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**FACULTY OF POLITICAL, ADMINISTRATIVE
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**DOCTORAL SCHOOL OF POLITICAL AND COMMUNICATION
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Attitudes Regarding Political Leadership and Gender in Romania. Majority and Minority Views

(Thesis summary)

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Keywords: gender discrimination, political leadership, ethnicity, public policies, higher education, representative bureaucracy, regression model, factorial analysis.

1. Aim and research objectives

The main aim of the present research is to explore how gender is perceived in the Romanian society, focusing on multiple gender issues and different types of discrimination in the fields of politics, public administration and higher education. By adopting a holistic approach, we have the opportunity to carefully analyze not only the different types of gender discrimination which can occur in politics, public administration and higher education but also the relationships between these phenomena and the potential background factors related to the Romanian society.

Considering the aforementioned rather ambitious aim, we need to emphasize that the current work should be seen as having an exploratory or descriptive nature regarding the potential relationships between the three aforementioned domains, as we are unaware of any previous endeavors of a similar scale focused on the Romanian society. Furthermore, the present work also inclines towards more explanatory (causal) techniques, design and methods in an attempt to provide a more clear understanding of the factors which affect individual attitudes and perceptions towards the political leadership abilities of men and women. In brief, the present thesis tries to provide substantiated, accurate and reliable answers to the following nine research questions:

- RQ1: How do political liberalism (especially liberal neutrality) and distributive justice contribute to the feminist movement/agenda?

- RQ2: What was the role of globalization in the transnational diffusion of feminism and other social movements?

- RQ3: Is there any alternative to political representation which could lead to more adequate public policies and outcomes for disadvantaged groups?

- RQ4: Can higher education contribute to the empowerment of women and foster better gender integration in Romania?

- RQ5: How did female candidates perform in Romanian national and local post-communist elections?

- RQ6: Can the Romanian central public administration be considered (viewed as) a representative bureaucracy from a gender perspective?

- RQ7: What are the strategies adopted by female public leaders to break through the glass ceiling?

- RQ8: Do individual attitudes regarding the societal roles of men and women differ in Romania according to ethnicity and gender criteria?
- RQ9: How can we explain individual attitudes regarding the perceived political leadership abilities of men and women in Romania?

Albeit the aforementioned research questions are heterogeneous, varying from strictly theoretical inquiries to others which require consistent empirical approaches and data analyses, this variation can be seen as being a natural reflection of the holistic nature of the initial research aim and of the overall complexity of the studied phenomena. The heterogeneity of the nine research questions will also influence the methodological framework of the thesis, as thorough answers can only be provided by adopting both qualitative and quantitative methods. Even if a consistent number of the proposed research questions are theoretical, they are nonetheless necessary in order to obtain a better understanding of the hurdles women still have to overcome and of the multiple nuanced and subtle facets of gender discrimination persisting in the modern society, thus allowing us to construct a solid background for the empirical research conducted in the latter chapters of the thesis.

In an attempt to move beyond being strictly an academic exercise and an important addition to the fields of political science and feminism, the present work will also extensively focus on the implications which can be derived for public policies in an attempt to potentially exercise positive change and contribute to a better integration of women in multiple domains of the Romanian society.

2. The structure and content of the thesis

Beside the introductory chapter (consisting of the aim and research objectives/questions, the description of the thesis, methodological aspects and a brief discussions of the main findings and their implications), the thesis consists of five main chapters dealing with theoretical and empirical facets of gender discrimination in the three domains, while the last chapter is dedicated to concluding remarks.

As such, chapter II ('Representative bureaucracy and democratic values in a global context') presents the initial theoretical underpinnings of this research by making consistent theoretical analyses into the fields of: (a) representative bureaucracy (its definition and connection with better policy outcomes, the importance of discretionary power and the

factors which can influence bureaucratic power), (b) liberal neutrality (focusing on definitions, interpretations and potential criticism), (c) how gender is perceived in distributive justice, (d) philosophical connections between feminism and liberalism, and (e) the transnational diffusion of social movements (with a keen interest in feminism and gender equality as a social movement).

Chapter III ('Gender discrimination in organizations') strengthens the theoretical framework by narrowing the focus to gender discrimination phenomena in an organizational context as it explores: (a) more general theoretical aspects, (b) the main causes for the existence of gender discrimination in organizations and society, (c) specific forms of organizational gender discrimination (such as the glass cliff, ceiling and elevator – among others), and (d) some measures which can be used to reduce gender discrimination. Building on the aforementioned analyses, the chapter also proposes a theoretical framework for understanding gender discrimination phenomena in organizations.

Chapter IV ('Gender, education and local communities') includes both theoretical and empirical analyses on: (a) the importance of education for gender related phenomena, (b) how minorities can be disadvantaged or better integrated via education, (c) different forms of gender discrimination in education, (d) representative bureaucracy as a solution for ensuring better educational outcomes for minorities, (e) comparisons of the 12 best ranked Romanian universities with their local environments (using data for 2012 and 2016), (f) higher education gender segregation in EU 28 (using Eurostat data for the 2003 – 2012 period) and (g) gender discrimination (both sexual and professional) in Romanian higher education (this research was based on data collected with a questionnaire; N= 93).

Chapter V ('The glass ceiling in the public sector: Romanian elected and appointed officials') presents more in-depth empirical analyses regarding the underrepresentation of women in Romanian politics and public administration, both at the national and local level. Following a brief theoretical introduction, this chapter includes three empirical analyses, focusing on: (a) a gender analysis of Romanian national (parliamentary) and local elections, (b) a qualitative pilot study on women that managed to break through the glass ceiling in Romanian public organizations, and (c) an exploration of representative bureaucracy in Romanian central public administration. The first empirical research starts with an historical analysis of the representation of women in the European Parliament (from 1954 to 2017) and EU administrative functions, and then focuses on Romanian elections at the national level (parliamentary elections from 1992 to 2016) and at the local one (for mayoral positions, county councils and local councils between 2004 and 2016). The second empirical research

included in this chapter consists in the analysis and interpretation of structured interviews conducted with 15 female managers from the Romanian public sector, highlighting the main barriers encountered in their careers, as well as the perceived strengths, qualities, abilities and skills of female managers that succeeded in the public sphere. The last empirical research from this chapter uses 2003-2015 Eurostat data covering Romanian central public administration institutions in order to explore two gender phenomena which can manifest in the public sphere (the glass ceiling and horizontal segregation), while also trying to connect these phenomena with the concept of representative bureaucracy.

Chapter VI ('Romanian societal attitudes regarding gender. Majority and minority (Roma) views') includes the main empirical analyses[1] of the thesis as it explores eleven individual attitudes regarding gender, and tries to explain the attitudes toward male and female political leadership abilities. Following the theoretical introduction and a discussion of the methodology, the chapter will continue with a descriptive analysis of the respondents' opinions on 11 gender issues taking into account both gender and ethnicity. Secondly, four factor analyses are conducted on all 11 gender attitudes in order to identify hidden/latent dimensions/factors, as follows: (a) the first analysis was done on the national sample (including both males and females); (b) the second analysis was conducted on the Roma sample (including both males and females); (c) the third analysis was based on the entire male sample (from both the Roma sample and the national sample); and (d) the fourth analysis was based on the entire female sample (from both the Roma sample and the national sample). The third main analysis conducted in order to explore individual attitudes on the 11 issues regarding gender between four sub-groups (or sub-samples: Romanian males, Romanian females, Roma males, Roma females) was a post-hoc analysis of variance (ANOVA).

A multiple regression analysis was conducted (in order to explain attitudes toward male and female political leaders) on the two main samples (Romanian and Roma) and the four sub-samples (Romanian males, Romanian females, Roma males, Roma females), while also taking into account (in each case) the main scenarios/possibilities of dealing with missing data. Considering the main alternatives SPSS offers for missing data, three scenarios were developed for each sample or sub-samples: condition/scenario A (where missing data were excluded listwise); condition/scenario B (where missing data were excluded pairwise), and condition/scenario C (where missing data were replaced by means). As such, this section

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[1] The analyses presented and interpreted in this chapter are based on data from the 2006 Roma Inclusion Barometer developed by the Open Society Foundation.

of the research includes a total of 18 multiple regressions which were analyzed, interpreted and compared in-depth. The regression model (as presented in Figure 1) was conducted on multiple samples in order to test the following hypotheses:

- H1: Attitudes regarding the political leadership abilities of men and women are influenced by other gender attitudes.
- H2: Attitudes regarding the political leadership abilities of men and women are influenced by organizational trust (trust in organizations).
- H3: Attitudes regarding the political leadership abilities of men and women are influenced by the respondents' outlook.
- H4: Attitudes regarding the political leadership abilities of men and women are influenced by socio-demographic indicators.
- H5: Attitudes regarding the political leadership abilities of men and women are influenced by the respondents' financial wellbeing.
- H6: Attitudes regarding the political leadership abilities of men and women are influenced by housing indicators.
- H7: Attitudes regarding the political leadership abilities of men and women are influenced by the community in which they reside.

The last chapter (Chapter VII – 'Conclusions, policy recommendations and future lines of research') reviews the main findings of the thesis and (their implications for public policies) in order to develop potential public policy recommendations and propose future lines of research, while also addressing some of the potential limitations of the current work and highlighting its most important strengths.

3. Methodological approaches

Taking into consideration the general complexity of gender discrimination phenomena and the multiple research objectives proposed in this thesis, the research had to combine both qualitative and quantitative methodologies in the attempt to reach a better understanding of gender in the Romanian society.

As such, official European Union data (from Eurostat and from the European Institute of Gender Equality) is used predominantly in Chapter IV and Chapter V. Subchapter IV.6 (Educational horizontal and vertical gender segregation in EU28) builds on data from the Education and training (edtr) database as it analyzes the ratio of male and female students and

graduates at ISCED 5A and 6 levels, according to the main field of study in EU28; the same database is used to explore male and female employment in higher education in full and part-time positions. Subchapter V.4 uses 2003-2015 data from the European Institute of Gender Equality in order to explore the share of men and women in Level 1 and Level 2 positions in the Romanian Central Public Administration according to the four main administrative functions (Basic functions, Economy functions, Infrastructure functions, and Socio-cultural functions) promoted by the BEIS[2] typology (see European Commission, 2010).

Official Romanian statistical data (from different ministries or The National Agency for Equality of Chances between Men and Women - ANES) is used in Subchapter V.2 in order to explore the share of men and women as political candidates or electoral winners in the national (parliamentary) and local (county and local council or mayoral) elections for the 1992 to 2016 elections. Chapter V also includes data collected in 2012 and 2016 from the official websites of 12 Romanian advanced research and education universities, four cities and three county councils regarding the share of men and women in executive and legislative positions in both academia and local public administration.

Qualitative data (collected with a semi-structured interview guide) from 15 female respondents working in the Romanian public sector (at the national or local level) is used in Subchapter V.3 in an exploratory attempt to identify the profiles, key competences, the main problems and the individual strategies of female administrative and political leaders that managed to rise above the glass ceiling.

Quantitative data collected (with a questionnaire) from 93 Romanian PhD students (with heterogeneous fields of expertise) from six Romanian universities in different geographic regions was used to observe the prevalence of sexual harassment and work-related discriminatory practices in higher education in subchapter IV.7.

The most important empirical analyses were conducted with data from the 2006 Roma Inclusion Barometer developed by Open Society Foundation. The dataset used in this section is representative at both the national level (as 1215 persons aged 18 and over were surveyed with a statistic error margin of ± 2,9%) and regarding the Romanian Roma population (1387 persons aged 18 and over, self-identified as Roma were surveyed, with a statistic error margin of ± 2,6%).

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[2] The BEIS typology is used in order 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

Initially (in subchapter VI.3), 11 variables from the aforementioned database were used to explore individual attitudes toward females and males (see the GendAtt battery of variables included in Table 1) referring to: (1) working and stay at home mothers; (2) the effects that working mothers have on preschoolers; (3) if women desire jobs/careers or a family/kids; (4) the fulfilment of employed and unemployed wives; (5) jobs and the independence of women; (6) the structure of earnings in the family; (7) the child caring abilities of fathers and mothers; (8) emotional control in relationships; (9) the political leadership abilities of men and women; (10) the importance of higher education for men and women, and (11) business leadership abilities of men and women. The analysis of attitudes/opinions was conducted for multiple categories of respondents (for the entire national sample, for the entire Roma sample, all males from both samples, all females from both samples, males from the national sample, females from the national sample, males from the Roma sample and females from the Roma sample) regarding the 11 gender attitudes in order to observe if there are any differences between the aforementioned types of respondents.

The differences observed between the groups with regard to gender attitudes were further explored with the help of factor analyses in subchapter VI.4. All 11 gender attitudes variables were included in the Factor Analysis, and the analysis was conducted four times: (a) the first analysis was done on the national sample (including both males and females); (b) the second analysis was conducted on the Roma sample (including both males and females); (c) the third analysis was based on the entire male sample (from both the Roma sample and the national sample population); and (d) the fourth analysis was based on the entire female sample (from both the Roma sample and the national sample).

Continuing the previous descriptive and exploratory analyses, the differences between the four subgroups (Roma males, Roma females, Romanian males and Romanian females) regarding the 11 gender attitudes were then tested for statistically significance in subchapter VI.5 using a post-hoc analysis of variance (Anova).

The aim of subchapter VI.6 is to identify the factors/variables (the template regression model is presented in Figure 1 and the independent variables are described in Table 1) which can influence attitudes toward male and female political leaders in the case of the two main sample (the national sample in Model 1 and the Roma sample in Model 2) and the four subsamples (Romanian males in Model 3, Roma Males in Model 4, Romanian females in Model 5 and Roma females in Model 6).

The main theoretical model which will be tested to identify potential factors which can influence the respondents' opinions/attitudes on the political leadership capabilities of females and males is presented below:

PolLi = c+ GendAtt_1-10 + InsTrust_1-13 + SocDem_1-3+ OutL_1-2 + E(f)I_1-4 + HouCom_1-3, where:

- GendAtt_1-10 – refers to the ten variables measuring attitudes toward females and males (as presented in Table 1);
- InsTrust_1-13 – refers to the thirteen variables measuring trust in different public, private or non-profit organizations and institutions (as presented in Table 1);
- SocDem_1-3 – refers to the three general socio-demographic indicators (age, gender and education) and largely serve as control variables (as presented in Table 1);
- OutL_1-2 – refers to the two variables measuring the respondents' opinions regarding their personal situation and the situation in Romania (as presented in Table 1);
- E(f)I_1-3 – refers to the four variables measuring economic and financial indicators (both revenues and expenditures, personal and at household level – as presented in Table 1); and
- HouCom_1-3 – refers to the three variables measuring housing and community indicators (as presented in Table 1).
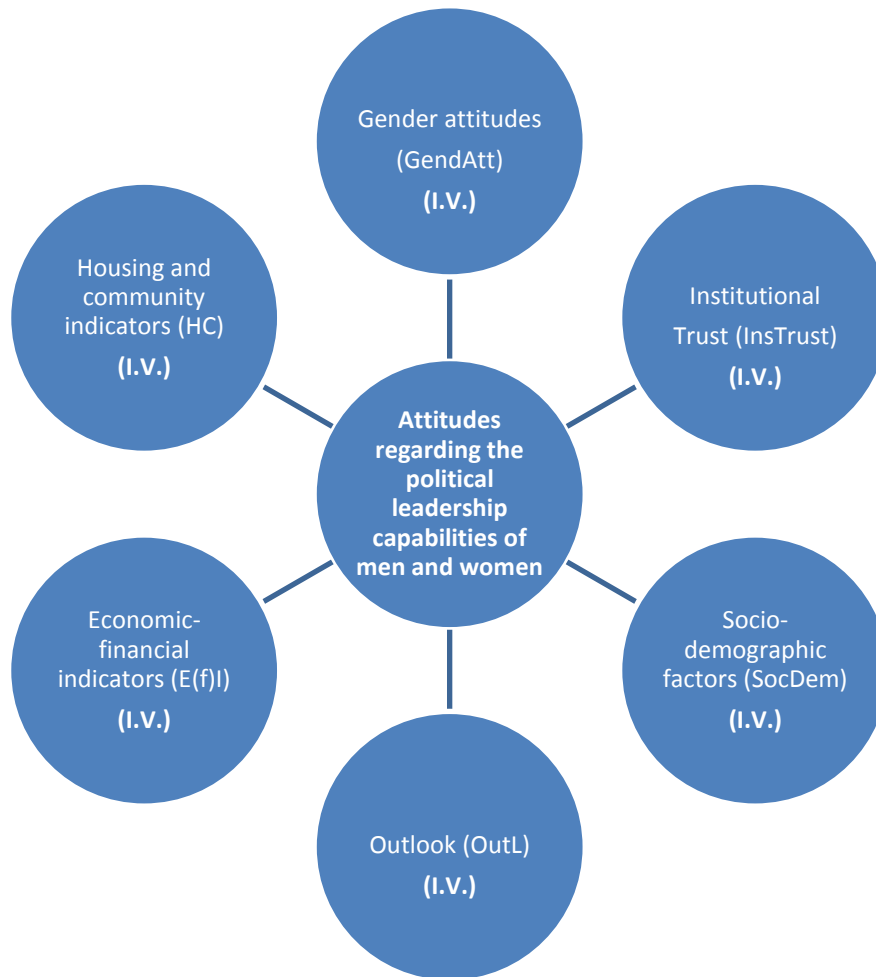
Note: I.V. – independent variable

Figure 1: The main factors that explain attitudes toward male and female political leaders

Although the main statistical model includes the same variables (as presented in Figure 1 and Table 1), testing it on the six samples will provide more in-depth information about the perception of political leadership in Romania and allows us to conduct further comparisons highlighting the importance of gender and ethnicity. Each model will be tested under three conditions (scenarios) for dealing with missing data: condition/scenario A – where missing data will be excluded from the analysis listwise; condition/scenario B – where missing data will be excluded from the analysis pairwise, and condition/scenario C – where missing data will be replaced by means.

Furthermore, in order to better understand the factors which can influence attitudes toward female political leaders, a model comparison will be conducted in subchapter VI.7 on the results of the two main samples (the national and the Roma sample); Model 1C and Model 2C will be compared, as these two models under scenario C have the highest representativeness (sample size) and an adequate explanatory power (with R^2 above 0,400).

Factor	Questionnaire items	Observations
Gender attitudes (GendAtt)	1. A working mother can be just as thoughtful/careful with her children as a stay at home mother. 2. A preschooler might face difficulties if his mother works/has a job. 3. Having a job is a good thing, but what women want is to have a family and children. 4. A wife that does not work is just as fulfilled as one that has a job. 5. The best way for a woman to be independent is to have a job. 6. Both husbands (spouses) must earn money for the family. 7. In general, fathers can take care of children just as good as mothers can. 8. In a relationship women can control their emotions better than men. 9. In general men are better political leaders than women. 10. University studies are more important for a boy than they are for a girl. 11. Men are better than women at running/leading a business.	Variables measured at the ordinal level using a Lykert-type scale with 6 answering possibilities: • 1 – to a very high degree, • 2 – to a high degree, • 3 – to a low degree, • 4 – to a very low degree, • 8 – Don't know, and • 9 – Don't want to answer.
Institutional trust (InsTrust)	1. How much trust do you have in … the European Union 2. How much trust do you have in … the Presidency 3. How much trust do you have in … the Government 4. How much trust do you have in … the Parliament 5. How much trust do you have in … Justice 6. How much trust do you have in … the Army 7. How much trust do you have in …the Police 8. How much trust do you have in … Municipal (Town) Hall (General Hall in the case of Bucharest) 9. How much trust do you have in …Political Parties 10. How much trust do you have in … Banks 11. How much trust do you have in …Mass-media (television, radio, newspapers) 12. How much trust do you have in … Non-governmental Organizations 13. How much trust do you have in … the Church	Variables measured at the ordinal level using a Lykert-type scale with 6 answering possibilities (out of which two are more similar to non-responses), as follows: • 1 – to a very low degree, not at all • 2 – to a low degree, • 3 – to a high degree, • 4 – to a very high degree, • 8 – Don't know, and • 9 – Don't want to answer.
Socio-demographic factors (SocDem)	1. The respondent's gender	Dichotomous variable
	2. The respondents age	Measured on an interval scale, in years
	3. The respondent's level of education	Ordinal type scale, from 1 (no education) to 12 (university)
Outlook (OutL)	1. The general satisfaction regarding the quality of life (the way in which the respondents live)	Likert type scale
	2. 'Do you think that in Romania, things are going … '.	Dichotomous variable
Economic-financial indicators (E(f)I)	1. How do you appreciate the current income/revenue of your household ?	Likert type scale, subjective measuring
	2. In the previous month (October) the total amount of money obtained (earned) by all the members in your household (including the salary, dividends, rents, sales)?	In million lei, measured on an interval scale
	3. Your personal income in the previous month (October) was around …? '	In million lei, measured on an interval scale
	4. How much money were spent, in total, during the previous month in your household? '	In million lei, measured on an interval scale
Housing and community (HC)	1. How many rooms does your house have?	No. of rooms, measured on an interval scale
	2. What is the surface of your house?	Square meters, measured on an interval scale
	3. Community/locality type.	Ordinal scale (from large city to village)

Table 1: Main variables used to explain attitudes towards male and female political leaders

4. Main research findings and conclusions

Before going into more detailed and nuanced discussions regarding the main findings and conclusions which can be derived from each chapter and subchapter, we need to directly address the initial research questions and briefly review the most important insights we reached in each case. The short answers presented in Table 2 for each of the nine initial research questions are also discussed at length in the remaining of the current chapter.

Table 2: On the initial research questions

No.	Research question	Main findings
RQ1	How do political liberalism (especially liberal neutrality) and distributive justice contribute to the feminist movement/agenda?	Albeit most feminist theory is rather critical of political liberalism and liberal neutrality, the two concepts are not irreconcilable as the liberal framework is often used to promote the feminist agenda. Distributive justice warrants policy-makers to ensure that previous unjust and unfair gender treatments are not further continued and replicated, thus contributing to the feminist movement. • See subchapters II.2, II.3 and II.4
RQ2	What was the role of globalization in the transnational diffusion of feminism and other social movements?	The core feminist movement originated in the North and spread both consciously and unconsciously (often as a spillover of economic practices and FDI penetration) to the South. • See subchapter II.5
RQ3	Is there any alternative to political representation which could lead to more adequate public policies and outcomes for disadvantaged groups?	The literature review provided consistent theoretical evidence that a more representative public apparatus (which includes different types of minorities) can provide multiple benefits for traditionally discriminated social groups. • See subchapter II.1
RQ4	Can higher education contribute to the empowerment of women and foster better gender integration in Romania?	Empirical analyses showed that (a) HEIs do not differ at the decision-making level from local institutions from a gender perspective, (b) both vertical and horizontal gender segregation still persist in higher education and that (c) workplace gender discrimination exists in Romanian HE, although sexual harassment is less prevalent. Based on these empirical findings and other theoretical analyses conducted in chapter IV, higher education cannot currently contribute to the empowerment of women and foster better gender integration in Romania. • See subchapters IV.5, IV.6 and IV.7
RQ5	How did female candidates perform in Romanian national and local post-communist elections?	Women are consistently underrepresented as potential candidates for public decision making positions at both the national and local level, resulting in a lower ratio of female elected officials. • See subchapter V.2.
RQ6	Can the Romanian central public administration be considered (viewed as) a representative bureaucracy from a gender perspective?	The Romanian central public administration has taken some steps in the direction of a representative bureaucracy following the 2010-2011 salary reductions, thus strengthening passive gender representation. • See subchapter V.4

RQ7	What are the strategies adopted by female public leaders to break through the glass ceiling?	Most respondents argued for adopting a 'small steps perspective/policy' – dividing bigger issues into smaller ones and tackling one small issue at a time. Other strategies can include: perseverance, diplomacy, introspection, creativity and initiative, self-sacrifice, delegation, professional training, self-learning and adopting a participatory management style. • See subchapter V.3
RQ8	Do individual attitudes regarding the societal roles of men and women differ in Romania according to ethnicity and gender criteria?	Respondents from the Roma male sample seem to present the most detrimental/traditionalistic views on gender equality, while Romanian females present the weaker biases against women and their role in society and are more opened/progressive in regard to multiple gender issues; Romanian males and Roma females can be situated somewhere in between. Thus we can conclude that both gender and ethnicity influence individual attitudes regarding gender roles. • See subchapters VI.2, VI.3 and VI.5
RQ9	How can we explain individual attitudes regarding the perceived political leadership abilities of men and women in Romania?	The statistical model tested on different sample and under different scenarios for missing data showed that socio-demographic factors (gender, age and formal education), outlook, institutional trust, housing and community indicators and socio-economic indicators have a limited influence on the respondents' perception of the political leadership abilities of men and women, while other gender attitudes (two of them, especially) seem to hold a more stable influence over different samples. • See subchapters VI.1, VI.2, VI.6 and VI.7

Source: Author's findings

Although Chapter II ('Representative Bureaucracy and Democratic Values in A Global Context') has a pronounced theoretical nature as it lays the groundwork for a better comprehension of gender phenomena and their subtleties in a modern society and political system, some key observations have to be reminded. After observing how representative bureaucracy can be connected with gender discrimination, this thesis provides consistent arguments that a more representative public apparatus (which includes minorities of different natures – of ethnicity, gender, social class, sexual orientation, linguistic and so on) can provide multiple benefits for traditionally discriminated social groups. The multiple connections between liberal neutrality, distributive justice and gender build upon the previous analysis on representative bureaucracy in order to provide a more complex understanding of gender phenomena and design complex public policies that address the root of gender discrimination in a democratic society and not just its forms of manifestations and effects. The last subchapter provided consistent evidence that although cultural goods and movements can travel across national borders and vast geographic distances, similar to

economic goods/movements, the directions in which they spread as well as their core contents and repertoires tend to be heterogeneous.

The in-depth theoretical inquiry conducted in Chapter III ('Gender Discrimination in Organizations') presented a rather gloomy picture, as gender discrimination remains an unfortunate and undesirable aspect of the modern organizational life, mostly affecting women that aspire to reach the upper levels of the hierarchy. Psychological mechanisms (such as those suggested by the stereotyping, attribution, equity theory, gender roles and so on) create discriminatory attitudes and behaviors against women in the labor force and, as a result, women are either underrepresented in higher managerial positions (the glass ceiling) or overrepresented in risky managerial positions (the glass cliff), while, in the limited number of sectors where they represent more than half of the labor force, men have better odds of being promoted, mostly due to informal mechanisms (due to the glass elevator). The partial failures of previous measures geared toward gender integration can be explained by the fact that most discriminatory behaviors/attitudes in modern societies are of an informal nature, thus changes/measures focusing solely on the legal framework have a rather limited impact both on individuals and the society. More adequate measures/instruments should influence individuals, organizations and even societies at a psychological level, referring to cultural values, the creation of support networks and other informal aspects. Laws, rules and regulations against gender discrimination (or which encourage affirmative actions) are nonetheless necessary, as they represent the basis for a better representation of women in management and actively discourage explicit/overt discriminatory actions. However, in order to encourage present or future male managers to promote and accept amongst them equally well trained females, we cannot (and should not) intervene solely with 'the hammer of the law' because finer tuning (consisting of awareness campaigns, training seminars, good practice examples, and so on) is necessary and more appropriate to address core issues of discrimination.

Bridging the gap between the theoretical and the empirical analyses conducted in this thesis, Chapter IV 'Gender, Education and Local Communities' focused on the situation of women in higher education and the potential links between universities and their immediate environments (local communities). Contrary to initial expectations, the argument that could be made in favor of universities acting as role models for societies (their local communities) is limited, as women remain underrepresented both in the legislative functions of academia (Senate) and especially in executive functions (as deans, rectors, vice-rectors and Senate presidents) that imply a higher degree of power/authority; in the case of top executive

functions, the access of women seems to be more limited as the position implies more power. Furthermore, the research conducted on Eurostat data on higher education provided conclusive evidence that horizontal gender segregation still persists in the higher education systems of EU member states, as men and women tend to consistently engage in different specializations that can be connected with their traditional societal gender roles. The evidence for the vertical gender segregation in academia is less straightforward, but strong arguments can be made for its existence, as female students tend to be predominant at lower (bachelor and master) educational levels but men seem to catch-up and even surpass them at PhD/doctoral level. Furthermore, female academics are less likely to obtain a full time job which could lead to a permanent position and are more often relegated to part time employment. The third empirical study of this chapter (based on the responses of 93 PhD students from six Romanian universities) showed that respondents believed that men had a better situation both at the national level and in their organizations, but there was a common belief that those organizations were (in general) more equal than the Romanian society. Even if sexual harassment behaviors were not a serious cause for concern in Romanian HE institutions, the 93 respondents were more aware of other forms of workplace gender discrimination. One worrisome aspect could be identified via the data collected from the respondents, regarding the difference of perceptions between male and female respondents regarding workplace discrimination during professional evaluation, as women believed (felt) that such practices were more prevalent.

The analyses conducted in Chapter V ('The Glass Ceiling In The Public Sector: Romanian Elected and Appointed Officials') showed that women are consistently underrepresented as potential candidates for public decision making positions, while the ratio of females elected officials is significantly lower than that of males.

Qualitative research also provided consistent empirical evidence that women in Romanian public sector managerial positions tend to view themselves as being responsible, professional, committed, optimistic, respectful and problem solvers, while trying to distance themselves from more traditional female characteristics such as patience, intuition, sociability, talent (having a vocation), elegance, charisma and empathy. Most female managers tend to regard their professional success as the result of hard work, perseverance and professional competence and not of favorable circumstances, luck or chance, despite the problems faced during their managerial career – related to the organization, the environment (or outside the organization) as well as personal and family issues. Furthermore, the analysis of Romanian central public administration decision-making functions highlighted the fact that

even if men occupied the vast majority of all decision-making positions at both decisional 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 remained constant and equitable, as each gender occupied more than 40% at each level (reaching a form of gender equality in decision-making positions). 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 and the effects it had on public sector salaries. 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 the 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 and organizational shortages.

The main empirical analyses included in Chapter VI ('Romanian Societal Attitudes regarding Gender. Majority and Minority (Roma) Views') explore individual attitudes regarding 11 gender issues and seek to explain attitudes toward male and female political leaders.

The first important aspect observed via the descriptive analysis is that more non-responses (such as: don't know, or don't want to answer) seem to be generated by the Roma sample (the highest being 29,4% in the case of the higher education item), a fact which can signal the existence of a potential taboo subject in the case of this minority, as well a higher reticence to share/manifest their opinions regarding gender issues. The overall results of the descriptive analysis for the four groups (based on gender and ethnicity) indicate rather detrimental views on gender issues and provide multiple clues that Romania remains rather a traditionalistic society regarding gender equality and female emancipation. However, the descriptive research also highlighted some potential divergences among the four main subgroups (Roma males, Roma females, Romanian males and Romanian females) in respect to multiple issues, differences which warranted further exploration. Overall, respondents from the Roma male sample seem to present the most detrimental/traditionalistic views on gender equality, while Romanian females present the weaker biases against women and their role in society, and are more opened/progressive with regard to multiple gender issues; Romanian males and Roma females are somewhere in between.

Even if the factorial analyses conducted present some limitations that need to be taken into account, considering that both the KMO and Bartlett's Test provided excellent scores for all analyses, we can assume that the aforementioned limitations have a marginal effect on the reliability of this analysis. All four analyses (conducted on the national sample, on the Roma sample, on the all-male sample and on the all-female sample) reduced the number of variables from 11 to 2 components (factors), explaining over 50% of the total variance of the initial variable in the case of the national sample and well above 60% for the other three aforementioned subsamples. The results of the factor analysis seem to be more stable (for all four analyses) in the case of the second component (explaining around 20% of the total variance of the 11 variables), which included the following variables: (a) University studies are more important for a boy than a girl; (b) In general men are better political leaders than women, and (c) Men run businesses better than women. This would indicate that the opinions regarding leadership abilities of male and female constitute a distinct line of thought for the respondents, possibly pointing out general biases against female leaders, biases that would explain the glass ceiling identified in the case of Romanian political decision-making positions. The inclusion of attitudes toward higher education in this component can be explained considering that education was often cited as an explanation for the differences between male and female professional attainments, especially in relation to career advancement. The first component (which explained between 33 and 42% from the total variance of the 11 variables) is less clear cut in all four cases, as only two variables were included in this component (with different loadings) for all four analyses, namely: (a) A working mother can be just as thoughtful with her children as a stay at home mom and (b) Both husbands must earn money for the family. According to the highest loading criteria, the first components/factors of each factorial analysis also included the following variables: (a) The best way for a women to be independent is to have a job (in the national sample), (b) Having a job is a good thing, but what women truly want is a family and children (in the Roma sample), (c) A stay at home wife is just as accomplished as one that has a job (in the all-male sample) and (d) The best way for a women to be independent is to have a job (all-female sample). In the national and all female sample, the third variable included in the first factor is the same and obviously in line with the other two, while the variables include in the Roma and all-male sample seems to be both counterintuitive and opposed to the other two variables. From the perspective of the four factorial analyses, there do not seem to be considerable differences between the four samples as: (a) the second component is identical in all four cases and (b) the first component is very similar in all four cases.

The post-hoc analysis of variance (ANOVA) indicates that differences are more likely to occur in the case of the Roma male and the Romanian female subsamples, with the first group manifesting more discriminative attitudes against females and the latter being more gender inclusive (or manifesting fewer discriminatory attitudes), with the other two groups (Romanian males and Roma females) being somewhere in between. Furthermore, based on the results obtained from the post-hoc Anova, we can also analyze the number of differences which appear between subsamples as a proxy for divergence or similarity between them. The highest numbers of statistically significant differences (nine out of eleven comparisons) were encountered between Roma males and Romanian females, followed by Romanian males and Roma males (seven out of eleven comparisons) – the higher numbers of differences indicates more divergence between these groups. More moderate levels of divergence (or similarity) were identified between Roma females and Romanian females, as six out of eleven comparisons were statistically significant. Four mean differences were statistically significant in the case of both comparisons between Roma males and females, as well as between Romanian males and females – although the statistically significant differences do not fully overlap, these results can indicate a possible mediating effect of ethnicity on attitudes toward gender equality. The lowest number of statistically significant differences (only three out of eleven comparisons) were encountered between Romanian males and Roma females, thus showing that these two groups are rather similar in their attitudes towards gender and different gender issues – which is a rather surprising finding and deserves further exploration.

The eighteen regression analyses conducted in subchapter VI.6 allowed us to observe and explain attitudes regarding the perceived political leadership capabilities from the perspective of respondents from the two main samples (Romanian and Roma) as well as from the perspective of the four subsamples (Romanian males, Romanian females, Roma males, Roma females), thus continuing the analyses presented in the previous subchapters. All the models tested were statistically significant with $p < ,0005$, but R^2 varied considerably between models, ranging from 0,407 (in the case of Model 1C) to 0,608 (in the case of Model 3A). Only one independent variable was statistically significant across all eighteen models, namely the belief that men are better than women at running/leading a business, with B greater than 0,680 and Sig. = ,000; this indicates that there is a strong and positive connection between the opinions on economic leadership and those on political leadership.

Tests (simulations) on the same sample under different conditions for dealing with missing data (listwise exclusion, pairwise exclusion or replacement by mean) yielded

different results for each of the two main groups and four subgroups, as shown in subchapter VI.7. The treatment of missing data also influenced the goodness of fit for each model, as listwise exclusion reduced sample size but provided higher R^2 than both pairwise exclusion (with smaller R^2) and replacement by means (with the lowest R^2 but bigger sample size and more representative).

Subchapter VI.7 also included a more direct and nuanced comparison of Model 1C and Model 2C in order to reach a better understanding of the factors which can influence attitudes regarding male and female political leaders in the case of Romanians and Roma respondents. In the case of both models none of the housing and community variables (namely the number of rooms in a house, the surface of the house or the locality/community type) were statistically significant as Sig. $> 0,1$, and the same situation occurred in the case of two socio-demographic factors (age and the last educational level graduated). Furthermore, three of the ten gender opinions and seven of the thirteen trust related variables (namely trust in the Presidency, Government, army, police, Municipal (Town/City) Hall, non-governmental organization and the Church) were also statistically insignificant for both samples, thus they do not seem to influence the respondents' attitudes regarding male and female political leaders. Two other factors/independent variables (personal general satisfaction with the way of life and the personal income in the previous month) were not statistically significant in any of the two models.

Further similarities from the perspective of the variables that were statistically significant in both cases highlight the existence of common factors that influence the respondents' attitudes toward the political leadership capabilities of men and women. Two of the ten gender beliefs were statistically significant in both models: the belief that university studies are more important for a boy than for a girl, and that men are better than women at running/leading a business; other common variables include trust in banks and the subjective assessments of household income. As such, in the case of both samples, stronger beliefs that university studies are more important for a boy than they are for a girl, that men are better than women at running/leading a business as well as better (subjective) appreciations of household income can all be connected with stronger beliefs that men are better political leaders than female; higher levels of trust in banks are associated with weaker beliefs that men are better political leaders than females.

In the case of the model tested on the national sample (Model 1C) the other statistically significant independent variables are from the gender attitudes and institutional trust sets of variables; with the exception of the aforementioned economic-financial indicator

(the subjective appreciations of household income) none of the other socio-demographic, outlook or housing and community variables were statistically significant. Model 2C (tested on the Roma sample) is more complex than 1C as it includes a higher number of unique variables (statistically significant independent variables that are not present in the other model); the difference is quite significant as 1C has four unique variables and 2C has ten. In the case of Model 2C, three gender attitudes variables were statistically significant, as stronger beliefs that a preschooler might face difficulties if his mother had a job, that a wife that did not work was just as fulfilled as one that had a job, and that in a relationship women could control their emotions better than men strengthened the belief that men were better political leaders than women. Higher levels of trust in Parliament were associated with weaker beliefs that men are better political leaders than females, while higher levels of trust in justice and Mass-media with stronger beliefs.

Gender also seems to be a significant factor in the case of Model 2C but not in the case of Model 1C, as Roma males are more likely than their female counterparts to believe that men are better political leaders than females. Furthermore, Roma respondents believed that things were going in a good direction in Romania were also more likely to believe that men were better political leaders than females, and that belief could also be influenced by higher objective household revenues, while higher objective household spending had an opposite influence – although the influence of the latter two were rather small.

Before discussing the main policy implications of our findings and proposing public policies and future lines of research, we need to address the main hypotheses proposed in the second section of this summary and assess their status, based on the results of the regression models conducted on the two main samples and the four sub-samples (see Table 3).

Table 3: Confirmed and refuted hypotheses

No.	Hypothesis	Status	Argument
H1	Attitudes regarding the political leadership abilities of men and women are influenced by other gender attitudes.	Partially confirmed	Albeit not all of the ten gender attitudes included in the regression model were statistically significant across the analyses conducted, the respondents' level of agreement with the statement that university studies were more important for a boy than they were for a girl and that men were better business/economic leaders than females consistently provided the highest unstandardized and standardized coefficients at $p < 0,05$. Thus, these two attitudes surfaced as the most consistent and relevant independent variables across the 18 regression analyses, indicating that they played an important role in the attitudes respondents had regarding the political leadership abilities of men and

			women.
H2	Attitudes regarding the political leadership abilities of men and women are influenced by organizational trust (trust in organizations).	Refuted	None of the organizational trust variables maintained consistent statistical significance (at $p < 0{,}05$) across the regression models conducted on the different samples and under different conditions for dealing with missing data.
H3	Attitudes regarding the political leadership abilities of men and women are influenced by the respondents' outlook.	Refuted	None of the two outlook variables maintained consistent statistical significance (at $p < 0{,}05$) across the regression models conducted on the different samples and conditions for dealing with missing data.
H4	Attitudes regarding the political leadership abilities of men and women are influenced by socio-demographic indicators.	Refuted	None of the three socio-demographic (control) variables maintained consistent statistical significance (at $p < 0{,}05$) across the regression models conducted on the different samples and under different conditions for dealing with missing data.
H5	Attitudes regarding the political leadership abilities of men and women are influenced by the respondents' financial wellbeing.	Refuted	None of the four financial wellbeing (economic-financial indicators) variables maintained consistent statistical significance (at $p < 0{,}05$) across the regression models conducted on the different samples and under different conditions for dealing with missing data.
H6	Attitudes regarding the political leadership abilities of men and women are influenced by housing indicators.	Refuted	None of the two housing indicators maintained consistent statistical significance (at $p < 0{,}05$) across the regression models conducted on the different samples and under different conditions for dealing with missing data.
H7	Attitudes regarding the political leadership abilities of men and women are influenced by the community in which they reside.	Refuted	The community variable did not maintain consistent statistical significance (at $p < 0{,}05$) across the regression models conducted on the different samples and under different conditions for dealing with missing data.

Source: Author's findings

As it can be observed in Table 3, six of the initial main hypotheses proposed in order to explain the respondents' attitudes regarding the political leadership abilities of men and women are refuted by the data, while only one hypothesis if partially confirmed, as the respondents' level of agreement with the statement that university studies are more important for a boy than they are for a girl and that men are better business/economic leaders than women proved to be the most consistent and relevant independent variables across all samples and scenarios for dealing with missing data. Even if most of the initial hypotheses were refuted, we should emphasize that these results, although negative, do nonetheless offer important insights on the factors which influence opinions regarding male and female political leadership abilities, thus providing an important contribution to the scientific

literature. Furthermore, the present findings highlight the informal and psychological nature of gender phenomena, and create new opportunities for future research.

5. Policy implications and recommendations

Before addressing the main policy implication and developing recommendations based on the findings of this research, it should be specified that, unfortunately, not all of these findings are conducive to generate clear and consistent policy recommendations. As such, the more theoretical sections of this work can influence and add to different fields of study and research, but present only limited practical applications. Furthermore, even some of the more applied analyses conducted, which also contribute to the literature, might have limited practical (public policy/implications) applications, as they are more suitable to lead to future lines of research. However, even with these limitations, there are a number of public policy recommendations and implications which can be derived from the extensive theoretical and empirical analyses conducted in this work, which will be detailed in the present sub-chapter.

The main policy implications which can be derived from the initial theoretical sections (Chapters II and III) refer to the main advantages derived from ensuring a more representative bureaucracy and the need to move beyond legal means in the attempt of reducing gender discrimination. As such, policy/decision-makers should initially reconsider personnel policies in order to ensure that recruitment, selection and promotion procedures are more inclusive towards disadvantaged groups; affirmative hiring practices can ensure a more adequate representation of the population in the bureaucratic apparatus and, consequentially, more appropriate public policies. Going beyond the aforementioned formal improvements (which are nonetheless necessary and constitute the foundation of more inclusive institutional setups), both public and private managers (organizational decision-makers) also need to scrutinize the actual work environment in order to identify informal practices that can be detrimental to disadvantaged groups and correct such deficiencies.

Based on the findings presented in Chapter IV, especially the analysis of the twelve top Romanian advanced research and education universities, it can be easily argued that higher education institutions should encourage more women to candidate for both executive and legislative functions, in an attempt to provide a better example (role model) for their local

environment and especially in regard to the student body. Although this view might idealize universities to a certain degree, they do have the potential to exert a positive influence on both the community in which they reside and the larger environment by internally promoting more gender inclusive decision-making. Both local politicians and voters can be influenced by the gender inclusive universities established in their cities and counties, thus surpassing some of the preexistent biases against female political leaders; as a result, more female politicians could be then motivated to engage in the political race and more voters could be determined to cast their vote and place their trust in a female candidate – if more women break through the academic glass ceiling and make their presence felt in the community. Furthermore, the students of these gender inclusive universities could further propagate less detrimental views of females in decision making-positions, leading to more positive outcomes in their home communities.

Universities should also reconsider their recruitment and admission policies regarding undergraduate and graduate students, as horizontal gender segregations seem to persist regarding different fields of study, especially in the case of STEM (where male students are predominant) and social sciences and the humanities (where female students are overrepresented). Unfortunately, the traditional gender roles of men and women seem to be perpetuated in the educational setup, most likely as a result of early socialization and pre-university education. In this respect, higher education organizations could create partnerships with other education providers (high schools for example) and try to encourage young boys and girls to engage in fields that are less connected with the aforementioned gender roles, thus increase their selection pools for undergraduate and then graduate students. The more gender inclusive university decision-making mentioned in the previous paragraph can also be nurtured by encouraging and actively promoting hiring policies which would place female academics on tenured tracked positions – as they currently seem to represent most of the part-time/ university labor force. Last but not least, although Romanian universities seem to maintain a good situation in the case of sexual harassment (as such practices are not considered to be common), the status-quo is less positive in the case of workplace/professional gender discrimination. Beside continuing and strengthening policies that reduce sexual harassments, universities should redesign their personnel strategies and workplace policies in order to ensure the adoption of a real merit based system which can properly address the systemic underrepresentation of women in academia and provide the multiple societal benefits discussed earlier.

Considering the fact that Romanian women tend to be consistently underrepresented in national decision-making (as members of the Parliament, as shown in Chapter V), we posit that a better representation in the national central public administration (CPA) could address via the means of bureaucratic representation some of the shortcomings generated by the low number/ratio of female parliament members. Albeit it would be easier to design and implement policies geared toward ensuring more women reach CPA decision-making positions, as these merit based appointments do not require major transformations on the behalf of the electoral body[3], men also seem to occupy the most senior (higher) such offices. Men 'dominated' CPA at the higher level (1) from 2003 until 2010, but the shift between 2010 and 2011 (when women broke through the glass ceiling in these functions) is not necessarily the result of purposeful public policies, but most likely an unintended effect of austerity measures and structural reforms which resulted in salary cuts that made these positions less financially attractive. However, this shift also indicates (beside the existence of a potential glass cliff in the Romanian CPA) that female civil service employees are more loyal to their organizations and less likely to use their exit option (Hirschman, 1970; Dowding *et al.*, 2000). Thus, designing public policies (e.g. affirmative actions) aimed at ensuring the existence of a representative bureaucracy in CPA would not only counterbalance some of the negative effects of male political overrepresentation but could also lead to a more stable and predictable national administration, especially since our analysis has shown that women are both determinate/willing and capable to assume such roles.

The first descriptive analysis conducted in Chapter VI has shown that both ethnicity and gender influence individual attitudes regarding gender issues, while the Romanian society still maintains a rather traditionalistic view of women; Romanian women seem to be more gender inclusive groups and Roma males the least, while Romanian males and Roma females fall somewhere in-between. Thus, some recommendations might be made for female candidates who can focus their campaign and attract the support of the group most likely to vote for them (namely female voters) by highlighting on the campaign trail gender/societal issues which would be otherwise ignored. However, a political strategy focused exclusively on gender issues does entail some risks, as it could alienate potential male voters; thus candidates should strive to reach a balance between more general issues and those targeting specific group interests.

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[3]Attitudinal and behavioral transformations which would be required in order to convince voters to elect female parliamentary candidates who could better represent their needs and desires than male candidates.

The factorial analysis conducted on the eleven gender attitudes provided consistent and somewhat surprising results across all four samples (Romanian respondents, Roma respondents, all male and all female respondents) as three variables were always grouped together on the second component, showing a strong connection between the attitudes regarding the importance of higher education (university studies) for boys and girls and the political and economic/business leadership abilities of men and women. While the connection between the political and economic/business leadership abilities of men and women is not necessary a surprise, as these attitudes can be both subscribed in the broader category of female leadership, the fact that attitudes towards the importance of education for the two genders were also included in this component deserves further inquiry. It is possible that the respondents' perception vis-à-vis education can influence their perceptions regarding leadership abilities; thus we can hypothesize that, indirectly, public policies designed at reducing gender discrimination and segregation in higher education might reduce the overall gender bias against female leaders.

The post-hoc analysis of variance (ANOVA) highlighted multiple differences between the four main subgroups (Romanian males, Romanian females, Roma males and Roma females), thus providing consistent evidence that attitudes towards females are moderated by both gender and ethnicity. Although these are not necessarily new and groundbreaking findings, they draw attention upon the need to address the group which presents the most biased attitudes in the detriment of women, namely Roma males. The excessive 'traditionalistic' gender views of Roma males are without a doubt reflected in the tendency of Roma children to drop out from education (Brüggemann, 2012, p. 41) and in the lower educational aspirations for female education attainment (Brüggemann, 2012, p. 51). As such, targeting this group with special measures aimed at reducing their gender bias (such as awareness campaigns) can indirectly improve the situation of young Roma females and their social integration. At the opposite side of the spectrum, Romanian females showed the most inclusive gender attitudes (confirming the descriptive findings presented in subchapter VI), thus we can assume that they have the highest potential to transform these positive attitudes into societal practices. Building on the assumptions of representative bureaucracy, it can be easily argued that by including more Romanian females in the state apparatus (national and local public administration institutions), especially in positions that imply influence in the decision making process, we can ensure the design (development) and implementation of more gender equitable and sensitive public policies.

The regression models presented and analyzed in subchapter VI.6 explored in-depth the factors which can influence attitudes towards male and female political leaders, highlighting the fact that different explanatory mechanisms can be identified in the case of different population samples, under different scenarios for dealing with missing data. Across all eighteen regression models 'subjective' factors, such as other gender attitudes, trust in different organizations or subjective appreciations of household incomes were the most consistent predictors (statistically significant independent variables) for the belief that men are better political leaders than females, thus bringing once again to the forefront the psychological and informal nature of gender discrimination. From a policy perspective, we need to state once again that the best suited measures to tackle gender discrimination at the national level (see Model 1, under all three scenarios) are those aimed at changing the mentality of the population, as other factors (such as income, education, life satisfaction, community indicators) do not seem to have any effect on attitudes towards the political leadership abilities of men and women.

The attitudes of the Roma population (see Model 2) regarding the political leadership abilities of men and women are explained by a more diverse series of factors, of subjective (attitudinal) and objective nature[4]. Since the belief that a preschooler might face difficulties if his mother works/has a job was statistically significant in explaining political leadership attitudes, we can argue that better education related services and facilities (such as afterschool) can lead to positive developments regarding female integration in the Roma community; by assisting Roma families in taking care of their children, females of this ethnicity might be less pressured to dedicate all their time, focus and attention to their children, reduce the social and community stigma against those that do not do it, and eventually encourage them to be more involved in their own education or the labor force. Furthermore, trust in mass-media (television, radio, newspapers, etc.) also seems to be a significant factor in explaining attitudes regarding male and female political leaders, thus these information means can and should be used to exert a positive change in the attitudes of Roma (or other minorities) regarding gender.

One interesting aspect which surfaced across all regression analyses is that education (the last educational level graduated by the respondents) does not have any statistically significant effect on attitudes towards male and female political leaders. Unfortunately, this

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[4]This model also presented a rather surprising finding, namely that more well-off Roma respondents are in fact more biased against female political leaders, but both B coefficients and the Sig. values indicate a rather spurious relationship.

means that policy aimed at increasing the level of education (either at the national or ethnic level) will not affect attitudes towards political leadership and that, consequentially, cannot ensure more female representation in the political arena. The same can also be observed in the case of age, which had a statistically significant effect only in the case of the Roma female sample, thus showing the lack of inter-generational differences in the appraisal of male and female political leadership capabilities, as well as what could be easily considered a failure of post-communist public policies in ensuring more inclusive gender attitudes.

Objective measurement of individual or personal income is another factor that does not seem to influence gender attitudes in the case of political leadership in any of the eighteen regression analyses, while subjective assessments and objective measurements of household income, as well as objective measurements of household spending were statistically significant in different iterations of the model (obviously, not all at the same time) – in essence, personal financial wellbeing seems to be less important across all samples than household financial wellbeing. The main policy implication which can be derived from the aforementioned observation is that attitudes/opinions regarding the political leadership abilities of men and women are more likely to be influenced by the level of household finances (economic wellbeing) than they are by personal economic/financial success.

Housing and community indicators do not seem to contribute as explanatory factors for attitudes regarding male and female political leaders, as both the surface of the respondents' houses and the community type were not statistically significant in any of the models, while the number of rooms was statistically significant only in two situations (in Model 2A and Model 4A). Since the community in which respondents reside does not have any statistical significance, we can argue that eventual public policies aimed at reducing gender discrimination or at improving attitudes towards women should be focused on both the rural and the urban environment, on both large and smaller communities. Furthermore, potential strategies of female politicians to attract the votes of urban dwellers (as they are often considered more open-minded and ready to accept a female political leader than their rural counterparts) might not be successful, as electoral attitudes do not seem to diverge. On the other hand, if we take housing surface and the number of rooms as proxies for financial wellbeing or quality of life, we can argue that improvements in these areas will not necessarily lead to less gender discriminative societies, once again highlighting the psychological nature of the phenomena. Life satisfaction is another factor that does not appear to influence attitudes towards the political leadership abilities of men and women, thus making it impossible to find adequate support for the political glass cliff

assumption/hypothesis (that female political leaders will be more desirable in decline/crisis situations as they represent a change of the status-quo); similar findings occurred in the case of the other outlook variable (referring to the direction in which things are going in Romania).

6. Future research avenues

The work conducted up to this point allows us to provide a series of recommendations and potential future lines of research, thus broadening the research field and bringing to the forefront new opportunities for academics interested in the phenomena, while simultaneously addressing (indirectly) some of the inherent limitations of this study. First of all, some of the pilot studies conducted can and should be replicated on a larger scale in order to increase the reliability of the findings. In this respect, the comparison between universities and their local communities (see subchapter IV.5) should be replicated at the national level, by including all the cities/municipalities where other universities are established (mostly referring to other large and medium cities) or where any of the Romanian accredited universities have opened campuses or university extensions (mostly referring to smaller towns). Furthermore, our analysis was limited to two electoral cycles (2012 and 2016), but other researchers might find data for previous periods and present a better analysis of how this relationship (between HEIs and their communities) has evolved in time.

Another analysis which deserves further attention refers to gender discrimination and related phenomena in academia (see subchapter IV.7), which can be replicated at the national level (to include all Romanian universities) and extended to include both PhD students and faculty; such an endeavor could be feasible especially since the data collection instrument is already designed/created (as included in Annex 1) and can be easily improved or adapted to particular research interests.

A better understanding of gender discrimination in politics and public administration could be reached by exploring the strategies and tactics adopted by women who managed to break through the glass ceiling in these domains, as done in subchapter V.3; however, while a qualitative approach is more adequate than a quantitative one to explore these issues, the sample used in this research was limited from multiple perspectives (especially with regard to the size and geographic representation). Thus, the structured interview guide included in

Annex 2 can be improved and used to collect more reliable and valid data representative at the national level, by expanding the geographical area and the types of institutions and organizations from which interviewee can be selected.

Other aspects which deserve further in-depth exploration pertain to the role Romanian women took in national and local political competition (see subchapters V.2.2 and V.2.3) as well as in central and local public administration (see subchapter V.4), and how their representation/involvement in these areas developed through time. The analyses conducted on women in the national and local electoral races, especially the exploration of their representation as political candidates and as winners, provided consistent information on women in the Romanian political arena, but these researches can be further developed. One potential line of research could consist of analyzing the share of women as candidates for national legislative positions (in the Chambers of Deputies and the Senate) on county or regional bases for all previous electoral cycles (the data included in subchapter V.2.2 was limited to the 2012 and 2016 elections). The same approach could be taken in the case of local (mayoral, local and county councils) elections as the data included in subchapter V.2.3 did not cover the entire post-communist period, neither from the perspective of electoral results, nor from the perspective of candidates. Furthermore, the two aforementioned analyses could be improved by taking into account socio-demographic indicators of the electorate or the profile of the political parties which promoted and offered support to female candidates. However, quantitative data can only help us understand the role of women in national and local elections up to a certain degree, as some limitations are inherent to this approach; thus, a qualitative approach, consisting of interviews with female (successful and unsuccessful) candidates and case studies could provide a more in-depth picture regarding:

- The contextual and internal factors which motivated women to initially engage in politics and later on to candidate for a local or national seat;
- The hurdles they had to overcome on their path towards becoming a local or national political leader;
- The particular strategies adopted on the campaign trail and the specific resources women had at their disposal; and
- The political management style adopted after winning the electoral race and the public policies (social issues) towards which female political leaders tend to be more sensitive or interested in.

Building on the premises of representative bureaucracy (see subchapter II.1) researchers can further explore the impact of female representation in central public administration (CPA) decision-making positions on public policies. The research presented in chapter V.4 can be replicated to include all EU28 member states in a comparative perspective (based on the BEIS classification/typology, for both level 1 and level 2 positions). Furthermore, academics interested in the field can also explore the connection between female representation in CPA decision-making positions and the gender aspects of public policies enacted in different periods or other indexes of gender equality (or, in more general terms, the overall quality of life in the case of women). A similar research could be conducted in order to explore potential linkages between women in local administrative decision-making positions and the quality of life for women in these local communities (again, based on the assumption that a more representative bureaucracy will lead to more adequate public policies for the represented group). Furthermore, interested researchers could explore or connect the multiple relationships between political decision-makers (elected representatives) and public administration decision-makers and the quality of public policies from a gender perspective, at the local, national or international level.

Since the most important and consistent empirical analyses included in this work focused on explaining the attitudes of Romanian and Roma towards the political leadership abilities of men and women, chapter VI also presents the highest potential to develop future research topics and inspire other academics. First of all, the main theoretical model (see subchapter VI.1) used to explain attitudes regarding the political leadership abilities of men and women can be further improved based on a more comprehensive and up-to-date literature review; considering the high pace at which research regarding this topic is published, we cannot assume that our theoretical model is without any flow as new articles and books can provide consistent arguments for including new factors or for excluding existing ones. Future research can also focus on identifying more suitable variables which can be used as proxies for the main factors included in the model, as we have to acknowledge the fact that our current model uses a rather high number of independent variables, some of which proved to be statistically insignificant across all eighteen regressions. Beside improvements of the theoretical model, we can also observe a series of limitations which can be addressed by future researches regarding the operationalization and measurement scales used for the variables. For example, the Likert type scale used to measure the respondents' gender attitudes in the 2006 Roma Inclusion Barometer is not necessarily ideal as it only used four

categories to gauge the response and two more for non-answers[5]; a more complex five[6] level or seven[7] level scale, with a clear neutral[8] level/option (showing neither agreement nor disagreement with the gender statement made) would provide more accurate measurements of the respondents' attitudes. Other potential improvements regarding the scale would be to inverse it, so that one would correspond to a very low degree of agreement and five or seven to a very high degree, as the current scale can create some confusion and makes the results more complicated to explain and understand. A similar five or seven level Likert scale could also be used in the case of the organizational trust variables (where answers were similarly measured on a four level scale, with the neutral option being removed).

We must also acknowledge that, although the data used for the analyses conducted in chapter VI is not necessarily outdated, both the Romanian society as a whole and especially researchers interested in this topic could certainly benefit from an actualization. A newer dataset would allow researchers and policy makers to: (a) obtain a better and more accurate understanding of gender attitudes in Romania; (b) measure how these attitudes have evolved over time and potentially identify the factors (actions, policy measures or other societal developments) which can influence gender attitudes in time; (c) re-test the theoretical model developed; (d) obtain more diverse data by expanding the battery of questions/items regarding gender attitudes; (e) explore how the presence of female political leaders in a community influence gender attitudes, and (f) identify potential shifts between majority and minority groups. Furthermore, an actualized dataset could be used by elected or appointed decision-makers to develop more adequate public policies specifically aimed at reducing gender discrimination (gender mainstreaming) or to ensure that all existing or future public policies take into account the differentiated impacts these measures have on the two genders (gendered public policies).

As final conclusions, after reviewing the main findings, discussing policy implications and recommendations and promoting other possible lines of research, we need to emphasize some of the main strengths of the current work. One of the most important additions this

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[5] The original scale was as follows: 1 – to a very high degree; 2 – to a high degree; 3 – to a low degree; 4 – to a very low degree; 8 – Don't know, and 9 – Don't want to answer.

[6] Whereas the levels could be: 1 – to a very high degree; 2 – to a high degree; 3 – to neither a high nor a low degree, 4 – to a low degree; 5 – to a very low degree; 8 – Don't know, and 9 – Don't want to answer.

[7] Whereas the levels could be: 1 – to a very high degree; 2 – to a high degree; 3 – to a relatively high degree; 4 – to neither a high nor a low degree, 5 – to a relatively low degree; 6 – to a low degree; 7 – to a very low degree; 8 – Don't know, and 9 – Don't want to answer.

[8] The lack of a clear neutral option could force respondents to choose between a positive and a negative answer or one of the two non-answers (don't know or don't want to answer), although these do not truly reflect their attitudes, opinions or beliefs.

thesis brings to the scientific literature consists in the holistic approach adopted to study gender discrimination by connecting multiple facets of the Romanian society (politics, public administration and education); the research topic was not approached from a single perspective or as an isolated domain as the thesis has carefully scrutinized the relationships between these phenomena as well as potential underlying factors.

Another important strength refers to the methodological mix of both qualitative and quantitative approaches, methods and research techniques used in order to reach a better understanding of gender discrimination and the potential relationships between the three main areas of society included in the analysis. Furthermore, the combination of multiple fields of study (feminism, political science, organizational studies, public policy, and so on), different theories from the aforementioned fields, methods and empirical data, ensured the limitation of potential intrinsic biases, and led to more nuanced and robust results/findings. Further methodological contributions stem from the approach adopted regarding data analysis and model testing. The present thesis provided three different strategies for dealing with missing data, namely listwise exclusion, pairwise exclusion and replacement with the mean, thus highlighting how these methodological choices can lead to divergent and often contradictory results, and how the treatment of missing data can influence a researcher's findings and conclusions. Alongside using different scenarios/strategies for dealing with missing data, the model was also tested on different samples and subsamples in order to account for different causal patterns which might explain attitudes regarding the (perceived) political leadership abilities of men and women.

Last but not least, we must also bring forth that the main research findings of this thesis are also used to develop public policies ideas/recommendations regarding the reduction of gender discrimination behaviors in multiple areas, thus providing more consistent benefits for the Romanian society. Furthermore, while other academics also engage in the endeavor of promoting public policy recommendations in their works, we have taken a step further and also discussed the main implications of the results for both public policies (decision-makers) and the societal actors (women in academia, public administration or politics) which can encounter the multiple forms of gender discrimination scrutinized in the current research.

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