

University of Nevada, Reno

**Culture, Sexism, and Legal Remedies: A Three Country Study of Gender Inequality at the  
Corporate Level**

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of

Bachelor of Science in International Business and the Honors Program

by

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prepared under our supervision by

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## **Abstract**

Sexism in the workplace is a quietly thriving pattern across cultures and businesses - especially at the executive level. Geert Hofstede's work on behavior and institutions across culture include dimensions that can help predict gender inequality in a culture. Further, whether sexism is more benevolent or hostile in the workplace depends on a culture's values. These values and norms often manifest themselves in the policies created by firms that operate in all countries and become a part of a professional culture that continues to keep women in lower level or lower paying positions. How a country attempts to remedy gender inequality can also be a reflection of its cultural values. Based on a study of three culturally different countries (Japan, Norway and the United States), this research seeks to answer questions regarding how the values of a culture contribute to gender inequality in the workplace, what has been done to combat it, and the potential benefits of a more diverse workplace.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

Although women have advanced into many of the same positions as men in the workplace in recent years, only about 5% have managed to earn the title of CEO of Fortune 500 countries (Catalyst 2016). Many factors account for the continued inequality among men and women at the highest levels of organizations, including education, experience, lack of work-life balance support, and leadership styles because, more often than not, the styles that have prevailed in the past tend to be based on masculine values rather than on a combination of feminine and masculine traits (Jones, Stewart, King, et al. 2014). However, these factors explain the absence of women in upper management only to a limited degree. The disproportionate number of women CEOs indicates that a systemic gender bias is thriving. “The invisible barriers that hinder the career advancement of women,” known as the glass ceiling, has prevented women from career advancement for decades. (Kurian 2013, p. 127).

Sexism, “beliefs, emotions, or behavior that support gender inequality” (Vohs 2007, p. 858), plays a critical role in explaining the continued existence of the glass ceiling and women’s slow advancement to upper level positions in organizations across the world. Sexist attitudes are reflected by the explicit and implicit expectations involved in relationships between men and women employees and are reflected in the organizational processes and structures of corporations (Ridgeway 2011). As world economies recover from recession, corporations are searching for ways to better utilize resources and innovate in the sale and distribution of products and services. In this context, corporations “legal entities, operated by persons authorized to conduct a specific business, to raise money for this purpose, and to acquire or sell property” (Kurian 2013, p. 70) review current processes and structures to

identify any organizational structures or processes that prevent the corporation from functioning effectively and efficiently – including processes and structures that present obstacles to talented and motivated women. Women present half of the workforce in most countries. Allowing sexist attitudes to impact the full use of that resource results in undesirable effects for societies, which include decreased profits, unsatisfied customers, or even decreased employee performance (Jones, Stewart, King, et al 2014). Including half of the world’s population in upper level management decisions benefits organizations as well as the consumers of these corporations’ products and services (Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu 2011).

The case for equal gender representation in corporate governance grows stronger as researchers and companies alike learn that there are many benefits to having half the world’s population represented at the highest levels of leadership. In fact, the U.S. company Deloitte has coined the phrase “Gender Dividend” to describe the increased profits and success that a company can achieve when women are equally represented at the highest levels of corporations (Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu 2011). Countries around the world are realizing these benefits and taking steps to change the status quo using various levels of incentives and repercussions to create gender equality in the workplace. The negative consequences of gender discrimination in the workplace have been measured across cultures (Jones, Stewart, King, et al 2014). However, the extent of such conditions and gender discrimination’s effect on women’s advancement varies. Cultural differences can explain some of the variation.

Culture is defined as “...the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category from another” (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov 2010).

The extent to which sexist attitudes affect the policies and procedures of an organization depend on cultural characteristics as defined by Hofstede. These dimensions are the culture's tendency toward being masculine versus feminine and having a higher power distance versus a lower power distance (Hofstede 2001). The purpose of this research is to identify potentially culture-based causes of gender discrimination and the consequent lack of gender equality in corporate governance. In addition, the legislative approaches to addressing gender inequality in business in three countries – Japan, Norway and the United States - that differ substantially with respect to their culture will be compared and analyzed. Company leaders and academics who are interested in gender equality can benefit from learning about the way culture shapes women's participation in corporate leadership and legislative approaches. The inclusion of women in corporate leadership benefits corporations and economies as a whole.

#### *Purpose and Significance*

A multitude of research and statistical information exists up to this point in academia and business that explains the causes and effects of the glass ceiling, especially in the context of the United States (Cotter, Hermsen, & Vanneman 2011; Jackson, O'Callaghan, & Adserias 2014) . However, the causes of gender inequality in the workplace are researched under a North American/Anglo cultural lens and thus might not be specifically useful in analyzing other countries. Further, some of the reasons why women are not advancing to upper level leadership positions in organizations are culture-bound, or limited by or valid only within a culture, while other reasons for gender inequality in the workplace might be more universal, or culturally salient. For example, the value of long working hours in Japan presents a significant obstacle to maintaining a work-life balance (Nemoto 2013). Long working hours

might not be a core cultural value in the United States or Norway, but finding a work-life balance is an important and universal obstacle women have to overcome to break through the glass ceiling. I will compare and analyze how Hofstede's cultural dimensions of masculinity/femininity, power distance, individualism, and uncertainty avoidance are reflected in the causes of and in the policies enacted to address gender inequality in Japan, Norway and the United States.

The realization that women leaders organize and direct their employees differently and that such gender-based differences in leadership benefit organizations is now catching on outside of academia (Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu 2011; Gratton, Kelan, Volgt et al 2007). A number of international organizations are learning that their bottom lines benefit – either through increased profits, innovation, or retention of talented employees - when women hold executive level leadership positions. The economic justification for confronting sexism is becoming perhaps the best means of bringing gender equality in corporate governance to the forefront of international business conversations. According to a recent McKinsey and Company report based on data collected from 366 companies across industries in the United States, Canada, Latin America and the United Kingdom, companies that strive for gender diverse leadership are 15% more likely to outperform those that are not, on average and across the countries in the study. This outperformance could be the result of increased financial returns, improved customer orientation, and acquisition and retention of motivated and talented leaders (Hunt, Layton, & Prince 2015). Further, popular publications like DiversityInc hold companies accountable for their employment of women and other underrepresented groups of people, with a mission of bringing “education and clarity to the

business benefits of diversity” (DiversityInc 2016). DiversityInc’s 2015 list of “Top 50 Companies for Diversity” was compiled using a number of indicators, including one for the inclusion of women at various levels of leadership. Companies at the top of the list were Novartis Pharmaceuticals, Kaiser Permanente and PricewaterhouseCoopers. In addition, the publication of accountability and progress reports on gender equality signals a much-needed change in what constitutes a successful, profitable organization. As gender diversity gains momentum and credibility as a necessary step for organizations of all types, many more members of the academic and business community will want to understand how they can contribute. Eventually many more members of the community will need research and statistics that are culture-specific and thus more specifically applicable to their field of study or organizational policies.

### *Methodology*

In order to form conclusions that are apply to specific cultures, this research includes analysis of the culture and social environment of three very culturally different countries: Japan, Norway and the United States. These countries were chosen not only because they are culturally different, but also because they are similar in terms of their economic, political and technological systems. All three countries have well-functioning local, state and federal government systems as well as thriving economies fueled by advanced technology. Further, they are all OECD and United Nations members, indicating they are stable and have the potential to commit to ending the gender gap at the highest levels of leadership of corporations. The principal means of data and information collection for this study is through secondary research. This study utilizes information and reports provided by each country’s

government accountability/compliance offices as well as by international organizations like the United Nations, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the International Labor Organization, and the World Economic Forum.

In addition to statistical data, this research relies on well-supported frameworks and scales in order to compare the cultures and gender equality indicators of Japan, Norway and the United States. Geert Hofstede's cultural dimensions is the first means of pinpointing potential cultural values that lead to gender inequality within each culture. A look at Peter Glick's Ambivalent Sexism Inventory reveals whether hostile or ambivalent sexism (or both) tends to occur in each culture (Glick & Fisk 2001). Furthermore, the author makes use of the University of Nevada, Reno's multitude of online databases and printed journals to better understand the culturally-based causes of gender inequality in the workplace in Japan, Norway and the United States as well as to explore what countries are doing to confront gender inequality in corporate governance in those countries.

### *Understanding Culture and Sexism*

While women have made strides toward attaining upper level leadership positions equal to those of men, the number of women CEOs and board members of corporations remains considerably lower than that of men. Disparities between men and women tend to be lower in feminine cultures like that of Norway, while gender inequality is higher in masculine cultures like that of Japan. Further analysis of how a country's culture affects women's advancement in corporate leadership is an important factor in how to mitigate the potential negative effects of culture on gender equality and remedy the gender gap problem.

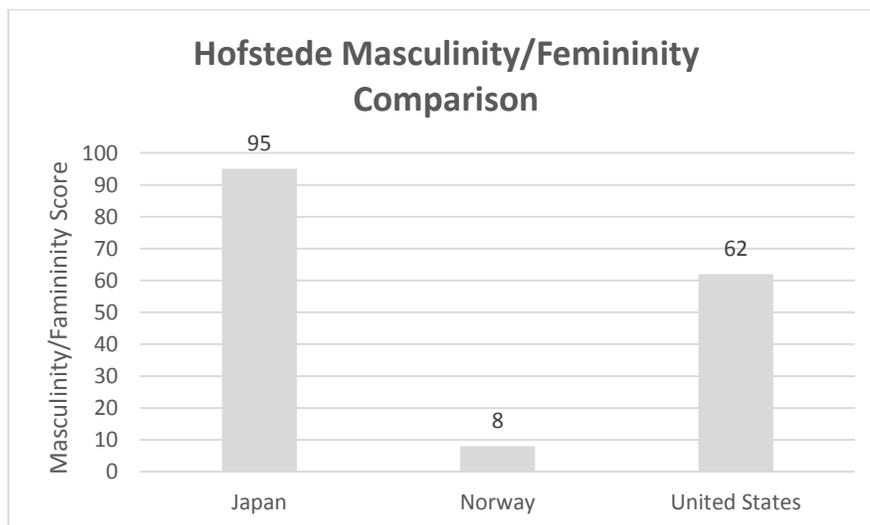
### *Hofstede's Cultural Framework*

Geert Hofstede's original work during the 1960s and 1970s on the differences in values between cultures is useful in understanding why gender equality in the workplace is easier to achieve in one culture as opposed to another. Geert Hofstede and colleagues undertook a cross-national survey of 72 countries and over 116,000 questionnaires in 1968 and 1972 to measure people's views of certain situations and approaches to societal problems (Hofstede 2001). The results of their research have allowed culture to be quantified and more specifically analyzed. As of 2010, there are 6 dimensions used to quantify and differentiate cultures: power distance (PDI), individualism (IDV), masculinity (MAS), uncertainty avoidance (UAI), long/short term orientation (LTO) and indulgence. Hofstede's four original dimensions – PDI, IDV, MAS and UAI – are further analyzed for the purpose of this research. Each country in the study is ranked on a scale from 1 to 100, where a number closer to 1 indicates a low tendency and one closer to 100 indicates a high tendency. For example, a score of 10 on the MAS scale indicates the culture is more feminine than masculine. The masculinity/femininity dimension is directly related to the focus of this study as it captures the relative emphasis on values related to masculine and feminine traits in a country. For the purpose of this study, a masculine culture is defined as one that prefers “achievement, heroism, assertiveness and material rewards for success” rather than feminine values of “cooperation, modesty, caring for the weak, and quality of life” (Hofstede 2001, p. 279). Each culture's values, defined simply as “a broad tendency to prefer certain states of affairs over others” (p. 5), are what foster or hinder gender equality among men and women in the workplace in each country.

### *Masculinity/Femininity Dimension*

The masculinity/femininity dimension (MAS) describes the aspect of culture concerned with one's ego vs. social issues (p. 279). The MAS dimension of Hofstede's national culture remains a good predictor of whether a country has more or less gender inequality in the workplace. Japan, which has a score of 95 on the 100 point MAS scale, has the highest masculinity score of all the countries measured. This means that the Japanese tend to value assertiveness and ego-based goals like career advancement and wealth. In contrast, feminine cultures tend to focus on building and maintaining relationships and helping others, like that of Norway, which scores only an 8 on the 100 point MAS scale. The United States has a score 62 out of 100 on the MAS scale and is thus relatively more masculine because its score leans 12 points closer to masculinity over femininity. Any score difference of 4 points or greater signals a statistically significant difference between cultures (Hofstede 2001).

*Figure 1: Hofstede MAS Comparison*



*(Hofstede 2001)*

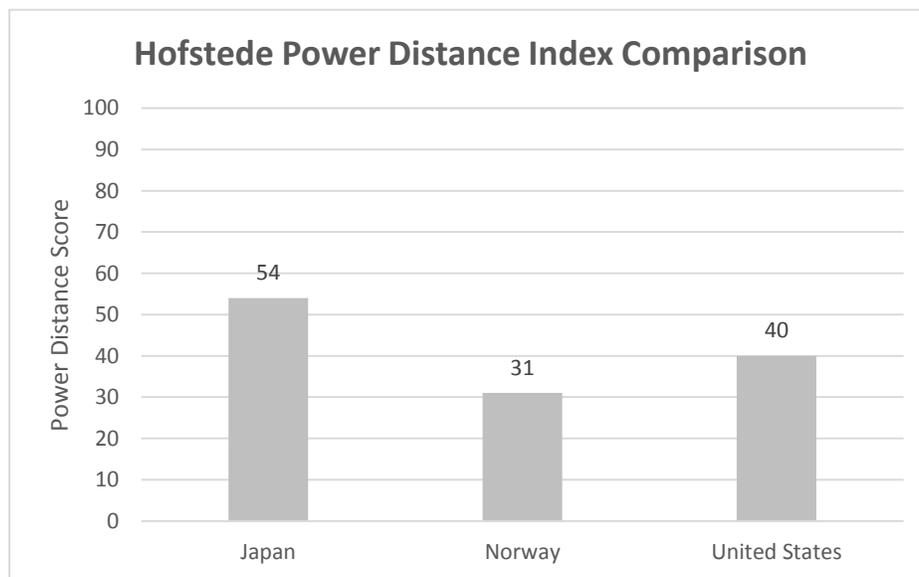
The masculinity/femininity dimension allows for a number of research-proven generalizations to be made about how masculinity affects the workplace environment. Each country's MAS scores are displayed in Figure 1. Because Japan is a significantly masculine country, we expect that members of Japanese society to have fewer women managers, prefer less time off from work, expect pay for performance, and experience higher levels of job stress (Hofstede 2001, p. 318). Since the United States is 12 points more masculine than feminine, we expect similar conditions in U.S. companies, but to a lesser extreme because of the difference in score values (62 vs. 95). In a more feminine culture like Norway, people have higher expectations for quality working conditions, have more women in management positions, prefer more time off for sickness, and experience less burnout symptoms than in a masculine society (p. 318).

#### *Power Distance Index*

The power distance index dimension (PDI) measures how a society handles inequality among its members (Hofstede 2001, p. 79). In an organizational context, power distance predicts the type of relationship managers have with their subordinates. A country with a high power distance score tends to have hierarchical organizational structures in which upper level managers are expected to give directions to lower level employees, who generally do not question the actions of their superiors (p. 107). In a country with a relatively low PDI score, organizations tend to be more "flat," meaning there is less distinction between bosses and subordinates. Employees in a low PDI organizational culture assume their input matters. Members of a high PDI culture seek authoritative leaders while those in low PDI cultures

work better with consultative leaders. Members of a more hierarchical culture, i.e. a country with a higher PDI score, tend to be more accepting gender inequality among men and women as they are not expected to question the actions of their superiors (Namely, the hiring and promotion practices of upper level management). All three countries in this study have lower PDI scores, but the differences among them are significant. Each country's PDI score is displayed in Figure 2 below. Based on its relatively low (less than 50) PDI score and the fact that their scores are more than 4 points away from each other, Norwegian corporate structures are more flat while Japanese corporate structures are significantly more hierarchical. Since the United States' score is less than 50, we can expect U.S. corporations to also have relatively flat corporate structures as well.

Figure 2: Hofstede PDI Comparison



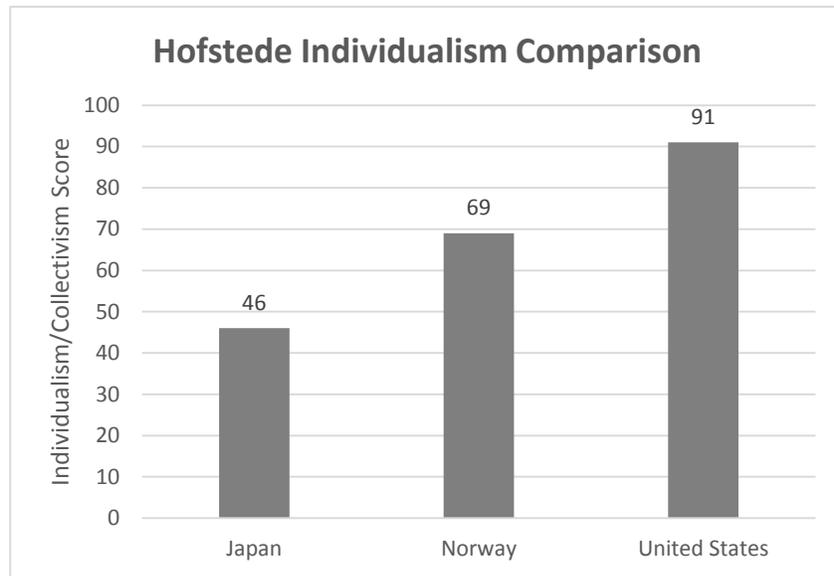
(Hofstede 2001)

### *Individualism/Collectivism Dimension*

This dimension “describes the relationship between the individual and the collectivity that prevails in a given society” (Hofstede, 2001, p. 209). In an organizational context, a country’s IDV score predicts whether employees tend to act in their (and their immediate family’s) self-interest or if employees make decisions based on how that decision affects their “in-group,” not necessarily themselves (p. 244). Further, members of a more collectivistic culture are expected to be more committed to their employer, treat personal relationships as more valuable than business tasks, and have less “social mobility across occupations” than members of an individualistic culture (p. 244). It is likely that individualism/collectivism plays a role in the extent of gender inequality. Collectivistic cultures emphasize the well-being of the group over individual self-interest. Therefore, what is good for the group (society) is acceptable and does not need to be changed. Since members of a collectivistic culture prefer to maintain harmony within their communities, it is more difficult to make changes to combat gender inequality in the workplace which is related to caring for underrepresented groups like women and minorities. In individual cultures, the individual’s rights and equity and fairness prevail. Perceptions of fairness are based on social comparisons of input outcome ratios. Members of such cultures are more likely to address issues of inequity. Japan, Norway and the United States’ IDV scores are presented in Figure 3 below. Based on Japan’s IDV score, we can expect Japanese employees to manifest more collectivistic values. While Norway and the U.S. are both relatively individualistic, we can

expect U.S. employees to act significantly more in their own self-interest than Norwegian employees.

*Figure 3: Hofstede IDV Comparison*



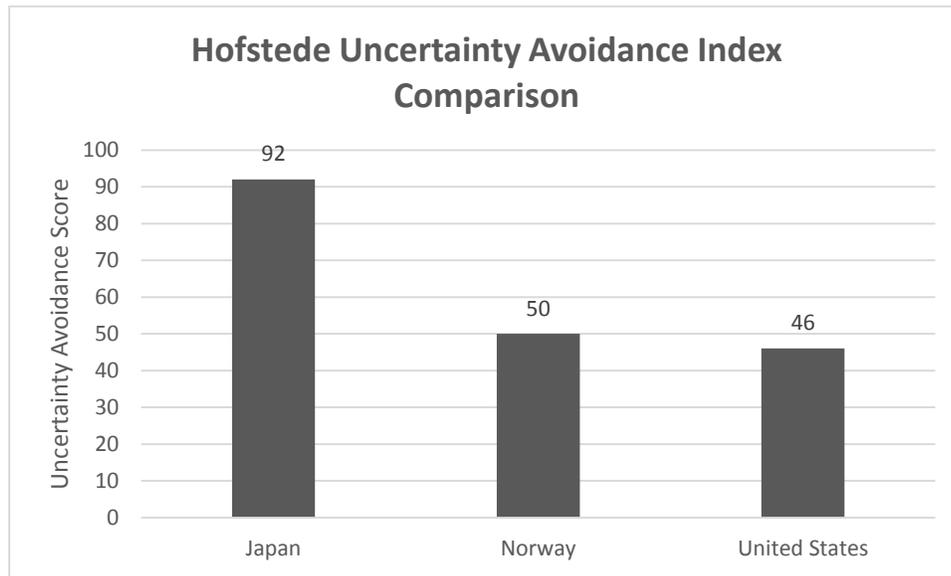
*(Hofstede 2001)*

### *Uncertainty Avoidance Index*

The last of Hofstede's four original cultural dimensions of national culture is the "degree to which a culture's members are comfortable with ambiguity" (Hofstede 2001, p. 145). A culture with a high UAI score tend to have clear social codes and beliefs as to how to approach and control the future and are motivated by their fear of failing. Cultures with low UAI scores tend to be less wary of what will happen in the future and are motivated by hope for success. In terms of this dimension's effect on organizational culture, we expect to see employees of higher UAI cultures prefer to know the outcomes of every one of their tasks, have a task orientation and maintain more rigid structures and policies within the company. Employees in lower UAI cultures tend to value innovation more highly, have managers

involved in strategic decision making, and expect fewer details mentioned during project planning (Hofstede 2001). Concerning the relationship between uncertainty avoidance and gender inequality, this cultural dimension might affect gender equality through its impact on people's openness to change and acceptance of a need for change as well as through its impact on the creation and prevalence of legislation that addresses gender equity. In a relatively high UAI culture, members of that culture turn toward legislation and policy in order to remedy the problem of gender inequality in the workplace since legislation and rules reduce ambiguity which is desirable in such cultures. On the other hand, members a culture with a lower UAI score – indicating that people are more comfortable with ambiguity - might be less likely to enact legislation to remedy gender inequality issues. People in cultures with high uncertainty avoidance are afraid of the unknown and, therefore, not likely to change the current conditions that they are accustomed to. Overall, uncertainty avoidance might result in more legislation but in reality, less actual internally driven behavioral change. Figure 4 below includes all three sample countries' UAI scores. Based on their scores, we expect Japanese employees to exhibit high UAI characteristics. Norway and the United States, while only 4 points different from each other, tend to exhibit much less discomfort with ambiguity in the workplace – the U.S. more than Norway.

Figure 4: Hofstede UAI Comparison



(Hofstede 2001)

*Ambivalent Sexism: Hostile vs. Benevolent Sexism*

Another important predictor of gender inequality in the workplace is Peter Glick's Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI). The ASI, originally published and validated in the U.S. in the mid-1990s, is the result of responses to surveys of over 15,000 men and women living in 20 countries across the world (Glick & Fiske, 2001). Based on the results, Glick has identified two overarching means of maintaining gender inequality in every part of society: hostile and benevolent sexism. Both tend to work harmoniously in a culture to preserve the current uneven status quo of gender relations via the three main components of paternalism, gender differentiation, and heterosexuality (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Hostile sexism is considered overt because this type of sexism is a more easily recognizable view of gender relations that places men and women in adversarial positions where each gender is constantly fighting for control. Benevolent sexism, on the other hand, is described as "...a set of

interrelated attitudes toward women that are sexist in terms of viewing women stereotypically and in restricted roles but that are subjectively positive in feeling tone (for the perceiver) and also tend to elicit behaviors typically categorized as prosocial (e.g., helping) or intimacy seeking (e.g., self-disclosure)” (Glick & Fiske 1996, p. 491). A very poignant and relevant example of benevolent sexism comes from a study by Kumiko Nemoto, who interviewed a number of women working in various positions of leadership across financial and cosmetics companies in Japan. When asked about having to opt out of the workforce to raise their children, some women “...saw quitting a job for marriage or childbirth as a gender privilege; an option that enables them to leave inhumane working conditions rather than a career sacrifice” (Nemoto 2013).

## Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

The following is a synthesis and review of the current research regarding women's leadership levels and the relationship between cultural values and gender inequality in the sample countries of Japan, Norway and the United States. The last portion of this chapter reviews the legal policies specifically created to increase the number of women in upper level management and remedy the lack of gender equality at the corporate level in the sample countries.

### *Women in Leadership Positions: What do we know?*

International organizations like the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Economic Forum (WEF) have been tracking human progress and individually measuring indicators of women's advancement in the workplace and society of their member countries since 1995 and 2006, respectively (Bardhan & Klasen 2000; World Economic Forum 2015). The WEF synthesizes four separate measures of gender inequality to rank all 145 member countries. These measures include economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment of women in each country (WEF 2015). According to the WEF 2015 Global Gender Gap Report, Norway ranks 2<sup>nd</sup>, the United States 28<sup>th</sup>, and Japan 101<sup>st</sup> on the Global Index, where a better ranking indicates a smaller gender gap. The reason for Japan's relatively high ranking is because of the significantly low number of politically empowered Japanese women as well as a low economic participation and opportunity score (WEF 2015).

The UNDP uses indicators of reproductive health, empowerment and labor force participation to construct its Gender Inequality Index for each of the 188 countries measured.

According to the UNDP's most recent report, Norway ranks 9th, the United States 55<sup>th</sup> and Japan 26<sup>th</sup> on the GII, where a lower number indicates less gender inequality (Human Development Report 2015). Part of the reason for the United States' relatively high GII ranking is the quality of reproductive health care that women receive. Even though women are participating less in parliament and in the labor force in Japan, it seems that the infant mortality and adolescent birth rates in the United States (signs of reproductive health) play a more important role in attaining gender equality and thus their lower reproductive health rankings lead to more gender inequality in the country. Below is an excerpt of the report comparing gender inequality indicators of the UNDP's top 20 most developed countries:

Figure 5: UNDP 20 Most Developed Countries

| HDI rank                           | Gender Inequality Index |       | Maternal mortality ratio         | Adolescent birth rate               | Share of seats in parliament | Population with at least some secondary education |                        | Labour force participation rate <sup>a</sup> |      |      |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|---|------------------------|--|------|------|
|                                    | Value                   | Rank  | (deaths per 100,000 live births) | (births per 1,000 women ages 15-19) | (% held by women)            | (% ages 25 and older)                             |                        | (% ages 15 and older)                        |      |      |
|                                    | 2014                    | 2014  | 2013                             | 2010/2015 <sup>b</sup>              | 2014                         | 2005-2014 <sup>c</sup>                            | 2005-2014 <sup>c</sup> | 2013   | 2013 |      |
| <b>VERY HIGH HUMAN DEVELOPMENT</b> |                         |       |                                  |                                     |                              |   |                        |  |      |      |
| 1                                  | Norway                  | 0.067 | 9                                | 4                                   | 7.8                          | 39.6  | 97.4                   | 96.7   | 61.2 | 68.7 |
| 2                                  | Australia               | 0.110 | 19                               | 6                                   | 12.1                         | 30.5  | 94.3 <sup>d</sup>      | 94.6 <sup>d</sup>                            | 58.8 | 71.8 |
| 3                                  | Switzerland             | 0.028 | 2                                | 6                                   | 1.9                          | 28.5  | 95.0                   | 96.6   | 61.8 | 74.9 |
| 4                                  | Denmark                 | 0.048 | 4                                | 5                                   | 5.1                          | 38.0  | 95.5 <sup>e</sup>      | 96.6 <sup>e</sup>                            | 58.7 | 66.4 |
| 5                                  | Netherlands             | 0.062 | 7                                | 6                                   | 6.2                          | 36.9  | 87.7                   | 90.5   | 58.5 | 70.6 |
| 6                                  | Germany                 | 0.041 | 3                                | 7                                   | 3.8                          | 36.9  | 96.3                   | 97.0   | 53.6 | 66.4 |
| 6                                  | Ireland                 | 0.113 | 21                               | 9                                   | 8.2                          | 19.9  | 80.5                   | 78.6   | 53.1 | 68.1 |
| 8                                  | United States           | 0.280 | 55                               | 28                                  | 31.0                         | 19.4  | 95.1                   | 94.8   | 56.3 | 68.9 |
| 9                                  | Canada                  | 0.129 | 25                               | 11                                  | 14.5                         | 28.2  | 100.0                  | 100.0  | 61.6 | 71.0 |
| 9                                  | New Zealand             | 0.157 | 32                               | 8                                   | 25.3                         | 31.4  | 95.0                   | 95.3   | 62.0 | 73.8 |
| 11                                 | Singapore               | 0.088 | 13                               | 6                                   | 6.0                          | 25.3  | 74.1                   | 81.0   | 58.8 | 77.2 |
| 12                                 | Hong Kong, China (SAR)  | ..    | ..                               | ..                                  | 3.3                          | ..  | 72.2                   | 79.2   | 51.3 | 67.8 |
| 13                                 | Liechtenstein           | ..    | ..                               | ..                                  | ..                           | 20.0  | ..                     | ..   | ..   | ..   |
| 14                                 | Sweden                  | 0.055 | 6                                | 4                                   | 6.5                          | 43.6  | 86.5                   | 87.3   | 60.3 | 67.9 |
| 14                                 | United Kingdom          | 0.177 | 39                               | 8                                   | 25.8                         | 23.5  | 99.8                   | 99.9   | 55.7 | 68.7 |
| 16                                 | Iceland                 | 0.087 | 12                               | 4                                   | 11.5                         | 41.3  | 91.0                   | 91.6   | 70.5 | 77.4 |
| 17                                 | Korea (Republic of)     | 0.125 | 23                               | 27                                  | 2.2                          | 16.3  | 77.0 <sup>f</sup>      | 89.1 <sup>f</sup>                            | 50.1 | 72.1 |
| 18                                 | Israel                  | 0.101 | 18                               | 2                                   | 7.8                          | 22.5  | 84.4                   | 87.3   | 57.9 | 69.1 |
| 19                                 | Luxembourg              | 0.100 | 17                               | 11                                  | 8.3                          | 28.3  | 100.0 <sup>e</sup>     | 100.0 <sup>e</sup>                           | 50.7 | 64.6 |
| 20                                 | Japan                   | 0.133 | 26                               | 6                                   | 5.4                          | 11.6  | 87.0                   | 85.8   | 48.8 | 70.4 |

(Human Development Report 2015)

The International Labor Organization (ILO) published a report entitled *Women in Business Management: Gaining Momentum in 2013*. In addition to compiling data from McKinsey and Company, Deloitte, the World Economic Forum, and Catalyst, the ILO's Bureau for Employer's Activities conducted a survey of 1,300 private companies in 39 developing countries to study the current leadership levels of women in the companies as well as to explore the policies in place that aim to increase the number of women managers (Wirth-Dominice 2015). The study found that only 13% of companies had gender diverse boards with at least forty to sixty percent represented, while a majority of the survey respondents reported having less than 30% of women on boards (p. 11). Based on survey responses, the following is a list of the top 3 reasons for the lack of gender diversity of upper level management:

1. Women have more familial obligations than men  
Women have traditionally fulfilled the role of homemaker and caregiver for their families and are still expected to care for their families in addition to working.
2. Roles assigned to men and women by society  
Women and men are still assigned separate roles from their male counterparts at home and in the workplace. In addition to being expected to care for children, women are also typically expected to take less impactful roles or lower level positions because they are viewed as less capable than male coworkers.
3. Masculine corporate culture  
In a culture that values masculine traits of endurance, achievement, and getting ahead at the cost of familial or personal obligations, women are at a disadvantage because their gender-based values of relationships, caring for others, and participative leadership are viewed as inferior or less useful.

The International Labor Organization also publishes data about women's participation in the labor force on an annual basis. According to the ILO, this statistic is a measure of "...the proportion of the population ages 15 and older that is economically active" (2015). Based on survey data results, 49% of women and 70% of men in Japan are

actively participating in the workforce. Sixty one percent of the female population and 69% of the male population is participating in the workforce in Norway. Lastly, 56% of the female population and 69% of the male population is participating in the workforce in the United States.

In addition to global institutions, independent companies McKinsey and Company and Deloitte have not only measured the extent to which women are leading at the corporate level, but have also published reports in support of increasing gender equality in corporate governance. For example, Deloitte recently published a report entitled *The Gender Dividend: Making the Business Case for Investing in Women* in which authors Pellegrino, D'Amato, and Weisberg coined the term "gender dividend" to describe how "fully integrating women into both the workplace and the marketplace can yield a significant return" (p. 4). McKinsey and Company's 2015 *Diversity Matters* report supports the idea of the gender dividend. The 2015 *Women on Boards: Global Trends in Gender Diversity on Corporate Boards* report further contends that companies with "strong board leadership," i.e. 3 or more women representatives, generate higher Returns on Equity (Lee, Marshall & Rallis et al. 2015). It is important to note that these reports, including the one published by the ILO, emphasize that higher returns, greater customer orientations and/or higher company performance remain correlated with gender diverse corporate leadership but have not yet proved to be a direct cause of such factors.

Each country in the chosen sample has a governmental office or department that specifically measures the extent of women's participation in the labor market. These specific departments also collect statistical information about women in middle and upper

management positions. In Norway, the Central Bureau of Statistics published a report in March 2016 entitled “Gender Inequality is Decreasing,” in which contributors Karen Hamre and Toril Sandnes say that the number of female managers has increased about 4% since 2008 based on municipality-level sampling. More recent data shows that women are increasingly filling upper management positions in public companies in Norway and complying with the 40% rule instituted in 2003. The number of women board directors of privately held Norwegian companies is 17% (Egge-Hoveid & Hamre 2016). However, women are still obtaining more middle than upper level management positions in comparison to men. The lack of women in upper level management positions within Norwegian companies which indicates barriers to obtaining senior level management positions for women still exist (Egge & Hamre 2016). As of 2014, the number of women managers of Norway’s 145 large market capitalization companies hovers at 3% with more women in middle and upper management positions in private companies that are not subject to the quota law (Stoll 2014). According to Norway’s Central Bureau of Statistics, only 16% of general managers of public companies are women. The ratio dips to 7% for private companies (Egge-Hoveid & Hamre 2016).

According to a report published by the Japanese Gender Equality Bureau Cabinet Office in June 2015, women in Japan occupied 8.3% of middle and upper level management positions. There is a note on the report that says this number “includes middle and senior management levels,” which means that the number of Japanese women leaders is very low regardless of whether their positions are in middle or upper management. Further, the report measures the number of Japanese companies taking “positive action” toward gender equality

in the workplace, which was listed at 40% as of 2014 (Numerical Targets and Updated Figures... 2015). This statistic does not note what types of policies make them “positive action,” nor does the report specify what type or how many companies were studied for report findings. Finally, the report lists a target number of women in middle and senior management positions of 10% for 2015, but it does not specify how the target will be reached, either through incentives or potential fines for noncompliance. Another report based on data from over 1,800 Japanese firms listed on the Topix index shows that just over 10% of the companies have female directors, and only 1.5% of company board directors are women (Chu & Ito 2015). Another report by the Harvard Business Review based on data from Japan’s largest 20 countries shows that just over 1% have women CEOs as of 2014 (Wittenberg-Cox 2014).

Catalyst, whose mission is to “accelerate progress for women through workplace inclusion” is an organization that charges itself with tracking women’s leadership among Fortune 500 and Fortune 1000 companies (Catalyst Corp.). Organizations like The Pew Research Center, the Center for American Progress, and Fortune magazine have all published reports and articles that rely on Catalyst’s statistical information, indicating Catalyst’s credibility in the business and public information arenas in the United States (Parke, Horowitz & Rohal 2015; Warner 2014; Fairchild 2014). The number of women employed as CEOs of Fortune 500 companies has been a measure of gender (in)equality in the United States since Katherine Graham became the first female CEO (of The Washington Post Company) in 1972 (Mohan 2014). The number of female board members of Fortune 500 companies is slightly higher, at 19% as of 2015 (Catalyst 2016). According to the U.S.

Bureau of Labor Statistics, women comprised almost 16% of business management positions as of 2013 (United States, BLS).

The following figure shows the number of women working at S&P 500 companies at various levels of leadership. As of 2015, 4% of Fortune 500 CEOs were women and 19% of board member seats of Fortune 500 companies were held by women.

*Figure 6: Women in S&P 500 Companies*



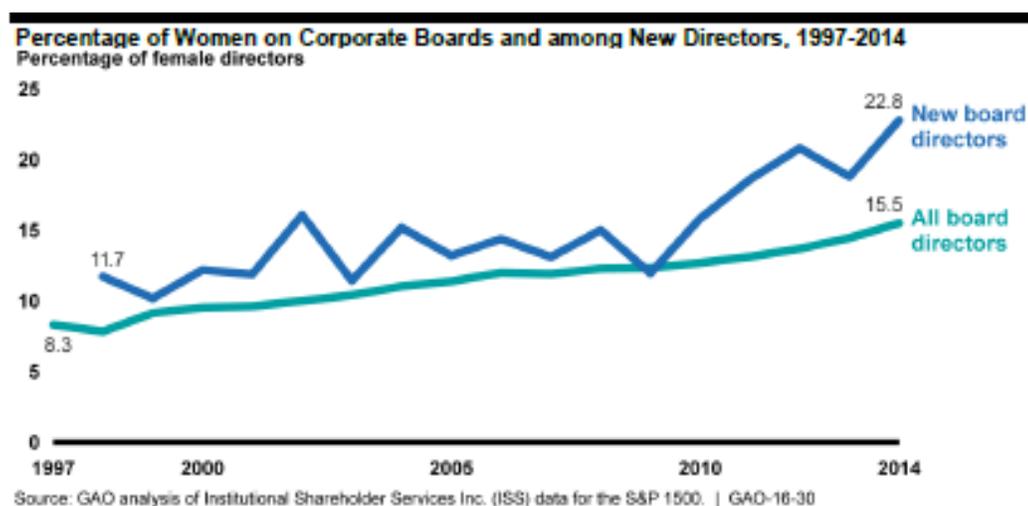
**Sources**

Catalyst, *Women CEOs of the S&P 500* (2015).  
 Catalyst, *2014 Catalyst Census: Women Board Directors* (2015).  
 U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), "2013 EEO-1 Survey Data."  
 S&P 500 is owned by S&P Dow Jones Indices LLC.

At the request of the Subcommittee on Capital Markets and Government Sponsored Enterprises within the House of Representatives, the United States Government Accountability Office published a report in December 2015 in which the GAO surveyed U.S. publicly traded companies to “examine gender diversity on corporate boards” (p.1). The report is based on Institutional Shareholder Service, Inc. data as well as in interviews with 19 people with past experience as CEOs or board members across industries (p. 2). Although the

measurement includes a slightly different selection of companies, the GAO also finds that women represent only about 16% of board seats on Fortune 1500 companies, which is an 8% increase since 1997. Below is a chart summarizing the GAO's findings on women's representation on the boards of S&P 1500 companies. As of 2014, women comprised only 15% of board positions of S&P 1500 companies.

Figure 7: U.S. GAO Women on Boards 1997-2014



### *Culture and Gender Equality*

Anthropologists agree that patriarchy, “men possessing structural control of economic, legal, and political institutions,” exists across cultures (Glick and Fiske 1996, p. 492). Further, physical differences between the male and female sexes are what create gender roles, which every culture is dependent upon in order to categorize its members. In the context of the workplace, gender roles can determine which types of jobs can be occupied by men and which can be occupied by women (Hofstede 1984). Reports by the ILO, WEF, UNDP, and Deloitte confirm that jobs in traditionally feminine roles (nursing, teaching, caregiver, and homemaker) are held by women more often than men, indicating that the glass

ceiling and perceived gender roles are still producing obstacles for women in achieving gender equality across industries.

Geert Hofstede's extensive research on the masculinity/femininity dimension of organizational culture implies that culture can be an important barrier or advantage to the advancement of women into the workforce in general as well as the highest levels of corporate leadership. Cultural values like achievement, assertiveness and materialism correlate with the types of goals that members of a masculine society strive to achieve (Hofstede 2001). These masculine values are similar to those mentioned in Schwartz and Rubel's research, which correlates gender equality levels in a culture with how important certain "basic human values" are to men and women (2009, p. 171). Their study across 70 countries found that values of "...benevolence, universalism, self-direction, stimulation, and hedonism" are associated with higher levels of gender equality while "...power, achievement, security, conformity, and tradition" tend to correlate with more gender inequality (p. 174).

Researchers have also used Hofstede's dimensions to find a correlation between the four original dimensions (IDV, MAS, PDI and UAI) and the gender pay gap, which is often used as a measure of gender inequality in the workplace. In the article, "Explaining the gender wage gap: is culture the missing link?" a study of 34 countries (including Japan, Norway, and the United States) found that "cultural influences do have an impact on the size of the gender wage gap" (Grosso & Smith 2007). The results of the study show that PDI, MAS, and IDV are positively correlated with an increased gender wage gap while UAI is negatively correlated. This correlation means that low power distance, low masculinity, and

low individualism scores tend to equate to lower levels of economic gender inequality in the form of wages. Further, higher uncertainty avoidance scores lead to more laws that provide for gender equality and thus an increase in economic gender equality.

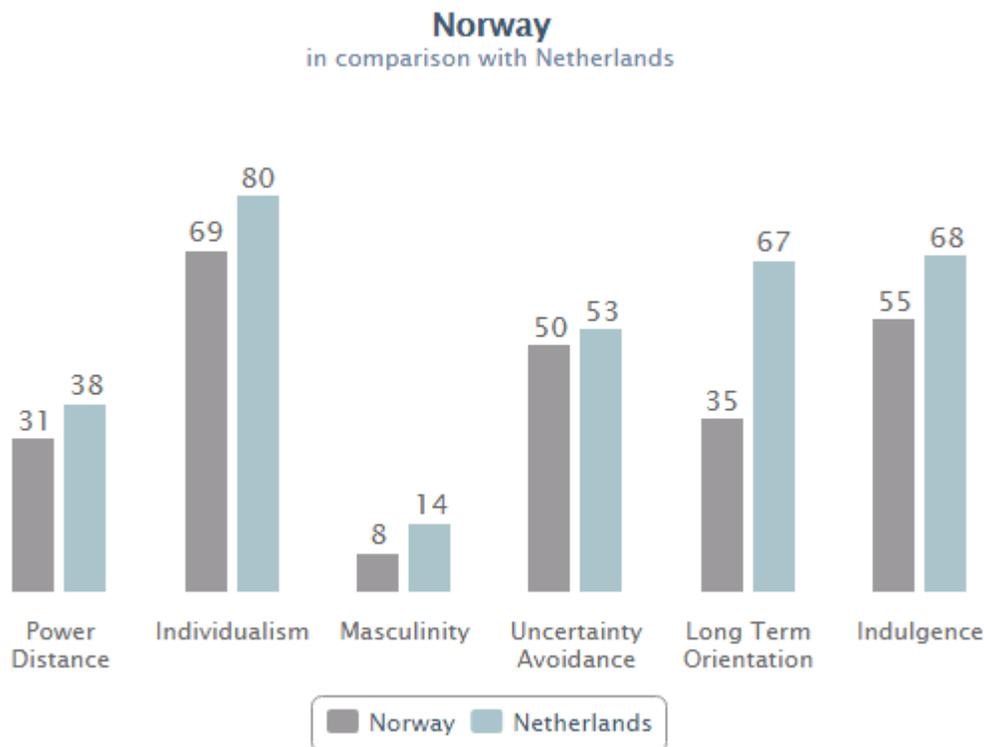
Another study utilized data from 7,302 companies in 32 countries to correlate Hofstede's 4 original cultural dimensions with the number of women represented on the boards of companies in each country. The study included Japan and the United States. The authors hypothesized that in countries with high PDI, MAS, or UAI scores, less women sit on boards of corporations while a country's IDV score do have an effect on the percentage of women on corporate boards (Carrasco, Francoeur, Labelle et al. 2015). As expected, high PDI and MAS scores are related to lower numbers of women on corporate boards, respectively. However, IDV and UAI scores do not appear to affect the percentage of women of boards. What these results mean is that in countries with high PDI scores, people are more comfortable with inequality between men and women, so "underrepresentation of women on boards is not considered a problem" (p. 436). Moreover, countries with high MAS scores tend to rely on gender stereotypes and expectations of women, which leads to lower levels of women board members because women are assumed to be unfit to fill the same roles as their male counterparts.

Social psychologist Peter Glick and his colleague, Susan Fiske, have also done cross-cultural research on how gender roles are maintained via sexism and these gender roles affect the perception of gender differences. More specifically, their research explores hostile (HS) and benevolent sexism (BS) and their relationship with ambivalent sexism, which occurs when a person believes something hostile like "Women belong in the home, not the

workplace” as well as benevolent: “Women need to be protected” (1996). Ambivalent sexism affects women’s advancement to corporate level leadership because this type of sexism is subtler but still based on the ideology that men are “dominant” and that women belong in the home. Recent research conducted using data from the 2006 World Values Survey of 32 countries confirmed the interdependent relationship between hostile and benevolent sexism (Napier, Thorisdottir & Jost 2010).

Below are the results of an ASI survey that include BS and HS scores from Japan and the United States. Norway is not yet included in the online ASI quiz, so for comparison purposes, results from the Netherlands was included. Norway and the Netherlands are relatively similar in terms of Hofstede’s cultural dimensions and are also grouped into the same cultural cluster (Hofstede 2001, p. 62). Figure 8 below includes a comparison of cultural dimensions between Norway and the Netherlands.

Figure 8: Norway/Netherlands Cultural Dimensions



(Hofstede 1996)

The results in Figures 9, 10 and 11 below are from the UnderstandingPrejudice.org website, which uses Glick, Fiske and other colleague's information to provide interested users with information about their own possible sexist beliefs in comparison to a country they choose (Social Psychology Network 2016). The ASI scores each country on a scale from 0 to 5, with 0 indicating low levels of hostile and benevolent sexism and 5 indicating high levels. The charts below indicate that Japanese men and women hold more hostile and benevolently sexist beliefs than their counterparts in the United States and Norway/Netherlands, but only slightly. Overall, people from the Netherlands (Norway's substitute country) possess lower HS scores, but women do tend to possess more hostile and benevolently sexist beliefs than

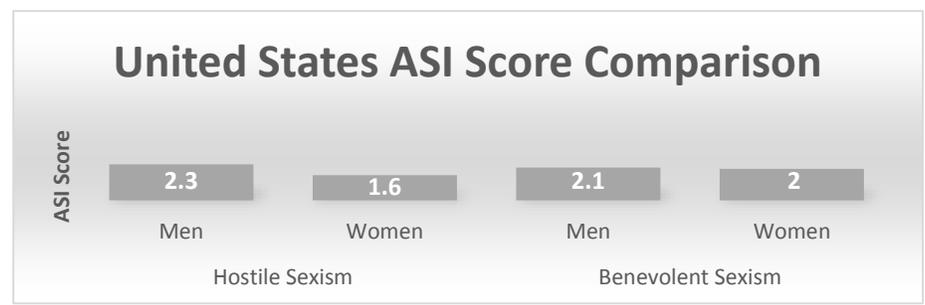
men. Women in Norway/Netherlands also tend to have more benevolently sexism beliefs than women in the United States and Norway/Netherlands as well.

Figure 9: Japan ASI Score Comparison



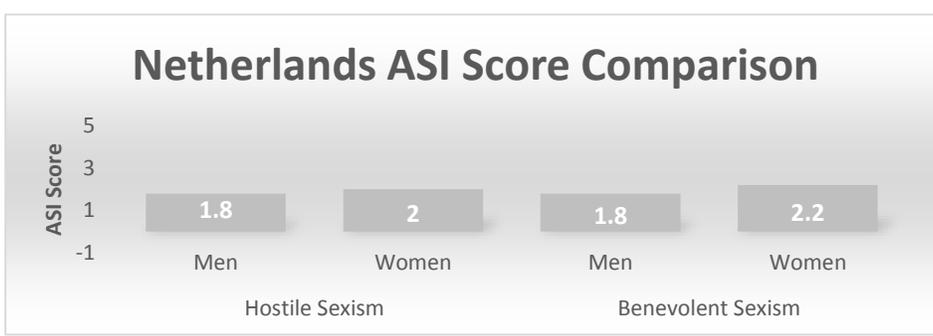
(Social Psychology Network)

Figure 10: United States ASI Score Comparison



(Social Psychology Network)

Figure 11: Netherlands ASI Score Comparison



(Social Psychology Network)

The above information provides evidence that there is indeed a relationship between cultural values or dimensions and gender (in)equality in the workplace and at the corporate level. To be more specific, women living in cultures that value masculine traits and exhibit Hofstede's masculine values tend to face more obstacles when advancing to upper level management positions, including overcoming gender stereotypes and being paid less money for the same work. The following section will answer questions pertaining to how a country that values relatively masculine or feminine traits and exhibits masculine or feminine characteristics approaches the obvious gender gap in corporate governance.

#### *Policies for Gender Equality*

Legislative approaches to achieving gender equality in the workplace vary in their nature and how policies are implemented and enforced across cultures and governments, from national "targets" to quota systems to disclosure requirements. The following table briefly summarizes the approaches some countries are taking to increase the number of women leaders at the corporate level. These countries in the table below were highlighted in the U.S. Government Accountability Office's report summarizing examples of what countries around the world are doing to combat gender inequality in corporate governance.

Table 1: Summary of Approaches Addressing Boardroom Diversity

| Summary of Approaches Addressing Boardroom Diversity |                        |   |
|--|------------------------|---|
| Country  | Type                   | Description   |
| Norway   | Quota                  | At least 40% of each gender represented on boards of public companies; dissolution possible if noncompliant |
| Germany  | Quota                  | At least 30% women on boards of public companies  |
| United Kingdom                                       | Voluntary measure      | Target-based approach: voluntary code of conduct and 25% target of women on boards by 2015                  |
| Australia, Canada                                    | Disclosure requirement | "Comply or explain" in financial statements why boards/executives are not diverse                           |

(U.S. GAO 2015)

Many countries understand that supporting women, men and families via maternity/paternity, parental, or family leave policies increases the likelihood that women will strive to remain in the workforce and have more (financial) success in their careers (Cabeza, Johnson & Tyner 2011; Hoey 2014; Lyness, Thompson & Francesco et al. 1999). The OECD's most recent report on parental leave policies reveals that the United States is the only member country to "offer no statutory entitlement to paid leave on a national basis" (Gatenio, Waldfogel & Haas 2015, p. 2). However, when maternity leave is offered, it is generally well-paid. Norway is a member of the small group of countries that pays up to 100% of earnings during leave while Japan offers up to 12 months of paid paternity leave, which is the most paternity leave offered to fathers by OECD member countries (p. 8). This section reviews the present policies in place designed to increase gender equality in the workplace, including specific board diversity requirements as well as peripheral public

policies like family/parental/medical leave for employees, in the sample countries of Norway, Japan, and the United States.

### *Norway*

Norway is seen as a leader in addressing the gender gap because of an amendment its government passed in the early 2000s that required 40% of board members of publicly traded companies to be women, in addition to its progressive maternity and paternity leave policies. Before the law officially went into effect, women made up about 15% of the boards of public companies. Eventually public companies met the required 40% benchmark in 2008 (Sjafjell 2015). The law itself applies only to public companies and includes all Norwegian companies listed on the Norwegian Register of Business Enterprises. Even though the law was implemented to increase gender equality for the sake of progress, Norwegian lawmakers understood that it was important to "...recruit more women into the boardrooms for the sake of the performance and competitiveness of the companies" (p. 29). According to Norway's Ministry of Children, Equality, and Social Inclusion website, the specifics of the law are as follows:

- If the board of directors consists of 2-3 members, both genders must be represented
- If the board of directors consists of 4-5 members, each gender must be represented by at least 2 members
- If the board consists of 6-8 members, each gender must be represented by at least 3 members

- If the board has 9 members, each gender must be represented by at least 4 members
- If the board has 10 or more members, each gender must be represented by at least 40 percent of the members

The consequences for not maintaining this gender balance on a company's board include the company being prohibited from registering on the Register of Business Enterprises, fines, and even dissolution. As a result of the new legislation, Norway has seen higher numbers of women managers at executive levels of corporations. However, the number of companies that are publicly listed has decreased from 554 in 2003 to 250 as of June 2014 (Sjafjell 2015). Since the law applies to only public companies, it follows that companies are choosing to circumvent the law by remaining private. There is also further evidence that increases in women board members are either not trickling down to management positions or are taking longer than a decade to show progress.

In addition to very specific requirements for gender diversity on the boards of public corporations, Norway also provides both male and female parents with generous amounts of paid time off work before and after pregnancy. According to the Leave Network, which was created in 2004 to analyze and report on leave policies in over 35 countries, Norway provides pregnant women with a base number of 13 weeks paid maternity leave, with 3 weeks of leave dedicated prior to delivery. Six weeks of leave after delivery are required for the health of the mother. After the thirteen week period, parents can choose how long and when they want to take time off for up to three years after the birth of their child. Paid leave payments can range from 100% of salary for 26 weeks or 80% of salary for up to 49 weeks. In order to be eligible

for paid leave benefits, mothers have to have worked at least six out of the previous ten months with their employer and have also paid into the national insurance program for at least 6 months' worth of their salary (Brandth & Kvande 2015). In 1993, Norway changed leave laws to provide fathers with 10 weeks of non-transferable paternity leave as a means of increasing parenting participation by fathers and increasing work/life balance for new mothers (Naz 2010). This incentive seems to have been successful, with 85% of fathers choosing to use the benefit (Lappegard 2008).

### *Japan*

While the Equal Employment Opportunity Act was passed in April of 1986 in Japan, women have seen far slower progress in terms of labor force participation and advancement to leadership positions (Abe 2011). The law, which explicitly prohibits "...gender discrimination with respect to vocational training, fringe benefits, retirement, and dismissal" does not provide any means for potential plaintiffs to file suit in court nor does it give the government the ability to launch an investigation to discriminatory claims (Edwards 1994). Japan has updated the EEOL to prohibit gender discrimination in recruiting and hiring employees as well as to force companies to create policies against sexual harassment of women (Assmann 2012). However, Japanese companies have created a "dual career track" system in which employees are hired into clerical (mostly women) or managerial (mostly men) positions in order to evade EEOL requirements (p. 7).

More recently, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has made the advancement of women in the workplace an important aspect of his economic reforms, calling the economic

empowerment of women the “third arrow” of Abenomics (Song 2015). His plan includes 1) increasing the number of women participating in the labor market and 2) increasing the number of women upper level managers and company executives. The Japanese Gender Equality Bureau, under the direction of Prime Minister Abe, has begun requesting publicly traded companies to disclose “gender related information” in their annual reports as a way to provide information to potential employees and investors (p. 125). At a recent Global Leaders Meeting on Gender Equality, Abe remarked that the Japanese government has “...set a goal that about 30% of leadership positions in the Japanese society be occupied by women by 2020” (Japan, Cabinet Public Relations Office).

In addition to proposed laws to increase gender equality in the workforce, Japan also provides a limited amount of paid maternity and paternity leave to employees. In order to be eligible for benefits, women must be a part of their employer’s health insurance plan, thus women who are self-employed or part-time employees are not eligible. New mothers are legally allowed to take up to 44 weeks of maternity leave, but at a significantly lower rate. For 6 weeks before and 8 weeks after delivery, mothers receive 67% of their salary earnings. After that, their benefits are reduced to 50% of earnings up to the 44 week limit. Fathers are provided with up to a year of paid paternity leave, but recent data show that only 2% of new fathers decide to use the benefit (Nakazato & Nishimura 2015).

### *United States*

The United States has not taken a specific, comprehensive approach to increasing women’s representation on the boards or executive positions in a company like Norway or

Japan. However, the Equal Pay and Civil Rights Acts have significantly helped women and minority groups gain higher level positions, more equal pay for equal work, and face less sexual harassment and discrimination in the workplace. The exact verbiage of the Equal Pay Act is as follows:

No employer having employees subject to any provisions of this section shall discriminate, within any establishment in which such employees are employed, between employees on the basis of sex by paying wages to employees in such establishment at a rate less than the rate at which he pays wages to employees of the opposite sex in such establishment for equal work on jobs the performance of which requires equal skill, effort, and responsibility, and which are performed under similar working conditions (United States, EEOC).

Exception for pay based on merit, seniority, production amounts, and a “differential based on any other factor other than sex” exists and can be manipulated to win cases in which women accuse their companies of sex-based pay discrimination (United States, EEOC). The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission is charged with enforcing and investigating employment discrimination cases that are prohibited by the Equal Pay Act and the Civil Rights Act. Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 expands upon the rights of U.S. Americans in the workplace to make “...employment discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, and national origin” illegal. It has further been amended to protect women from pregnancy discrimination, making it illegal to discriminate against a woman because of “...pregnancy, childbirth, or a medical condition related to pregnancy or childbirth” (United States, EEOC). In 2010, the Securities and Exchange Commission adopted a new requirement for companies to disclose “...whether, and if so how, a nominating committee considers diversity in identifying nominees for director” (United

States, SEC). The commission, however, specifically allows a corporation to define what “diversity” actually means, and does not list any sort of penalty for noncompliance.

The United States is the only OECD member country that does not provide women and families a statutorily mandated paid maternity, paternity, or medical leave at a national level. The Family Medical Leave Act of 1993 mandates that employees are allowed to take 12 “unpaid, job-protected” workweeks for every 12 months in the case of childbirth, adoption, spousal/familial health conditions, or a personal health condition that affects the employee’s ability to do their job (United States, Department of Labor 2016). However, the employee must have been employed at their job for at least one year and the federal mandate applies only to companies with 50 or more employees (Livingston 2013). Without requiring leave to be paid by at least a fraction of the employee’s earnings, this law is essentially job protection so that the employee is not fired for taking time off work for pregnancy or medical issues (Palazzari 2007). While the employee is on leave, they have to not only bear the brunt of medical costs that are incurred, but they also do not receive any source of income during their time away from work.

Based on the above information provided by international organizations, independent research companies, and individual government offices, comparisons can be made about Norway, Japan and the United States using Hofstede’s MAS, IDV and PDI scores. Questions to be addressed include: Is there a relationship between gender equality levels and cultural factors? How do countries react to this inequality in terms of legislation? To what extent? The following results and findings section provide some insight with respect to these questions as a means of answering the principle question of this research, which is whether

culture affects gender inequality at the corporate level and also how it affects the approaches governments are taking to remedy the problem.

### Chapter 3: Results and Findings

The following section analyzes the relationships between Hofstede's MAS, IDV, UAI, and PDI scores, Glick's BS/HS scores and gender equality at the corporate level in Japan, Norway, and the United States. A review of the UNDP, the WEF indices, the MAS dimension, and the prevalence of women in upper management reveal that there is a relationship between the indices and the extent to which women are represented in upper management positions. A comparison between MAS and BS/HS scores reveals a relationship between masculine cultures and ambivalent sexism. Finally, a comparison and analysis between Hofstede's four original dimensions and each sample country's legislative approach to remedying gender inequality at the corporate level indicate that culture does play a role in women's leadership at the corporate level.

#### *Culture and Women's Leadership*

Table 2: International Rankings Comparison

| International Rankings Comparison     |                |               |                      |
|---------------------------------------|----------------|---------------|----------------------|
| Organization                          | Country        |               |                      |
|                                       | <i>Japan</i>   | <i>Norway</i> | <i>United States</i> |
|                                       | Ranking        |               |                      |
| <b>Gender Inequality Index (UNDP)</b> | 26/188 (20/20) | 9/188 (1/20)  | 55/188 (8/20)        |
| <b>Global Gender Gap (WEF)</b>        | 101/145        | 2/145         | 28/145               |
| <b>MAS Dimension Score</b>            | 95/100         | 8/100         | 62/100               |

(Human Development Report 2015; World Economic Forum 2015; Hofstede 2001)

Table 2 is a compilation of data from the UNDP, WEF, and Hofstede's MAS dimension. The UNDP ranking is out of 188 countries, with each country's ranking out of the top 20 most developed countries in parentheses next to the ranking. The WEF ranking is out of 145 countries. Hofstede's MAS dimension is an indicator of whether gender roles are more or less strict in a culture and thus predict gender (in)equality in that culture. Based on the data, a higher MAS score is related to a lower ranking from either organization. Conversely, a relatively low MAS score is related to a higher (more gender equal) ranking. The reason that the United States' GII ranking contradicts the MAS relationship and is thus ranked lower than Japan is because the United States' has a relatively high maternal mortality and adolescent birth rate incidence in comparison to Japan, which is considered more significant by the UNDP and thus indicates more gender equality in Japan. The other factors that contribute to the United States' ranking – labor force participation, secondary education attainment, and participation in government – are similar to that of Japan and Norway and would otherwise align with the MAS/low ranking relationship without the skew of the reproductive health piece of the ranking.

Another aspect of Hofstede's MAS dimension predicts that a country has fewer women leaders in a more masculine culture and more in a more feminine culture. Table 3 below confirms this assertion. In a masculine country like Japan, there are significantly fewer women managers and board members. In a relatively feminine country like Norway, the ratio of women board members is significantly more than in Japan and the United States. The number of women managers in Norway is similar to that of the United States, though. Because the United States' MAS score is significantly more masculine than Norway but still

less than Japan, it follows that the number of women board members and managers falls between Norway's 40% and Japan's range of 4-8%.

*Table 3: Women's Leadership Levels Comparison*

| <b>Women's Leadership Levels</b> |                              |   |                           |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------|---|---------------------------|
|                                  | <b>Country</b>               |   |                           |
|                                  | <i>Japan</i>                 | <i>Norway</i>                               | <i>United States</i>      |
| <b>Female CEOs/Directors</b>     | 1% (Harvard Business Review) | 7-16% (Central Bureau of Labor Statistics)  | 5% (S&P 500 companies)    |
| <b>Female Board Members</b>      | 1.5% (Bloomberg 2015)        | 17-40% (Central Bureau of Labor Statistics) | 19.2% (S&P 500 Companies) |
| <b>MAS Dimension Score</b>       | 95/100                       | 8/100                                       | 62/100                    |

*(Catalyst; Chu & Ito 2015; Egge-Hoveid & Hamre 2016; Wittenberg-Cox 2014)*

### *Culture and Sexism*

Based on results from the online Ambivalent Sexism Inventory quiz for Japan, Norway/Netherlands and the United States, Hofstede's MAS dimension is a predictor of hostile sexism, and also be an indicator of benevolent sexism levels within a culture. In a country that has a high MAS score like Japan, material achievement, success and gender inequality are expected to be a part of everyday life. The gender inequality aspect of a highly masculine country contributes to what Glick and colleagues refer to as hostile sexist beliefs, i.e. norms and behaviors that overtly keep women from advancing into the same economic, political and social spaces as men. All three sample countries have laws that specifically prohibit behaviors that are overtly sexist (hostile) in their nature. However, like the Equal Employment Opportunity Law in Japan, not all of the implemented laws are created equally and some are actually ineffectual. It is clear that more benevolently sexist behaviors still exist

in all three countries. In a more feminine country, we expect less hostile sexism because members of a feminine culture will value gender egalitarianism more than clear gender separations. While benevolent sexism is viewed more positively by people that hold this type of sexist belief, it is still harmful to the advancement of women. Because benevolent sexist beliefs are harder to pinpoint, it follows that benevolent sexism might only be somewhat associated with a more masculine culture, but still less prevalent in a feminine culture. Table 4 below summarizes the relationship between Hofstede's MAS scale and hostile and benevolent sexism.

*Table 4: MAS Score and Ambivalent Sexism Inventory*

| <b>MAS Scores and Ambivalent Sexism Inventory</b> |                               |                            |
|---|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
|   | <b>Benevolent Sexism (BS)</b> | <b>Hostile Sexism (HS)</b> |
| <b>Masculinity</b>                                | Somewhat associated           | Measured by MAS scale      |
| <b>Femininity</b>                                 | Negatively associated         | Negatively Associated      |

*(Glick et al. 1996; Hofstede 2001)*

Table 5 below compares each sample country's MAS score with ASI results. As mentioned in the Culture and Gender Equality section, the UnderstandingPrejudice.org website does not include HS and BS information about Norway. Because Norway and the Netherlands are culturally similar (as evidenced by Figure 8), results from the Netherlands have been included for comparison purposes in the following table. Japan's HS average score of 2.35 is higher than the United States' 1.95 HS score, as is its BS score – 2.2 average versus 2.05 average. In a highly masculine country like Japan, hostile sexism is more prevalent than in a moderately masculine country like the United States. The United States' HS and BS scores also indicate that a lower MAS score is related to somewhat lower levels

of benevolent and hostile sexism. Results from the Netherlands further support that a more feminine culture tends to have lower HS and BS scores. The Netherlands' averages – 1.9 for HS and 2.0 for BS – are related to its relatively low MAS score. All three sample countries have relatively similar BS scores, which indicates that since hostile sexism has been essentially made illegal by country-wide legislation, hostile sexist beliefs have shifted toward a more subtle type of sexism.

*Table 5: Country MAS Scores and ASI Results*

| <b>Country MAS Scores and ASI Results</b>          |                        |                       |                              |
|--|------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|
|  | <b>HS (men/women)</b>  | <b>BS (men/women)</b> | <b>MAS Score</b>             |
| <b>Japan</b>                                       | 2.5/2.2 (2.35 average) | 2.3/2.1 (2.2 average) | 95                           |
| <b>Netherlands<br/>(Substitute for<br/>Norway)</b> | 1.8/2.0 (1.9 average)  | 1.8/2.2 (2.0 average) | Norway: 8<br>Netherlands: 14 |
| <b>United States</b>                               | 2.3/1.6 (1.95 average) | 2.1/2 (2.05 average)  | 62                           |

*(Understanding Prejudice.org website; Hofstede 2001)*

### *Culture and Legislation*

Table 6 summarizes how each sample country is reacting to gender inequality at the corporate level and lists the MAS, UAI, PDI and IDV of each country scores next to it. In a country with a high MAS score like Japan, members of the Japanese culture are much more accepting of gender inequalities in and outside of the workplace. A high UAI score indicates that members of the Japanese culture are more resistant to change in gender norms and corporate structure, and that the country is likely to specify laws that eliminate uncertainty about the future. Japan's relatively high PDI score supports the idea that employees are

accepting of certain levels of inequality, including gender inequality in the workplace. Japan's relatively low IDV score indicates that the Japanese are less concerned with individual achievements and experience more obstacles when trying to move up toward higher levels of leadership.

Table 6: Legislative Approaches Comparison

| Legislative Approaches Comparison |  |           |           |           |           |
|-----------------------------------|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Country                           | Type of Approach   | MAS Score | UAI Score | PDI Score | IDV Score |
| <b>Japan</b>                      | 30% target by 2020 – no special incentives as of yet; no penalties for noncompliance | 95        | 90        | 54        | 46        |
| <b>Norway</b>                     | 40% requirement for all public companies; penalties for noncompliance                | 8         | 50        | 31        | 69        |
| <b>United States</b>              | SEC disclosure requirement; no penalty for noncompliance                             | 62        | 46        | 40        | 91        |

(Sjafjell 2015; Japan, Cabinet Public Relations Office, United States, SEC; Hofstede 2001)

Norway's approach to remedying the gender gap in corporate governance is by far the most concrete because it is a law that enacted by Norwegian legislators rather than speeches or recommendations made by government bodies. This is related to how feminine the country's culture is. However, such a concrete approach does not seem related to the country's relatively low UAI score because low UAI scores tend to predict lower amounts of legislation created to control the uncertainty of the future. While Norway's low UAI score leads us to believe Norway might be less apt to create laws to avoid uncertainty, the low UAI score could explain that Norwegians might have been more comfortable with changing gender norms and corporate processes, even if it was via a new law. According to Hofstede's characterization of a low power distance country, a 31 PDI score indicates that Norwegians

are less accepting of gender inequality in general, and a low PDI score could explain the country's far reaching gender equality and parental leave legislation. Norway's moderate IDV score indicates that Norwegians experience less obstacles in social mobility across occupations than people in Japan or other relatively collectivistic cultures.

Lastly, the United States is relatively masculine based on its MAS score, so it makes sense that the U.S. has not enacted more laws to combat gender inequality. In addition, U.S. Americans are relatively more comfortable than the Japanese or Norwegians with ambiguity, so the lack of strict gender equality laws is to be expected. On the other hand, due to the United States' relatively low UAI score, the potential for changing gender norms and corporate structure is higher. Moreover, the United States' relatively low PDI score indicates that people are less accepting of inequality and supports the idea behind increasing gender equality in corporate governance of U.S. companies via the SEC disclosure requirement.

In addition to gender equality and equal employment opportunity laws that explicitly attempt to level the playing field for men and women at the corporate level, countries have also implemented laws that enable men and women to find more balance between work and family life. Table 7 below summarizes each sample country's parental leave policies and includes their respective MAS, UAI, PDI and IDV scores next to them. Each sample country's approach to parental leave policies is somewhat expected based on the combination of its cultural dimension scores. As a highly masculine country that is uncomfortable with ambiguity and apt to create laws to control the future (due to its high UAI score), it follows that Japan has paid parental leave laws enacted, including a generous paternity leave allowance. Japan's moderate IDV and PDI scores also play a role in how effective the law is,

because a higher PDI score indicates that members of the culture are more accepting of inequality than those who live in a relatively less hierarchical society like that of Norway. As a highly feminine country, Norway has generous paid parental leave policies, including a dedicated paternity leave allowance. Norway's UAI score is related to its creation of the 40% requirement, but a score of 50 indicates an equal tendency toward both high and low uncertainty avoidance characteristics. At the other end of the spectrum, the United States is an anomaly in that it is the only OECD member country that does not have federally mandated paid parental leave policies. The United States has a lower MAS score than Japan, but does not provide paid parental leave to employees. However, the country's relatively low UAI score indicates that members of U.S. culture are more comfortable with uncertainty and thus less likely to create legislation that provides strict policies and structure for its employees.

*Table 7: Parental Leave Policies Comparison*

| Parental Leave Policies Comparison |   |           |           |           |           |
|------------------------------------|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Country                            | Policy Details  | MAS Score | UAI Score | PDI Score | IDV Score |
| <b>Japan</b>                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited to employees covered by health insurance</li> <li>• 2/3 of income, then 1/2</li> <li>• 44 weeks</li> <li>• Paternity leave for 12 months (used by 2%)</li> </ul> | 95        | 90        | 54        | 46        |
| <b>Norway</b>                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eligible after 6 months</li> <li>• 80-100% of pay</li> <li>• Up to 3 years</li> <li>• Separate paternity leave (used by 85%)</li> </ul>                                  | 8         | 50        | 31        | 69        |
| <b>United States</b>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No federally mandated paid leave</li> <li>• Up to 12 weeks for 12 months of work</li> <li>• Job protection for pregnant/sick employees</li> </ul>                        | 62        | 46        | 40        | 91        |

*(Brandth & Kvande 2015; Nakazato & Nishimura 2015; United States, Department of Labor 2015)*

The following Discussion and Conclusions chapter discusses the significance, limitations, and implications of this research. The subject of women's advancement in the workplace is ever changing, so studies must be reviewed, experiments re-run, and reports updated as countries and companies take further action to decrease gender inequality. The connection between culture and gender inequality in corporate governance is strong, but clearly more quantitative research must be done. Nonetheless, the economic case for gender equality is the impetus for increasing the number of women CEOs, managers and board members in the sample countries and in many other countries across the world. Cultural factors must be taken into consideration while countries or companies begin to understand and combat gender inequality in business.

## Chapter 4: Discussion and Conclusions

This research sought to better understand culture's effect on women's advancement to upper level management positions. In other words, are a country's culturally-based tendencies relevant factors in gender inequality in corporate governance? Based on the findings presented here, the answer is yes. Culture plays a role in gender equality. In fact, culture also plays a role in the types of laws or guidelines that are passed by the government within a specific culture. Based on the above research, it is clear that a country's MAS score can predict whether women are represented at the executive and board level of corporations. Secondly, a combination of PDI, MAS, IDV and UAI scores contributes to the obstacles that women face in advancing to the corporate level. The combination of cultural factors also affects the type of legislation that is enacted by each country. The MAS score in Japan, for example, provides an explanation for the lack of women CEOs and board members, as does the country's tendency to be accepting of inequalities, based on its PDI score. However, the fact that Japan also has an EEOL and parental leave policies in place that were created to mitigate the gender inequality problem makes sense based on the country's UAI score. Perhaps these laws have been ineffectual because Japanese culture's masculine tendency towards gender inequality and its members' degree of acceptance of inequality are stronger than any attempts to change the status quo. Further, Japan's relatively high UAI score predicts that the Japanese might more uncomfortable with changing the status quo than they are with creating gender diversity in corporate governance.

Companies and governments seem to be more willing to comply with or implement gender equality policies once they realize that gender diversity in corporate governance leads

to increased innovation, profits, and employee performance. This research reveals that a significant amount of gender inequality – caused by a combination of sexism, tradition, and government policies – exists even among the most developed countries of the world. Despite the fact that it makes simple logical sense to open upper level management positions to women because they comprise half the world’s population and that gender equality can benefit the company in the long run, economic gender inequality still thrives across companies and cultures, including Japan, Norway, and the United States, as evidenced by international rankings and corporate leadership statistics. This research proves culture to be an important contributor to gender inequality in corporate governance. What type of culture supports the advancement of women in business? According to the results of this study and the arguments and observations provided throughout this thesis, what is best for women is a culture that is feminine, individualistic, has low power distance, and low uncertainty avoidance. Which countries look like that? The Scandinavian countries. The findings of this study, however, do not provide specific insights into the relative importance of each dimension other than the femininity/ masculinity dimension appears to be the most obvious in its relationship to gender equality.

Although countries like Norway are attempting to remedy the problem of gender inequality in corporate governance by enacting sweeping gender equality legislation, gender inequality still thrives when it is not regulated – as evidenced by Norwegian private companies (who are not yet held accountable by the gender equality stipulation) who employ few women CEOs and board members. The case in Norway also supports the notion that it is the combination of cultural factors rather than just a country’s MAS score that effects gender

inequality. Based on the results of this research, corporations are still somewhat unwilling to truly commit to gender equality, as evidenced by the low prevalence of managers and board members of private companies (See Table 3). While Norwegians manifest less hostile sexist beliefs, the fact that Norwegian women tend to hold more benevolently sexist beliefs plays a role in women's motivation to advance into similar positions as men in the workplace. This presents a new issue for the Norwegian government in which ambivalent sexism plays a role in keeping women from advancing in business. This behavior is much harder to pinpoint and thus more difficult to create legislation to prevent.

On the other end of the cultural spectrum, it makes sense that Japan presents so few opportunities to women chiefly because of its masculinity, but also because men tend to hold more hostile sexist beliefs than they would in the Netherlands/Norway or the United States. The fact that the United States does not provide any paid parental leave to its citizens could be a result of the country's low UAI score, but is more likely the result of the combination of the culture's UAI, IDV, MAS, and PDI scores as well as economic and political factors. For example, Japan's UAI score contradicts the expectation that the country would create laws to stamp out ambiguity levels. In a high UAI country like Japan, we can expect legislation like the EEOL to be enacted in order to avoid feelings of uncertainty about social expectations and the future. However, Japan's relatively higher PDI score might explain why: according to Carrasco, Francoeur, Labelle, "underrepresentation of women on boards is not considered [enough] of a problem" (2014, p. 436).

### *Limitations*

That being said, it is clear that each of the sample countries in this study present unique characteristics and questions about gender inequality in corporate governance and public policy that can be explained only by cultural dimensions and the ambivalently sexist beliefs held by its people. This research is based on a 3 country sample, so it is not extensive enough to draw more concrete conclusions about the connections between culture, sexism and public policies. Further, the data collected for this research was done so by secondary sources who collected the information for similar purposes, but not necessarily specifically to connect Hofstede's cultural dimensions of UAI, PDI, MAS and IDV to Glick's HS and BS inventories with gender inequality in corporate governance and public policy.

The research regarding this topic is increasing exponentially as countries and companies become aware of the numerous benefits of gender equality in the workplace and in corporate governance. Reports cited in this research are being updated and re-published on company websites and academic databases at a very fast pace, thus increasing the likelihood that this research might not have the most up-to-date statistics regarding women's leadership levels. Further, the leaders of the three sample countries in this study consider gender equality an important issue and speak about it on a weekly to monthly basis – especially in Japan. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and his administration could be releasing more specific policy measures for his “30% by 2020” target any time. As a result of the ever changing political environment in each country, there will likely be slight changes to laws or guidelines as each country's leadership explores the best options for implementing gender equality legislation.

### *Implications*

This research can provide substantial insight to company and government decision makers as they review the policy options in front of them as different means of attaining gender equality in corporate governance. If they understand that their culture's tendency to avoid (or not avoid) ambiguity or the degree to which they are comfortable (or are uncomfortable) with inequality affects how they view the relationship between men and women, perhaps they will be more likely to customize the corporate policy or legislation to work around or within those cultural limitations. If decision makers can more specifically understand how to make gender equality in corporate governance appealing to employees or citizens, the people who are subject to those policies will be more likely to adhere to the new changes, increase the number of women CEOs and board members, and thus improve the overall wellbeing of the company. Policy changes could take the form of incentive programs for men to take more paternal leave in Japan, companies across industries providing parental leave to men and women in the United States, and Norwegian companies implementing incentive programs tailored to motivating women to advance to higher levels of corporate leadership.

### *Conclusions*

The relationship between culture and women's advancement to corporate leadership positions is evidenced by each country's MAS score and the number of women CEOs, managers and board members of companies within the country. Each country's approach to remedying gender inequality via specific gender equality legislation and parental leave policies also reveals a relationship between a county's cultural tendencies (MAS, UAI, PDI

and IDV) and its willingness to fix a problem that has serious social and economic implications. The extent to which men and women hold hostile and benevolent sexist beliefs also seems to be related to how masculine a country's culture tends to be – i.e. a higher MAS score indicates higher levels of hostile sexist beliefs held by men and women. Whether changes are implemented to increase gender equality seem to also be based on the economic benefit it will provide for a company or country. This has been made clear by the fact that most if not all research advocating for gender equality in corporate governance – either by independent organizations or government offices – cites the potential benefits of including women in important decision making positions.

#### *Recommendations for Future Research*

Since there seems to be a relationship between culture and women's leadership levels, culture and sexism, and culture and policy approaches on behalf of the sample countries' governments, I recommend that further primary research be conducted to more concretely explain the role of culture in women's advancement to corporate leadership and board positions. More specifically, an analysis and comparison across the countries included in Hofstede's research could provide insight as to which combination of cultural dimensions (MAS, IDV, UAI or PDI) prove to create the highest levels of gender inequality, and vice versa. Other helpful research would include a more comprehensive study of the types of legislation countries are implementing in order to remedy gender inequality. Those approaches can then be compared and analyzed with respect to Hofstede's cultural dimensions to better determine culture's effect on legislative approaches.

Lastly, it will be helpful for companies and countries alike to better understand how they can appeal to companies and employees to implement policies and strive for gender equality in the workplace and corporate governance. Research regarding the intrinsic and extrinsic motivations for gender inequality could reveal how people feel they benefit from the status quo and why they might be less likely to contribute to increasing gender equality in the workplace. This kind of research can provide insight for company and government leaders as to how they can convince employees to truly follow equal employment opportunity laws, either through potential incentives or penalties, but more likely a combination of both.

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