

A COMPARATIVE SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF INDIRECT FORMS OF GENDER DISCRIMINATION FROM ROMANIA AND DENMARK AMONG HIGHER EDUCATION EMPLOYEES

<https://doi.org/10.47743/jopafl-2024-32-15>

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Abstract

Background: Romania, a country with only 3 women rectors out of 54 public state universities, is at the opposite pole of gender equality to Denmark, which reached a 30% threshold of females in higher management positions in academia. Nevertheless, despite the cultural differences, this paper manages to identify similar indirect discrimination issues between the two countries.

Methods: Extending a previous systematic review focused on Romania, the study employs similar research methods to draw a comparison between Denmark and Romania. Four databases (Research Gate, ProQuest, JSTOR, and EBSCO) were searched for academic papers referring to indirect forms of discrimination that occurred at some point in the Danish Higher Education. The papers had to fit one of the four categories previously identified: recruitment & selection, evaluation, promotion, and collaboration with students, colleagues, and supervisors.

Results: A total of 11,056 articles were identified in the first step of the search, however, only 24 checked all the selection criteria and were included in this systematic review. The focus was to identify if current issues still happening in Romania, occurred at some point in Denmark too. This reasoning helps us to not only draw a comparison between the two countries but also to identify the period when a leading country dealt with similar indirect forms of discrimination.

Discussions: Stereotypes affect women's careers even in a country where the vast majority of the population embraces gender equality. In Danish Academia, more women than men were employed in temporary positions or part-time contracts, and the glass ceiling and glass escalator effects are still encountered, but at a lower rate. Furthermore, in a similar manner to the Romanian culture, the segregation was attributed to individual preferences, instead of recognizing systemic discrimination occurring in the workplace.

Keywords: gender segregation, higher education management, indirect discrimination

Introduction

With a quota raging between 27%-30% of female managers in the higher education environment since 2017, Denmark, together with other Nordic countries, is considered an etalon for the rest of Europe, when it comes to gender equality (Denmark Statistics, 2023). The same trend is encountered at the highest level of government too, with women holding up to 31.8% of the council seats even back in the 2009 elections (Baekgaard & Kjaer, 2012).

On the opposite end, Romania and other former communist countries, despite managing to reduce forms of direct discrimination, are still facing vertical gender segregation in public administration, especially in higher education institutions. According to the latest data from the European Union (2021), in 2019 Romania only had 11.1% of women as heads of institutions, one of the lowest percentages after Cyprus.

Nevertheless, Denmark didn't always have the representation it has today. In 1981 for example, the share of female employees in higher education reached only 15% out of 603 staff members included in the study (Moore, 1987). This led us to ask ourselves what kind of obstacles women encountered in the past in Denmark, and to what extent we can draw similarities to current issues women experience in their careers in countries where parity is still far from being achieved.

The current paper extends an existing study that, based on a systematic review, identified current forms of indirect discrimination that women in Romanian higher education still deal with. As a clarification, indirect discrimination refers to situations that are considered to be fair for both males and females, however, in reality, one gender is disadvantaged compared to the other (Wilson, Marks, Noone, Hamilton-Mackenzie, 2010). This might be a result of policies and strategies only having the profile of white men in mind in the elaboration process, thus not taking into account the different needs each gender has (Mavin, Bryans, Waring, 2004). (The study was presented during the 30th NISPAcee Annual Conference 2022, Bucharest Romania and published in Gâscă G. F., Macarie F. C., 2023. The impact of gender stereotypes on women representation in higher education. a systematic review, in Baba, C, Buftic, A, Matea, K., *Contribuția studenților doctoranzi la studiul administrației publice din România*, Accent, Cluj-Napoca, 978-606-561-240-2 (forthcoming))

We recognize that Denmark is still not at the level of its neighboring Nordic countries, which both managed to reach parity in management positions for several years now (European Commission, 2021). The country encountered a stagnation when it comes to progress in the gender equality field, and compared to Norway and Sweden, in Denmark, there is a weaker emphasis on gender equality policies in the academic field (Nielsen, 2017). Here, vertical segregation is seen more as a result of women's ambition and competitiveness, than a matter of discrimination (Nielsen, 2014).

Nevertheless, from the perspective of this comparative paper, it turned out to be an advantage, as a similar mindset is currently encountered in Romania. Furthermore, as Denmark already reached a 30% quota, the country can represent a starting point for identifying best practices to be applied in Romania, or similar countries (Statistics Denmark, 2021). As an observation, the ~30% quota is an important threshold, required by European law to be achieved by 2026 (EU Directive No.2381/2022). Even though the law refers to large private companies, the public sector and the higher education system can act as a role model.

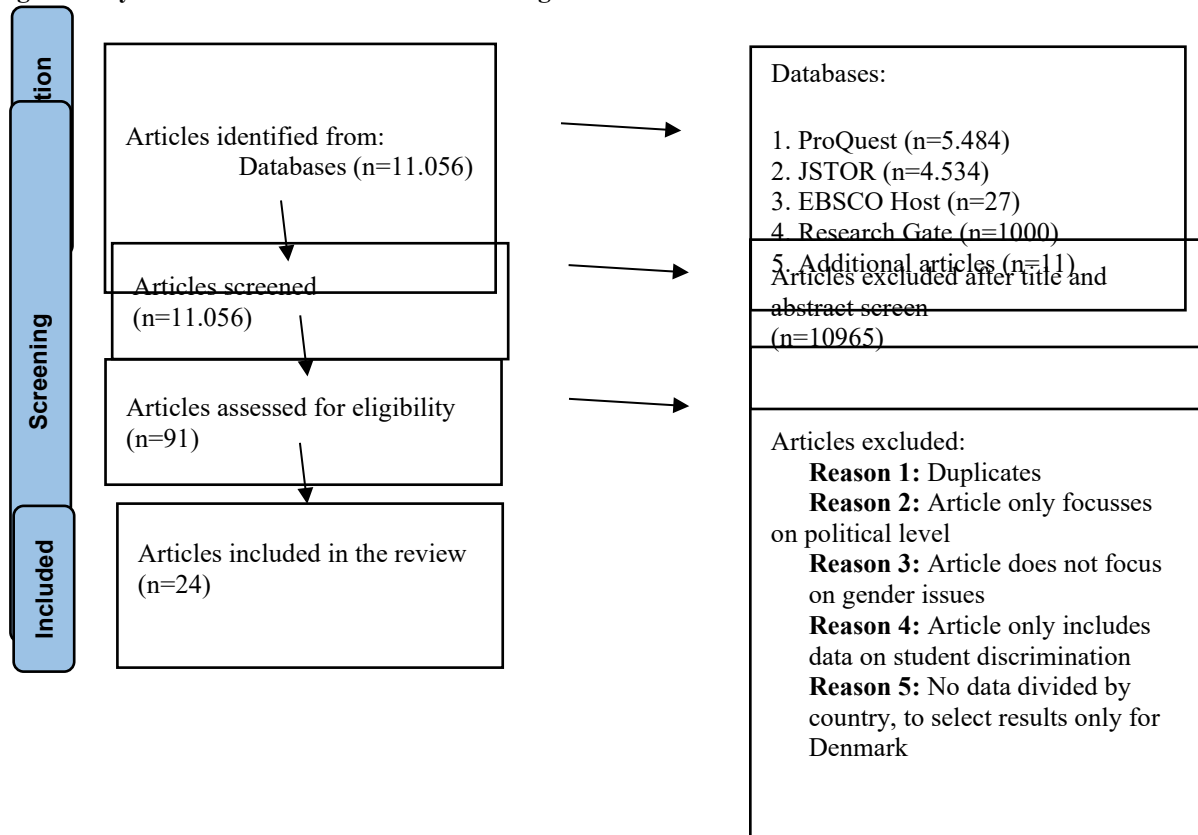
As a starting point, this paper identifies issues that women dealt with in Denmark's Higher Education Institutions, starting from the ones that were identified in Romania, based on the previous study. By understating the similarities in problems between the two countries, plus the period when these issues occurred in Denmark, can later help us in identifying the practices used to combat indirect discrimination. The next section will present the search and selection criteria for the systematic review, while the third section presents the results of the analysis. Conclusions and further steps are elaborated in the end.

For the purpose of this comparison, it is important to add that both countries follow a meritocratic system in terms of advancement in academic grades. The universities in both countries work based on a pyramidal structure, starting from research assistant/ university assistant, all the way up to professorship (Eurydice, 2023 a). When it comes to higher management positions, there are some differences between Romania and Denmark, nevertheless, having the right network is important in both countries. The rector in Romania (the highest management role) is appointed based on a vote from all teaching and research staff in the university, plus representatives of students. On the other hand, in Denmark, starting with 2003, this position is assigned based on the university board's decision (Carney, 2007). In both countries, the deans are selected by the rector based on a public contest, while heads of departments are appointed through a vote in Romania, and by the rector in Denmark (Eurydice, 2023 b).

Search Strategy and Selection Criteria

As stated before, this systematic review draws on the results of a previous study that identified indirect forms of discrimination in Romanian Higher Education, based on what the academic literature discovered until 2020. For the current paper, to be able to create a comparison between the results, the same search and selection methods were used. Therefore, the paper is constructed using the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) criteria (Page, et al., 2021) and the same four databases were searched as can be seen in Figure 1. Additionally, 11 articles were added from external sources.

Figure 1: Systematic Review PRISMA Flow Diagram



Identification & Selection

In terms of selection, we started with the screening of the titles and abstracts, as stated in the PRISMA criteria. The databases returned a total of 11,056 articles, out of which 91 passed the first process of the screening. In the second step, consisting of the reading of the full text, studies were excluded for several reasons. First, the study needed to be based on data from Denmark. Comparative studies on several countries were included in the review if the data and results were clearly divided by each country. Furthermore, the data had to be connected to higher education institutions or the general level of public administration. Studies focusing strictly on the political level were not included in the review. Lastly, as the paper draws a comparison with a previous study, only the studies that fit into the same categories previously identified (described in the next section) were selected. This led to a total of 24 articles being included in this review.

Analysis

The Romanian systematic review uses the triangulation method to link key concepts from both quantitative and qualitative studies (Erzberger & Kelle, 2003). Concepts in the qualitative studies were identified using a three-step process (Thomas & Harden, 2008), by selecting important information from each study, grouping them into categories, and lastly taking into consideration each concept's impact on the bigger category. The data from quantitative studies was selected using narrative analyses (Munn, et al., 2014) and then grouped and connected with the other information.

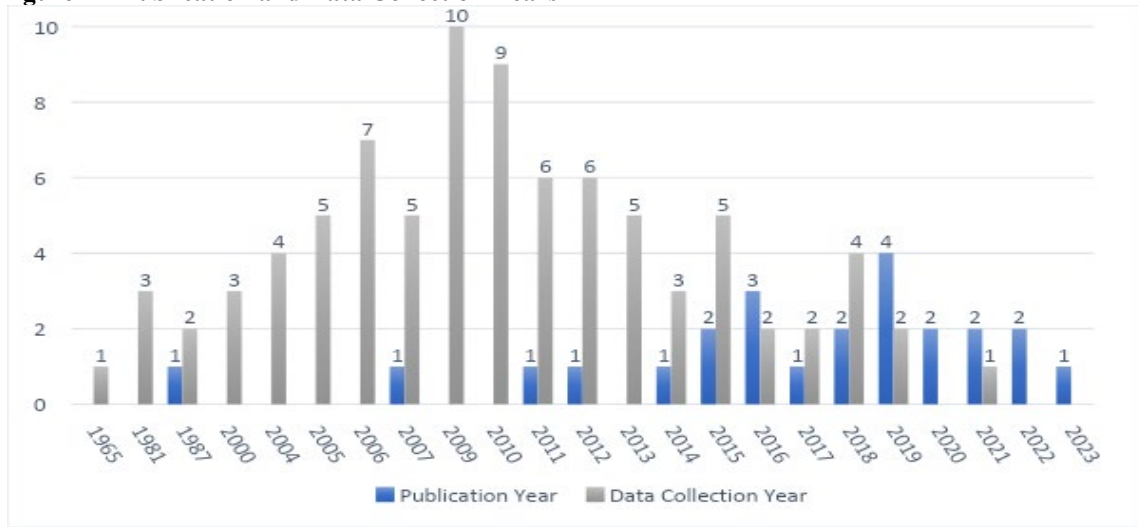
In the current study, we kept the same categories that were created in the paper on which we extended, therefore, there was no need to use the three-step process created by Thomas and Harden (2008) as previously. The four main areas that we were interested in finding situations dealing with indirect forms of discrimination were: recruitment & selection, evaluation, promotion, and collaboration. Therefore, we only used narrative analyses this time in order to analyze the information that would be relevant in answering the first research question, no matter if it was a qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-method study.

Results

This systematic review is based on 24 articles that passed all the selection criteria presented above. The oldest paper dates back to 1987, while the newest was published in 2023. However, the majority of the studies included were published between 2015 and 2022, as can be seen in Figure 2. Nevertheless, the recent publication year of the papers does not automatically mean that the issues described in the studies are as new. In order to identify the periods when Denmark dealt with indirect forms of discrimination in the higher education environment, and therefore answer one of our research questions, we looked at the years from when the data was collected.

Several of the papers are based on data that span over multiple years, starting with 1965. The majority of the information in all papers was collected between 2004 and 2015, with the peak being reached in 2009 and 2010. There was one study that was based on data from 2021, which focused on the pandemic impact on issues still present in the Danish academia.

Figure 2 – Publication and Data Collection Years



Out of the 24 articles included, the number of papers based on quantitative methods is almost equal to the number of papers based on qualitative methods. Therefore, as seen in Figure 3, we have 10 quantitative papers, 9 qualitative and the rest of 5 combine both research methodologies. Eight papers out of 24 used more than one research instrument, several of them analyzing trends from statistics, employees’ CVs, or institutional procedures over the years. The rest of the data in the papers were gathered either through interviews or questionnaires.

Figure 3 – Research methodology per study

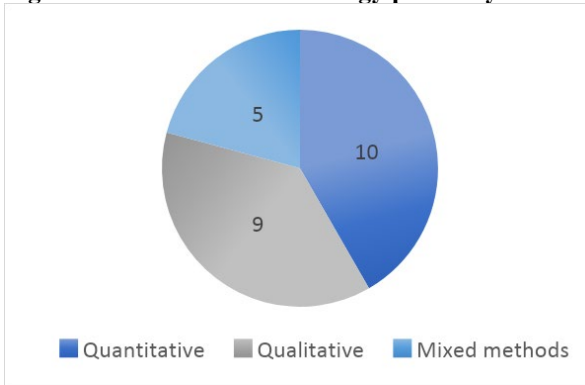
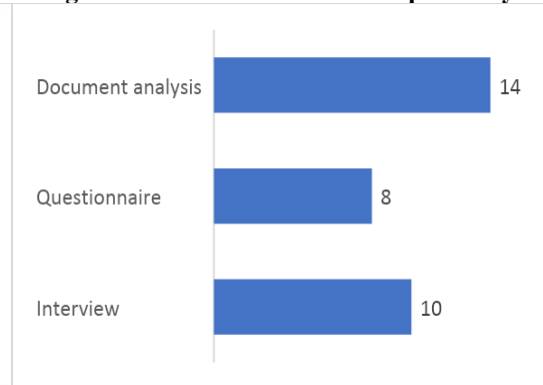


Figure 4 – Research instrument per study



As mentioned in the previous section, in this review we included both studies referring to higher education employees, as well as studies that are focused on the general level of public administration. Nevertheless, the vast majority of information is based strictly on data from teachers, researchers, and administrative workers in academia, as only 6 out of the 24 articles selected talk about the bigger level of public administration. Three other papers analyze different public workers but divide the data by profession.

Discussions

Despite Denmark being an example for other European countries when it comes to gender equality, the state has its own set of issues regarding situations when women were

discriminated in the past. In this chapter, we identified indirect forms of discrimination in the Higher Education System, that occurred at some point in the country's history. The chapter is presented through a comparative lens with similar situations that still occur in Romania, gathered into four main sections: recruitment & selection, evaluation, promotion, and lastly collaboration with people inside or outside the department. Each subsection will start with a summary of the results obtained from the previous study focused on Romania's higher education, before diving into the data obtained from Denmark. All results will be analyzed from a comparative perspective.

Recruitment & Selection

The Romanian education system still deals with both vertical and horizontal gender segregation among its staff. Women are more often encountered in entry-level positions and up to middle management positions, and a bigger percentage of them are employed in temporary contracts compared to men (Macarie & Moldovan, 2015; Apostoaie, et al., 2019; European Commission, 2021, p. 81). Furthermore, more women are encountered in fields like humanity, agronomy, or health, in concordance with the stereotypes that women are more nurturing (Macarie & Moldovan, 2012; Macarie & Moldovan, 2015; Drumea, et al., 2020). Lastly, during the recruitment process, women still deal with questions related to their personal lives, due to the belief that women are more responsible for the family life, thus affecting their careers in the long term (Macarie & Moldovan, 2013; Cărauşan, 2012). A similar horizontal gender segregation was encountered in Denmark until around 2017. At the higher level of public administration, there were significant differences in departments, with men being collocated in the financial departments, or those departments that are considered more prestigious (Gram & Grøn, 2020). The higher education system was no exception, with more men than women reaching the title of full professors in STEM fields (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) (Nielsen, 2017). Between 1997 and 2006, the highest percentage of women employed in a technical Danish university was 12.1%, even lower than the EU average at that time (Colatrella & Gomard, 2011).

The international theory behind gender segregation is vast, explaining the phenomenon both as a result of gender roles and stereotypes existing in the organization, but also as a consequence of personal preferences (Dicke, et al., 2019). Nevertheless, at a closer look, the two are strongly connected as stereotypes are ingrained in one's culture and affect even the way children are raised based on their gender, therefore leading to different preferences in the future (Liben & Signorella, 1980; Koenig, 2018). In addition, in the public administration sector in Denmark, even when there was no preference from the candidate, women still had a higher chance to be assigned to a department related more to the nurturing field, than to a technical one (Baekgaard & Kjaer, 2012).

In terms of vertical segregation, the percentage of women used to be greater in the lower level positions, working as "research assistants, instructors and among junior ranks of the non-tenured faculty" (Moore, 1987; Skewes, et al., 2019). A similar trend was encountered in administrative positions, with women being over-represented there (Skewes, et al., 2019). In addition, based on data from 2009-2010, it was discovered that there were greater chances for a woman to be employed in a part-time or temporary contract, similar to what studies concluded in Romania (Nielsen & Madsen, 2019; Macarie & Moldovan, 2015). Just in 2011-2013, 62% more women were employed in such positions, compared to only 35% of men (Nielsen, 2016).

This can be a result of men and women being selected on different criteria, or being examined on harsher standards based on gender. Studies have shown that men with a curriculum vitae that fits outside of the job description still have a higher chance of being selected for the job, while women tend to start in lower positions and only be recruited internally for advancement in other roles (Gram & Grøn, 2020).

Lastly, in both countries there were situations where women tended to be assigned more teaching activities than men, drastically affecting the time they could dedicate to research (Moore, 1987; European Commission, 2021, p. 81). We will later see in the next sections how important one's research results are for their career, as both countries put more emphasis on research than on teaching. The COVID pandemic that started in 2020 in Europe brought to the surface even more the inequality that this arrangement creates, leading to even fewer publications by women (Constantinescu & Pozsar, 2022).

Evaluation

Men and women are evaluated differently, many times leading to women having to work harder to prove they are suitable for the position they work in (Albulescu & Herrera-Saldana, 2016; Ward, et al., 2014). Since in Romania, higher education management is mostly dominated by men, the culture that is formed promotes men's performances "because the past showed that men are good leaders" (Apostoaie, et al., 2019). Furthermore, due to the lack of feminine role models, women tend to be harsher on themselves when it comes to their skills, and many times correlate the idea of success with external factors instead as a result of their capabilities (Macarie & Moldovan, 2013; Ward, et al., 2014). The difference in evaluation can lead to an increase in the gender pay gap in the long term, as several bonuses are offered based on one's performance (Cărauşan, 2012). Gender stereotypes are the ones that mold one's perception of someone, influencing how capable they see them or what kind of behavior is expected from them (Charles, 2011; Heilman, 2012; Koenig, 2018). Despite Denmark having a more advanced integration of gender equality in their culture, in 2012 stereotypes were still present in the academic environment. Women researchers were considered "soft actors in a hard world of science" (Nielsen, 2014).

Denmark did not always have the 30% quota that the country managed to reach today in the public sector. Back in the days when women were tokens (being in a gender minority), including in the academic world, having management aspirations was negatively correlated with their gender (Nielsen & Madsen, 2018). This connects with the results obtained in Romania and with international literature referring to stereotypes threat theory. More precisely, negative stereotypes referring to one's behavior, roles, and capabilities are more common to be used when judging a woman, having a direct impact on these women's future aspirations and on the way they see their performances (Ryan & Haslam, 2008; Spencer, et al., 2016; Gram & Grøn, 2020). As a consequence, in the years 2004-2013, between 8% and 16% of women academics hesitated to apply for a higher position leading to professorships (Nielsen, 2016).

In terms of paychecks, the system works similarly to Romania, leaving no place for discrimination at first glance, but in reality, disadvantaging women due to the connection between performance and bonuses. When it comes to equal wage agreements in Denmark, there were rules imposed as early as 1973 (Borchorst & Siim, 2008). However, despite

having fixed base salaries, the differences in wages occur from the remuneration of extra tasks or performance bonuses (Nielsen, 2015; Stritch & Villadsen, 2018).

We already observed women tended to be employed in temporary or part-time contracts, positions that are usually excluded from performance bonuses. Furthermore, motherhood can have an impact too, with studies showing that women with children earn less than women without children. Nevertheless, starting with the age of 29, all women start to earn less compared to men in similar positions and the wage gap continues to widen with age (Stritch & Villadsen, 2018).

Promotion

Romania is a country that is still confronting with the glass ceiling and glass cliff phenomena in public administration (Macarie & Moldovan, 2011, pp. 101-102; Ryan & Haslam, 2008). In the international literature, these are defined as an invisible barrier that stops women from attaining leadership roles or women being promoted to these roles in times of instability (U.S. Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995, p. 25; Ryan & Haslam, 2005; Powell & Butterfield, 2015). The previous study identified four main factors that led to this. Firstly, there is a lack of clear, transparent criteria needed for one to advance in grade or explain how candidates are differentiated during the recruitment process. (Ward, et al., 2014; Manciu, et al., 2015; Albuлесcu & Herrera-Saldana, 2016). Secondly, research activity is the most important measurement, however, women tend to get more teaching activities, thus drastically impacting the time they can dedicate to research (Bădoi, 2019; Ichim, 2020). The last two factors refer to the work-life balance and the ability to form a network that would choose and support you in the higher management positions, due to the lack of female communities in the upper tier of positions (Macarie & Moldovan, 2013; Ward, et al., 2014; Bădoi, 2019; Apostoaie, et al., 2019).

Based on data from 2009-2010, Denmark too dealt with a glass ceiling effect. Despite the ability of the public sector to attract female candidates, most of them remained in the lower positions. If at the entry level, there were only 10% female tokens, compared to 33% male tokens, the ratio was inversely proportional as we got closer to the top (Nielsen & Madsen, 2018). The situation still remains today, as there are only 30% women in board members across the public sector (Statistics Denmark, 2021). One interesting aspect is that women have a lower interest in management positions than men, with 41% of women aspiring towards such a position (Nielsen & Madsen, 2018). However, their motivation is directly impacted by the representation around them. Having female role models and female communities around leads to an increase in this percentage (Nielsen & Madsen, 2019).

Another phenomenon that the two countries have in common is the glass cliff, as women reach leadership positions in times of struggle. At the political level, there are more chances for a woman to lead parties that are losing seats, as the post becomes less desirable to men (O'Brien, 2015). However, those positions involve a higher risk and usually come with lower benefits (Ryan, et al., 2016). The same trend was encountered in higher education institutions, where women were usually promoted to less desirable positions, which would impact their future aspirations and career paths (Moore, 1987). On the other hand, men get promoted more easily, even when their profile does not meet the typical path normally required for a specific position (Gram & Grøn, 2020). In addition, more men than women start their careers in recognized departments, a fact that will lead to them reaching an executive position with “2.3 years faster than the average woman” (Gram & Grøn, 2020).

Lastly, another similarity that the Romanian and Danish academic worlds have in common is the accent put on research results. When it comes to promotions, both countries measure results based on the number of publications in journals with high-impact factors and based on the index of the publications (Skov, 2021). However, as already presented in the first section of this chapter, the type of contracts women are employed into or the types of responsibilities they get leave less time for research activities.

Therefore, the lack of women promoted to higher management positions is a result of both personal aspirations and indirect discrimination in the workplace (Nielsen, 2016; Dahlerup, 2018). It is important to note that the two notions are strongly connected, as discrimination along the career path will shape future aspirations.

Collaboration

Collaboration with students, colleagues, and supervisors impacts all aspects of a person's life in the academic world and gender stereotypes influence the way women are treated. As they are considered patient beings, women receive more administrative tasks than their male colleagues, while masculine stereotypes referring to ambition and competitiveness will make men be seen as more favorable by students and colleagues (Moldovan, et al., 2019; Ichim, 2020). Furthermore, the vertical segregation present in Romania leads to feelings of isolation, lack of mentoring, or limited access to information and opportunities (Macarie & Moldovan, 2013; Ward, et al., 2014; Apostoaie, et al., 2019). The literature in Romania also identified how women are discriminated when it comes to international mobilities. Women have both a harder time accessing international opportunities (due to work-related mechanisms and personal responsibilities) and more difficulties when trying to work in a country's culture that has a different level of gender inclusion (Morley, et al., 2018; Bădoi, 2019; Ichim, 2020).

Compared to Romanian legislation that started to guarantee most gender equality rights after the fall of the communist regime and in the first part of the current century, Denmark's legislation goes back to 1970 (Larsen, 2005; Tănase, 2018). Nevertheless, one important aspect that the two countries have in common is the fact that vertical segregation is not recognized to be a consequence of gender discrimination, but rather of personal aspirations and choices (Nielsen, 2014; Nielsen, 2016). This can lead to matters of discrimination and misogyny being dismissed when they happen, or being cataloged as "Danish humor" (Guschke, et al., 2022; Skewes, et al., 2019).

In addition, positive measures enforced to increase the number of women in leadership roles are often critiqued in terms of fairness and necessity (Segaard, et al., 2023; Utoft, 2020; Skewes, et al., 2021). Compared to its neighboring countries (Norway and Sweden), Denmark has no regulations based on which to sanction universities that do not provide regular reports on gender equality (Nielsen, 2014).

However, the belief that gender discrimination is a present issue is majorly influenced by the number of women in the institution. In studies done at the level of parliament, up to 30% more women than men recognized vertical segregation as a consequence of indirect gender discrimination, and more women engaged in gender equality policies (Dahlerup, 2018; Holli & Harder, 2016). This correlates with international literature stating that the number of women directly impacts attitudes, behaviors, and perceptions of gender inequality (King, et al., 2010).

International mobilities are also harder for Danish women to attain, with a ratio of 1 to 3 women compared to men having international experiences during the course of their careers (Gram & Grøn, 2020). Institutional factors contributing to this phenomenon are connected to the lack of female representation in the upper positions, which disadvantages women in having one-to-one relationships, mentorship, or easy access to new opportunities (Bilimoria, et al., 2006; Nielsen & Madsen, 2018). In an analysis made at the end of the past century, men had several advantages over women, such as easier access to “best graduate programs, better financial arrangements, and introduction and participation in collegial network”, all based on recommendations from their peers (Moore, 1987). The argument is strengthened by other recent studies, proving that one’s connections in academia are important even when there is open competition for a position (Colatrella & Gomard, 2011; Nielsen, 2016).

There were also differences identified in the way teachers interact with students and how much time they spend for supervising activities according to their gender. Female teachers with a higher level of empathy tend to initiate contact with students more often and schedule future meetings in advance, compared to male colleagues who only respond when students reach out to them (Nielsen, 2015). This, same as in Romanian teachers’ case, drastically impacts the time they can dedicate to research, networking, and mobilities, all important to advance in grade and higher management positions. Furthermore, this might shape students’ attitudes towards their teachers, as one study identified students see male teachers as being assertive and self-reliant, and male students see the same gender teachers as having a better performance (Binderkrantz & Bisgaard, 2024).

Conclusions

In the context of gender equality, Romania and Denmark are two countries at opposite ends of the European ranking (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2023). With such a difference in numbers and with the fact that the Danish society embraced the concept of equal rights as early as the 70s, at first glance it is difficult to draw any similarities between the two countries.

Nevertheless, before managing to reach the 30% quota of women leaders in public administration around 2017, Denmark still dealt with several forms of indirect discrimination as it was identified in this systematic review. With a focus on only discrimination issues similar to Romania, the years between 2004 and 2015 turned out to be the most problematic. Without a doubt, some of these issues are still present, as Denmark has not been able to reach parity as other Nordic countries and seems to be stuck at the same numbers since six years ago. The literature review supports this argument, as the most recent study, published in 2023, still uncovered several barriers in women’s academic careers.

More concretely, women tend to be discriminated as early as recruitment and selection go. Romania confronts with horizontal and vertical segregation, with more women being encountered in lower positions (university assistants and lecturers) and in fields considered to be more nurturing (humanity, agronomy, or health). However, in a similar mindset encountered in Denmark too, this is not recognized as a matter of gender inequality and is attributed instead to personal preferences.

However, at a closer look, the literature points out several gender-blind scenarios. For example, in both countries, women are more often employed in part-time positions or

temporary contracts and are also dealing with more teaching hours than male colleagues. This drastically impacts the time they can dedicate to research activity, affecting, in the long term, their chances of being promoted to a higher grade.

Other factors that used to influence women's career paths in Denmark and are still present in Romania are related to the differences in evaluation that occur between the two genders and to the differences in interactions generated by being a token in the workplace. Women tend to be evaluated on harsher criteria than their male colleagues, and, at the same time, women themselves impose harsher standards on themselves the higher they are in their careers. However, based on the international literature, this also might be a result of observing behaviors and expectations of the people around them, therefore another result of existing systemic discrimination (Nadal, et al., 2021)

The lack of recognition of these issues leads to defensive attitudes towards positive measures meant to reduce discrimination, many considering that they are too much. However, as studies proved, the awareness of gender discrimination is positively influenced by the number of women in the institutions. Therefore, having more women is important not only for the existence of role models, communities, and support groups but for recognizing and combating gender discrimination.

Nevertheless, despite some issues still being present in the Danish Higher Education, most of the situations present in Romania were encountered in Denmark in the years 2009 and 2010. Therefore, moving forward, researchers can look at these specific years and the years right after for strategies and good practices implemented there to solve indirect discrimination. It is important to understand and analyze strategies both at the national level and at the institutional level, that allowed Denmark's Higher Education to reach a quota of 30% women leaders.

This systematic review proved that despite the cultural differences between the two countries, there are several similarities when it comes to women's discrimination in higher education. This is an important discovery, as it proves that countries at the top of the gender equality index can represent role models for countries that are still far from an equal society.

Authors' Contributions: GFG documented and identified bibliography, with contribution from CFM; GFG designed, analyzed and wrote the manuscript, with the supervision of CFM. All authors reviewed the final manuscript.

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Annex 1

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