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From *"Goal-Orientated, Strong and Decisive Leader"* to *"Collaborative and Communicative Listener".* Gendered Shifts in Vice-Chancellor Ideals, 1990–2018

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Abstract: Applying a critical gendered lens, this article examines academic leadership ideals. It draws on a content analysis of job advertisements for Vice-Chancellors at Swedish higher education institutions from 1990 until 2018. The aim of the article is to investigate to what extent masculine or feminine wordings have been used to describe the ideal Vice-Chancellor in these documents. The analysis reveals that a shift in the leadership ideal has taken place during the time period investigated. Before this shift, during the 1990s, the ideal Vice-Chancellor was described as competitive, bold, strong, tough, decisive, driven, and assertive. These wordings are still included in the job advertisements from the 2000s and the 2010s. However, a more communicative and collaborative leadership ideal also emerges during these decades. There is thus a significant shift in how the leadership ideal is described. This shift is analyzed from a gendered perspective, suggesting that the traditional masculine-biased leadership ideal has decreased in influence with the feminine, transformational leadership ideal acting as a counterweight. The article argues that the shift in leadership ideals, as constructed in the job advertisements, mirrors the increase of women Vice-Chancellors appointed in the Swedish higher education sector.

1. Introduction

Women continue to be under-represented in academic decision-making in Europe. This is particularly apparent when considering the proportion of female heads of institutions in the higher education sector and the proportion of female heads of universities [1]. The same male domination has been observed world-wide [2–4]. The low proportion of female heads of higher education institutions is a key indicator of the gender inequality that still permeates higher education, and it has received attention on both national and international policy level [1]. There is also, by now, an extensive body of empirical research investigating women's absence from senior academic decision-making positions. Multiple structural and cultural institutional barriers to women's advancement in academic leadership have been identified [5]. One of the main barriers to the advancement of women in academic leadership are male informal networks and men's homosociability [6,7]. Another explanation to women's absence from academic leadership is the gendered division of labor, resulting in the disproportionate amount of time women spend on family, child care, and housework [8]. This is problematic because the career model in higher education is based on a male norm, which rewards full-time devotion, early achievements, non-attachments outside of academia, and identification with science [9–13].

The recruitment and appointment processes in higher education have attracted particular interest from feminist researchers [12,14]. Previous studies have highlighted how these processes, believed to be based on meritocratic principles, are in fact gendered, permeated by direct and indirect discrimination

towards women [15]. The existence of implicit bias in assessments and evaluations of candidates for senior leadership positions has also been exposed [12]. Research has revealed that appointment and promotion committees and recruitment consultants stereotype women to have certain leadership skills, while lacking others, and can question women's ability to act in accordance with the expectations on an academic leader, which include images of a strong and charismatic masculine leadership style [16,17]. Previous research from for example the US has described the leadership ideal in the US higher education with reference to discursive formations such as the statesman, the warrior, the tyrant, the hero, the expert, and the negotiator, which are all traditional masculine positions [13]. Similar references to what can be interpreted as masculine leadership ideals appear in a report about the Swedish higher education, where Vice-Chancellors are described as traditionally being regarded as "lonely and strong leader," "charismatic," "magnificent," and "the Vice Chancellor is king!" [14] (pp. 14–17). The result has been that women are overlooked as potential academic leaders, while men experience a male bonus in these processes [2,18]. In addition, studies have revealed how requirements and standards in the recruitment process can be purposely vague and lack transparency in order to maintain the influence of gender-bias, i.e., underlying assumptions and ideas about women and men, femininity and masculinity [19,20]. If there is a more detailed and elaborate recruitment profile envisioned for a professorship, it has commonly and routinely been molded to attract, and favor, a male candidate who is considered to be particularly talented [16].

Recruitment and appointment processes, thus, constitute barriers to women's careers in higher education, and they need to be explored, highlighted, and scrutinized. Despite the large body of previous literature investigating women's careers in academia, we still know little about how academic leadership ideals are produced and reproduced in these recruitment and appointment processes, and if and how academic ideals are gendered. The aim of this article is to investigate the leadership ideals constructed in job advertisements for Vice-Chancellors at Swedish higher education institutions. The article adopts a critical gender perspective, which means that the leadership ideals are analyzed in relation to cultural stereotypes about female and male managers and feminine and masculine leadership. Looking at these job advertisements through a gendered lens, the article investigates to what extent they reflect and reproduce these gendered stereotypes.

Analyzing job advertisements for senior leadership positions entails identifying ideals associated with superior leadership performance [21]. In addition, analyses of job advertisements can illustrate trends and changes over time regarding how the ideal candidate is described [22]. Leadership ideals reflect contemporary images of what constitute efficient and superior leadership and can shift due to the arrival of new theories about popular leadership styles [23,24]. They are also contextually dependent and vary between organizations due to culture, work arrangements, power relations, and decision-making routines [25].

Leadership ideals define the skills, traits, qualifications, experiences, and behaviors that characterize the successful, efficient, and good leader [21,26]. They serve as a benchmark for leader assessment and selection and become essential in the recruitment of managers [27]. Although we know little about how academic ideals are gendered, what constitutes efficient academic leadership has attracted a great deal of interest internationally. This previous research highlights how academic leadership ideals are characterized by a context permeated by meritocracy and collegiality, meaning that the members of the faculty traditionally have elected the academic managers based on scholarly reputation rather than leadership experience or skills [28,29]. Full professorship and academic legitimacy has therefore generally been considered a prerequisite for the highest academic leadership positions [30,31]. According to previous research, the successful academic leader is someone who has a clear sense of direction/strategic vision; is considerate, trustworthy, and has personal integrity; encourages open communication; communicates well about the direction the department is going; and creates a positive/collegial work atmosphere [32]. A credible academic leader must also be able to influence, direct and guide peers, stimulate creativity of others, encourage risk-taking, and develop novel solutions [33,34]. Studies of presidential effectiveness in the US higher education found that having exceptional communicative skills, developing and achieving visions, and maintaining good relationships with stakeholder was not enough for a successful university president [35]. The ability to seek and attract resources was also necessary to enhance the academic programs and support the infrastructure needed [36].

Feminist leadership research, focusing on the private sector and business management, has revealed that certain images and traits of leaders are strongly associated with men and masculinity, while others are associated with women and femininity [37]. The behaviors, traits, and skills expected of a leader, in accordance with a traditional leadership ideal, have been congruent with expectations of men's agentic behavior. Agentic behavioral traits are usually defined as denoting, for example, ambition, assertion, control, and independence (see left side of Table 1, below) [23]. These are personal characteristics and skills that women stereotypically are assumed to possess to a lesser degree than men [38]. The result of these prejudices, stereotypes, and expectations is the association between masculinity and traditional leader roles, an association sometimes condensed in the expression "think manager-think male" [39]. The association between men and traditional leadership ideals means that men still often seem self-evident as leaders, while women are overlooked and not identified as effective leaders by others [40–43]. Women leaders are instead expected to display communal behavior [44,45]. Communal behavior involves focusing the needs of others and the common good, which is manifested, for example, in a behavior that is oriented toward helping and supporting others (see right side of Table 1, below) [23]. The distinction between agentic and communal behavior follows a dichotomous gender logic which produces two different gendered leadership ideals. Although social and cultural stereotypes such as these are one-sided and exaggerated, they continue to influence our society and guide our behavior. To what extent they do so is, however, an empirical question to be investigated. Gender stereotypes are, for example, prevalent in Ireland, where gender stereotypes in senior management in higher education often are taken for granted. In comparison, in the Swedish higher education, gender stereotypes in senior management positions are challenged by feminist values and a gender balance in numbers and replaced by a gender-neutral discourse [46].

Table 1. Gendered leadership ideals [13,23,38,46–50].

Masculine	Feminine
dominant, aggressive, strong, tough, authoritative, direct, straightforward, gutsy, brave, bold, daring, charismatic, powerful, courageous, natural leader, consensus builder, driven, ambitious, decisive, competitive, hardworking, logical, analytical, competent, objective, rational, independent, autonomous, self-reliant, assertive, confident, progressive, distinctive, innovative, dynamic, forceful, focused, determined, career oriented, restrained, resilient, enduring, persistent, perseverance results-driven, challenge-orientated, goal-oriented	flexible, adaptable, reasonable, cooperative, collaborative, community oriented, team player, friendly, supportive, involved, encouraging, good listener, selfless, perceptive, reliable, dependable, trustworthy, build trust, committed, passive, helpful, social, sincere, conscientious, imaginative, open to new ideas, creative, down to earth, humble, honest, loving, nurturing, sensitive, poised, patient, understanding, emotional, expressive, articulate, empathetic, socially responsible

The type of leadership style described by the traits to the left in Table 1 is sometimes referred to as a transactional leadership style, which involves reward behavior and an exchange relationship between leaders and followers where the leader provides guidance, goals, directions, and also punishments [49]. Leadership ideals are, as already mentioned above, contextually dependent and changeable. The traditional, authoritarian, transactional, leadership ideal has become less and less popular, although it still constitutes a central image of power and influence. Recent research suggests that when contemporary organizations become less hierarchical, more flexible, team oriented and participative, the criteria and qualities of successful and ideal leadership change [51]. The transactional leadership style has therefore been challenged by the transformational leadership style, which favors an ideal where the leader relates to others as equals, is sensitive and aware of the effects of leadership on others, has a working style that empowers and builds teams, and promotes co-operation, mentoring, and dialogue [52]. The transformational leadership style has been associated with women because it incorporates more traits and qualities traditionally associated with femininity and women, sometimes referred to as communal [17,53] (see the right column in Table 1).

A shift from a transactional toward a transformational leadership ideal could result in a more suitable fit for women as leaders and increased recruitment of women to leadership positions [50]. It could also lead to a more collaborative academic culture that is less permeated by dominant conversational techniques and bullying [54–56]. Some studies have even proposed that women could be more suitable for leadership positions in higher education than men [57,58]. These studies have argued that the demands on academic leaders have changed and that there is now an increasing focus on "soft" leadership tasks, emotional management, and team work [59,60]. Women are thus perceived as potentially making a positive contribution to university decision-making [61,62].

2. Background: The Swedish Case Study

This article makes a contribution to the existing body of research by extending our knowledge about academic leadership ideals to the Swedish higher education sector, where these issues have remained largely unexplored.

The Swedish higher education system is relatively small, encompassing a total of 48 higher education institutions of very different character and with different status [63]. The population selected for the present study is constituted by 27 of the largest and oldest higher education institutions (see Appendix A). Most of these are public institutions, accountable to the Swedish Government, and entitled to award first, second- and third-cycle qualifications. The selection of population in the present study follows Engwall [64] in that it excludes some institutions due to their character—the college of physical education, the defense college, eight colleges of performing arts—and some also due to their size—small schools for nursing, psychotherapy, and theology. It is important to note, however, that the selection of 27 higher education institutions should not be interpreted as indicating that these 27 are a homogenous group of institutions. As previous research has highlighted, they are of different sizes and spread out geographically in very different communities and also have different disciplinary profiles [65]. It is, however, considered beyond the scope of the analysis in this article to take all these aspects into account.

In Sweden, Vice-Chancellors are appointed to a six-year term after which they can be re-elected twice for two consecutive three-year periods. Although the Swedish government formally appoints the Vice-Chancellor (as the head of a government agency), the appointment is always done on the basis of a proposal from the board of governors of the higher education institutions. The university board is also in control of the process of identifying the Vice-Chancellor candidate proposed to the Swedish government. The Vice-Chancellor leads the institution together with one or more Pro Vice-Chancellors, one who act as deputy to serve instead of the Vice-Chancellor when he or she is not on duty, while the other Pro Vice-Chancellors can have responsibilities for specific areas, for example internationalization, equality and diversity or graduate education. The Pro Vice-Chancellors are appointed by the board of governors at the higher education organisation but often on the recommendation of the new Vice-Chancellor, who thus can put together his or her own leadership team. The newly appointed Vice-Chancellor is rarely supposed to "fit into" an already existing leadership team. Instead, these top positions are all replaced at the same time in order to ensure that a more profound change of governance occurs [59,66].

The Vice-Chancellor position in higher education has, traditionally, been male-dominated in Sweden [63]. The proportion of women Vice-Chancellors at the 27 higher education institutions was only 7 per cent in 1990. During the last two decades, however, the number of women has continued to increase, and Sweden has become one of the countries in Europe with the highest percentage of women Vice-Chancellors [67–70]. Women increased among the Vice-Chancellors at the 27 institutions, and in 2015, they constituted 59 per cent. In 2018 the proportion of women, however, fell to 33 per cent (see Table 2).

Table 2. Vice-Chancellors at the 27 higher education institutions [69].

Year Sex of Vice-Chancellor	1990	2000	2005	2010	2015	2018
Woman	2	6	9	13	16	9
Man	25	21	18	14	11	18

The increase in female Vice-Chancellors between 1990–2015 has been explained by different factors, such as women acting as change agents, HEIs becoming accountable to the Swedish government for including women candidates in the recruitment processes, and the transformation of the higher education sector [46,59,63,66,67]. Engwall explains the increasing recruitment of female Vice-Chancellors primarily reflecting a general trend towards equal opportunities for women and men in society and an increase of female students to universities [64].

3. Materials and Methods

The material, analyzed in the present study, is constituted by job advertisements and recruitment profiles used in the recruitment and election of Vice-Chancellors over the three decades 1990, 2000, 2010 at the 27 Swedish higher education institutions. During these three decades, a total of 119 Vice-Chancellors were appointed at the 27 higher education institutions. In 85 of these 119 recruitments, i.e., in 71 per cent of the recruitments, it was possible to collect the recruitment profile and/or job advertisement. The majority of the documents were collected directly from the archives of the higher education institutions. However, in 34 of the 119 recruitment processes the specific document, containing the recruitment profile, was not archived by the higher education institution, and these could not be retrieved. The ongoing recruitment processes between 2014–2018 were monitored as part of a research project and the recruitment profiles and job advertisements from those years were collected from online resources, e.g., the webpages of the higher education institutions as they were being published and the searches were in progress.

The job advertisements were analyzed to gain an understanding of the content of the documents and the contextual use of certain words in them [66]. To achieve this a content analysis approach was adopted [67]. The content analysis started with identifying the unit for data collection, the unit of meaning and the unit of analysis [71,72]. The unit for data collection was constituted by the 85 job advertisements. The unit of meaning was identified as the part of the document that described the ideal candidate and the recruitment profile. The unit of analysis was deductively defined to be words and concepts that described the required, and desired, qualities, traits, skills, knowledge, experiences, background, and behavior of the ideal Vice-Chancellor in accordance with the model for gendered leadership ideals.

After the data had been prepared, it was coded into categories according to the guidelines for focused coding, or so-called directed content analysis [73]. This is a type of analysis that focuses on a micro level and aims at identifying patterns [74]. It provides frequency counts and a classification of words with similar meaning or shared similar connotations, and arranges them into fewer content categories [69]. The classification in this study was based on a fixed categorization matrix that was developed beforehand, based on previous literature and theories on gendered leadership ideals (compiled in Table 1) [13,36,46–50]. In order to ensure conceptual validity, i.e., that the concepts were operationalized in accordance with theoretical definitions, the selection of codes was based on careful and thorough examination of previous literature and research on leadership and higher education. Notwithstanding, it has to be acknowledged that the final selection of codes, included in the categorization matrix (see Table 1) could have included other codes and excluded some of the ones finally chosen.

The content of the job advertisements was coded for correspondence with, or exemplification of, the identified categories in the categorization matrix, i.e., as examples of wordings that fit into the masculine leadership ideal or the feminine leadership ideal. The content analysis was thus of deductive character, meaning that the structure of the analysis was operationalized on the basis of previous knowledge about leadership ideals [75,76]. The coding was done by hand and based on a thorough and close readings of the job advertisements where every trait and skill, included in the categorization matrix, was coded and notes were taken on the frequency of occurrences of the different concepts.

A second analytical phase commenced after the frequency counts and when the classifications and categorizations were finalized. In this second analytical phase, the latent usage of the words and contents were analyzed. This involved a contextualized interpretation of the content, taking into

account the context of the job advertisements. The results of this analytical phase is reported on in the discussion section in this article. There, two contextual aspects are taken into consideration: year the job advertisements were published, and which higher education institutions published them. This analytical second phase, thus, had a qualitative character and included a subjective interpretation of the content of the analyzed texts through "the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns [72] (p. 1278).

4. Results

4.1. Masculine Leadership Ideals

The categorization matrix used in the content analysis included a total of 48 wordings that denoted examples of traits, skills, qualities, and behaviors identified in previous research as constituting a masculine leadership ideal (see left side in Table 1). The results of the content analysis show that 37 of these 48 wordings appeared in the 85 job advertisements. The following eleven words did not appear in the job advertisements: dominant, aggressive, gutsy, daring, powerful, logical, objective, rational, restrained, ambitious, and career oriented. Although these words were not explicitly used in the job advertisements, it was obvious that the image of the ideal Vice-Chancellor also included traits such as ambitious and career-oriented. All job advertisements included as a necessary condition that the candidate should be an excellent researcher and teacher and have the title of full professor, which could be interpreted as presupposing a certain career orientation and ambition.

The results of the frequency counts from the content analysis are displayed in the table below (Table 3), where the 37 codes have been merged into 16 themes, to create a better overview. The thematic presentation is based on that some of the wordings denote similar and overlapping traits and skills and were used with similar meaning in the job advertisements.

Table 3. Results from the content analysis: masculine leadership ideal.

	Masculine Wordings	No. of Ads
1.	Goal-oriented/results-driven	37
2.	Strong/tough/forceful	36
3.	Natural leader	31
4.	Decisive/focused/determined/driven	24
5.	Distinctive/direct/straightforward	19
6.	Courageous/bold/brave	17
7.	Challenge-oriented	15
8.	Charismatic/dynamic	12
9.	Confident/assertive/self-reliant	11
10.	Consensus-builder	9
11.	Persistent/persevere/enduring/resilient	9
12.	Competitive/hardworking	8
13.	Intellectual/analytical/competent	5
14.	Independent/autonomous	4
15.	Authoritative	3
16.	Progressive/innovative	2
	Total no. of occurrences: 242	

Table 3 illustrates that the 85 job advertisements included 242 references to what can be interpreted as a masculine leadership ideal. This means that, in general, every job advertisement included two to three such wordings. Many of the traits and skills are combined in the same job advertisement when the ideal Vice-Chancellor is described as someone who needs to be a "unifying force inwards and a strong representative outwards" and depicted as someone who has "authority, respect and good reputation" (job ad. 1992). Several of the job advertisements include a description of the ideal leadership style of

a Vice-Chancellor as characterized by being "distinctive, consistent and persistent; follows through with decisions" (job ad. 1996). In another job advertisement (from 2006) the Vice-Chancellor ideal emerges through accounts such as "a natural leader who is dynamic, self-confident and likes to lead and make decisions and follows through with decisions."

Two of the 85 job advertisements stands out from the rest because the frequency of codes, categorized as constituting a masculine leadership ideal is higher than average. One of these is from 1998 and describes the ideal candidate for the Vice-Chancellor position with the following wordings:

> You should be an authority in the scientific community with a large network and thorough knowledge, focused on results, a good leader, goal-oriented, used to decision-making, trustworthy with a strong back-bone, stubborn, perseverance, be representative, presentable and decisive.
>
> (Excerpt from job ad. 1998)

This is a depiction that illustrates how the expectations for Vice-Chancellors constitute this higher education leader to be a certain type of person. It is also a depiction that efficiently establishes the association between the traditional image of masculinity and the Vice-Chancellor position by constructing an ideal with references to an agentic leadership style [77].

The other of the two job advertisements most clearly and unambiguously characterized by a masculine leadership ideal is from 2009. It includes almost exclusively references to an ideal leader in terms of the agentic leadership style and depicts the ideal Vice-Chancellor in the following manner:

> We are looking for a strong leader with a solid base in the scientific society, both on a national and international arena. You should have practical experience of strategic leadership in higher education. As a person you are distinct, consistent, unafraid, driven, assertive, self-confident and clear. You can unify the organization around strategic goals and work towards achieving those goals. You have the ability to turn visions into reality and the courage to make uncomfortable decisions. You are structured at work, have perseverance, high stress-tolerance and achieve concrete results.
>
> (Excerpt from job ad. 2009)

Previous research has highlighted how an emphasis on agentic traits like this, in a manner positively linked to ideal leadership, could pose a female disadvantage in access to leadership positions [78].

4.2. Feminine Leadership Ideals

The categorization matrix used for the content analysis also included a total of 42 wordings that denoted examples of traits, skills, qualities and behaviors identified in previous research as constituting a feminine leadership ideal (see right side in Table 1). The results of the content analysis show that only 15 of these 42 wordings appeared in the 85 job advertisements (see Table 4 below).

Table 4. Results of the content analysis: feminine leadership ideal.

	Feminine Wording	No. of Ads
1.	Cooperative/collaborative	44
2.	Communicative	36
3.	Socially responsible	30
4.	Good listener	27
5.	Trustworthy/trust relations	17
6.	Committed	11
7.	Interpersonal/relational/social	8
8.	Supportive	6
9.	Approachable/responsive	4
10.	Flexible	1
	Total no. of occurrences: 184	

Table 4 illustrates that the 85 job advertisements included 184 references to what can be interpreted as a feminine leadership ideal and a communal leadership style. Table 4 also reveals that the most frequently occurring trait (of the 89 coded in this study) in the 85 analyzed job advertisements, was cooperative/collaborative (coded as feminine), which was mentioned in 44 job advertisements, i.e., in 52 per cent of them. The second most popular trait was communicative, mentioned in 36 job advertisements, i.e., in 42 per cent of them. This can be compared to the results from previous studies. Bennett [22] found in his study of 1000 job advertisements in general management, marketing, finance, and HRM that only 14 different skills were mentioned more than 10 times in the sample. The skill mentioned in most job advertisements in Bennett's study was communication. He found that communication was mentioned in 420 ads, i.e., in 42 per cent of the ads, which is a remarkable similar result compared to the results in this present study. The third most frequently mentioned wording in the table above, socially responsible, has a special connotation in these job advertisements. The job advertisements do not explicitly refer to the ideal Vice Chancellor being "socially responsible" with that exact wordings. Instead, 30 of them state that it is necessary that the Vice-Chancellor candidates have experiences, and interests, in taking responsibility for issues related to diversity, equality, and equity. Here, these wordings have been coded as examples of being "socially responsible." This is the only example in the content analysis of when the coding included implicit wordings in order to be able to classify a frequently reoccurring wording according to the categorization matrix. This exception to the coding matrix was considered valid and justifiable due to the theoretical framework and the gendered perspective applied in the study. Although having an interest in equality issues was not previously classified as a part of the transformational leadership style or categorized as a communal quality, previous research has emphasized women's greater interest, knowledge, and commitment to them [54,70]. Besides this exception, all other codes have been categorized literally according to the exact expression. Another example of such exact coding is to be a "good listener," which is interpreted in previous research as an important communal trait and related to being interpersonal, relational, and social, which are traits usually coded as feminine. "Preparedness to listen" is also one of the qualities mentioned by Macfarlane [31] as characteristic of a good leader in his discussion of professors as academic leaders.

Unlike the masculine leadership ideal, there were no job advertisements with only references to wordings associated with the feminine leadership ideal. Instead, the feminine wordings were spread among the job advertisements and mixed and blended with the masculine wordings. One of the job advertisements with the highest frequency of feminine codes presented the ideal Vice-Chancellor in the following way:

> We are looking for someone who is a good communicator. You should be able to infuse enthusiasm in students and employees. You must be flexible when cooperating with the surroundings. You take equality into account at work and create a good place to work for personnel and students.

> (Excerpt from job ad 2007)

This is also a depiction that illustrates that the expectations for Vice-Chancellors constitute the ideal as a certain type of person. This is, however, clearly a very different person or personality than the one described in the quotes above. Instead, this is a description that emphasizes communal leadership qualities and promote a transformation leadership style [77]. Another example of a job advertisement that included wordings associated with the transformational leadership style is from 2010 and emphasizes how the new Vice-Chancellor is expected to: "work together and create trust," "work to increase students' influence," "take responsibility for the creation of a good working environment," "have the ability to delegate," and "create a positive climate" (Excerpts job ad. 2010).

The results from the first phase of the content analysis hence illustrate that both masculine and feminine wordings are used to describe the ideal Vice-Chancellor in the job advertisements. These results echoe the study by Barbara Bagilhole and Kate White, who interviewed current and

former Vice-Chancellors, senior managers, and recruitment firms in UK and Australia in order to identify skill requirements for effective leadership and management in higher education [17]. They found that successful senior managers were described with reference to a wide range of criteria; "hard-edged skills" involving male authority, firmness, aggression, and delivery, and "soft" skills, associated with women's leadership styles, involving collaborative and cooperative people skills. The authors, however, also emphasized that between these two dichotomies is a spectrum of skills, which have a less clear gendered coding, such as integrity, emotional intelligence, confidence, resilience and delegation [17].

Although the most frequently occurring aspect of the Vice-Chancellor ideal was classified as constituting a part of a feminine leadership ideal, the total number of occurrences was significantly higher for the masculine leadership ideal (242) compared to the feminine leadership ideal (184). The total number of codes was also significantly higher for the masculine leadership ideal (41) than for the feminine leadership ideal (19). The results of the content analysis thus seem to indicate that the transactional leadership ideal has been somewhat favoured in the higher education sector, with a slight emphasis on agentic traits. This could be interpreted as in accordance with the results from previous studies on male-bias in higher education leadership.

The results from this first phase of the content analysis did, however, not point clearly to an uncontested masculine leadership ideal for Vice-Chancellors in the Swedish higher education. The inclusion of 15 codes, occurring 184 times, categorized as aspects of a feminine leadership ideal indicates that communal qualities are also part of the Vice-Chancellor ideals at the Swedish higher education institutions.

The quantitative results reported on above, however, present the job advertisements in a fragmented and deconstructed manner, something that is typical for content analysis [79]. The next section will therefore attempt to contextualize the results in order to increase the "fit" of the findings from the coding, linking them together, presenting them as interrelated, and thereby increasing knowledge-building [79].

4.3. Contextualizing Gendered Shifts

The contextualization of the results is based on the second phase of the analysis, in which the year in which the job advertisements were constructed and published was taken into account. This meant that when the analysis proceeded, the job advertisements were organized according to the year they were published; from 1990 until 2018. Due to the small number of job advertisements; 85 over almost 30 years (i.e., only 2–3 job advertisements every year), the job advertisements were thematically organized based on decade, producing three clusters, according to the three decades; 1990s, 2000s and the 2010s (see Table 5).

Table 5. Clusters of job advertisements.

Decade	1990s	2000s	2010s	Total
No. of job advertisements analysed	17	33	35	85

The reason for the lower number of job advertisements analyzed from the 1990s has already been mentioned in the method section of this article: the job advertisements or recruitment profiles were not all archived by the higher education institutions. Engwall [64], however, also shows in his study that the Vice-Chancellors were replaced less frequently during the 1990s and more Vice-Chancellors served the full 12-year term. There were thus fewer recruitment processes during that decade, compared to the later decades. It is also highly probable that in many of the recruitment processes from the 1990s no recruitment profile was constructed at all. The job advertisements collected from this decade are short, often only a couple of lines. Two job advertisements from the 1980ties were also collected, but are not included in the analysis, and they only refer to the Swedish higher education ordinance

where the formal qualifications for a Vice-Chancellor is stated as "fulfilling the requirements to be a professor or lecturer." This more than likely does not imply that a Vice-Chancellor ideal did not exist. More likely is that the appointment process was less transparent and more of an internal affair where the appointments were based on ideas about the professor "next in line" [80]. This is also confirmed by the fact that external recruitments of Vice-Chancellors have increased during the last decades [64]. The job advertisements from the two later decades, especially from the 2010s, are longer and detailed, often producing a long bullet list of qualifications and requirements, ranked from the necessary ones to the advantageous (desirable but not necessary). Another comparison can be added to illustrate the differences between the job advertisements; while the coded unit of meaning (see the above method section for definition) from the 1990s comprised one and a half pages of a Word document, the unit of meaning from the 2000s (33 job advertisements) consisted of three and a half pages, and the unit of meaning from the 2010s (35 job advertisements) five and a half pages.

There is thus an obvious trend among the recruitment profiles; that the higher education institutions are using them to a greater extent, they put more effort into constructing them, and they include a more thorough description of the ideal Vice-Chancellor [60].

Is it possible to see a trend over these three decades when it comes to the Vice-Chancellor ideal and the masculine and feminine leadership ideals? In order to answer this question, the analysis turned to investigate the distribution of codes over the three clusters. The purpose of this was to find out if the traits, skills and behaviors categorized as part of either a masculine leadership ideal or a feminine leadership ideal were evenly distributed over the job advertisements from the three different decades. The results from this analysis are found below in Table 6.

Table 6. Distribution of codes over the three clusters.

Decade	1990s	2000s	2010s	Total
Masculine wordings	81 (33%)	84 (35%)	77 (32%)	242 (100%)
Feminine wordings	20 (11%)	81 (44%)	83 (45%)	184 (99%)

Table 6 illustrates that while only 20% of the job advertisements were from the 1990s and considerably shorter than during the following two decades, they comprise one third of the occurrences of masculine wordings (81 of 242 coded occurrences). The job advertisements from the same decade only contained 11% of the feminine wordings coded (20 of 184 coded occurrences). In comparison, the job advertisements published during the 2000s contained 35% of the masculine wordings (84 out of 242) and 44% of the feminine wordings (81 out of 184). Finally, the job advertisements published during the last decade, the 2010s, included 32% of the masculine wordings (77 of 242) and 45% of the feminine wordings (83 out of 184).

When taking into account the decade the job advertisements were published, an interesting pattern hence emerges. The masculine wordings dominate over the feminine wordings in the 17 job advertisements from the 1990s. This distribution, however, shifts notably in the job advertisements published during the 2000s. Although slightly more masculine wordings are used in the job advertisements from this decade, the increase of the feminine wordings is unambiguous. It should be noted, however, that the proportion of the feminine wordings remained virtually the same in 2000 and 2010.

On average, each job advertisements published during the 1990s included four to five masculine wordings to describe the Vice-Chancellor ideal but only one feminine wordings. This can be compared to during the job advertisements published during the 2010s, when they on average included two references to masculine leadership ideals and two references to feminine leadership ideals. Because the 17 job advertisements from the 1990s in most cases are very brief, the impact of the masculine wordings is considerably greater than in the later ones. The 35 job advertisements from the 2010s included 77 references to a masculine leadership ideal, but this ideal becomes less prominent because these wordings only constitute a small part of the considerably longer recruitment profile.

To sum up, the results show that a shift has taken place from a mostly (although not completely) masculine leadership ideal for Vice-Chancellors during the 1990s to a leadership ideal that includes aspects from a feminine leadership ideal to the same extent. The emphasis on a distinctly masculine leadership ideal has decreased gradually while the increase of wordings associated with the feminine leadership ideal has increased in a likewise gradual manner during the last two decades.

5. Discussion

In this section, several different aspects of the analysis will be critically discussed and reflected upon, mainly regarding what claims the article can make.

The aim of this article was not to present results that show that the wordings in the job advertisements influence the outcome of the recruitment process or that there are any causal relationships between the wordings and the appointment of women or men as Vice-Chancellors. Such a statement would be invalid and not take into account the complexity of the recruitment process, where the job advertisement is only a small part. The job advertisements are, however, central in that they reflect and reproduce leadership ideals and are based on the recruitment profiles used throughout the recruitment processes. The job advertisements also reflect the recruitment process per se. The longer job advertisements during the last two decades can be interpreted as reflecting an increasing transparency regarding the appointment of Vice-Chancellors.

No causal relations can thus be established between the more detailed job advertisements and the recruitment of more women to the Vice-Chancellor position. Previous research, however, has emphasized transparency in recruitment processes as an important contributing factor for more gender equal and women-inclusive recruitment [12,19,23,81]. Transparency in processes "breaks down 'collegial' male-dominated traditional gendered patterns, thereby providing openings for women" [82] (p. 181). Explicitly stating the traits, skills, and qualities included in the recruitment profile ensures a more fair recruitment process and a more equal treatment of all candidates. That the job advertisements during the 1990s were short and lacking of information about the ideal Vice-Chancellor does not indicate that there were no leadership ideals that influenced the recruitment processes. This ideal, however, was not clearly communicated. Detailed and informative job advertisements can also be expected to attract more applicants, as such job advertisements signal to the candidates that the recruitment process is legitimate and sincere instead of an informal and internal affair, where the outcome is already beforehand determined [12]. Accordingly, there are other dimensions of the recruitment processes that probably have supported a women-inclusive recruitment, besides the inclusion of feminine wordings in the job advertisements.

The wordings in the job advertisements not only reflect the recruitment process in its entirety but also the awareness among the recruitment committees and recruitment firms involved. In some of the documents also acquired from the higher education institutions, the attitudes of people involved in the recruitment process are clearly revealed and expressed. There are, for example, minutes from board meetings and meetings with recruitment committees where the participants clearly state that "it is time that we appoint a woman as Vice-Chancellor." This also supports the explanation suggested by Engwall [64] that the increase of women Vice-Chancellors in Swedish higher education can be partly explained by a general trend toward equal opportunities for women and men in society. It is clear that such a trend in some cases also has influenced the recruitment process and perhaps also contributed to more pronounced feminine wordings in the job advertisements.

The results, therefore, do *indicate* that the use of feminine wordings, in combination with other change processes, can have a beneficial effect on the outcome and allow for more women to be included in the recruitment process and be appointed to Vice-Chancellor. In this article, this statement can only be supported by the correlation between Table 2, which illustrates the increase of female Vice-Chancellors at the 27 higher education institutions included in the analysis in this study, and Table 6, which illustrates the increase of feminine wordings in the job advertisements used to recruitment the Vice-Chancellors during the same time period.

There are also some interesting examples in the data, looking at the wordings in the job advertisements and the results of the recruitment processes, i.e., whether a female or male Vice-Chancellor was appointed. One such example is the recruitment in 1992 of one of the first women to a University Vice-Chancellor position, at Umeå University. The recruitment profile in 1992 includes wordings such as "ability to cooperate," "has good judgment," "ability to listen," "can infuse enthusiasm." In the following two recruitment processes at this university, men were appointed Vice-Chancellors, first in 1999 and then in 2005. The two job advertisements used then emphasized "very good leadership skills," "being able to represent the university outwards," "ability to lead competitive education and research." Another woman was recruited in 2010 and the recruitment profile was once again distinctly different and included wordings such as: "listens and have a dialogue with students and employees," "a good listener," "great ability to create and nurture good relations."

Another difficulty with a content analysis such as this is the connotation of the concepts. Bennett [18] notes the difficulties in knowing exactly how the authors of job advertisements define the different concepts, skills and traits. This is a valid argument also in the present study. It is most likely that some of the concepts are used more or less synonymously or with overlapping definitions, for example, the concepts "decisive," "forceful," "driven," and "strong," here categorized as masculine. The concepts are also used in very different ways and in different contexts in the job advertisements. One example is the trait "committed" or "having commitment" that in some job advertisements was used on its own, to describe someone as being a "committed person." In other places, it was used to describe the ideal Vice-Chancellor as someone who could create a committed faculty and workforce, which obviously is not the same trait as being "committed as a person."

Another issue, critical for the reliability and validity of the quantitative focused coding, is related to the definition and contextualization of the concepts that were coded. Using a categorization matrix like this risks reproducing dichotomies and stereotypes about femininity and masculinity [62]. The analysis, therefore, also needs to acknowledge that the meaning of leadership, just as the meaning of gender, is a socially and culturally situated construction, which is performed, negotiated, and shifting [7]. It is also important to remember that stereotypical masculinity is not only and necessarily coupled with male bodies. As previous studies show, professional women, female managers, can also be defined according to these ideals [23]. Instead of reproducing these dichotomies, the use of similar lists and categorizations could perhaps also, ideally, contribute to making the dichotomies visible and questioned instead of taken for granted and unspoken.

Previous research has also revealed how men continue to monopolize powerful status positions in work organizations irrespective of the qualifications associated with the work ideal of that position [83]. This monopolization and domination is made possible due to male power to define what the "right" and valuable skills are. Work performed by women has accordingly been defined as unqualified and less prestigious. Masculinity can, also in keeping with this logic, change and adapt rather than men giving up an occupation with high status or high pay. Abrahamsson [84,85], for example, points to how social competence, as a part of the modern organization, has been learnt by men in Swedish industrial companies and has become a part of the local definition of masculinity, although traditionally linked to women and femininity. According to Abrahamsson, this has been possible through emphasizing men's skills as intellectual and refined while recognizing women's corresponding skills as biological and natural traits. This differentiation maintains the distinction between men's traits, skills and behaviors as more important and qualified than women's. The gender coding of traits, skills and behaviors can thus change, but the denotation and the nuances of wordings can also change [84,85].

The results in this article suggest that it is highly relevant to continue to study social skills, interpersonal sensitivity, attentiveness to others, and responsiveness to the needs and motivations of others. Are they understood as qualities and traits or, instead, as competencies and skills, which ideal leaders learn and develop strategically in order to achieve certain goals? Previous research shows that when customer service grew more important in the labor market, the definition of the interaction between customer and employees was redefined from that of providing helpful advice and caring for others to emphasizing effectiveness, marketing, sales, leading a discussion, and adopting an aggressive

approach [84]. Are leadership ideals, describing ideal Vice-Chancellors within higher education, similarly being redefined? This is something for future research to investigate.

6. Conclusions

This article has argued that the shift in leadership ideals, reflected and constructed in job advertisements for Vice-Chancellors, has coincided with the increase of female Vice-Chancellors in Swedish higher education. As the job advertisements became longer and described the ideal Vice-Chancellor in more detail, they also started to include traits, skills, and behaviors associated with a transformational leadership ideal. This finding gives support to previous research, which has emphasized that the image of the Vice-Chancellor as "King" and "hero" has been slowly and gradually replaced by an image of a servant [59]. That more women became appointed Vice-Chancellor during this time period further supports previous research suggesting that the transformational ideal would benefit women candidates [39,51,55,57,58,60]. Although the causal relationship between the increase of female Vice-Chancellors and increase of feminine wordings in job advertisements has not been established, the correlation in itself is interesting and the knowledge of it should inspire recruitment processes in the higher education sector in other countries.

Women's presence in more prestigious and powerful positions has remained low throughout Europe [1]. The male-domination in academic decision-making has persisted world-wide, and especially the Vice-Chancellor position has remained male-dominated [2,3]. There are also long-term consequences on institutional and national level, e.g., skills and talent wastage and a missed opportunity for women to contribute to the future development of higher education. In a national review of gender equality in Irish higher education, the benefits of increased gender equality are described as in terms of meeting the challenges of the future, reaching academic excellence, and "positive results for the system as a whole" [86] (p. 18). There are thus strong incentives for higher education institutions to increase the proportion of women academic leaders. In order to make sure that women continue to increase in academic leadership positions, it is important to research both their minority position and mapping the hindering factors for their academic leadership career progress. It is, however, also important to identify best practices and success cases [3]. Sweden and Swedish higher education constitute such an interesting success case study, where women have been appointed Vice-Chancellor to a higher degree than in most other countries. Case studies from Sweden, such as this, can hopefully contribute to increased gender equality in senior leadership positions in higher education institutions in other countries.

Based on the results from this study, recommendations can be made regarding the recruitment and appointment processes involving Vice-Chancellors. Job advertisements and recruitment profiles used in these processes should always be critically scrutinized from a gendered perspective, and wordings that too explicitly refer to a masculine leadership ideal should be re-considered and re-worded. As previous research has highlighted, the use of feminine wordings are in line with definitions of efficient leadership. It should, hence, not pose a threat to the leadership in higher education if the wordings were adjusted to reflect traits that are common within leadership styles referred to as transformational and to include more communal qualities.

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Appendix A. List over the 27 Higher Education Institutions

Uppsala University
Lund University
Stockholm University
University of Gothenburg

Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences
Karolinska Institutet
Royal Institute of Technology
Chalmers University of Technology
Umeå University
Linköping University
Linnaeus University
Luleå Technical University
Örebro University
Karlstad University
Mid-Sweden University
Malmö University College
Mälardalen University College
Borås University College
Dalarna University College
Gävle University College
Kristianstad University College
Jönköping University College
Skövde University College
Halmstad University College
Blekinge Institute of Technology
West University College
Södertörn University College

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