

ROTTERDAM SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT ERASMUS UNIVERSITY

THE 8TH SUMMIT: WOMEN'S ASCENT OF ORGANISATIONS

DIANNE LYNNE BEVELANDER



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It is in vain to say human beings ought to be satisfied with tranquility: they must have action; and they will make it if they cannot find it. Millions are condemned to a stiller doom than mine, and millions are in silent revolt against their lot. Nobody knows how many rebellions besides political rebellions ferment in the masses of life which people earth. Women are supposed to be very calm generally: but women feel just as men feel; they need exercise for their faculties, and a field for their efforts, as much as their brothers do; they suffer from too rigid a restraint, to absolute a stagnation, precisely as men would suffer; and it is narrow-minded in their more privileged fellow-creatures to say that they ought to confine themselves to making puddings and knitting stockings, to playing on the piano and embroidering bags. It is thoughtless to condemn them, or laugh at them, if they seek to do more or learn more than custom has pronounced necessary for their sex.

Charlotte Brontë (1847) **Jane Eyre**

The 8th Summit

Women's Ascent of Organisations

Dianne Lynne Bevelander

Address delivered on the occasion of accepting the appointment of
Professor of Management Education with a focus on Women in Business
at Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University (RSM),
on Friday, 5 February 2016

Samenvatting

Tijdens mijn oratie zal ik een beschrijving geven van wie ik ben en waarom ik me met veel passie buig over de uitdagingen waarvoor carrièregerichte vrouwen zich gesteld zien. Ik sta eerst kort stil bij de huidige stand van zaken rond genderdiversiteit bij de overheid, in het bedrijfsleven en in de academische wereld. Uit de statistieken komt helaas een nogal somber beeld naar voren dat velen van ons echter nauwelijks zal verbazen. Aansluitend geef ik aan de hand van de wetenschappelijke literatuur een overzicht van de diverse factoren die verondersteld worden hieraan bij te dragen. Op basis van deze inzichten en de resultaten van mijn eigen onderzoek bespreek ik dan de rol die universiteiten en business schools dienen te vervullen bij de verwezenlijking van de genderevenwichtige ecosystemen die nodig zijn om mannen en vrouwen gelijke carrièrekansen te kunnen bieden. Ik stel dat pleitbezorging, leiderschap en actie van cruciaal belang zijn als we een kern van leiders willen vormen die veel minder **onbewust** bevooroordeeld denken; toekomstige leiders die in staat zijn en gemotiveerd zijn om de noodzakelijke transformatie tot stand te brengen. Ik maak me sterk voor significante veranderingen voor wat betreft het curriculum — aangeboden opleidingen, gebruikte materialen en gehanteerde rolmodellen — en voor onderzoek dat nodig is om al deze elementen te belichten. Ik sluit mijn rede af met een toelichting op het **Centre for Women and Organisations** en de leiderschapsrol die het ECWO momenteel vervult en wenst te vervullen. Die rol bestaat eruit bij te dragen aan het debat en de actie die nodig zijn om gestalte te geven aan de transformatie van het ecosysteem zoals vele gezaghebbende denkers en organisaties verspreid over de hele wereld voorstaan. Ik ben van oordeel dat pleitbezorging cruciaal is ter ondersteuning van deze agenda en ik zal tenslotte de bijdrage toelichten die ik hoop te leveren met de steun en de actieve betrokkenheid van diverse belanghebbenden binnen en buiten onze business school en onze universiteit.

Abstract

In this inaugural address I follow the statement of who I am and why I am passionate about addressing the challenges facing career-oriented women, with a brief reflection on recent patterns to gender diversity across business, government, and academia. Sadly, the statistics present a rather dismal picture that is of little surprise to many of us. I then turn to the literature to provide an overview of the various factors considered to contribute to the current status. Informed by these insights, and by my own research findings, I discuss the role that universities and business schools need to play to create the gender-balanced eco-systems necessary to provide equal opportunity for men and women. I argue that advocacy, leadership, and action are crucial if we are to produce a cadre of leaders whose thinking is far less **unconsciously** biased, future leaders capable and motivated to make the needed transformation. I make a case for significant changes to curriculum content – courses taught, materials used, and role-models engaged – and research needed to inform each of these elements. I conclude by discussing the **Centre for Women and Organisations** and the leadership role it is currently playing, and intends to, play to contribute to the debate and actions needed for the eco-system transformation called for by many dominant thinkers and organisations around the globe. I argue for advocacy as a key factor supporting this agenda and discuss the contribution that I hope to make with the support and active engagement of many stakeholders within and outside our Business School and our University.

Table of Contents

Samenvatting	4
Abstract	4
Table of Contents	5
1. Introduction	6
2. Who am I?	8
3. Today's Gender Reality	10
4. Research on Gender	13
5. RSM and the Centre for Women and Organisations	16
6. The Case for Advocacy	21
7. Words of Thanks	23
8. References	25

1. Introduction

**Dear Rector Magnificus,
dear Dean,
dear family, friends, and colleagues,
dear distinguished guests, and students,**

I am standing here today for two main reasons. First, I have a passion for education. Second, I want to help create a society where women are guaranteed the same opportunities as men to realise their career aspirations.

Speaking as Jane Eyre, Charlotte Brontë stated as long ago as 1846 that “*women feel just as men feel; they need exercise for their faculties, and a field for their efforts, as much as their brothers do; they suffer from too rigid a restraint, to absolute a stagnation, precisely as men would suffer ...*” and that “*... it is thoughtless to condemn them, or laugh at them, if they seek to do more or learn more than custom has pronounced necessary for their sex.*” Less than a year later in 1847, these views resulted in an attack on the character of Jane as the “*personification of an unregenerate and undisciplined spirit*” by Elizabeth Rigby in the leading literary and political periodical of the time – *The Quarterly Review*.¹

I mention this as a preface to my inaugural address because the opinions raised by Jane Eyre are as relevant today as they were almost 170 years ago, and because the criticism of her character came from none other than another woman. Gender bias is as much a female issue as it is a male issue. Changing the gender paradigm will require extreme effort, commitment, and on-going attention from both men and women.

In preparing for today, I asked several people what was expected of an inaugural address. The general opinion was that the speech should begin with a well-argued and insightful reflection of the work that brought the speaker to his or her current position and scholarly passion. It should then turn to addressing the path of contribution planned for the future. While I will try to achieve this goal, I should say that those closest to me generally said: “*Dianne, keep it lively and please don't bore us with an address best suited for an academic journal. Rather, tell us how you and the Centre intend to change the status quo.*” I therefore find myself with the rather daunting task of meeting the justified expectation of an inaugural, keeping you somewhat entertained while doing so, and telling you how Erasmus Centre for Women and Organisations (ECWO) will strive to achieve what many have suggested is almost impossible. Never let it be said I am not up for a challenge!

1 Rigby, E. (December 1848). *The Quarterly Review*, 84: 173-174, as referenced by Gilbert, S.M. (1977). Plain Jane's Progress, *Signs*, 2(4): 779-804. URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3173210>. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/3173210?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents, accessed January 5, 2016.

Let me begin by pointing out the male mannequin next to me. Why am I doing this? According to extensive research (Brescoll, 2011; Goldin & Rouse, 2000) the sad truth is that I am considered more professionally competent, and what I say is more acknowledged and accepted, if I am a man. Hence, the mannequin. Remember, whenever you begin to think I am getting a little too big for my boots, or that the point I am making just cannot be valid, or that what I am saying sounds clichéd, please look to the mannequin and all will immediately regain the gravitas and credibility it deserves. Unbelievable, but true!

With the support of this great University, and all of you, I will certainly try to change the status quo. However, the sad reality is that most here today will not live long enough to see equality between the men and women. As the 2013 European Commission report on gender equality stated: *"There has been progress in most areas, but (it has been) achieved at an uneven pace. At this rate of change, it will take almost 30 years to reach the EU's target of 75% of women in employment, over 70 years to make equal pay a reality, over 20 years to achieve parity in national parliaments (at least 40% of each gender), over 20 years to achieve gender balance on the boards of Europe's biggest companies, and almost 40 years to ensure that housework is equally shared."*² We clearly have a long and difficult road ahead of us!

For those of you who are not mountaineers, the title of my address is in recognition of the fact that women have summited the highest mountains on each of the seven continents. The eighth, and possibly most difficult, summit involves climbing to the highest level of corporate, government, and educational institutions.

In giving my address, I would like to achieve a number of key outcomes.

- Tell you a little about myself and why I am passionate about the research, education, and consultative agenda before me.
- Present a brief picture of the today's gender reality.
- Reflect on some key research and argue how we can – and should – contribute to moving this work forward in a manner that is impactful for scholars and practitioners alike.
- Discuss the aspirations that I have for the Centre for Women and Organisations and its importance for RSM, Erasmus University, the corporate sector, and our wider society.
- Place my Trust Fund professorship within the context of the above.
- Make the case for advocacy.

2 See: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/swd_2014_142_en.pdf.

2. Who am I?

If you had asked me twenty years ago where would I be today, I would have imagined in education. Although I pursued my university degrees quite late in life, my belief in education started at an early age while I was working in administration at Technikon Mangosuthu³ – a black tertiary education institution in what was a profoundly discriminatory South Africa. While working there, I saw young people of colour committed to improving themselves and their society – in spite of the often insurmountable hurdles placed in front of them by an unrelenting military-political machine. Certainly, it was a difficult and sometimes unsafe time, but the experience gave me a sense of where I could add value while pursuing a personally rewarding career.

The road since has not always been a smooth, but it has been a wonderful, rocky, wild rollercoaster of experiences. Looking back, I realise how incredibly fortunate I have been – meeting wonderful gifted people, developing countless friendships, and learning an enormous amount along the way.

I must admit that I have cried often, laughed a lot, and failed numerous times before reaching the point where I feel I am able to meaningfully contribute to my passion – supporting the education and development of professional women. A passion that developed out of a long-standing interest in diversity, and that flourished during my doctoral research and through my involvement with international MBA students and executives at RSM.

Do people
suffering
hallucinations
usually hear a
male voice or a
female voice?

By chance, during my research on graduate management education, I found significant differences in how male and female students build networks of trust. I also found evidence confirming the extent to which business schools perpetuate gender bias. Even if unintentional, this bias is likely further reinforced by the graduates these schools produce. In this sense, much like business schools have been accused of being culpable for some remarkable

ethical and market failures, they are also partially responsible for perpetuating gender bias. These observations resulted in a publication in the *Academy of Management Learning & Education journal* (Bevelander & Page, 2011) and to the launch of the RSM's Kilimanjaro MBA elective.

3 Renamed Mangosuthu University of Technology following the fall of South Africa's Apartheid regime.

Through my research, I have come to appreciate that women face many socially constructed hurdles to their professional progress. Hurdles that do not reflect innate capabilities or lack of desire, but that are imposed through socially contrasted norms established and reinforced over time. I have also come to appreciate the extent of my own biases and deficiencies, and how hard I have sometimes been on women in my network. Today, I firmly believe that management education, research, and advocacy can – and must – make a difference in these circumstances. I want to be part of this transformation. Consequently, my on-going efforts and the work of the Erasmus Centre for Women and Organisations will be decidedly normative. I make no apologies for this!

3. Today's Gender Reality

As the seventh secretary-general of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, stated: *"gender equality is more than a goal in itself. It is a precondition for meeting the challenge of reducing poverty, promoting sustainable development, and building good governance."*⁴

So, what is the current reality?

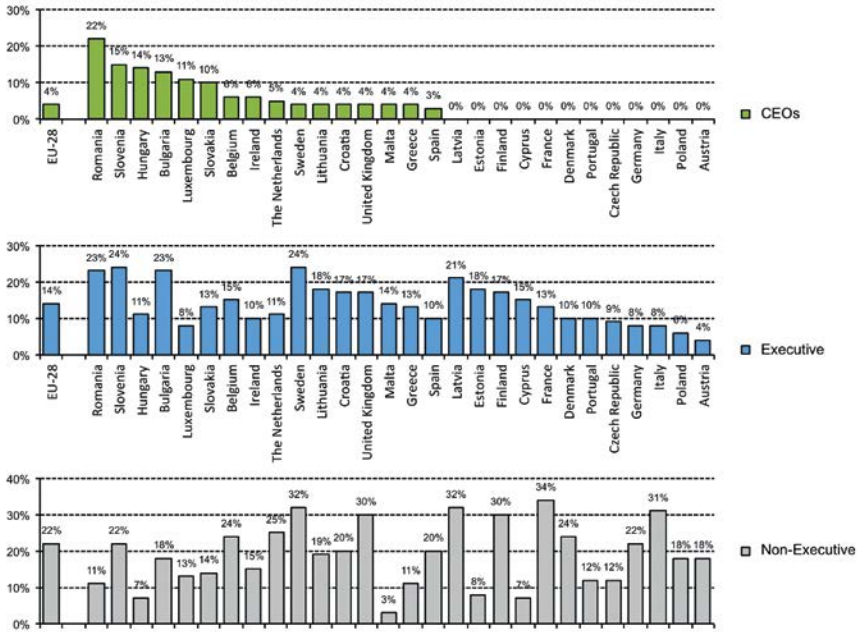
From a professional perspective, statistics provided by the European Commission, and the Netherlands based Business Monitor, and National Network of Female Professors are revealing. They present a dismal picture of gender equality for the corporate sector, for government, and for academia. European Commission (2015) statistics find that only 4% of the chief executive officers of the largest listed companies in each of 28 European Union member countries are women, while only 14% are senior executives⁵. Non-executive percentages may be a little better with 22% being women but they remain well below anything resembling parity. Exhibit 1 provides a breakdown by country.

In 2015 Netherlands female CEOs, executives, and non-executives were 5%, 11%, and 25% of the totals. Sadly, there is also little evidence of an upward trend in our country. Pouwels and Henderikse (2015) found that only 4.2% of Netherlands supervisory board chairpersons were women in 2014, up from 2.1% two years prior. According to them we doubled the percentage, but I doubt we can gloat about either number.

4 As referenced in the statement of the UNICEF executive director, Ann M. Veneman, on International Women's Day 2006. See: http://www.unicef.org/media/media_35134.html.

5 Senior executives are considered to be those individuals who serve on the two highest decision-making bodies of each company – the supervisory and executive boards where the two-tier system is in operation, and the board of directors and executive/management committee where the unitary system is in place.

Exhibit 1: EU-28 Percentages of Females in Senior Corporate Positions: 2015



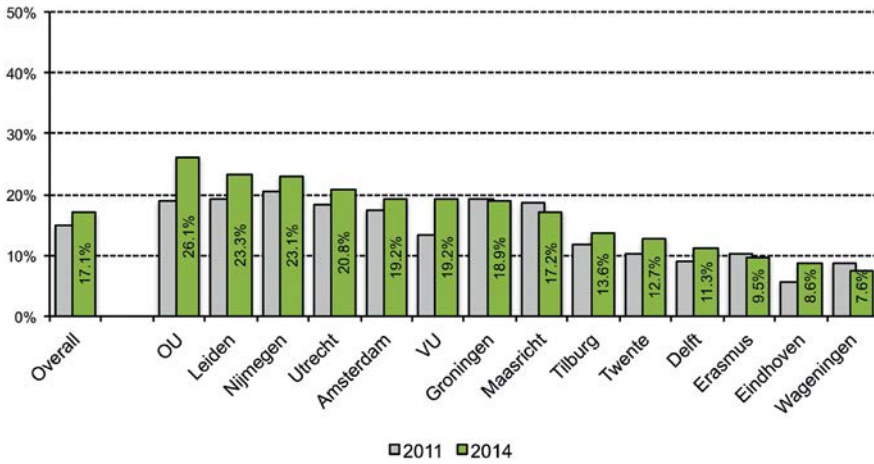
Source: European Commission, extracted from http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/gender-decision-making/database/index_en.htm, accessed January 5, 2016.

Governments, administrations, and central banks across the EU-28 fare better, but also fall well short of equality. Although 39% of the presidents of National parliaments are women, overall women represent only 28% of parliamentarians⁶. Senior level non-political administrators of National ministries and government departments were 31% female in 2014 versus 17% a decade earlier, while only 4% of central bank governors – one of 28 – and 20% of vice-governors were women in 2015. Globally, 17% of parliamentary seats were held by women in 2010, and only seven of 150 elected heads of state, and eleven of 192 heads of government, were women (United Nations, 2010).

How are we doing in academia? Here again, the evidence suggests not nearly as well as we'd like. It appears that only university medical centres show any marked evidence of increased numbers of female professors. Outside of health sciences, over the three-year period ending in 2014, the number of female professors (hoogleraren) in the Netherlands only increased to 17.1% of the total, up from 14.8%. Unfortunately, as Exhibit 2 shows, Erasmus University experienced a decline of seven full-time equivalent professors bringing the percentage down to 9.5% from 10.1% (National Network of Female Professors, 2015).

6 Presidency and membership refers to the single or lower house of the National parliament of each country. European Commission, extracted from http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/gender-decision-making/database/index_en.htm, accessed January 5, 2016.

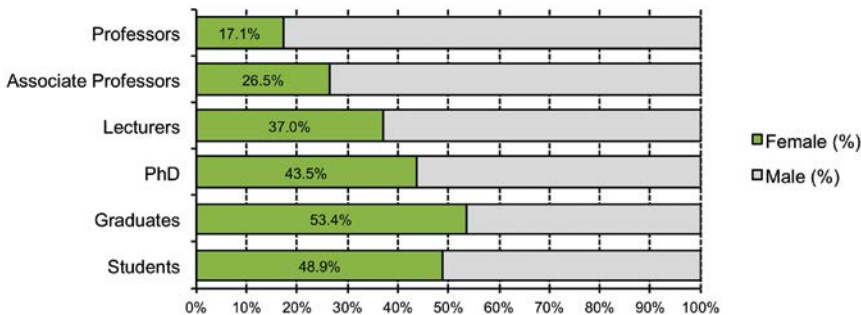
Exhibit 2: Percentages of Full-time Equivalent Professors by Gender



Source: National Network of Female Professors, 2015; VSNU. Percentages above exclude professors in health sciences.

The gender distribution across the ranks of academia shown in Exhibit 3 both highlights the challenge and demonstrates the opportunity for improvement. The decline in the percentage of women outside of health sciences from graduates to professors suggests that the necessary resources for improvement are present – the challenge remains creating the necessary ecosystem to ensure both retention and the promotion among our female students and colleagues. It seems clear that the education sector is equally culpable in failing to harness all the talent available given the continued low female representation at the highest levels of academia.

Exhibit 3: Percentages of Full-time Equivalent Professors by Gender: 2014



Source: National Network of Female Professors, 2015; VSNU. Percentages above exclude professors in health sciences.

4. Research on Gender

Curt Rice (2014), head of Norway's Committee on Gender Balance and Diversity in Research, has proposed three reasons why women are not more equitably represented at the highest levels of organisations: (1) they are not capable of doing the work required; (2) they lack the desire; or (3) they face structural impediments to their progress to the top.

I believe that it is unwise and offensive – possibly even a little dangerous – to argue that women are not capable. Furthermore, although certainly there are women who do not wish to lead groups and organisations, they are no different from men in this regard and claiming this as the justification for the statistics I have presented would be both naïve and – again – rather offensive. Consequently, as articulated by Rice, this leaves structural barriers as the significant impediment to women's progress to senior positions across most organisational settings.

Considerable research substantiates Rice's contention. Elvira and Cohen (2001) find structural and institutional evidence of bias that includes hiring bias (Moss-Racusin, Dovido, Brescoll, Graham, and Handelsman, 2015), while Smith (2002) finds significant indicators of promotion bias. Mavin, Bryans, and Waring (2004), and Acker (2008) discuss implicit bias across organisations – including within academia – and authors such as Ely (1995), Chatman and O'Reilly (2004), and Eagly and Carli (2007a, 2007b) examine different factors that might explain the continued scarcity of women at the top of organisations.

Unsurprisingly, societal expectations of motherhood and perceptions of work-family conflict have also been found to contribute to current organisational leadership imbalances (Heilman & Okimoto, 2008; Joshi, Liao, & Jackson, 2006; Ruderman, Ohlott, Panzer, & King, 2002). Today mothers are still seen as less competent and less committed, and offered less money. The good news is that mothers who display especially high levels of workplace commitment are judged as equally competent and committed as their childless peers. However, it appears they are also considered more selfish, arrogant, dominant, and less warm and likeable (Bernard & Correll, 2010).

Additionally – again perhaps unsurprisingly – research has found that lack of commitment or fuller understanding of gender issues and context by management undermines the implementation of gender-friendly policies (Wooldridge & Floyd, 1989; Roseberry, Remke, Klæsson, & Holgersson, 2015).

Do women feel cold in the office more often than men?

Aside from the obvious loss of talent that the scarcity of women in senior organisational positions represents, evidence exists to suggest that this comes at a significant performance cost. Companies with the highest percentage of women in management positions have been shown to deliver greater returns to shareholders

(Catalyst, 2004; Francoeur, Labelle, & Sinclair-Desgagné, 2008; McKinsey & Company, 2007; Post & Byron, 2015). Furthermore, Post and Byron's (2015) meta study provides

evidence that boards with greater proportions of women give increased attention to strategic issues and spend more time monitoring corporate activities, including audit checking and ethics monitoring. In a similar vein, Dollar, Fisman, and Gatti (2001), and Cumming, Leung, and Rui (2015) find that levels of corruption decrease as female representation in government and the corporate sector increase. In short more women at the top, means better returns, better attention to strategic issues, and less corruption. Clearly, women can lead!

Was there a time when pink was for boys and blue was for girls?

The eighth and current secretary-general of the United Nations – Ban Ki-moon, summarised these findings in stating: *“Countries with higher levels of gender equality have higher economic growth. Companies with more women on their boards have higher returns. Peace agreements that include women are more successful.*

Parliaments with more women take up a wider range of issues - including health, education, anti-discrimination, and child support.”⁷

Let’s face it, women are bright, talented, creative, and driven! The World Economic Forum (2015) argues that women perform 66% of the world’s work and produce 50% of its food, yet they earn only 10% of the income and own only 1% of the world’s property. McKinsey and Company (2015) recently estimated that World GDP would increase by \$12 trillion if every country matched the progress towards gender equality of its fastest moving neighbours. This mirrors Lofström’s (2009) contention that Europe’s GDP could grow by 27% if women’s engagement in the productive sector was such that their output rose to equal that of men.

These patterns also need to be understood while recognising that women continue to bear most of the responsibilities for the home, in spite of the changes that have occurred in women’s participation in the labour market (Bianchi, Milkie, Sayer, & Robinson, 2000). Across all regions, women spend at least twice as much time as men on unpaid domestic work and, although they only represent slightly over 50% of the global population, they are estimated to control 70% of global spending as the key household decision makers (World Bank Group, 2013; Roche, Ducasse, & Liao, 2011). Women need to realise how much power they have in their hands – or perhaps I should say pockets!

Gender bias within the corporate sector is just as evident within the tertiary education sector broadly, and within business schools in particular. I do not single out business schools to suggest they are the greatest culprits. Rather, I do so because they can, and should, take the lead in developing innovative approaches for dealing with gender inequality and begin seriously changing the masculine business paradigm that remains dominant.

⁷ Secretary-General’s remarks at annual commemoration of the International Women’s Day, March 17, 2014. Retrieved from <http://www.un.org/sg/statements/index.asp?nid=7510>, accessed January 5, 2016.

Business schools, through their research and through their undergraduate, MBA, and executive programmes play a significant role in informing the business practices and the worldview of tomorrow's leaders and influencers. They have an opportunity and a responsibility to make a difference. Educational institutions that fully value gender diversity will commit to transforming themselves into organisations that reflect and respect this diversity, and that play a major role in ensuring they contribute to transforming their greater eco-system of stakeholders!

5. RSM and the Centre for Women and Organisations

In common with many, I remain concerned by the continued under-representation of women in positions of influence in business, academia, and government despite the laws in many countries forbidding gender (and other) discrimination in employment. Glib explanations employing catchy expressions like glass ceilings and cliffs, sticky floors, and labyrinths remain unsatisfying to me.

For me, it comes down to visionary leadership and action!

Women currently receive 60% of the masters degrees and 52% of the doctoral degrees awarded in the United States. The total percentage of women enrolment in colleges exceeds that of men in two out of every three countries, while in some such as Estonia, Iceland, and Poland two-thirds of university graduates are women. Of course, there are exceptions – notably Japan, South Korea, and Turkey – but even there the proportion of female university graduates exceeds 40%.

Before turning to how we can achieve change let me return briefly to my male mask and to the nature of bias by referring to Malcolm Gladwell's (2005) critically acclaimed book – **Blink: The Power of Thinking without Thinking**. He references research on the impact of blind auditions of orchestra musicians (Goldin & Rouse, 2000). Prior to the 1970's less than 5% of players in the top five orchestras in the United States were women – a factor attributed to performance differences. However, once a screen was put between the performer and the jury, the likelihood that a female would progress to the next round increased by 50%. The bottom line – if you do not see us and know that we are female our talents are recognised to be the equal of men. Bias is an insidious thing – not only when it is conscious, but also when it is unconscious!

The young talent is here, and the young talent is getting educated. Why is progress so slow?

Many of the answers lie in the research I have already discussed. All of us – men and women – suffer from unconscious or implicit gender bias that translates into decisions that drive hiring differences, pay differences, and expectations differences; and that perpetuate the male dominated eco-system still present in most organisational settings. Consequently, I am rather proud of the actions that Erasmus University and RSM are taking to contribute meaningfully to changing the situation. Both institutions clearly appreciate that we have the responsibility and a collective opportunity to make a difference. A number of our scholars, staff, and students are already addressing the issues. The University has demonstrated the needed leadership by creating and mandating the Diversity Committee, and by establishing the Erasmus Centre for Women and Organisations – ECWO for short.

At the time the Centre started towards the end of 2014, few of us could have imagined the impact it would have over so short a period, and the promise that its early start offers for the future. The energy and output over the past eighteen months has inspired students and younger female faculty, has resulted in engaged education and applied research activities with major organisations, and has started to produce scholarship across the Boyer's (1990) domains of discovery, integration, application, and education⁸.

How did it all start, and what does the future hold for ECWO in helping business schools in general – and RSM in particular – make a gender shift? Business schools claim they are shaping management attitudes and practice (Bevelander & Page, 2011). If this is the case we need to acknowledge that business courses are **not** gender neutral and that this fact perpetuates bias! In order not to keep you here for hours, I will only discuss three examples – business cases, leadership courses, and role models.

Consider business cases – how few of them feature female principals and how many of these few only do so to highlight a gender related context? Nitin Nohria, dean of Harvard Business School, tacitly admitted this when he stated his intention to double the number of Harvard case studies featuring women protagonists to **only** 20% by 2019! Now think about how leadership is generally taught. The idea of the charismatic dominant leader who **rallies the troops like a great military general** still looms large in spite of the slow emergence of topics and theories related to spiritual and authentic leadership, or even female leadership. Even when the primarily male metaphors of leadership are not employed, women in positions of authority are often spoken about in derogatory terms in a way that is unrelated to their authority – the way they dress, or the tone of their voice, or aspects of their personal lives. As illustration, following a video featuring Charlotte Beers when she was CEO of Ogilvy & Mather Worldwide, I personally witnessed delegates attending a Harvard Business School executive course, mercilessly commenting on the way she was dressed when asked to reflect on her leadership attributes that were then described as harsh and unrelenting. Given all she achieved in turning the company around, this was stunning to me. Business schools can, and should, change this paradigm. As Collinson and Tourish (2015) eloquently argue, business school educators need to stop reinforcing the notion that there are “powerful and charismatic male leaders” – usually white – that “rescue” companies. Leadership is not a white male privilege and we need to stop reinforcing the notion through the repeated use of these stereotypical cases. Future leadership should no longer look like heroic white men rescuing companies; it should be far more diverse, team-oriented and include women, people of colour and people with different sexual orientations. This is where business education in its curriculum should start making the change. However, if the people who are designing the courses are largely male academics and there is a lack of commitment, or fuller understanding, change will continue to be slow. That is why I repeatedly refer to the need for visionary leadership and action!

In our Academy of Management article, *Ms Trust: Gender, Networks and Trust – Implications for Management & Education* (Bevelander & Page, 2011), we provide

8 Boyer, E.L. (1990). **Scholarship reconsidered: Priorities of the professoriate**. Princeton, N.J: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. ISBN: 0-931050-43-X

evidence that female MBA students skew relatively more to the opposite gender – men – when engaged in activities that involve greater degrees of trust. They also tend to trust less at higher levels of trust than their fellow male students. Given the relative scarcity of women in leadership positions in organisations, it seemed to us that this pattern of behaviour should be explicitly addressed as part of management development. As associate dean with the authority to implement change, I established an elective exclusively for female students designed to develop their ability and desire to collaborate, encourage, and empower one another when challenged and exposed to a stressful, risky environment that placed them outside their perceived comfort zone. An elective that would allow them to see that they could reach the top even if there seems to be a ‘mountain’ in the way.

Do women
get less
personal
space than
men?

The RSM Kilimanjaro elective has now seen approximately seventy MBA students attempt to summit the highest mountain in Africa and develop amazing insight about themselves and their female peers along the way. Longitudinal research currently underway on the experiences of these women is confirming that their perception of their own ability, their perception of the abilities of women generally, and their appreciation of the need

to support, trust, and endorse one another has changed in a sustained way.

I am confident that the over two-hundred pages of reflective text that we are currently analysing will do more than merely justify the elective. It will demonstrate unequivocally how curricula innovation can transform how participants and others perceive the leadership potential and authority of women.

A few quotes from climbers that I believe demonstrate the success of the elective are:

- One written before the climb that still makes me smile: *“I hope to climb the tallest mountain in Africa and live to tell the tale in a boardroom full of men.”* (Elizabeth Dyas, American, Full-time International MBA, 2012).
- Another written just before the climb: *“Challenges are very scary at the beginning because they take us out of our comfort zone. But they are also very rewarding in the end because they extend our consciousness and extend our awareness about who we are and where we are. They leverage our skills and make us keep on going – dreaming for more and looking higher.”* (Denise Umuhire, Dutch, OneMBA, 2013).
- Finally, one taken from an essay written after the climb: *“The debrief. There was laughter and fun, but there were also tears – tears of celebration, frustration, relief, and happiness. What resonated for me about this session was that everyone was actively listening and learning. No one was trying to outdo each other. There was no pressure to hold back or to have a different agenda, just displays of true feelings and emotion, expressed with the sole goal of learning. So I’ll leave you with a question: How much value can this spirit create if it can be encapsulated in a corporate environment? I believe, incalculable! My next challenge will be how I can achieve this within an organisation.”* (Gina Jardine, Australian, Rio Tinto executive participant, 2014).

Appreciating that some here today have justified concerns about women only courses, let me say that I see the Kilimanjaro course as part of a larger portfolio of education and research initiatives. It got people talking, and significantly enlivened the debate around diversity. Prior to the elective, talks and workshops on diversity and gender balanced leadership attracted women and one or two men – typically dragged there by a partner – but there was no noise!

Kilimanjaro and ECWO have started to make noise. We are presently developing a suite of cases for use across a variety of programmes – undergraduate, graduate, and executive – that will attract further attention. These cases are being developed thanks to our supporters who have shared some very personal stories with us. Some, like the recently published Harvard Business Review harassment case (Bevelander, Nolan, & Page, 2015) involving benevolent sexism, are short and structured as vignettes. Others, including the Kilimanjaro case published by our own Case Centre, are longer and address a broader set of leadership challenges. Of course, some of the cases will look at wider diversity issues such as the LGBT⁹ case we produced that progressed to the final election round of an international case competition. I consider this an important case because so little exists in the LGBT area – a search of the Harvard Case Centre yields only twenty such cases.

Outside of the MBA or degree student classroom, we are also working with a number of leading companies that are looking to address retention, pipeline, and the promotion of talented women within their organisations. ECWO is a proud partner with such organisations as the European Central Bank, ING, and TNO in working on these important issues. We are engaged through significant programming activity and we are exploring research opportunities that include developing performance metrics related to the initiatives of these organisations.

I see significant complementarity between the programme work and applied research that we undertake, and want to acknowledge the foresight and leadership that our early ECWO partners are displaying in working with us across these discovery domains. To quote Izabella Csontos, Project and Change Leader for ING Finance & Strategy, *“ING chose the Erasmus Centre for Women and Organisations to design and deliver the Women in Business programme because it is driven by exceptional people who share a passion for gender equality ... Through the programme ECWO empowers women to take an active role in their own career development by creating awareness and openness for new opportunities. In doing so, the programme motivates women to understand change and become change agents themselves.”*

Beyond scholarship, we do not have enough female role models, in academia or business. Role models play an extremely important role and have a positive impact on how people view their own abilities (Kelan & Jones, 2010; Marx & Roman, 2002). Sadly, female role models are far too scarce in business education. Only 22% of the advisory board members and 26% of the faculty across the Financial Times top 100 business

9 LGBT: Lesbian, Bisexual, Gay, and Transgendered.

schools are female¹⁰. The extent to which this is the established norm was brought home to me a little while ago when a senior RSM faculty member asked me why the majority of faculty teaching on ECWO programmes were female and whether I thought this was positive. An exceedingly strange question, particularly when you consider the extent to which we have historically avoided asking the question: Why do we have such a majority of men teaching at business schools and is this a good thing? Clearly, change is needed to ensure that women are much more present as senior figures in business schools and academia in general – we are the institutions that develop the leaders of tomorrow and our behaviours and patterns do matter!

ECWO is working hard to change this by getting successful women to engage with our open and customised programme and workshop participants as inspiring role models. Obvious illustrations of these role models are: Carien van der Laan (chair of the ECWO Advisory Board), Hanneke Takkenberg (ECWO Advisory Board member and chief diversity officer of the University), Pauline van der Meer Mohr (immediate past President of Erasmus University and co-sponsor of the Centre), Rebecca Stephens (author, mountaineer, speaker, educator, and past chair of the Himalayan Trust UK), Karen Stephenson (Anthropologist and founder and CEO, Netform Inc.), Hadewych Cels (Co-founder, Karmijn Kapitaal), Marlies Dekkers (Dutch Fashion Designer), Jacqueline Tammenoms Bakker (director of companies and vice-chair of RSM Advisory Board), and Jacqueline Brassey (Senior managing partner learning & development, McKinsey & Company). All are outstanding role models for the many individuals engaging with us – from the most junior aspirant manager to senior leaders across all spheres. When academics suggest they cannot find talented women to speak in our programmes, our response should be: 'Open your eyes!'

As I hope the activities I have mentioned demonstrate, ECWO and I will engage in furthering gender equality to the highest levels of organisations through work that spans the four domains of scholarship expected of a university – discovery, integration, application, and education.

10 See: <http://rankings.ft.com/businessschoolrankings/global-mba-ranking-2015>, accessed January 9, 2016.

6. The Case for Advocacy

In her work on Research Policy, Harvard's Carol Weiss raises the issue of whether researchers have a greater impact on policy when they engage beyond their traditional role of *"supplying empirical evidence"*. She also asks whether academics involved in advocating for certain policy values *"forfeit their ticket of admission, which is based on assumptions of objective and compelling knowledge"*, and whether *"they jeopardize the interests of institutional social science"* through such engagement (Weiss, 1991: 38).

While recognising the truth of these issues, I would like to conclude by saying that the gender challenges we face are significant and – once again – by stating that Erasmus University and RSM can, and must, play a transformation-enabling role. Although they may not transform as fast as a waterfall – to paraphrase Pauline van der Meer Mohr – they cannot transform at a pace where *glaciers will melt faster*¹¹. This University and education institutions globally can be game changers. We must ensure that our graduates go out into the world of work with the understanding, skills, and passion to **make change happen**.

However, to do this, we must change first and this must be inspired and driven from leadership. Little sustainable will happen until our leadership recognises and insists on change. Faculty hiring committees can no longer be exclusively male or even dominated by men. Leadership teams can not continue to be all male, and heads of department and academic directors cannot be all male either! The eco-system of the University has to change from a male-dominated environment to a gender-neutral environment where both women and men can thrive equally. If education leadership does not recognise that a paradigm shift is required, and does not make diversity a priority, change will continue to be sporadic and more and more justified calls for quotas will be voiced by the disempowered minority.

The University and RSM have made a meaningful start through the diversity program, through setting up the Diversity Committee, and by establishing the Erasmus Centre for Women and Organisations, but these initiatives remain on the execution boundaries. They can develop policies, provide insight, and advocate, but only leadership can enforce. We can only urge those with executive authority to make diversity in general, and gender diversity in particular, a strategic priority and – having done so – then walk the talk.

In my role as an endowed professor of Management Education with a Focus on Women in Business I intend to play a significant role in advocating for, supporting, and furthering the needed paradigm shift for the benefit women, for the benefit of men, for the

11 Pauline van der Meer Mohr (December 10, 2015) quoted in Erasmus Magazine. Retrieved from <https://www.erasmusmagazine.nl/en/2015/12/10/vertrekkend-collegevoorzitter-teleurgesteld-over-diversiteitsbeleid/>, accessed January 16, 2015.

benefit of all organisations – including universities – and for the ultimate benefit of our collective society. I, and the Erasmus Centre for Women and Organisations, have started to make a noise and started to make a difference. I assure you that we will continue along this path.

Before end with words of thanks, I would like to read from a blog that was written by one of the Kilimanjaro women, Bonolo Sekhukhune (2013), who had this to say:

"In my rucksack, I take all my mother's boundless understanding of a missing daughter this year. In my rucksack I take my father, whose memory reminds me of what it truly means to be great. In my rucksack, I take my sisters' broad shoulders that have carried me through this challenging and exciting time of my life with the four simple words 'how can we help?' In my rucksack I take all the up and the down occasions in which I was not "present". In my rucksack, I take all my female friends whose life journey's I am missing. In the rucksack, I take all my male friends who have been a phone call away for this sometimes damsel in distress. In my rucksack I take my misfits, who have made this year feel somewhat 'normal'. In my rucksack, I take the dreams and hopes of those who wish to be on the plane with me, and more importantly the ones who thought, 'these things just don't happen to people like us'. In my rucksack, I take the inspiration from the women I am about to meet who have already inspired me to no end. And lastly, in my rucksack I take me. The person I was, the person I am and the person I chose to be."

7. Words of Thanks

I would like conclude by thanking the many individuals who contributed to making this day possible. In doing so, I will undoubtedly exclude some folk and apologise in advance for this – you are also key contributors to helping me realise this moment.

To my PhD supervisor, Leyland Pitt, who has been an outstanding friend over many years and without whom I would still be dreaming of doing a PhD ... one day!

To the Rector Magnificus, Huib Pols – for driving the establishment of the professorship I am now privileged to hold – and the University's immediate past President, Pauline van der Meer Mohr. Thanks to both of you for your continued advice and mentorship.

Steeff van de Velde, Dean of Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University (RSM) and steadfast supporter, without whom neither this professorship nor the Erasmus Centre for Women and Organisations would exist today. Thank you!

Lucas Meijs, chair of the Department of Business-Society Management, for enthusiastically welcoming me into the department that has proven to be the perfect home for my academic endeavours. Lucas, thanks for your friendship and for introducing me to a department that you so correctly referred to as the one where all the fun happens and where the non-conformists work – the department that you clearly knew matched me perfectly!

Hanneke van Takkenberg. Thank you for your unfailing friendship, counsel, and support.

Karen Stephenson, for being a role model for independent achievement and pursuing what you believe in even when the path is less popular; Rebecca Stephens, for leading the four inspirational Kilimanjaro ascents that in no small measure provided the fertile ground for building the Erasmus Centre for Women and Organisations; and Madeline van Steege, for helping deconstruct hundreds of pages of Kilimanjaro text.

To my current and past colleagues in the Bayle Building – a heartfelt thanks! You are the individuals who have supported me on a daily basis and, when needed, cajoled me to ensure that I never gave up. Although too many to name individually, and with apologies to those I inadvertently exclude, I need to explicitly mention Dave Bond, Hetty Boswijk, Lesley Ann Calvert, Maria Croes, Ragonda Florijn, Rodger George, Rod Goins, Jaap Spronk, Sonja van Staveren, and Saskia Treurniet.

A special thanks goes to Mike Page who encouraged me to become an academic and believed in me more than I believed in myself. Mike taught me to write and tried to teach me how to reference – and continues to beat me over the head about where to place all those full stops, commas, and digital object identifier references. Most importantly, he taught me to believe in myself and dream big!

To Cornelia van Zuylen who pushed me to pin a date down for my inaugural. Thank you Cornelia, without your support I would not be standing here today.

Finally, and closest to my heart, I would like to thank my family. My parents would love to have been here today to witness this event. I like to believe that they are here in spirit. Hans and Ans Cleton, my ex-husband and his mother, who are in the audience and who encouraged me to study and be the best I can be. My two children, Natalie and Bjorn, who are both completing their doctorates, and their spouses, Niek and Deborah. From a very young age my children have known their mother as a person always studying and asking too many questions. Thank you for always supporting me and being there for me. I am sorry for all the dinners I didn't make and that some of your holidays were coming with me on business trips. However, Natalie and Bjorn I am so, so proud of you both, what you have become and what you have achieved. I love you both.

Ik heb gezegd.

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Question: Do people suffering hallucinations usually hear a male voice or a female voice?

Answer: Research has found that people who suffer hallucinations usually hear male voices because it is harder for the brain to create a false feminine voice as accurately as it can create a false masculine voice (Sokhia, D.S., Hunter, M.D., Wilkinson, I.D., & Woodruff, P.W.R. (2005). Male and female voices activate distinct regions in the male brain. *NeuroImage*, 27(3): 572-578. DOI: 10.1016/j.neuroimage.2005.04.023).

Question: Do women feel cold in the office more often than men?

Answer: The thermal comfort model that informs the temperature setting for many buildings is based on the metabolic rates of a 154 pound, 40 year-old man. Women, who are smaller with more body fat and less muscle lower metabolic rates making this temperature setting wrong for them (Kingma, B., & van Marken Lichtenbelt, W. (2015). Energy consumption in buildings and female thermal demand. *Nature Climate Change*, 5: 1054-1056. DOI: 10.1038/nclimate2741).

Question: Was there a time when pink was for boys and blue was for girls?

Answer: Pink was deemed by many guides to be more appropriate for boys and blue for girls as recently as the 1920's. A reference to this colour preference appeared in the trade publication of Earnshaw's Infants' Department in June 1918. It expressed the view that "*pink, being a more decided and stronger colour, is more suitable for the boy, while blue, which is more delicate and dainty, is prettier for the girl*" (see: <http://www.todayifoundout.com/index.php/2014/10/pink-used-common-color-boys-blue-girls/>).

Question: Do women get less personal space than men?

Answer: Women's space is far more likely to be encroached upon by both women and men. In public, women are more likely to walk around men or move out of their way. In homes, men are more likely to have their room, study, or den an inviolate area where nothing is to be touched. Women also use space in a more confining way. While men are more likely to sit with arms and legs apart, women cross legs at ankles and sit with hands in their laps, taking up far less space. This reduced control of space or territory is characteristic of those with less power and status (Myra Sadker & Joyce Kaser. **The Communications Gender Gap**, Mid-Atlantic Centre for Sex Equity, . 5010 Wisconsin Avenue, N.W., Suite 308, Washington, D.C. 20016, 1984).

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