Chapter 3

Above and Beyond:
The Influence of Hierarchical Level and Gender on Perceptions of Leadership
Abstract

Two crucial characteristics of individuals in organizations, hierarchical position and gender, and their effect on ratings of leadership styles were examined. Based on the reasoning that leadership is an interpersonal phenomenon, it was hypothesized that hierarchical position and gender would have an influence on how leadership styles are rated. In one comprehensive study, ratings of leadership were collected from 360 degrees sources. First, the influence of the hierarchical role of the rater on ratings of leadership styles was examined. Because of the different hierarchical role each rater had towards the leader, it was argued that different raters experience a different behavioral interaction with the individual being rated. Compared with subordinates, supervisors rated leaders higher on coaching, yielding, and withdrawn leadership, and lower on inspirational, directive, and authoritarian leadership. Surprisingly, peers provided higher ratings of distrustful leadership and lower ratings of participative leadership compared to both supervisors and subordinates. Second, the influence of gender of both the rater and the leader was investigated. Compared to male leaders, female leaders were rated higher on coaching, inspirational, directive, and participative leadership, and lower on distrustful, withdrawn, and yielding leadership. Compared to female raters, male raters provided higher ratings for inspirational, directive, authoritarian, and distrustful leadership and lower ratings for withdrawn and participative leadership. Finally, the interaction effect between gender of the rater and gender of the leader was examined. Although an interaction effect was found for coaching and inspirational leadership, it did not support our hypothesis.
Providing feedback based on multisource ratings of leadership behaviors has become increasingly popular over the past years. Multisource ratings, or 360 degrees ratings, are ratings obtained from subordinates, peers, and supervisors on one and the same focal person. There are both empirical and practical reasons for this increased preference for multisource ratings. Empirically, one of the most important reasons to use multisource ratings is that single self-ratings of leadership behaviors have been shown to be invalid and inaccurate (e.g., Fleenor, Smither, Atwater, Braddy, & Sturm, 2010; Harris & Schaubroeck, 1988). From a practical point of view, multisource ratings may increase a leader’s awareness of its behaviors as seen by the people surrounding them (London & Smither, 1995). However, multisource ratings are also not free of disadvantages. The most notable of these disadvantages is the lack of agreement between raters from different hierarchical levels (Atkins & Wood, 2002; Fleenor, et al., 2010; Harris & Schaubroeck, 1988; Ostroff, Atwater, & Feinberg, 2004; Solansky, 2010). That is, ratings by subordinates are often different from ratings by supervisors and/or peers. This begs the question why different raters have different perceptions of their leaders. What are possible determinants of these differences and how can these be theoretically explained? In this paper we focus on two potential causes for these different ratings, namely the hierarchical perspective of the rater and the gender of the rater.

In this paper, we build on role theory to explain why these two characteristics are so important in multisource rating of leaders. Central to role theory is the notion that individuals are in a social position and hold expectations about their own and other people’s behavior, in relation to this position or role (Biddle, 1986). Two of the most important elements in organizations shaping the behavioral expectations are 1) someone’s hierarchical position and 2) someone’s gender. With respect to hierarchical position, in multisource (or 360 degrees) feedback, the individual being rated is in a different hierarchical role towards each of the rating sources. Accordingly, this hierarchical role is likely to shape behavioral expectations, prescribing different behaviors from the individual being rated towards each of the rating sources and vice versa. Second, gender is one of the most discussed variables in social role theory. Eagly (1987) has argued that differences in social behaviors might be caused by the tendency of men and women to behave according to their gender role. These gender roles prescribe highly gender stereotypic behaviors for both men and women, raters
and ratees (Eagly, 1987). In sum, the present paper will investigate the influence of 1) the hierarchical perspective of the rater, and 2) the gender of both the rater and the leader on differences in leadership ratings.

**Circumplex Leadership Scan**

To examine this question, the present study will use a recently developed leadership model. This model is based on the interpersonal circumplex and is named the leadership circumplex (Redeker, De Vries, Rouckhout, Vermeren, & De Fruyt, 2012, Chapter 2). The leadership circumplex uses similar dimensions as the interpersonal circumplex, namely agency and communion, to summarize leadership behaviors (Figure 1 shows a visualization of the leadership circumplex). In this model leadership behaviors are located on the circumference of a circle, spanned by the two dimensions. The circumplex is divided into eight octants, describing eight different leadership styles. Starting at the positive pole of the communion axis and going counterclockwise, the leadership styles are named coaching, inspirational, directive, authoritarian, distrustful, withdrawn, yielding, and participative leadership (see Table 1 for definitions of the leadership styles). Each leadership style differs in their degree of agency and communion. The benefit of using this model is that it uses a continuous, overarching set of leadership behaviors. Furthermore, using a model similar to the interpersonal circumplex provides the opportunity to compare our findings to studies examining interpersonal behaviors (e.g., Markey, Funder, & Ozer, 2003; Moskowitz, Jung Suh, & Desaulniers, 1994). Finally, the leadership circumplex model helps to paint a fine-grained picture of the many possible differences between raters resulting from the social roles of both raters and ratees.
Figure 1. The leadership circumplex
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Octant</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Example items (number of items; Cronbach’s alpha for supervisor-, peer-, and subordinate-ratings)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coaching</td>
<td>Persons with a coaching leadership style tend to show their appreciation for their subordinates and let them know how important they are, they tend to stimulate their subordinates through positive communication and to listen to the opinion of their subordinates.</td>
<td>&quot;shows that staff members are important to him/her&quot;, &quot;gives support to staff members&quot;, &quot;asks for the staff’s opinion&quot; ($k = 15$; $\alpha_{\text{supervisor}} = .92$; $\alpha_{\text{peer}} = .93$; $\alpha_{\text{subordinate}} = .93$)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspirational</td>
<td>Persons with an inspirational leadership style tend to stimulate and persuade subordinates through a clear vision, tend to act decisively when performance and/or organizational problems arise, and to motivate subordinates to perform optimally.</td>
<td>&quot;indicates clearly his/her role in the personal development of staff members&quot;, &quot;acts firmly in situations of crisis&quot;, &quot;sets clear objectives for the staff&quot; ($k = 15$; $\alpha_{\text{supervisor}} = .91$; $\alpha_{\text{peer}} = .91$; $\alpha_{\text{subordinate}} = .93$)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directive</td>
<td>Persons with a directive leadership style tend to try to reach success competitively, tend to actively monitor and correct subordinates, and to behave strictly towards subordinates.</td>
<td>&quot;supervises the work of the staff members carefully&quot;, &quot;has severe judgments about staff members&quot;, &quot;is competitive&quot; ($k = 12$; $\alpha_{\text{supervisor}} = .82$; $\alpha_{\text{peer}} = .82$; $\alpha_{\text{subordinate}} = .79$)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authoritarian</td>
<td>Persons with an authoritarian leadership style tend to force subordinates to obey them, tend to be harsh on subordinates, and to not accept criticism.</td>
<td>&quot;avoids friendly relationships&quot;, &quot;sets one-sidedly the expected performance level of the staff&quot;, &quot;gives orders in a compulsory way&quot; ($k = 15$; $\alpha_{\text{supervisor}} = .86$; $\alpha_{\text{peer}} = .89$; $\alpha_{\text{subordinate}} = .89$)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distrustful</td>
<td>Persons with a distrustful leadership style tend to be suspicious of the motives of subordinates, tend to be quick and negative in their judgment, and stay distant from their subordinates.</td>
<td>&quot;is suspicious&quot;, &quot;judges too quickly&quot;, &quot;does not allow staff members to organize their work themselves&quot; ($k = 15$; $\alpha_{\text{supervisor}} = .87$; $\alpha_{\text{peer}} = .90$; $\alpha_{\text{subordinate}} = .90$)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Withdrawn</td>
<td>Persons with a withdrawn leadership style tend to be personally and professionally absent, tend to avoid confrontations and responsibilities, and to act too late when problems arise.</td>
<td>&quot;delays decisions&quot;, &quot;does not take responsibility&quot;, &quot;does not set the expected performance level&quot; ($k = 15$; $\alpha_{\text{supervisor}} = .91$; $\alpha_{\text{peer}} = .90$; $\alpha_{\text{subordinate}} = .89$)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yielding</td>
<td>Persons with a yielding leadership style tend to be very flexible when interacting with subordinates and to be hesitant to provide guidance, they tend to put the subordinates’ interest above the company’s interest, and to avoid being the center of attention.</td>
<td>&quot;is inconspicuous&quot;, &quot;wants to please everybody&quot;, &quot;is able to subordinate the company’s interests to the staff’s interests&quot; ($k = 15$; $\alpha_{\text{supervisor}} = .85$; $\alpha_{\text{peer}} = .85$; $\alpha_{\text{subordinate}} = .76$)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participative</td>
<td>Persons with a participative leadership style tend to include subordinates in all processes, they tend to easily accept and incorporate subordinates’ propositions, and to show their understanding of the feelings and emotions of their subordinates.</td>
<td>&quot;makes certain decisions together with the staff&quot;, &quot;is tolerant&quot;, and &quot;allows staff members to do their work their own way&quot; ($k = 14$; $\alpha_{\text{supervisor}} = .83$; $\alpha_{\text{peer}} = .86$; $\alpha_{\text{subordinate}} = .87$)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Hierarchical perspective of the rater

In multisource ratings, the individual being rated (i.e., the target) is in a different hierarchical role vis-à-vis the raters, i.e., subordinates, peers, and supervisors. When subordinates rate their leaders, their ratings are based on the role that the target has in their interaction, that is that of their leader. In comparison, when a target is rated by supervisors, the targets' role in interactions is most often that of a subordinate. These different hierarchical roles are likely to influence the target's behavior. Supervisory behaviors are often related to behaviors such as dominance and assertiveness (e.g., Bem, 1974; Schein, 2001). Therefore, it is likely that someone in a supervisory position will behave relatively more dominant in interactions with their subordinates, compared to interactions with their supervisors. Based on these considerations, we propose that these different hierarchical perspectives of the raters will influence their perceptions of leadership behavior of a target.

Providing preliminary support for this reasoning, Moskowitz, Jung Suh, and Desaulniers (1994) examined the influence of the hierarchical perspective of the interaction partner on interpersonal behavior of the participant. Participants in this study provided self-reports of their behavior in interactions with a supervisor, peer, and subordinate. Targets reported more dominant behaviors when interacting with a subordinate, compared to interactions with a supervisor or a peer. Furthermore, more submissiveness was reported when interacting with a supervisor, compared to interactions with subordinates and peers. In sum, Moskowitz et al. (1994) examined how one's behavior changes to the degree that the hierarchical role of their interaction partner changes. We take their findings a step further by examining how an individual's behavior is differentially rated by interaction partners from different hierarchical perspectives. Additionally, we propose that the influence of differences in hierarchical role of the rater and the target on perceived behavior will also be visible in differential judgments of the target’s leadership style. That is, in our study the target is not rated on his/her general interpersonal behavior, but on his/her behavior in the role of a leader.

To examine how the hierarchical position of the raters may determine different ratings of leadership styles, we build on a model that purports to describe the complementarity of interpersonal behavior in a circumplex. Leary (1957) proposed a circumplex model in which
control behaviors by one individual are complemented with contradictory behaviors (i.e., submissive behaviors) of the interaction partner, and vice versa. Whereas the complementarity principle is associated with opposite behaviors on the control axis, it is associated with similar behaviors on the communion axis. That is, an individual showing behaviors on the positive side of the communion axis will most likely evoke similar positive communal behavior in his/her interaction partner. Similarly, behaviors on the negative side of the communion axis will most likely evoke negative communal behaviors.

Complementarity of behaviors is not without reason. Complementarity of behaviors on the right side of the circumplex are related to both more positive perceptions of the interaction and to more positive outcomes of the interaction (e.g., Markey, Lowmaster, & Eichler, 2010).

Based on these considerations, we expect differences between ratings of individuals from different hierarchical perspectives to be especially visible on the agency axis of the leadership circumplex. We expect leaders to show different interpersonal behaviors towards individuals that have a different hierarchical role towards them. More specifically, we predict that a focal person in a leadership position will exhibit more agentic and less submissive behaviors towards a subordinate, compared to the behavior that s/he shows towards a supervisor. That is, we expect supervisors to rate leaders lower on styles high in agency, namely directive and inspirational leadership, and higher on styles low in agency, namely withdrawn and yielding leadership. On the other hand, we expect subordinates to rate leaders higher on directive and inspirational leadership and lower on withdrawn and yielding leadership. Based on Leary’s (1957) model, in which behaviors on the communion axis are complemented with similar behaviors, we expect no differences between raters of a different hierarchical perspective on leadership styles that are close to the communion axis, namely coaching, participative, authoritarian, and distrustful leadership.

**Gender of leader and rater**

A second potentially major influence on the ratings of leadership is the gender of both the leader and the rater. Gender differences have been extensively studied in the past decades (e.g., Eagly & Johnson, 1990; Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, & Van Engen, 2003). Often differences between men and women have been ascribed to differences in the masculine and feminine gender role. The feminine gender role has been related to communal and
warm behaviors, such as being gentle, compassionate, and sympathetic. Contrarily, the masculine gender role is related to agentic and dominant behaviors, such as being forceful, competitive, and individualistic. Although perceptions of effective leadership have frequently been related to the masculine gender role (Bem, 1974; Cann & Siegfried, 1990; Powell, Butterfield, & Parent, 2002; Schein, 1973, 1975; Schein, Mueller, Lituchy, & Liu, 1996), it has been demonstrated that women often show the more effective leadership styles. Female leaders have been found to be more transformational and communal than male leaders. Male leaders are usually rated higher on the styles transactional leadership, management by exception (both passive and active), laissez faire leadership, and are perceived as more agentic. However, when solely focusing on organizational settings, these differences between male and female leaders tend to be small (Carless, 1998; Eagly & Carli, 2003; Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, & Van Engen, 2003; Eagly & Johnson, 1990).

The lack of larger findings in organizational settings have been ascribed to the salience of gender in different settings. In organizational settings, the functional role (or the roles associated with the occupation) of the individual might be more prominent. However, in stereotype or laboratory studies, in which this functional role is less evident, the gender of the person being studied might be more salient (Moskowitz et al., 1994). In line with these findings, some researchers have suggested that the composition of the group in which a person is interacting may be of influence on the salience of gender (e.g., Maccoby, 1990). This indicates that the gender composition of the interaction dyad may be of influence on the rating of behaviors. In other words, when raters judge a leader's style, their own gender and well as the gender of the leader may influence their ratings.

In sum, as a result of gender roles, prescribing different behaviors to men and women, we expect female leaders to behave more according to the female gender role and therefore be rated higher on leadership styles that have been related to transformational leadership and communal leadership, namely participative, coaching, and inspirational leadership (Redeker, De Vries, Rouckhout, Vermeren, & De Fruyt, 2012, Chapter 2). Furthermore, we expect female leaders to be rated higher on leadership styles that are low in agency, namely yielding and withdrawn leadership. We expect male leaders to behave more in line with the male gender role and therefore be rated higher on leadership styles that are related to
transactional, management by exception and laissez faire leadership, namely directive, authoritarian, and distrustful leadership (Redeker et al., 2012, Chapter 2).

We expect an interaction effect between the gender of the leader and the gender of the rater; that is, in gender diverse rater-ratee dyads, gender will be more salient and therefore the ratings of the leadership styles of the different gender will be more similar to the stereotype when compared to ratings of the same gender leader. Specifically we expect the differences between male and female leaders to be larger when they are rated by a rater from the opposite sex, compared to same-sex ratings.

In order to test these hypotheses, we collected multisource or 360 degree feedback. Specifically, we collected leadership style ratings of leaders from both their supervisors and their subordinates. Additionally, peer-ratings were collected to serve as a control condition to examine possible differences in ratings from different hierarchical perspectives. Although we did not expect an interaction between the hierarchical perspective of the rater and the gender of either the rater or the leader, we will explore the presence of interaction effects in our analyses.

**Method**

**Participants**

For the sake of clarity, participants are discussed categorized by function, which is defined here as their hierarchical position compared to the leader, which can either be the leader’s subordinate, a peer, or the leader’s supervisor. Leaders were 220 individuals (157 male, 63 female) holding a supervisory position in a company in The Netherlands or Belgium. Leaders’ age ranged from 28 to 66 years \( (M = 44.87, SD = 8.35) \). Leaders were rated by 1065 subordinates, of which 681 were male and 359 female (25 unknown). Subordinates’ age ranged from 20 to 70 years \( (M = 42.25, SD = 9.64) \). Furthermore, leaders were rated by 677 peers (482 male, 195 female; age range 26 to 71 years, \( M = 44.78, SD = 8.28 \)) and 257 supervisors (200 male, 57 female; age range 27 to 67 years, \( M = 46.37, SD = 7.41 \)).

**Procedure**

All leaders took part in a training program organized by one and the same consultancy organization. As part of the training, leaders were asked to complete a questionnaire
measuring their leadership styles (see ‘materials’ below). Furthermore, they were asked to
approach as many of their colleagues as possible, but at least 8 individuals, to complete the
leadership questionnaire about them. Leaders were instructed to ask raters from all levels
around them, namely subordinates, peers, and supervisors. All subjects who took part in the
training gave their consent to use the data from the questionnaire for research purposes.
The data provided by the different raters were used as an input to the training.

**Material**

CLS. The questionnaire used to measure leadership styles is the Circumplex Leadership
Scan (CLS). The CLS is an operationalization of the Leadership Circumplex developed by
Redeker, De Vries, Rouckhout, Vermeren, and De Fruyt (2012; Chapter 2). The questionnaire
contains 116 items. The 116 items of the questionnaire each describe a leadership behavior
located on the circumference of the leadership circumplex (a circle spanned by two
orthogonal, unrelated dimensions very similar to the interpersonal dimensions agency and
communion). Items are located on the circle based on the strength of their relationship. The
distance between variables increases when the strength of the association decreases. Items
are equally spaced on the circumference, therefore creating a circular continuum of
leadership behaviors. The circumplex is divided into eight octants representing eight
different leadership styles. The circumplex leadership scan has demonstrated to be a valid
and reliable questionnaire, complying with the strict criteria of a true circumplex (Redeker et
al., 2012, Chapter 2). The leadership styles, their definitions, exemplar items, and Cronbach’s
alphas for supervisor-, peer-, and subordinate-ratings can be found in Table 1. Overall,
Cronbach’s alphas ranged from .76 to .93.

To analyze the dimensionality of the data, we used Multidimensional Scaling (MDS). MDS
uses a matrix of similarity ratings between all pairs of items entered in the analysis. These
similarity ratings are transformed into distances represented in a multidimensional space,
meaning that the distance between items in a multidimensional space increases when
similarity of items decreases (Fabrigar et al., 1997). The two-dimensional solution generated
the following values: Kruskal’s Stress I = .02, DAF = 1.00 (supervisor); Kruskal’s Stress I = .02,
DAF = 1.00 (peer); Kruskal’s Stress I = .02, DAF = 1.00 (subordinate). This indicates that a two
dimensional solution summarizes the scales. Additionally the data was entered in CIRCUM
(Browne, 1992), which is a covariance structuring technique and was developed specifically to evaluate circumplex correlation models (Gurtman & Pincus, 2000). This approach assesses whether the underlying structure of the correlation matrix has a circumplex nature (Fabrigar et al., 1997). To assess the model fit we calculated the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA). A lower RMSEA-value indicates a better fit of the model. The following RMSEA-values were found: RMSEA_{supervisor} = .08; RMSEA_{peer} = .14; RMSEA_{subordinate} = .17. Previous studies, with leader’s self- and subordinate-ratings resulted in a similar RMSEA-value as the supervisor-ratings (Redeker et al., 2012, Chapter 2). Peer and subordinate ratings generated a somewhat poorer fit.

**Results**

Although we did not expect to find an interaction between the hierarchical perspective of the rater and the gender of both the rater and the leader, we first analyzed the full factorial model with all possible interactions in one model. No interactions were found between the hierarchical perspective of the leader and the gender of the leader and the rater. Therefore, we decided to not include these interactions in the analyses reported below. In line with our hypotheses, we focused our analyses on the model containing the three main effects of hierarchical perspective, gender of the rater, and gender of the leader. Furthermore, we included the interaction effect of the gender of the rater and the gender of the leader in the analyses. Results of these analyses are described below.

The data were organized by leader. Each leader had a number of raters, namely supervisors, peers, and subordinates. The number of raters per leader was not the same for each leader. We analyzed the data using two different techniques. First, we conducted a MANOVA with the hierarchical perspective and the gender of the leader and rater as independent factors and the eight CLS leadership styles as the dependent factors (Wilks’ Λ for each main effect $p < .001$; for the interaction between gender of leader and rater $p < .10$). Second, we conducted a mixed model ANOVA, controlling for the leader that is being rated. Both techniques generated similar results, therefore, we decided to describe the results of the

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1 Results of these analyses can be obtained from the first author.
mixed model ANOVA’s, because this analysis controls for the number of raters per leader and the ratings within a leader.

Hierarchical perspective

Differences in ratings between hierarchical perspectives of the rater were found for all eight leadership styles. Means and standard errors for each hierarchical perspective’s ratings can be found in Table 2. Leaders were rated higher on coaching by their supervisor and subordinates, compared to ratings of their peers ($F[2, 931.10^3] = 4.55, p = .01$). Supervisors rated the leaders lower on inspirational leadership, compared to ratings of subordinates ($F[2, 727.22] = 5.32, p = .005$). On average, supervisors also provided lower ratings on directive leadership, compared to subordinates and peers ($F[2, 707.14] = 7.36, p = .01$). Authoritarian leadership was rated lower by supervisors, compared to subordinates, who – in turn – provided lower ratings on authoritarian leadership than peers ($F[2, 1115.60] = 12.40, p < .001$). Peers gave higher ratings of distrustful leadership, compared to both supervisors and subordinates ($F[2, 872.75] = 9.92, p < .001$). Subordinates rated their leaders lower on withdrawn leadership, compared to ratings of both peers and supervisors ($F[2, 1053.93] = 12.61, p < .001$). Subordinates also gave lower ratings of yielding leadership, compared to peers, who gave marginally lower ratings when compared to supervisors ($F[2, 713.96] = 14.54, p < .001$). Both subordinates and supervisors gave higher ratings of participative leadership, compared to peer-ratings ($F[2, 1070.53] = 13.62, p < .001$). In sum, in line with our hypothesis leaders were rated lower on styles high in agency by their supervisor, compared to subordinates, and higher on styles low in agency.

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2 Due to the methodology used to analyze the data, tables present standard errors instead of standard deviations.

3 The mixed model ANOVA’s controlled for the leader being rated. The denominator’s degrees of freedom reflect this control condition.
Table 2. Means and standard errors for supervisors, peers, and subordinates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership Style</th>
<th>Supervisor</th>
<th>Peer</th>
<th>Subordinate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SE</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaching</td>
<td>3.00&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>2.92&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspirational</td>
<td>2.73&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>2.81&lt;sup&gt;a,b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directive</td>
<td>2.00&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>2.13&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authoritarian</td>
<td>1.20&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>1.39&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distrustful</td>
<td>0.91&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>1.03&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Withdrawn</td>
<td>1.10&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>1.06&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yielding</td>
<td>1.56&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>1.48&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participative</td>
<td>2.67&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>2.56&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. N<sub>supervisor</sub> = 1065; N<sub>peer</sub> = 677; N<sub>subordinate</sub> = 257. Means in a row with different superscripts differ significantly from each other (p < .05).

Gender of the leader

Partly in line with our hypothesis, seven out of eight leadership styles generated different results for male and female leaders. Means and standard errors can be found in Table 3. Coaching, inspirational, directive, and participative leadership was rated higher for female leaders, compared to male leaders (F<sub>coaching</sub> [1, 1575.62] = 33.03, p < .001; F<sub>inspirational</sub> [1, 1592.18] = 67.39, p < .001; F<sub>directive</sub> [1, 1244.66] = 8.68, p = .003; F<sub>participative</sub> [1, 1761.55] = 6.27, p = .012). Male leaders were rated higher on distrustful, withdrawn, and yielding leadership (F<sub>distrustful</sub> [1, 1879.06] = 14.28, p < .001; F<sub>withdrawn</sub> [1, 1518.80] = 53.32, p < .001; F<sub>yielding</sub> [1, 1404.41] = 17.73, p < .001). There was no difference between male and female leaders on authoritarian leadership.
#### Table 3. Means and standard errors for male and female leaders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership Style</th>
<th>Male leader</th>
<th>Female leader</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaching</td>
<td>2.89&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspirational</td>
<td>2.68&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directive</td>
<td>2.04&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authoritarian</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distrustful</td>
<td>1.01&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Withdrawn</td>
<td>1.14&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yielding</td>
<td>1.54&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participative</td>
<td>2.60&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* N<sub>male</sub> = 157; N<sub>female</sub> = 63. Means in a row with different superscripts differ significantly from each other (*p* < .05).

#### Gender of the rater

Ratings of six leadership styles differed between male and female raters. Table 4 displays means and standard errors for each leadership style. Inspirational, directive, authoritarian, and distrustful leadership were rated higher by male raters, compared to female raters (F<sub>inspirational</sub> [1, 1319.11] = 8.62, *p* = .003; F<sub>directive</sub> [1, 894.74] = 60.28, *p* < .001; F<sub>authoritarian</sub> [1, 1881.27] = 49.19, *p* < .001; F<sub>distrustful</sub> [1, 1804.54] = 5.80, *p* = .016). Withdrawn and participative leadership were rated higher by female raters (F<sub>withdrawn</sub> [1, 1566.24] = 5.72, *p* = .02; F<sub>participative</sub> [1, 1769.41] = 9.65, *p* = .002). For gender of the rater, we found no differences on coaching and yielding leadership.
### Table 4. Means and standard errors for male and female raters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership Style</th>
<th>Male Rater</th>
<th>Female Rater</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaching</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspirational</td>
<td>2.83&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directive</td>
<td>2.12&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authoritarian</td>
<td>1.40&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distrustful</td>
<td>0.99&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Withdrawn</td>
<td>1.01&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yielding</td>
<td>1.49</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participative</td>
<td>2.60&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* N<sub>male</sub> = 1363; N<sub>female</sub> = 611. Means in a row with different superscripts differ significantly from each other (p < .05).

**Gender composition of rater-leader**

An interaction effect of gender of the rater and gender of the leader was found for coaching leadership ($F[1, 1717.68] = 6.22, p = .013$). Although male raters already endorsed a significantly higher coaching style of female leaders, compared to male leaders ($F[1, 1678.29] = 6.41, p = .01$), female raters even more strongly endorsed a significantly higher coaching style of female leaders compared to male leaders ($F[1, 1503.01] = 28.95, p < .001$).

An interaction effect of gender of the leader and gender of the rater was also found for inspirational leadership ($F[1, 1268.79] = 7.84, p = .005$). In general, male leaders were rated lower on inspirational leadership than female leaders ($F[1, 1852.88] = 18.69, p < .001$). However, the contrast in ratings of inspirational leadership between male and female leaders was larger among female raters ($F[1, 971.06] = 50.33, p < .001$), who provided lower ratings of inspirational leadership for male leaders, than male raters did ($F[1, 211.09] = 32.46, p < .001$). We expected to find the effects of gender of the leader to be larger in different gender dyads, compared to same-gender dyads. However, these results showed...
that the effects of gender are larger in female dyads. Means and standard errors can be found in Table 5.

Table 5. Means and standard errors for interaction effects between gender of leader and gender of rater

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership Style</th>
<th>Male Leader</th>
<th>Female Leader</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male Rater</td>
<td>Female Rater</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaching</td>
<td>2.92(^b)</td>
<td>2.86(^b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspirational</td>
<td>2.76(^b)</td>
<td>2.60(^c)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directive</td>
<td>2.13 (\text{SE} )</td>
<td>1.96 (\text{SE} )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authoritarian</td>
<td>1.36 (\text{SE} )</td>
<td>1.20 (\text{SE} )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distrustful</td>
<td>1.01 (\text{SE} )</td>
<td>1.00 (\text{SE} )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Withdrawn</td>
<td>1.09 (\text{SE} )</td>
<td>1.19 (\text{SE} )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yielding</td>
<td>1.53 (\text{SE} )</td>
<td>1.54 (\text{SE} )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participative</td>
<td>2.59 (\text{SE} )</td>
<td>2.61 (\text{SE} )</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. N = 220 (leaders) & 1999 (raters). Means in a row with different superscripts differ significantly from each other \((p < .05)\).

Discussion

The aim of the present study was to examine the relation between ratings of leadership and characteristics of the rater. Specifically, we studied the relation between ratings of leadership styles and the hierarchical perspective of the rater and ratings of leadership styles and the gender of both the leader and the rater. We found clear differences between the ratings from individuals from different hierarchical perspectives. Because the different hierarchical role each rater has towards the leader, different raters experience a different behavioral interaction with the individual being rated. As a result, we predicted that there would be differences between supervisor’s and subordinate’s ratings which would mostly be
visible on the agency axis on the leadership circumplex. In line with this hypothesis, we
found that ratings of supervisors were lower on styles high in agency, namely directive and
inspirational leadership compared to ratings of subordinates. Also in line with this
hypothesis, subordinates gave lower ratings on styles that were low in agency, namely
withdrawn and yielding leadership, compared to supervisor’s ratings.

Our findings nicely contribute to previous work which has proposed that being in a
supervisory position is related to more dominant behaviors, which in turn is predicted to
evoke more submissive behaviors from a subordinate (Markey, Funder, & Ozer, 2003). The
supervisor-rater is in a supervisory position towards the leader. Similarly, the leader is in a
supervisory position towards the subordinate-rater. Therefore, it seems very plausible that
the target is perceived as more agentic by the subordinate-rater compared to the
supervisor-rater, who perceives the leader as more submissive compared to the
subordinate-rater.

Although we predicted that the differences between ratings of different raters would be less
visible on the communion axis, the findings regarding peer ratings seem to be mostly
present on this axis. That is, we obtained some surprising results regarding the ratings of
peers on styles close to both the positive and negative pole of the communion axis, namely
authoritarian, distrustful, coaching, and participative leadership. We intended to use the
ratings of the peers as a control condition, but peers rated the leaders differently from
subordinates and supervisors on these three leadership styles. Authoritarian leadership was
rated highest by peers, compared to subordinates, who gave higher ratings compared to
supervisors. Similarly, distrustful leadership was rated higher by peers, compared to both
supervisors and subordinates. Participative and coaching leadership was rated lower by
peers, compared to supervisors and subordinates. A possible explanation for these results
may be that peers are trusted more to exchange both positive and negative information
about subordinates, which may in turn lead to more differentiated ratings on the
communion axis of the circumplex. Some support for this claim can be found in the gossip-
literature, which demonstrates that positive and negative gossiping is shared differently with
co-workers in different work relations (Grosser, Lopez-Kidwell, & Labianca, 2010). People
tend to exchange both positive and negative gossip more with people with whom they are
friends in a social network, whereas positive gossip alone is more shared with people with
whom they have merely instrumental relations. Because friendship ties are more likely among peers, peers may obtain a more differential image of the rated leader.

With the exception of authoritarian leadership, we found differences between male and female leaders on their rated leadership styles. Female leaders were rated higher on participative, coaching, inspirational, and directive leadership. Male leaders were seen as more distrustful, withdrawn, and directive when compared to female leaders. This is in line with previous findings demonstrating that female leaders show more transformational leadership and that male leaders show more management by exception and laissez faire leadership (Eagly & Carli, 2003; Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, & Van Engen, 2003; Eagly & Johnson, 1990). It may be that these results are caused by a selection effect. The styles that were rated higher for female leaders are also rated as more effective (Redeker et al., 2012).

The number of women in leadership positions is still small compared to the number of men. It may be that only those women are promoted into leadership positions that show these highly effective leadership styles, while men are more easily promoted into these positions.

Male and female raters were also found to differ in their ratings independent of the gender of the leader that was being rated. Male raters, from all hierarchical perspectives, tended to provide higher ratings of inspirational, directive, authoritarian, and distrustful leadership. Withdrawn and participative leadership was rated higher by female raters. These ratings are most closely related to gender stereotypical beliefs about leadership styles. Redeker, Homan, and De Vries (2012; Chapter 4) demonstrated that inspirational, directive, authoritarian, and distrustful leadership are stereotypically believed to be more masculine. Withdrawn and participative leadership are perceived to be more feminine leadership styles. These results show that raters, independent of the gender of the leader, gave ratings of these leadership styles related to stereotypical beliefs about their own gender. An explanation for these results might be that raters more easily differentiate between behaviors that are close to their own gender role and possibly project this difference in differentiation on their ratings of the behaviors of others. Support for this suggestion can be found in the ingroup/outgroup literature. It is demonstrated that individuals differentiate more between members of their ingroup and perceive outgroup members as being more homogeneous. Building on this ingroup and outgroup difference, one would expect that people more easily differentiate between the behaviors linked to their own gender role, or
the ingroup, than between the behaviors of the other gender, or the outgroup (Mullen & Hu, 1989).

We did expect to find interaction effects between the gender of the rater and the gender of the leader, because differences in gender composition of the rater-leader dyad were predicted to influence the salience of the gender of the leader. However, we only found an interaction for two of the eight leadership styles. Although male raters endorsed a higher coaching style of female leaders, female raters even more strongly endorsed a higher coaching style of female leaders. Furthermore, female raters endorsed a lower inspirational leadership style to male leaders compared to female leaders. Female raters endorsed even lower inspirational leadership style to male leaders both compared to female leaders and compared to male raters.

Styles both high in agency and communion, coaching and inspirational leadership, are generally stereotypically perceived as more effective and are also related positively to positive leadership outcome variables (Redeker et al., 2012, Chapter 2; Redeker, Homan, & De Vries, 2012, Chapter 4). The interaction effects, therefore, show a tendency of women to more positively rate female leaders than male leaders. This is in line with studies on leadership stereotypes that find that women, compared to men, are more likely to attribute successful manager characteristics to female managers (Duehr & Bono, 2006). In line with our findings, Duehr and Bono (2006) found these results especially in the studies focusing on transformational and communal characteristics, which are found to be more feminine in general. Other studies also demonstrated this same-sex bias in stereotypes among women (Boyce & Herd, 2003; Rudman & Goodwin, 2004). The number of women in leadership positions is still much smaller, compared to men in leadership positions. Being a female leader may cause her gender to be more salient, resulting in an emphasis on the female gender ingroup. This may lead to an ingroup bias, defined as the positive evaluation of members of the ingroup, compared to the outgroup. Mullen, Brown, and Smith (1992) showed that the effects of an ingroup bias are stronger when the ingroup is made salient. Therefore, the results of women rating female leaders more positively may be the result of an ingroup bias.
Our results may be specifically valuable for practitioners. Practitioners often use multisource - or 360 degrees - feedback, to diagnose the individual’s leadership styles as a starting point for training and coaching. The present study shows that it is beneficial to segregate these ratings into different groups, both on hierarchical role and on gender of the rater. Not only will this enhance the variance in the scores, it may also provide valuable information about the differences between ratings of their colleagues that may be useful in training and coaching-settings for both the practitioner and the leader.

As with all studies, this study also has some limitations, two of which are mentioned below. First, the present study exclusively focused on leadership styles and therefore did not measure any leadership outcome variables. Previous studies on self-other agreement in ratings of different perspectives have shown that different levels of agreement have different relations with leadership outcome variables (e.g., Fleenor et al., 2010). The present study sheds light on the content of the differences between raters. Therefore, it may be interesting for future studies to focus on the effect these differences have on ratings of outcome variables. Furthermore, it may also be interesting for future studies to examine the influence of other characteristics, such as the gender composition within a team or organization on ratings of leadership. Second, leaders were motivated to collect as many ratings as possible from their subordinates, peers, and supervisors. However, we were not able to collect a dataset that provided both male and female ratings from all hierarchical perspectives for each leader. Although we did not find indication for an interaction effect between hierarchical perspective and gender of the leader and/or the rater, it may be of interest to more extensively study this with a larger, more complete dataset.

Nevertheless, the present study sheds light on the content differences of ratings of raters with varying characteristics. As a result of using a comprehensive leadership questionnaire it was possible to demonstrate the influence of different characteristics on an overarching set of leadership behaviors. The present study nicely showed the relation of both roles with the agency and the communion axis. Specifically, differences in hierarchical role were shown to be closely related to differences in dominant and submissive behaviors in leader, while gender differences were found to have an effect on the behaviors linked to both the communion and the agency axes of the leadership circumplex.