

ASPECTS OF THE GENDER INEQUALITY ISSUE IN KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY CAREERS

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Abstract: Professional segregation, as a form of gender inequality persists in the labor market. The main issue with this phenomenon is gender inequality payment, with drawbacks in both individual and social evolution. Women's potential as professionals is not used at its highest level and, thus, the economic and social development is not in the right pace. Also, the additional income generated by equal payment would offer benefits for the society, as well as for its members, through the reduction of poverty rate.

As gender bias seems to be the main cause of professional segregation and unequal payment, this paper aims to study the causes and the existent situation at a global level. The comparison between European countries and the US best reflects the differences and causes of gender inequality issues in both education and labor market. Also, the paper sheds light upon unemployment as an indicator of gender equality in the workforce.

Key words: knowledge society, professional segregation, gender equality, gender bias, labor market

Introduction

„No society treats its women equally with men” was the conclusion of a United Nations Development Program report published in 1997. The declaration was made after 50 years from the approval of Human Rights, which stipulated gender, race and religion equality and forbade any form of discrimination. Nowadays, the principle of equality remains a desideratum, especially when it comes to gender equality. Women are still disadvantaged in the labor market, with financial, as well as social and professional side effects. The controversial gender inequality does not miss even in the knowledge society (in essence, a society based on values and creative potential). Women meet difficulties even in domains such as ICT, where the value of the output is not related in any way to the gender of the person who generated it.

Despite the approaches made nationally and internationally, as well as through different independent institutions and organizations, professional segregation remains one of the global major concerns.

Professional segregation: a source of payment inequity

The general opinion regarding gender equality in the workforce is that women have equal rights with men, so favored mainly by national and international legislation. Yet, the apparent equality is contradicted by the income differences in

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the labor market. Recent studies demonstrate that professional segregation also has profound economic implications.

Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR), an American institute mainly focused on research regarding women's situation in family and society, published in January 2014 a study on how paying women equally with men would reduce poverty and would stimulate economic growth. Based on statistic data regarding the social and economic situation of the US population during 2010–2012, the paper signals the way in which unequal payment affects not only women, but the ones depending on their income, too. While 59.3% women would earn more if they were paid equally with men, the poverty rate for women would halve (would be 3.9%, decreasing from the actual 8.1%).

An important aspect is that from the 14.3 million single women in the US (divorced, widows or without partner) only 4.6% would live below the poverty line in comparison with 11% women who, nowadays, live on or below the poverty line. Considering that the poverty rate for single mothers is 28.7%, it is very easy to observe the impact of payment inequity for the dependents on these women. Equal payment for equal work would increase the incomes of two-thirds of single mothers and would reduce poverty rate in their case to 15%.

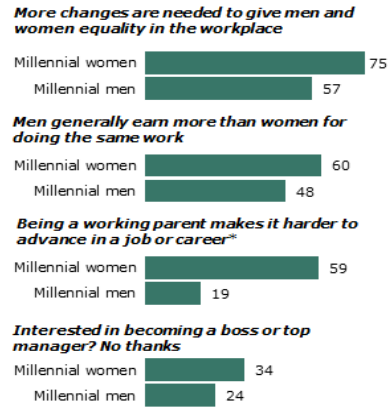
Another observation of this study was that this equality would add a national income of \$447.6 billion (2.9% of the US GDP spent for temporary assistance to families in need, in 2012). Analyzing Europe with regards to the additional income generated by a better representativeness of women—according to an EU 2013 study—the increase in the number of women in ICT industry so that equals the number of men would attract a GDP increase of €9 billion (1.3 times Malta's GDP).

A report made for President Barack Obama regarding the economical wellness of women in America (presented to him in January 2014) indicates the reduced number of women working at the White House. The report analyzes financial insecurity, poverty and gender bias and provides solutions to improve the economic status of women in America, both for the public and private activity areas. According to this report, the average salary at the White House for men is \$73,729, while a woman earns, in average \$65,000. Thus, the payment gap stays at 11.8%.

According to Pew Research Center, a subsidiary of Pew Charitable Trust, the Millennials see an improvement regarding salary equality by gender, though there still are significant differences. 75% of the Millennial women agree that more changes are required to obtain gender equality in the workplace. The payment gap in the US shrank from 84 cents for a dollar earned by a man—in the 80s—to 64 cents for each dollar earned by a man in 2012, considering that women were 47% of the workforce in the US in 2012. On the one hand, year-over-year, women increasingly participated in the labor market and were involved in lucrative activities (52% women in 1980, compared with 58% in 2012). On the other hand, the reduction in the number of active men in the workforce had a significant contribution. While the number of professionally active women increased by eight

percentage points in the last 30 years (from 66% in 1980, they reached 74% in 2012), the number of active men in the workforce reduced with eight percentage points in the same time frame (from 78% in 1980, to 70% in 2012).

% of 18- to 32-year-olds saying ...



* Working parent findings based on those who are employed and have at least one child under age 18. For Millennial women, n=105; for Millennial men, n=141.

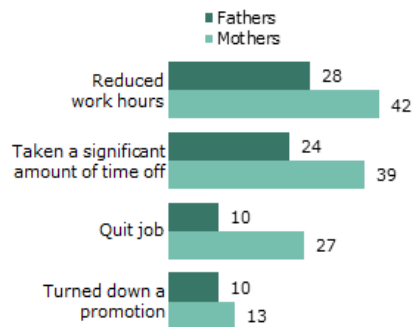
Note: Based on all Millennial women (n=360) and all Millennial men (n=450).

Figure 1. Millennial Women's View on Gender and Work in the US

Source: "On Pay Gap, Millennial Women Near Parity – For Now", Pew Research Center, December 2013, page 1

An impediment in women's professional evolution is their decision to establish a family and to have children. After the age of 30, gender payment gap widens. One of the main factors causing this situation is family, especially bringing up children.

% saying they have ... in order to care for a child or family member

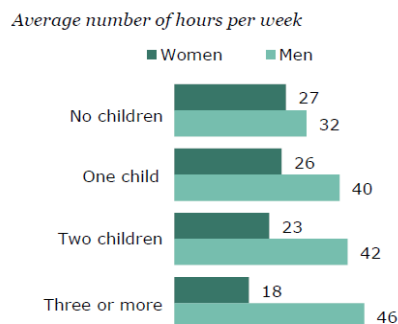


Notes: Based on those who have ever worked, "Fathers" and "mothers" include those with children of any age, including adult children (n=1,254).

Figure 2. Career Interruptions for Parental Purposes in the US

Source: "On Pay Gap, Millennial Women Near Parity – For Now", Pew Research Center, December 2013, page 12

According to the Pew study, 51% women (compared with only 16% men) who already have children agree that this decision affected their professional trajectory, although they do not regret the choice they made. 94% of the adults that decide, at a certain moment, to quit their job or to reduce the time spent at work are satisfied with the choice they made. A significant 62% young women who are not, yet, mothers consider that their career path will be slowed down if they decide to have children.



Note: Based on adults ages 18-64. "Children" refer to own children under age 18 living in the household. Paid work-related activities include time on the job, commute time, and any other time spent on job-related activities.

Figure 3. Paid Work Hours, by Number of Children

Source: "On Pay Gap, Millennial Women Near Parity – For Now", Pew Research Center, December 2013, page 27

Anyway, the situation is paradoxical: although women feel disadvantaged both professionally and financially, many people already integrated in the labor market (women, as well as men) do not consider they are discriminated from this perspective. It is obvious that the perception of professional segregation can be easily generalized, especially among women: 53% women think that it is easier for a man to obtain a promotion. At the same time, 72% say that the society has to make efforts to ensure equality in the workplace. Despite these, few people report such abuses. Among professionally active people, just one in ten say that in the company they work for there are salary disparities. Over 70% of workers agree that women have equal chances with men to advance in their career.

Neither Europe does the situation look better: a study made in the UK and published in November 2012 shows that for people with the same educational level, salary differences appear from the moment they are hired. The study, made through the 'Futuretrack' project developed by the Workforce Research Institute from Warwick University, analyzed the evolution of salary during 2006–2012 for UK universities graduates who obtained their diploma in 2006. The conclusions of the study are not surprising: 70% women earn under £24,000, while only 55.6% British young men earn this salary. Irrespective of the activity domain, the gap is not in the favor of women. Even in domains such as justice, where women are more numerous, men earn higher salaries. The only activity area where women are paid equally with men is that of the not-for-profit organizations.

The so-called common causes for payment gaps signaled in various studies above mentioned need to be highlighted: mothers interrupt their careers to give birth and bring up children and women involvement in worse paid domains or not-for-profit organizations—which usually pay less than companies. Is it to be so?

Gender Equality in Management

A unanimously recognized fact is that national legislation of each state, as well as the international laws, stipulate clearly the illegality of the act of paying a woman less than a man for the same work. Despite this, women earn less than men and advance with more difficulty in their career, even when they decide not to become mothers and to concentrate all their efforts toward professional success.

From this perspective, the situation of women managers is iconic for the entire labor market. According to "Women in business: from classroom to boardroom", a report published by Grant Thornton in March 2014, only 24% of senior management positions are held by women globally. The study aims at an incisive analysis of women's situation in the labor market worldwide. Thus, the global leader from this point of view is Russia, where 43% of the total of women holding positions in senior management are located. The study shows that the main reason of this high representativeness is the ex-soviet policy of equal chances for everyone. Also, the urbanization process brought new career opportunities for Russian women. Among the economically developed countries, the highest representativeness is in New Zealand, where 31% of senior managers are women. Depending on the industry, the number of women senior managers differs. While in education and social services 51% of the managers are women, there is a low representativeness in domains such as mining (12%), agriculture (16%), energy (16%) and transport (17%).



Figure 4. Proportion of Women in Senior Roles by Industry

Source: "Women in business: from classroom to boardroom", Grant Thornton, March 2014, page 12

The real problem is not that only one quarter of senior managers are women, but the fact that the same percentage was obtained in the 2007, 2009 and 2012 studies. The proportion of women holding this position in 2010 and 2011 was

lower, phenomenon generated by the economic recession and the decision of many businesses to restrain or even stop their activity.

The main cause is the reduced integration rate of women graduates in the workforce. In 2013, 66% of companies declared that less than half of the graduates they hired were women. Annually, only 21% of the jobs available worldwide are occupied by women. At the same time, in the world, only 32% of employees are women. The situation varies little from a region to another (a maximum of 35% in Asia Pacific and a minimum of 30% in the US). Although in higher education there is a ratio of 108:100 in favor of women graduates globally, their professional integration rate is a clear clue to chance inequality as twill.

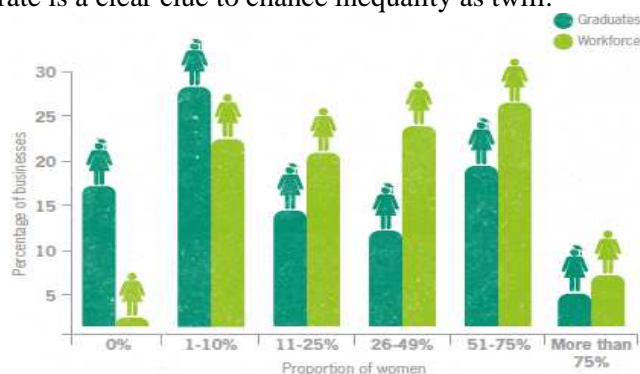


Figure 5. Proportion of Women as Workforce/Graduate Intake Globally

Source: "Women in business: from classroom to boardroom", Grant Thornton, March 2014, page 8

According to the EU study regarding ICT sector, nowadays, from 1000 women graduates of a Bachelor's degree or equivalent studies, only 29 have a diploma in ICT and only four in 1000 will actually work in this field. Regarding management positions, only 19.2% are held by women, as compared to the average of other industries: 45.2%. Also, the ICT sector is characterized by a low representativeness of women entrepreneurs: 31.3% of Europeans that have independent activities and just 19.2% of the ICT entrepreneurs.

The results of a pole made by Chartered Management Institute (made with 1,700 workers in various activity domains) indicate that society needs young women models. The study proves that the number of women aiming at a top manager position is half of the number of men with the same objective. The main causes are the old stereotypes, as successful feminine models miss from the mass-media. Also, an important reason for the absence of these models is unconscious bias. A Yale University study, published in "Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences" magazine in September 2012, shows that the majority of people have the tendency to fit men and women in stereotype categories to easily generalize concepts.

European Commission analyzed gender equilibrium in decision-making positions for 34 states, respectively the 28 EU members, four EU candidates

(Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Serbian Republic and Iceland), as well as the European Economic Space states (Liechtenstein and Norway).

Regarding public administration, European Commission splits the decisional positions considering two decisional levels, as follows:

- Decisional Level 1: general secretary, deputy general secretary, general director and deputy general director
- Decisional Level 2: director and deputy director

For 2012 and 2013, the situation of the 34 states is according to Table 1:

Table 1. Women representation in decision-making position in Europe in 2012 and 2013

	2012				2013			
	Decisional Level 1		Decisional Level 2		Decisional Level 1		Decisional Level 2	
	Women (%)	Men (%)	Women (%)	Men (%)	Women (%)	Men (%)	Women (%)	Men (%)
UE – 27	29	71	37	63	30	70	39	61
Romania	46	54	56	44	47	53	53	47
All 34 States	29	71	37	63	30	70	39	61

At European level, Romania is among top five countries with regards to a high representativeness of women in management positions. For decisional level 1, the female representativeness degree is with 17 percentage points higher than the European average (46% in Romania, compared to 29% in Europe). This difference maintained in 2013, too, when the national average was 47%, compared to the 30% European average. For decisional level 2, Romania is with 19 percentage points below the European average (56% women in Romania compared to 37% in Europe). In 2013, the difference diminished, reaching 14 percentage points in favor of Romania (53% the national average, compared to the 39% European average). While the number of women who hold decisional level 1 positions in Romanian public administration grew by just 1% during 2012-2013, for decisional level 2 there was a decrease of 3% in the same time frame. In contrast, in Europe there was an increase in the number of women holding management positions in the central public administration for both decisional degrees (1% for level 1 and 2% for level 2). For decisional level 1, Romania is on the second place in the general European top in 2013, while for decisional level 2 it is on the fifth position in the same top. An important observation is the high representativeness of women in the central public administration, in Romania, as well as in Europe. In Romania's case, this situation is a result of the government's preoccupation to promote women for management positions and to harness their professional potential. The situation in Romania may serve as a model.

Despite a few exceptions, global gender equality remains a desideratum both for managerial positions and all the other jobs and designations. Irrespective of the number of studies made and explanations found, the conclusion is one of the most simple: despite the legislation and equality policies lead by governments and private organizations, women are the only one who suffer the consequences consisting in the difficulties they face in career at the entry level, as well as when it comes to getting promotions.

Unemployment rate, an efficiency indicator for gender equality in the workforce

To achieve a general perspective over the manner in which the equality principle applies in the labor force, it is necessary to consider unemployment phenomenon, as well. Customizing this fact for Romania, it is interesting to observe unemployment phenomenon in the country with one of the best women representativeness in top management positions in the central public administration.

Regarding the situation of registered unemployed people, the number of unemployed women is smaller than the number of unemployed men. According to figure 6, in 2012, as well as in 2013, women unemployment rate had lower values than men unemployment rate.

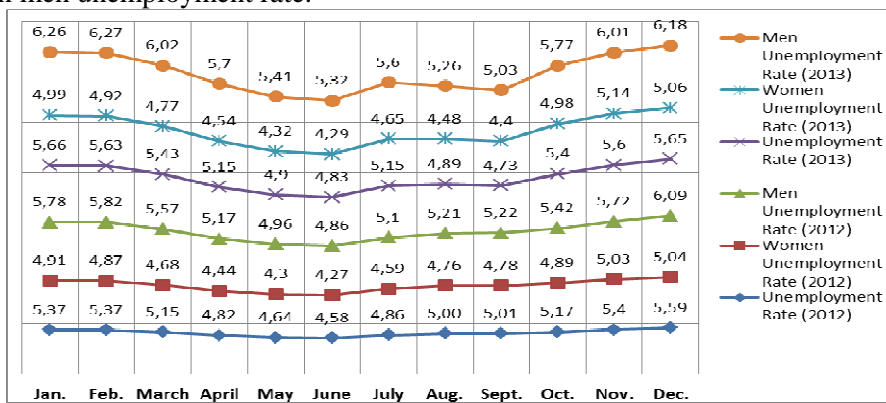


Figure 6. Evolution of Unemployment Rate During 2012–2013 – by Gender

Source: Author's Adaptation after "Statistical Situation of Registered Unemployment as of 31 December 2013", National Agency for Employment, page 2

Also, regarding the educational level of unemployed women, the most vulnerable categories are easily observable from figures 7 and 8: women aged over 40 and those with primary and secondary education degrees.

Noteworthy is that women aged around 30 decide to interrupt their career to bring up children and they are the same who intend at the age of 40 to resume their professional activity. The main limit of this data is the fact that it only indicates the number of registered unemployed people. Thus, what seems a favorable situation for women might be, in fact, a simple erroneous impression.

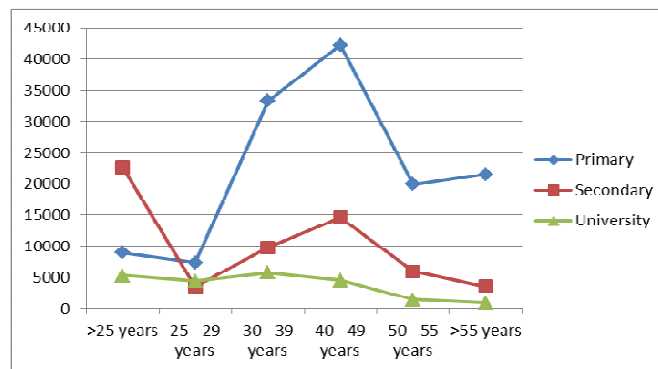


Figure 7. Romanian Unemployed Women - by Education Level

Source: Author's elaboration based on data from "Unemployed Number and Unemployment Rate as of December 2013", National Agency for Employment, page 8

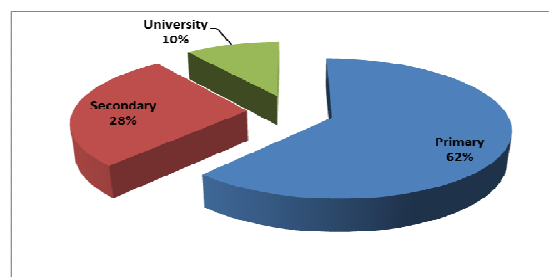


Figure 8. Percentage of Unemployed Women – by Education Level

Source: Author's elaboration based on data from "Unemployed Number and Unemployment Rate as of December 2013", National Agency for Employment, page 8

As no public institution keeps an attentive evidence of the actual presence of women in the labor market, either employed or unemployed, the real unemployment rate can be appreciated as considerably higher than that of registered unemployed people.

Summary

Professional segregation represents a phenomenon largely met in the labor market, irrespective of the activity domain. The main causes are discrimination and gen biases. While during the education period, the number of girls with high achievements is larger than the number of boys, in the moment of graduation the situation turns upside down. Employers are keen to hire male graduates, regardless of whether women are appropriate or not for a certain job. Thus, women face the impossibility to work in the domain for which they studied and, as a consequence, they hardly access top management positions.

The input value of women in knowledge society consists in their capacity to be empathic, to put the human being in the center of the organization and to find the best motivation techniques to meet objectives.

There are states where women's situation has a positive halo, especially in the case of top management positions. Russia, New Zealand and Romania are among the countries with a good representativeness at this level. Regarding unemployment rate in Romania, the number of unemployed women is lower than the number of unemployed men. If employers, along with state's institutions, would do the necessary steps for a better professional integration of women and for work paid equally to both men and women, the desideratum of gender equality in the labor market would become a reality with considerable benefits (at individual and society level).

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**ASPEKTY KWESTII NIERÓWNOŚCI PŁCI W KARIERACH SPOŁECZEŃSTWA
OPARTEGO NA WIEDZY**

Streszczenie: Segregacja zawodowa, jako forma nierówności płci utrzymuje się na rynku pracy. Głównym problemem związanym z tym zjawiskiem jest nierówność w opłacaniu pracowników różnych płci, co jest powodem nierównych szans w indywidualnej i społecznej ewolucji. Potencjał kobiet jako fachowców nie jest wykorzystywany na najwyższym poziomie, i stąd rozwój gospodarczy i społeczny nie idzie w odpowiednim tempie. Ponadto, dodatkowy przychód wygenerowany przez jednakową zapłatę przyniosłby korzyści zarówno dla społeczeństwa, jak i dla jego członków, poprzez zmniejszenie stopy ubóstwa.

Jako, że nierówne traktowanie ze względu na płeć wydaje się być główną przyczyną segregacji zawodowej i nierównej zapłaty za pracę, dokument ten ma na celu zbadanie przyczyn i istniejącej sytuacji na szczeblu globalnym. Porównanie krajów europejskich i Stanów Zjednoczonych najlepiej odzwierciedla różnice i przyczyny problemów nierówności płci w zakresie kształcenia i rynku pracy. Niniejszy artykuł rzuca również światło na bezrobocie jako wskaźnik równouprawnienia płci w pracy.

Słowa kluczowe: społeczeństwo oparte na wiedzy, segregacja zawodowa, równouprawnienie płci, nierówne traktowanie ze względu na płeć, rynek pracy

在知识社会职业生涯中性别不平等方面

摘要: 专业的隔离, 作为一种形式的性别不平等仍然存在劳动力市场。与这一现象的主要问题是性别不平等付款, 与个人和社会进化中的缺点。妇女的潜力作为专业人员不能在其最高级别使用和, 因此, 经济和社会发展不是正确的步伐。此外, 平等支付的额外收入将提供为社会, 并为其成员, 通过减少贫困率的好处。性别偏见似乎是专业的隔离和不平等支付的主要原因, 本文的目的是研究的原因和全球一级的存在情况。欧洲国家和美国之间的比较最好反映的差异和教育劳动力市场的性别不平等问题的原因。此外, 纸张揭示失业后作为劳动力中的性别平等指标。

关键词: 知识社会、专业的隔离、两性平等、劳动力市场的性别偏见

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