

# REPRESENTATIVE BUREAUCRACY IN ROMANIA? GENDER AND LEADERSHIP IN CENTRAL PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION\*

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## Abstract

This exploratory research is focused on two gender phenomena which can manifest in the public sphere (the glass ceiling and horizontal segregation), trying to connect these phenomena with the concept of representative bureaucracy in Romanian central public administration institutions.

Using 2003-2015 data covering central public administration institutions (ministries and other government offices/departments) the analysis shows that the overall situation of women in these decision-making positions has improved considerably in 2011, ensuring the desideratum of gender equity (and possible fertile ground for a representative bureaucracy). However, the sudden shift observed in the data between 2010 and 2011 might be an unintended result of austerity pay cuts as men in decision-making positions migrated to the private sector due to financial reasons.

Breaking down the data (according to the BEIS typology) provides (partial) evidence for the existence of sectorial segregation, as at the higher administrative ranks (level 1) there are more men than women in institutions with Basic functions (Government's Office, European Funds, Foreign Affairs, Internal Affairs, Justice, National Defense), while the reverse is true for Socio-cultural institutions (Culture, Education and Scientific Research, Employment, Family, Social Protection and Elderly, Health, Youth and Sport).

**Keywords:** central government, glass ceiling, cultural values, management/leadership.



## 1. Introduction

Female employees face multiple discriminatory phenomena resulting in (at least) two different forms of gender discrimination: (a) horizontal discrimination (e.g.: women and men are treated differently<sup>1</sup> at the same hierarchical level, some sectors or industries tend to be predominantly male or female) and (b) vertical discrimination (e.g.: the underrepresentation of women in upper management, the overrepresentation of women in precarious managerial positions, the greater opportunities for promotion enjoyed by men in female dominated professions). However, according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2008), the low level of representation of women in management positions, both in the public and private sectors, represents an inefficient use of human capital. Gender discrimination phenomena prevent both current and future generations from achieving their full potential, thus hindering socio-economic sustainable development (United Nations, 2014, p. 26).

This exploratory paper focuses on two interconnected gender phenomena which can manifest in the public sphere, namely the glass ceiling (the underrepresentation of female in upper managerial/leadership positions in public administration) and horizontal segregation (the fact that males and females tend to dominate different fields/sectors in the public sphere), trying to connect these phenomena with the concept of representative bureaucracy in Romanian central public administration institutions. After a brief inquiry into the causes of female discrimination (section 2), the paper will focus on the situation of female public sector decision makers, while also highlighting some of the benefits brought by equal participation (in section 3). Sections 4 and 5 are dedicated to methodological issues, data analysis and discussions, and the last section will present the conclusions of this research as well as some public policy recommendations for ensuring a representative bureaucracy.

## 2. Societal values, individual attitudes and female discrimination

Most gender discrimination phenomena (in the labor force in general and management/leadership in particular) can be explained by multiple contextual, personal, organizational and systemic factors which can be reduced to two main categories: societal values and individual attitudes. The Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (undated, pp. 7-9) offers as potential explanations for the underrepresentation of women in managerial positions: (a) women, unlike men, are most often required to balance both work and family demands, thus putting a strain on their professional life, and (b) working in male dominated industries restricts the hierarchical advancement perspectives of females due to male prejudices. On a similar note,

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<sup>1</sup> Different treatment can refer to professional evaluations, payment, not being considered for promotion opportunities, access to informal networks and mentorship, and so on.

Palmer and Simon argue that cultural and societal attitudes (especially regarding housework and childcare) are important obstacles for women trying to break the (political) glass ceiling (2008, p. 221), while Williams posits that the 'maternal barrier' (an umbrella term for the family obligations of women, often referring to childbearing and childcare, house chores, spouse care) is the most significant factor which hinders the ideal of a gender equal society (2003, pp. 1-14); furthermore, the fact that women are a priori assumed to have more family and child related obligations than men is in itself a societal value than can be considered a prejudice/stereotype. Norris and Inglehart also point out that culture can be an obstacle for equal representation, but they also argue that 'culture drives the success of women in elected office' (2001, p. 135); there is however a positive aspect, as attitudes toward females in public leadership roles can become more egalitarian (less biased) with time through a gradual process of demographic turnover (2001, p. 136).

The OECD goes beyond the idea of societal barriers and values by drawing attention that these are often institutionalized, under the form of discriminatory social institutions defined as 'formal and informal laws, social norms and practices that restrict or exclude women and consequently curtail their access to rights, justice, resources and empowerment opportunities' (OECD, 2014, p. 6). In this line of thought, although some social institutions can lead to beneficial social transformations and empower women, 'discriminatory social institutions have a domino effect on a woman's whole life cycle'; thus laws and public policies should move beyond their gender neutral phase and be designed and implemented with special consideration for gender issues and equality (OECD, 2014, p. 7).

Stoker, Van der Velde and Lammers (2012, pp. 31-42) analyze the organizational context and argue that the generally accepted stereotype of a manager is masculine, and that most employees prefer a man manager/leader; a similar view is expressed by Kolb as: he argues that 'leadership continues to be described in stereotypically masculine terms' (1999, p. 305). As a result, women's advancement into managerial/leadership positions is often interrupted or limited by the discrepancies perceived between women's characteristics and the characteristics (usually men's characteristics) traditionally correlated with managerial success (Terborg and Ilgen, 1975, pp. 352-376; Baroudi and Truman, 1992, pp. 4-5; Latu *et al.*, 2011). Women are generally perceived as being empathic, intuitive, lacking aggression, emotional, dependent, oriented towards group, not competitive, less ambitious, devoid of entrepreneurial spirit and as lacking the desire to be in a leadership position; by associating feminine characteristics with women and masculine characteristics with men (and successful leaders), women's chances to advance on the organizational ladder are diminished. Due to the existence of surface/alleged differences (incongruities) between female gender roles and leadership roles, women are less favorably perceived as potential occupants of leadership positions when compared to male counterparts (Eagly and Karau, 2002, p. 573).

Furthermore, once females assume a leadership role that entails masculine values (act as the type of leaders they are expected to be) they tend to be evaluated in a negative way (Eagly and Karau, 2002), being often considered too aggressive or authoritarian. Okimoto and Brescoll highlight similar disparities as power seeking behaviors (real or perceived) manifested by women in the political sphere were negatively sanctioned by potential electors (due to moral-emotional reactions), while the same behaviors manifested by males were not (2010). On the other hand, in practice, males and females often adopt different leadership styles; during a meta-analysis of existing research on male and female leadership styles, Eagly and Johnson found evidence that 'women tended to adopt a more democratic or participative style and a less autocratic or directive style than did men' (1990, p. 223). Other differences relate to how male and female managers use their time: for example, female public administration managers tend to spend less time with internal management activities and networking relationships than their male counterparts (Jacobson, Kelleher Palus and Bowling, 2010, pp. 491-499). Tibus (2010, pp. 743-757) also argues that female business owners are more likely to adopt transformational leadership as opposed to the transactional one favored by men. The adoption of transformational leadership can be further connected with public administration performance (Hințea, 2015), thus an argument could be made that the inclusion of more females in public sector decision-making positions might increase institutional performance.

Masterful (agentic) women are frowned upon during the selection process (Phelan, Moss-Racusin and Rudman, 2008) as evaluators seem to change hiring criteria away from competence and motivation (where these types of women are positively evaluated) to criteria where they are under-evaluated (such as social skills<sup>2</sup>). Within groups, members seem to favor men when selecting or evaluating leaders even if the behaviors of those selected or evaluated (males and females) are similar (Forsyth, Heiney and Wright, 1997, p. 98). According to the same authors 'these biases result from discrepancies between individuals' stereotypes about women and their implicit prototypes of leaders' (Forsyth, Heiney and Wright, 1997, p. 98) and empirical evidence proved that cognitive biases and individual expectations have an effect on the reactions and attitudes of followers.

Rudman and Kilianski distinguish between two types of attitudes toward female authority: implicit ones (men are usually connected with high authority and women with low authority) and explicit ones; even if women manifest less explicit forms of prejudice toward female authority than men, the implicit attitudes of the two genders are similarly negative (2000, p. 1315). Beside the gender of employees, attitudes toward females in decision making positions can also differ according to

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2 The distinction could also be made between hard skills and soft skills: an evaluator could/would change his/her criteria from hard skills (which are more easy to quantify and compare objectively) to soft skills (where biases are more prone to exist) when tasked with assessing a female candidate.

occupational traits, previous experiences (with female leaders) and age; Arkorful, Doe and Agyemang found evidence that employees from private organizations, employees with previous negative interactions with female managers, male employees and older employees express negative attitudes (are less open) to female superiors than employees from public organizations, employees with previous positive interactions with female managers, female employees and younger employees (2014, p. 241). More positive attitudes regarding female leaders were connected with general empathy toward diverse ethnic or cultural groups (Cundiff and Komarraju, 2008), thus being conducive to a more inclusive work environment.

Individual attitudes toward male and female leaders are deeply entrenched in the national culture and will differ from country to country and both between and within larger cultural spaces, but they tend to be stable in time. For example, in what could be easily considered a traditional national culture (in Pakistan), Ali, Khan and Munaf did not find any differences between the attitudes of men and women toward female managers, but rather within the male sample as men coming from families with a working mother manifested more positive attitudes towards female managers (2013, p. 373). However, a longitudinal survey<sup>3</sup> of Greek middle managers showed that attitudes toward female leaders are stable in time and difficult to change, even if (in time) more females occupied managerial positions (Galanaki, Papalexandris and Halikias, 2009, pp. 495-496). According to Hoyt and Burnette, 'traditional attitudes toward women in authority significantly predicted a pro-male gender bias in leader evaluations (and progressive attitudes predicted a pro-female gender bias)' (2013, p. 1306); as such, it can be hypothesized that traditional societies are more prone to maintain the status quo (create contexts in which fewer women can be found in leadership positions), while we may assume that more liberal/progressive societies will allow/nurture further improvements in this area, leading to a more equal representation in time.

### **3. Women in public administration: performance issues and current developments**

A better ratio of women in the public sphere could lead to better policy (and socio-economic) outcomes for the citizenry as a higher participation of women in politics can be connected with reduced and more controlled corruption (Dollar, Fisman and Gatti, 2001), at least in more democratic (institutionally sound) contexts (Esarey and Chirillo, 2013, pp. 361-389). Women in public offices (in the US Congress in this case) manage to secure more funds from the federal budget than males, thus providing further incentives for local constituencies to elect female representatives in deliberative bodies (Anzia and Berry, 2011, pp. 478-493). At the local level, women city

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<sup>3</sup> The survey was initially conducted in 1990 and then repeated in 2006.

councilors seem to offer more to their communities than male councilors because they tend to spend more time doing constituency work (Thomas, 1992).

Compared to their male counterparts, women city managers seemed to be more willing to incorporate citizen input in decision making (an idea often brought forward by the proponents of governance) while also showing an overall greater concern and interest for community involvement (Fox and Schuhmann, 1999, pp. 231-242). Similar findings are reported for executive elected offices as women mayors lean toward congeniality and cooperation, while male mayors are more willing to emphasize hierarchy and hierarchical power (Tolleson Rinehart, 1991). The presence of more females in US federal agencies was connected with improved organizational performance (D'Agostino, 2015). Other benefits of better female representation in the public sector can be derived from the theory of passive representation<sup>4</sup>, which argues that 'a demographically diverse public sector workforce (...) will lead to policy outcomes that reflect the interests of all groups represented' (Bradbury and Kellough, 2008, p. 697); as such, a higher ratio of females in public administration (especially in decision-making positions) would generate more gender sensitive public policies (Dolan, 2000).

Grissom, Nicholson-Crotty and Keiser (2012) found evidence that: (a) women are less likely to leave a position (and the public sector) than their male colleagues as they are more satisfied; (b) employees (teachers in this case) generally prefer to work for a male manager, and (c) while female employee results are similar under both male and female supervisors, male working under female supervisors tend to have a lower job satisfaction and a higher turnover rate. Analyzing 118 U.S. federal regulatory organizations, Smith and Monaghan (2013) found evidence that 'women are expected to get into leadership positions in organizations working in 'feminine' policy areas and where a woman holds the top level of leadership' and that 'the proportion of women in upper-level leadership positions is expected to increase in agencies with a higher likelihood of failure when such agencies are less visible', thus underlying the existence of two different gender discrimination phenomena: the glass cliff and vertical segregation. Even if/when women manage to break through the glass cliff they might face another obstacle, namely a glass cliff as female leaders 'are placed in precarious positions setting them up for failure and pushing them over the edge' (Sabharwal, 2015, p. 399; Haslam and Ryan, 2008). Women tend to work in a disproportionately large number in education and health related branches of the public sector, while males are predominant in core administrative and defense institutions (Cribb, Disney and Sibieta, 2014, p. 2). Women from the public sector might be in

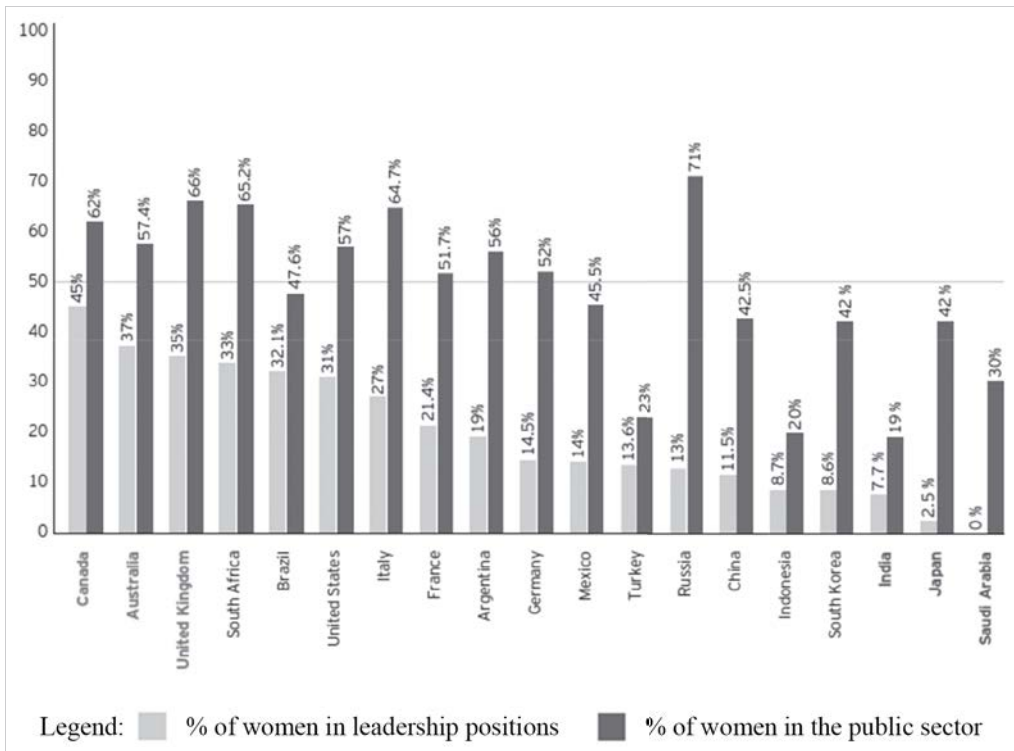
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4 Passive representation (also known as representative bureaucracy) is often brought up along, in addition or in opposition to active representation (i.e. elected officials which represent the interest of their constituency) in order to further legitimize governments or as a mean for improving the performance of public administration.

some instances even more discriminated than in the private one, as their access to certain positions that involve hierarchic responsibility (authority over a team) is more hindered (Alber, 2013, p. 129).

Reid, Miller and Kerr use a database obtained from the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (the data is representative at the national level for the US) and observe that: (a) women are underrepresented in upper administrative and professional functions in national agencies, thus suggesting the presence of a glass ceiling in regulatory and distributive agencies; (b) women are better represented in redistributive agencies (but even in this case their representation in upper management is below that of males); and (c) women are less present in positions that offer superior remuneration (2004, p. 377).

The statistical data available does not present a very encouraging picture, as females still seem to be underrepresented in public sector leadership/managerial positions, even if they represent most of the workforce. In G20 countries for example, although women account for around 45% of all public sector positions (almost half of the workforce), they occupy less than 20% of leadership positions in this sector (Figure 1).

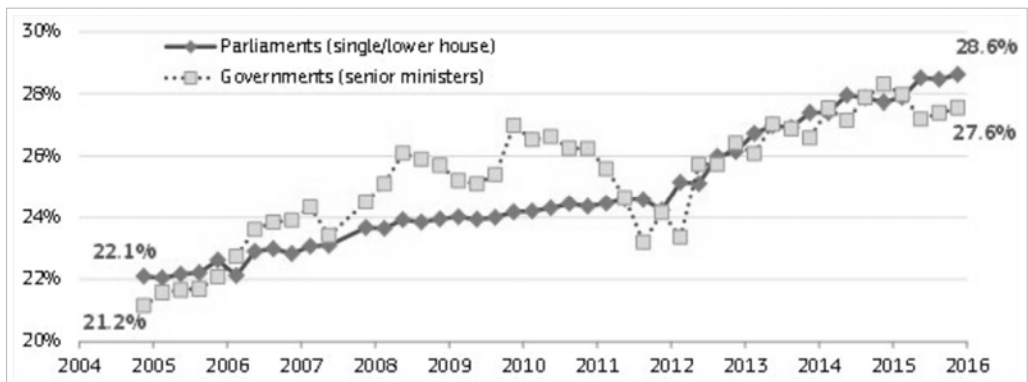


**Figure 1:** Women in leadership positions in G20

**Source:** Ernst & Young, 2013, p. 10

In EU Member States, at the first two administrative levels (ministries and other governmental departments), women occupy only 36% of leadership positions, while the two genders are equally represented (at least 40% of higher level positions in central public administration are occupied by each gender) only in eleven countries (European Commission, 2013, p. 31).

Although equal participation of women and men in decision-making is considered to be a ‘matter of justice, human rights and good governance’ by the European Commission (2016, p. 24) women continue to be underrepresented in both the legislative and executive higher echelon of EU Member States (Figure 2) as they represent only 28.5%<sup>5</sup> of single/lower houses of parliaments and 27.4% of senior ministers. Furthermore, there is considerable heterogeneity between Member States both regarding the aforementioned legislative and executive positions.



**Figure 2:** Women in national parliaments and governments across the EU (% , October 2004 to November 2015)

**Source:** European Commission, 2016, p. 24

Beside the fact that women are underrepresented in upper technical and administrative positions in the public sector, the leaders of these organizations tend to ignore these developments (Vaz, 2013). Furthermore, the adoption of more transparent hiring practices and the implementation of formal equal treatment policies can create the impression that the glass ceiling has been reduced (Vaz, 2013, p. 765), even if more harm is done via unregulated informal channels.

#### 4. Methodology: data and classifications

Decision-making positions in national administrations are defined as positions that allow taking or influencing a decision within a domain or organization (at hierarchical level) (European Commission, 2010, p. 3). The BEIS typology is used in or-

<sup>5</sup> According to the European Commission (2016) if the current trends continue, gender parity will not be achieved before 2051.

der to classify decision-making positions in national (and European) administration (European Commission, 2010); the typology classifies ministries in four basic categories: Basic functions, Economy functions, Infrastructure functions, and Socio-cultural functions (Table 1 presents the Romanian ministries included in each category in 2009 and 2015).

**Table 1:** Romanian national administration according to the BEIS typology (2009 vs. 2015)

BEIS type	Ministries included in 2009	Ministries included in 2015
<b>Basic functions</b>	Government's Office	Government's Office
	Ministry of: Defense; Foreign Affairs; Interior and Administrative Reform; Justice.	Ministry of: European Funds; Foreign Affairs; Internal Affairs; Justice; National Defense.
<b>Economy</b>	Ministry of: Agriculture and Rural Development; Economy; Public Finance; Small and Medium-Sized Companies, Trade, Tourism and Liberal Professions; Tourism.	Ministry of: Agriculture and Rural Development; Economy, Trade and Tourism; Energy, Small and Medium Enterprises and Business; Public Finance; Regional Development and Public Administration.
	Ministry of: Communications and Information Technology; Development, Public Works and Housing; Environment and Sustainable Development; Transport.	Ministry of: Environment, Water and Forests; Information Society; Transport.
<b>Socio-cultural functions</b>	Ministry of: Culture and Religious Affairs; Education and Research; Employment, Family and Equal Opportunities; Public Health; Youth and Sports.	Ministry of: Culture; Education and Scientific Research; Employment, Family, Social Protection and Elderly; Health; Youth and Sport.

**Source:** Adapted after European Commission (2010, p. A-23; undated, p. A-11)

High ranking administrative positions (excluding the minister and other politically appointed functions/officials) are further divided in two levels: level 1 positions entail more influence/power (and refer to secretary general, deputy secretary general, general director, deputy general director and higher civil servant) while level 2 positions (the level below level 1 as defined by the ministry) entail less influence and power (include director and deputy director functions) in central public administration (European Commission, 2010).

The data used for this study covers the 2003-2015 period and includes all Romanian national administration institutions (ministries and the Government's Office). The analysis conducted takes into account both the BEIS typology and the two administrative levels. All the data was collected in July 2015 from the European Commission (undated) and then updated/verified in March 2016.

Table 2 presents the number of ministries included in the analysis (which ranges from 24 in 2003 to 14) as well as cases for which data was not available (the most problematic year is 2003 when for 11 ministries there is no data, but in the other years data is available for almost all ministries).

**Table 2:** Data coverage of Romanian national administration institutions

Year	Total number of ministries		Basic functions		Economy		Infrastructure		Socio-cultural functions	
	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B
2003	24	13	8	4	6	3	4	2	6	4
2004	14	14	5	5	3	3	2	2	4	4
2005	14	14	5	5	3	3	2	2	4	4
2006	14	14	5	5	3	3	2	2	4	4
2007	16	16	5	5	3	3	4	4	4	4
2008	16	16	5	5	3	3	4	4	4	4
2009	19	18	5	5	5	5	4	4	5	4
2010	19	16	5	5	5	4	4	3	5	4
2011	16	16	5	5	4	4	3	3	4	4
2012	17	17	6	6	4	4	3	3	4	4
2013	18	18	6	6	4	4	3	3	5	5
2014	18	18	6	6	4	4	3	3	5	5
2015	19	19	6	6	5	5	3	3	5	5

Legend: A = covered; B= with data

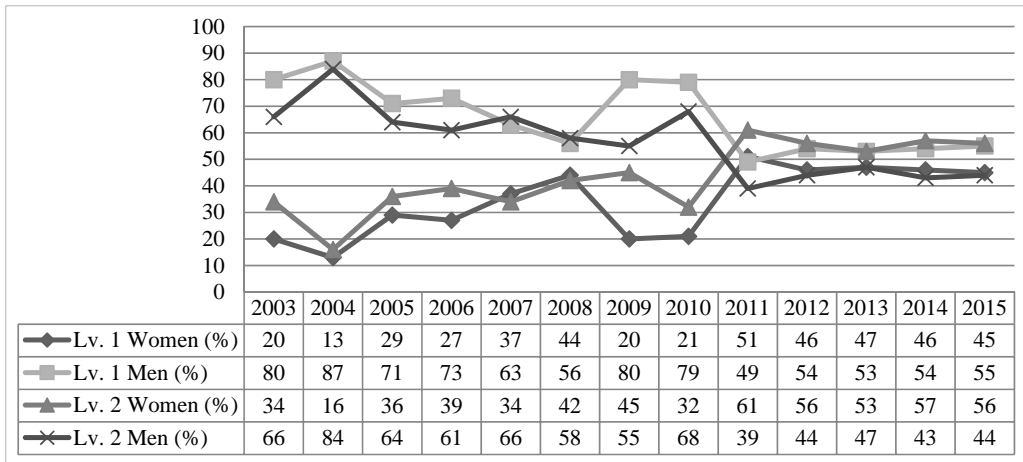
Source: Adapted after European Commission (undated) data

## 5. Results and further discussions

The total data for all Romanian central public administration decision-making positions (Figure 3) shows some peculiar trends over time. Between 2003 and 2010, men occupied the vast majority of decision-making positions at both levels, being highly concentrated at level 1 (positions which entail more influence/power). However, male dominance in decision-making positions ceased abruptly in 2011, from 79% in 2010 to 49% in 2011 (at level 1) and from 68% to 39% (at level 2). After 2011 the ratio remained somewhat constant, as each gender occupied more than 40% at each level (reaching a form of gender equality in decision-making positions). In fact, from 2011 onward, women occupied more than 50% of level 2 functions (director and deputy director). These developments could be hailed as a sign that Romanian central public administration institutions finally managed to ameliorate the glass ceiling, ensuring better passive representation or representative bureaucracy, but contextual factors must also be taken into account (especially the financial crisis which led to austerity and structural reforms).

The effects of the financial crisis and the looming threat of a fiscal crisis forced the Romanian government to engage in an agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in 2009 and further promote austerity measures and structural reforms. As such, the measures agreed with the IMF included public sector pay cuts<sup>6</sup> which were first enforced in April 2009; in August 2009 further pay cuts were announced, and employees were required to take two week of unpaid leave (between October and December 2009) (European Public Service Union, undated, p. 7). One year later

<sup>6</sup> These cuts referred to basic wages, as well as the elimination or reduction of bonuses and additional payments (cuts in overtime), especially for the higher administrative echelons.



**Figure 3:** Women and men in national administration (total)

**Source:** Adapted after European Commission (undated) data

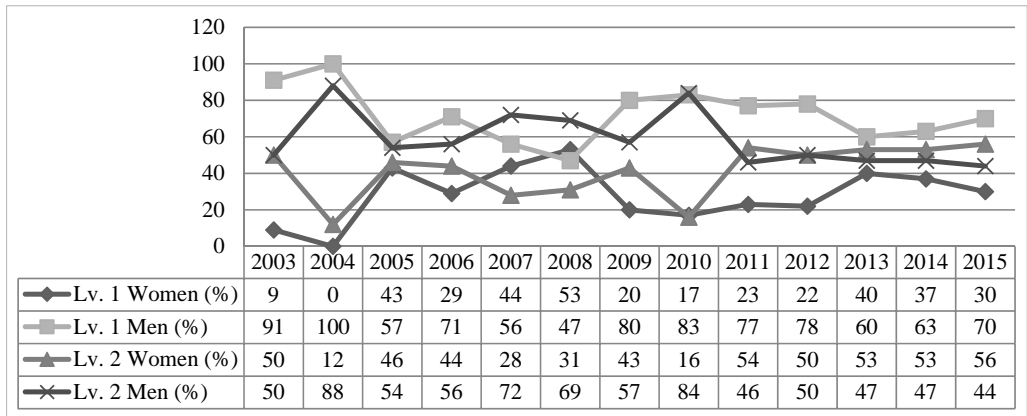
(in May 2010) a temporary (from July to December 2010) 25% cut in public sector pay was introduced<sup>7</sup>; however, the 25% pay cut was less temporary than expected, as a new law on public sector pay was enacted in 2010, wages were frozen and the wage cut imposed in 2010 was only restored by the end of 2012, with the intervention of the Judiciary (European Public Service Union, 2016, pp. 33-34). In 2013, 2014 and 2015 public sector wages mostly remained at previous levels (with few sectorial exceptions) or were marginally increased, which means that the average wage in the public sector is now lower than in the private sector.

From the perspective of wage cuts, the data presented in Figure 3 might signal a different development than a desirable amelioration of the public sector glass ceiling: the gender parity achieved between 2010 and 2011 could have been generated not by gender sensitive policies and practices, but by a massive exit from the public sector of men, dissatisfied with their financial remuneration (especially since pay and benefits cuts often targeted the higher ranks).

In the case of central public administration institutions with Basic functions (Figure 4), men still occupied the majority of level 1 decision-making positions even after 2010, while women occupy more than 50% of level 2 positions since 2011. Furthermore, in this category of central institutions, the ratio of level 1 functions occupied by women was 0 in 2004, and it started to regress, from 50% in 2013 to 30% in 2015.

For Economy (type) central public administration institutions, some shifts are visible even from 2010, when women started to occupy more level 2 positions than men

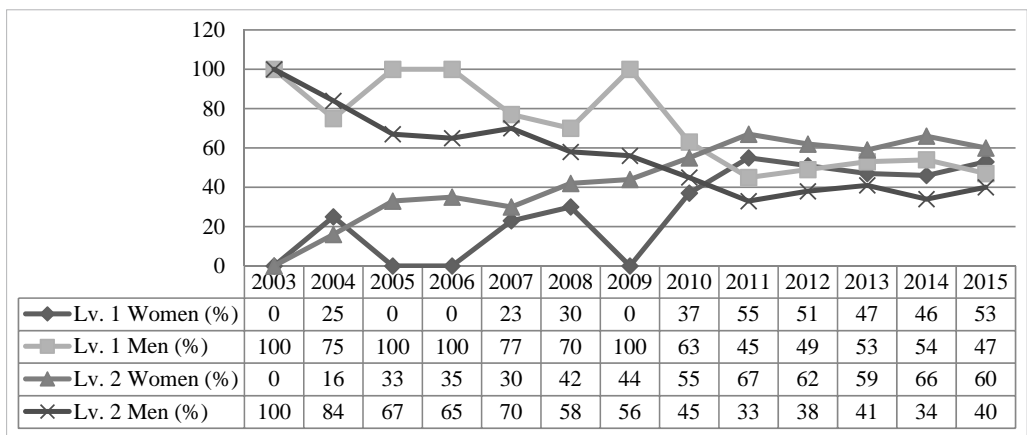
<sup>7</sup> As such, in public administration and defense, gross earnings fell by 27.1% between July 2008 and July 2010 (gross monthly earnings dropped from 3,156 lei to 2,914 lei) (European Public Service Union, undated, pp. 36-37).



**Figure 4:** Women and men in national administration (BEIS: Basic functions)

**Source:** Adapted after European Commission (undated) data

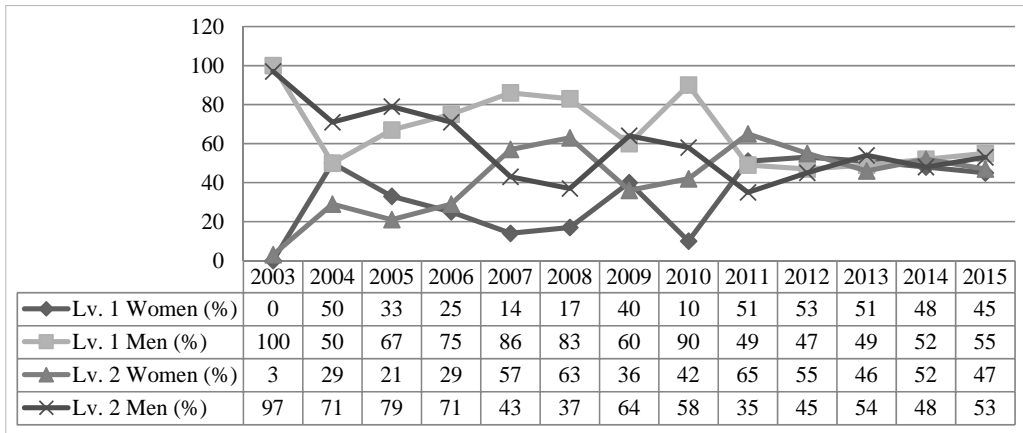
(Figure 5). There is also a considerable improvement in the case of higher (level 1) positions after 2010, but there is no consistent pattern as the ratio continued to shift. The situation is more interesting for the pre-2010 period, when women are systematically underrepresented in these functions (0% in 2003, 2005, 2006 and 2009, and under 30% for other years).



**Figure 5:** Women and men in national administration (BEIS: Economy)

**Source:** Adapted after European Commission (undated) data

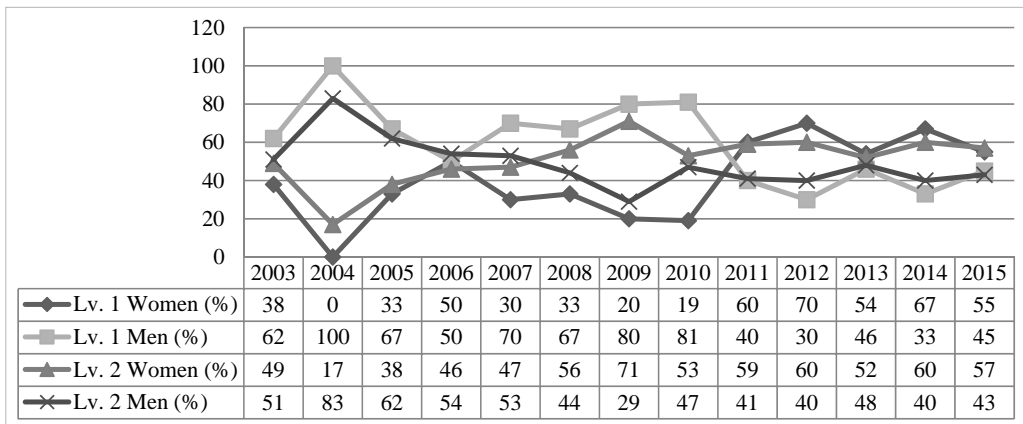
Figure 6 presents the distribution of administrative functions in Infrastructure related Romanian ministries and governmental departments. Although women were considerably underrepresented in level 1 decision-making positions until 2010, this trend was diminished from 2011 as both men and women are equally represented. The two genders are on equal footing in level 2 positions since 2010, although women also held more positions than men in 2007 and 2008.



**Figure 6:** Women and men in national administration (BEIS: Infrastructure)

**Source:** Adapted after European Commission (undated) data

Central public administration institutions with Socio-cultural functions seem to have been more gender sensitive, as men and women were approximately equally represented in level 2 decision-making positions since 2006 (Figure 7), while women have held more positions at level 1 than men since 2011.



**Figure 7:** Women and men in national administration (BEIS: Socio-cultural functions)

**Source:** Adapted after European Commission (undated) data

Two types of central public administration organizations merit further discussions regarding male and female representation in decision-making positions, namely those tasked with Basic and Socio-cultural functions as males and females seem to dominate higher ranking administrative positions. The first type includes the Government's Office and organizations tasked with European funds, foreign affairs, internal affairs, justice, and national defense functions, and in this case men occupy the majority of level 1 positions since 2009. The second type includes organizations

tasked with culture, education, scientific research, employment, family, social protection, elderly, health, youth and sport, and women occupy most level 1 and level 2 functions since 2011 (2008 in the case of level 2). These trends seem to indicate a form of horizontal segregation as the domains in which males and females dominate higher administrative functions overlap with their traditional stereotypical roles (of protectors/providers or nurturers/caretakers) (Cribb, Disney and Sibieta, 2014). Furthermore, these patterns can only be observed for Basic and Socio-cultural organizations, as in the case of Economy and Infrastructure related organizations the situation is more equilibrated after 2011.

## **6. Conclusions and policy recommendations**

Even if men occupied the vast majority of all decision-making positions at both levels, being highly concentrated at level 1 (positions which entail more influence/power) between 2003 and 2010, their dominance has ceased abruptly in 2011. Since then, the ratio remains constant and equitable, as each gender occupies more than 40% at each level (reaching a form of gender equality in decision-making positions). Thus, it could be argued that the Romanian public administration has taken some steps in the direction of a representative bureaucracy, strengthening passive representation.

However, the shift between 2010 and 2011 might not necessarily be the result of gender sensitive policies and practices, but an unintended outcome of the austerity measures and structural reforms implemented as a response to the financial crisis. Men, dissatisfied with their financial remuneration (especially since pay and benefits cuts often targeted the higher ranks they had previously occupied) possibly left these organizations for better wages in the private sector, clearing the path for women. Unfortunately, although the evidence is 'contextual', this might also signal the existence of a glass cliff in Romanian central public administration as women only managed to break through the glass ceiling, in a general unfavorable setup during a crisis period, on the background of institutional uncertainty.

The means to achieve equal representation in decision-making positions are rather diverse, ranging from individual level actions to gender sensitive formal and informal work practices and policies. From an individual perspective Palmer and Simon (2008, p. 221) promote informal mentoring as a factor that could increase the representation of women in managerial (especially political) positions. Successful female managers (that reached above the glass ceiling) usually try to increase their cultural capital in order to negotiate with male dominated networks, and maintain their high status positions via personal improvements (such as education or by modifying their speech and behavioral patterns), while men appeal to individualism and gender ideology to ensure and maintain high status positions (Davies-Netzley, 1998, pp. 339-335). Connell (2006, pp, 837-849) refers to embedding gender equity policies in all aspects of organizational life, meshing such policies with other experiences and offering both formal and informal support from the top. However, revolutionary measures

tend to scare people and cause high amounts of resistance (from organizations and members), while small wins (via diagnosis, dialogue and experimentation) focused on 'incremental changes aimed at biases so entrenched in the system that they're not even noticed until they're gone' (Meyerson and Fletcher, 2000, p. 128) represent the true keys and means for surpassing the glass ceiling (pp. 127-136). Thus, incremental measures seem to be more suitable (as opposed to abrupt changes such as what happened in Romanian central public institutions between 2010 and 2011) if we take into account the specific bureaucratic, traditionalistic and reticent nature of public sector organizations.

If the aim of future national public policies will target the creation of a truly representative bureaucracy, which can complement the benefits of active representation, decision-makers should take into account the aforementioned recommendations derived from the literature.

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