

„BABEȘ BOLYAI” UNIVERSITY OF CLUJ-NAPOCA

**FACULTY OF ECONOMIC SCIENCES AND
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ABSTRACT OF PhD THESIS

**FEMALE MANAGEMENT AND
LEADERSHIP IN ROMÂNIA**

SCIENTIFIC COORDINATOR:

Prof. univ. dr. IOAN MIHUȚ

PhD STUDENT:

Lect. univ. ANGELA ON

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THE STRUCTURE OF THE ABSTRACT

Table of contents of the PhD thesis	2
Key words.....	4
Argument.....	4
Chapter 1. Gender diversity in organizations	6
Chapter 2. Women in management.....	9
Chapter 3. Female leadership from the cultural perspective	12
Chapter 4. Female leadership and leadership styles	13
Chapter 5. Culture, management and female leadership in Romania.....	15
Chapter 6. Final considerations and proposals regarding the continuation of the research	21
Selective bibliography.....	26

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES.....	i
ARGUMENT	i
CHAPTER 1	
GENDER DIVERSITY IN ORGANIZATIONS	1
1.1. Diversity – conceptual delimitations.....	2
1.2. Diversity management in organizations	4
1.3. Gender diversity	10
1.3.1. Gender and sex. The structure of the difference	12
1.3.2. Gender differences regarding physical, communication and management abilities ...	15
1.4. Conclusion	25
CHAPTER 2	
WOMEN IN MANAGEMENT	28
2.1. The ascension of women in management.....	29
2.1.1. Barriers to gender equality.....	31
2.1.2. Gender roles as braking factors affecting gender equality.....	40
2.1.3. The <i>glass ceiling</i> phenomenon.....	44
2.1.4. The impact of the numerical distribution of women within organizations.....	45
2.1.5. The significance of gender equality. Salary policies. Affirmative action.....	49
2.2. Satisfactions and frustrations associated with management	53
2.2.1. Leaders’ satisfactions.....	54
2.2.2. Leaders’ dissatisfactions and frustrations.....	56
2.2.3. The stress associated with management and gender	58
2.3. The manager woman in organizations.....	60
2.4. Conclusion	66
CHAPTER 3	
FEMALE LEADERSHIP FROM A CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE.....	69
3.1. Globalization and gender	71
3.2. Gender and culture in organizations.....	76
3.3. Leadership and cultural diversity	86
3.4. The woman’s role in organizational culture and change strategies	89
3.5. Recent studies on female leadership	92
3.5.1. Leadership and gender – the approach of the Centre for Gender in Organizations ...	92
3.5.2. The internal empowerment of women – the study of Accenture centre.....	95
3.5.2.1. Career	96
3.5.2.2. Work/personal life balance.....	99
3.5.2.3. Leadership	102
3.6. Conclusion	104

CHAPTER 4	
FEMALE LEADERSHIP AND LEADERSHIP STYLES	106
4.1. Neutral theories of leadership styles	107
4.1.1. Leadership autoritar și leadership democratic.....	112
4.1.2. The consideration, structure conceiving and work efficiency	117
4.1.3. The Hersey-Blanchard model of leadership.....	122
4.1.4. The situational theory of leadership (Fred Fiedler).....	124
4.1.5. The path-goal theory of leadership	127
4.1.6. The normative theory of leadership.....	129
4.2. <i>Gendered</i> approaches of leadership	132
4.3. Its power and significance for female leadership.....	139
4.4. The evaluation of managers in relation to their sex affiliation	148
4.5. Promoting women in organizations.....	152
4.6. Conclusion	153
 CHAPTER 5	
CULTURE, MANAGEMENT AND FEMALE LEADERSHIP IN ROMANIA	157
5.1. Women's participation in power structures in Romania	161
5.2. Equality of chances in community and national legislation	168
5.3. The research methodology regarding female management and leadership in Romania ..	172
5.3.1. Case study I. Research on the attitudes of young people towards the manager	
women	174
5.3.1.1. The description of the research and the instrument of investigation, WAMS	
questionnaire	175
5.3.1.2. Attitudinal investigation WAMS - 2003-2004.....	177
5.3.1.3. Attitudinal investigation WAMS - 2008-2009.....	186
5.3.1.4. Comparative analysis of the two research periods	193
5.3.1.5. The implications of the study	202
5.3.2. Case study II. Research on the personality features of female and male managers..	205
5.3.2.1. The description of the research	208
5.3.2.2. The interpretation of the data resulted from the research	210
5.3.2.3. The implications of the study	216
5.3.3. Case study III. Research on the female entrepreneurship in Mureș, Harghita,	
Covasna region.....	217
5.3.3.1. The description of the research.....	218
5.3.3.2. The interpretation of the data resulted from the research	219
5.3.3.3. The implications of the study	231
5.4. Conclusion.....	232
 CHAPTER 6	
FINAL CONSIDERATIONS AND PROPOSALS REGARDING THE CONTINUATION	
OF THE RESEARCH.....	243
6.1. Final considerations.....	243
6.2. The opportunity and the need for the thesis	247
6.3. Personal contributions	250
6.4. Proposals regarding the continuation of the research.....	255
 BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	258
 ANNEXES.....	268

KEY WORDS

DIVERSITY, DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT, GENDER DIVERSITY, EQUALITY OF CHANCES, FEMALE LEADERSHIP, LEADERSHIP STYLES, POWER, FEMALE ENTREPRENEURSHIP.

ARGUMENT

Humanity is revealed today, more than ever, openly, with all its peculiarities, individualities and ephemeral and contingent limits. In the spin of change, the interest of history got new, more concrete topics: discourses and representations, life practices, the structure of the daily life, the construction of identities, political culture interpreted from the point of view of attitudes and behaviours, etc. Certain issues, such as: citizenship and civil society – environments in which, according to liberal postulates every individual is presumably equal and free in relation to others – have been reopened, arousing an enormous attention for the last years in fields like: sociology, law philosophy, politics, history, feminist theory and history of feminism etc.

The arguments of drawing up a paper in the field of female management and leadership cannot be different from the role of any research measure, more or less empirical, academic or not, in the sociologic field:

- Role of reflection and acknowledgement regarding women's statute and their situation in relation to the power positions;
- Comparison with other similar researches in the country and from abroad and with the interdisciplinary approaches of the debated topic;
- Identification of some possible interventional measures carried out in social development projects;
- Role of arousing the interest, once more, in ignored or accepted without reserves realities.

The introduction of the feminine perspective and the relationships between women and men in the analyses of sociologists, anthropologists, historians, psychologists etc., as well as in interdisciplinary researches, brings forward social actors neglected in the traditional scientific discourse and contributes to the enrichment of the methodological and theoretical options.

The time we live asks for an open dialogue on the changing traditional and modern perceptions, including in relation to *who can become a leader* and *what features* one must

possess in order to perform an efficient leadership. The numerous studies that have carried out so far show that leadership features are *related to gender* and not *specific to gender*. One of the most gladdening realities of the present era is that the leading talents and abilities of women are acknowledged slowly and surely. More and more women in leading positions have proved not only that they can meet the requirements of their job, completing the assumed tasks, but that they make a change at the level of perceptions in what leadership practices are concerned.

A large number of experts argue that the interactive and co-operant leadership style, highly promoted nowadays, would be the traditional style practised and preferred by women. Despite the popularity of this idea, men are equally able to lead in an interactive way. Moreover, men and women are perfectly able to assume authoritarian as well as interactive leadership styles.

There is nothing left to do but appreciate every individual, no matter the gender, based on one's value and uniqueness, the strengths of the favourite leadership style and the one asked by the context where one acts. Only in this way we will be able to strengthen the organizations and communities we live in. There are opportunities as well as challenges for which anybody wants to dedicate the necessary effort for building a career of leadership, either man or woman.

The present thesis aims to spread some light on the topic of permanence or on the contrary on the topic of change, achieved or aimed for, of sexual order in the structures of society. The course of action is justified also by the fact that not until long ago it was thought that modernity works for a complete elimination of sexual division of norms. In reality, it is the one which reconciles present and past, the one which brings elements of tradition within the individualist world. Even in the centre of hypermodernity, the totally opposed positions of genders are reorganized, although old roles and functions are perpetuated, being combined in an original way with the modern roles

Democratic modernity reaches a balance of the gaps between the two genders, truly more subtle, less radical, less authoritarian, thus, they are no longer perceived as obstacles in the manifestation of the self.

Our approach takes the direction of a reflexive analysis of the real state of the gender relations in the power structures, in an equidistant way, in order to assure the objectivity necessary for any scientific project. We have not been tempted by the militant beliefs which inspire so many works dedicated to the feminine condition. We have insisted on the rational aspects,

given by the efficiency of using the human potential entirely, at the level of organizations as well as at the level of society on its whole.

CAPITOLUL 1

GENDER DIVERSITY IN ORGANIZATIONS

The quality, innovation and globalization requirements have determined organizations to look for new solutions for the emerged problems and, at the same time, to acknowledge the value of heterogeneity of employees in order to create new products and to gain new markets. Once this fact is acknowledged, the challenge for the management of organizations is to cultivate an environment in which every employee has the opportunity of expressing and turning into account its entire physic and intellectual potential.

Diversity management has become more and more necessary precisely in order to coordinate the *entire diversity*, taking into consideration the differences met at various categories of employees – aspects related to race, ethnic groups, gender and sexual orientation, age and disabilities, religion, etc. The equality principle has to be respected in the sense of enhancing differences in a context of varied expectations of employees, cultural traditions, religious perceptions, etc., that are related to the identity of every person. Organizational culture is enriched, and from the point of view of the expected performances, making a *mosaic* within the organization also means acknowledging the distinctive contribution of every member, by accepting the differences and not by attenuating them.

Broadly speaking, diversity management, including as practices assuring equal chances and affirmative action, focuses on equality *by difference* rather than by *similarity*, favouring the acceptance and enhancing the differences between individuals and groups and the acknowledgement of the benefits which diversity can bring in an organization. Eliminating discrimination aims to get equality of chances for all individuals and represents a strategy adopted at present by numerous organizations, even if it is just a component of diversity management. The last has a broader meaning, and this is enhancing diversity by maximizing the employees' potential.

We have considered the classification of the women issue in management and leadership in the broader topic of diversity as important, at least for the following reasons:

- Diversity, as a disputed and complex phenomenon, which characterizes the current social structures, is manifested and causes significant effects at the level of society as well as at the level of organizations and their management;
- Gender is one of the immutable dimensions of diversity, which characterizes the human species, naturally – and *equally* – divided between men and women; in the power structures the same parity does not exist in almost any culture;

- There is a generalized discrepancy between the gender diversity of the structure of an organization's members and the gender diversity in taking decisions, also in the highly feminized organizations.

Therefore, the demographic changes make the shift of attention from the perspective on opportunity equality for the traditionally disadvantaged groups to *the imperative of reaching and maintaining the labour force in the entire diversity of population categories* necessary¹. Thus, equality, correctness and non-discrimination, at the work place, become objective requirements of the current economic and social environment, which surpass the sphere of the ethic behaviour on the labour market.

Accepting diversity is still a particularly slow process, precisely as the erosion one. At the present, the old beliefs are more difficult to maintain. Most of us learn to control the reactions based on myths, emotions and traditional stereotypes, and, in their place, to become more aware of the changes that happen and to have a critical vision. The old instincts and behaviour models are replaced by new information and experiences, allowing our answer to others to be less passionate and more reflexive.

As far as the effects of diversity are concerned, the discussions converge on the ***economic but also on the psycho-social*** dimension. The *economic* effects are conditioned by the exploitation of those *diversity aspects identified as positive* (for example creativity and innovation, determined precisely by the multitude of perspectives of solving problems), at the same time with minimizing the negative aspects.

As for *gender diversity*, necessary and natural in the structure of the institutions and in the leadership teams, similar to the demographic diversity, this represents a desirable situation, which has never been reached. The segregation phenomenon (not just occupational), having gender as criterion, is to be found in any region, in any political system, level of economic development or religious, social or cultural environment.

In order to diminish the effects of this phenomenon specific measures have been set. There are already the well-known *undiscriminating practices* (EEO – Equal Employment Opportunities), and the intentionally *favouring* (AA – Affirmative Action), of American origin (which have been adopted, sometimes with the same name, in many countries and

¹ Paloş R. (2004), *Diversitatea în organizații: tineri, vârstnici, femei, persoane cu nevoi speciale*, in Manual de psihologia muncii și organizațională, Polirom Publishing House, 2004, p.315;

cultures). These practices are often confused with diversity management. Certainly, although they do not coincide, the efforts made in all three directions do not exclude one another, but, ideally they can support each other.

It has been shown that while the policy of equal chances and the affirmative action mainly serve some social goals, diversity management is justified by the economic finality, therefore it differs from the first as far as objective, approach and character are concerned².

Next, the first chapter includes a series of clarifications of the terms gender and sex, as well as an interesting approach of gender by means of power relationships and relationships of lack of power. According to this, both women and men can feel vulnerable or powerful at a certain moment, aspect that may be considered an answer to the most frequent approached of the term of gender, as a complex of topics that exclusively concern women.

The most important gender differences regarding the physical, communication and leading abilities, recognized by the literature dedicated to gender are also systematized. The increase in the number of women at the top management level is based on the context created by the diversity of employees in management, diversity regarded as an essential resource.

As for the communication abilities of women and men, the most important aspect revealed by the numerous studies presented in the specialist literature is that the positive, inoffensive communication style traditionally used by one of the sexes can also be used by the opposite sex in an efficient way. Moreover, there is ground for the stereotypic division of the communication style on sexes to lose its basic founding, and communication to be simply a rich process in content and articulation forms.

Similarly, the leadership styles do not belong to a single sex. More and more leaders, men and women, are willing to commit their logic – pre reason – as well as intuition, to acknowledge the obvious as well as the feelings, to express technical competences as well as the ones of emotional integrity, using whole sets of features in order to achieve the best possible results. In the tendency of not limiting the leadership strengths by separation or denial of the style attributed to the *other gender*, the most appropriate leadership model integrates the masculine approaches as well as the feminine ones.

One of the authors that insist on the idea of indistinguishable enhancement of talents is Tom Peters who, in his volume dedicated to leadership³ in 2005, focuses on women, in a chapter

² Pollar O., Gonzales R. (1994), *Dynamics and Diversity*, Thomson Crisp Learning, USA, p.13;

entirely dedicated to them, considering them a real source of talent for leadership. He boldly states that the new leaders of tomorrow's business will be women, arguing that at the present, *there is a source of talent for leadership, which is so much needed, and which is outrageously hidden: women.*

His arguments are simple, presented as follows: a) Talent is increasingly important; b) The leaders' reserve does not satisfy the changing needs of the moment; c) Women are a source of talent, especially talent for leadership, incredibly forgotten; d) Women and men are different; e) The so called *women's fortress* (term also found at other authors) satisfies to a surprisingly degree the leadership needs of the new economy; f) Therefore, women have to play an important role in solving the problem of talent; g) Accelerating the incorporation of women in leadership is a strategic imperative, of a higher rank.

The management based on *command and control* but also the *authoritarian leadership* are out of date. The new leadership attracts a group of capacities and abilities, whose distinctive mark are the special talents of employees, their capacity of improvising and inspiring. Under these circumstances, the imperative is to take advantage also of the unique leadership qualities of women and of cultivating every person's talent that can create a favouring working environment.

CHAPTER 2

WOMEN IN MANAGEMENT

Despite the consistent promotion of a collective leadership based on communication, of feminizing degrees and of discrediting the male culture, nothing or almost nothing changes in the representation of women at a top decision-making level. The achievement of making it to the top of few women is not significant; the persistence with which they are kept aside by the so-called *social reproduction of the male power* (Giles Lipovetski) is significant. Taking into account the state of mentalities and the evolution of professional clarifications of women, the share will not be insignificant at the top of the hierarchies. Modernity forces us to evolve also at this level of parity representation of genders.

Unfortunately, the rhythm recorded so far is extremely slow, thing that makes the aimed progress to be limited and to change only marginally the positions of the two sexes. The causes frequently invoked are the *barriers against gender equality*, that can be objective, when they emerge from the outside (the organizational or political environment) and

³ Peters T. (2005), *La esencia. Liderazgo*, (original title *Essentials. Leadership*), Pearson Educación, Madrid, p.92;

subjective, when starting from the limitations imposed by women, by lack of trust in their own forces and lack of persistence in the struggle for advancement.

As far as discrimination at the level of organizations is concerned, (a significant barrier for women), we have presented the categories defined by Stoner and Freeman in 1995, these being: discriminating *access and treatment*, explained by the most important aspects that give them content. The subtle shapes that discrimination has, persist in most of the states, despite the declared efforts and the legislations intending to give women equal chances for employment and promotion on any position, from any hierarchic level.

The shared expectations at the level of society related to *gender roles* are also perceived as important barriers for women. Gender roles produce social pressures on individuals, which at their turn determine a characteristic behaviour, of conformity to expectations.

For organizations, conformity to gender roles implies a diminution of the possibilities of attracting talents. The current exigencies of management ask for the recruitment and retaining of the best employees, but also of the ones willing to totally dedicate themselves to the leading activity. If women drop out of the competition for power or are less involved, according to some secondary assumed roles, this will be against their advancement and the wish of gender parity in the organizations' leadership. Assuming traditional gender roles is an obstacle for the women who aim for a management career.

We have drawn the attention, on the other hand, on the fact that women's difficulties in reaching the top is not always due to a resistance on half of the male power of female inhibition, but also to the fact that the logic of power is not the same for men and women. The dominance wish, the desire for fame or recognition are not exclusively male wishes, but definitely a smaller number of women see power as a source of social glory and appreciation, as compared to men. This is why many qualified women refuse to involve in the competition for power.

Another form of discrimination under discussion, a structural one this time, is the so called *glass ceiling*, based on gender stereotypes. Women are almost always considered too emotive, less combative, as compared to men, unsuitable to employment in production units, without initiative spirit, less involved in the organization, etc. These are only some of the misogynistic pictures that prevent decision makers to objectively appreciate competence. *The ceiling* build in this way, keeps women away from certain positions that can propel them towards higher leadership levels. They are obliged to choose a repertoire of socially acceptable attitudes, which

generate role conflicts between femininity and competence, distorting the evaluation of their performances. Thus, men in leading positions manage to associate professional achievements with some qualities which are traditionally theirs.

The low participation of women in the power structures can be partially explained also by internal factors, which are related to mistrust their forces, underestimation of capacities etc. These are also related to the consciousness of the traditional, inferior role played in the family and transposed in the public life or the one of the organization. This aspect has a decreasing importance once with the increasing number of qualified women.

All these elements offer us a picture of the complexity of the problems that represent major shortcomings of qualified women that aim to accede to top management. These frustrations are clearly *characteristic to the female half*, as compared to the satisfactions and frustrations of leaders that we have globally presented, regardless of their gender.

Counteracting the effects of the *gender barriers* may be achieved by increasing the numerical impact of women in organizations, by increasing the number of women at higher levels. Regardless of how this thing is achieved (even by artificial measures such as quotas), the significant effect is produced at the level of organizational culture, which may become more *permissive, even hospitable* to women. By recent studies as well as by the ones considered classic it has been proved that, while the number of women in higher positions is increasing, their sexuality is less striking, less obvious and therefore it does no longer cause social and psychological discomfort for women managers.

As for the public policies aimed to reduce the differences regarding the paying system of women and men, these have to take into account both directions of segregation of paid work: *horizontally*, meaning that any public policy for women has to be focused equal legislation regarding the paying system, and *vertically* the stress of public policies needs to fall on extending the recruitment area and promotion of women and on the initiation of the so called *gendered* hierarchies of professions.

The affirmative action, on the other hand, by the practices adopted at the level of organizations, government agencies, universities, etc., can improve the economic status of minorities and women related to employment, education, small business and personal development. The affirmative action is fundamentally justified by the artificial character of the inequalities which are

perpetuated between women and men. This means that as long as reality produces differences, the affirmative action is necessary in order to reduce these differences or to eliminate them.

CHAPTER 3

FEMALE LEADERSHIP FROM A CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

Organizations, as well as individuals, have relatively stable personalities or behaviour models that have generally been called organizational culture. Each organizational culture is characterized by a certain degree of uniqueness. When an organization manages to appreciate the importance of its culture uniqueness, it can induce an added value to its ideas, and the old conceptions about homogeneity or cultural identity begin to be insignificant.

Due to the varied values and basic beliefs in different countries, the leadership and organizations are inevitably culturally anchored. There are no two cultures that regard authority, hierarchy or structure in the same way. One of the most interesting aspects of culture is that it cannot be avoided or neglected since it decisively determines behavioural norms. Nothing happens unless a creation and interpretation of significances of some members of a group of individuals interacting with another group takes place.

The leader approaches the organization he leads not only as a functioning mechanism, a system of components inter-related or a distribution of decisional power, but as a *whole* in which all these go hand in hand with the norms and values, ethical justifications of behaviours, beliefs, symbols etc., at whose creation he has to contribute in order to achieve what he aims for. From the cultural perspective, the organization appears as a system of significances and interpretations, inside which the leadership role becomes decisive.

We have insisted in this chapter on the masculine-feminine dimension of the well known research on organizational cultures belonging to the Dutch professor, **Geert Hofstede**. The results of his researches proved instrumental to any action on characterizing any culture, national as well as organizational.

According to the studies of Hofstede, the absolute and statistical differences between men and women are the same all over the world, but the social roles are dictated only partially by the biological determination. The set of behaviours associated to a certain gender differs from one society to another in relation to their cultural determinations. Therefore, once with the studies carried out, Hofstede mentioned the *essential difference between the biological determination and the cultural one of the gender dimension*. He used the terms *woman* and *man* in order to

highlight the absolute, biological differences, and the terms *masculine* and *feminine* (gender), for the social roles, determined by culture and that are relative and not absolute.

We have also presented in the third chapter the syntheses of two recent studies carried out by the Centre of Gender in Organizations (CGO) of the Simmons Management School in Boston and the Accenture Consultancy Company. The first study approaches leadership from the point of view of the organization able to learn from its practices and actions, and from the way of conceiving the negotiation process. The second study (Accenture), based on interviews with 2,246 managers from 13 countries worldwide proposes women's empowerment to come from the inside, from the level of their expectations and achievements.

CHAPTER 4

FEMALE LEADERSHIP AND LEADING STYLES

From the point of view of our thesis topic, we have considered that the synthetic presentation of the most significant classic, neutral theories on leadership styles is important. This is justified by the fact that until now there have not been separate ideas of male and female leadership, being proved that differentiation according to gender of the leaders' behaviours is inconsistent from the point of view of performing management functions, for the leadership style and more precisely for its efficiency.

We have brought back into discussion the specific, *gendered* theories, of female leadership, as present in the conception of the well known researchers of leadership. These theories emerged from the desire of explaining, mainly, why women are confronted with a generalized failure regarding the advancement to higher management positions. The gender discrimination theory gained a considerably high importance for this phenomenon, while other explanations, which were based on features, attitudes, behaviours, talents etc., between women and men, did not have an especial success. These last theories had the tendency of demonstrating that women are less suitable for senior management positions, but they did not acquire the practical (empirical) support necessary in order to be validated.

The higher interest for researchers was of finding answers to two questions: *Do women have a distinct and clear contribution to the enrichment of management science and practice?* and *Do women have a different leading style from men?* Regarding the first question, this would definitely find an affirmative answer in time, while, in relation to a distinct feminine style, the opinions formulated by specialists were extremely different.

The western feminist literature has brought in discussion two contradicting concepts: the model which argues the similarity between men and women and the model which implies that women are equal to men, but different from them. The similarity was deduced by numerous researchers from the lack of some essential differences in management styles between the two genders. On the contrary, other numerous works proved that feminine features are not suitable for a leading position and they recommended avoiding emotive reactions, more control, rational judgement and foreseeing, for the women that aim for higher management positions.

Furthermore, a series of older as well as more recent theories, try to highlight the differences in performing management and leadership functions, between men and women, and last but not least the efficiency of the different approaches of the two genders. The authors of these differentiation theories did not feat to adopt the terms of *female leadership style* or *male leadership style*, while the researchers who proved being more cautious in using these terms were more numerous. Some of them clearly showed that a female leadership style does not exist (as neither the name of a male style is valid).

We totally subscribe the idea that *gendering leadership* is not a productive action, since up until now, the generic leader that almost all researchers make reference to is neutral; the studied capacities, the behaviours, the virtues, the defects, the feelings etc. of leaders, referred indistinguishably to men or women. Therefore, we understand that *female leadership is simply leadership performed by women*, without understanding by this a separate style, well defined, differentiated from the one performed by men. This clarification is necessary from the point of view of this thesis topic.

We have also presented in this chapter the interesting aspects of assuming and exerting power by women. Beyond the well known categories of the sources of power in the organization, which are the same for both genders, there is an entire series of important aspects which make the difference between women's perception of power, which lead to specific manners of exerting it.

Women do not appreciate the exercise of power in similar terms as men. The dominance often associated with power is perceived as meaningless, without content, by women. Their passion for power is more reduced and this is why they lead by sharing power. Thus, all those who accept this share, either collaborators or subordinates, are enhanced.

Therefore, in the current era, women are no longer psychologically inhibited by the so called fear of power. But the social motivation regarding reaching the top of the professional hierarchy

differs from the one of men. Women socialization focuses more on personal achievement regarding social relationships than on organizational success or hierarchic dominance. From this point of view women often adopt critical attitudes towards opportunism and careerism associated with the struggle for top positions.

As for managers evaluation, regardless the methods used by evaluators, there is a tendency, more or less acknowledged, of focusing interest towards the behaviour masculine pole (and favouring this). This happens on the lack of some impartial comparison benchmarks between typical gender behaviours and, surely, the poor presence of women in the evaluating teams. The frequent consequences are those of losing sight of some important aspects of feminine contribution in approaching management and unfair evaluations, in favour of male managers.

Finally, women's promotion is also influenced by discrimination, sometimes of an intentional one, as it has been shown. Numerous authors have identified the subtle ways in which a fact is accomplished, drawing at the same time attention on the deeply negative impact of candidates to promotion that gender prejudices have or favouring based on gender. Narrowing the promotion possibilities of women by consolidating the glass ceiling and walls are frequent practices, and which unfortunately will not disappear very soon.

The fact that women's success is owed precisely to a non-traditional approach of leadership, which is suitable in a world form where certainties have disappeared and one in continuous change, clarifies them for higher responsibility positions, achieved by promotion under conditions of correct competition with men.

CHAPTER 5

FEMALE CULTURE, MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP IN ROMANIA

The first part of this chapter corresponds to an attempt of placing the Romanian feminine issue in the broader European context, under the circumstances in which the real picture had often been altered by interpretations which are not characteristic to our country. The so called *Romanian female immobility* which we have discussed about and the current tendencies regarding the participation in the public scene of women find their explanations in the native cultural models, in the patriarchy and collectivism typical for our society, which still influence the way of thinking and correlation to the society's problems.

As for the women's representation at the top of the social hierarchy in our country, this is much more unbalanced than at a global level. The 9% of women in Parliament ranks us far below the

18% global average⁴, and the comparison with women's participation in the European Parliament, of 35%, puts us at a higher disadvantage.⁵ It is worth noticing that our country has respected the gender share of the European forum, sending to Brussels 35 Romanian Members of the European Parliament, out of whom 10 are women.

Regarding the legislation on respecting equality of chances, our country gradually adapted its work terminology to the one existing at a European level; the Constitution and Labour Code in force are fundamental documents by which right equality of men and women are *assured*, on the labour market as well as when it comes to getting public leading positions.

An increased number of bodies have been created in order to promote equality of chances between women and men, but these do not function efficiently, the results of their actions being insignificant at the level of beneficiaries. Therefore, there are no sustained campaigns of continuous and constant promotion of the equality of chances principle, and the collaboration between these bodies is extremely poor.

Our researches, by which we have tried to accomplish a characterization of the female and leadership and management in Romania, have been carried out on three different levels (described next), regarding somehow disparate aspects, apparently unlinked, regarding women's participation in management and leadership positions. These topics are not entitled to explain, separately, the current tendencies manifested in society, from the point of view of gender representation. But they can contribute, from our point of view, to a more profound knowledge of the phenomenon, and moreover, they can justify the reason for some intervention measures, aiming to reduce the gender disequilibrium of participation.

The first aspect submitted to research was the attitudinal one, having as major objective the discovery of some profound causes, less obvious, of marginalizing women generally on the public scene, and especially on the one of organizational management or business environment. Concretely, the longitudinal investigation carried out on a sample of young population, highlighted a series of interesting and relevant aspects regarding generalized perceptions and attitudes towards women managers.

In essence, we aimed to identify a possible attitudinal model, built on a (relatively) common pattern of thinking among young people, in relation to their perceptions and opinions towards women managers. The premise we began with was that young people represent the most entitled population

⁴ <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/world.htm>

⁵ http://www.europarl.europa.eu/parliament/archive/elections2009/ro/men_women_ro.html

segment to produce major changes at the level of society, including in the way of improving women's representation in power structures and top positions. Moreover, we have assumed that the permanent changes and modernization, which took place at the level of society, also produce *in time* changes of perceptions and mentalities at the level of individuals. In an environment in which modernity induces a permissive way of thinking, women managers or leaders are no longer considered as exceptions or rarities, but only the expression of a equitable society, in which every individual, according to his options and education, may develop professionally in any field he wants.

The separate analysis of the collected data in the two periods of investigation, 2003-2004 and 2008-2009, highlighted a series of interesting aspects. Generally, a tendency for favourable attitudes towards women managers was noticed in both investigations, tendency of a large age group 31-40 years, as compared to the other two younger groups. Contrary to the initial assumptions, the youngest sample chose a rather neutral area of opinions, showing in this way a more reduced trust in the managerial capacities of women. As far as the attitudes of young people according to the gender they belong is concerned, the separate analysis of the data in the two investigations shows two completely different situations from one period another. If in the first part of the research the male subjects proved to be clearly more in favour of women managers, as compared to female subjects, in the second stage of the research the situation changed: women were the ones who proved to be more favourable, as compared to male subjects. The attitude differences were each time significant, as proved by the *one-way ANOVA* analysis of variance, available in the SPSS application.

The fact that in each stage clear attitude differences between the two genders were recorded, led us towards *a first conclusion of our study i.e. that at the level of the young part of population there are distinct attitudinal and thinking patterns, according to gender*. It needs to be underlined that the subjects involved uniformly, *conjointly*, following in a way or another, the appreciation patterns common to the gender they belong to.

The totally different way of evaluation of a subject like women managers, according to the respondents' gender, leads us to another appreciation/conclusion, regarding the different socialization of young people in the Romanian society. They are the result, the expression way of thinking shared by all members of society, faithfully reflected in the early socialization within family as well as in the education system; these have always influenced the future opinions, attitudes and behaviours of young people.

The undoubted change of general opinions from an investigation period to another, in a favourable way of the female subjects and in an unfavourable way of the male subjects, additionally crates the perception of an *accentuated attitudinal volatility* among young people, of an instability of expressed opinions, based on generalized expectations regarding the growing up and modernization of the Romanian society. In the four year period between the two investigations, the events that took place at the level of our society (or maybe the ones which did not happen...), generated the opinions of the young men and *an appreciation* of young women's opinions. No matter how we catalogued these changes, they prove the immaturity of living a relatively new subject in the sociologic and managerial discourse.

The modernization of society did not produce a progress of the collective mentality among young people, related to acceptance and promotion of diversity, especially the gender one, in all that means participation in the decision making process. Neither the adherence of Romania to the European Union in 2007 caused an acceleration of democratization by respecting a equal structure of genders at the top of the public pyramid, although we had expected a series of the Union's regulations to be applied also in our country. Our explanation concerning his aspect was the absence from the public stage of a large number of women that may have been noticed by their special contributions in politics, business or in leading Romanian organizations. The numerical impact of success women in our country on the general opinions and attitudes was extremely poor, causing the withdrawal of the female half from the public stage, mentioned by many authors.

The phenomenon noticed in our research, of the respondents' tendency to think *conjointly*, one way or another, according to their affiliation to one of the genders, leads us to another conclusion, that next there will be an extremely slow evolution of the process of obtaining parity in the representation of the two genders on the public stage. For this reason, a consensus is needed at the level of society and not by the agreement of half of the population and the disapproval of the other.

The second part of our research had as objective the identification of those personality features of managers, that are related to the specific leading behaviours, trying by this to show that there are no valid reasons for the marginalization of any of the sexes (generally women), regarding labour, responsibility or management, being based on the inner structure of individuals or their personality.

The Freiburg Personality Inventory (FPI) used, identifies 12 dimensions of personality such as: sociability, extroversion, masculinity, calm, tendency of domination, aggressiveness etc.,

dimensions that we often associate with the behaviours of *strong people*, consequently with those of leaders or managers. From the point of view of our topic, by investigating by means of the FPI questionnaire we looked for the possible correlations between the gender of the questioned people, the managerial level they have and their personality's dimensions. Surely we were also interested in the existence (or nonexistence) of some significant differences between male managers and female managers in relation to their personality features, although the characterization of individuals' complex personality is rather the object of sociological and psychological studies.

Our research highlighted some significant differences, by means of the independent variable sex, regarding the personality factors called *Nervousness* and *Masculinity*, of women and men managers. These differences are statistically significant, as compared to other noticed differences, for example *Aggressiveness* and *Tendency of domination*, both more reduced to women managers, but statistically insignificant. The second variable, *managerial level* (superior or intermediate) of the subjects, did not register significant differences regarding the personality factors in FPI questionnaire.

The most important conclusion of this study is that the independent variables taken into account (the respondents' sex and the managerial level) are not relevant at the level of the dependent variables, meaning the 12 personality factors. We can deduce that the features and the behaviours characteristic to the leading work do not differ significantly, from one researched group to another, from the group of women managers to the one of men managers respectively, or from the group of superior managers to the one of middle class managers.

Therefore, the personality features cannot lay at the basis of prejudices related to the *suitability* or *unsuitability* of women for managerial and leadership positions. Acknowledging the fact that personality by itself does not represent a valid criterion for evaluation people concerning managerial or leadership capacities, in the same way it is also inapplicable to other domains – may be a reference point of a society that wants to modernize, including by indiscriminate of women or other representatives of another minority. The search and justification of gender differences, by means of the personality features, as well as demonstrating the *non-differences* where clichés state the opposite, contribute to the gradual erosion of these stereotypes, having positive effects on opinions, attitudes and behaviours towards women managers.

In the third part of the research, we have considered that the investigation, albeit partial, of the Romanian female entrepreneurship, can complete the picture on the real implication of

women in the decision making process at the level of business, but also at the level of the entire national economy.

The studied carried out focused on the Transylvanian female entrepreneurship, by including a number of 218 entrepreneurs from three counties in the centre of the country: Mureş, Covasna and Harghita. The share of 21% of women entrepreneurs, in the sample included in the study, mainly corresponds to the participation of women in business at a national level, as it resulted from the reports of the sample researches representative at a national level. Therefore, our interpretations related to the general profile of Romanian women entrepreneurs, enjoys accuracy to a rather large extent, mainly because we aimed for the qualitative aspects of this profile (motivations, the level of studies, the key necessary abilities, gender barriers etc.). Moreover, we can state that men and women entrepreneurs match this profile, the similarities being significant in almost all aspects investigated.

Thus, from the data we got we can generally appreciate that there are no significant differences regarding the age average of entrepreneurs in the investigated sample; most of the women entrepreneurs perceive the influence of the business they run on their personal or family life as positive or neutral; the entrepreneurial motivations are layered in the same way by men and women: *financial independence, the lack of a hierarchic boss, and taking advantage of some business opportunities* ranking on the first motivational positions; most of the subjects included in the study intend to develop their business and to maintain it at the current level (thus, there is a mainly positive optimist perception related to the business environment, even under the circumstances of the current crisis); the women entrepreneurs are ambitious persons, they take important responsibilities without restraints and they wish to control the environment they administrate (aspects also relatively homogenous from the point of view of the respondents' gender); perseverance and the ability of working in a team are considered the most important qualities of business women, that supported them in their careers, while the physical aspect is perceived as unimportant.

If the aspects presented above rather demonstrate the closeness between the two genders in what entrepreneurship is concerned, the *shortcomings* noticed by the respondents are clearly perceived differently. Business women consider that the lack of some real support networks between SMEs, the lack of models or mentors and the obligation of making compromises, are the most important shortcomings felt in their careers. The fact that *gender barriers* decisively influence women's decision of doing business is very important, for example, the prejudices

and collective patriarchal mentality still act against them, being factors which limit access to the entrepreneurial field.

The positive entrepreneurial models usually stimulate the set up of a new business and have an important impact on entrepreneurs; but women have few feminine models, as compared to men, because of their long exclusion from the leading of the economic and social life, but also because of not assuming mentor roles by those women who enjoy success in business. This thing leads to the reduction of the positive effect on the decision of doing business of the potential entrepreneurs.

CHAPTER 6

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS AND PROPOSALS REGARDING THE CONTINUATION OF THE RESEARCH

The relevance of the present thesis consists not only in the set of evaluations and analyses of the existing situation in our country in relation to the positioning of women in the power and responsibility structures, but, especially, in the conclusions reached, that can represent topics of more profound researches in this extremely important and delicate field. Moreover, the interventional aspect does not have to be neglected, which has to start from a reflection as accurate as possible of the real situation in our country, avoiding in this way the *import* of measures for the improvement of the female representation.

We live in a patriarchal society, meaning a society where men have more power than women do and use it to create privileges in relation to these. Patriarchate is equally supported by men and women. In Romania, the history of gender relations is the history of changing one form of domination of men with another⁶. The dry remarks of Vladimir Pasti that follow these ample descriptions of the Romanian patriarchate, in his book entitled *Ultima inegalitate. Relațiile de gen în România*, are interesting and provocative at the same time. They are intended to determine the research of the current state of relationships between the two genders, to eliminate the presumed influences of modernity on these, of the expected changes or, on the contrary, of the confirmations regarding the perpetuation of some secular social relations. Our course of action follows this direction, especially by the research on the attitudes of young people in the Mureș region, towards women managers. Having available a large number of young subjects, the temptation of questionnaire investigation was very high, considering that the manifested attitudes of the young people

⁶ Pasti V., (2003), *Ultima inegalitate. Relațiile de gen în România*, Polirom Publishing House, Iași, p. 173;

show the early socializing way and this at its turn can offer us a picture (of course partial) of the patriarchal society we live in.

Certainly also the research on the Romanian female entrepreneurship can complete the image on the *emancipation movement of women* or of coming out of the *men domination* area, specific to the patriarchal society. Any course of research on this direction may reveal previously ignored aspects or evaluated from a wrong perspective; it may identify new causes that lead to unexpected effects in the so complex and delicate relationships between the two genders.

By investigating the personality features of managers, we aimed to emphasise, once more, that the differences between men and women from the point of view personality factors related to management, are not of a contextualized nature, but rather of a structural, morphological one, they do not belong to the position occupied in a hierarchy, but they are normal psychological differences, as specialists have proven so far. Therefore, there are no valid reasons in order to proclaim the superiority of any of the genders as far as practising management or performing leadership is concerned.

Our thesis is by excellence the apology of talent, as unique arbiter that has to govern the managerial activity no matter the hierarchical level where it is performed. Talent is equally divided between sexes and it needs to be enhanced, because it is the only one able to make *capital dance*,⁷ as the Norwegian authors Nordström and Ridderstråle, state in the title of their success book.

The changes at the level of our society are imminent, and women will be part of the relevant answer of these changes. As for organizations and their management, women are able to bring new solutions for management. Moreover, the feminine approach will imprint new valences to leadership. The most suitable leadership model will integrate the male approaches as well as the female ones, without being a separation (denial) from the style attributed to the *other gender*. Therefore, leaders will use logic or pure reason, as well as intuition; will equally appreciate evidence and feelings, technical competences and the ones of emotional integrity, using entire sets of features in order to get the best possible results. The leader itself will define its own style regardless of the gender it belongs to.

⁷ Nordström K., Ridderstråle J. (2003), *Funky Business. Talent Makes Capital Dance*, BookHouse Publishing, Sweden;

Proposals regarding the continuation of the research. The researches carried out, the secondary ones as well as the primary ones, are limited, by the area of investigation of the proposed topics as well as by their incipient stage, thing which underlines the necessity of continuing the researches, in order to get some covering results from the point of view of scientific representativeness. The gender diversity of management is a topic that can hardly ever be exhausted or covered totally from the point of view knowing the relevant aspects, especially for managerial performance. The studies that have been carried out up to now, which tried to show the differences in practising management by men as compared to the management practised by women, start to be irrelevant. On the contrary, the researches on *the contexts in which individuals can show their special talents* are added more weight, which can make the difference (for example at the level of the organization), in a world without national frontiers, without linguistic or ethnic obstacles, practically in a world without limits regarding the possibilities of talents' advancement. From this perspective, the contemporary world is both scary and challenging by the infinity of opportunities that it offers.

The study started at "Petru Maior" University of Tîrgu-Mureş on the direction of the attitudes of young people towards women managers needs to be continued, first of all by extending the area of respondents towards people in the business environment. This can be achieved on target groups of subjects: employees that work in organizations run by women, employees in companies preponderantly feminine, but run by men, women entrepreneurs etc. Certainly, the periodical longitudinal investigations are also interesting, intended to identify the temporary attitudinal changes among population. These show us the direction that collective conceptions and mentalities are taking; they offer us a perspective on the moment in which management can reach the equal gender structure in any type of social structures.

Following this direction of opinions and attitudes, we have insisted on the importance of the educational factor on the attitudinal design of young people regarding the acceptance without any reserves of management gender diversity. For this we aim to carry out an impact study on the introduction of a new gender master programme at the Faculty of Economic, Law and Administrative Sciences of "Petru Maior" University of Tîrgu-Mureş, starting from the experience already gained in the gender master programme of the Faculty of Sciences and Letters of PMU, called *Gender studies from a cultural perspective*. The attraction that this master programme has enjoyed from its very beginning in 2004, among Mureş undergraduates, gives us hope that the same issue of gender will cause a similar interest, by

approaching the specific problems not from the point of view of literature dedicated to gender and gender studies, but from an economic and managerial efficiency point of view.

Also for a better involvement of higher education in the training of young people, we aim to continue researches on the line of entrepreneurship and to promote, by consistent exposure, the significant results obtained by business women in our region and the examples of best practice in consolidating a collaboration network and real support between businesses run by women. Moreover, we aim to involve students in the research of management gender diversity, contributing in this way to their correct and direct informing concerning this issue (we have noticed in our investigations that the reactions of young students are often the result of ignorance about the proposed topic or the refuse of a clear position, for or against women leading).

The topic of female entrepreneurship will be studied next in order to identify the business opportunities for women in the Centre region, first of all in the counties included in the project in progress at “Petru Maior” University, and then it will be extended in order to get a higher degree of accuracy at a higher level of national entrepreneurship.

Certainly the area of research in the field of gender studies and management can be enriched more by approaching some complementary topics, such as:

- determining the positions mostly held by women at different levels of management and in different department of Romanian companies; salary levels, their real and formal qualifications, career development;
- identifying the attitudes of women managers towards their position (satisfaction, expectations, frustrations), but also the attitudes of their male colleagues;
- identifying the obstacles, difficulties and limits met by women in pursuing a management career and success strategies;
- the characterization from the point of view personality and behaviours of women having successful careers and mentioning the characteristics necessary for the employment of women in successful organizations, etc.

Moreover, the problem of enhancing university degrees by women is worth studying, because it is statistically proven that success women are single on a high proportion, or married but without children. Children’s presence usually makes the development of a management career more difficult (in the United States 90% of men in top positions have children, but only 35% of women managers are mothers); the higher the number of children the more threatened is the mother’s career.

Therefore enhancing the managerial potential of qualified women is seriously diminished by the fact that women deliberately limit their career projects, they adopt compromise strategies, often from a natural desire of having a family, thing which leads to a reduced availability for work, low interest for advancement and of course, limited involvement in organizational projects.

What we have to keep in mind is that *the limited role of the active representation of women seriously affects life of all people – men, women, children and adults*. Therefore, *...nothing is more important today in the political economy of development than an adequate acknowledgement of the woman's economic, political and social participation. This is truly a fundamental aspect of development as freedom.*⁸

⁸ Amartya Sen (2004), *Dezvoltarea ca libertate*, Economic Publishing House, Collection Paradigmele economice, Bucharest, p.258.

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