

ARE UNIVERSITIES ROLE MODELS FOR COMMUNITIES? A GENDER PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

The present paper explores the degree in which universities could/should serve as role models for communities from the perspective of gender integration. Although the theoretical/moral answer would be affirmative (universities should be in such a position that would allow local communities to regard them as role models of gender integration), the primary empirical analysis leads to another conclusion.

A brief theoretical review (that connects gender discrimination, sustainable development, universities and local communities) is followed by an empirical analysis that compares the management structures of 12 Romanian Universities of Advanced Research and Education (the best Romanian universities according to a national ranking) with those of four local communities where they are located (as geographic proximity would lead to a better diffusion of best practices). Contrary to initial expectations, even in higher education institutions, women are underrepresented both in executive and legislative positions.

Since universities are subject to the same major patterns of gender discrimination (such as role theory, glass ceiling and glass elevator) as private and public organizations, they lose the moral high ground that theory would suggest. However, medicine and pharmacy universities that can be connected with the traditional roles attributed to women provide better gender integration, but glass escalator phenomena remain present even in these limited fields.

Keywords: gender discrimination, academia, sustainable development, local communities.

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1. Introduction

1.1. *Outline: lines of inquiry and initial arguments*

The aim of this paper is twofold, both theoretical and empirical. A critical review of multiple fields of academic literature is conducted in order to observe the linkages between gender discrimination/integration, sustainable development, universities and local communities; however, the major focus is that of better understanding gender discrimination, mainly its origins and possible forms of manifestation.

Our empirical research focusses on the similarities and differences between communities and academic institutions, in order to observe if academia can serve as a role model of gender integration for local communities. Gender integration is the opposite phenomena of gender discrimination; albeit discrimination has both positive connotations (when it is viewed as a process of differentiation in order to reach a decision, taking into account legitimate criteria such as merit or potential) and negative ones (when it is viewed as a process of differentiation based on characteristics that are not adequate or relevant for the activity for which the differentiation is made) (Dipboye and Colella, 2005, p. 2), the interest of this paper refers to the second one.

From the onset, it would seem that universities would be the best model of gender integration as (1) they are the gathering place of the brightest minds, (2) are mostly future oriented (they try to answer the question of where societies should be in the future) and (3) position in the hierarchy (recognition and reward) is based on merits and achievements. Thus, in an ideal situation, universities should (or have the capacity to) serve as role models for societies (or at least for their immediate communities).

Previous studies link universities and their local communities or surroundings from multiple perspectives, thus contributing to the validity of the aforementioned argument (that universities should serve as role models for communities). Martin, Smith and Phillips (2005, pp. 149-153) argue that, even if in the past communities failed to partner with surrounding communities, the new prevailing governance paradigm, which 'encourages the creation of innovative partnerships between the government sector, the private sector and the non-profit sector in order to harness the collective energies and strengths of all partners' (2005, p. 149), requires the existence of such partnerships (albeit their proven success can be influenced by several factors). Robinson, Zass-Ogilvie and Hudson (2012) argue that universities can and should do more for their communities (especially for disadvantaged communities and groups) as the former are in a better position due to their resources and expertise. Hutchcroft argues that although universities are already an important economic actor, as they tend to be 'one of the largest spenders, employers and influencers in the area' (1996, p. 219), they could do much more once integrated/accepted as partners by local authorities and communities.

Going beyond the moral and normative aspects presented above, the paper will try to connect gender with sustainable development and present a brief review of gender discrimination literature (both in the labor force and management).

Furthermore, the core of the paper consists of an analysis of the most important Romanian universities that will observe their potential to serve as role models for

local communities. Comparisons will be made both from the perspective of executive positions (mayors and presidents of county councils versus rectors and deans) and from the perspective of legislative ones (local and county councils versus university senates and senate presidents). The empirical data was collected for 12 Romanian universities (best ranked at national level) and the four cities (and counties) where they are located (all the information was gathered in April 2012).

1.2. Sustainable development and gender

Gender integration/discrimination or gender studies (in general) resurfaced as an important field of research and as an issue of public policy once these phenomena were connected with sustainable development. The most famous and widely accepted definition of sustainable development refers to it as ‘development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’ (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987, p. 43).

From an overall concept, sustainable development can be further conceptualized in three pillars (major domains), as presented in Table 1. Gender (discrimination and integration) is a crucial concept for at least two pillars (the social and economic one) but it might also influence the third one, albeit such linkages (between gender and environmental issues) are still underexplored.

Table 1: The three pillars of sustainable development

Social	Economic	Environmental
Equity*	Services#	Biodiversity
Participation*	Household needs*	Natural resources
Empowerment*	Industrial and agricultural growth #	Carrying capacity
Social mobility*	Efficient use of labor*	Ecosystem integrity
Cultural preservation#		Clean air and water

Legend!: * domains where gender discrimination/integration plays a key role
 # domains that are at least partially affected by gender discrimination/integration

Source: World Bank (2001)

By allowing gender discrimination to persist, societies not only endanger the fulfillment of their current needs, but also limit the possibilities of future generations to meet their own needs. In more objective terms, if we consider ‘human individuals’ as resources for sustainable development, then we (as a society) should make full use of their potential and capabilities; by allowing gender discrimination to persist, a society/community limits its own development capabilities and prospects.

Far beyond being only a personal opinion, gender and sustainable development have been connected on multiple occasions, both by academic researchers (Hemmati

1 The importance given to gender issues in the context of the three pillars of sustainable development represents the opinion of the authors and not the explicit position of the World Bank or other international/national institutions or researchers.

and Gardiner, 2002; Johnsson-Latham, 2007; Rico, 1998; Parris, 2005, pp. 3-7) and international organizations (OECD, 2008; World Bank, 2012; United Nations, 1999; UNDP, 2004).

2. An analytical framework for gender discrimination

In order to offer a better understanding of gender discrimination and its importance, a brief literature review needs to be presented². Going beyond a simple description of the main theories, the paper will propose a way to systematize the current knowledge pertaining to gender discrimination. The criteria that can be used to classify gender discrimination phenomena refer to: (1) the degree of visibility of discriminative practices, (2) the horizontal versus vertical effects of such practices, and (3) the scope of the theories.

According to the degree of visibility, a distinction can be made between:

1. formal/overt discrimination: when gender is used as the main criterion in making job-related decisions (hiring, promotion, dismissal, salary differentiation, and so on) (Lawler and Johngeok, 1998, pp.129-152); and
2. informal/covert discrimination: which can take subtler forms such as social exclusion, isolation, the avoidance of interpersonal contact, paternalistic behavior, humor and language used to conceal male domination over women (Dipboye and Colella, 2005, p. 2; Cleveland, Vescio and Barnes-Farrell, 2005, pp. 150-155; Colella and Stone, 2005, pp. 227-254; Bell, McLaughlin and Sequeira, 2002, pp. 66-68).

The second criterion distinguishes between vertical and horizontal discrimination, referring to how individuals are treated (a) when they try to climb the hierarchical ladder or (b) at the same hierarchical level.

Vertical gender discrimination theories usually refer to:

1. the glass ceiling: states that women are usually underrepresented in top managerial positions (The Federal Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995a; 1995b; Haslam and Ryan, 2008; Hultin, 2003; Cotter *et al.*, 2001; Wright, Baxter and Birkelund, 1995; Wirth, 2001; Bell, McLaughlin and Sequeira, 2002; Korabik, 1992; Arulampalam, Booth and Bryan, 2007);
2. the glass cliff: according to which women are promoted in top managerial positions only when the company is in a dire situation – women are ‘set up’ to fail (Ryan and Haslan, 2005, 2007; Haslam and Ryan, 2008; Wright, Baxter and Birkerlund, 1995; Kulich, Ryan and Haslam, 2007; Ryan, Haslam and Postmes, 2007); and
3. the glass elevator: argues that male in female dominated professions advance faster due to powerful informal networks of male mentors that exist in organizations and which offer support and guidance to males (Williams, 1992; Hultin, 2003).

2 Since the authors (Macarie and Moldovan, 2012a, pp. 153-172; 2012b, pp. 12-19) already conducted a rather extensive review of most of the theories, they will not be discussed here in detail.

Horizontal theories of gender discrimination differentiate between:

1. the gender pay gap: according to which women are less paid than men even though they have similar education, expertise, responsibilities and results (Arulampalam, Booth and Bryan, 2007; European Commission, 2010; CONSAD Research Corporation, 2009; Trades Unions Congress, 2009; Drolet, 2011, pp. 3-13; Blau and Kahn, 2000; Blau and Kahn, 2007; Tijdens and Van Klaveren, 2012);
2. the brass ceiling: argues that women have limited access and promotion possibilities in occupations that are traditionally considered to be attributed to males, such as police and military services (Miller, 1999; Schulz, 2004; Corsianos, 2009; Westmarland, 2001; Silvestri, 2012; Snow, 2010; Boyer, 2008);
3. the stained glass ceiling: makes reference to the fact that women have limited accession and promotion opportunities in religious organizations and institutions (Adams, 2007, pp. 80-105; Longman and Lafreniere, 2012, pp. 45-61; Ngunjiri and Christo-Baker, 2012; Sullins, 2000, pp. 243-266; de Gasquet, 2010, pp. 22-39; O'Brien, 2012, pp. 5-26; Lowe, 2011, pp. 309-329; Purvis, 1995);
4. sectorial (industrial) gender discriminations (segregation): argues that women have limited access in entire industries or fields of activity (Kakad, 2002, pp. 355-372; Parveen and Dey, 2009, pp. 223-233; Ashenfelter and Hannan, 1986, pp. 149-173; Dong *et al.*, 2004, pp. 979-998; Duguet and Petit, 2005, pp. 79-102; Jacobs, 1989); and
5. informal discrimination (as explained above).

According to the scope of the theories, we can distinguish between descriptive theories (that refer to how discrimination is felt in practice) and explanatory theories (that inquire upon the reasons/sources of discrimination). As most of the aforementioned theories present a pronounced descriptive character, they can all be included in the descriptive theories category; albeit some of them also offer tentative explanations for a particular type of discrimination, we consider that the main focus is to describe a phenomenon and not to explain its possible causes.

Explanatory theories usually refer to:

1. equity: proposes that individuals should evaluate their investments/inputs (education, experience) and results, compare them to those of other persons in similar conditions and, based on this comparison, they should assess the degree of satisfaction with their work place (Terborg and Ilgen, 1975, pp. 352-376; Baroudi and Truman, 1992, p. 6; McDonald, 2000, pp. 427-439);
2. stereotyping: argues that women's advancement into managerial positions is interrupted or limited by the discrepancies perceived between women's characteristics and those characteristics (usually men's characteristics) traditionally correlated with managerial success (Terborg and Ilgen, 1975, pp. 352-376; Baroudi and Truman, 1992, pp. 4-5; McElroy and Morrow, 1983, pp. 11-13; Bobbitt-Zeher, 2011, pp. 764-786);
3. attribution: assumes that workplace success or failure can be attributed to stable, objective factors (intelligence, professionalism, skill) or variable, subjective factors

- (chance or luck) and that this attribution differs in the case of the two genders (Terborg and Ilgen, 1975, pp. 352-376; Baroudi and Truman, 1992, p. 5);
4. rational bias: assumes that individuals discriminate (on gender criteria) because they believe that this is expected from them by their superiors (Trentham and Larwood, 1998, pp. 1-28; Larwood, Szwajkowski and Rose, 1988, pp. 9-29); and
 5. the gender role theory: assumes that men and women are brought up (raised) in specific ways (as breadwinners and caregivers), thus both genders act in such ways and society regards them as such (Fortin, 2005, pp. 315-438; Edwards, 1983, pp. 358-412; Cotter, Hermsen and Vanneman, 2011, pp. 259-289; Lee, 2005; Beere, 1990; Lindsey, 2004; Heide, 2004).

The analytical framework (classifications) that can be used to understand and analyze gender discrimination is presented in a brief form in Table 2.

Table 2: Proposed classification of gender discrimination theories

Classification criterion	Main classes	Main theories
I. Degree of visibility	A. Formal/overt discrimination	When such practices are accepted/tolerated by national laws or organizational by-laws.
	B. Informal/covert discrimination	Social exclusion, isolation, avoidance of interpersonal contact, paternalistic behavior, humor and language.
II. Relations vis-à-vis organizational hierarchy	A. Vertical discrimination	Glass theories (ceiling, cliff and escalator).
	B. Horizontal discrimination	Informal discrimination, gender pay gap, occupational segregation (or sectorial gender discrimination), brass ceiling and stained glass ceiling.
III. Scope of the theories	A. Descriptive	Most of the above.
	B. Explanatory	Equity theory, attribution theory, stereotyping theory, rational bias, gender role theory.

There are a few types of limitations regarding the aforementioned classification, limitations that have to be both mentioned and analyzed.

First of all, the theories presented above are rather complex as they make reference to more than a single element, thus classification decisions had to be made according to what we considered to be the main focus or goal of the theory (to explain or to present something).

Secondly, it may be the case that the classes (categories) proposed for each category are not fully independent from each other. For example, informal discrimination (which can also be considered a horizontal type of discrimination) plays an important role regarding how individuals belonging to the two genders are promoted (especially when referring to glass ceiling and glass escalator phenomena and other forms of vertical discrimination) which in turn may influence the gender pay gap (a rather horizontal type of discrimination).

Thirdly, as the literature on gender discrimination is constantly expanding, there is the possibility that some theories were not included in this review. Unfortunately, given the scope of this paper as well as the limited amount of resources (especially time) reviewing all the theories pertaining to gender discrimination goes beyond the scope of a single article.

Furthermore, taking into consideration their complexity, some theories can be further divided, in smaller groups, classes or subclasses. For example, informal discrimination can be seen as: (1) exclusion from the group, (2) lack of mentorship (3) sexual harassment and so on. Even the latter one (sexual harassment) can be further divided between verbal manifestations and physical ones.

All in all, even if the aforementioned classification is less than perfect, we consider it to be a good starting point for understanding the key characteristics of gender discrimination and why today's society is far from an ideal one, one that fully integrates all of its members.

3. Methodological aspects

The empirical part of the paper focuses on assessing how well Romanian universities can serve as role models for their local communities. Although Romania has more than 90 universities that received accreditation from the resort ministry, we focused only on 12 of them, which were ranked highest at national level. The 12 'advanced research and education universities' (all state universities) are the only ones that can offer both undergraduate (bachelor) and graduate (masters and doctoral) education programs, while still maintaining a leading edge in research (once again, the comparison is made with other Romanian universities).

The 12 universities are clustered in four major cities: Bucharest (the capital of Romania), Cluj-Napoca, Timisoara and Iași (all four cities have a respectable tradition in education and promote universities as one of their main local assets).

Furthermore, we are interested in managerial positions (understood in the context of this paper as those types of positions that require/involve decision making responsibility or refer to the implementation of decisions made at the local/community/university level). As such, we distinguish between legislative positions (decision making) and executive positions (that involve some degree of decision making as well as implementation), both in the community (at city and county level) and university (distinguishing between the university and its faculties).

The data was collected in April 2012 (for both universities and local communities) from the official internet pages of these institutions. Table 3 presents the 12 universities (making reference to their names, overall specializations as well as their locations: city and county), while the positions/bodies on which this analyze is focused are presented in Table 4.

Table 3: Sample universities and their local communities

Name	Profile	Location
Universitatea din București (<i>University of Bucharest; UB</i>)	General, social sciences	Bucharest (city)
Academia de Studii Economice din București (<i>The Bucharest University of Economic Studies; BUES</i>)	Economics, social sciences	
Universitatea de Medicină și Farmacie "Carol Davila" din București (<i>The University of Medicine and Pharmacy "Carol Davila" Bucharest - UMP CD</i>)	Medicine and pharmacy	
Universitatea Politehnică din București (<i>University POLITEHNICA of Bucharest; UPB</i>)	Technical	

Name	Profile	Location
Universitatea Babeş-Bolyai din Cluj Napoca (<i>Babeş-Bolyai University of Cluj Napoca; BBU CN</i>)	General, social sciences	Cluj-Napoca (city); Cluj (county)
Universitatea de Ştiinţe Agricole şi Medicină Veterinară din Cluj Napoca (<i>The University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine of Cluj-Napoca; UASVM CN</i>)	Agricultural and veterinary sciences	
Universitatea Tehnică din Cluj Napoca (<i>The Technical University of Cluj Napoca; TU CN</i>)	Technical	
Universitatea de Medicină şi Farmacie "Iuliu Haţieganu" din Cluj Napoca (<i>The "Iuliu Hatieganu" University of Medicine and Pharmacy; IHUMP</i>)	Medicine and pharmacy	
Universitatea Alexandru Ioan Cuza din Iaşi (<i>The Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iaşi; AICUI</i>)	General, social sciences	Iaşi (city and county)
Universitatea de Medicină şi Farmacie "Gr. T. Popa" din Iaşi (<i>The "Gr. T. Popa" University of Medicine and Pharmacy of Iaşi; GTP UMP</i>)	Medicine and pharmacy	
Universitatea Tehnică "Gheorghe Astachi" din Iaşi (<i>The Technical University "Gheorghe Astachi" of Iaşi; TUGAI</i>)	Technical	
Universitatea Politehnică din Timişoara (<i>The "Politehnica" University of Timişoara; PUT</i>)	Technical	Timişoara (city); Timiş (county)

Table 4: Executive and legislative position/bodies included in the analysis

	Executive positions	Legislative (positions and bodies)
Academia	Rector (presidents), Vice-Rectors, Deans	Senate members ³ , Senate President
Society (local community)	Mayor, Vice-Mayors, President of County Council	Local council County council

We have deliberately chosen to scrutinize the relationship between universities and their immediate surrounding local communities since previous studies (that focused on partnerships between the two) argued that geographical proximity is a key factor of success regarding the relationship between the aforementioned two types of institutions; thus geographical proximity remains crucial if we regard academic institutions as role models for community based institutions.

4. Results: comparing universities and their communities

The empirical results will be presented according to the communities (city and county) in which the 12 universities are located (sections 4.1. to 4.4.); we will also reflect on the overarching trends and patterns observed, while trying to corroborate them with previous studies (section 4.5).

Unfortunately, considering the small sample included in the study, we are unable to conduct more advanced statistical analyses as such endeavors would fail to reach conclusive results due to the small number of cases. However, this does not diminish the strength of our argument, as our cases (12 universities and four local communities) constitute a population by themselves (the best Romanian universities and their surrounding communities).

3 In the case of university senates, we included only those representatives that were elected from the professorial body (thus excluding student representatives).

4.1. Bucharest

In the case of Bucharest based universities, none of the highest executive positions (rector/president) are occupied by women, although some of the immediate lower ranking positions (vice rectors/presidents) are better divided between men and women (six from a total of 20 such positions are occupied by women). Only one senate president is a female, but this can be considered similar to an outlier as that person is a former minister of education and maintains strong political connections. In the case of deans, the situation is rather in favor of men; even so, the UMP CD makes an exception as two of its three deans are women.

Table 5a: Gender integration in Academic decision making positions (Bucharest)

Name	Rector (President)		Vice Rectors (Vice Presidents)		Senate President		Senate Members		Deans	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
UB	1	0	3	2	1	0	60 (68%)	28 (32%)	15	4
BUES	1	0	5	1	1	0	46 (64%)	26 (36%)	8	3
UMP CD	1	0	3	2	1	0	53 (77%)	16 (23%)	1	2
UPB	1	0	3	1	0	1	76 (86%)	12 (14%)	14	1
Total	4	0	14 (70%)	6 (30%)	3	1	235 (74%)	82 (26%)	38 (79%)	10 (21%)

The situation in the legislative bodies of the four universities does not differ from the executive: on average, around 26% of senate members are women.

Table 5b: Gender integration in Community decision making positions (Bucharest)

Mayor		Vice Mayor		Local Council	
M	F	M	F	M	F
1	0	2	0	43 (78%)	12 (22%)

The situation in the community seems to mimic that of the academia, as a similar percentage of female representation is achieved in the legislative, while no women managed to break the glass ceiling of executive positions.

4.2. Cluj-Napoca (Cluj)

The situation of women in universities from Cluj-Napoca is far from an ideal one. There are no female in rector or senate president positions and women are also far from reaching the same ratio as men in vice-rector positions. However, there are some positive developments in the case of the IH UMP and UASVM CN, as women have more dean positions or the same number of dean positions as men. Furthermore, their representation in the senate of these two universities is over 30%.

Table 6a: Gender integration in Academic decision making positions (Cluj-Napoca, Cluj)

Name	Rector (President)		Vice Rectors (Vice Presidents)		Senate President		Senate Members		Deans	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
BBU CN	1	0	8	2	1	0	72 (70%)	31 (30%)	19	2
UASVM CN	1	0	4	2	1	0	15 (58%)	11 (42%)	2	2
IH UMP	1	0	4	1	1	0	21 (68%)	10 (32%)	1	2
TU CN	1	0	5	0	1	0	49 (80%)	12 (20%)	12	1
Total	4	0	21 (81%)	5 (19%)	4	0	157 (71%)	64 (29%)	34 (83%)	7 (17%)

Table 6b: Gender integration in Community decision making positions (Cluj-Napoca, Cluj)

Mayor		Vice Mayor		Local Council		President of County Council		Vice Presidents of County Council		Members of the County Council	
M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
1	0	1	0	23 (85%)	4 (15%)	1	0	1	1	33 (89%)	4 (11%)

If the situation of women in the academia presented some positive aspects, there are no such developments at community level, as only one executive function is occupied by a woman, while female representation in the legislative is below 15% for both institutions.

According to the analysis presented above, it seems that Cluj based universities could in fact act as a role model for the local communities, as female are better represented in the case of the legislative and some of the lower executive functions of these educational institutions.

4.3. Iași (Iași)

Overall, the three universities from Iași present the same trend observed in Bucharest and Cluj: rector and senate president positions are all occupied by men, while vice-rector positions are only dominated by them (as some of these positions are occupied by women).

The situation of women in the university centered on medicine and pharmacy is once again distinguishable better: 65% of the senate members are female, while three of the four deans are of the same gender.

Table 7a: Gender integration in Academic decision making positions (Iași)

Name	Rector (President)		Vice Rectors (Vice Presidents)		Senate President		Senate Members		Deans	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
AICUI	1	0	6	1	1	0	40 (80%)	10 (20%)	15	0
GTP UMP	1	0	4	2	1	0	11 (35%)	20 (65%)	1	3
TUGAI	1	0	4	2	1	0	42 (88%)	6 (12%)	10	1
Total	3	0	14 (74%)	5 (26%)	3	0	95 (73%)	36 (27%)	26 (87%)	4 (13%)

Table 7b: Gender integration in Community decision making positions (Iași)

Mayor		Vice Mayor		Local Council		President of County Council		Vice Presidents of County Council		Members of the County Council	
M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
1	0	2	0	23 (85%)	4 (15%)	1	0	2	0	30 (83%)	6 (17%)

The favorable trend observed in the academia is once again not reflected by the community, as all executive positions are occupied by men, while women represent just above 15% of the legislative.

4.4. Timișoara (Timiș)

In the case of Timișoara/Timiș both the academia and the community are clearly dominated by males, as there are no women in executive positions and their representation in the legislative is around 16%.

Table 8a: Gender integration in Academic decision making positions (Timișoara/Timiș)

Name	Rector (President)		Vice Rectors (Vice Presidents)		Senate President		Senate Members		Deans	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
PUT	1	0	4	0	1	0	40 (83%)	8 (17%)	8 (80%)	2 (20%)

Table 8b: Gender integration in Community decision making positions (Timișoara/Timiș)

Mayor		Vice Mayor		Local Council		President of County Council		Vice Presidents of County Council		Members of the County Council	
M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
1	0	2	0	21 (78%)	6 (22%)	1	0	2	0	31 (84%)	6 (16%)

4.5. Further discussions

The overall situation of women in academia is far from an ideal one: in all 12 universities, the highest executive position (rector or president) is occupied by a male, while the percentage of vice rector (vice president) positions occupied by women ranges between 0 and 30%. At faculty level, male are also dominant in executive positions as more than 85% of the total number of deans are male. The situation of women in the highest legislative function (senate president) is also rather worrisome: only one out of 12 such positions is occupied by a woman, but in our opinion this is rather an outlier (due to the background of this particular senate president). Furthermore, only between 17% and 29% of the total number senate members (calculated for all universities located in a certain community) are females.

Giving the aforementioned empirical developments, it seems that universities present the same types of inequalities as other (public and private) institutions as the percentage of women in higher positions is far below than that of men (both in what we called executive and legislative positions or bodies). There are however some noticeable differences when we compare gender representation both within academia and between academia and community. If universities located in Bucharest and Timișoara have the

same male to female ratio in their senates as their respective communities (in local and county council), academic institutions from Cluj and Iași present a better integration of females in these functions than their local communities (the difference is higher than 10%, in favor of academia). Thus, we could say that although no academic institution can serve as a role model from the perspective of gender integration in executive positions, some of them could be able to offer a best practice example from the perspective of legislative functions.

Furthermore, the empirical data also allowed us to observe an unexpected aspect: universities that are focused on health issues (medicine and pharmacy) seem to provide a more suitable place for women as they are better integrated in some executive functions (deans, vice-rectors) and in the legislative (senate). However, these types of universities can be easily connected with the traditional roles allocated to women (those of taking care of things or nursing), while the other types of universities (especially the technical ones) can be seen as being suitable to more traditional male activities/roles (building things, exploring). Thus it would seem that women are better represented (or that gender integration approaches the standards of sustainable development) only in those academic sectors that can be connected with the traditional roles attributed to women. Such developments offer strong evidence that the type of discrimination proposed by 'role theory' exists in the academic environment. Unfortunately, even in these limited sectors which can be connected with the traditional roles 'attributed' to women, males are better represented at the top executive and legislative functions (rectors/presidents, vice-rectors/presidents and senate presidents), a fact which can point out the existence of 'glass escalator' phenomena.

Our current analysis corroborates previous findings and concerns expressed in the literature. For example, Monroe *et al.* (2008, pp. 215-233), based on interviews with 80 female faculty members argue that individual and institutional forms of discrimination (mostly of informal nature) against women faculty members still exist, while Carr *et al.* (2003, pp. 1007-1018) present substantial evidence for the existence of gender discrimination in academic medical careers (mainly the existence of a glass elevator and informal discrimination). Dinerman (1971, p. 253) claims that the representation of women in academia based institutions has reduced in time (fewer women occupied teaching positions) and Walters and le Roux (2008, pp. 49-73) showed that the gender remuneration pay gap affects women and that it also depends on the lower ratio of females in senior positions, their relatively younger age and underrepresentation in higher research output and qualifications categories. Dyer (2004) presents evidence for the existence of a glass ceiling in academia as well as a gender pay gap; furthermore she argues that both overt and subtle forms of gender discrimination bar women from tenure (she focusses on 19 cases of women who felt discriminated and appealed to the courts in order to obtain what was rightfully theirs).

Furthermore, Stratton *et al.* (2005, pp. 400-408) presented statistical evidence that the exposure to (perceived) gender discrimination and sexual harassment during undergraduate studies influenced students' future choices; albeit their evidence comes

from a medical schools, we believe that the same patterns apply in other types of universities – thus once students observe such developments in academia they are likely to perpetuate them in the community.

5. Conclusions

Despite our initial expectations, the argument that could be made in favor of universities as role models for societies is a rather weak one, as women are underrepresented both in the legislative functions and especially in executive functions that imply a higher degree of power. In the case of top executive functions, the access of women seems to be even more limited as the position implies more power. Universities are far from being an ideal model of gender integration and in their current situation they could not serve as role models for their local communities because the difference between the two (from a gender perspective) is rather insignificant (they are more alike than different). Even in the limited sample which we managed to compile, there is abundant evidence of three distinct discriminative practices that exist in academia, namely role theory, glass ceiling and the glass escalator.

Our study also presents some limitations, most important being the small sample on which we focused our attention. From this perspective, our study is an exploratory one (similar to a pilot study) as a bigger sample would be required in order to generalize our findings and conduct more convincing statistical analyses. Even so, we reiterate our major findings: with the exception of legislative positions in two of the four academic centers and limited aspects in universities with specializations traditionally attributed to women, academia is not in the position of serving as a role model of gender integration.

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