



UNIVERSITAT DE BARCELONA  
BUSINESS SCHOOL

**MSc**  
International Business

# **THE EFFECT OF CULTURE ON FEMALE LEADERSHIP: TOWARDS EQUALITY EVERYWHERE?**

Name of student: Alicia Schünemann

Master's Thesis tutor: Dr. Patricia Elgoibar

Date: June 30, 2020

## **PLAGIARISM STATEMENT**

The content of this document is the sole responsibility of the author, who declares that she has not committed plagiarism and that all references to the work of other authors have been correctly cited in the text.

Date: June 30, 2020

Signature: *Alicia Schönemann*

---

# The Effect of Culture on Female Leadership: Towards Equality Everywhere?

---

Alicia Schünemann

*University of Barcelona*

*Master (M.Sc.) in International Business*

## **ABSTRACT**

In the last decades, female leadership and female representation in top management positions received increasing attention and got more visible. There is a trend towards gender diversity in upper management, voluntarily or forced by regulations, as the society moves towards gender equality, also at leadership positions. Thus, traditional barriers tend to decrease slightly. Nevertheless, this trend is only developing slowly and has been noticed primarily by enterprises in the developed western world. Due to this discrepancy between different countries, culture can be understood as a key influencing factor in supporting women as leaders. This thesis aims to contribute to a deeper knowledge about female leadership and women's opportunities in management. The relationship between women in leadership and culture will be highlighted. Additionally, key influencing factors of culture impacting women's opportunities in ascending the career ladder will be researched within a content analysis.

Keywords: Female Leadership; Culture; Gender Equality; Organizations

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

**PLAGIARISM STATEMENT..... 1**

**ABSTRACT..... 2**

**TABLE OF CONTENTS..... 3**

**LIST OF FIGURES ..... 4**

**LIST OF TABLES ..... 4**

**ABBREVIATIONS ..... 5**

**1. INTRODUCTION..... 6**

    1.1 Relevance of the Work and Contribution ..... 7

    1.2 Expectations and Structure ..... 8

    1.3 Limitations..... 8

**2. LITERATURE REVIEW..... 9**

    2.1 Leadership ..... 9

        2.1.1 Introduction to Leadership ..... 9

        2.1.2 Leadership Theory ..... 10

    2.2 Concept of Culture ..... 14

        2.2.1 Introduction to Culture..... 14

        2.2.2 Hofstede’s Cultural Dimensions ..... 15

    2.3 Relationship between Leadership and Culture ..... 17

    2.4 Female Leadership ..... 19

        2.4.1 Introduction to Female Leadership ..... 19

        2.4.2 Is There a Female Leadership Style? ..... 21

    2.5 Relationship between Female Leadership and Culture ..... 22

**3. METHODOLOGY..... 25**

    3.1 Qualitative Research – Content Analysis ..... 25

    3.2 Data Collection..... 26

**4. RESULTS..... 28**

    4.1 Category: Hofstede’s Cultural Dimensions..... 28

    4.2 Category: Role of Women..... 29

    4.3 Category: Religion ..... 30

    4.4 Category: Traditional Beliefs ..... 31

    4.5 Category: Gender Inequality ..... 32

    4.6 Discussion and Implications..... 33

**5. CONCLUSION..... 36**

**REFERENCES..... 39**

## **LIST OF FIGURES**

Figure 1: Leadership Approaches .....	11
Figure 2: Managerial Leadership Grid .....	12
Figure 3: Situational Leadership Styles .....	13
Figure 4: The Three Levels of Mental Programming .....	15
Figure 5: Eight-Scale Model in the Real Business Life .....	18
Figure 6: Representation of Women by Management Level .....	20
Figure 7: Leadership Diamond.....	23
Figure 8: Gender Inequality Index .....	23

## **LIST OF TABLES**

Table 1: Sources for the Content Analysis .....	27
---	----

## **ABBREVIATIONS**

CEO	Chief Executive Officer
e.g.	For example
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
U.S.	United States of America
vs.	Versus

---

## 1. INTRODUCTION

---

In the recent years, female leadership as well as women's participation in top management positions received increasing attention and got more visible (Kim & Shin, 2017). It is possible to say that there is a trend towards gender diversity in management, voluntarily or forced by regulations, as the society moves more and more away from the understanding that women are "not perceived as being suitable for leadership positions" (Evans, 2010: 348; Eagly & Carli, 2007). Furthermore, there is a growing knowledge about the topic of gender equality which has a positive influence on people's awareness (Virick & Greer, 2012; Wahl & Höök, 2007). To say it in other words, the society increasingly demands for more equal treatment of men and women, also in the context of management (United Nations, 2020a; Carrasco, Francoeur, Labelle, Laffarga, Ruiz-Barbadillo, 2015). Moreover, traditional barriers tend to decrease slightly (Evans, 2010). This is especially true for western countries and the respective enterprises where people have the tendency to adopt the belief that diversity is a source "of strategic advantage" (Virick & Greer, 2012: 576).

*"The development of gender diversity in leadership positions is a critical need for many companies as they develop strategies for how to they will compete in the future." (Virick & Greer, 2012: 575)*

This statement underlines the importance of female participation in management positions which can be described as a relevant aspect when it comes to gender diversity. It highlights the fact that companies need to take gender diversity into account in order to be profitable as well as successful in the long term (Chadwick & Dawson, 2018; Post, 2015; United Nations, 2020a). However, this trend is only developing slowly and has not been recognized to the full desirable extent by many countries around the world (Melero, 2011). Thus, unfortunately one can say that companies "are still reproducing gender inequalities" (Genciano Chin, 2016: 19). As there seems to be a huge disparity between different cultures and respective countries, it is important to include culture as an influencing factor on the development of female leadership and women in upper management positions (Moriarty, 2019; Hewlett & Rashid, 2015; Northouse, 2015).

*"Culture and context are central to understanding a society's differing role expectations of males and females. Both must live, survive, and thrive within the constraints and opportunities imposed by culture and context." (Eden & Forquer Gupta, 2017: 206)*

Therefore, a deeper understanding about female leadership and the respective influence of culture has to be established in order to recognize the importance of creating the same possibilities as well as opportunities for male and female managers. Hence, the main research question of this paper is the following: What effect does culture have on female leadership?

In other words, the main objective of this master thesis is to analyze the influence as well as the impact of culture on leadership. More precisely, the focus will be on women's professional life in management. Here, it is a core element to investigate to what extent culture plays a role. The research question is motivated by the fact that there seem to be huge

discrepancies across cultures and countries when it comes to female participation in upper management positions (Simeon, Nicholson & Wong, 2001; Cho & McLean, 2018; Flabbi, Piras & Abrahams, 2017). There is a need to identify as well as deeper investigate the source of these circumstances. An additional motivation here is that in general the awareness for gender equality as well as diversity is growing which makes this topic even more relevant and up to date (United Nations, 2020b; McKinsey & Company, 2019).

## **1.1 Relevance of the Work and Contribution**

As gender equality and women empowerment are of great importance nowadays, the herewith connected female leadership and women's representation in top management are of huge importance too. Its relevance is supported by the fact that one of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals is "gender equality and women's empowerment" (United Nations, 2020b). To be more precise, one detailed objective of this topic is the following:

*"Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decisionmaking in political, economic and public life." (United Nations, 2020b)*

With this, it gets evident that the topic of female leadership is relevant. Since female participation in upper management is directly connected with gender equality as a human right, its importance is fostered (United Nations, 2020b). Here, the Gender Equality Index itself provides deeper insights into the situation in each country (United Nations Development Programme, 2018). There are various reasons why women are underrepresented in higher managerial positions which is often caused by unfavourable stereotypes and prejudices about women (Koburtay, Syed & Haloub, 2019; Sandberg, 2013; Eagly & Carli, 2007). This is why female leadership needs to be investigated deeper aiming to provide a comprehensive overview of recent research as well as findings across different cultures. This should contribute to a broader understanding of the importance of women in top management positions. There are several positive outcomes and dynamics associated with this, such as improved firm performance and productivity as well as increased efficiency in global teams (Flabbi, Macis, Moro & Schivardi, 2012; Post, 2015; United Nations, 2020a). Although one can notice slight advancements in gender equality as well as diversity in leadership positions, the positive contribution needs to be communicated clearly in order to have further advancements in the coming years (Eagly & Carli, 2007). As culture seems to play an important role influencing this kind of development, it is of relevance to investigate the relationship between female leadership and culture as a conditioning factor (Eden & Forquer Gupta, 2017; Koburtay et al., 2019).

The main contribution of designing a paper with the research objective to analyze the influence of culture on female leadership, is the fact that there are almost no consolidated overviews done about different cultures' impact on women's professional life. Most of the research just focuses on one single country and the respective situation faced by women (e.g. Chao, 2011; Alhadhrami, Goby & Al-Ansaari, 2018; Manzoor, 2015; Hodges, 2017). With this thesis, a broader understanding about the concrete relationship should be established. To add, this paper should be seen as an incentive for organizations to speed up changes in favor



for gender equality and women in top management positions. Furthermore, this work should show to which degree the characteristics of the respective cultures are shaping the environment for women. Additionally, this master thesis helps in establishing categories to cluster the advancement of female leadership in different countries and their respective culture.

## **1.2 Expectations and Structure**

This paper will discuss the topic of female leadership and concepts of culture as mentioned earlier. Therefore, it is essential to provide the theoretical framework needed. Additionally, culture as an influencing factor on female leadership will be deeper investigated within a content analysis executed in the methodological part of this thesis.

To give an orientation, this paper is divided into five main chapters. The first part is the introduction where the topic is presented. Based on this, the work's relevance and the expectations are demonstrated. The last part of the introduction will show the limitations of this paper. The second chapter of this thesis will deal with the literature review which can be understood as the theoretical framework. The theory will have its focus on three main subtopics namely leadership including male and female leading styles, concepts of culture as well as the integration of these two topics. The third chapter is dedicated to the methodology which is a conceptual approach dealing with a content analysis aiming to find patterns between female leadership and culture. The concrete approach of the bibliographic research will be explained. Based on this, in the fourth chapter, identified general as well as specific relationships and linkages between female leadership and culture will be presented. These will be the results of the content analysis. Lastly, this master thesis finishes with a conclusion in the fifth chapter. Here, the key findings and implications will be shown. Additionally, one gets to know the limitations of the research. An outlook as well as needed future research will be provided.

## **1.3 Limitations**

This master thesis has some limitations. Due to the scope of this work, it is not possible to discuss every topic mentioned in detail. The main objective of this paper is to give an overview concerning the topics of female leadership and culture as well as their respective interplay.

Furthermore, the methodological approach focuses on selected papers aiming to identify relationships as well as linkages between female leadership and culture. Here, the main aim is to provide a comprehensive overview of the key findings rather than to design an all-embracing detailed analysis. However, it can be said that the underlying methodologies, approaches and principles used to analyze the links between female leadership and culture can be adapted to corresponding future research.

---

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

---

In this section, the different concepts of this research will be developed. Firstly, there will be an analysis of the concept of leadership (*see chapter 2.1*) as well as the concept of culture (*see chapter 2.2*). Followed by this, the relationship between these two topics will be discussed (*see chapter 2.3*). Additionally, the narrower topic of female leadership (*see chapter 2.4*) will be introduced as well as the respective relationship between female leadership and culture (*see chapter 2.5*).

### 2.1 Leadership

*“There are almost as many definitions of leadership as there are people who have attempted to define the concepts.” (Stogdill, 1974: 7)*

As the scholar Ralph M. Stogdill (1974) already formulated, it is nearly impossible to define leadership and its complex concepts in just one single sentence. That is why there are many different approaches and formulations of leadership (Tang, 2019; Yukl, 2013; House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman & Gupta, 2004). Peter Drucker, a well-known pioneer in modern management, kept his definition quite simple but at the same time really insightful. He said that there is only one definition of a leader. He or she just needs to have followers (Drucker, 1996). This chapter will further describe leadership and diverse leadership theories.

#### 2.1.1 Introduction to Leadership

*“There are many possible ways to define leadership. However, the definition of leadership should depend on the purposes to be served.” (Bass, 2009: 25)*

Generally, one can say that leadership can be understood as a process where the main objective is to influence members of a group in order to achieve a common goal (Northouse, 2018; Yukl, 2013; Horner, 1997). This underlines the fact that leadership is required every time objectives need to be achieved (Yukl, 2006). Deriving from this, it is possible to say that leadership is neither a characteristic nor a specific trait but an interplay which can be understood as an instrumental value (Bass, 2009). This means that leadership can be described as an interaction between different people, namely the leader and the followers (Northouse, 2018). The leader’s task is to give voice and say what is needed aiming to finally mobilize the whole group (Bass, 2009; Yukl, 2006). Consequently, it can be stated that “leadership occurs in groups” (Northouse, 2013: 5). Groups represent the context where the leadership occurs. Hence, the group is essential (Northouse, 2018). Moreover, leadership requires at least two persons that socially interact within this two-way process (Northouse, 2001). Here, the power is distributed unequally which results in an asymmetrical interaction between the leader and the respective follower (Stock-Homburg, 2013; De Cremer, Van Dick & Murnighan, 2011; Janda, 1960). Without this kind of influence, leadership would not exist (Northouse, 2018; By, Hughes & Ford, 2016).

To add, leadership is described as a behavior, a trait as well as an act and includes personality, skills as well as information-processing aspects (Northouse, 2013). Furthermore, some core

tasks of leaders can be identified, namely setting as well as formulating goals for teams and individuals, organizing and decisionmaking (Malik, 2014). Moreover, leaders need to focus on tasks such as controlling, assessing, developing as well as measuring employees (Malik, 2014). This highlights the importance of the relationship between the leader and the followers. Additionally, Yukl (2013) states that leaders need to clarify the followers' roles as well as responsibilities. An essential task of a leader is to give structure to the subordinates and to provide the needed resources in order to fulfill the job tasks (Yukl, 2013). At this point, it is relevant to mention that most of the effects of leadership are indirect. For instance, the leader has an indirect influence on the employee's performance through e.g. rewards, trainings or improvement of morale standards (Bass, 2009).

When it comes to the concrete behavior of the leader, some aspects need to be highlighted. Again, the understanding of the leader's behavior as well as the respective tasks differ greatly. According to Malik (2014) people can only be successful under the premise of "right and good management" which helps people to "transform their strengths and skills into performance and success" (p. 14). To say it in other words, aiming to be successful, people need to make themselves effective first. Furthermore, leaders need to believe in themselves which will ultimately give them the required self-confidence in order to lead others (Hesselbein, Goldsmith & Beckhard, 1997). This is also connected with the next two behavioral aspects of a leader: responsibility as well as role modelling (Drucker, 1997). Firstly, leaders need to be responsible. It is not about "rank, privileges, titles, or money" (Drucker, 1997: Foreword). To add, due to the fact that leaders are visible, they set examples and have to function as a role model (Drucker, 1997). A leader can only be considered being a good leader when he or she follows the same guidelines he or she expects the followers to align with (Drucker, 1997). Therefore, leaders have to start with leading and managing themselves first.

At the same time, certain soft skills are associated with good and successful leaders which "help him to interact positively with his subordinates or team members" (Tang, 2019: 6). This includes communication skills helping to clearly formulate organizational goals, motivation as well as the capability to inspire others, trustworthiness, the ability to give constructive feedback, responsibility for one's actions, flexibility and the ability to delegate work (Tang, 2019; Hassan, Mahsud, Yukl & Prussia, 2013; Sharkie, 2009).

### **2.1.2 Leadership Theory**

Having mentioned the most important aspects when it comes to leadership, the leadership theory which exemplifies the way how leadership in general can be explained will shortly be highlighted. Figure 1 shows the evolution as well as temporal evolvment of different leadership approaches (Harrison, 2018). Here, one can see that the leadership theory started in the 1930s with the Great Man Theory whose main idea was that "people are born with traits that make them natural leaders" (Harrison, 2018: 17). Over time, many more theories have been designed (*see Figure 1*) (Tang, 2019). In this thesis, three main theories will be introduced, namely the trait-oriented perspective, the behavioral perspective and the situational perspective. The reason why these theories will be discussed more in detail is due to the fact that the three above-mentioned perspectives can help in answering the leading

question of this thesis, namely on which factors leadership success depends on (Stock-Homburg, 2010; Horner, 1997).

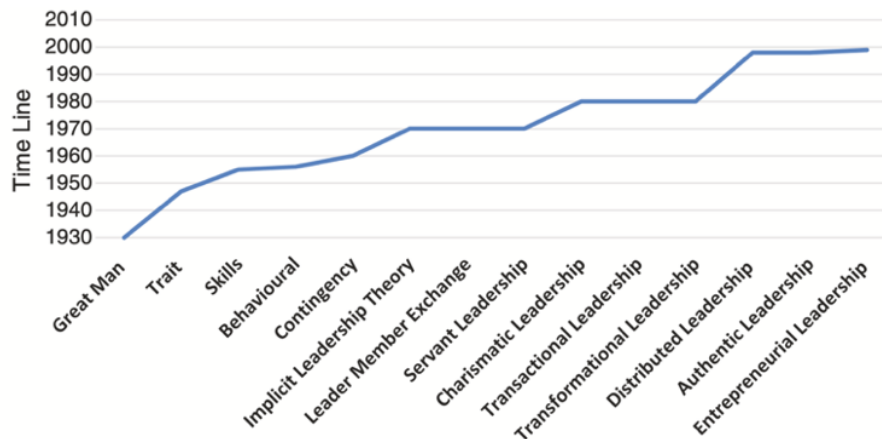


Figure 1: Leadership Approaches  
(Source: Harrison, 2018)

### Trait-oriented perspective

The underlying assumption of this perspective is the fact that personality traits are being considered as the main influencing factor on leadership success (Northouse, 2018; Stock-Homburg, 2010). This theory focuses on the idea that some leaders can be considered as natural leaders as those kinds of people are “endowed with certain traits not possessed by other people” (Tang, 2019: 12; De Cremer et al., 2011). Hence, long lists of personality traits needed for leaders have been established (Harrison, 2018; Van Knippenberg & Hogg, 2003). This includes for instance traits such as honesty, forward-looking, intelligence as well as competence (Tang, 2019). These traits can be understood as “leadership schemas and expectations” by the followers (Van Knippenberg & Hogg, 2003: 34). Various researchers agree that there are five main personality traits associated with successful leaders. These Big 5 Personality Traits include agreeableness, extraversion, neuroticism, openness (to experience) and conscientiousness (Northouse, 2013; De Cremer et al., 2011; Costa & McCrae, 2011). In order to measure different traits and characteristics of a leader, various questionnaires and tests are available, for instance the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (Northouse, 2018).

### Behavioral perspective

This leadership theory can already be partially understood just by its name. The main focus of this approach is the leader’s behavior meaning what they “actually do and not what they inherently possess” (Harrison, 2018: 23; Tang, 2019). Therefore, the behavior of the leader towards the respective followers can be understood as the most important factor impacting the leadership success (Harrison, 2018). Different from the first presented perspective, the behavioral leadership theory says that good leadership and the respective skills can be learned and developed (Northouse, 2016). Additionally, the behavioral approach of leadership is divided into two different kinds of behaviors namely the task behavior and the relationship behavior. With this, the main purpose of the behavioral perspective can be derived which is “to explain how leaders combine these two kinds of behaviors to influence followers in their efforts to reach a goal” (Northouse, 2016: 71).

The most important researches that have been done under the behavioral perspective are the Ohio state studies, studies of the University of Michigan and studies by Blake and Mouton (Harrison, 2018; Northouse, 2016). As the managerial leadership grid by Blake and Mouton is the “best known model of managerial behavior” and is used widely in the business world, one can find it in Figure 2 (Northouse, 2016: 74). This grid is composed of two different factors which is “concern for people” and “concern for results” (Management Study Guide, 2020; Northouse, 2016). The axis “concern for results” deals with the leader’s commitment to achieve the organizational goals (Northouse, 2016). Here, different aspects are influencing the factor of the axis such as workload or policies (Northouse, 2016). The second axis “concern for people” refers to the leader’s approach of dealing with his or her followers (Management Study Guide, 2020). This type of concern includes aspects like “promoting the personal worth of followers, providing good working conditions, maintaining a fair salary structure” as well as building trust and commitment (Northouse, 2016: 75). Most effective leaders show concern for both people as well as results (Harrison, 2018; Management Study Guide, 2020). Blake and Mouton developed five main behavioral leadership styles (*see Figure 2*) (Management Study Guide, 2020).

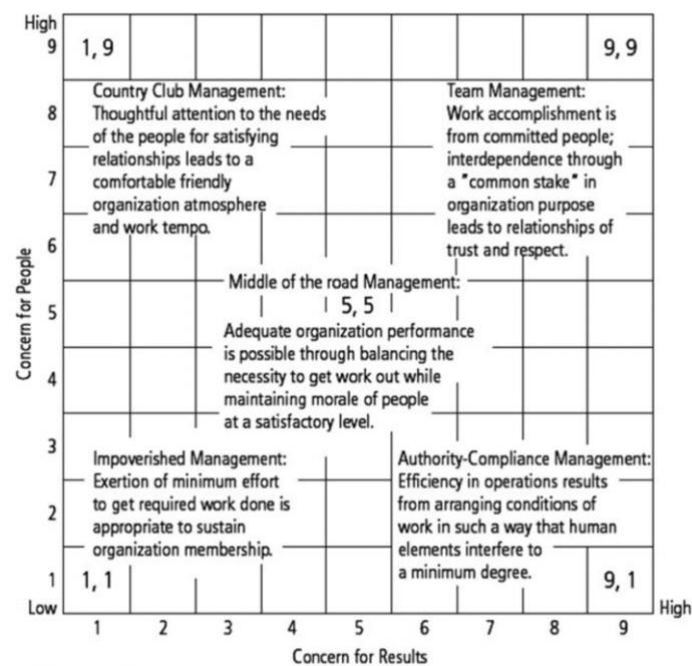
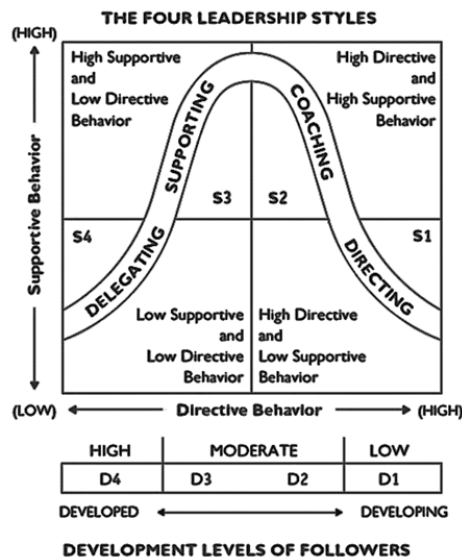


Figure 2: Managerial Leadership Grid  
(Source: Northouse, 2016: 76)

### Situational perspective

The core assumption of the situational perspective of leadership is that the leader’s success primarily depends on the context and respective contextual factors (Tang, 2019). For instance, this includes the “nature of the external environment” (Tang, 2019: 23). Thus, different situations demand different kinds of leadership styles (Missouri Western State University, 2020). At the same time, this means that the leader has to adapt according to the situation (Northouse, 2013; Missouri Western State University, 2020). In general, this perspective is composed of two different dimensions namely a directive as well as a supportive dimension (Northouse, 2013). On the one hand side, the directive behavior can be understood as a one-

way communication which includes giving direction, the establishment and reaching of objectives as well as role definition (Northouse, 2013). Supportive behaviors on the other hand side focus on two-way communication where the main aim is to make followers feel comfortable and to provide support socially as well as emotionally (Northouse, 2013). The described theory is visualized in Figure 3 where the four different situational leadership styles namely directing, coaching, supporting and delegating are shown. This figure also visualizes that the degree of development of the respective follower impacts the way how the leader treats him or her (*see Figure 3*).



*Figure 3: Situational Leadership Styles  
(Source: Northouse, 2013: 100)*

Additionally, it is of great importance to also introduce the theories of transformational and transactional leadership. These are modern and more recent approaches in the research (*see Figure 1*). Furthermore, both the transformational as well as transactional leadership theory connect insights into and theories of the above-mentioned trait-oriented, behavioral and situational approaches (Avolio & Bass, 2002). To add, these two theories received a lot of support from both management as well as science (Avolio & Bass, 2002).

### Transactional

The transactional leadership style is characterized by the leader's identification of the subordinate's needs and an extrinsic motivation through materialistic or psychological rewards (Harrison, 2018). Here, the rewards or disciplines are based on the respective performance of the followers (Avolio & Bass, 2002). Additionally, the transactional leadership style has its focus on maximizing one's own interests (Stock-Homburg, 2013). There are three subordinate styles of which this leadership theory is composed of namely contingent reward, management-by-exception and laissez-faire (Avolio & Bass, 2002; Harrison, 2018; Northouse, 2013; Yukl, 2013). Contingent reward is used to motivate the subordinates in order to achieve the objectives successfully (Avolio & Bass, 2002). Management-by-exception means that the leader keeps the status-quo as long as the subordinates fulfill their tasks satisfactorily. In case goals are not achieved anymore, the leader intervenes (Harrison, 2018; Avolio & Bass, 2002). Lastly, laissez-faire can be

understood as the absence of any leadership and is therefore “the most inactive” as well as “most ineffective” leadership style (Avolio & Bass, 2002: 4).

## **Transformational**

The main idea of transformational leadership is to bring positive change in individual as well as social systems aiming to create value (Tang, 2019). The objective of this theory is to improve “the motivation, morale, and job performance of subordinates” while inspiring and empowering them through intrinsic motivation (Tang, 2019: 17; Northouse, 2013; Yukl, 2013). For this, the leader “motivate[s] others to do more than they originally intended and often even more than they thought possible” (Avolio & Bass, 2002: 1). The foundation for this leadership style was set in 1985 by Bernard Bass who developed a model composed of four main behaviors (Bass, 1985; Harrison, 2018). This includes idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation as well as individualized consideration (Bass, 1985; Avolio & Bass, 2002; Harrison, 2018; Yukl, 2013). Generally, one can say that the focus of this leadership theory is on emotions, values, standards, ethics as well as long-term commitment (Northouse, 2013; Yukl, 2013).

## **2.2 Concept of Culture**

Culture plays an important role in everyone’s life. It can be understood as the identity of a human group, for instance a whole society (Hofstede, 1980; Tîmbalari, 2019; Schein, 2017). In this section, the topic of culture will be introduced as well as Hofstede’s well-known cultural dimensions which help to decode different cultures.

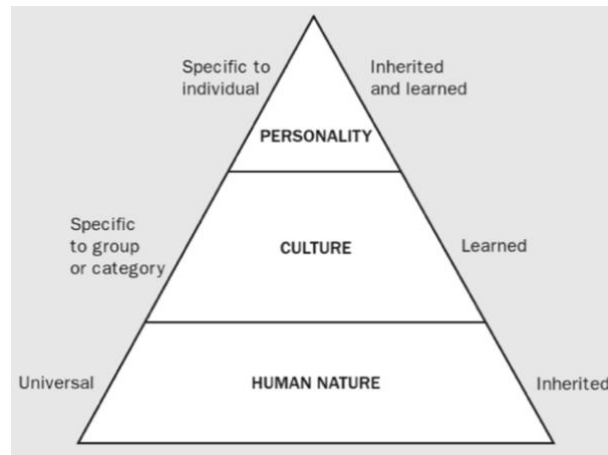
### **2.2.1 Introduction to Culture**

Culture has been tried to define in many different ways and approaches (House et al., 2004). According to the well-known Dutch professor Geert Hofstede (1980), culture is “the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group from another” (p. 21). The values as well as unwritten rules of the group have the biggest impact on shaping the respective culture (Hofstede, 1980; House et al., 2004; Meyer, 2014b). Furthermore, what culture is for a human group is basically the same what is personality for an individual person as it shapes how people think, act and behave (Hofstede, 1980; House et al., 2004; Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010). To say it in another way, Kluckhohn (1951) defined the following:

*“Culture consists in patterned ways of thinking, feeling, and reacting, acquired and transmitted mainly by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e. historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values.” (p. 86)*

It is possible to say that culture shapes people since the early childhood because “at that time a person is most susceptible to learning and assimilating” (Hofstede et al., 2010: 4). Hence, one can stress that the programming of the culture starts within the family. Later, other environmental factors are shaping the culture such as living communities, the neighbourhood

or peer groups (Hofstede et al., 2010). This also supports the fact that culture can be learned and is nothing that exists naturally or innate (Hofstede et al., 2010). Contrary to this is the concept of human nature, the ability to have feelings, as well as personality, a unique set of traits, as these two phenomena are inherited (*see Figure 4*) (Hofstede et al., 2010).



*Figure 4: The Three Levels of Mental Programming*  
(Source: Hofstede et al., 2010: 6)

Additionally, cultures across different countries, societies and groups have the same characteristics. The first one is the fact that culture reproduces itself (Hofstede et al., 2010). This means that culture is a “powerful stabilizing force” where the education the previous generation received is reproduced in the next generation (Hofstede et al., 2010: 11; Schein, 2017). To say it in other words, parents transfer their culture to their children which means that culture is “transmitted across age generations” (House et al., 2004: 57; Schein, 2017). Moreover, culture is a phenomenon that cannot be prevented by any group (Meyer, 2014b). The creation of shared principles and regulations is a condition for group survival (Hofstede et al., 2010). Furthermore, culture goes beyond race and family. This means that especially today in the globalized world, culture is not connected with genes or a specific race. Culture is more about a “symbolic group membership” (Hofstede et al., 2010: 15; House et al., 2004). To add, cultures have multiple layers (Hofstede et al., 2010). Every person belongs to different cultures and groups at the same time. Thus, one carries multiple layers of Hofstede’s mental programming of the mind within oneself (Hofstede et al., 2010). For example, this can be the national culture of one’s home country, a religious group, on social class level or according to the generation one is born into (Hofstede et al., 2010). Lastly, it is important to say that culture is very hard to change, particularly when it comes to well-established values (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2017; Eden & Forquer Gupta, 2017).

### **2.2.2 Hofstede’s Cultural Dimensions**

Aiming to identify the most important dimensions of national cultures, the Dutch professor Geert Hofstede studied the most relevant and common problems across cultures. From this, he derived five main cultural dimensions. These dimensions have the highest impact on the functionality as well as implementation of national cultures. As he developed “the most useful and practical cultural model”, Hofstede’s approach will now be highlighted (Tîmbalari, 2019: 222).



## **Power Distance**

The first dimension is the so-called power distance. Here, the main cultural problem involved is human inequality (Hofstede, 1980). One can say that various cultures weight aspects such as “prestige, wealth, and power” differently (Hofstede, 1980: 65). Thus, this cultural dimension is directly connected with the concentration of power within the society and the respective degree of acceptance by the members of the group (Hofstede, 1980; Tîmbalari, 2019; House, Dorfman, Javidan, Hanges & Sully de Luque, 2014). Inferring from this, national cultures with a high power distance show more inequality compared to countries with a lower power distance. To add, high power distance cultures tend to accept that power is distributed unequally (Vasile & Nicolescu, 2016).

## **Uncertainty Avoidance**

Secondly, Hofstede identified the cultural dimension of uncertainty avoidance which relates to the societal issue of the future’s unpredictability (Hofstede, 1998; House et al., 2014). As the name already indicates, this is associated with the degree to which members of a culture feel either comfortable or uncomfortable in unknown situations (Hofstede, 2001). To say it in other words, cultures with a high uncertainty avoidance have a “lack of tolerance for ambiguity and uncertainty” (DeBode, Haggard & Haggard, 2020: 67). These kinds of cultures prefer to have standards, clear regulations as well as rules (House et al., 2014). Thus, there is a strong reliance on mechanisms that help to minimize the unpredictability of the future (House et al., 2014). Contrary to this are cultures with a low uncertainty avoidance where people tend to be more risk-taking and relaxed when thinking about the future (DeBode et al., 2020).

## **Femininity vs. Masculinity**

This dimension is dealing with the society’s perpetuation, especially when it comes to the division between men and women regarding emotional as well as social roles (Hofstede, 2001; Vasile & Nicolescu, 2016). On the one side, masculine cultures tend to be seen as competitive, oriented towards achievements as well as aggressive. Here, social gender roles are clearly separated from each other (DeBode et al., 2020). On the other side, feminine cultures focus on interpersonal relationships and social assets (Tîmbalari, 2019). Thus, femininity in national cultures promotes fair processes which ultimately results in “greater economic freedom in more feminine cultures” (DeBode et al., 2020: 67; House et al., 2014). To add, this cultural dimension is connected with one of the dimensions of the GLOBE study namely gender egalitarianism (House et al., 2014; House et al., 2004).

## **Collectivism vs. Individualism**

The fourth view is often called “the most well-known of Hofstede’s dimensions” namely collectivism and individualism (DeBode et al., 2020: 66). One can say that the primary focus is on the relationship of individuals with the group (Vasile & Nicolescu, 2016). The main social problem which is connected with this dimension is the cohesiveness of societies and groups (Hofstede, 1998). When talking about collectivistic societies, an individual person feels associated to a larger group and hence identifies him- or herself with this group (DeBode

et al., 2020). This means that collectivistic societies are organized around groups. Individualistic societies at the same time strongly rely on one's personal identity and tend to consider one's own interest first before thinking about the group's necessities (DeBode et al., 2020). Furthermore, it can be mentioned that the cultural dimension of collectivism is also one of the main characteristics identified within the framework of the GLOBE study (House et al., 2014; House et al., 2004).

### **Long-term vs. Short-term Orientation**

The last dimension deals with people's focus on either short-term or long-term achievements (Hofstede, 2001). Although this dimension originally was not outlined by Hofstede, it was added later to his theoretical model (DeBode et al., 2020). The "problem of choosing between virtue and truth" is the main societal issue associated with this dimension (Hofstede, 1998: 11). Cultures with a long-term orientation value perseverance (Tîmbalari, 2019). This future orientation typically includes "behaviors such as planning, investing in the future, and delaying gratification" (House et al., 2014: 12). Simultaneously, societies with a short-term orientation emphasize their traditions as well as history (DeBode et al., 2020; Tîmbalari, 2019).

### **2.3 Relationship between Leadership and Culture**

*"The patterns of behavior that are regarded as acceptable in leaders differ from time to time and from one culture to another [...]." (Bass, 1990: 5)*

Today, we live in a connected and globalized world where one can notice an "increased interdependence (economic, social, technical and political) between nations" (Northouse, 2016: 427). This means that trade, culture as well as communication goes beyond borders and people are more interconnected than ever before (Northouse, 2016; Meyer, 2014b).

In this way, successful leadership is not considered to be the same in every country and culture (Chamorro-Premuzic & Sanger, 2016; House et al., 2004). Hence, culture specific aspects have to be taken into account when leading across countries and respective cultures (Meyer, 2014b). The main reason for this is the fact that "cultures differ in their implicit theories of leadership" (Chamorro-Premuzic & Sanger, 2016). To say it in other words, the globalization has created a new challenge when it comes to appropriate leadership (Northouse, 2016). Aiming to "design effective multinational organizations", right and suitable leaders have to be selected for subsidiaries around the world (Northouse, 2016: 427). Those leaders need to fit to the respective employees' culture in order to achieve high leadership performance. However, only a small minority of international managers are aware of the fact that culture heavily impacts their work (Meyer, 2014b).

Global leaders work across cultures and countries (Meyer, 2014b). In 1992, Adler and Bartholomew formulated skills that are needed for successful managers working with people from different cultural backgrounds. These skills include the development of a global perspective when conducting business in diverse environments, the ambitious learning about different cultures, the ability to work with people coming from different countries as well as cultures and the creation of "culturally synergistic organizational environment[s]" (Adler &

Bartholomew, 1992: 54). Here, it gets obvious that cultural awareness as well as understanding is essential in order to be a successful leader in various countries (Adler & Bartholomew, 1992; Meyer, 2014b). For this, it is required that leaders learn about cultural aspects such as trends, perspectives and approaches in conducting business (Adler & Bartholomew, 1992; Meyer, 2014b; House et al., 2004). More recent research such as Erin Meyer’s approach support this (Meyer, 2014b). This implies that leaders need to have the ability to adapt when working with people from different cultural backgrounds (Northouse, 2016; Meyer, 2014b). Therefore, leaders nowadays “require a broader range of skills than traditional international managers” (Adler & Bartholomew, 1992: 53). Furthermore, cross-cultural skills need to be applied on a daily basis (Meyer, 2014b). Another relevant aspect that needs to be considered by global managers is the fact that people from different cultures have to be approached “from a position of equality rather than cultural superiority” (Northouse, 2016: 428; Schein, 2017). Thus, the belief of cultural dominance is inappropriate and out of place (Adler & Bartholomew, 1992). Lastly, it is important to mention that leadership across cultures requires excellent communication competencies in order to appropriately address people from different cultures (Northouse, 2016; Meyer, 2014b).

Additionally, an eight-scale model has been developed which gives deeper insights into “how cultures vary along a spectrum from one extreme to its opposite” (Meyer, 2014b: 15). International leaders need to be aware of the following differences across cultures: Communicating, evaluating, persuading, leading, deciding, trusting, disagreeing as well as scheduling (Meyer, 2014b). Here, each aspect has two extremes, for instance direct negative feedback vs. indirect negative feedback (Meyer, 2014b). These findings are well researched and based on analyses from multiple perspectives (Meyer, 2014a). Taking these eight scales into account, managers as well as leaders can increase their effectiveness when working in different cultures or with people from different cultural backgrounds (Meyer, 2014b). An example of how the eight-scale model might help international leaders in the real business life is provided in Figure 5. With this, the appropriate behavior in the respective national culture can be identified in advance (*see Figure 5*). Therefore, improper approaches in conducting business can be minimized and in the best case even avoided. However, stereotyping is the wrong strategy (Meyer, 2014a).

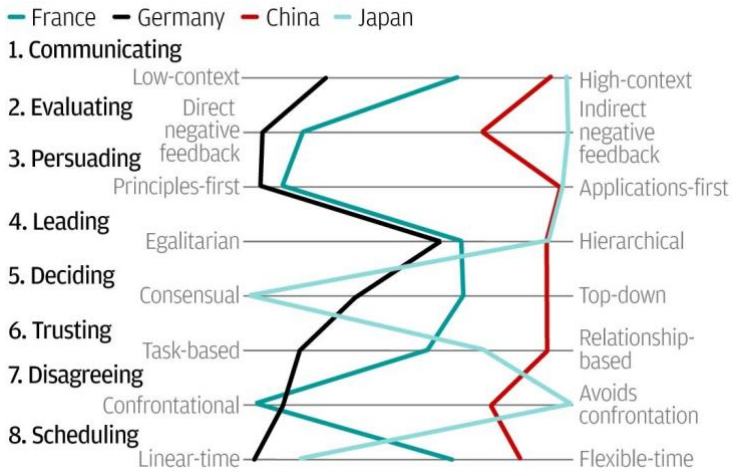


Figure 5: Eight-Scale Model in the Real Business Life (Source: Meyer, 2014a)

As mentioned earlier in this thesis, Geert Hofstede designed five cultural dimensions (e.g. Hofstede, 1998; Hofstede, 1980). With these dimensions, regional clusters can be created from which respective leadership profiles can be derived (Northouse, 2016; Meyer, 2014b). Therefore, when appropriately connecting the concept of leadership with culture, the leader's probability to effectively lead across various cultures increases strongly (Meyer, 2014b). In order to support this statement, two examples will be highlighted shortly. For instance, the classic leadership profile of Nordic Europe is connected with a team oriented as well as autonomous leadership style (Northouse, 2016; Meyer, 2014b). This is due to the fact that this region is characterized by institutional collectivism and gender egalitarianism. Nordic people tend to identify themselves "with the broader society" (Northouse, 2016: 439). Additionally, cooperation is valued a lot in countries like Denmark, Finland or Sweden (Northouse, 2016). Thus, leaders working in these countries need to apply the above-mentioned cultural characteristics in order to be successful in Nordic Europe. Another example is the leadership style in Southern Asia where team oriented as well as charismatic leadership is highly valued (Northouse, 2016). Southern Asian countries talk about effective leadership when a leader is considered to be "collaborative, inspirational, sensitive to people's needs, and concerned with status and face saving" (Northouse, 2016: 446). This is directly connected with Hofstede's cultural dimensions as Southern Asia achieves high scores in in-group collectivism and relatively high scores in power distance (Northouse, 2016; Meyer, 2014b).

In sum, culture and leadership are heavily connected with each other. In order to be a successful leader, various competencies need to be acquired which are responding to the cultural framework (Northouse, 2016; Meyer, 2014b; Adler & Bartholomew, 1992). Furthermore, cultural awareness as well as understanding are key in order to be an effective global leader (Meyer, 2014b). Hofstede's cultural dimensions can help leaders to better understand the culture when doing business abroad. If one does not consider these differences, leaders in our globalized world will fail.

## **2.4 Female Leadership**

Having mentioned leadership and its complex concepts earlier, it is now relevant to introduce the narrower topic of female leadership. Women in leading managerial positions is an often discussed and relevant topic in our society nowadays. Although only developing slowly on a worldwide basis, there is the tendency of an increasing participation of women in leading positions (Northouse, 2018; Evans, 2010; Eagly & Carli, 2007). However, the phenomenon of female leadership can still be considered as a rarity in the business world much of which is due to additional barriers - subtle or obvious - faced by women (Eagly & Carli, 2007).

### **2.4.1 Introduction to Female Leadership**

It is possible to point at highly effective and successful female leaders around the world. One example is Mary Barra who is the chairman and chief executive officer (CEO) of General Motors since 2014. With this, she is the first female CEO of one of the world's leading car manufacturers (General Motors, 2020; Northouse, 2018). Other examples are Virginia Rometty who served as chairman, president and CEO of IBM until April 2020 and the CEO of the American company Best Buy Corie Barry (Welt, 2020; Best Buy, 2020). Even though

these are excellent examples of women in top management positions, this is an exception in the business world (Eagly & Carli, 2007). Approximately half of the U.S. workforce is female and even more than 60 % of master’s degrees in the United States are achieved by women while their representation in upper management positions is just a fraction out of this (Northouse, 2018; U.S. National Center for Education Statistics, 2016; Eagly & Carli, 2007). This is supported by the fact that just 33 managers listed on the Fortune 500 list of 2019 are women which accounts for just 6,6 % (Catalyst, 2019). However, this number marks a new all-time high in female CEOs of listed firms (Catalyst, 2019). At this point, it seems important to mention that most of the advancement of women in leadership positions took place at lower levels of management rather than these top positions within enterprises (Eagly & Sczesny, 2009; Eagly & Carli, 2007). Additionally, some changes in favor for women can be observed (Eagly & Carli, 2007). This includes for instance the access to education for women, so that it is possible to say that “women are no longer held back by limited education” (Eagly & Carli, 2007: 16).

The presented gender gap in leadership is a phenomenon that happens on a global basis and not just in the here demonstrated example of the United States of America. Nearly every country around the world shows a huge underrepresentation of female leaders as “the Mad Men era is still alive and well” (Moore & Diese, 2018: 111; Szymanska & Rubin, 2018). Furthermore, additional obstacles as well as challenges for women exist such as the glass ceiling, an invisible barrier that prevents women from ascending the career ladder, or the existing pay gap between men and women (United Nations, 2020a; Van Emmerik, Wendt & Euwema, 2010; Van der Boon, 2003). Eagly & Carli (2007) identified three different kinds of barriers that hinder women’s advancement to top management positions which are the so-called concrete wall, the labyrinth as well as the above-mentioned glass ceiling.

A = Entry-level B = Manager C = Senior Manager/Director D = Vice President E = Senior Vice President F = C-suite

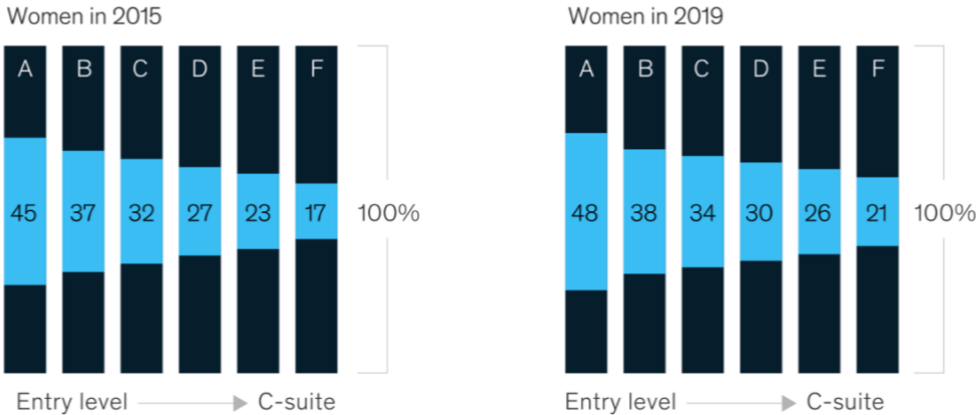


Figure 6: Representation of Women by Management Level (Source: McKinsey & Company, 2019)

McKinsey & Company (2019) conducted an international study about women in the workplace investigating female participation on different management levels. Figure 6 shows the results of this research. One can notice an improvement of female participation on every level over the four-year period from 2015 to 2019 (see Figure 6) (McKinsey & Company, 2019). Although this development happens quite slowly, female leadership and the herewith

connected gender diversity tend to be on the rise and will get even more visible in the coming years. Right as well as appropriate policies such as “inclusive and unbiased hiring and promotions” need to be further disseminated (McKinsey & Company, 2019).

#### **2.4.2 Is There a Female Leadership Style?**

As the team leader’s gender has an impact on the way people lead, a difference in the typical leadership style between men and women can be observed (Gartzia & Van Engen, 2012; Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001). According to psychologists this is mainly due to men’s and women’s “different personalities because they evolved different behavioral strategies for reproduction in eons past” (Eagly & Carli, 2007: 30). Hence, it is now important to show the respective characteristics of female leadership.

The female leadership style is perceived to be cooperative, regenerative, empathic as well as creative (Esser, Kahrens, Mouzughy & Eomois, 2018; Bhat & Sisodia, 2016; Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001). This is also supported by the fact that women have to fulfill societal expectations when becoming a mother (Esser, Kahrens, Mouzughy & Eomois, 2018). To add, emotional intelligence is the “ability to understand emotions and apply this understanding to life’s tasks” (Northouse, 2018: 28). Hence, this is a key factor for leadership effectiveness as it increases the leader’s capability of solving complex problems (Yukl, 2013). Research has shown that here generally women score higher than men (Mandell & Pherwani, 2003). Moreover, women tend to be more caring and concerned about relationships which is also supported by the female’s ability of empathic understanding (Sandberg, 2013; Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001). Schermerhorn (1999) concluded in his research that women in leadership positions act more democratically than men and are more concerned about their followers’ feelings. Thus, it can be stated that women compared to “their male counterparts [...] facilitate team cohesion, cooperative learning, and participative communication” (Post, 2015: 1155). This is especially helpful when teams are diverse, composed of a lot of members or geographically dispersed (Post, 2015). Therefore, international teams can work more efficaciously under a female leader. Furthermore, women have the ability to better deal with crises compared to men (Borgerson, 2018). The main reason for this is the fact that female leaders have an “emotional-related capacity” which helps to effectively approach as well as overcome crises (Borgerson, 2018: 2).

Contrary to the female leadership style, men tend to lead in a more task oriented as well as autocratic style. Their approach in leadership can be considered to be more directive (Esser et al., 2018; Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001). In the literature, male leadership is often described as aggressive, courageous as well as assertive, especially when compared to the female cooperative approach of leading (Born, Ranehill & Sandberg, 2018; Kim & Shin, 2017; Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001). Men prefer to use traditional authority and value hierarchical organizational structures (Rahman, 2018; Eagly & Carli, 2007). As the original idea of leadership “is associated with men”, female leaders clearly have a disadvantage even though both leadership styles can be effective as well as successful depending on the respective context and situation (Steffens, Viladot & Scheifele, 2019: 3; Northouse, 2018; Eagly & Carli, 2007).

The above-mentioned characteristics of female leadership result in the conclusion that women are more effective on the human and emotional side compared to male leaders (Evans, 2010).

*“Women exceed men in the use of democratic or participatory styles, and they are more likely to use transformational leadership behaviors and contingent rewards, which are styles associated with contemporary notions of effective leadership. Women are no less effective than men, and women are no less committed to their jobs or motivated for leadership roles than men.”*  
(Northouse, 2018: 409)

At this point, it is relevant to say that women face problems male leaders are not exposed to as there is a “contradiction between the expectations which people have of women and how they expect a leader to behave” (Esser et al., 2018: 138; Koburtay et al., 2019). This is backed with empirical evidence which calls this phenomenon the role congruity theory (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Additionally, women are exposed to other serious obstacles which include discrimination, sexual harassment as well as subtle sexism (Sandberg, 2013). A lot of examples show that still today high barriers for women ascending the career ladder as well as gender-based negative stereotypes exist (Nekhili, Chakroun & Chtioui, 2018; Steffens et al., 2019). This is particularly true for masculine dominated jobs, for instance in the area of engineering, IT or finance (Koburtay et al., 2019).

## **2.5 Relationship between Female Leadership and Culture**

Having mentioned the uniqueness of female leadership, the relationship between women in leading positions and the respective culture has to be investigated deeper. As the Gender Equality Index gives insights into women’s career possibilities, this concept will be presented more in detail highlighting certain exemplary countries.

The leadership diamond crates the relationship between these factors (Klenke, 1996). This theoretical model can be found in Figure 7 which highlights the interplay between women, culture and leadership (Klenke, 1996). When looking at the figure, it gets obvious that there are three main influencing factors on leadership (also called followership) namely gender, culture and context (*see Figure 7*) (Northouse, 2016; Moore & Diese, 2018; House et al., 2014; Klenke, 1996). Moreover, these three factors impact each other, not only the way of leading (Klenke, 1996).

*“Since culture concerns the daily interactions between men and women within and between subcultures and other collectivities, invariably gender is a crucial, if not the most crucial, component of culture.”* (Klenke, 1996: 23)

Firstly, context “refers to the setting in which leadership emerges and is exercised” and “influences what leaders must do and what they can do” (Klenke, 1996: 18). Hence, context can be understood as the framework where the leadership occurs (Eden & Forquer Gupta, 2017). This can be the industry type, the organization’s size or the level of development of the respective country (Klenke, 1996). At the same time, gender and culture are equally important in order to determine leadership and its effectiveness (*see Figure 7*) (Eden & Forquer Gupta, 2017; Northouse, 2016; House et al., 2014). Consequently, the importance of understanding the relationship between women in leadership and culture’s influence is stressed.

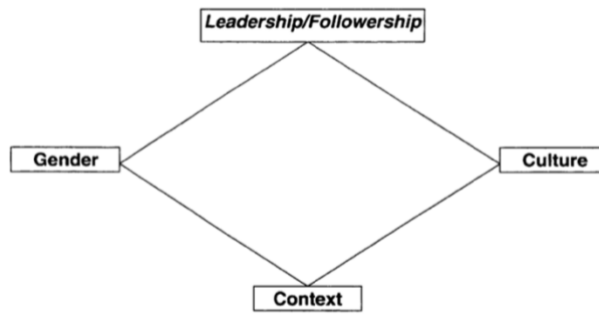


Figure 7: Leadership Diamond  
(Source: Klenke, 1996)

An important factor that has to be kept in mind when talking about female leadership and culture is gender equality. According to the UNESCO (2020), the advancement of gender equality is connected with the specific culture. From this, it can be inferred that culture and the respective Gender Equality Index, which measures the complex construct of gender equality, have an impact on women ascending the career ladder as well as occupying upper management positions (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2019). Therefore, culture impacts women’s possibilities and opportunities in leadership (Paoloni & Lombardi, 2018). The United Nations call gender equality and the herewith connected equal treatment of men and women in various areas of life “an unfinished business of our time” (United Nations, 2020a). For instance, there is a “lack of women’s real progress toward gender equality in poor countries, much of which is due to patriarchal societies and negative cultural attitudes toward women and girls” (Eden & Forquer Gupta, 2017: 206).

The European Union scored 64.7 points out of 100 in the Gender Equality Index and 72.0 points in the domain of work (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2019). This underlines that even in the most developed countries, there is a lot of room for improvement for gender equality and equal access to jobs in management as well as business. That is why the United Nations also included gender equality and “women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decisionmaking” in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (United Nations, 2020b). These SDGs have been developed and approved by all 193 UN member states in 2015 and include 17 objectives aiming to make the earth a better place. To be more precise, the overall objective is to terminate poverty around the world, protect the planet and enhance the life of everyone (United Nations, 2020c).

HDI rank	Gender Inequality Index		SDG 3.1 Maternal mortality ratio	SDG 3.7 Adolescent birth rate	SDG 5.5 Share of seats in parliament	SDG 4.6 Population with at least some secondary education		Labour force participation rate*		
	Value	Rank	(deaths per 100,000 live births)	(births per 1,000 women ages 15–19)	(% held by women)	(% ages 25 and older)		(% ages 15 and older)		
	2018	2018	2015	2015–2020 <sup>b</sup>	2018	2010–2018 <sup>c</sup>	2010–2018 <sup>c</sup>	2018	2018	
<b>VERY HIGH HUMAN DEVELOPMENT</b>										
1	Norway	0.044	5	5	5.1	41.4	96.1	94.8	60.2	66.7
2	Switzerland	0.037	1	5	2.8	29.3	96.4	97.2	62.6	74.1
3	Ireland	0.093	22	8	7.5	24.3	90.2 <sup>d</sup>	86.3 <sup>d</sup>	55.1	68.1
4	Germany	0.084	19	6	8.1	31.5	96.0	96.6	55.3	66.2
4	Hong Kong, China (SAR)	..	..	..	2.7	..	76.6	82.9	54.1	67.8
6	Australia	0.103	25	6	11.7	32.7	90.0	90.7	59.7	70.5
6	Iceland	0.057	9	3	6.3	38.1	100.0 <sup>e</sup>	100.0 <sup>e</sup>	72.1	80.6
8	Sweden	0.040	2	4	5.1	46.1	88.8	89.0	61.1	67.6
9	Singapore	0.065	11	10	3.5	23.0	76.3	83.3	60.5	76.3
10	Netherlands	0.041	4	7	3.8	35.6	86.6	90.1	58.0	68.9

Figure 8: Gender Inequality Index  
(Source: United Nations Development Programme, 2018)



Countries that are performing best in the Gender Equality Index can be found in Figure 8. At the same time, these countries are the ones that have relatively high participation rates of women in top management positions. One example is Sweden. The country has one of the highest percentages with 39,6 % of women directorships compared on a worldwide basis (Catalyst, 2020). Additionally, 96,6 % of Swedish companies have three or more women on the board (Catalyst, 2020). Another positive example that can be mentioned is Germany. Here, 81,0 % of German enterprises have three or more women on the board (Catalyst, 2020). Furthermore, there are 33,3 % of women directorships in 2019 which strongly increased compared to 2016 with only 19,5 %. In the year 2015, Germany even introduced a quota for female representation on the board (Catalyst, 2020; Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend, 2020). Hence, the German government supports women in achieving top management positions. Other countries that function as a role model are for instance Norway, Switzerland or the Netherlands (*see Figure 8*). However, still in these countries there is potential for further improvement. At the same time, countries such as Congo, South Sudan, Mali or Malawi score the lowest when it comes to human development including e.g. the share of seats in parliament held by women (United Nations Development Programme, 2018). In the Democratic Republic of Congo for instance, only 8,2 % of seats in the parliament are held by female representatives (United Nations Development Programme, 2018). To add, in the strongly male dominated Arabic country Yemen, this number is even worse with 0,5 % of seats occupied by women (United Nations Development Programme, 2018; Amnesty International, 2019). From all these statistics, it can be inferred that there is a huge difference between developed (e.g. Sweden, Germany or Switzerland) and developing or underdeveloped countries (e.g. Congo, South Sudan or Yemen) when it comes to gender equality and the respective participation of women in leadership positions. At this point, it seems appropriate to mention that also the political systems fulfill an important role when it comes to female leadership as well as gender equality (Carrasco et al., 2015). Many studies show that the political system of a respective country shapes the women's role within the society and herewith the occupation of leadership roles within companies (Carrasco et al., 2015).

To conclude, gender equality varies from one country to another which is due to different cultural understandings when it comes to the roles of men and women and the respective gender expectations (United Nations, 2020a; Eden & Forquer Gupta, 2017). These cultural differences result in divergent career opportunities for women and might harm female leadership in extreme cases. This is especially true for underdeveloped or developing poor countries as they often have male dominated cultures (Eden & Forquer Gupta, 2017; Manzoor, 2015). Therefore, it is possible to conclude that culture and environment heavily impact female leadership and women's representation in upper management positions. The Gender Inequality Index gives an indication of opportunities women face in the workplace and represents the respective cultural perspectives when it comes to gender expectations as well as roles.

---

### 3. METHODOLOGY

---

In this study, a content analysis after a bibliographic research will be applied. The main aim of this analysis is to investigate and later highlight the relationship between female leadership and culture more in detail. Thus, this paper should show to what degree culture is a conditioning factor for female leadership across specific countries. This is what makes this master thesis unique. In order to do so, scientific papers have to be collected using appropriate databases. The sample will be precisely described. These papers will be the source of information in order to carry out the content analysis. Based on this, general as well as specific relations and linkages between women in leading managerial positions and culture will be demonstrated. Later in this thesis, there will be a presentation of the main findings.

#### 3.1 Qualitative Research – Content Analysis

In this research, a qualitative approach for the above-mentioned analysis is chosen. The core idea of such a qualitative research is to take content data into account contrary to quantitative approaches which have their focus on numerical data that can be approached statistically (Flick, 2009; Mayring, 2015). Qualitative content analyses are based on contextual data, as the name might already indicate, since in most of the cases they are conducted openly (Flick, 2009). The basic concept is to adapt the research process to the respective situation aiming to match the requirements. Therefore, it is possible to say that qualitative research is less orientated towards a given structure and has no fixed technical approach contrary to the quantitative analysis (Flick, 2009). Moreover, qualitative research is a “data collection method” those idea is to deeper investigate a sample out of a large amount of available papers (Mayring, 2014: 43).

According to Mayring (2014), different sources for the content analysis can be used. This ranges from interview transcripts, focus groups and open questionnaires to observational studies, document analyses as well as secondary analyses (Mayring, 2014). In this master thesis, aiming to find specific relationships between female leadership and culture as an influencing factor, the document analysis is chosen. Here, a wide range of texts can be included (Mayring, 2014). In some literatures, it is even stated that only this approach of qualitative research is able “to provide the actual scientific explanations of facts” (Flick, 2009: 25). As the literature review about the two main topics this master thesis is dealing with, leadership and the concept of culture, has been introduced earlier, context knowledge is already available. Thus, the first valuable steps of the qualitative content analysis are made (Flick, 2009). This might also help in increasing the sensitivity for beneficial papers that should be used in the following document analysis (Flick, 2009).

In this paper, the traditional idea of the research process will be applied (Flick, 2009). The first step, the theory, already has been introduced in the literature review (*see chapter 2*). The next steps of this process are now done in the methodology where the hypothesis that culture impacts female leadership to a large degree is tested. The qualitative data needed for this will be collected through databases namely Web of Science, Scopus as well as Emerald Insight. Lastly, the collected papers will be interpreted and certain patterns between women in

managerial positions and national cultures should be identified in the last step. This separation of the data collection from the analysis facilitates the concentration and preciseness (Flick, 2009).

### **3.2 Data Collection**

Having mentioned the theoretical approach of the content analysis used in this master thesis, the collection of papers that should give insights into culture as a conditioning factor of female leadership starts. For this, the search has been conducted in the three well-known databases Web of Science, Scopus and Emerald Insight. To add, available eBooks were used in the case they could help in deepening the knowledge about the relation between female leadership and culture. In order to get access to the databases and thereby to the papers, the free access of the University of Barcelona was used. Aiming to find suitable sources for the analysis, certain keywords as well as including and excluding factors have been applied in the search process. The concrete procedure will be described in the following paragraph.

The first approach in finding adequate sources was in the database Web of Science. Here, the search process focused on the Web of Science Core Collection. The two keywords “female leadership” and “culture” have been used under the search of topics. This resulted in 37 accessible papers. Based on this, only papers available in English have been selected in order to exclude sources written in different languages. Additionally, articles as document type have been chosen. Consequently, 28 papers were available from which the most suitable ones have to be selected. Therefore, the abstracts of all accessible sources have been read and based on this, four papers ultimately have been picked out. The second research was in the database Scopus. Here, “female leadership” again was used as a keyword in the abstract. Moreover, “culture” as well as “context” have been selected in the search field of article title, abstract and keywords. This resulted in 14 accessible papers. Again, only papers written in English have been selected which therefore excluded one source in French and another one in Spanish. From the 12 remaining sources, one paper has been selected after reading all the abstracts. Another search process has been done in Scopus under different keywords. Here, “women” and “leadership” as keywords for the article’s title have been selected as well as “gap” in the field of article title, abstract and keywords. 49 papers were available under this search from which 48 were in English and one in German. Hence, no selection based on the language was necessary. However, the papers have been limited to the subject area of business, management and accounting in order to match the topic of this master thesis. Thus, 18 papers were available from which in the end two have been selected after all abstracts have been read. The last research has been conducted in Emerald Insight. Among all Emerald content, the words “female leadership” in the abstract and “culture” in all fields has been used. Additionally, the search has been limited to papers with guaranteed access. This resulted in 32 potential sources for the content analysis. Again, all abstracts have been studied so that finally six papers from Emerald Insight have been selected. As a consequence, the three databases helped in finding 13 sources for the following analysis. Furthermore, two available eBooks have been selected through the library of the University of Barcelona with the keywords of “women in leadership”. Altogether, 15 sources will be used in the analysis with the objective to find insights into culture as a conditioning factor of female leadership. The

different papers identified can be found in Table 1. Due to previous research in the literature review, some sources already have been mentioned and referred to earlier.

	<b>Database</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Year &amp; Author(s)</b>	<b>Journal / Publisher</b>
1	Web of Science	From female leadership advantage to female leadership deficit: A developing country perspective.	2015. Sidani, Y. M., Konrad, A. & Karam, C. M.	Career Development International, 20 (3): 273 – 292.
2	Web of Science	Gender ratio, societal culture, and male and female leadership.	2010. Van Emmerik, H., Wendt, H. & Euwema, M. C.	Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology, 83: 895 – 914.
3	Web of Science	The impact of indigenous culture on female leadership in Pakistan.	2015. Manzoor, S.	International Journal of Organizational Leadership, 4: 414 – 429.
4	Web of Science	Women’s enactment of leadership in a heavily gender-marked Islamic context: An exploration within the United Arab Emirates.	2018. Alhadhrami, A., Goby, V. P. & Al-Ansaari, Y.	International Journal of Organizational Analysis, 26 (4): 728 – 747.
5	Scopus	Climbing the Himalayas: A cross-cultural analysis of female leadership and glass ceiling effect in non-profit organizations.	2011. Chao, C. C.	Leadership & Organization Development Journal, 32 (8): 760 – 781.
6	Scopus	Cracking the walls of leadership: women in Saudi Arabia.	2017. Hodges, J.	Gender in Management: An International Journal, 32 (1): 34 – 46.
7	Scopus	Women and Leadership in the United States: Are We Closing the Gender Gap?	2018. Lyness, K. S. & Grotto, A. R.	Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior, 5: 227 – 265.
8	Emerald Insight	Aspiring to leadership... a women’s world? An example of developments in France.	2010. Evans, D.	Cross Cultural Management: An International Journal, 17 (4): 347 – 367.
9	Emerald Insight	Female corporate leadership in Latin America and the Caribbean region: Representation and firm-level outcomes.	2017. Flabbi, L., Piras, C. & Abrahams, S.	International Journal of Manpower, 38 (6): 790 – 818.
10	Emerald Insight	Female leadership in the Middle Eastern higher education.	2018. Von Alberti-Alhtaybat, L. & Aazam, S.	Journal of Economic and Administrative Sciences, 34 (2): 90 – 107.
11	Emerald Insight	Labelling them is negating them: A phenomenological study of stereotypes and followers’ experiences about women leadership in Pakistan.	2019. Samo, A. H., Qazi, S. W. & Mansoor Buriro, W.	Management Research Review, 42 (3): 391 – 411.
12	Emerald Insight	The power of femininity: Exploring the gender and ethnic experiences of Muslim women who accessed supervisory roles in a Bedouin society.	2008. Quader, S. A. R. & Oplatka, I.	Journal of Educational Administration, 46 (3): 396 – 415.
13	Emerald Insight	Women on boards of directors in Latin America: building a model.	2018. Heller, L. & Gabaldon, P.	Academia Revista Latinoamericana de Administración, 31 (1): 43 – 72.
14	eBook	Indian Women in Leadership.	2018. Ghosh, R. & McLean, G. N.	Cham: Palgrave MacMillan.
15	eBook	Korean Women in Leadership.	2018. Cho, Y. & McLean, G. N.	Cham: Palgrave MacMillan.

*Table 1: Sources for the Content Analysis  
(Source: Own elaboration)*

---

## 4. RESULTS

---

In the following section, the research findings of the content analysis concerning culture's influence on female leadership in different countries will be presented. These results are based on a detailed analysis of the 15 papers selected, following a bibliometric methodology. Here, it was essential to carefully examine the sources as well as the methodology and results of the studies.

The findings are structured based on the most important aspects shaping a culture which are influencing women's access to leadership positions. For this aim, categories have been developed. The results will be presented according to five categories: Hofstede's cultural dimensions; the role of women within the society; religion's impact; traditional beliefs within the culture; and the level of gender inequality in the respective country.

The research findings should help to understand to what degree a respective culture influences female leadership in different regions of the world. Moreover, it should provide deeper insights into the impact of general characteristics as well as dimensions of culture on the career possibilities women face in upper management positions.

### 4.1 Category: Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions

The first focus of the research findings is on the earlier introduced cultural dimensions identified by Hofstede and later supported by House (Hofstede, 2001; Hofstede, 1998; House et al., 2014). Here, quite a few papers mentioned that the two dimensions of power distance as well as femininity vs. masculinity have the biggest impact on women's opportunities on the labor market (Van Emmerik et al., 2010; Lyness & Grotto, 2018; Heller & Gabaldon, 2018; Ghosh & McLean, 2018; Cho & McLean, 2018; Sidani, Konrad & Karam, 2015; Chao, 2011). Hence, it is important to explain why these two characteristics have such a significant influence.

#### Power Distance

As mentioned earlier in this master thesis, power distance belongs to the main cultural dimensions of societies (Hofstede, 1980; House et al., 2014). In many of the 15 sources, the degree of power distance has been mentioned as a key factor impacting female leadership. In the Arab culture for instance, the power distance achieves high scores which ultimately results in conservative beliefs that distinguish gender roles (Sidani et al., 2015; Hodges, 2017; Von Alberti-Alhtaybat & Aazam, 2018). Thus, women are allocated to less powerful assignments like domestic work or child education compared to men who occupy powerful roles (Sidani et al., 2015; Samo, Qazi & Mansoor, 2019). Additionally, men are assigned to higher positions within the hierarchies compared to women (Heller & Gabaldon, 2018). Fathers are often perceived as role models. From this, it can be inferred that high power distance cultures have traditional gender roles which makes it hard for women to get access to leadership and upper managerial positions (Lyness & Grotto, 2018).

Therefore, it is possible to say that cultures with a low power distance create more professional as well as private opportunities for women. Here, feminist movements are more

common (Heller & Gabaldon, 2018). This means that the level of power distance scored by a country gives insights into the advancement of female leadership. At the same time, these cultures put more emphasis on gender equality as well as equal treatment of men and women.

### **Femininity vs. Masculinity**

The second cultural dimension mentioned in many of the 15 sources as having an impact on female leadership, is the degree of femininity or masculinity within a society (Heller & Gabaldon, 2018; Ghosh & McLean, 2018; Von Alberti-Alhtaybat & Aazam, 2018; Samo et al., 2019). As described in this paper, this cultural dimension encloses how a culture deals with the allocation of social roles for men and women (Hofstede, 2001; Vasile & Nicolescu, 2016). Therefore, this role division highly impacts female leadership. The reason for this is due to the fact that masculinity is associated with authority which consequently discriminates female leaders (Samo et al., 2019; Chao, 2011). The consequence of connecting management with masculinity is the perception that maleness is the needed resource for successful leadership (Von Alberti-Alhtaybat & Aazam, 2018). This results in the idea that femaleness is a bad characteristic (Von Alberti-Alhtaybat & Aazam, 2018). Cultures scoring high in masculinity not only restrict women's possibilities on the labor market but also - at the same time - in the all-embracing life outside of the home (Ghosh & McLean, 2018). Some examples here are India, Pakistan or Venezuela (Heller & Gabaldon, 2018; Ghosh & McLean, 2018; Manzoor, 2015). At this point, it seems important to mention that the Scandinavian countries serve as a role model as they score high in femininity. Thus, they create favorable environments for women wishing to ascend the career ladder (Evans, 2010). High numbers of female executives are the result.

To sum it up, it is essential to reduce the level of masculinity within cultures in order to provide career possibilities for women (Heller & Gabaldon, 2018; Lyness & Grotto, 2018). Moreover, institutional protection of women active in the labor market determined by the respective government is key, aiming to lower the score in masculinity (Heller & Gabaldon, 2018). Gender egalitarianism is the ultimate goal which constitutes the optimal environment for female leaders.

### **4.2 Category: Role of Women**

The second category which has an influence on female leadership is the role of women within the society. When it comes to the gender role, individuals tend to behave according to societal and cultural expectations (Van Emmerik et al., 2010). This means that the role of women assigned by the culture impacts their opportunities as well as possibilities in life (Von Alberti-Alhtaybat & Aazam, 2018). Here, cultures which strongly rely on traditional values tend to assign women the role of home caretakers (Sidani et al., 2015; Alhadhrami et al., 2018; Cho & McLean, 2018; Chao, 2011). If they cannot fulfill this role appropriately, these women feel guilty (Cho & McLean, 2018). Hence, the career growth of women is defined by cultural values and ideologies (Manzoor, 2015). In Pakistan, Saudi Arabia or Lebanon for example, there is a strong male dominance within the country which restricts women's possibility to make their own decisions and hinders them to live an independent life (Manzoor, 2015; Samo et al., 2019; Sidani et al., 2015; Hodges, 2017). Therefore, due to their role within the society,

women's career growth is restricted by cultural barriers in some countries. Additionally, women in traditional settings face a lot of negative stereotypes in leadership as the expectations of successful leaders are contradictory to women's traditional role within the family (Sidani et al., 2015; Lyness & Grotto, 2018; Quader & Oplatka, 2008; Cho & McLean, 2018). Because of this, female leaders in more traditional and less developed countries are perceived to be ineffective and unprofessional (Samo et al., 2019). Thus, there is a disqualification for leadership positions just because of women's gender (Sidani et al., 2015; Quader & Oplatka, 2008). This strongly hinders their advancement.

Simultaneously, in more globalized and developed countries such as France or Sweden where female leadership is already present, there will be even more progress towards women in top management positions in the coming years (Evans, 2010). This is supported by the awareness of gender equality in western countries. Furthermore, the role of women in developed countries as well as the perception of different leadership styles change in favor for female leaders (Evans, 2010). This is also true for urban areas in developing countries like India where women progressively question their traditional role (Ghosh & McLean, 2018). This also has a positive influence on women's access to education (Ghosh & McLean, 2018). Here, the Caribbean (e.g. Jamaica and Colombia) also serve as a role model (Flabbi et al., 2017).

### **4.3 Category: Religion**

Another category established to explain culture's influence on female leadership is religion. It is possible to say that religion belongs to the most important factors impacting women's status within the society (Hodges, 2017; Von Alberti-Alhtaybat & Aazam, 2018). The main reason for this is that religion is deeply rooted in societal expectations and therefore significantly influences culture (Hodges, 2017). Especially in the Arab world, where the predominant religion is Islam, this is a strong force shaping the expected gender as well as traditional roles (Hodges, 2017; Von Alberti-Alhtaybat & Aazam, 2018).

In the framework of the content analysis of the 15 papers, the religions of the analyzed countries have been investigated. Here, one could recognize that countries with Islam as dominant religion showed more patriarchal structures (Sidani et al., 2015; Von Alberti-Alhtaybat & Aazam, 2018; Samo et al., 2019; Quader & Oplatka, 2008; Alhadhrami et al., 2018). From this, it can be inferred that religion determines the expectations as well as obligations of both men and women within the cultural group. To be more precise, these studies showed that in an Islamic context women take part to a lesser degree in managerial positions and have limited freedoms in their everyday life (Manzoor, 2015; Sidani et al., 2015; Alhadhrami et al., 2018; Hodges, 2017; Von Alberti-Alhtaybat & Aazam, 2018; Samo et al., 2019). As already mentioned in the category role of women, in these kinds of cultures there is a tendency for women to fulfill duties at home such as taking care of the children and the household (Sidani et al., 2015; Alhadhrami et al., 2018; Cho & McLean, 2018). In these countries, the female participation in the workforce is really low (Sidani et al., 2015). This is particularly true for top management positions (Hodges, 2017; Alhadhrami et al., 2018; Ghosh & McLean, 2018; Manzoor, 2015). Sometimes, women are not even allowed to join the workforce leaving alone leadership positions (Manzoor, 2015). Nevertheless, there are also Islamic countries in which women enjoy excellent education and even "outperform men

at all school levels” (Alhadhrami et al., 2018: 731). This is especially the case for more developed Islamic countries. Unfortunately, women often do not get the possibility to show their skills and talents in the real business world due to barriers created by the deeply rooted religious views.

Based on this, it is possible to say that patriarchal societies within an Islamic context pose huge barriers for women who wish to ascend the career ladder. Here, men are perceived as the only real leaders who have the possibility to be the head of organizations (Sidani et al., 2015). This is not true for instance in a culture shaped by Christianity where female leadership is on the rise and will get even more obvious in the future (Evans, 2010; Lyness & Grotto, 2018). At this point, it is essential to mention that wealthier countries tend to be less religious (Noack, 2015). In these countries, female leadership is more observable than in developing economies where religion often is a key driver of everyday life.

#### **4.4 Category: Traditional Beliefs**

Fourthly, traditional beliefs as well as values have been identified as another category. These views and perceptions are shaping a culture significantly. As described in detail in the theoretical framework, culture is hard to change and has been developed over decades (Hofstede et al., 2017; Eden & Forquer Gupta, 2017). Thus, traditional beliefs are still present nowadays in many cultures around the world. Here, the members of the society strongly rely on the established traditional views and approaches in life where consequently female leaders are very rare in the business world (Hodges, 2017; Quader & Oplatka, 2008). The reason for this is that women do not even get the chance to be preselected for leadership roles due to their gender and traditionally assigned role within the family (Hodges, 2017). This goes together with the role of women defined by the culture as well as the level of masculinity scored by the country. To say it in other words, in countries and cultures which have a conservative mentality, there is the belief that women should not be supported in their professional careers as they have to fulfill their duties at home (Hodges, 2017; Ghosh & McLean, 2018). Otherwise, they are perceived not to be a good family member (Von Alberti-Alhtaybat & Aazam, 2018). That is why often women not even try to occupy upper management positions in fear they could lose the support of their family in the future (Von Alberti-Alhtaybat & Aazam, 2018; Chao, 2011). Moreover, other traditional beliefs can negatively affect female leadership. One concrete example is the officially abolished cast system in India which determines women’s access to wealth, power and privilege (Ghosh & McLean, 2018). If women are born into a low cast, their opportunities in life and therefore also in leadership are really poor and hampered (Ghosh & McLean, 2018). Furthermore, one can say that the degree of economic development within a country or region influences the reliance on traditional beliefs. In rural areas of developing countries for instance, one can observe a negative attitude towards the education of girl children as the family fears they will move away from traditional norms as well as values (Ghosh & McLean, 2018). This is definitely not the case in developed western countries (Evans, 2010; Lyness & Grotto, 2018). Here, women are generally not exposed to this tradition.

Nevertheless, in some cultures women tend to take advantage of their femininity (Quader & Oplatka). As female members of the society in traditional cultures are often perceived as



vulnerable, they are protected by cultural rules in many areas of life. This is also true for leadership positions (Quader & Oplatka, 2008). Additionally, women at least have to pretend to stick to the traditional and strict gender relations, otherwise their career advancement is hindered (Quader & Oplatka, 2008).

Altogether, one can say that the traditional beliefs are at the same time traditional obstacles faced by women. In traditional settings, leadership is perceived to be male dominated and a sphere where women are misplaced (Quader & Oplatka, 2008; Hodges, 2017). Again, this is especially true for developing economies which place a lot of emphasis on long valued norms.

#### **4.5 Category: Gender Inequality**

The last category links culture's influence on female leadership with the country's respective rank in the Gender Inequality Index. This has already been examined in the literature review theoretically. As it is possible to identify some specific patterns when it comes to the relationship between female leadership, culture and the rank in the Gender Inequality Index scored by the respective country, it seems relevant to investigate this deeper.

All countries mentioned in the selected 15 papers have been analyzed with the help of the United Nations' human development reports which *inter alia* give insights into the gender inequality in different countries of the world (United Nations Development Programme, 2018). Having identified the respective positions of the mentioned countries, it got obvious that those countries where patriarchal structures are common and accepted by the society have high scores in the Gender Inequality Index. This means that these countries and their cultures discriminate women in their private as well as professional life. Some examples here are India which is placed on the 122nd rank, Pakistan on the 136th rank or Lebanon on the 79th rank (United Nations Development Programme, 2018; Sidani et al., 2015; Samo et al., 2019; Ghosh & McLean, 2018). To add, these countries are shaped by very traditional roles for men and women. Here, men tend to make decisions by which female family members are restricted (Ghosh & McLean, 2018; Samo et al., 2019; Sidani et al., 2015). Moreover, it is possible to say that there is the tendency that countries scoring higher in the Gender Inequality Index also have a high degree of both masculinity as well as power distance in Hofstede's cultural dimensions. This further pushes for the exclusion of women in leadership positions and strongly hinders their career advancement. A negative relation between the rank in the Gender Inequality Index and women's possibilities in management can be detected.

At the same time, in the developed western world countries are ranked on the first positions where gender equality is an important topic (e.g. Sweden on the 2nd rank or France on the 8th rank) (United Nations Development Programme, 2018). Although in these countries female leadership is not that prevalent as one might wish, the topic is addressed clearly, and regulations are developed in favor for female leaders. In France for instance, there are well-established childcare facilities which definitely helps women's advancement on the career ladder as the work-life balance can be harmonized (Evans, 2010). Moreover, some developed countries, such as Germany, introduced quotas for female representation on e.g. the board of directors (Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend, 2020).

However, it is possible to say that the above-mentioned negative relationship is not true for every country analyzed within this content analysis. Saudi Arabia for example, where women are restricted in many parts of their life, is placed on the 49th rank (United Nations Development Programme, 2018). Here, women even fear to be promoted into leadership positions as their reputation would suffer with this (Hodges, 2017). Also, the United Arab Emirates where a powerful patriarchy is present achieved the 26th rank (United Nations Development Programme, 2018; Alhadhrami et al., 2018). This means that women in countries which have achieved the first ranks in the Gender Inequality Index do not necessarily have easier access to top management positions. Nevertheless, in general this tendency is observable.

#### **4.6 Discussion and Implications**

Due to the increasing relevance of female leadership, the importance of conducting an analysis of women in leadership and culture's influence on the career advancement is justified. In this master thesis, the most relevant factors that impact cultures and respectively female leadership have been identified, following secondary data. Here, five main aspects which create a relation between these two concepts have been observed.

Firstly, Hofstede's cultural dimensions provide insights into the possibilities faced by women in leadership. This is also supported by the fact that the five dimensions have a huge impact on a society's functionality and implementation of their respective culture (Tîmbalari, 2019). To be more precise, especially the degree of power distance as well as masculinity vs. femininity shape the labor market for women to a great extent. Cultures scoring high in power distance tend to distribute power unequally. This is impacting female leadership to a large degree when men are assigned to more powerful roles than women. Thus, women occupy lower positions in the hierarchy and have a difficult time getting access to leadership positions. Here, inequality between male and female members of the group can be detected. To add, cultures shaped by lower power distance put more effort into gender egalitarianism which ultimately has a positive influence on female leadership. Also, masculinity vs. femininity as a cultural dimension significantly shapes women's possibilities in the labor market. The more feminine the environment, the better the opportunities in leadership for women. This means at the same time, that masculine cultures discriminate female leaders to a large degree as there is the assumption that maleness is needed in order to be a successful leader.

Secondly, the role assigned to female members of a culture have an impact on their career possibilities. Women living within a cultural framework which relies on traditional roles as well as values assigns them the role of caretakers. Men are the ones who are culturally permitted to occupy leadership positions and roles connected with power. Therefore, one can say that the role assigned to women by culture can impact their qualification for managerial positions significantly. At the same time, countries and regions which are more oriented towards western values are more liberal and increasingly give women the same career opportunities than men. Additionally, there is the tendency that typical female leadership styles, such as the transformational one, are progressively demanded.

Thirdly, religion as a major force shaping the cultural framework for female leadership has been identified since this is strongly related to the societal expectations of a group. The analysis showed that principally the Islamic religion poses barriers for women who wish to ascend the career ladder as there is a reliance on traditional roles and assignments for both men and women. Thus, the participation rate of women in the workforce and respectively upper management positions is really low in strong Islamic contexts. Here, women often do not get the chance to show their potential. At the same time, it is observable that developed countries are less religious than for instance developing economies. In these western countries, the topic of female leadership is frequently discussed and receives more and more attention. Based on this, it is possible to say that there is a relation between religion and the female participation rate in leadership positions.

Additionally, the reliance on traditional beliefs also impacts both culture as well as female leadership. As cultures and their norms are established over a long period of time, they are heavily embedded in a society's perception of right and wrong behavior. In cultures shaped by traditional beliefs, female leaders are seldom as they have to occupy their traditionally assigned role which focuses mainly on the household. Such a conservative mentality hinders female leadership extremely. To add, maintaining the support of the family as well as a good reputation are the main drivers that hold back women in ascending the career ladder in such traditional settings. The described scenario can often be observed in developing countries which tend to be poorer. In developed economies where culture is shaped to a lower degree by such traditional beliefs, this extreme kind of discrimination is not prevalent.

Lastly, the degree of gender equality within a country helps to characterize the dominant culture. Then, this also impacts female leadership. The analysis showed that countries with patriarchal structures tend to have high scores in the Gender Inequality Index which means that an unequal treatment of men and women is common. In these countries and their respective cultures, it is very unlikely that women get the possibility to occupy leadership positions as men are perceived to be superior. Moreover, countries that score high in the Gender Inequality Index tend also to have a higher degree of masculinity and power distance. Consequently, women have a hard time to receive opportunities in both their private as well as professional life. Simultaneously, developed economies are ranked among the top positions in the index. Here, female leadership is also on the rise and receives increasing attention by the society and government. Thus, the Gender Inequality Index gives insights into what women can expect on the labor market in different countries. The best opportunities can be found in countries that focus on egalitarianism.

In summary, the analysis shows that there are five main factors of culture that can have an impact on women's access to leadership positions. Depending on the extent to which these factors are present in a respective culture, women's possibilities in leadership are defined. It is possible to say that the more traditional and patriarchal cultures are, the harder it is for women to get access to top management positions. One can observe that this is often the case in developing poorer economies where a separation of gender roles is prevalent. Additionally, the reliance on religious values and ideologies is way more common than in western countries such as Sweden, Germany or the Netherlands. At the same time, these countries tend to be scored at higher levels of the Gender Inequality Index developed by the United Nations. In

Europe for instance, a changing mindset towards gender equality in many areas of life can be detected. Favorable measures for women are introduced such as quotas for the composition of the board of directors. However, the development as well as acceptance of female leadership is not as advanced as wished even in the most developed countries. It is essential to move away from the obsolete role division of men and women and appreciate the benefits female leadership brings to organizations. At this point, culture plays an important role as it shapes the values, norms and rules of the society.

---

## 5. CONCLUSION

---

This master thesis highlights one important topic of the emerging business world that will be even more on the rise when looking at the future.

Female leadership, women empowerment as well as gender equality are present topics in our life nowadays as the society moves increasingly towards the idea that women in leadership are beneficial for management (Chadwick & Dawson, 2018; Post, 2015; United Nations, 2020a). However, this trend is developing slowly and principally in the developed western world (Melero, 2011). That is why the United Nations included gender equality and women's empowerment in the Sustainable Development Goals in order to further push for this advancement (United Nations, 2020b). Additionally, culture seems to play an important role as progress in female leadership varies from one country to another (Eden & Forquer Gupta, 2017). That is why this paper is centered on the relationship between the two concepts of women in leadership and culture. Hence, the research focused on an analysis aiming to identify culture's influence on female leadership.

When it comes to the concepts of leadership as well as culture, it was essential to first provide a general understanding. Firstly, there are many different approaches in order to define leadership (Bass, 2009). However, it got obvious that the relationship between the leader and his or her respective followers is the most relevant aspect (Northouse, 2018; Yukl, 2013; Horner, 1997). Like this, objectives in teams can be achieved. Furthermore, different leadership theories which illustrate how leadership in general can be understood, have been established over the past years (Harrison, 2018). Especially the transactional as well as transformational leadership styles are of great importance as they are modern and more recent approaches (Avolio & Bass, 2002). Secondly, talking about culture, one can say that this is a core element in everyone's life. Here, the unwritten values, norms as well as rules have the biggest impact on shaping the respective culture (Hofstede, 1980; House et al., 2004; Meyer, 2014b). Also, culture is very hard to change as the group's values have been established over a long period of time (Hofstede et al., 2017; Eden & Forquer Gupta, 2017). To add, it was essential to introduce Hofstede's cultural dimensions, namely power distance, uncertainty avoidance, femininity vs. masculinity, collectivism vs. individualism and long-term vs. short-term orientation, as he developed one of the most frequently used practical cultural models (Tîmbalari, 2019).

While combining these two topics, the research showed that culture and leadership are heavily interconnected. Although we live in a globalized world, successful leadership is not considered to be the same in every culture and country (Northouse, 2016; Chamorro-Premuzic & Sanger, 2016). Therefore, it is essential that leaders are aware of cultural differences in order to increase their effectiveness as well as professionalism (Meyer, 2014b). Here, the ability to adapt is key (Northouse, 2016; Meyer, 2014b). Additionally, Hofstede's cultural dimensions can help to better understand different cultures when leaders are doing business abroad.

This thesis has its main focus on women in leading managerial positions. It is possible to say that the gender gap occurs on a global basis and women face obstacles men are not exposed to

such as the glass ceiling (United Nations, 2020a; Van Emmerik et al., 2010; Van der Boon, 2003). Nevertheless, there is an increasing participation of women on different management levels which gives hope for the future (McKinsey & Company, 2019). Moreover, a typical female leadership style is observable. Women's style of leading is perceived to be cooperative, regenerative, empathic as well as creative (Bhat & Sisodia, 2016; Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001). To add, women have a positive influence on team dynamics which makes them very well equipped for leading groups in multinational organizations (Post, 2015).

Additionally, this thesis sheds a light on the Gender Inequality Index as this gives insights into the possibilities women face in the labor market. The main reason for this is that cultures have different understandings of the role division between men and women which ultimately impacts female leadership as well as women's representation in upper management positions (United Nations, 2020a; Eden & Forquer Gupta, 2017). Especially in underdeveloped or developing countries scoring high in the Gender Inequality Index a male dominance is observable (Eden & Forquer Gupta, 2017; Manzoor, 2015). This hampers women's advancement on the career ladder significantly. Thus, this paper shows that culture and the environment have an influence on women's access to leadership positions.

This is also supported by the content analysis conducted in the framework of this paper. Answering the research question, the results are that there are five main aspects which shape cultures and respectively influence female leadership. To be more precise, two of Hofstede's cultural dimensions namely power distance and femininity vs. masculinity as well as the role of women within the society, the respective predominant religion, traditional beliefs and the earlier mentioned gender inequality within the country have been identified as major forces shaping the environment for women. Depending on how extensively these factors are prevalent within a culture, women's opportunities in management are influenced. In general, one can say that the more traditional as well as patriarchal a culture is, the lesser the probability of women occupying powerful leadership position. This also indicates that female leadership is more accepted in the western globalized world compared to developing economies where traditional gender roles are the norm. Moreover, this is supported by official numbers in women's participation on both the labor market in general as well as in top management positions.

To sum it up, female leadership is a relevant issue in today's business world. It is essential that corporations take this phenomenon into consideration in order to be competitive in the long run. Gender equality as well as diversity are key drivers of profitability. Organizations in both developed and developing countries need to be aware of female leadership and the prevailing discrimination of women in the workplace. Changing mindsets as well as governmental regulations are inevitable and definitely needed in order to further support women ascending the career ladder. This master thesis has contributed to existing literature in a way that specific aspects of cultures shaping as well as influencing female leadership have been identified. The unique feature here is that multiple countries have been involved in the analysis. Therefore, the focus has not been on one specific country as the idea was to determine general influencing factors.

Lastly, further future research is needed. This master thesis only gives an orientation and first ideas of how intensively culture impacts women's possibilities in management. Additional work and research are needed in order to demonstrate the influential relationship between the cultural framework and women's possibilities in occupying leadership positions more in detail. For this, more than 15 sources have to be taken into account. This is especially important as female leadership is on the rise and societies demand more equal treatment of men and women. This paper should be understood as an incentive for further improvements and research referring to female leadership and women's access to top management positions around the world.

---

## REFERENCES

---

- Adler, N. J. & Bartholomew, S. 1992. Managing Globally Competent People. *Academy of Management Executive*, 6 (3): 52 – 65.
- Alhadhrami, A., Goby, V. P. & Al-Ansaari, Y. 2018. Women's enactment of leadership in a heavily gender-marked Islamic context: An exploration within the United Arab Emirates. *International Journal of Organizational Analysis*, 26 (4): 728 – 747.
- Amnesty International. 2019. *Yemen: One of the Worst Places in the World to be a Women*. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2019/12/yemen-one-of-the-worst-places-in-the-world-to-be-a-woman/>; 11.05.2020.
- Avolio, B. J. & Bass, B. M. 2002. *Developing Potential Across a Full Range of Leadership: Cases on Transactional and Transformational Leadership*. New York: Taylor & Francis Group.
- Bass, B. M. 1985. *Leadership and performance beyond expectations*. New York: Free Press.
- Bass, B. M. 1990. *Bass & Stogdill's Handbook of Leadership – Theory, Research, and Managerial Applications* (3rd ed.). New York: Free Press.
- Bass, B. M. 2009. *The Bass Handbook of Leadership* (4th ed.). New York: Free Press.
- Best Buy. 2020. *Corie Barry*. <https://corporate.bestbuy.com/about-best-buy/corie-barry/>; 28.04.2020.
- Bhat, N. & Sisodia, R. 2016. *Shakti Leadership. Embracing Feminine and Masculine Power in Business*. Oakland, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.
- Borgerson, J. L. 2018. *Caring and Power in Female Leadership. A Philosophical Approach*. Newcastle, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Born, A., Ranehill, E. & Sandberg, A. 2018. A man's world? – The impact of a male dominated environment on female leadership. *Working Papers in Economics*, 744.
- Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend (German Federal Ministry). 2020. *Frauen in Führungspositionen: Entwicklung seit 2015*. <https://www.bmfsfj.de/quote/>; 11.05.2020.
- By, R. T., Hughes, M. & Ford, J. 2016. Change Leadership: Oxymoron and Myths. *Journal of Change Management*, 16 (1): 8 – 17.
- Carrasco, A., Francoeur, C., Labelle, R., Laffarga, J. & Ruiz-Barbadillo, E. 2015. Appointing Women to Boards: Is There A Cultural Bias? *Journal of Business Ethics*, 129 (2): 429 – 444.
- Catalyst. 2019. *Historical List of Women CEOs of the Fortune Lists: 1972 – 2019*. [https://www.catalyst.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Catalyst\\_Women\\_-Fortune\\_CEOs\\_1972-2019\\_Historical\\_List\\_5.16.2019.pdf](https://www.catalyst.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Catalyst_Women_-Fortune_CEOs_1972-2019_Historical_List_5.16.2019.pdf); 28.04.2020.



- Catalyst. 2020. *Women on Corporate Boards: Quick Take*. <https://www.catalyst.org-research/women-on-corporate-boards/>; 30.04.2020.
- Chadwick, I. C. & Dawson, A. 2018. Women leaders and firm performance in family businesses: An examination of financial and nonfinancial outcomes. *Journal of Family Business Strategy*, 9 (4): 238 – 249.
- Chamorro-Premuzic, T. & Sanger, M. 2016. What Leadership Looks Like in Different Cultures. *Harvard Business Review*, <https://hbr.org/2016/05/what-leadership-looks-like-in-different-cultures>; 27.04.2020.
- Chao, C. C. 2011. Climbing the Himalayas: A cross-cultural analysis of female leadership and glass ceiling effect in non-profit organizations. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 32 (8): 760 – 781.
- Cho, Y. & McLean, G. N. 2018. *Korean Women in Leadership* (1st ed.). Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Costa, P. & McCrae, R. R. 2011. *The Five-Factor Model, Five Factor Theory, and Interpersonal Psychology*. Research Paper of the National Institute of Aging, Bethesda, Maryland.
- DeBode, J. D., Haggard, D. L. & Haggard, K. S. 2020. Economic freedom and Hofstede's cultural dimensions. *International Journal of Organization Theory & Behavior*, 23 (1): 65 – 84.
- De Cremer, D., Van Dick, R. & Murnighan, J. K. 2011. *Social Psychology and Organizations*. New York: Taylor & Francis Group.
- Drucker, P. 1997. *The Leader of the Future – New Visions, Strategies and Practices for the Next Era*. New York: Wiley.
- Eagly, A. H. & Carli, L. L. 2007. *Through the Labyrinth. The Truth About How Women Become Leaders*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.
- Eagly, A. H. & Johannesen-Schmidt, M. C. 2001. The Leadership Styles of Women and Men. *Journal of Social Issues*, 57 (4): 781 – 797.
- Eagly, A. H. & Karau, S. J. 2002. Role Congruity Theory of Prejudice Toward Female Leaders. *Psychological Review*, 109 (3): 573 – 598.
- Eagly, A. H. & Sczesny, S. 2009. *Stereotypes about women, men, and leaders: Have times changed?* In: Barreto, M., Ryan, M. K. & Schmitt, M. T. *The Glass Ceiling in the 21st Century: Understanding Barriers to Gender Equality*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Eden, L. & Forquer Gupta, S. 2017. Culture and context matter: gender in international business and management. *Cross Cultural & Strategic Management*, 24 (2): 194 – 210.
- Esser, A., Kahrens, M., Mouzoughi, Y. & Eomois, E. 2018. A female leadership competency framework from the perspective of male leaders. *Gender in Management: An International Journal*, 33 (2): 138 – 166.

- European Institute for Gender Equality. 2019. *Gender Equality Index*. <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/2019>; 30.04.2020.
- Evans, D. 2010. Aspiring to leadership... a women's world? An example of developments in France. *Cross Cultural Management: An International Journal*, 17 (4): 347 – 367.
- Flabbi, L., Macis, M., Moro, A. & Schivardi, F. 2019. Do Female Executives Make a Difference? The Impact of Female Leadership on Gender Gaps and Firm Performance. *The Economic Journal*, 129 (622): 2390 – 2423.
- Flabbi, L., Piras, C. & Abrahams, S. 2017. Female corporate leadership in Latin America and the Caribbean region. Representation and firm-level outcomes. *International Journal of Manpower*, 38 (6): 790 – 818.
- Flick, U. 2009. *An Introduction to Qualitative Research* (4th ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
- Gartzia, L. & Van Engen, M. L. 2012. Are (male) leaders „feminine“ enough? Gendered traits of identity as mediators of sex differences in leadership styles. *Gender in Management: An International Journal*, 27 (5): 296 – 314.
- Genciano Chin, L. 2016. Unequal egalitarianism. Does organizational structure create different perceptions of male versus female leadership abilities? *Gender in Management: An International Journal*, 31 (1): 19 – 42.
- General Motors. 2020. *Mary T. Barra*. <https://www.gm.com/our-company/leadership/mary-t-barra.html>; 28.04.2020.
- Ghosh, R. & McLean, G. N. 2018. *Indian Women in Leadership* (1st ed.). Cham: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Harrison, C. 2018. *Leadership Theory and Research. A Critical Approach to New and Existing Paradigms*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Hassan, S., Mahsud, R. Yukl, G. & Prussia, G. E. 2013. Ethical and empowering leadership and leader effectiveness. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 28 (2): 133 – 146.
- Heller, L. & Gabaldon, P. 2018. Women on boards of directors in Latin America: building a model. *Academia Revista Latinoamericana de Administración*, 31 (1): 43 – 72.
- Hesselbein, F., Goldsmith M. & Beckhard, R. 1997. *The Leader of the Future: New Visions, Strategies and Practices for the Next Era*. New York: Wiley.
- Hewlett, S. A. & Rashid, R. 2015. Leading Across Cultures Is More Complicated for Women. *Harvard Business Review*. <https://hbr.org/2015/12/leading-across-cultures-is-more-complicated-for-women>; 23.04.2020.
- Hodges, J. 2017. Cracking the walls of leadership: women in Saudi Arabia. *Gender in Management: An International Journal*, 32 (1): 34 – 46.
- Hofstede, G. 1980. *Culture's Consequences. International Differences in Work-Related Values*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

- Hofstede, G. 1998. *Masculinity and Femininity. The Taboo Dimension of National Cultures*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Hofstede, G. 2001. *Culture's Consequences: Comparing Values, Behaviors, Institutions, and Organizations Across Nations* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Hofstede, G., Hofstede, G. J. & Minkov, M. 2010. *Cultures and Organizations. Software of the Mind: Intercultural Corporation and Its Importance for Survival* (3rd ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill Education.
- Hofstede, G., Hofstede, G. J. & Minkov, M. 2017. *Lokales Denken, globales Handeln: Interkulturelle Zusammenarbeit und globales Management* (6th ed.). München: Dtv Verlagsgesellschaft.
- Horner, M. 1997. Leadership theory: past, present and future. *Team Performance Management*, 3 (4): 270 – 287.
- House, R. J., Dorfman, P. W., Javidan, M., Hanges, P. J. & Sully de Luque, M. F. 2014. *Strategic Leadership Across Cultures. The GLOBE Study of CEO Leadership Behavior and Effectiveness in 24 Countries* (1st ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- House, R. J., Hanges, P. J., Javidan, M., Dorfman, P. W. & Gupta, V. 2004. *Culture, Leadership, and Organizations. The GLOBE Study of 62 Societies* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Janda, F. K. 1960. Towards the Explication of the Concept of Leadership in Terms of the Concept of Power. *Human Relations*, 13 (4): 345 – 363.
- Kim, S. & Shin, M. 2017. The effectiveness of transformational leadership on empowerment. The roles of gender and gender dyads. *Cross Cultural & Strategic Management*, 24 (2): 271 – 287.
- Klenke, K. 1996. *Women and Leadership. A Contextual Perspective* (5th ed.). New York: Springer.
- Kluckhohn, C. 1951. *Values and value-orientations in the theory of action: An exploration in definition and classification*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Koburtay, T., Syed, J. & Haloub, R. 2019. Congruity between the female gender role and the leader role: a literature review. *European Business Review*, 31 (6): 831 – 848.
- Lyness, K. S. & Grotto, A. R. 2018. Women and Leadership in the United States: Are We Closing the Gender Gap? *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, 5: 227 – 265.
- Malik, F. 2014. *Managing, Performing, Living: Effective Management for a New World*. Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag.
- Management Study Guide. 2020. *Blake and Mouton's Managerial Grid*. <https://managementstudyguide.com/blake-mouton-managerial-grid.htm>; 10.05.2020.

- Mandell, B. & Pherwani, S. 2003. Relationship Between Emotional Intelligence and Transformational Leadership Style: A Gender Comparison. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 17: 387 – 404.
- Manzoor, S. 2015. The impact of indigenous culture on female leadership in Pakistan. *International Journal of Organizational Leadership*, 4: 414 – 429.
- Mayring, P. 2014. *Qualitative Content Analysis – Theoretical Foundation, Basic Procedures and Software Solution*. Klagenfurt: Beltz Verlag.
- Mayring, P. 2015. *Qualitative Inhaltsanalyse – Grundlagen und Techniken* (12th ed.). Weinheim: Beltz Verlag.
- McKinsey & Company. 2019. *Women in the Workplace 2019*. <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/gender-equality/women-in-the-workplace-2019#>; 28.04.2020.
- Melero, E. 2011. Are workplaces with many women in management run differently? *Journal of Business Research*, 64: 385 – 393.
- Meyer, E. 2014a. Eight-scale tool for mapping cultural differences. *South China Morning Post: Business*. <https://www.scmp.com/business/economy/article/1518529/mapping-global-cultural-differences-offers-advantages-business>; 08.05.2020.
- Meyer, E. 2014b. *The Culture Map: Breaking Through The Invisible Boundaries Of Global Business* (1st ed.). New York: PublicAffairs.
- Missouri Western State University. 2020. *Situational Leadership Theory*. <https://oer.missouriwestern.edu/rsm424/chapter/situational-leadership-theory/>; 20.05.2020.
- Moore, S. & Diese, A. 2018. *Women in Leadership*. In: Denmark, F. L. & Paludi, M. A. Women and Leadership. Cham: Springer.
- Moriarty, R. 2019. What Cultural Challenges Do Women In Leadership Positions Face? *Forbes*. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/robinmoriarty/2019/10/23/what-cultural-challenges-do-women-in-leadership-positions-face/#15a981571121>; 23.04.2020.
- Nekhili, M., Chakroun, H. & Chtioui, T. 2018. Women’s Leadership and Firm Performance: Family Versus Nonfamily Firms. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 153: 291 – 316.
- Noack, R. 2015. Map: These are the world’s least religious countries. *The Washington Post*. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2015/04/14/map-these-are-the-worlds-least-religious-countries/>; 21.05.2020.
- Northouse, P. G. 2001. *Leadership: Theory and Practice* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Northouse, P. G. 2013. *Leadership: Theory and Practice* (6th ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
- Northouse, P. G. 2016. *Leadership: Theory and Practice* (7th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- Northouse, P. G. 2018. *Leadership: Theory and Practice* (8th ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
- Paoloni, P. & Lombardi, R. 2018. *Gender Issues in Business and Economics. Selections from the 2017 Ipazia Workshop on Gender*. Cham: Springer.
- Post, C. 2015. When is female leadership an advantage? Coordination requirements, team cohesion, and team interaction norms. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 36 (8): 1153 – 1175.
- Quader, S. A. R. & Oplatka, I. 2008. The power of femininity: Exploring the gender and ethnic experiences of Muslim women who accessed supervisory roles in a Bedouin society. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 46 (3): 396 – 415.
- Rahman, M. A. 2018. Influence of Female Leadership Styles and Organization Culture on Locus of Control and Job Satisfaction. *Integrated Journal of Business and Economics*, 2 (2): 123 – 134.
- Samo, A. H., Qazi, S. W. & Mansoor Buriro, W. 2019. Labelling them is negating them: A phenomenological study of stereotypes and followers' experiences about women leadership in Pakistan. *Management Research Review*, 42 (3): 391 – 411.
- Sandberg, S. 2013. *Lean In. Women, Work and the Will to Lead*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Schein, E. H. 2017. *Organizational Culture and Leadership* (5th ed.). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley & Sons.
- Schermerhorn, J. R. 1999. *Management* (6th ed.). New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Sharkie, R. 2009. Trust in leadership is vital for employee performance. *Management Research News*, 32 (5): 491 – 498.
- Sidani, Y. M., Konrad, A. & Karam, C. M. 2015. From female leadership advantage to female leadership deficit: A developing country perspective. *Career Development International*, 20 (3): 273 – 292.
- Simeon, R., Nicholson, J. D. & Wong, Y. Y. 2001. Comparisons of Asian and US Workplace Gender Roles. *Cross Cultural Management*, 8 (2): 47 – 59.
- Steffens, M. C., Viladot, M. A. & Scheifele, C. 2019. Male Majority, Female Majority, or Gender Diversity in Organizations: How Do Proportions Affect Gender Stereotyping and Women Leaders' Well-Being? *Frontiers in Psychology*, 10: Article 1037.
- Stock-Homburg, R. 2010. *Personalmanagement – Theorien – Konzepte – Instrumente* (2nd ed.). Wiesbaden: Springer Gabler.
- Stock-Homburg, R. 2013. *Personalmanagement – Theorien – Konzepte – Instrumente* (3rd ed.). Wiesbaden: Springer Gabler.
- Stogdill, R. M. 1974. *Handbook of leadership: A survey of theory and research*. New York: Free Press.

- Szymanska, I. I. & Rubin, B. A. 2018. Gender and relationship differences in the perceptions of male and female leadership. *Gender in Management: An International Journal*, 33 (4): 254 – 281.
- Tang, K. N. 2019. *Leadership and Change Management*. Singapore: Springer.
- Tîmbalari, C. 2019. Dimensions of National Culture – Cross-Cultural Theories. *Studies in Business and Economics*, 14 (3): 220 – 230.
- United Nations. 2019. *World Economic Situation and Prospects 2019*. [https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/wp-content/uploads/sites/45/WESP2019\\_-BOOK-ANNEX-en.pdf](https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/wp-content/uploads/sites/45/WESP2019_-BOOK-ANNEX-en.pdf); 07.05.2020.
- United Nations. 2020a. *Gender Equality*. <https://www.un.org/en/sections/issues-depth/gender-equality/>; 30.04.2020.
- United Nations. 2020b. *Sustainable Development Goals. Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls*. <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/gender-equality/>; 22.04.2020.
- United Nations. 2020c. *The Sustainable Development Agenda. 17 Goals for People, for Planet*. <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/development-agenda/>; 01.05.2020.
- United Nations Development Programme. 2018. *Human Development Reports. Gender Inequality Index (GII)*. <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/table-5-gender-inequality-index-gii>; 30.04.2020.
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). 2020. *Gender Equality and Culture*. <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/gender-and-culture/-gender-equality-and-culture/>; 30.04.2020.
- U.S. National Center for Education Statistics. 2016. *Degrees conferred by race and sex*. <https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=72>; 28.04.2020.
- Van der Boon, M. 2003. Women in international management: an international perspective on women's ways of leadership. *Women in Management Review*, 18 (3): 132 – 146.
- Van Emmerik, H., Wendt, H. & Euwema, M. C. 2010. Gender ratio, societal culture, and male and female leadership. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 83: 895 – 914.
- Van Knippenberg, D. & Hogg, M. A. 2003. *Leadership and Power. Identity Processes in Groups and Organizations*. London: Sage.
- Vasile, A. C. & Nicolescu, L. 2016. Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions and Management in Corporations. *Cross-Cultural Management Journal*, 18 (1): 35 – 46.
- Virick, M. & Greer, C. R. 2012. Gender Diversity in Leadership Succession: Preparing for the Future. *Human Resource Management*, 51 (4): 575 – 600.
- Von Alberti-Alhtaybat, L. & Aazam, S. 2018. Female leadership in the Middle Eastern higher education. *Journal of Economic and Administrative Sciences*, 34 (2): 90 – 107.

Wahl, A. & Höök, P. 2007. Changes in working with gender equality in management in Sweden. *Equal Opportunities International*, 26 (5): 435 – 448.

Welt. 2020. *IBM-Chefin tritt nach acht Jahren zurück*. <https://www.welt.de/wirtschaft/-article205484389/Ginni-Rometty-IBM-Chefin-tritt-nach-acht-Jahren-zurueck.html>; 28.04.2020.

Yukl, G. A. 2006. *Leadership in Organizations* (6th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.

Yukl, G. A. 2013. *Leadership in Organizations* (8th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.