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„The Shard" – one possible model of discrimination of women

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Abstract

It is almost a cliché in social sciences today to do gender research. Researchers did exhaustive investigations about the gender wage gap, career, and developmental prospects. The available data about women's progress (or rather the lack of it) at the workplace is overwhelming, but these are mostly descriptive. Though these presented a comprehensive picture of the phenomenon, they did not provide the reasons for discrimination, only clarified the symptoms. Our article aims to create a new framework utilizing existing data. We suggest a new model that has explanatory value and attempt to present the reasons for the treatment of women. Our theoretical model focuses on decision-making. Our conclusion is – based on prototype heuristics and bounded rationality – that four factors influence decision-making about women in the workplace: cognitive development of the individual, societal expectations, power demands, and accessible data in the environment. Exploring these can contribute to the improvement of women progressing to higher-level jobs by uncovering the reasons for discrimination.

Keywords: discrimination, psychological factors in people's judgment, decision theory

Introduction

Our paper discusses a generally well-known and exceptionally well-researched phenomenon: discrimination against women. Not only the layperson but also social sciences researchers could pose the question: why is this particular issue was not eradicated a long time ago? Observing professional literature and even the popular press shows that the problem is still significant and does not decrease. On the contrary, it demonstrates novel features in the 21st century. Research highlights new and unexpected issues that prove the importance and growing impact of the phenomenon, it had changed its appearance, but the essence is the same. We aimed to discover the reasons for discrimination against women. There is a wealth of evidence proving its existence. No one can debate the presence of the gender wage gap, the low participation of women at high levels of management, or the preferential treatment of men when training for leadership potential (for example, Blau, Kahn, 2016, Devillard, et al. 2018.). So far, research had identified numerous relevant decisive factors, but they are not convincing enough to provide a general and indisputable cause of discrimination.

The article offers a new model and approaches the discrimination phenomenon using results from the psychology of decision-making. The core outcome of our research is the new approach that puts the decision to the center of the model of discrimination. According to the model, four main factors are influencing the decision-maker, who is boundedly rational and employs statistical discrimination:

- the cognitive development of the individual
- societal expectations and customs
- expectations and rules of power
- available data in the environment.

In the first part of the article, we analyze discrimination as a phenomenon and use human resource management tools as a basis of analysis. We look at bias in staffing, talent management, remuneration, and examine equal employment opportunities. After that, we explore possible forms and causes of discrimination and link it to decision-making. The most important result is in the final part of the paper, where we explain the elements of our new model. We close the article with the conclusions.

The research question is: What are the decision-making mechanisms that leaders use in the workplace evaluating their female colleagues?

Discrimination as a phenomenon

In Human Resource Management textbooks, authors dedicate separate chapters to the different ways of discrimination. The action: "discrimination," according to Mathis and Jackson (2011) in itself, is not an objectionable act. It is: "recognizing differences among items or people." (Mathis, Jackson, 2011). We "discriminate" between our colleagues based on education, abilities, skills, tenacity, endurance. Unlawful discrimination happens when we do this based on illegal criteria such as treating members of protected groups differently. We may use rules that are irrelevant for work (such as sexual orientation or national origin). There are several bases of illegal discrimination, for example, gender, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, pregnancy, or children in the family (Torrington et al., 2013).

There are different approaches to handling this issue in other countries; legal systems regulate equal opportunities in various ways. In Europe, the directives of the European Union forbid every means of discrimination (European Court of Human Rights, 2010). There are anti-discrimination laws in Australia, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, India, Hong-Kong, Israel,

New Zealand, South Africa, the USA, and Japan. There are countries, though, where the L&E Global Knowledge Center (2018) does not mention these laws such as Saudi – Arabia and Turkey. There are characteristic forms of discrimination in the labor market against employees. Here, we are looking at how female employees are affected and how this situation had changed in the 21st century. We also investigate what could be the root causes of this issue to set up a theoretical model.

There is a wealth of research about different – unfavorable treatment of women at the workplace (Schirle, 2015; Abraham, 2017; Eagly, Carli, 2007). These researches are all based on proved statistical data; there is no question about inequity. Their value is undebated, they uncover and highlight issues and help women assert their rights, and employers to take measures against discrimination.

We examined the unfair treatment of women using instruments of Human Resource Management. HRM has data about employees, we used these for introducing an analytical framework.

Based on Mathis and Jackson (2011), one may regard the process of HRM in the workplace as a circular set of actions. The following activities are crucial to HRM:
- staffing
- talent management
- remuneration
- equal employment opportunities
- employee relations
- strategy

In four of these functions, we can find proved and documented differential treatment against women. These four are staffing, talent management, remuneration, and ensuring equal employment opportunities. In the following section, we demonstrate the existence of unfavorable practices only as an illustration of our argument: that discrimination still exists. We did not intend to be exhaustive or provide a comprehensive picture of this issue. These examples are only for proof of discrimination. There is an overwhelming number of analyses that give wide-ranging expert consideration of the case; the aim of our article is different. We are looking for a reason for the phenomenon and not an illustration of it.

Discrimination in staffing

Arrow established already in 1973 that discrimination is present at the first steps of employment; at the hiring process. When a company uses discrimination in hiring, it ascribes positive or negative values to specific characteristics. In this case, these attributes might have no relationship at all to the person's productivity. Kübler et al. (2018) examined hiring in Germany. They found that at the evaluation of resumes, men got much better appraisals than women even when they were starting their careers, so the possible worse GPA results of men played no role in getting a job. They chose career entrants because here, experience and recent data about productivity did not influence employers.

In Hungary, Katalin Koncz analyzed the situation of women in the labor market in several articles. It is interesting to see that even in Central Eastern Europe, similar tendencies are prevalent like in the West. However, the rhetoric of the previous political and economic system intensely emphasized female-male equality in all walks of life. The intensifying competition in the labor market brought unfavorable consequences for women. Koncz found: when some jobs are populated mostly by women, these jobs are at the low end of the employment hierarchy. These jobs carried less appreciation and are paid worse than those at the top (Koncz, 2004). Karoliny and Galambosné (2014) examined a similar issue in HRM. They found that although

in the 21st century, three-quarters of employees were women in HRM departments, leaders of these departments were predominantly men.

Discrimination in talent management

Women experience a lack of equal opportunities already at the beginning of their careers. Some recent examples: Tokyo Medical University deliberately marked down the exam scores of female applicants over more than a decade (and increased men's results) to prevent them from gaining entrance to the university. They claimed that when female doctors start a family, they will cause a shortage of trained medical personnel in hospitals. This practice came into the open in August 2018 (McCurry, 2018). University leaders apologized and promised to stop this custom.

Women cannot become leaders for the reason that the upper echelons are closed before them but also because they start their career with a considerable handicap. This disadvantage does not decrease with their career progress; on the contrary, it increases (Devillard et al. 2018).

Fernandez and Campero (2017) emphasize that the reason for the lack of women in the talent pipeline is the hiring of less number of female employees. Although the demand side is open now at the labor market for women, the supply side has its imbalances. They suggest starting talent management efforts before hiring starts to create the possibility of a balanced gender ratio.

Discrimination in remuneration

The gender wage gap is a well-researched phenomenon. Here we show only the results of some recent research. Blau and Kahn analyzed in 2016 the trends between 1980 and 2010. They examined the effect of psychological characteristics (such as personality) and non-cognitive skills. They found that they account only for a small or moderate portion of pay differences (Blau, Kahn, 2016).

Abendroth et al. (2017) report research done in Germany, where the subject of their study was how the gender differences of those who are in power influence pay differences between men and women. They looked at the gender of the decision-maker and the subject of the decision. Results showed that men favor men to women, but women do not prefer women. It is interesting to see that women supported men, and they did not promote or paid more to their female colleagues. The authors found personal reasons for these factors, such as jealousy, lack of self-confidence, lack of self-awareness, and the fear that the promoted women can take away the promoter's job in the future.

In recent years, lots of papers discussed the question of whether the creation of a formalized wage system would help in reducing the gender–wage gap. Abraham's (2017) research concluded that even formalized wage systems favor men because men and women use these systems differently. Women are less prone to support women when giving remuneration, which is the converse case with men; they do favor men in these situations.

Exploratory research was done in 2018 at Georgetown University about the gender wage gap in the 21st century. In the USA, for every dollar, a man makes, a woman gets 81 cents. If we rule out the facts that: women work in occupations that pay worse, they have less experience, worse union situation, or less education (and take racial discrimination into account); still, 41% of the gender wage gap is unexplained. If social scientists account for all measurable employment factors that could legitimately explain the wage differences, women's wages are still only 92% of men's wages. The authors of the paper "Women Can't Win" advise women

to achieve a higher educational level than a man (in the same position) to obtain the same salary as the man. Research proved that women with graduate degrees earn as much as men with bachelor's degrees. (Carneval, Smith, Gulish, 2018).

Statistics prove the gender wage gap in OECD countries (OECD, 2017); the average difference was 13,8%, the lowest in Romania, the highest in South-Korea: 34,6%. In Hungary, it is 9,4%, according to the 2016 OECD data.

It is difficult to explain how the wage differences can coexist with the laws that explicitly forbid discrimination, where equal pay is a definite requirement. In the USA, the Equal Pay Act of 1963 (Mathis, Jackson, 2011), or in Hungary 12. §. of the Labor Code (Act I of 2012 on the Labor Code) orders pay discrimination illegal.

Discrimination and equal employment opportunity

Two Hungarian researchers, Nagy and Primecz (2010), looked for the reasons for discrimination against women from a feminist point of view. Their opinion is that the expectations of society are responsible. They also admit that this is only one aspect from the many that exist.

Castilla and Bernard proved with experiments in 2010, that even when an organization promotes meritocracy, managers in that organization show higher bias in favor of men over equally well-performing women. This situational paradox was especially prevalent in their experiment if an organization was pronounced meritocratic; managers preferred male employees over similarly qualified women by giving them more substantial monetary rewards. The well-known McKinsey research series also prove the lack of equal opportunities. In their 2018 issue "Women in the Workplace," the authors write about the "uneven playing field" women face in the workplace. The uneven playing field can mean less support from managers, everyday discrimination, sexual harassment, and unfair workplace – to mention a few examples. McKinsey based the 2018 survey on more than 64 000 employees in the USA (Thomas et al., 2018).

Harvard Business School did comprehensive research in 2012 and 2013 among MBA, DBA, and Ph.D. Harvard alumni, titled " Life and Leadership after HBS." The results of the survey done with MBA alumni appeared in 2014. The "gender gap" emerged not only in differences in the achieved positions, but women were also disappointed in their career expectations. Their career folded out differently from what they thought it would be. Most women expected that their career would be as crucial for their partners as their own, and many of them were disappointed. Most men thought that their employment would enjoy a higher priority than their partners, and generally, it was the case (Ely, Stone, Amermann, 2014).

All the research mentioned above are examples of significant cases of proof that harmful discrimination exists towards women. These describe the phenomenon and provide much-needed research information for decision-makers. However, they do not examine the causes of discrimination; they provide data about the appearance of it. Decision-makers need a more in-depth analysis for inclusive action, as treating symptoms does help for a while but does not specify the reason. Without knowing what causes the different treatment, decision-makers cannot act in a consistent and trustworthy way and may not bring the best measures. Our paper aims to create a model that contains the factors that contribute towards a bias against women at the workplace — this way, the model would aid managers to be better in providing equal opportunity towards all workforce.

Possible forms and causes of discrimination

In our model, we wanted to include those factors that can act as discriminatory elements considering those issues that legitimately explain different treatment. It is not easy to compare the wages of men and women, as in the case of women, we have to take into consideration aspects that are non-existent at men. These could be temporarily leaving work because of child-bearing, being a stay-at-home mother for several years, which actions significantly affect female progression in organizations. At analyzing discrimination, we have to consider several control factors that influence the phenomenon. Women can legitimately have lower salaries for several reasons. They could be less experienced in the workplace, or they cannot progress as fast as their male contemporaries. The reason for this could be their families. They might refuse international assignments or assignments that involve a substantial amount of travel to care for their significant others. If we look at their career log and do not consider the reasons for these, just the facts, we are already discriminating against them.

Before introducing the model, we discern between the two main types of discrimination: taste-based and statistical discrimination.

Taste – based discrimination

Becker described the first model of discrimination in 1957. Here employers refuse to employ minorities because they erroneously think minorities will be less productive. He mentions that in this case, the employer behaves as if he were willing to be deprived of income to avoid certain transactions (Becker, 1957. p. 16.). The employer is ignorant of the productivity of the employee. S/he may base ignorance on less knowledge, but also prejudice. Becker says while beliefs of low productivity may be eliminated by obtaining knowledge about the persons, bias is not so easy to weed out, as prejudice is "relatively independent of knowledge." (Becker, 1957. p. 16.) It is relevant to say here that Becker refers to the fear of the majority group of the minority growing in power if the number of minority persons increases in a given community. In another aspect, members of the minority have to work harder to offset the disadvantage arising from their employment, or in the same logic; they have to accept less remuneration (Autor, 2003). Taste – based discrimination belongs to the competition models of discrimination that examine the utility-maximizing behavior of the individual decision-maker. According to Lahey (2008), taste-based discrimination happens when an employer prefers an employee group based on taste and not on economic rationality. The "taste" could be a race or based on xenophobic ideas but could mean personal preferences such as age. The primary purpose is to leave information out of consideration about the potential employee (Zschirnt, Ruedin, 2016). The person deciding about employment does not behave in a profit-maximizing way in this case but tries to avoid the psychological cost of employing a person of a "non grata" race (Riach, Rich, 1991).

Statistical discrimination

As Autor (2003) mentions, most economic analyses of discrimination focused on the statistical theory of discrimination and not on taste-based discrimination after Phelps (1972) and Arrow (1973). The basic idea of statistical discrimination is that firms do not have enough information about the capabilities of employees, so the employer draws conclusions about the employees based on easily observable information – such as race or gender. The premise is that these characteristics have a relationship to productivity. If the observable characteristics show a link to less productivity, the employer will negatively discriminate against the employee. Ethnicity works as a proxy to non-observable information (such as trustworthiness). This way, members

of a specific group may be victims of discrimination because the employer does not have information about them (Arrow, 1972). The employer does not choose the most optimal employee because of this lack of data. Statistical discrimination is also understood as an acceptable trade-off; that is: the employer does not need to pay more for more and relevant information (Bursell, 2007). Research done by Coffman et al. (2017) proved this concept. Employers hired those applicants whom they presumed to have positive future productivity. Their experiment showed that their presumptions are gender independent, though they also demonstrated strong in-group bias. Females were more inclined to hire females than males (Coffman, Exley, Niederle, 2017).

The abovementioned researches proved that obtaining information about the individual's productivity is complicated and has costs. All these difficulties may be the reason for evaluating women based not on their productivity but average productivity, and here, we can find statistical discrimination in the background.

Besides taste-based and statistical discrimination, there could be other reasons for not hiring women in some industries, not promoting, not paying them the same way as men. Here we mention two of those: conscious decisions of women and differences in working style.

The conscious decision of women

Women may decide not to exert full effort at the workplace because they know that their energies are needed elsewhere and in their family life. Because they do not work that much and that hard, they earn less remuneration.

Differences in working styles

Quite a few research exists about the differences between male and female working styles. For example, Rigg (1994) found significant differences in how work was defined, the method of working, in decision-making, and handling relationships among workers. In Melero's (2004) research at those workplaces where women were in the majority, leadership was more democratic. There were more personal relationships between managers and their employees, and managers were more inclined to do mentoring.

Wage differentials can occur even when there is an external performance evaluation system. The background is not discrimination, but the differences in productivity. The National Bureau of Economic Research in 2018 showed that in the case of UBER, three factors explain the lower wages of women: experience, faster driving, preferred routes. Women can decide about these issues every day, so wage differentials arise not because of discrimination but because of the employees' conscious decisions (Cook et al., 2018).

These examples are by no means exhaustive; they only highlight some of the complicating issues in discrimination. In the next part of the paper, we link discrimination and decision theory.

The relationship between discrimination and decision theory

In Akinar-Sposito's article (2013), there are three approaches the author mentions that may explain gender-related inequality; biological models, socialization models, and structural/cultural models. All these models clarify vital factors, but they cannot describe every emerging issue with a convincing argument. Societies can and do change; women's situation may improve. An example to highlight this argument is the situation in Saudi-Arabia where women can now drive. They got permission from 23 Jun 2018 to obtain a driving license

(Coker, 2018). Statistical data prove that the performance of women at the workplace answers requirements; still, their progress in the ranks of organizations is not comparable to that of the men. Neither their progress nor the results are equivalent to their male colleagues. The explanation of this phenomenon should lie somewhere else. The trigger for discrimination should be a more general factor that prevails in every situation in every case. We were looking for this common characteristic in the documented cases and found it in decisions.

Managers in the workplace have to make a stream of decisions continuously. Human resource situations require decisions both very significant: about hiring, promotion, and demotion, and less significant: about filling a photocopier or when and with whom have coffee in the lunchbreak. Managers bring these decisions to maximize utility, trying to be rational and maximizing results for the organization. Alternatively, instead, they think they do. With the development of decision theory, it became more and more evident that the rationality of human decision making is questionable the least.

One cannot write about decision-making without mentioning Herbert Simon. He got the Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel in 1978 (Nobel Media, 2018a). His research started to prove that human decisions are only limitedly rational. Humans cannot achieve maximal utility in their choices; they are capable only of creating satisfactory – but not perfect solutions to problems, which he named "satisficing" (Simon, 1955). Rationality is only limited – "bounded." The significance of psychology in decision-making became even more meaningful by Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky (1974). Their studies of how people make mistakes in decisions when they intend to be entirely rational. They studied the psychology of intuitive beliefs and choices and examined their bounded rationality (Kahneman, 2003). Kahneman got the Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in 2002 for his work (Nobel Media, 2018b).

From the wide-ranging scope of Kahneman's work here, we concentrate on intuition, reasoning, and heuristics. Several psychologists examined the processes of how people make intuitive and deliberate decisions (Kahneman, 2003). Kahneman also accepts the "Two Systems" idea or idea of dual-process theories. In these theories of thinking, System 1 is responsible for fast, intuitive, associative, and emotional decisions. These are not necessarily worse than the decisions made by System 2, which are guided by rules, is slower, effortful, and is deliberately controlled.

Interestingly, Kahneman says. System 1 is less flexible than System 2. Habit governs System 1, and as these are difficult to change, System 1 is more challenging to change than System 2, which is controlled by rules. Perception guides System 1's operation. Perception is the psychological process of paying attention to, organizing, and making sense of sensory data (Huczynski, Buchanan, 2013). Human perception is imperfect because of the biological limitations of the brain, so the "reality" humans rely on may be very different from the reality that exists (Huczynski, Buchanan, 2013). Mistakes people make in perception contribute to the errors made in decision-making (Robbins, Judge, 2013).

All humans see the world via the gateway of perception; it is unavoidable. When managers decide about a person in any context, they cannot exclude perception and, consequently, mistakes. By using the Two systems theory, we may find the reasons that cause decision-makers to bring inefficient decisions. We may discover why women are judged not by their performance but are evaluated based on other criteria that appear salient at the moment of the decision. Kahneman and Tversky conclude:

"..people rely on a limited number of heuristic principles which reduce the complex tasks of assessing probabilities and predicting values to simpler judgmental operations. In general, these heuristics are quite useful, but sometimes they lead to severe and systematic errors." (Tversky, Kahneman, 1974. p 1124.). Judgment will be aided by a heuristic when the individual evaluates a specified target attribute (characteristic) of an object. She substitutes that attribute by another feature of that particular object: the heuristic attribute. The heuristic attribute is easier to use because this comes effortlessly to the mind. This process is called attribute substitution (Kahneman, Frederick, 2002). In simple terms: people try to answer a challenging question by substituting it by answering an easier one, the authors say, without being aware of the substitution.

Tversky, Kahneman presented three heuristics in their article: representativeness, availability, and the anchoring and adjustment heuristics (Tversky, Kahneman, 1974). All are frequent in human decision-making, but most often, we use representativeness and availability heuristics. In this paper, we will more closely examine representativeness and prototype heuristics.

When decision-makers use representativeness heuristics, they judge the likelihood of an event by a similarity of that occurrence to stereotypes of similar occurrences. Example: "What is the probability that object A belongs to class B?" (Tversky, Kahneman, 1974). When confronted with these types of problems, people rely on representativeness heuristics when they assess probability based on how much (A) resembles (B), that is how representative is (A) of (B) (Tversky, Kahneman, 1974). When using prototype heuristics, people immediately have an idea of an item if that item belongs to a sufficiently homogeneous set with a prototype. The prototype carries the average values of the relevant characteristics of the individual items. On the one hand, it is a useful cognitive function because it allows the user to sort out new stimuli efficiently when comparing the characteristics of that to the prototype (Kahneman, 2003). On the other hand, it causes typical and consequential biases for complicated tasks.
Judgment by prototypes can work quite efficiently at simple tasks, such as the judgment of line lengths. Still, there are consequences in decision-making for more complicated tasks (for example, automatic computation of sums) (Kahneman, 2003. p. 1464.). From the examples, Kahneman mentions we will use category prediction and assessment of support that a sample of observations provides for a hypothesis (Kahneman, 2003. p. 1464.).

Human resources judgments, those that concern the workforce of a company, are mostly decisions made under the conditions of uncertainty. Those managers who make human resources decisions (for example, hiring, promotion, redundancies) work in a world where information is incomplete both about their subjects of decisions and about the outcomes of decisions. The probabilities of their choices being accurate are also incalculable in advance (Griffin, Moorhead, 2007. p. 200.).

Our model has the following hypothesis: when managers evaluate women at the workplace, then the data the decision-makers use are not *only* the objective HR data. They automatically consider all factors which exist in the decision-makers' experience, and these "extensional attributes" (Kahneman, 2003) distort their decisions. Each piece of information that they have of women adds to their already existing ideas. However, each positive element of that information pool increases the aggregate value of the evaluated social group, the combination of those is nonadditive. This way, the opinion managers have of women may be distorted.

In the judgment of managers about their colleagues, they have to assess whether the individual they evaluate belongs to a group because the individual resembles the group's stereotype. In

decision-making, the managers appraise using both their cognitive systems. The data about their colleagues in HR databases will be used by their System 2. Still, their System 1 will immediately jump to the readily accessible prototypical characteristics of the person who is the subject of their appraisal.

Our model

Based on the above, the elements of our model are the following:

- Expectations of the society people belong to — the requirements of female roles of that particular society, which gender socialization creates.
  - The role model, the individual, follows will be formed during the socialization experiences (such as participation in education, expectations of the family, and the workplace (Bartol et al., 2003). This factor may change when society changes; theoretically, it may happen for the advantage of women (like driving in Saudi-Arabia), but societies characteristically change very slowly. Societal changes will affect basic value systems, and values are very stable. According to Williamson (2000), the "informal institutions, customs, tradition, norms, religion" have a "great deal of inertia," that is, they will be accepted, not questioned, and stay functional for a very long time.
- Demands of power.
  - Here we think about power in the Foucauldian sense when we say the decision-makers who have the power will want to retain it (Johnson, Hekman, 2016). Maintaining operations of the "normal" societal order are of essential concern for the owners of power. The owners of power can achieve obedience to authority not only by using force but also using power as part of an unquestioned social order. The rules people willingly follow will construct the way of their living and enclose them into an unquestioned and restricted lifestyle.
- Cognitive development of the individual.
  - High skills in decision-making and, conversely, individual errors (Kahneman, 2003) influence the outcomes. The individual can improve the quality of decisions by practice, experience, or efficient methodology, formalization, mathematical methods, or the "outsider perspective" (Milkman, Chugh, Bazerman, 2008).
- Context
  - Information contributes to more efficient decisions. Statistical data, HR databases in companies, research done by organizations, such as LeanIn. org, McKinsey, or Catalyst, these all influence managers. The activities of these organizations improve knowledge about gender-based discrimination and also contribute to the improvement of the situation. Nevertheless, there is much to correct, even in the 21st century.

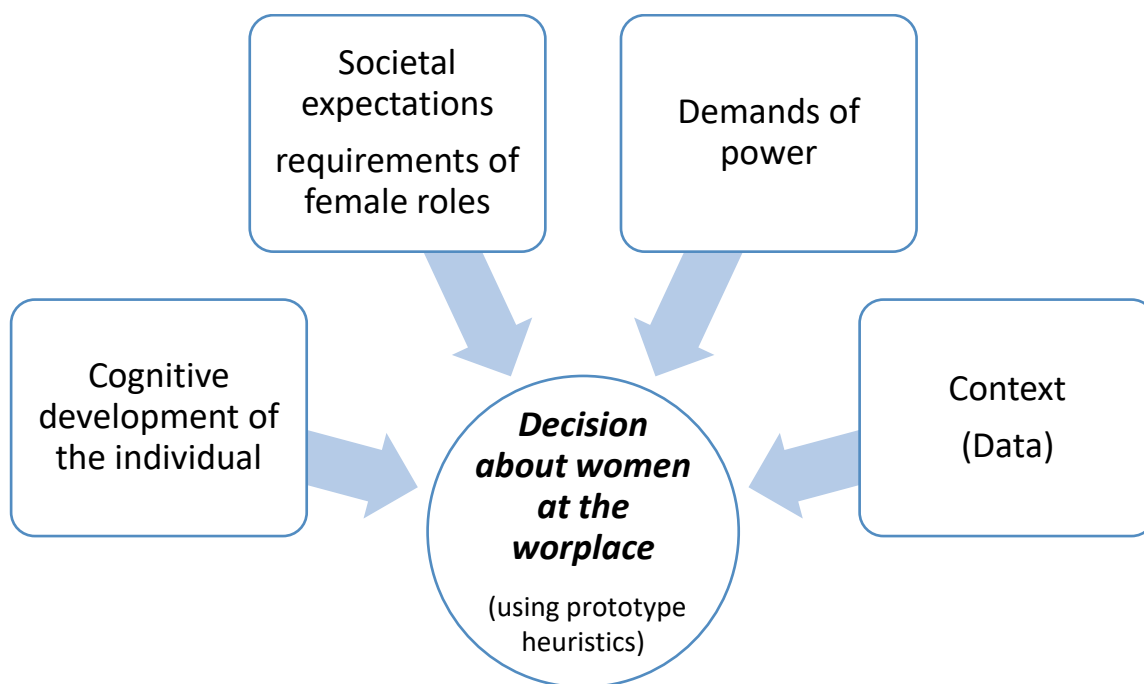Our proposed model of discrimination against women is the following:

Figure 1. A possible model of discrimination against women

Discussion

Decision-makers may strive towards rational and bias-free decisions, but the factors mentioned in the model modify their intentions. A person forms decisions based on individual cognitive development, the knowledge obtained via experience and education.

How humans decide is inevitably influenced by societal expectations. Gneezy et al. (2009) compared the competition propensity of men and women in matrilineal and patriarchal societies. One was the Khasi tribe in India – matrilineal, the other the patriarchal Maasai tribe in Tanzania. (The matrilineal society traces ancestral descent through maternal lines, while in patriarchal societies, it is done by paternal lines. Narayan, 2014). In the matrilineal society, women were more competitive than men. They had decision-making rights in family issues and lots of other topics, which are the domain of men in patriarchal societies. In the Maasai tribe, the competitiveness and the decision-making rights resembled Western societies – patriarchal. Men were twice as competitive as women. How a society treats gender is considerably influenced by the deep-rooted expectations of that particular society.

Power is omnipresent in society, and in managerial decision-making, it plays a significant role. Power holders (either individuals or boards) are inclined to favor those who are similar to them. As 85% of the corporate executives and board members are white males, women come up short

when competing for higher-level positions. Johnson and Hekman proved: If women or members of other minorities engaged in diversity promoting behavior, their performance ratings were worse than those who did not do the same. This effect did not apply to white men. Those in power want to ensure the continuation of their power. Giving away power to those who have less and consequently losing some of it (by those who gave away) is penalized in organizations. According to the authors, this phenomenon happens because of the status of white managers. Members of the high-status group are regarded as competent: "because their competence is assumed based on their membership in the high-status group." (Johnson, Hekman, 2016). In a group, high-status members are allowed to deviate from the accepted group norms (as long as it does not endanger the aims of the group), for lower status members it is not acceptable (Johnson, Hekman, 2016, Robbins, Judge, 2013, pp. 285).

Further, on power, we use Foucault's work and assume that power is an all-encompassing phenomenon in society (Buchanan, Huczynski, 2017). It is built into the structure of society and decides what "normal" is and what can be considered "deviant." Disciplinary power works very effectively both on individuals and organizations via built-in structures, mechanisms, and tools of surveillance to make people accept its command. The stability of these types of arrangements is remarkable. With the development of science and technology, gender does not define the kind of work men and women can do. The development of household machines, infant nutrients, computers would enable both genders to switch roles. Still, it does not happen or happens seldom. In the case of women in most Western societies, the rules (and power) of the patriarchal society decides about "normal" behavior and lifestyle, the paths of career they are allowed to take. If the general expectations of the community (the power web) do not support women to follow careers the same way as men, all actions to support women will be considered as "abnormal" or "deviant."

Perception returns when we look at hard data. Although statistics may look very objective, interpretation of data happens via the perception of the user, it is inevitable. In the past ten years, a wealth of research discussed women's situation in societies. Because of the easy accessibility of information, their situation somewhat improved if we look at the latest McKinsey reports (Thomas et al. 2018). There are organizations where the gender wage-gap started to close. It happens slowly, but at least it happens. In 1959 women's salaries in the USA were 60% that of the men; in 2015, it is 78,6% (Garza, 2015),

Conclusions

Discrimination is an adverse process that results in the devaluation of certain societal groups, their exclusion from significant events that also concern them. It prevents them from accessing those resources that are readily available for other – non-excluded social groups. All of these actions result in the marginalization and exploitation of these people to the advantage of the majority. The overt forms of discrimination are not typical in the 21st century, more the covert appearances, where one cannot pinpoint the harmful intent, only the disparate impact. In these cases, the victim of discrimination does not even notice what happened to her.
Our model strives for illustrating those processes, which contribute to the still prevailing reality that women still are unable to utilize – theoretically for everyone available – opportunities. The effect of the glass ceiling is still with us.

Part of the cognitive development of the individual is the improvement in perception and reasoning. Humans can observe the world only through the gateway of perception (Buchanan, Huczynski, 2017). Perception plays a vital role in how we see the world, how we interpret phenomena, and, consequently, what we will think about them. As perception is unique to every human being, and we also learn it during our cognitive development, how it happens in each individual is different. This way, people can (and do) have dissimilar ideas about the same occurrence, sometimes even opposite opinions, although they encounter the same incident. Evaluation of our fellow humans happens via perception. Women in the workplace are no exception. Their evaluation will occur using (unintentionally) this psychological phenomenon. The development in decision theory enabled researchers to find mistakes in the processes of decision-making. One of the main culprits is imperfect perception. Kahneman suggests in several publications that there are simple methods to improve the process of making decisions, such as usage of algorithms or mathematical methodology (Kahneman, 2016).

It would be a mistake to simplify discrimination against women to faulty perception, however. We cannot examine this complex phenomenon without considering societal expectations, the context of the workplace, and importantly: power. Neither of these is an explanatory variable in itself, that is why we included them into our model as moderating variables. The complex cognitive activity of discrimination is moderated by these variables, which makes improvement or eradication challenging. We were looking at the one common core factor in discrimination occurrences at the workplace and found it in the decision-making processes of managers.

The answer to our research question: decision-makers bring their decisions about women at the workplace using (most of the time unconsciously) prototype heuristics, and this heuristic has substantial mistakes. Because of the psychology of heuristics, it may not be intentional; it may not aim to harm the women concerned; the characteristics of human cognition may be the reason for using it.

If we can improve decision-making processes at the workplace, if we can utilize optimization methods that prevent biases, attenuate the needs of power holders, and can use objective data about the workforce, then discrimination will decrease. If that happens, then those women who have a need to contribute to knowledge, a fulfilled life, and leaving a legacy behind them in society will not walk in the shards of the glass ceiling (Bell, 2016; Banek, 2017).

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