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# The Complexity of Authentic Leadership

An interdisciplinary study with mixed methods about the relationship between gender and authentic leadership

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## Abstract

### The Complexity of Authentic Leadership

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Authenticity is a philosophical and psychological concept with origin in Greek philosophy that means being true to oneself. The twenty-first-century corporations' increased complexity and multiple cooperate scandals have created a demand for application of the concept of authenticity into leadership – resulting in the concept of authentic leadership. Authentic leadership is something leaders should strive for since it shows to have a significant impact on work engagement, team effectiveness, financial performance, and work satisfaction, to name a few. Due to the many advantages of authentic leadership, multiple measurement tools have been created to identify and measure the authenticity in leaders. The idea of authentic leadership to be a measurable concept has received criticism and acknowledgment within the research field. Even though research states that authentic leadership is gendered, there is no consideration of gender in the existing measurement tools for authentic leadership. Men and women meet different conditions in life, careers, and as leaders, and due to the long history of male leaders, the norm of leadership builds on the male gender. The purpose of this study is three folded: Firstly, the study aims to understand how authenticity in leaders can be identified. Secondly, the circumstances that affect authentic leadership development will be explored. And lastly, the relationship between gender and authentic leadership development will be investigated. To fulfill the purpose, mixed methods have been applied. Six qualitative interviews chosen with theoretical and snowball sampling have been performed. Based on the learnings from the literature review and interviews, a quantitative questionnaire has been sent out to 327 persons. The study's findings show that identifying authenticity can be accomplished by different approaches: Questionnaire, in-depth interviews, and through a feeling. The circumstances that affect authentic leadership development are dependent on the formations of the factors and a person's level of self-awareness. Lastly, authentic leadership is challenging for both men and women since the male prototype of leaders can hinder both genders.

**Keywords:** *Authentic leadership, authenticity, gender, measurements tools, self-awareness, norms*

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## Popular science summary

*“Women who want to succeed must be like men, but aren’t allowed to be like men, but should even so be like men”* Dahlbom-Hall (1996, p. 65). Ever since women entered the labor market, there has been an unequal distribution of women and men at top positions. Due to the long history of male leaders, society still in many ways connect the leader role with a man. This has resulted in challenges for women who need to hide parts of herself when adapting to this, hence not being true to herself. Being true to self is the key within authentic leadership, a relatively new concept within the leadership field. An authentic leader is a leader who perceives authenticity, meaning follow his or her own thoughts and beliefs instead of being steered by others. Authentic leadership has both been glorified and received much criticism, for instance, regarding the lack of consideration for women. Literature states that women find it harder to be authentic leaders.

This study explores the relationship between gender and authentic leadership. The focus has been to create an understanding of how authenticity can be identified in a leader, what factors that affect the development of authentic leadership and to understand what gender means in authentic leadership development. This has been done by performing six video interviews, reading literature, and sending out a digital questionnaire to leaders at different levels in Sweden.

The result states that gender does have a meaning in authentic leadership development. Both for women and men, who face different types of challenges. It is also concluded that authentic leadership is a complex concept where different people perceive it differently. Therefore, several ways of identifying authenticity are presented, likewise, several factors that affect authentic leadership development. The predominant factor that the study presents is self-awareness. The findings shows that self-awareness is essential since it decide the outer factors impact on authentic leadership development.

## Foreword

Two authors have conducted this study, and the work has been divided equally among us. We are thankful for sharing this journey and believe that our great collaboration has formed the study into what it is today. We are proud of what we have accomplished and grateful for all the learnings we bring from this study.

We appreciate all the people who have contributed to the study to make it possible for us to conduct it. Thank you to everyone who took your time to either answer our questionnaire or participate in an interview. Furthermore, we would like to thank our subject reader Sofia Wagrell for the guidance and support along the way. We would also like to show our gratitude to our supervisors Anna Kowalska Lindberg and Iwona Kuraszko Bolöv. Thank you for your insights, support, knowledge, and valuable time. We could not have done this without you!

*Stockholm, 8/6–2021*  
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## 1 Introduction

The need and interest in authentic leadership are growing in society and in academic research. Authentic leadership has been shown to have a positive impact on both organizations, groups, and individuals (Shahzad, Raja, & Hashmi, 2020). To investigate the concept of authentic leadership, this study will frequently use the terms: authenticity, authentic leaders, and authentic leadership. The terms have a clear connection to one another, but they all entail different definitions and applications. To make these terms useful, the meaning and how they relate to each other need to be clarified. Authenticity can be described briefly as being true to the self, meaning owning your thoughts and beliefs and acting according to these (Luthans & Avolio, 2003). A leader with authenticity is an authentic leader. Authentic leaders do not fake their leadership nor developing an image of themselves as a leader that does not reflect themselves. Authentic leadership performs by authentic leaders and is a self-expressive act that is a part of being true to the self rather than striving for status, honor, or other personal rewards (Shamira & Eilam, 2005). The most significant difference between authentic leaders and authentic leadership is how a leader can influence others to adapt to new value attitudes and goals. Therefore, authentic leadership cannot consist of only authentic leaders; others need to be included in the equation (Shamira & Eilam, 2005).

The growth of the need for authentic leadership comes from the upswing of worldwide cooperate scandals and crises. The corporate scandals and crises have created a higher demand for new leadership styles that restore the trust and accountability of the leaders. As a result, cooperation's that fail to show a consistency of words and actions will lose reliance. (Walumbwa, Avolio, Wernsing, Gardner, & Peterson, 2008). Hassan and Ahmed (2011) explain that organizations need authentic leaders to be effective and more successful in the long term. Authentic leader's honesty, high integrity, and commitment to their core values create a healthy culture and relationship in groups and organizations. This results in positive outcomes such as employee engagement, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction (Hassan & Ahmed, 2011).

Within the literature about authentic leadership, the aspects of gender often have none or little involvement. Gender research is aiming to create an understanding of the underlying factors that affect society. For instance, the factors that affect the wage difference between men and women, the values connected to men respectively woman, and why there are few women in

executive leadership positions (Alvesson & Due Billing, 2011, p. 24). The way men and women are being perceived vary within different periods and cultural contexts (Ibid, p. 24). Regarding the connection of gender and authentic leadership, Önday (2016) and Sinclair (2013) argue for authentic leadership to be gendered, and Hopkins and O'Neil (2015) believe it to be more challenging for women to be authentic leaders than men. For this reason, this study will investigate the relationship between gender and authentic leadership further.

### 1.1 Problematization

Authenticity, authentic leaders, and authentic leadership as concepts have been questioned due to scandals within the research world. For example, Walumbwa is one researcher whose work has been retracted from the academic record due to flawed methodology. The scandal has harmed the entire construct of authentic leadership (Spoelstra, Butler, & Delaney, 2020). Furthermore, authentic leadership has received criticism because it builds on authenticity, which authors (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Bass & Avolio, 1993; George, 2003; Walumbwa et al., 2008) explains as begin true to yourself. According to Alvesson and Einola (2019), the self is a philosophical and psychological concept, and is extremely difficult to identify and measure for externals and even for the individuals themselves (Alvesson & Einola, 2019; Ford & Harding, 2011). Authenticity is beyond objectivity and clear guidelines since it lacks objective attributes and qualities that decided whether a person is authentic or not (Golomb, 1995). Alvesson and Einola (2019) explain that authenticity is a continuous internal process hidden and does not appear in any external assessments. However, Butterworth (2020) declares authentic leadership as a measurable leadership construct. The reason for wanting to identify and measure authentic leaders and leadership is the shown positive benefits and since it is proposed to be the root element for effective leadership (Wong & Laschinger, 2012).

The research of developing, identifying, and measuring authentic leadership has very little consideration of the respondent's gender and its potential impact. This despite that Önday (2016) explains that men and women meet different life conditions, careers, and leaders. Weyer (2007) argues that society is built upon gender-role stereotypes that create an expected way to behave for each gender. While men are associated with assertiveness and are predicted to compete for attention and to make problem-focused suggestions, a woman is expected to appear as supporting, sympathetic, and helpful towards others (Ibid, 2007). Larsson and Alvinus (2020) also present the different characteristics expected by women, respectively,

men. Women are expected to be warm and kind, while men are expected to be dominant and authoritative. The associations and expectations for women resemble the authentic leader's definition (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Sharmir & Eilam, 2005; Luthans & Avolio, 2003). However, Önday (2016) presents a study that shows authentic leadership is especially challenging for women. Societies stereotypes and norms regarding women and women in leadership positions make it extremely difficult for women to be authentic and, at the same time, not going against the norms (Wahl, Holgersson, Höök, & Linghag, 2018, p. 199; Önday, 2016). Dahlbom-Hall (1996, p. 65) strengthens this problem by stating: *“Women who want to succeed must be like men, but aren't allowed to be like men, but should even so be like men.”*

Due to the long history of male leaders, the norm of leadership builds on the male gender (Wahl, Holgersson, Höök, & Linghag, 2018, p. 187; Bowles & McGinn, 2005). Once women manage to establish themselves in a leadership position, gender-based social norms tend to form the assumed women leader behavior. Women who go against these social rules and norms are likely to meet social disapproval from others (Ridgeway, 2001; Ridgeway & Smith-Lovin, 1999; Rudman & Glick, 1999; Valian, 1999, referred to in Messick & Kramer, 2005). Women who instead adapt to the stereotypical masculine behaviors are seen as violating the women's norms and are likely to meet social disapproval from others (Branson, 2002; Rdman & Glick, 1999, referred to in Bowles & McGinn2005). Therefore, women meet a dilemma where the requirements of being a leader and a woman are inconsistent (Hopkins & O'Neil, 2015) which results in a lose-lose situation for women leaders.

## 1.2 Purpose and research questions

The purpose of the project is to create an understanding of how to identify authenticity in a leader, as well as to explore the circumstances that affect authentic leadership development and discover how gender influence the authentic leadership development. To fulfill the purpose, we have formulated the following three research questions:

1. How can authenticity be identified in a leader?
2. Which inner and outer factors drive or limit the process of authentic leadership development?
3. What does gender mean in authentic leadership development?

The first research question is fundamental to enable the creation of the questionnaire that will help us answer the third research question. Furthermore, as mentioned in the problematization, men and women meet different conditions in life and careers. The second research question is therefore essential to gain an understanding of what gender means in authentic leadership development.

### 1.3 Disposition

This study consists of eight chapters that will be structured as follows. In the first chapter, an introduction to the study is presented, with purpose and research questions. Secondly, some background information about leadership, gender, and the external partners. Thirdly, prior leadership research, identified gaps within literature and contributions for the study. Fourthly, literature that will be used to answer the research questions. Fifthly, methods used during the study with information about the data collection methods and analysis methods. Sixthly, analysis of the study based on identified themes from the qualitative interviews, the outcome from the questionnaire, and literature. Seventhly, a general discussion about the study and the theoretical and practical contribution. Lastly, in chapter eight, the conclusion is presented for each of the three research questions.

## 2 Background

*This chapter presents some history about leadership research and introduces the existing gender problematization in organizations. Further, the thesis's external partner, Anima Ledarskap AB, is presented with a description of what the company offers as well as some fundamental history of the company.*

### 2.1 History of leadership

The term leader was created in the 1300' (King A. S., 1990) and since then been defined differently through the years. Leadership has always been a subject of great interest in society as well as in research (Ford & Harding, 2011). Nevertheless, Amanchukwu, Stanley, and Ololube (2015) states that “*Leadership is not a “one size fit all” phenomenon.*” The authors state that researchers have propounded many different leadership theories and views over the years, but none have been considered universal. According to Hopkins and O'Neil (2015), the modern view of leadership is connected to four primary perspectives, the trait, the behavioral, the contingency, and the contemporary. Within this division, the latest include transformational and authentic leadership. Although these views share similarities, the overall mindset regarding leadership has developed over the years. Popular issues to be addressed within leadership literature are whether a person is born into being a leader or develops into one by practicing.

Recently, the interest in authenticity and authentic leadership has increased markedly due to modern cooperate scandals, management malfeasance, and a conscious society requiring cooperation to be transparent and equitable (Walumbwa et., 2008). These cooperate scandals, which are consequences of leaders' unethical behavior, have resulted in global financial crises and mistrust for more significant businesses. The need for authenticity has increased due to extreme situations, including economic, social, and historical crises (Alvesson & Einola, 2019). Private organizations, public, and volunteer organizations are dealing with stressors and challenges that create a demand for genuine leadership focusing on restoring optimism and confidence within the organization (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). Furthermore, the publication of Avolio and Gardner (2005) in a special issue published by The Leadership Quarterly has been referred to as a highly influential starting point for when the interest in authentic leadership in the academic field become popular (Alvesson & Einola, 2019).

## 2.2 Gender in leadership

The distinction between gender and sex was first introduced by Money and Ehrhardt (1972, referred to in Muehlenhard & Peterson, 2011), who referred to sex as an individual physical characteristic and gender as an individual's psychological characteristics and behaviors. Crawford (2006, referred to in Muehlenhard & Peterson, 2011) states that the distinguishment between sex and gender is an essential step in recognizing that many of the differences between men and women might be socially created rather than biologically. Often, female/male are treated as sex categories, while woman/man is understood as gender categories based on social and cultural factors (Muehlenhard & Peterson, 2011).

In leadership, women are seen as a minority group. Women and other ethnocultural minority groups struggle with leadership-related challenges that result in less access to leadership positions (Ayman & Korabik, 2010). According to Ayman and Korabik (2010), a contribution to this is the higher social status men possess, resulting in an uneven division of resources and power between the genders, where men are more privileged than women. This can be shown by comparing the monthly salary for Sweden's top ten largest professions, where men on average earn several thousand's more than women at the same position (Statistics Sweden, 2018, s. 75). The issue of equal pay despite gender is also addressed in EU laws, although women still earn less than men on average and the gender pay gap in the EU countries of 14,7 percent (European Commission, 2020, p. 10). United Nations also works to eliminate discrimination and violence against women and ensure that women get a salary that matches their position. United Nations (2015) has formed the goal "*Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life*".

In the United States, less than 6% of the CEOs in the 500 most prominent listed companies are women (Catalyst, 2020). The Swedish Government Official Reports (1997, p. 132) states that the limited number of women in top positions has little to do with discrimination and is a consequence of men and women's education choice. Based on a study they performed 1970-1990, the top positions were recruited from education such as economics and engineering, which mainly included male students, resulting in fewer females recruited. Further, the same study shows that aspects like part-time work, amount of worked hours, and age affect the possibility to reach top positions (Ibid, p. 132). In the Swedish Government Official Reports

(1994, p. 7) the low amount of woman on high positions explains by men to be because woman cares more for the family, lack the needed self-confidence, do not aiming for higher positions or possesses the wrong education. On the other side, women explain it by hierarchical structures in the organization and men's conservative attitudes (Ibid, p.7).

### 2.3 External partners

Anima Ledarskap AB, led by CEO Anna Kowalska Lindberg is a Swedish leadership development company. Mrs. Kowalska Lindberg possesses extensive experience from top leadership positions in private corporations and as a government official. In the year 2020, she founded Anima as a subsidiary company to Barbro Dahlbom-Hall Konsult AB, which Mrs. Kowalska Lindberg bought in 2015 from Barbro Dahlbom-Hall. Mrs. Dahlbom-Hall is a pioneer within leadership development and founded the company in 1980. The company offers a wide range of leadership development courses and programs for individuals and organizations. Within the courses, the focus is to get all leaders to find their individual own best way to lead. The idea of focusing on each individual and using their capabilities to grow into a better leader is unique for Anima, compared to the competitors that mainly focus on a specific role model or leadership/management idea. Through the courses, the goal is to make organizations better based on sustainable leadership meaning that the leader needs to work on their own development to be able to develop others.

The foundation for this study is a collaboration between Anima Ledarskap and Ph.D. Iwona Kuraszko Bolöv, Visiting Senior Researcher at INSEAD business school. Mrs. Kuraszko Bolöv is currently writing a book about authentic leadership and is interested in the relationship between gender and authentic leadership. Further, Mrs. Kuraszko Bolöv needs to finding interviewees to participate in in-depth interviews within the book. The participants should be characterized as authentic leaders and located within the group of participants from two of Anima's leadership development programs, called "Leading Women" and "Leading Men." As explained by the name, the former targets men, and the latter targets women. Each program occasion includes a maximum of 10 people widely chosen from various managerial positions and different organizations. Both programs extent over approximately nine-month and the structure is experience-based, including a mixture of theory, exercises, group discussions, and individual reflections. Much of the programs' focus lies on gender imprinting and its impact on

leadership, and the agenda addresses issues as equality and how to break norms in organizations.

### 3 Literature review

*This chapter presents prior leadership research to emphasize the main shortcomings within the field to identify areas for contribution. The leadership research consists of the difference between a leader and a manager, two different leadership models, further explanation of the concept's authenticity, authentic leaders and authentic leadership, and criticism towards the concepts. Furthermore, the chapter addresses the gender perspective within an organizational context, and lastly, the contributions for this thesis are presented.*

#### 3.1 The traditional leadership

##### 3.1.1 Leadership vs. management and leaders vs. managers

*“Some people have the capacity to become excellent managers but not strong leaders. Others have great leadership potential but have great difficulty becoming strong managers”* (Kotter, 2007). The division of leadership/management and leaders/managers has been emphasized in research for almost a century. According to Kotter, leadership is not the same as management, and leaders are not the same as managers. Nor should these be handling the same kinds of tasks and responsibilities within an organization. Management is a set of processes that enable a complicated system of people and technology to run functionally (Kotter, 1996). Managers have a formal mandate and gain subordinates through this mandate's possession and usage. A manager can use constraints since the management connects to the position as a manager (Fayol, 1917; Gulick & Urwick, 1937; Bennis, 1959, referred to in Stranngård & Jönsson, 2009, pp. 22–23). On the other hand, leaders cannot be called leaders because of a title or position. A leader is a person who develops and inspires, and motivates others, aligning people and establish visions (Kotter, 1996; Stranngård & Jönsson, 2009, s. 23). Hence, to be a leader, you must have followers. Leadership is the process of influencing a group of individuals to achieve shared objectives and goals (Northouse, 2013; Yukl, 2011, referred to in Stranngård & Jönsson, 2009, p. 14).

##### 3.1.2 Leadership and leaders

Many researchers have tried to explain leadership's implications during the past decades. James MacGregor Burns described that leadership is *“one of the most observed and least understood phenomena on earth.”* (Alvehus, 2021). While some theories have suggested that leadership is all about the leader, others believe that leadership is based on the situation the leader is in.

According to Larsson, Lundin, and Zander (2017, p. 9) the best way to describe leadership is to combine the two former explanations. The authors suggest that leadership is an interplay between the leader and the external context. Avolio and Bass developed a model referred to as “A full range of leadership model” (Bass & Riggio, 2006), or “full-range leadership theory” (Antonakis & House, 2002). The model is built upon identified leader characteristics that formed three types of leader styles, Laissez-faire, transactional and transformational. The former refers to a version of non-leadership, added in the model to indicate the absence of leadership (Antonakis & House, 2002). In 2003, the Swedish Defence University presented a developed version of Avolio and Bass’s model (Larsson, Lundin, & Zander, 2017, p. 68). This model has been further developed and named “The leadership model” (Larsson, Lundin, & Zander, 2017, p. 84; Larsson & Alvinus, 2020).

In Figure 1, the “A full range of leadership model” and “The leadership model” are assembled to create an understanding of the ideas. One difference in the model presented by Larsson, Lundin, and Zander is that the previously called non-leadership style Laissez-faire now accounts for as destructive leadership (Larsson, Lundin, & Zander, 2017, p. 68). Furthermore, the authors use conventional and developmental leader styles instead of transactional and transformative as in Avolio and Bass’ original model. According to Larsson, Lundin, and Zander (2017, p. 81), the destructive leader possesses egocentric, unfair, false, inexplicit, and arrogant characteristics. Further, the conventional leader involves using control, requirements, and reward (Ibid, p. 77). Lastly, the developmental leader style includes creativity, encouragement, personal consideration, responsibility, and authenticity (Ibid, p.68). As seen in Figure 1, the transformative/developmental leader style, including authentic leadership, is the most favorable from both an individual development point of view and the organizational result.

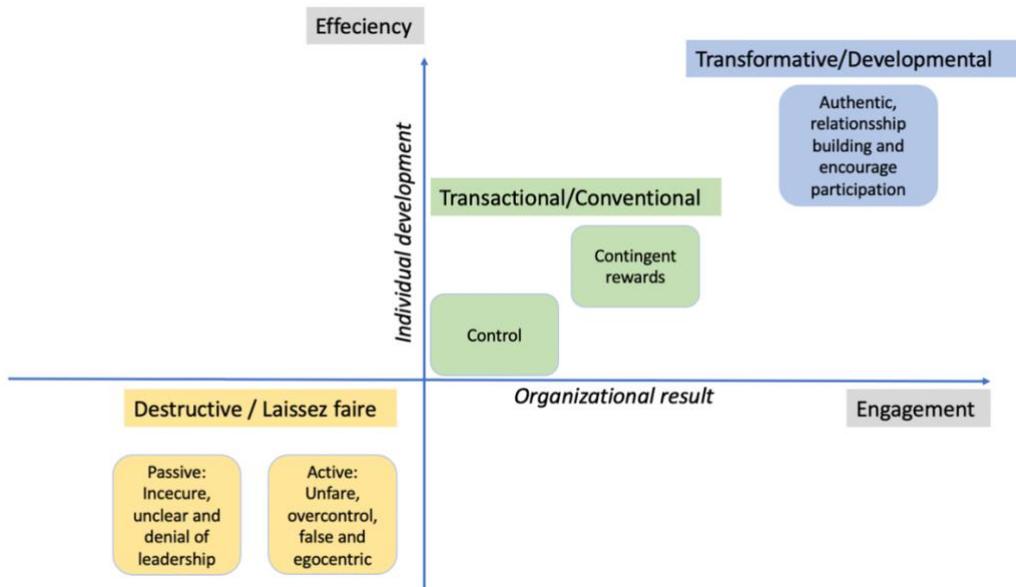


Figure 1. Adapted illustration of “A full range of leadership model” and “The leadership model” (own representation, 2021).

In their research, Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, and van Engen (2003) found slight evidence implying that men are more likely to use the Laissez-faire leader style while women to a higher degree than men use a transformative leader style. Rhode (2017) also states that women are more likely than men to engage in transformational leadership. This because it relies on skills and characteristics that are more typical for women. When it comes to transactional leadership, women are more likely to use contingent rewards, and men more likely to use control (Eagly et al., 2003). According to (Avolio & Bass, 2001), all leaders possess both transformational and transactional characteristics, where the most optimal leaders are those with more transformational than transactional characteristics. The authors describe transformational leadership to be an expansion of transactional leadership.

Besides the leader style, Larsson et al.’s (2019) “The Leadership Model” includes the context factors of leadership. Kellerman (2016) explains that leadership is not about the individual woman or man; It is a system that consists of three equally important parts. (1) the leader, (2) the followers and, (3) the context of leaders and followers. Larsson et al. (2019) explain that three different contexts significantly impact the leader and the leadership. The three contexts applied in the “The leadership model” are presented in Figure 2. The three contexts have factors that affect a leader. The group context is, for example, the size of the groups, roles, and communication that all affect the leader’s ability to foster relationships and teamwork. The organizational context as hierarchy affects the leader through different requirements and

external demands. Lastly, the external environments such as societies' political, social, and cultural contexts affect the leader's decision-making (Larsson & Hyllgren, 2013, referred to in Larsson, Lundin, & Zander, 2017, p. 39).

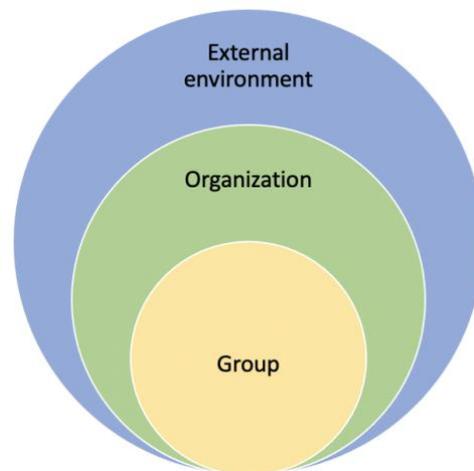


Figure 2. Environmental characteristics (Larsson & Hyllgren, 2013, referred to in Larsson, Lundin, & Zander, 2017, p. 39).

## 3.2 The new leadership

### 3.2.1 Authenticity

To enable authentic leadership one must, first and foremost, achieve authenticity (Gardner, Avolio, Luthans, May, & Walumbwa). The concept of authenticity comes from Greek philosophy and means: *"To thine own self be true"* (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Schlegel, Hicks, Arndt, & King, 2009; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2014). The idea of a true self has a long history in philosophical research within the true self in psychological functions (Schlegel, Hicks, Arndt, & King, 2009). The terminology and definition of authenticity can vary in research depending on the scholar's agenda and approach (Chen, 2019). The standard view of authenticity includes self-awareness and self-regulation, meaning being aware of one's internal states and choose to act according to these, hence developed through self-esteem where people see and understand themselves and their lives (Walumbwa et al., 2008; Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Chen, 2019). The conception of authenticity that has been adapted into leadership studied relies on Kernis (2003) definition: *"Authenticity can be characterized as reflecting the unobstructed operation of one's true, or core, self in one's daily enterprise. As I describe, authenticity has at least four discriminable components: awareness, unbiased processing, action, and relational orientation"*.

Kernis (2003) explains that the first component - *awareness* - consists of being aware and having trust in one's feelings and desires and includes being aware of one's strengths and weaknesses, trait characteristics, and emotions. Kernis (2003) also refers to Perls, Hefferline, and Goodman's research from 1951 about inherent polarities meaning that a person is not exclusively feminine or masculine, introvert or extrovert, dominant or submissive, for example. One of these aspects dominates the other, but that does not mean that the other does not exist. The second component is *unbiased processing*, involving that an individual should not deny or ignore personal knowledge and experiences. Instead, one should accept one's positive and negative attributes. Furthermore, the component of *action* means that individuals need to act according to their true self and one's values, preferences, and needs instead of acting to please others. According to Kernis (2003), the last component of authenticity is the *relational orientation* and covers the value of openness and truthfulness in one's close relationships. It emphasizes the importance of not being fake and showing the real you, good and bad.

Martin Seligman's psychological theory positive psychology is a part of authenticity that has received attention in the academic field (Luthans & Avolio, 2003; Medlock, 2012; Avolio & Gardner, 2005). Instead of searching for wrongs and weaknesses in individuals, the theory of positive psychology focuses on nurturing people's strong qualities. The positive psychology movement aims to make people's lives more productive and fulfilling through identifying and developing positive capabilities (Luthans & Avolio, 2003). The aim is to change psychology from repairing the worst things to building up the best qualities (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2014, p. 3). Authenticity is an essential part of defining a normative framework of positive psychology. One challenge with positive psychology is that there is no clear way of defining the self and an authentic self (Medlock, 2012).

### 3.2.2 Authentic leaders

George (2003) explains that twenty-first-century corporations' increased complexity demands a new form of leadership. In addition to this, there are multiple corporate scandals during the last decade that have paved the way for more authentic leaders (Spoelstra, Butler, & Delaney, 2020). Continually, George (2003) explains that the corporate world needs authentic leaders who lead with head and heart, who pursue purpose, values, integrity, and the establishment of long-lasting, meaningful relationships. Furthermore, he argues that authentic leaders build authentic organizations that will compete more effectively on the market. Avolio and Gardner (2005) define authentic leaders as:

*“Deeply aware of how they think and behave and are perceived by others as being aware of their own and others’ values/moral perspectives, knowledge, and strengths; aware of the context in which they operate; and who are confident, hopeful, optimistic, resilient, and of high moral character”.*

Authentic leaders are aware of how they think, behave and the concept they operate. Furthermore, an authentic leader is confident, optimistic, resilient, and highly moral. Luthans and Avolio (2003) explain that authenticity includes owning personal values, including thought, emotions, or belief, and acting according to these individual values. For the authentic leader, it is important not to withhold vital information or make decisions behind the back of the involved person (Larsson, Lundin, & Zander, 2017, p. 71).

### 3.2.3 Authentic leadership

Authentic leadership is a relatively young addition within the field of leadership. Luthans and Avolio published one of the first articles on authentic leadership in 2003 (Northouse, 2019, p. 313). The leadership style indicates that the leader communicates with his or her followers with authenticity (Seek Lee, 2018). The idea is based upon previously positive forms of leadership as ethical, charismatic, spiritual, servant, and transformational (Alvesson & Einola, 2019; Önday, 2016). However, most of these five leadership types focus on the follower’s development, while authentic leadership focuses on leader development (Önday, 2016). Other notable differences between the theories shown by Önday (2016) are that an authentic leader leads by values and purpose rather than being derived by spiritual beliefs as in spiritual leadership and that an authentic leader strives to be real, which differs from the charismatic leader who may appear as very theatrical. Authentic leadership has been likened to a concept that provides hope into often exposed organizations by promoting humanistic values and optimism (Walumbwa et al., 2008). The concept has been used to explain a wide range of organizational and individual-level changes like work engagement, satisfaction with supervisor, increased team effectiveness, financial performance (Shahzad, Raja, & Hashmi, 2020), trust in leadership, organizational commitment (Butterworth, 2020), working satisfaction and higher performance within the organization (Wong & Laschinger, 2012). Furthermore, Seek Lee (2018) highlights a study comparing authentic leadership with transformational leadership and ethical leadership. The result shows that authentic leadership has the most influence on organization effectiveness.

### 3.2.4 Authentic leadership development

The concept of authenticity in leadership is still in an early phase of developing into a theory. Due to the early stage, more factors may influence the final theory of authentic leadership (Northouse, 2019, p. 318). Luthans and Avolio (2003) initially defined authentic leadership as a process that draws on positive psychological capacities and highly developed organizational context, which are both parts of positive organizational behavior and result in greater self-awareness and self-regulated positive behaviors following by authentic leadership. Luthans and Avolio (2003) formed the Authentic Leadership Development Model, which is based on positive organizational behavior, transformational and ethical leadership theories. Luthans and Avolio (2003) Authentic Leadership Development Model can be seen in Figure 3.

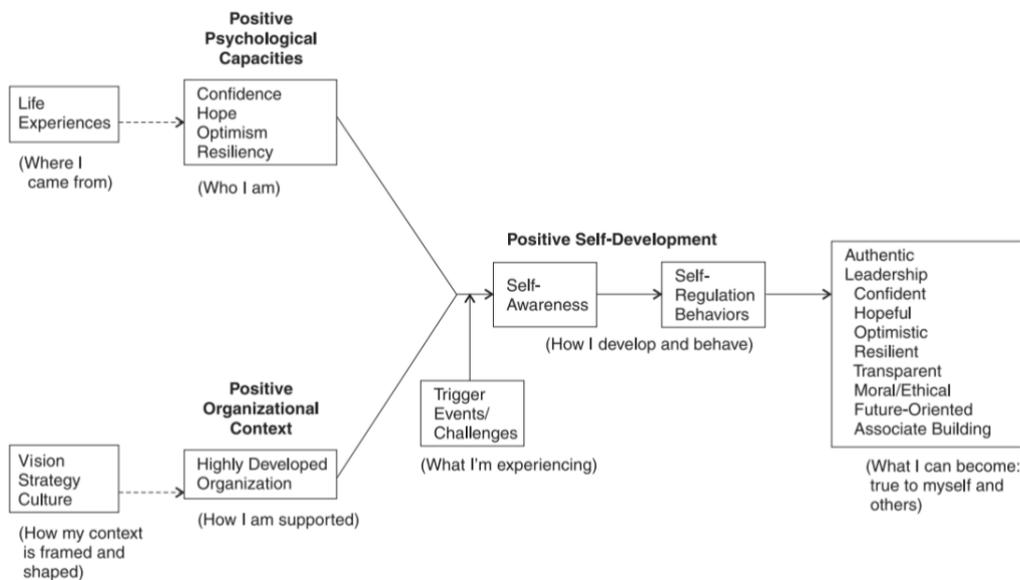


Figure 3. Authentic Leadership Development Model (Luthans & Avolio, 2003).

Positive psychological capacities mean qualities that can be enhanced by development, measured, and effectively managed for performance improvement in organizations (Luthans, 2002). Positive organizational behavior stands for the individual-level psychology that fosters authentic leadership. The positive psychological capacities that drive authenticity in Luthans and Avolio's (2003) definition are *confidence, hope, optimism, and resilience*. Authentic leadership development is also dependent on the context and can be taken to a cultural level. Therefore, the context and the individual must be adapted for authentic leadership development (Luthans & Avolio, 2003). Bass and Avolio (1993) explain that organizations can also have transformational leadership qualities in similar ways as the leader. This leads us into the positive organizational context that involves the vision, strategy, culture, and workgroups. In organizations with applied transformational leadership's organizational qualities, the leader and

development can be optimized through a transparent, energizing, intellectual and stimulating culture. This culture will result in higher support of leaders and followers' development to reach their full potential (Luthans & Avolio, 2003). In such a positive organizational context, Luthans and Avolio (2003) state that leadership development has a much higher chance of being embedded into the culture than in organizations where mistrust is normative. Bass and Avolio (1993) explain that the most developed organizational culture is where the leaders care about other's development and care about getting their task done successfully. According to Figure 3, authentic leadership is developed on two levels – individual and organizational. Developing an individual's positive psychological capacities must therefore cohere with a highly developed positive organizational context to enable authentic leadership. The positive organizational context needs to be highly developed due to the trigger events/challenges in Figure 3, the organizational culture will trigger these events and decide if they will foster or hinder positive self-development. Therefore, the degree of a developed organization will be crucial for enabling the development of authentic leadership (Luthans & Avolio, 2003).

However, Cooper, Scandura, and Schriesheim (2005) have expressed concerns regarding the positive psychological capacities described by Luthans and Avolio (2003). Cooper et al. (2005) mean that the definition is multi-dimensional (different traits, states, behaviors, contexts, and attributes) and multi-level (individual, team, and organizational level), which makes it too broad to conceptualize authentic leadership, and the authors encourage more narrow definitions. Building on the psychologist theories developed by Kernis (2003), Ilies, Morgeson, and Nahrgang (2005) proposed a more limited authentic leadership model that includes *self-awareness, unbiased processing, authentic behavior, and authentic relational orientation*. Gardner, Avolio, Luthans, May, and Walumbwa (2005) have integrated Luthans and Avolio (2003), Ilies et al. (2005) models and perspectives, and Deci and Ryan's (2000) self-determination theory, to propose a self-based model of authentic leader and follower development. Gardner et al.'s (2005) model focus on self-awareness and self-regulation as core components of authentic leadership.

Furthermore, Walumbwa et al. (2008) have consolidated all the previously mentioned models (Luthans & Avolio, 2003; Kernis, 2003; Ilies et al., 2005; Garder et al., 2005; Deci & Ryan, 2000) to develop their conceptualization of authentic leadership. Walumbwa's et al. (2008) modified definitions of authentic leadership after considering the previous models are:

*“A pattern of leader behavior that draws upon and promotes both positive psychological capacities and a positive ethical climate, to foster greater self-awareness, an internalized moral perspective, balanced processing of information, and relational transparency on the part of leaders working with followers, fostering positive self-development”* (Walumbwa et al., 2008).

Beside positive psychological capacities, Northouse (2019, p. 316) argue that critical life event and moral reasoning influence authentic leadership. The author describes moral reasoning as having the ability to make ethical decisions and states that developing moral reasoning is a life-long journey. Regarding critical life events, Northouse (2019, p. 317) declares it to be situations that shape people's lives and thereby also affect the individual development of authentic leadership. The events can be both positive and negative but will, in some way, act as a catalysator for change. For that reason, a leader facilitates their individual development of authentic leadership by being aware of their life experiences and critical life events.

### 3.2.5 Criticism of authentic leadership

Many published leadership studies often met criticism, and authentic leadership studies are no exception (Ford & Harding, 2011). Alvesson and Einola (2019) present four areas where they located the main problems of authentic leadership, (1) in the theory development, (2) in practice, (3) in relation to other leadership theories, and (4) the foundation of authentic leadership. These general problem areas are supported by the author's arguments that there is an unsolvable tension between the authentic self and job-based roles at the workplace and that authentic leadership as a concept lacks a stable theoretical foundation. The authors also argue that striving for being authentic may lead to personal vulnerability and that it is impossible to measure authentic leadership. These ideas align with the criticism Nyberg and Sveningsson (2014) address towards the concept. The two authors imply that many researchers in the field of authentic leadership ignore the organizational complexity and the social context the leader must deal with and states that this will aggravate the practice of being an authentic leader, hence being true to oneself.

Golomb (1995) states that there are no difficulties in understanding the concepts of authentic and authenticity as they are used in everyday life, but in relation to leaders and leadership makes it more complex. Ford and Harding (2011) express concerns regarding authentic leader's

definition by referring to Jessica Benjamin's research about Object Relations Theory. The core critique includes the epistemological approach that authentic leadership models entail. Authentic leadership theory proposes that one can discover one's true self without any external interaction (Hopkins & O'Neil, 2015). In contrast, Benjamin's (1990) theory of Object Relations presents that the self's core is formed through relationships. Traditional object relations theorists such as Melanie Klein and Donald Winnicott emphasize the importance of experiences within relationships and interaction with other people. Benjamin (1990) strengthens this by explaining that the self can only exist through interactions with others and that intersubjective dynamic is where the self-reorients and the self can emerge. When looking at authentic leadership through the lens of the Benjamins (1990) lens, the research indicates that authentic leadership models are only a theoretical model inoperable in practice (Ford & Harding, 2011).

Furthermore, the many positive characteristics of authentic leaders have also been criticized. In their publication, Alvesson and Einola (2019) state that the authentic leader has been glorified as a "*Disneyland-inspired good leader, a moral peak performer*". Further, the authors state that being an authentic leader rather corresponds to a fantasy ideal more than reality. One perspective of the criticism is whether an individual can be true to themselves (Ford & Harding, 2011). Another problem of the concept is the lack of a complete unified definition of the meaning of authentic leadership, which makes it difficult to measure or analyze the outcome of the concept (Luenendonk, 2020). The existing tools used to measure authentic leadership have received plenty of criticism regarding generalizing, trustworthiness, validity, and reliability (Spoelstra, Butler, & Delaney, 2020).

### 3.3 Gender in organizational contexts

Acker (1990) states that men almost entirely occupy the most powerful organizational positions. The author also explains exceptions where biological women fill these positions, acting like men. According to Acker (1990), men have more power than women within the organizational context. Beard (2004, p. 98) explains that power is a term that is highly connected to the male gender. Women can therefore be rejected the power due to their gender. Additionally, Kanter (1993) explains that gender differences in an organization are due to its structure rather than women and men's characteristics. The author argues that women's problem in large organizations is their structure placement, crowded in low hierarchy jobs, and exposure as tokens in the high hierarchy jobs (Kanter, 1993). Organizations need to change this structure

to fit women since it's already coded as masculine (Beard, 2018, p. 98). Even though this structure may not be created of active decision-making, the structure's different roles have preconceived characteristics embedded in them. *“A masculine ethic of rationality can be identified in the early image of managers. This masculine ethic elevates the trait assumed to belong to men”* (Kanter, 1993, s. 43).

Organizations are often being defined as gender-neutral. Meanwhile, masculine principles dominate their authority structure (Kanter, 1993). Later research from Kelan (2009) shows that this definition of gender-neutral organizations is still common. Gender awareness is incorporated in the organization to a much greater extent than historically but is simultaneously rejected (Gill, 2007). Lately, many men have started to reflect on themselves and what it means to be a man (Dahlbom-Hall, 2020, p. 11). Their strive for power, career, and success has been toned down, and interest in life outside of the workplace has increased (Ibid, p. 11). Heiskanen and Rantalaiho (1997, p. 196, referred to in Kelan, 2009) explain that this is a consequence of the acknowledged ideology of equality. Our society believes that full gender equality has already been fulfilled. This has led to gender blindness, where people choose to ignore gender discrimination and inequalities since they are under the impression that it is more modern and woke to be gender blind (Lewis, 2006).

When women joined the labor market, the gender roles got strengthened instead of fading out (Dahlbom-Hall, 2007, p. 58). To understand the signification of gender within organizations, the research covers broad ideas from different disciplines like medicine, economics, culture, pedagogy, and political science (Wahl, Holgersson, Höök, & Linghag, 2018, p. 21). According to Dahlbom-Hall (1996, p. 41), the denial of the role gender plays within an organization leads that the former open oppression against women has turned into a covert version. Furthermore, she states that 70 to 80 percent of the organization's conflicts are related to gender roles. *“One isn't born a man or a woman; one develops into one or the other. Gender conflicts influencing working life are founded in this way and create the obstacles that stop projects from taking off”* (Dahlbom-Hall, 1996, p. 42).

### 3.4 Gap and contribution

The literature review shows that gender in organization indicates that the strong norms and gender roles make it more difficult for women to act as themselves in organizations. However, how gender is related to authentic leadership development is yet not a well-understood

phenomenon. The research that describes how gender impact the performance of authentic leadership is very limited. This study will contribute to expanding the research of the genders impact of authentic leadership development. To enable this investigation, it is required to look at authentic leaders, hence the starting point of this study is to understand how to identify authenticity in a leader. This study will therefore contribute by mapping out ways to identify authenticity to see how it relates to gender.

The gap identified in the literature review is connected to the two models, “The Leadership Model” and “Authentic Leadership Development Model”. “The Leadership Model” includes three contexts that are described as having an impact on the leader and the leadership, as illustrated in Figure 2. *Environmental characteristics*. However, in the “Authentic Leadership Development Model”, there are only two contexts described – individual and organizational factors. Since the Object Relations Theory presents the importance of relationships and interactions, the external environment is essential to take into consideration. This study will therefore expand the existing “Authentic Leadership Development Model” with the aspects of the external environment which is lacking the current configuration. Furthermore, the factors in the “Authentic Leadership Development Model” are very vague and non-defined. This study will therefore contribute with more understanding about what these inner and outer factors may be and how they impact authentic leadership development.

## 4 Theoretical framework

*This chapter presents the underlying dimensions of authenticity and authentic leadership followed by the ethical framework of authenticity. Further, the Authentic Leadership Questionnaire is described as a measurements tool for authentic leadership. Continually, the leader prototype and the gender perspective of authentic leaders are described. Lastly, an operationalization of the theory has been conducted into two models that will be further used in the analysis.*

### 4.1 Underlying dimensions of authentic leadership

As mentioned earlier, the common view of authenticity includes self-awareness and self-regulation (Walumbwa et al., 2008; Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Chen, 2019). Medlock (2012) explains that authenticity from a psychological perspective is important on an individual level and for developing a healthy, growth-oriented, and innovative society. A culture that encourages the development of individuals and respects freedom, supports diversity, innovation, and the development of each individual's unique capabilities and will lead to a democratic society (May, 1996, referred to in Medlock, 2012).

Kernis (2013) first component covers the self-awareness of authenticity, and the remaining components cover self-regulation. Luthans and Avolio explain that the leader who aims to develop authentic leadership needs to be aware of their context in which they operate it. Self-awareness is a process where individuals continually understand unique talents, strengths, purpose, core values, and beliefs (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; George, 2003). Self-awareness helps leaders establish open, transparent, and genuine relations (Avolio, 2005). When fulfilling self-awareness, a leader has the presumptions to develop self-regulation (Luthans & Avolio, 2003). Avolio and Gardner (2005) explain the process of self-regulation as pursuing self-control and align their values with their actions. The self-regulation aspect draws from Deci and Ryan's (2000) self-determination theory (Gardner, Avolio, Luthans, May, & Walumbwa). Deci and Ryan (2000) distinguish between two types of motivations for actions. The first motivation is intrinsic motivation and refers to doing something because it is interesting or enjoyable and therefore comes from within and the self. In contrast, extrinsic motivation refers to doing something because it leads to a separable outcome, such as doing something to avoid judgment or gaining public acceptance. Most of the activities people do are not intrinsically

motivated. Especially after early childhood, freedom is affected by social demands and roles, assuming responsibility for extrinsic tasks (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Authenticity builds on finding and being true to “the self.” Harter (2012, p. 2) explains the self as both a cognitive and social construction. From a cognitive perspective, the self builds on what we know about us, including our beliefs, traits, characteristics, abilities, and roles (Harter, 2012, p.). Social construction comes from experiences and relationships. Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2014, p. 384) explain that social constructions can create an image of how a person should be. This creates self-images that are unrealistic and constructed only to gain approval or acceptance of others and to present themselves in a manner that would impress others (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2014; Medlock, 2012). Chen (2019) means people can be more or less authentic in different relations or contexts, for example, with friends, and at work. Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2014, p. 384) explain people as social chameleons who adapt their social context role. This results in creating multiple and possible selves (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2014; Chen, 2019; Medlock, 2012). Leary (2004) refers to these kinds of derivations from the self as “the curse of the self,” meaning individuals who engage in social comparisons to make themselves look better or to claim that they are better than average. Leary (2004) explains that these derivations can compromise the self.

Harter (2012) explains that both the cognitive and the social construction of the self can be traced back to childhood. Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2014, p. 384) also demonstrate that the ability or non-ability to one accurate self-image can be traced back to childhood. Parents who do not validate their child’s true self will aggravate their ability to find themselves. Kernis (2003) also explains that their parent denies the most damaging child's potential to be true to themselves. Furthermore, partners who are overinvolved with their children's representation, preferences, thought, wishes, needs, and emotions will create a need for the child to adapt to a socially constructed self (Winnicott, 1965, referred to in Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2014, p. 387). Schlegel, Hicks, Arndt, and King (2009) has concluded from multiple psychological theories from Horney (1942, 1950), Jung (1953), Laing (1960), Miller (1979), Rogers (1951), and Winnicott (1960), that losing touch with one’s true self due to parental or social demand is a source of human misery and that authenticity is related to well-being.

Walumbwa et al. (2008) have conceptualized authentic leadership in four components within self-awareness and self-regulation. These components are self-awareness, balanced processing,

internalized moral, and relational transparency. *Self-awareness* is a dynamic process where the leader reflects and demonstrates an understanding of their own strengths, limitations, impact of others, and other perceptions. *Balanced processing* indicated the degree to which a leader shows objectivity and analyzes relevant data and other's views before deciding. *Internalized moral* is about the high standard for moral and ethical conduct and how these guide decision and actions. Lastly, *Relational transparency* involves how the leader presents its true self to others by sharing information, expressing true thoughts and feelings, and creating an open climate where others feel comfortable thinking and speaking freely (Walumbwa et al., 2008).

#### 4.2 The ethical framework of authenticity

Authenticity is a subjective phenomenon hidden inside an individual (Alvesson & Einola, 2019). The self is defined as value-orientated and the principles of values that the individual holds as essential. The value orientation includes an ethical framework for making objective evaluations about what is morally worthy (Taylor, 1999). As questioned by Alvesson & Einola (2019), what is morally worthy and moral worthy for whom? For owners, for subordinates, for colleagues, for customers, for the planet, for taxpayers, or specific interest groups? Within positive psychology, authenticity core values are drawn on virtue ethics traditions (Medlock, 2012). Ethics treat how we should live and what we should do (DeVettere, 2002, p. 13). Virtue ethics is about human behavior (DeVettere, 2002, p. 20) and does not consider the ethics of action or a consequence, but instead the agent and the agent's character (Lennerfors, 2019, p. 143; Hursthouse, 1999). Virtue ethics emerged in ancient Greek with philosophers like Plato and Aristotle at the forefront (Lennerfors, 2019, p. 143). The word virtue comes from Latin and means excellence, capacity, or ability. More commonly in modern English, the word has come to refer to a pattern of someone's character or a personality that leads to moral actions and behavior (Hooft, 2014, p. 2).

Hooft (2014, p. 13) explains that norms can impact which virtues are seen as admirable in a society. Norms in society are what a person “must” do and what is required of a person in a situation. Hooft (2014, p. 13) explains that when humans act morally, human follow the norms. It is an internal feeling of pressure that leads to actions even if the situation contradicts the person's desire (Hooft, 2014, p. 13). This can result in a situation where a person can lie if it would be to their advantage (Hooft, 2014, p. 17). Virtue ethics emphasizes that the agent wants to do what is required in society and does this out of a personal will and not because of the

pressure of norms. Rather than feeling bound to obey external norms, the agent of virtues ethics feels internally motivated because of the honesty to the own character (Hooft, 2014, p. 17). Virtue ethics is about desire and not a duty, meaning what we want to do and not what we ought to do, resulting in personal happiness and not the greatest happiness of all (Devettere, 2002, p. 20).

#### 4.3 Tools for measuring authentic leaders

The Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (ALQ) was developed by Walumbwa et al. (2008) and is used to measure authentic leadership's perception in a leader. It is a theory-based and validated tool that can be useful for the theory development of authentic leadership (Northouse, 2019, p. 321). ALQ consists of 16 questions, sorted into the four subscales, self-awareness, balanced processing, internalized moral perspective, and relational transparency (Walumbwa et al., 2008; Alvesson & Einola, 2019; Wong & Laschinger, 2012). Each question consists of five answer options, 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The model has been translated into various languages and exists in two versions, one used by employees to rate their leaders and one used by the leader for self-assessment (Cervo, dos Santos Mendes Mónico, Rebelo dos Santos, Hutz, & Pais, 2016).

As a development of Walumbwa et al.'s (2008) ALQ tool, Neider and Schriesheim (2011) presented the Authentic Leadership Inventory (ALI). ALI builds on the four subscales provided in ALQ but includes 14 questions instead of 16 as in ALQ (Neider & Schriesheim, 2011). According to the authors, the need for an improved version existed due to identified shortcomings with the ALQ. Furthermore, as a response to ALQ and ALI, Levesque-Côté, Fernet, Austin, and Morin (2018) developed the Authentic Leadership-Integrated Questionnaire (AL-IQ). Despite the many developed versions of ALQ, Susing, Green and Grant (2011) state that self-assessment tool measures are inherently limited since they are based on a person's thought of themselves and would therefore advantageously be combined with others' opinions, such as colleagues.

To use Walumbwa et al.'s (2008) ALQ tool, the questionnaire must be purchased from Mind Garden, an international psychological assessment publisher. After purchasing and performed ALQ from Mind Garden, the respondent gets a report with the result (Mind Garden, 2019). However, since the purchased ALQ from Mind Garden is protected of copyrights by the originators, Northouse (2019, p. 335) created an alternative authentic leadership self-

assessment questionnaire. The tool also consists of 16 questions within the same four subscales as ALQ and is the tool that will further be used in the study. The whole questionnaire is to be found in *Appendix A: Northouse questionnaire questions*.

#### 4.4 Leader prototypes

Rosch (1978) explains that one of the most basic human's tasks is to classify their environment that can be treated as equal. Classifications are created to simplify the external world and reduce cognitive efforts by simplifying information processing (Rosch, 1978). Rosch (1978) developed the Categorization Theory that described individuals' classifications. Individuals use their cognitive schemes to categorize people and to create prototypes. The categorization occurs through cognitive schemes developed over time and shaped by experiences. The categories are formed around a prototype, a representative example of categories associated with a specific category. Thus, the category's individuals share common features (Rosch, 1978).

Based on Rosch's (1978) work on cognitive categories, Lord, Foti, and De Vader (1984) developed the Leader Categorization Theory. According to Lord et al. (1984), individuals hold a long-term memory of systems that consists of features that distinguish leaders from non-leader. The cognitive categorizations create expectations for traits and attributes that a leader should possess, known as leader prototype. Individuals have a leader's scheme, which creates a leader prototype with interconnected attributes associated with leaders and guides the perception of a leader (Lord et al., 1984). If an individual's behavior and traits match a leader's prototype, the individual will be seen as a leader in the viewer's eyes (Lord et al., 1984).

The Social Role Theory, developed by Eagly (1978), aims to understand the causes of sex differences and similarities in social behavior. According to the Social Role Theory, the differences between men and women observed in psychological studies have arisen from men and women's social roles. The difference between sex occurs in social behavior due to the typical characteristic commonly possessed of men and women. The social theory shows that men and women adjust to the typical sex-role and the social behavior linked to the respective sex. Different skills and beliefs between sex arise from typical family and economic roles of men and women (Eckes & Trautner, 2000). The sex's social position creates different gender roles and norms, meaning belief, desire, and expectations of what people should do, described

as injunctive norms (Cialdini & Trost, 1998, p. 151; Eckes & Trautner, 2000). The injunctive norms decided what acceptable and unacceptable behavior is. These norms describe desirable behavior to be approved by others and create behavior guidance to ensure approval. Derivations from the injunctive norms create moral disapproval. Additionally, there are descriptive norms that expect what the people do. The descriptive norms involve the perception of which behavior is normal and common in the group and are based on observations of the people around you. Derivations from descriptive norms create surprise and do not meet disapproval as injunctive norms (Koenig, Eagly, Mitchell, & Ristikari, 2011; Eckes & Trautner, 2000; Cialdini & Trost, 1998).

The Role Congruity Model developed by Eagly and Karau (2002) builds on the Social Role Theory and presents the woman's prototype's mismatch, and the prototype of leaders is presented. The model shows that the attributes identified in men and leaders are the same while women are not. The authors use agency attributes for male and leader prototypes and communication attributes for women prototypes. The communication attributes are connected primarily with concern and welfare for others, such as helpful, kind, sympathetic, sensitive, and gentle. While the agency attributes describe as controlling, confident, aggressive, ambitious, forceful, and independent. Which is the same description of the leader's prototype. Therefore, men are seen as more similar to the leader's prototype than women are (Koenig, Eagly, Mitchell, & Ristikari, 2011; Eagly & Karau, 2002).

#### 4.5 Gender perspective of authentic leaders

It has been argued that minority groups outside of the traditional leadership pool experience difficulties in authentic leadership (Shaw, 2010). The author states that when it comes to differences concerning class, ethnicity, and gender, the minority groups often have a hard time appearing as authentic leaders according to their followers since their leadership is not as established as the traditional leader.

Hopkins and O'Neil (2015) share the idea that authentic leadership literature neglects essential issues in the social context and pinpoint three reasons why authentic leadership is more challenging for women than men. Firstly, they argue that the mindset "*think manager, think male*" still exists as the norm, and therefore the masculine characteristics are to be preferred in a leader. If a woman acts masculine, she gets criticisms. Ironically, she gets criticism for acting feminine as well. In their study, a decisively male CEO was perceived as authentic, while a

decisively female CEO was inauthentic. Secondly, the concept of authentic leadership is based on gender-neutral organizations, which according to the authors, does not reflect the reality of the gendered reality. They argue that even the most modern organizations are built upon norms that facilitates for men, including policies and systems that are harder for women to adapt to. Lastly, Hopkins and O'Neil (2015) argue that authentic leadership reinforces women to be outsiders when it comes to leadership, that a woman will have to deal with more considerable obstacles to gain her follower's trust. Önday (2016) also supported these three arguments, and further stated that "*authentic leadership is a gendered representation of leadership*".

These arguments are supported by Sinclair (2013), who presents two cases where female leaders have faced difficulties and criticism when performing authentic leadership. The author state that women are more likely than men to get criticism for trying to be themselves while possessing a leader role. For instance, the two women got criticism for their appearance, including clothing and bodies and private lives. Sinclair (2013) claims authenticity to be judged in a gendered view where women leaders get exposed and judged by their bodies, seen as markers for their identity. While the female body associates with the female leader's identity, such as trustworthiness, leadership, and morality, the author states that the male body is not marked and noticed to the same extent.

Furthermore, Dahlbom-Hall (2007) explains that the male leader role impacts males as well. To be approved as a man, you need to be assertive, loud, aggressive, and not show any emotions (Dahlbom-Hall, 2007, p. 50). This creates a desire for men to let go of who they are and instead adjust to the norms of how they should be (Ibid, 2007, p. 50). Men that choose not to follow or act as the masculine norms get criticism and can come to be defined as the male feminist, the new man, or be connected to homosexuality (Alvesson & Due Billing, 2011, p. 113). Eagly (1978) explains that men's and women's pressure to adapt to norms and prototypes differs. Women have higher social pressure to adapt to norms while men are more independent. Eagly (1978) refers to this as the "*submissiveness of the female role*".

#### 4.6 Theoretical operationalization

The theoretical operationalization is created as a summary of the theoretical framework. To explain how authenticity can be identified in a leader, several concept and ideas within the theoretical framework will be used. Firstly, the four components of authentic leadership, self-awareness, balanced processing, internalized moral perspective, and relational transparency

(Walumbwa et al., 2008) are fundamental. Secondly, virtue ethics ideas about the difference between doing what we want to do and what we feel is a duty to do. Thirdly, “the curse of the self” (Leary, 2004), stating that people may show derivations from the self that compromise the self, which problematizes the identification of authenticity in persons. Lastly, the idea of measuring authentic leader's thought questionnaires will be addressed by using Northouse’s (2019) developed version of Walumbwa et al.’s (2008) ALQ.

Figure 4 presents factors that, according to the literature, drive or limit the process of authentic leadership development. The figure is divided into inner and outer factors, where inner factors are connected to how a person steers themselves from within, and outer factors involve how a person is steered and affected by the external environment. For instance, Walumbwa et al. (2008) discuss how self-awareness and self-regulation is a fundamental matter for a person’s understanding of themselves and possibility to being aware of one’s internal states. Therefore, possessing a high self-awareness and self-regulation is essential for authentic leaders and these two will drive the process of authentic leadership development. The opposite of this is people who choose to follow society's norms. Hooft (2014) describes norms as something required of a person in a particular situation, a “must” do. By letting norms steer your choices, you limit your authentic leadership development. Regarding the outer factors, Medlock (2012) discusses about the implications of a culture that encourages the development of individuals, hence the culture is a driving factor. Further, the leader prototype (Lord et al., 1984) is one of the identified factors to limit the development of authentic leadership, since striving for being something else than your true self makes it impossible to be authentic.

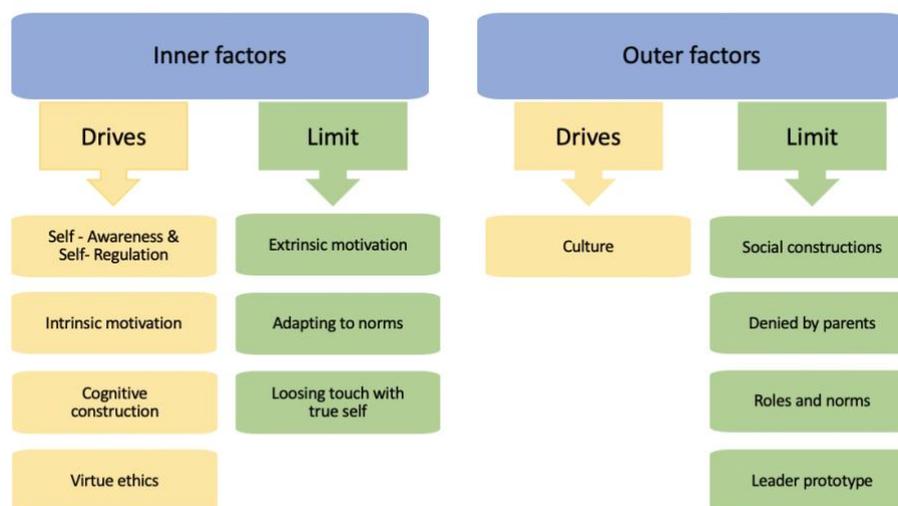


Figure 4. Factors that drive and limit authentic leadership development (own representation, 2021).

Lastly, Figure 5 addresses the gender perspective of authentic leadership. Within each circle, theories and perspectives connected to respective gender are listed. The figure states that women are a minority group in leadership (Shaw, 2010) and that the “think manager, think male” norm still exists (Hopkins & O’Neil, 2015). It is also shown in the figure that it is more difficult for a woman to be authentic leaders than it is for men (Hopkins & O’Neil, 2015; Sinclair, 2013; Önday, 2016).

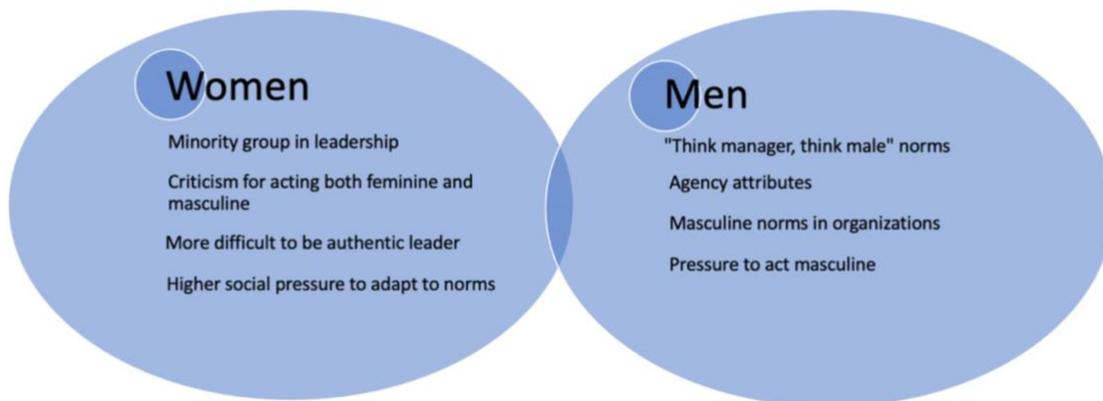


Figure 5. Gender differences within authentic leadership development (own representation, 2021).

## 5 Methodology

*This chapter presents the methodological approach chosen for this study and motivations for the working methods and choices conducted through the process. It includes profound information about the study, such as research design, data collection and data analysis methods, ethical considerations, and lastly quality considerations.*

### 5.1 Research strategy and philosophy

This study has applied an abductive strategy, which involves going back-and-forth between empirics and theory while searching for theoretical ideas and patterns in the data (Bell, Bryman, & Harley, 2018, p. 24). The process starts by observing phenomena and working iteratively with data and theory to explain the phenomena (Ibid, p. 549). This differs the most from the deductive approach, which is performed as a linear process where each step is built upon the previous and the research is often steered by a hypothesis (Ibid, p. 21), hence are not suitable for this study. Instead, this study's aim is to discover new variables and relationships between gender and authenticity. When the aim of the study is to discover new variables and relationships, Dubios and Gadde (2002) explain that an abductive approach is the most suitable.

Authentic leadership is a theory under development that is widely debated from different scholars and perspectives. Due to the interdisciplinary characteristics of the topic, different kinds of theories and perspectives were needed to describe the subject to a fair and realistic extent. To answer the three research questions, we therefore had to apply different models, perspectives, theories, and research methods. As shown below in Table 1, research question 1 and 2 was answered through data collected by qualitative interviews and theoretical choices. Furthermore, the information collected for answering research questions 1 and 2 was also fundamentally for creating the quantitative questionnaire, which partly answers the third research question. Besides using the questionnaire, the third research question was also answered by different theories and models, just as the two other research questions.

*Table 1. Theories used to answer research questions.*

Research questions	Models, perspectives, and theories	Method
1.How can authenticity be identified in a leader?	“The curse of the self” (Leary, 2004), virtue ethics, measurement tools, four components of authentic leadership (Walumbwa et al., 2008)	Qualitative interviews and theoretical choices

2. Which inner and outer factors drive or limit the process of authentic leadership development?	See Figure 4.	Qualitative interviews and theoretical choices
3. What does gender mean in authentic leadership development?	See Figure 5, norms, Leader Categorization Theory (Lord et al., 1984), The Social Role Theory (Eagly, 1978), The Role Congruity Model (Eagly & Karau, 2002)	Quantitative questionnaire, qualitative interviews, and theoretical choices

Authenticity, authentic leadership, and gender are all concepts that do not have an objective definition and are therefore shaped by social actors. As mentioned earlier, the study aims to understand concepts and factors that affect the concept. This will lay as a foundation for the philosophical assumption for the study, which Bell et al. (2018, p. 26) explain to consist of two components: *Ontology*, assumptions about the nature of reality, and *Epistemology*, the theory of knowledge. This study's ontological approach is constructivism, meaning that the reality is constructed by social actors rather than externalities and is constantly revised (Bell et al., 2018, p. 27). Walsh (1972, referred to in Bell et al., 2018, p. 29) explains that social science researchers cannot take an objective reality for granted as a natural scientist can do. Instead, we must examine the processes that construct the social world. The ontological constructivism approach also suggests that people's categories to understand the world are social products and are constructed in and thought interactions (Bell et al., 2018, p. 29). Due to constructivism ontology, the study will also entail an interpretivist epistemological approach that assumes social science differs from natural science. The purpose of interpretivist epistemology is to understand human behavior and the how and why of social actions (Bell et al., 2018, p. 29; Hiller, 2016). From an interpretivist perspective, all knowledge is grounded in the individual's experiences and is subjective and connected to the individual act's context (Hiller, 2016).

Even though ontological constructivism and interpretivist epistemological are more common in qualitative methods than quantitative methods (King, Horrocks, & Brooks, 2019, p. 11), Bell et al. (2018, p. 561) explain that the connection between philosophical standpoint and research method is not predetermined. The field of mixed method is still developing, and the philosophical assumptions of mixed methods are widely discussed (Tashakkori & Creswell, 2007). Bell et al. (2018, p. 561) explain that quantitative methods can occasionally have interpretivist standpoint, which we believe to be the case for this study. This is due to the

relationship between the two method's shared goals. The ontological approach will influence the method by assuming that the reality in the interviews and surveys is a construction of reality. And the epistemological assumption influences the study by being aware that the reality might be difficult to capture through data collection because of the risk that respondent's answers are affected by what they believe the researcher wants to hear (Mann, 2016, p. 44). To minimize the risk of biased answers, no personal opinions were shared by the researchers before or during the interviews. However, it is hard to fully overcome the problem since only the respondent will know their true opinions. Overall, the study entails an approach that there is not one correct answer to the research questions or point of view since reality and knowledge can differ from one person to another and depending on the chosen theoretical framework.

## 5.2 Data collection

This study will entail the Exploratory Sequential design, as illustrated in Figure 6. This means that the qualitative method lay as a foundation for the quantitative method (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011, s. 8). A combination of qualitative and quantitative is called mixed methods (King, Horrocks, & Brooks, 2019, p. 7; Bell et al., 2018, p. 547). Mixed methods have received criticism for the feasibility and desirability. However, the debate has turned to view mixed methods as having credibility during the past years, and mixed methods are nowadays being used regularly as a research strategy. There are different types of mixed methods. In this study, the qualitative method will guide the outline of the quantitative method with the knowledge of authentic leadership as a concept and the opportunity for measurement. This knowledge facilitated the creation of the adapted tool for measuring authentic leaders. Bell et al. (2018, p. 576) explain this as aiding measurement.



Figure 6. Exploratory Sequential design for mixed methods (Bell et al., 2018, p. 576).

### 5.2.1 Theoretical choices

When collecting literature for the study, reliable sources from books and articles published in journals have been used. The sources consist of traditional works within the field of leadership and recent publications. The mixture between traditional views and modern opinions has been

essential to present the subject as fairly and trustworthy as possible. If reading a work that includes a reference that we could not gain access to, we have chosen to refer to both the original source and the secondary source to minimize the risk of misunderstandings and to give credit to the correct author. Furthermore, it has been vital to include authors that are both positive and critical towards authentic leadership to not exclude any opinions and understand all kinds of ideas and arguments regarding the topic.

For literature searching, journals that contain literature about gender, organizations, and management have been widely used. For instance, *The Journal of Change Management*, which is a journal that is peer-reviewed with high-quality research that contributes to scientific knowledge with a focus on developing leadership and organizational practice to adapted for the twenty-first century, and the *Journal of Gender Studies*, which is a peer-reviewed journal with interdisciplinary gender studies to create a dialogue among different academic fields that engage with ideas and theories of gender. Furthermore, journals as the *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, the *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, the *Journal of Management Inquiry*, and the *Leadership Quarterly* are included. Lastly, literature was collected until theoretical saturation was achieved, and keywords like leadership, authentic leadership, authenticity, and gender were used.

According to Knopf (2006), a literature review needs to make considerations of the quality of the findings in the existing research. As mentioned in the problematization and the literature review, Fred Walumbwa is one author within authentic leadership research whose work has met criticism due to flawed methodology. According to Spoelstra, Butler, and Delaney (2016), seven of Walumbwa's publications have been retracted from *The Leadership Quarterly*, one from *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, and one from *Journal of Operations Management*. The reason for retraction differs from each publication (Spoelstra, Butler, & Delaney, 2016). The literature review and the rest of the study will not include any of the retracted publications to ensure the quality of the study. However, Walumbwa is a researcher who is frequently used in the study, but the articles that have been flagged with concerns have been excluded.

#### 5.2.2 Qualitative method

As a qualitative data collecting method, semi-structured interviews were held. Interviews were chosen for this study since Bell et al. (2018, p. 208; King, Horrocks, & Brooks, 2019) explain that interviews aim to understand respondent's own or other's behavior, values, norms, and

attitude. The reason for semi-structured interviews is the flexible design, which was necessary for the study due to the variety of the respondents' backgrounds, opinions, and perspectives. Furthermore, the semi-structured interviews allowed us to let the respondents' opinions and answers guide the interview. The questions did not necessarily have to follow the same order as in the interview guide, and additional questions are dependent on the respondent's answer (Bell et al., 2018, p. 436). An interview guide with seven questions was created as a foundation for the interviews, found in *Appendix B: Semi-structured interview questions*. Even though, the interview guide is presented in English in the appendix, the interviews are held in Swedish, with a translated version of the questions. This to make sure the interviewee felt confident and could express themselves without linguistic limitations.

For the qualitative interviews, purposive sampling was used. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sample where the interviewees are carefully chosen for the study (Bell et al. 2018, p. 595). The two used approaches were theoretical sampling and snowball sampling. Theoretical sampling is an ongoing process of data collection where the researcher collects and analyzes the data through the project and decides what to collect next and when to stop (Bell et al., 2018, p. 392), while snowball sampling is used to gain access to various meaningful contacts through existing contacts (Ibid, 2018, p. 395). Theoretical sampling was used when reading an interesting publication and reaching out to the author. Snowball sampling was used at the end of the qualitative methods by asking the interviewee for tips regarding other suitable respondents. The snowball sampling has also been adapted within Anima Ledarskap network, who have access to several convenient persons for the study.

To collect insights, knowledge, and opinion from a leadership perspective as well as from a philosophical and psychological perspective, the interviewees come from different professions and backgrounds. The interviewees were also thoroughly chosen to represent both a positive and negative attitude towards authentic leadership. Furthermore, it was essential to have a relatively even division of respondents within each gender. In Table 2, a description of each interviewee is presented. We are grateful that no respondent wanted to be anonymous since they are carefully chosen due to their knowledge and experience, and we believe the usage of their names is a strength within the study. Further information about the interviews is to be found in *Appendix C: Information of respondent*.

Table 2. information about interviewees.

Respondent (R)	Name	Occupation	Relevant accomplishments
1	Edward Harris	Priest in the diocese of Stockholm	Expert on the philosopher Kierkegaard and his thoughts about authenticity
2	Johan Alvehus	Professor at Lund University and editor-in-chief of the journal "Organisation & Samhälle"	Journal publications about leadership and a newly published article that questions authentic leadership
3	Lena Ydmark	Psychologist and leadership development consultant	Train, evaluate and develop leadership on individual, group, and organizational levels
4	Barbro Dahlbom-Hall	Author and leadership and management consultant	Swedish pioneer within leadership development. Rewarded for her work about the connection of gender and leadership
5	Marika Ronty	Psychologist, psychotherapist, author, and leadership development consultant	Developer of the Leader Intelligence Questionnaire and the leadership model Ledarintelligens
6	Gerry Larsson	Author and professor at Swedish Defence University	Developer of The Leadership Model and published in Journal of Gender Studies

The interviews were performed differently depending on the respondent's wishes and the interviewer's conditions, resulting in either Microsoft Teams, Zoom, or telephone. All interviews followed the same interview guide, and the duration differed between 35-68 minutes. The date, location, and duration for each interview are presented below, in Table 3.

Table 3. Information about the interviews.

Respondent	Date of interview	Location	Duration (min)
1	19/2 - 21	Microsoft Teams	40

2	23/2 - 21	Microsoft Teams	43
3	25/2 – 21	Zoom	35
4	25/2 – 21	Telephone	45
5	26/2 – 21	Microsoft Teams	68
6	1/3 – 21	Zoom	35

As seen in Table 3, the location of the interviews has all been remote. This is naturally a consequence of the ongoing pandemic and a tool to overcome geographical constraints. Microsoft Teams and Zoom were online face-to-face interviews, while for the telephone interview, we could not see the respondent. Remote video and telephone interviews come with both advantages and disadvantages. One advantage is that the respondents may feel more comfortable which will help them be more willing to disclose personal stories and experiences (King, Horrocks, & Brooks, 2019, p. 116). In the remote interviews, we were able to see the respondent, which is an advantage since we then could see facial expressions and body language. This in contrast to the telephone interview where we had to rely on audio only. But we did not see this as a problem for the interview quality since the interview topics did not touch upon topics that the respondent face expressions and body language would impact.

### 5.2.3 Quantitative method

The quantitative data collection method was a self-completed questionnaire created based on information from the theoretical choices and the qualitative interviews. The response rate of the questionnaire was 19,6 percent. The foundation for the questionnaire was the Authentic Leadership Self-Assessment Questionnaire created by Northouse (2019, p. 335) as an alternative to Walumbwas et al. (2008) ALQ mentioned above. The reason for choosing Northouse’s version was due to copyright reasons since the originators behind ALQ does not allow the questionnaire to be shared or modified. To fulfill the purpose of this thesis that addresses the gender perspective within authentic leadership, additional questions needed to be added to the questionnaire. Therefore, the Northouse version was more suitable. The whole questionnaire is to be found in Appendix D: Adapted questionnaire.

The method self-completed questionnaire means that the respondents must read the questions and answer the questions themselves (Bell et al., 2018, p. 232). The questionnaire was divided into three parts meaning that the respondent needed to finish one part to be able to move on to the next. By doing this, we could ensure that respondents could not read the whole

questionnaire before answering, and we could therefore ensure that the questions have been answered in the correct order. Another disadvantaged the difficulty to ensure that the aimed person is answering (Bell et al., 2018, p. 234). The risk of incorrect respondents has been eliminated by adding a question that confirms that they have gone to one of Anima's leadership programs. The questionnaire was sent out through the online platform MailChimp, which was a tool for gaining Bell et al.'s (2018, p. 234) presented advantages of distribution to large quantities, time and cost-efficient and the absence of that the interview may affect the respondents.

Besides questions addressing self-awareness, balanced processing, internalized moral, and relational transparency, as in Northouse Authentic Leadership Self-Assessment Questionnaire, three parts were added to the questionnaire. Firstly, the respondents were asked about which of Animas leadership programs they had participated in, Leading Women or Leading Men. The question was formulated this way for two reasons, to understand the gender of the respondent and to ensure that the person had participated in any of the programs. This had to be clarified to eliminate the risk of anyone outside of the sample would answer. The next question addressed the respondent's privacy and asked if they would agree to share their name and be contacted for further studies about authentic leadership or if they wanted to be anonymous. Furthermore, three questions about gender were added to contribute to the gap in authentic leadership about the impact of gender. Lastly, five questions of both ratio and ordinal character were added based on learnings from the qualitative interviews and literature. These questions asked the respondents to state how often or how many hours the latest month they behave in a certain way within their leadership role. The questions were added to increase the answer's validity since the questionnaire is a self-assessment tool. Hence the answers may be biased or based on a misconception about oneself. According to the qualitative interviews, a way of increase the degree of truth within the answers is to ask the respondent to state how many hours they put into a specific activity. For instance, if a respondent believes that herself or himself always stand up for her or his beliefs, and then answer *always* on the question "*On a monthly basis, how often do you leave a meeting/discussion and feel that you did not argue for your opinions and beliefs?*", this answer will indicate that this person does not stand up for the beliefs as much as they first thought.

The last five questions were selected to cover all five major parts of the questionnaire, with one question addressing the four components of authentic leadership plus the aspect of gender: self-

awareness, balanced processing, internalized moral, relational transparency, and gender. Additionally, one significant change was made to the original version of Northouse's tool, namely that one answer option was added to every question. The original version had five ordinal character options: *Strongly disagree*, *Disagree*, *Neutral*, *Agree*, *Strongly agree*. We added the option "I don't know". This because all the respondents have Swedish as their mother tongue and may struggle with some of the questions. For that reason, it was better to encourage the respondent to answer "I don't know" if they did not understand the question since the result would be more reliable then. However, since the original tool was in English, we did not want to risk changing the question's meaning by translating it into our respondent's mother tongue. Besides that, all respondents who wanted to be a part of researcher Iwona Kuraszko Bolöv's upcoming study about authentic leadership need to later participate in English interviews. Therefore, it was good to ask English questions already in this stage.

The sample for the quantitative data collection includes all participants from Anima's two leadership development programs, "Leading Women" and "Leading Men," accessible through Anima. The company has access to 320 email addresses, to which we send the questionnaire by using the marketing platform Mailchimp. The usage of Mailchimp facilitated the mailing process since every participant was reached through one single email. To minimize the risk of respondents missing the email, the CEO of Anima Ledarskap shared a link to the questionnaire on the company's LinkedIn account and Facebook account. To ensure that only participants of the program answered the questionnaire, we had a control question where they were asked to specify which program they have attended.

### 5.3 Data analysis

For the qualitative data, a thematic analysis was performed. Thematic analysis is one of the most used approaches for analyzing qualitative data (Bell et al. 2018, p. 519). The thematic analysis is a method for identifying and organizing data set to find patterns of meaning. The patterns of meaning are called themes (Braun & Clarke, 2012). Similarities and differences between the interviewee's statements can be one example of a theme, and topics that recur several times as repetitions can indicate another theme (Bell et al. 2018, p. 519). This analysis approach was suitable for this study since it aimed to understand each respondent's thoughts and ideas and see if the respondents shared ideas. The thematic analysis of the study followed Braun and Clarkes (2012) six-step approach to thematic analysis. In Table 4, the six steps and

the adaption to our study are presented:

Table 4. Six steps of thematic analysis.

<b><i>Step 1: Familiarize with the data</i></b>	<i>Listen to recordings and transcribing</i>
<b><i>Step 2: Generation initial codes</i></b>	<i>Identified important codes within each transcript</i>
<b><i>Step 3: Searching for themes</i></b>	<i>Comparing the codes to find themes</i>
<b><i>Step 4: Reviewing themes</i></b>	<i>Finding the most suitable themes in relation to the research questions</i>
<b><i>Step 5: Defining and naming themes</i></b>	<i>Summed up the essential to create a final theme name</i>
<b><i>Step 6: Producing the report</i></b>	<i>Described the themes in the analysis chapter</i>

For the quantitative data, we have used a bivariate analysis that analysis two variables at a time to explore a relationship (Bell et al., 2018, p. 321). The two variables for this study are gender and authentic leadership. Depending on the character of the variables, different analysis methods can be used. Goos and Meintrup (2015) explain that nominal variables can be gender and ordinal variables as a statement with alternatives as strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. This study has used contingency tables since Bell et al. (2018, p. 322) recommend this method when exploring nominal and ordinal variables. It is important to state that the aim of the bivariate analysis is to find relationships and not causality. Meaning that we cannot state that one variable cause another (Bell et al., 2018, p. 322). For us, it will be impossible to know that gender and the answers in the questionnaire are related and that one causes the other which is important to always bear in mind. The contingency tables will show the relationship between gender and authentic leadership. The data in the contingency tables will be presented in two columns: n (the number of respondents) and % (percentage of the total number in that column). The percentage will lay as a foundation for searching for patterns of associations since the number of men and women respondents differs. There were two respondents who did not answer any of the questions. Bell et al. (2018, p. 313) explains this as missing data which is important to handle. The missing data have been deleted from the

analysis to minimize its effect on the overall result. This results in 61 respondents that will be a part of the data analysis.

In Northouse's questionnaire, the authentic leadership scores are calculated separately in the four categories self-awareness, balanced processing, internalized moral, and relational transparency (Northouse, 2019, p. 338). The highest possible score for each question, 5 points, was given by answering "*strongly agree*" while "*strongly disagree*" resulted in the lowest points, namely 1 point. Each category consists of four questions, where the points for each question is summarized into the total score for that category. Therefore, the lowest number of points given could be 4 and the highest 20. The results can be found in *Appendix E: Quantitative data analysis*. According to Northouse, 16-20 points in one category indicate strong authentic leadership, while a score of 15 and below indicate weaker authentic leadership. When performing the data analysis, we have used this method and added zero points for our added option "*I don't know*" and the missing data. The measure of central tendency is the mean value since the spread in the distribution of values is very even without any extreme values. Mean value is sum of all values divided by the number of values (Bell et al., 2018, p. 320). The values from each category have been added up for respective gender divided by the number of women and men respondents to get a separate mean value for women and men.

#### 5.4 Ethical considerations

Ethical issues can occur during various stages in a research process. Hence the researchers need to know ethics to be prepared to deal with the upcoming issues (Bell et al., 2018, p. 109). According to Bell et al. (2018, p. 114), there are mainly four ethical principles to take into consideration while performing research: (1) Harm to participants, (2) Invasion of privacy, (3) lack of informed consent, and (4) deception.

To fulfill the first ethical principle in the qualitative interviews, the questions were sent to the interviewees before the interview to eliminate stress and harm regarding the upcoming conversation. Further, to secure that no harm to the participants occurred the other principles were carefully considered. To ensure the principle of invasion of privacy, we asked for permission for recoding the audio and video of the interviews. We also asked if we could include the respondents name in the study. The interviews started with a discourse about integrity, possibility for anonymity, explanation of the study aim, asking for permission to record the interview, and clarifying the interview usage, and giving the interviewee permission

to skip a question if desirable to enable informed consent. Before the interview, the respondents got information about the study and the reason for wanting their participation. Lastly, to prevent the risk of deception, the respondents got the opportunity to read and confirm how we present their opinions in the analysis chapter before we submitted the final version of the study.

The four ethical principles have also guided the quantitative part of the study. Regarding harm to participants, the study was structured to minimize the risk of both direct harm and indirect harm for the respondents in connection to the study. This has been done by discussing ethical principles with the external supervisors and the subject reader about how other researchers are dealing with ethical principles, and mainly by making sure that the respondent knows what is expected from them when joining the research. Furthermore, informed consent was of high importance before the respondents answered the questionnaire. Therefore, all necessary information about the questionnaire was explained in the email, the social media post, and in an introduction section within the questionnaire. For instance, the respondent got informed about the condition regarding the usage of the result for Mrs. Kuraszko Bolöv book and could voluntarily decide if they wanted to be a part of her project or answer the questionnaire anonymously. This also connects to the second ethical principle, invasion of privacy, which is fundamental for making the respondent feel safe. Another part of this is that the questionnaire only consists of questions needed for the research and does not collect private information about the respondents. Lastly, deception has been prevented by giving the respondent as much information as possible about the questionnaire and the study. This information addressed the estimated time to complete the questionnaire, the number of questions, the reason for questions in English instead of Swedish, and the study's purpose.

## 5.5 Quality considerations

For qualitative research, Bell et al. (2018, p. 48) suggest evaluating the quality considerations based on trustworthiness. According to Bell et al., trustworthiness consists of four aspects: credibility, confirmability, transferability, and dependability. To ensure the qualitative interview's credibility and confirmability, respondent validation has been adapted. Meaning the process of confirming the respondent's thoughts and feeling to provide correct interpretations of the interview (Bell et al., 2018, p. 364). This has been applied to this study by sending out the analysis chapter to the respondents to ensure that we as researchers have interpreted them correctly. This is also important since the interviews were held in Swedish,

and the study is written in English. By doing this, we can eliminate the risk of opinions getting lost or misunderstood in translation. Further, we have provided a thick description of the context to allow others to decide whether the study is transferable.

For the quantitative methods, the quality aspects of validity, reliability, and replicability are essential (Bell et al., 2018, p. 73). The degree of validity is difficult to ensure since the questionnaire is a self-assessment tool that can only collect opinions. The reliability of the study can be seen as low since authenticity has been described in both theory and empirics as a life-long journey and something that one should always work with. Therefore, the respondent's answers have low stability since it's a dynamic process. One must also take into consideration that all respondents in the questionnaire have participated in Anima's leadership courses, something that may affect their answers and the way they are reasoning. If performing this questionnaire on leaders that did not participate in Anima's courses, the result may differ. Lastly, the replicability of the study is high since the used questionnaire is presented in *Appendix D: Adapted questionnaire*. This creates an opportunity for other researchers to replicate the study.

Overall, the study is conducted by two researchers, which decreases the risks of being biased and letting personal values affect the study. Although, both researchers are women, which may increase the risk of being biased. To prevent biased to the most significant possible extent, we have had multiple external parties reading through the study to ensure that all arguments are theoretical and/or empirical based.

#### 5.5.1 Limitations

Both qualitative and quantitative methods include preoccupations that need to be considered. For the quantitative, Bell et al. (2018, p. 176) explain that measurement, causality, generalizing, and replication are aspects that need to be taken into consideration. Firstly, measurement is described as the most vital preoccupation for quantitative research (Ibid, 2018, p. 176). The questionnaire in this study is a developed version of an existing tool based on measuring authentic leaders that have gotten a lot of criticisms. We are fully aware of this and that our developed questionnaire may receive the same complaint. However, creating a questionnaire from scratch may also lead to criticism and problems with reliability and validity. Hence, we believe that it was better to use the already existing questions. Secondly, there is a concern about the causal explanation in quantitative research, that it describes *how* things are and not

*why* (Ibid, 2018, p.177). Our study is no exception. There will be assumptions of the reasons behind the survey's answers; therefore, the study has causal limitations. Thirdly, the concern of generalizing the study is mainly built on the researcher's ability to create a representative sample (Ibid, 2018, p.177). The questionnaire in this study has been sent to the whole population of Animas participants within "Leading Women" and "Leading Men", which increases our ability to draw generalizing findings for the entire population, but not beyond the population. Lastly, the tools for ensuring the replication are more challenging than for the qualitative method since the questionnaire does not provide any details, as age, company, work position, about the respondents other than the gender. However, this limitation was made based on ethical reasons, which we decided to outweigh the potential for replication of the study.

The preoccupation in qualitative research is connected to the epistemological approach that covers what knowledge is. Due to the identified contradictory perceptions of authenticity and authentic leadership from the theoretical choices, it was of high importance that the interview was built upon the individual perception of the concepts. Therefore, each interview started with asking the respondent about their perception of authenticity and understanding of authentic leadership. For this reason, the semi-structured approach was of an advantage since it enabled the respondent definition to guide the interview. Although, the flexibility in the semi-structured interviews can also bring limitations. The limitation contains a complex data analysis due to a wide range of different answers. The comprehensive answers also create a desire to ask leading questions to point the respondent in a preferred direction. Asking leading questions would decrease the study's quality and have therefore not been used.

## 6 Analysis

*This chapter presents the analysis of the theoretical framework and the empirics derived from the data collection. From the thematic analysis, the following themes were identified: True to self, Level of self-awareness, Time consuming process, Organizational culture, Leadership development courses, Lack of objectivity, Women's and men's ability to be true to self, and Maintaining leader prototypes. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the study has an exploratory sequential design. Therefore, the empirics from the interviews will first be presented, and thereafter the adapted authentic leadership questionnaire and the results will be presented.*

### 6.1 Identifying authenticity in leaders

Authenticity comes from Greek philosophy and means "*To thine own self be true*" (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Schlegel, Hicks, Arndt, & King, 2009; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2014). This might seem like a straightforward and universal definition, but the meaning of authenticity is subjective (Chen, 2019). R1 explains authenticity as a harmonious interplay between physical, mental, and intuitive abilities. R3 and R5 describe it as being true to yourself and not go away with other people's expectations. R4 aligns with R3 and R5 definitions and adds on "*Authenticity is not only owning one's good sides, but also one's bad sides*". R6 describes it as being real and following your inner moral compass. R1, R3, R4, R5, and R6 all believe that a person can be authentic. R2, on the other hand, states that authenticity is best views as fictitious and therefore something one can never achieve. These opinions have formed the theme of *True to self*.

Authenticity includes self-awareness and self-regulation, as presented on page 11. To enable self-regulation, one must first achieve self-awareness (Kernis, 2003). R1, R3, R4, and R5 describe both self-awareness and self-regulation when defining authenticity. Self-regulation is about pursuing self-control and align values with actions. When placing authenticity in relation to leadership, external responsibilities and expectations will be added. Self-regulation draws from Deci and Ryan's (2000) self-determination theory that describes intrinsic motivation as actions that come from the self, while extrinsic motivation comes from external demands. According to Kernis (2003) four components of authenticity and Walumbwa et al. (2008) four components of authentic leadership, a person or a leader cannot be authentic if they get affected and influenced by external pressure and expectations. R3 also describes this: "*Not to go away*

*with other people's expectations"* and R5: *"Be faithful to the values you have, and to live as you are"*. What a person should do and decide to do is about ethics (Devettere, 2002, p. 13). Virtue ethics explains that a person who is seen as ethical is internally motivated to follow the norms, instead of following norms because of external pressure. From a virtue ethics perspective, a person can be adapting to norms and still be seen as authentic, assuming that it is intrinsically motivated.

Authenticity is a subjective phenomenon hidden inside an individual (Alvesson & Einola, 2019). Whether authenticity can be identified by someone other than yourself is a topic with multiple contrasting research and opinions from the respondents. Walumbwa et al.'s (2008), ALQ, and Neider and Schriesheim's (2011) ALI tool represent research that believes that questionnaire can be used to identify authenticity. This differ from Susing et al. (2011) who are critical towards only using a questionnaire as a tool. Luenendonk (2020) is also critical of this, and states authentic leadership is hard to measure. R3 shares Luenendonk's (2020) opinion: *"I wish there were a measure of it [Authenticity in leadership], but I have not found any (...). I feel it in conversation and through communication with someone, whether it feels grounded or not. I believe in some form of emotional transference"*. R4 believes that someone other than yourself can identify authenticity if the two persons feel safe with each other. R6 explains that it is easier to see the lack of authenticity in leadership rather than the presence of it. R5 explains that the possibility to identify authenticity in someone else is dependent on to which extent the external party is authentic: *"I just get a sense of whether you are grounded or not. But it also connects to what degree I myself am grounded. The more grounded I am, the easier it will be for me to see if someone else is not"* (R5).

The theme *True to self* has been identified in all interviews but with different approaches. R1, R3, R4, R5, and R6 all state that authenticity is something one should always strive for. However, R2 has a different approach and viewpoint of the concept by stating, *"authenticity as a singular is an impossibility when it comes to identity"* and *"I don't believe that authentic leadership can exist"* Furthermore, R2 presents the following criticism toward authentic leadership:

*"There are many positive values embedded in the word authentic. If we put authentic before almost anything, it sounds good, for example, authentic leadership or an authentic city, authentic environment, authentic series. (...)*

*Topics such as authentic leadership become automatically positively value laden, so we forget things fundamental to leadership like manipulation, lies, keeping people out of decision-making processes, and so on".*

R2 also states that authenticity is not something a person can achieve in leadership, nor in life. R2 refers to the book *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* written by Erving Goffman that explains that the self is a long line of presentations. This aligns with Chen (2019), who describes people as more or less authentic in different relations and contexts which result in multiple selves. This is also pointed out by Learys (2004), who describes it as "the curse of the self." R3 agrees with Erving Goffman and Chen (2019) that a person can show different sides in a different context. Although, R3 does not believe that these derivations comprise the ability to be authentic. R3 opinions are equivalent to Perls, Hefferline, and Goodman's (1951) research of inherent polarities that a person can be authentic to a different degree in various situations but still be seen as an authentic person or leader.

*"I see that you are a person. You are not two. I see that you use different parts of yourself depending on what role or goals you have. In a family context, I have a different goal and context than if I am at work. I do not believe we will be anyone else when we get home. However, I can use myself in different ways" (R3).*

To conclude, identifying authenticity is very subjective and complex. Both in oneself and in someone else. This is shown in this chapter since many of the interviews have different standpoints and views of the concept. From theory and empirics, the process of identifying authenticity is elusive. The only person who can know if they are authentic or not, is the person in question. Other persons can get an indication or feeling of the authentic, but they can never know if it is the truth. The complexity increases even more from the learnings from this chapter where it is presented that one person can go against their true self, but still be seen as an authentic person or leader. This in contrast to the learning that external responsibilities that the leader role entails higher demand to being true to self and not go away with other expectations. To be true to oneself and at the same time meet external responsibilities and expectations is a complex equation to handle. But if viewing it from the first mentioned learnings, one can be authentic even though if they once or while go away with external expectations. The essential question is the reason for adapting to external expectations. If the cause is pressure - it indicates low authenticity, but if the cause is internally motivated – it does not necessarily mean that a

person is inauthentic. The reasoning behind it can only the person know themselves, which contributes to the elusively the process of identifying authenticity.

## 6.2 Inner factors that drive and limit authentic leadership development

As shown in Figure 4, several factors are identified in the literature that drives and limits authentic leadership development. Walumbwa et al. (2008) stated that self-awareness and self-regulation are fundamental for understanding oneself. This view is shared by most of the respondents and collected within the theme *Level of self-awareness*. R5 means that it is essential to be grounded in oneself and have a high self-awareness to develop authentic leadership. R1 also discusses the importance of self-awareness, *"It is important to me in authentic leadership that you take the time to reflect on yourself. What do I think, what do I feel? Just as I expose others to criticism or scrutiny, you should also expose yourself to it"*. Self-awareness is also required to enable a cognitive construction, which according to Harter (2012), is one of the two essential parts of authenticity. Lack of self-awareness makes it impossible to base a decision on cognitive construction. This is identified to drive authentic leadership development. R1, R4, and R5 all describe that authentic leadership cannot be developed if a person has low or no self-awareness and is therefore not aware of their good and bad sides. This in line with Schlegel et al. (2009) thoughts that losing touch with your true self will limit the possibility for authenticity and therefore limit the process of authentic leadership development.

*"An authentic leader dares to think out of the own box"* (R1). Further, R1 explains that it is common that people avoid taking responsibility due to the fear of how others will react and refer to this as the person being inauthentic. By this definition, an inauthentic leader would follow extrinsic motivation, while an authentic leader would follow intrinsic motivation. The former is considered to limit authentic leadership development, while the latter would drive the development. R5 agrees with this by stating: *"You can only be authentic when you are true to yourself, not when you are true to someone else's will"*. Therefore, following norms and social expectations can be seen as an inner factor that limits authentic leadership development. Hooft (2014, p. 13) explains that following norms is an internal pressure that leads to actions even if the situation contradicts the person's desires. Although, when looking at norms from an ethical perspective, Hooft (2014, p. 13) explains that when humans act morally, humans follow the norms. Virtue ethics emphasizes that the agent wants to do what is required in society and therefore follow norms of personal desire and not because of external pressure. To

acknowledge if norms are being a follower of extrinsic motivation or intrinsic motivation and virtue ethics, a high level of self-awareness is required. Following norms of extrinsic motivation limits the development of authentic leadership. But it can also create a need for authentic leadership development. R3 explains this:

*"What drives the development of authentic leadership is probably that one has felt very bad about leading non-authentically, that is, following others or being outside oneself, and therefore being guided from the outside by the expectations and needs of others. An example is if you are burnt out, it is very physical exclusion. Then I have really been controlled by other things and lost myself".*

Furthermore, the theme *Time-consuming process* was identified. R1 and R5 state that authentic leadership is a lifelong journey, a lifestyle that a leader who strives for authentic leadership needs to work with and to develop during life. R5 states that *"Authentic leadership is a process that you need to work with all the time."* Agreeing with this, R4 explains that authentic leadership is not easily seen but should instead be considered as a large context. According to R2, authentic leadership results in a time-consuming hunt for something one can never reach: *"I think the talk of authentic leadership is a very destructive way of reasoning about leadership for people who are the target group for leadership talk, that is, managers. It creates a search for something you will never reach".*

To conclude, the factors that drive authentic leadership development on a micro level (individuals) are partly the same that drives the development of authentic leadership on a macro level (cooperate scandals). As mentioned in the background chapter, the need for authentic leadership on a macro level comes from organizations unethical behavior and high stressors which create a demand for a more genuine leadership. On a micro level, the inner factor that drives authentic leadership can be similar. If a leader follows extrinsic motivation, it can lead to mental illness in form of anxiety and depression. This may be a wake-up call to change their leadership style. To reach the wake-up call that will help a person to develop authentic leadership, one must first and foremost have high self-awareness. With low self-awareness, the mental illness will limit the person's ability and desire to take on a leadership role again since the role might be connected to anxiety and stress. The degree of self-awareness in a person will therefore decide whether the mental illness will drive or limit authentic leadership. The degree of self-awareness also affects the other inner factors, such as motivation. A leader's self-

awareness will enable an understanding of the reasons for acting in a certain way. Following intrinsic motivation will drive authentic leadership. Following extrinsic motivation will limit it. To know the cause of the action, a high level of self-awareness is required. This also shows that inner factors that will drive or limit authentic leadership are different from individual to individual.

### 6.3 Outer factors that drive and limit authentic leadership development

According to Walumbwa et al.'s (2008) Authentic Leadership Development Model, the development of an authentic leader is affected by what the person experience. This has also been described by Northouse (2019) as critical life events. Personal experience at work is often connected to the culture of the organization. Therefore, the theme *Organizational culture* was created to summarize how outer factors can drive or limit authentic leadership. R3 discusses that if a leader does not share the same goal as the company, it makes it difficult to be a leader. R1 states that an authentic leader implies their followers to grow. The former example limits authentic leadership development, and the latter drives it.

From the thematical analysis, the theme *Leadership development courses* were also identified. The theme consists of thought about how leadership development courses as an outer factor affect the leadership development process. According to R5, it is impossible to join a leadership course and afterward expect to be an authentic leader. Northouse (2019) stated that possessing the capacity for moral reasoning can influence authentic leadership, which is something one can practice during a leadership course. Furthermore, a leadership course encourages the participants to self-reflect. R1 highlights the importance of self-reflection and self-insight. However, both R2 and R5 are critical to the management industry. "*The leadership industry is very extensive and there are many who make a lot of money from holding courses of various kinds*" (R5). R2 states that "*The talk of leadership and authenticity corresponds to a degree of anxiety*" and implies that a person can feel relief by participating in a leadership development course about authentic leadership. According to R2, "*Authentic leadership is much more of a business idea than anything that has anything to do with research*".

According to Walumbwa et al. (2008), positive self-development (self-awareness and self-regulation) is affected by positive psychological capacities and positive organizational context. Align with Walumbwa et al.'s (2008) model, R6 states that a leader will be affected by contextual factors such as organizational culture, regulations, and power relations. These

context factors could both limit and drive the development of an authentic leader, depending on their formation (Luthans & Avolio, 2003). This aligns with Medlock (2012), who explains that culture affects an individual's possibility to develop. Harter (2012) explains that the self consists of two parts - cognitive and social construction. Both pieces are required to enable authenticity. Social contexts and childhood are essential parts of the journey to finding the true self and authenticity. The impact of childhood is included in Walumbwa et al.'s (2008) and Luthans and Avolio's (2002) research, but the social context other than organizational is lacking. The impact of social context as norms of the society, for example, is presented by R4 who explains that few have overcome the norm culture through their own development. R3 describes that a person that is grounded in oneself and dares to resist external impulses.

To emphasize the social context impact on authentic leadership development even further, Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2014) explain people as social chameleons who adapt to social contexts. People adapt to what they believe to be correct to gain approval or acceptance of others. According to the Leader Categorization Theory (Lord et al., 1984), all people have cognitive categorizations with features that distinguish leaders from non-leader. If an individual's behavior and traits match a leader's prototype, the individual will be seen as a leader in the viewers' eyes (Lord et al., 1984). R3 explains that society has locked roles which, according to R3, may be one reason why there are fewer women in leadership positions, for example.

To conclude, society includes many norms that may work as outer factor that hinders authentic leadership development since following norms may mean abandoning your own beliefs and values. Since the social impact is high, it makes it almost impossible to be an authentic leader in an organization steered by an unhealthy norm culture. If the people in your vicinity are inauthentic and enter a role, it is hard for you not to do the same and losing your true self. For a leader, it might even be advantageous to enter a role that indicates safety, less responsibility, and privacy. On the other side, authentic behavior breeds more authentic behavior, which is why a permissive and developing organization drives authentic leadership development. When a person rejects to follow norms, he or she will act as they truly want. The possibility to oppose norms may also differ depending on the leadership level, status, commitments, and expectations. Executives are highly monitored by internal and external actors, which increases the pressure to indulge expectations and thereby increases the risk of disregarding your own true self. Nevertheless, executives have more autonomy than subordinate leaders, which may

give more extensive freedom and possibility to be authentic. Executives might gain respect due to their title, while subordinate leaders might have more difficulty in receiving respect from their subordinates and may therefore adapt to norms and leader's prototypes instead of being authentic. However, there is an interplay between being and not being authentic. To become successful within an organization, a leader needs to be able to adapt to rules, culture, and colleagues and not always follow their own beliefs and values. Therefore, authentic leadership needs to be viewed as a combination between following and leading others.

#### 6.4 Adapted authentic leadership questionnaire

Tools exist to measure authentic leadership (Walumbwa et al., 2008; Neider & Schriesheim, 2011; Levesque-Côté et al., 2018; Northouse, 2019). However, authors like Susing et al. (2011) are critical towards only using a questionnaire and argues for the mixture of a self-assessment questionnaire and in-depth interviews. Furthermore, questionnaires used for testing authentic leaders have gotten many critics (Luenendonk, 2020; Spoelstra et al., 2016). The divided opinions have also been identified within the qualitative interviews and summarized into the theme *lack of objectivity*. R6 shares the idea with Susing et al. (2011) and believes that authentic leadership only partly can be tested through the usage of a questionnaire and prefer adding an in depth-interview in addition to a questionnaire. This is since people perceive themselves positively and often rate themselves better than reality while answering a questionnaire. R5 also identifies the problem with people answering what they believe is the correct answer instead of the actual truth and means that this makes the result from questionnaires lacking validity. Further, R3 believes the concept of authenticity to be too complex to capture through a self-assessment tool. R1, on the other hand, is more positive towards this and states that authentic leaders require qualities such as self-confidence, respect, humility, compassion, and vulnerability and that these characteristics could be identifiable through an interview or a questionnaire. This idea is not shared by R2, who states that "*There is nothing that you can measure through questionnaires other than people's opinions*". Even so, R2 explains that he does not wish for the research on leadership in general to stop: "*Research breeds more research. What I would like is for leadership to be discussed in a more critical way*".

Since the study has an exploratory sequential design, the learnings from the qualitative interviews will lay as a foundation to the quantitative questionnaire. The first learning drawn from the interviews is based on learnings from R5. R5s developed self-assessment Leader

Intelligence Questionnaire includes questions that confirm previous answers by asking the respondent to define the number of hours put on a specific task. This has been incorporated in our adapted questionnaire by adding part 3, see *Appendix D: Adapted questionnaire*. Part 3 includes questions about time spent on tasks as self-reflection, comprising, hiding their true self, and reflection about the gender impact on leader styles. These questions can indicate the validity of the answers in part 2.

Furthermore, the adapted questionnaire is based on learnings from R3, R5, and R6, who all state that people answer what they think you want to hear and what they believe to be the most desirable answer. Therefore, we have added questions where the most desirable answer is not clear. For example: "On a monthly basis, how often do you leave a meeting/discussion and feel that you did not argue for your opinions and beliefs?" and "how often do you disregard your own ideas to compromise with others?". Lastly, questions 17-19 in part 2 have been added to the Northouse version of ALQ. These questions have been added to profoundly investigate the topic due to conflicting opinions of genders' impact on authentic leadership, which will be presented further in 6.5.1.

Below in Table 5, the total authentic leadership scores for both women and men are presented as a mean value. The results indicate no significant differences between how the two genders rate their leadership style. Both women and men scored over 16 points in two categories: Self-awareness and Internalized moral perspective. However, the average score for the categories Balanced processing and Relational transparency were a bit lower, which indicates that the respondents are less confident in these areas.

Table 5. Mean value of authentic leadership scores.

	Self-awareness	Internalized moral perspective	Balanced processing	Relational transparency
<b>Women</b>	16,65	16,81	15,96	16,46
<b>Men</b>	16,86	16,64	15,43	15,93

Figure 7 presents the number of points for each of the 61 respondents within each of the four categories. Further details of the figure are presented in *Appendix E: Quantitative data analysis*. The figure shows that 21 of the 47 women received a score over 16 in each of the four categories, this number was 3 of 14 for men. This shows that 44% of the women and 22% of the men possess over 16 points in all four categories. According to Northouse (2019), a leader

can be more or less authentic within the four categories, where a score over 16 points indicates strong authentic leadership.

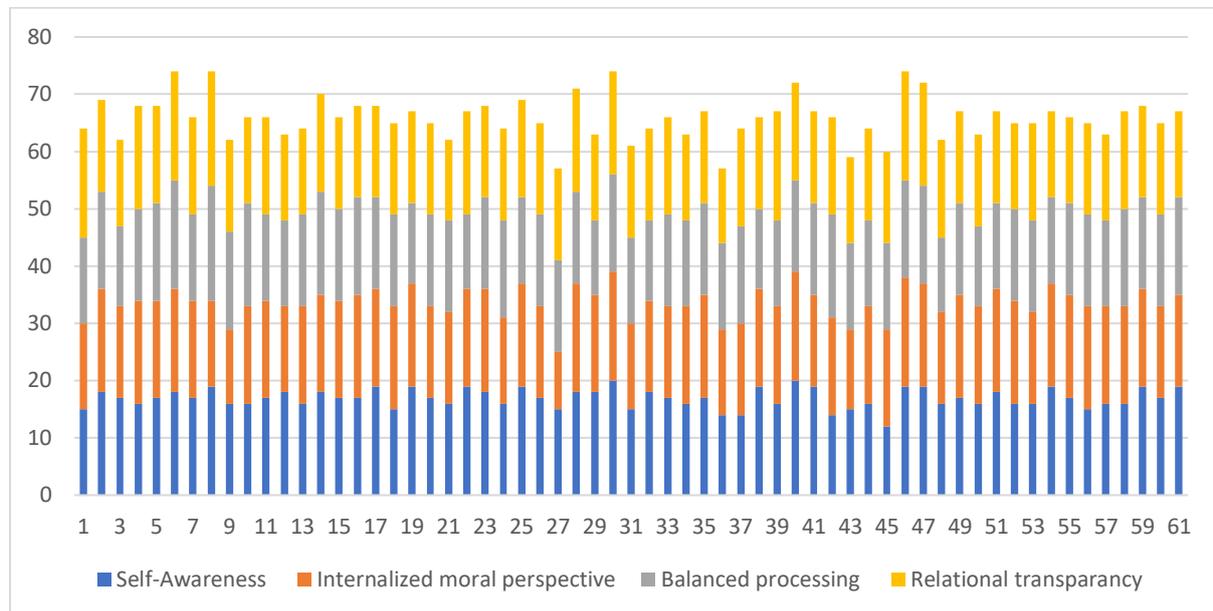


Figure 7. Points for each respondent (own representation, 2021).

The five added questions in part 3, see *Appendix D: Adapted questionnaire*, show that most of the respondents spend time every month on self-reflection and evaluating, as well as reflecting on the impact of gender on the leader style. Both questions show that 93% of the respondent used between 10-31+ hours on reflection. The rest, 7%, answered 0 hours or *I don't know*, where reflection about gender got three respondents answering 0 hours, while self-reflection got one respondent answering 0 hours. It is also shown that most respondents very seldom hide their true self at work and very seldom leave a discussion without arguing for their opinions and belief. Regarding the question “*On a monthly basis, how often do you disregard your own ideas to compromise with others?*”, 58% answered *Very seldom*, while 42% answered *Often*. This again illustrates the complexity of authentic leadership, where one needs to follow others but also follow the own beliefs and values. All answers on the five added questions are to be found in *Appendix F: Result from questionnaire part 3*.

However, respondent 23 scored 18 points in the category self-awareness and answered 0 hours on the question “*On a monthly basis, how many hours do you spend on self-reflection and evaluating your leader style?*”. According to R1 and R5 from the qualitative interviews, authentic leadership is a life-long process, hence self-reflection is something a leader striving for an authentic leader style never should stop with. Walumbwa et al. (2008) state self-

awareness to be a dynamic process where the leader reflects and demonstrates an understanding of themselves. By spending 0 hours on self-reflection and evaluation, it is not likely that respondent 23 is as authentic as the 18 points indicate. This result demonstrates that the question was helpful. For the other four questions, no derivations like this were identified, hence the result indicates that the respondents self-assessed to a fair extent. This means that the confirmation of the accuracy of the answers in part 2 was fulfilled.

To conclude, there are different opinions regarding how and if authentic leadership is a measurable concept. It has been highlighted that a questionnaire is only capable of collecting opinions and not facts. However, in depth-interviews and conversations are presented as a complement to questionnaires. Regardless of the methods used, authenticity is still individual and hidden inside of a person. Authentic leadership questionnaires or in-depth interviews can be used as a starting point in the process of becoming an authentic leader since the respondent will need to start reflecting about their true self. For that reason, it is essential to reflect on individual issues and personality traits that affect you, since being aware of your own strengths and weaknesses are what increases the level of self-awareness.

### 6.5 The relationship between gender and authentic leadership

The thoughts of the Leader categorization theory about traits and attributes that a leader should possess goes long back to the 1980s (Lord et al., 1984). Hopkins & O'Neil (2015) states that most organizations are built upon masculine norms. Furthermore, they argue that the "Think manager, think male" norm still exists. These statements were also founded during the qualitative interviews, where the theme *Maintaining leader prototypes* were identified. The theme consists of ideas about the macho culture, a Disney hero ideal of a leader, and reasons why fewer women have executive leadership positions.

Eagly (1978) explains that there are differences in the pressure men and women feel to adapt to norms and prototypes. R6 means that tendencies have noted showing that men often are trying to fit into the macho culture, while women do not have to do that. However, R5 argues that a woman working in a business dominated by men will need to adapt both language and approach to fit the masculine culture. R5 also describes the opposite; if a man is working in a business dominated by women, he will also need to adapt but may have it easier to blend in. The differences in approval when going against the norms indicate that men and women meet

different social role theory norms. Women meet social disapproval when going against the norms described as injunctive norms. In comparison, men are more relatable to the descriptive norms that create surprises since it's abnormal but do not result in social disapproval. Even though derivations from the norms for men would not create disapproval, R5 describes that there is high pressure for men to follow the norms. R5 refers to a conversation where a man leader explained that he feels like he constantly plays a theater when trying to fit into the macho culture and that he cannot be true to himself if he does not allow to show his feminine sides as well. According to R2, connecting leadership with men is deeply integrated into the western world due to the typical masculine hero ideal often represented in literature throughout the ages but also for example Disney movies. Similarly, R3 believes that the reason why most high leadership positions belong to men may be because society still has locked roles. Furthermore, R4 describes how the gender norms limit women, "*A woman can be as competent as she wants, but gender norms stop them*".

Researchers have identified authentic leadership as more challenging for women than for men (Hopkins & O'Neil, 2015; Sinclair, 2013; Önday, 2016). Sharing similar ideas, R4 also believed it to be harder for women than men. The claim that the male leader role also impacts men (Dahlbom-Hall, 2007) was also identified in the interviews. These ideas got support from R6, who stated that "*What I would guess is that women find it easier to be authentic than men.*" R6 argues that the macho culture creates a risk that the authentic disappearing in men. Contrariwise, R3 does not believe it to be any differences between women's and men's ability to be authentic leaders and stated that all gender could be authentic since it is about people more than the division of woman and men. This goes in line with R1, who also states that the characteristics needed to be authentic are to be found in both women and men "*These basic abilities are characteristic of homo sapiens, and both men and women belong to homo sapiens.*" R5, on the other hand, argues that there naturally will be differences for the two gender:

*"All structures, organizations, and society are built according to a patriarchate approach, and that means that all women must engage in a masculine way of thinking. Which means that many women commit violence against themselves in their leadership role. Then it is difficult to be authentic because you must adapt, not to the company but to the masculine norms".*

R5 also explains the biological differences between women and men, meaning that the genders have different hormonal systems that cannot be ignored and will create differences. Furthermore, R2 does not believe in authentic leadership but considers the topic of gender to be engaging within authentic leadership. R2 states that differences exist between women and men, but these differences are not there naturally but rather existing since society creates and recreates them repeatedly: “*We use authentic leadership to construct gender differences*” (R2). These ideas are clustered into the theme *Women’s and men’s ability to be true to self*.

Thoughts related to Eagly and Karau’s (2002) Role congruity model and its agency attributes connected to men and communication attributes connected to women were also discussed during the interviews. According to R1, a woman leader does not need to follow what a man leader does. By having self-confidence and self-insight, all leaders should trust their initiation and lead to create conditions that promote employees' creativity. According to Sinclair (2013), it is more likely that a woman gets critic than a man when she embraces her true self as a leader. This goes in line with Hopkins and O’Neil’s (2015) argument that a woman will get critic for both acting masculine and feminine in her leadership position. R4 argues that “*Gender norms are so strong. There are very few who, through their own development, have overcome the norm culture*”. Since women are a minority group in leadership (Shaw, 2010), they face many difficulties trying to pass the norms and prove that their gender is not necessarily connected to the proposed communication attributes.

#### 6.5.1 Adapted authentic leadership questionnaire outcome

As presented earlier, both literature and the qualitative interview respondents possess conflicting opinions about genders' impact on authentic leadership development. For that reason, we wanted to get leaders opinions and added the following gender-related questions: (1) *I can be my true self as a woman/as a man in my leadership role*, (2) *My gender hinders me in acting as I truly am as a person in my leadership role*, (3) *I believe my leadership style is affected by my gender*. The result for each added question is presented in Table 6, Table 7, and Table 8, including the number of respondents and average answer rate in percentage for each answer option. The analysis will be based on the percentage since the unequal distribution of the number of men and women respondents would be misleading.

Table 6 shows that most respondents, both women, and men, can be their true selves in their leadership roles. This result goes against Shaw's (2010) reasoning that groups outside the traditional leadership pool experience have difficulties in authentic leadership. According to The Role Congruity Model (Eagly & Karau, 2002), the traditional leadership pool consists of leader prototypes consist of attributes connected to men. Nevertheless, this is not what the result in Table 6 shows. The result aligns with R1 and R3 opinions that there is no difference between gender's ability to be an authentic leader.

Table 6. Result question "I can be my true self as a woman or as a man in my leadership role".

	Women (n)	Women (%)	Men (n)	Men (%)
Strongly agree	15	32%	5	36%
Agree	28	60%	7	50%
Disagree	1	2%	0	0%
Neutral	3	6%	2	14%
Strongly disagree	0	0%	0	0%
Don't know	0	0%	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>100%</b>

Most of both women and men answered *Disagree* on the question *My gender hinders me in acting as I truly am as a person in my leadership role*. Table 7 shows that this feeling is shared by 55% of the women and 43% of the men. 2% of the women answered *Strongly agree*, which goes in line with the thoughts of Hopkins and O'Neil (2015), Önday (2016), and Sinclair (2013) that authentic leadership is more challenging for women. However, Dahlbom-Hall (2007), Alvesson and Due Billing (2011), and Eagly (1978) describes that men face challenges in acting as their true self due to the norms of how they should be. This aligns with the result that shows that 21% of the men answer *Agree*.

Table 7. Result question "My gender hinders me in acting as I truly am as a person in my leadership role".

	Women (n)	Women (%)	Men (n)	Men (%)
Strongly agree	1	2%	0	0%
Agree	5	11%	3	21%
Disagree	26	55%	6	43%
Neutral	9	19%	3	21%
Strongly disagree	6	13%	2	14%
Don't know	0	0%	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>100%</b>

The result from the questionnaire also indicates that gender affects the leadership style, as presented below in Table 8. 62% of the women and 85 % of the men either answered *Agree* or *Strongly agree* on the question *I believe my leadership style is affected by my gender*. However, 32% of women, respectively 7% of men, answered *Neutral* which indicates neither agree nor disagree. The literature of authentic leadership that has taken gender is consideration states that it is either more challenging for men or for women, which is not what the result of the high number of neutral answers shows. However, most of the literature for this thesis is not specifically mention to address Sweden only, which could be a reason why the presented result in Table 8 does not agree with the presented literature.

Table 8. Result question “I believe my leadership style is affected by my gender”.

	Women (n)	Women (%)	Men (n)	Men (%)
<b>Strongly agree</b>	6	13%	3	21%
<b>Agree</b>	23	49%	9	64%
<b>Disagree</b>	3	6%	1	7%
<b>Neutral</b>	15	32%	1	7%
<b>Strongly disagree</b>	0	0%	0	0%
<b>Don't know</b>	0	0%	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 8 and Table 7 brought another interesting insight, that both men and women seem to believe that their leadership style is affected by their gender, but not that their gender hinders them from acting as they truly are in their leadership role. Of the 41 respondents who answered *Agree* or *Strongly agree* in Table 8, 61% answered *Disagree* or *Strongly disagree* in Table 7. With this result, it would have been interesting to dig deeper into the reasons for the answers. Since the output indicates that gender affects the leadership role but not hinders it, it would be interesting to understand how and to what extent it plays a role. Perhaps these leaders instead use gender as an advantage than a shortage. This result may also be affected by the type of leader position the respondents possess. Leaders at different levels face different kinds of problems and challenges and must therefore be taken into consideration when analyzing the outcome.

## 7 Discussion

*This chapter presents a discussion of the findings from the analysis followed by social and ethical aspects as well as the limitations of the findings and the whole study. Further, the theoretical contribution of the study will be presented through a developed Authentic Leadership Model based on the findings in the analysis. The practical contribution of the study will thereafter be presented with a short repetition of our adapted questionnaire. Lastly, suggestions for future research will be presented.*

### 7.1 Social aspects

Despite the progress made in gender equality in leadership, there still exist differences between men and women in aspects as salary, status (European Commission, 2020, p. 10), in life, careers, and as leaders (Önday, 2016). Gender inequality is a global issue that is far away from being solved. The issue has reached the considerable extent that United Nations have formed goals in the “Transforming our world 2030” report that will strive to achieve gender equality and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels. One obstacle for achieving this goal is due to the long history of male leaders that have formed the leader role into what it is today. The formation of the leader decides how the leader *should* act, which compromises how the leader *wants* to act. This formation has created preconceptions in society where people connect leadership to men. Simultaneously, society creates and fosters preconceptions of characteristics of women that are not connected to how the traditional leader *should* be. Even if women would get equal opportunities for leadership, it is therefore not assured that women will be accepted as leaders. On the other hand, an authentic leader does not have the same desired requirements which would in theory favor women to enter leadership positions. However, in practice it is not as simple. Even though, a new era of leadership has entered due to corporate scandals and the need of a new leadership style, the old formations have not been eliminated. This is shown since authentic leadership can hinder both men and women who do not act according to social expectations.

Authentic leadership can be seen from a macro perspective that includes social aspects as well as leadership positions. The macro perspective requires more than just companies to recruit more women leaders. As seen in Figure 2: *Environmental Characteristics*, the three aspects: Group, organizations, and external environment are all factors that impact leadership and leader styles. Meaning that the focus cannot be placed on one aspect. For example, a leader who spends much time on self-reflection might even so not be able to perform authentic leadership

due to dated culture in organization and preconceptions in society. Other factors that is important to consider due to the makro perspective is the culture, tradition, and religion. Since these three aspects both affects the individual leader and the organization culture, this would indicate that this study might not get the same result if it were to be performed in another country. All respondents in this study are Swedish and works in organizations based on Swedish culture, hence the result not necessarily would be applicable in other contexts.

## 7.2 Ethical aspects

Beyond addressing the ethical aspects of the methodology of the study, ethics needs to be considered in the study as a whole. Discussion of gender might be problematic since it requires generalization and placing people in categories instead of seeing all people as individuals. For example, in this study, the population has been divided into the groups of men or women. We have chosen to use the terms men or women instead of male and female since the latter indicate biological inherency which is not accurate for all individuals in the society. To enable the respondent to the questionnaire to choose their gender rather than sex, we did not ask about their sex. Instead, we asked them if they were a participant in the course “Leading Women” or “Leading Men”.

The study has required the generalization of genders when presenting the information. For example, not all men possess the same characteristic as the leader prototype. As stated in Perls, Hefferline, and Goodman's research on inherent polarities (1951), a person is not only feminine or masculine. We are aware that exceptions from this exist, but since all individuals are unique, generalization is required to gain an understating of the topic. Therefore, we have presented different perspectives to include a larger audience and to minimize harm for the reader.

## 7.3 Limitations

This study includes several limitations, and some will be accounted for here. To start with, all respondents that answered the adapted authentic leadership questionnaire had participated in a leadership development program held by Anima Ledarskap. Therefore, it is likely that the answers are affected by learnings from the program and that a different outcome would have been presented if sending out the questionnaire to leaders who did not participate in a leadership development program beforehand. Since Anima’s programs address gender, another scenario of interest would be if the respondents had participated in a program without gender focus. Although the study got many advantages from having Animas leadership program “Leading

Women” and “Leading Men” as a starting point, it also brings limitations to the outcome. Another limitation regarding the quantitative data collection is the lack of nuanced answers. The outcome presented interesting findings, but since quantitative data cannot account for the underlying reasons for the outcome, we are left wondering why the respondents answer as they did. This limitation is in general applicable for quantitative data and was indeed taken into consideration before choosing to utilize a quantitative data collection method. However, the quantitative data collection gains many insights, although it includes limitations.

Another identified limitation is the lack of a valid theory for authentic leadership. Since the theory is still under development, different researchers can perceive the concept differently. Although researchers will always have different opinions regarding theories, it might be problematic to read about authentic leadership since one cannot ensure that the authors discuss the exact same thing. This can result in researchers exerting the definition of authentic leadership that is most favorable for their own usage.

#### 7.4 Contributions

The theoretical contribution of this study will be to fill the gap that we identified in the literature review. The identified gap created a desire for us to expand Luthans and Avolio’s (2003) “Authentic Leadership Development Model” with more aspects of the external environment other than the organization and to gain more understanding about what the inner and outer factors may be and how they impact authentic leadership development. The learnings from this study show that authentic leadership development is a broad and complex topic. Cooper, Scandura, and Schriesheim (2005) have expressed concerns regarding the wideness of the “Authentic Leadership Development Model”, we believe that a wide model gives a good overview and is necessary to catch the complexity and to conceptualize it. The development of the existing “Authentic Leadership Development Model” is illustrated in Figure 8.

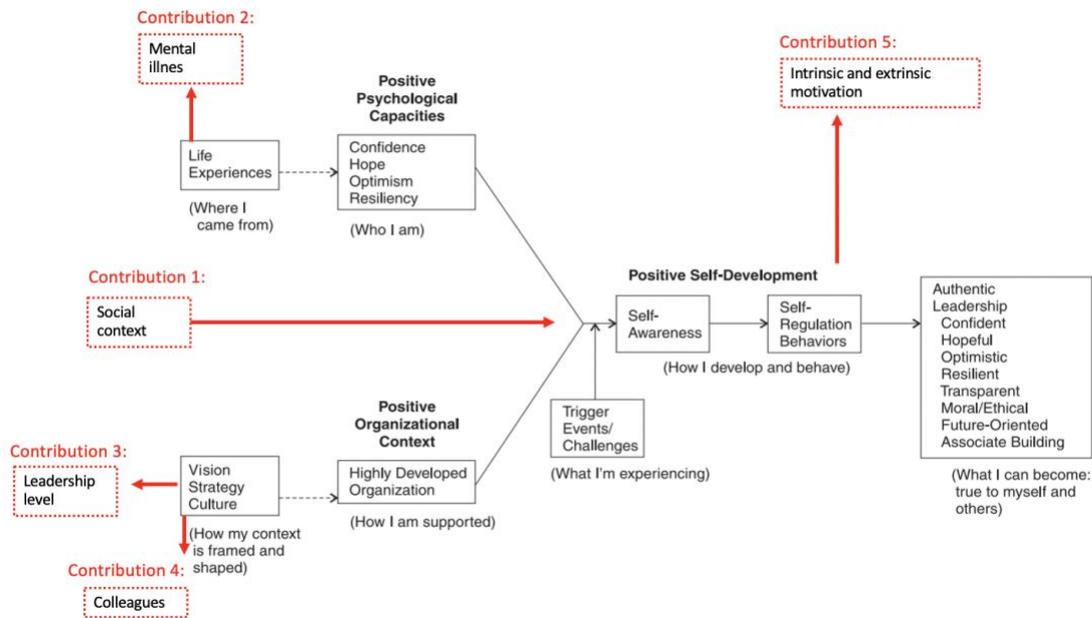


Figure 8. Development of Luthans and Avolio (2003) "Authentic Leadership Development Model".

The first contribution to the model is the social context, meaning society's norms, roles, prototypes, and structures. This study shows that the social context is extremely important when talking about authentic leadership development. We believe that Luthans and Avolio's (2003) model in its current configuration lacks essential aspects within this topic. The life experiences in the model are very vague and non-defined, the second contribution is therefore a concrete example of what life experience that can have an impact on the development of authentic leadership. Contribution 3 and 4 is also more concrete example on organization impact which we found lacking in the model. The examples in contributions 2-4 are all examples of the synonyms: Critical life events (Northouse, 2019) and Trigger events (Luthans & Avolio, 2003). The events will act as a catalysator for change, but whether the change will drive or limit authentic leadership development depends on their formation. Lastly, contribution 5 is regarding the self-regulation component of the model. Self-regulation means acting according to one's true self. The learnings from this study show that this is misleading when investigating it from a motivation lens. The current configuration of the models lacks the insight that one does not always need to follow their true self, as long it is intrinsic motivated.

The practical contribution consists of the adapted authentic leadership questionnaire, created to address the shortage that researcher seldom considers gender aspects within authentic leadership. Besides adding questions about gender in relation to the leadership role, the questionnaire has also been designed to address validity concerns from people critical towards using questionnaires to measure authentic leadership.

## 7.5 Future research

This study emphasis on the complexity of authentic leadership and therefore it is desirable for future research to continue the developing a solid theory for authentic leadership. A universal definition and theory need to be established to enable higher validity within the field. For now, contradicting definition of authentic leadership aggravate the understanding of the concept. Additionally, future researcher could also use the practical contribution from this thesis in a large-scale test, comparing different leadership levels and countries to identify similarities and differences.

## 8 Conclusion

*This chapter presents the conclusion of the study by answering the three research questions that have formed the study. After presenting the answers, an overall conclusion of the whole study will be presented.*

The purpose of this study is three folded: (1) How authenticity can be identified in a leader, (2) Explore the circumstances that affect authentic leadership development, and (3) The relationship between gender and authentic leadership development. Three research questions were formulated to enable the fulfillment of the purpose. The questions build on each other and are all essential to gain the needed understanding of the topic.

### **Research question 1** *How can authenticity be identified in a leader?*

The conclusion drawn from the first research question is that identifying authenticity can be accomplished by different approaches. We will not present a single solution to be more favorable than others since the result shows divided opinions. As presented, self-assessment questionnaires can be used to identify authenticity, alone or in combination with in-depth interviews. Identifying authenticity is also suggested to be less palpable, a feeling you get from a leader who exhibits authenticity. Contradictory to this, it is proposed that one person cannot identify authenticity in another person; hence only the individual leader can know for sure if he or she is authentic. The last founded approach is that there is no answer to how to identify authenticity since there is no such thing as authentic leaders. Even though there are skeptics of authenticity and identifying it through a questionnaire, the findings for the study show that this method can indicate a leader's authenticity. And it is also a valuable tool for starting the process of increasing self-awareness since it requires self-reflection. Regardless of whether you are critical to authentic leadership, authenticity and being true to yourself in life should always strive for.

### **Research question 2** *Which inner and outer factors drive or limit the process of authentic leadership development?*

The division between inner and outer factors much more diffuse than what we anticipated at the beginning of the study. It shows that which outer factors drive or limit authentic leadership developed depends on the inner factors. A person with a high level of self-awareness does not let outer factors, as social context, limit their authentic leadership development. The social

context may even drive authentic leadership development for this person since it requires recurrent self-reflection. On the other hand, a person with a low level of self-awareness is hindered by outer factors. From our developed “Authentic Leadership Development Model” in Figure 8, we can see that the formation of the outer factors decides whether it will drive or limit authentic leadership development. Colleagues are one outer factor that affects, but it is determined by the degree of authenticity in them and the organizational culture if it drives or limits. The formation of the inner factors determines whether it will drive or limit authentic leadership development. The predominant inner factor that can drive and limit the process found in the study is self-awareness. Self-awareness is a part of the “Authentic Leadership Development Model,” but the findings from this study show that self-awareness must start even earlier in the process. It should be seen as the initial component of authentic leadership development.

**Research question 3** *What does gender mean in authentic leadership development?*

To illustrate what gender can mean for women respectively men, *Figure 5 Gender differences within authentic leadership development*, has been created. From the adapted authentic leadership questionnaire, it is shown that gender has a meaning in leadership since 93% of the leaders spend time every month reflecting on the impact of gender in their own or other’s leadership. Another learning from the practical contribution (questionnaire) stating that gender means something in authentic leadership development is presented in Table 8 showing that most respondents opine their gender to affect their leader style. However, Table 7 shows that although gender impacts the leadership style, most people do not see gender as something that hinders them from acting as they want in their leader role.

The findings in research question 2 show that the impact norms and leader prototypes have on authentic leadership depends on the degree of self-awareness. However, the existing preconceptions of gender can aggravate the process of self-awareness since norms can prototypes can interfere with finding the true self. The leader prototype is connected to men and the typical characteristic commonly possessed of men, which is problematic for women who want to fit in, but at the same time, not lose her true self. Although, the norm: “think manager, think male” will impact both women and men. The leader prototype can also be problematic for men, who feel the pressure to act according to the macho culture. Not all men nor all women can be fitted into a leadership norm or prototype since all individuals are unique.

Due to this complexity, this study concludes that gender has meaning for both women and men when it comes to authentic leadership development. Another approach in the findings is that gender does not impact authentic leadership development. It is all about individuals, and therefore all people, regardless of gender, have the same opportunity and the same difficulties in authentic leadership development.

### **Overall conclusion**

This thesis shows that authentic leadership and gender are two complex and comprehensive subjects that together become even more diffuse. Therefore, this study has presented a multitude of viewpoints, opinions, and results regarding the three research questions, where no answer is more correct than another. Since leadership, in general, is a complex area, it is not a surprise to conclude that this goes for authentic leadership as well. As we presented earlier, the term leader has been used since the 1300s with different definitions, indicating the level of complexity. Therefore, we are confident in concluding that leadership is a complex subject, where authentic leadership is no exception.

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## Appendix A: Northouse questionnaire questions

1. I can list my three greatest weaknesses.
2. My actions reflect my core values.
3. I seek others' opinions before making up my own mind.
4. I openly share my feelings with others.
5. I can list my three greatest strengths.
6. I do not allow group pressure to control me.
7. I listen closely to the ideas of those who disagree with me.
8. I let others know who I truly am as a person.
9. I seek feedback as a way of understanding who I really am as a person.
10. Other people know where I stand on controversial issues.
11. I do not emphasize my own point of view at the expense of others.
12. I rarely present a "false" front to others.
13. I accept the feelings I have about myself.
14. My morals guide what I do as a leader.
15. I listen very carefully to the ideas of others before making decisions.
16. I admit my mistakes to others.

## Appendix B: Semi-structured interview questions

1. What is your perception of authenticity?
2. What is your understanding of authentic leadership?
3. According to you, what drives or limits the process of authentic leadership development?
4. Do you believe it to be possible to identify an authentic leader?
5. According to you, what does gender mean in authentic leadership development?
6. Do you believe it to be harder for any gender to be an authentic leader?
7. According to you, how can you tell if a leader is using authentic leadership?

## Appendix C: Information of respondent

Edward Harris is a Doctor of Theology, a priest in the diocese of Stockholm, and writer. He is an expert regarding the philosopher Søren Kierkegaard and was one of two authors on the book “The Art of Living Sincerely” about Kierkegaard. Furthermore, Mr. Harris is a member of the Franciscan Third Order, and has spoken in the Swedish radio program “Summer in P1”.

Johan Alvehus is an associate professor at Lund University in the Department of Service Management and Service Studies. The research focus that Alvehus entail is leadership and management in organizations. The issues in focus are leadership in complex power hierarchies, the ontology of leadership, and the role of institutional logic in the everyday life of the organization. In addition to journal publications, Alvehus has published books within both methodology and organization theory. He is also the editor-in-chief of the journal ”Organisation & Samhälle”.

Lena Ydmark is a licensed psychologist with more than 20 years of practical psychology work experience. Her company Consultant Lena Ydmark AB offers training, evaluation, and development of individuals as well as groups and organizations. Ydmark has a wide range of experience working with leadership development, coaching, leadership evaluation, communication, change management, and group guidance.

Barbro Dahlbom-Hall is a consultant in the field of leadership and management and the founder of Barbro Dahlbom-Hall konsult. She is a leadership pioneer that in the 1960’ studied leadership in USA and brought the insights to Sweden. Dahlbom-Hall has experience from a long career, both in Sweden and internationally, and have worked with SIDA, the EU, the UN, UNICEF, INSEAD et al. For her work with leadership and gender, Dahlbom-Hall has received several awards including the Kings medal of the 8<sup>th</sup> dimension with the ribbon of the Order of the Seraphim’s and an honorary Ph.D. in medicine from Uppsala University. During her career, she has written several books about the connection between leadership and gender, and also spoken in the Swedish radio program “Summer in P1”.

Marika Ronty is a licensed psychologist, psychotherapist, retreat leader, and founder of the company Ledarintelligens. She has written multiple books in the field of leadership and development, and writes for the Swedish leadership site motivation.se. Furthermore, Ronty has

developed the Leader Intelligence Questionnaire and is originator of the model Ledarintelligens, which have been published in several academic journals.

Gerry Larsson is a professor in psychology, leadership in stressful conditions, and a legitimized psychologist in working life psychology. Currently, Larsson is a senior professor in the Division of Leadership within the Department of Security, Strategy, and Leadership at the Swedish Defence University. He is one of the developers of The Leadership Model, which focuses on the interplay of leader characteristics and external context. In addition to this, Larsson has written multiple books and articles on the topic of leadership.

## Appendix D: Adapted questionnaire

### Part 1:

1. What program did you attend?

Leading Women

Leading Men

2. Do you accept to be contacted for further studies about authentic leadership?

No, I want to be anonymous.

Yes, my name is:

### Part 2:

Within part 2, all question had the following answer options: Strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree, I don't know.

1. I can list my three greatest weaknesses.

2. My actions reflect my core values.

3. I seek others' opinions before making up my own mind.

4. I openly share my feelings with others.

5. I can list my three greatest strengths.

6. I do not allow group pressure to control me.

7. I listen closely to the ideas of those who disagree with me.

8. I let others know who I truly am as a person.

9. I seek feedback as a way of understanding who I really am as a person.

10. Other people know where I stand on controversial issues.

11. I do not emphasize my own point of view at the expense of others.

12. I rarely present a "false" front to others.

13. I accept the feelings I have about myself.

14. My morals guide what I do as a leader.

15. I listen very carefully to the ideas of others before making decisions.

16. I admit my mistakes to others.

17. I can be my true self as a woman/as a man in my leadership role

18. My gender hinders me in acting as I truly am as a person in my leadership role

19. I believe my leadership style is affected by my gender

**Part 3:**

Within part three, question 1 and 5 had the answer options: 0 hours, 1-10 hours, 11-20 hours, 21-30 hours, 31+ hours. While question 2, 3 and 4 had the answer options: Never, very seldom, often, always, I don't know.

1. On a monthly basis, how many hours do you spend on self-reflection and evaluating your leader style?
2. On a monthly basis, how often do you leave a meeting/discussion and feel that you did not argue for your opinions and beliefs?
3. On a monthly basis, how often do you disregard your own ideas to compromise with others?
4. On a monthly basis, how often do you hide your true self at work?
5. On a monthly basis, how many hours do you spend on reflecting about the gender impact on yours or others leader styles?

## Appendix E: Quantitative data analysis

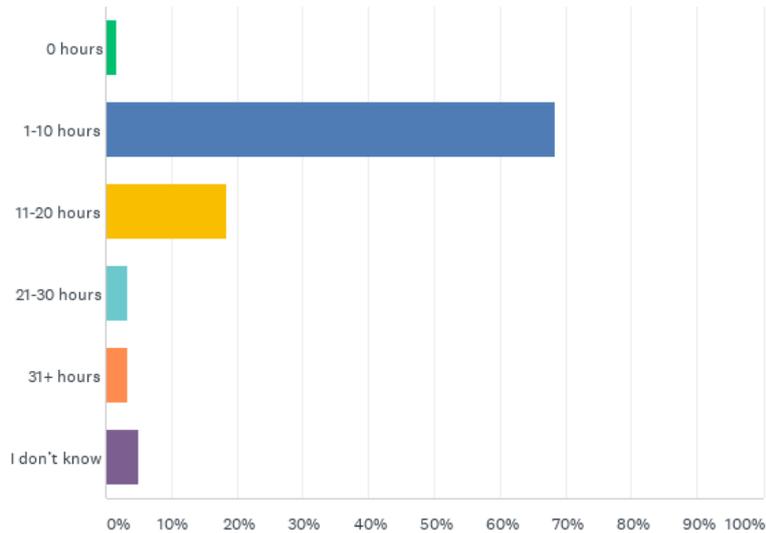
Respondents points within the four categories of authentic leadership. The dark grey boxes indicate the scores 16 or above, meaning that the respondents are authentic according to Northouse point system.

R	Self-Awareness	Internalized moral perspective	Balanced processing	Relational transparency
1	15	15	15	19
2	18	18	17	16
3	17	16	14	15
4	16	18	16	18
5	17	17	17	17
6	18	18	19	19
7	17	17	15	17
8	19	15	20	20
9	16	13	17	16
10	16	17	18	15
11	17	17	15	17
12	18	15	15	15
13	16	17	16	15
14	18	17	18	17
15	17	17	16	16
16	17	18	17	16
17	19	17	16	16
18	15	18	16	16
19	19	18	14	16
20	17	16	16	16
21	16	16	16	14
22	0	0	0	0
23	19	17	13	18
24	18	18	16	16
25	16	15	17	16
26	19	18	15	17
27	17	16	16	16
28	15	10	16	16
29	18	19	16	18
30	18	17	13	15
31	20	19	17	18
32	15	15	15	16
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34	17	16	16	17
35	16	17	15	15
36	17	18	16	16
37	14	15	15	13

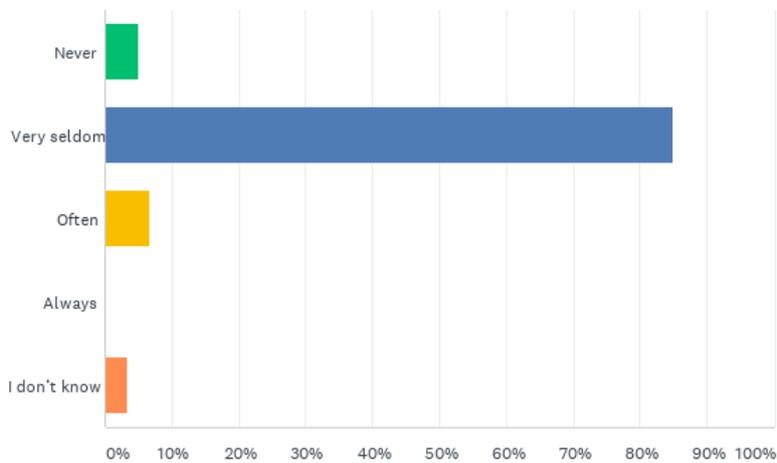
38	14	16	17	17
39	0	0	0	0
40	19	17	14	16
41	16	17	15	19
42	20	19	16	17
43	19	16	16	16
44	14	17	18	17
45	15	14	15	15
46	16	17	15	16
47	12	17	15	16
48	19	19	17	19
49	19	18	17	18
50	16	16	13	17
51	17	18	16	16
52	16	17	14	16
53	18	18	15	16
54	16	18	16	15
55	16	16	16	17
56	19	18	15	15
57	17	18	16	15
58	15	18	16	16
59	16	17	15	15
60	16	17	17	17
61	19	17	16	16
62	17	16	16	16
63	19	16	17	15

## Appendix F: Result from questionnaire part 3

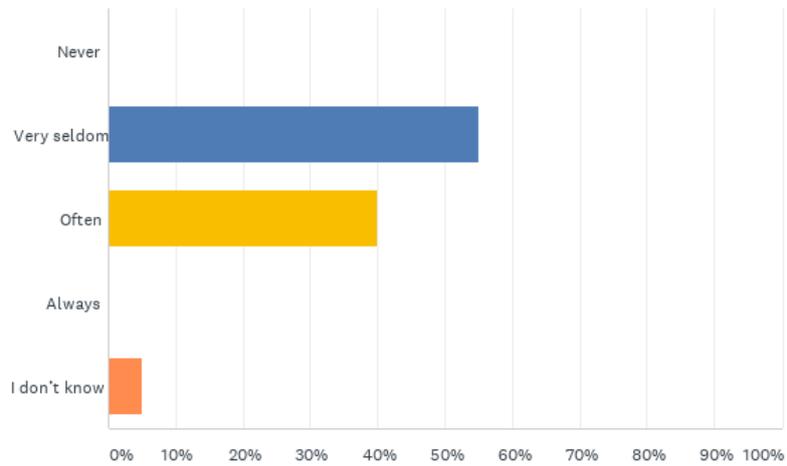
1. On a monthly basis, how many hours do you spend on self-reflection and evaluating your leader style?



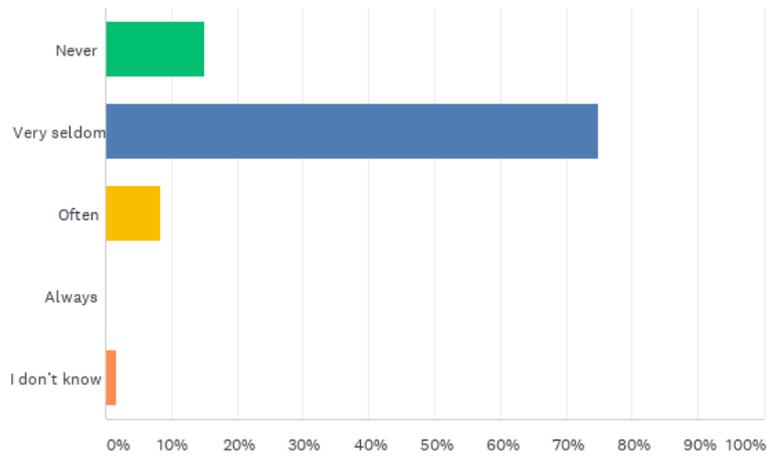
2. On a monthly basis, how often do you leave a meeting/discussion and feel that you did not argue for your opinions and beliefs?



3. On a monthly basis, how often do you disregard your own ideas to compromise with others?



4. On a monthly basis, how often do you hide you true self at work?



5. On a monthly basis, how many hours do you spend on reflecting about the gender impact on yours or others leader styles?

