



# MOTIVATION TO LEAD

## FROM A GENDER PERSPECTIVE

What motivates men and women to thrive  
for a leadership position?

M. Gatzka, G. Elprana, S. Stiehl, & J. Felfe  
University of Siegen





# Leadership, career success and gender

- Although equally qualified, women are still underrepresented in leadership positions worldwide (Brugger et al., 2009)
  - In Germany only 20% of all leadership positions in small and middle sized companies and only 4% in large firms are occupied by women (Brader et al., 2006)
- Previous research indicated several possible socio-psychological determinants
  - E.g. stereotype threat, role incongruity, goal conflicts, biased social cognitions towards women and their competences, and differences in career support (Eagly et al., 2004)
  - Almost no research has been conducted in regard to the motivational aspects of leadership



# Leadership, career success and gender

→ A instrument measuring motivation to lead would provide the opportunity to

- Contribute to an early identification of leadership motivation disclosing potential motivational risks and chances
- Permit a deeper understanding of one's own motivation to lead



# Predicting career success based on individual motivation

- Motivation to manage in hierarchic organizations (e.g. Miner & Smith, 1982)
  - Projective measure: Miner Sentence Completion Scale, 40 Phrases, 7 Subscales
  - Great gender differences across subscales especially for business students
  - Complex and difficult evaluation
- Bochumer Inventar zur berufsbezogenen Persönlichkeitsbeschreibung (Hossiep & Paschen, 1998)
  - 15 Items on motivation to lead, focus on power



# Predicting career success based on individual motivation

- **Motivation to lead** (Chan & Drasgow, 2001)
  - Conceptualized in terms of three correlated factors
    - Affective: individuals enjoy to lead
    - Noncalculative: motivated by beliefs about potential outcomes associated with the role of leadership, not by cost-benefit calculations
    - social-normative: leadership out of a sense of duty and responsibility
  - Question on WHY people take the lead, not IF they do

# New approach: The project „Motivation to lead from a gender perspective“

- Integration of several ideas
  - Trisection of motives into affective, calculative and social-normative components
  - Analyzing explicit and implicit motives
    - Self-ratings
    - Situational questions
    - Projective assessment through photography
- Investigate motive constellations, that point on (potential) future take over of leadership
- Utilization in vocational and courseguidance and personnel development

# Interview study

- 29 male and 21 female participants from different branches, who have already reached a leadership position
- Semi-structured interview guideline
  - Duration about one hour
  - Ratings and open questions
- Four central questions:
  1. Is motivation to lead essential in order to reach a leadership position?
  2. Do male and female leaders differ in regard to their motivation to lead?
  3. Are there any early indicators of motivation to lead in leaders' life courses?
  4. Is power motivation central to the motivation to lead construct?

# Central assumptions - results

	Mean ♂	SD ♂	Mean ♀	SD ♀
Importance of context	<b>3.5</b>	.98	<b>3.7</b>	.90
Importance of traits	<b>4.3</b>	.74	<b>3.8</b>	1.01
Importance of MTL	<b>4.1</b>	.95	<b>3.5</b>	1.26
Changeability of MTL	<b>3.0</b>	1.16	<b>3.0</b>	.99
Own MTL	<b>4.2</b>	1.00	<b>4.1</b>	1.01
Importance of leading position	<b>4.2</b>	.96	<b>3.6</b>	1.52

1. Is motivation to lead essential in order to reach a leadership position? ✓
2. Do male and female leaders differ in regard to their motivation to lead? ✗



# Central assumptions - results

3. Are there any early indicators of motivation to lead in leaders' life courses?
  - Many leaders explicitly report early indicators of MTL during high school and university
  - On the other hand, some report having discovered their leadership potential in the long run
  
4. Is power motivation central to the motivation to lead construct?
  - Power motive was not explicitly named as part of one's own MTL
  - However the interview partners did assume power to be an important part of other leaders' motivation!

# General results

<b>Own MTL</b>	<b>-.31 *</b>	Importance of context
	<b>.41**</b>	Importance of MTL
	<b>.41*</b>	Take delight in leading
	<b>-.39*</b>	Meet expectations
	<b>.25</b>	Being a role model
	<b>.27</b>	Impart knowledge
<b>Importance of leading position</b>	<b>-.40*</b>	Meet expectations
	<b>.48*</b>	Take delight in leading
	<b>-.28</b>	Social reputation

# Incentives and constraints

- Most relevant incentives
  - Ability to frame your own workplace
  - Realize your own ideas
  - Further your own development
- Most relevant constraints
  - Fear of the responsibility
  - Losing the capacity to work on content
- Gender differences
  - ♂ want to be role model
  - ♀ take delight in leading, want to impart knowledge, don't care about expectations



# Assessment of motivation to lead

Assessment in childhood		Not possible
Assessment in adolescence		Possible
Assessment in apprenticeship		Possible
Assessment in first occupation		Possible
Assessment overall	pos.	Adolescence, apprenticeship, occupation
Assessment overall	-.46*	Importance of context
Assessment overall	.49*	Education
Own MTL	.30	Always wanted to be

# Construction of the instrument

- Basic motives (fear / hope components)
  - Power, achievement, affiliation
- Second order motive: motivation to lead
- Further incentives and constraints, e.g.
  - Being a role model
  - Motivating others
  - Autonomy
- Situational questions to reveal hidden motives
  - Common leadership
  - Covered motivation to lead
- Photographies of business situations



04.12.2009, Career Success  
Workshop Nürnberg

# Thank you for your attention!

Magdalena Gatzka  
Universität Siegen  
[gatzka@psychologie.uni-siegen.de](mailto:gatzka@psychologie.uni-siegen.de)