

Clearing the Glass Ceiling

implementing the male view for transparency in the Dutch glass ceiling debate



"I hope my meteoric rise in the company isn't just because I am a man."

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Yours sincerely,
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Utrecht, August 10th 2011

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Introduction

“And I, too have been bumping my way against glassy planes, falling half-stunned, gathering myself up and crawling, then again taking off, searching.”
(Rich 1987, p. 211)

There is extensive research that states that women in the top will profit companies and politics enormously (Eagli & Carli 2007, Valian 1998). So why are there so few women in top positions in business, politics or science? Either as CEO's, managing Directors or as board members?

There seems to be a barrier that keeps women from the top in business and politics, but is this due to patriarchy that has installed and keeps in place a glass ceiling? Are women kept in place by men, 'old boys' networks or are there other factors that may be considered to be playing a part in the Netherlands? Other terms coined are for example the sticky floor, the idea that women do not *want* to get to the top, are content with their part time jobs, or do not want to adjust to the business culture and keep themselves out of higher labor functions. Another term is the glass cliff where women are deliberately set up for high risk positions where they can fail as if falling off a cliff.

The glass ceiling isn't a new phenomenon. In the second feminist wave Joke Kool Smit addressed the same problems that we now call the glass ceiling (Vuijsje 2008). Why is this still such a hindrance, or at least a topic of discussion, in the 21st century? A new approach is called for in the academic world, public media and amongst different feminist views and groups. The glass ceiling debate in the Netherlands has been a polarized one from the start. The 1.5 workers model is standard in the Netherlands and the Dutch discussion, whether women belong either at the top of business or at home as stay-at-home mothers is a ferocious one, fought in the public eye of Dutch society by Heleen Mees, Roos Wouters and Marike Stellinga. They represent the different voices in this debate. Heleen Mees' *Weg met het deeltijdfeminisme! Over vrouwen, ambitie en carrière* (Down with Part-time Feminism! On women, Ambition and Career) (2007) argues that Dutch women should work fulltime. Marike Stellinga argues in her *De mythe van het glazen plafond* (The Myth of the Glass Ceiling) (2009) that women in the Netherlands simply don't want to work more than the part-time jobs they currently hold. And last Roos Wouters' *Fuck! Ik ben een feminist* (Fuck! I am a Feminist) (2008) is a plea for *femanism* where both women and men take on the responsibilities for their jobs and childcare. What they have in common is the notion that something needs to be changed; only the what and how are problematic.

On the other side of the debate we find the old boys networks in companies and industry sectors, men who want their wives to take care of their children owing to an old-fashioned notion of femininity, and of course the overall notion of patriarchy that has been part of the Dutch culture for so long (Beauvoir 1988, Woolf 2000). In short, Dutch masculinity which used to be portrayed as the one thing that stops the development of Dutch women and feminism.

However, there is a discussion going about the crisis in masculinity (Brod 2002, Kegan Gardiner 2002, Wiegman 2002) and, in the Netherlands, about *Het onbehagen van de man* (The Uneasiness/Discomfort of Men) (van Rijsbergen 2009). My opinion is that thanks to the changing roles of men, a collaborate feminism is rising, men and women working together to break through different role patterns. This has been illustrated by Former minister Wouter Bos, who has chosen his family above his

career in politics and now has a job at KPMG for four days a week becoming the example of the changing (male) role patterns in the Netherlands.

This raises the question, are these actually different schools of thought - one arguing that women have a problem and that men have different sets of problems - or are they both based on the same social or cultural developments? If they are in fact the same, than we must consider, how do they influence each other, and more to the point, how should they? What perhaps is missing in this debate is the male or masculine view on that same glass ceiling. Since there is significant research (Eagli & Carli 2007, Valian 1998) that states that women on the top will profit companies and politics enormously, we must also consider what men think of (the lack of) Dutch women in top positions. If there is truth about the changing roles of men and changing masculinities, what do these men actually have to say about what is conceived as a problem 'of women'?

Acknowledging that a gap in knowledge exists about the glass ceiling in the Netherlands: there is scarce or insufficient evidence to suggest what men at the top think of the glass ceiling. Currently there are no publications either English or Dutch texts where a male perspective regarding the glass ceiling was given. In the numerous publications regarding this topic, only women were interviewed or participated in case studies. If men and presumably masculine or androcentric corporate cultures are already changing, maybe the answers to solve the problems concerning the glass ceiling are to be found precisely there. Even if men and these working cultures are not changed, the key to the problem might be found within those that are in power in companies.

Changing cultures are always worth researching as they project new sets of beliefs, interactions and values between people. This is an opportunity for feminists to analyze both old and new role patterns within Dutch (corporate) culture and the various debates going on about these changes. Let us make room for men to advocate the changes they want as well; fathers who might want a stay-at-home day, less working hours, acceptance as the primary care taker of the family. What is the ideal role pattern according to both women and men and what are the ideas they might share?

In this thesis I hope to tackle two problems at the same time. First of all I hope to come out of the divide that has its hold on Dutch feminism, namely the divide between different feminists like Roos Wouters, Marike Stellinga and Heleen Mees. Secondly, I want to involve men in the problem solving. Their total absence in the debate creates more problems than that it solves. Take for example the table of contents of the book: *Waarom vrouwen geen baas worden* (Why Women don't

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Become the Boss) (Nuyens 2005), written by a woman for women. Chapters six to twelve of this book of the book states: women and power, women and money, women and status, women in politics, women at the top, and women at the fireplace. What is surprising in this publication, is that it should not be possible to write a book about the top of corporate culture without acknowledging the fact that men are there.

The glass ceiling is all about the lack of women at executive positions in business, politics and other places of power, meaning that men do make up 80 to 90% of the people who make it and have power (SCP/CBS 2010). I think these men could give loads of good advice if we just asked for it, especially because masculinity is in flux. The debates around this topic of the glass ceiling and female leadership are in abundance. This can be evidenced by the LinkedIn group: Leadership Think Tank, where the discussion: ‘What would happen if women ruled the world?’ (LinkedIn 2011) has accumulated within five months to a staggering 1928 reactions and comments and not just by women. Dutch newspapers have contributed to the debate by publishing several articles on this topic, highlighting that the debate is very much alive. Dutch quality newspaper *Trouw* (2011) featured *Vrouwen aansporen om hun best te doen op de arbeidsmarkt ligt gevoelig* (To Encourage Women in the Labor Market to do their Best is Tricky) and just two days later *NRC Handelsblad*, another Dutch quality newspaper, featured *Mijn perspectief is anders dan dat van een man* (My Perspective is Different From That of a Man) (Kas 2011). Both articles project a female perspective, and although women in both articles are compared with men equally on both educational level and managerial style, men do not have a voice or opinion within this debate. Thus the following research question has been formulated:

To what extent can one speak of a mutual influence between the now changing ideas of masculinities and the debate about the glass ceiling in the Netherlands?

Can we renew or even change the glass ceiling debate – that has become stuck in a situation of women as having a problem – if we would start to implement the insights, opinions and beliefs of men?

In order to solve this question I did a cross combined discourse analysis of the glass ceiling debate in the Netherlands and a discourse analysis of the standpoint of men on that topic. I have done the Dutch discourse analysis through three Dutch popular scientific books on the glass ceiling subject and in order to fill the gaps in the Dutch glass ceiling debate and implement masculinity studies in this feminist research, I interviewed nine male Directors and CEO’s; five of them in the non-profit sector and four in the profit or ‘male dominated’ sector. This qualitative research project should be seen as a first attempt at integrating the Dutch feminist discourse with a male view on the glass ceiling debate in the Netherlands.

In chapter one you will find the background of masculinities within feminism and chapter two contains the concept and history of the glass ceiling and how it is currently perceived. Chapter three discusses the used methodology and the reason for using a discourse analysis. Chapter four contains respectively the results of the discourse analysis of the three Dutch popular scientific books on the glass ceiling. In chapter five you can find the discourse analysis of what men have to say about the glass ceiling. This chapter will give an insight in how the male view is different from the current glass ceiling debate and how this different take can be used to fill the gaps within the Dutch discourse. In conclusion Chapter six will contain the wrap-up, conclusions and recommendations.

1 The masculine discourse within feminism

“It is a theoretical mistake to think that one can analyze women’s lives and men’s lives separately and then simply synthesize the results of these analyses of gender. This sort of “separate spheres” model of gender misses precisely the core of the reality of gender, that gender is a socially constructed category formed precisely in and through the interplay of genders” (Brod 2002, p. 165).

This chapter discusses the role of masculinity studies throughout the history of feminism in both the second and third feminist wave. Additionally, the constructions of the used terminology and the argument for why feminist studies need must include research on both genders and ends with a conclusion.

This chapter is the background for the discourse analysis of the male view which is discussed at length in chapter five, furthermore containing a detailed discussion with nine Directors and CEO’s as to why researching men and undertaking masculinity studies is beneficial or advantageous for feminism and gender studies.

Second wave feminism

The goal of the second-wave feminists was to expose how patriarchy influences the everyday lives of women and this improved their status within society to that of the level of men, equality instead of being equal. Simone de Beauvoir writes in the introduction of *The Second Sex* that “man can think of himself without woman. She cannot think of herself without man” (1988, p.16). The feminist discourse of the second-wave both within and outside the academia did not have room for men and masculinity as research objects.

The idea that women were fighting against men and patriarchy, changed into the realization that women were fighting against the way how patriarchy was and still is embedded in modern society, and that men and women are equally bound by patriarchy. The reason to integrate masculinities within this gender studies thesis is because “as a woman, I am a consumer of masculinities, but I am not more so than men are; and, like men, I as a woman am also a producer of masculinities and a performer of them” (Kosofsky Sedgwick in: Lewis 2004, p. 245). Masculinity is intertwined with gender studies on every topic because masculinity is just like femininity and gender deeply embedded in social culture. Especially within this glass ceiling debate where those that are in power are men. Both women and men are entangled within this asymmetrical dichotomy. “What is appropriate to each gender by way of temperament, character, interests, status, worth, gesture, and expression. Every moment of the child’s life is a clue to how he or she must think and behave to attain or satisfy the demands which gender places upon one” (Millett 1969, p. 42). Gender roles are established at a very young age for both women and men and the behavior of both sexes are adjusted to the views of those roles (Vilian 1998). Social interactions shape the value that is given to each gender because within the patriarchal society men are higher valued than women.

Rich believes that “large numbers of men could, in fact, undertake childcare on a large scale without radically altering the balance of male power in a male identified society” (Rich 1981, p. 638). So instead of becoming more equal, men gain more power putting women further to the margins replacing them. “It is a painful fact that a nurturing father, who replaces rather than complements a mother, *must be loved at the*

mother's expense, whatever the reasons for the mother's absence" (emphasis original, Rich *no year*, p. 245). The generally accepted fact that men left the task of childcare to women, and referring to it as a women's task, devalued this role at the same time. Or as Chodorow formulates, it is "the fact that women, and women only, are responsible for child care in the sexual division of labor has led to an entire social organization of gender inequality, and that men as well as women must become primary caretakers for children if that inequality is going to change" (paraphrased in Rich 1981, p. 635). When considering that men are viewed as being above the family, not sharing equal responsibilities in child rising, lets the double standard exist and copied in the next generations.

When women take action to advance into the male domain, it influences and encourages the equality fight to begin, as it is a victory over the oppressors, a taking away of power and distributing it more equally. Gains are made with intellectual freedom as in Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* (2000), and with this freedom comes the possibility to be economically independent. In Simone de Beauvoir's words: "It is through gainful employment that woman has traversed most of the distance that separated her from the male" (1988, p. 689). And with the right to own our own bodies (Thornham 2000).

Third wave feminism

The third-wave feminists went a step further than their predecessors of the second-wave. After feminism and women's studies were accepted within the academic field, a generation of women were able to grown up with feminism (Thornham 2000, Henry 2004), a new angle needed to be found to keep feminism fresh and workable. Away with the old dichotomy of unshaved women in overalls, short hair and anti-men. One of the ways of doing this was redefining feminism in a way that is was workable for these new self-assured feminists. A four day working week for both men and women, combine the family with a job and a equal labor division for men and women.

Henry paraphrases Walker: the new feminism "represents a demographic shift in those who make up the next generation of feminists – a generation that has grown up transgender, bisexual, interracial – and thus has trouble thinking in such binary terms. In other words, racial, sexual, and other identities have become more complex and so, correspondingly, must feminism" (Henry 2004, p. 159). Parts of the new feminist definition comes from different strings of feminisms. Part of the definition that Cooke uses to set out her statement and understanding about Islamic feminism can be used in the general definition as well, "Feminism provides for the analytical tools for assessing how expectations for men's and women's behavior have led to unjust situations, particularly but not necessarily only for women" (Cooke 2002, p. 143). Feminism becomes more than 'just' women's rights.

It is imperative to consider that this is where men and masculinity came into the academic field as part of the gender equation. As highlighted by Braidotti, "both poles of the gender dualism need to be deconstructed. I think that masculinity can only be effectively extricated from the phallus by men, if they [men] choose to become politically involved" (Braidotti 1995, p. 186), this challenges patriarchy from within, fully conscious of the effects of living in a patriarchal society.

Feminism is no longer something for just women, "if feminist-minded men take on the issue of masculinity, they also have to confront the question of power relations and the extent to which they structure women's entire way of living. The recognition of this dissymmetry is a fundamental moment in the process of deconstructing phallic power and of men's coming to consciousness" (Braidotti 1995, p. 186), In the past,

men were left out of the feminist struggle, now they are seen as part of the process an asset to help feminism and gender studies to grow and expand.

The construction of terminology

With the insight that gender and femininity are constructed comes the notion that masculinity is constructed as well. By being linked to femininity, masculinity is able to change its meaning as well, and if masculinity is in crisis (or is merely changing) than so is femininity and gender, because all these terms are socially constructed. “The need to theorize gender and in particular to theorize men and masculinity, arises largely because of the dangers of reification, essentialism, and reductionism that arise when using such categories as ‘women’ and ‘men’, ‘femininity’ and ‘masculinity’” (Hearn & Morgan 1990, p. 8-9). Both femininity and masculinity are intertwined so that research on both of them will gain us a complementary insight in the construction of gender. This thesis aims to do just that, combine masculine views with the current feminist debate in order to formulate new solutions.

The concept that the category ‘women’ does not exist is a well excepted one within gender studies, but at the same time the notion of a category of men where men, maleness and masculinity are still firm in place. The idea of the category men, being just as diverse as the category of women is a recent one and with this notion came the knowledge that not all men are equal and share the same masculine rights and privileges. This leads us to the fact that by studying ‘just’ women, feminists can only see the partial explanations of how gender is shaped thus we miss the link of how men are shaped by masculinity.

The need for research of both genders

As feminists, we have the opportunity to fill the gap that men leave by disregarding gender while doing their ‘own’ research because “Men rarely see themselves as a gender, and society generally treats masculine characteristics as the prototype of human behaviour, irrespective of time and space. Masculinism, therefore, operates as a hegemonic ideology and exerts a profound influence on the structure of modern society” (Nurse 2004, p. 3). Men tend to forget that they are gendered as well and by doing so, they miss the opportunity to “do good-quality research that brings masculinity into focus” (Carrigan *et al* 2002, p. 99). The reality is that feminist research questions the privileged identities and ideologies of masculinity “which is rarely consciously articulated because it is so often represented as universally applicable, settled and beyond question in its hegemonic influence” (Lewis 2004, p. 244). As Brod stated: “To let the study of gender be equivalent to the study of women is to leave men as unmarked by gender and hence normatively human. However the unmarkedness of the superordinate is precisely the mark of their dominance” (2002, p. 166). To break down this dominance we have to make men our research object as well.

The perception of the unequal division of power within the category of men opens up a whole new field of research. “A great deal of feminist work in masculinity studies has been motivated by the desire to intervene in the practices of patriarchal domination while locating the possibilities for men to challenge their constitution as men” (Wiegman 2002, p. 43). If men start to do research with a feminist lens or from a masculine viewpoint, men can help to gain insights in the feminist cause.

“In the normal course of events, men, elites, or ruling classes generally have no more need to theorize their situations than fish need to theorize about water; yet even saying that does not quite ring true, for there are also

numerous contradictions, disjunctures, ambivalences, uncertainties, and just temporary wonderings in the ordinary lives of men which need to be acknowledged too” (Hearn & Morgan 1990, p. 15).

To make the conceptions of the dominant features of masculinity problematic, feminists need to do research on this topic to reveal the blind spot most academic men have on this area. Nurse acknowledges that “from a revolutionary standpoint, the traditional myth of male privilege, power and status blinds men to their own gender oppression, and therefore limits the possibilities for an emancipatory transition from within the boundaries of Masculinism” (Nurse 2004, p. 33). According to Brod, the only route toward the requisite knowledge for feminists is to start “questioning the category itself [gender, or in other examples; ethnicity, sexual orientation etc.], rather than just the subordinate group marked by it” (2002, p. 167). In addition, knowledge of the dominant group gives knowledge of the subordinate group as well. Gender is shaped where the two groups are interrelated, and so are femininity and masculinity, and thus male and female. To show what it means to be a man without taking all the advantages for granted and give a scientific explanation on why and how men and masculinities are shaped in the way they are in our and other societies. Together with this new approach the role of women and men change within feminist studies. The men become embodied as a research object enabling feminists to analyse what makes men, men and women, women gaining insights on how the two influence each other. Both men and women are shaped by gender and have undergone the historical processes of gender formation. Masculinity is no longer viewed as a static, monolithic concept (Kegan Gardiner 2002). Acknowledging that masculinity is just as fluent as femininity brings an end to the rigid division between the two, creating a space where changes are desired and the possibility of social change becomes within reach. Where the binary division between femininity and masculinity makes the notions between the different genders more static, does the notion of changeability the opposite. “By making hegemonic masculinity visible we begin to erode its power” (Robinson 2002, p. 147), and it enables us to contest the unquestioned and unchallenged masculine norm. By studying men and masculinity, feminists can reduce ‘men’s resistance to feminism,’ and create a space where male dominance can be challenged in a theoretical and scientific manner to show that the category of men, just like the category of women, are not a single group but constructed within different groups of males dependant on class, race, age, sexuality, nationality etc.

There are different kinds of masculinities and thus different ways of being male is worth studying. Hegemonic masculinity is an ideal image and the notion that there are different kinds of marginalized masculinities, such as homosexual masculinities which are highly feminized, is one which requires further feminist research. In this way extra knowledge is gathered how masculinity is shaped and how men shape themselves to fit different pictures of masculinity. The consequence of these actions however lead to the persistence of the ‘taken for granted masculinities’ and “the invisibilities of men [that] serve men’s interests, keeping their activities apart from critical scrutiny” (Hearn & Morgan 1990, p. 7) thus in doing so, keep their dominance as a group in place. Moreover, feminist research on men and masculine roles enables women to question the naturalness of masculinity and patriarchy. By studying men and masculinity, feminists can reduce ‘men’s resistance to feminism,’ (Kegan Gardiner 2002, p. 9) due to the conscious raising of the fact that maleness and for example whiteness are categories as well with their own privileges and restrictions.

A different advantage is gained by the alliances feminists can make with male stream researches due to the shared interests in the topic. The gaining of an “alliance with progressive men, including white men, who have signalled the desire and potential for a politics beyond their own interests” (Newton & Stacey 1995, p. 289) within feminist research. Men are no longer seen as the ‘enemy’ or the ‘other’ category but just like black feminists before us who claimed alliance with men from their own ethnicity, to combine strength, numbers and power. “The shift within academic mainstream feminism from identity politics to politics across identities challenges us to move more fully across this divide as well” (Newton & Stacey 1995, p. 289). An extra result of these practises could be the fight for liberation for men as well as women to break free from the hegemonic masculinity and femininity.

To find out how men are bound by the same patriarchal society, research needs to be done to see where the boundaries of cultural acceptance are and how they can be moved. Haug *et al* argued that individuals act according to what they receive as appropriate in their dominant cultural values and “find compromise solutions [within] the range of activities accessible to any given individual [creating] general modes of appropriation of the social” (Haug *et al* 1987, p. 44-5). To find out what the boundaries for men are, can give good insight on how to change them from within the male side of patriarchy. There is a growing interest within the third feminist-wave in men and masculinities and could possibly signal as the turning point of contemporary feminism.

Conclusion

In concluding chapter one, the discussion has focused solely on comparing the first two feminist waves, and arguably compared this to our modernized third feminist wave. Within first-wave feminism women fought to be equal to men, as where the second-wave complained that the first-wave feminism portrayed itself as victims and where men were portrayed as the enemy (Thornham 2000). Male dominance was what women fought against in that first wave. I imagine a statement like ‘What do you mean, a man got rights, he already has all the rights in the world, now it is time for us’ was said in the first wave. The second-wave would have had a similar argument that replaced the male-dominance with patriarchy. ‘Women are suppressed by patriarchy, and have to fit in society shaped and directed by men’.

The third wave will reply differently; male-dominance and patriarchy are questioned and no longer universally employed. Men are struggling to fit in the new discourse, one where women are found everywhere, independent, and free. They do have a hard time catching up, because they fell behind at the beginning of the feminist struggle. The current female generation, like myself is raised with the feminist spoon, to put it in simple terms, something that is self-evident, that women are equal to men. The roles women used to have are no longer taken for granted or sufficient in this new shaped women’s world. So as third-wave feminists it is our privilege to take men by the hand and guide them into this new world bringing an end to the crisis of masculinity.

Now in the 21st century men need women to define themselves especially within relationships and fatherhood. Those domains are ruled by what women want. A list of sorts where men need to conform to, because, at least in westerns society, the nuclear family is no longer sacred. Single mothers, *bewust alleenstaande moeder* (BAM) (*deliberately single mother*), marriage that is not so sacred anymore, homosexual and lesbian couples who want to raise children form the new 21st century families.

The male role is changing because its discourse is changing. By (re)naming men and masculinity as a part of gender we add a new field of research to our studies and gain the possibility to complement the total gender picture. However notably with just the research we will never get there. Publications, articles, and getting active within the political arena¹ are essential for changing an entire culture; more importantly thorough research is indispensable.

The goal of feminist research is to fight for equality between men and women, but how this is reached, if it is unknown to what it may be compared against? It can be emphasised that the research of men is the next logical step in the development of feminist research. This makes this thesis pre-eminently a third wave feminist piece while the current Dutch debate (see chapter four) still fits in the second-wave feminist debate.

¹ I mean, in the Netherlands there is a party for the elderly as well as for the Animals. Why not a party for women/feminism?

2 The concept of the glass ceiling

This chapter contains the history of term ‘glass ceiling’ exploring its current meaning and place within the Dutch popular scientific debate. It furthermore treats the horizontal and vertical segregation within the labor market and the influences of Dutch family role patterns will be explained. In concluding the suggested insufficient solutions in the current debate and alternative terminologies will be examined.

The current meaning of the glass ceiling

The glass ceiling “is a metaphor that can be seen as the cumulative result of gender inequality in both economical and social aspect” (De Olde & Slinkman 1999, p. 33)² and encompasses three innate instructive meanings.

The first is an invisible barrier that keeps women from reaching a certain level within organizations, companies, and politics. This, formed by discrimination is known to represent “the image of a ‘glass’ obstruction suggested that women were being misled about their opportunities because the impediment was not easy for them to see from a distance” (Eagly & Carli 2007, p. 4). Secondly, it has prevented employees from reaching high ranking positions within the workforce despite their competences because these competences are as good as their male peers. Thirdly, these preliminaries are unlikely to disappear over time. This makes the glass ceiling into a long-term problem without an easy solution, because its discrimination often goes unnoticed and is grounded in social and cultural relations (Valian 1998). The actual height of the glass ceiling differs per corporal culture, social culture, and the norms and values that are in place either through religion or other forms of social interaction (Eagly & Carli 2007). There are a few theories that may explain the lack of women in top positions. To explore this further, let’s look at the theories that most often expressed.

First there is the leaky pipeline theory which says that women drop out in every higher level. Take for example Dutch academia; more than half of the students are women, but the percentages of female professors and scientists drop systematically as the level rises. In 2005 the Netherlands had 61% of all masters students that were female, 42% of the PhD students were female, Assistant professors were 28%, Associate professors only 16%, where additionally female full professors only reached 10% of the total amount of professors in the Netherlands (SCP/CBS 2010).

The second is the theory that there are not enough qualified women who completed enough of the route of the working cycle to have gained enough experience to fulfill a leading job. “The trifle quantity of women in leading positions is a bottleneck found in both national and international research literature” (De Olde & Slinkman 1999, p. 33)³. This theory is most often heard in the male dominated boardrooms.

Thirdly, leadership is viewed as a typically masculine activity so women, leading women as well as women as a category, don’t fit the stereotypical picture. It is not often that people may asks themselves where their conception of the differences between female and male come from nor what they are based upon. These gender

² “Het is een metafoor, waarbij het glazen plafond gezien kan worden als de cumulatieve uitkomst van ongelijkheid tussen de seksen in economisch en sociaal opzicht” (De Olde & Slinkman 1999, p.33)

³ “Het relatief geringe aandeel van vrouwen in topfuncties is een knelpunt dat in zowel nationale als internationale onderzoeksliteratuur wordt gesignaleerd” (De Olde & Slinkman 1999, p.33)

schemas, according to Virginia Valian (1998) are similar to the old belief that the earth was flat. It was a concept that seemed natural and logical according to their experiences. Only when data and results of research became common knowledge did the naturalness of these beliefs break.

Lastly it is important to consider that women make different choices on the labor market. It is apparent that men often choose to go for leading functions, while women put more importance into the content of the job and whether it will be a meaningful occupation. The latter is also tied up around the belief that women, more often than men, want to combine their job with child raising and thus opt for part-time employment (De Olde & Slinkman 1999).

The four theories described above have been written without a scientific foundation. There is no singular objective reason as to why women do not reach the top; it is a form of latent discrimination (Rosser 2004, Valian 1998). The fact is that managing has been a role undertaken by men and is respectively seen as a male job with the accompanying male corporate culture, thus in the end the source is sought on the side of stereotypes and myths of masculinity and femininity (Valian 1998). Today's men *have* leadership positions and they are the ones that make the decisions. The outcome of these practices is that the measurement for success became not just male but masculine as well, giving rise to the stereotype that is now in place. As men are predominantly seen in leadership positions, leadership is viewed upon as a masculine quality. Importantly, just like the term gender already presumes: the symbolical, structural and individual layers keep each other in place. In order to change this view on gender, all layers need to be contested and proven otherwise. This is almost impossible to do due to the deeply embedded social cultural construction of the described gender roles. Being a woman in a leadership position does not so much attack the view of the masculine quality of leadership, but confirms the masculine quality of that woman leader (Harding 1986).

Several successful factors have been identified according to female managers. These include: work twice as hard as men and get attention for this, act in a way that make men feel comfortable, take on the (almost) impossible jobs and handle them perfect, and mentor and coach systems (De Olde & Slinkman 1999). A more civilized version: "Because the bar is set higher for women, the old adage says that a woman must be 'twice as good as a man' to get a job holds true, at least for jobs that are traditionally male dominated, including most leadership positions" (Eagly & Carli 2007, p. 115). This is simply because the disadvantages you have as a woman in business. Women must fight the masculine rules of being a leader while they are being scrutinized for being a 'female' woman. A lot of women chose to start up their own business instead of battling a male dominated culture. This can be evidenced in other countries such as the United States of America where almost half of the businesses are owned by women. These women do not show up in the CEO and director statistics in the top of business life.

The history of the glass ceiling debate

The first appearance of the glass ceiling concept was in the *Wall Street Journal* in a 24th of March 1986 article by the two journalists Carol Hymowitz and Timothy Schellhardt: "Even those women who rise steadily through the ranks, eventually crashed into an invisible barrier. The executive suite seemed within their grasp, but they just couldn't break through the glass ceiling" (Hymowitz & Schellhardt, quoted in Eagly & Carli 2007, p. 4). Subsequent to this first article many more followed in the United states and later in Europe and the Netherlands.

The historical basis of the glass ceiling, figuratively speaking, lies in the changing concept of working patterns and changing economics. From the nineteen-fifties the concept was formulated on the basis of the male breadwinner and female caretaker family unit. This however no longer applies to the rapidly changing economic and social developments in Europe and North America (Perrons *et al* 2006). Both paid employment and families have become more varied and flexible, creating a whole range of lifestyle changes. This change is viewed as being responsible for the changing gender divisions and role patterns through the creating of new places of interactions between men and women. Most adjustments needed to be done on the paid work floor where women were rapidly finding a place of their own.

Considering the major changes in role patterns there is now a penetration from females on the workplace. Men are still widely absent in care taker positions both in paid and unpaid labor. So here women are adjusting themselves to male roles; women striving to become equal to men, without a counter balancing act from the male side. “‘Man’, so often used as a generic term to signify ‘humanity’ only emphasizes the cultural and social exclusion of women where men are the ‘norm’, and where seemingly ‘universal’ values are in fact men’s values (Whelehan 1995, p. 9), leaving women with a double workload, often poorly paid and compensated.

There are two reasons why the 1.5 income model is imbedded in the Netherlands. The first is because the Netherlands is a rich country and has been from the golden age dating back to the 1700. So rich that it was possible for men to keep their wives at home, in effect becoming housewives, because they earned enough money to meet their wives and children’s financial needs. This quickly became the social norm. After the Cultural Revolution in the 1960s part-time employment was offered in order to accommodate both the previous notion of women being able to stay home and the liberation of women aiding the opportunity for women to work. Dutch social norms say that children should not be at childcare for more than 3 days per week and the Netherlands remains wealthy enough to be able for families to live with a 1.5 income model (Vendrik & Cövers 2010), meeting the set social norms.

Secondly the Netherlands have never had an extended active war period. In countries such as France, the United Kingdom and Germany, where men were needed at the battle fronts of war, giving rise for women to fill the formerly known male jobs. A fine example is the first female trolley conductress in England who drove around in 1915. In the Netherlands the first trolley conductress only first appeared in 1973 (Brouwer 2003).

If we examine the actual statistics, we see that women in the Netherlands in 2009 worked on average 25 hours per week and men 37 hours. This is due to the part-time jobs most women in the Netherlands have. According to 27% of the Dutch population, the ideal labor participation for mothers with children up to four years is three days or 24 hours, 24% would rather want them not to work at all or in a one or two day job, and only 10% thinks that a 4 or 5 day job is ideal for moms (SCP/CBS 2010).

Fathers are supposed to work four days a week when they have children under the age of four and fathers with school going children are expected to work fulltime. These numbers have not changed over the last two years. Only 26% of the working women in 2009 worked fulltime (SCP/CBS 2010).

In The Netherlands, when compared with other countries in the European Union (EU), shows that: the labor participation of women in the EU in 2010 was 58.6%. In the Netherlands this was 71.5%, one of the highest is the EU where only The Danish women have a higher participation. The EU indicator refers to paid work for more than one hour per week. Dutch women have the highest part-time labor participation

in Europe, where more than 75.8% of the working female labor force works part-time. As a relatively large fraction of Dutch women work part-time the fulltime Equivalent (fte) in the Netherlands is only 44.4% well below the European average of 50% (SCP/CBS 2010).

Both men and women find it very important to increase their personal and professional development, however men regard this more highly in comparison to women in vertical mobility (SCP/CBS 2010). Women want an interesting job that helps with their personal growth while men put a bigger importance to the rise in their career to higher positions (SCP/CBS 2010). Young men and women want to reach the top of the labor market more often than the older generation and what is important to consider is that an upward career path is achievable for everyone (SCP/CBS 2010). The idea that one does the same job throughout her or his working life, is an idea from the past. Men however want to reach the top significantly more often than women: 53 versus 29 percent (SCP/CBS 2010).

Horizontal and vertical segregation

Besides the vertical mobility there is a horizontal and vertical segregation in paid employment between men and women. The *within-occupation* wage gap shows that women earn less than men in the same jobs and functions. The *between-occupation* wage gap shows that male dominated professions and occupations are more highly paid than female-dominated occupations (Eagly & Carli 2007). Both the clustering of women in 'feminine' jobs and the fact that men earn more in the same jobs and functions contributes to the wage gap between men and women.

Vertical segregation is the source of what has been known as the leaky pipeline theory of "decreasing percentages of women [...] compared to their male counterparts with increasing levels of hierarchy" (Rosser 2004). This can be largely evidenced in the health field. The support staff and the nurses are mostly female and physicians and top hospital heads are mostly male (Wirth 2001). Horizontal segregation is the division in women's jobs versus men's jobs through the different disciplines, which helps to create highly feminized and masculinized jobs where the masculine jobs are overall better evaluated, paid and have a higher esteem. The horizontal segregation in the labor market in the Netherlands can be expressed by a segregation measure between one and zero. By one is there a clear segregation between male and female labor sectors and by zero is the female/male division fifty-fifty. The segregation-index in 2009 in the Netherlands was 0.34 and in 2001 0.31. This means that the horizontal segregation between female and male jobs in the Netherlands in the past eight years has been growing. For example, Dutch women score relatively poor in the natural sciences with a female participation of 15.8%. Only Luxembourg scores lower than the Netherlands, the lowest out of all other EU countries (SCP/CBS 2010).

The places in which women work within the labor market are also segregated; women work more often in the non-profit sector than in the business world. 65% of all labor participants in the non-profit sector are women and of all the managers 39% are female. In the economical sector only 32% of the labor force are female and in managerial functions they make up a total of 16%. In the top 25 of the biggest companies in the Netherlands, 5.6% of the executive board members are female, in the top 100 this is 5.3%. When compared to the non-profit sector, 38% of the executive boards are women. This is a significant difference where interestingly the numbers of the latter have not changed in the past two years, suggesting that a ceiling has been reached (SCP/CBS 2010 p. 197).

The overall school participation of girls in the Netherlands is much better compared to hundred or even fifty years ago, although this can be seen as the start of a leaky pipeline. In the school year 2009/2010 of the total Dutch school going population, half of the students in secondary education were girls, with more girls than boys at the higher general secondary educational schools and pre-university education⁴. Young women got their degrees on higher levels, sooner and more often than young men. In higher vocational education⁵ and university-education, girls are respectively 52% and 51% of the total student population (SCP/CBS 2010).

If we look at the overall participation of women in the labor market in the Netherlands we see that in 2009, 67% of the 20-64 year women were in gross labor participation, meaning all women in that age category who are able to work. The net labor participation are the women who are actually working in the labor market (which means earning a salary). So in 2009, 60% of women between the ages 20-64 had a paid job of at least 12 hours per week. “More highly qualified women are more likely to retain greater attachment to the labor market, work full-time and develop careers” (Perrons *et al* 2006, p. 76). To break the numbers down according to age; in the category 25-35, 80% of the women had a paid job for more than 12 hours per week. Women in the age category of 35-45 score very high at 74%. Elderly women in the age 45-64 work the least with a participation of 34% (SCP/CBS 2010). These numbers are explained by the fact that in the past few decades it has become more and more acceptable for women to work at least part-time. Functions, due to the educational qualifications which have risen enormously for women.

Dutch family role patterns

In order to understand the preliminaries of the current Dutch glass ceiling debate you need to understand how the role patterns in current Dutch society are shaped. Within Dutch society, families with children function in “a ‘neotraditional’ modification of the male breadwinner, female homemaker ‘template’” (Crompton & Brockmann 2006, p. 105). This means that fathers work full-time and mothers often part-time or not at all. Although women are climbing the career ladder in the Netherlands, their main responsibilities remain in the private sector taking care of the household and children. This undoubtedly results in an absence of women within the higher regions of business, “thus maintaining patterns of gender inequality in employment. Indeed at times when such women give priority to their families by resigning from high-profile, high-paying jobs, this is greeted in some quarters as evidence that women cannot ‘have it all’ and should make a choice between employment and family life” (Crompton & Brockmann 2006, p. 105). These differences in role patterns are one of the difficulties that help create the glass ceiling. Women take care, or are supposed to take care, of the household while men work long hard jobs. This view doesn’t change quickly because it is so embedded within the Dutch culture. To juggle work and family life, women must shift from having a career to having (just a) job. Mothers are pressured into being the perfect parent more than men are and these demands create tension between childcare and work (Eagly & Carli 2007). As women gain more roles, the time for each role diminishes. A career woman puts her time and effort into her career but when she becomes a mother she takes on a second career, leaving less time for the former, transforming the first from a career into a job.

⁴ Havo en vwo

⁵ hbo

If companies implement family-friendly policies to help more women into a company, they must be aware for unintended consequences or simply a backfiring of these policies, as these recourses are only used by women and thus can result in an even bigger gender inequality. A slower career progress by reason of maternity leave and part-time work only disadvantage women. One of the underlying thoughts which appear to be the basis on which Dutch mothers base their decisions upon is in regards to “paid work and caring emerge from ‘gendered moral rationalities’: gendered because they address the philosophy of what it is to be a ‘good mother’, moral because they provide guidance about ‘the right thing to do’, and rationalities because this provides a framework for decision making” (Perrons *et al* 2006, p. 124). These social norms make it more difficult for women to get to and stay at the top of the labor market.

What does not help the debate is the dichotomy in the Dutch emancipation debate noted by Ans Merens (SCP/CBS 2010), that on the one hand women want more women in the top of business and industry. Whereas on the other hand there is a group of women who fear women participating in the labor market is a bad thing due to a fear of a devaluation of motherhood.

This then leads to differences in the career pathway between men and women. Most women work part time and do more analytical work focused on content instead of management. Partly because women get a greater satisfaction from what they perceive as useful jobs and because it is easier combined with part-time employment. Considering if women become leaders, they have to struggle against the quandary that being female comes with a typical mindset that clashes with that of being a leader. This double bind is visualized by Alice Eagly and Linda Carli: “the communal woman is expected to be helpful and warm. She avoids being overly assertive or dominant, doesn’t promote or very prominently display her accomplishments, and makes no overt attempt to influence others. In contrast, the agentic leader is expected to be direct and assertive, exhibit confidence and competence, and exert influence over others” (2007, p. 102). This makes it extremely difficult for women to reach the top, because stereotypical femininity and agentic leadership do not mix well together.

Current solutions within the glass ceiling debate are insufficient: A new school of thought is needed

Solutions are sought in different corners and one of these is to legitimize diversity policy and women’s authority, if members accept these ideas it becomes easier for women to be good decision makers and be accepted as such.

“In addition to the advantages of a larger candidate pool, a more favorable public image, and desirable leadership styles, gender diversity provides a wider range of perspectives and points of view on many issues, including product selection, advertising, public relations, and labor relations. Also, organizations that serve women as clients, costumers, and employees can have better relationships with these groups when women are among those who hold leadership positions. [...] Another reason why women’s perspectives can be especially valuable is that, as the less traditional occupants of executive roles, they may be more receptive to innovation and change” (Eagly & Carli 2007, p. 192).

Within the glass ceiling debate there are few solutions mentioned which generally are difficult to apply and lack masculine perspectives. Cora de Olde and Esther

Slinkman (1999) suggest two of the possible solutions. The first is to create career courses for women with concrete goals and a rigid selection procedure and/or coach female management potential. The second is to prove that there are enough women with work experience in the different companies; that you can find them. Yet in 2010 there are career courses for women but women are still as invisible as the glass ceiling or people in charge do not search hard enough/or in the right places.

The third solution that is mentioned, is to stop biased selection; do neutral assessments, give women training, and make them visible. This is the most difficult solution because the gender bias is almost never noticed due to covert discrimination (Valian 1998). This is a type of discrimination that is not openly converted and one that most people aren't even aware of. Most people have a mental imagine to which the ideal man and woman should conform to. These differences determine where men and women should be judged differently because they are opposite sexes. When asking directly, most people will reply with 'men and women are equal', however in their actions and judgments they differentiate between women and men, where mostly men are favored, making it covert discrimination.

A fourth and final recommendation for changes within the corporate culture include is replacing the extra-long hours or evening meetings to create gender balance (Eagly & Carli 2007). Generate more part-time possibilities within management functions and judge quality above quantity. Change the fine-tuning that decides what a good employee is. This can be seen in the fact that it is easier for a woman to become CEO of a 'new' company where there isn't an established male dominated culture. This might be the reason why most American female CEO's are, for example E-bay and Xerox (Eagly & Carli 2007).

In sum, organizations, men and society all need to change but neither of the above mentioned solutions suggests change or adjustments within the male corporate culture. Furthermore, more than 90% of the managing population is male and part of that male population does not like the existing corporate culture either. "Both men and women can benefit from active involvement in family roles as well as paid work roles. Paternal involvement in childcare not only would reduce women's work load but also would enrich men's lives. And a greater sharing of employment and family responsibilities can also benefit men by reducing their burden as breadwinners" (Eagly & Carli 2007, p. 179). There is a general compliance with the reality that corporate culture needs to change but not that this culture is set and kept in place by its male occupants.

Related and alternative terms

Within the glass ceiling debate other terms are coined to express related issues. The concrete ceiling takes into account intersectionality; originally formulated by Kimberlé Crenshaw as: "Black women can experience discrimination that are both similar and different from those experienced by white women and black men [...] often they experience double-discrimination the combined effects of practices which discriminate on the basis of race, and on the basis of sex" (1989, p. 149). Gloria Wekker elaborates on this point by saying: Gender and ethnicity co-construct each other, they are at work simultaneously: gender is always already ethnicized and ethnicity is always already gendered (2002, p. 15). The concrete ceiling thus implies a multi-layered barrier that thickens the glass until it becomes impenetrable concrete. Black women face both negative effects from racism and sexism which intensifies the barrier that they face in the labor market. Marilyn Davidson describes this phenomenon in her book *The Black and Ethnic Minority Woman Manager: Cracking*

the Concrete Ceiling (Davidson 1997). Effects of these Multiple forms of discrimination are less salary compared to men and white women, a bigger chance of isolation, the possibility of being a token position with the pressure to perform, no role models, little support from home, and more conflict with family and friends. We could “help shatter the glass ceiling if we would establish institutionalized mechanisms to encourage women-and other minorities-to find ways to traverse professional hurdles that can feel as threatening as crossing a visual cliff” (Renwick Monroe 2002, p. 241). Due to the double or even triple form of discrimination, ethnic minority women face a concrete ceiling, an even bigger challenge than the glass ceiling and are looking for even more support and encouragement on their way to the top.

The opposite of the glass and concrete ceiling is the Glass elevator or escalator. This is the advantage that men have in female dominated professions. Men in those professions are promoted more often, earn more salary and are found in 85% of the managerial functions (Valian 1998).

The term glass floor is used to describe the barriers men meet in their wish for being a part in childcare, “emancipation is often conceived as the battle in which women claim traditional male privileges, leaving men to conform. However more and more men want to be part of their children’s lives as a parent and in the household” (Wouters 2008, p. 12)⁶. Men are currently viewed as the male breadwinner, child raising and other domestic activities do not fit that picture.

The next term that is often used is the glass cliff, which implies that token women in high places are being scrutinized on all (mis)steps and on purpose named in hazardous high profile positions. One that Stellinga (2009) calls a worldwide devilish conspiracy against women and doesn’t really believe that men would deliberately do these things. Research on the other hand has “evidence that some women are placed, more often than comparable men, in highly risky positions [...] companies in the UK are more likely to place women in high-level executive positions when the companies are experiencing financial downturns and declines in performance. [...] The reason for the glass cliff phenomenon may include companies’ greater willingness to risk sacrificing their female executives and women’s greater willingness to take these positions, given their poorer prospects for obtaining more-desirable positions” (Eagly & Carli 2007, p. 151). On the other hand, high level positions often come available after a company has been in trouble where the old CEO has quit or has been fired. since the new social norm for more women in CEO and executive boards, women are selected for the first available seats on those boards. This way women are chosen on risky positions but not to see them fail in the near future.

To wrap up the alternative terminology, Alice Eagly and Linda Carli (2007) propose a new metaphor, namely that of a labyrinth. This because of the flaws they see with the glass ceiling metaphor:

1. It erroneously implies that women have equal access to entry-level positions.
2. It erroneously assumes the presence of an absolute barrier at a specific high level in organizations.
3. It erroneously suggests that all barriers to women are difficult to detect and therefore unforeseen.

⁶ “Emancipatie wordt vaak gezien als de strijd waarbij vrouwen traditionele mannenrechten opeisen en mannen enkel kunnen inschikken. Alsof de rol van de traditionele man de enige begeerlijke is. “Maar steeds meer mannen willen ook een aandeel in de opvoeding van de kinderen en het huishouden” (Wouter 2008, p. 12).

4. It erroneously assumes that there exists a single, homogenous barrier and thereby ignores the complexity and variety of obstacles that women leaders can face.
5. It fails to recognize the diverse strategies that women devise to become leaders.
6. It precludes the possibility that women can overcome barriers and become leaders.
7. It fails to suggest that thoughtful problem solving can facilitate women's path to leadership.

Women do get to the top albeit not in great numbers so the idea of the glass ceiling as an inflexible and impenetrable barrier is wrong since "a general bias against women appears to operate with approximately equal strength at all levels" (Eagly & Carli 2007, p. 73). This table shows that the discrimination is going on in all levels of a company and thus the term glass ceiling is not correct for it is a labyrinth that starts together with every woman's career.

Hierarchical level	Number of men (that makes promotion)	Number of woman (that makes promotion)	% woman promoted	% man promoted	Number of men for every woman (promoted)
CEO	1	0,06	-	-	16
Executive	10	1,25	10	5	8
Manager	100	25	10	5	4
Supervisor	1000	500	10	5	2
Worker	10000	10.000	10	5	1

Table: hierarchical level and the male/female ratio. (Eagly & Carli 2007, p.73).

This table illustrates the latent discrimination that takes place on all levels results in a small number of women at the top. When calculated each small way in which women are set back, discriminated, and ignored, it shows a total sum of the level that women are being held back within the workplace. Women aren't often chosen as leaders and when they do, they lack the opportunity to shine, and if they do shine, the men do not acknowledge their success at the same standards as other (male) peers (Valian 1998). The labyrinth metaphor envisions a difficult journey but with a goal worth reaching. "Passage through a labyrinth is not simple or direct, but requires persistence, awareness of one's progress, and a careful analysis of the puzzles that lie ahead. [...] For women who aspire to attain leadership, routes to this goal exist but can present both unexpected and expected twists and turns. Because all labyrinths have a viable route to their center, it is understood that goals are attainable" (Eagly & Carli 2007, p. x) instead of impossible.

I do agree with Eagly and Carli (2007) that the glass ceiling no longer is the perfect metaphor for the current situation. However it is the most, if not the only, term used in contemporary Dutch literature, to describe the current debate within the Dutch feminists' debate. Due to this, the 'glass ceiling' terminology will be utilized although it is validly criticized.

3 Methodology: Discourse analyses

This chapter examines the used methodology for the research and will begin with an explanation of why a discourse analysis is utilized, followed by how this is employed within the research method and within this research. This chapter ends with a conclusion in which a description of the research steps taken will be explained at length.

Depending on the discipline the meaning of ‘discourse’ varies. Linguists use discourse in the sense of everything beyond what has been said or how language is actually used (Schiffrin *et al* 2001). The way the discourse is used in this thesis comes from cultural studies which is influenced by the philosophy of Michel Foucault. It “refers to a broad conglomeration of linguistic and non-linguistic social practices and ideological assumptions that together construct power or [for instance] racism” (Schiffrin *et al* 2001, p. 1). This results in what Teun van Dijk calls ‘critical discourse analysis’; “analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context” in order to “understand, expose, and ultimately resist social inequality” (2001, p. 352). Here we see that the Foucauldian emphasis on the non-linguistic gets less emphasis in the methodological translation of the term (Barad 2003).

First of all, discourse analysis can be seen as the research of a total understanding of actual texts and/or talk (Schiffrin *et al* 2001). However that it isn’t possible to do a discourse in a vacuum. The interrelatedness with its non-linguistic surroundings, other discourses, and culture(s) in which it is studied make this impossible.

The second reason is that while doing a discourse analysis the research ascertains what must be researched, how this must be done, where attention is paid and what is deemed as useful sources and results. “Theory formation, description, and explanation, are socio-politically ‘situated’” (Van Dijk 2001, p. 353, Haraway 1991) and the production and reproduction of these cultural norms and values, like power relations and social boundaries all shape a discourse (Heller 2001). This gives power to certain people in the discourse. “The social organization of discourse itself, allows certain actors to exercise judgments over others, to control what gets to count as knowledge” (Heller 2001, p. 256). Studying a discourse creates challenges for a researcher especially if she/he complies with who is powerful in the studied discourse. Depending on where a researcher might fit within the discourse she/he studies, will color the views of the researcher on its intended meanings. So functions, meaning and structuring might all become up for debate at one point of research (Tolmach Lakoff 2001). What is perceived as the intended meaning of the discourse, might not be the meaning that follows the discourse being researched, because of the location of the researcher in that discourse. As a researcher, instead of a normal participant. At all times attention must be paid to what is intended in the discourse versus what makes the most sense to the researcher in any particular situation.

Discourse and gender

The difficulties of discourse analysis and the inherent power plays apply especially to this research as it is a discourse on gender. The study, which in itself is a culturally imbedded social process, “not just personally performed, but recognizably performed in order to match intersubjective typification. It sets up background expectations, which are more or less stable factors of a culture” (Baron & Kotthoff

2001, p. xi). In conducting research in this field on the 'other' gender, in this case: men, might make me as a researcher extra vulnerable for misunderstandings. Conversely, it might give me a fresh and insightful look into the 'other' because "the expectations as well as the actual 'doing gender' are interrelated with power processes in society" (Baron & Kotthoff 2001, p. xi). Which might give me, as being from another gender, a deeper insight in what is taken for granted within my own gender. The interactions with and within gender will make an interactive power balance.

The taken-for-grantedness of the gender gap as natural, is what makes the workings of the gender-gap so difficult to pinpoint. As soon as you see a woman, all kinds of feminine characteristics are projected on that single woman without checking if these are in place for that individual fitting within the general cultural meaning of being a woman (Butler 1986). When taken into account intersectionality, these forms of naturalness of categories are multilayered and can be seen with religion, sexuality, age, and ethnicity as well.

The social practice of gender is active on two levels: "First, gender functions as an interpretive category that enables participants in a community to make sense of and structure their particular social practices. Secondly, gender is a social relation that enters into and partially constitutes all other social relations and activities. Bases on the specified, asymmetrical meanings of 'male' and 'female', and the consequences being assigned to one or the other within concrete social practices, such an allocation becomes a constraint of further practices" (Lazar 2005, p. 5). Gender plays at three levels, personal, institutional and at a symbolic level but all influences daily lives, ordering reality of "social, psychological, historical, economical and political phenomena" (Wekker 2009, p. 62) of the people living it.

As everybody is part of a discourse, all acts and attitudes are measurable against the hegemonic discourse so even "acts that go against gendered expectation may unwittingly result in the reinforcement of the existing gender structure" (Lazar 2005, p. 9). This means that any deviance of the norm only reinforces the gender dichotomy because it actually emphasizes the underlying gender structure. So any transgression of the gender norm can be seen as a reinforcement of those norms instead of a transgression. As these gendered norms are practiced in everyday life, in its routines, texts and talks this "makes it an invisible power" (Lazar 2005, p. 10). That same natural invisible power keeps the invisible glass ceiling in place, we could intuit: "On the one hand, [sexist and] racist opinions and beliefs are produced and reproduced by means of discourse; discriminatory exclusionary practices are prepared, promulgated, and legitimated through discourse. On the other hand, discourse serves to criticize, delegitimize, and argue against racist opinions and practices, that is, to pursue [feminist and] antiracist strategies" (Wodak and Reisigl 2001, p. 372). The latter is an argument in favor of pursuing a discourse analysis.

By doing a discourse analysis, the expectation is to find out what the underlying structure of the discourse is that keeps the glass ceiling at place, how it works and how people work within it. When these parameters are unraveled, the discourses are made visible, and then maybe it is possible to no longer confirm to it but start challenge its hold on society, both its power and its dominance.

The goal of this research is to analyze how gender differences are being set up and maintained within the Dutch glass ceiling debate and on the work floor in Dutch corporate culture. The advantages of doing a discourse analysis are that it is possible to use different sources both audio and written, books and media, and emic and etic viewpoints.

The analysis of the Dutch glass ceiling debate will be conducted using literary discourse analysis of Dutch popular scientific literature. The analysis of Dutch corporate culture will be conducted through a discourse analysis of nine interviews with male CEO's and Directors of profit and non-profit companies and organizations in the Netherlands. The latter is because "those groups who control most influential discourse also have more chances to control the minds and actions of others" (van Dijk 2001, p. 355). As masculine and patriarchal discourse is hegemonic and dominant in corporate culture it is logical to include masculinity studies to this research.

To find out the interconnectedness of both discourses the explicit discourse on the glass ceiling in which women feature, and the discourse of the male CEO's, the parameters of both need to be made visible. I am aware that "[r]epresentations are recontextualizations of social practices; thus they are always political for the choices made in them, such as who/what is represented, or not, and in what ways, in relation to the other? In analyzing the representational practices, we are interrogating the power dynamic at work in a particular socio-historical moment: what do the representational choices tell us about the changing or unchanging contemporary balance of power" (Lazar 2005, p. 140). The fact that this is such a sizable topic of debate within Dutch contemporary society and feminist realm, tells us that the social culture involved with this topic is changing. These notions of change allows us to accept that both discourses are indeed fluent and thus changeable. Although as long as women are both the subject and the main narrator of this debate, men will not be heard or represented. This all mounds up to the opinion that doing a discourse analysis is the best suited method for the research that I want to convey.

The use of a gender discourse analysis in gender specific research

This paragraph contains the process of how the discourse analysis is executed in this research. The first discourse analysis that I will undertake is on how the glass ceiling debate is situated in the Netherlands and within contemporary Dutch feminism. I do this by researching three books within Dutch popular literature concerning the glass ceiling is made up of the texts of three women with different views on the glass ceiling that interact with each other through their books and in social media like newspapers and blogs. Heleen Mees (2007), Marike Stellinga (2009), and Roos Wouters (2008) all describe what they see as the problem of Dutch society. All three have very different views on working women, men, and what they see as the answer for the problem of the glass ceiling if perceived as a problem at all. These three books are the most read and combined, they give a general overview of the current state of the Dutch debate concerning the glass ceiling. Heleen Mees says: women need to work fulltime and take care of themselves and all other women. Marike Stellinga argues: women do not want to be at the top, there is a lack of ambition, and Roos Wouters proclaims femanism, that is, the idea that men can do something as well, that women and men have to do it together.

The second discourse analysis presented in this thesis are the nine exploratory and qualitative interviews with different men in top positions of Dutch business, four in the profit sector and five in the non-profit sector. These interviews are the basis for the discourse analysis in chapter five of the male view on the glass ceiling.

By combining the interviews and the Dutch debate on the glass ceiling I hope to fill the gap noticed in the previous chapter of the contemporary debate in the Netherlands and within feminist discourse. What has been said about the glass ceiling

lacks representations of men, and the lack of men's voices, whereas there is also a debate going on about changing masculinities. The latter debate will be further explained in chapter four. The first step is to clarify how this debate is positioned within Dutch feminism, and the second step is trying to combine the debates and the two discourse analyses mentioned above. There are a lot of books with interviews of female CEO's and Directors in the Netherlands but where are the men? It is difficult as a woman to state the male view, as if there is one unified view at all, but I feel that it should be part of the debate on the glass ceiling, because else 50% of the population and 85 to 95% of the working population will not be heard in the debate about the glass ceiling that concerns all. If there is a glass ceiling that needs to be broken then men will have to take on a big role in these changes, I think.

Method

The interviews that were held as part of this thesis were semi-structured and took about an hour to conduct. Interviewees were accessed using informal contacts as starting points, sending open mails to companies and via snowball effects from earlier interviewed persons. As the interviews were held in Dutch the quotations from interviews were to be reconstructed due to translations to English and aren't verbatim transcriptions. I have provided the original Dutch quotes in footnotes.

The topic list of the interviews can be found in Appendix 1 and is set up in a way to get past socially desirable answers, find out the current home situation of the interviewee and a general view of women in top positions in business.

The topics that will be mentioned in the interviews are the glass ceiling, women who did make it to the top and the reasons why most do not. Further, what they see as the problems and the solutions in the current glass ceiling debate.

The analyses of the three books were done with a slightly different angle. First of all I extracted for each of the three books what the main opinion were on the current glass ceiling debate, where they see opportunities and where the problems and then, in order to complete the picture, I compared the three books to formulate a more total description on the current Dutch glass ceiling debate.

4 Discourse analysis of the contemporary Dutch glass ceiling debate

This chapter contains the analysis of three recently published popular scientific books on the glass ceiling debate in the Netherlands. In this chapter I will explore the arguments of three popular Dutch scientific books in order to show how the Dutch public debate of the glass ceiling is currently shaped. The three books are representative for the Dutch media debate about the glass ceiling, because together they capture all sides that are currently heard and discussed within the Dutch popular media.

This chapter begins with the depiction of the book: *Weg met het Deeltijdfeminisme! Over vrouwen, ambitie en carrière* (Down with Part-time Feminism! About Women, Ambition and Career), written by Heleen Mees (2007), an advocate of economical independence for all women. Secondly the recapitulation from the book written by Marike Stellinga (2009): *De mythe van het glazen plafond* (The Myth of the Glass Ceiling), which argues that there is no glass ceiling in the Netherlands. The third section describes Roos Wouters' (2008) augmentations for *femanism*, in her book called *Fuck! Ik ben een feminist* (Fuck! I am a Feminist). The final section contains a conclusion with an overview of the current discourse and describes the issues that are currently missing within the discourse.

Heleen Mees: Economical independence for all women

Let's start with Heleen Mees, an advocate for economic independence of women in order to give them a better control of their own lives. Her book *Weg met het deeltijdfeminisme! Over vrouwen, ambitie en carrière* (Down with part-time feminism! About Women, Ambition and Career) is a collection of columns, essays and manifestos written to stimulate women in the Netherlands to go and work fulltime. This paragraph contains Mees' views on respectively; the Dutch income model, family life and politics, followed by her description of the role patterns within Dutch culture.

Fulltime work and income model

According to Mees, the reason for women in the Netherlands not reaching the top is the vast number of Dutch women working part-time. Only 25% of all women on the Dutch labor market work fulltime compared with 85% of the men (SCP/CBS 2010). The lifelong income loss for the average woman who becomes a mother is an estimated 40% (Mees 2007): "Part-time working always has a negative effect on a career but there has to be more. Women who do work fulltime advance slower than their male colleagues. There still lacks a certain taken for grantedness when we talk about a career women" (Mees 2007, p. 54-5)⁷. There is still a certain stigma associated with the low rates of Dutch fulltime working women. This is what Mees strives to change.

In the Netherlands the 1.5 income model is standard, meaning that the labor division of the average Dutch nuclear family is a fulltime job for the husband and a part-time job for the wife. "The 1.5 income model as used in the Netherlands is a

⁷ "Werken in deeltijd heeft een blijvend negatief effect op de carrière. Maar er moet meer aan de hand zijn. ook de vrouwen die wel voltijds werken maken namelijk minder makkelijk carrière dan mannen. [...] Als het om vrouwen gaat ontbreekt nog steeds de vanzelfsprekendheid" (Mees 2007, p. 54-5).

treacherous cocktail of traditional role patterns diluted with a whiff of feminism. Dutch women drink it to the bottom” (Mees 2007, p. 128)⁸. The idea of a choice-feminism is an illusion, Dutch women chose en masse the way that has been mapped out by society from their birth. Instead of protesting against the discrimination of women compared to men, women keep the inequality in the social power structures in place by the choices they make (Mees 2007).

This applies especially for Dutch mothers. Most Dutch mothers work part-time and are economically dependent of the fulltime earnings of their husbands. This is not the brightest ideal in a country where one out of three marriages fails. After a divorce a lot of women - and their children - get caught in the poverty trap. That is why women need to ‘de-mother’ for the interest of their children (Mees 2007, p. 114)⁹. Women do not have exclusive rights on emotions just as men don’t have exclusive rights on power. The household does not offer enough opportunities for women to develop their talents. Let men take on some of the responsibilities and contract the rest of the choirs out. Stop being so prude about the household and go to work from now on! (Mees 2007).

Dutch family life

Mees states that it is “a fact that it is never proven that mother instinct is something natural” (Mees 2007, p. 118)¹⁰, so motherhood causes an unbalance in the labor market because of the responsibilities of the household and of the well-being of the children. To put it more simple, a majority of women do not want to involve their husbands or partners with household chores in fear of the men making a disarray and by doing so, increasing the work load that they need to do.

Mees worries about the Dutch morals concerning child raising and household divisions. She argues that “women do not have a special natural or moral responsibility with regard to the household, this includes child raising. [Yet a]s long as [Dutch] society views women as the ‘problem owner’ and as long as women are treated that way, the discrimination of women will remain” (Mees 2007, p. 155)¹¹. According to Mees it is not just the men who are clinging to this view: “Women are so confined in their identity of being a mother or a wife that their professional identity isn’t acknowledged even if their academic achievements exceed those of men” (Mees 2007, p. 86)¹². Highly educated women who do not pursue a satisfactory career don’t just throw away their own career. “They barter away the positions of other women as well, including their own daughter and their daughters’ daughters” (Mees 2007, p.

⁸ “het anderhalfverdienersmodel is een verraderlijk brouwsel van traditionele rolpatronen aangelengd met een vleugje feminisme. Nederlandse vrouwen drinken de beker die hun wordt aangereikt tot de bodem leeg” (Mees 2007, p. 128).

⁹ “Veel moeders werken in kleine deeltijdbanen en zijn financieel afhankelijk van hun voltijd werkende echtgenoot. Geen goed idee in een land waar een op de drie huwelijken strandt, want na een scheiding zitten alleenstaande moeders – met hun kroost – veelal klem in de armoedeval. Vrouwen moeten daarom ‘ontmoederen’ in het belang van hun kinderen” (Mees 2007, p. 114).

¹⁰ “dat moederinstinct aangeboren zou zijn is nooit wetenschappelijk bewezen” (Mees 2007, p. 118)

¹¹ “Vrouwen hebben geen bijzondere, natuurlijke of morele verantwoordelijkheid ten aanzien van het huishouden, de zorg voor kinderen daarbij inbegrepen. Zolang de samenleving vrouwen niettemin blijft zien als ‘problemeigenaar’ en zolang vrouwen als zodanig worden behandeld, zal de achterstelling van vrouwen in stand blijven” (Mees 2007, p. 155).

¹² “Een vrouw blijft zo gevangen in haar identiteit van moeder of minnares, terwijl ze als professional nauwelijks aan bod komt, ook al overtreft de academische prestatie die van mannen ” (Mees 2007, p. 86)

129)¹³. Keeping the household divisions intact throughout the next generation(s), leaving the burden of childcare as a woman's job while working outside the house in the public a man's.

To get around the children- and household-trap, Mees argues that highly educated women should develop a strategy. "The best way to choose a man is to pick one who is either much younger, older or a dropout. This creates the much-needed room for negotiations. The latter is what most women miss because their wish to get children is often a higher than that of a man" (Mees 2007, p. 130)¹⁴. This should not automatically mean that they will have full responsibility for these children as well.

Heleen Mees wrote a column about women and breast-feeding which received numerous reactions that she devoted another column to the subject and the reactions she received as a result of it. Mees points out that anybody "who is truly involved with the health and care of children should not make him- or herself guilty in tending to children's needs such as breast-feeding demagoguery but should support the need for social economic independence for women. You cannot do that by portraying women as walking uteruses with a pair of breasts. You do that by fighting for an equal division in caretaking between men and women and for better career perspectives for women" (Mees 2007, p. 74)¹⁵. The notion that economic independence is more important for a baby than being breastfed for a year during maternal leave is fervently upheld by Mees. If the mother becomes economically dependent and responsible for the household because of this maternal leave it gives all the wrong signals to potential working mothers. "The discussion of breast-feeding reveals not just the value people give to breast-feeding but it shows the lack of appreciation that society has of the value of women as professionals, as thinking human beings" (Mees 2007, p. 79)¹⁶. We have to stop applauding men who plead for more extended leave arrangements for women, Mees says. They are not prepared to take on their fair share of the care responsibilities. The fact that it were mostly *women* who reacted to the first column in an exceedingly negative way, gave Heleen Mees all the more reason to make a bigger upheaval. She does not just blame the Dutch women. She blames the Dutch politics as well.

Women and Dutch politics

Dutch politicians have been equally neglectful: "a new government need to put a stop to all the household incomes tax regulations that encourage women to be economically dependent of their partner or husband. These have a negative effect on the labor participation of women" (Mees 2007, p. 111)¹⁷. In the Netherlands is it

¹³ "Hoogopgeleide vrouwen [...] verkwanselen ook de positie van andere vrouwen, inclusief die van hun eigen dochters en hun dochters, dochters" (Mees 2007, p. 129).

¹⁴ "De beste manier is een man uit te kiezen die óf veel ouder, óf veel jonger, óf een drop-out is [...] dat schept de broodnodige onderhandelingsruimte. Aan dat laatste ontbreekt het de vrouwen vaak, omdat de kindervens bij de vrouw, [...] net iets urgenter is dan die van de man" (Mees 2007, p. 130).

¹⁵ "Wie zich werkelijk bekommert om de gezondheid van kinderen zou zich niet moeten bezondigen aan borstvoedingsdemagogie, maar zou zich juist sterk moeten maken voor de sociaaleconomische positie van vrouwen. Dat doe je niet door vrouwen weg te zetten als wandelende baarmoeders met een stel tieten, maar dat doe je door te strijden voor een eerlijker verdeling van zorgtaken tussen mannen en vrouwen en voor betere carrièreperspectieven voor vrouwen" (Mees 2007, p. 74).

¹⁶ "Het [discussie over invoeren van een jaar zoogverlof] zegt niet alleen iets over hoeveel waarde wordt gehecht aan borstvoeding, maar misschien nog wel meer over de waardering die er in Nederland bestaat voor de vrouw als professional, als denkend wezen" (Mees 2007, p. 79).

¹⁷ "Een nieuw kabinet moet een einde maken aan alle kostwinnersregelingen in de inkomenssfeer. Die geven een verkeerd signaal af aan vrouwen, namelijk dat het prima is als zij economisch afhankelijk

possible to combine the incomes of both partners and as it is standard to have a 1.5 income model, divide them in half, giving the couple the possibility to pay less income tax. When the part-time working partners, in most cases the woman, wants to work more hours, thereby increasing their total income so that they move up a tax scale and need to pay a bigger tax percentage. This virtually keeps the total household income at the same level and makes it very unattractive for women to become economically independent, especially when you gain extra costs for childcare and domestic help because of the lack of time.

Mees argues that “we owe it to all the other women to revolt. We cannot leave it to others. Only our own outrage and political pressure can lead to change. This requires that women become part of the Dutch governmental elite” (Mees 2007, p. 96)¹⁸ or there will never be change. “Take the [second] last coalition formation¹⁹ meetings between the CDA, PvdA and the Christen Unie. This was done by seven gentlemen. Not even Wouter Bos, the chairman of the PvdA (a left sided labor party in the Netherlands) had the decency to bring a woman to the negotiating table. They talked about the future of the Dutch abortion legislation. You have to wonder how such a meeting goes. Would they not be a bit ashamed of themselves?” (Mees 2007, p. 83)²⁰. Women need to go to work, get involved and become part of the Dutch politics and government negotiations.

Should the government consider developing a minimum norm for gender balance to give Dutch women realistic possibilities to gain higher functions and positions. This is the best way to break open the contemporary culture of prejudices and stereotyping (Mees 2007, p. 143). However “the lack of promotions of highly educated women seem more rooted in corporate culture, and prejudices and stereotypes, than outright discrimination. Clone behavior and group dynamics restrain the exclusively male company directors to appoint a woman, even if each individual board members would support such a decision” (Mees 2007, p. 142)²¹. The workplace might no longer be the domain of men but is still is in thrall of the male dominance that goes on and has a direct influence on the prospects of women.

Role patterns in Dutch culture

We already have made up our arrears in education, not only are there more women who go to university but they graduate faster and with higher grades, so it has to be men. “A number of you [men] do not see the usefulness of gender balance initiatives. You think that we, as women, just need to perform better? Do you think

worden van hun partner. Die regelingen hebben materieel een ontmoedigende werking op het arbeidsaanbod van vrouwen” (Mees 2007, p. 111).

¹⁸ “Je bent het aan andere vrouwen verplicht om in het geweer te komen. We kunnen het niet aan anderen overlaten. Alleen onze verontwaardiging en onze politieke druk kunnen tot veranderingen leiden. Daarvoor is het noodzakelijk dat vrouwen deel uit gaan maken van de bestuurlijke elite van Nederland” (Mees 2007, p. 96).

¹⁹ This was the Balkenende IV government which was installed on February the 22nd 2007 and ended in 2010.

²⁰ “De formatiebesprekingen tussen CDA, PvdA en ChristenUnie waren een aangelegenheid voor zeven heren. Zelfs Bos had niet het fatsoen een vrouw mee naar de onderhandelingstafel te nemen. Ze spraken ook over de toekomst van de abortuspraktijk in Nederland. Je vraagt je af hoe zo’n gesprek gaat. Zouden ze zichzelf ook niet een beetje schamen?” (Mees 2007, p. 83).

²¹ “Het probleem met de doorstroming van hoogopgeleide vrouwen lijkt meer geworteld in de ondernemingscultuur, en in vooroordelen en stereotypen, dan in regelrechte discriminatie. Kloonedrag en groepsdynamiek weerhouden een uitsluitend mannelijk ondernemingsbestuur ervan om een vrouw te benoemen, zelfs als de bestuursleden ieder individueel een dergelijk besluit zouden steunen” (Mees 2007, p. 142).

that the competition of *Microsoft* just needs to perform better? That is what you actually claim” (Mees 2007, p. 32)²². The old boys’ network has all the characteristics of a cartel, Mees says. Successful newcomers are left out, so talented Dutch women do not get the chance they deserve whilst research shows that companies with more women on higher managerial positions make more profit than those without women in top functions (Mees 2007). It is not just the businesses who gain advantages if more women make it to the top. “If we succeed to tap in the female supply of labor, we have a solution for the aging working population of the baby boom, and are able to save billions who we can invest in childcare and education” (Mees 2007, p. 160)²³. Women’s liberation is the best way to generate wealth and to put a stop to poverty and child mortality.

When it comes to the concrete case of the glass ceiling, this, according to Mees, is a problem of male dominance on the work floor and the lack of ambition of Dutch women. “Is the glass ceiling as thick as the icecap of the North Pole once was? Or is it just as the pole cap partly melted down, but lack Dutch women the ambitions? It is not surprising that Dutch women still see themselves as the ‘problem owner’ of the household, including childcare. Even now a whole generation of women grows up seeing their mother in small part-time jobs. Women internalize the household stereotype which then becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy” (Mees 2007, p. 84)²⁴. Dutch women claim to be emancipated in being able to take care of their children and work as well but this is actually the 1.5 income trap. Dutch culture stipulates that women need to take care of their children and are not ambitious enough to fight this Dutch social mindset in order to become economically independent.

Marieke Stellinga: the glass ceiling as a non-problem

Marieke Stellinga does not believe in a glass ceiling formed by men or corporate culture. In contrast to Mees, Stellinga argues that the problem lies with the hostility of Dutch corporate culture against women additionally that women are captured in a part-time feminism. Stellinga’s book *De mythe van het glazen plafond* (The Myth of the Glass Ceiling) (2009) argues that the glass ceiling is a myth that needs to be debunked.

This paragraph follows Stellinga’s reasoning through the agency of Dutch women, her views on a Dutch quota, how she compares Dutch women to Dutch men and why Dutch women stay away from the top, concluding with her views on Dutch men.

²² “Een aantal van u ziet wellicht niets in deze initiatieven voor gender balance. U vindt dat wij nog maar wat beter ons best moeten doen? Vindt u soms ook dat de concurrenten van Microsoft gewoon iets beter hun best moeten doen? Want dat is wat u feitelijk beweert” (Mees 2007, p. 32).

²³ “Als we erin slagen om beter te profiteren van het arbeidspotentieel van vrouwen, dan kan langs die weg de vergrijzingsproblematiek volledig worden ondervangen, terwijl er jaarlijks ook nog eens miljarden beschikbaar zijn om extra te investeren in onderwijs en kinderopvang” (Mees 2007, p. 160).

²⁴ “Is het glazen plafond zo dik als het ijs van de Noordpool ooit was? Of is het net als het poolijs al flink geslonken, maar zijn de Nederlandse vrouwen gewoonweg te weinig ambitieus? [...] Het is dus niet vreemd dat Nederlandse vrouwen zichzelf nog steeds ‘probleemeigenaar’ beschouwen van het huishouden – de zorg voor de kinderen daarbij inbegrepen. Ook nu weer groeit een hele generatie vrouwen op die hun moeder niet anders hebben gezien dan in kleine deeltijdbanen. [...] Vrouwen internaliseren dan de huishoudstereotype, die daardoor een self-fulfilling prophecy wordt” (Mees 2007, p. 84).

Agency of Dutch women

According to Stellinga, “feminists like Heleen Mees argue that women lack ambition but men are still to blame. The male cartel keeps women from reaching the top. The man at the kitchen table pushes his wife at her weakest moments in the role of mother and housewife. The dominant culture keeps women from having a career. Women need help, need to be saved and liberated from this oppression” (Stellinga 2009, p. 10)²⁵. This line of thinking highlights women without an agency. Moreover Stellinga argues, that we have seen that Mees actually calls for women to take matters into their own hands.

Stellinga stresses that Dutch women do have their own agency and have actually *chosen* for the situation that they find themselves: “Between equal chances and equal outcomes sits free choice. Why is the thought that women choose out of free will to do the biggest part of the child raising, or only to climb the first steps of the career ladder so unbearable? Why do we keep concluding that women are being hampered? And that drastic measures are allowed?” (Stellinga 2009, p. 51)²⁶. One ‘have to’ has been exchanged for another, Stellinga argues. Traditionally were women destined to become housewife and mother, the myth of femininity, we could say. Now women ‘have to’ have a career outside the house the feminist push towards establishing a problem that is called: the glass ceiling.

Whereas one of the main goals of the feminist movement in the sixties and seventies was fighting against the generalization of women (Henry 2004). It is unusual that the current-day fighters for the female cause unashamedly use generalizations for both men and women in defining what their roles should be and their lives should look like. The notion that women independently choose for a life they want to live is not a revolutionary one but it is between intellectuals a controversial one. “That women do not have the same goals and desires as men is a politically incorrect thought” (Stellinga 2009, p. 211)²⁷, one that causes conflict and contradiction between the different groups of feminists. In some ways feminism has become disadvantageous to women, they have become sexist with a meddling streak, who “want to reshape society according to their norms and values, determining how others should live their lives” (Stellinga 2009, p. 10-11)²⁸. By waving around a pointy finger and telling people, in this case women, how they should live their lives, free will is taken away and replaced by a new set of restrains or values that we have to fight in order to gain and maintain or freedom.

²⁵ “Al zeggen feministes als Heleen Mees nu ook dat vrouwen weinig ambitieus zijn, mannen hebben het nog steeds gedaan. Het *mannenkartel* houdt vrouwen naar de top tegen. De man aan de keukentafel duwt zijn vrouw op haar zwakste moment in de rol van moeder. De dominante cultuur houdt vrouwen af van een carrière. Vrouwen moeten worden geholpen, gered en bevrijd van al deze onderdrukking” (Stellinga 2009, p. 10).

²⁶ “Tussen gelijke kansen en gelijke uitkomsten zit vrije keuze. Ik vraag me af waarom de gedachte zo onverdraaglijk is dat vrouwen er uit vrije wil voor kiezen om het grootste deel van de zorg voor de kinderen op zich te nemen, of om de ladder omhoog maar een paar treden te bestijgen. Waarom blijft de conclusie dat vrouwen worden gehinderd? En dat harde middelen dus zijn veroorloofd?” (Stellinga 2009, p. 51).

²⁷ “Dat vrouwen niet hetzelfde willen als mannen, is een politiek incorrecte gedachte” (Stellinga 2009, p. 211).

²⁸ “Ze [seksistische feministes] willen de maatschappij herscheppen volgens hun normen, ze willen bepalen hoe andere mensen hun leven leiden” (Stellinga 2009, p. 10-11).

The Norway quota and Dutch politics

Stellinga's position shows some resemblance to the Norway quota that enforces rules for men and women to abide. In Norway there are generous leave arrangements for both men and women. Stellinga is evidently not prepared to have this feminist, often-considered good practice imported into the Netherlands: "Fathers are allowed to take a big part of this leave but seldom do. The Norwegian government continues appointing a bigger and bigger share of the parental leave exclusively to the fathers to counterbalance the, in their eyes, unfair division. The father part of leave has recently raised from six to ten weeks. This to force young parents to divide the household and child caring and rearing tasks more equal. Additional plans, like waving a three month parental leave just to the father, takes the focus away from the mothers, has resulted in a great resistance from the Norwegian population, because they think that the labor division is fine the way it is" (Stellinga 2009, p. 25)²⁹. Putting rules into place that determine how people should live inside their homes, will take away free will. Those who promote a quota deny the possibility that women want other things from life than what men do. This again, is at odds with the history of feminism: the personal is political was precisely introduced to make what happens inside the house, behind the front door, into a topic for feminist discussion (Thornham 2000; Whelehan 1995).

The quota that Norway has put into place has similar effects. It stipulates the interactions between men and women and lays down a set of rules that women and men need to follow in order to be considered a good woman or man. "It is a brutal fact: *the quota discriminates Norwegian men*. There is little doubt that female executives applaud this quota! Almost overnight, these women gained an incredible amount of power" (emphasize original, Stellinga 2009, p. 36)³⁰. According to Stellinga "the Norwegian quota is a form of discrimination to stop an alleged discrimination – weird thing" (2009, p. 37)³¹. The side effects of this are downgrading of leadership positions (Stellinga 2009) and horizontal segregation of CEO and Director positions creating 'female' top functions, mostly Human Resources and Communication (Eagli & Carli 2007, Stellinga 2009).

Another reason why "a quota of thirty percent of women in executive boards and CEO's in the Netherlands is absolutely mad is because the total number of full-time working women is only twenty-five percent!" (Stellinga 2009, p. 42)³². As established Dutch top women like "Halsema, Kroes and Jongerius try to gain power at the expense of men. A number of feminists shout: 'yes hurray!' I [Stellinga] ask: did these women deserve that power?" (Stellinga 2009, p. 55)³³. If they managed to reach the

²⁹ In Noorwegen is sprake van een ruime verlofregeling voor mannen en vrouwen. "Vaders mogen officieel ook een groot deel van het verlof opnemen, maar doen dat zelden. Dit tot ongenoegen van de regering die een steeds groter deel van het verlof exclusief aan vaders toewijst. Zojuist is het papadeel verhoogd van zes naar tien weken. Dat moet jonge ouders dwingen de taken gelijkjer te verdelen. Verdergaande plannen, zoals om drie maanden verlof louter aan vaders toe te kennen en dus af te pakken van moeders, stuiten op grote weerstand van de Noorse bevolking. Die vinden de taakverdeling prima zo" (Stellinga 2009, p. 25).

³⁰ "Het is een keihard feit: *door het quotum worden Noorse mannen gediscrimineerd*. Geen wonder dat zakenvrouwen het quotum toe juichen! Ze hebben van de ene op de andere dag ongelofelijk veel macht gekregen" (Stellinga 2009, p. 36)

³¹ "Discrimineren om vermeende discriminatie tegen te gaan – rare boel" (Stellinga 2009, p. 37).

³² "Een quotum van 30 procent slaat in Nederland als een tang op een varken. Dat is meer dan het aantal werkende vrouwen dat voltijds werkt: 25 procent" (Stellinga 2009, p. 42).

³³ "Halsema, Kroes en Jongerius proberen zich macht toe te eigenen ten koste van mannen. Veel feministes roepen nu 'ja hoera!' Ik vraag: hebben vrouwen die macht echt verdiend?" (Stellinga 2009, p. 55).

top without a quota, surely there are more women with the same determination who are able to do just that. Why do we want them as leader in the 'yes to a quota' front? What can be accomplished is more involvement of the government which is overall bad for women.

The Dutch regulations may look women friendly however they are paternalistic, concludes Stellinga. Long parental leaves sends the message to women with small children, that they should not work. Women friendly policy might possibly be not as women 'friendly' as once thought. To explain, women-friendly policy does two things, one: it attracts women to the labor market who never plan to have a career. This increases the underrepresentation of women in top functions of business because of the disproportion between women at the top and the total amount of working women (Stellinga 2009).

The interesting thing is why the government puts so much effort in letting mothers work (longer) while having children, and leaving all the childless women of which 40% works part-time as well, alone. Why do you never hear any political statements about this category of women? These women are never described as oppressed or trapped in their role. The politicians accept the fact they work part-time, then why not from mothers? (Stellinga 2009). It is important to consider that being a mother implies as being involved with a man and presumably ones that oppress her. While women without children are not supposedly oppressed and can freely choose to work part-time. "The best evidence that the yoke of motherhood is not that big, is the fact that having children has little to do with the choice for a shorter work week" (Stellinga 2009, p. 73)³⁴. It might be because women realize that there is more to life than just work. It is even so that women who want a career will do that in spite of all the misleading rules. They work small jobs that enlarge their self esteem and make them feel good about themselves, not to make a career but for social contacts next to their fulfilling family life. "Part-time jobs are a luxury that Dutch women can indulge, envied by a lot of European women" (Stellinga 2009, p. 76)³⁵. To be realistic, most women in Europe need to work fulltime to have a comfortable life. However one third of Dutch women do not have a financial need for a job (SCP/CBS 2010). That makes working for Dutch women a right not an obligation, this in contrast with Dutch men of whom seventy-five percent feels a financial need to work. This is according to Mees, something that Dutch women should feel as well; the pressure of being financially independent regardless of their financial state.

Dutch women compared to Dutch men

When we define power as having control over one's own life, women are not doing so bad compared to men, says Stellinga. Again what we decipher from this is that she exposes the myth of the glass ceiling, while Mees emphasizes that women's choices are formed by men's ideas (Mees 2007). Women more often receive custody of the children in a divorce scenario, commit less suicide, do not get killed being a soldier in war, are almost completely missing in the most dirty and dangerous jobs, are less often the victim of violence, and are happier with their jobs. Not the least because women have more options than men. "Women can strive for a good career, have a nice part-time job, be a fulltime mom or a combination mom. Men on the other

³⁴ "Het beste bewijs dat het met het juk van de moederschapscultuur wel meevalt, is het feit dat kinderen verassend weinig te maken hebben met de keuze voor een korte werkweek" (Stellinga 2009, p. 73).

³⁵ "Deeltijdbanen zijn een luxe en nederlandse vrouwen baden in die luxe, benijd door veel andere Europese vrouwen" (Stellinga 2009, p. 76)

hand have a non-choice between working and working because their role as breadwinner is fixed within the female psyche” (Stellinga 2009, p. 107)³⁶. The Dutch career woman has a husband who acts as a financial buffer. His career is an obligation while hers is an opportunity. That lightens her life much more than his. Women have more options which offers them an advantage and more freedom. Having a job and a career no longer has a high esteem, time of and relaxed living does. In that context women gain and men loose out.

For these reasons listed above, women do not choose for the top. Respect, conditions of employment, and being able to stay close to their selves during a job is much more important for women. “A lot of high educated women drop out between the ages thirty-four and forty. This phenomenon has been named the opt-out revolution by the *new York Times* about six years ago” (Stellinga 2009, p. 136)³⁷, making it a worldwide trend. Thirty years ago there was discrimination and patriarchal dominance but now have “a great number of educated women discovered that they have other goals than just earn loads of money” (Stellinga 2009, p. 137)³⁸. This suggests that women do have enough power to live their lives they way they wish.

Why Dutch women stay away from the top

If the desired standards for a top function are: working long hours, lots of traveling with great availability, it is suggested that women disengage from this as they do not desire such a lifestyle. The Dutch government is not going to say that these norms are either good or bad. Norms cannot be lowered so everyone can do these jobs because only the best performers will undertake these roles. This can be likened to kindergarten teachers lecturing at universities. Someone who works for just three days is often less skilled and experienced than someone who works structurally five days a week. Lowering the norms is not how it works. “I have written an analysis for the *Elsevier* for over six years, why women in the Netherlands and Europe rarely reach the top. My conclusion is not the old boys’ network but that women more often than men choose not to fight for a top position” (Stellinga 2009, p. 20)³⁹. Women do not feel like suffering for a few years, let alone ten or even thirty years. “The alternatives are attractive: start your own business or find a nicer less demanding job. Dutch women have an escape from the tough fight that career making is” (Stellinga 2009, p. 64)⁴⁰, because of their husband’s financial contribution.

Dutch contemporary culture hinders women to work. “Women are half of the population and thus half of that culture. Why has culture been put outside women’s range of influence? Who determines that there is something wrong with that culture?”

³⁶ “Vrouwen kunnen een carrière nastreven of een leuke deeltijd baan nemen, voltijds moeder of een ‘combinatievrouw’ worden. Mannen daarentegen hebben de keuze tussen: werken en werken, want hun rol als hoofdkostwinner ligt ook voor vrouwen vast” (Stellinga 2009, p. 107).

³⁷ “veel hoogopgeleide, kansrijke carrièrevrouwen haken af als ze tussen de 35 en 40 jaar oud zijn. Dit fenomeen werd in de Amerikaanse krant *The New York Times* zes jaar geleden tot *The opt-out revolution* gedoopt” (Stellinga 2009, p. 136).

³⁸ “een flink deel van deze hoog presterende vrouwen heeft ontdekt dat ze andere doelen hebben dan bakken met geld verdienen” (Stellinga 2009, p. 137).

³⁹ “Al zes jaar schrijf ik voor *Elsevier* analyses over waarom vrouwen in Nederland en Europa de top maar zelden bereiken. Mijn conclusie is dat vrouwen niet buiten de top worden gehouden, maar minder vaak dan mannen kiezen voor het gevecht om de top posities” (Stellinga 2009, p. 20).

⁴⁰ “De alternatieven zijn aantrekkelijk: voor zichzelf beginnen, een minder veeleisende, maar wel leuke baan. Vrouwen hebben een uitweg uit dat taaie gevecht dat carrière maken vaak is” (Stellinga 2009, p. 64).

(Stellinga 2009, p. 89)⁴¹. Culture is not responsible for how people act; moreover culture is the result of how people act. “Yes women’s choices will be influenced by culture, but that does not mean that free will is an illusion” (Stellinga 2009, p. 93)⁴². If when women want to work part-time and raise their children part-time, that does not mean that this is a forced practice.

“I dare to argue that ambitious women nowadays have an advantage over ambitious men. Every big company wants to have at least one woman in the board of directors, or as CEO because of positive press” (Stellinga 2009, p. 157)⁴³. Today’s discrimination is no longer against women but against men and has become the run of the mill:

“To prove this, I [Stellinga] want you to do an exercise: watch an episode of the television show Help my man is a Handyman! But picture the name of the show: help! My wife is a housewife. Change the crying wife into a crying man, who can no longer live with the mess in his house because his wife does not clean. It does not matter if he threatens with a divorce or leaving with their children, his wife does not clean the house. Can the host of the TV show call the wife to account?”

Every host, no even every Dutch person would ask the guy: why don’t you pick up the dishwasher brush, or the mop? It isn’t that hard to dust is it? What kind of lazy sexist dick are you? I have not seen all the shows but I have the strong feeling that the host never ever asked one of the crying women: why didn’t you pick up the hammer? Why haven’t you learned to tile the walls? Come on, every woman can paint! What kind of sexist bitch are you?” (Stellinga 2009, p. 109)⁴⁴.

Women choose what they do or do not want to do and have the freedom to do so without being overly judged by the Dutch society.

Dutch men

According to Stellinga men are taken advantage of as a result of Dutch culture. “The ones that blame men for the relative low number of top women in the

⁴¹ “vrouwen vormen toch de helft van de bevolking en daarmee de helft van die cultuur? Waarom wordt de cultuur buiten de invloedsfeer van vrouwen gelegd? En wie bepaald er eigenlijk dat er iets mis is met die cultuur?” (Stellinga 2009, p. 89).

⁴² “Ook al zal de bestaande cultuur heus de keuzes van vrouwen beïnvloeden, dat betekent niet dat de keuzevrijheid een illusie is” (Stellinga 2009, p. 93).

⁴³ “Toch durf ik de stelling aan ambitieuze vrouwen vandaag de dag stelselmatig juist een streepje voor hebben op ambitieuze mannen. Elk groot bedrijf en elke organisatie wil graag vrouwen in de top, al was het alleen maar om goede sier mee te maken” (Stellinga 2009, p. 157).

⁴⁴ “Om te begrijpen dat we seksisme tegenover mannen normaal vinden en tegenover vrouwen niet, wil ik u vragen een oefening te doen. Kijk een keer naar dat programma [*help mijn man is klusser*] maar beeld u in dat het heet: *help, mijn vrouw is huisvrouw*. Maak van de huilende vrouw een huilende man die de rotzooi in zijn huis niet meer trekt. Zijn vrouw maakt het huis niet schoon. Of hij nu dreigt met een scheiding of zegt te vertrekken met de kinderen: het haalt niets uit, schoonmaken doet zijn vrouw niet. Kan de presentator die vrouw ter verantwoording roepen?

Iedere presentator, sterker, iedere Nederlander, zou de beste man vragen: Waarom pak je zelf niet een keer een afwasborstel? Of een dweil? Zo moeilijk is stoffen toch niet? Wat ben jij eigenlijk voor een luie, seksistische eikel? Ik heb niet alle afleveringen gezien, maar het lijkt me sterk dat de presentator ooit aan die huilende vrouwen heeft gevraagd: waarom pak je zelf niet eens een hamer op? Waarom leer je niet zelf tegels te zetten? Kom, elke vrouw kan schilderen! Wat ben jij eigenlijk voor een luie seksistische trut?” (Stellinga 2009, p. 109).

Netherlands, actually says that Dutch men are more sexist and macho than men in other western countries, because in the rest of the Western countries women reach the top more often than in the Netherlands” (Stellinga 2009, p. 219)⁴⁵. Stellinga’s (2009) chapter *lang leve de Nederlandse man* (long live the Dutch men) argues that Dutch men are, just like Dutch women, special. Dutch fathers not only have increased the time they spend in the household they did the same in their work. Dutch mothers are in the unique position that their gendered obligations, working, household, childcare, take up less time than that of their male spouses. This difference can be up to three hours of time. With the exception of other European countries such as Denmark and Sweden this pattern is reversed. In the Netherlands seventy-eight percent of women are happy with the amount of work that their partners do in the household and childcare. “Dutch men are more likely to take to washing the dishes or walk behind the buggy than anywhere else in the world” (Stellinga 2009, p. 115)⁴⁶. It is true that women work more hours within the home but “women work twice as much time on the children and the household but men work two or even up to three times more than women do” (Stellinga 2009, p. 117)⁴⁷. To take care of the financial needs of a family is a form of care giving as well although not one that is appreciated or praised.

All in all, here we find a definition of the glass ceiling as an artificial barrier that keeps qualified individuals from reaching higher managerial functions that is from glass because of its invisibility. “The common tendency of research [of the glass ceiling] is that men work more, interrupt their careers less and work for longer periods for the same boss. All these things are necessary for a top function” (Stellinga 2009, p. 136)⁴⁸. There is no provable discrimination, only subtle exclusion by men. This makes it according to Stellinga (2009) per definition improvable. You cannot see it, you cannot point to it.

Roos Wouters: stands for femanism

Now that we have seen that Mees argues that women are caught in the idea that part-time feminism gives women freedom and that the Dutch corporate culture is women un-friendly. Additionally Stellinga doesn’t believe in a glass ceiling at all, arguing that Dutch women have more freedom than any other group of women in Europe. Introducing Roos Wouters to the debate, who argues for a new form of feminism not against men but with men: *femanism*’ (Wouters 2008).

This paragraph contains the position Roos Wouters has compared to Stellinga and Mees, followed by the setback of Dutch role patterns and the second-wave feminists versus women now.

⁴⁵ “Wie mannen aanvoert als verklaring voor het relatief lage aantal topvrouwen in Nederland, zegt eigenlijk dat Nederlandse mannen discriminerender, onaardiger, seksistischer en meer macho zijn dan mannen in andere Westerse landen. Want in de rest van het westen bereiken vrouwen veel vaker de top” (Stellinga 2009, p. 219).

⁴⁶ “Nederlandse mannen doen op veel grotere schaal dan elders ter wereld de afwas en lopen met de kinderwagen” (Stellinga 2009, p. 115).

⁴⁷ “Vrouwen besteden twee keer zoveel tijd aan de kinderen en het huishouden, maar mannen werken twee tot zelfs drie keer zoveel uren als vrouwen” (Stellinga 2009, p. 117).

⁴⁸ “de algemene tendens van onderzoeken [naar het glazen plafond] is dat mannen meer uren maken, hun carrières minder vaak onderbreken en langer bij dezelfde baas werken – allemaal nodig voor het bereiken van een topbaan” (Stellinga 2009, p. 136).

Roos Wouters' position compared to Mees and Stellinga

Like Heleen Mees and Marike Stellinga, more than “70 percent of American women do not want to be called feminists, because of the hostilities of feminists against both women and men. Roos Wouters writes in her book *Fuck! ik ben een feminist* (Fuck! I am a Feminist) over the aversion that young men and women have feminism have in the Netherlands. Feminism has been struggling for ages with the differences between freedom and liberation” (Stellinga 2009, P. 120)⁴⁹. Both men and women struggle to find a balance to combine childcare and a career. Wouters follows Stellinga's argument that Dutch men are being discriminated. Wouters disagrees with the idea that women, or men, have free will to choose what they want and we see a shift in political outlook appearing. Where Stellinga is of a liberal kind, Wouters is more left sided and Mees moves to the right of field by arguing that women take individual responsibility for their own situation.

The setback of Dutch role patterns

Here the glass ceiling comes in: “The glass ceiling is not just the cause of the old-boys network or the male cartels, but also due to the fact that most women do not feel comfortable in top functions. It is a better plan to find out why that is than to say that women need to adjust to the excising cultures and male behavior. Like their lives are the norm and their working lives the model” (Wouters 2008, p. 61)⁵⁰. A big part of what makes women uncomfortable in the workplace is the male dominated culture that can be found in many corporations.

Wouters states that both women and men find a lot of restriction on their path, not just patriarchy but the powerful conservative female stronghold: “Conservative women who think that working mothers are bad mothers and men who take care of their children no ‘real men’” (Wouters 2008, p. 145)⁵¹. Wouters highlights that people often forget that there are social restrictions for men as well. It is less accepted for men to work part-time and although the ‘daddy-day’⁵² where men are allowed to have a day off work to take care of their children, becomes slowly more accepted, part-time working without children is still not socially acceptable.

“Due to Joosts’ (Roos’ partner and father of her children) professionalism with our first child, I could imagine better how this must feel for a man. Usually men know less about newborn babies than their female partners: is the bathing water not too hot or too cold, why does a child only stop crying when it is with the other parent? It is difficult to find out the reasons behind this as a man, definitively when the maternity assistant only lets you butter

⁴⁹ “70 procent van de Amerikaanse vrouwen willen geen feministgenoemd worden, juist vanwege de vijandigheid van feministes ten opzichte van vrouwen én mannen. Roos Wouters beschrijft in haar boek *Fuck! Ik ben een feminist* de grote afkeer van het woord feminisme onder jonge vrouwen en mannen in Nederland. Het feminisme worstelt al eeuwenlang met het verschil tussen vrijheid en bevrijding”(Stellinga 2009, P. 120)

⁵⁰ “Het glazen plafond wordt niet alleen veroorzaakt door een mannenkartel dat vrouwen buitensluit, maar ook doordat vrouwen zich vaak niet prettig voelen in die topposities [en] dan vind ik het beter om te kijken waar dat aan ligt dan om te stellen dat ze zich maar moeten aanpassen en net zo moeten worden als mannen. Alsof die mannen de norm zijn en hun werkend leven het model” (Wouters 2008, p. 61).

⁵¹ “conservatieve vrouwen die werkelijk menen dat moeders die werken slechte moeders zijn en mannen die voor de kinderen zorgen geen ‘echte mannen’” (Wouters 2008, p. 145).

⁵² papadag

and sprinkle the Dutch Rusk with aniseed comfits. Before that, men could only watch how their wife performed in labor with blood sweat and tears to produce their child. As can be understood, men may run back to work as soon as possible to feel useful again. That is what I wanted to do as well” (Wouters 2008, p. 28)⁵³.

Currently, the Dutch government is pressuring women to increase their workload and men to take up more responsibilities in the household without offering men the space to work less. This further impacts on the female workload as the range of responsibilities increases for women.

The freedom that the former waves of feminism left behind only managed to give us a better struggle. “I had, just like many ambitious mothers in this age, trouble with excessive ‘have-to’s’. I had to do everything. Not just for anybody but for myself” (Wouters 2008, p. 7-8)⁵⁴. This striving for what can be described as perfectness for women in the household, on the job and when it comes to being a mom is imposed by culture. It became the price of freedom that the previous generation had gained: “to choose is to lose but to not choose impossible” (Wouters 2008, p. 10)⁵⁵. So our generation is now in the emancipation-cramp with no strategic way out.

Second wave feminists versus women now

Wouters interviews a number of famous second wave feminists, one of which is Jolande Withuis: “I think that the women of Wouters’ generation want to much. It is a form of emancipation to stop confirming to expectations: being a good cook, mother, looking good, sport, social time with friends, a demanding job - nobody can handle all that at the same time. It is stupid and vain to want all that” (Wouters 2008, p. 57-8)⁵⁶. Another is Christien Brinkgreve: “My generation fought to have the world of their fathers and to not have the world of their mothers. That is what we fought for. Your generation wants to combine both worlds. That makes the package of duties a lot more extensive” (Wouters 2008, p. 63)⁵⁷. In opposition to what everybody says, this generation is not pampered. They have the feeling that they need to combine everything to make sure they do not miss out on any chances. “Mothers try frantically to juggle all the balls until they drop and fathers are being ridiculed if they announced

⁵³ “Doordat Joost zo ervaren met ons kind omging, kon ik me beter in een man verplaatsen. Meestal weten mannen minder van pasgeboren baby’s dan hun partner: is het badwater niet te heet of te koud, waarom stopt je kind pas met huilen als het bij de ander is? Meestal kom je daar als man ook moeilijk achter omdat de kraamhulp geneigd is je de beschuit met muisjes te laten maken. En dan heb je als man ook nog een hulpeloos toegekeken hoe je geliefde jouw kind met bloed, zweet en tranen op de wereld heeft gezet. Ik kan me goed voorstellen dat je dan als een idioot weer naar je werk gaat om je toch nuttig te voelen. Dat had ik op dat moment namelijk ook maar wat graag gedaan” (Wouters 2008, p. 28).

⁵⁴ “Ik had net als veel andere ambitieuze moeders in deze tijd last van overmatig moeten. Ik móést alles, en van niemand anders dan mijzelf” (Wouters 2008, p. 7-8).

⁵⁵ “kiezen is verliezen, maar niet kiezen is onmogelijk” (Wouters 2008, p. 10).

⁵⁶ “ik (Jolande Withuis) denk soms ook dat jullie gewoon te veel willen. Het is ook een vorm van emancipatie om niet aan al die verwachtingen tegelijk te willen voldoen: goed koken, kinderen, er goed uitzien, sporten, tijd voor vriendinnen, veeleisende baan – dat kan niemand allemaal tegelijk. Dat willen is gewoon dom en verwend” (Wouters 2008, p. 57-8).

⁵⁷ “Mijn generatie (Christien Brinkgreve) wilde wel de wereld van hun vader hebben maar níét die van hun moeder, en daar stredden we voor. Jullie generatie wil beide werelden. Daardoor is het eisen- en takenpakket veel omvangrijker geworden” (Wouters 2008, p. 63).

that they want to be part of the child raising” (Wouters 2008, p. 42)⁵⁸. The fear of not performing enough tasks, additionally to performing them well enough, is a burden that our generation is struggling with. When adding cultural pressures to the already complicated contemporary cultural gender situation it becomes even difficult to step out established role patterns.

Wouters (2008) argues that parenthood needs to emancipate from the constricting role patterns it is in. “Now is the time that we need to fight for the common interests of women and men. Everybody claims that women and men are equal but today’s laws and regulations are not adjusted to the wishes and needs of modern society” (Wouters 2008, p. 87-8)⁵⁹. If government policies were gender neutral it would be easier for women to work full time without value judgment but “the government rather pays a subsidy than stimulating mothers to find jobs. This way one sex is kept dependent on the other and it gives fulltime working mothers feeling that they need to defend themselves against societies judgment” (Wouters 2008, p. 51)⁶⁰. In theory this works both ways but in practice only 25% of the Dutch women have a full time job compared with 85% of men (SCP/CBS 2010) of which most are financially supporting their wives and/or children.

As long as women’s jobs and achievements are measured against a masculine measuring system, gender equality stays a fictional concept. The current rules of society do not give much room to live your own life no matter if you are male or female. This has not changed since the early feminist days: “the wish that Joost and I share is to find an equal work-life balance in a society that is formed in such a way to make that possible was the original wish of the first wave of feminists like Joke Smit? What happened to that form of feminism? How did we end up in the emancipation-cramp?” (Wouters 2008, p. 44)⁶¹. We need a feminism that fights for equality between men and women, not just women who have to be equal to men but men being equal to women as well.

How is this for the men in our generation? Wouters states that: “a man’s career on average develops faster and earns on average seven percent more, is it to be expected that they continue to see their office more often than their children. Women who put economic independence at the top of their priority list will have a bigger change to not having children⁶², and women who do want to have children are more likely to give up their career. The fact that this last category of women are continually higher educated, looking for a job that matches their education field makes it all the more difficult. Instead of realizing that it is the way how society is structured that forces these choices, a lot of men and women think it is their own inability that gets them

⁵⁸ “Moeders probeerden krampachtig alle ballen in de lucht te houden tot ze erbij neervielen, en vaders werden belachelijk gemaakt als zij te kennen gaven ook een aandeel in de opvoeding te willen” (Wouters 2008, p. 42).

⁵⁹ “inmiddels zijn we aangekomen in een tijd waarin we moeten strijden voor het belang van vrouwen en mannen. Iedereen roept dat we gelijkwaardig zijn, maar de wetten en regels zijn nog niet aangepast aan de hedendaagse wensen en behoeften van mannen en vrouwen” (Wouters 2008, p. 87-8).

⁶⁰ “De overheid verstrekt liever aanrechtsubsidie of een uitkering dan dat ze vrouwen die kinderen hebben stimuleert om aan het werk te gaan. Op die manier blijft de ene sekse afhankelijk van de andere, en moet je je als vrouw nog steeds verdedigen als je veel werkt” (Wouters 2008, p. 51).

⁶¹ “De wens van Joost en mij om evenredig te werken en te zorgen in een samenleving die daarop gericht is, was toch ook ooit de oorspronkelijke wens van feministen als Joke Smit? Wat was er dan toch gebeurd met dat oorspronkelijke feminisme? Hoe waren we in deze emancipatiekramp beland?” (Wouters 2008, p. 44).

⁶² A correct way to say this would be childless but that implies a deviance from the norm ‘having children’.

trapped in a corner” (Wouters 2008, p. 147)⁶³. A shift is needed not just in feminism but in contemporary society as well.

We should not fight for only women’s rights but for men’s rights and family rights as well. The anti-men campaigns from the second feminist wave have become an inappropriate means in this age according to Wouters.

Capturing the discourse

All three writers described above agree that there is something wrong within contemporary Dutch society and with contemporary Dutch feminism, although the solutions are found in different places. There are differences in the way they handle the glass ceiling as well. Stellinga argues that it does not exist in contemporary Dutch culture, Mees blames the masculine corporate culture and Wouters blames the way Dutch culture is constructed with rigid role patterns that constrict both women and men. First of all, it is interesting that all three want to stop blaming women, and have started blaming *feminism*.

Where Heleen Mees firmly states that she is not a feminist, Roos Wouters discovers to her own surprise in her book that she is a feminist. Secondly, when it comes to *their* solutions, Heleen Mees argues that women need to work fulltime in order to become economically independent and emancipated. Marike Stellinga argues that there is no glass ceiling in the Netherlands because women have the right and the freedom to choose what they want, not the least thanks to the Dutch men. She does argue however that the rift between feminisms are the problem for women who want to have top functions. Roos Wouters argues for a *femanism*, where both women and men fight against their gender specific discriminations.

The current glass ceiling discourse in the Netherlands lacks some insights. Firstly there is no talk at all of other types of discrimination within the Dutch debate. The concrete ceiling as mentioned earlier cannot be found in any of the three books nor is there any other mention of the multi-layeredness of intersectionality. Intersectionality can easily be implemented in the current debate with for example the Norway quota for women. Here you can argue that when you start quota for women, other minorities as ethnicity, sexuality, religion and age are in need of a quota as well.

What cannot be found either, is the reason for the second discourse analysis of my thesis. Although men are a large part of their reasoning, they aren’t asked to speak up themselves. There continues to be discussion about Dutch men: Mees puts her arguments in a ‘us versus them’ portraying men as the bad guys with their cartels. On the flip side, Stellinga argues that women are better off than men because of the freedom women have in the Dutch culture due to the good qualities Dutch men possess and albeit Roos Wouters argues for a *femanism* where men join the ‘feminist’ struggle, their insights and experiences are not brought into the current Dutch debate. The male view is lacking in this debate. This leads to say that the current Dutch glass ceiling debate fits clearly within the second wave feminist debate.

⁶³ “Doordat mannen nog altijd sneller carrière maken en gemiddeld 7 procent meer verdienen, zullen zij hun werkplek waarschijnlijk vaker blijven zien dan hun kinderen. Vrouwen die financiële onafhankelijkheid boven aan hun wensenlijstje plaatsen, zullen daarentegen vaker kinderloos blijven, en vrouwen met een grote kinderwens zullen de handdoek vaker in de ring gooien. Het feit dat deze laatste vrouwen steeds vaker hoogopgeleid zijn en de ambitie hebben om een baan te zoeken die bij hun opleiding past, maakt zo’n keuze extra schrijnend. Maar in plaats van te beseffen dat de inrichting van de samenleving je tot die keuzes dwingt, denken de meeste mannen en vrouwen dat het aan henzelf ligt als ze in de knel raken” (Wouters 2008, p. 147).

The place of men within feminism has been changing for the last couple of decades, therefore by implementing their views and notions as seen in the next chapter makes this thesis a third wave feministic one. In the following chapter men are given a voice and their vision on the Dutch glass ceiling debate will be explored.

5 Male views on the glass ceiling debate

“I had the same reflex when the question came. Does that woman know for sure that she wants to interview me on this subject? But she knew for sure and I really like to be part of such a research” (Jan Jaap Kleinrensink, Plan Nederland)⁶⁴.

This chapter begins with the details about who have taken part in interviews regarding the glass ceiling debate in the Netherlands in addition to what organizations or companies they represent. This is followed by a discussion about the general views these men hold about the glass ceiling. The chapter will describe and explore what men believe hinders women from reaching the top, followed by the paragraph what if 85% of all Directors and CEO's were women, which leads to the male view of female leadership characteristics. This is followed with a descriptive paragraph on the views men have about a quota for the percentages of women in leadership positions in the Netherlands. The chapter concludes with a paragraph changing culture, changing masculinities and importantly offers solutions in respect to the glass ceiling debate as formulated by the men interviewed.

Introduction of the Directors and their companies

The nine men that were interviewed are either Directors or CEO's of variable sized Dutch based companies. Three of these companies are situated in the technical profit sector: Bouwfonds Ontwikkeling (Development), Ordina and PAT-KRÜGER Systems. One is a consultancy & engineering firm: DHV and five of them in the non-profit sector: CARE Nederland, ICCO, Natuurmonumenten (nature reserve), Oranje Fonds, and Plan Nederland.

Bouwfonds is a solidly anchored developer creating living environments - locally and regionally - with a high functional value, experience value and future value (Bouwfonds 2011). Introducing Patrick Joosen, the Director of region Midden (the center part of the Netherlands), who has four sons between the ages of six and sixteen. Ordina is a service provider on Consulting, ICT and Outsourcing, bringing about improvements and renewal for clients. This is done where Business and IT interface with each other. They combine IT expertise and knowledge of business processes, local markets and local issues (Ordina 2011). Henk Wesselo is responsible for the HR and Transformation at Ordina and has two children which are six and nine. PAT-KRÜGER Systems sells and develops high quality and innovative solutions, installs and takes care of service and maintenance for crane safety systems (PAT-KRÜGER 2011). Pieter van Erp is Managing Director and Owner of the company and has two children in their late twenties.

DHV is a leading international consultancy and engineering firm, providing services and innovative solutions in environment and sustainability, general buildings, manufacturing and industrial process, urban and regional development and water (DHV 2011). Eugene Grüter is Managing Director of Construction and Industry and Statutory director of DHV. He has two sons eleven and sixteen years of age.

The NGO's are CARE Nederland, a leading humanitarian organization fighting global poverty. They place special focus on working alongside poor women because

⁶⁴ Ik had dezelfde reflex hoor, toen de vraag kwam. En weet die mevrouw dan wel zeker dat ze dat mij wil vragen. Maar dat wist zij zeker en ik vind het erg leuk om aan zo'n onderzoek mee te doen (Jan Jaap Kleinrensink, Plan Nederland).

they have the power to help families and communities escape poverty (CARE 2011). Guus Eskens is National Director of CARE Nederland and has two children in their early twenties. ICCO is an inter-church organization for development cooperation. Their goal is to give global financial support and advice to local organizations and networks that work for better access to basic facilities, initiating sustainable economical development and enhancing peace and democracy (ICCO 2011). Wim Hart is a Member of the Executive Board of ICCO and has four children between the ages of nineteen and twenty-five. Natuurmonumenten (nature reserve) has the goal to improve the quality of life in the Netherlands by preserving nature, landscape and cultural history (Natuurmonumenten 2011). Fedde Koster is Director Finance and (Operational) Management at Natuurmonumenten, no children but two adult stepchildren and grandchildren. Oranje Fonds supports social cohesion and social integration projects such as small-scale community initiatives, mentoring projects for young people, and language programs (Oranje Fonds 2011). Ronald van der Giessen is Director of Oranje Fonds and has two children ages fourteen and seventeen. PLAN Nederland is a children's development organization that promotes children's rights and lifts millions of children out of poverty (Plan 2011). Jan Jaap Kleinrensink is Director international programs at PLAN Nederland and has three daughters two in their late teens and the third is one year old.

Each interview differs from the other, both in responses and ideas, but all of them have one common denominator; a surprisingly original view on where they perceive problems within the glass ceiling debate and the solutions they envisage.

How do men perceive the glass ceiling?

There is a consistent basic notion shared by all male interviewees of what the glass ceiling in the Netherlands exactly entails: "The glass ceiling for me is the image of a glass wall, you can see the top but one way or another, you cannot get there. Simple as that" (Wim Hart, ICCO)⁶⁵. These are in line with the general description of the glass ceiling as a gender issue in the media. "The debate would be that the highest functions within business and civil service are occupied by men and that there exists a mechanism that keeps women from rendering these positions. Some of them succeed but they have to bring great offers, but most do not make it. That is the discussion. There is an impenetrable ceiling that is formed by conventions, historically, lack of capacity, or lack of willpower from women to break through" (Ronald van der Giessen, Oranje Fonds)⁶⁶. The men notice a multitude of possible causes of the glass ceiling, acknowledging the fact that it is a multi-layered problem.

What stands out in the interviews is the problems these men have with the term 'glass ceiling' itself: "My personal difficulty with the term lies in the fact that when you postulate is as a fact, it is made real because it exists in the perception of people"

⁶⁵ Het glazen plafond in is voor mij inderdaad het beeld van de glazen wand, je kan de top wel zien maar op de ene of andere manier kom je er niet te zitten. Heel simpel. Ik volg het debat niet als zodanig maar af en toe lees ik in de krant er weer wat over. [...] Ik geloof dus niet in het glazen plafond in de zin dat dat een bewust gekozen situatie is die bewust door de mannen wordt gecultiveerd van zo moet het blijven, daar geloof ik niets van. Dat gaat vanzelf veranderen, soms moet er gewacht worden, soms moet er gepusht worden (Wim Hart, ICCO).

⁶⁶ Het debat zou zijn dat de hoogste posities in het bedrijfsleven en ambtenarij door mannen worden bezet en dat er een mechanisme is waardoor vrouwen niet representatief op die posities terecht kunnen komen. Sommigen lukt het wel maar die brengen daar grote offers voor en de meeste lukt het niet. Dat is de discussie. Dat is een plafond waar je niet doorheen komt omdat het er nu eenmaal is omdat het door conventies of historisch gevormd wordt of door het gebrek aan capaciteit of gebrek aan wil bij vrouwen om er doorheen te breken (Ronald van der Giessen, Oranje Fonds).

(Jan Jaap Kleinrensink, Plan Nederland)⁶⁷. The argument that there is a glass ceiling does not help with finding a solution; it only enforces the problematic nature:

“At one point, the glass ceiling as a symbol itself became to leading within the debate. Question like, does it exist, and is it safety glass, double glazing, transparent glass, or frosted glass. This makes it a very instrumental discussion which in my eyes, did not help with solving the problems the last five years. I do not like to talk in these terms so I try to argue from the companies perspective; the question of reaching all the possible talents, using the talent pool inside your own company as well as outside. You can slightly change the debate by asking if you think that from the perspective of society, there are other groups who are more or less consciously rated of less importance. That is what I think the correct social emancipation question. Which you can pursue for all kinds of subgroups, minorities” (Henk Wesselo, Ordina)⁶⁸

The glass ceiling can be viewed as part of its own problem. The debate about it made it actually more rigid and real. What arrests the attention is the broader definition used by Henk Wesselo was the field of emancipation. He employs a form of intersectionality by emphasizing that emancipation can be for more than just women and applies for other minorities as well. “Which impact can you have as employer when you realize that you want heterologous’ talents at the top of your company” (Henk Wesselo, Ordina)⁶⁹. Emancipation gets connected with diversity moving the problem away from the male/female debate to broaden its meaning. This in comparison with Stellinga, Wouters and Mees who continue to limit the debate to the gender dichotomy.

What do men think that stops women from reaching the top?

During the interviews a multitude of issues were brought up as to what the men conceive as the key obstacles for women in their pursuit of reaching the top. The first is the notion that having children is a hindrance for women’s careers. “You know what, I see it in my management team, the director of the K.F. Heijn Fonds does not have children, the director of the SNS Fonds neither. My management team contain three women, all unmarried. Two have no children and one has grown-up children. In my top are girls who have to work hard, which they can because they do not have to race home to cook dinner so to say. It helps if there is no child burden. So it is an implicit barrier but a biological evolutionary one of the human species. In the end it

⁶⁷ Mijn bezwaar tegen het begrip zou zijn als je het eenmaal poneert door te zeggen dat het er is, dan is het er ook want het is iets dat in de beleving bestaat (Jan Jaap Kleinrensink, Plan Nederland).

⁶⁸ Op een goed moment is het glazen plafond als symbool zelf eigenlijk te leidend geworden in de discussie. Want dan heb je de vraag of het wel of niet bestaat, en of het hard glas is of dubbelglas of transparantglas of matglas. Daarmee wordt het een hele instrumentele discussie die in mijn ogen heeft de discussie de afgelopen vijf jaar niet zo bijster veel bijgedragen aan het oplossen van welk probleem dan ook. Ik praat niet graag in die termen [...], ik probeer om de discussie meestal terug te brengen naar vanuit het bedrijfs perspectief; de vraag of je maximaal mogelijke talenten die er zijn aanboort, benut je de talentpool voldoende zowel binnen je organisatie kijkt als daaromheen. Wat nog wel eens een net wat andere vraag is dan de vraag of je in maatschappelijk perspectief vindt dat er groepen zijn die meer of minder bewust worden achtergesteld. Dat vind ik dan meer de maatschappelijke emancipatievraag. Die je voor allerlei vormen, subgroepen, minderheden zou kunnen voeren (Henk Wesselo, Ordina).

⁶⁹ Welke impact kun je als werkgever hebben als je je realiseert dat je ook andersoortige talenten aan de top wil zien om dat dan ook te realiseren (Henk Wesselo, Ordina).

are the mothers who raise the children and the fathers are of minor importance. The mother gives birth and needs to breast-feed” (Ronald van der Giessen, Oranje Fonds)⁷⁰. Childcare is a burden for career women but it does not stop there. Women feel a greater responsibility towards their husband and household, which become side careers to keep them busy and stop them from reaching the top.

“I have had some people here with important functions in this company of whom you can ascertain to have three careers. I addressed them on this: you have a husband you keep track of, your family that you manage, which is your second career and you have a career with this company. You will not advance to a higher position if you do not make a choice. What do you mean? I keep it simple: or your husband stops working, or you hire an au-pair or you will not rise to a higher level in this company. I think that it is much harder for women to choose. I do think so. They feel a greater responsibility for their family. They have more difficulty losing themselves in a job, leaving aside whether that’s right or wrong. Men can hang their entire lives on their career so to speak” (Patrick Joosen, Bouwfonds)⁷¹.

Secondly, the men notice that women often have different values and goals compared to men, as Wim Hart identifies: “I think that a lot of women decide that having a career is not worth all the trouble and make some choices. They make a conscious choice to leave their career ambitions. It might not be a politically correct story but that’s the way I see it” (Wim Hart, ICCO)⁷². Wim Hart follows the same reasoning as Stellinga that women have more freedom to choose for a job instead of a career.

The third obstacle that men have identified is the ongoing debate between the different groups of women. The rift between the different views within Dutch feminism is something that they see as a great setback for women who want to reach the top of the employment line, as well as the cultural pressure that reign the actions of Dutch women. “It is the individual that makes the choice to say I am in this phase of my life. Husband and I are both in an important phase of our careers, we have just

⁷⁰ Weet je, ik zie het in mijn MT, laat ik het maar in mijn omgeving zien, de directeur van K.F. Heijn Fonds heeft geen kinderen, directeur van het SNS Fonds ook niet. In mijn MT zitten drie vrouwen en allemaal ongehuwd. En twee hebben geen kinderen en één wel maar is ongehuwd met volwassen kinderen. Dus in mijn top, dat zijn meisjes die hard moeten werken, en dat kan ook want ze hoeven niet thuis te blijven van zet de aardappels maar vast op. Dus het helpt wel als die kinderlast er niet is. Dus dat is wel een impliciete belemmering maar dat is ook wel een biologisch evolutionaire belemmering in de menselijke soort. Uiteindelijk worden die kinderen opgevoed door de moeder en is de vader bijzaak. De moeder moet baren en borstvoeden (Ronald van der Giessen, Oranje Fonds).

⁷¹ Ik heb natuurlijk ook wel mensen gehad die gewoon een belangrijke functie hadden binnen het bedrijf en waar je dan constateerde dat, en daar heb ik mensen ook wel op aangesproken; je hebt drie carrières. Wat bedoel je dan? Ik zeg; je hebt een man, want dat hoor je dan wat die allemaal doen, ik zeg, je hebt je gezin, dat is je tweede carrière en dan heb je ook nog een carrière hier. Ik zeg; jij komt niet verder als je daar geen keuze in maakt. Ja wat bedoel je? Ik zeg heel simpel: of je man stopt met werken, of je laat je gezin bij een au pair of je staat hier gewoon stil. [...] Ik denk dat het voor vrouwen moeilijker is om daarin te kiezen. Dat denk ik wel ja. Die voelen zich voor hun gezin veel verantwoordelijker. Die kunnen zich veel minder verliezen in hun werk. Even los van of dat goed of fout is. Die kunnen zich veel minder verliezen in hun werk en ook, kerels kunnen daar voor 100% hun leven daar aan ophangen bij wijze van spreken (Patrick Joosen, Bouwfonds).

⁷² Ik denk dat heel veel vrouwen uiteindelijk zoiets hebben van dit is het me niet waard en dan gaan ze keuzes maken. Dan laten ze vaak hun carrièreambities wat liggen. Het is een heel banaal verhaal maar zo nuchter zie ik het gewoon (Wim Hart, ICCO).

gotten our first child, a second child might be an option; we are very busy, difficult to combine. The choice to work part-time than is rapidly made. Which I think is a social cultural thing. Because your mother thinks that you should, and your friend says that it is stupid to give up your job. It is not like the generation before us. Your mother-in-law sees it as quite logical that you will take care of the kids. So you compromise between your friend and you mother-in-law and start working part-time” (Henk Wesselo, Ordina)⁷³. Women are more alert to the views of women than what they actually want to do themselves.

“There is peer pressure. This is a nice example: my wife, who had a high responsibility job in a big company, the times she brought the children to school, other mothers treated her differently than the house-mothers treated one another. She was viewed like; ow she is dumping her kids again, she was held into account. When we decided to put our kids in daycare, some of our inner circle of friends has reacted very condescending. You ‘stall’ your children with day-care because you simply want to work, you should not have gotten kids in the first place. That is the undercurrent. That is when my wife thought, well there are stay-over-mothers and mothers that drive the kids if they are going somewhere, I should volunteer for the annual cleaning and do a good deed as well. And to make matters worse, worse is not the correct term, the crazy conclusion was that, because she felt so good for doing a good deed, that when she got to the school the next day, to her own wonderment was her name absent on the list. She was like, I volunteered? It did not work that way. The other helping-mothers got precedence” (Eugene Grüter, DHV)⁷⁴.

The idea that omnipresence makes good mothers and that women need to mother and take care of the children is deeply engrained in Dutch culture. Deviance from this well established norm lets to corrections and judgments from within (the female)

⁷³ Het individu maakt de keuze om te zeggen van ja, ik zit nu in de fase met: Man en ik zitten allebei in een belangrijke carrièrefase, eerste kind net gehad, misschien komt er nog een tweede, het is erg druk, kan het moeilijk combineren. En daarmee al heel snel de keuze maakt om parttime te gaan werken. Wat ik een maatschappelijk cultureel ding vind. Want je moeder vindt dat je, nou je vriendin vind dat het stupide is dat je je baan opgeeft; dat doen wij niet meer. Het is niet meer zoals de generatie voor ons. En je schoonmoeder vindt het heel logisch dat jij voor de kinderen gaat zorgen. En als compromis tussen je schoonmoeder en je vriendin ga je dan maar tussenin zitten en parttime werken (Henk Wesselo, Ordina).

⁷⁴ Er is ook peer pressure. Dat is ook wel een mooi voorbeeld, mijn vrouw, en die bekleedde zal ik maar zeggen een verantwoordelijke positie binnen een groot bedrijf, als ze 's ochtends ook een keer op het schoolplein stond dan werd zij toch op een ander manier bejegend dan wanneer ze een van de huismoeders was. Werd ze toch een beetje aangekeken van die komt de kinderen weer afleveren dat is toch, zij werd eigenlijk ter verantwoording gehouden. Toen wij ervoor kozen om de kinderen naar de crèche te brengen nou daar hebben wij ook wel in onze vriendenkring hebben mensen daar neerbuigend op gereageerd. Omdat jij je kinderen opbergt in een crèche omdat jij zo nodig moet werken, dan had je maar niet aan kinderen moeten beginnen. Dus die ondertoon zit erin. En toen dacht mijn vrouw ook van nou dan, er zijn overblijfmoeders en moeders die rijden als ze een keer naar de dierentuin gaan, nou toen was er een keer een schoonmaakactie en toen dacht mijn vrouw: weet je wat ik doe, ik meld me aan en laat ik ook een keer een goede daad doen. En tot overmaat van ramp, ramp is niet het woord, de gekke conclusie was, ze voelde zich zo goed, van nu heb ik ook een goede daad gedaan ik meld me aan en de dag daarop was ze op het schoolplein en tot haar grote verbazing op dat lijstje stond haar naam niet bij. Maar zij van zoiets, ik heb me toch opgegeven? Nee dat werkte zo niet. Die oppasmoeders hadden voorrang (Eugene Grüter, DHV).

society. Women who do have a career are being excluded by stay-home mothers and school activities because of the disapproval of their parenting.

Nowadays, children need their parents and do not need to be sent to daycare more than four days a week, as can be evidenced in this example from Henk Wesselo:

“I live in a neighborhood where relatively many career oriented couples live, you get a child, which goes to a daycare center and one of the 40 kids was there for five days a week. He had a Danish mother and a French father who both thought that there is nothing wrong with the practice because of their cultural background. And the way people, both men and women were talking about that poor boy that had to go to daycare for five days in the week from nine to four! The parents were complaining that they could not drop their child there from seven to seven which is normal in France and Denmark. In our area live relatively many part-time working fathers, staying home one day, mommy staying home one day and the child goes 3 days to daycare being the standard more I seen as bad parenting. Leaving aside the question whether this is right, wrong or needed. Such a collective judgment on that poor child being there five days a week was really shocking to me. What lets me to question what the elements are that you can start to influence to change a culture” (Henk Wesselo, Ordina)⁷⁵.

The collective judgment as part of the Dutch (corporate) culture is what men think must change in order to get more women to the top of Dutch business. Thus in summary the significant points that hinder women as discussed above, according to the men are: children are a hindrance for women if they want to gain a leadership position because the responsibilities lead up to a significant workload, essentially three careers for women. Secondly, women have different values and goals of what they perceive as their careers. The third point is peer pressure and the ongoing debate between the different groups of women and lastly Dutch culture further dictates that children should only be in daycare for four days a week which is almost impossible to combine with a career at the top of a business.

What if 85% of all Directors and CEO's were women?

The concept that women and men differ is widely accepted and different traits and styles are attributed to both women and men. In order to go beyond the standard and socially acceptable answers I asked all the men to visualize the idea that the

⁷⁵ Ik woon in een wijk waar relatieve weging relatief goed verdienende carrièreachtige stellen wonen, redelijk progressief, dan krijg je een kind, dat kind gaat naar het kinderdagverblijf, één van de 40 kinderen zat er vijf dagen in de week. Dat kind had een Deense moeder met een hele goede baan bij een Amerikaans bedrijf hier en een Franse vader met een hele goede baan bij een dochter van het Franse bedrijf. Die allebei vanuit hun eigen lokale context het niet meer dan normaal vonden, daar werd, de manier waarop er werd gepraat over dat arme jongetje wat vijf dagen in de week naar de kinderopvang ging, en dan nota bene van negen tot vier terwijl dat in al die ander landen, zij klaagden meer over het feit dat je dat kind niet gewoon van zeven tot zeven kon stallen wat zowel in Frankrijk als Denemarken heel normaal is. Dus ik vond dat zo'n mooi ander licht op dat zelfde probleem dat maakt ook niet uit, of het mannen waren of vrouwen die erover praatte. En ik moet zeggen, in die omgeving relatief veel ook parttime werkende mannen die dan ook 4 dagen in de week werken en zij vier dagen in de week en het kind drie dagen in de opvang. Standaard ding. Even los van de vraag of dat een nette verhouding is en of dat nodig is, iets uitmaakt hoe het verdeeld is. Zo'n soort collectief oordeel over dat arme jongentje dat dan niet drie maar vijf dagen zat. Ik vond dat echt schokkend. Waar ik dan naar zoek, naar wat de elementen in onze cultuur zijn waar je begint te beïnvloeden (Henk Wesselo, Ordina).

numbers of men and women in the top of business were reversed and what would happen if 85% of Directors and CEO's were women. The idea of 85% women at the top gave the general notion that it would never work. In setting aside that 85% at the top are men, the general idea is that a gender balance is something to strive for because diversity in the top gives room for alternative views and actions. After some thought Pieter van Erp sums the general opinion up: "That would not work, simply because a lot of men will not accept that. Let's say, I think that fifty-fifty could work but a lot of employees are older and will have a different view on the matter. Not everybody is as open" (Pieter van Erp, PAT-KRÜGER Systems)⁷⁶. The implicit message is that the current ratio of eighty five percent of all top function filled by men is not ideal either.

Diversity is wanted and according to most needed to ensure the future existence of their companies. "Based on my working experiences, I think that a gender balance has an absolute surplus value compared to just men or just women" (Wim Hart, ICCO)⁷⁷. A balance of values and work methods is asked for to implement the changing values and wishes of society into the companies.

By Jan Jaap Kleinrensink from Plan Nederland there already is a seventy-five percent of women in top functions of the company which gives him the opportunity to explain the differences in functioning of a male versus female dominated company.

"If I look at personal styles in our director consultation, do men do things differently than women? Until recently we had a male executive director and if I compare his style with mine, do they principally differ from the styles women have in the consultation? It is funny because what you see is that when you look at hierarchical sensitivity, you look at a mirror, It turns out to be the mirror of what you would expect. It is not the men who are hierarchical sensitive but the women. What could be, if explained scientifically, come from the fact that women are the majority in this organization and have the drive to show their competence and male behavior while the men are, I won't say softies but, if you want to say it positive, have learned to take into account the multitude of caring aspects of management. Taking care of the people and employees that they are happy and taking care... that. More concerned about the wellbeing of people as individuals and women are just a bit tougher than the men in this culture so that is the mirror image of what is happening in the more competitive corporate cultures and in society. I do not know if it is true but I thought I throw it in as my own theoretic" (Jan Jaap Kleinrensink, Plan Nederland)⁷⁸.

⁷⁶ Dat zou niet werken. Om de doodeenvoudige reden dat een heleboel mannen dat niet accepteren. Ik denk niet dat het werkt. Laten we zeggen ik denk dat half om half ook nog zou werken maar je hebt natuurlijk heel wat mensen die wat ouder zijn en die dat waarschijnlijk anders tegenaan kijken. Niet iedereen is daar even open in (Pieter van Erp, PAT-KRÜGER Systems).

⁷⁷ In die zin denk ik op basis van ervaringen die ik zelf heb in mijn werkend leven dat een balans van mannen en vrouwen een absolute meerwaarde heeft ten opzichte van alleen mannen, dan wel alleen vrouwen (Wim Hart, ICCO).

⁷⁸ Als ik kijk naar stijlen, dat is ook weer persoonlijk, in ons directieoverleg? Doen mannen dat dan anders dan vrouwen? Tot voor kort hadden we een algemeen directeur die man was, als ik kijk naar zijn stijl en de mijne is die dan principieel anders dan de stijl van vrouwen in hetzelfde overleg? Dat is wel grappig, want eigenlijk wat je dan ziet als het gaat over hiërarchisch en gevoelig voor, dan lijkt het een soort spiegelbeeld te zijn van wat je zou verwachten. Dan zijn het volgens mij niet de mannen die het meest hiërarchisch zijn ingesteld maar juist de vrouwen. Wat weer, als je het wetenschappelijk zou willen verklaren, voort komt door het feit dat vrouwen in die positie een meerderheid hebben en

If you have a majority in power, a power structure need to be formed and according to Jan Jaap Kleinrensink there isn't much difference between women and men when they get into power. What did change is the accents between women and men who were put in management aspects as the men in his organization learned to put more emphasis on the caring aspects of its personnel.

What we do need to keep in mind is that although the board of Plan Nederland consists of seventy-five percent women, the employees encompass an even bigger percentage of women, which makes it a female dominated company. This in comparison with the vision of Pieter van Erp who projected a eighty-five percent female board for a male dominated company. Non-profit organization Oranje Fonds where Ronald van der Giessen is Director has a men/women employee division of eighty-five percent women. The board consists of three women, and two males; Ronald van der Giessen who is Director and the Deputy Director. This creates its own set of dynamics or even problems. "The communication division was populated with seven ladies and when we had two vacancies there, the ladies themselves asked to fill them with two men. It becomes too much a henhouse and a talking bunch. We waited with filing the position until two qualified men were found and this indeed improved the atmosphere drastically. There used to be these genuine bitch-fights. Scolding wives I called them. This scolding ceased when two men joined the department. So this identifies that a gender balance or lack off is something that is noticeable in companies" (Ronald van der Giessen, Oranje Fonds)⁷⁹. A gender balance is not only desirable for the boards but needs to be reflected along the total employee division of a company to have the greatest effect.

Female leader characteristics

Although the idea exists amongst men that women in leadership roles have different characteristics and values, the women who have made it to the top, are generally perceived to have more masculine than feminine qualities and traits. "They are never good-looking and very, very good at what they do" (Pieter van Erp, PAT-KRÜGER Systems)⁸⁰. A more positive trait that is often noticed is their perseverance and fighting mentality. The men in this research study acknowledge that these qualities and traits are necessary for women to survive in the higher functions in companies. "They all are ladies who stand their ground. They are well educated strong

misschien ook wel een drang hebben om te laten zien dat ze in staat zijn tot mannelijk gedrag om het zo te zeggen terwijl de mannen, ik zal niet zeggen softies zijn, maar wel als je het positief wil benoemen, geleerd hebben om rekening te houden met allerlei meer zorgende aspecten van het management. Zorgen voor de mensen zorgen voor de medewerkers en dat ze tevreden zijn, zorgen voor.. nou dat. En dus meer zich gelegen laten liggen aan het welbevinden van mensen individueel en dan zijn de vrouwen misschien relatief net iets harder dan de mannen in deze cultuur dus dat is enigszins spiegelbeeldig aan hoe het in het hardere bedrijfsleven werkt en ook wel spiegelbeeldig aan hoe het er in de samenleving aan toe gaat. Ik weet niet of het waar is maar als theorette gooi ik hem er maar even tegenaan (Jan Jaap Kleinrensink, Plan Nederland).

⁷⁹ Op de afdeling communicatie hadden we zeven dames, en hebben we voor de twee vacatures die er kwamen hebben de dames gezegd van er moeten hier twee mannen bij komen. Het wordt te veel een kippenhok en een hennen en kwekvijver. En we hebben ook gewacht tot er twee goede mannen voorbij kwamen en de sfeer is ook gelijk een stuk beter geworden daar. Het werden ook echt van die wijvenruzetjes kwamen er. Kijvende wijven zoals ik dat noem. En daar zijn we helemaal vanaf met die twee mannen erbij. Dus ja, die genderbalans is ook in zichzelf wat je merkt in een organisatie (Ronald van der Giessen, Oranje Fonds).

⁸⁰ Mijn eerste gedachte is dat ze zijn nooit knap en ze zijn goed (Pieter van Erp, PAT-KRÜGER Systems).

concerning content, able in setting out their standpoints and arguments and a very good feeling for what's going on in their surroundings and how to play into them, which women do better than men. Those are the three aspects I recognize with women in top positions. You should not underestimate their fighters' mentality. The women who made it have had a tough road to get there, more so than most men" (Patrick Joosen, Bouwfonds)⁸¹. The women who did reach the top are praised for their talents because they have proven themselves in battle.

The talents, skills and often the vast amount of knowledge they have are highly recognized and appreciated. "There are a few similarities. They want to live a more meaningful life, not just raising the kids but they want to have meaning in the job that they do as well. They have a directive interest in specific subjects in which they create a distinct profile of themselves and gain in-depth knowledge. Women are more ambitious" (Guus Eskens, CARE Nederland)⁸². Women who are currently in top positions are well qualified however most men would like to see more feminine traits in the work environment as well.

The earlier mentioned gender balance that most men want to have at the top of business can be found in the feminine characteristics that most women and men at the top are currently lacking. The line of thought is that women are more prevalent in the feminine traits and have a more holistic view on the world. Men want this 'new' type of top woman to fulfill the gender balance wish, because the masculine traits the current business women have, homogenizes the boards of directors instead of creating a board with more diverse values and characteristics. "We are a society that depends on ratio. You see that the crises that come together now, ecological, financial, economical and whatever more, are caused by the fact that we think in quantity and matter and more, more, more instead of quality and emotion. We are in a juncture that will help us to bring out the more feminine or femaleness, especially the feelings and how to handle not just quantity but quality of life" (Eugene Grüter, DHV)⁸³. The way women look at the current problematic issues is what most men want to be implemented in the companies missions and values as these become more important within our current society as well. "I think that it is better for the economic stability

⁸¹ Het zijn allemaal dames die hun, dat klinkt weer raar, die hun mannetje staan. Dus in die zin zijn het meestal wel, het zijn mensen die meestal inhoudelijk goed onderlegd zijn, die vaak ook hun standpunten en argumenten beter dan mening man hun standpunten gewoon naar voren kunnen brengen en daarnaast ook gewoon ontzettend goed gebruik maken van hun gevoel van omgeving waar ze opereren. En die functioneren minder vaak met oogkleppen op dan mannen doen dus in die zin. Dat zijn wel drie aspecten die ik herken. Altijd wel op ene of andere manier bij die dames. Dat hun vechtersmentaliteit niet te onderschatten valt.

Ja dames die daar komen die hebben meestal al een hele weg afgelegd en dat is iets, dat is ook een pre namelijk. Die hebben om daar te komen, dat kan ik niet ontkennen, vaak harder moeten knokken dan die kerels (Patrick Joosen, Bouwfonds).

⁸² Nou, ze hebben wel overeenkomsten. Overeenkomsten zijn dat ze over het algemeen een betekenisvoller leven willen leiden en dat ze dat niet alleen zien in het grootbrengen van kinderen maar dat zij betekenis en inhoud willen geven aan hun leven op een veelzijdiger manier dan alleen kinderen. Ze hebben vaak een gerichte belangstelling heb ik gemerkt. Ze zijn geïnteresseerd in een bepaald onderwerp en in dat onderwerp willen ze zich profileren, uitdiepen. Ze hebben meer ambitie, iets dat ik ambitie noem (Guus Eskens, CARE Nederland).

⁸³ We zijn een maatschappij die heel sterk leunt op ratio in alles. Je ziet ook dat we de crises die nu bij elkaar komen, de ecologische, de financiële, de economische whatever crisis nog meer. Maar die worden in belangrijke mate toch uiteindelijk veroorzaakt door dat wij denken in kwantiteit en in materie en in meer meer meer in plaats van in kwaliteit. En in gevoel.[...] We zitten in een tijdsgewricht, en dat gaat ons ook helpen, dat vrouwelijke of feminiene dat vooral dat gevoel over hoe we daar mee om moeten gaan, en dat het niet alleen gaat om kwantiteit gaat maar ook om de kwaliteit, in het leven (Eugene Grüter, DHV)

and the growth and maintenance of a certain level of prosperity if there are more women at the top in the business world. In addition you have the advantage that women look at the world differently. They have their own gender specific way of looking, I think” (Guus Eskens, CARE Nederland)⁸⁴. The different way of looking at this problem is with a more long-term vision rather than a temporary or quick solution, which is highly valued by the men in this research.

A second point of why men want more women in the top is because “in general, women are better in connecting than men because men put themselves in the front while women see the value more of the company or their team. This is at the same time their pitfall, that they do not make it to the chair they should be sitting in because men give a more open chase” (Eugene Grüter, DHV)⁸⁵. Women have, according to the men, a more social way of managing that places an emphasis on teamwork instead of their own accomplishments. “The problems of society have become of such a complex nature that collaboration has become essential. Within these collaborations, feminine traits fall into place and come to their blossom. Women tend to put the importance of the company before their own, working better in teams. This is indispensable for the mission statement of this company, collaborate internally. We want to put the focus of our company sustainable living environment. These are the facets that women can bring to the table” (Eugene Grüter, DHV)⁸⁶. Again, men have emphasized that women’s social leadership style combined with the different approach to problem solving gives them a big surplus value for becoming board members, CEO’s and Directors.

In brief, the women who made it to the top of the business world are truly good at their jobs, but the wished feminine characteristics as per the men, are still lacking. These are perceived as having a more long-term vision and emphasis on life quality. The second reason for the wish of more feminine traits in top positions is the teamwork qualities that women have and that they are better at connecting people.

Men’s general views on a quota in the Netherlands

Between the diverse men interviewed in this research are different views on the quota. Eugene Grüter articulates in favor of a quota: “One is scared for being an

⁸⁴ ik denk dat het beter is voor een economie en de stabiliteit van een economie en voor de groei en handhaving van een zeker welvaartsniveau dat er meer vrouwen in de top komen. Daarbij heb je natuurlijk het voordeel dat vrouwen kijken anders naar de wereld. Die hebben hun eigen gender specifieke blik, denk ik (Guus Eskens, CARE Nederland).

⁸⁵ Omdat ik, wat ik aangaf, over het algemeen, en dat is natuurlijk heel generiek, vrouwen beter vindt in het verbinden, dan mannen omdat mannen zichzelf meer op de voorgrond zetten terwijl vrouwen dat meer doen voor het team of bedrijf. Dat is ook hun pitfall dat ze soms niet op de stoel komen waar ze wellicht heel goed zouden passen omdat die man daar dan achteraan jaagt, dat openlijker doet (Eugene Grüter, DHV)

⁸⁶ De problemen waarmee we worden geconfronteerd in de maatschappij zijn zo complex geworden dat samenwerking onontbeerlijk is. En daar komen met name de meer feminiene eigenschappen heel uitdrukkelijk, komen die als een voorwaarde aan bod en dat zie je dus ook terug. Een vrouw heeft gemiddeld gesproken al is dat alleen al om het feit dat ze geen haan is, dus minder hanerig gedrag vertoont waardoor ze zich minder op de voorgrond werpt maar veel meer in het team als prestatie wil meerzetten en dat is onontbeerlijk, ook als we kijken naar missie van dit bedrijf dan staan we er toch voor om integraal daar ligt het woord team natuurlijk achter. Dat wij willen werken aan een meer duurzame leefomgeving. Dus het zijn voornamelijk die facetten die vrouwen kunnen bijdragen (Eugene Grüter, DHV).

Excuse Truus while others are happy because they got a chance due to the pressure of this subject. I think that things like the Norway quota and setting goals for yourself are smart and will help. You can royally influence behavior” (Eugene Grüter, DHV)⁸⁷. The arguments he uses follows the reasoning of Heleen Mees (2007) in the previous chapter; as a quota will help more women to the top, this will become more normal and visible, stimulating women to acquire a career.

The tendency for this to occur however swings the pendulum downwards. Not just in reference to how to implement a quota but the consequences for corporations as well. The thought that a quota can lead to a devaluation of CEO and Director functions within corporations in the Netherlands is feared.

“I have been a lot of times in Scandinavia in the period the quota got introduced, what happened there was that the definition of management got expanded. In the classical technical companies you have a direction of five; one is marketing which is a woman, marketing and communication. Another is Human resources which is a woman, and the boss and the operational manager are men and finances can be either. Realistically there were no qualified women in the talent pool in a technological company who met the criteria of twenty years of experience in the sector. Leaving the important question; if you are in an international group, should you lower the standard of operational manager? Or do we need a new form of leadership where we employ managers who do not know the technical trade? Which is normal in some sectors but viewed as inept in the technological sector. A quota is politics and I do not have an answer for the alternatives because doing nothing is not the solution either” (Henk Wesselo, Ordina)⁸⁸.

These devaluations are never in favor of a company nor for the status of the women who have to fill them. The horizontal segregation of CEO and director positions mentioned here by Henk Wesselo is exactly what Stellinga (2009) fears what would happen in the Netherlands if the government chooses to implement a quota, devalued ‘female’ top functions. Stellinga (2009) further suggests that none of the

⁸⁷ Ja een excuustruus, en anderen zeggen daarentegen, ik vind het helemaal niet erg want bijv. iemand die ik erover gesproken heb zit in de raad van bestuur bij ABN-AMRO Caroline Princen, die zegt, ik vind het fantastisch want juist omdat er nu zo’n druk op zit heb ik die kans gekregen. Toen was er een vacature was had ik lekker een streepje voor op al die mannen. Dat is toch fijn? Ik denk dat die quota’s zoals in Noorwegen (17) en jezelf doelen stellen die heel smart zijn, die helpen. Ik zie, je kunt daar het gedrag heel vorstelijk mee beïnvloeden (Eugene Grüter, DHV).

⁸⁸ Ik heb dat in Scandinavië veel gezien. A, in de jaren dat het quotum bestaat in Noorwegen, een jaar of acht, toen zwierf ik daar ook redelijk wat rond en het eerste wat daar gebeurde is dat de definitie van management wat verbreed is. (..) Wat je met name in bedrijven ziet dat je daar op een aantal in, nou goed, met name in de technologie sector, daar zie je klassiek wordt een directie vastgesteld op 4 mensen en dat is marketing, dat is een vrouw, marketing en communicatie. Dat is HR dat is een vrouw en dan is de baas, dat is een man en de operationeel manager, dat is ook een man. En finance hangt er dan tussenin. Dat is de wisselpost. Reëel gezien was daar niets aan talentpool binnen een technologiebedrijf aan vrouwen die, waarvan je zegt, die voldeden ook aan het normale profiel van 20 jaar ervaring in de sector. Onze belangrijke vraag, als je in een internationale groep zit en de wetgeving verandert; moeten we nu het profiel van operationeel manager veranderen? Uiteindelijk is dat de enige echte vraag: vind je dan ook dat er een ander soort leiderschap nodig is, of vind je dat je het heel goed kunt doen met managers die niet veel van het vak weten. Wat in sommige vakgebieden normaal is, maar in de technologie sector gemiddeld als onhandig wordt gezien. Maar goed, in die zin denk ik dat een quota, het is wel politiek. Ik heb niet een goed antwoord op het alternatief, want ik denk dat niets doen ook geen oplossing is (Henk Wesselo, Ordina).

men take, by arguing that a quota puts rules into place that will take away free will and deny the possibility that women want other things from and in life than what men do.

Patrick Joosen articulates the surplus value of the women who made it to the top without a quota. “Look, you got to want it and be alert but do not emphasize it to much or people will look right through it. That is the negative aspect of a quota, it can work against you. I think that the ladies who made it, are very self-conscious of the fight they had to get where they are, more so than the men which can be an immense asset. What does not kill you makes you stronger” (Patrick Joosen, Bouwfonds)⁸⁹. This surplus value will likely disappear if a quota becomes implemented.

To sum up the male opinion on a quota, yes because it increases the visibility of women at the top, and no because it leads to token women, a segregation of director positions and a devaluation of ‘female’ top functions. The majority of men are against a quota which by no definition means that they are against women in the top of even forming cartels to keep women away from top positions in Dutch business.

Changing culture, changing masculinities

Changes that are noticed within the higher regions of business are the expanding of what has been seen solely as masculine in the past. Part of this development is connected with the increased demand of feminine leadership qualities and the swift changes of the different generations, such as the baby-boomers who are slowly starting to leave the corporate arena. “If people are happy with the role division, fine by me but if you have a political lens or with the ambition of power, or doing a power analysis you notice that there are high numbers of men in crucial positions of power which cannot be done part-time. The same goes for politics and sciences and other vital positions are still dominated by men. You could say that we have learned from the emancipation process. We are aware of the fact that this is no longer taken for granted” (Jan Jaap Kleinrensink, Plan Nederland)⁹⁰. There is an awareness of the need for a gender balance in business by the men interviewed for this research, and that this gender balance has been influenced by Dutch culture and dictated by role patterns for both men and women.

Changes within the Dutch culture are often observed and mentioned during the interviews: “I’ve heard a story from my mother, more an anecdote; in Ede on the Veluwe where she grew up was a schoolteacher Mr. Jansen who’s wife was sick, we would call it chronically ill. This meant that Mr. Jansen took care of his wife, the household and walked behind the buggy. This was very unusual in the twenties and thirties for a man pushing a stroller so he got laughed at. Thankfully, if I might say so, we are that much advantaged that nobody with the right mind laughs anymore if they

⁸⁹ Kijk je moet het willen en alert op zijn maar als je te veel de nadruk op legt prikken mensen er zo doorheen. Dus dat is ook het negatieve van zo’n quotum. Als je er teveel de nadruk op legt dan werkt het tegen je. Dus ik denk dat dames die dat niveau bereiken hebben moeten zich ervan bewust zijn voor dat gevecht dat ze hebben moeten leveren, misschien meer nog dan die kerel, dat kan wel eens een heel groot voordeel zijn. Daar wordt je sterker van (Patrick Joosen, Bouwfonds).

⁹⁰ Als men er gelukkig mee is, oké. Als je er meer politiek naar kijkt, vanuit machtsdenken of vanuit een machtsanalyse dan kun je zeggen, dan is het toch nog in hoge mate zo dat mannen op cruciale machtsposities zitten. Die vaak ook moeilijk parttime in te vullen zijn. In de politiek maar ook op bepaalde plekken in de wetenschap (11) en noem maar op. Allerlei gezichtsbepalende posities in de samenleving dus is het nog steeds wel wat door mannen gedomineerd. Mannen zijn, we hebben denk ik ook wel iets geleerd door het emancipatie proces zou je kunnen zeggen. We zijn ons ervan bewust dat het niet allemaal vanzelfsprekend zo is (Jan Jaap Kleinrensink, Plan Nederland).

see a man pushing the baby buggy” (Jan Jaap Kleinrensink, Plan Nederland)⁹¹. These cultural changes apply pressure on the men as well: “My personal opinion is pure and simple, I hardly dare to speak out but if I’m honest I would say that one of the partners, I used to say the mother, but I can see now that men can have enough feminine qualities and understanding to fulfill the father/mother role for their children, I believe that that is possible” (Wim Hart, ICCO)⁹². Other effects of changing masculinities can be found within the changing corporate cultures.

The reason of these changes is contributed to the transformation of corporations because of the departing baby-boom. “I think that the Netherlands are a lot more tolerant than for example Belgium. Another factor that needs to be taken into account is the average age of a company. Younger people can cope easier with those changes than someone of an older generation, say people above fifty” (Pieter van Erp, PAT-KRÜGER Systems)⁹³. The younger generations work with different sets of rules compared to the previous ones. The male breadwinner and female caregiver pattern is no longer holy in the current generation. “Within the current generation, you see that some of the young men at Natuurmonumenten have different philosophies. You see that people are less connected with the organizations they work for. People work a couple of years for the same company and move on if something comes by what looks like more fun” (Fedde Koster, Natuurmonumenten)⁹⁴. The idea that men need to work full-time, make careers and become the sole providers for their families is slowly diminishing.

The current changes in role patterns lead to changes of masculinity in Dutch culture and corporate culture. “There are people here at planning and control who like it the way it is. Ambition of lack thereof has a lot to do with it. I believe that there are people who do not want to sacrifice everything, men also, who like it the way it is”

⁹¹ Ik weet van mijn moeder het verhaal, meer een anekdote daarover in Ede de Veluwe waar zij opgroeide daar was een onderwijzer, meester Jansen en die meester Jansen had een vrouw die ernstig ziek was. Langjarig, wat nu een chronisch zieke zou heten. En dat betekende dat Meester Jansen de zorgtaken deed en dat meester Jansen ook op staat met een kinderwagen liep. Maar dat was in de jaren twintig, dertig erg ongebruikelijk dat een man achter een kinderwagen liep. Die werd dus ook uitgelachen. Haha kijk die meester Jansen toch met een kinderwagen, belachelijk. Gelukkig, als ik dat normatief mag kleuren zijn we wel zo ver dat niemand het in zijn hoofd haalt om een man uit te lachen omdat hij achter een kinderwagen loopt (Jan Jaap Kleinrensink, Plan Nederland).

⁹² Nou kijk, als je mijn puur persoonlijke mening is een heel traditionele. Die durf je haast niet uit te spreken maar als ik heel eerlijk ben, ik geloof dat één van de partners, vroeger had ik gezegd de moeder, nu kan ik zien dat de vader kan dat ook zijn als hij genoeg feminiene aspecten hebben en snappen dat hij inderdaad de vader/moederrol een heel eind kan spelen voor zijn kinderen. En dat kan, dat geloof ik ook (Wim Hart, ICCO).

⁹³ Ja meer met het gevoel doen. Ik denk dat dat eh Nederland een stuk toleranter is als bijvoorbeeld België dat ehm als het bedrijf ik denk dat de gemiddelde leeftijd van het bedrijf meespeelt, dat wanneer je jongere mensen hebt die zullen daar absoluut makkelijker mee om gaan dan oudere mensen en oudere dan denk ik dat je boven de vijfen boven de vijftig moet om daar maar een nummer aan te geven. Ehm, ik denk dat dat in Engeland ook zo speelt. Ja ik denk dat dat het geval is (Pieter van Erp, PAT-KRÜGER Systems).

⁹⁴ Je ziet wel dat de huidige generatie, je ziet wel dat mannen, ten minste een aantal mannen bij natuurmonumenten, tenminste een aantal jonge mannen dat die anders in het leven staan of proberen te staan. Maar je ziet überhaupt dat mensen, vind ik, dat mensen aan de kant van verbonden zijn met organisaties en zo dat dat veel losser wordt. Mensen doen, mensen hebben ook zoiets van dat doe ik een paar jaar, en als wat voorbij komt ga ik wat anders doen en dat is ook anders dan een aantal jaar geleden (Fedde Koster, Natuurmonumenten).

(Fedde Koster, Natuurmonumenten)⁹⁵. To strive for a top business position as the holy grail of your working life is slowly diminishing for men.

“There are men at ICCO that work part-time but this is not what you would call a career oriented company. This is an altruistic work branch compared with my former accountancy job. That was a masculine profession where the inflow of women is steadily rising but there was no further upward mobility for these women. The glass ceiling is firmly into place within the accountancy branch where the up-or-out- principle rules the work floor. If I look at the younger, new colleagues who do go home at five where I steamed through until seven, saying sorry, I’ve got a wife and kids, where I was thinking that that is impossible, you have a deadline, customers etc. you have to stay. The generation that are in their thirties, they handle this better than I did” (Wim Hart, ICCO)⁹⁶.

Masculinities are changing both in the feminized companies and within the younger generation. Mostly these changes are welcomed and seen as an improvement of the formerly too rigid corporate cultures for both women and men. The changes the men propose to recruit more women in their companies, are the changes that they would welcome for their own companies as well as a liberation or even emancipation from the formerly unyielding masculine corporate cultures.

Conclusion: Key points and solutions of the glass ceiling debate according to these men

The question that was formulated for this research thesis was what would you recommend to recruit and retain more women in top positions within business in the Netherlands. This question was presented to a number of Business directors and CEO upon which variety of solutions were provided. Firstly the general consensus is that changes in corporate and Dutch culture will have the biggest impact on these changes.

“I have a brother and a sister and traditionally it is expected from my sister to help with birthday parties and other care giving tasks in the family. My generation, I am fifty, puts question marks at the naturalness of these processes but follow the older generation. The next generation, my children, go further than just questioning and do no longer accept these roles. So the idea that women have the care giving roles was natural for the previous

⁹⁵ er zijn mensen bij planning en control hier, die vinden het allemaal wel prima. Het heeft ook een beetje te maken met je ambitie volgens mij of je ambitie hebt of niet. En ik geloof wel dat er mensen zijn die er niet alles voor over hebben, ook mannen die er niet alles voor over hebben die vinden het wel goed zo ja (Fedde Koster, Natuurmonumenten).

⁹⁶ Er zijn hier veel mannen die parttime werken. Nu is dit sowieso een organisatie dat niet zozeer carrièregedreven medewerkers kent. Het is toch een beetje een onbaatzuchtige tak van sport. Maar in het vorige, die accountancy generatie, en account is dan toch wel een heel, was altijd een heel erg mannenberoep waarbij je steeds meer een instroom van vrouwen plaats vind. Maar absoluut geen doorstroom. Ik denk dat bij accountancy is wel waar het glazen plafond stevig aanwezig is. Maar wat ik ook bij mannen zag, het is een beetje het up or out principe die in de organisaties geldt, dat dus echt de jongere collega's hun leven en dan mijn leven daarop projecteerde die gaan nu wel om vijf uur naar huis terwijl ik gewoon nog zat door te kachelen tot half zeven. En die zeggen; vrouw kinderen, sorry. Moet nu weg. En dat ik echt dacht van dat kan toch niet, je hebt een klant en het moet af. Je moet blijven. Dus ik denk wel dat de generatie die ik nu de dertigers noem, dat ik wel eens dacht van zie je wel. Die doen dat beter dan ik dat gedaan heb (Wim Hart, ICCO).

generation, questioned in my generation, and contested in my children's generation. If this is the trend you can expect that this has consequences on the work floor as well. Is this going to create a new reality? I think so, but slowly because most of these processes are deeply embedded in cultural society" (Jan Jaap Kleinrensink, Plan Nederland)⁹⁷.

According to the interviewees, The item that needs the most change is corporate culture. The importance of corporate culture is evident when comparing the profit with the non-profit sector. Companies need to become more women friendly where possible. Men notice that, in the event where women have taken over specific branches, the corporate culture has changed. This counts for a critical mass of women in a company, not solely for its male/female division of top functions. "If you have more women within your company the corporate culture will change to one that I think will be better, more balanced in decision-making processes. I think it useful to work on that" (Guus Eskens, CARE Nederland)⁹⁸. Ronald van de Giessen who also started in the profit sector before transferring to the non-profit sector notices the differences between the two fields. "Being a junior and a young professional, my whole career was between other men. What I learned of this women's world is that the only way I can survive is by being very conservative. Asking five times if someone has something extra to add or say lets leave it with that and take it up next week. Use a soft approach and do not start with my own opinion and asking for comments, but take a different approach. That's what I learned. Things changed a lot for me, I love it here. I'm never scared that people won't listen because everybody had a say and agreed with the plans. This might be a bit slower but it creates support" (Ronald van der Giessen, Oranje Fonds)⁹⁹. The differences between the profit and the non-profit

⁹⁷ Ik kom uit een gezin (27) van drie kinderen 1 zus en 1 broer, dan is dat van oudsher zo en tot op de dag van vandaag dat de zus verwacht wordt dat ze komt opdraven om bij verjaardagen te helpen bedienen of om andere vrouwelijke zorgtaken om heel traditioneel te spreken uit te voeren. Mijn generatie, ik ben 50 bijna, zet daar vraagtekens bij van goh wat gek eigenlijk, maar we gaan er nog wel in mee want de voorgaande generatie vraagt dat eigenlijk. Ik denk dat het langzamerhand zo is dat de volgende generatie, mijn kinderen, niet meer als vanzelfsprekend accepteren en verder gaan dan alleen die vraag stellen maar het ook niet meer doen. Dus als je dat, die verwachtingen van oh vrouwen doen de zorgtaken wel, of niet, dat is bij de vorige generatie nog vanzelfsprekend bij de volgende generatie, deze generatie stelt vraagtekens en de volgende generatie is het al met de daad anders. Als dat de trend is die je zou kunnen schetsen dan zou je daar al uit verwachten dat dat ook consequenties heeft op de werkvloer uitpakt. Dat het in elk geval mannen en vrouwen collectief het niet vanzelfsprekend meer vinden dat de rollen zo verdeelt zijn zoals dat traditioneel was. Leidt dat dan ook tot een andere werkelijkheid? Nou dat misschien wel maar heel langzaam waarschijnlijk want er zijn nog allerlei ingesleten processen (Jan Jaap Kleinrensink, Plan Nederland)

⁹⁸ Ik denk wel dat je mee te maken hebt in de zin, zoals je zei, als je gelijk meer vrouwen hebt ga je toch meteen een andere cultuur ontstaan en ik denk dat dat wel beter is, evenwichtiger besluitvorming kan en zal plaatsvinden. Dat geloof ik wel. Dus ik geloof wel dat het zin heeft om daaraan te werken (Guus Eskens, CARE Nederland).

⁹⁹ Als junior en als jong zakelijk talent ben ik altijd tussen de mannen geweest. Ik heb hier wel geleerd in deze vrouwenomgeving dat de enige manier waarop ik hier kan overleven is door heel conservatief te zijn. Vijf keer de tafel rond te gaan met heb je nog iets toe te voegen, zullen we het eens zo bekijken, laten we het even liggen doen we het volgende week nog een keer. Een zachte benadering en niet eerst mijn eigen mening te geven om dan te vragen of er commentaar op is. Dat heb ik anders geleerd moet ik je zeggen. Voor mij is er wel wat veranderd ja. Ik heb het hier erg naar mijn zin. Ik hoef hier nooit bang te zijn dat er wel naar me geluisterd wordt maar dat het niet wordt uitgevoerd. Ik heb zoveel naar hun geluisterd en dan doen ze ook uiteindelijk wat we hebben afgesproken. Dat kan niet anders. Dat is de uitkomst van het proces. Het gaat misschien wel minder snel. Ik denk dat je daardoor veel meer draagvlak creëert (Ronald van der Giessen, Oranje Fonds)

sector as exemplified by Ronald van der Giessen shows the influence that changing corporate cultures has. The non-profit sector is usually seen as women-friendly because more women are employed and retained within this sector, and thus attracting more women to this sector.

“I think that companies could develop a whole new corporate culture. If it is an improvement, I do not know. It depends. It could go too far, tipping the scales to the other side changing all the advantages in disadvantages. There will be a shift in emphasis. How exactly I do not know because most women in leadership positions have a masculine leadership style. The women I know are straightforward but I think that a different culture will develop with more attention and understanding for mothers with children. That is why it is so important that we start moving in that direction now” (Guus Eskens, CARE Nederland)¹⁰⁰.

Corporate culture is changing, implementing the ‘new way of working’ and working project based. “We are going to a whole new way of working. More flexibility, project based and more challenging. You can see this in the new generation, a number of young men at Natuurmonumenten live by a different philosophy. You see that people are less bonded to the companies they work for, they take up tasks for just a few years” (Fedde Koster, Natuurmonumenten)¹⁰¹. As personal characteristics are more valued and not just sought after within the existing employees individuals will get more changes to work. This will greatly asset women as their specific characteristics are very suitable for project based working.

The second solution for the glass ceiling debate lies, according to the men, in the changing demands and skill sets of CEO’s and boards. Feminine qualities and their holistic views become more appreciated. “In my generation, and I am fifty-one, it was only natural that father had a career and not mother. That naturalness has slowly disappeared, making it more easy for women to gain a position, it is absolutely not done to not have this as a key point in a company. We used to be pushy about it to look good; now most companies really want it because of the benefits of a mixed leadership team” (Eugene Grüter, DHV)¹⁰². As diversity becomes more and more a

¹⁰⁰ Ik denk dat er een heel andere cultuur binnen bedrijven zou kunnen gaan ontstaan. Dat sluit ik zeker niet uit. Of dat een goede cultuur is weet ik ook niet. Dat hangt natuurlijk af, het kan zo ver doorslaan dat alle voordelen weer nadelen worden. Daar heb ik geen zicht op maar ik denk wel dat het anders wordt. Er worden accenten gelegd op andere dingen. Wat weet ik ook niet zo goed want leidinggevende vrouwen die ik ken hebben toch wel een redelijke mannelijke leiderschapsstijl van wat ik dan een beetje misschien is dat ook wel dat de vrouwen die ik ken zijn vrij rechttoe rechtaan maar ik denk wel dat er een andere cultuur zal ontstaan die leggen waarschijnlijk zullen ze meer aandacht en begrip hebben voor vrouwen die inderdaad met huis gezin kinderen zitten. Dat werkt wel door op de ene of andere manier. Vandaar is het wel belangrijk dat zo’n richting wordt ingeslagen. Als dadelijk 80 procent van de CEO’s vrouw zijn weet ik niet precies wat er gaat gebeuren (Guus Eskens, CARE Nederland).

¹⁰¹ we gaan naar een andere manier van werken. Meer flexibiliteit, meer uitdaging bieden, meer projectmatig. Je ziet wel dat de huidige generatie, je ziet wel dat mannen, ten minste een aantal mannen bij natuurmonumenten, tenminste een aantal jonge mannen dat die anders in het leven staan of proberen te staan. Maar je ziet überhaupt dat mensen, vind ik, dat mensen aan de kant van verbonden zijn met organisaties en zo dat dat veel losser wordt. Mensen doen, mensen hebben ook zoiets van dat doe ik een paar jaar (Fedde Koster, Natuurmonumenten).

¹⁰² Mijn generatie, ik ben 51, was er een meer vanzelfsprekendheid dat papa de carrière doorloopt en niet mama. En die vanzelfsprekendheid is gaandeweg verdampt, en dus kunnen ook vrouwen gemakkelijker hun positie verwerven, het is ook absoluut not done op dit moment om daar niet serieus mee bezig te zijn. Waar we misschien eerst heel erg hebben lopen drukken (8) en het misschien niet

high priority for companies to keep their social acceptance in our culture and their clients.

The third key solution that presented during the interviews is the notion that the glass ceiling is something that will dissolve by its own with time. Women are achieving better in schools, men are perfectly aware of that fact and the impact this will have in the years to come within the different corporations. This combined with the retirement of the baby-boom which will create a shortage of skilled people on the labor market giving plenty of room for women to rise in the corporate ranks. “You have an advantage in the future; there is a labor shortage and the need for more feminine qualities. It is just a matter of time, because a huge generation, the baby boom, are going to retire in the next five years, it has become normal for women to work” (Fedde Koster, Natuurmonumenten)¹⁰³. Due to the changing circumstances of our society and the changing (corporate) cultures, the men interviewed believe that the glass ceiling will become a non-problem within the coming decade. “I really think that you (women) are coming. Quota or no quota. I think that is what will be happening in the near future. The demography and educational level will start counting more and more. There is a shrinkage of highly educated labor supply so women will be more and more needed. You better deal with it!” (Fedde Koster, Natuurmonumenten)¹⁰⁴. It might not be in every segment but it is already happening in education, advocacy, and the medical specialists and in the non-profit sector.

When the above mentioned events are set into motion, women in top positions will become a natural sight. “I think that it is a growth process that when more women get in higher positions, they will be taken for granted. If more and more women become available for high positions it will become natural” (Pieter van Erp, PAT-KRÜGER Systems)¹⁰⁵. This is reinforced by Jan Jaap Kleinrensink as he evaluates a question he was asked during one of his first job interviews:

“During a job interview the question was asked if I would find it difficult to have a female manager. I thought it to be a peculiar question because all that mattered to me is competence in his or her field not their gender. I understood the question but thought is strange. It invites to give politically correct answers; like that it does not matter to you, but does it? That way it is a good

altijd van harte ging of authentiek gemeend was, omdat het bonton was om erover te praten, constateer ik dat steeds meer bedrijven het ook daadwerkelijk willen (Eugene Grüter, DHV).

¹⁰³ Het begint toch met de, ja, jullie zijn gewoon in het voordeel de komende tijd. Ik heb één element nog niet genoemd. Er is een tekort op de arbeidsmarkt. Er is behoefte aan meer vrouwelijke eigenschappen. Het is gewoon een kwestie van tijd dat dit gaat gebeuren. Ik denk inmiddels wel dat dit palet van, als ik gewoon kijk naar, er stroomt nu een grote generatie richting pensioen en VUT, of VUT, dat bestaat niet meer, richting pensioen, de babyboom. Die gaan zich ook met zorg bemoeien, of die worden gevraagd om zorg te leveren zal ik maar zeggen. Dat is gewoner dan 20/30 jaar geleden dan de laatste tijd, nu dat vrouwen ook gewoon gaan werken (Fedde Koster, Natuurmonumenten).

¹⁰⁴ Ik denk echt dat jullie eraan komen. Quota of geen quota. Ik denk dat dat gaat gebeuren de komende tijd. De demografie en het opleidingsniveau dat gaat zijn weg vinden. Dat gaat gewoon, hier en daar duurt het wat langer maar dat gaat gewoon gebeuren. Ik denk ook wel dat dat, tenzij je hele grote restauratiegedachtes krijgt, terug achter het aanrecht of zo. Maar volgens mij gaat dat gewoon niet meer gebeuren. We hebben een shrinking, het arbeidspotentieel vermindert gewoon. Jullie zijn hard genoeg nodig, hebben het goed opleidingsniveau. You better deal with it (Fedde Koster, Natuurmonumenten).

¹⁰⁵ Ik denk dat het een groeiproces is en dat als er op meer plaatsen meer dames komen dat zoiets eigenlijk vanzelf geaccepteerd wordt. En ook aan gedacht wordt. Als er meer beschikbaar zouden komen dan zie je ze meer op bepaalde plaatsen komen en wordt het dan ook gewoon gemeengoed (Pieter van Erp, PAT-KRÜGER Systems).

question to see how people react, what their thought processes are and how they answer it. Nobody would ask that question nowadays, I think because competence is more important than gender. Things have changed it that matter or are slowly changing. There is this impatience on these transitions that need to take place to end up with this ideal goal we want to reach. There are relatively few female leaders. One of the causes could be that men do not allow women to become leaders, I do not think that his is the main problem but it could be. It is easy to blame women themselves, save for the fact that they do have a shared part in the current situation. Society as a whole is influenced by norms and expectations who all play their parts” (Jan Jaap Kleinrensink, Plan Nederland)¹⁰⁶.

As demonstrated by Jan Jaap Kleinrensink, men are a lot more positive on the influx of women in the higher regions of corporate culture when compared to feminine views such as Marike Stellinga, Heleen Mees and Roos Wouters. The main differences lay firstly in that the men view the problems of the glass ceiling on a long term scale that will dissolve on its own due to changes in corporate culture and the gender balance in the workforce. This means that there are more and more qualified women available to fill leading positions, especially when the baby-boomers start to retire in the next five years.

Secondly, the men acknowledge that role patterns and expectations of men and women are changing due to feminism and emancipation, while Mees and Wouters are just pointing out that change is needed. Stellinga’s theory is followed by the men in saying that women already have the freedom to choose and that Dutch men are changing as well in comparison with their Western peers.

Thirdly, where the women conceive the Dutch role patterns as solid and rigid, the men mostly perceive them as changing. This gives room to the view that change is already taking place instead of the view that change is needed and almost impossible to employ.

Fourthly, men implement different ideas about discrimination into the debate. This is noticeably missing within the current Dutch discourse of the glass ceiling. A more intersectional level of discrimination is in place at the top of companies. Not just the male/female dichotomy but age and masculine/feminine traits as well. It is not just

¹⁰⁶ Ik herinner mij toen ik, mijn eerste baan na mijn studie werd er tijdens het sollicitatiegesprek de vraag gesteld of ik het moeilijk zou vinden om leiding te krijgen van een vrouw. Ik vond dat toen al een beetje een wonderlijke vraag ja, voor mij is bepalend of een leidinggevende competent is en beschikt over een aantal, deskundig is en goed is in zijn vak, zijn of haar vak, en niet het gender issue. Ik snapte de vraag natuurlijk wel maar ik vond hem een beetje vreemd. Ik zou nog steeds, het nodigt ook uit tot politiek correcte antwoorden namelijk dat je dat allemaal niet uitmaakt. Is het dan ook echt zo? Dus in die zin is het best een aardige vraag omdat je ook kan zien hoe eerlijk iemand antwoordt en ook wat voor een soort afweging daaraan ten grondslag ligt wat voor een soort argumenten er dan komen. Ik zou daar geloof vandaag de dag niet meer zo gauw die vraag stellen. Omdat ik, misschien omdat ik het wel vanzelfsprekend vind dat dat meer met geschiktheid te maken heeft dan met gender. Maar er is denk ik wel wat in veranderd. Maar dat gaat heel langzaam. Er zit ook wel een, in het echt hebben we een soort ongeduld dat die veranderingen moeten plaatsvinden, willen toe naar een soort ideaal einddoel en dat ligt nog zo ver weg. Er zijn nog relatief (26) weinig vrouwelijke leidinggevendenden. Het zou kunnen zijn dat het een oorzaak is dat mannen dat hen niet toestaan. Of dat onprettig vinden. Ik heb niet de indruk dat aan dat eind de voornaamste knelpunt zit maar het zou kunnen. Dan zou je dat daar iets aan moeten doen. Het is natuurlijk te makkelijk om te zeggen, het ligt aan de vrouwen zelf. Ongetwijfeld hebben die ook een aandeel in het geheel. De situatie waar wij allemaal deel van uitmaken, de hele samenleving leven bepaalde normen en verwachtingen in die allemaal een rol spelen (Jan Jaap Kleinrensink, Plan Nederland).

the women who get discriminated but everyone who does not comply with the white middle-aged Anglo-Saxon male vision of a director.

The final solution can be found in the differences between the male view and the current Dutch discourse. The three Dutch popular scientific books all use a distinct 'us versus them' language; men are against women, different groups of women oppose to other groups of women. The interviewed men receive the glass ceiling as a problem that lies with all groups and needs a common solution, namely a change of Dutch (corporate) culture to a more gender equal culture.

Conclusion

Rationale of research

The rationale of this research started with the question: Can we renew or implement dialogue and change to the glass ceiling debate if we would start to implement the insights, opinions and beliefs of men? The rationale behind this thesis lies with women being depicted as having a problem that prevents them from reaching the top of the business world. Furthermore, this thesis has aimed to examine the different views on the glass ceiling debate by interviewing nine male Directors and CEO's. This has been achieved by combining masculine views with the current feminist debate in order to formulate and offer new solutions. The research question that was formulated is:

To what extent can one speak of a mutual influence between the now changing ideas of masculinities and the debate about the glass ceiling in the Netherlands?

In order to answer this question a cross combined discourse analysis of the glass ceiling debate in the Netherlands and a discourse analysis of the viewpoint of men on that topic was employed.

In reviewing the Dutch discourse analysis of the debate, three Dutch popular scientific books on the glass ceiling were analyzed in order to fill the gaps in the Dutch glass ceiling debate. Furthermore masculinity studies in this feminist research were implemented through the use of nine male Directors and CEO's; from both the male dominated profit sector and the non-profit sector. This qualitative research project can be viewed as the first attempt of integrating the Dutch feminist discourse that incorporates a masculine view on the glass ceiling debate in the Netherlands. The inclusion of masculine insights and views, not covered in literature, has contributed more to my understandings of feminist causes of the preceding five years on the public glass ceiling debate.

Research results

Roos Wouters, Heleen Mees and Marike Stellinga all contribute to the current popular scientific Dutch glass ceiling debate, and they are all, yet in diverse ways, feminists. Heleen Mees argues that women need to work fulltime in order to become economically independent and emancipated. Marike Stellinga argues that the glass ceiling debate does not exist in the Netherlands because women have the right and the freedom to choose what they want, not in the least thanks to Dutch men. She further argues that the rift between feminisms is the problem for women who want to have top functions. Roos Wouters argues for *femanism*, where both men and women fight against their gender specific discriminations. All three authors agree that there is something wrong within contemporary Dutch society and with contemporary Dutch feminism, although the solutions are found in different places. There are differences in the way they handle the glass ceiling as well. Marike Stellinga argues that the glass ceiling debate does not exist in contemporary Dutch culture, Heleen Mees blames the masculine corporate culture and Roos Wouters blames the way Dutch culture is constructed though the use of rigid role patterns that restrict both women and men. What is engaging is that from reviewing the literature, three of the authors have stopped blaming women, and have started blaming *feminism*.

Dutch feminism may be perceived as bringing about a sour taste to society. Women have openly proclaimed that they are not feminists even if they openly proclaim feminist views. All the fighting amongst women has not helped the feminist cause, as it is no longer popular to be a feminist in the Netherlands. We need to fight for a common cause, just like the women of the first feminist wave of suffrage did when they fought for voting rights for all women, and what the second feminist wave did with 'equal value equal pay' and 'the personal is political'. The current debate is quite polarized in the Netherlands leaving Dutch feminism without a common cause or course of action. The interactions between the key players of the debate has become circular without new insights or success stories. Publications are partly reactions and disagreements to other popular scientific authors whose ideas are vied as a mockery. The dichotomy within the glass ceiling debate – one between women and men on the one hand and between different groups of women on the other – does not help in finding a solution. This research is a challenge to the hold that the glass ceiling debate has on the Netherlands, and supports a common cause for both women and men in order to mobilize a this new third wave of feminism.

As a result of the current research, the glass ceiling discourse in the Netherlands lacks some insight. Firstly there is no discourse of other types of discrimination within the Dutch debate. An intersectional view of types of discrimination cannot be found in any of the three books nor does it mention the multi-layeredness of intersectionality. Intersectionality can easily be implemented in the current debate with for example the Norway quota for women. Here you can argue that when you start implementing quota for women, other minorities as ethnicity, sexuality, religion and age are in need of a quota as well.

Further, what is missing from the literature is the reason for the second discourse analysis of this thesis, is that although men make out a large part of the reasoning of Heleen Mees, Roos Wouters and Marike Stellinga, they aren't asked to speak up. The masculine view is lacking in this debate. This is where masculinity studies and men's interpretations and ideas contribute to the debate. Most of the nine men that I interviewed see the glass ceiling and the debate around it as a problem of the current time and phase of this culture, which is actually changing rapidly. Women's roles, in and out the house are already rapidly changing and the concept of the stay-at-home mother and working father as depicted in the fifties is no longer the natural evolvement of the modern nuclear family. There are other possibilities now, not just for women but for men as well. Going to work is no longer just a means to earn a living and support a family. Work is something where you go to in order to further develop yourself and find meaning in your life, but not at any cost. There is attention for the work-life balance of both partners.

If you make a comparison between my generation and the previous one you see the differences: my generation goes to university because we can and because we want to go. I never did it for feminist reasons but because it was the next logical step in my education. Nobody ever told me I could not do it because I am a woman. The early 1960s concept that it was not normal for girls to get education, go to the university or even getting physics degrees was alien to me until I stumbled into gender studies. It is this normalcy and naturalness that the men pinpoint during the interviews in regards to the changes that is currently happening within Dutch (corporate) culture.

Also during the interviews, it became clear that comparatively men think differently to women about the concept of the glass ceiling. It is already acknowledged that women do better at education and university levels. As a result,

men view women as the great talent pool for future leadership functions at the top of business. And according to the men, that future is very near. Say the next ten years after the exodus of the male baby-boom generation from the CEO rooms and boards. Due to the rapid graying in the work force there will be a rising labor demand. In order to fill those gaps, employers will turn to the female talent pool. In order to employ these women, the things that women find important in jobs will be offered more, seducing more women to work fulltime and in higher functions. This is not just because there are more women available but the men of the next generation have grown up with the notion that their female friends, colleagues, sisters and daughters are as equally competent, inventive and qualified as themselves. Denying women to work in high functioning jobs, or at the top of the business world, considering the ageing population, is not an option if you want your company to remain successful.

During the interviews a multitude of issues were conveyed as to what they conceive to be the main obstacles for women in their pursuit of reaching the top. Firstly, career women often have side careers to keep them busy and their minds of their goals. Secondly the men have experienced a lot of debate going on between the different groups of women. The rift between the different views within Dutch feminism is something that they see as a great hindrance for women who want to reach the top. What needs to change according to the interviewees is firstly the corporate culture. It needs to become more women friendly, for example the non-profit sector. Men notice that in the event where women are already directing specific branches the culture changes as well.

An important component of the corporate culture is the rules for career development, this is important for both women and men. Managerial qualities are seen as masculine qualities. This is pinpointed by the fact that most female leaders are being described as masculine and that feminine men have, just as most women, difficulties to reach the top. Although men at the top say that they want more people at the top with these feminine qualities, the selection is based on its male equivalent, with the exception of some non-profit companies because their corporate culture suits the feminine leadership style.

Finally, there is the idea that the glass ceiling is something that will dissolve or broken down on its own. Women are performing better at school, and men are perfectly aware of the impact this has in a few years time amongst the different corporations. This combined with the retirement of the baby-boom which will create a shortage of skilled people on the labor market giving plenty of room for women to rise in the corporate ranks. However men are on the whole a lot more positive on the influx of women in the higher regions of corporate culture.

Recommendations

In concluding this thesis, I would like to make some recommendations that can be made for the different groups involved. For companies: Firstly it is imperative to create career development opportunities that are not combined with managerial functions. For example the function of advisory experts could be separated from a manager function instead of combining these jobs. Some employees have vast amounts of knowledge but do not want the additional responsibilities of managing a department of the company. Secondly, if companies want to change corporate culture, it is imperative to start with creating awareness and raising of the covert discrimination of women, and other minority groups. This assists women to express competencies and desired goals, to the men in a company.

Recommendations for Dutch policy makers: It is vital not to implement a quota for the number of women that should be part of a board or CEO of a company. Firstly it unreasonable to demand to have thirty percent of women at the top of companies if only twenty-five percent of women work fulltime. Furthermore this can lead to devaluation of certain top positions which weakens the overall positions and rankings women at the top. Most importantly this further creates token female leaders who, if they fail, may further complicate the matter for other women who aspire a top function.

Recommendations for further research: Further research is required into what the Dutch government can implement besides employing a quota to encourage more women to the top positions. Further research is also required that examines the level below the top position to find the differences in the workplace between male and female managers and what the possible advantages and disadvantages are for more heterogeneity. Furthermore to use this research to compare the Dutch discourse with other Western countries to find out the exact influences from the Dutch 1.5 income model and what can be seen as the more general of patriarchal reasoning for the glass ceiling.

My last recommendation is for both women and men: Start labeling yourself as proud feminists!

Appendix 1: Topic list interviews

Are you familiar with the term ‘the glass ceiling’?

What do you know about it?

What do you think about it?

What do you know about the glass ceiling debate in the Netherlands?

Do you perceive it as a problem? Why?

What do you see as possible solutions?

Is this an issue within the board of directors?

Imagine that 85% of the people on the top of business are women, do you recognize that a certain type of women who will be successful and reach to the top?

Have young men/ fathers the same/different problems?

Do you notice differences in generations?

How do you combine work and family?

If there is something that needs to be changed what would that be?

- Men
- Women
- Politics
- Companies
- Education
- Culture

Do you have anything to add?

Did I miss something?

Can I mention your name and company in my thesis?

Can I contact you by e-mail for possible further questions?

Thank you for participating in this interview.

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