

Cracking the glass ceiling: Women as leaders?



Marloes van Engen

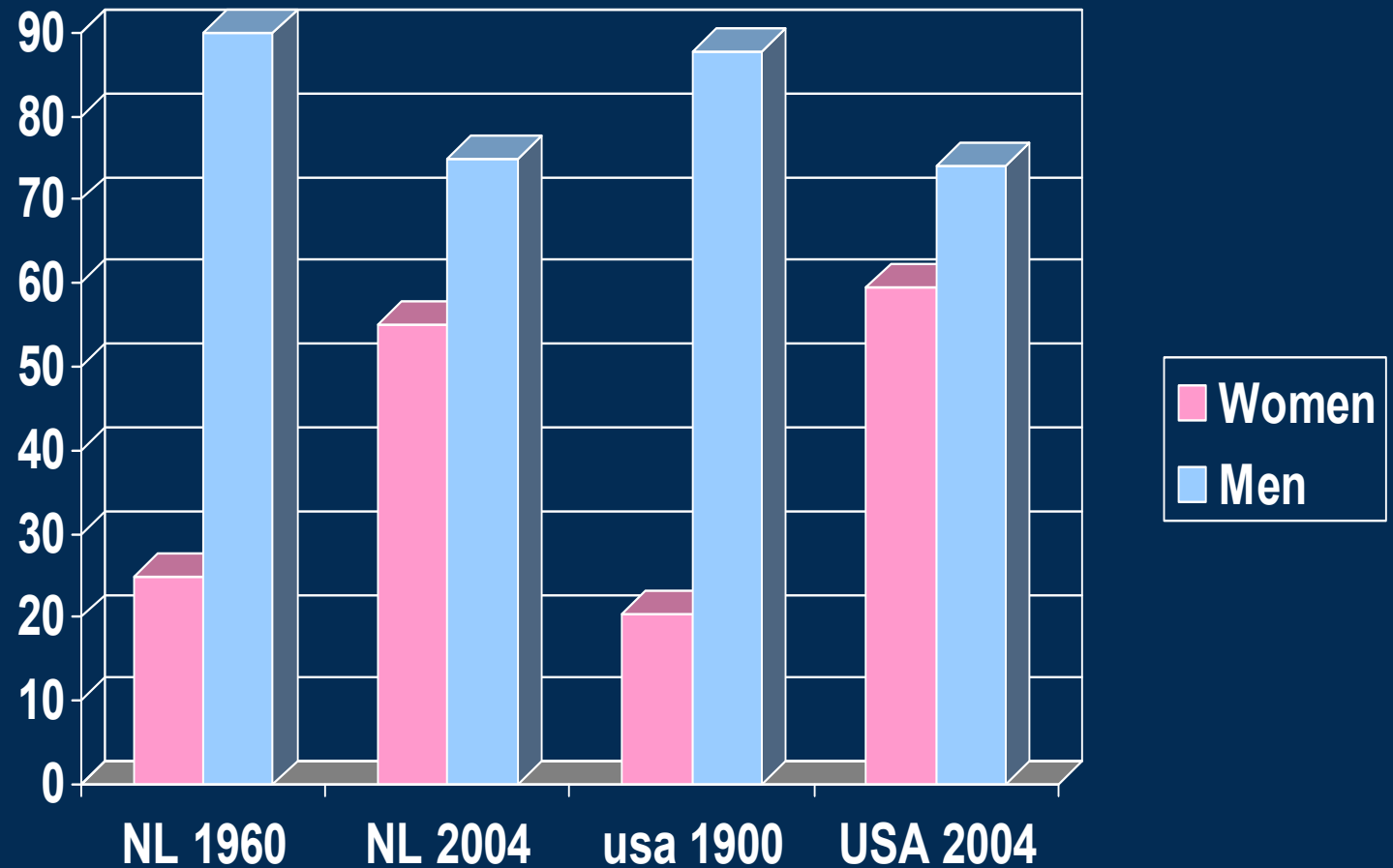
Human Resource Studies

Tilburg University

This Lecture:

- Facts and Figures about men and women at the labor market
- Explanations:
 - > Individual differences?
 - > Prejudice?
 - > Organizational systems & Practices?
- Some research examples:
 - > Meta-analysis
 - > Experiment
 - > Case study

Men and women at the labor market



Horizontal segregation

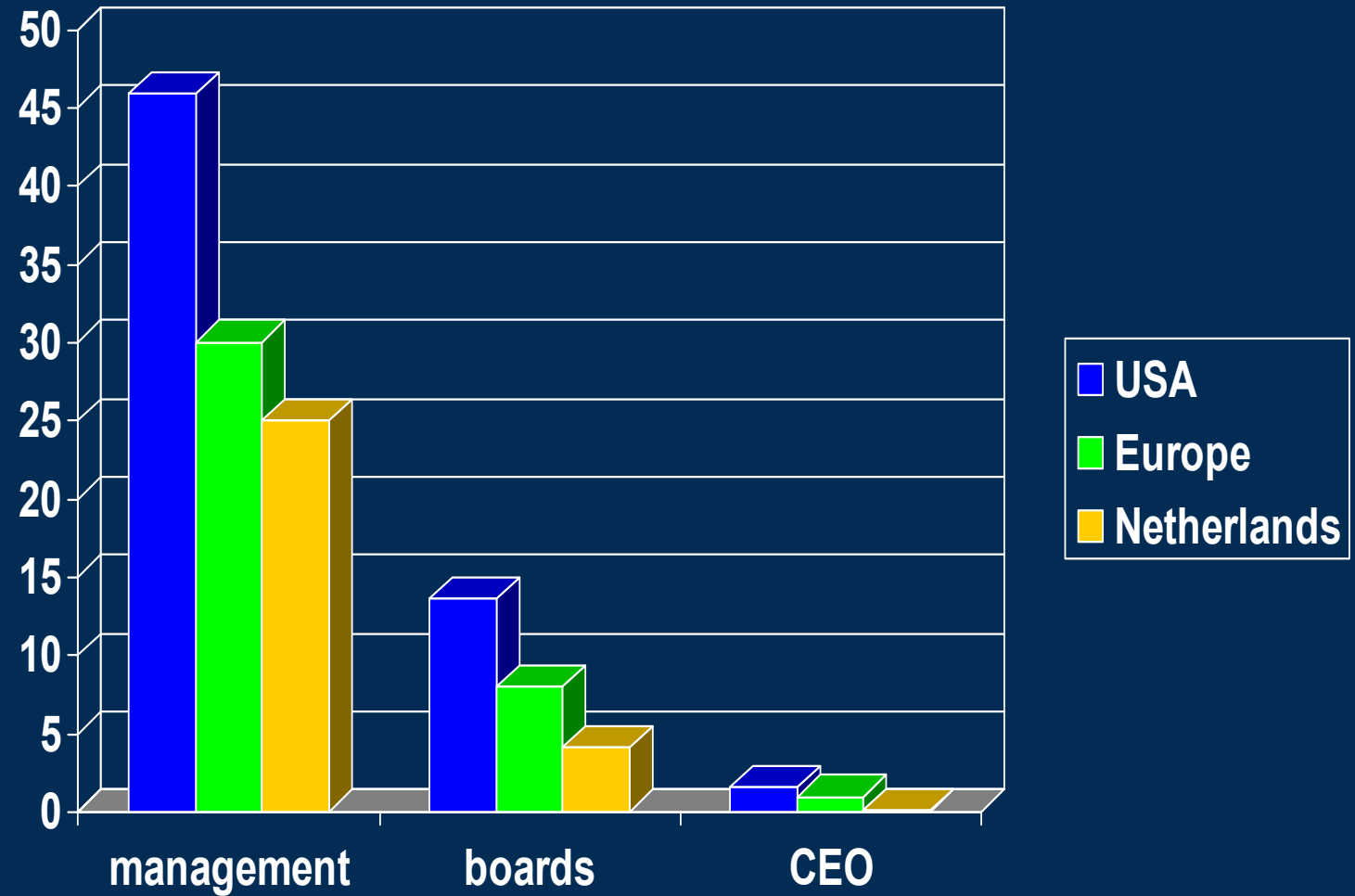
Labor market:

- Sectors
- Occupations

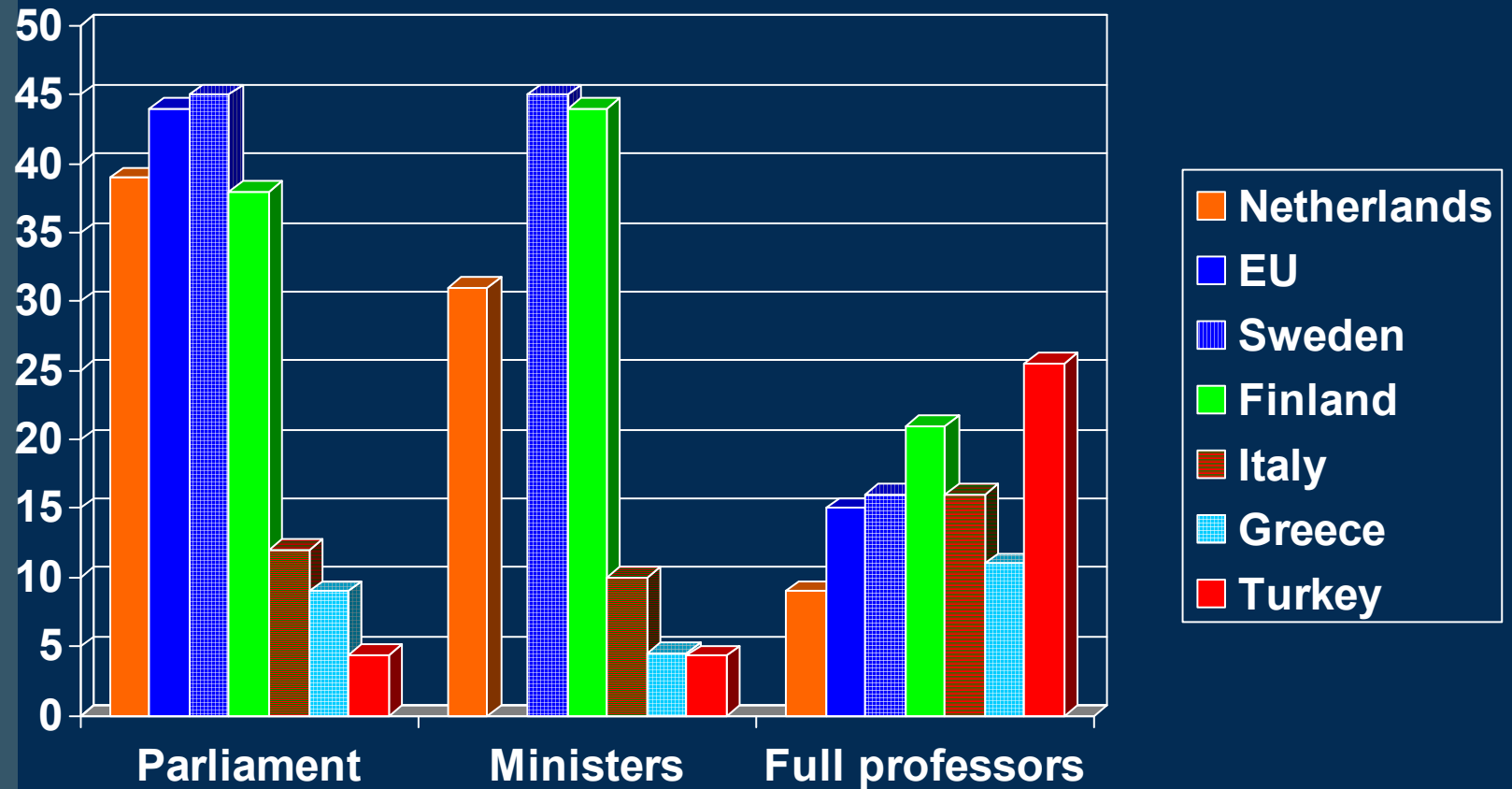
Organizations:

- Departments and Jobs: “Glass walls”
- Assignment of tasks and opportunities

Vertical segregation: Proportion of women in corporate management



Proportion of women in government and education



Glass ceiling

- “a transparent barrier that [keeps] women from rising above a certain level in organizations”
(Morrison, White, Van Velsor, 1987, p 13)

Relative thickness of the Glass Ceiling -NL

| | % Potential female managers | % Actual female managers | Thickness Glass Ceiling |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Manufact. industry | 15 | - | 100 |
| Construction | 4 | - | 100 |
| Education | 49 | 13 | 74 |
| Government | 29 | 16 | 43 |
| Transport & Communication | 19 | 11 | 42 |
| Health Care | 62 | 48 | 22 |
| Business services | 25 | 20 | 20 |
| Trade | 19 | 15 | 18 |

Explanations for the Glass Ceiling?

Leader related traits and characteristics?

- > Need for achievement
- > Social affiliation
- > Aggressiveness, Assertiveness, Self confidence
- > Motivation to manage, Career aspirations
- > Integrity
- However:
 - > Limited explanatory power: Relationship between personality traits and leadership is weak
 - > Gender differences small and converging
 - > Value for effective leadership not clear

(e.g. Eagly & Carli, 2003; see also series of meta-analyses of Eagly and colleagues; Butterfield & Grinell, 1999; Powell, 1999)

Human Capital Investments ?

- Education
- Job attitudes
- Household responsibilities
- Child care responsibilities
- Career interruptions
- Turnover

Furthermore, investments in human capital investments pay off more for men than for women

(e.g. Eagly & Carli, 2003; Lyness & Judiesch, 2001; Lyness & Thompson, 1997; 2000; Melamed, 1996; Stroh & Reilly, 1999; Tharenou, 1997; 2004)

Women as leaders?



- Nixon: “I don’t think a woman should be in any government job whatsoever. . . . The reason why I do is mainly because they are erratic. And emotional. Men are erratic and emotional, too, but the point is a woman is more likely to be so.”

'As leaders, women rule'

Business Week, 20-11-2000

'The future of business depends on women'

Fast Company, aug 2002

- “the typical female characteristics are much more efficient”

Many Social Scientists Claim Women and Men Are the Same

- Male and female leaders in similar roles--
 - > Are bound by similar constraints on behavior
 - > Possess similar competence and status
 - > Can appear different because they are in different types of leadership roles

- Traditional Approaches
 - > Task-oriented leadership
 - > People-oriented leadership
 - > Democratic versus Autocratic
- Eagly & Johnson (1990), 1961-1987:
- van Engen & Willemssen (2004), 1987-2000:
 - > Laboratory \geq Field studies
 - > Democratic: Female leaders \geq Male leaders
 - > Moderated by Organizational Factors

Transformational Leadership

- Idealized Influence (attributes)
 - > *Her actions build my respect for her*
- Idealized Influence (behavior)
 - > *Emphasizes the importance of having a collective sense of mission*
- Inspirational Motivation
 - > *Optimism and excitement of future goals*
- Intellectual Stimulation
 - > *Suggests new ways of looking at how we do our jobs*
- Individualized Consideration
 - > *Treats each of us as individuals with different needs, abilities, and aspirations*

Transactional Leadership

- Contingent Reward
 - > *Expresses satisfaction when I do a good job*
- Management-by-Exception active
 - > *Directs attention toward failure to meet standards*
- Management-by-Exception passive
 - > *Fails to intervene until problems become serious*
- Laissez-Faire Leadership
 - > *Avoids getting involved when important issues arise*

(Bass, 1985)

Effectiveness:

More
Effective
Styles

- Transformational
 - > Idealized Influence (Attributes)
 - > Idealized Influence (Behavior)
 - > Inspirational Motivation
 - > Intellectual Stimulation
 - > Individualized Consideration

Less
Effective
Styles

- Transactional
 - > Contingent Reward
 - > Active Management by Exception
 - > Passive Management by Exception
- Laissez-Faire

Method

- Locating studies
 - > Indexes: PsycINFO, ABI/INFORM, ERIC, DA
 - > Reference lists of located studies
 - > Listservs, Conference proceedings
- Criteria
 - > Assessed at least 5 male and 5 female organizational leaders
- Yield
 - > 42 documents produced 49 studies
 - > > 20.000 male, > 9.000 female leaders

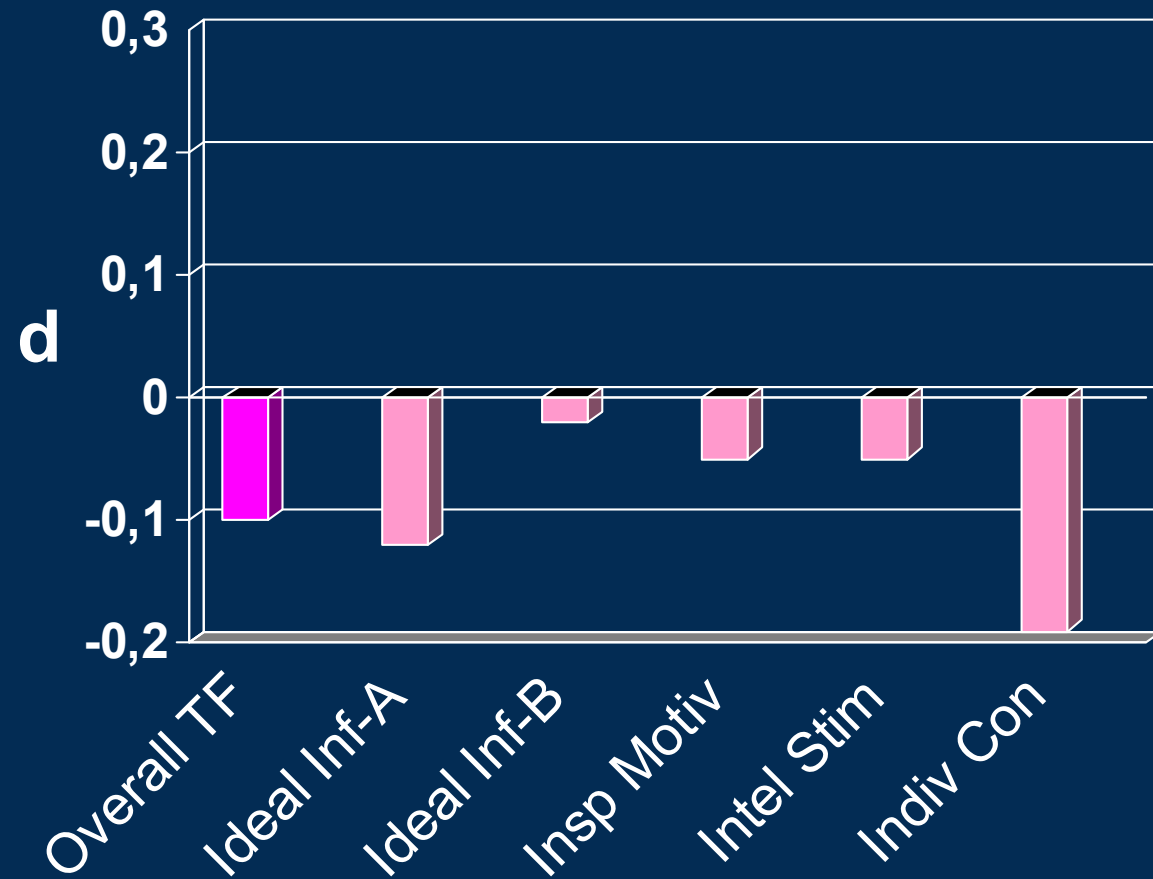
Transformational leadership

Effect size $d =$

$\frac{\text{Male mean} - \text{Female mean}}$

$\frac{\text{Pooled standard deviation}}$

Positive $d =$ men higher

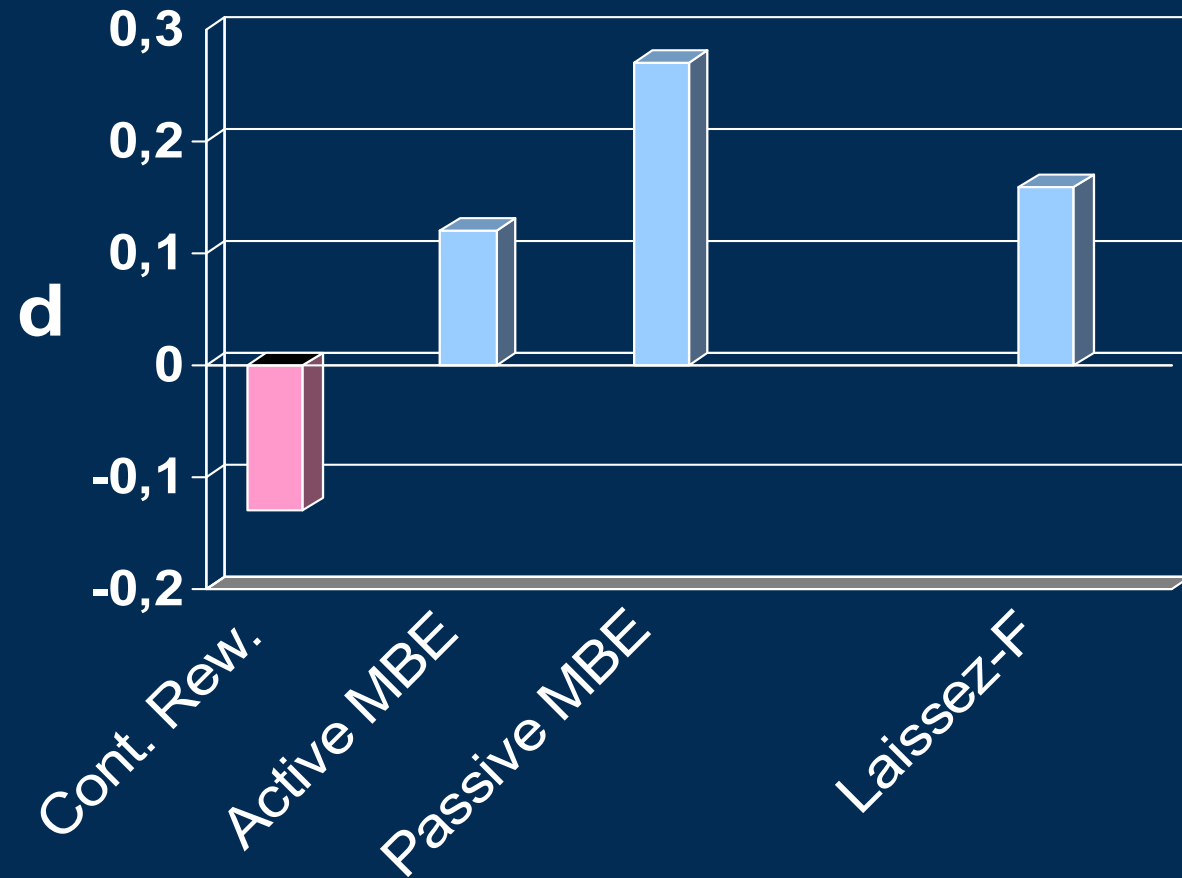


Transactional leadership

Positive d = men higher

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Effectiveness:

More Effective Styles

- Transformational
 - > Idealized Influence (Attributes)
 - > Idealized Influence (Behavior)
 - > Inspirational Motivation
 - > Intellectual Stimulation
 - > Individualized Consideration

Less Effective Styles

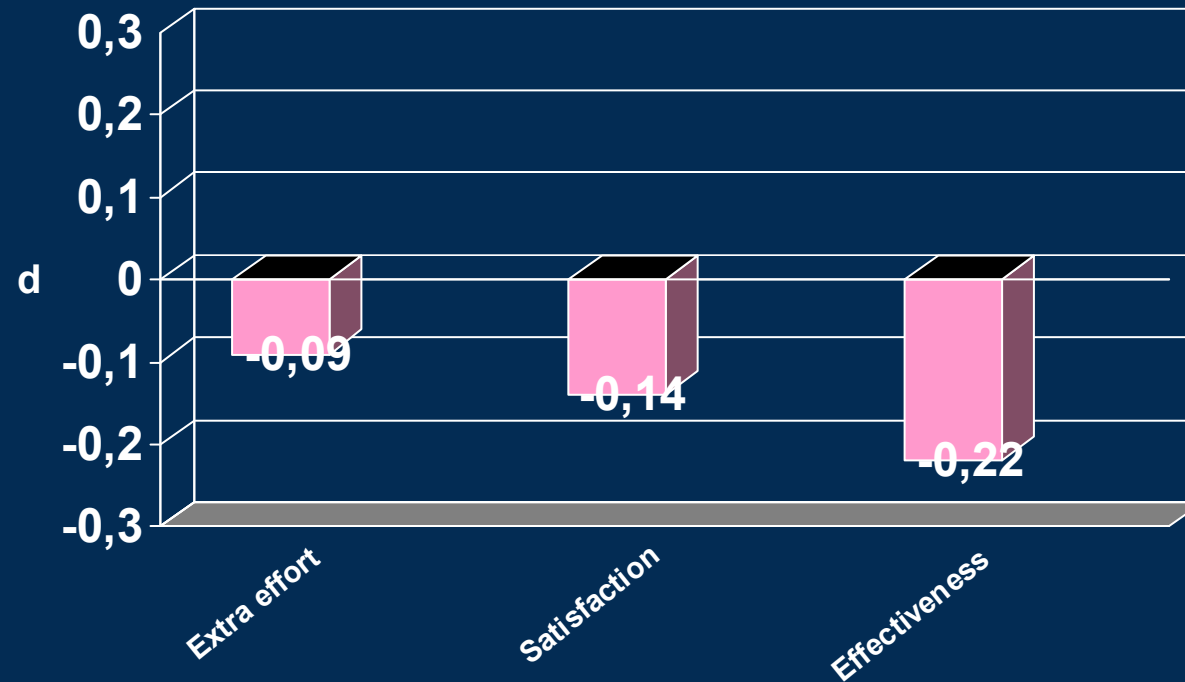
- Transactional
 - > Contingent Reward
 - > Active Management by Exception
 - > Passive Management by Exception
- Laissez-Faire

Additional analyses on the 44 overall transformational effect sizes:

- No effects for: specificity of leader role, male dominance of role, sex of raters, etcetera
- Sex difference (in female direction) larger
 - *Later year of publication*
 - *Older average age*

Outcomes of Leadership MLQ Norming Study

Positive d = men higher



Meta-Analysis Findings--

- Women score higher on the more effective leadership styles:
 - > Transformational leadership
 - > Contingent Reward
 - > And are rated higher on outcome variables
- Men score higher on the less effective leadership styles:
 - > Management by exception
 - > Laissez faire

Yet, so few women at the top:

- Prejudice as an explanation?

Prejudice as an explanation

- “Prejudice can arise from the relations that people perceive between the characteristics of a social group and the requirements of the **social roles** that group members occupy or aspire to occupy” (Eagly, 2000)

Social Roles (1):

- “Socially shared expectations about typical attributes belonging to a certain social position or members of a particular social group. ...
- ...These expectations are based on observations in daily life and thus have a *descriptive* quality” (Biddle, 1979; Sarbin & Allen, 1968)

Social Roles (2):

- Social roles are not only descriptive, describing what members of a particular social category are like and act like,
- but also *prescriptive (injunctive)*, containing consensual expectations about what a group of people ought to do or ideally should do (Cialdini & Trost, 1998)

Social Roles (3):

- This prescriptive/injunctive or normative character of social roles becomes visible when people do not adhere to the roles they are supposed to play:
- Violation of role prescriptions may lead to devaluation or exclusion by others

Gender roles (1)

- Consensual beliefs about the typical attributes of women and men.
- These beliefs stem from the societal division of labor. Women and men typically occupy different roles and develop skills and behavioral styles that are adaptive for these roles:
 - > Family (provider-homemaker)
 - > Occupations (service-manufacturing)
 - > Positions of authority

(Eagly, 1987; Eagly, Wood & Diekmann, 2000)

Gender roles (2)

- Female gender role roles can be characterized as *communal* : Reflecting a sense of communion, a concern for others and selflessness
- Male gender role can be characterized as *agentic*: Reflecting agency, self-assertion, and a desire for achievement

(Bakan, 1966; Wiggins, 1992)

Gender roles influence:

- How we think women and men are like (stereotypes)
 - > Results in double standard
- How we see our (ideal) selves
- How we evaluate others

Gender roles & Leader roles (1)

- Inconsistency between female gender role and leader roles: Typical attributes of successful managers are similar to characteristics considered to be typical for men.

(Schein and colleagues, 1973 – 2001):

- “Think manager, think male”

Gender roles & Leader roles (2)

Incompatibility of leader role and female gender role leads to 2 forms of prejudice against female leaders:

1. Perceiving women less favorably than men as potential leaders
2. Evaluating behavior that fulfills the prescriptions of a leader less favorably if enacted by a woman compared to a man

Description based bias - example

- Gallup Polls (1953-1995): preference to work for a male or female boss

| | 1953 | 1995 |
|-----------------|----------------------------|------|
| Respondent sex: | Man preferred as leader: | |
| •men | 75 | 37 |
| •women | 57 | 54 |
| •total | 66 | 46 |
| | Woman preferred as leader: | |
| •men | 2 | 17 |
| •women | 8 | 22 |
| •total | 5 | 20 |

Prescription based bias -1

- Backlash effect:

The enactment of gender role leads to decreased performance expectations, whereas fulfillment of the managerial role produces disadvantages because of gender role violation

Courtcase example:

- Hopkins versus Price Waterhouse (1982):
- “she had more billable hours than any other person proposed for partner that year, she had brought in business worth \$25 million, her clients praised her and her supporters recommended her as driven, hard working and exacting”

Prescription based bias –2b

- She was denied partnership because:
“..this ‘lady candidate’ was ‘macho’, she
‘overcompensated for being a woman’ and
‘she needed a course to charm school’
> (Fiske et al, 1991)

Following the meta-analysis:

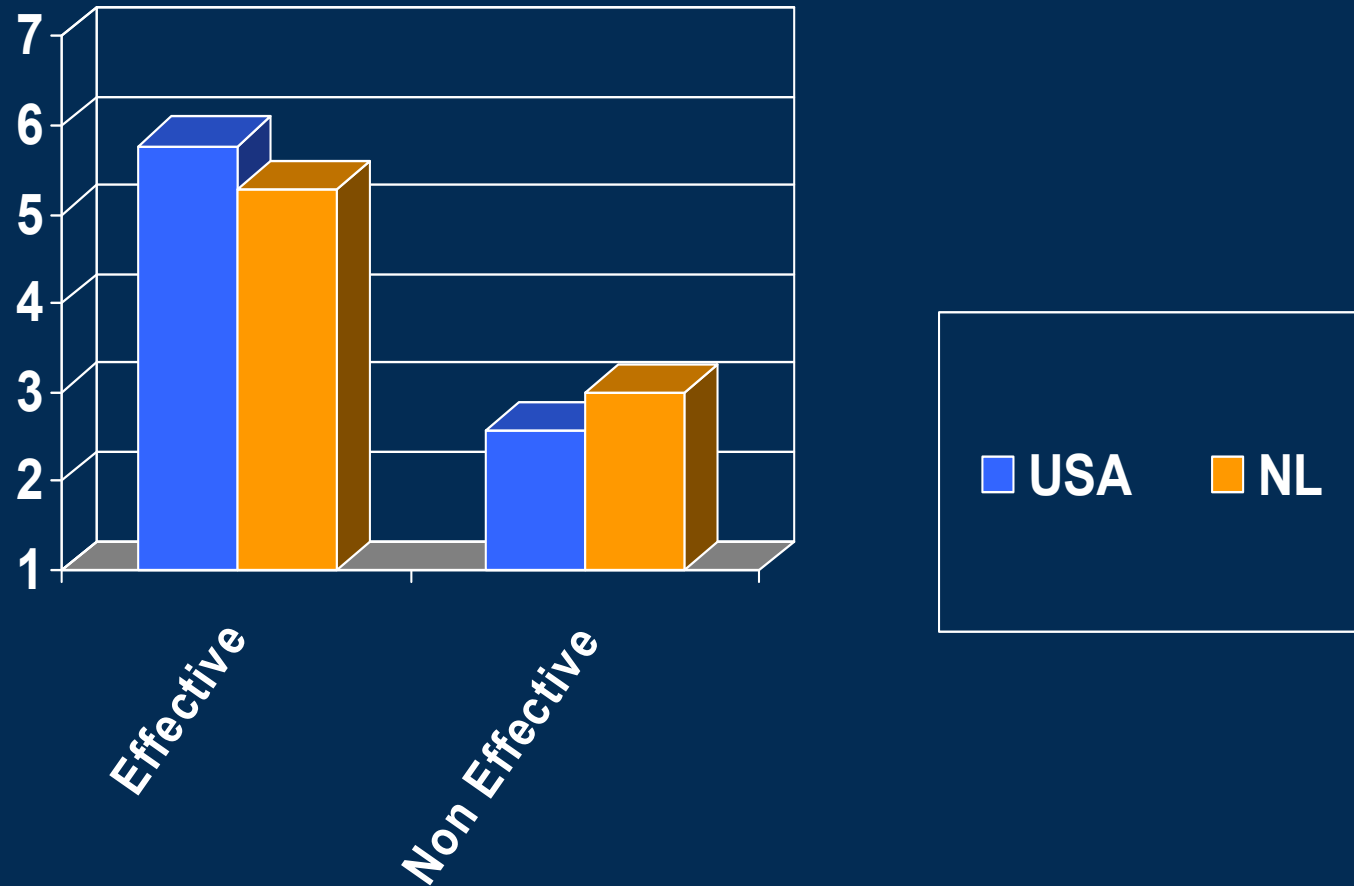
- If women are such wonderful leaders, why aren't they advancing?
- Is transformational leadership (not) a prerequisite for making promotion to higher levels?
- Is transformational leadership equally rewarding for men and women?

- Vinkenburg, van Engen, Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt (submitted)
- See also van Engen & Vinkenburg (2005). *Gedrag & Organisatie*

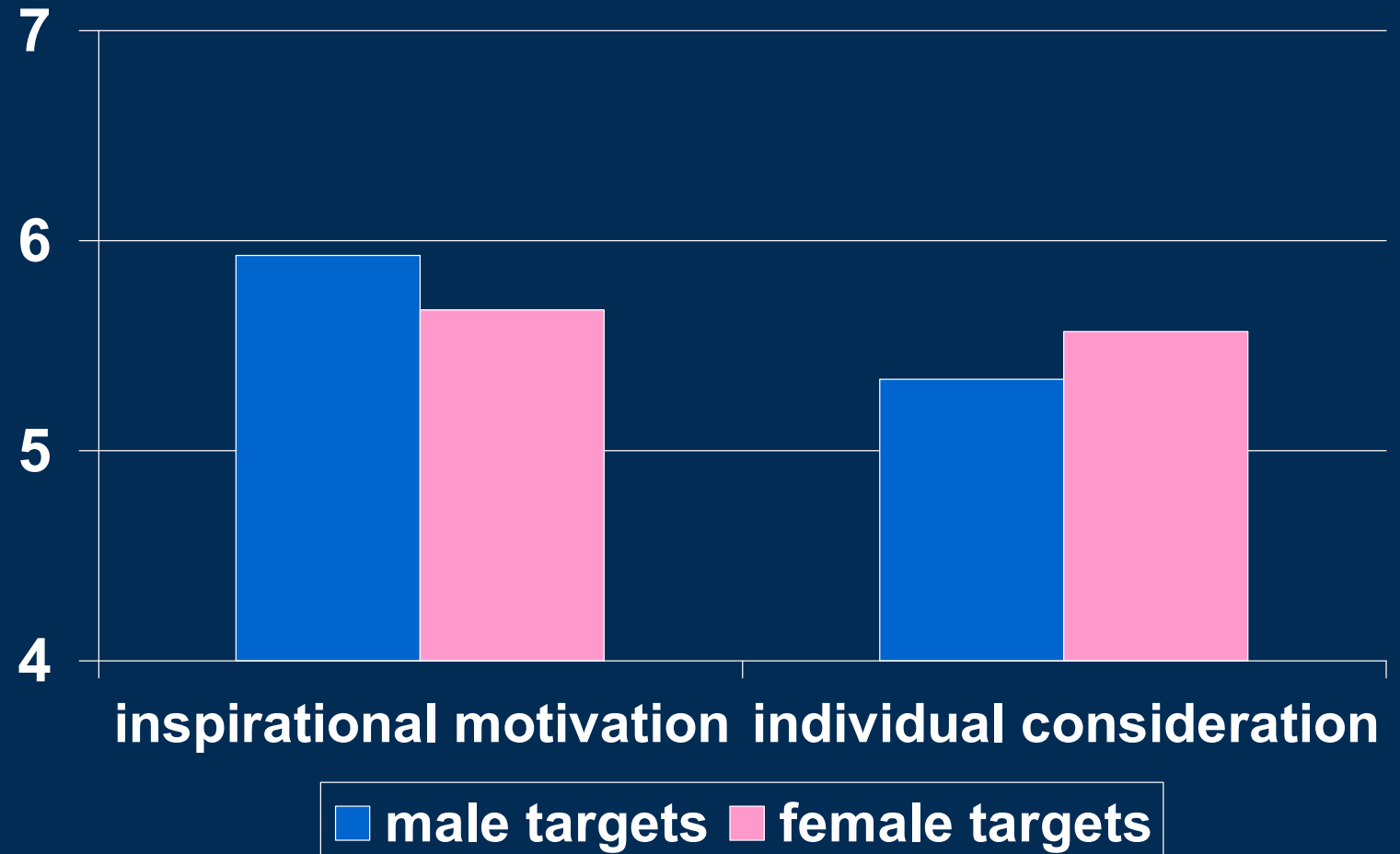
Method

- **Sample:**
 - > 282 male and 233 female participants in public settings in the U.S.A. and The Netherlands
 - 41 years, 74% management experience
- **Sample item:**
 - > *Expresses confidence that goals will be achieved.*
 - > How likely is it that this behavior would help a male middle manager to get promoted to senior manager? (very unlikely=1, very likely = 7)
- **Between subjects design:**
 - > 3 Target Sex: male / female / no-mention
 - > 3 Target Level: promotion to
middle manager / senior manager/ CEO

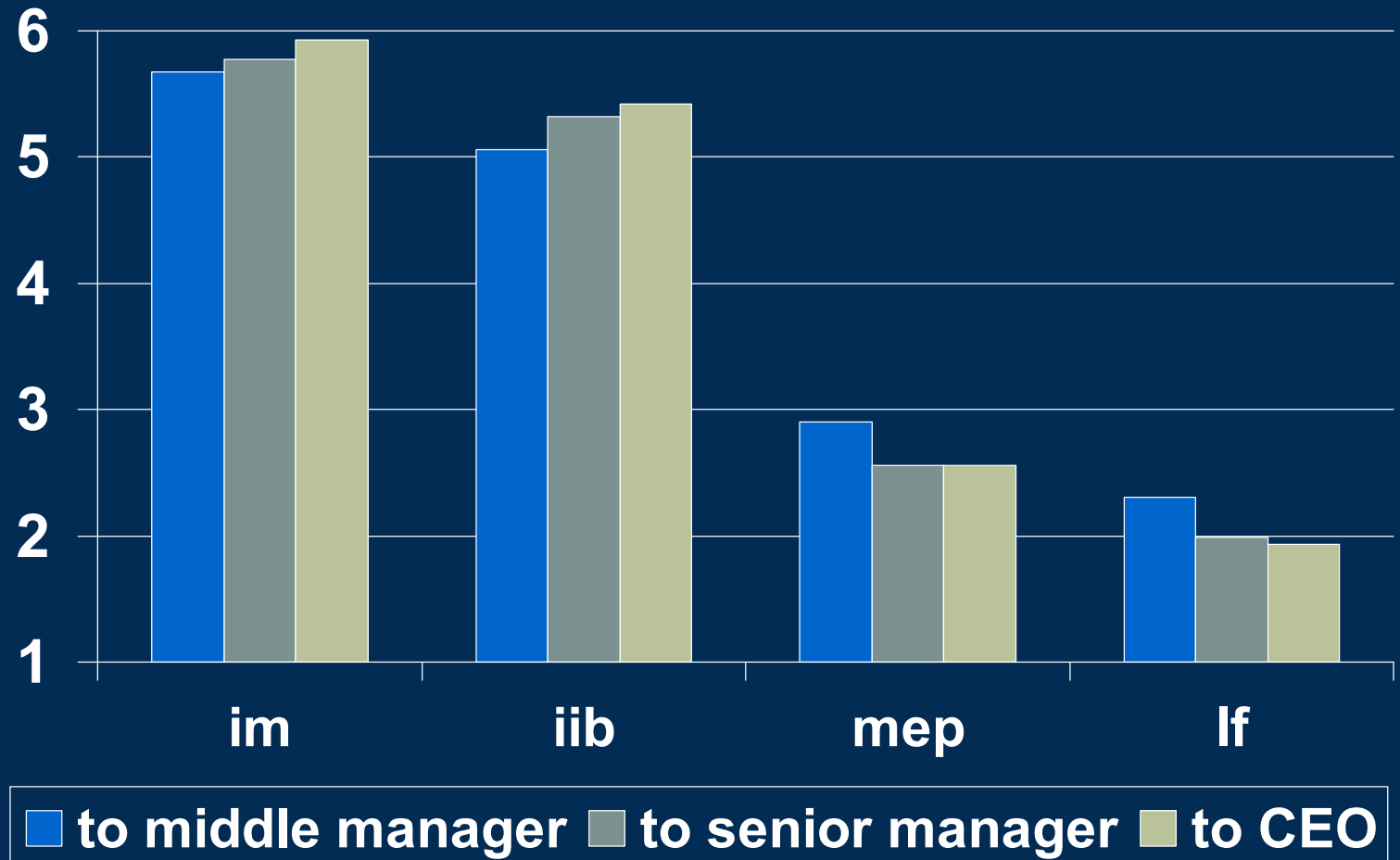
Country effect



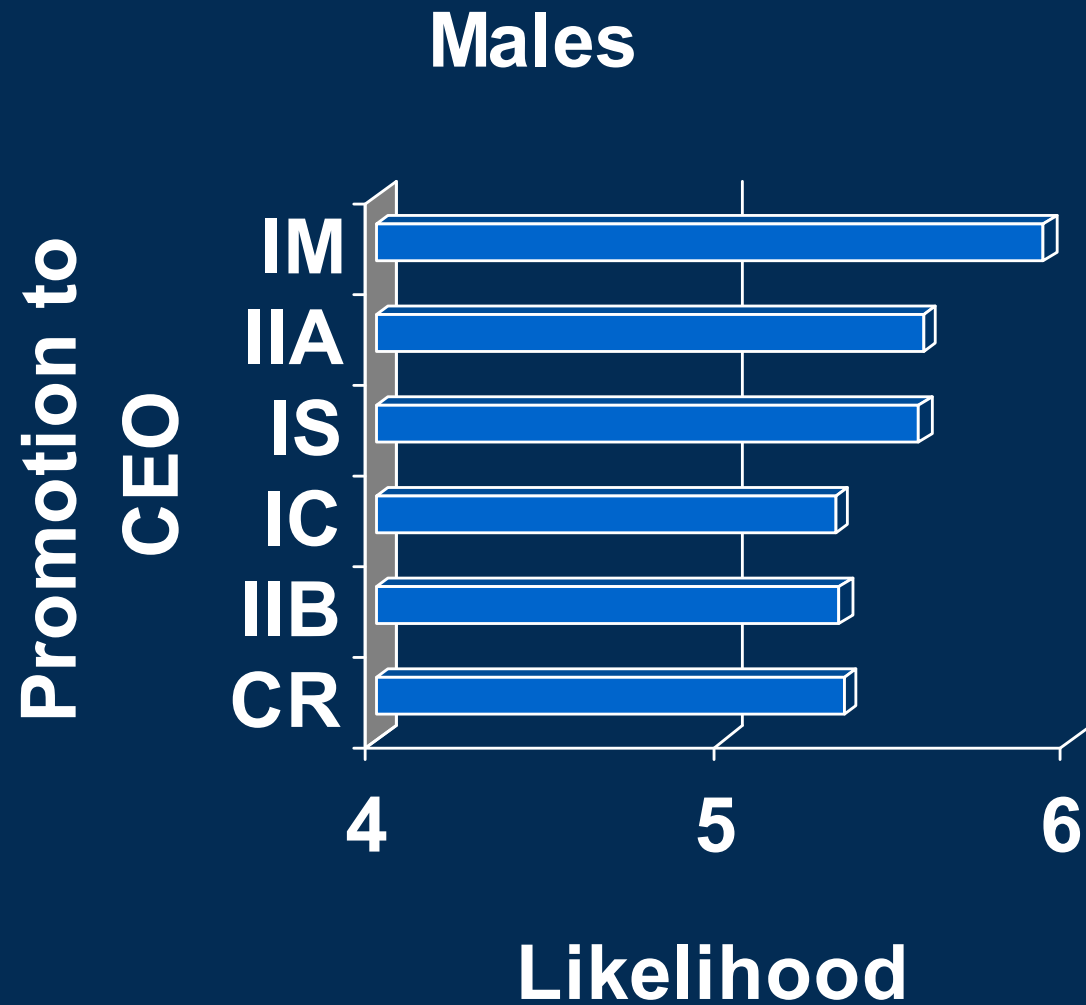
Target Sex Main Effects



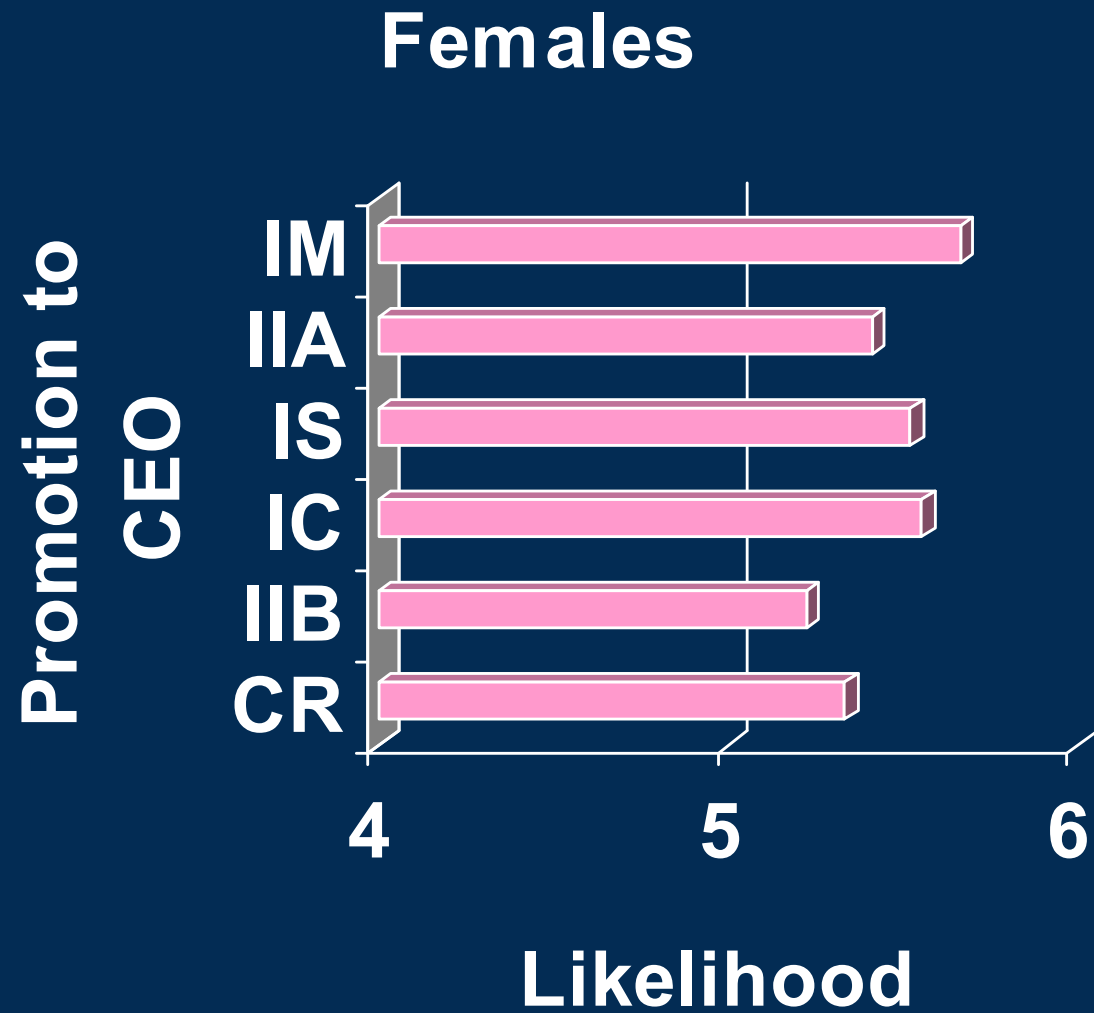
Promotion Level Main Effects



Styles in Ranked Order - men



Styles in Ranked Order - women



Discussion 'promotability of TF styles'

- Inspirational motivation was judged especially helpful to men's AND to the highest levels of leadership.
- Individualized consideration was judged especially helpful to women's promotion but no effect of level.
- Thus, the behaviors judged to be more likely to lead to men's (versus women's) promotion are also judged as likely to lead to promotion to the highest levels of leadership.

In the Blackbox: How does it happen?

- What happens in actual organizations?

Gendered career making practices:
On 'doing ambition'

Sools, Van Engen & Baerveldt (2007).

Journal of Organizational and Occupational Psychology

Case and Method (1)

- Multinational Corporation *Enir*
- Women make:
 - 25 % of managers
 - 15 % higher ranks
 - 0 % of top
- Targeting the glass ceiling:
 - Masculine culture →
 - Female turnover
 - WIM group installed, expertise hired

Case and Method (2)

- Analyses of organizational demographic statistics:
 - Turnover hypotheses disconfirmed
 - Part-time factor not sufficient
 - Career progression of women stalled

Careers and Gender

- Analyzing ‘talk’ about career making
 - > Cultural patterns on ‘how to get on’
 - > Membership Competencies:
 - Implicit and explicit knowledge on how to get on
 - Positioning oneself in the organizational arena
 - > → ‘Doing Ambition’

- In-Depth interviews:
- Sampling:
 - 3 women middle management & 3 male 'matches'
 - 3 women & 1 man that left the organization
 - 3 male & 3 female HR managers
- Characteristics:
 - Age 32-41
 - Variation coverage:
 - Departments (technical, commercial, personnel)
 - Demographic (full-time/part-time, children/no-children)

Case and Method (4)

- Interviews:
 - Wide range of topics
 - E.g. Promotion, opportunities, work and care, part-time work, ambition, drop-outs
 - After some interviews:
 - Explicit questions referring to gender removed
 - Ambition more central
- Transcribed verbatim, including non-verbal utterances

I: *Imagine an ambitious person. Describe that person.*

R: Brrr. Ambitious?

I: Yes.

R: (.) er (takes a deep breath) Somebody who wants to learn things, I consider an ambitious person.

I: *Mm. mm. Somebody who wants to learn things.*

R: Yes.

I: *Are there any other things?*

R; No, (laughs).

I: *That is what ambition entails?*

R: It is for me. Er ... So, that is, I myself see it as separate from getting on in in in hierarchical structures.

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(man, employed, respondent 2)

Ha, that's the idiot who's been at the same desk for years (laughs). The loser (laughs). But that's the way they feel about it, of course. Someone who's been at the same desk for years is really just an idiot.

- Show you want to gain promotion without showing you want to;

(man, employed, chief HR, respondent 12)

I think that if you're ambitious in your work, you show some commitment, some keenness in your work. When a project has been rounded off or is approaching completion, that you show I want more, more, more. Bigger, seeing other things, I want to learn. [...] But then this is an attitude you display all day, every day again. And then you don't necessarily need to mention this in an interview once or twice a year, 'I want more', but you just feel that some want to go further in their work and that others are fine the way they are.

The magical disappearance of ambition - 1

(Woman, employed, respondent 6)

I have a child, but as I am ambitious, I do not want to work part-time.

(Woman, no longer employed, respondent 10)

Look, before I had a child, when I was still working full-time, then yes, you're ambitious, you work long hours and you show enormous commitment of course. After my daughter's birth, I started working part-time, and then your commitment is still strong, only you feel that it's quite a bit less of course, because it's "only part-time", and I must say, I don't know whether it's still the case, but that's very much how it was experienced. Like, she's now working part-time, so she is probably less eager now. In any case, she's a lot less ambitious.

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R: You only notice that er with young women, the career er commitment vanishes into thin air the moment children arrive. And that is simply because their interest at that moment is in a totally different area. And that does not mean that as a result it is completely removed, that ambition, but it does come to quite a standstill.

I: *Mm.mm.*

R: And not just because there is a child, but also because the mind set has changed [...].

I: *And the same does not go for men?*

R: Not as far as I've noticed.

I: *Mm.mm.*

R: It is true that there is a more conscious er emphasis like, what am I doing in my work, and how do I redress the balance between privacy and work, so more attention for the surroundings. And more attention for the home. But you see, with women it is quite striking how that changes and that's a fact. The question is only when would you be able to pick it up where you left off.

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Double-Bind:

- Both leaving ambition implicit or making ambition explicit is impossible:
- Not stating ambition, it is taken as self-evident that women are not ambitious (any longer)
- To be seen as competent for the top, one should not explicitly state their ambition

Double-Bind:

(Woman, employee, respondent 6)

I: Do you think men and women have equal opportunities to gain top positions?

R: Er er [negative].

I: No?

R: No. [...] Unless you can prove you will never have children [laughs]. So that's why I think, well.

I: You think [this] because women are expected to have children.

R: No, because they believe that they will have children and become so emotionally dependent on the family that they will not be prepared to work as they did before.

I: Mm.mm. So you think only if women can prove this will not happen

R: [laughs] They may try, but no one is going to require such proof, are they?

I: So this is not an option then.

R: "Have you been sterilized?" [laughs]. No, that isn't an option. If you were to hand over a form or a statement by your GP, 'she has been sterilized', men would be offended. So, you can never get away with this, when you're fifty perhaps. Then you have your child but then, well, (.) too old for Enir, 'not because you're a woman', but.

I: They would be offended?

R: Yes, that you, because you imply that they think that they wouldn't give you a fair chance. That's why. They always [unintelligible] they have as much chance, but I don't think so.

Conclusion 'doing ambition'

- 'Doing ambition' the culturally right way is difficult for men and women
 - > Paradox of Ambition
- Additionally women face a
 - > Double Bind
- Not a matter of skills or competence, but success in maintaining the corporate discourse

Lingering questions:

- Actual differences between men and women in ambition?
- The role of part-time work?
- Motherhood: descriptive and prescriptive norm?

Motherhood Ideology :

van Engen, Dijkers & Vinkenburg

Associations between decision-making, family-friendly arrangements and career outcomes

Representative sample of employees of the Dutch labor market (525 respondents)

Individual

Organizational
Societal factors



Motherhood
ideology



Use of work-
home
arrangements



Career
outcomes

Motherhood Ideology :

van Engen, Dijkers & Vinkenbunrg

1st results.....

Ambition

- > No sex differences
- > Parenthood did not explain ambition
- > Working part-time does for women AND men

Motherhood Ideology

- > Individual MI-> work-home arrangements -> career success
- > Supervisor MI-> work-home arrangements - > career success
- > Peers MI-> work-home arrangements - > career success

Advice for organizations:

- Hiring, selection and promotion systems: are they gender neutral?
- Work-home arrangements help, if carefully introduced
- Be aware of stereotypes on men, women and parents when making hiring, selection and promotion decisions
- Ambition may be a consequence rather than a predictor (or both)

Advice for Female Leaders

- Continue to use transformational leadership styles in workplace, but ***consider greater emphasis upon behaviors of inspirational motivation.***
 - > Talk optimistically about the future
 - > Express confidence that goals will be achieved
 - > Talk enthusiastically about what needs to be accomplished
 - > Articulate a compelling vision of the future

Thank you for your attention!