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## The Gendered Stereotype of the ‘Good Manager’ Sex Role Expectations towards Male and Female Managers\*\*

In the past 30 years, U.S. and international studies have shown that societal expectations of the ‘good manager’ are closely related to the male stereotype. However, it is not clear, whether this stereotype is the same for men and women alike in managerial positions. The results of a German study with 625 students and 376 professionals participating between 1997 and 2005 are presented in the short note below. The main findings of the study are: 1. Female managers are expected to conform more closely to male stereotypes than are male managers. 2. Higher expectations are set from women and respondents with practical experience than from men and those who are inexperienced. 3. The most recent trend shows that male stereotypes increasingly dominate over female stereotypes. We conclude by emphasizing the importance of highly structured and controlled procedures in order to prevent sex-related discrimination in organizational selection and performance appraisal.

Key words: **Manager, Selection, Sex Roles, Gender Studies, Germany**

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## Introduction

In an article in the German Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology the authors (Rustemeyer/Thrien 1989) asked a provocative question: *“The female manager – the male manager: How feminine, how masculine should they be?”* Their study responds to a research question, which has been the subject of discussion in the USA since the beginning of the 1970s, but addresses it from a German perspective. Their findings can therefore largely be transferred to the German situation, but (like prior American studies) they leave out a central aspect of this question. Namely, whether the male role stereotype is the same for men and women in managerial positions.

In the 1970s, when the male/female categorization was introduced to theoretical and empirical management research, the “women’s liberation movement” was just beginning to spread, and men dominated both management teaching and management practice in all industrialized nations. Thirty years have past and sensitivity to gender relevant issues in Germany seems to be ebbing away (Krell/Karberg 2002), after peaking in the first half of the 1990’s. During this period, the proportion of women in managerial positions in business, politics, research and teaching increased considerably. Nevertheless, only 10% or less of top management positions in Germany today are occupied by women. According to statistics published by the European Commission, only 7% of the full professorships at German Universities are held by women in the year 2000. The percent of members of the Human Resources and Organization Committee of the Association of Business Administration Professors who were women in 2001 was 8.5%. The share of top management positions in private industry held by women varies between 5% und 15% from industry to industry and overall correlates negatively with firm size: In 1999, of the 2,071 management and executive board members of the 500 biggest German companies only 18 (0.87%) were women (Schmacke 2000). This percentage is very low compared to figures in Great Britain, France, and Scandinavia.

Numerous reasons for women’s continued under-representation were discussed (Küpper 1994). We address one of the explanations in our paper and test it using the results of a structured survey carried out among students and junior managers. This hypothesis is that the under-representation of women in management positions can be attributed to gender-specific stereotypes that are apparent during the recruitment process. Stereotypes are typically personal characteristics or behaviours ascribed to groups of persons (Leyens et al. 1994: 11; Stroebe/Insko 1989: 4ff.). In this study we evaluate gender stereotypical expectations of male and female job applicants. They are less favourable for women because of the perceived incongruity between the female gender role and leadership roles (Eagly/Karau 2002; Hannover 2003; Steffens/Mehl 2003; Wänke et al. 2003).

## The Significance of Gender Stereotypes in the Selection Process

Several types of selection decisions often influence, directly or indirectly, whether a person is chosen for a leadership position. In addition to specifically recruiting potential junior managers, many companies employ formal performance appraisal systems for their own employees, which often entail an evaluation based on a discussion be-

tween the employee and his/her superior or are the result of a more long term informal mentoring relationship. Thus, organisations continually make selection decisions that, among other things, influence whether the proportion of women in top management positions changes over time. Only a small proportion of these decisions are made in the context of a human resource policy. The rest are a result of everyday behaviour that is not influenced to any great extent by human resource policy (Klimecki/Gmür 2005: 117ff.). The question facing organisations is how strongly they wish to structure and standardize this continuous process of selection decisions.

For the decision makers, selection decisions always involve twofold uncertainty:

- Uncertainty with respect to the requisite skills for the position to be filled: The skills needed for a leadership position are usually as multifaceted as they are individually controversial. There is no generally accepted set of qualities for successful leadership.
- Uncertainty concerning the characteristics of the candidate: No matter what the selection process is, the decisions are always based on the little information available regarding the person in question, who has to complement it by providing further information about his or her education and prior experience to form a more complete picture.

Selections are typically made under time pressure, necessitating a decision even when there are gaps in information. To reduce the observer's uncertainty these gaps are then generally filled in by stereotypical images of positions and persons to create the overall impression, although the person in question may not be aware of this (Bargh 1989; Spreemann 2000: 13ff.).

The extent of the uncertainty depends on the chosen selection process, and the influence of stereotypes is decisive for the process, with gender-role stereotypes influencing the interpretation of the observed behaviour of men and women as well as the assessment of potential and unobserved behaviour. Although the former is largely independent of the selected assessment process, the latter is significantly affected by the structure of the process. Studies of recruitment show that the more comprehensive and detailed (transparent) the information on the applicant and the position's requirements is, the less influence gender stereotypes have (Friedel-Howe 1994: 99). There is a high level of uncertainty in all selection processes that are not based on a systematic analysis of requirements. Several studies (e.g. Shaw 1972; Rosen/Jerde 1974a and 1974b; Glick et al. 1988; Steinpreis et al. 1999; Graves/Powell 1988) have shown that uncertainty of information in selection decisions increases the likelihood of a different evaluation of men and women. Women invariably receive less favourable decisions, in particular in those instances where the position to be filled is gender-typed as male (Cohen/Bunker 1975). Studies comparing salary and career development in larger companies (Stroh et al. 1992) as well as studies concerning the influence of a systematic analysis of requirements on the gender gap in salaries (Scholl/Cooper 1991) present a similar picture.

The results of these studies allow us to estimate the potential influence of gender stereotypes on recruitment decisions and raise the question to what extent these stereotypes can actually be verified.

## Recent Research on Managers and Gender Stereotypes

Empirical findings regarding gender and managerial roles published since the 1970s are predominantly based on two research approaches using different instruments and were developed virtually independently.

### *The BSRI Approach*

The first approach follows the Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI), developed in the early 1970s (Bem 1974). This is the most widely used sex role index in the literature since then (Beere 1990: 74). It consists of three scales: one masculine; one feminine; and one gender-neutral. Each contains 20 characteristics viewed as desirable for men and women in American society at the beginning of the 1970s (cf. table 1). Between 1979 and 2002, several studies in the U.S. and Germany that investigate the male and female stereotypes and the ideal manager profiles underlying this survey.

**Tab. 1: BSRI Personal Attributes (Bem 1974)**

masculine items	neutral items	feminine items
acts as a leader	adaptable	affectionate
aggressive	conceited	cheerful
ambitious	conscientious	childlike
analytical	conventional	compassionate
assertive	friendly	does not use harsh language
athletic	happy	eager to soothe hurt feelings
competitive	helpful	feminine
defends own beliefs	inefficient	flattering
dominant	jealous	gentle
energetic	likable	gullible
has leadership abilities	moody	loves children
independent	reliable	loyal
individualistic	secretive	sensitive to the needs of others
makes decisions easily	sincere	shy
masculine	solemn	soft spoken
self-reliant	tactful	sympathetic
self-sufficient	theatrical	tender
strong personality	truthful	understanding
willing to take a stand	unpredictable	warm-hearted
willing to take risks	unsystematic	easy-going

In studies based on the BSRI, respondents are asked to characterize an ideal manager using the 60 attributes or using a shorter version with 30 attributes. Between the mid-1970s to the end of the 1990s, Powell/Butterfield (1979; 1984; 1989; 2002) and Powell/Kido (1994) conducted several studies investigating the question to what extent the image of the ideal manager is linked to stereotypical male, female or gender-neutral characteristics.

The results of the U.S. studies consistently show that the ideal manager is predominantly described using male attributes, whereas stereotypical female attributes, to the extent they enter at all, are selected only in combination with male characteristics (cf. table 2). The results were the same, whether the groups interviewed consisted of

men or women, students or professionals. Over time there was, however, a decline in the preference for the purely masculine type (Powell et al. 2002: 189).

The study by Rustemeyer/Thrien (1989) in Germany confirms the U.S. findings. In both studies the student respondents displayed a stronger preference for the masculine stereotype than the professionals did.

**Table 2: Overview of the empirical studies based on BSRI and similar role inventories**

publication	country	respondents	research tool	preferred stereotypes	Differences between groups of respondents
Powell/ Butterfield 1979	USA	574 students  110 professionals	BSRI	68,6% masculine 1,4% feminine 13,1% mixed 73,6% masculine 1,8% feminine 5,5% mixed	no sign. differences between male and female respondents
Powell/ Butterfield 1984	USA	627 students	BSRI	74,8% masculine 0,6% feminine 12,9% mixed	no sign. differences between male and female respondents
Arkkelin/ Simmons 1985	USA	240 students	BSRI (parts)	preference for masculine items	k.A.
Powell/ Butterfield 1989	USA	201 students  127 professionals	BSRI (3x 10 items)	65,4% masculine 2,6% feminine 24,8% mixed 62,3% masculine 1,8% feminine 19,3% mixed	no sign. differences between male and female respondents
Rustemeyer/ Thrien 1989	GER	109 students  54 professionals (only male)	BSRI (German)	86,2% masculine 1,8% feminine 9,2% mixed 64,8% masculine 3,7% feminine 7,4% mixed	no sign. differences between male and female respondents  significant differences between male students and professionals
Powell/ Kido 1994	USA  JAP	249 students  264 students	BSRI (2 x 10 items)	USA: preference for masculine items  Japan: preference for feminine items	significant differences between USA and Japan
Powell et al. 2002	USA	206 students  142 managers	BSRI (3x 10 items)	47,6% masculine 6,8% feminine 29,6% mixed 56,9% masculine 2,4% feminine 17,1% mixed	no sign. differences between male and female respondents
Willemssen 2002	NED	143 students	used their own role inventory	preference for masculine items	Male respondents value feminine stereotypes more than female respondents do.

Particularly striking are the results of the only Japanese study (Powell/Kido 1994): the respondents preferred female to male attributes, in a culture that is considered distinctly masculine (e.g. Hofstede, 1980). The researchers themselves were unable to offer an explanation for their findings, which surprised even them. It is interesting to note that the Japanese respondents (like the Americans) described the typical American manager using mainly male attributes, whereas the typical Japanese manager and the ideal manager are typecast as having more female attributes. One reason for this could be that the general understanding of leadership in Japan as opposed to the U.S. includes many more female attributes (e.g. loyal, sympathetic or yielding).

A potential problem with the inventory is that it is not clear whether the ideal manager is more masculine or more feminine. Sixty attributes are not specifically relevant to the areas of leadership and management. In particular, 20 of the female and 20 of the gender-neutral characteristics at a first glance do not appear to correspond with the categories of the attribute-oriented leadership research. Thus, it is hardly surprising that all the studies mentioned arrive at the same conclusion. Namely, some respondents did not use any of the stereotypically female attributes in their description of the ideal manager.

### *The SDI/PAQ-Approach*

The second approach does not assume a predefined type, but identifies the type for each study. The tools used are characteristic indexes, such as the Schein Descriptive Index (SDI) with 92 attributes (Schein 1973) or the Personal Attributes Questionnaire (PAQ) with 24 attributes (Spence/Helmreich 1978). Both questionnaires contain a number of characteristics that are considered particularly discriminating when used to describe men and women. The respondents are asked to describe typical men, typical women, and the ideal manager using these lists of attributes. The manager type is then identified by determining the similarities between the ideal manager and men on the one hand and women on the other hand. The correlation coefficient ( $r^2$ ) is generally used for measurement.

Similar to studies based on BSRI, the results of these studies are remarkably constant (cf. table 3):

- In all studies, the ideal manager profile substantially resembled the typical male profile. The correlation coefficients are always highly significant ( $p < .01$ ) over the entire period in both countries and for all respondents: students and managers, men and women alike.
- In the majority of studies, there was not much similarity between the male respondents' ratings of the manager profile and the typical description of females, while there was a significant positive resemblance between the women's ratings of the two. The main reason for this is that the female respondents perceive fewer differences between typical men and typical women than the male respondents do. Nonetheless, in most of the older cases, there is more resemblance between the profile of the ideal manager and the typical male profile than with the typical female profile. In a number of more recent American studies, however, the ratings converge (Brenner et al. 1989), or are even reversed (Orser 1994).

**Table 3: Overview of empirical studies based on SDI and PAQ**

publication	coun-try	respon-dents	re-search tool	Correlation scores (male/female respondents) * = $p < .01$ / + = $p < .05$	differences between groups of respon-dents
Schein 1973 / 1975	USA	467 managers	SDI	.62* / .54* manager - man .06 / .30* manager - woman	male respondents with stronger stereotypes
Massengill/ Di Marco 1979	USA	160 professionals	SDI	.62* / .67* manager - man .00 / .35* manager - woman	male respondents with stronger stereotypes
Brenner et al. 1989	USA	593 managers	SDI	.72* / .59* manager - man -.01 / .52* manager - woman	male respondents with stronger stereotypes
Heilman et al. 1989	USA	268 managers	SDI	.54* manager - man -.24 manager - woman	<i>only male respondents</i>
Schein et al. 1989	USA	238 students	SDI	.70* / .51* manager - man .10 / .43* manager - woman	male respondents with stronger stereotypes
Schein/ Müller 1992	GER	446 students	SDI	.74* / .66* manager - man -.04 / .19+ manager - woman	male respondents with stronger stereotypes
Schein/ Müller 1992	GBR	151 students	SDI	.67* / .60* manager - man .02 / .31* manager - woman	male respondents with stronger stereotypes
Schein/ Davidson 1993	GBR	379 students	SDI	.50* / .55* manager - man .05 / .35* manager - woman	male respondents with stronger stereotypes
Foster 1994	GBR	240 lecturers	SDI	.46* / .46* manager - man .17 / .04 manager - woman	higher ranked lecturers with stronger stereotypes
Orser 1994	CAN	297 students	SDI	.66* / .38* manager - man .00 / .47* manager - woman	male respondents with stronger stereotypes
Dodge et al. 1995	USA	190 students	SDI	.52* / .47* manager - man .03 / .31* manager - woman	male respondents with stronger stereotypes
Norris/Wylie 1995	USA/ CAN	924 students	PAQ	.88* / .71* manager - man .22 / .60* manager - woman	male respondents with stronger stereotypes
Schein et al. 1996	JAP	316 students	SDI	.54* / .68* manager - man -.07 / -.04 manager - woman	female respondents with stronger stereotypes
Schein et al. 1996	ROC	273 students	SDI	.91* / .91* manager - man -.04 / .28* manager - woman	male respondents with stronger stereotypes
Sauers et al. 2002	NZL	318 students	SDI	.72* / .66* manager - man .36* / .46* manager - woman	male respondents with stronger stereotypes
Vinnicombe/ Singh 2002	GBR	363 managers	PAQ	no information	no differences between male and female respondents
Fernandez/ Cabral-Cardoso 2003	POR	299 students	used their own role inventory	Managers are more similar to men than women. Men and women in management positions are similar.	male respondents with stronger stereotypes

- The male and female respondents' description of the ideal manager are largely the same, but the male respondents are convinced that women are significantly different than this ideal profile. The female respondents, on the other hand, find a significant similarity.

There were no notable differences in the responses of students and mid-level managers, although there were great differences in the respondents' ages.

In the US studies carried out between 1970 und 1990, there has been an increasing disparity in the responses of men and women. Women viewed the ideal manager as possessing characteristics ascribed to both men and women, whereas in the men's view the attributes of the typical woman are still far from those of the ideal manager. There is also an interesting Portuguese study by Fernandez/Cabral-Cardoso (2003) to date that distinguishes which uses its own role inventory. In that study the descriptions of typical male and female managers are quite similar. The largest difference is between the descriptions of typical female managers and typical women. The results, however, leave the question unanswered as to whether or not the ideal profiles are the same when applied to men or women in managerial positions.

The results of a number of international comparisons considerably resemble the masculinity index of Hofstede (1980) (cf. table 4). Further, a comparison of German and U.S. studies shows a stronger preference for male stereotypes in Germany.

**Table 4: Masculine preferences in international comparison**

	Netherlands	Portugal	Canada	New Zealand	USA	UK	Germany	Japan	China
Average preference of masculine stereotypes SDI / PAQ <sup>(1)</sup>		+ (?) <sup>(4)</sup> Fernandez/ Cabral-Cardoso 2003	+33 Orser 1994 Norris/ Wylie 1995	+28 Sauers et al. 2002	+42 Schein 1973, 1975 Massengill/ DiMarco 1979 Schein et al 1989 Brenner et al.1989 Heilman et al. 1989 Norris/Wylie 1995 Dodge et al. 1995	+38 Schein/ Müller 1992 Schein/ Davidson 1993 Foster 1994	+63 Schein/ Müller 1992	+67 Schein et al. 1996	+79 Schein et al. 1996
Average preference of masculine stereotypes BSRI <sup>(2)</sup>	+ (?) <sup>(4)</sup> Willem- sen 2002				+62 Powell/ Butterfield 1979, 1984, 1989 Powell et al 2002		+73 Rustemeyer/ Thrien 1989	- (?) <sup>(4)</sup> Powell/ Kido 1994	
Masculinity <sup>(3)</sup> (Hofstede 1980)	+ 14	+ 31	+ 52	+ 58	+ 62	+ 66	+ 66	+ 95	

<sup>(1)</sup> Range from -1 to +1: Difference between the correlation scores of manager-man and manager-woman (average score from male and female respondents). Positive values represent a preference for masculine stereotypes.

<sup>(2)</sup> Range from -1 to +1: Difference between %-scores of masculine and feminine stereotypes. Positive values represent a preference for masculine stereotypes

<sup>(3)</sup> Range from 0 to 100. Positive values represent a preference for masculine values.

<sup>(4)</sup> Tendencies +/- ; published scores are not comparable.



As previously mentioned, the results of the Japanese study by Powell/Kido (1994) present a striking anomaly. This study shows a relative preference for the female stereotypes, while the approaches used in the other two countries produce very high masculine values. One possible explanation could be that the gender-typical characteristics of the BSRI cannot be successfully transferred to Japan. In that case, there appears to be a methodological advantage in the approach of Schein et al. with respect to studies that make international comparisons: the SDI does not predetermine male or female types, but rather identifies them each time on the basis of the differences the survey data produce.

The findings of the previously discussed studies lead to the following hypotheses for the present study:

- H1: *The ideal manager is more strongly characterised by the stereotypically attributes.*
- H2: *There are no significant differences in the preferences for male and female attributes of men and women.*
- H3: *There are no significant differences in the preferences for male and female attributes of students and managers.*
- H4: *The preference for male or female attributes is dependent on the gender of the person under evaluation, in that a greater similarity of preferred women in managerial positions with male stereotypes is expected than of preferred men.*

Numerous findings from studies with a similar methodical approach exist for the first three hypotheses, but not for the last hypothesis, which is the result of research on the influence of gender in selection decisions: If a decision-maker with a preference for masculine traits assumes that women generally have more female than male attributes, he will view women suitable for a managerial position only when they are particularly strongly endowed with the attributes generally felt to be missing. This would compensate for the role incongruity of women in managerial positions (Eagly/Karau 2002), but means that a woman is expected to have more male attributes than a man in order to be an ideal manager. In addition, the study by Heilman/Stopeck (1985) shows that the assessment of men's and women's suitability for managerial positions is impacted differently by outside influences (such as physical attractiveness). Thus, there are strong indications that when investigating the influence of gender stereotypes, the gender of the person being evaluated plays a significant role.

## Methods and Sample

As part of the present study, we carried out several surveys of students and junior employees in the banking sector between 1997 and 2005 in order to measure to what extent there is a preference for masculine traits in the ideal manager. Our approach largely follows that of Powell et al. (2002) based on the BSRI, but we use a gender role inventory specifically developed for the analysis of managerial profiles (Gmür 1991).

One aim of our study was to identify the preference for male and female stereotypes, independent of each other, an approach not permitted by SDI (Schein 1973) which does not describe attributes as stereotypically male or female. BSRI (Bem 1974), on the other hand, assumes such a differentiation. However, as previously mentioned, the validity of the feminine scale to measure professional attributes is questionable.

We used a questionnaire including 30 attributes, equally divided into those that are stereotypically male and female, and those that are gender-neutral. The 30 attributes emerged from a total of 105, compiled from various sources. The criterion for their selection was their assumed relevance for leadership in the theoretical model of Bass (1990). In a lecture at the University of Konstanz on "Management and Organization", we presented the 105 attributes (in German) to 170 students (85 men and 85 women) and asked them to "allocate each attribute in the list to one of the following statements: (a) is more masculine, i.e. is allegedly found more often in men than in women; (b) is androgynous, i.e. is allegedly found in men and women alike; (c) is more specifically feminine, i.e. is allegedly found more frequently in women than in men. The value +1 was given for each male characterisation, the value -1 for each female characterisation and the value 0 for each gender-neutral characterisation. The result was a mean value of -0.004 ranging from +0.78 for "dominant" und "aggressive" characteristics to -0.90 for "emotional" characteristics. Based on these values, we compiled three lists of these 105 attributes. One list contained 34 distinctly male attributes with a mean value of +0.52, a second list included 35 distinctly female attributes with a mean value of -0.52, and a third list comprised 36 attributes, with a value between the other two. Only in a very few cases were there significant differences between the responses from the men and the women.

**Table 5: Attributes of the KMG I (Gmür 1991)**

male attributes	neutral attributes	female attributes
analytical	able to work under pressure	adept at dealing with people
competent	active	considerate
confident	adaptive	cooperative
convincing	critical	creative
decisive	eloquent	demanding
efficient	integrated thinker	mediative
foresighted	intelligent	open-minded
goal-oriented	motivating	sociable
has strong nerves	reliable	spontaneous
independent	results-oriented	well-balanced

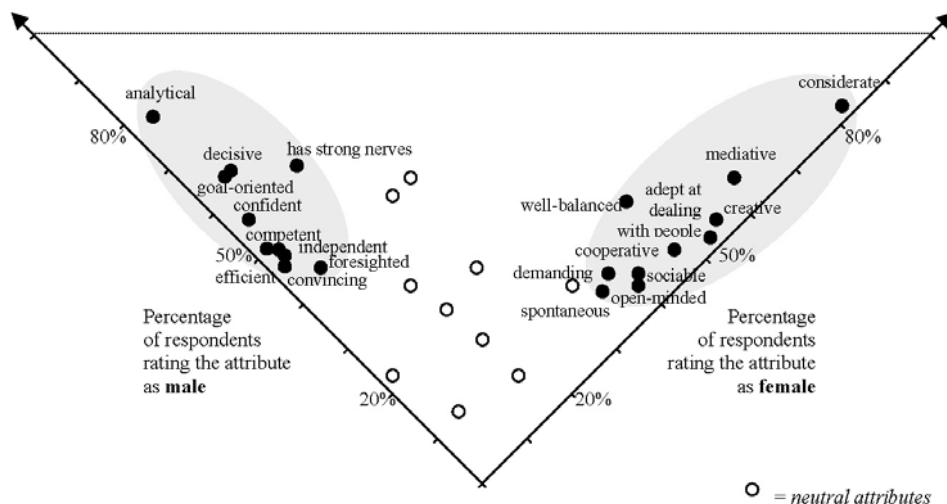
We then presented the three lists to another group of 167 students (85 men and 82 women) and asked them "which attributes do successful female managers and successful male managers need today, and which attributes should they preferably not have? Choose from each of the three lists the five most important and the five most unfavourable attributes." The responses represented a preference for each stereotype: male, female, or gender-neutral. The most preferred attributes were chosen from each of the three lists (cf. table 5).

Again, there were no significant differences between the responses from the men and the women. Also, there were only a few changes in the gender role typing between the original lists and the shortened lists. Based on the first questionnaire, the ten male attributes have a mean value of +0.50 (previous value: 0.52) and apparently represent the total 34 attributes well. The same applies to the gender-neutral attributes, which have a mean value of +0.06 (previous value: +0.03). There was a clear swing in the female attributes to a mean value of -0.43 (previous value: -0.52), thus

showing a less distinct female profile. But with a dispersion of 0.13 the attributes of the three groups of remain quite distinct.

In the course of further investigation, we only take into consideration the preferences for male and female attributes. Figure 1 shows the dispersion of the attributes as a result of the initial sex role typing. The neutral attributes are marked by the light-coloured dots.

**Figure 1: Sex role typing of the 30 attributes included in the KMG (Gmür 1991)**



The factor analysis based on the results of the first survey for these 20 attributes confirms that the consistency in the male scale is significantly higher than in the female scale (cf. table 6).

For this reason, the stereotypical female characteristics "spontaneous", "well-balanced" and "demanding" were subsequently eliminated and not taken into account for the further evaluation of data.

In the studies conducted between 1997 and 2001, we proceeded as follows: One half of the respondents was presented with a list entitled "Successful Leadership" that included all 30 attributes in alphabetical order and was given the following task: "The demands managers face are in a constant state of change. Thus, the question which attributes a successful manager should possess is repeatedly asked. Today, men occupy 90% of all managerial positions. Therefore, our question is: Which of the following attributes should a man possess so that you consider him to be a potentially successful manager? Select from the following list the 10 attributes that you personally feel to be important for men in managerial positions. Then, select the 5 attributes you consider to be least important." The other half of the respondents was given the same list with a slightly modified task, although this modification was not made clear to the respondents: "[...] Today, women occupy 10% of all managerial positions. Therefore, our question is: Which of the following attributes should a woman possess so that you consider her to be a potentially successful manager? [...]". Using this method we were able to differentiate the results according to the gender of the person under evaluation.

**Table 6: Factor analysis for the male and female attributes (2 factors, varimax rotated)**

	Factor 1 17,7% explained variance	Factor 2 11,5% explained variance
<i>male stereotypes:</i>		
competent	,73	-,02
independent	,69	-,02
goal-oriented	,65	-,25
efficient	,55	,07
analytical	,53	-,06
convincing	,53	,04
decisive	,52	,00
confident	,51	-,08
has strong nerves	,49	,11
foresighted	,48	,19
<i>female stereotypes:</i>		
sociable	,02	,58
cooperative	-,12	,56
considerate	-,30	,56
adept at dealing with people	-,03	,55
open-minded	-,03	,55
mediative	-,21	,53
creative	,11	,50
spontaneous	-,03	,30
well-balanced	,09	,23
demanding	-,07	-,11
	(10 items)	(7 items)
reliability (Cronbach alpha)	0,76	0,64

An index consisting of positive and negative selection decisions for the ten stereotypically male and the seven stereotypically female attributes was developed for the evaluation.

$$\text{stereotyping index} = \frac{m+}{20} - \frac{w+}{14} + \frac{w-}{10} - \frac{m-}{10}$$

- m+ = Number of male attributes rated as most important (max. 10)  
 w+ = Number of female attributes rated as most important (max. 7)  
 m- = Number of male attributes rated as less important (max. 5)  
 w- = Number of female attributes rated as less important (max. 5)

The index was designed to show the maximum value of +1 for a distinctly masculine and -1 for a distinctly female type.<sup>1</sup> The value zero represents a typing where the preferences for male and female attributes are more or less the same, or where is a domi-

<sup>1</sup> The value +1 means that all ten male attributes were considered to be very important, and five of the seven female attributes were considered less important. Correspondingly, the minimal value -1 means that all seven female attributes – but none of the male attributes – were considered to be very important, and five of the ten male attributes were rated as less important.

nation of gender-neutral characteristics. The different denominators in the formula correspond to the maximum number of male or female attributes that one respondent considered particularly important or less important.<sup>2</sup>

## Data Set

The 1001 respondents in the present study – 639 men and 360 women – consisted of students of public and private management at the University of Konstanz and junior managers from the banking sector, who in addition to their professional activity, were enrolled in an advanced management programme. The average age of the 625 students was 22 and 56% of them were men; the majority came from southwest Germany. The 376 junior managers (78% men) came from all regions of western Germany, their average age was 29 and they had an average of 10 years professional experience.

The survey of the junior managers took place in 1997/98 and 2005 as part of a two-day mandatory course on the subject of leadership. The survey of the students consisted of three waves in 1997/98, 2001/02 and 2005 during diverse public policy management courses

## Results

The result for all respondents was a mean value of +0.129 for the index of "types", with a standard deviation of 0.26, showing that when this instrument is used, male attributes are again preferred to female attributes. Table 7 shows how frequently the 30 attributes were rated particularly important or less important.

Except for the two attributes "adept at dealing with people" and "cooperative", the female stereotypes take a back seat to the male stereotypes. All male attributes are more frequently considered particularly important than less important, but this is true only of the first two female attributes. For 71% of the respondents, the male attributes outweigh the female attributes. This rating is similarly high for both the male respondents at 69.8% and the female respondents at 73.3%. The mean values of the index of types are at +0.114 and +0.156 respectively. The difference is significant ( $p(t) = 0,014$ ) and can be found with different levels of significance in all the subgroups of managers and students in 1997/98, 2001 and 2005. Thus, we can assume that the assigning of types also depends on the gender of the respondent.

A comparison of the differences between the students and the junior managers from the banking sector in 1997/98 and 2005 shows a significant difference in that the junior managers – men and women alike – describe the ideal manager as being more masculine. The differences are more marked in the later year: In 2005 the re-

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<sup>2</sup> Five out of the total of 30 attributes were to be marked unimportant. These could include a maximum of five of the ten male attributes or five of the seven female attributes. At the same time, ten of the 30 attributes were to be marked particularly important. In the most extreme case all ten male or all seven female attributes could be included. The gender-neutral attributes located between the male and the female types accounted for the rest. To set the range between the maximum values of +1 and -1, all denominators in the formula were doubled.

spondents characterize the ideal manager as being significantly more masculine than the respondents in 1997/1998 did.

**Table 7: Preferences for the ten male and seven female typed attributes**

rank:	attribute:	stereotype:	percentage of respondents, rating the attribute as ...	
			... one of the 10 most important attributes	... one of the 5 less important attributes
1	adept at dealing with people	female	63,4%	1,7%
2	competent	male	57,0%	5,4%
3	convincing	male	50,8%	4,8%
4	goal-oriented	male	46,0%	5,5%
5	decisive	male	46,1%	6,7%
6	confident	male	43,9%	11,0%
7	cooperative	female	37,0%	9,2%
8	foresighted	female	35,5%	4,2%
	<i>mean score of the 10 male attributes</i>	male	38,1%	8,9%
9	analytical	male	33,2%	16,8%
10	efficient	male	20,2%	8,3%
11	has strong nerves	male	26,0%	14,5%
12	independent	male	22,7%	11,4%
	<i>mean score of the 7 female attributes</i>		27,1%	23,1%
13	open-minded	female	20,7%	25,9%
14	creative	female	22,8%	34,5%
15	mediative	female	14,9%	24,3%
16	sociable	female	16,4%	28,0%
17	considerate	female	14,3%	38,5%

**Table 8: Comparison of the mean typing values**

group comparison:	mean typing values	difference:	
		absolute	t-value
male/female respondents	+ 0,114 / + 0,156	0,042	2,247*
student/junior manager respondents 1997-98	+ 0,046 / + 0,105	0,060	2,401*
student/junior manager respondents 2005	+ 0,144 / + 0,212	0,068	2,601**
student respondents 1997-98 / 2005	+ 0,046 / + 0,144	0,098	3,688***
junior manager respondents 1997-98 / 2005	+ 0,105 / + 0,212	0,107	4,355***
person under evaluation: male/female manager	+ 0,094 / + 0,163	0,070	4,305***
* = $p < 0,05$ / ** = $p < 0,01$ / *** = $p < 0,001$ / n.s. = non significant			

The last difference we examined (hypothesis 4) is significant: Distinctly more male characteristics are ascribed to the ideal female manager than to the ideal male manager and, as table 9 shows, this is true at various significance levels for most of the subgroups. This investigation also clearly shows something that most previous studies have neglected. Both students and junior managers expect a female manager to possess more stereotypically male attributes than men in managerial positions. Over time, however, there is a decline in the preference for the masculine type.

**Table 9: Comparison of stereotypes dependent on the manager's sex**

respondents:	stereotypes towards ...			difference between men – women	
	all	men as managers	women as managers	absolute	t-value
male (n=639)	+ 0,114	+ 0,101	+ 0,127	0,026	1,259 (n.s.)
female (n=360)	+ 0,156	+ 0,083	+ 0,227	0,145	5,577***
students (n=625)	+ 0,115	+ 0,070	+ 0,158	0,088	4,154***
junior managers (n=376)	+ 0,152	+ 0,131	+ 0,173	0,042	1,680 (n.s.)
junior managers 1997/98 (n=212)	+ 0,105	+ 0,086	+ 0,127	0,041	1,322 (n.s.)
students 1997/98 (n=219)	+ 0,046	- 0,021	+ 0,107	0,128	3,415**
students 2001/02 (n=217)	+ 0,159	+ 0,115	+ 0,202	0,087	2,576*
students 2005 (n=189)	+ 0,144	+ 0,121	+ 0,167	0,046	1,256 (n.s.)
junior managers 2005 (n=164)	+ 0,212	+ 0,195	+ 0,228	0,033	0,871 (n.s.)

\* =  $p < 0,05$  / \*\* =  $p < 0,01$  / \*\*\* =  $p < 0,001$  / n.s. = non significant

All six subgroups have a strong preference for female managers to have male rather than female attributes. Thus, the study confirms hypotheses 1 and 4. On the other hand, there is a significant difference between students and junior managers, as well as between male and female respondents. Finally, there are definite indications of a shift in the preference for masculine characteristics over time, which requires further investigation. For hypothesis 2, the study shows a significant difference for all groups in the preferences of the male and female respondents for the 1997/98 and the 2005 sample, but this is not the case for the 2001/02 sample.

## Discussion

The results of the study confirm the findings of previous German and American studies of the gender roles ascribed to managers and extend them to include the difference between men and women in managerial positions. They corroborate the validity of the measuring instrument used in this study and are consistent with the role incongruity theory (Eagly/Karau 2002). The findings also confirm the assumption that previous studies using a similar approach have overlooked: the significant connection between the ideal manager and the gender of the person under evaluation.

The study's results are important for understanding the selection process in that they reveal a twofold discrimination mechanism: Female applicants for senior and junior management positions are not only confronted with expectations different from the female stereotype, but are also expected to show more stereotypically male attributes than their male counterparts. These findings illustrate how great the danger of discrimination against women in selection process is, when decisions allow a great deal of room for gender stereotyping. The more the decision-maker compensates for lack of observations by relying on a general opinion, the greater the tendency to underestimate the competence of female applicants.

Although the time during which this study was conducted, 1997 to 2005, is much shorter than that of the North American studies between 1975 and 2002 conducted by Schein et al. and Powell/Butterfield, the data collected in this study are nonetheless



useful. The North American studies suggest that the managerial stereotype is more feminine in North America compared with Europe. This German study shows the stereotype of the ideal manager has become increasingly masculine. In teaching of management, the male model of the dominant charismatic leader seems to have increasingly replaced the rival model of the more feminine, cooperative partner, similar to the manager of the 1980s. Although major components of charismatic leadership (Bass/Avolio 1993), such as “inspirational“ or “intellectual stimulation“ are neither found among the ten male nor among the female attributes, there are similarities with the male attributes “objective-oriented”, “foresighted”, “confident“ and “convincing”.

Are the results of this study applicable to the selection process? The approach of this study is in line with the dominant questionnaire research on the importance of stereotypes in hypothetical situations of assessment. Therefore, it is also subject to the same limitations with respect to external validity. The results are significant on the assumption that selection decisions are influenced by gender perceptions, and that the demands of the position to be filled cannot be completely met by observable skills: Obviously, the tendency to assess men and women differently is not relevant when the gender of the candidate is not known to the assessors, or when the requisite skills for the position are completely transparent and can be observed by everyone. Neither of these conditions is realistic, although with increased standardization in selection processes, stereotyping may be expected to have less effect. On the other hand, consistent with Neubauer’s (1990) ambiguous findings, it is not likely that women serving on the board of an assessment centre will make much difference.

The “ideal male manager“ is still expected to have stereotypically male attitudes and to behave like a man, and this is even more true for the “ideal female manager“. These expectations are culturally deep-seated and reproduced in the media through the dramatization of management in the biographies of successful managers, in press reports and even in cartoons (Sheridan 1994). They are also introduced as “practical“ illustrative material in academic research and teaching. Here, at least, education, and especially advanced education in the field of business administration could make an effort to counteract these expectations.

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