Stereotypical Barriers for Women in Management

“I get the feeling, gentlemen, that you don’t take having a female boss that seriously.”

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1 http://www.cartoonstock.com/directory/f/female_boss.asp
Abstract

Since the beginning of time, there have been clear defined roles for females and males in society. Due to females reproductive abilities, they were the ones to bear and have children and this made many of their tasks domestic. Males, on the other hand, were the providers and protectors of the family and this centered many of their tasks outside the domestic domain. However, as time has changed so has the division of tasks between males and females. A large number of females have entered the labor market in the last few decades and this means that females have been and are entering traditionally male dominated domains. One might think there would be a proportionate increase of females in most occupations, but research shows that this is not the case, by contrast it shows that the increase in the overall labor force participation rate for females is not reflected in the proportionate increase of women in managerial positions (Karen Korabik, 1999). This suggests some adjustment problems for both organizations and society.

In this thesis, we will look at the specific behavioral and cultural stereotypical perceptions and expectations associated with a senior manager and how these might work as a barrier for women to accent to senior management. This will be done in terms of leadership style and behavior as well as gender stereotyping, as we think these might help explain the low number of females in senior management.

In order to answer this, a gender discussion will be used to look at the construct of gender and the social role theory will be used to explain how gender roles and stereotypes came into being. After this, the stereotypic male and female will be presented and following will their leadership style be described using the Ohio State University study. A leader’s base and use of power will also be analyzed using John R. P. French and Bertam Raven’s taxonomy of power.

The stereotypic image of a leader was found to be equal to that of a male, even though theory argues that the most effective leader should behave androgynously. Women, therefore, ought to have an equal chance at senior management positions.

However, the stereotypic beliefs are found to be a barrier for women to accent to senior management. The female gender stereotype constitute its own limitations to women because the stereotypical image of a manager holds a bias favoring men, which results in women being perceived as less competent and therefore, they have to work harder to be acknowledged and pro-
moted. Therefore, it is concluded that the poor fit between the characteristics associated with a leader and with a female constitute a barrier to women.

Moreover, evidence suggest that women’s leadership style is also a barrier to women, first due to the difference in the use of power between the female leadership style and the prevailing power culture in the top of organizations. Secondly, because women experience a behavioral double-bind, which means that when emphasizing their feminine (consideration) leadership style, they are perceived as less favorable managers, however, when using a masculine (initiating structure) leadership style they are negatively sanctioned for breaking their gender role.

Women therefore tend engage in gender management, which means they will downplay their femininity. However, using this gender strategy; being neither feminine or masculine, leave them ‘stuck in the middle’, which means that they will not outperform colleagues and are therefore less likely to be considered for a promoting.
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1. Introduction

For hundreds of years the lives of women have been formed by their ability to bear children, while men were the ones concerned with business and politics. A mixture of societal changes and technological developments happening over the last 50 years has, however, facilitated the entry of women into the labor market and caused the need for the social role of women to be much broader defined. Besides being mothers and wives women are now also researchers, managers and politicians. Inventions, such as birth control, have given women a choice if and when to have children, thereby easing the planning and pursuit of a professional career. While economic and societal trends, like the shift in the distribution of jobs; favoring an increasing number of jobs in the service sector, have redesigned work to be less dependent on the superior physical strength of men (Cook, 1985 in Karen Korabik, 1999). The result has been a significant change in the composition of the workforce, caused by the large increase in the participation rate for women over the last few decades (Karen Korabik, 1999). This tendency causing an increasing number of women in the workforce has been present in practically all of the Western countries (Karen Korabik, 1999).

Nevertheless, the developments have been so fast paced that, as described in the Handbook of Gender & Work, “not surprisingly, they have resulted in a variety of adjustment problems for organizations and researchers as well as society” (Karen Korabik, 1999: 4). Even though women have succeeded in invading many of the previously male-dominated areas, jobs are still segregated by sharp ‘gender lines’. The gender lines work not only horizontally; dividing traditionally male-dominated occupations from the female ones but also vertically; meaning that few women can be found at senior management levels. Research shows, that the proportionate increase in the overall labor force participation rate for women is not reflected in the proportionate increase in women in managerial positions (Karen Korabik, 1999).

The fact, that “the proportion of women decreases at progressively higher levels of managerial hierarchies” (Parker & Fagenson, 1994 in Powell 1999: xi), suggests that the discussion regarding social roles and gender equality is still far from settled, which seems to be supported by the considerable amount of attention the matter is given by parties of the trades and industries. Therefore, trying to rectify this gender based imbalance between genders, governments and companies as well as NGOs have been trying to equalize the opportunities for men and women through a number of different initiatives.
In Denmark, one such initiative is the “Charter for More Women in Management”, which was developed by the Danish Ministry of Gender Equality in 2008 (Ligestilling and DI). Opposed to several other Western European countries the Danish Government has chosen not to use Affirmative programs and quotas to achieve a more equal distribution of men and women in senior management and board rooms. Instead the Charter is encouraging change by formulating some common objectives for organizations to strive for; allowing them a choice of method. Today over 100 Danish organizations has signed the Charter, which symbolically commits them to work towards having more women in management (Charter for flere kvinder i ledelse, 2011).

In order to fulfill this obligation companies have, among other things, rethought their recruitment strategies, established mentor programs for potential women managers, and introduced new Human Resource policies that, e.g., allow flexible hours, so that it is possible to manage both family and work at the same time (Ligestilling and DI). The goal is not only to attract the talented female candidates, but also to encourage more women to pursue a career as manager/CEO.

However, it is not only because of governmental action that companies are starting to change their strategies. CEO of LEGO, Jørgen Vig Knudstorp, describes how the LEGO organization’s initial internal changes were caused by grass root initiatives led by female employees, who e.g. organized networking groups and events for the women in the organization (Ligestilling and DI). This illustrates the trend that highly educated Danish women are now, more than before, organizing in communities across industries and are in that way helping each other to get ahead.

Nevertheless, the above mentioned initiatives and activities are not only benefitting the women wanting to pursue a position in senior management. Different sources seem to suggest that companies do also have a lot to gain. Women have invested heavily in their human capital in recent years (Powell, 1999a), which is illustrated by statistics showing that more women than men are now graduating from higher education in Denmark (Danmarks Statistik). Women now are therefore as educated as men, and they do indeed possess qualities and knowledge that companies need in order to be successful. Therefore, when considering both female and male candidates for a CEO position, the companies get a much larger group of qualified people to choose from. Secondly, according to diversity management theory having a more diverse group of managers and employees – including more women – facilitates more innovative problem solving, better understanding of the demands of a diverse customer group, and is a way to avoid organizational groupthink (Brooks, 2009). A study, made by the Danish Ministry of Gender Equality, even shows that Danish companies having wom-
en in senior management and on the board do better or just as good as companies having no women employed at that level (Kossowska, Smith, Smith and Verner, 2005).

Governmental and company initiatives, as presented previously, have increased the demand for more women, entertained by the theoretically benefits of embracing diversity at the workplace. On the supply side women have secured an increase in both the quantity and the quality of their labor. Combining the efforts of all the parties involved, it seems Denmark has taken a significant step towards increasing gender equality in the labor market, among other; resulting in more women in the senior management of Danish organizations.

However, as concluded in the Handbook of Gender and Work, “despite the educational parity of women and men and the entry of greatly increased numbers of women into managerial and most professional careers in the past 30 years” (Carli and Eagly, 1999: 221) leadership roles are still dominated by men. Surveying the CEO changes in the top 1000 largest companies in Denmark, “Økonomisk Ugebrev” reported, that of the 94 CEOs appointed in 2010 only four of them were women (Børsen, 2011a).

This mismatch calls for our attention.

1.1 Defining the problem
In her article, “Gender-based Barriers to Senior Management Positions: Understanding the Scarcity of Female CEOs”, Judith G. Oakley, 2000, gives several suggestions to why women are still under-represented in senior management in large corporations. Oakley uses the term ‘barriers’ when describing the many – both overt and covert – obstacles that women face, which prevent them from climbing the corporate ladder. According to Oakley the barriers to women’s advancement fall into two distinct categories. The first category is related to corporate practices. Often gender imbalance is partially caused by the favoritism of males when it comes to “recruitment, retention and promotion” (Oakley, 2000: 322). The barriers explained by the second category are, as stated in the article, rooted in “behavioral and cultural causes […] that revolve around issues of stereotyping, tokenism, power, preferred leadership styles, and the psychodynamics of male/female relations” (Oakley, 2000: 322).

One might argue that initiatives, like the new recruitment strategies, HR policies and job designs, are mainly targeted at the barriers related to the corporate practices. By changing the internal procedures in the corporate organizations, women are more likely to be considered as leader candidates.
The reason why only four out of 94 newly appointed CEOs in 2010 were women, may therefore be explained by the lack of attention given to the second category of barriers. We suspect that these particular barriers hold a key explanation as to why women are not ascending to senior management positions.

Using Oakley’s article as our starting point we therefore want to look closer at the second category; focusing on the stereotypic image and leadership style associated with a CEO. A study made by Epinion on behalf of The Danish Chamber of Commerce illustrates the current situation/problem concerning these specific barriers. The result of the study shows that a majority of employees prefer a male boss over the age of 45 (Børsen, 2011). Birgitte Meisner Nielsen, the HR manager in The Danish Chamber of Commerce, believes that this result illustrates the strength of the inner stereotypic image of a manager. She questions if gender quotas and career development programs will actually have a significant effect, and if the individual’s inner picture of a boss is working as a barrier (Børsen, 2011).

Therefore realizing that specific – behavioral and cultural – stereotypical perceptions and expectations associated with a CEO might be able to partly explain the low number of female members of senior management in Danish corporate organizations, we ask the following questions:

1.2 Problem statement
How are the stereotypical expectations and images, in terms of leadership style and behavior, associated with a member of the senior management of a corporate organization working as a barrier to women?

To investigate this further, we have chosen to use theories regarding; gender and social roles, stereotypes, and male vs. female leadership styles. Further explanations as to how and why the specific theories will be applied are provided in the later section about method.

1.3 Delimitations
We will in this thesis mainly concentrate on the discussion concerning the barriers limiting women’s career prospects within senior management. Knowing that several factors cause the low number of women senior managers, we have chosen to focus only on how stereotypical beliefs and leadership styles contribute to this gender-based barrier. Other structural as well as structural and behavioral factors will therefore not be explored.
Much of the literature and theories used are the work of American scholars, based on studies performed in the USA. Yet, as explained briefly in the introduction, the issues investigated in this thesis are to a greater or lesser extent phenomena present in most Western countries (Karen Korabik, 1999). As in the introduction, we have therefore chosen to use Danish examples, numbers, and statistics in order to substantiate our problem statement, as well as to prove that these ‘Western’ tendencies are also present in Denmark. Any particular cultural aspects will, however, not be taken into consideration.

We are aware that the context, in which a leader leads, like e.g. the industry, influences what is seen as the expected and appropriate leadership behavior in that specific situation and that the context sometimes alters behavior. However, we have chosen to only discuss the generally held stereotypical expectation associated with a person occupying a leadership position. Any context specific differences will therefore not be given any attention.

We will, however, make the distinction between corporate organizations and State owned enterprises. Having chosen to focus on some of the gender-based barriers existing within the corporate world, no attention will be given the State owned enterprises. Significant differences exist between the career prospect of publicly employed women and privately employed women. Why these differences are, is in itself an interesting question. However, it is a question we do not answer in this thesis.

1.4 Definitions
In order to fully understand the scope of the thesis; this paragraph is intended to familiarise the reader with our definitions of the key concepts.

1.4.1 Leadership style
When using the concept ‘leadership style’, we are doing so, because it holds the behavior and priorities of the leader (manager). Studying the stereotypical leadership style of men and women, and senior managers, we will therefore examine interpersonal relations, the basis of authority and power, and, finally, if task-completion or relationships-building/maintenance are the primary concern.
1.4.2 Leader and Manager

The terms ‘leader’ and ‘manager’ will be used interchangeably throughout the thesis. When our sources offer knowledge about the stereotype, behaviors, etc of ‘leader’, we apply it to organizational settings to tell us something about the ‘manager’.

1.4.3 Sex

When using the term ‘sex’ we are referring to the biological sex of the individual, which is determined by physical features, chromosomes, and genitalia. Thus, ‘sex’ describes human females and males (WHO, 2011).

1.4.4 Gender

The concept of ‘gender’ is defined as the social identity of individuals. Social factors, such as behavior, social role, and position determine if a person is what we know as, a man or a woman (WHO, 2011).

We are aware that there is a difference in the definitions between the words ‘female’ and ‘women’, ‘male’ and ‘man’. However, we will use these terms interchangeably, as several of the research papers and theoretical articles used are doing so as well.

1.4.5 Stereotypes

Ashmore and Del Boca’s definition of stereotypes are widely acknowledged and has been used by several other researchers within the field of social science. We will therefore use their definition in the thesis. They define stereotypes as “a set of beliefs about the personal attributes of a group of people” (Ashmore and Del Boca, 1981 in Six and Eckes, 1991: 16).

Gender stereotypes are defined as: “the structured sets of beliefs about the personal attributes of men and women” (Ashmore and Del Boca, 1979 in Six and Eckes, 1991: 222).
2. Method

In this thesis, specific barriers as to why few women are holding senior management positions will be explored and discussed. As a means to explain the low number of the women in senior management, we will first look into the theoretical explanation of the stereotypical images associated with leaders and their relation to the existing male and female stereotypes and leadership styles. Secondly, based on this theoretical analysis, we will discuss the effectiveness of these stereotypes and leadership styles as barriers.

In order to do this, we will look at how this subject has been analyzed, explained, and discussed theoretically by using the work of researchers and theorists within fields of organizational studies, social science, and feminism.

The objective of the following paragraphs is to provide an overview of the information retrieval performed, as well as choice and use of theories in order to answer our problem statement.

As explained in the introduction the starting point for our thesis is the article, by Judith G. Oakley, “Gender-based Barriers to Senior Management Positions: Understanding the Scarcity of Female CEOs”. Through this article we were introduced to several potential explanations as to why there is few women in senior management; our basic point of interest. Therefore, Oakley’s list of potential barriers is chosen as point of departure for our research. Within the category of behavioral and cultural caused barriers, proposed by Oakley, we first identified ‘stereotypes’ and ‘leadership styles’ as the elements, which we wished to explore.

In the early stages of information retrieval, these terms, where then used as the key words in our search. The initial search words used where e.g. ‘stereotypes leadership’, ‘leadership style’ and ‘stereotypic leader’. The journals found on the Aarhus School of Business’ library’s website were frequently used to find articles of interest.

The journals used are, among others, Sex Roles, Journal of Social Issues, Psychological Bulletin, and Journal of Applied Psychology as they offer knowledge in the areas of interest for our thesis. In short, these journals are concerned with issues concerning, among other, gender, humans and the interaction between humans. This will, among other, help us learn how a woman leader is perceived, and how women behave as well as perceive themselves.

The information found in these first rounds of information retrieval was used to familiarize ourselves with the different theories, research papers, and articles produced on these subjects. From
these we were then able to identify and select the most interesting and relevant sources, which would be used to answer our problem statement. The final sources were selected based on the criteria that they would help build our understanding of the how the barrier that women face is related to the stereotyping of job titles, men, and women.

Furthermore, the bibliographies of our research articles have been used to find additional articles that could bring further understanding and information about a particular issue; these were selected on the basis of the same criteria.

Finally, books introducing basic organizational behavior strategies were used in an attempt to get an overview of the many leadership theories that exist. This we used as a guideline to find the most appropriate theories on leadership styles for our thesis.

Our thesis is written on the basis of the academic work of many theorists and researcher. The data of this thesis is therefore a combination of qualitative and quantitative results; reflecting the extent to which our references have used qualitative or quantitative research methods.

2.1 Choice and Use of Sources
On the basis of our literature search we identified theories and articles which can be used when answering the problem statement. We are concentrating on uncovering the general tendencies within the area of gender stereotypical barriers to women’s career prospects.

We are introduced to some general tendencies concerning the ‘women and power’ and ‘social and gender roles’ respectively by the article, by Janice D. Yoder, called “Making Leadership Work More Effectively for Women” and the article, by Alice H. Eagly and Mary C. Johannesen-Schmidt, called “The Leadership Styles of Women and Men”. In their article, Alice H. Eagly and Mary C. Johannesen-Schmidt use the social role theory, which gave us the inspiration to use it as well. The social role theory of sex differences and similarities is a useful tool for understanding and explaining the influence of stereotypes on the allocation of social and gender roles onto men and women in society as well as the behavioral difference of men and women.

As mentioned, the social role theory explains the behavioral differences between men and women, which also partly explain why women and men lead differently. The Ohio State University study provides an explanation of different behavioral leadership styles. Therefore, in order to understand and analyze the leadership styles of men and women, the Ohio State University study is chosen. This study is used to characterize the leadership style of men and women and is used in the dis-
discussion, when discussing if the female leadership style could possibly be a barrier for women. Moreover, we decided on the Ohio State University study since a majority of our sources, i.e. research articles and studies, are referring to this study, using it in their analysis of female and male leadership styles, or simply using the concepts (‘consideration’ and ‘initiating structure’) defined by it.

In connection to the leadership style John R. P. French and Bertam Raven’s Taxonomy of Social Power is used to examine the power relations between leaders and their subordinates. This is also used later in the discussion to examine if the different sources of power might work as a barrier for women.

Moreover feminist perspectives on sex and gender will be introduced. This section is provided to give the reader an understanding of the concept of gender and its construction. It is important to know how people are constantly ‘correcting’ each other behavior to fit gender stereotypes to understand how they can produce barrier to women’s careers.

**2.2 Theories**

In this section the theories applied throughout the thesis are presented and described in greater detail. These are the theories which will form the basis of the analyses in later sections, and are discussed and questioned in the final discussion.

**2.2.1 Ohio State University Study**

When discussing female and male leadership styles the Ohio State University theory on leadership style is applied. The reason for this is that much of the literature used is using the concepts (consideration and initiating structure) defined in the Ohio State University study, when describing or categorizing female and male leadership styles.

The Ohio State theory on leadership styles will also be used in the later discussion about effective leadership, where a comparison between the leadership styles of women, men, and the effective leader will be made. The characterization of effective leadership style is to be used in order to see if a discrepancy between this leadership style and the style of women and men exists. That is, to see if gender-specific leadership styles work as a barrier to women and if so, how.

In the beginning, research on leadership concentrated on the personal traits of the good leader and argued that a person’s traits would determine if s/he would be a good leader. Later, researchers be-
gan to research the leadership behavior and therefore, they put emphasis on the leadership style (Brooks, 2009). The Ohio State University study was one such theory and in the late 1940ties and the beginning of the 1950ties a group of researchers at the Ohio State University developed a leadership model on the basis of leadership behavior description questionnaires (LBDQ). This questionnaire was developed from approximately 1800 descriptive items, which were thought to describe leadership behavior. The researchers expected to find nine different dimensions of leadership behavior, these descriptive items were therefore reduced to 150 statements, each of which only represented one of the nine dimensions (Tracy, 1987).

However, after the researchers conducted a factor analysis on the data, only two dimensions accounted for around 80% of the common variance, which means that actually there were not nine dimensions, but only two (Tracy, 1987). These two dimensions are called ‘consideration’ and ‘initiating structure’.

The Ohio State theory defines ‘consideration’ and ‘initiating structure’ as two independent dimensions, which means that they are not believed to be mutually exclusive. Leaders can therefore be e.g. display both dimensions of behavior simultaneously to a greater or lesser extent (Hughes, Ginnett and Gordon, 2009).

‘Consideration’ refers to the more people oriented behaviors, such displaying concern for subordinates, whereas leaders exhibiting ‘initiating structure’ behaviors tend to focus more on the job itself, i.e. getting the job done the best way possible.

A considerate leader treats subordinates as equals, listens to their ideas, and is willing to put these into operation. The leader stresses the importance of collaboration, job satisfaction, and the welfare of the group. This leader is also easy to approach, shows appreciation for good work, expresses personal concern for the subordinates, and provides supportive networks that values trust, relationship and friendship (Bass, 2008; Hughes, Ginnett and Gordon, 2009).

By contrast, a leader who shows structuring behavior is primarily focused on goals, meeting deadlines, and maintaining standards. This kind of leader will not obtain subordinates’ approval before acting, and s/he will alone decide what should be done, and how a job should be carried out. ‘Structuring’ leaders favor having clearly defined roles of the leader and the subordinates, and work will be organized into clear patterns (Bass, 2008; Hughes, Ginnett and Gordon, 2009).
Based on the Ohio State University study it is possible to illustrate four distinct types of leadership behaviors by graphing the two dimensions each occupying one of the axes. Each axis is a continuum running from ‘low’ display of the particular leadership behavior to ‘high’. Assuming that leaders can be evaluated on each of these continuums, their leadership style can be described (Hughes, Ginnett and Gordon, 2009).

Such a graph/model provides four quadrants of leadership style (low on both dimensions, high on one and low on the other and vice versa, and high on both). One may argue that a leader might be medium in both or some other combination, but for the sake of simplicity, leader will be evaluated as either ‘high’ or ‘low’.

![Figure 1: This figure is made on the basis of the above mentioned)](image)

Arguably, a leader, who exhibits high concentrations of both considering and structuring behaviors, is the most effective leader compared to a leader who is either low in one or both of the dimensions (see figure 1).

The argumentation behind this is composed of two sub-arguments; the first being that if subordinates do not know what is expected of them and what their goal is, and if they do not know how the work should be coordinated with others, or what their own role is in attaining the goal (a lack of initiating structure), it will lead to frustration among them.
Secondly, frustration may also arise from subordinates feeling that they do not get the necessary feedback or support (lack of consideration). The conclusion to these arguments is, arguably, that both dimensions are needed for effective leadership.

However, the Ohio State University study has its limitations. A widely known critique of behavioral theories (among them being Ohio State University study) is their inability to take the leader’s context into account. Numerous studies have shown that the best leadership style is dependent on the situation and that an initiating structure can be better than consideration in some situations and the other way around (Hughes, Ginnett and Gordon, 2009).

Secondly, as mentioned in the beginning of this section, the researchers behind the Ohio State University study originally expected there to be nine dimensions, but ended up with only two. Researcher, Lane Tracy, therefore questions their method and argues that their factor interpretations are wide open to bias, since their original nine factor structures proved to be wrong. She also argues that the hypothesis (that there are two dimension; consideration and initiating structure) is untested and actually suggests that maybe the model should not be used (Tracy, 1987).

The validity of the Ohio State University study has also been questioned by Bruce M. Fisher and Jack E. Edwards, who write that only a few actual assessments of the validity and the generalizability of the two dimensions exist (Fisher and Edwards, 1988). Timothy A. Judge, Ronald F. Piccolo and Remus Ilies, therefore, choose to test the validity of the two dimensions. They were able to conclude that the validity and generalizability of the behavioral dimensions of ‘consideration’ and ‘initiating structure’ do in fact prove applicable (Judge, Piccolo and Ilies, 2004).

Alice H. Eagly and Mary C. Johannesen-Schmidt emphasize the many obstacles preventing the researcher in achieving a well-controlled study, because the environments in which leaders lead are highly diverse – both between companies and within the single organization. They even argue that even though studies are carried out in a laboratory setting, the study will still be relatively uncontrolled. They also emphasize the fact that it is often leaders themselves or their associates who evaluates them and therefore they are not evaluated by the same standard (Eagly and Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001).

In conclusion, two dimensions of leadership behavior, on which leaders’ styles can be evaluated, have been identified by the Ohio State University study, i.e. ‘consideration’ and ‘initiating struc-
ture’. Secondly, based on the Ohio State University model, it has been argued that the most effective behavioral leadership style consists of a high display of both dimensions.

### 2.2.2 French and Raven’s Taxonomy of Social Power

Based on the two distinct behavioral dimensions of leadership styles, which are established in the Ohio State University study, there are reasons to believe that these two leadership styles also use different basis of authority; thereby gaining the support of their subordinates differently.

It is the objective of the following section to introduce the theory of the sources of leader power, which will be used to explain how the ‘considering’ and ‘structuring’ leaders differ in their preferences and use of power. This theory will be used as a supplement to the Ohio State University study in order to give a fuller description of the ‘consideration’ type of leader and ‘initiating structure’ type of leader.

John French and Bertam Raven identify five sources of power by which an individual may influence others. They explain power as the means a leader may use in order for him/her to influence subordinates and generate desired behaviors.

The five sources of power are as follows:

**Expert power** is basically a term for the common expression; knowledge is power. If a person has a lot of expertise in an area, it will enable him/her to influence other people in this area because other people depend on the person’s knowledge/skill/judgment. This means that “expert power is a function of the amount of knowledge one possesses relative to the rest of the members of the group,” (Hughes, Ginnett and Gordon, 2009: 142). This means that expert power is, theoretically, not tied to a rank or title, people will, however, accept the decisions and suggestions offered by people, who have significant expertise and knowledge in an area *relative* to the others.

However, for expert power to be influential, it is necessary that the person being influenced, trusts that the influencer is telling the truth, and that s/he actually do have knowledge in the area he/she is talking about (French and Raven, 1959).

**Another of French and Raven’s sources of power is legitimate power.** This power depends on a person’s organizational title and is therefore the person’s official authority. For example, the CEO has, by virtue of her/his position, more authority than the clerk. However, things are more complex than
that. French and Raven argues that there are different bases for legitimate power and that cultural values are one of them. Among other, cultural value are age, intelligence, sex, and other characteristics that are particularly positively valued in a certain culture. These characteristics will allow a person, who posses such characteristics, to prescribe behaviors for another person, who does not possess such characteristics (French and Raven, 1959).

A third basis of legitimate power is acceptance of social structure. Here it is a question whether a person accepts the social structure or not, if s/he does; s/he will also accept the legitimate authority of another person higher in the hierarchy and will be willing to behave in the prescribed way (French and Raven, 1959).

The last basis for legitimate power is designation by a legitimizing agent. This is when a person accepts an influence attempt, because it comes from a person who has been granted the power to do so by a legitimizing agent who is accepted by the person being influenced (French and Raven, 1959).

There are several examples of how powerful perceived legitimate power can be. Milgram’s study from 1961 showed that people are willing to carry out almost any order, if it comes from a person of authority. Based on his experiments concerning ‘obedience to authority’, he was able to conclude that people obey orders, as long as they are given by people with perceived authority (Coon and Mitterer, 2007). One can argues that in organizational settings, this shows how important it is for managers to demonstrate their legitimate power, in order to produce the desired behavior in their subordinates.

“Referent power refers to the potential influence one can exert due to the strength of the relationship between the leader and the followers.” (Hughes, Ginnett and Gordon, 2009: 143). This means that the better the relationship between subordinate and leader, the more the leader can influence the subordinates; however, the subordinates will also have greater influence on the leader (Hughes, Ginnett and Gordon, 2009). Referent power works because subordinates want to be identified with and accepted by the leader, whom they respect and look up to. The manager may therefore generate higher level of commitment (Bass, 2008) among the employees and prescribe behaviors desired.

As an example of referent power, French and Raven explain how a subordinate obey the order of the leader regardless, because s/he wants to avoid the discomfort present when arguing against/with a good friend (French and Raven, 1959). However, as mentioned earlier, referent power works ‘both ways’; since it is a function of the relationship between two persons. Therefore the risk, inhe-
rent in referent power, is that the leader may also be the one conforming, because of a desire to maintain the relationship. The leader may therefore be reluctant to act in some situations, and fail to take advantage of the other sources of power (French and Raven, 1959).

The fourth source of power is coercive power. Here, the key word is punishment. A person who has the power to remove positive events or to give negative sanctions to another person possesses coercive power over that person, and is able to make that person behave in a particular way more or less voluntary (Bass, 2008). A sanction could be to fire the subordinate, not give bonus or degrade the subordinate to a lower rank. Luckily for subordinates there are often limits to the leader’s coercive power. This could be rules or policies, but also common norms and the reputation of the person holding coercive power. But here it should be remembered that there are both inappropriate and appropriate uses of coercive power. Sometimes it can be necessary in order to change an undesired behavior and then it will be considered appropriate (Hughes, Ginnett and Gordon, 2009). However, it is important to know and have in mind that coercive power will decrease the attraction the subordinate has towards the leader (French and Raven, 1959). There is both formal and informal coercive power. Often formal coercion is expressed verbally and explicitly and informal coercion is expressed nonverbally and implicitly. The subordinates can also have power over the leader; they just control other sanctions than the leader does (Hughes, Ginnett and Gordon, 2009). They can e.g. refuse or slow down work.

While coercive power will decrease the ‘attractiveness’ of the leader, the last of French and Raven’s powers; reward power, will increase this attraction (French and Raven, 1959). Coercive power and reward power is each other’s opposites. Reward power builds on the leader’s ability to control the distribution of desirable reward to others, e.g. praise, time off, and monetary bonuses (French and Raven, 1959). However, it is important for the leader to know what kinds of rewards are valued by the subordinates, in order to make reward power effective. The leader needs to know what they will regard as a reward else it may work as a punishment instead (Hughes, Ginnett and Gordon, 2009).

Based on the above introduction of the various sources of power, one sees that the five bases of power are highly dependent and influenced by each other. French and Raven introduces the ‘sleeper effect’ when explaining this ‘interaction’ between the bases of power. Here, the influencer is perceived as unreliable, i.e. s/he has negative referent power. Therefore, when presenting ‘facts’, i.e.
when s/he demonstrates her/his expert power, the influencer is able to only produce little change in the influencees’ opinions. Normally, the influencer would be able to influence the opinions and belief of her/his influencees. However, a “negative social influence on their beliefs” is created (French and Raven, 1969: 451). This indicates that negative referent power might reduce the effect of expert power, which also shows that the powers are dependent on each other.

The fact that the powers can also be hard to distinguish can be seen with reward power. Something that is thought of as a reward by the leader might actually work as a punishment for the subordinate (e.g. public acknowledgement) and therefore work as coercive power (Hughes, Ginnett and Gordon, 2009). Therefore it might also be difficult for the leader to know the exact outcome of their influence attempt and how their subordinates will react. This can be a problem with reward power as subordinates might only do what they are rewarded to do. Many textbooks include examples of this phenomenon, e.g. no one wipes the tables in a restaurant because the employees are paid per customer served. It might also take time for the new leader to develop her/his bases of power, subordinates will therefore often have more power in this period.

2.2.3 Social Role Theory of Sex Differences and Similarities

Whereas the later sections ‘gender as a social construct’ and ‘female and male stereotypes’ attempt to explain and illustrate how gender ‘works’ through socialization and what constitute these gender stereotypes, respectively, the social role theory of sex differences and similarities takes it one step further back in an effort to understand where the gender stereotypical images of men and women originate from.

The social role theory of sex differences and similarities examines the origin of stereotypical gender based differences by exploring the interaction between social roles (occupational) and gender roles. It is therefore particularly useful in the answering of the question; why some social roles are limited to one gender, i.e. why few women are CEOs.

In an effort to understand what causes men and women to exhibit different social behaviors, the theory of social role theory was developed. In the 1980s the cumulated research findings, in the area of male and female social behavior, seemed to suggest that it is possible to detect a difference in the social behavior of men and women – however, the differences are small. Researchers believe that the understanding of these differences (and similarities) in behavior is closely connected to the prior decades’ research on gender stereotypes. Social scientists have traditionally defined stereotypes as
inaccurate portrayals of groups (Allport, 1954 in Eagly, Wood and Diekman, 2000), however, it turns out that the differences between men and women described in the scientific literature match the stereotypic beliefs that perceivers hold about the differences (Eagly, Wood, & Diekman, 2000).

Recognizing this relation between “the content of the ideas people have about women and men and scientifically documented sex differences in social behavior and personality” (Eagly, Wood, & Diekman, 2000: 124) the social role theory can be used to explain how humans let their behavior be guided by the expectations that society has for them. The theory bases this argument on the knowledge of social psychology. Social psychologists explain that humans naturally want to conform to these expectations and therefore behave accordingly. Therefore, when society has different expectations towards the behavior of men and women, then these beliefs will, through socialization processes, produce actual differences in social behavior.

The social role theory argues that these expectations to gender-appropriate behavior reflect the fact that men and women have different social roles and status in society. The theory emphasizes the historical sexual division of labor and gender hierarchy as the main reasons why, the sexes are implicitly seen as having different levels of status and different roles to fulfill. Observing men perform the typical male-roles, e.g. provider, and women perform the typical female-roles, like e.g. homemaker; people have created the beliefs that society hold about the sexes. Thus, according to social role theory; the explanation why the sexes differ must be found by analyzing the impact of these social structural factors (Carli and Eagly, 1999).

### 2.2.3.1 Social Roles

The responsibilities related to family life and society in general have been naturally divided between men and women based on their physical differences. The childbearing abilities of women have made them the primary caretaker of the children. Not being able to leave the newborn baby has caused women to be greatly involved in the domestic tasks. Men, on the other hand, have traditionally been involved with tasks outside the home.

In order for a woman to fulfill her domestic role, as e.g. caretaker, and for a man to fulfill his occupational role, the sexes have therefore specialized in very different directions. Women and men have adjusted to their particular roles by “acquiring the specific skills and resources linked to successful role performance and by adapting their social behavior to role requirements […]” (Eagly, Wood, & Diekman, 2000: 126).
This homemaker-provider division of labor can, according to the social role theory, explain why a gender-based stereotypic categorization of both practical skills and personal characteristics exist. Women often have better interpersonal skills, and a superior ability to interpret nonverbal communication. This expertise makes women able to develop close relationships with others, which is an important part of her role description as the nurturing figure. Thus, female behaviors are categorized as mainly displaying communal characteristics, e.g. expressiveness, selflessness, and concern for others (Eagly, Wood, & Diekman, 2000).

For men to deliver a successful role performance; a quite different set of skills have been cultivated. Male roles are characterized using traits like confidence and self-assertion, as well as having a desire for achievement (Bakan, 1966; Wiggins 1992 in Carli and Eagly, 1999). These characteristics manifest the agentic behavior expected of men.

2.2.3.2 Stereotypic Gender Roles

From the communal and agentic behaviors two distinct gender roles emerge. This means that the gender roles, which are defined as “[the shared expectations that apply to individuals on the basis of their social identified sex [...]” (Eagly, Wood, & Diekman, 2000: 127), are formed on the basis of the sex-typical activities carried out by individuals of each sex – both in occupational and family settings/situations. Dominating tendencies in women’s behavior, caused by the requirements of their social roles, thus become stereotypic of women. Therefore, when women display communal and domestic behaviors in order to fulfill their social roles satisfactory, these are incorporated in the female gender role. The same goes for the man, where the agentic behavior; necessary to successfully perform his more instrumental role, become stereotypic of the male gender role.

Social role theory argues that the stereotypic gender roles control behavior in two ways. The expectations that constitute gender roles do not only determine the likely behavior of men and women, they also describe the beliefs about how men and women should ideally behave.

This reasoning is explained using the descriptive norms and injunctive norms, which means the “expectations derived from observations of what people do” and the “expectations about what people should do” respectively (Cialdini & Trost, 1998 in Carli and Eagly, 1999: 207). The influence of others is an important part of understanding the power of descriptive norms to produce behavior. For example, when a woman sees how other women behave in a particular situation, she is likely to behave in the same way. Injunctive norms associated with gender roles demand a women to behave the way a women ‘ought to behave’, such as the idea that women ought to display kind-
ness or interest in home related issues. This combination of norms creates a normative pressure on women to behave according to their sex-typical role. The same norms guide men’s behavior.

Deviating from the norms – especially the injunctive norms – lead to negative sanctions from the society. When failing to behave according to the descriptive norms in a specific situation, it causes the surroundings to express emotions of surprise. Deviating from the injunctive norms, however, produce stronger reactions related to moral disapproval (Eagly, Wood, & Diekman, 2000). On the other hand, when behaving ‘appropriate’, one receives approval from others.

Social role theory suggests that these rewards and punishments lead people to regulate their behavior to fit the stereotypic gender role, which “[t]o the extent that these normative expectations about behavior appropriate to women and men become internalized as part of individuals’ self-concept and personalities […]”(Carli & Eagly, 1999: 208). Thus, social role theory predicts that men and women behave differently in order to conform to gender roles and stereotypes; causing the self-concepts of women and men to become the stereotypes. Moreover, this ‘mechanism’ has a self-perpetuating effect “[t]o the extent that men and women actually behave stereotypically, these differences would in turn strengthen gender roles and stereotypes and channel men and women into different social roles […]” (Eagly, Wood, & Diekman, 2000: 151).

2.2.3.3 Gender Hierarchy
The gender hierarchy is, according to social role theory, closely connected to sexual division labor. The social role of women, as e.g. homemakers and housewives, has isolated them in their homes and kept them from taking part in the building of society’s political and corporate structures. Based on their social role men are, on the other hand, expected to be the task-leaders in society. This means that a higher level of power and status are associated with male gender roles. Women are emotional leaders; however, a woman’s interpersonal qualities are valued less than the task-solving abilities of men. The opinion and ideas of a woman as well as the woman herself are therefore seen as less important (Eagly, Wood and Diekman, 2000).

2.2.3.4 Implications of the Social Role Theory on Leadership
Based on the theory of the influence of normative gender roles and stereotypic images of the behavior of men and women, social role theory holds its own interpretation of the low number of women in senior management.
Because individuals violating the stereotypic expectations are often perceived unfavorable, people are reluctant to choose occupations that do not conform to the communal and agentic gender roles. This, according to the theory, can also to some degree explain the gender segregation of the labor market (Carli & Eagly, 1999). A woman exhibiting confident and competent behaviors – the typical required behaviors of a manager – is therefore viewed as less acceptable, expect within the female-dominated occupations like e.g. nursing because it is characteristics normally associated with females. Here she is ‘allowed’ to be better than a man. Thus, the female self-concept makes women display more subordinate behaviors, in order to conform to their perceived hierarchical gender-status.

These implications are applied in the later discussion regarding the barriers of female leaders.

2.2.3.5 Limitations
The theory, however, hold some limitations. Stereotypes do not control the behavior in all situations. A study made by scholars Sczesny and Kühnen (2004) proved that managers applying systematic methods in the recruitment process were able to adjust for their stereotypical images. They were less likely to perceive males as more competent leaders.

Secondly, the influence of gender roles seems to diminish when comparing men and women having the same social (occupational) role. The constraints of the social functions, like e.g. management position, therefore limit the power of gender. The male nurse will, e.g., be demanded to behave according to his occupation, and not his gender.
3. Perspectives on Sex and Gender

As defined earlier; sex and gender refer to the biological sex, i.e. male or female, and to the social gender, i.e. man or woman, respectively. However, in order to investigate if a connection between the stereotypical gender roles and the stereotypical expectations of a senior management member exists, as well as how their relation affect the career prospect of corporate women, it is only natural to first take a closer look at these definitions of sex and gender, i.e. their underlying assumptions.

The construction of gender may hold part of the explanation why gender norms dominate most aspects of human life – including work life – and are very difficult to escape.

The matter of ‘sex’ and ‘gender’ has been the subject of feminists’ critical examination for several decades. Therefore, wanting to understand the implication of sex and gender, feminist theory is chosen to explore the construction of gender, i.e. how we are all ‘gendered’. Yet, despite the common concern with the equality of men and women; many independent lines of thought exists within feminism. Therefore, all feminist do not understand ‘sex’ and ‘gender’ the same way. These different branches of feminist theory therefore offer diverging perspective on what ‘sex’ and ‘gender’ are. Besides explaining the ‘construction’ of gender the following section is an attempt to illustrate the different feminist branches’ meanings of the terms, and to hold the implications of these meanings up against each other.

3.1 Feminism – Gender as a Social Construct

Feminists originally distinguished the two concepts of sex and gender in order to escape the bi-deterministic logic\(^1\) dominating the discussion of gender-based differences and similarities in the late 18\(^{th}\) and early 19\(^{th}\) century. Advocates of the biological determinism argued that the diverging social and behavioral traits between men and women were a reflection of the difference in male and female biology. These ‘medical facts’ caused, according to the theory, women to be passive and conservative, while men were energetic and passionate individuals. This theory was, among other, used to justify why women should not obtain the same political rights as men. Women would simply not be interested in having or exercising such rights due to their biology.

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\(^1\) It is the theory that “our genes and genetic makeup determine every aspect of our being and of our personality” (Nurture or nature). Also known as genetic determinism.
In order to promote change and demand equal rights for men and women; a new basis for the discussion of gender differences was needed. If the biological features of individuals determine behavior, interests, and cognitive abilities, change is, arguably, impossible. Feminism, therefore, argues that psychological and behavioral differences between the sexes is caused by socialization, cultural practices, and social norms; causing them to develop different social genders. If gender is something socially produced and ‘learned’, theoretically it is changeable and ‘unlearnable’. Among the first to describe gender as being something learned was social theorist Simone de Beauvoir, who claimed that one is not born as a woman – it is something one becomes (Lorber, 1994).

This phenomenon, illustrated by Beauvoir’s statement, is what social scientists today call the ‘social construction of gender’. When traits are associated with a certain gender, it is thus an “intended or unintended product of a social practice” (Haslanger, 1995:97).

Judith Lorber describes the social construction of gender as ‘doing gender’, i.e. positively and negatively sanctioning other people according to expected gender practices. According to her, everyone ‘does gender’ instinctively all the time, which is why people do not realize that they are constantly participating in the shaping and re-shaping of gender (Lorber, 1994). Through repeated practices people are unconsciously controlling the behavior of each other and making sure that all behave ‘gender appropriately’.

She explains society’s need to divide males and female into constraining gender roles, by describing gender as a social institution. Being a social institution; gender therefore becomes a way for human beings to organize their lives. Gender stereotypes are used as a tool to reduce uncertainty, because they provide a basic set of assumptions about what to expect, when meeting new people. Lorber claims that human society depends on the predictability of the gender division to allocate resources, responsibilities, leadership, and values among its members. She explains that societies differ in the extent to which they distribute these goods and tasks on the basis of talents, motivations, and competence or based on the membership of a specific group in terms of gender, race, and ethnicity (Lorber, 1994). However gender (and age) works as a basic way of classifying people in all societies.

Feminist branches generally agree that gender is a social construct. Regarding the actual construction of the genders, however, no consensus seems to be possible. When discussing which exact social practices cause this gender-construction, and what social construction actually is, social scien-
tists offer different solutions. Each branch holds its own suggestion to how and why gender is constructed.

Nancy Chodorow, 1974, believes that the constructed gender is developed by the infant as a response to certain gender-based parenting practices. A mother-daughter relationship is therefore different from a mother-son relationship, which means that the mother unintentionally will encourage the forming of an either masculine or feminine personality (Chodorow, 1974). These gendered personalities are reflected in women and men behaving stereotypically. That ‘being emotional’ or ‘emotionally dependent’ is associated with the stereotypical feminine personality is therefore, using Chodorow’s argumentation, caused by the symbiotic relationship between mother and daughter. Men are, on the other hand, often emotionally detached because a mother will not identify as closely with the male infant (Chodorow, 1974).

Another theory, developed by Catherine MacKinnon, uses the theory of sexuality to understand the meaning of genders. It suggests that the sexual objectification of women as an object for men’s desire produce divergent genders descriptions. The stereotypical perception of males as dominating and females as submissive is a reflection of this sexual power dynamic (Haslanger, 1995). One can therefore argue that the sexual hierarchy of femininity and masculinity spill over into society and cause for gender appropriate behaviors and roles to be produced. According to MacKinnon this means that the idea of gender equality is utopia as long as gendered sexuality determines a person’s place in the gender hierarchy. The socialization of males and females differs because of these underlying power inequalities. Men have simply been taught to find the submissive women attractive, and women have been taught to find the dominating male attracting. MacKinnon suggests a ban of pornography as one of the ways to end the sexual dominance of men (Haslanger, 1995).

Social learning theorists, however, believe that gender identity is acquired through immediate processes of socialization. Albert Bandura explains this process as being made up by the encouragement from parents to develop gender-appropriate behavior and interests as well as the observation of same-sex models (Shaffer, 2009). Research on the development of gender roles in young children shows that parents seem to, unconsciously, promote/cultivate masculine identities in their male children and feminine identities in their female children (Fagot, 1978 in Shaffer, 2009). If a boy, when playing dress-up, puts on a dress he will, most likely, be told by his parents that he looks silly whereas his sister, when putting on the dress, will receive a positive feedback. Using these rewards and punishments parents reinforce ‘appropriate’ behaviors while discouraging unsuitable cross-gender behavior. Using the term of Judith Lorber, which was introduced earlier the parents
are ‘doing gender’, thereby shaping the self-concept of their children to conform to the feminine and masculine gender-norms of society.

Secondly, as mentioned above, children observe the behavior of persons whom they identify with and copy. A girl, who identifies with, e.g., her mother and girlfriends, will copy their behavior in order to conform to the feminine ideal. Other females will then again copy her behavior, and so on. Theorists argue that it is this reinforcing nature of the socialization process that is problematic for the liberation of women. Because women are socialized into the subordinate position as the weaker sex, they learn to be passive and ignorant, which are qualities that are then inherited by their daughters.

In summary, whether one views gender as originating from functions of sexuality or from the learned masculine and feminine behavioral patterns; gender is a vital part of the way human beings organize the tasks in society, which is why people, unconsciously and automatically, perform this ‘social construction’ on a daily basis.

This explains that gender is something ‘learned’, which means that women do not necessarily have to behave subordinate, but that it is changeable. However, it also suggests the difficulty in changing what people think of as ‘normal’, since it is mostly an unconscious process.

Whether one believes Chodorow, MacKinnon, or the social learning theory to be true, it means that different ‘solutions’ must be applied to change the social construction of gender; in order to ‘construct’ men and women as equals. Whereas MacKinnon argue that men and women have to be taught to be sexually equal, and Chodorow believes that changes in the early months of parenting is needed, social learning theory suggests that parents (and society) should not negatively sanction the individual when behaving ‘non-gender appropriate’, as well as emphasize the need for same sex role models.

The social learning theory seems to best be able to explain how the communal and agentic behaviors, which the social role theory explained how came to be gender stereotypic for women and men respectively, are ‘learned’ and reinforced. They both emphasize the effectiveness of norms, i.e. positive and negative sanctions from surroundings, to control and produce gender differences in behavior. Which means that also in organizational settings people will control each other’s behavior, and like persons that stay within the constraints of the gender role, and dislike people acting outside it.
Oakley, 2000, suggests that the socialization perspective can help one understand how the ‘gender identity’ of women, as she calls it, which includes an attention to feelings and relationship with others (communal behaviors), can come to work against the woman when she wants to be a senior manager. The sensitivity of the female gender can be mistaken for weakness. However when not displaying sensitivity, the women will be negatively sanctioned for not behaving ‘like a woman’.

The understanding of the social construction of gender is important to see how this constant ‘gender construction’ interferes with the female manager’s successful performance as leader. This is further discussed as a barrier in later sections.

3.2 The Homogeneous Gender

Recent post modernistic feminist theories have, however, questioned if the understanding of gender is as ‘simple’ as stated above.

Viewing gender as a social construction holds some underlying metaphysical assumptions, which is denoted gender realism. Gender realism means that theorists make the assumption that women can be identified and grouped together, i.e. categorized as women, on the basis of some common characteristics, which all women share. Thus, these common criteria are thought to differentiate all women from all men. The definition of the female gender and the understanding of what it means ‘to be a woman’ are thought to be composed by specific features and experiences, shared among women.

However, if a woman does not, e.g., experience a sexual objectification, or have a feminine personality, she will not, theoretically, count as a woman. One may ask what she then becomes. A man? On that account, gender realism has been criticized for having a superficial conception of universal womanhood, and for imposing an ideal ‘version’ of womanhood.

Elizabeth Spelman, arguing against the gender realism, states that the gender realists’ assumption that gender is constructed independently of race, class, ethnicity and nationality is incorrect (Mikkola, 2006). If these had no effect on the development of social gender, women all over the world would experience that of ‘being a woman’ as exactly the same; which does not seem to be the actual case. Moreover, Spelman argues, the differences in social background among women, which influences the ‘construction’ of femininity, creates different types of femininities in different societies (Mikkola, 2006).
One could argue that feminist themselves ‘socially constructed’ femininity. That is, by defining
genders, theorists unintentionally create an unspoken normative description of the ‘woman’. Judith
Butler believes that a categorization can never be just descriptive, but will inevitably involve some
normative commitments for its members (Mikkola, 2006). She adds that these ‘membership-
conditions’ will never satisfy all women. She therefore questions gender as being something that is
ture and real, and states that people cannot actually ‘do their gender wrong’. Butler suggests that
gender is more like a performance, which consists of certain repeated feminine or masculine activi-
ties; such as dressing up for girls and playing sports for boys. A male transvestite is just ‘perform-
ing’ the female gender, therefore, Butler claims one cannot say the he is not a really a woman.
Therefore, according to performative gender theory, instead of trying to define ‘woman’, feminists
should concentrate on the power dynamics in society and how they shaped the understanding of
‘being a woman’ (Mikkola, 2006).

Based on Spelman and Butler’s criticism of the categorization of women, one may question if the
inequality between men and women are actually reinforced by the definition of women as a group
different from men. This might in itself become normative, as Butler claims. That is, when women
are claimed to offer something unique in terms of a ‘special female leadership style’ it is again the
differences – rather than similarities – between men and women that are emphasized. It seems that
it only confirms the female and male stereotypes.

This critique is elaborated further in the later discussion on barriers.

3.3 The Distinction between Sex and Gender

In early theoretical work of feminists concerning sex and gender, the two concepts are considered as
being complementary to one another; as gender is thought to be the ‘social interpretation of sex’. Thus, sex and gender are seen as being complementary to each other. According to scholar L. Nichol-
olson, the sex of the individual functions as a ‘coat-rack’, upon which the gender is ‘hung’; there-
by making the male or female sex (of a newborn) the basis of gender-construction. The expected
behavior of males and females is then imposed on the sexed body by society. The sex is therefore
fixed – an individual is either male or female – however, the difference in the cultural interpreta-
tion of male bodies versus female bodies creates masculine and feminine persons (Nicholson, 1994).
Cultural anthropologist, Gayle Rubin, suggests that it is through this ‘sex/gender system’ that “the
biological raw material of human sex and procreation is shaped by human, social intervention”
(Rubin, 2006: 90), from which the gender-based division and oppression of the sexes stem. Radical feminist Rubin, therefore argue that the objective of feminism should be to end ‘women’s subordination’ by creating a genderless society through social reform, where sex is not associated with any ‘appropriate’ behavior or sexuality (Rubin, 2006).

To think of sex and gender as complementary does not, however, seem to always hold. Research on, e.g., transsexuality suggests that sometimes sex and gender does not match. Moreover, some societies have more than two genders. Lorber tells about a third gender called ‘manly hearted women’ found in some Indian societies. She explains them as “biological females who work, marry, and parent as men” (Lorber, 1994: 291). Rather than being either man or woman; their social status is female men. One might therefore argue that even though most Western societies (only) “allow” two genders, these do not necessarily have to fit the sex of an individual. The situation in Western societies may be that certain beliefs about the sex, e.g. that men are stronger than women, produce gender norms and thereby expected personalities and behavior, which is also explained in the social role theory.

Some theorists, like Butler, claims that the understanding of the sexed body is just as much a social construct as is gender. According to Butler, people are taught, e.g., who to desire, i.e. men desire women and women desire men. Her conclusion is then that there are no diction between sex and gender.

Other feminist brands argue against the distinction between sex and gender. They find it useless because when creating an opposition like sex/gender, or irrational/rational; emotional/stable, one of the terms will always be superior. Gender being perceived as the mind is superior to the body. However, women are more strongly associated with their bodies and are therefore devaluated. Prokhovnik illustrates this with the example of a job interview, in which women are, more often than men, asked how they are going to manage taking care of their children while at work. This shows that a woman has a harder time ‘escaping’ their bodily features, as e.g. reproduction, and because she is closer to her nature, she is often perceived as more emotional and irrational. By contrast, men are assumed to be able to ‘escape’ their body and be rational and productive, and are therefore met as ‘gender-neutral’ persons, Prokhovnik claims (Prokhovnik, 2000).

Therefore, as women are associated closer to their body – nature – than men, they must prove that they can be rational and stable. Women cannot like men ‘escape’ their bodies. Prokhovnik claims
that the reproductive and nurturing ability of women keeps their gender closely associated with their sex; thereby defining them as emotional – too emotional for a manager position – and as more concerned about family than the job.
4. Males and Females

In this section, a short introduction to stereotypes, how and why they are present, are provided. Hereafter, the stereotypic images of both men and women are described and discussed, as to answer what they constitute and if they work as a barrier for women.

Secondly, the leadership styles of men and women are described for similar reasons; to answer if any difference between the leadership style of men and women is present and if these differences in leadership behavior are a barrier, and if so how.

4.1 Stereotypes

Iris Varner and Linda Beamer argue that stereotypes are the mental categories we make in order to understand culture and one another (Varner and Beamer, 2005). They argue that when people encounter something unfamiliar or complex, people tend to categorize the data in order for it to make sense. This makes it easier for people to interpret new encounters because they have categories, which they can use to make sense of the new encounter (Varner and Beamer, 2005).

John E. Williams and Deborah L. Best write that “[s]tereotypes are simply generalizations about groups of people” (Williams and Best, 1982: 16). E.g. if a person meets a hippie, that person will try to categorize the data about the hippie and on the basis of this; the person will make generalizations about hippies. This will provide the person with a set of tools, which the person can use to understand and interpret a hippie next time one comes by. They recognize that not all stereotypes are correct or adequate, and that some people fail to recognize the differences there can be within a group or that some groups might overlap (Williams and Best, 1982), e.g. Danes and Swedes are two groups, but they overlap when a Swede is living in Denmark.

Williams and Best agrees with Ashmore and Del Boca when defining gender stereotypes, but they argue that the general beliefs about each gender might be “conceptualized as operating at two different levels” (Williams and Best, 1982: 16), where the first level is sex-role stereotypes and the second is sex-trait stereotypes. The sex-role stereotypes are the beliefs concerning what is regarded as being appropriate in terms of the roles and activities for each of the genders. Sex-trait stereotypes are the psychological characteristics believed to characterize each gender (Williams and Best, 1982).

One may argue that what Williams and Best call ‘sex-role stereotypes’ are the same as the gender roles explained by the social role theory, which are controlled by the descriptive and injunctive
norms. Injunctive norms, which are “expectations about what people should do” (Cialdini & Trost, 1998 in Carli and Eagly, 1999: 207) and ideally would do (Eagly, Wood and Diekman, 2000) governs the expected behavior of men and women.

As a conclusion to this, one could argue that people use stereotypes to form expectations to other people or cultures and to generalize about these, in order to fill gaps in their knowledge about different things.

In the following paragraph the sex-trait stereotypes are examined in an effort to understand which traits, behaviors, and psychological abilities are perceived as being characteristic for women and men respectively. As described in earlier paragraphs, there is reason to suspect that the stereotypic gender categorization proposes a barrier for women, who wants senior management positions. Then these characteristics will be used in the further discussion about female and male leadership styles.

4.1.1 The Stereotypic Females and Males

For decades many researchers have studied and written about the characteristics of females and males, trying to find out which characteristics are perceived as stereotypically feminine and masculine. As mentioned earlier, the social role theory suggests that the early structures in society, i.e. the sexual labor division, have caused gender stereotypic roles and traits to develop; affecting the behavior of men and women. Women developed skills for the tasks needed at home (e.g. caring for others, communicating etc), which means that she developed more relationship oriented skills. Males also developed specialized skills, but those skills were more oriented toward tasks, since it was his job to hunt and provide food for the family and to protect the family. He, therefore, developed skills such as being independent, daring, aggressive, and strong.

These communal (feminine) and agentic (masculine) behavior and characteristics were, according to social role theory, necessary to fulfill their role in society. The stereotypes of men and women therefore reflect these traits and abilities, which scientific work of a number of researchers show. Generally, research findings show that men are considered to possess more agentic qualities and women are considered to possess more communal qualities (Carli and Eagly, 1999; Rosette and Tost, 2010; Cann and Siegfried, 1990).
In 1975, John E. Williams and Susan M. Bennett wrote a research article called “The Definition of Sex Stereotypes via the Adjective Check List”. Here they used the ‘adjective check list’\textsuperscript{2} to assess the characteristics of men and women most commonly held in many cultures (Williams and Bennett, 1975). Respondents (both men and women) were given the list with the 300 adjectives and then asked to consider each of them; placing them masculine, feminine or neither feminine or masculine (Williams and Bennett, 1975). Adjectives where less than three quarters of the respondents associated it with one of the sexes were sorted out and the rest of the adjectives were kept. From this they were able to produce a list of 33 adjectives commonly associated with men and 32 commonly associated with women. The full list of adjectives associated with men and women can be seen in appendix 1: Sex Focused Stereotypes of Men and Women.

Looking at the list of adjectives associated with men, one could argue that many of them fit the description of an agentic behavior. It is adjectives like ‘independent’, ‘assertive’ and ‘courageous’ (see paragraph about the social role theory) that is also used to describe agentic behavior. Regarding the list of adjectives associated with women, one could argue that they are more oriented towards relationships (e.g. sensitive, emotional, gentle, and talkative). The adjectives fit the description of the communal behavior.

A closer look at the tables reveals that there are many opposites between women and men. For example, one adjective associated with men are ‘unemotional’ whereas ‘emotional’ is associated with women, another example is ‘independent’ for men and ‘dependent’ for women. One seems to be able to infer that men and women are (stereotypically) perceived by people to each other’s opposites. This suggests that people define men and women on the basis of their differences, meaning that people might have difficulties defining e.g. a woman without mentioning a man.

There are, however, also similarities between the sexes. The adjective ‘attractive’ is for 96% of men and 76% of women associated with women and ‘handsome’ is for 94% of both men and women associated with men (see appendix 1).

As a second dimension of their study, they added additional column to the table with an evaluative classification of all the adjectives as being favorable, unfavorable, or neutral. For each sex there were 15 adjectives with a bias (favorable or unfavorable). 10 of the adjectives associated with women were evaluated as unfavorable whereas 10 of the adjectives associated with men, were fa-

\textsuperscript{2} It is a list of 300 adjectives. It has been concluded that the list is a good tool when defining and studying sex stereotypes (Williams and Bennett, 1975)
The researchers argue that these results support that the male stereotype is perceived more favorable than the female stereotype (Williams and Bennett, 1975).

Linda L. Carli and Alice H. Eagly write that there are also stereotypic cognitive characteristics. ‘Cognitive’ refers to how a person process information and how a person apply knowledge, therefore, the ‘stereotypic cognitive characteristics’ is peoples’ stereotypes about how e.g. men and women process information and apply knowledge. According to these stereotypes; men are “more analytical, exact, and better at abstractions, reasoning, and problem solving”, whereas women are perceived “as more imaginative, intuitive, perceptive, verbally skilled, and creative” (Cejka and Eagly, 1999 in Carli and Eagly, 1999: 209).

In summary, very different behaviors and cognitive abilities are allocated to the two genders. Moreover, when determining the favorability of the gender specific competences people seem to perceived masculine qualities as more favorable than feminine qualities.

4.2 Male and Female Leadership Styles

Throughout history extensive research has been conducted about leadership styles and many theories have been constructed in this field, starting with Frederick Taylor; when it was mainly a question about efficiency, to the Ohio State University study, and all the way to the transformational and transactional leadership theories in the nineteen nineties.

Leadership is an increasingly important issue for organizations, and recent leadership theories, like diversity management, have brought additional attention to the benefits of having a diverse workforce (Brooks, 2009). The belief is that men and women differ in their approach to management, and therefore offer different qualities. Arnie Cann and William D. Siegfried, 1990, were indeed able to conclude that there is a difference in how women and men are thought to lead. Using the terminology of the Ohio State University study, they examined the perceived difference between leader behavior of men and women, by letting participants associate a number of masculine, feminine, and neutral traits with either ‘consideration’ or ‘initiating structure’.

In the following paragraphs the leadership styles of men and women are further explored also using the terminology of the Ohio State University study. This is done in an effort to see if the same stereotypical perception of men and women ‘spill over’ into the occupational settings, and also prevails when it comes to describing leadership style. As mentioned in the paragraph about stereotypes,
men and women seem to be defined on the basis of each other’s differences, male and female leadership styles are therefore here described simultaneously.

As established is the paragraph about female and male stereotypes, females are considered as exhibiting communal behaviors and men as exhibiting agentic behaviors. Arguably, that means, that women are more relationship-oriented, whereas men are more task-oriented.

On the basis of the above, one may suggest that, if a woman stereotypically is exhibiting communal behaviors, it will be reflected in her leader behavior, which then will also be more relationship-oriented. The same argumentation can be made regarding men; a man’s leader behavior will, therefore, demonstrate a higher concern towards the task at hand.

Scholars, Alice H. Eagly and Mary C. Johannesen-Schmidt, agree with this line of arguments. They write in their report, “The Leadership Styles of Women and Men”, that “to the extent that gender roles spill over to influence leadership behavior in organizational settings, the behavior of female leaders, compared with that of male leaders, may be more interpersonally oriented,” (Eagly and Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001: 12).

In order to set out the leadership style of men and women more precisely, one could again take a closer look at the work of the two researchers, Arnie Cann and William D. Siegfried, and their two studies on gender stereotypes. In their first study, the researchers selected 12 male, 12 female, and 12 neutral characteristics from John E. Williams and Deborah L. Best’s book “Measuring Stereotypes: A Thirty-Nation Study”. The researchers provided the respondents with descriptions of the leadership styles ‘consideration’ and ‘initiating structure’ and asked them to rank the 36 characteristics on a 5 point scale (where consideration is 1 and initiating structure is 5). This first study shows that female characteristics are associated with the consideration leadership style; having an average rated value closer to one. While male characteristics are rated as being closer to 5; suggesting an initiating structure leadership style (Cann, and Siegfried, 1990).

In their second study, they used ten behavioral descriptors for consideration and ten for initiating structure. These behavioral descriptors were selected from the Leadership Behavior Description Questionnaire (LBDQ) (Cann and Siegfried, 1990). This questionnaire was designed in Ohio State university study to determine the two dimensions (Tracy, 1987). Respondents were asked to rank the ten behavioral descriptors for each dimension on a 5-point scale ranging from masculine (1) to
feminine (5). This study also shows that a consideration leadership style is judged to be more feminine and initiating structure is judged to be more masculine (Cann, and Siegfried, 1990).

In Oakley’s article she draws on the work of both Henry Mintzberg and Sally Helgesen in order to put descriptive word on the ways men and women lead. Words used describing men are, among other: “contact, decisional, interruption, usurpation, protect, burden and shield” (Mintzberg, 1973 in Oakley, 2000: 327), which Oakley argues points to the fact that male managers have a more instrumental attitude toward others, i.e. colleagues, subordinates etc (Oakley, 2000). Describing female managers, it is words like: “flow, interactive, access, conduit, involvement, network, and reach” that are used (Helgesen, 1990 in Oakley, 2000: 327). In order to state another argument for women to have a consideration leadership style and men to have an initiating structure leadership style, the words used by Mintzberg and Helgesen can be compared to the description of the consideration and initiating structure leadership style.

To stress the importance of collaboration, to listen to subordinates’ ideas and be willing to implement those ideas is part of the description of a ‘consideration’ leadership style. ‘Interactive’ and ‘involvement’ is words used by Helgesen and it could be argued that these two descriptions basically have the same meaning. Another of Helgesen’s words is ‘network’ this is also mentioned in the description of ‘consideration’; that such leader will provide supportive networks that values relationships, friendship and trust. ‘Access’ and ‘reach’ can also be argued to describe the same as ‘easy to approach’. In conclusions to this comparison, it can be states, arguably, that females do have a consideration leadership style.

Looking at the words used for men by Mintzberg regarding the argument that these words illustrate a more instrumental approach, one can argue for the ‘initiating structure’ leadership style for men. This is building on that a leader with an ‘initiating structure’ leadership style is task-oriented and primarily focused on goals-attainment. Such leader will decide who should do what and the role each play in attaining the goal will be clear. Therefore, an instrumental attitude can be said to describe the behavior an initiating structure leader exhibits.

4.2.1 Leader Power

It has been established that women are more relationship oriented and more concerned with the welfare of their subordinates and their leadership style is characterized as consideration. Therefore, it has also been established that women are more focused on improving the welfare of their subordi-
nates, emphasizes job satisfaction, and listens to subordinates’ ideas. On the basis of this, one could argue that women are more likely to use reward power in their influence attempts. This is, among other things, based on the assumption that subordinates feels valued and more motivated if their leader listens to them and let them participate in decision making and that is can be thought of as a reward (French and Raven, 1959). Janice D. Yoder supports this argument that women are more likely to use reward power and she writes that reward power is often used by successful women to improve the welfare of their subordinates (Yoder, 2001). This is not to say men are not using reward power, mere that women might be more liable to use this kind of power.

According to social role theory, males are associated more with power and status than females are. Males’ abilities are also valued higher by society than females’ abilities. Looking at the cultural basis of legitimate power, this means that males possess a characteristic which is valued by the culture (their sex is male) and therefore, the society allows them to prescribe behaviors for other persons who do not possess this characteristics. This further means that males naturally possess legitimate power in society because they are males, but females are not naturally given this power and therefore, often needs others to legitimatize them (French and Raven, 1959; Eagle, Wood and Diekman, 2000). One could argue, on the basis of this, that males will also naturally possess this power in an organizational setting, but females, on the other hand, lack this power in such settings. But, looking at the two other bases of legitimate power, acceptance of social structure and designation by a legitimizing agent, females should possess the same legitimate power in organizations as males provided that the subordinates accepts the social structure and accepts the agent who has granted the power to the individual.

### 4.2.2 Are Female and Male Leadership Styles Distinct?

So far it has been established that men and women are thought of as having different leadership styles. As results indicate feminine values are perceived as constituting the ‘consideration’ leadership style and the masculine traits as constituting the ‘initiating structure’ leadership style.

As far as the social role theory’s prediction, that genders actually behave according to the prevailing/existing stereotypes, because it is related to successful role performance, hold true, one might infer that actual – not only stereotypical – differences exist between the behaviors and values of men and women. Therefore, one the basis of this argumentation it seems that these stereotypic perceived leadership styles also in organizational settings produce actual gender differences; mean-
ing that women actually behave according to the ‘consideration’ leadership style, while men are ‘structuring’

It is theorized that the general behavior, which an individual is exhibiting, is representing what the individual finds important. Therefore, what an individual values will play a significant role in that individual’s behavior – including leadership style (Hughes, Ginnett and Gordon, 2009). Through socialization women have learned to be sensitive to other’s feelings and to “weigh decisions based on their impact on relationships” (Oakley, 2000: 327), which are values that they will also bring to the workplace.

However, were Oakley, 2000, fears that this ‘soft’ gender identity of women may work as a disadvantage for female managers, Helgesen, 1990, Rosener, 1990; 1995, and Adler, 1993 (all in Oakley, 2000), by contrast suggest that this clear distinction between female and male leadership styles does not necessarily need to work as a barrier for women. Women in leadership have become a hot topic in today’s society and therefore a lot of attention has also been paid to their unique relationship-oriented leadership style. According to the three researcher women should indeed emphasize their difference from men, rather than downplaying their feminine traits. The interactive leadership styles of women and their communal abilities are leadership skills that are in high demand in the flatter organizations, where empowerment of employees and information flow throughout the organization are highly prioritized. Helgesen, Rosener, and Adler (in Oakley, 2000) argue that women represent a new approach to leadership, which corporations, which are increasingly embracing diversity and networking, value.

The perception of women as ‘consideration’ leaders gives women a basis for marketing themselves; turning old weaknesses to advantages. Thereby eliminating the barrier constituted by their gender stereotype.

Helgesen, 1990, and Adler, 1990, (in Oakley, 2000) add that this new interactive leadership style can also be adopted by men; it is simply build upon the female values and feminine traits. Yet, despite this adding the broader interpretation Oakley, 2000, argue that the creation of a superior female leadership style, meant to correct the weaknesses of the traditional male leadership style may be setting female managers up to fail from the start. As the post modernist feminist, Butler argued; any categorization becomes normative. One may argue that women might succeed in escaping the male stereotype of a leader, nevertheless Oakley, 2000, and Butler, (in Mikkola, 2006), both agree that the belief that a unique feminine leadership style exists creates just another female leadership
style for women to live up to. According to the post modernist feminist theory such constructions keep women captured in the constraining self-understanding that they are somehow only able to deliver something different from men. Post structural feminist theory therefore claims that diversity in general should be emphasized; the gender category is too simple (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2009).

Demanding all women to deliver a ‘consideration’ leadership style fails to take personalities, individuals differences, and preferences into account. It seems that by so sharply categorizing the leadership styles of men and women, one is making the same falsely assumption as gender realists; that all women can be grouped together in one category. Nikki C. Townsley, 2003, challenges the stereotypical beliefs about female and male leadership styles and encourages people to evaluate the ‘leadership gender’ ('consideration' or ‘initiating structure’) of others based on their performances and communication practices – rather than simply looking at their sex.

By positively emphasizing the unique female leadership style, i.e. offering the corporations a unique product, it seems that women may be able to escape the myth that they are not as good leader as men. However, when agreeing to this kind of ‘female branding’, women implicitly acknowledge that they cannot compete with men on male traits – that they are different. One might also argue that this very segregated look at leadership styles ‘feeds’, rather than diminish, the stereotypical beliefs of society, thereby failing to recognize the great personal differences within the category of ‘women leaders’.
5. The Leader: Stereotype vs. Theory

In order to examine if women in corporate organizations are held back by stereotypical expectations and images associated with a senior manager, it is necessary first to find out which stereotypes exists about leaders.

Social role theory states that the gender-specific stereotypes originate from historical gender-specific social (occupational) roles. As explained earlier, the theory argues, that the genders have developed different traits in order to perform successfully in their respective social roles. These traits have then gradually come to determine the gender stereotypes of men and women. According to the reasoning of social role theory, the person having the social role of ‘leader’, which is traditionally a male occupation, will therefore most likely be expected to possess male characteristics and display agentic behaviors.

Several studies investigating the stereotypical image of leadership is presented in the following section. These provide a description of the stereotypical leader, and, moreover, they are used in an attempt to verify the above line of argumentation made by using social role theory.

Social role theory argues that gender stereotypical behavior results in successful role performance. Arguably, agentic behaviors constitute the successful performance of the leadership role. However, when dealing with the leader role in corporate settings, it seems natural for one to question if the behaviors and traits ‘expected by society’, i.e. agentic behaviors and male traits, is necessarily also the most effective leader behavior.

To find out if the stereotypical leader and the effective leader match, the Ohio State University study is applied. The Ohio State University study provides a theoretical ideal for the behavioral style of an effective leader.

5.1 The Stereotypic Leader

As defined earlier, stereotypes are the beliefs people hold about the attributes of a particular group of people. The stereotypical leader is therefore not necessarily the most effective leader, neither the worst, but a reflection of the personal attributes, i.e. physical appearance, traits, and cognitive abilities, which people in general associate with a leader.
In the above section on stereotypes, Varner and Beamer explained that stereotypes are a cognitive method by which people organize external experiences. By using stereotypes to simplify ‘the world’, it becomes more predictable. Gender stereotypes are particularly strong, because they are formed and reinforced by the socialization processes that all people take part in and are shaped by. Social role theorists explain that much of society is organized on the basis of these gender stereotypes (Eagly, Wood, & Diekman, 2000), because of the reciprocal relationship between social roles and gender roles. Lorber emphasizes that this offers predictability in, among other, the allocation of responsibilities and leadership (Lorber, 1994). Arguably, gender stereotypes, therefore, ‘spill over’ into organizational settings and thereby affect the beliefs people hold about (senior) managers.

Abilities, which people expect a leader to possess, are more closely associated with the male gender stereotypical characteristics than the female gender stereotypical characteristics. The aggregated research findings concerning the stereotypical leader clearly show that leadership is generally perceived as masculine (Butterfield and Grinnell, 1999). Several studies conclude that the stereotypical leader is seen as possessing a majority of male traits.

In a study, performed by Powell and Butterfield, undergraduate students and MBAs, who had full-time jobs, were asked to describe a “good manager”. Contrary to their expectations that the good manager would be described as being both instrumental and expressive, i.e. possessing masculine as well as feminine traits, they found that the respondents perceived a good manager, as one having most masculine traits. Even though considerable amount of research suggests that the effective leader is androgynous, the feminine characteristics were not associated with a good manager (Powell and Butterfield, 1984). In late 1980s the two researchers decided to perform the study again. In the previous study 20 masculine and 20 feminine items were used; this time, however, they cut the number down to 10 for each. Since several of the 20 feminine items were considered highly unfavorable, they believed that removing some of the feminine traits might lead to the good manager being described as more androgynous. However, they found quite the opposite; the view that a good manager was more masculine than feminine was found to be even more strongly held than previously (Butterfield and Grinnell, 1999).

Arkkelin and Simmons did a similar study, in which they presented the respondents with masculine, feminine, and androgynous traits. Even though respondents did not describe the good manager with the androgynous terms, they still rate the androgynous traits as favorable as the masculine. They were able to conclude: “[t]hus, while respondents apparently do not offer androgynous charac-
teristics of the good manager when asked to describe one, at least they sometimes respond equally favorably to managers described to them in androgynous terms as in masculine terms.” (Arkkelin and Simmons, 1985 in Butterfield and Grinnell, 1999: 230). Thus, this suggests that the androgynous leader can sometimes be perceived as being just as effective as the male leader, but not necessarily better.

In two other studies, by Broveman et al. and Heilman et al., male managers were asked to characterize the style of both male and female managers. Findings showed that they “associated the more desirable managerial traits with men and the less desirable managerial traits with women” (Broveman, 1972; Heilman, 1989 in Oakley, 2000: 326). Similarly Schein found “that both female and male executives perceived men to fit a stereotype of a successful manager more closely than women” (Schein, 1973, 1975 in Powell and Butterfield, 1984: 478).

All in all, strong evidence exists that the successful leader is generally perceived to be male, and that this stereotypical ideal is held by both women and men, whether they are students, employees, managers, or executive. According to social role theory; people are socialized into social roles on the basis of their gender; this means that males haves traditionally been socialized into ‘the leader role’. Leadership and its ‘criteria for success’ have, therefore, been characterized by men using masculine terms (Butterfield and Grinnell, 1999). Social role theorists, Alice H. Eagly and Mary C. Johannesen-Schmidt, explain this by arguing “that because men have long held these roles, they have defined the styles to which people have become accustomed” (Eagly and Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001: 3). Thus, the definition of a leader is implicitly masculine. This combined with the argument that criterions for success in a leader role are defined in masculine terms, implies that a good manager/successful leader holds all the favorable male gender-specific traits. Similarly, Cann and Siegfried state that an overlap between the stereotypic male and the stereotypic good manager exists (Cann and Siegfried, 1990).

As described in the section about female and male stereotypes, men are most of the time described using agentic characteristics, while women are described in communal terms. In the above introduced studies by Broveman and Heilman, the male manager-respondents also described the style of male managers as being “aggressive, independent, unemotional, objective, dominant, active, competitive, logical worldly, self-confident, and skilled in business” (Broveman, 1972; Heilman, 1989 in Oakley, 2000: 326). As Oakley points out, these are all competence-related traits. Women’s communal traits, which are stereotypically defined as the ‘opposite of men’, are therefore, according to Oakley, associated with incompetence. She argues that this opposition, agen-
tic/communal, may be the main reason why such a dominating male bias exists, despite the fact that little evidence have been found for any difference in the leadership potential and abilities of men and women (Dobbins & Platz, 1986; Powell, 1993 in Oakley, 2000).

Furthermore, it has been proved that managers in corporate organization, i.e. both men and women, behave according to the traits associated with male stereotypes. This seems to strongly imply that in order to be perceived as successful and as having leader potential, one has to conform to the stereotypical leader image.

Nonetheless, Powell claims that the employees will abandon these stereotypes and respect their female manager for her individual qualities (competences) and not only perceive her as a ‘woman’ after getting to know her. (Powell, 1993 in Oakley, 2000).

In summary, two conclusions can be made. First, it is clear that the stereotypical leader is male. Secondly, when describing the successful leader (good manager) people use male gender stereotypic characteristics. A competent leader is perceived to display male behaviors and hold cognitive abilities, like e.g. being decisional and analytical.

5.2 The Effective Leader
The stereotypical leader is male. As stated previously the male stereotype and the stereotype of a ‘good manager’ overlap (Cann and Siegfried, 1990). Thus, successful leadership is thought to constitute the display of agentic behaviors, despite evidence that women are just as ‘good managers’ as men. Turning to the leadership theories, successful, i.e. effective, leadership is described as including both feminine and masculine qualities.

According to The Ohio State University study, being an effective leader constitute an “ability to successfully influence a group toward the accomplishment of its goals” (Hughes, Ginnett and Gordon, 2009: 267). As presented earlier, in its attempts to identify the behaviors universally associated with an effective leader, it was argued that the most effective leader is one who scores high on both the initiatingstructure dimension and the consideration dimension (see figure 1). This means that ideally a leader should focus on both the welfare of the subordinates, as well as the task completion. This view is supported by Fleishman, who claims that it can be expected that a leadership style prioritizing consideration and initiating structure equally will result in leader effectiveness (Fleishman, 1972 in Fisher and Edwards, 1988).
Arguably, one needs to take into consideration the particular context and employees, when assessing if feminine or masculine ‘leader behavior’ will be most effective. Findings have shown that a leadership style combining high concern for ‘consideration’ and high concern for ‘structuring’ is not necessarily always the best alternative. In some situations, e.g. when dealing with a very complex task, a leader who has an initiating structure behavior will be more effective, whereas other settings require a more considerate behavior, e.g. when the employees are experts within their field and therefore know better than the leader how to solve the task at hand. However, it can be argued that the effective leader generally needs to be able to respond to a variety of demands and situations. The most qualified leader will therefore be the one holding the flexibility to take advantage of both leadership styles and therefore score high on both dimensions.

As described previously in the section on female and male leadership styles, results indicate that the two dimensions of leadership mirror the difference between male and female behavioral style. Women display more consideration-oriented behaviors, such as showing supportiveness and appreciation of subordinates’ work, while men tends to engage in behavior emphasizing the structuring of the work, like e.g. setting and monitoring performance standards. Arnie Cann and William D. Siegfried argue that the nature of effective leadership behaviors ideally would be ‘androgynous’ (Cann and Siegfried, 1990). In their study about the relation between gender stereotypes and the two dimensions of effective leadership (Ohio State University), they support this claim with a three-step argumentation. First, they find that a leader should have both considering and structuring behaviors in order to be effective, similar to the studies presented above. Secondly, they confirm the stereotypical images of the genders, i.e. the agentic male behavior and the communal female behavior. Finally, they prove that that agentic characteristics constitute structuring behaviors and that communal characteristics constitute considering behaviors.

If, according to theory, the effective leader exhibit both structuring and considering behaviors, this means that the effective leader will also hold both agentic and communal abilities. These agentic and communal characteristics being associated with men and women, respectively, means that the ideal leader will be both male and female. Thus, using this ‘backwards explanation’ Cann and Siegfried are able to conclude that the effective leader is behaviorally androgynous.

In terms of the use of powers this means that the effective leader takes advantage of all five sources of power. Here, the flexibility is also a sign of leader effectiveness, because it allows the
manager to choose the appropriate power-base according to the demands of the situation. Thus, the
effective leader should attempt to increase all the various bases of power.

How to exactly characterize the specific traits of the most effective leader is, however, an ongoing
discussion, and there is yet no general agreement among researchers. However, on the basis of the
above argumentation, one may assume that the effective leader can be described as behaving andro-
gynously.

Strong stereotypical expectations concerning a leader exist. As expected, people’s description of the
stereotypical leader is male. Male traits are therefore considered favorable, whereas female traits
are, at least in organizational settings, associated with incompetence. Moreover, it is noteworthy
that female managers are associated with less favorable managerial characteristics.

This might suggest why the majority of corporate managers, disregarding personal gender,
choose to conform to the male stereotype and lead according to its prescriptions, even though, theo-
retically, the effective leader is androgynous.
6. Discussion of Barriers

The objective of this thesis is to find out why stereotypical expectations and images associated with a senior manager is a barrier for women who wish to have a career in upper management. So far, it has been established that the understanding of gender stereotypes are highly related to the answering of this problem statement. The above analyses have provided a description of the different gender stereotypes, where they originate from, and how they ‘work’ through socialization processes. In the following section the potential barriers originating from the relation between the gender stereotypes and stereotypical belief about a senior manager will be discussed in an effort to determine, if these stereotypic expectations indeed do constitute challenges for women having corporate careers.

The discussion will be build up by five sub-sections, each discussing different aspects of the barriers to women in senior management.

6.1 The stereotype of a Leader is Equal to that of a Man

In the section ‘The Leader: Stereotype vs. Theory’ a description of the stereotypic beliefs existing about leaders was provided together with an examination of the theoretical description of the effective leader. These two description are important, because they enable an analysis of the potential ‘match or mismatch’, i.e. to see if these two ‘leaders’ match or if there is a difference between the stereotypic leader and the, theoretically, most effective one.

Several points were made. It was first established that the stereotypic leader is expected to possess male characteristics and display agentic behaviors because the occupation is traditionally a male one. Secondly, the Ohio State University theory explains the effective leader as one possessing both feminine and masculine characteristics, i.e. behave in an androgynous way. This issue will be discussed in greater detail in the following paragraphs, focusing on the stereotypic image of a leader.

As it has been stated previously, men have held the role of the leader for a long time and therefore, it is the male who has defined the leader role (Eagly and Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001). This means that, as states previously, the stereotypic leader is thought of as being male and expected to possess masculine characteristics. A further extension of these statements could be the argumentation that the closer a male’s characteristics is to the characteristics of the stereotypic male, the better
the fit between the male and the leader position will be perceived. This also means that the more feminine a woman is, the poorer the fit will be perceived. Therefore, one might argue that it is natural for people, when a man is holding the leader position. However, when a woman is holding that position, it is not natural in the same way, i.e. people do not expect a female to hold a senior management position, because it does not match the stereotype of a leader. So, society expects a leader to be male.

Social role theory argues that people regulate their behavior so that it will fit the gender specific expectations. Carli and Eagly further argue that these expectations to the individuals behavior become a part of one’s self-concept and personality (Carli and Eagly, 1999), which means that people will behave, think of themselves, and ‘act’ according to the expectations held by society about their gender. On this basis, arguably, women will regulate their behavior to fit their stereotypical gender role and their self-concept will be like the stereotype. Since the leader role is not a feminine domain, women will not think of themselves as leaders. This, according to social role theory, will result in the self-concept to become the stereotype. One might argue for a circular movement in which they are creating and reinforcing each other.

Combining the above paragraphs, one could argue that when society does not expect a female to be or become a leader or perceive the person-job fit to be good, and when the women herself does not expect to become one or has the leader position as a part of her self-concept; one might argue that fewer women will apply for senior management positions.

One the basis of this, one can conclude that the stereotypic image of a leader being male and the results from this, work as a barrier to women.

The findings of Eagly and Karau, illustrate how men naturally emerge as leaders in group settings (Eagly and Karau, 1991, Carli and Eagly, 1999), which, according to Eagly, is caused by men’s superior place in the gender hierarchy. Research shows that individuals perceived as informal leaders are also more likely to get promoted into higher managerial positions, because they proved their leadership abilities (Carli and Eagly, 1999). On the basis of these findings, one seems to be able to conclude that men have a ‘gendered’ advantage over women, because of the power dynamics between men and women.

However, it is not that women do never emerge as leaders. As explained earlier, women are ‘allowed’ to outperform and have power over men in stereotypical female areas. Therefore, based on their superior communal skills women become emotional leaders, e.g. get a personnel management
position. However, their commitment to social tasks and the wellbeing of others is often not re-
warded or acknowledge in the evaluating of leadership potential. Therefore, as Eagly and Karau
(1991, in Carli and Eagly, 1999) explain it; “[t]o the extent that women informally take on the role
of social facilitator and not the role of task leader, they may be less likely to rise in organizations”.

6.2 Perceived Competence

The fact that the leader role is a male domain means that the success criterions, by which a leader is
evaluated, have been characterized by men in masculine terms (Butterfield and Grinnell, 1999).
Therefore, the leader potential of senior management candidates will be evaluated positively, when
displaying the strong masculine characteristics, which are perceived as favorable managerial traits.

Another aspect of the stereotypic leader being male is that people then expect the fit between the
person holding the position (the male) and the job itself to be very good. Therefore, people also ex-
pect and predict that the male will be successful in such a position (Heilman and Stopeck, 1985).
However, it also means that people will not expect or predict females to be successful in a senior
management position. Developing this further, it has been stated that “expectations about success
carry over to the causal attributions one makes for that success if it occurs.” (Weiner et al, 1971;
Deaux, 1976 in Heilman and Stopeck, 1985: 380). Heilman and Stopeck interpret this and argue
that it means that “[w]hen success is consistent with expectations it is attributed to stable, internal
causes, that is, to an individual's ability. But when success is unanticipated it is deemed unstable or
temporary and assumed to derive from sources other than the individual's ability[.]” (Heilman and
Stopeck, 1985: 380). Therefore, one could argue, that when a male is a successful leader, people
attribute this to his abilities and to his internal attributions, but when a female is a successful leader,
people attribute it to external attributions, e.g. her attractiveness or luck.

This provides some kind of support for the commonly known myth that if a women advance to a
senior management position, she got there due to other attributes than her competences. In the ar-
ticle “Attractiveness and Corporate Success: Different Causal Attributions for Males and Females”,
Madeline E. Heilman and Melanie H. Stopeck finds evidence to support this myth. Based on their
results they conclude that attractive women’s success is not judged to be due to their abilities and
they are judged to be less capable than unattractive women (Heilman and Stopeck, 1985). However,
they also conclude that this is not the case for males. Instead it is the opposite; for attractive males;
their success is attributed to their abilities. Furthermore, attractive males were even perceived to be
more capable persons (Heilman and Stopeck, 1985)!
A possible explanation to this phenomenon can be found in the article “The Definition of Sex Stereotypes via the Adjective Check List”. Here it was found that one of the adjectives commonly associated with a male is ‘handsome’ and for females the adjective is ‘attractive’. It has been demonstrated that “attractiveness enhances gender characterizations. That is, an attractive woman is perceived to be more feminine and an attractive man is viewed to be more masculine than their less attractive counterparts.” (Gillen, 1981 in Heilman and Stopeck, 1985: 379).

Madeline E. Heilmand and Melanie H. Stopeck also make this point (Heilman and Stopeck, 1985). This further means, one could argue, that an attractive female is perceived to be closer to the stereotypical female and therefore, also perceived to be less competent for a senior management position.

On the basis of the same study the researchers also concluded that the effect of appearance on what ability is attributed to and on the capability ratings, is reduced to being insignificant when the researchers controlled for gender categorization (Heilman and Stopeck, 1985). This suggests that the better the fit between the male person and the male stereotype, the better the fit is perceived to be between the person and the job. However, it is only so when it comes to males. For females it has the opposite effect.

So, attractive (handsome) males are perceived to be the most successful leaders. This is in line with earlier conclusions, that an effective leader is perceived to be male.

Based on the above discussion it seems that people tend to judge other individuals on the basis of their stereotypes and are not able to evaluate other people in an objective manner. This implicitly means that women are judged on their expected feminine traits and communal behavior – whether present or not, which can prove less desirable for women, because these skills are perceived as less favorable in managerial positions (Oakley, 2000). The following discussion elaborates on this.

In the paragraph about the stereotypic female and male, the stereotypic cognitive characteristics of women are, among other, imaginative and creative whereas they for men are more analytical, exact and better at problem solving. In the section about the stereotypic leader, it was concluded that such male cognitive abilities is perceived to be part of the description of a competent leader. Due to the two above mentioned statements, group members consider men more competent than women in solving tasks, especially those tasks that involve analysis and reasoning. If, however, the group
members are presented with proof that a woman is superior, they will regard the woman to be just ‘as’ competent (Carli and Eagly, 1999).

This is supported by the social role theory that argues that people expect men to be more competent in solving tasks than women, since the traits needed to solve such tasks are associated with male traits. However, when it is in a traditionally feminine domain the work of women was to be evaluated, there is not a tendency to evaluate women as less competent than men. It is only when it is in a traditionally masculine domain women are evaluated less competent (Swim, Borgida, Maruyama and Myers, 1989 in Carli and Eagly, 1999). But, as argued previously, the leader role is traditionally a masculine domain and therefore, arguably, women will be evaluated as less competent than men in such a position. That the leader role is traditionally male dominated will also mean that women will often find themselves in a token position (Oakley, 2000). This means that the woman is much more visible in the group and therefore, the individual’s performance and behavior will be evaluated to a larger extent than the rest of the group members (Oakley, 2000). This will increase the performance pressure and scrutiny the individual is exposed to. This suggests that there are a gender bias in the standards used to evaluate women and men, meaning that women must perform better than men to be considered just as competent. It is theorized that the reason for this is that women are perceived less competent, and therefore more evidence of the contrary is needed (Carli and Eagly, 1999).

However, it should be remembered that women generally are associated with more favorable adjectives than men as the study by John E. Williams and Susan M. Bennett shows. Eagly and her colleagues also found that attitudes towards women are more positive than attitudes towards men (Carli and Eagly, 1999). They suggest that the reason for this is that women are perceived to be more friendly, approachable and nurturing. However, these characteristics are not part of what is described as being relevant to outstanding performance in jobs characterized by problem solving and analyses. Therefore, the generally more positive evaluation of women does not help them to be viewed as more competent or get a job in the top management (Carli and Eagly, 1999).

In summary, one is able to conclude that the female stereotype is partly to blame for the low number of women in senior management. To the extent to which the female stereotype does not ‘fit’ the stereotypical image of a manager, women are perceived as having poor leadership potential. Because women are expected to exhibit communal behavior and hold feminine cognitive traits, according to the female stereotype, which are associated with managerial incompetence, they are less
likely to receive acknowledgement for their managerial abilities – rather it will be accredited looks or luck.

The poor fit between characteristics associated with the female gender and a leader position therefore constitute a barrier for women.

6.3 Leadership Style: A Barrier to Women?

As already established, stereotypical differences between the leadership style of a male and woman exist. Male characteristics and values constitute the ‘initiating structure’ leadership style and female characteristics and value constitute the ‘consideration’ leadership style (Cann and Siegfried, 1990). As presented above a ‘consideration’ leadership style implies a high concern for the welfare of subordinates, e.g. by empowering them and consulting them before taking a decision.

In the corporate culture and especially in the top of organizations, power is often seen as a zero-sum game (Oakley, 2000), meaning that; when a leader gives power to others, that leader will lose the same amount of power s/he has given out. However, having such an interactive leadership style, it seems that the female manager to a greater extent than the male manager shares her power with the subordinates. Women therefore, arguably, view power as expandable, i.e. they can distribute power to their subordinates without losing power themselves.

One might argue for at least two implications of this non-power-sharing culture. The first being that it might not be very attractive for female leaders to refrain from sharing power with their subordinates due to their way of leading and therefore, one could argue that women’s power distributing way of leading might not fit the description of the culture in the top of organizations. Another implication of the female tendency to share power is that the female manager risk being viewed as weak, because she consults subordinates in decision making. If she is then perceived as not being confident and/or qualified ‘enough’ to make important decisions on her own, she might therefore be regarded as less suitable for high power senior management positions, as they demand the jobholder to make tough decision. Cann and Siegfried, 1990, noticed a preference for ‘highly directive’ behaviors, i.e. ‘initiating structure’, when asking the participants to adopt a ‘top-down’ view in their studies. By contrast, when asked to evaluate the ideal manager from a subordinates’ point of view, the participants emphasized employee-oriented aspects of effective leadership. Therefore, because superiors are usually the ones hiring and/or promoting, one seems to be able to infer that the men demonstrating decisive and confident behaviors have an advantage.
Finally, leaders might be reluctant to act if they believe it will influence the relationship in a negative way or if the desire to maintain a good relationship is dominant (French and Raven, 1959). Managers who prioritize a close relationship with subordinates are more afraid to damage this relationship by making unpopular decisions. Therefore, these ‘consideration’ style leaders will be more reluctant to act. Therefore, on the basis of this one might suspect female leaders to be more prone to this reluctance to act, since they rely on referent power more than male leaders do. This might contribute to the gap between the power culture in the top of organizations and the female leadership style; which thereby again point to the ‘non fit’ between women and the prevailing power culture.

The above discussion suggests that ‘consideration’ leadership style associated with female characteristics may be a barrier for women, mainly due to the perceived poor ‘decision-making skills’ and power sharing.

One might wonder if it would benefit females if they change their leadership style to resemble that of a male. Alice H. Eagle and Blair T. Johnson suggest that women finding themselves in a token positions, as mentioned earlier, often abandon the stereotypic female leadership style (‘consideration’) in decision making, because they might lose authority if their leadership style is the stereotypic female leadership style. They further suggest that women, instead of a very feminine leadership style, should adopt a more male leadership style in order to survive in such an environment (Eagly and Johnson, 1990).

However, it is not without consequences when a woman abandons the feminine leadership style and takes on a more male leadership style which will be discussed in the next paragraph.

### 6.4 Catch 22 – the behavioral double-bind

As explained above, women do not match the stereotypic image of a leader, among other because their feminine characteristics are perceived as being unfavorable traits in a management position. One may argue that women, who adjust to the male stereotype by deliberately behaving ‘more male’ and choosing a ‘structuring’ leadership style, rather than a ‘consideration’ leadership style, would be able to overcome the gender stereotypical barriers.

Indeed, women in upper-management have been found to be more masculine, i.e. exhibiting agentic behaviors like being assertive and self-promoting (Oakley, 2000). Yet, despite the attempt to compete with men based on the male stereotypical criteria of success, these ‘masculine’ female managers have lower perceived performance than their male colleagues (Butterfield and Grinnell,
Radical feminists believe that women offer a unique set of values and ‘female perspective’, which are neither better nor worse than men’s – just different. One may argue that behaving agentic and abandoning these female values violate the nature of women, which therefore, makes them perform lower than men.

Moreover, researchers, Carli and Eagly, 1999, found that the display of agentic behaviors can backfire on women (Carli and Eagle, 1999). Because task-completion contributions from a woman are usually valued as less legitimate, these assertive and self-confident behaviors are perceived as inauthentic. Carli and Eagly, 1999, argue that the competences and qualities of a woman are therefore not acknowledged; giving her a lower performance rating (Carli and Eagly, 1999).

Oakley, 2000, uses the term ‘catch 22’ when describing the situation, where a woman will choose the wrong behavior no matter how she decides to ‘act’. That is, when she chooses to retain her femininity, she loses managerial credibility, because of the incompetence-association of female characteristics. However, when she attempts to behave according to the prescriptions of the stereotypical male image of the leader, she is negatively sanctioned for violating her own female stereotype.

When being a female leader it seems that she will inevitably experience a role conflict between her gender role and the leader role. Although knowing that leaders are expected to exhibit assertive and ‘structuring’ behaviors, women cannot fully live up to these requirements, because it involves violating the appropriate gender hierarchy and behavior (Gervasio & Crawford, 1989 in Yoder, 2001). Despite the fact that they might receive some positive feedback for the successful role performance as leader; choosing to behave agentically, women are negatively evaluated for not exhibiting communal and supportive behaviors, which are expected and preferred by society (Eagly and Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001).

Deviating from the injunctive norm of communal behavior, Eagly, Wood, and Diekman, 2000, previously argue, causes strong reactions of moral disapproval from the people surrounding the ‘violator’. The gender-deviating female leader loses her ‘predictability’ and therefore increases the level of anxiety of her surroundings, at least until they become familiar with her personal competences (Varner and Beamer, 2005). Supporting this line of arguments are the findings of Carli (1990; 1995 in Yoder, 2001), which show that assertive women are perceived as threatening and are disliked (Butler & Geis, 1990; Carli, in Yoder, 2001). As Oakley puts it, this behavioral double-bind for female leaders “is that they must be tough and authoritative (like men) to be taken seriously, but they will be perceived as ‘bitches’ if they act too aggressively” (Oakley, 2000: 324).
One may question the strength of the referent power of one of these ‘bitches’. As previously explained, referent power can have an either positive or negative effect on the relative strength of the other available bases of leader power. In a number of studies by Carli (1990, 1999 in Yoder, 2001), the result consistently show that assertive women were ineffective and less influential, especially with their male colleagues. By contrast she also found that gender-congruent, cautious women are more successful in their influence attempts, which again shows, one might argue, that negative and positive sanctions are allocated on the basis of ‘gender-appropriate’ behavior and status.

Oakley, 2000, describes how women leaders engage in strategies of gender management to overcome the stereotypical boundaries. In order to stay credible in the eyes of their male colleagues they downplay their femininity, however, only just enough not to challenge their female gender role. While this approach may work up to a certain level of management, one could argue that it does not allow the female manager to fully compete with her colleagues in neither job-oriented nor employee-oriented tasks; leaving her ‘stuck in the middle’. As Oakley argues, these women will be perceived as ‘just blending in’, and therefore not be considered for promotion which will give them the opportunity to move up through the ranks.

In conclusion, one sees that this ‘catch 22 situation’ prevents women from reaching senior management level. Diverging normative expectations toward appropriate feminine behaviors as well as leadership style held by society constitute an inconsistency. Whereas assertive women, imitating the masculine behaviors, are disliked and ineffective, the feminine women are perceived as incompetent. Being perceived as either ineffective or incompetent, one might add, are undeniable undesirable when pursuing a senior management position. Because men do not experience the same inconsistency between their traits and the requirements of a leader, it only produces a stereotypical handicap for female managers and, thus becomes a gender-stereotypical barrier for their career advancement.

One may argue that the implications of this behavioral double-bind, such as perceived incompetence and ineffectiveness offers plausible explanations as to why few women advance in organizational hierarchies. By having to behave within the normative constraints of female behavior constitute a restriction on the managerial tools, from which the female manager can choose; causing her to never be the best potential candidate for the promotion in the eyes of the recruiters.

Moreover, individuals violating the stereotypic expectations are often perceived unfavorable; women are therefore reluctant to pursue occupations that do not conform to the communal gender
stereotype. As explained above, only gender-congruent women are positively evaluated by society, which means that women are rewarded and socialized to display subordinate behaviors. It might therefore be that these gender norms not only prevent women from being promoted but also keeps women from applying for management positions, simply because they have not learned (through gender socialization) to think of themselves as leaders.

So far the previous discussion suggests that gender roles ‘spill over’ into organizational settings creating a barrier for the career advancement of women.

However, it seems that this barrier constituted by the behavioral double-bind may be diminishing. As explained previously, gender roles originate, according to the social role theory, from the historical social, i.e. occupational, roles of men and women. Therefore, one may assume based on the theory that societal changes in the social roles of men and women will be reflected in the gender roles. This relationship gives gender its dynamic nature, which makes change possible. Cultural changes in typical work and family roles of the sexes happening over time will thus also alter the stereotypes and gender roles. It has indeed been established that the changing sex ratios of occupations have caused the masculinity and femininity associated with the particular occupations to be adjusted. The jobholder is therefore less likely to be demanded a behavior conforming to the stereotypical gender attributes of the occupation (Eagle, Wood, & Diekman, 2000). This implies that women’s display of feminine behaviors will be more accepted, as the stereotypical image of the leader is changing – i.e. as more and more women become leaders, the stereotypic expectations and images of a leader loses its male bias. Therefore, one might argue that the emphasis of female role models, i.e. female CEOs, is essential for the process of change.

Finally, specific social roles are very constraining in their demands of the appropriate behavior. Social role theory argues that “gender roles become relatively less important determinants of behavior in their presence” (Eagly, Wood, & Diekman, 2000: 154). Therefore, in these social functions the gender bias diminishes.
7. Conclusion

We began by asking how the stereotypical expectations and images associated with a CEO work as a barrier to the career prospects of corporate women. In order to get a better understanding, we quickly became aware that we needed to explore the gender stereotypes as well as the discussion about gender roles because we realized that an understanding of the existing stereotypes would bring us closer to an answer how the stereotypical image of a leader is a barrier to women.

In the first paragraph of the discussion, it is concluded that the stereotypic leader is perceived to be male, and therefore, women do not perceive themselves as leader and might not apply for senior management positions. Secondly, they are less likely to be promoted due to this stereotypic belief. On this basis it is concluded that the stereotypic image of a leader is working as a barrier to women.

According to social role theory, women are emotional leaders and men are tasks leaders. This means that men have an advantage which women do not have. Since it is the abilities of men which is associated with the leader role, men are more likely to be promoted. It might therefore be that these gender norms not only prevent women from being promoted but also keeps women from applying for management positions, simply because they have not learned (through gender socialization) to think of themselves as leaders. This again means that the stereotypes regarding leader work as a barrier to women.

When it comes to competence, the success criterions for leaders are defined on the basis of agentic behavior and therefore, women receive a less favorable evaluation since women are not able to compete with men in their gender specific traits. Furthermore, it is even found that female traits are often associated with incompetence when it comes to leadership. It is not expected of women to be successful as leaders so when they do succeed it is not attributed to their abilities, rather it is attributed to external factors. This implicitly means that women are judged on their expected feminine traits and communal behavior – whether present or not, which can prove less desirable for women, because these skills are perceived as less favorable in managerial positions. Since women are not expected to success as leaders, they have to prove themselves to a greater extent than their male colleagues in order to be perceived successful. This means that, once again, the stereotypical image of a senior manager constitute a barrier to women because they have to work harder in order to received that same acknowledgement as their male colleagues and thereby be promoted.

All in all, the poor fit between characteristics associated with the female gender and a leader position therefore constitute a barrier for women.
It is also argued that leadership style might work as a barrier to women and since women’s consideration leadership style are perceived as a sign of weakness because she share power with her subordinates and sometimes consults them before making decisions. She might therefore be regarded as less suitable for high power senior management positions, as they demand the jobholder to make tough decision. This way of leading does not match the prevailing zero-sum ideal of power in the top of organizations.

Until now, it is argued that the stereotypic female does not fit into the stereotypic leader role in terms of traits and leadership style. However, it seems that women, who adopt an initiating structure leadership style to compete with their male colleagues, are not successful either.

Breaking the gender roles will result in a strong reaction from society and therefore, women who behave like men are negatively sanctioned because they are not behaving according to the communal norm set for women. Therefore women often engage in gender management and downplay their femininity. This means that female managers cannot exhibit only communal or agentic behavior, but often blend in. This further means that they often do not get promoted. This behavior double-bind constitutes a barrier for women as well.

Overall there seems to be evidence that women do face barriers due to the stereotypic images and expectations associated with a senior manager.

This thesis has uncovered some of the barriers to women and some of the reasons why. Further research could be looking into the issue of gender categorization in terms of leadership style. In an earlier paragraph, it is briefly explored which implication the categorization of female and male leadership style has. Further research could look into whether it is possible to even make this categorization of female and male leadership styles or if the categorization itself is creating the gender differences. In connection to this, research could also look into if more leadership style, not necessarily associated with gender, is more adequate.

Despite widespread change in gender roles, women continue to have less power than men. From the perspective of social role theory, this gender difference in power should be perceived as eroding as women gain access to male-dominated roles typically associated with power. Research into how organization’s recruitment strategies could help uncover how the gender biases favouring men can be weakened.
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## Appendix 1 Focused Sex Stereotypes for Men and Women

**Table 1. Focused Sex Stereotypes: Adjectives Associated with Men and Adjectives Associated with Women by at least Three-Quarters of Subjects of Both Sexes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adjectives associated with men</th>
<th>Male subjects (%)</th>
<th>Female subjects (%)</th>
<th>Evaluative classification$^a$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adventurous</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggressive</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambitious</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assertive</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autocratic</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boastful</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coarse</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confident</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courageous</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cruel</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daring</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disorderly</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominant</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enterprising</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forceful</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handsome</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jolly</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logical</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loud</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masculine</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rational</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Realistic</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robust</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-confident</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Severe</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stable</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steady</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stern</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tough</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemotional</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
NB: there is a discrepancy between this table and another table by the same authors in their later book “Measuring Sex Stereotypes: A Thirty Nation Study. The discrepancy is that the characteristic “unexcitable” should not be in the table regarding women, but should be in the table regarding men (Williams and Bennett, 1975; Williams and Best, 1982)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adjectives associated with women</th>
<th>Male subjects (%)</th>
<th>Female subjects (%)</th>
<th>Evaluative classification$^a$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unexcitable</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affected</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affectionate</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appreciative</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attractive</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charming</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complaining</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
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(Statistik Banken)

http://www.statistikbanken.dk/krhfu1

22-04-2011

Statistikbanken - data og tal

Befolkningens højeste fuldførte uddannelse efter alder, herkomst, område, tid, uddannelse og køn

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