Chapter 6

Summary of Results and General Discussion
Leadership is one of the most crucial topics in understanding human behavior in organizations. As a result, the leadership literature is replete with leadership models and questionnaires. Yet, recent debate on these models has shown the need for an integrative model that contains both the positive and the negative side of leadership and that is accompanied by a psychometrically sound operationalization (Avolio, 2007; DeRue, Nahrgang, Wellman, & Humphrey, 2011; Hunter, Bedell-Avers, & Mumford, 2007; Yukl, Gordon, & Taber, 2002). In order to address this call for a sound, integrative leadership framework, the first part of this dissertation (Chapter 2) focused on creating the leadership circumplex and an accompanying questionnaire, the circumplex leadership scan (i.e., the CLS). The second part of this dissertation dealt with another question from the leadership literature, namely ‘What is the influence of characteristics of both the leader and the rater on perceptions of leadership?’. Using the leadership circumplex, the focus was first on the influence of characteristics of the rater on ratings of leadership. The characteristics we studied were the hierarchical role of the rater in relation to the leader and the gender of both the rater and the leader (Chapter 3). Building on the latter we zoomed in on gender stereotypes about leadership styles and leadership effectiveness (Chapter 4). Finally, we examined the most basic form of stereotyping, the beliefs people form based on a glance of someone’s face. Specifically, we focused on two facial characteristics that have been deemed to be important in the literature, babyfacedness and facial dominance (Chapter 5).

In the present chapter, we will summarize the methodology and main findings of the empirical chapters. Subsequently, we will discuss the theoretical and practical implications of the findings. Following, we will address the strengths and weaknesses of the empirical chapters. We will conclude this chapter with some directions for future research.

Summary of main findings

Development of the leadership circumplex.

Chapter 2 aimed to integrate leadership conceptualizations into one overarching model, using a ‘leadership circumplex’. In the introduction it was argued that leadership is interpersonal by nature (e.g., Vroom & Jago, 2007; Yukl, 2010), leadership can be captured by two main dimensions (e.g., Kahn & Katz, 1953), and that these two dimensions strongly resemble the dimensions of the interpersonal circumplex, namely agency and communion.
(e.g., Ruiz, Smith, & Rhodewalt, 2001). In the proposed leadership circumplex model, two main dimensions span a circular model, with each leadership behavior equally spaced on the circumference. Five studies showed that the leadership circumplex is a valid and reliable framework for leadership behaviors.

Study 1 asked individuals in a supervisory position to complete a questionnaire of 442 leadership descriptive items. These items were compiled in individual brainstorm sessions aiming to come up with as many leadership behaviors as possible. Multidimensional scaling was used to show that two dimensions are sufficient to summarize the leadership descriptive items and that these two dimensions show a recognizable resemblance to the interpersonal dimensions ‘agency’ and ‘communion’.

A second study was conducted to examine the circumplex properties of the questionnaire. Furthermore, it aimed to reduce the number of items in the questionnaire to a manageable amount. Study 2 resulted in a psychometrically sound instrument, complying with the criteria of a true circumplex (Fabrigar, Visser, & Browne, 1997). Items were equally spaced on the circumference of a circle, with equal vector lengths measured from the origin of the circle. The circumplex was divided into octants, representing eight leadership styles, all showing reasonable to high internal reliability. These styles were named coaching, inspirational, directive, authoritarian, distrustful, withdrawn, yielding, and participative leadership.

The third study confirmed the stability of the CLS model and its circumplex structure for self-ratings. It additionally explored the circumplex structure of subordinates’ ratings of their leaders. For each leader’s self-rating an accompanying subordinate’s rating about this leader was collected. The underlying structures appeared to be highly congruent, meaning that the structural model of the leaders’ ratings on their leadership styles is almost exactly the same as the structural model of the subordinate’s ratings.

Study 4 aimed to assess the validity and reliability of the CLS. First, it investigated the convergent validity of the CLS with other leadership styles from the existing leadership literature. The two dimensions, hypothesized to resemble the interpersonal dimensions agency and communion, showed the expected resemblance to task- and human-oriented leadership (Syroit, 1979). Furthermore, the octant leadership styles from the CLS showed
high convergence and divergence with other existing conceptualizations of leadership. The upper-right quadrant was strongly related to for instance charismatic leadership (De Hoogh et al., 2004) and the subscales of transformational leadership (Avolio & Bass, 1991). The lower-left quadrant was represented by the more passive, absent leadership styles like laissez-faire leadership (Avolio & Bass, 1991). The upper-left quadrant was among others characterized by the darker side of leadership, namely despotic leadership (De Hoogh & Den Hartog, 2008). The lower-right quadrant was expected to be related to participative leadership (Hanges & Dickson, 2004). However, it was found also to be related to other styles high in communion, namely coaching and inspirational leadership. Second, the predictive validity was measured using different leadership outcome scales, which were rated by the leaders themselves. The results showed that that leadership effectiveness was highly related to the diagonal axis going from the lower-left quadrant (ineffective) to the upper-right quadrant (highly effective), the charisma-diagonal. This is in line with previous research on leadership effectiveness and the convergent validity of the CLS. Previous studies have shown styles represented in the upper-right quadrant, for instance charismatic and transformational leadership, to be highly effective and styles related to the lower-left quadrant, for instance laissez-faire leadership, to be ineffective (e.g., Judge & Piccolo, 2004; Lowe, Kroeck, & Sivasubramaniam, 1996). Finally, the test-retest reliability was explored by having leaders complete the CLS twice within a 4-6 weeks interval. Ratings at time 1 and time 2 were highly correlated, indicating a high test-retest reliability.

The predictive validity of the CLS that was examined in Study 4 should be interpreted with caution. Many previous studies have shown that when adequately and reliably wanting to measure leadership effectiveness, one should not rely on self-ratings alone (e.g., Hofstee, 1994). Therefore, a fifth study was conducted which measured different leadership outcome variables and related them to self- and other-rated leadership styles. The results in this study replicate the findings of Study 4, such that effective leadership fits the charisma-diagonal. In our studies, self- and other-ratings thus resulted in similar outcomes regarding the understanding of what constitutes effective leadership.
Leadership Perceptions

*Influence of rater characteristics.*

In Chapter 3, the focus was on characteristics of the rater and the possible influence of these characteristics on perceptions of leadership in actual work settings. Individuals are in different social positions and hold expectations about their own and other people’s behavior, in relation to these positions (Biddle, 1986). Two characteristics were seen as crucial in organizations and especially leadership.

First, the influence of the hierarchical role of the rater on ratings of CLS leadership styles was examined. 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 might 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 our predictions, compared with subordinates, supervisors rated the leaders generally lower on octants associated with the positive pole of the agency dimension (i.e., inspirational and directive leadership) and higher on octants associated with the negative pole of the agency dimension (e.g., yielding and withdrawn leadership). Surprisingly, peers rated their leaders higher on authoritarian and distrustful leadership, compared to both supervisors and subordinates. Furthermore, both subordinates and supervisors gave higher ratings of coaching and participative leadership, compared to peer-ratings.

Second, the influence of gender of both the rater and the leader was investigated. Except for authoritarian leadership, differences between ratings for male and female leaders were found for all leadership styles. Ratings for male and female leaders were related to the previously described charisma-diagonal, the diagonal from the lower-left quadrant, which was rated higher for male leaders, to the upper-right quadrant, which was rated higher for female leaders. Subsequently, six leadership styles differed between male and female raters. However, these ratings were more strongly related to the diagonal going from the upper-left quadrant to the lower-right quadrant, the autocratic-democratic diagonal. Male raters tended to rate leaders higher on leadership styles represented by the upper-left side of this diagonal (e.g., directive and authoritarian leadership). Female raters tended to rate leaders
higher on leadership styles on the lower-right side (e.g., withdrawn and participative leadership). Finally, we examined the interaction between the gender of the leader and the gender of the rater. An interaction effect of gender of the rater and gender of the leader was found for coaching leadership and inspirational leadership, styles at the upper-right side of the charisma-diagonal, showing that female raters tended to endorse higher coaching and inspirational leadership styles for female leaders.

**Influence of leader characteristics: Gender stereotypes.**

Chapter 4 zoomed in on gender stereotypes in leadership. This chapter aimed to illuminate how gender stereotypes about leadership are related to stereotypes about the effectiveness of leadership. Three separate laboratory studies showed that gender stereotypes about leadership might not be as negative for female leaders as the commonly cited ‘think-manager-think-male’ phenomenon presumes (Schein, 1973; 1975). By examining these relationships in a controlled setting, personal experiences and interactions between raters and ratees could not influence the results. Study 1 had participants rate each leadership behavior of the CLS on their perceived masculinity and femininity. It was shown that people indicate as many styles to be more masculine as there are styles that they see as more feminine. Styles at the upper-left side of the autocratic-democratic diagonal were believed to be more masculine. The lower-right side of this diagonal, with styles high in communion and low in agency, was believed to be more feminine. Study 2 used a similar method to examine the perceived effectiveness of leadership by having each participant rate how effective they thought each leadership behavior was perceived by people in general. Study 2 demonstrated that people stereotypically perceive styles on the upper-right side of the charisma-axis to be more effective, while styles on the lower-left side are perceived as ineffective. Finally in Study 3, both methodologies were combined to study whether certain leadership styles would be stereotypically perceived as more effective for either male or female leaders. Participants were asked to rate each leadership behavior on how effective they thought people in general found the behavior for either a male or a female leader. Results indicated that there is a difference in styles that are perceived to be effective for male and female leaders. Both male and female leaders might benefit from showing gender congruent styles. Thus, female leaders might benefit from the communion styles that were found to be perceived as both effective and feminine, namely coaching and participative
leadership, while men might benefit from the agency styles that are perceived as masculine as well as effective, namely inspirational and directive leadership.

**Influence of leader characteristics: Facial dominance and babyfacedness.**

Chapter 5 zoomed in even closer, by examining the stereotypes that are formed based in an instant by just looking at a photo of a leader’s face. This chapter aimed to examine the relation between the facial characteristics of the leader and the expected and actual leadership style and effectiveness. We specifically focused on facial dominance and babyfacedness because these characteristics have been shown to be important predictors of leadership outcomes in previous studies (e.g., Perrett et al., 1998; Zebrowitz & Montepare, 1998). Using one set of photos of leader’s faces, three different studies were conducted in both laboratory and field settings. First, Study 1 investigated the relations between babyfacedness, facial dominance, and the expected leadership styles. Participants were shown photos of leader’s faces, one by one, and were asked for each leader what kind of leadership behavior they expected this leader to exhibit. This showed that babyfaced leaders were expected to lead with styles low in agency and not with styles low in communion. The more facial dominant leader was expected to lead with styles high in agency and not with styles low in agency. Study 2 examined the relation between the same facial characteristics and self-rated leadership styles. It was shown that babyfaced leaders rate themselves higher on distrustful leadership. Finally, Study 3 confirmed the findings of Study 2 by demonstrating that subordinates also rate leaders with more babyfacedness as more distrustful.

**Theoretical implications**

The present dissertation, both theoretically and empirically, demonstrated the possibility to integrate different leadership models into one overarching leadership circumplex. In the leadership circumplex, two dimensions summarize the leadership behaviors. Although previous scholars who attempted to integrate leadership behaviors (e.g., DeRue et al., 2011) argued that there might be a third dimension of leadership, this dissertation found no indication for the existence of an extra dimension. DeRue et al. (2011) categorized transformational, charismatic, and inspirational leadership behaviors under change-oriented behaviors, which are captured by the styles high in agency and communion in the leadership circumplex. Even a fourth dimension was mentioned in these studies named passive
leadership. The present dissertation showed that passive leadership is captured by the styles in the bottom of the circumplex. Therefore, the CLS seems to provide an overarching model, capturing (almost) all leadership styles, without the need for adding a third or fourth dimension of leadership.

With these two dimensions the leadership circumplex was able to show the interpersonal nature of leadership. The interpersonal nature of leadership is often stressed by most leadership theories, however, few actually integrated this with measurement of leadership. A theoretical framework that does consider leader-follower interaction is the transactional or social exchange view of leadership (Hollander, 1964), according to which leadership is a two-way influential process from leader to led and vice versa. The dyadic nature of leadership is also central in the leader-member exchange (LMX) perspective on leadership (Gerstner & Day, 1997). The leadership circumplex adds to these perspectives by addressing the circumplex nature of interpersonal interactions between leaders and subordinates. The present dissertation showed the strong resemblance of the CLS with notions from interpersonal theories, specifically the interpersonal circumplex. This integration of interpersonal theories with leadership theories is an important contribution to the leadership literature and entails significant implications for research on leadership. If we believe that leadership is an interpersonal interaction, it becomes important to also measure it as such. Moreover, perceiving leadership as inherently interpersonal also may raise questions regarding the importance of leader and rater characteristics, as these have been found to influence interpersonal interactions in other domains than leadership (e.g., Moskowitz, Jung Suh, & Desaulniers, 1994).

Building on the interaction between leader and led and the interpersonal circumplex, Chapter 3 was able to show differences in ratings from raters with a different hierarchical perspective. These findings contribute to previous work in which was 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. These findings provide important implications for measuring leadership. Previous research has shown that there is often a great discrepancy between other-ratings, such as supervisor and peer-ratings (Atkins & Wood, 2002; Fleenor et al., 2010; Harris & Schaubroeck, 1988; Ostroff, Atwater, & Feinberg, 2004; Solansky, 2010). The present dissertation contributes to these findings by showing what the content of these differences is. When measuring leadership, it therefore seems wise to be careful when aggregating the ratings from different hierarchical perspectives.

Although not predicted, some surprising results were obtained with respect to the ratings of peers on authoritarian, distrustful, coaching, and participative leadership. Peers rated the leaders higher (for authoritarian and distrustful leadership) and lower (coaching and participative leadership) compared to both subordinates and supervisors. The different interaction with different co-workers might be an explanation for this. Possibly, because friendship ties are more likely among peers, they are trusted more with positive and negative information about subordinates. One may be reluctant to share this information with a supervisor or a subordinate. This sharing may lead to more differentiated ratings on the communal axis of the circumplex by these peers, since these peers receive more information about communion-related behaviors of the individual vis-à-vis their subordinates. The gossip literature shows that individuals choose co-workers with different work-relations to share positive and negative gossip with. People tend to exchange positive and negative gossip more with people with whom they are friends, which is more likely when this person is a peer (Grosser, Lopez-Kidwell, & Labianca, 2010). Again, these findings are important to take into account when measuring leadership with multi-source ratings. The present dissertation demonstrates that one should not only be careful with interpreting differences between supervisor and subordinate ratings, but also shows the influence of the position of a peer on ratings of leadership styles.

The division of the sexes in leadership positions is still highly unbalanced in favor of men. An explanation could be that behaviors are perceived differently when shown by a male or a female leader, which is in line with previous theorizing (Butler & Geis, 1990; Ridgeway, 1982; Carli, 1990, 1995, 1999; Wood & Karten, 1986; Giacalone & Riordan, 1990; Wosinska, Dabul, Whetstone-Dion, & Cialdini, 1996; Rudman, 1998; Eagly, Makhijani, & Klonsky, 1992). Both Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 focused on the perception of male and female leadership. Chapter
3 focused on male and female leaders from the position of the male and female raters surrounding them. Additionally, Chapter 4 focused on masculine and feminine leadership and its perceived effectiveness for male and female leaders.

Chapter 3 found differences between male and female leaders on their rated leadership styles. The charisma-diagonal differentiated between styles that are shown by female leader and styles that are seen by male leaders. In line with previous studies showing that female leaders demonstrate more transformational leadership styles, the upper-right side of the diagonal represented the female styles. The lower-right side of the diagonal represented male leadership styles, which is in line with the literature showing that male leaders demonstrate more management by exception, more laissez-faire, and more transactional leadership (Eagly & Carli, 2003; Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, & Van Engen, 2003; Eagly & Johnson, 1990). Interestingly enough, Chapter 4 showed that the stereotypical beliefs about male and female leadership do not resemble these findings. It was shown that styles high in communion and low in agency are perceived as more feminine and also as more effective for female leaders, and styles high in agency and low in communion are perceived as more masculine and also more effective for male leaders. An explanation for these differences might be found in the study by Vinkenburg, Van Engen, Eagly, and Johannesen-Schmidt (2011). In this study, it was demonstrated that inspirational motivation behaviors are especially important for men and women to get promoted into leadership positions. The women in the study of Chapter 3 study are already in a leadership position, and thus already promoted. Therefore, it seems plausible to assume that these women reached these positions because they already showed more behaviors closely related to inspirational motivation. Chapter 2 demonstrated that inspirational motivation is positively related to directive, inspirational, and coaching leadership. In sum, the results of Chapter 3 of this dissertation showing that the women studied are rated higher on participative, coaching, inspirational, and directive leadership behaviors, with the latter two being high in agentic behaviors, might be caused by the need for women to show these behaviors in order get promoted into their leadership positions. Additional support for this claim may come from the attraction-selection-attrition literature that states that forces within an organization operate to attract, select, and retain a homogeneous group of employees. Applying this to leadership in organizations, where most leaders are male, these forces will operate to
maintain the homogeneity in the group of leaders. Since homogeneity in this group is determined by being masculine, selection of women in the group may be biased towards their level of masculine characteristics (Schneider, 1987).

More in line with the stereotypical beliefs about men and women are the ratings of male and female raters. The ratings of male and female raters, unrelated to the gender of the leader, were more in line with the stereotypical beliefs about leadership found in Chapter 4. The distinction between male and female raters was related to the autocratic-democratic diagonal of the circumplex. Male raters tended to give ratings on the upper-left side of this diagonal, while female raters tended to give ratings on the lower-right side of this diagonal. As was demonstrated in Chapter 4, 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 tend to rate the leaders according to similarity with their own gender, instead of based on the stereotypical beliefs about the gender of the leader. An explanation for these results might be that raters project beliefs that are close to the stereotypes about their own gender on the ratings of the leader. This way, instead of rating male and female leaders differently based on gender stereotypes, ratings differ based on the gender of the rater.

In Chapter 3 interaction effects between the gender of the rater and the leader were expected. This hypothesis was based on the relative salience of gender in a different gender rater-ratee dyad. The enhanced salience of gender was expected to lead to more stereotypical ratings of leadership styles and thus to be more closely related to the stereotypical masculinity and femininity of the styles as measured in Chapter 4. However, we only found an interaction for two of the eight leadership styles. Both male and female raters gave higher ratings of coaching leadership to female leaders when compared to male leaders. However, these differences between male and female leaders on coaching leadership were significantly more pronounced for female raters than for male raters. Additionally, male raters gave lower ratings of inspirational leadership to male leaders compared to female leaders. Female raters gave even lower ratings of inspirational leadership to male leaders both compared to their ratings of female leaders and compared to ratings of male raters. Chapter 2 showed that styles both high in agency and communion, coaching and inspirational leadership, are generally more effective and are also related
positively to positive leadership outcome variables. Chapter 4 showed that the same styles are also stereotypically perceived as more effective. Leadership styles both low in agency and communion are both perceived as ineffective and related to leadership ineffectiveness. The interaction effects, therefore, show a tendency of women to rate male leaders as less effective than female leaders. This is similar to studies on leadership stereotypes that find that women, compared to men, are more likely to attribute successful manager characteristics to female managers (e.g., Duehr & Bono, 2006). We did not find support for the opposite idea that male raters tend to also perceive male leaders as more effective. This might be caused by an ingroup bias, defined as the positive evaluation of members of the ingroup, compared to the outgroup. Mullen, Brown, and Smith (1992) demonstrate that the effects of an ingroup bias are stronger when the ingroup is made salient. The number of women in leadership positions is still much smaller, compared to men in leadership positions. Therefore, being a women in such a position may cause her gender to be more salient. As a result, the female gender ingroup may be more salient in this situation and cause a stronger ingroup bias.

Although Chapter 5 examined stereotypical and actual perceptions of leadership as well, it focused on two different characteristics, namely the perceived babyfacedness and facial dominance of a leader. In line with previous findings linking babyfacedness to perceptions of submissiveness, weakness, and incompetence (Keating, 1981; Montepare & Zebrowitz, 1998; Zebrowitz, 1997), it was shown that leaders with more babyfacedness also are expected to hold more submissive leadership styles. However, previous studies also showed a relation between babyfacedness and perceived warmth, which was not found in the present dissertation. In fact, coaching leadership was expected more of leaders with more facial dominance compared to babyfacedness, albeit marginally. A possible explanation might be the focus on leadership behaviors in this study, compared to a more general behavioral focus in other studies. It might be that the specific focus on leadership possibly triggers responses that are more closely related to the leadership stereotype related to the agentic axis. The ‘think-manager-think-male’ phenomenon (Schein, 1975) is based on the finding that people generally relate the words ‘good manager’ to perceptions as dominance, assertiveness, and competitiveness. These words seem to be more related to the agency axis of the leadership circumplex.
Based on the thin slices of behavior literature, it was hypothesized that people may accurately assess leadership based on the facial characteristics of the leader. It was expected that people who have to rate leadership based on facial characteristics alone will tend to ascribe behaviors that are on the lower right side of the autocratic-democratic diagonal to more babyfaced leaders and behaviors that are on the upper-left side of the autocratic-democratic axis to the facial dominant leaders. Although the data indeed supported this for people who had to rate pictures of leaders, actual subordinate and self-reports of leaders painted a somewhat different picture regarding the relationship between facial characteristics and leader perceptions. More specifically, it was also found that the babyfaced are in fact sometimes showing behaviors opposite from what is expected, which has been named the self-defeating prophecy effect (Collins & Zebrowitz, 1995; Zebrowitz, Andreoletti, Collins, Lee, & Blumenthal, 1998; Zebrowitz, Collins, & Dutta, 1998). We found that leaders with more babyfacedness self-rate themselves as more authoritarian and distrustful. The self-defeating prophecy effect entails that people counter the negative associations as a result of their babyface, by acting in a contrary manner. Based on the properties of a circumplex, opposite behaviors of the expected styles for babyfaced leaders would have been inspirational and directive leadership, both relatively effective styles. That is, the expected styles for more babyfaced leaders were yielding and withdrawn leadership, two styles on the lower side of the circumplex, opposite from inspirational and directive leadership on the upper side of the circumplex model. However, babyfaced leaders were rated higher on behaviors that were characterized by their negative relation with communion (on the left side of the circumplex). Chapter 2 showed that the styles on the left side, lower left side and lower side of the circumplex are rated as least effective. Thus, although babyfaced leaders show the self-defeating prophecy effect to contradict the negative and ineffective associations related to their facial characteristics, they behave more towards the equally ineffective styles.

**Practical implications**

The present dissertation provided some results that may be specifically valuable for practitioners. Therefore, we will name some of these implications separately below.
Chapter 2 resulted in an instrument that may be very useful for practitioners as well. Using the Circumplex Leadership Scan as a diagnostic tool to assess an individual’s leadership style provides a valid starting point for training and coaching sessions. Combining this with the results on the effectiveness of the different styles offers the opportunity to target these trainings on the specific behaviors of the individual and changing these behaviors to become more effective.

The results of Chapter 3 may also be specifically valuable for assessment settings. Practitioners often use multisource - or 360 degrees - feedback, to diagnose the individual’s leadership styles as a starting point for training and coaching. It is often of great value to individually compare self- and other-ratings. The high congruence of self- and other-ratings in Chapter 2 indicates that individual comparison between self- and other-ratings is possible and that there is potential for the CLS to be used as a 360 degree measurement instrument. Chapter 3 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.

Chapter 4 demonstrates that behaviors that are seen as more feminine are also perceived to be more effective for female leaders and behaviors that are perceived as more masculine are also perceived as more effective for male leaders. A conclusion that could be drawn from these results is that leaders should generally show gender congruent behaviors. To be perceived as more effective than their male counterparts, female leaders need to demonstrate communal behaviors, for instance by being supportive, accepting and appreciative, while men need to demonstrate agency, for example by acting competitively, visionary, and persuasively. When individuals are in a leadership role, both men and women are wise to be aware of these perceptual differences of their behaviors. Leadership behaviors that are perceived to be generally effective might in practice be effective for one gender but not for the other. For example, directive leadership is generally seen as quite effective. However, it is especially effective for male leaders compared to female leaders. Women using directive leadership behaviors may be responded to more negatively. Combined with studies emphasizing the masculine leadership prototype, this may potentially
lead to learned helplessness in women who start to believe that although their behavior should be effective it is still perceived as less effective. As a consequence, this may lead them to stop trying (e.g. Abramson, Seligman, & Teasdale, 1978). However, when they are made aware of the gender-dependent beliefs regarding effectiveness of leadership behaviors, by for instance training or coaching them to use styles that are gender-congruent, they possibly have a better chance of reaching their full leadership potential. However, as said before, to be promoted into a leadership position, leaders may benefit from inspirational behaviors, which are generally perceived as more masculine. Thus, although female leaders may be perceived as more effective when showing gender-congruent behaviors once they have reached the leadership positions, to get to those positions they may benefit from behaviors that are more inspirational and masculine.

The final empirical chapter, Chapter 5, discusses the inability of individuals to accurately assess someone’s behaviors from facial characteristics alone. Practitioners and especially the individuals responsible for the selection of employees or leaders, may benefit from an awareness of this inability. Additionally, the idea that perceptions of babyfaced leaders may not completely overlap with actual behaviors is also relevant to take into account. If babyfaced leaders tend to engage in the self-defeating prophecy effect and exuberate more dominant behaviors to deal with their less dominant facial characteristics, this is an important stereotype to be aware off. In other words, when one requires a relatively more communal leader, it is not necessarily wise to follow the inferences made from the face of an individual alone.

Limitations and suggestions for future studies

The present dissertation provided promising results, however, as with all studies, some limitations arise as well, some of which are mentioned below.

First, only Chapter 2 and Chapter 4 used other-rated leadership outcome criteria. Due to the selection of the sample used in Chapter 3, it was not possible to include outcome variables in this study. 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). Chapter 3 shed 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. Furthermore, Chapter 4 focused on the stereotypical beliefs people have about leadership styles and leadership effectiveness. Therefore, it did not include measures of actual leadership effectiveness, but rather assessed the beliefs people have about leadership effectiveness. Comparing these beliefs to findings from actual effectiveness ratings in Study 2, however, shows that people’s beliefs about leadership effectiveness quite accurately reflect actual perceptions of effectiveness. Finally, actual leadership effectiveness as, for instance, visualized in profit, performance, or sales has not been taken into account in these studies. Although we have no reason to assume that perceptions of leadership effectiveness will be unrelated or negatively related to more objective measures of effectiveness, future research could set out to study a broader range of effectiveness ratings.

Second, specific characteristics of the different samples may have had an influence on the findings. In Chapter 3, data was gathered from different rating sources. However, due to the selection of the sample, and possibly also due to the fact that there are less women in leadership positions, it was impossible to gather data for raters of both genders for all hierarchical perspectives. This prevented us from fully analyzing the relation between hierarchical role and gender role and its influence on ratings of the leadership styles. Fortunately, we did not find indication for such an interaction effect in the data. Another possible limitation deals with the way in which we selected our leaders. Being a leader was defined in our studies as being in a supervisory position. As a result, data was obtained from individuals in positions at different levels within organizations and is not focused on one specific group of leaders or managers. However, having participants from different companies in a different level supervisory position ensured that we would have sufficient variance in the leadership styles. Moreover, it resembles the broad range of leadership positions in actual organizations.

The most important limitation of our studies, and thereby one of the main suggestions for future research, might be found in the perceivers of leadership. Although, Chapter 3, 4, and 5 intensively studied the perceptual issues surrounding leadership, we did not study the effect leadership has on the perceiver. Results from Chapter 3 demonstrate that the
different role leaders and raters fulfill has an influence on the ratings of leadership styles. This suggests that these roles have an influence on the behavioral interaction between the rater and the leader. Markey, Funder, and Ozer (2003) and Tracey, Ryan, and Jaschik-Herman (2001) showed that when two persons interact their behaviors tend to conform to a circular pattern as predicted by the interpersonal circumplex. Results from Chapter 3 confirm these studies by showing that leaders are rated as being more submissive by their supervisors and perceived as being more dominant by their subordinates. However, Chapter 3 only investigated the rated behavior of the leader and did not examine the reactive behavior of the rater. It may be of interest to examine the behaviors of the individuals surrounding the leader as well. An indication of the usefulness of a circumplex approach in measuring this is provided in a study by Glomb and Welsh (2005), who demonstrated that subordinate satisfaction is higher when their supervisor shows complementary behaviors on the personality dimension of control than when he or she shows non-complementary behaviors on the control dimension. The CLS, by being a circular behavioral model, can help to gain insight in what behaviors are evoked by certain leadership behaviors. This possibly shows whether certain behaviors are complemented by opposite behaviors or mimicked with similar behaviors of the subordinate and vice versa. Combining this with measures of effectiveness may provide useful information to practitioners, which can be put to good use in training, coaching, management development, etc. To be in a position to examine such questions, the CLS should be complemented with a version that is able to measure subordinate behaviors.

Finally, the second part of this dissertation focused on the influence of characteristics of the rater and the leader on perceptions of leadership. Specifically, three main characteristics were studied. Chapter 3 and chapter 4 both studied the influence of gender of both the leader and the rater. Chapter 3 additionally studied the hierarchical position of the rater, compared to the leader. Finally, Chapter 5 studied the facial characteristics of the leader. Although, this dissertation provided interesting insight into these important characteristics, some other characteristics remained unstudied. Future research might benefit from studying some of these other characteristics, such as the influence of age and ethnic background of both the leader and the rater on ratings of leadership.
Conclusion

One of the most important and central strengths of the present dissertation are the methods that are used. The carefully constructed leadership model and questionnaire from Chapter 2 were used in each Chapter throughout the dissertation. As a result of using a complete, continuous model of leadership, the leadership circumplex, this dissertation was able to provide a comprehensive overview of the different perceptions people have about leadership styles. It was demonstrated that the characteristics of the rater are of influence on the ratings that are provided on a leader’s behavioral style. It was shown that the perception of leadership effectiveness is strongly influenced by gender stereotypes. Importantly, however, these gender stereotypical perceptions might not be as negative for women as is often believed. Finally, it was demonstrated that a behavioral image is made by individuals in the blink of an eye, but, more importantly, that this image is not as accurate as people believe it to be. In sum, in responding to the call for a more comprehensive and interpersonally based leadership model, we also contributed to research on leadership perceptions and show that stereotypes might not be as accurate as we believe them to be.