

THE INFLUENCE OF GENDER POLICIES ON LEADERSHIP IN CENTRAL PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION OF ROMANIA

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Abstract: *The present research focuses on two interconnected gender phenomena which are often manifested in public sector: the glass ceiling and horizontal segregation, trying to establish a connection between the presence and evolution of these concepts in Central Public Administration of Romania and the implementation of gender policies and national legislation. The methodology of research consists of an exploratory study conducted using 2003-2017 data gathered from Central Public Administration institutions (ministries and subordinated institutions) concerning women in decision-making positions and uses BEIS typology, showing the influence of gender policies implemented by Romanian Governments from the reference period. The study's results showed that the situation of women in decision-making positions has improved starting with 2011 when the dominance of men occupying both level 1 (positions which involve more power) and level 2 leadership positions has stopped. The data showed the existence of sectorial segregation because at higher administrative levels, men were better represented than women. From 2011 until the present, the gender ratio remained constant and equitable, because each gender occupied more than 40% of public functions at each level. This study showed that in the Central Public Administration of Romania women managed to break the glass ceiling and a form of gender equality in the core of the administration has been reached.*

Keywords: *leadership, gender, glass ceiling, horizontal segregation*

JEL Classification: *J16, J18, K38*

1. INTRODUCTION

The position of women in society has changed during the last decades and more and more women are now occupying positions with power of decision inside states' administration and their qualities as leaders are starting to be recognized. In the past, women had their very well defined roles into the family and only some occupations were considered suitable for them. Even if women succeeded to break the barriers imposed by societies concerning their gender role, the position of women is still not equal with men's position in terms of payment, time, work field and power. During their career, women struggle with many forms of discrimination. Female employees are not equally paid as their male counterparts, they work harder in order to be named in positions with power of decision, they are evaluated in a more severe way, have fewer opportunities to be

promoted in leadership positions and they are often perceived negatively because they violate their gender role.

Women struggle with two forms of discrimination in their workplace. Horizontal discrimination refers to the situation when women are treated differently than men, in terms of payment, promotions, professional evaluations or when it comes to access leadership positions. Another aspect that shows this type of discrimination is the separation of occupations in feminine and masculine fields. Public administration is considered a feminine sector while engineering, construction or automobile field are supposed to be masculine sectors. Vertical discrimination refers to the fact that women are underrepresented in positions with high power of decision or in upper management of organizations and overrepresented in medium and low management positions. Public administration of Romania is a sector where women are well represented but mostly in positions of medium and low management (Macarie & Moldovan, 2012) showing that vertical discrimination is spread among Romanian female civil servants.

The present study analyses the situation of women in decision-making positions from Central Public Administration of Romania in connection with two gender concepts: the glass ceiling and horizontal segregation. These phenomena are present in public sector, therefore, an analysis of the evolution of women in leadership positions from this sector should establish if women managed to break the glass ceiling and succeeded to reach positions on high levels of management. The presence and evolution of these concepts in the Central Public Administration of Romania could show the impact of gender policies and national legislation over women's situation and over the gender gap.

2. METHODOLOGY OF RESEARCH

The research methodology consists of an exploratory study regarding women in decision-making positions from Central Public Administration of Romania using BEIS typology. A statistical analysis of the men and women occupying leadership positions from ministries and subordinated institutions in 2003-2017 periods has been realized in order to create a clear picture of women's positions in the Central Public Administration of Romania. The statistical analysis was realized using data collected in 2017, from official documents from the European Commission, the European Institute for Gender Equality and the Ministry of Labor and Social Justice of Romania.

The main purpose of the study is to establish if gender policies implemented by Romanian Government had a positive influence over the evolution of women in decision-making positions and if women's situation from Central Public Administration has improved from 2003 until present.

The main objectives of this exploratory study are:

O1: The analysis of women's situation from Central Public Administration in order to establish if they managed to break the glass ceiling and accede in administrative positions of level 1.

O2: The analysis of women's evolution in administrative positions of level 1 and 2 in order to observe the presence of horizontal segregation within public administration.

We started our research from the following hypothesis:

H1: Female civil servants from Central Public Administration have managed to break the glass ceiling and accede on positions with high power of decision.

H2: Horizontal segregation phenomenon is present in Romanian public administration because on level 1 decision-making positions men are better represented.

We used data regarding men and women occupying leadership positions from ministries and subordinated institutions (senior civil servants) using BEIS typology. The decision-making positions which have been analyzed in the study were the ones mentioned in the European's Commission online database (COM) on gender balance in decision-making positions. The database was created in 2003 to centralize information about men and women who are in leadership positions in political, judicial, public administration, business and finance, social partners and NGOs areas. The data used in the study concerned only the public administration field.

Romanian national administration, according to BEIS typology, is structured in:

- **Basic Functions:** Government's Office, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of National Defence, Ministry of Relation with Parliament, Ministry for Romanians Abroad,
- **Economy:** Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Ministry of Business Environment, Commerce and Entrepreneurship, Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Public Finance, Ministry of Regional Development, Public Administration and European Funds, Ministry of Tourism,
- **Infrastructure:** Ministry for Communication and Information Society, Ministry of Energy, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Transport, Ministry of Waters and Forests,
- **Socio-cultural functions:** Ministry of Culture and National Identity, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Labour and Social Justice, Ministry of National Education, Ministry for Public Consultation and Social Dialogue, Ministry of Research and Innovation, Ministry of Youth and Sport. (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2017).

The administrative positions at national level excluding the minister and other politically appointed officials are divided into: *level 1 administrators* which include all administrative (non-political) positions from the head of the ministry down to the level of head of directorate or similar (a directorate is a major section within the ministry) and *level 2 administrators* which include all the positions below the head of directorate down to the level of head of division/department (a division/department is the first level of organization below the directorate). In Romania's case, level 1 administrators are the positions of Secretary General, Deputy Secretary General, Director General, Deputy Director General) and level 2 administrators are the considered the Director Deputy and Director (European Institute for Gender Quality, 2017).

3. MAIN FACTORS WHICH INFLUENCE WOMEN'S CAREER

There are many factors that influence the evolution of female employees. Even if countries have adjusted their legislation and gender has become an important objective for public policies, factors like culture, stereotypes, the division of societies into

masculine and feminine cultures and the way people apprehend women's roles, affect women's careers, their chances of promotion and accession to leadership positions.

The glass ceiling is a concept which must be taken into account when analyzing the relationship between leadership and gender, female employee's situation or gender inequalities. The concept refers to the existence of invisible barriers which women face when they want to occupy leadership positions. These barriers are an obstacle in women's promotion in decision-making positions. As a result, women must work harder than men in order to proof their aptitudes and competencies and break the glass ceiling (Morrison, White & Van Versol, 1987). Morrison et. al (1987) affirmed that the glass ceiling is "a transparent barrier that kept women from rising above a certain level in corporations. . . . It applies to women as a group who are kept from advancing higher because they are women". When the presence of women in a work field is high, it could be considered that they are situated above the glass ceiling, having promotion opportunities, if not, they are situated under the glass ceiling with low chances of occupying leadership positions (Baxter & Wright, 2000). When the number of women occupying positions with power of decision is raising and the representation of women and men on these positions is almost equal, the glass ceiling is broken and women's position is starting to change.

Even if women manage to break the glass ceiling, they often face another form of discrimination: horizontal segregation. This concept explains the situation when women and men dominate different areas in the public sector. Horizontal segregation shows that women are concentrated on fields like education or health, which are considered to be "feminized" and men prefer areas like defense, infrastructure or the core administration (Cribb et al., 2014, p.2). Horizontal segregation also shows that women predominantly occupy leadership positions from inferior levels of management (e.g. head of office) and men are concentrated in positions with high power of decision (Moldovan, 2016).

Research on leadership and gender showed that most female managers could be found in medium or low positions of management, without high power of decision and only a few of them managed to really break the glass ceiling (Cole, 2004, p.106) and gain access to positions from top management. This situation could have different causes such as the stereotypes about the feminine and masculine gender roles, the lack of benefits for female employees who have children or are divorced or in a vulnerable situation or the masculine values which dominate the organizational cultures (Macarie et al., 2011, p.147).

The cultural factors and stereotypes could influence women's promotion in decision-making positions and their possibility of breaking the glass ceiling (Palmer & Simon, 2008, p.221). These factors divided societies into masculine and feminine cultures (Stoker, et al., 2012, pp.31-42) which assumed that men and women should behave in certain manners, according to their gender roles. The violation of their gender roles could create prejudice against women. These factors influenced the perception of women in leadership positions and made them be sometimes perceived in a negative manner (Eagly & Karau, 2002) affecting inclusively their possibility of acceding in decision-making positions.

Feminine and masculine values assumed that women should be kind, nurturing, motivating, relationship-oriented, caring and men should be assertive, trustful, decided, competitive and controlling (Abele, 2003; Bakan, 1966; Fiske & Stevens, 1993). The masculine traits were considered necessary for the act of leading and a leader's image was automatically associated with a man (Eagly & Karau, 2002). This situation could affect women who must work twice as hard than men in order to manage to occupy positions with high power of decision and must demonstrate that they are capable to lead at least as well as men do it.

The fact that masculine values are still predominating the organizations is not just a consequence of social values or prejudices against women, but it also could be caused by the lack of practical experience, that women have regarding leadership. Organizations are dominated by cultures made by men for men, a situation that directly affects women's chances of success to reach leadership positions. In an organization where masculine values are dominant, it is difficult for women to integrate and behave in discordance with their gender roles, in order to be accepted (Macarie, et al., 2011, p.147).

In Western societies, masculine values still predominate, which led to the assumption that women are inferior to men. The masculine values are associated with autocratic leadership style, while feminine values characterize the democratic or participative leadership styles. As studies showed that the participative leadership style is more effective, men should adopt feminine values into their leading act or accept a greater presence of women in positions with high power of decision. (Macarie et al., 2011, p.148).

In order to study leadership in public administration, women's presence in decision-making positions should be analyzed and conclude if gender policies results are being reflected in the public administration of Romania. It is important to observe the evolution of women in positions with power of decision and their concentration in higher, medium or low levels of management in order to establish if in Romanian public administration women are well represented, if they occupy positions from the superior levels of management which suppose high power of decision or if they are only present in a large number in the inferior levels of management.

4. THE EVOLUTION OF GENDER POLICIES IN ROMANIA

European Union member states have focused in the past years on policies which should eliminate discrimination of all kind between genders and should place women in a better position on their work life. Equal representation in positions with high power of decision is a fundamental condition for a solid and efficient democracy and European countries make considerable efforts in order to reduce the disparities between women and men on all plans. Several EU Member States have strengthened their commitment to gender equality in political decision-making positions by introducing gender quotas. These can be mandatory or adopted voluntarily in order to create a gender balance in politics and to integrate targets for gender balance in the selection of candidates (European Commission, 2017).

Member States which have mandatory or voluntary quotas registered the highest increase in political representation of women since 2003. This situation is available not only in the political field. Quotas are one of the measures used to improve the balance between women and men. However, only the quotas themselves are not sufficient. Other measures such as public debates, campaigns, regular monitoring and global programs are necessary to encourage the presence of women in politics (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2016).

The increased participation of women in politics and in public administration is a result of the gender policies adopted in Europe and translated in Romanian legislation. Even if the progress concerning women occupying decision-making positions is not the expected one, it is the result of EU commitment and its member states, on gender policies and on reducing the differences between men and women in terms of payment, work field, time and power. Romania has not adopted gender quotas but focused on “soft positive action measures in public sector employment” (European Commission, 2016).

After its accession to the European Union, Romania assumed to guarantee and promote equal opportunities and treatment between men and women through the implementation of the Constitution and national legislation. Equal treatment and opportunities for women and men is a fundamental principle of human rights, implemented both at the legislative level and on public policy area. Recent studies showed that introducing the gender perspective in public policies have led to significant increases in the economy and the living standards of citizens (Ministry of Labor and Social Justice, 2011).

In the last years, it could be observed that gender differences have diminished, but not enough to achieve *de facto* the equality between women and men. Romania’s experience in the field of gender equality legislation already includes well-structured institutional arrangements to implement this principle, a strong civil society and an important academic segment (National Agency for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, 2014). Law no.202/2002 republished on equal opportunities and equal treatment between women and men is the legal act which ensured legislative harmonization with the relevant Community rules (Government of Romania, 2014).

Regarding the balanced participation at decision-making positions, Law no. 202/2002 republished on equal opportunities and equal treatment between women and men, states that “public authorities, local and national economic and social units, as well as political parties and other non-profit entities that operate under their own regulations, promote and support the balanced participation of women and men in decision-making positions and in order to accelerate the achievement of the *de facto* equality between men and women the local public authorities will adopt incentives for fair and balanced representation of women and men in decision-making positions, respecting the criteria of competence” (Parliament of Romania, 2013).

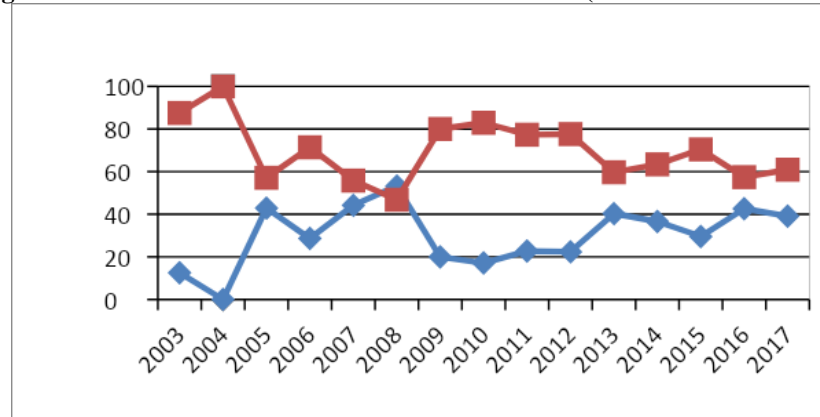
At the national level, the legal regulations on equal opportunities and treatment between women and men is made by the National Agency for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men. The Agency is a specialized body of central public administration, with legal personality, subordinated to the Ministry of Labor, Family, and Social Protection. The Agency promotes equal opportunities and treatment for men and women

and acts for the elimination of all forms of discrimination based on gender in all national policies and programs, and duties strategy, regulatory representation and state authority in the field of domestic violence with responsibilities for the development, coordination and implementation of government policies and strategies in the field of domestic violence (Government of Romania, 2016).

5. MAIN FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

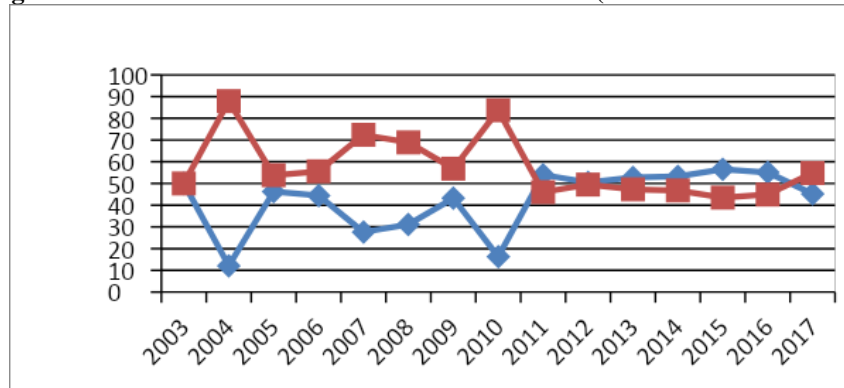
In the next section of the article, women’s situation from decision-making positions from Central Public Administration of Romania is presented. The presence of female public servants in leadership positions has been analyzed using BEIS typology. The positions from Romanian public administration have been divided into four categories: Basic, Economic, Infrastructure and Socio-Cultural functions.

Figure 1 Women and men in national administration (Level 1 Basic functions)



Source: Author, adapted from the European Institute for Gender Equality data (2017)

Figure 2 Women and men in national administration (Level 2 Basic functions)



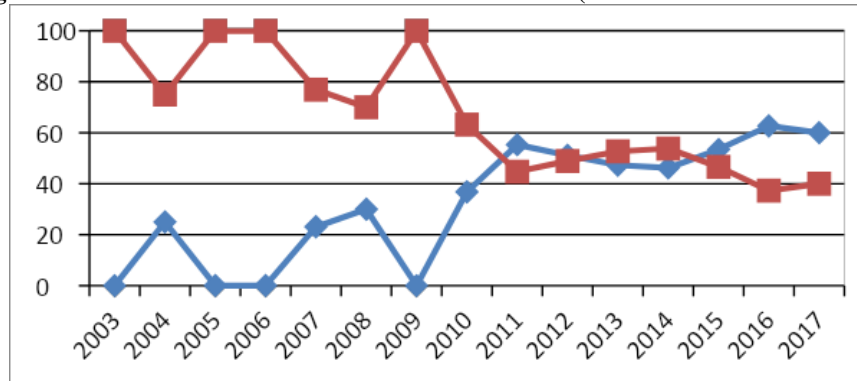
Source: Author, adapted from the European Institute for Gender Equality data (2017)

As far as the basic functions were concerned, it could be observed the presence of gender segregation because at level 1, the only situation where the percentage of women exceeded that of men was in 2008 (53.2%). In the last 8 years, the percentage has

stagnated to 20% and then 40%. The real change was at the second level, where the percentage of women surpassed that of men in the 2011-2016 period, a situation which has not been maintained in the last year of analysis.

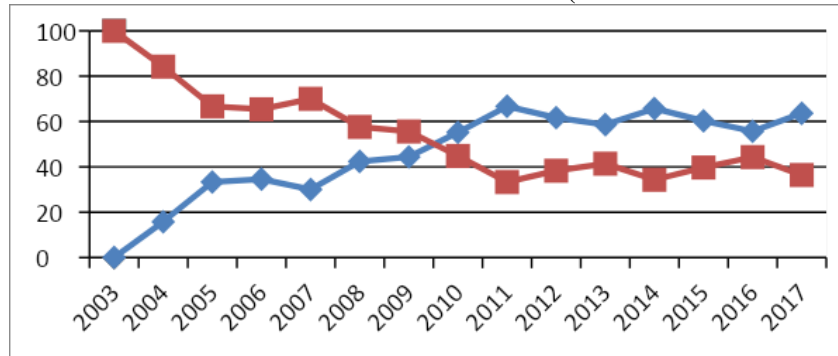
The results showed the concentration of men in positions with high power of decision (level 1) and a better representation of women on level 2 basic functions, where the power of decision is lower. It could be observed the evolution of female senior civil servants, from 13% in the first year of analysis to 39% in the last year. Even if women are more present in low and medium levels of management (level 2), as far as their presence will raise, gender equality could be achieved.

Figure 3 Women and men in national administration (Level 1 Economic functions)



Source: Author, adapted from the European Institute for Gender Equality data (2017)

Figure 4 Women and men in national administration (Level 2 Economic functions)

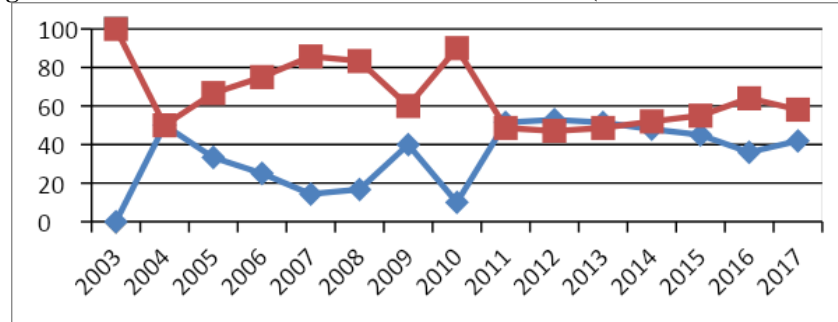


Source: Author, adapted from the European Institute for Gender Equality data (2017)

As far as the economic positions were concerned, the analysis showed that women have not occupied leadership positions from level 1 in 2003-2005-2006 and more recently in 2009. In the following years (2011-2015) the presence of women increased and a state of equilibrium has been reached. In the last two years of the studied period, it could be observed a massive presence of female senior civil servants, with 62.7% and respectively 60% at level 1 economic functions occupied. A similar situation has been recorded at level 2, with women accounting for more than 60% since 2011, in most of the cases. As level 2 economic functions were concerned, it could be observed that the

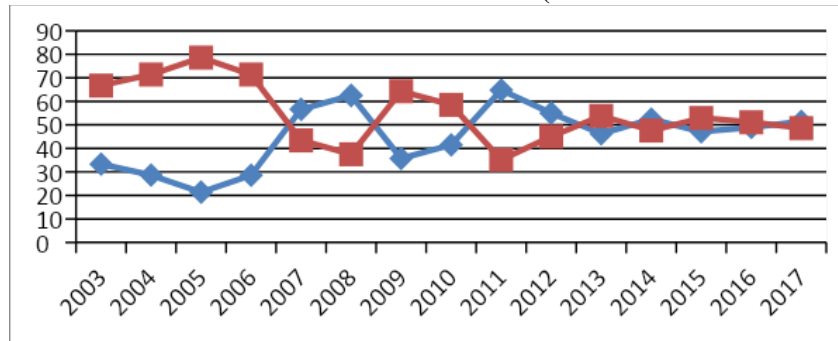
situation could lead to the underrepresentation of men in those positions, situation which would not be in favor of any gender.

Figure 5 Women and men in national administration (Level 1 Infrastructure functions)



Source: Author, adapted from the European Institute for Gender Equality data (2017)

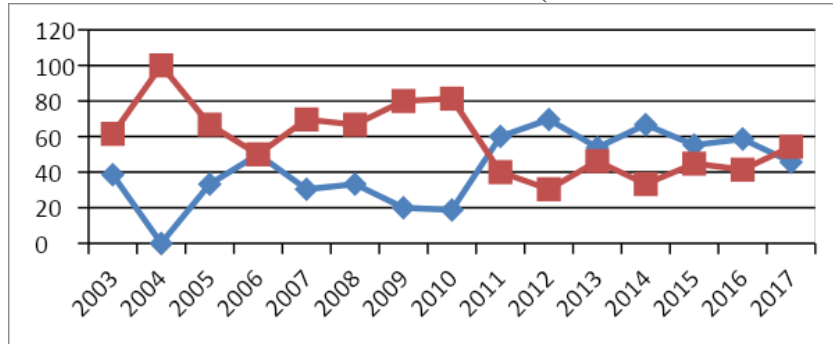
Figure 6 Women and men in national administration (Level 2 Infrastructure functions)



Source: Author, adapted from the European Institute for Gender Equality data (2017)

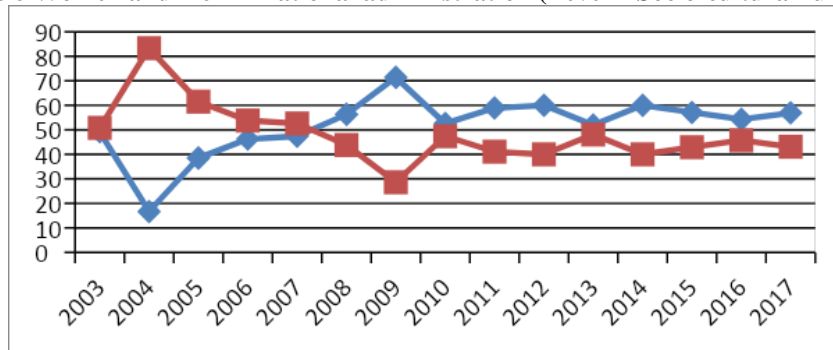
As far as the infrastructure functions were concerned, the figures showed that at level 1, women's presence varied in every studied year, from no women in 2003 to 51% in 2011. At the end of the studied period, it could be observed that the gender gap was low, and both genders occupied more than 40% of level 1 positions. Regarding level 2 positions, the presence of female leaders was higher and at the end of the studied period, women occupied 51% of level 2 positions. Even if infrastructure could be considered a masculine field, it could be observed that women managed to be well represented in those positions, too.

Figure 7 Women and men in national administration (Level 1 Socio-cultural functions)



Source: Author, adapted from the European Institute for Gender Equality data (2017)

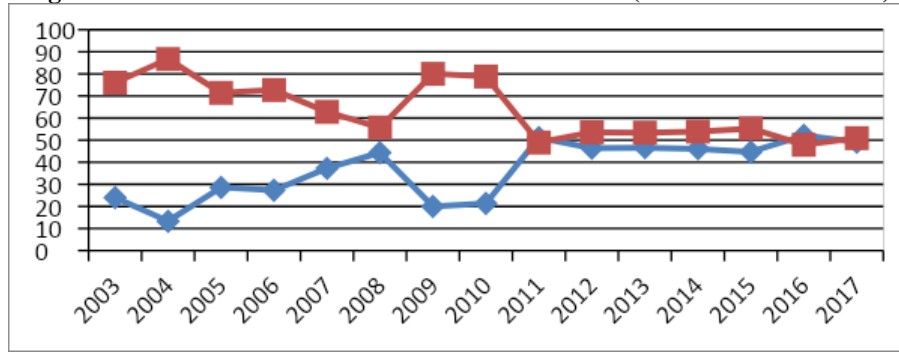
Figure 8 Women and men in national administration (Level 2 Socio-cultural functions)



Source: Author, adapted from the European Institute for Gender Equality data (2017)

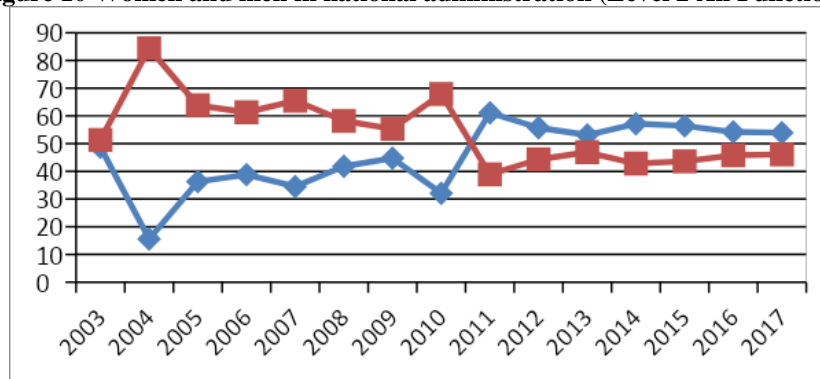
Concerning the socio-cultural positions, at level 1, both genders were well represented. The presence of women was not constant during years and varied from no position occupied by women (in 2003) to 70% in 2012. Regarding the leadership positions from level 2, it could be observed that since 2008, the majority were occupied by women, the highest representation being in 2009 (71%). It could be observed that the evolution of both genders in the socio-cultural functions had no ascendant or descendent trend for any of the genders. Their presence varied differently in every year. At the end of the studied period, at both levels, the presence of each gender is more than 40% which means that a sort of gender equality has been reached. The situation of women could be improved by raising their presence in level 1 position.

Figure 9 Women and men in national administration (Level 1 All Functions)



Source: Author, adapted from the European Institute for Gender Equality data (2017)

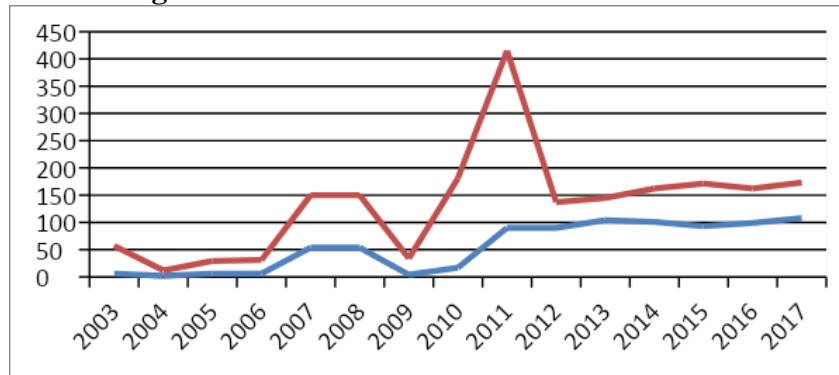
Figure 10 Women and men in national administration (Level 2 All Functions)



Source: Author, adapted from the European Institute for Gender Equality data (2017)

Analyzing the Central Public Administration as a whole, it could be observed, that initially, the level 1 positions were occupied mostly by men. The situation improved during the time, as the presence of men in level 1 positions, decreased. From 2011 until now, it could be observed a balanced participation of both genders on these positions with high power of decision. At level 2, the percentage of women occupying leadership positions increased from 32.1% in 2010 to 61 in 2011 and decreased by 54% in 2017. From 2011, the women from the Central Public Administration occupied the majority of level 2 leadership positions. The figures showed that even if men still tended to occupy more level 1 position then women did, at the end of the studied period it could be observed that the gender gap lowered and gender equality has been reached. The situation is in women's favor, because being well represented at both levels, they have the chance to occupy more level 1 position in the future.

Figure 11 Women in national administration



Source: Author, adapted from the European Institute for Gender Equality data (2017)

The figures showed the evolution of women in leadership positions, from both levels. It could be observed that during years, their presence raised considerably. Their presence did not rise gradually and it did not have a pattern. If in 2010, 181 level 2 leadership positions were occupied by women, the number was almost three times higher in 2011 and then decreased to 137 in 2012. From 2012, the presence of women at both levels is constant, being better represented in level 1 decision-making position.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The analysis showed that the central administration of Romania, presents a certain level of gender equality. From 2011, it could be observed that the gender ratio remained constant and equitable at all levels because each gender occupied more than 40% of the public functions. It also could be observed the presence of sectorial segregation in the public administration because women were better represented on positions from level 2, meaning that they were more present in positions with less power of decision and men tended to occupy more positions with high power of decision. Taking into account that women succeeded to occupy, more than 40% of level 1 positions and the existence of the gender balance at this level, it could be affirmed that female from Central Public Administration of Romania have managed to break the glass ceiling. It also could be partially affirmed that the implemented gender policies, had a positive impact and at least, in the public sector, women's situation has improved. A large number of women in decision-making position is also the result of the fact that public administration is a feminized sector so normally, the proportion of women in leadership positions is high.

The hypothesis of the study have been validated because the results shows that women in decision-making positions have managed to break the glass ceiling and horizontal segregation phenomenon is present in the public administration due to the fact that on positions with a higher power of decision, men were better represented,

Even if in the 2003-2010 period men occupied the majority of the decision-making positions from Central Public Administration from both levels, the situation

changed significantly in 2011. After 2011, it could be observed that both men and women, occupied more than 40% of the decision-making positions, maintaining a constant and equitable ratio which showed that in the center of Romanian administration, a certain level of equality, has been reached and women managed to cross the invisible barriers which stand in their possibility of occupying leadership positions.

Therefore, the Central Public Administration of Romania is a sector where women are not under-represented, due to the fact that the percentage of positions occupied by women was significantly high. In Romania, the distribution of power of decision between genders is better than in the Member States which promote equal treatment and equal opportunities between women and men, showing that gender policies influenced women's situation in a positive manner and that women occupied more and more positions which supposed high power of decision.

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