

# Through the Labyrinth: Women as Leaders

Alice Eagly

First Arab Women in Leadership Forum

Dubai, January 13, 2009

Wrong



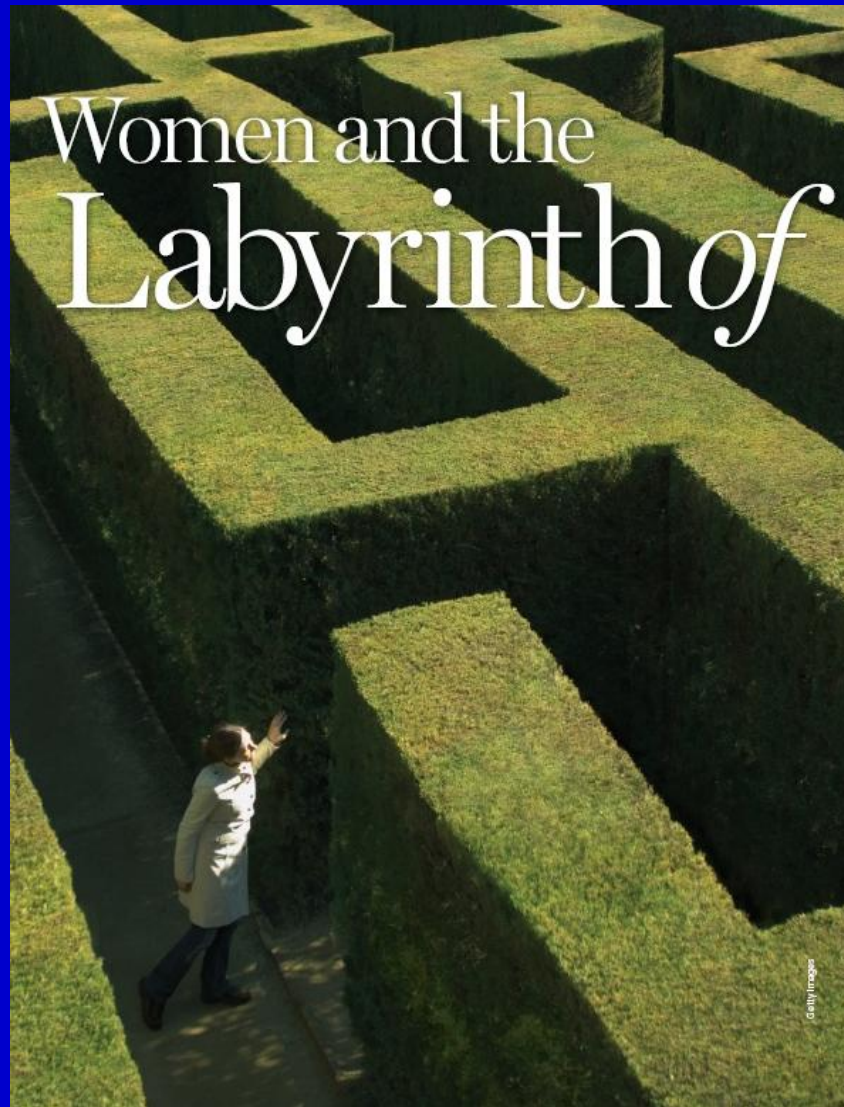
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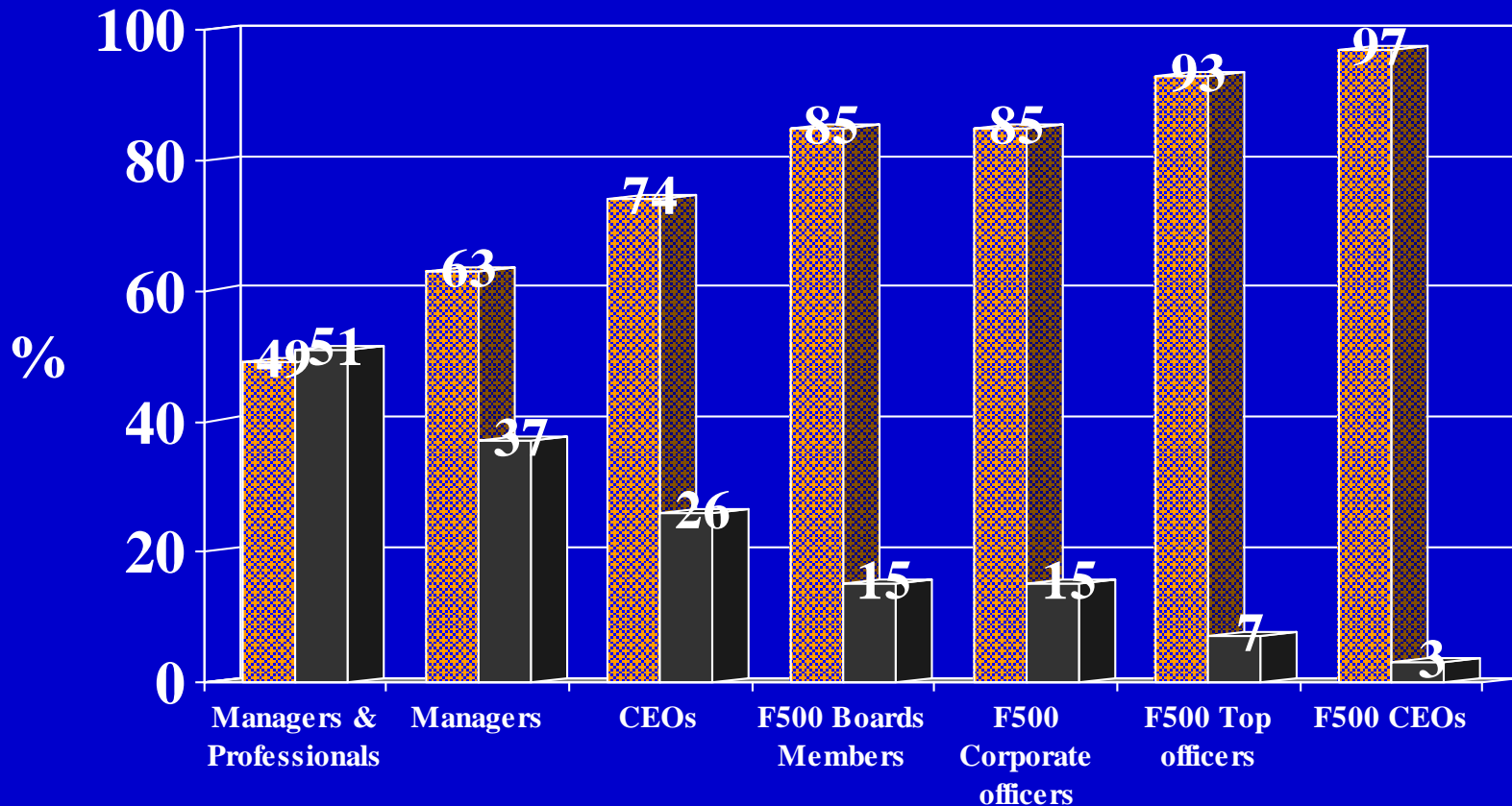


Women and the  
Labyrinth *of*

Better

Metaphor

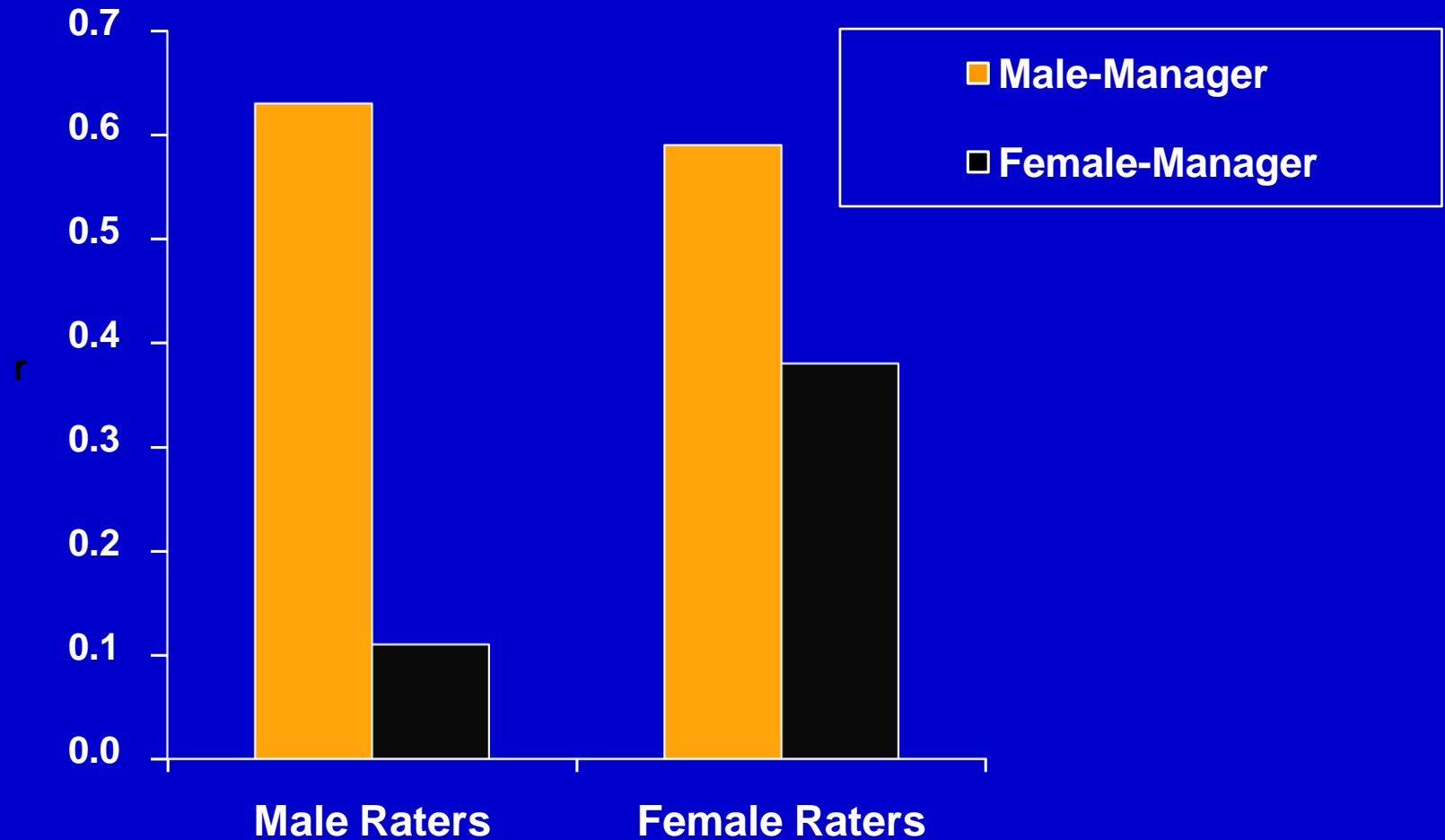
# Organizational Leadership in USA, 2007



# Why the Loss of Women at Higher Levels?

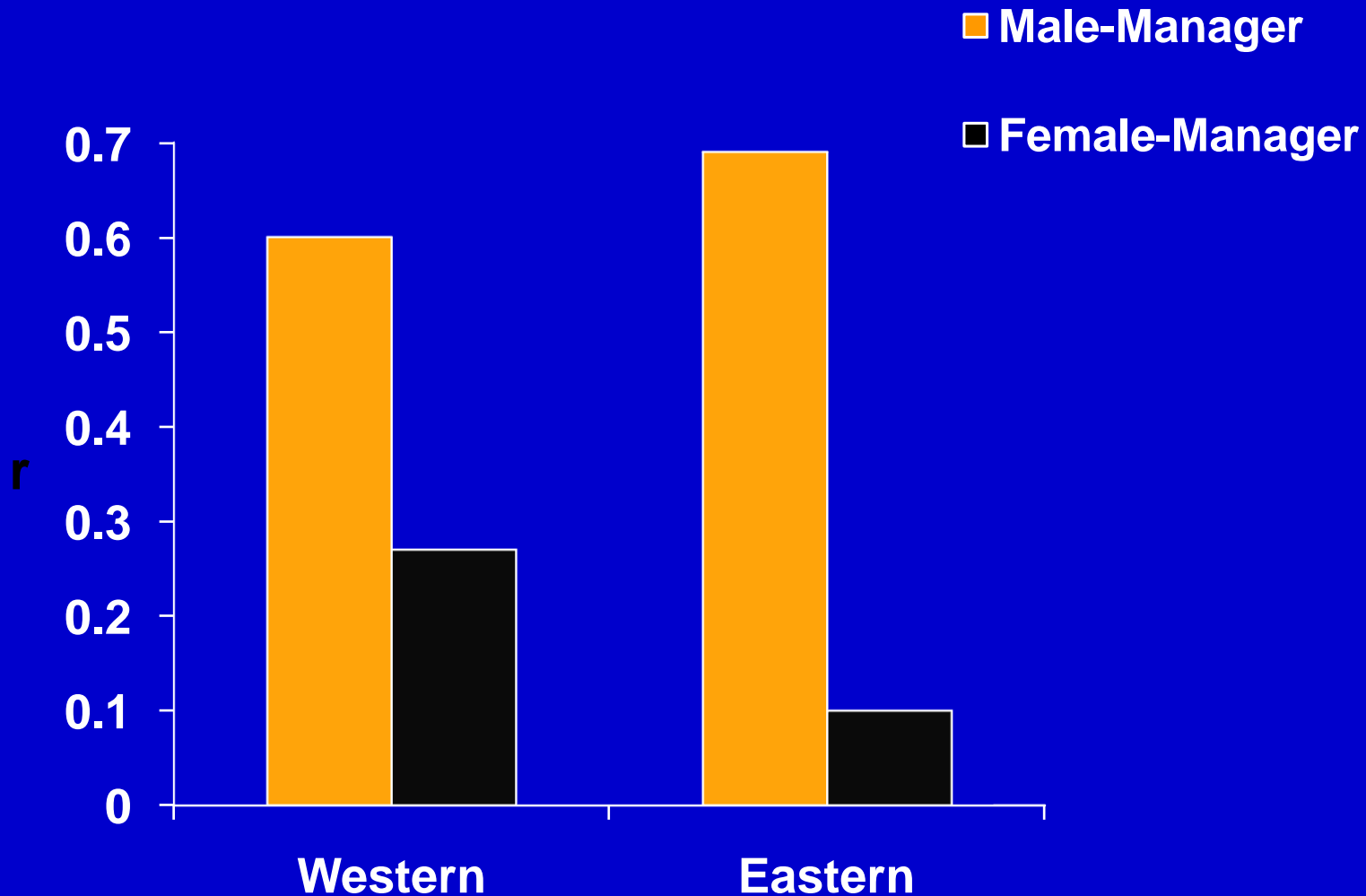
- One reason: A cultural barrier in stereotypes of women as “communal” and men as “agentic”
  - Leaders regarded as more agentic than communal, especially at high levels
- Incongruity (or “lack of fit”) of women in relation to many leader roles
  - Proof: “Think manager—Think male” experiments

# “Think-Manager—Think Male” Findings in Eagly et al. Meta-Analysis



Based on 50 samples

# “Think Manager-Think Male” Findings by Region



# Gradual Waning of This Prejudice

- Weakening of “think manager—think male”
- U. S. Polls show lessening in preference for having a male “boss”
- Women becoming more plausible & acceptable as leaders
- Simultaneously leadership has changed

# What Is Good Leadership Now?

- Contemporary “good managerial practices” in many contexts emphasize
  - inspiring, role modeling, team-building, motivating, stimulating creativity, developing others’ skill, collaborating
- Less culturally masculine than earlier “command & control” models
- Reflects modern organizational environment

# Example of Contemporary Leadership



*We have teams of people, creative people, and it is about keeping them motivated, keeping them on track, making sure that they are following the vision. I am observing, watching and encouraging and motivating . . . . We try to set an agenda throughout the company where everyone's opinion counts, and it's nice to be asked.*

Rose Marie Bravo  
Then-CEO, Burberry Group

# Research on Leadership Style

- Contemporary style labeled “*transformational leadership*” & assessed in many studies
  - Studies attest to its overall effectiveness
- Eagly, Van Engen, & Johannensen-Schmidt (2003) compared women & men in meta-analysis of 45 studies of managers from primarily Western nations
  - Female leaders somewhat more transformational than male leaders
  - Male leaders higher on than female leaders on other, less effective leader behaviors

# Reasons for Optimism about Women as Leaders

- Leadership is changing away from traditional “command & control” to transformational model
  - Women, somewhat more than men, lead in this contemporary style
- Women’s gains include now seeming more appropriate as leaders: Cultural barrier is weakening
  - Choosing woman leader can seem to be progressive & modern
  - Women can enhance organizations’ effectiveness