

LYNN ROSEBERRY & JOHAN ROOS

BRIDGING THE GENDER GAP

Seven Principles for Achieving
Gender Balance



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We dedicate this book to our children,
Caroline and Christina & August and Quintus,
our most important contributions to a gender-balanced future.

PREFACE

In this book we describe and illustrate how the continuing gap between men and women in leadership and persistent occupational segregation are due in large part to a number of assumptions that people in their different roles as parents, educators, and leaders hold on to. We explain how these assumptions have developed and why it is time to challenge them as well as outline principles that will help all of us develop new perspectives and act differently. The book is structured around seven stories commonly told about men, women, and work, and each ends with a corresponding guiding principle to encourage action.

We generated the seven stories and principles from many interviews, conversations, and engagement in debates at conferences and in executive education. We served as participant observers in dialogues with a few individuals and discussions among many people in both our own and other organizations. We conducted many semi-structured interviews with corporate executives, middle managers, HR managers, and diversity and inclusion managers at ten different organizations. We kept notes of the countless informal conversations we had with colleagues and acquaintances in our own and other institutions about the subjects in this book during the year and a half in which we worked on it. The seven main stories and corresponding guiding principles emerged from so-called first- and second-order interpretations of these data.

We related the stories we developed to literature in relevant academic disciplines as well as to practitioners in executive education and to consultants. In turn, this helped us develop the seven principles that we propose can be used by individuals to determine what might be preventing progress towards gender balance in their own organizations and what kinds of effective action might be taken to bring about change.

We have referred to some of the interviews in the chapters that follow, but have anonymized many of them by using pseudonyms for both the people and the organizations and changing some identifying details. Most of the interviews we conducted do not appear in the text but simply served to provide the data we needed to arrive at our conclusions.

We wish to express our sincere thanks to the many people in private and public organizations who generously shared their experience, views, frustrations, insights, and suggestions about how to close the gender gaps in leadership and occupations. Without their voluntary and generous participation, we could not have written this book.

We wish to acknowledge a number of other people who provided invaluable support in various forms during the process of writing this book. We wish to thank our respective institutions, Copenhagen Business School and Jönköping International Business School, for material and organizational support provided for this project, and Birgitte Moltke, Robyn Remke, Jette Steen Knudsen, and Andreas Philippopoulos-Mihalopoulos for their valuable feedback on portions of the draft manuscript.

We also wish to acknowledge Bonnie Kasten and Charlotte Petersen who generously shared their experiences as consultants working to promote women in leadership and to Helene Ahl who let us try out some of the early ideas in her diverse class of HR students. They inspired us to keep our eyes on the practical problems.

Finally, we wish to extend special thanks to Rick Benzel, without whose help we would still be writing this book.

Despite all the help and support received in the course of writing this book, we have undoubtedly made some mistakes. For those we take full responsibility.

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NOTE ON ILLUSTRATIONS

Illustrations for Chapters 2 to 8 by the artist, Oscar von Stapelmohr,
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Introduction

This book is about why we see only a few token women in a sea of men in positions of power and leadership. When we were in the midst of writing this book, that question exploded into an international debate in the wake of an article in *The Atlantic*¹ by Princeton Professor Anne-Marie Slaughter. Under the title, ‘Why Women Still Can’t Have It All’, Slaughter wrote about how difficult it still is for highly qualified women like herself to pursue their career dreams all the way to the top because of anachronistic work arrangements based on the centuries-old male-breadwinner model of the family. Facebook Chief Operating Officer Sheryl Sandberg’s book *Lean In*² added more fuel to the fire by pointing out how women too often succumb to limiting beliefs about their own abilities and their ‘right’ to claim top jobs for themselves, and how they should rather and can internalize the revolution started by our feminist foremothers by ‘leaning in’.

This book enters that debate with some answers to a slightly different question: *What do all of us—not just women pursuing high-powered careers, not just employers, and not just political leaders—need to do in order to bring about a more equal distribution of men and women in leadership and across occupations?*

We arrived at this question based on our own experiences as university academics and managers who have worked on bringing about a more

¹ Slaughter (2012).

² Sandberg (2013).

equal distribution of men and women in our own organizational hierarchies. During the course of our experience working in this area, we discovered that although many people say they are committed to sex equality and believe that men and women should be treated equally, when pressed to answer the question ‘Why do we still see so few women in leadership positions if everyone endorses the concept of sex equality?’, they offered explanations based on well-known gender stereotypes or the ‘invisible hand’ of the market. We were shocked to discover how little people knew about where their ideas about masculinity and femininity came from or why families continued to follow the male-breadwinner model even when both parents worked. We decided we needed to write a book to help us—and hopefully others—understand how to respond to these excuses for gender imbalances.

Where we started

Lynn is a female American academic lawyer, and Johan is a male Swedish business strategist and educator, with professional backgrounds in both the USA and Europe. The story about how we came to write this book together is an important part of the background for the chapters that follow. We’ll each tell our own stories from our own perspectives. Lynn first.

I am an associate professor of law and politics at Copenhagen Business School (CBS), one of the largest business-oriented universities in Europe with 20,000 undergraduate and graduate students and a faculty and staff numbering over 1,200. I have taught a wide range of courses in employment law, legal theory, diversity management, and the relationship between business and human rights. Johan and I began working together when he became President of CBS and I became Head of CBS’ Department of Law—both on 1 August 2009.

At that time, only 14% of the professors at CBS were women, the top leadership team consisted of four middle-aged white men (the President, two Deans, and the University Director), while at the next level down, only three of the 17 department heads were women, including me. The administrative staff were, and still are, overwhelmingly female, while most of their managers were men. The other universities in Denmark

had about the same gender composition in their management teams and administrative staff.

I was surprised by the pronounced gender imbalance on the university faculties in Denmark given the fact that Denmark was supposed to be one of the most gender-equal countries in the world. The university faculties and top management teams are far less gender-integrated than in the USA where approximately 25% of university and college professors are female. Most women in Denmark work full time—even when they have children. New parents in Denmark get a total of about a year's leave from work with at least some pay. Mothers get 18 weeks of legally mandated maternity leave, fathers get two weeks, and then they can split 32 weeks. There is affordable public daycare for all children from the ages of about 12 months through pre-school and after-school programmes for children through grade 9.

By the time I became Head of the Department of Law and Johan arrived on the scene, I had long ago concluded that the reasons for gender imbalance in Danish universities were largely beyond the reach of employment discrimination law and traditional concepts of equal treatment. I had written my Ph.D. thesis about the limitations of sex discrimination law as a tool for achieving sex equality in employment in the European Union and the USA. I had read hundreds of court cases and scholarly articles on the subject and knew how difficult it is for judges, lawyers, managers, and employees to agree on what equal treatment of men and women is, and how little progress had been made since the first big influx of women into the European and North American labour markets in the 1970s and 1980s. Neither CBS nor other Danish universities are any exception to that discouraging fact. Since I came to CBS as a research assistant in 1994, the numbers of women in the top echelons of university faculties and administration had hardly changed in 20 years.

Having studied the difficulties of using anti-discrimination law to rectify gender inequality, I became convinced that the way forward requires getting managers in organizations to see gender as an issue worthy of their attention and to reconsider many of their most fundamental assumptions about differences between the sexes.

I began to hope that gender might finally come into focus at CBS when the Dean of Research formed a task force in the spring of 2009 to talk about what kinds of initiatives might help accelerate women's progress into the top ranks of the academic hierarchy. I soon discovered that the new President of CBS, Johan Roos, was more than ready to engage with this agenda at CBS.

Here is Johan's story in his own words.

I am currently professor of strategy as well as CEO and Dean of Jönköping International Business School, a young, private, business school, with a gender-balanced leadership team and student body in Sweden focusing on entrepreneurship, renewal, and ownership. Prior to this, I was President at CBS, as Lynn described. Before taking the Presidency at CBS, I had been a professor of business strategy at the best business schools in Norway, Switzerland, and Sweden, and also spent a few years at a top US business school. In those years, I observed first-hand how more and more young women fill the classrooms in higher education and now make up a majority of university graduates in the developed world. I saw how the number of female faculty grew much slower and how difficult it seemed for women to make careers in the highly competitive business of business schools.

As a business professor I've consulted for CEOs and executives of large corporations in Europe, the USA, Asia, South Africa, and Australia. I've engaged with top leaders, middle managers, and board members of private companies in industries as diverse as newspapers, cable TV, enterprise storage, telecommunications, banking, insurance, information systems, consumer packaging, distribution of consumer electronics, toys, pharmaceuticals, earth moving machinery, automotive, house construction, fine chemicals, transportation machinery, agro business, power generation, re-insurance, yellow pages, and telecom. I have also worked with ministers, including prime ministers, and with civil servants in the public sector, and I have interacted with a range of people in the volunteer sector.

Throughout my personal and professional journey of discovery over the last 25 years, I have met extraordinary brilliance, but I have also

encountered a great deal of ignorance among the entrepreneurs, civil servants, and leaders I have taught and advised. I experienced the prevalence and effects of sexism and misogyny of the kind that former Prime Minister Julia Gillard accused opposition leader Tony Abbott during a speech in the country's parliament in 2012, which went viral on YouTube.³

I have been impressed with several female academic colleagues and executives that I encountered in my capacities as professor and consultant. I was often far more impressed with their intellectual and management abilities than those of their more numerous male counterparts. As a result, I often couldn't help but think that there must be many, many more women out there who would be better professors, business leaders, and civil servants than many of the men I'd met in those sectors, and I wondered where in the world they were. I included some of them in my academic writing, as anonymous cases and examples, but I wondered what I could do to help bring more women like the ones I admired into the top echelons of organizational hierarchies.

This became an increasingly pressing issue for me when I took on the leadership of CBS, a prominent business school which displayed painfully obvious gender imbalances in its management teams, administrative staff, and faculty.

Lynn and I had many discussions with each other and with colleagues at CBS about gender imbalances at CBS and what to do about it. I eventually appointed Lynn to be CBS' first Equal Opportunities Officer, and in that capacity since then, she has continued to work on developing CBS' policies, spearheading a number of initiatives at CBS. As part of our efforts to educate ourselves about what others are doing in this area, we began speaking with colleagues at other universities and corporate executives and diversity managers in Europe and the USA who have worked on achieving a better gender balance in their own organizations.

This book is a result of all those conversations. It is a record of our journey of discovery as we listened to what people had to say about why

³ ABC News (2012).

men and women are not represented in roughly equal numbers in leadership or in the different occupations represented in their organizations and what should be done about it.

What we heard

As we spoke to managers and employees in all kinds of organizations about gender balance or the lack of it, we noticed that they tended to repeat certain excuses for the status quo, even though no one ever came right out and said that men and women are not equally capable or should not be treated equally.

A surprising number of people we talked to did not see any need to work on promoting more women into leadership positions or eliminating occupational gender segregation. They either believed that the passage of time should be enough to solve the problem or that it is simply not a problem—that it reflects individual preferences no one should interfere with or judge. Some of these people were concerned that working on gender balance would inevitably result in sacrificing excellence for equality. We also talked to a lot of people who agreed that gender imbalance is a problem to worry about, but they didn't believe that much could be done about it.

When we dug a little deeper into the background of all these beliefs, people gave one or more of the following reasons for having them:

1. There is no reliable business case proving the need to achieve gender balance. Because no one can show gender balance creates a measurable positive impact on the bottom line, it is not worth investing effort or resources.
2. Gender imbalances simply reflect the facts of life: women have babies, which means they cannot work as much as men. People who are able and willing to work full time without interruption during the course of their working lives are just more valuable to businesses and other organizations.
3. Gender imbalances reflect biological facts. Women are genetically programmed to prioritize personal relationships and caring while

men are genetically programmed to seek material wealth and leadership to ensure their desirability as mates and to affirm their masculinity. These biological facts make men better equipped to lead large organizations.

4. Whether they're genetically or socially programmed, men and women have very different priorities, and we should just accept it. Rather than worrying about perceptions of sex differences in abilities and interests, we should celebrate, and even capitalize on them.
5. Women are just not ambitious enough. Sheryl Sandberg is right—women need to 'lean in' more. The women's movement was successful: everyone now agrees that men and women are equal, so the gender imbalances we talk about are not due to sex discrimination. So this means that women alone are responsible for their underrepresentation in positions of leadership.
6. Suggesting that organizations should do something to ensure that their leadership teams include equal numbers of men and women tends to promote discrimination against men. It pits men and women against each other in the race to the top and fosters discord and bad feelings between the sexes, and neither men nor women want that.
7. Not all women want to pursue careers or leadership positions. Promoting gender balance implies disrespect for the women who are not interested in those things.
8. We have laws against sex discrimination in employment. Women just need to exercise their legal rights to equal treatment. If they can't prove there's sex discrimination, there's no problem.

We also heard from a substantial number of executives who believed it is very important to ensure that men and women are represented in equal numbers in positions of leadership and that occupational segregation is a serious economic issue, but who also thought it was a far more complex issue than they could analyse and understand themselves. They were aware of the wide variety of approaches that different organizations have adopted to address the problem, but could not identify any they could be

sure would work in their own organizations. They felt unable to judge the quality of advice peddled by gender and diversity consultants. They didn't know where to start or what to watch out for.

Then there were those who did not believe they could do anything as individuals to address the problem. In their view, it requires collective concerted efforts rather than the actions of scattered individuals. Instead of focusing our efforts on organizations, we should focus our attention on the political process and get our political representatives to take action.

When we began having these conversations with people, we did not know ourselves exactly what motivated our commitment to working towards a balanced gender composition at all levels of our organizations other than our steadfast belief in sex equality. We also believe that the world is failing to make good use of all the intelligence and creativity out there so long as well under half of the world's leaders in politics, business, and education are women, and men and women are clustered into single-sex occupational ghettos. We found ourselves groping for answers to the questions and concerns we heard, and we shared the confusion of the executives who were uncertain about what strategy is best for achieving a better gender balance. Johan appointed Lynn Equal Opportunities Officer and Lynn accepted, not because either of us really knew what we should do. We were just committed to the belief that some action was better than inaction and that we would learn as we went along.

Our response

This book is our response to all the objections and concerns and confusion we encountered—or experienced ourselves—as we spoke with people about the need for a better gender balance in leadership and across occupations and how to go about achieving it. We decided that in order to communicate effectively about why businesses and other organizations need to take action to promote gender balance, we needed to address each of the eight main reasons people gave us for not investing time, effort, or resources in working for it. To address each of these eight reasons, we embarked upon a review of gender-related scholarship published in the last 60 years by evolutionary biologists and anthropologists,

neuroscientists, sociologists, psychologists, historians, political scientists, and legal scholars. Together we arrived at a greater understanding of the ‘state of the art’ in gender research, which informs the basis for the chapters you will read.

Johan is an expert in strategy—the art and science of engaging people to think and prepare for the future. As a strategy professor with tenures in six business schools in five countries, he has become an expert in using systems thinking, complexity models, and creative arts techniques to challenge and support how executives strategize. He analyses the strengths and weaknesses of organizations, seeks to understand the threats and challenges that lie in front of them, and then helps leaders prepare for both the expected and the unexpected, and to make adjustments in strategy, structure, and governance as necessary. As a scholar and a practising leader, Johan has learned to pay attention to the dynamics of change and emerging trends and technologies and shifting market sentiments, to question his own and others’ assumptions, and to uncover his own and others’ blind spots.

If there was ever an issue that needed deep analysis and strategic thinking, it is certainly how to plan for and achieve gender balance on a large scale in the future. We have thus applied our skills as academics and organizational leaders, as researchers and educators, and as parents and ordinary citizens to fashion this book.

In addition, we drew on the experiences and insights of the company and political leaders, students, and colleagues, with whom we spoke during the course of our research. We talked with many leaders in multinational corporations and smaller firms as well as public corporations to listen to their experiences with addressing (or ignoring) gender gaps in their organizations. We engaged them, extracted their frustrations and insights, and learned from their successes and failures. We also challenged our own colleagues, students, friends, and families. These conversations fuelled our journey of discovery with a combination of hope and increasing irritation. We have been deeply disturbed by shocking examples of gender bias observed in the course of our investigations, but we have also been inspired by the enthusiasm of the many people we spoke with who

want to engage in the work necessary to close remaining gender gaps. As a result of these conversations and our work in writing this book, we are more convinced than ever that we can reduce or even eliminate occupational segregation and get much closer to gender-balanced leadership of our societies' institutions and governments, that everyone can find a way of contributing to achieving these goals, and that we'll all be better off for having made the effort.

What is 'gender balance' anyway?

In our view, gender balance is reached when we fulfil three main objectives. First, it requires that the majority of men and women work in gender-integrated workplaces regardless of what type of job, be it an engineer, politician, CEO, teacher, or nurse. There is no logical or biological reason that these jobs need to be thought of as gender-specific, as we will show in the book.

Second, gender balance requires rethinking the way we work and raise our children so that both men and women are able and willing to participate equally in both arenas. As long as we continue to believe that mothers only are best suited to care for their babies and young children, we will *not* achieve gender balance. We will show in this book why it is crucial for the well-being of mums, dads, children—and society in general—that we recognize that the gender or family relationship of the caregiver does not determine the quality of the care young children receive.

Third, gender balance means that men and women must share relatively equally—at a *minimum* ratio of 60:40—the positions of power and decision-making in business, education, and national and local governments. It is simply poor governance when women in most Western nations hold, on average, only 10–20% of such positions. We will show in this book why 60:40 should be the minimum ratio between the sexes.

These are the three benchmark conditions we must achieve to gain a meaningful degree of gender balance. However, we are quick to add that we do not believe quotas are the best way to make progress towards any of these three conditions. Legislating quotas may be an effective way to force gender balance, and in a limited number of specific situations—such as

on company boards—quotas may even be the best way, but as this book shows, the processes that create gender gaps are so far-reaching and their effects so widespread throughout society that we would have to adopt quotas everywhere to close gender gaps once and for all. This is clearly unfeasible and irreconcilable with our commitment to democratic government and individual rights and freedoms. So, as you will see in this book, our proposals for solutions are focused on changing thinking and mind-sets in order to change behaviour.

A note on our statistics and examples

Our emphasis in this book is strictly on how to achieve gender balance, as we define it, in pluralist, secular societies—such as the USA, Canada, Mexico, most of Europe, Australia and the Pacific, and a handful of rapidly developing nations in South America, Africa, and Asia where a vast middle class is emerging and the demand for gender balance is growing. The reason for this is that in these societies, many of the basic building blocks of gender equality are in place and they are ready—or will soon be—to take the next big step towards gender balance. Countries like Saudi Arabia and Afghanistan, where women do not have equal rights before the law, are at a completely different place in their journeys towards gender balance, and the recommendations we make in this book are probably not particularly relevant or helpful to them.

Our overall belief and message is that much of the world is poised for action to seize the advantages of a more gender-balanced way of life, and that the more we expand the footprint of gender balance—making it bigger and deeper—the better the world will be. For this reason, although we cite facts and statistics primarily from the USA and Europe, we believe that our analysis and recommendations may be useful in other parts of the world.

Join us in change

As you read each chapter in this book, we hope that you will begin to see that deep changes in our attitudes and beliefs about gender are necessary in order to change the behaviours that create gender imbalances in

leadership and in the way we employ people to work. To help this process, the last chapter in the book provides a set of principles to guide you on the journey towards gender balance. Every individual's action counts. We invite you to take this journey with us to explore how we can help each other look beyond accepted perceptions of gender differences and recognize that the very qualities that make men and women human bind us much closer together than any real or imagined gender differences can separate us.

Making the Case for Gender Balance

In a classroom at the University of Western Ontario in Canada, Professor Alison Konrad is teaching a mandatory class on corporate social responsibility to a class of undergraduate honours students in business administration. Professor Konrad uses the first half of the semester to teach the students about the concept of corporate social responsibility—where it comes from, what it consists of. The rest of the course is devoted to the subject of gender in organizations—more specifically the question of why so few women end up in top management positions. She has taught this course since 2010, and every year someone has asked, ‘Why are we talking about gender in this class?’ or simply ‘Why do we have to study this subject?’¹

These questions tell us a lot about what young people think is important to business. Gender does not seem to be one of them. They are not alone in thinking that. We have also encountered that belief when talking to business school professors and students and hear it expressed regularly in debates about the gender composition of corporate boards.

What kind of answer can we give to people who raise that question?

A look at the distribution of wealth and power around the globe could help.

Despite decades of consciousness-raising and legislation about gender equality, the majority of women throughout the world still live as second-class citizens—or worse. Considering that women make up nearly half the world’s population, and now comprise the majority of college graduates

¹ E-mail correspondence between Lynn Roseberry and Alison Konrad, August 20, 2013.

in Europe and North America, we should all be concerned about that.² Neither our Western democratic institutions nor the proliferation of educated women with advanced degrees nor economic progress throughout vast swaths of the globe has radically altered the fact that women wield less political power, hold far fewer corporate and government leadership positions, and have less control over their own destinies than most men.

In some nations, women have almost no rights or freedom to choose the way they live their lives. They are forbidden an education, the right to choose their marriage partner, the age at which they marry, the right to say yes or no to sexual intercourse, and the choice of how many children they will be required to bear. A glaring example of gender discrimination thriving among such nations is the shocking statistic that women account for two-thirds of the world's 774 million adult illiterates—a figure that has remained unchanged for the past 20 years.³

Those of us in democratic, pluralist societies see ourselves as progressives, given that the living conditions of women in our societies are far better compared to women's living conditions in those 'backward' nations. Women in our societies go to school, study and become highly literate, have careers, drive cars, decide who to marry and divorce, juggle work and family life, and are able to vote and own property. But such evidence of gender equality belies an enormous imbalance in all our political, economic, and educational institutions. Consider just a few statistics that reveal glaring gender imbalances despite widespread commitment to the idea of gender equality:

² Contrary to popular belief, women do not make up more than 50% of the world's population. However, statistically speaking, they should, given the fact that when males and females receive the same care, females tend to have better survival rates than males. So where are all the statistically predicted 'missing' women? The horrifying truth is that female fetuses are aborted and babies left to die or even killed in a number of cultures. The Nobel prize-winning economist Amartya Sen has famously estimated that in China alone, the number of missing women was 50 million in 1990. When added to the missing women in South Asia, West Asia, and North Africa, a great many more than 100 million women were missing from the planet. Sen (1990).

³ United Nations (2010).

Gender imbalances in politics

- In 2010, only seven of 150 elected heads of state in the world were women, and only 11 of 192 heads of government.⁴
- Among national legislatures and parliaments, the ratio of women to men does not reflect the populations they are supposed to represent. Women hold only 18% of the 435 seats in the 2013 US House of Representatives and only 20% of the seats in the 2013 US Senate.⁵ In Europe, the average percentage of women in national parliaments is 22.7%. The numbers are only slightly better in Australia and Canada, where women hold about 25% of the seats in the national parliaments.⁶ These statistics are surprising given the fact that in all of these named countries, females are 50% or more of their entire populations and sex discrimination in most areas of life has been prohibited for decades.

Gender imbalances in our workplaces

- Although women make up the majority of the US workforce, they hold only 4.2% of Fortune 500 CEO positions and only 4.5% of Fortune 1000 CEO positions.⁷
- In the USA and most Western European countries, the percentage of women on corporate boards and on senior executive teams is a severely disproportionate 15%.⁸
- Women's participation in the global labour market has hovered at 52% of adult women since 1990. Men's participation rate, on the other hand, was 81% in 1990 and 77% in 2010. The participation rate

⁴ United Nations (2010).

⁵ Center for American Women and Politics (2013).

⁶ Inter-Parliamentary Union (2013). However, in the Nordic countries (Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Iceland) women hold, on average, 42% of the seats in national parliaments.

⁷ Catalyst (2013a).

⁸ Barsh and Yee (2011a).

of women in the labour force is at its lowest, at 30%, in Northern Africa and Western Asia, and next lowest, at 40%, in southern Asia.⁹

- In the USA, women earn far less than men, despite the fact that they now comprise 47.6% of the workforce, as compared to 33% in the 1950s. In a 2011 report from the Martin Prosperity Institute entitled *The Rise of Women in the Creative Class*, noted business professor and researcher Richard Florida and his colleagues wrote,

While women have increased their role in the overall economy and in the Creative Class in particular, there is a substantial gender gap in earnings. Overall, men are paid 50 per cent more than women; Creative Class men earn a staggering 70 per cent more than their female counterparts. The gap shrinks somewhat when we control for hours worked, education, and skills, but women still earn \$10,600 less than men overall and \$23,700 less than men in Creative Class jobs.¹⁰

- All around the world, most men and women work in sex-segregated occupations and workplaces. In Europe, over 60% of working women are employed in female-dominated occupations (such as teaching, nursing, and childcare), while 60% of working men are employed in male-dominated occupations.¹¹ In each of the 34 member countries of the OECD, half of all women work in just 11 or fewer of the major occupation groups, while half of all men work in more than 20 of these occupations.¹²
- The male:female gap in the choice of occupations is especially pronounced in the USA, Italy, Ireland, Greece, and the UK compared to other OECD countries.¹³

⁹ United Nations (2010).

¹⁰ Florida et al. (2011). Creative Class jobs are those that Florida characterizes as highly skilled, including jobs in computers and maths; architecture and engineering; life, physical, and social sciences; arts, design, media, entertainment, and sports; management; law; finance; business; management; education; and healthcare occupations.

¹¹ Biletta (2012a).

¹² Catalyst (2013b).

¹³ Catalyst (2013b).

Gender imbalances in our educational institutions

- Among full professors at all institutions of higher education (both undergraduate colleges and universities offering graduate education) in the USA nationwide in 2005–6, women held only 24% of the positions while men held 76%.¹⁴
- In most European universities, the percentage of women faculty is in the range of only 15–20%.¹⁵
- In the OECD countries in 2010, on average, only 27% of graduates in engineering, manufacturing, and construction were women, compared to more than 74% of graduates in health and welfare.¹⁶
- Women make up more than four out of five primary teachers in most countries in Central Asia, Central and Eastern Europe, and North America and Western Europe. In several countries in Central and Eastern Europe, including Belarus, the Czech Republic, Lithuania, the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation, Slovenia, and Ukraine, almost the entire primary teaching force (97% or more) is female. The same applies to Armenia, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan in Central Asia.¹⁷ Among 22 middle- and high-income countries with data, women hold the majority of teaching positions in 17 countries, but when it comes to management at the school level, they hold the majority of positions in only slightly more than half (12) of these countries.¹⁸

Do such statistics about gender imbalances matter? So what if women are so far behind in holding government and corporate leadership positions? What does it matter that women work in only a few professions? Does women's role in the labour force actually make a difference to the

¹⁴ West and Curtis (2006).

¹⁵ League of European Research Universities (2012).

¹⁶ OECD (2012).

¹⁷ UNESCO (2010).

¹⁸ UNESCO (2010). On the other hand, women make up the highest proportions of teachers and school-level management personnel in various countries of Central and Eastern Europe, including Bulgaria, Lithuania, and Slovakia.

prosperity of a nation? And why can't we just continue along the path we are on, allowing women to catch up with men slowly, whenever it happens?

The moral and economic arguments for gender balance Answers to these questions are usually framed as either moral or economic arguments. The moral case appeals to our sense of justice and fairness. Most of us agree it's simply not fair to treat men or women worse than the opposite sex. The moral case generated the necessary political support for adopting legislation requiring equal treatment for men and women in the 1960s and 1970s. It is also the main reason why most people today would feel offended if accused of sex discrimination. Most people see sex discrimination as a moral failure—something to be ashamed of. But despite the broad impact of the moral case, business leaders still often argue that their responsibility for addressing gender imbalances only goes as far as what the laws dictate. The business of business is to make a profit, they say, and so they don't need to do anything more than any law requires—unless it pays off at the bottom line. Similarly, many political leaders want proof that investing resources in closing gender gaps will pay off in terms of economic results such as lower unemployment, increased GDP, and other measures of prosperity.

In response to the reluctance of businesses and governments to engage more proactively with the process of achieving gender balance, a number of scholars and consultants have constructed an economic case for gender balance based on a wide array of statistics indicating that bringing more women into leadership positions, ensuring gender-balanced teams, and resolving conflicts between parental and work obligations are all good for business and the economy. Noted consulting firm McKinsey's reports called *Women Matter*¹⁹ and Avivah Wittenberg-Cox's book *Why Women Mean Business*²⁰ are iconic examples of the business case for gender balance. These publications seek to persuade business and political leaders that investing resources in achieving gender balance will pay off in concrete advances.

¹⁹ Desveau et al. (2007, 2008, 2010).

²⁰ Wittenberg-Cox (2008).

Here are just a few examples of the studies supporting the economic case for gender equality:

- Since the 1990s, research by leading economists and development scholars has shown that just educating girls and young women—without doing more—leads to significant economic development. In 1991, the chief economist at the World Bank, Lawrence Summers, wrote, ‘Investment in girls’ education may well be the highest-return investment available in the developing world. The question is not whether countries can afford this investment, but whether countries can afford not to educate more girls.’²¹
- In 2001 a World Bank study²² argued that promoting gender equality is crucial to combat global poverty.
- In a 2008 research report, the multinational investment bank Goldman Sachs emphasized how much developing countries can improve their economic performance by educating girls, and they donated \$100 million to a campaign to give 10,000 women a business education.²³

All national economies, regardless of their stage of economic development, seem to benefit from investing in gender equality in education and employment. The labour and intellectual contributions that women make to a national economy add to national GDPs as well as the tax base, which in turn provides the resources to help stabilize national economies.

In the USA, for example, we know that the movement for gender equality in the 1960s and 1970s had a direct positive impact on the American economy. In that era, laws prohibiting sex discrimination encouraged millions of young women to get college educations and aspire to a broader range of careers than nurse, teacher, secretary, or flight attendant. The resulting surge of educated women who joined the workforce had a significant positive effect on US growth. Economists say that 65% of American GDP growth in the 1970s can be attributed to the workforce

²¹ Summers (1992).

²² Mason and King (2001).

²³ Lawson (2008).