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## ANKU COLLEGE MODEL UNITED NATIONS 2020

**COMMITTEE:** Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee (SOCHUM)

**ISSUE:** Questioning “the glass ceiling”

**STUDENT OFFICER:** Duru Nehir Dolu

**POSITION:** Deputy Chair

Dear participants,

I am Duru and I will be serving as your deputy chair in the SOCHUM committee. I am an eleventh grader at Arı College. My friends generally describe me as a cheerful person which I hope, will help our sessions to be more enjoyable. I wish this conference to be a great experience for you in which you will learn about the world issues, have the opportunity to state your ideas and opinions without worrying about being judged and improve your communication and public speaking skills by befriending with new people and joining the debates in the committee. I am looking forward to meeting all of you.

### INTRODUCTION

The metaphor of the glass ceiling comes from the idea of some minorities being held back to advance upwards in corporations by an invisible barrier. Even though that certain phenomenon' origin lies in the way before, the term itself became commonly used in the 80s and this effect is still considered as one of the huge problems of our world.

The usage of the term generally involves discrimination towards women in companies and corporations. Although the breaches of women's rights got less often in the past few decades because of the increasing number of women's rights activist and the organizations which aim to raise more awareness about it, the unchanging perception of woman and her role in the society still cause a resistance to the success of women in business life.

As it is mentioned in the first paragraph, the glass ceiling effect is not only an obstacle for women but also minorities as it is studied in the Glass Ceiling Commission. It defined the glass ceiling as "those artificial barriers based on an attitudinal or organizational bias that prevent qualified individuals from advancing upward in their organization into management-level positions."



## DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

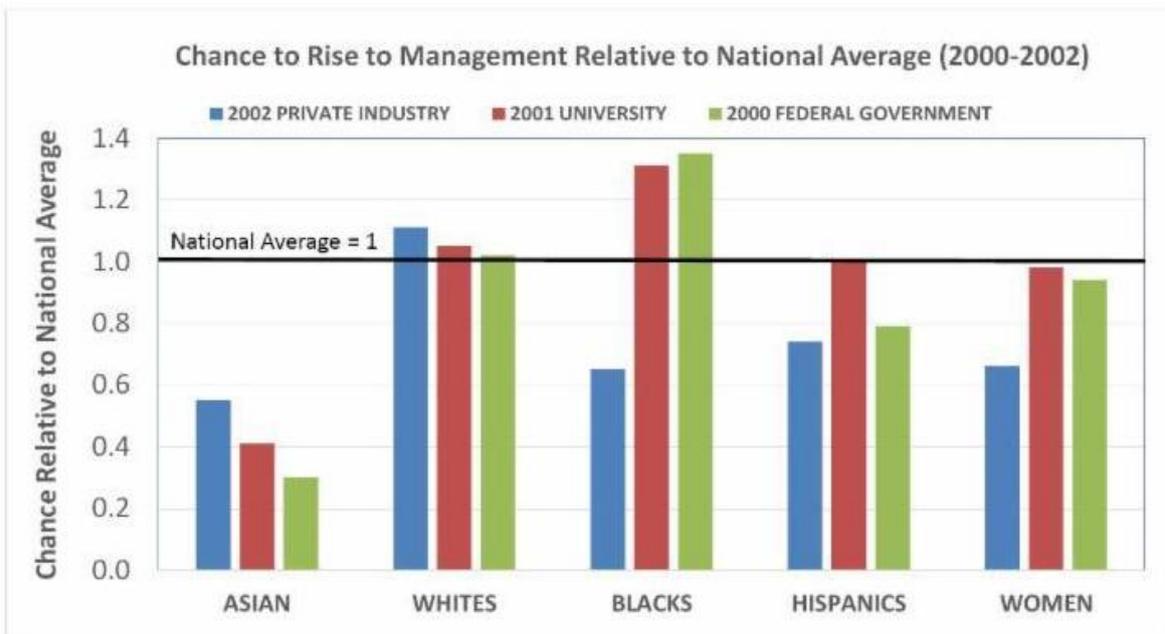
**Glass ceiling:** It is a metaphor used to describe the invisible impediment which restrains successful individuals to reach the position they deserve to be in, by disregarding their efforts. The individuals generally belong to a minority group or they are the victims of sexism.

**Sexism:** It is when a sex or gender is discriminated against and prejudiced because of the stereotypes and gender roles in society. The idea of sexism strongly related to the belief of a gender or sex being inferior to one another. Women and girls are the ones who are affected by sexism the most throughout history.

**Racism:** It happens when a certain race believes that they are somehow more superior to other races which causes discrimination between races and humiliation or belittlement of the thought to be the inferior race.

**Minority:** A smaller group which is different from the rest because of their race, religion, political beliefs, etc.

**Patriarchy:** It is a social system that is male-dominated. Men hold the power over women in roles of political leadership, social privilege, moral authority and control of the property.



## OVERVIEW

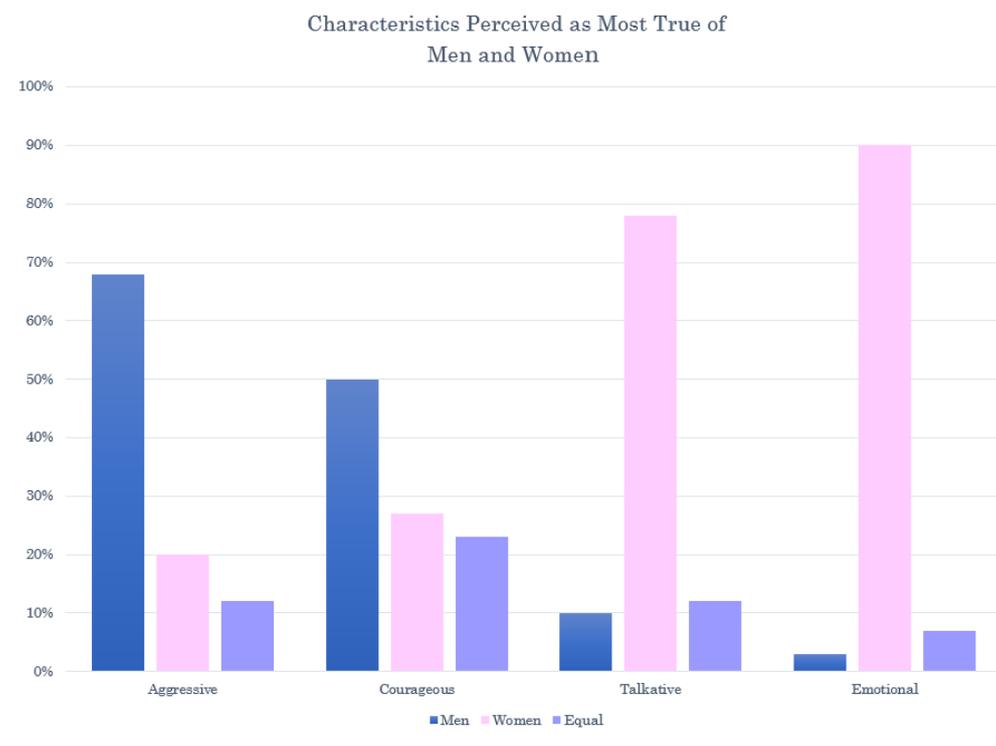
Since the beginning of mankind, people have faced various kinds of inequality because of their gender, race, ethnic origin, etc. This perception was originated from the fear of the unusual and unfamiliar. People with color have been the targets of acts of racism for a long while and suffered from discrimination. Even though now it is known that they are no different than any other race, do not pose any danger to another and there is nothing to be afraid about, the thought of them being inferior still continues in some parts of the world.



Similarly, the history of sexism also goes a long way back. The physical attributes and abilities of women considered not enough in comparison to men's which caused their other skills to be underestimated and them to be seen as less useful. Recently, women proved that they can be strong, independent and successful as the way they are. However, prejudice against women did not completely disappear. It still plays a role as an impediment when it comes to reaching top ranks in the management of corporations or becoming a candidate for a political party. Minority women are considered as the most affected ones from this phenomenon since they are at the intersection of two groups which tend to be seen as inferior.

### Causes and Effects:

As it is mentioned above, the prejudice in people's minds is the main cause of the glass ceiling. It affects the evaluation process of the applicants with or without intention. It creates a latent layer above those all women and minority people who are very at good at their occupation and keeps them in the position they stuck, preventing them to get a promotion. For example, gender stereotypes are big obstacles in front of both women and men. According to researches most people associate being a woman with more emotional attitudes and being a man with more aggressive manners. It influences the business life of individuals and how they are treated in their working environment. Women tend to be chosen for positions that demand emotional management with customers more than men because of the feminine stereotypes and men are thought to be more suitable for leading roles in companies.



## Evaluation of Other Issues:

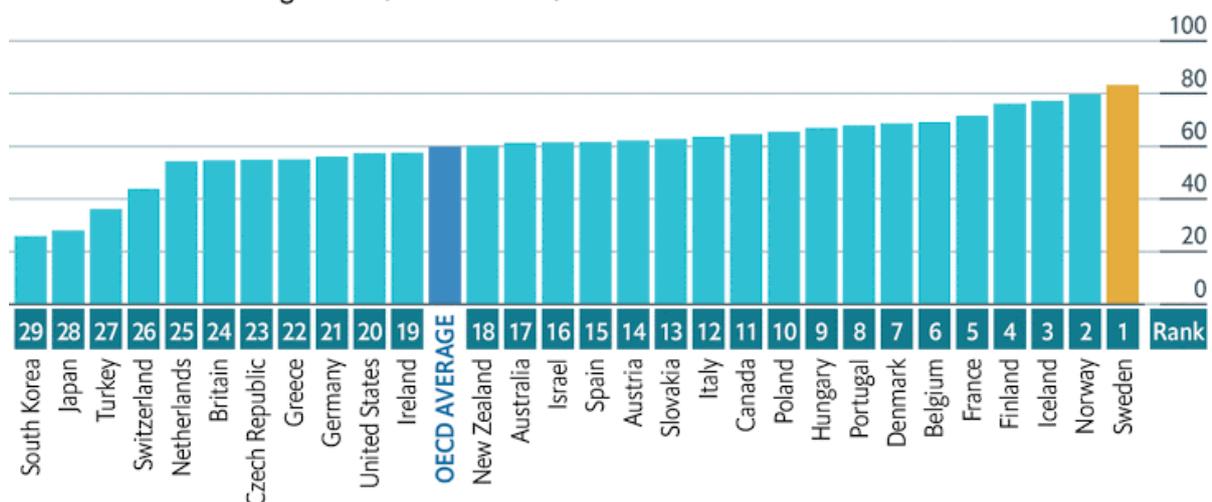
Because of the glass ceiling effect, while the more qualified individuals stay in the low ranks of the management, the employees who are not that good at their job get raises. This phenomenon decreases the economic success of corporations. Besides, it triggers a vicious circle of women and minority people not getting any promotion and being paid by fewer amounts, having low statutes in the society causing them to be faced more prejudice and finally, again, not advancing to the position they deserve to be in because of this perception. Thus, it increases the financial difference between social classes.

## RELEVANT ACTORS AND BODIES:

According to the latest data Sweden, Norway and Iceland are the leading countries in terms of the quality of the environment for working women while the United States and Germany ranked behind the world average. The glass ceiling effect most likely to happen in Asian countries such as Japan and South Korea which are unfortunately do not have so many gender equality based workplaces. Even though working conditions have improved significantly since the 1900s, when the first protests of women's rights started to occur, the perfect environment for working women still cannot be maintained in every part of the world.

### Glass-ceiling index

Environment for working women, 2018 or latest, 100=best



Sources: European Institute for Gender Equality; Eurostat; GMAC; ILO; Inter-Parliamentary Union; OECD; national sources; *The Economist*

### UN Women:

It is the United Nations entity that aims to empower women and sustain gender equality. UN Women supports the UN Member States to achieve global standards of gender equality by cooperating with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programs, and services.

### The Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID):

It is a global, feminist, membership, movement-support organization working to achieve gender justice and women's human rights worldwide.

### The Congress of Racial Equality (CORE):

It is founded in 1942 and became one of the leading activist organizations in the early years of the American civil rights movement.

## TIMELINE OF MAJOR EVENTS

1908-1920	Protests were done by women worldwide to speak up against gender inequality. Various rights were given to women all over the world. International Women's Day began to be celebrated.
1945	The Charter of the United Nations was signed. It is the first international agreement to affirm the principle of equality between women and men.
1950-1960	The civil rights movement occurred in the United States to protest racial discrimination and endeavor to provide African Americans with equal rights with the rest of the American citizens.
1975	During International Women's Year, the United Nations began celebrating International Women's Day on 8 March.

1991	The Glass Ceiling Commission was created by The Civil Right Act and studied the artificial barriers which prevent not only women but also minorities to advance upwards in their career.
1995	The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action was signed by 189 governments. Its clauses involve ensuring all women to have the right to exercise her choices such as participating in politics, getting an education, having an income, and living in societies free from violence and discrimination.
2001	The Durban Declaration and Programme of Action was adopted. The conference focused on combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance.
2015	One of the 17 sustainable development goals which are adopted by many countries, aimed at achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls.

## POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

The glass ceiling effect mainly caused by the prejudices in people's minds as it is also mentioned in the introduction and overview parts of this study guide. Eliminating an idea which is planted in one's mind long ago, is extremely hard. Changing the perspective of the whole world is even harder. In this case, we can only talk about ways to reduce it. The biggest cause of these kinds of discriminating actions towards minorities and women comes from the thought of them being inferior. Thus, the primary action to take is raising awareness all over the world by educating the youth, instilling the idea of equality of all humans and organizing seminars and conferences to spread this ideology. Young girls should be encouraged to choose whichever occupation they want to have in the future without having any doubts about whether they are suitable for that job as a female or not. If we can succeed in proving that a minority person or a woman can also be in the very same working environment with another man and can be as successful as him, the glass ceiling above them begins to crack even not broken.

A UN-related organization is essential to supervise the corporations and companies' attitudes towards women and minorities since unfortunately it is not possible to maintain

an equal working environment for them without detecting workplaces. Individuals who are both qualified and eager to advance upward should also be evaluated by a non-corporation-related organization to ensure that no prejudice interferes in the process of finding the right employee to be in top ranks of management.

## USEFUL LINKS AND SOURCES

<https://www.thoughtco.com/glass-ceiling-for-women-definition-3530823>

<https://www.unwomen.org/en>

[https://digitalcommons.ilr.cornell.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1117&context=key\\_workplace](https://digitalcommons.ilr.cornell.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1117&context=key_workplace)

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<https://www.everydayhealth.com/womens-health/glass-ceiling-effect-its-impact-on-women/>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glass\\_ceiling](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glass_ceiling)

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patriarchy>

<https://www.newscientist.com/article/mg23831740-400-the-origins-of-sexism-how-men-came-to-rule-12000-years-ago/>

<https://www.awid.org/>

<https://www.loc.gov/static/collections/women-of-protest/images/detchron.pdf>