Female and gender leadership:

To which extents gender impacts on leadership and organizations in France?

Author(s): Aurélie Daniel
Yann Moudic

Tutor: Dr.Pr. Philippe Daudi

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Linnaeus University
School of Business and Economics
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Table of contents

Acknowledgements ........................................................................................................... P2

Abstract ............................................................................................................................ P6

Introduction ......................................................................................................................... P7

Chapter 1: Research framework ..................................................................................... P9
  1.1 Strategic issue ............................................................................................................. P9
  1.2 Research question ...................................................................................................... P9
  1.3 Research objective .................................................................................................... P10
  1.4 Research perspective ............................................................................................... P10
  1.5 Research methodology ............................................................................................ P11
    1.5.1 Research design .................................................................................................. P11
    1.5.2 Primary sources: Interviews .............................................................................. P13
    1.5.3 Secondary sources .............................................................................................. P14
  1.6 The viability and the reliability .................................................................................. P15

Chapter 2: Importance of the study ................................................................................ P17
  2.1 Gender issues in the French society ........................................................................ P17
  2.2 Gender issues in organizations ................................................................................. P19

Chapter 3: Theoretical framework .................................................................................. P22
  RQ1: WHAT IS OUR CONTEMPORARY UNDERSTANDING OF GENDER LEADERSHIP? P24
    3.1 Gender background ............................................................................................... P24
      3.1.1 Sexual-oriented education ................................................................................ P24
      3.1.2 Gender social role ............................................................................................ P25
      3.1.3 Gender stereotypic perceptions ........................................................................ P26
    3.2 The gender leadership styles ................................................................................... P27
      3.2.1 The female and male leadership styles ............................................................. P28
3.2.2 The transformational and transactional leadership styles ........................................ P30
3.2.3 Shifting perceptions of gender leadership styles .................................................... P33
  3.2.3.1 The transformational leadership style: a female leadership style ....................... P33
  3.2.3.2 The transactional leadership style: a male leadership style ................................. P34
3.2.4 The gender leadership styles controversy .............................................................. P35
3.3 The social perception of a leader: an incongruity ...................................................... P38

RQ2: HOW DO GENDER LEADERSHIP ISSUES MANIFEST THEMSELVES WITHIN THE FRAME
OF ORGANIZATIONS? ........................................................................................................ P39
3.4 Impacts on organizations ............................................................................................ P39
  3.4.1 Male organizational model .................................................................................... P39
  3.4.2 Glass ceiling ........................................................................................................... P40

Chapter 4: The empirical study ......................................................................................... P43
4.1 Empirical findings and analysis .................................................................................. P44
  4.1.1 Shifting perceptions of gender and leadership ...................................................... P44
  4.1.2 Influences of stereotypes ...................................................................................... P52
    4.1.2.1 Gender stereotypic perception: an immutable dimension ............................... P55
    4.1.2.2 The tacit power of stereotypes ....................................................................... P56
  4.1.3 Male organizational model: a standard ................................................................. P58
4.2 Findings summarizations ............................................................................................ P63

Further discussion ............................................................................................................. P68

Conclusion ......................................................................................................................... P70

The learning curve ............................................................................................................. P72

References ......................................................................................................................... P73

Appendix 1: Figures ........................................................................................................... P75
Appendix 2: Interviews questions ..................................................................................... P76
Appendix 3: Interviews ...................................................................................................... P77
Appendix 4: The Gantt diagram ......................................................................................... P101
Abstract

Business life is historically a male activity. Consequently, expectations of organizations toward their employees in terms of assertiveness, availabilities and submission to the hierarchy have always reflected male standards of living. Thus, the appearance of the leadership concept has naturally been shaped by masculine values. The progressive implication of women in the business life appeared in the 70’s. Consequently, this small universe tailor made for men involved the emergence of gender issues.

The role of the leader is to implement the right leadership style to the right situation. A popular vision promotes two traditional leadership styles: a masculine one opposed to a new feminine one. The concept is based on long-established stereotypes regarding genders. Researches tried to prove the natural tendency of men and women to apply a certain leadership style according to their gender. However, results only show very little influence of the gender on the leadership style applied, which allowed us to put gender leadership styles into perspective.

Firstly, we collected scientific data from articles and books in order to have a fair vision of concepts on this subject. Then, we envisioned the useful theories to backup concepts we used to analyze. Our analysis is also based on concrete experiences of leaders who face gender issues in the everyday life. We collected their opinions by the mean of semi conducted interviews. We concentrated on theoretical, conceptual and empirical data to explain and analyze gender impacts on leadership and organizations.

Concerning our conceptual framework, our empirical findings admit that controversies led to our contemporary understanding of gender leadership. Regarding leadership styles, the current gender stereotypic categorizations do not seem to be relevant anymore. The sexual-oriented education and the gender social roles shape followers and leaders perceptions which involve the current male organizational model and a glass ceiling. In other words, women encounter difficulties to access to leading positions. Because of tacit stereotypic perceptions, the business life is a men’s world referring to masculine values and standard ways of living.
Introduction

Leadership is an evolving concept. During the last decades, thanks to new communication technologies, new approaches of leadership emerge. Leadership is the ability to influence a group of people and to manage them in order to reach a common goal. The leader is the person who has the capacity to motivate and federate a team. Leading often refers to charisma and the ability to “give sense” to his followers. He draws a “map” of the environment providing his followers landmarks in an uncertain and changing world. The leader helps his followers to trust the organization, to understand guidelines and to improve their efficiency. Leader’s mission is to provide to their followers a wide vision of their job and a clear path to follow, in order to reach the common goal. Jagd, Suren (2009) explains the vision of R. M Stogdills who claims that: “Leadership is a process involving three elements: influencing others to behave in a certain way; working with people in a group context; and influencing group members in the direction of a goal accomplishment.”

The concept of leadership, the perception of what a leader is and leadership methods appeared before the industrial revolution. Leading and this perception of leadership was inherited of a traditional male vision because the main leaders of our occidental civilization have always been men. Therefore, the concept of leadership has always been associated to masculine values and to the male domination. But this traditional perception evolved. The paternalistic image of the leader, who controls, transmits knowledge, gives advice, orders tasks to accomplish, rewards and punishes, erodes gradually. Indeed, nowadays organizations are less compartmentalized, hierarchy has less importance and leaders get closer to their teams. Followers are more autonomous thus leaders do not need to have a direct control on individuals anymore. Notion of hierarchy is now obsolete, the male power of the leader "looses of his magic". Moreover, new technologies allow the leaders to execute several tasks at the same time, to gain time and to open their job to more cooperative and collaborative projects. Due to this evolution, the way to lead changed also. Many theories appeared about leadership models. Researchers emphasize different leadership styles corresponding to different manners to lead group according to the circumstances. Now, leaders face more and more different situations. One precise leadership style cannot suit all contexts.
Within the numerous different leadership approaches, two opposite trends are emerging: the male and female leadership styles. These theories emphasize a gender typed leadership style. The male leadership style is based on masculine values such as assertiveness, command and control. The female leadership style comes close to the following feminine values: nurturing, attentive, caring, which reflect female stereotypes and feminine values. The basic reasoning leads to think that women are consequently more able to deal with female leadership. These visions of leadership based on gender differences tend to show that the leadership style can be directly linked to the masculinity or femininity of leaders. This paradigm underlining a gender-typed leadership style is currently discussed. New researches tend to show that, the notions of female and male leadership styles might be irrelevant from now on. However, business life evolves fast nowadays, and the “traditional leadership style” or “male leadership style” tends to be dropped out, in favour of the female one. Therefore, because of their values they naturally carry, women should be now more expected than men for leadership positions. But, the woman’s stereotyped perception is completely opposed to the classical leader’s one seen as a young, bright, and beautiful man, as well as independent and assertive. Therefore, people follow these archetypal profiles and prefer to be led by men. Women are under-represented in top-executive positions and to succeed at getting leader’s positions still remains today more difficult to them. Taking into account gender leadership issues, our thesis will be an understanding process in determining to which extents gender impacts on leadership and organizations.
Chapter 1: Research framework

1.1 Strategic Issue

As apprentices we are privileged observers of leaders’ behaviors within our companies. Observing them gives us practical elements to analyze their leadership styles according to gender and the context of our companies. The impact of gender on organizations and leadership is still controversial. Many specialists are still confronting their theories on this subject. We provide elements to understand the real role of leaders’ gender. In a learning process, we try to understand which factors impact on the relationship between leaders and gender stereotypes, in order to emphasize the consequences on their leadership and, to a large extent, on the organization itself. Then, we decided to focus on the following strategic issue: to which extents gender impacts on leadership and organizations in France?

1.2 Research question

To answer our strategic issue, we concentrated on the two following research questions: “What is our contemporary understanding of gender leadership?”, and giving our understanding of gender leadership issues “How do they manifest themselves within the frame of organizations?”. The major concepts we selected aim at answering these two research questions. Then, precise parts of the theoretical framework are dedicated to them. The answers to these two questions enables us to understand the real impact of gender, first on leadership, and secondly on the frame of organizations.

The question “What is our contemporary understanding of gender leadership?” is very wide-opened and can be seen as naïve, but gender leadership theories evolved and some controversies about the real impact of gender on leadership appeared. At the moment, none could actually prove it. Thus, this aspect of gender related to leadership interested us. Scientists emphasize the reality of gender influence from a behavioral point of view but analyzing gender in business life, studies do not highlight differences due to gender. So we tried first to understand the different dimensions of gender background which is not only
cultural, but also biological. We answer many issues like the biological influence of gender, its social perception and the influence of stereotypes.

Our first investigations toward this subject led us to be aware of gender issues within companies such as the under-representation of women in top-executive positions. According to studies, we noticed connections between genders, stereotypes and leadership issues. The leadership is a key function of organizations. If gender issues have a real impact on leadership, this is a fair question to analyze: “How do gender leadership issues manifest themselves within the frame of organizations?”

1.3 Research objective

We noticed that for ages, several debates have raised the under-representation of women in top-executive positions. Today, we want to provide our readers as much as possible a thorough understanding of contemporary moots about gender leadership. Thus, our study looks for understanding, describing and even analyzing how gender leadership issues appear within organizations.

Indeed, even if female leaders are more and more hired in organizations, they are still under-represented within top-executive positions. Gender issues exist and can be noticed within many organizations. Our learning process tends to provide knowledge for leaders about gender issues in business and also to put forward its reasons and effects on their leadership. Our research aims at understanding this reality through gender impacts on leadership and also organizations. The whole analysis leads us to create business knowledge on the current gender leadership issues, its reasons and impacts on companies' organizational models.

1.4 Research perspective

As MBA students, we adopt an academic perspective which consists in going through scientific works published on gender leadership. We collected data in order to extract and constitute a suitable literature review. We selected major concepts to be used to understand and analyze gender effects on leadership and organizational models. Then, we positioned ourselves as gender leadership analysts who tried to understand and explain, in a learning process, phenomena they witness.
As apprentices, we are also privileged observers of our companies and participants in the way we constitute the followership of a leader. This perspective is the start of our thinking process. Indeed, we first noticed an under-representation of women within companies we are working in. Secondly, one of us attended a situation related to a gender leadership issue. Within an industrial gas company, the arrival of a new leader, as sales manager, disturbed the commercial team. Because of a style considered as too directive to implement a new information system within the commercial department, the new manager met difficulties of integration. Followers were opposed to his leadership by refusing to collaborate with him. In that case, we have to mention that his gender was different of the previous leader, and the new dominant team gender was the opposite of the one he used to manage. These observations led us to wonder why such a disparity exists between men and women's representations among top-executive positions. Moreover, they also raised the questions of gender effects on leadership and of gender leadership issues.

1.5 Research methodology

1.5.1 Research design

Our research design refers to the grounded theory developed by the sociologists Glaser and Strauss through the book *The discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for qualitative research* (1967). Our methodology is based on interpretation of data in an abductive way. We used a qualitative method which admits the influence of a context and different types of interactions, to analyze all kind of data, which are compatible with an interpretive approach accepting that "all is data" which means interviews, statistics, empirical observations, scientific publications. We interpreted data we observed and collected at empirical and theoretical levels thanks to an abductive approach. The grounded theory allowed us to interpret data envisioning an emerging theory which will emerge from theoretical, conceptual and empirical frameworks. The method has been also very useful to understand our topic following an emerging process. Referring to the possibility that a grounded theory can offer "A framework for taking observations, intuitions, and understandings to a conceptual level and providing the guidelines for the discovery and formulation of theory" (Strauss A.L & Corbin J.M 1997, p.182 ), we can illustrate, thanks to the next figure, how we followed the abductive approach.
The grounded theory has been very compatible with our process to structure our thesis: “The grounded theorist compares data with data, data with concept, concept with concept, and theoretical category with theoretical category”, (Charmaz 2002, p.6397). Following this methodology, our thesis has been constituted as an on-going process: our reflection emerged progressively. We can carry on the discussion saying that we followed the path of the constructivist grounded theory. Charmaz (2002, p.6397) claimed that "The questions that observers ask of the empirical world shape data that they select from it. Similarly, constructivists view their conceptual categories as constructed through their interpretations of the data rather than emanating from them." Indeed, we selected major concepts to structure our discussion in an interpretative way.

From an overall point of view, we isolated the most suitable literature review which enabled us to apprehend gender impacts on leadership and organizations. Indeed, the thesis puts stress on connections between gender leadership's theories extracted from the literature review selected, and the reality of companies we are working in. To interview male and female managers and CEOs transmitted us an empirical view of gender leadership issues. These face-to-face researches complete and even reinforce our understanding process. We will now focus deeper on primary and secondary sources.
1.5.2 Primary sources: Interviews

Our empirical study is based on the following face-to-face researches: interviews. We selected a small sample of four male and four female leaders from seven different companies. They all work in Brittany, the western part of France. All the managers we questioned are known of us thanks to our apprenticeship, our business school and private networks. We chose them because of their leading positions with the will to study transverse gender interactions between leaders and followers. Indeed, we crossed interviews of male leaders who lead their gender counterparts and female followers, and also female leaders who lead their gender counterparts and male followers.

We want to introduce them justifying why we selected them. The first manager is the female CEO of Bluecom, a computer and network company composed of 30 people, who are 90% males, a case which was interesting to study. We selected her because of her top-executive position and her important role within Brest’s business life. For the same reasons, we interviewed the second manager, who is the female CEO of Reprocéane, a services company and an office stationery provider. As the previous one, she leads a SME mainly formed of men. The third manager is a female middle and regional sales manager of Air Liquide, a gaz industry French multinational. She used to be in charge in charge of a twelve member group mainly composed of men. One year ago, she evolved as the sales manager for the western part of France and now mainly conducts a team of women. We wanted to get her point of view because she has been managing both genders. Moreover, she is the manager of one of us who is an apprentice within Air Liquide. For the same reasons, we decided to question the fourth manager, who is a male regional sales manager within Air Liquide. However, this manager now leads a male team. The fifth manager is the CEO of the Brest Audi-Volkswagen dealership. We selected him because he used to be the vice-president of France Business CEOs Association, whom one of the branches is located in Brest. He also plays an important role within Brest economic life because of his top-executive position. He leads about 100 people. The sixth manager is a young male sales manager of Kiabi, a French clothing retailer. He has just been graduated in business management and used to study leadership at school. For this reason, we wanted to get his analytical view of his management. Moreover, he manages a team of six women. The seventh manager is the female CEO of GMT Consulting in Brest, and has a huge experience in managing teams and projects because she used to be the financial manager of big companies. She is now a financial and change management consultant, a professional coach and is at the moment writing a book on
management. We chose her because of her experience. The eighth person is a research and development manager within the biggest telecommunication company in France, France Telecom. His team is multidisciplinary (marketing staff, sociologist, psychologist, engineer, ergonomist, project managers) mainly composed of male researchers: 15 men and 3 women. We selected him not only because one of us is an apprentice within Orange Labs, the R&D department of France Telecom located in Lannion, but also for the R&D area he is evolving in and the diversity of the team he is conducting.

Interviews provide us qualitative data to explain and understand to which extents gender impacts on leadership and organizations. We will confront them to our theoretical and conceptual frameworks in order to analyze empirical findings, "The grounded theorist compares one interview excerpt with another, an interview excerpt with a concept that may explain it, a concept with another concept and so forth." (Charmaz 2002, p.6397) We opted for the semi-structured which, as defined Fisher and Collin (2004), involves a free way and orders to ask questions which are ranked under the following specific categories defined previously: identity card, gender leadership style, gender stereotypic perceptions, dominant male organizational model and obstacles. Indeed, we are looking for collecting qualitative data and free way of asking questions according to the answers of the interviewee. We considered that it is an effective way to collect more data than expected. It also makes conversations prevail, which offers more materials to interpret. Regarding Abnor and Bjerke (2009) classification of interviews, we have been leading standardized interviews. Indeed, we asked the same questions to interviewees in order to get criteria of comparison. According to the authors’ interview styles, we conducted face-to-face and telephone interviews notably with interviewees who did not live near Brest. You will find the framework of interviews in appendix 2 (p.76).

1.5.3 Secondary sources

They refer to all data we collected about gender leadership, except for the data collected through interviews designed for our empirical study. Thanks to Internet and references of similar theses, we explored scientific publications, conference board reports, legal texts and several specific encyclopedias. We have been gathering data extracted from the Google search engine and Linnaeus University data base.
Debates raised among different medias such as newspapers (The Economist, the famous British newspaper and Ouest France, a French newspaper), TV, Internet are also a source of data. Gender issues make also part of current conversations such as discussions we had with our colleagues or friends and other students during leadership courses. All these formal and informal secondary sources related to the combination of various experiences, provided us information enriching our contemporary understanding of gender leadership issues.

Once the collection of data was done, we have followed a particular path to organize and insert them to structure our thesis. We selected a process, what Glaser and Strauss name “coding” in order to choose major concepts to use in a fair literature review: "Rather than apply extant concepts to their data, grounded theorists create codes as they study their data and, in abbreviated terms, define what they see in it. Coding helps the researcher to conceptualize what basic processes occur in the research setting or situation", (Charmaz 2002, p.6398). Then, we have been writing memos on each document read and exchanged them in order to both have the same level of knowledge. Memos helped us to design quickly the structure of our thesis and to keep in mind central ideas. Finally, theoretical sampling techniques enabled us to shed light on core categories to study. “Theoretical sampling raises the conceptual level of the analysis" and "occurs after the grounded theorist has defined and analyzed core theoretical categories through focused coding and memo-writing, but needs more data to develop, refine, and check the properties, boundaries, causes, and consequences of these theoretical categories." as Charmaz (2002, p.6398) claims.

1.6 The validity and the reliability

The interpretive approach of our topic involves subjective points of view. Indeed, we interpreted data, so our reflection is influenced according to what we see of reality. Our explanations also depend on our perspectives. The goal of our thesis cannot claim that we are providing a new theory on the subject which is the pure reflection of the reality. Our study findings offer our understanding process of the topic which we consider as true. The study proposes our own reading and explanation of impacts of gender on leadership and organization.

Our empirical study was conducted thanks to a small sample which represents many different gender leadership situations: women who lead men, a woman who leads a mixed
team, a woman who mainly leads men, men who lead men, men who lead a mixed team and men who mainly lead women. These leaders evolve in different business contexts: in SME’s (small & middle-sized enterprises), in a retail group and multinational groups. We decided to study different perspectives of the gender leadership regarding the followership and the business context to get interesting data. We collected our interviewees’ interpretations of the reality. In order not to distort results of interviews, if the interviewee was known of one of us, the other student took the role of the interviewer. We cannot assert to consider that our study can be generalized. However, our thesis aims at offering a relevant reflection regarding a suitable theoretical framework.
Chapter 2: Importance of the study

2.1 Gender issues in the French society

Gender is the most obvious and visible characteristic that distinguishes individuals. Individual behaviors are related to many different factors which shape their personality like ethnicity, cultural background or religion, but only two are common to every single human being all over the world: male and female’s genders. Previously, the society did not allow women to participate actively to the social life. The rules were made by men for men. For instance, women were not allowed to vote before the twentieth century in most of countries. Women vote was not authorized until 1944 in France, 1971 in Switzerland, 1974 in Portugal. Nowadays the world does not belong to men anymore. Women’s implication in institutions, companies and governments reaches its climax. In a male-designed society, it is not easy for women to find their own place. We can consider as a proof of these difficulties of integration important debates that occur currently. There are numerous topics linked to gender discussions namely sex discrimination, life standard adaptation (maternity leave, part time…) and parity.

Everyone is aware of gender issues and the questionings that occur today. Our society takes into account gender and especially female gender. These issues are seriously considered by legal institutions. In 1954, the European Union legally established the equality of salary between men and women thanks to the article 119 CE written in the Roma treaty. In 1976, EU established the obligation for European members to insure the equivalence of treatment of men and women regarding the access to employments, professional trainings and promotions (European directive 76/207/CEE). More and more initiatives are taken. Women’s right associations appear and promote parity as well as life standard adaptation. Besides, governments legislate in order to change the facts.

But dissimilarities still remain because of social, political and historical evolutions. Our Western society is based on masculine values transmitted from generations to generations. The entire occidental model is based on the belief in male superiority. For example, in the bible, the woman is created from Adam’s rib because he could not find “a helper suitable for him” (The Bible, Genesis 2:20.) within all animals that God created. Thus,
Adam is the model of the woman. Then bible myth tells that Eve committed the first sins of humanity. As she led Adam to make the same mistake, she must be dominated by the man as a punishment. This myth shaped the social perception of women for centuries, we can still feel its influence on our modern society. Moreover, history school books still present great men who played a role in historical events and forget to mention great women. Therefore, the domination of men is deeply fixed in the western culture, so the evolution, as far as women are concerned, remains very slow, as the following figure shows.

**Figure 2: Employment rate of men and women from 1975 to 2007 in France**

The most obvious matter about gender is the under-representation of women in the social institutions. In France, only a small part of active women get involve in social institutions (companies, associations, public administrations and public services) at a high level. Therefore, the point of view of these institutions is men-oriented. The lack of women at leading positions contributes to reinforce this masculine point of view and it impedes the evolution of the society. We cannot continue to ignore and exclude half of the population from the social life.
2.2 Gender issues in organizations

Within organizations, the problem is the same. Women are not involved enough at top-executive positions. Moreover, things change slowly. As we can see on the following chart, the rate of women at top-executive positions increased during the last decade. Public institutions’ efforts to promote parity have been relevant within organizations. Even if the situation evolves slowly, the women’s rate at top-executive positions increases every year.

**Figure 3: Evolution of women’s rate at leading positions in France**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Women in top-executive position</th>
<th>1990</th>
<th>2002</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Global number of women holding a top-executive position (per mil)</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s rate in top executive positions</td>
<td>18.5%</td>
<td>31.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Corporate women directors International 2002*

In France, young women are more graduated than their young male counterparts. Paradoxically, fewer women get involved at a high level at leading positions. It means that companies do not exploit a major part of the most qualified workforce. Dissimilarities remain as the following figure proves:

**Figure 4: Compensation disparities between genders in French companies (workforce with six years of professional experience at least)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diploma</th>
<th>Women’s rate</th>
<th>Unemployment rate</th>
<th>Part time employment’s rate</th>
<th>Management position’s rate</th>
<th>Average salary per month</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td>Exact science, life science and production</td>
<td>48.3%</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social sciences, and social services</td>
<td>67.9%</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This chart emphasizes the remaining inequalities of treatment within men and women as far as work is concerned. In each case, the female salary is lower than the male one. It means that for the same job, women get less recognition than men. With a bachelor diploma, differences are lower between men and women. Nevertheless, considering a master degree diploma, the gap is getting wider.

**Figure 5: Women at managerial positions in 25 European countries**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lithuania²</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>(7)</td>
<td>/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latvia</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy²</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>(15)</td>
<td>(18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakian</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average 2004</strong></td>
<td>32</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway²</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Rep.</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luxembourg</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>-4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark²</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malta</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 According to the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO88) - ISCO88-group 1 - Civil Population
2 Irregularities in classification

**Source:** Eurostat (2006)
In France 37% of women were involved at managerial positions in 2004 while 30% of Swedish women get involved in top positions, with and was up by 2% since 1999. But differences regarding salaries are weaker in Sweden, where the salaries of women represent 92% of those of a man (Svenska Institutet 2007), than in France, where the salaries of women represent 81% of those of a man (Insee 2007).

Figure 6: Representation of women at leading positions in the world

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number of companies taken into account in the study</th>
<th>Number of companies with at least one woman at a top-executive position</th>
<th>Companies’ rate with at least one woman at a top-executive position</th>
<th>Number of managers</th>
<th>Number of female managers</th>
<th>Female managers’ rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>434</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>5912</td>
<td>735</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>2345</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>2968</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>37.7%</td>
<td>3094</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>2486</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>2396</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>43115</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Corporate women directors International (2002)

These charts give us the current representation of women at top-executive positions in industrialized countries situated in Europe and around the world. Concerning leading positions, women are far less represented than men. It’s important to study such a disparity because the problem of the glass ceiling obstructs the implication of women in companies. Women represent half of the people, it means that organizations deprive themselves of half of their talented people. “We’d be crazy and stupid to ignore 50 per cent of the talent available” claims a Dutch CEO in the Executive Catalyst’s survey (2002, p4).
Chapter 3: Theoretical framework

Our theoretical framework enables us to introduce the major fields we studied. Gender in business is a widely discussed subject. It was necessary to make a draconian selection of our literature. This selection process was also a part of our understanding process.

As we selected the necessary literature to treat our subject, we were more familiar with the major theories. We focused on the most reliable sources and authors trying to avoid the feminist writers who put forward radical points of view. Our goal was to collect all data which enable us to make a deeper analysis of our topic: gender impacts on leadership styles and organizations.

At the end of each part of the study, we will put the stress on accepted concepts we will use to analyze our empirical study. Figures will successively appear summarizing main concepts to keep in mind.

Within the book and articles collected, we emphasize few concepts which can provide interesting points of view in order to understand the gender issues and the way they are related to leadership and organizations. We can highlight the major theories which enable us to structure our reflection.

Research fields:

- the gender background

- the gender leadership styles

- the shifting perceptions of gender leadership styles

- the gender leadership controversy

- the male organizational model

- the glass ceiling

The following figure introduces the theoretical framework by emphasizing main theories which will allow us to have a contemporary understanding of gender leadership and its manifestations on the frame of organizations.
Figure 7: Literature map
RQ1: What is our contemporary understanding of gender leadership?

3.1 Gender Background

3.1.1 Sexual-oriented education

Every society around the world has its own manner to apprehend these biological differences. All communities build social rules according to gender. Depending on their culture, people have to behave regarding the sex’ category they belong to. People can behave specifically according to a framework which defines the notion of gender within their community. A sexual-oriented education shapes people vision of gender. Education always refers to the current values of societies, therefore this oriented education is an evolving concept.

This concept corresponds to the vision of “what a male is?” or “what a female is?”. In fact, it refers to the models of the ideal man or woman. Individual’s behaviors must reflect this model. It represents a rigorous model that others have to follow as far as memberships are concerned. Thus, they refer to the father/mother models they knew during their childhood (Sinclair, A 1998). Young girls behave regarding the female’s frame and young boys, the male’s one. Defined roles and expectations of these two categories are not the same. As a consequence, behaviors differ. By reproducing social schemes, we naturally teach young boys to be dominant, fearless, strapping and resourceful, while we teach girls to be kind, sweet and submissive. The education leads little boys to become husbands able to fight to defend the interests of their families, and girls to become submissive wives and nurturing mothers. The differentiation of gender prepares each child to a predetermined role within the community namely being a father or a mother.

Consequently, this sex-role oriented education locks up gender within a framework. West. C. and Zimmerman. D. H (1987, p.141) develop and illustrate this notion of sex-role education. These authors took up a study of Cahill emphasizing the children’s learning process of gender. Thanks to this example, they explain that children, by observing adults’ behaviors, identify and integrate the ideal attributes of each gender and behave in order to reproduce those belonging to their own gender.
3.1.2 Gender social role

Another important aspect about gender is the notion of social role regarding gender. Without followers, there is no leader. Leaders are at the head of a community. Thus, they are also affected by social conventions and expectations of followers’ groups. As communities evolve, gender social roles change with the evolution of the standards of living.

West. C. and Zimmerman. D. H (1987) explain that the gender differentiation and sex-role education build a pattern of the ideal attributes a man or a woman should have. These draw a sort of caricature of men or women called stereotypes. The stereotype expresses expectations of people regarding male and female gender. It corresponds more to a phantasm than a reality. Nowadays, the submissive wife does not correspond to reality anymore, and men are not always assertive and fearless soldier as they are described in every media. But the stereotypes still remain. According to them, women are always taking care of children, keeping house, while men are assertive workers, bringing money back home to foster their family. West. C. and Zimmerman. D. H (1987) explain that stereotypes are taught to children who will reproduce them. Due to this education, individuals are conditioned by a sexual-oriented gender role.

Thus, roles are allocated to gender. In other words, we can highlight that regarding stereotypes, male and female are not allowed to do the same activities. Some of them are directly dedicated to a certain gender. Then, individuals behave according to stereotypes and gender social roles which stem from them. Within organization, social rules seem to be a bit different. Referring to Wagner & Berger, Eagly HA. and Johannesen-Schmidt (2001, p.6) state that, the gender behavioral differences tend to disappear in an experimental context. Within organizational contexts, gender differences also erode while other types of differences do not.

Sex roles and stereotypes are a part of the social perception of gender. These dimensions of gender issues follow the lead that individuals have to correspond to the ideal man or to the ideal woman. As individuals, leaders also highlight this view and stereotype their behavior regarding their gender.
3.1.3 The gender stereotypic perceptions

According to their study, West. C. and Zimmerman. D. H (1987, p.133) explain the concept of stereotype as a social construction of what a man or woman should be regarding the culture of their community. To them, gender stereotypes are a “well defined set of criteria which enables categorization of individuals”. Eagly and Carly (2003, p818), define stereotypes as expectations toward a group which must possess “characteristic and exhibit behaviors” consistent with a pre-established idea.

Gender is a widely discussed issue, with a lot of influences on individuals and on culture. As communities, organizations also have to deal with the perception of gender. Gender is defined by a special framework, made of all concepts and criteria which enable to classify membership, these concepts and criteria defining “what a man or a woman is?” are what we can call stereotypes or archetypal profiles. To be clearly identified as a man or a woman, everyone tries to behave in a stereotyped way.

The influences of culture and education lead to a definition of archetypal profiles. Through female models’ examples, Sinclair (1998) explains the archetypal profile of the woman, which corresponds to the perfect mother: nurturing, caring, and submissive. Even if things changed during last decades, this old fashion portrait of women remains. Men’ archetypal profile is an assertive, exemplar, untiring worker and devoted to his family.

As communities, organizations have to deal with social expectations of its memberships. Eagly and Karau (2002) emphasize the importance of archetypal profiles and impacts of gender on leaders’ representation.

Concerning the gender background, we will accept the sexual-oriented education and the gender social role concepts and the gender stereotypic perceptions which, to us, refer to the contemporary understanding of gender leadership. The sexual-oriented education enables us to understand the role of cultural transmissions of gender perceptions. Leaders are influenced by their culture through education like anyone else. Gender social role refers to a kind of social agreements whereby memberships of societies define suitable roles for individuals. It enables us to understand how people are influenced by social pressure and regarding social conventions. Gender stereotypic perceptions allow us to understand expectations of people regarding notions of gender and leader.
3.2 Gender leadership styles

To have a fair contemporary understanding of gender leadership, our theoretical researches led us to devote a part of the study to the potential links between gender and leadership styles, and global definitions we can extract from them. Considering that a leadership style is based on leaders’ behaviors, Eagly and Johannesen-Shmidt (2001, p.10) noticed that the first leadership styles, introduced by Bales in 1950, were categorized as “interpersonally-oriented style” and “task-oriented style”. They consider that this classification was a gender stereotypic one. Authors (2001, p.11) also insist that Burns labeled in 1978 two new types of leadership styles he called transformational and transactional. Later on, both types of classifications have been linked because of behavioral common points. Firstly, we will define the gender stereotypic leadership styles, the female and male leaderships styles, and secondly, the transformational and the transactional leadership styles.
3.2.1 The female and male leadership styles

These two gender leadership styles exist in the contemporary understanding of gender leadership literature. We want to introduce them in order to deduce the aspects gender theories are based on.

As explained Eagly and Johannesen-Schmidt (2001, p.3-5), some typecasted considerations of women and men leaders behaviors exist. Consequently, they are also related to beliefs attributed to feminine and masculine attitudes and values. The female and male leadership styles have always been introduced as opposed trends we will go through in this part of the study.

We can quote many authors who depicted gender differences in leadership styles. Eagly AH and Johnson BT (1990, p.233) refer to Loden who opposed the two trends admitting the existence of a “masculine mode of management by qualities such as competitiveness, hierarchical authority, high control for the leader, and unemotional and analytic problem solving.” and a feminine way of leading he characterized as “cooperativeness, collaboration of managers and subordinates, lower control for the leader, and problem solving based on intuition and empathy as well as rationality”. Likewise, Eagly and Johannesen-Schmidt (2001, p.4) quote writers such as Helgesen and Rosener who contended that gender leadership styles exist because of sex differences.

Regarding leaders’ behaviors, according to Eagly AH and Johnson BT (1990, p.9236) the first contrasts between both styles have been based on sex criteria by Bales in 1950. According to him, an “interpersonally-oriented style” characterizes women leaders and a “task oriented-style” corresponds to men. Likewise, Eagly and Johannesen-Schmidt (2001, p.10) emphasize these distinctions established by many authors saying that male leaders aim at “organizing task-relevant activities”. Regarding the “interpersonally-oriented style”, authors understood it “as a concern with maintaining interpersonal relationships by tending to others’ morale and welfare”. They admit that these distinctions can be related to common beliefs concerning feminine and masculine attributes.

Many researchers have been leading empirical studies on the way followers rate their leaders and on how leaders rate themselves. Therefore, many authors confront “communal
Characteristics” ascribed to a female leadership style and “agentic characteristics” attributed to a male leadership style (Eagly AH & Karau SJ 2002, p.574). Still according to them (2002, p.574), “women evidently proceed with more collaboration and sharing of decision-making” and are viewed by their followers as having “a concern with the welfare of others” and as “being affectionate, helpful, kind, sympathetic, collaborative, socially sensitive, interpersonally sensitive, nurturing and gentle.” Still according to the author, male leadership style is characterized as “agentic”. According to Wehmeyer M.J. (2005, article), this concept refers to the “mental or physical capacity that enables a person to direct causal action toward a desired goal or objective.” This attribute is allocated to male leaders defined as “assertive, controlling and confident tendency, aggressive, ambitious, dominant, forceful, independent, self-sufficient, self-confident.” (Eagly AH & Karau SJ 2002, p.574) Eagly AH and Johnson BT (1990, p.236) explain that many gender leadership styles’ authors admit differences between women leaders viewed as “democratic and participative” versus men ones perceived as using an “autocratic style”. From these perceptions, it is possible to admit that the female leadership style is “democratic and participative” referring to “communal” values whereas the male leadership style is “autocratic”.

Another significant distinction between male and female leadership styles is based on the relation of men and women leaders with power, more precisely on how they consider it and they use it. Indeed, Bass, Avolio and Atwater (1996, p.11) refer to the two following authors, Jacobs and McClelland, who argued in 1994 that women and men leaders don’t use power in the same way saying that “female leaders are more individually considerate than using their power to control others” and use a more “resourceful power rather than a reactive power”. They allude to the “resourceful power” as the way leaders influence others in order to achieve a common goal, opposing this trend to the “reactive power” used by male leaders “to control individuals and groups”. Bass, Aviolo and Atwater (1996, p.11) also mention Jacobs and McClelland who suggest that men and women leaders have a different approach on how a leader applies power to lead his teams: “Women think of power in terms of resource-building whereas men think of power as a mean of developing control.”

Female and male leaderships are systematically defined in opposition. These definitions mainly depend on followers’ and leaders’ perceptions.
3.2.2 The transformational and transactional leadership styles

We decided to define these two leadership styles because they have been associated to female and male leadership styles. We will go through these theories in the next section of the study. But, we want to explain what they consist in independently.

According to Eagly and Johannesen-Schmidt (2001, p.10-11), Bales is the first to have introduced the concept of transformational and transactional leadership styles in 1950, which have been definitively labeled in 1978 by Burns.

According to them (2001, p.11-12), Burns established that transformational leaders “set especially high standards for behavior and establish themselves as role models by gaining the trust and confidence of their followers. They state future goals and develop plans to achieve them. (...) By mentoring and empowering followers, such leaders encourage them to develop their full potential and thereby contribute to their organization.” Moreover, Avolio, Bass and Atwater (1996, p.10) gave a very complete definition of this concept. According to them, this leadership style “influences followers by getting them to transcend their self-interests for the good of the group, organization, or society while also enhancing follower’s expectations and abilities, and their willingness to take risks.” Globally, the transformational leader aims at creating a common vision, a charismatic relationship with subordinates, and envisioning benefits of each follower. According to our authors (1996, p.10), four main factors define the transformational leadership style:

- **Charisma**: a charismatic leader aims at taking his followers to a common vision, purpose and mission. From followers’ points of view, they are “highly esteemed” and represent “role models” to imitate.

- **Inspirational stimulation**: inspirational leaders stimulate their followers “providing meaning and optimism about the mission” and its feasibility.

- **Intellectual stimulation**: “leaders encourage followers to question basic assumptions, and to consider problems from new and unique perspectives.”

- **Individual consideration**: leaders evaluate and take into account the needs of their subordinates. They lead them in order to develop their aptitudes. Followers are at the center of their consideration.
These definitions related to the four main components depicted above both insist on the collaborative and the communal aspects of the leadership style. The transformational leadership wants to elevate followers, considering them, in order to achieve a common goal. Their participation, as well as their creativity, seems to be essential to accomplish a project. The team and the project appear as the most important values to respect and envision. Eagly and Carli (2003, p.815) sum up the transformational model saying that “By mentoring and empowering followers, such leaders help followers to develop their potential and thus to contribute more effectively to their organization”.

As said formerly, the transactional leadership has been depicted in opposition to the transformational leadership. Eagly HA and Johannesen-Schmidt (2001, p.12) admit that Burns labeled it in 1978 defining it as an opposite trend of the transformational leadership style. He insisted on the fact that the transactional leader “exchanges relationships with his subordinates (...) clarifying subordinate responsibilities, monitoring their work and rewarding them for meeting objectives and correcting them for failing to meet objectives”. The transactor leader also expects compliant followers, so they can get rewards. Bass, Avolio and Atwater (1996, p.10) described the transactional leader as the one who “provides suitable rewards and recognition if followers achieve the objectives or execute the tasks as required”. According to them (1996, p.10), the transactional leadership influences followers using a management-by-exception and contingent rewards. These two factors can be described as:

- **The managements-by-exception:** this way of leading can be active or passive but globally aims at “monitoring and correcting followers’ mistakes and to take disciplinary sanction”.
  Regarding the active way, leaders “monitor and correct followers’ performances”. Regarding the passive way, the leader acts only when mistakes emerge and takes disciplinary sanctions.

- **Contingent reward:** this way of leading involves a more “constructive and positive transaction” in which both followers and leaders agree on objectives. Agreements are based on the consultation and the negotiation. In case of success and reached goals, leaders offer rewards.
Descriptions of the transactional leader globally refer to a supervisor and to the values of controls. Objectives must be reached and similarly tasks must be accomplished in the way they were formulated during an exchange between a leader and his subordinates. The notion of rewards seems to be an important factor used to motivate and encourage followers. The possible punishments, which can occur in case of mistakes, may try to prevent followers from them. Eagly and Carli (2003, p.815) give an overall definition of what a transactional leader is saying that he is “managing in the conventional sense of clarifying subordinates’ responsibilities, rewarding them for meeting objectives, and correcting them for failing to meet objectives”.
3.2.3 Shifting perceptions of gender leadership styles

Another contemporary understanding of gender leadership associated old and new leadership paradigms. Indeed, Bass, Avolio and Atwater (1996) perceived similarities and linked the female leadership style with the transformational one, and the male leadership style with the transactional one.

Vecchio (2002, p.644-646) also considers “the shifting views of gender and leadership” arguing that “The parallel development of these shifting conceptualizations of gender and leadership has coincided with attempts to merge the major dimensions of these conceptualizations by equating “femininity” with consideration and “masculinity” with structuring”. In the following figure, the author shows evolution of gender and leader views in parallel.

Figure 9: Shifting views of gender and leadership researches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of dimensions</th>
<th>Gender research</th>
<th>Leader research</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single dimension</td>
<td>Feminine ←→ Masculine</td>
<td>People ←→ Production</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent dimensions</td>
<td>Feminine</td>
<td>Masculine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple dimensions</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Leadership and gender advantage, Vecchio (2002, p.646)

3.2.3.1 The transformational leadership style: a female leadership style

Several studies demonstrated that women leaders are considered as using a more transformational leadership style. Indeed, Bass, Avolio and Atwater (1996) have been
conducting a study among a sample of middle and top-manager and as Maher (1997, p.211) emphasized: “They found that female managers were rated as more transformational than male managers by both male and female subordinates.” To strengthen her discussion, Maher (1997, p.211) also refers to a study led by Duskat in 1994 within a Roman Catholic Church where subordinates rated their mother superiors as transformational. All these examples linked the transformational leadership to the female leadership, mainly because of “communal attributes” and a “democratic style” used by female leaders. Authors admit a strong link between transformational and female leadership styles, which constitutes a part of the gender leadership concept.

Empirical studies mainly based on specific questionnaires show that female leaders are rated as more transformational by their subordinates. The following results reinforce the link between female leaders and a transformational leadership style applied by them.

**Figure 10: Mean ratings and standard deviations for transactional, transformational leaderships**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Female Stereotype</th>
<th>Male Stereotype</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transformational</td>
<td>3,92</td>
<td>3,50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>leadership</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Maher (1997, p.219)*

### 3.2.3.2 The transactional leadership style: a male leadership style

According to the same studies quoted above, the transactional leadership refers to the opposite style of the transformational and then, is related to the male leadership style. The transactional leadership style is associated to masculine characteristics depicted as “agentic” attributes, that is to say the ability to make choice, and an “assertive style”. Through their study, Bass, Avolio and Atwater (1996) showed that from followers’ point of view, this leadership style reflect the values that Eagly and Karau attributed to male leaders (2002, p.574): “assertive, controlling and confident tendency, aggressive, ambitious, dominant, forceful, independent, self-sufficient and self-confident.”
Many authors put stress on gender differences and the similarity between a specific leadership approach and a gender. It would mean that the transformational leadership style is mainly used by female leaders, so, the transformational leadership style may be a female leadership style. In the same way, men leaders are mainly perceived as transactional leaders, so the transactional leadership would be a male leadership style. Maher (1997, p211.) suggests that “these differences in transformational and transactional leadership might be due to differences between men and women in their tendency to be nurturing and promote the development of their subordinates, which is a component of transformational leadership”.

3.2.4 The gender leadership styles controversy

The contemporary understanding of gender leadership puts the stress on the following controversy: female leaders are not more transformational than their male counterparts, and male leaders are not more transactional than the female counterparts. Vecchio (2002) is the main author who puts into perspective gender stereotypic leadership styles considering that empirical researches led on the subject are not enough relevant.

According to gender differences, societies build definitions and rules. They define how people are allowed to behave and what they can do according to their gender. Thus, society builds stereotypes related to men and women and defines associated roles. As well as any other cultural knowledge, the stereotyped role of genders is taught to children through our every day stereotyped behaviors (West C & Zimmerman DH, 1987). Then, individuals always have a gender typed perception of each others. In organizations, studies on leadership and genders issues consist in evaluations of leaders by the followers. Like anyone else,
interviewees are influenced by the gender background of their culture. Their answers cannot be neutral. Thus, they typecast their leaders regarding his gender.

Vecchio’s studies (2002, p.664), which have been conducted on gender differences within organizations, only show little differences between men’ and women’ behaviors at work. "Yet, recent research on sex differences in charismatic leadership suggests that differences, if they exist are not great". More precisely, these conclusions on the reality of gender differences are based on weak differences within collected replies. Indeed, if we observe Bass, Avolio and Atwater’ leadership scale (1996, p.18), too few differences exist to establish that female leaders are purely transformational and that male leaders are purely transactional. The leadership style scale depicted through the following figure doesn’t emphasize significant differences.

**Figure 12: The leadership scale**

![The leadership scale](image)

*Source: Bass, Avolio and Atwater (1996, p.18)*

No study enables us to have a clear overview on this subject. There is always an element which calls conclusions into question. There is apparently no real manner to stay objective on the subject Vecchio, R.P (2002). Even the gender of the researcher can influence
answers of the interviewee. The real impact of gender on top management doesn't seem to be really proved for the moment. Moreover, referring to Wagner & Berger, Eagly HA and Johannesen-Schmidt (2001, P6) state that behavioral differences in leadership disappear within experimental contexts and erode within business contexts. All these elements found during our researches tend to put into question the existence of a gender-related leadership.

Our analysis leads us to assert that transformational and transactional leadership concepts are some of the possible evolutions of gender leadership concepts. The gender leadership has been built by studies based on interviews of followers. As we previously said, people have stereotyped perceptions of each other because of their sexual-oriented education and the social construction regarding gender. Thus, followers have a gender typed perception of their leaders. Nowadays, differences between typical masculine and feminine values are hazy. The shifting views of gender and leadership involve the impossibility to admit a gender stereotyped categorization of leaders. We admit that empirical studies led on gender leadership do not show a real influence of gender on leadership.

Figure 13: Concepts extracted from the theoretical framework: shifting perceptions of gender leadership styles

Source: Aurélie Daniel, Yann Moudic (2010)
3.3 The social perception of the leader: an incongruity

The concept of leader is old and appeared with first organizations and evolved slowly. According to Sinclair A. (1998), the concept of leader is highly linked with old-fashioned and heroic masculine values. This is due to the fact that traditionally, characters representing leaders in our culture through heroic models are essentially men. Thus, the leader’s perception is highly related to male gender.

According to Eagly and Karau (2002, p.575), dissimilarity exists between the social perceptions of a leader and of a female. They admit an “inconsistency between the predominantly communal qualities that perceivers associate with women and the predominantly agentic qualities they believe are required to succeed as a leader”. The female gender stereotypes, which are shaped by gender social roles, do not fit to the social perception of a leader perceived as a man. Our authors put stress on an incongruity which becomes a prejudice for women leaders. “The potential for prejudice against female leaders that is inherent in the female gender role follows from its dissimilarity to the expectations that typically have about leaders.” (Eagly & Karau 2002, p.575)

The figure n°9 which gives a concrete example of this incongruity is the empirical study led by Eagly and Karau (2002). It reveals that people prefer being led by male leaders:

**Figure 14: Responses by men and women in selected years to Gallup Poll’s question about preferring a man or a woman as boss**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men preferred as boss</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td><strong>48%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women preferred as boss</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td><strong>22%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Sources: Role congruity theory of prejudice toward female leaders, Eagly, Karau (2002, p.580)*

We consider that an incongruity exists between the social perception of a leader and the gender stereotypic perception of a woman. Thus, this dissimilarity explains why women are under-represented at top-executive positions when males prevail.
RQ2: How do gender leadership issues manifest themselves within the frame of organizations?

3.4 Impacts on organizations

3.4.1 Male organizational model

The concepts of leadership and organization are twins. There is no leadership without organizations and vice versa. Leadership is a masculine concept. Organizations were historically run by men. Therefore, organizational models are not neutral as far as gender is concerned. Employees currently evolve within a business environment based on a male organizational model. This model is based on masculine values, thus, new issues appear with the growing involvement of women in business life.

The leadership perception and method appeared with the first structured organizations. At that time, business life was dedicated to men exclusively (Helgesen S 1995). According to
her, concepts of leadership and organizations have always been associated to masculine values. She highlights that until today, the society keeps the paternalistic image of the leader, controlling, distributing knowledge, advice, tasks and rewards at the top of a heavily structured organizational hierarchy.

The "male organizational model" continues to be the dominant one. Many studies proved that the top-senior executive culture is shaped by men's values. According to Acker (1991), organizational structure is still not gender neutral and deeply reflects the masculine current values and norms. This dominant male organizational model shapes each organizational structure.

As the leadership, organizational models remain a masculine concept, deeply influenced by stereotypes associated to masculine values. According to Sinclair (2005), organizations are pre-defined by a dominant male model. Consequently, executive culture is historically a man's world. This is the reason why women meet barriers to access top-managerial positions (Eagly & Karau 2002). Hopefully, the situation evolved. Due to the influence of women’ emergence at top-executive positions, the business world is now more open to women (Helgesen S 1995).

3.4.2 Glass ceiling

This concept illustrates how gender leadership issues manifest themselves within organizations. Indeed, the glass ceiling shows the under-representation of women at top-executive positions. This metaphor of the glass ceiling is a reference frame to put stress on barriers that prevent women from accessing to leading positions. Nowadays, even if women occupy more and more top-executive positions, they still remain under-represented. Authors such as Meyerson, Fletcher, Morrisson and White strive to explain the phenomenon and its reasons.

The literature devoted to this concept always introduces statistics to show the under-representation of women at top-executive positions. Indeed, we can refer to figure 6 (p.21) which emphasizes the low representation of women at leading positions in the world. Indeed, the female managers’ rate fluctuates between 0,2% in Japan, 5,8% in South Africa, 7% in France, 9,1% in Canada and 12,4% in the US.
To describe the phenomenon, Meyerson and Fletcher (2000, p.231) qualified the under-representation of “gender inequity” within the corporate sphere of organizations. They talk about a systematic “disadvantage which blocks women from career advancement”, even if women have the same abilities as men. The next figure illustrates the phenomenon:

**Figure 16: The glass ceiling within the organizational pyramid**

![Glass Ceiling Diagram](image)

Source: ORSE study, 2004

Meyerson and Fletcher (2000, p.232) laid the blame on a dominant male executive culture “made by and for men”. According to them, organizational practices reflect male norms. They are also more adapted to the male gender role which allows a flexible availability and a complete devotion to the job.

Morrison and White (1992, p.15) went through three level of pressures to explain how women’ career advancement are restrained: “the job, their pioneer role in the job” and their family sphere. First, regarding pressures applied by the job, men face the same kind of stress and tensions which are for instance objectives to reach or tasks to accomplish. The second pressure lies in being a female CEO. Indeed, referring to the study of Kanter (1977) on “tokenism”, Morrisson and White (1992, p.17) put stress on the fact that women are a minority within the executive sphere. Finally, they show that a third pressure is linked to the
family and the private spheres. “Women are still expecting to take major responsibility for maintaining a household, raising children, even nurturing an intimate relationship.” (1992, p.17) Authors give us clues to understand why women are under-represented.

Through the concept of male organizational model, we can partly understand why women still face difficulties to evolve within organizations. The concept of leadership appeared with the first organizations which were led by male exclusively. Thus, the concepts of leader and top-executive positions are based on male values. The glass ceiling is a gender leadership issue manifestation caused by stereotypical models and then, a male organizational model. The under-representation of women at top-executive positions is visible. As Meyerson and Fletcher (2000), we lay the blame on a dominant male executive culture. Organizational practices reflect male norms and are more adapted to the male gender role: availability and a complete devotion to his job.

We will use the final concepts depicted on the following figure in order to analyze our empirical findings and then to provide an emerging theory.

**Figure 17: Final conceptual framework**

![Final conceptual framework](source: Aurélie Daniel, Yann Moudic (2010))
Chapter 4: The empirical study

Thanks to the conceptual framework selected, our empirical study will focus on the answer of our research issue: to which extents gender impacts on leadership and organizations in France? The interpretation of data we collected allows us to extract an emerging theory regarding our contemporary understanding of gender leadership and manifestations of gender leadership issues within the frame of organizations. The emerging theory is introduced by analysis themes chosen respecting the conceptual framework and interviews, the practical data studied.

First, our contemporary understanding of gender leadership led us to highlight the shifting perceptions of gender and leadership and the controversy focused on the reliability of gender leadership. Moreover, our study allowed us to emphasize how stereotypes involve gender leadership issues because of education and the social construction of gender role. Finally, we underline how gender stereotypic and social leader perceptions are fixed and imply a standardization of the male organizational model as a regular frame of organizations.

Each analysis theme is constituted of interview’s extracts to illustrate our argumentation. Indeed, we provide summarized interviewees’ perceptions extracted from specific categories we had previously defined. According to the argument developed, we excerpted quotations from different parts of the interviews. At the end of each section, we analyzed and interpreted data collected providing the emergence of a new theory. The reader can find the full interviews within the appendix 3 (p.77).

The empirical analysis takes up the conceptual framework and tries to provide a new way of understanding gender leadership, and the manifestation of its issues through the frame of organizations.
4.1 Empirical findings and analysis

4.1.1 Shifting perceptions of gender and leadership

Our first findings focus on the shifting views of gender and leadership. Our argument will aim at showing that there is a clear evolution of the traditional views of gender and leadership. We will go through this idea further into details in the analytical part of the section. Moreover, according to us, the association of old and new paradigms does not exist anymore. It means that women cannot be purely linked to the transformational leadership and men cannot be purely bonded with the transactional leadership style.

For now, we invite you to read what interviewees said on the way French managers and CEOs perceive their leadership styles and what a leader is.

Manager 1: the female CEO of Bluecom

She states that her leadership style is based on communication and participation. She also views herself as directive and tuned in her subordinates.

“My leadership is based on communication. I concert people, I am directive in so far as I give guidance leaving people independent (...). Every single employee is a vital link in the chain. I have a wide open communication with them but tasks are very well-defined. (...) I have weekly meetings with my teams during which I control the progress of what was done, and then I take action depending on the result. Likewise, I have an annual career path interview with each of my employees to talk about their evolution and performance. (...) To take decisions, I stand back, I ask for individual perception, and then I try to get a global feeling (...). I never imposed decisions, I never needed to do it. In case of bad decisions, I never hesitate to put myself into perspective. I always take into account both spheres which are the individual and the group.”

Concerning the way she motivates followers, she looks for a common vision describing her as inspirational.

“I create an interest in them, I make them feel personally concerned by the project, I implicate them without focusing them only on what they are working on.”
I prompt them by making them feel that they are parts of a whole project. I talk about a project vision to call their curiosity and their intellectual interests. (...). If the individual meets obstacles, I call for solidarity in the group, the team spirit to solve problems. It is very important to work together.”

She makes a direct parallel between her and the definition of a leader saying that:

“A CEO (...) is the federative element. In three words: dynamic, positive and federative. I federate people listening to them and defining priorities. I ensure the respect of the deadlines and objectives. I don’t want to lose my time, I am very directive.”

**Manager 2: the female CEO of Reprocéane**

The leadership described by the second CEO is informal, directive, based on communication, and flexibility. She rewards also her followers to motivate them.

“My leadership style is very convivial, it is a small company, (...) We talk to each other all the time. The way I manage is very informal, we talk during the coffee break (...) I make a monthly meeting with all employees. I know that they need to see charts and statistics to figure out our position. I think that I am directive. I involve people as much as possible, it is important to them to have a clear vision of what we are doing together. Understanding what is occurring for the company, to have a global vision of the business they are a part of, is highly enhancive for my employees. I try to develop versatility of everyone. (...) Developing the flexibility of employees and their ability to substitute to a colleague make them more able to understand information process, thus they are more effective. Then they are also more confident. I give some incentives to my employees. But it is not regular. Otherwise they take it for granted.”

She takes decisions in a consultative way.

“I always consult individuals because they have a great vision of the field and they know what they have to do.”
She defines a leader emphasizing on the sensegiving quality that a leader must transmit.

“A leader is necessarily able to foresee things with common sense. Values of anticipation and horse-sense make also part of the leader’s qualities.”

**Manager 3: the female regional sales manager of Air Liquide**

The third female manager states that she is close to her followers, makes sense for her subordinates.

“I could define my leadership style with the word “nearness”. I try to be close to my sellers and not to be interventionist. Concerning objectives to reach, I give a lot of explanations and meanings. I accompany my colleagues to find the good strategic leverage to act on. I ask them to plan their actions in order to attain their goals. I encourage people by inviting them for dinner and thanking them by e-mails. I show them that I am here and attentive to them.”

Even talking about taking a decision, she attaches importance to flexibility and proximity.

“I ask for tasks to be done by being responsive, giving precise deadlines and keeping close relationships. I am 10% interventionist and 90% close-at-hand relationship. Indeed, they are autonomous and know what they have to do.”

She considers a leader as “enthusiastic, coordinator, creative, responsible, federative and controller somehow.”

**Manager n°4: the male regional sales manager of Air Liquide**

Manager n°4 considers his leadership as “contextual and paternalistic”. He motivates his subordinates “setting the good example” and being also consultative.

“I coach them, I supervise them but without using well-defined methods. I follow my intuition according to the context. Concerning my subordinates’ objectives, I have a precise idea, they challenge me on that point. Sometimes they put forward their objectives. I agree or not but we readjust together. We write it and measure how the performance evolved.”

According to him, a leader must be “exemplary, charismatic and reliable”.
Manager n°5: the male CEO of Audi-Volkswagen dealership

The fifth leader defines his leadership as “An iron fist in a velvet glove.” He also states his leadership as participative, paternalistic, and altruistic. The exemplary nature is also very important.

“I think that it is important to have a participative management, the directive management is still used by leaders within companies, but I don’t think that it helps employees to evolve and to blossom. I also hold myself up as an example, it is important to show that you are also able to do what you require from your followers. (...) I consider that to be efficient, we need to consider the company as a family. It is a paternalistic view, where members have to find their own place and work with each other. It doesn’t mean that people are allowed to do whatever they want, they still have to show respect for the boss. (...) If something goes wrong, then, it is very important to reassure them, to re-inspire them confidence. It is essential to understand the reason of issues, to explain, to envision solutions, and to make my employees ready to work again for themselves and their company.”

He collaborates with his employees in altruistic and communicative ways.

“A very basic but paramount thing is to say “hello” to everyone when you arrive. This is a mark of respect but this is also a manner to talk with them and to be aware of “how they feel”. Then, they know that my door is always open if they want to speak about personal issues. It enables them to see that I am also a human being, and that I can understand if they have problems.”

He also compares the business context and the corresponding leadership style.

“For a company, it is possible to have a directive management, only if you are the leader on your market with a low competition. Then you are absolutely sure to find as many employees as you want, you don’t necessarily need to take care of them. The business context influences the management style. In my opinion, it will become more and more difficult to be efficient with a directive management style in the future, because business is getting harder.”
He implements his decision making in a consultative way. He also pays attention to make sense.

“For any decision, I always ask my collaborators. It’s important to involve them in the decision making process. Of course, I finally take the decision, and if my decision differs from what my employees say, I explain the reasons of my decision. It is important to argue on your decision in such a case.”

To define a leader, he refers to exemplary and innate qualities.

“You cannot become a leader. I think that we inherit the ability to lead. To be a leader means being able to take decisions, to assume, argue and justify them. (...) As a leader, you also have to show that you perfectly know the job. Such knowledge only comes with experience. Once, one of our competitors tried to put high skilled young people at leading positions, but it never worked. With a lack of practical knowledge, you never gain the trust and respect of employees.”

**Manager n°6: the male sales manager of Kiabi**

The sixth interviewee admits a leadership style based on communication, sense giving and a paternalistic way of managing team.

“My leadership style is paternalistic. I base my leadership style on the sense of communication essentially. I encourage people to share information as much as possible.” In my company, the hierarchy is not clearly defined. My job is to define priorities, to decide what is urgent or important, to decide and explain how to do the job. I try to be on the field with my team as much as possible. It is a manner to see how they work, to help them to get better. I train them and give them tricks.”

To boost his team, he uses flexibility considering a long term vision.

“I train them at the beginning, and then, when they know what to do, I let them find their own way to do the job. Doing things with flexibility is a rewarding aspect of the job, it allows them to be creative. (...) I have a long-term vision for my followers. I also try to give them a clear view of what is going on, I always explain them why I ask them to do something.”
He puts stress on the exemplary nature to implement decisions.

“I understood that it is important to be able to do what you ask to your followers. It is a basic principle, but I try to apply it every day. If I ask my employees to do something, it is because I already know how to do it, and I can show them if it is necessary. I try to be a model.”

**Manager n°7: the female CEO of GMT Consulting**

The seventh female CEO depicts her leadership style as based on communication, her ability to listen and creativity. She also emphasizes that a shared common vision is important.

“I build a strategy which is based on communication and explanation. My goal is to win over team members’ opinion on precise objectives without giving orders. Then objectives are reached naturally. I listen to people and create a common vision. I have been setting up what I call a “high-mass”, once a year, where employees and the executive committee can talk to each other and where the strategy of the company can be explained. This “high-mass” allows to create an interaction between the executive committee and employees. It is interesting and important to get a bottom-up feedback. To listen and to communicate are essentials. (...) If there is a resistance, I use a brainstorming which focuses on my main objectives. I precisely use the "Six Thinking Hats" method which consists in leaving employees to create a story very similar to my objectives to reach. Then, the employee has the feeling to be involved in the decision making (...) People learn to work together with their diversity. Moreover, this process allows me to change my objectives taking into account new ideas. Consequently, my leadership can be consultative.”

Adaptation and harmony are her key words to develop the potential of her employees.

“Adaptation is as important as avoiding clans and creating a harmony among the different departments.”

To her, “A leader must be communicative, tuned in his subordinates.”
Manager n°8: the male manager of Orange Labs

Ability to listen, proximity, autonomy and flexibility constitute the leadership of the male manager of Orange Labs.

“I listen to people and I get involved in their projects. Contrary to me, within the research and development area, it is very common to meet “Excell managers”, who are interested in figures. Their management is blunt, easier, and satisfies superiors. (...) I am less aloof from my team than they are and I use flexibility. At the beginning of a project, I get involved. I go with my team and support it. Once the project is launched, I leave the team members alone and autonomous. As a project manager, I am described as a “Business maker”. I launch a project, and then, I appoint them as delegates. For instance, I am not very comfortable with the marketing area, I don’t know how to deal with it... So, I let my competent colleagues to deal with it.”

To implement decision making, he communicates and consults his team.

“I speak more than I write. I avoid e-mails for that. Most of the time, my decision making is consultative. I ask for my colleagues’ opinions.”

He uses a rewarding system to encourage his followers.

“I look for adapted trainings, and for external recognitions such as patents. I obviously send congratulation e-mails. Even if my breathing space is small, I try to adjust salaries. I also offer them opportunities such as the access to conferences, the possibility to demonstrate their researches and a promotion to a higher position.”

He describes a leader as “Talkative. Dynamic but be careful, I mean not thrilled, not thrilled, dynamic in the way you have energy. Experienced. Moderate
Analysis

The first observations led us to notice a shift regarding the leadership implementation. Indeed, three-quarter of leaders we interviewed put stress on values such as communication, consultation and the attention they pay to their followers listening to them. These three notions often qualify their leadership style. This leadership shift is not related to gender. Indeed, the values mentioned above are expressed by both, male than female managers. We are confronted to similar answers of male and female CEOs. Regarding our conceptual framework on that point, we admit that the association of gender leadership old and new paradigms does not exist anymore. A female CEO can express values related to the transformational as well as the transactional leadership style. In the same manner, a male CEO seems to employ a transformational leadership style as he can use a transactional one.

Figure 18: Shifting perceptions of old and new paradigms about gender leadership

According to the cases we have been studying, we cannot generalize that a gender is related to a specific leadership style. Our findings led us to say that leaders can be categorized according to their behaviors rather than their sex. Answering that point, many interviewees have been insisting on the character of a leader reducing the importance of the gender.

Another shift seems to occur in the gender social roles. Indeed, most of the male leaders refer their leadership style to a paternalistic one. They put the stress on the exemplary nature and the experience a leader must represent. Initially, they express a patriarchal view of
their leadership. However, we find values of communication, participation, consultation and altruism which are not traditionally associated to the patriarch values. We noticed dissimilarities between the paternalistic view of themselves and the way they mainly describe their leadership. Then, we assert a shift regarding the father gender social role. The fatherhood does not seem to be associated to the following traditional values anymore that are strength, supervision, stringency and reason. Even if a paternalistic leadership is described, corresponding traditional views are not expressed.

Finally, we observed a kind of heterogeneity on the perceptions of leaders’ characteristics. Indeed, when we asked CEOs and managers to provide the main characteristics of a leader, we faced a diversity of answers. The classical leader characteristics which refer to a patriarchal view are mixed with new values following the same path as the shifts of the gender social roles. Manager n° 5 highlighted the necessity to avoid a directive management within a competitive business to keep talents. He describes the need of what he explains as a transformational leadership to face the current hard business life. The diversity of answers reflects a shifting view and implementation of leadership.

4.1.2 Influences of stereotypes

The interviews enable us to put stress on the role of stereotypes, regarding the way people see each other. All the interviewees highlight the great role of education and the role of stereotypes. The following extracts emphasize the perceptions our interviewees have of gender and their analysis regarding the social construction of gender.

Manager 1: the female CEO of Bluecom

The manager emphasizes the importance of education regarding how people consider each other through the notion of gender. She makes an analogy between education she received about gender and her own experience.

“If you consider a head of a family, you think of a man. Our education determines this idea. (...)Women are conditioned by their education to become housewives. For instance, my mum used to tell me “Your brothers need to study to get a job because they will assume a family but you will have a husband”. Now things are
changing and I don’t educate my daughter this way. As a woman, you will have to prove yourself, to be more relevant and you cannot afford to make a mistake. Beyond education, if we consider a concrete example, it would be after her work, it is more accepted that men go to relax with their colleagues around a beer while women go back home to take care of the children, to clean the house and to cook. The current life standards remain. I just hired a female business developer-manager. She keeps on working during lunch in order to go home earlier because her husband wouldn’t understand that he has to cook and to take care of the children. Women adapt their working habits to their private life. The masculine pressure is also present. Extra-professional reasons are omnipresent.”

Manager 2: the female CEO of Reprocéane

The CEO of Reprocéane stakes that disparities faced by women in their job evolution are due to the role of mother they have to handle on top of their job and of their everyday activities.

“Discrepancies between men and women are due to the fact that young women have to take care of their children. Now my children are independent, I can do whatever I want. But things are getting better. Men are more involved in housekeeping nowadays. To be a leader is a part of your character, it deals with people nature. (...)Socially living standards of men are more adapted to the business life. Business life requires globally more efforts from women because basically of our mother-role.”

Manager 5: the male CEO of Audi-Volkswagen dealership

This manager tells us that the first hindrance regarding the evolution of women is the motherhood responsibility and their natural assignment.

“Regarding women careers, the only problem is the maternity leave. While women stop working to have babies, men take manager positions. It corresponds to a real issue in France. If women have the required skills, they are as good as men. The motherhood responsibility is also a problem because women are less available for their job. They have to take care of their children, it is more natural than cultural. Children need their mother. Successful women in companies are mainly single. If not, it is because the husband takes care of the children.”
Manager 6: the male sales manager of Kiabi

The manager of Kiabi’s interview is interesting. As a young leader, he gives us a fresh point of view regarding gender gap. Manager 6 says that education has a big influence on the way people consider gender, especially in Latin countries. He also states that the way motherhood is seen currently works against women.

“Women have family duties that men do not. Anyway, all the women I know in leading position “took the place of their husband”. I mean that, while they are having a career, their husbands are taking care of the children. Women in leading positions have an agreement with their husband that enable them to evolve within companies. (...)I feel the impact of the French-Latin education I received. I noticed that, it was somehow difficult to me, to accept critics from a woman. I try to change it but within the French culture the “male” should not tolerate critics from a woman. I think that it is different in other countries. (...) The paternalistic image is very important among the French culture. The leader is the father. We keep reproducing this scheme, even if things are changing. For instance, examples taught to children at school still generate a male chauvinist vision of the society. By the way, followers better trust male leaders than female leaders nowadays. (...) The current philosophy says that: women leave a company to have babies, to become housewives and mothers. Therefore, they are less involved regarding the future of the company that is why we cannot trust women as much as men. It is not my opinion, but most of people think this way. It is a cultural thing.”

Manager 7: the female CEO of GMT Consulting

Manager 7 tells us that the perception of women has been shaped by an ancestral view of gender transmitted from a generation to another since centuries. However, according to her this view evolved slowly thanks to historical events.

“Since middle-ages, our common beliefs shaped by our education involve that women have to make babies. Women were tools of power. Women freed themselves and evolved after the First World War. I think that young men are afraid of young high-skilled women. Indeed, I noticed that they have difficulties to
get married. Mentalities cause that men don’t get married with women who earn two times their salaries. “

Manager 8: the male manager of Orange Labs

This manager also expresses the tacit obligation for women to curb their implication in their professional life for their family duty.

“The reasons of this disparity are cultural. Women must mother, take care of children. I met a female manager who worked better than her male counterparts. She must have decreased her rate of work to take care of her family. And once you kick the habit, it’s over.”

Analysis

4.1.2.1 Gender stereotypic perception: an immutable dimension

As we can see, interviewees express the huge influence of education in the way they envision gender differences. The model of the “mother-housewife” remains, the natural function and duty of women, for instance to have children and to take care of them, is taught from generations to generations. It perpetuates the traditional vision of gender. One of the interviewee (see manager 6) states that the education he received, as a young French child, pushed him to reproduce the scheme of male-chauvinism. Most of the interviewees seem to be aware of the influence of education, on their own behaviors. Thanks to this awareness, they try somehow to limit it.

We also observed that education plays the role of a structure according to social conventions. Therefore, each one perceives gender in the same manner. Through this perception, individuals envision a frame defining the rules of gender. It basically corresponds to the different conventions in terms of behaviors, clothing, and authorized activities that individuals have to respect, regarding their gender. Manager 6 describes precisely this reality in his interview. For instance, he does not appreciate critics from a woman. In his culture, the male has to be dominant. Therefore his perception of what a man is involves not paying attention to women critics, because they have a weaker value than men ones. His behaviors are conditioned by the social representation of gender induced by his education.
The social representation of gender notion also appears clearly in the interview of the female manager 1 within the short anecdote she tells about her mother. The attitude of her mother reveals that in her family, women have to become housewives. Any other possibilities have not been considered. To her mother, the activity of studying did not fit with the representation of a woman. The notion of gender role obviously appears here. This social representation regarding gender leads to define roles which fit with the image that people have of a man or a woman. Her family’s values only envision women in the role of mother and housewife.

For all interviewees, the role of the women as mothers is obvious. Every interviewee describes the role of a woman in the same terms (caring mother, housewives…) without calling this representation into question. Through this example of gender roles, we can envision how much education shapes our perception. The gender role defines firstly how they see each other.

4.1.2.2 The tacit power of stereotypes

We found that the social construction of gender, which involves the gender social roles, is based on education. Consequently, stereotypes emerge but are not necessarily perceived as such by people. They shape people perceptions without any awareness from them (or if existing, it is a small one). Regarding gender, their view is influenced by stereotypes.

Considering the question of disparities between male and female managers on the way they lead teams and the potential reasons of these differences, we face three types of answers which all refer to stereotypes. We propose the following ice berg metaphor to show the tacit power and influence of stereotypes.
At the top of the emerged surface of the iceberg, a small awareness of stereotypes exists regarding differences between male and female leaders. Interviewees admit that disparities they consider could be based on them.

The second type of answers refused firstly to accept a difference based on gender. After a first “no”, they emit the potential existence of differences related to the sensitiveness of women, biological factors which, to us, are pure stereotypes. Moderating their opinions, they pursue their explanations enumerating stereotypes they are unconscious of. The third kind of answer directly admits differences justified by a gender stereotypic perception too.
Stereotypes have a strong power in the way that they shape people perceptions. Globally, they are not aware of it. This tacit dimension, based on a social construction and education, is fixed. Regarding gender issues, stereotypes have such a great influence that, to us, they will still remain involving a standardization of a male organizational model.

4.1.3 Male organizational model: a standard

Manager 1: the female CEO of Bluecom

Manager 1 expresses the pressure she has to handle regarding her work environment. She says that women have always to adapt themselves, to reconcile work and private life, while men are “free”.

“Women adapt their working habits to their private life. The masculine pressure is also present. Extra-professional reasons are omnipresent. Men benefit of a free way to take actions.”

Concerning the problem she met to access to her position, she cannot identify obstacles she faced during her career, and she states that she never met problems related to her sex.

“I overcame them*(obstacles) thanks to my strong character. Probably, I met the same obstacles as a man.”

Manager 2: the female CEO of Reprocéane

This manager considers that the business life is better adapted to the male standards of living, but she does not indentify this as a barrier to her own professional life.

“Social living standards of men are more adapted to the business life. Business life requires globally more efforts from women because basically of our mother-role. As a leader, it is important to define clearly your position as a boss. It is important to impose your authority. There is one single boss. But being the boss also means to be able to trust people”.

58
As a leader, she considers that she never had to face obstacles because of her gender.

“I met obstacles but not because I was a woman. Men and women meet same obstacles”.

Manager 3: the female regional sales manager of Air Liquide

The female manager of Air Liquide emphasizes the shift that occurs in her company to integrate women taking the path to adapt itself to women and mothers’ ways of life. Even if the rhythm does not completely fit to the life standards of women, efforts are done.

“I evolve within an industrial sector where you can find chemists, engineers and technicians. So it’s not that easy for women to integrate such a sector. Secondly, it’s a big devotion to be an executive in terms of hours, we work a lot and some women don’t want that. For instance, I work 12 hours a day and I can understand that it’s hard to please. This intense rhythm can frighten women off. Men are still more available to face executive tasks. But, efforts are done.”

According to her, the values of organization are changing to better correspond to the life standards of women.

“Companies organize conferences, I formerly gave you the example of Pluriel. For instance, now, meetings are forbidden after 5pm. Companies start to take the private sphere into consideration because, nowadays, men take care of their children too. Society is changing. Interventionism is also a top-executive value. As a woman, I copy and undergo this model because my leadership is more related to the proximity than interventionism”.

She considers that she never met obstacles and she states that her gender favored her evolution, thanks to a positive discrimination policy.

“I have been very lucky to benefit from the women promotion policy. 30% of these women quitted their job because of their personal problems. Models are evolving. Women are more and more present at top-executive positions, and it can only progress. Working life is still difficult to them. The government also plays a role implementing laws to integrate women.”
Manager 4: the male regional sales manager of Air Liquide

Manager 4 shows us that efforts have been done within his company to establish parity. Nevertheless, he states that disparities still remain.

“We don’t give them (women) the chance to reach top-executive positions. A real segregation exists. Until the 2000’s, during a career advancement, women have to stop working to make children and men overtake them. Nowadays, models are changing because we lack of executive women to fill. So the number of executive women is increasing. Maybe, sexism and machismo still exist/remain. Some men are perhaps afraid of being led by women”.

Even if he confesses the importance of masculine values surrounding the organizational model concept, this manager has some difficulties to clearly define it.

“I never thought about that. I have difficulties to find my words. Managers consider that it is simpler to work between men, in a group of guys. But I have difficulties to express masculine values”.

Manager 5: the male CEO of Audi-Volkswagen dealership

The CEO of Audi-Volkswagen dealership gave us a very succinct view of the dominance of masculine values and cannot express more details about it.

“Yes, it is undeniable! To us, the masculine culture is very obvious”.

According to him, the top-executive culture is based on masculine values “Yes it does.” However, he does not give more details about masculine values.

Manager 6: the male sales manager of Kiabi

The manager of Kiabi states that, masculine values are highly visible in French companies. To him, this situation is currently due to the influence of the male-chauvinist Latin culture. He describes these values as related to the paternalistic image.

“Yes, organizational models of companies are very masculine. I think that it is more obvious in Latin countries like France, than in Germanic or Scandinavian countries. Because of this model, men are more expected than women to be
leaders. (...) The paternalistic image is very important among the French culture. The leader is the father. We keep reproducing this scheme, even if things are changing.”

Manager 7: the female CEO of GMT Consulting

Manager 7 explains us the importance of the hierarchy regarding the masculinity level of organizations. Higher is the hierarchy pyramid, stronger are masculine values. She defines them as oriented to power and productivity.

“The classical masculine companies are based on precise and well-defined organization chart which is a dominant-dominated model. Contrary to them, companies where human and communicative values are important, the product is promoted.” Related masculine values are the power and the productivity.”

During her interview, she emphasizes the difficulties she clearly faced as a woman to evolve professionally.

“I am sure that if tomorrow, I apply for a CEO position, regarding similar skills, a man will be hired. I am for more parity. Among an executive committee, a professional couple is complementary. Tacit obstacles exist. Years ago, I have been recruited by such a male-chauvinist company that I still don’t understand how it has been possible to be recruited. At that time, I have even thought of quitting the job. I heard a lot of sexist remarks which were expressed as a kind of self-defense. My male counterparts were afraid of me as if I had stolen their jobs.”

Manager 8: the male manager of Orange Labs

The manager of Orange Labs explains us that women who are currently at top-executive positions accept a male organizational model. He does not refer to the masculine model he is talking about.

“Women don’t turn up their nose at this model. Maybe because few of them are at top-executive positions to get things move.”
Analysis

Our interviewees all agree on the existence of a masculine frame within organization. We can notice that female managers are mainly able to describe these masculine values, while male managers, even if they perceive it, are not able to describe it.

In every community, minorities are discriminated. Within the “work-community”, the discriminate minority is the female one. This idea refers to the “tokenistic” model developed by Kanter (1977). Then, as a minority, they face prejudices and are able to identify them. Women face masculine values and have to fight against it every day. Therefore, as they need to understand the unfairness they perceive, they analyze the situation in order to have a fair vision of it. Thus, women are perfectly able to define the values related to the male organizational model. On the contrary, men never faced such problems and then are not able to describe the traditional masculine values of organizations. To them, a masculine organizational frame is a habit, a standard which corresponds to their way of life. So why shall you think about something which comes to you as natural? Moreover, individuals do not analyze about what they do not suffer from which is in that case disparity.

Companies did efforts to promote parity as manager 3 depicts. Nevertheless, disparities still remain. We might envisage that the current situation of women at top-executive positions involves a positive discrimination policy. This way to solve gender inequity is, once again, to the “tokenism” developed by Kanter (1977). Indeed, she states that some individuals of a minority are favored to create the illusion of a pro-active integration policy, regarding this minority. In our opinion, in a positive discrimination policy, the notion of disparity remains.

Our interviewees are mainly aware of the incongruity between the perception of woman role and the perception of leader role. As we said earlier, the role of a woman corresponds to the mother, while the leader role corresponds to the traditional view of the forefather. These two antagonist views are very common as we can see through the interviews. Men are still more expected to handle a leader position because it fits with the widespread image of a leader.

As interviewees say, business life standards have been shaped by men life standards. The female manager we met perfectly described the problems related to women life standards regarding the work life. They are able to describe and analyze it because they live these
difficulties. Contrary to male CEO’s, they are also able to describe masculine values which shape current organizational models: availability and devotion. Nevertheless, the female managers we met mainly state that they never met obstacles. They cannot link their analysis of the situation to their own experiences. Then, we admit that these women integrated the standards of men’s life. Therefore it becomes more difficult to them to be aware of obstacles they met or currently meets.

Through interviews, we envision how the masculine values, which lead to a male organizational model, can be a hindrance for women in companies. Whatever they do, women adapt themselves to the male organizational model blending in the same scheme.

4.2 Findings summarizations

According to our eight interviews collected, we end up our empirical study, summarizing our empirical findings in the following table. We want to offer our reader a synthetic view of our understanding of analytical themes regarding interviews. Respecting our interpretation, empirical data are organized in a lessening hierarchy from the strongest expressed values to the weakest.

Figure 20: Findings summarization table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manager n°1 Female CEO of Bluecom</th>
<th>Shifting perceptions of gender and leadership</th>
<th>Influence of stereotypes</th>
<th>Male organizational model: a standard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leadership style:</td>
<td>“If you consider a head of a family, you think of a man. Our education determines this idea. (...) Women are conditioned by their education to become housewives.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communicative</td>
<td>“Women adapt their working habits to their private life. The masculine pressure is also present.”</td>
<td>“Women adapt their working habits to their private life. The masculine pressure is also present.”</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Manager n°2
Female CEO of Reprocéane

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leader perception:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dynamic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federative</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership style:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Informal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communicative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sense giving</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consultative</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rewards to motivate</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leader perception:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Horse-sense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To foresee things with common sense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proactive</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

“Discrepancies between men and women are due to the fact that young women have to take care of their children.”

“Social living standards of men are more adapted to the business life. Business life requires globally more efforts from women because basically of our mother-role.”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manager n°3</th>
<th>Leadership style:</th>
<th>“Regarding women careers, the only problem is the maternity leave. While women stop working to have babies (...) The motherhood responsibility is also a problem because women are less available for their job.”</th>
<th>“I evolve within an industrial sector where (...) it’s not that easy for women to integrate such a sector. Secondly, it’s a big devotion to be an executive in terms of hours, we work a lot and some women don’t want that.(...) This intense rhythm can frighten women off.”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female regional sales manager of Air Liquide</td>
<td>Proximity</td>
<td>Enthusiastic</td>
<td>“Women have to stop working to make children and men overtake them.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leader perception:</td>
<td>Sense giving</td>
<td>Coordinator</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Flexibility</td>
<td>Creative</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Responsible</td>
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<td>Federative</td>
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<td>Controller</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manager n°4</td>
<td>Leadership style:</td>
<td>“Regarding women careers, the only problem is the maternity leave. (...) They have to take care of their children, it is more natural than cultural. Children need their mother.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male regional sales manager of Air Liquide</td>
<td>Contextual</td>
<td>Exemplary</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Leader perception:</td>
<td>Paternalistic</td>
<td>Charismatic</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exemplary</td>
<td>Reliable</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Consultative</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Manager n°5</td>
<td>Leadership style:</td>
<td>“Regarding women careers, the only problem is the maternity leave.”</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Male CEO of Audi-Volkswagen dealership</td>
<td>Participative (considered as adapted to the current business context)</td>
<td>Exemplary</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Paternalistic</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Altruistic</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exemplary</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Manager n°6</td>
<td>Leadership style:</td>
<td>“I feel the impact of the French-Latin education I received (...) it was somehow difficult to me to accept critics from a woman (...) within the French culture the “male” should not tolerate critics from a woman.”</td>
<td>“Organizational models of companies are very masculine. I think that it is obvious. (...) The paternalistic image is very important among the French culture. The leader is the father. We keep reproducing this scheme,”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Male sales manager of Kiabi</td>
<td>Consultative Sense giving Leadership perception: Exemplary Innate ability</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manager n°7</td>
<td>Leadership style:</td>
<td>“Since middle-ages, our common beliefs shaped by our education involve that women have to make babies.”</td>
<td>“The classical masculine companies are based on precise and well-defined organization chart which is a dominant-dominated model. (...) Related masculine values are the power and the productivity.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female CEO of GMT Consulting</td>
<td>Consultative Communicative Ability to listen Importance of creativity Common vision Adaptation Harmony</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Leadership perception:</td>
<td>Communicative Tuned in his subordinates</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manager n°8</td>
<td>Leadership style:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Male manager of Orange Labs</td>
<td>Ability to listen</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Proximity</td>
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<td>Autonomy</td>
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<td>Flexibility</td>
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<td>Rewards to motivate</td>
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<td>Communicative</td>
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<tr>
<th>Leader perception:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Talkative</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dynamic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experienced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
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</tbody>
</table>


“Women must mother, take care of children. I met a female manager who must have decreased her rate of work to take care of her family.”

Source: Aurélie Daniel, Yann Moudic (2010)
Further discussion

To discuss gender leadership issues that organizations face today, we want to focus on gender organizational effectiveness. Indeed, we want to talk about what kind of process companies set up to reduce gender inequity, reinforcing their organizational effectiveness.

On the topic, Kanter (1977) argues that gender has effects on the productivity of an organization. The under-representation of women among CEOs may mean that executive committees do without women, and then, without a major part of skilled people. In that way, it may be possible to consider that the glass ceiling prevents the effectiveness of an organization. Meyerson and Fletcher (2000, p.233-234) present four approaches which have mostly been tested within companies to break the glass ceiling. The first one consists in “encouraging women to adopt more masculine attributes” in order to fit to a dominant male executive culture. As discussed previously, this approach will not solve deep causes of the gender issues in organizations. Adopting more masculine attributes will automatically lead women to reproduce the male organizational model. We can wonder if this approach will reinforce this model instead of reducing it. The second approach consists, for companies, in taking the needs of women into account, as to assume their mother roles, and accommodate their way of life: “extended maternity leave” and “flexible work arrangements”. The third approach led organizations to put stress on women’s differences in leading in order to promote them. However, the last one, which has never been tested, is very radical: to change the whole and current organizational models which are based on male values. Authors admit that problems of gender inequities, which can affect the effectiveness of an organization, are decreasing but will still remain “because solutions deal with the symptom of inequity rather than the sources of inequity itself” (2000, p.234). They imply that to get the roof of the problem is a good way of solving gender inequities and then, to improve the effectiveness of an organization.

To avoid gender disparities, we need to change our behaviors toward genders acting on education. Education is the way communities reproduce their structure from generation to generation. This structure has been slowly built through centuries. And the way people consider each other through stereotypes represents a big part of this structure. To stop gender stereotypic perceptions, we should skip the stereotypes from our culture and education. Is that realistic? Stereotypes enable people to understand the rules of the society. Moreover, as we
emphasize in our empirical study, stereotypes are so deeply rooted in our way of life, that, most of the time, people are not aware of them. How could we elude something so important for the social construction? Is it feasible and desirable?

The gender effectiveness has been widely discussed. Many journalistic articles tend to emphasize advantages of women regarding leadership skills on their male counterparts. As we state in this thesis, we cannot emphasize any difference between men and women regarding leadership. It would be illusive to expect better leadership skills from a female leader, just because of her gender. As Eagly and Carli (2003, p16) say, the female leaders who reached top executive positions are “survivors of discriminatory processes and therefore tend to be competent”.

MBA Thesis
Conclusion

Discussions we debated through our conceptual and empirical studies provided a contemporary understanding of gender leadership and the manifestation of related issues in the frame of organizations.

Firstly, conceptual and empirical data highlighted a shifting view of leadership and gender. Gender role and leadership styles seem to have simultaneously changed because of the evolution of the social perception and construction of these notions. The understanding of gender leadership have been for a long time related to the association between old paradigms, male and female leadership styles, with the newest ones, transactional and transformational. These connections do not seem to fit to the current reality anymore. Nowadays, leaders, whatever their gender, associate their leadership styles to a transformational one, referring to values of communication, participation, altruism and consultation. Leaders of today takes their team members into consideration, provides sense giving using flexibility and leaving autonomy. This leadership style seems also to result from the current complex business life.

Our study depicted also how important education involves a social construction of gender and then, how it shapes our perception of gender social role. Consequently, stereotypes emerge. Their influence is paramount because of their tacit dimension. Indeed, they are fixed and shaped subconsciously our perception of gender and of leaders too. Concerning this point, we can highlight dissimilarities between the perception of what a leader represents and the social gender role of a woman leader, which involves a glass ceiling that prevents women from the access to top executive positions. According to our discussion, stereotypes also led the association of gender leadership of old and new paradigms which characterize the female and male leadership styles as respectively transformational and transactional. Followers who have been rating their women leaders as more transformational and their men leaders as more transactional are also conditioned by a social perception of gender and leaders. It’s not only the gender which impacts on leadership, but also the vision that followers have on it.

Consequently, manifestations of gender leadership issues in the frame of organizations lead to a standardization of the male organizational model. The image of a leader refers to men, than the executive culture reflects male values. This habit also leads to the durability of
the glass ceiling and more precisely of the dominant and current male model. Gender issues within organizations, such as the under-representation of women at top-leading positions, are decreasing but still remain…

Our contemporary understanding of gender leadership issues leads us to have a pessimistic view thinking of gender equity at top-executive positions. The heart of the matter seems to be related to our education and social construction according to gender. Women access to top-executive positions seems to follow the evolution of the social perception of the gender which is slow. Then, how long should we wait for a perfect equality among CEOs of tomorrow?
The learning curve

This project taught us to work in group, virtually and from distance. Indeed, as partners, we worked as apprentices in two different cities. We learned to manage our time, the distance from our tutor who travels a lot and lives in Sweden. We developed also our adaptation ability using another methodology than the current one in France. However, the crisis and difficulties we met at the beginning of the project were due to our lack of understanding of the new methodology. We apprehended it after the first progress report, putting into perspective our adaptation ability and open-mindedness. This introspection allowed us to provide a satisfactory work. The following figure illustrates our learning curve regarding the workshops.

Figure 21: Our learning curve

Sources: Aurélie Daniel, Yann Moudic (2010)
References


Kolb, M 1997, *Are We Still Stereotyping Leadership?*. SAGE publications.


Appendix 1: Figures

Figure 1: Choice of the abductive approach

Figure 2: Employment rate of men and women from 1975 to 2007 in France

Figure 3: Evolution of women’ rate at leading positions in France

Figure 4: Compensation disparities between genders in French companies (workforce with six years of professional experience at least)

Figure 5: Women at managerial positions in 25 European countries

Figure 6: Representation of women at leading positions in the world

Figure 7: Literature map

Figure 8: Concepts extracted from the theoretical framework sexual-oriented education, gender social role and gender stereotypic perceptions

Figure 9: Shifting views of gender and leadership researches

Figure 10: Mean ratings and standard deviations for transactional, transformational leaderships

Figure 11: Mean ratings and standard deviations for transactional, transformational leaderships

Figure 12: The leadership scale

Figure 13: Concepts extracted from the theoretical framework: shifting perceptions of gender leadership style

Figure 14: Responses by men and women in selected years to Gallup Poll’s question about preferring a man or a woman as boss

Figure 15: Concept extracted from the theoretical framework: the social perception of a leader, an incongruity

Figure 16: The glass ceiling within the organizational pyramid

Figure 17: Final conceptual framework

Figure 18: Shifting perceptions of old and new paradigms about gender leadership

Figure 19: An iceberg metaphor to illustrate the influence of tacit stereotypes

Figure 20: Findings summarization table

Figure 21: Our learning curve
Appendix 2: Interviews questions

Identity card
Name:
Age:
Gender:
Marital status:
Career evolution:

Gender leadership style
- How would you describe your leadership and the way you manage?
- How do you collaborate with your employees?
- How do you implement your decision making?
- How do you develop the potential of your employees? How do you encourage them?
- How important do you think self-confidence is?

Gender stereotypic perceptions
- According to you, what are the main characteristics of a leader?
- Do you think that men and women lead differently?
- Is the image of a woman compatible with the image of a leader?
- Within your company, have you ever felt stereotyped because of your gender?

Dominant male model/ executive culture
- According to you, within top-executive management, does a disparity between men and women exist? If so, what are the reasons?
- Do you think that a classical organizational French model is based on masculine values?
- And within your company?
- According to you, does the top-executive culture is based on masculine values?

Obstacles
- Have you ever met obstacles to access your position?
Appendix 3: Interviews

Manager n°1: the female CEO of Bluecom

Identity card
The first manager is 43, married and has two children. She is graduated in accounting. She is the woman CEO of Bluecom, a computer and network company of 30 people. She has been setting up her company 15 years ago after having worked 8 years as a cost control manager within a big food distribution organization. The three-quarters of her employees are men so as 90% of her clients. During her CEO carrier, she received two applications for technical positions.

Gender leadership style

How would you describe your leadership and the way you manage?
I don’t make any difference between my male and female employees. My leadership is based on communication. I concert people, I am directive in so far as I give guidance leaving people independent whatever the department they come from. Every single employee is a vital link in the chain. I have a wide open communication with them but tasks are very well-defined. Actions of my managers have a serious framed: who is doing what and how? I have weekly meetings with my teams during which I control the progress of what was done, and then I take action depending on the result. Likewise, I have an annual career path interview with each of my employees to talk about their evolution and performance. Life rules are important to respect such as being polite.

How do you implement your decision making?
To take decisions, I stand back, I ask for individual perception of a defined issue, and then I try to get a global feeling but I know that the group can influence people. So I listen, stand back, take time and think in order to take a decision. Concerning objectives to reach, I consult people who are not directly concerned, who have an external opinion. For instance, I ask for advice the sales department regarding the purchase department. I ask them “What could be improve on both sides?” I never imposed decisions, I never needed to do it. In case of bad decisions, I never hesitate to put myself into perspective. I always take into account both spheres which are the individual and the group.
How do you develop the potential of your employees? How do you encourage them?
I create an interest in them, I make them feel personally concerned by the project, I implicate them without focusing them only on what they are working on. I prompt them by making them feel that they are parts of a whole project. I talk about a project vision to call their curiosity and their intellectual interests. I take into consideration their personal issues listening to them. To know how to listen is essential. If the individual meets obstacles, I call for solidarity in the group, the team spirit to solve problems. It is very important to work together.

How important do you think self-confidence is?
It is a strategic piece of knowledge.

Gender stereotypic perceptions

According to you, what are the main characteristic of a leader?
A CEO is a barometer of a company and of a team, maintains the balance and is the federative element. In three words: dynamic, positive and federative. I federate people listening to them and defining priorities. I ensure the respect of the deadlines and objectives. I don’t want to lose my time, I am very directive.

Do you think that men and women lead differently?
There is no difference in leading at the executive level. If we have to emphasize on a small difference, we could say that women have a different sensitiveness. They are intuitive, able to guess that one member of her team feels bad. Men are more pragmatic.

Is the image of a woman compatible with the image of a leader?
Yes, it is nowadays compatible. However, if you consider a head of a family, you think of a man. Our education determines this idea.

Within your company, have you ever felt stereotyped because of your gender?
No. If you are strong-tempered, you establish yourself as a leader.
Dominant male model/ Executive culture

According to you, within top-executive management, does a disparity between men and women exist? If so, what are the reasons?

Women are conditioned by their education to become housewives. For instance, my mum used to tell me “Your brothers need to study to get a job because they will assume a family but you will have a husband”. Now things are changing and I don’t educate my daughter this way. As a woman, you will have to prove yourself, to be more relevant and you cannot afford to make a mistake.

Beyond education, if we consider a concrete example, it would be after her work, it is more accepted that men go to relax with their colleagues around a beer while women go back home to take care of the children, to clean the house and to cook. The current life standards remain. I just hired a female business developer-manager. She keeps on working during lunch in order to go home earlier because her husband wouldn’t understand that he has to cook and to take care of the children. Women adapt their working habits to their private life. The masculine pressure is also present. Extra-professional reasons are omnipresent.

Do you think that a classical organizational French model is based on masculine values?
Yes. Men benefit of a free way to take actions.

And within your company?
During a regular working day, the gender diversity is present and is a good thing for the company. I adapt my leadership to my employees’ schedules. One of my employees told me she wanted a baby. Then, we anticipated by finding her a substitute.

According to you, does the top-executive culture is based on masculine values?
Yes, it is 90% true.

Glass ceiling

Have you ever met obstacles to access your position?
Yes, I did when I started but I overcame them thanks to my strong character. Probably, I met the same obstacles as a man.
Manager n° 2: the female CEO of Reprocéane

Identity card
The second manager is the woman CEO of Reprocéane, a service company and an office stationery provider. She is 54 years old, in a relationship with three children. She has an A-level in science. Before working, the female CEO was a housewife. Once she left this status, she worked as a saleswoman during seven years in Reprocéane before accessing to a manager position within a small agency. She owns now her business. In Reprocéane, a major part of employees are men who hold technical posts and a small group of women works within the administrative pole.

Gender leadership style

How would you describe your leadership and the way you manage?
My leadership style is very convivial, it is a small company, I see my employees all the time. We talk to each other all the time. The way I manage is very informal, we talk during the coffee break, I work with the same people since 22 years. We know each other very well… But I make a monthly meeting with all employees. I know that they need to see charts and statistics figure out our position. I think that I am directive.

How do you collaborate with your employees?
I involve people as much as possible, it is important to them to have a clear vision of what we are doing together. Understanding what is occurring for the company, to have a global vision of the business they are a part of is highly enhanceive for my employees. If you involve people, it’s easier to interest them and to lead them in the way you want to.

How do you implement your decision making?
I always consult individuals because they have a great vision of the field and they know what they have to do. Somehow in my company, people build their own job and objectives. It develops their interest in their job but it would not be possible within a bigger organization.
How do you develop the potential of your employees? How do you encourage them?
I try to develop versatility of everyone. As a small company, it is important that my employees can substitute one another at any moment. It is a good exercise, it enables them to have a wider vision of the job. It enhances them, it gives them new aspects to consider their own current job and the evolution within the society. Developing the flexibility of employees and their ability to substitute to a colleague make them more able to understand information process, thus they are more effective. Then they are also more confident. Sometimes, I give some incentives to my employees. But it is not regular. Otherwise they take it for granted.

How important do you think self-confidence is?
For a leader, self-confidence is one of the most important qualities. Work is not easy everyday but you need to show that you feel confident otherwise you will crash the company. Confidence comes with experience and it is also hereditary somehow.

Gender stereotypic perceptions

According to you, what are the main characteristics of a leader?
To me, a leader is independent, respectful, very well organized. A leader is necessarily able to foresee things with common sense. Values of anticipation and horse-sense make also part of the leader’s qualities.

Do you think that men and women lead differently?
As leaders, women get more to the heart of the matter. Indeed, women are wives, mothers, and housewives. It takes a lot of time. We don’t have time to lose. We have abilities to deal with a restrictive schedule. But in communication, women say things less directly. This is what I noticed! I would say things more carefully than male leaders would do… Within my company, I can easily see that men are more unreserved for telling things.

Is the image of a woman compatible with the image of a leader?
There is certainly incongruity between the concept of what a woman is and what a leader is. To me, a leader can be a woman. Of course, we can emphasize some differences but it doesn’t mean that women cannot be leaders.
Within your company, have you ever felt stereotyped because of your gender?
I probably have been categorized because of my gender. But I never noticed it. It has never been said frankly. As a woman CEO, my colleagues and I are very protected… Male CEOs are very protective with us from this point of view. They consider us as CEOs, and help us to be considered this way by others.

Dominant male model/ Executive culture

According to you, within top-executive management, does a disparity between men and women exist? If so, what are the reasons?
Discrepancies between men and women are due to the fact that young women have to take care of their children. Now my children are independent, I can do whatever I want. But things are getting better. Men are more involved in housekeeping nowadays. To be a leader is a part of your character, it deals with people nature.

Do you think that a classical organizational French model is based on masculine values?
Disparities are probably due to the culture of business and organization. The masculine values are present everywhere, as well as in my company. For instance availability is a very masculine and necessary value for a leader. Leaders must be available for their organizations.

According to you, does the top-executive culture is based on masculine values?
Social living standards of men are more adapted to the business life. Business life requires globally more efforts from women because basically of our mother-role. As a leader, it is important to define clearly your position as a boss. It is important to impose your authority. There is one single boss. But being the boss also means to be able to trust people.

Glass ceiling

Have you ever met obstacles to access your position?
I met obstacles but not because I was a woman. Men and women meet same obstacles.
Manager n°3: the female regional sales manager of Air Liquide

Identity card
The manager n° 3 is a 33-year-old middle manager in the French worldwide company Air Liquide. She is single without children. She is master-graduated in Biology. After her studies, she started as a consultant for information system implementation during three years. Her position led her to be hired as an internal consultant to develop the implementation of a new information system within Air Liquide during two years. Then, she became a project manager during three years. She was in charge of a twelve-member group mainly composed of men. A year ago, she evolved as sales manager in the western part of France. She now mainly leads women.

Gender leadership style

How would you describe your leadership and the way you manage?
I could define my leadership style with the word “nearness”. I try to be close to my sellers and not to be interventionist. Concerning objectives to reach, I give a lot of explanations and meanings. I accompany my colleagues to find the good strategic leverage to act on. I ask them to plan their actions in order to attain their goals.

How do you develop the potential of your employees? How do you encourage them?
I encourage people by inviting them for dinner and thanking them by e-mails. I show them that I am here and attentive to them. I am not interventionist.

How do you implement your decision making?
I ask for tasks to be done by being responsive, giving precise deadlines and keeping close relationships. I am 10% interventionist and 90% close-at-hand relationship. Indeed, they are autonomous and know what they have to do. Within my team, 70% of the members I lead are matured. For the rest of the group, I set up plans of actions clarifying objectives and introducing methods to reach them.
How important do you think self-confidence is?
Self-confidence is fundamental and that is not necessarily the first quality of a woman. For my part, I think that I have to work on it. It makes you credible. As women, we have to prove more ourselves, we are less self-confident. To help us, within Air Liquide, as within big French companies, specific associations as Pluriel, for men and women, organize conferences on themes namely “distribution of time between the work and private spheres” or “how to manage a double career”, in other words, how can you manage the transfer of your husband keeping your job.

Gender stereotypic perceptions

According to you, what are the main characteristic of a leader?
Enthusiastic, coordinator, creative, responsible, federative and controller somehow.

Do you think that men and women lead differently? If so, what are the reasons?
Yes. It is maybe a stereotype but women have perhaps a more humane way of leading and listening to people. Men are precise: they get to the heart of the matter. They put their sensibility aside. Women are more social-oriented, this is the main small difference. Indeed, women and men are both enthusiastic, federative, coordinator and creative. According to my experience, I think that people come to a woman more easily to talk. This is what I noticed, dialogue is more implemented as far as women are concerned.

Is the image of a woman compatible with the image of a leader?
Yes, absolutely.

Within your company, have you ever felt stereotyped because of your gender?
Not at all! Ten years ago, Air Liquide decided to hire executive women in a proactive way, in order to put forward parity thanks to a positive discrimination policy. Temporarily, it’s a kind of catch-up session, it’s worth it. Then, companies reflect schools.
Dominant male model/ Executive culture

According to you, within top-executive management, does a disparity between men and women exist?
Yes, it does. I evolve within an industrial sector where you can find chemists, engineers and technicians. So it’s not that easy for women to integrate such a sector. Secondly, it’s a big devotion to be an executive in terms of hours, we work a lot and some women don’t want that. For instance, I work 12 hours a day and I can understand that it’s hard to please. This intense rhythm can frighten women off.

Do you think that a classical organizational French model is based on masculine values?
Yes. Men are still more available to face executive tasks. But, efforts are done. Companies organize conferences, I formerly gave you the example of Pluriel. For instance, now, meetings are forbidden after 5pm. Companies start to take the private sphere into consideration because, nowadays, men take care of their children too. Society is changing. Interventionism is also a top-executive value. As a woman, I copy and undergo this model because my leadership is more related to the proximity than interventionism.

Glass ceiling

Have you ever met obstacles to access your position?
No, not at all! I have been very lucky to benefit from the women promotion policy. 30% of these women quitted their job because of their personal problems. Models are evolving. Women are more and more present at top-executive positions, and it can only progress. Working life is still difficult to them. The government also plays a role implementing laws to integrate women.

Manager n°4: the male regional sales manager of Air Liquide

Identity card
The manager n°4 is 42, married and has two children. He has a marketing technique degree. He started as a commercial attaché. Then, he has been an information system expert, sales manager, sales manager for the SMEs located in the western part of France. Since a year, he is
the sales manager of the French western industrial companies. He manages a team composed of 12 members who are mainly males. He also used to manage a female team.

Gender stereotypic perceptions

How would you describe your leadership and the way you manage?
My leadership is contextual and paternalistic. I manage high-skilled people who are autonomous. So I influence them, making them adhere to shared values and rules. I convince them instead of leading them.

How do you collaborate with your employees?
It’s difficult to say. What kind of answers are you expecting? I set the good example. I coach them, I supervise them but without using well-defined methods. I follow my intuition according to the context. Concerning my subordinates’ objectives, I have a precise idea, they challenge me on that point. Sometimes they put forward their objectives. I agree or not but we readjust together. We write it and measure how the performance evolved.

How do you implement your decision making?
I take 22 decisions a day. I listen to stakeholders and I position myself.

How do you develop the potential of your employees? How do you encourage them?
I set the good example and implicate myself entirely. I do not hesitate to compare my subordinates’ results, positioning them according to a performance scale, first individually and secondly publicly. If my subordinates fail, I set up action plans.

How important do you think self-confidence is?
Self-confidence is huge and makes a manager successful or not. The paradox of a manager is that sometimes, he transmits ideas which are not his. Self-confidence is very important especially when you manage high-skilled people in a field you are not specialized in.
Gender stereotypic perceptions

According to you, what are the main characteristics of a leader?
Exemplary, charismatic and reliable.

Do you think that men and women lead differently?
Yes, men rise to top-executive position more easily and rapidly. Thus, according to my personal experience, women managers are more authoritarian, maybe because they have more to prove.

Is the image of a woman compatible with the image of a leader?
Yes.

Within your company, have you ever felt stereotyped because of your gender?
No.

Dominant male model/ Executive culture

According to you, within top-executive management, does a disparity between men and women exist? If so, what are the reasons?
Yes, because we don’t give them the chance to reach top-executive positions. A real segregation exists. Until the 2000’s, during a career advancement, women have to stop working to make children and men overtake them. Nowadays, models are changing because we lack of executive women to fill. So the number of executive women is increasing. Maybe, sexism and machismo still exist/ remain. Some men are perhaps afraid of being led by women.

Do you think that a classical organizational French model is based on masculine values?
According to you, does the top-executive culture is based on masculine values?
Yes. I never thought about that. I have difficulties to find my words. Managers consider that it is simpler to work between men, in a group of guys. But I have difficulties to express masculine values.
Glass ceiling

Have you ever met obstacles to access your position?
No, not really.

Manager n°5: the male CEO of Audi-Volkswagen dealership

Identity card
The manager n°5 is a 51-year-old CEO within the car retailer Audi-Volkswagen. He leads 95 people. He is married and has four children. He has an A-Level. After his studies, he started as an accountant within the automotive industry for one year. More interested in sale jobs, he applied for becoming a salesman. Without any particular training, he learnt the job. After few months, Pascal Bernard was as successful as older sellers. After one year, he left his second job to live in Belgium. There, he was hired for the same job as in the French company Renault. Once again, he was pretty successful after few months within the society. After one year, the manager n°5 asked for coming back to France. He worked again as a simple seller. After two years, his results justified a new promotion: he became a corporate customer seller. He worked at this position during eight years. Then he left to become sales manager for the company Volkswagen. As a new manager, he had to implement changes, to restructure and reorganize the agency. After four years, he had the opportunity to invest in an agency which was slowly going down. Then, he became CEO for two years and greatly improved the profitability of the agency. This commercial success offered him a new opportunity. A head hunter agency proposed him to invest in a bigger business. He is now CEO in the western part of France. He multiplied the return by three and increased the number of employees from 63 to 95 persons.

Gender leadership style

How would you describe your leadership and the way you manage?
An iron fist in a velvet glove! I think that it is important to have a participative management, the directive management is still used by leaders within companies, but I don’t think that it helps employees to evolve and to blossom. I also hold myself up as an example, it is important to show that you are also able to do what you require from your followers.
How do you collaborate with your employees?
A very basic but paramount thing is to say “hello” to everyone when you arrive. This is a mark of respect but this is also a manner to talk with them and to be aware of “how they feel”. Then, they know that my door is always open if they want to speak about personal issues. It enables them to see that I am also a human being, and that I can understand if they have problems.

For a company, it is possible to have a directive management, only if you are the leader on your market with a low competition. Then you are absolutely sure to find as many employees as you want, you don’t necessarily need to take care of them. The business context influences the management style. In my opinion, it will become more and more difficult to be efficient with a directive management style in the future, because business is getting harder. I consider that to be efficient, we need to consider the company as a family. It is a paternalistic view, where members have to find their own place and work with each other. It doesn’t mean that people are allowed to do whatever they want, they still have to show respect for the boss. This is an important rule, you cannot become friend with your employees otherwise they will not show you any consideration anymore.

How do you implement your decision making?
For any decision, I always ask my collaborators. It’s important to involve them in the “decision making process”. Of course, I finally take the decision, and if my decision differs from what my employees say, I explain the reasons of my decision. It is important to argue on your decision in such a case.

How do you develop the potential of your employees? How do you encourage them?
If everything is all right, people will improve themselves, but if something goes wrong, then, it is very important to reassure them, to re-inspire them confidence. It is essential to understand the reason of issues, to explain, to envision solutions, and to make my employees ready to work again for themselves and their company.

How important do you think self-confidence is?
It is important, but it comes with experience. When you are young, you are vulnerable to everything. After few years, you start to get a shell which allows you to cushion and to deal with bad and tough situations.
Gender stereotypic perceptions

According to you, what are the main characteristics of a leader?
You cannot become a leader. I think that we inherit the ability to lead. To be a leader means being able to take decisions, to assume, argue and justify them. Then you apply decisions and control them. When your followers know that you control the results of your decisions, they are more efficient. As a leader, you also have to show that you perfectly know the job. Such knowledge only comes with experience. Once, one of our competitors tried to put high skilled young people at leading positions, but it never worked. With a lack of practical knowledge, you never gain the trust and respect of employees. Universities shape good leaders only if scholar knowledge is melt with practical experiences.

Do you think that men and women lead differently?
No, I don’t think so. Some of my friends are female leaders and lead in the same way as me. We could maybe envision a maternal leadership style, but I think that it is not that different from the paternalistic view I described before.

Is the image of a woman compatible with the image of a leader?
Absolutely! And I think that female leaders should be more involved at leading positions, and it will evolve in the good way. Thanks to new life standards, women will have more easiness to get leaders positions. In my opinion, women are better leaders because men are too aggressive.

Within your company, have you ever felt stereotyped because of your gender?
No, never!

Dominant male model/ Executive culture

According to you, within top-executive management, does a disparity between men and women exist? If so, what are the reasons?
Yes! For instance, in my company, we only have men at leading positions. Regarding women careers, the only problem is the maternity leave. While women stop working to have babies, men take manager positions. It corresponds to a real issue in France. If women have the
required skills, they are as good as men. The motherhood responsibility is also a problem because women are less available for their job. They have to take care of their children, it is more natural than cultural. Children need their mother. Successful women in companies are mainly single. If not, it is because the husband takes care of the children.

**Do you think that a classical organizational French model is based on masculine values?**

**What about your company?**

Yes, it is undeniable! To us, the masculine culture is very obvious.

**According to you, does the top-executive culture is based on masculine values?**

Yes it does.

**Glass ceiling**

**Have you ever met obstacles to access your position?**

I met obstacles that every leader met. But it makes part of the job.

**Manager n°6: the male sales manager of Kiabi**

**Identity card**

The manager n°6 is a 27-year-old sales manager. He works for Kiabi which is a French clothing retailer. He is single and doesn’t have any children. After a master in logistic and a two–year apprenticeship, the young graduated manager took his current position as a sales manager. He is now managing a team of six women.

**Gender leadership style**

**How would you describe your leadership and the way you manage?**

My leadership style is paternalistic. I base my leadership style on the sense of communication essentially. I encourage people to share information as much as possible.

**How do you collaborate with your employees?**

In my company, the hierarchy is not clearly defined. Technically, we are almost at the same level. My job is to define priorities, to decide what is urgent or important, to decide and
explain how to do the job. I try to be on the field with my team as much as possible. It is a manner to see how they work, to help them to get better. I train them and give them tricks.

**How do you implement your decisions making?**
During my apprenticeship, I was a “follower”, I observed my managers, and I understood that it is important to be able to do what you ask to your followers. It is a basic principle, but I try to apply it every day. If I ask my employees to do something, it is because I already know how to do it, and I can show them if it is necessary. I try to be a model.

**How do you develop the potential of your employees? How do you encourage them?**
I work with them, I train them at the beginning, and then, when they know what to do, I let them find their own way to do the job. Doing things with flexibility is a rewarding aspect of the job, it allows them to be creative. This company enables people to evolve if they really want it. It is up to them to show their capabilities. My goal is to see them evolve to higher positions. I have a long-term vision for my followers. I also try to give them a clear view of what is going on, I always explain them why I ask them to do something. It is important to them to understand why they have to do what I ask, and what are the results of their work.

**How important do you think self-confidence is?**
It is one of the most important aspects of our job. Someone who is not self-confident, or doesn’t transmit self-confidence to others, cannot be a leader, he is just a “jumping jack”, who is only able to repeat orders. I always show that I know what I want, even if I am not sure. It is important to show that you can take decisions and you can assume them anyway. People prefer to follow someone who has a self-confident attitude, even if he takes risks or makes mistakes sometimes. To take risks is also something rewarding for followers.

**Gender stereotypic perceptions**

**According to you, what are the main characteristics of a leader?**
The leader is someone who motivates his followers, and who is self-confident of course! The leader has to give to others the will to develop their skills.
Do you think that men and women lead differently?
Yes, absolutely! We have different but complementary leadership styles. It doesn’t mean that there is one best way to lead... I think that, it is difficult for men to understand women leadership style and vice versa. Women will understand easier female leaders than males. I think that men reward their followers’ efforts even if the result is not that good, while women reward capabilities to reach a goal. Men are also more direct, if a male leader asks something to one of his followers, he will not care about how the job will be done while women will give more heed to it.

Is the image of a woman compatible with the image of a leader?
In my company, it is almost natural for women to evolve to leading positions because I work for the “fashion” industry. I am certainly influenced by this situation. Thus, the word “woman” is for me, perfectly compatible with the word “leader”.

Within your company, have you ever felt stereotyped because of your gender?
Yes, I already felt it. There is a lot of women within my company, and I already heard people say that, the way I organize things is typically masculine. I am not very strict concerning the organization of teams and work. I try to be flexible. My women colleagues don’t understand how I can work.

Dominant male model/ Executive culture

According to you, within top-executive management, does a disparity between men and women exist? If so, what are the reasons?
Nowadays, leading positions are mainly occupied by men. If you have a look at organizational charts of companies, you will see that leading positions are always occupied by men. But it evolves slowly. Men are more flexible. Women have family duties that men do not. Anyway, all the women I know in leading position “took the place of their husband”. I mean that, while they are having a career, their husbands are taking care of the children. Women in leading positions have an agreement with their husband that enable them to evolve within companies.
Do you think that a classical organizational French model is based on masculine values?
Yes, organizational models of companies are very masculine. I think that it is more obvious in Latin countries like France, than in Germanic or Scandinavian countries. Because of this model, men are more expected than women to be leaders.

And within your company?
Of course, even if I work within the fashion industry, I can see that, there is a lack of women occupying executive positions. I try to change this fact at my small scale. I try to change my mentality. But I feel the impact of the French-Latin education I received. I noticed that, it was somehow difficult to me, to accept critics from a woman. I try to change it but within the French culture, the “male” should not tolerate critics from a woman. I think that it is different in other countries. I worked with English people. To them, the leader is the leader, no matter the gender.

According to you, does the top-executive culture is based on masculine values?
The paternalistic image is very important among the French culture. The leader is the father. We keep reproducing this scheme, even if things are changing. For instance, examples taught to children at school still generate a male chauvinist vision of the society. By the way, followers better trust male leaders than female leaders nowadays. As a consequence, the executive culture is still based on masculine values. The current philosophy says that: women leave a company to have babies, to become housewives and mothers. Therefore, they are less involved regarding the future of the company that is why we cannot trust women as much as men. It is not my opinion, but most of people think this way. It is a cultural thing.

Glass ceiling

Have you ever met obstacles to access your position?
No never.
Manager n°7: the female CEO of GMT Consulting

Identity card
Manager 7 is 56, married and has one child. She has a professional coach degree and a certified public accounting degree. She has been working in a public accounting firm. Then, she worked in different economic industries such as the pharmaceutical, the manufacture and the consulting. She has been occupying positions of CEO’s and financial manager. Now I am a consultant in change management, especially in finance and human resources. She has been leading coed teams, until 800 people. When she describes the business environment she worked in for 30 years now, she talks about sexism. Before starting the interview, she highlighted the different kinds of leaderships which exist: a president has its own leadership, a priest or a researcher has its own too.

Gender leadership style

How would you describe your leadership and the way you manage?
I build a strategy which is based on communication and explanation. My goal is to win over team members’ opinion on precise objectives without giving orders. Then objectives are reached naturally. I listen to people and create a common vision. I have been setting up what I call a “high-mass, once a year, where employees and the executive committee can talk to each other and where the strategy of the company can be explained. This “high-mass” allows to create an interaction between the executive committee and employees. It is interesting and important to get a bottom-up feedback. To listen and to communicate are essentials.

How do you implement your decisions making?
When the strategy and decisions are well-defined, its implementations happen naturally. If there is a resistance, I use a brainstorming which focuses on my main objectives. I precisely use the "Six Thinking Hats" method which consists in leaving employees to create a story very similar to my objectives to reach. Then, the employee has the feeling to be involved in the decision making, that he is a part of the decision system. Then, decision making is easier to apply. People learn to work together with their diversity. Moreover, this process allows me to change my objectives taking into account new ideas. Consequently, my leadership can be consultative.
How do you develop the potential of your employees? How do you encourage them?
You cannot encourage a salesman the same way as a worker or a technician. You need to adapt your vision to the employees you are working with. It is important that employees keep focusing on the strategy of the company: to satisfy customers and suppliers. A salesman is propelled by objectives to reach with autonomy and specific equipments such as beautiful cars or mobile phones. An office employee needs to be congratulated if he realized a good report. Adaptation is as important as avoiding clans and creating a harmony among the different departments.

How important do you think self-confidence is?
It is very pleasant. I don’t know. I learn every day about people and life. I evolve every day. I consider self-confidence as sufficient. However you cannot lead if you don’t trust yourself.

Genders stereotypic perceptions

According to you, what are the main characteristics of a leader?
A leader must be communicative, tuned in his subordinates.

Do you think that men and women lead differently? If so, what are the reasons?
Yes, definitively. Women are mothers or are about to become mothers and then, you have a different vision. A woman leads with intuition and feels people. Male leaders have qualities but it’s rare that they use their sixth sense as we do thanks to our feminine genes. Female managers use a more human management. A male CEO needs to be known by his male counterparts, is too proud to put his decisions into perspective and to confess his mistakes.

Is the image of a woman compatible with the image of a leader?
Yes.

Within your company, have you ever felt stereotyped because of your gender?
Yes. Once, a recruiter asked me if I was on the pill or if I used condoms. I felt this question as a rape. These questions are asked to women but not to a man>men. This is abusive. But I never met problems within my team.
Dominant male model/ Executive culture

According to you, within top-executive management, does a disparity between men and women exist? If so, what are the reasons?
Yes, I don’t know exactly the statistics but I estimate that 85% of CEOs are men. I think that companies led by women are different and more efficient. Since middle-ages, our common beliefs shaped by our education involve that women have to make babies. Women were tools of power. Women freed themselves and evolved after the First World War. I think that young men are afraid of young high-skilled women. Indeed, I noticed that they have difficulties to get married. Mentalities cause that men don’t get married with women who earn two times their salaries.

Do you think that a classical organizational French model is based on masculine values?
It depends. The classical masculine companies are based on precise and well-defined organization chart which is a dominant-dominated model. Contrary to them, companies where human and communicative values are important, the product is promoted.

According to you, does the top-executive culture is based on masculine values?
Yes. Related masculine values are the power and the productivity.

Glass ceiling

Have you ever met obstacles to access your position?
Yes. I am sure that if tomorrow, I apply for a CEO position, regarding similar skills, a man will be hired. I am for more parity. Among an executive committee, a professional couple is complementary. Tacit obstacles exist. Years ago, I have been recruited by such a male-chauvinist company that I still don’t understand how it has been possible to be recruited. At that time, I have even thought of quitting the job. I heard a lot of sexist remarks which were expressed as a kind of self-defense. My male counterparts were afraid of me as if I had stolen their jobs.
Manager n°8: the male manager of Orange Labs

Identity card
The last manager is 41, lives in partner and has two children. He has an engineer diploma. Within the telecommunication area, he used to be an information system and a project manager before obtaining his current position: a research and development manager. His team is mainly composed of male researchers (15 men and 3 women).

Gender leadership style

How would you describe your leadership and the way you manage?
I listen to people and I get involved in their projects. Contrary to me, within the research and development area, it is very common to meet “Excell managers”, who are interested in figures. Their management is blunt, easier, and satisfies superiors. They take decisions based on facts which don’t allow flexibility. I am less aloof from my team than they are and I use flexibility.

How do you collaborate with your employees?
At the beginning of a project, I get involved. I go with my team and support it. Once the project is launched, I leave the team members alone and autonomous. As a project manager, I am described as a “Business maker”. I launch a project, and then, I appoint them as delegates. For instance, I am not very comfortable with the marketing area, I don’t know how to deal with it… So, I let my competent colleagues to deal with it.

How do you implement your decision making?
I speak more than I write. I avoid e-mails for that. Most of the time, my decision making is consultative. I ask for my colleagues’ opinions. However, when I am positive, which doesn’t happen often, I normally implement the decision.
How do you develop the potential of your employees? How do you encourage them?
I look for adapted trainings, and for external recognitions such as patents. This process is peculiar to the research and development area. I obviously send congratulation e-mails. Even if my breathing space is small, I try to adjust salaries. I also offer them opportunities such as the access to conferences, the possibility to demonstrate their researches and a promotion to a higher position. I trust them more as far as they are concerned.

How important do you think self-confidence is?
I don’t get the question… (Silence) The one who doesn’t doubt is an idiot. But when I am very positive, I take into account all criticisms.

Gender stereotypic perceptions

According to you, what are the main characteristic of a leader?
Talkative. Dynamic but be careful, I mean not thrilled, not thrilled, dynamic in the way you have energy. Experienced. Moderate.

Do you think that men and women lead differently? If yes, what are the reasons?
I think there is no difference concerning the method, as they manage teams. However, the feminine nature is different. The perception and personal experiences are different. In case of problems, women understand more quickly thanks to their sensibility. They are sensitive and thus, more able to manage blows. I never had female managers.

Is the image of a woman compatible with the image of a leader?
Yes.

Within your company, have you ever felt stereotyped because of your gender?
Yes and no. I didn’t pay attention to it.
Dominant male model/ Executive culture

According to you, within top-executive management, does a disparity between men and women exist?
Yes. Statistics speak, this is a fact. However, within the company, women managers are more paid than males.

If so, what are the reasons?
I don’t think women are less able. The reasons of this disparity are cultural. Women must mother, take care of children. I met a female manager who worked better than her male counterparts. She must have decreased her rate of work to take care of her family. And once you kick the habit, it’s over.

Do you think that a classical organizational French model is based on masculine values?
Yes, but not 100%, maybe it’s 60 or 70% true. Women don’t turn up their nose at this model. Maybe because few of them are at top-executive positions to get things move.

And within your company?
Yes, but it’s indiscriminate.

Glass ceiling

Have you ever met obstacles to access your position?
Yes, me.
# Appendix 4: The Gantt diagram

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- **Thesis Proposal**
- **Workshop 1**
- **Surveying Researches**
- **Presenting main theories**
- **Defining main theories to be used**
- **Defining the data collection technique**
- **Explaining the added value of the thesis**
- **Workshop 2**
- **Literature analysis**
- **Theoretical Framework**
- **Conceputal Framework**
- **Empirical study design**
- **First draft**
- **Data collection**
- **Data analysis**
- **Final version**
Linnaeus University – a firm focus on quality and competence

On 1 January 2010 Växjö University and the University of Kalmar merged to form Linnaeus University. This new university is the product of a will to improve the quality, enhance the appeal and boost the development potential of teaching and research, at the same time as it plays a prominent role in working closely together with local society. Linnaeus University offers an attractive knowledge environment characterised by high quality and a competitive portfolio of skills.

Linnaeus University is a modern, international university with the emphasis on the desire for knowledge, creative thinking and practical innovations. For us, the focus is on proximity to our students, but also on the world around us and the future ahead.