## "GENDER POLICY" IN SCIENCE? IMPLICATIONS OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Researcher PhD, Romanian Academy, Iaşi Branch Corresponding author:gasparelc@yahoo.com

#### Abstract

Some ethical perspectives on research and academic training are discussed, in terms of the ethical norms of the European Union that, according to the argumentative theory, would be convergent and similar to the criteria for selection and promotion of science, grounded on reasons of global politics (Manners, 2002), on gender, language, culture and science. In this respect, the paper highlights and criticizes some methodological aspects on academic training and research analysis in terms of women's insertion in the labor market (Truong et al., 2014) and their representation in highest academic forums. As such, the brief review of the role and importance of women, and of their degree of representation within the selections of what Nobel awards bring as recognition and skills, consists in an attempt of upgrading the ethical principles and of the philosophy of education, in general. On the other hand, the lack of representation and promotion of women in fields within the Nobel Prizes (Musskii, 2008) reveals a number of social and political implications of science on gender criteria, especially in terms of training and research excellence. Briefly, the paper addresses a few hypotheses:

1. If the ethical rules of the EU and their correlation with what it should be called gender politics of science resolved the real problems of women's representation in research excellence – which are the critiques, arguments and reasons that could rule the present situation – solutions and steps?

2. Does the analysis on research policy and on representing women within Romanian academia illustrate the present situation? The ethical implications and solutions as forms of response to the academic and research crisis that would really solve the problems on gender policies are also discussed.

**Keywords:** *ethics, ethical norms and values, gender equality, research, academic policies.* 

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The paper analyzes several hypotheses regarding *ethical responsibilities* related to academic training policy and the implications arising from the academic under-representation of women on the labor market within the efficiency and fair promotion criteria. Literature

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and philosophical debates currently outline the existence of several judgments related to the relationship of convergence, in a report of "European values" *versus* "global values"<sup>2</sup> according to which one can identify a number of causes, and possible solutions to a problem like that of women insertion in *excellence research* (Manners, 2002; Truong et al., 2014).

The representation of women in *excellence* research is a topical field mainly in philosophy debates, where the woman is not reflected in that training - promotion fair report in terms of representation in areas of efficiency. This issue of "equality of women within the Romanian academia" reveals ethical issues, while the argumentative and factual vulnerabilities are related to training policy, research policy and labor market insertion.<sup>3</sup> We distinguish here a few directions to be clarified within the criteria of what this paper brings in the universe of debate and analysis on the situation of women within the Romanian academia. (i) On one hand, we have the policy of academic training as an individual option, as an autonomous choice, during the years of university training, and that can often be strikingly interdisciplinary<sup>4</sup>. In this regard, it must be said that "the university trainer" does not have a methodology or criteria that restricts or signals out the difficulties on entering the labor market, but he rather encourages the interdisciplinary research based on doctoral admission criteria.<sup>5</sup> Accordingly, this training oportunity for all those interested in opening up horizons for research and training, others than those related to basic specialization, points to a knowledge related to each professional and academic management - to a certain extent on the philosophy of education, to the reason for autonomous choice. (ii) On the other hand,

within the criteria of a good understanding of what *moral judgment* entails starting with the university education strictly in conjunction with labor market requirements, this reveals a startling discrepancy between women's "level of training" and their "percentage of insertion" on the labor market<sup>6</sup>.

In other words, within the years of university training we have a human potential numerically expressed by a major representation of women who, after completing various stages of university education does not manifest as a percentage in the structure of higher education and academic research. In this context, we refer to one of the relatively recent statements on the rate of female participation in the competitions of the European Union within the context of research and innovation, where the European Commissioner for Research, Innovation and Science, Máire Geoghegan-Quinn stated: "The turnout reflects the broader issue of women's underrepresentation in STEM. This year, 37% of participants were women (41 female to 69 male participants). In 1997, the participation rate of women in EUCYS first exceeded 30% and since then it was usually between 30% and 35%, reaching the highest value of 41% in 2005. During those 26 years, 183 young females and 614 young males received awards (The best of Europe's young scientists, 2014).<sup>7</sup>

Consequentialism (Jeremy Bentham) supports the fundamental thesis based on the idea that a thing is good if there was a consequence which has, in turn, a positive ethical value. The ethical value means that it must be judged compared with all other consequences, not only related to a particular purpose, including the unintended consequences. (Narita, 2008). A brief assessment of women's situation in the academia through statistical correlation between what we call university education and representation of women within the Romanian academia (particularly in the field of philosophy) shows a certain inconsistency and irrelevancy in practical terms - within the policy of university promotion. On the other hand, the EU Commission's finding is very clear that "women's progress, including in key areas of the Lisbon Strategy, such as education and research, is not fully reflected in the position of women on the labor market. This is a waste of human capital that the EU cannot

afford. Gender equality was a fundamental goal of the European Employment Strategy, since its inception. Also, gender equality is considered an instrument for progress towards the Lisbon objectives for labor growth and employment (Manual pentru abordarea integratoare a egalității de gen, 2008).<sup>8</sup> In terms of this poor representation of women in the fields of Romanian academia, and by a strict correlation of data related to EU policy which meets global science policy, we refer to the arguments and ethical reflections on the implications arising from this on the *philosophy of education*.

# 2. GENDER POLICY IN SCIENCE?

The questions, reflections and arguments on the edge of what we have called gender politics of science are due to the effects that such representation of women may have on gender areas, especially on that which can cause mental representations on the philosophy of education. The lack of intrinsic motivation, especially of successful models in a field such as that of philosophy, can create an unfavorable image on what becomes the foundation of thinking of most current sciences. Prior to analyzing to the structuring and development of the arguments concerning the implications and ethical responsibilities of academic training and research, with effects on the labor market insertion in Romania, we refer to UNESCO Commission highlights and suggestions<sup>9</sup> on the role of education and educational policy (Delors, 2000).

UNESCO Commission recommends several directions that need to be considered in a report from *local* to *global type*. **1**.) To take into account the *global interdependence* and *globalization*, which is especially critical now in terms of culture, education etc., having effects beyond these within the structure of many international organizations. **2**.) The *major danger* of the "gap" that may occur between a minority of people able to successfully find their way in this new world and a majority that feels manipulated by events and who cannot make decisions about the future of society, about the dangers resulting from the failure of democracy and widespread

revolt, should be considered (Delors, 2000).<sup>10</sup> 3.) On the other hand, the Commission believes that "we must be led by the Utopian goal to guide the world towards mutual understanding, towards a greater sense of responsibility and more solidarity toward accepting spiritual and cultural differences between us" (Delors, 2000).<sup>11</sup> Yet language difficulties and the new selection and promotion criteria of education according to universal criteria may cause inequality in gender, in terms of representation. It should be noted that the methodological aspect, considering the ethical principles of normativity, the degree of consistency and relevancy of judgments on women's under-representation in academia is superficial without practical / institutional support in terms of science policy. One of the current fundamental arguments regarding the crisis within the academia refers to population demographics strictly related to the birth rate. Up to a point, this reasoning may be valid, but the links between the crisis and the underrepresentation of women in philosophy reveal the inconsistency of argumentation criteria. At this point of the analysis we correlate the reasons within the Romanian Space with UNESCO Commission's statistics and conclusions - "the absolute number of young people under 15 years grew in leaps from 700 million in 1950 to 1.7 billion by 1990. This explains the unprecedented pressure exerted on educational systems and applications that must respond and go to the limit, sometimes beyond the ability to be able to respond positively. Currently, more than 1 billion young people - almost a fifth of world population - are enrolled in schools, compared to only 300 million in 1953" (Delors, 2000).<sup>12</sup> Recently, in the context of promoting youth, research and innovation, the European Commissioner for Research, Innovation and Science Máire Geoghegan-Quinn stated that: "The quality of the projects taking part in the competition never ceases to amaze me and I congratulate all participants. Research and innovation spring from a variety of ideas, so we must offer people the freedom to develop and create their ideas. We must also exert greater efforts to increase women's participation in science and technology sectors. Here is the real

challenge for our educational systems." (The best of Europe's young scientists, 2014)<sup>13</sup>

In this respect, the study highlights several critical aspects of training and academic research methodology, the current criteria of women's insertion on the labor market and their representation within the highest academic fora. The brief review on the role and importance of women and their degree of representativeness in the selection of what Nobel awards bring as recognition and efficiency consists in an attempt of upgrading the *ethical principles* and *philosophy* of education in general. Some of the ethical perspectives on research and academic training will highlight a few issues of inequality in terms of ethical norms of the European Union and argumentative theory that they would be under the convergence and similarity criteria with the criteria for selection and promotion of science, grounded on global political reasons (Ian Manners, 'Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms?', Journal of Common Market Studies 40 (2): 235–58), of gender, language, culture and science. We add here some of the entries of UNESCO Committee on Migration, Education and Research - "another facet of the future problems is the variety of languages, an expression of human cultural diversity. It is estimated that 6,000 languages are spoken around the world, including the 12 ones spoken by more than 100 million people. (World Education Report 1995 -Raport asupra educației mondiale 1995/ Report on World Education, Paris, UNESCO, 1995)." (Delors, 2000)<sup>14</sup> In terms of selection and linguistic representation,<sup>15</sup> the Nobel Prizes believe that such an overview may reveal the way of representation on *areas, countries* and especially on women's real chance to represent their own working areas, for research and writing.

On the other hand the lack of representation of women in the Fundamental Philosophy<sup>16</sup> promoting the Nobel Prizes (Musskii, Serghei, *Laureați ai Premiului Nobel / Nobel Laureates*, 2009) discloses a series of *social implications* and *science policies* regarding gender, but especially in terms of *academic training* and *excellence research* (Nobel Prize Awarded Women, n.d.). On the other hand, the low representation of women in this final level of academic, scientific recognition raises serious questions over the process of training,

promotion and representation of women in the highest representative bodies worldwide. We present here a brief synthesis of Nobel Organization on women representation: the Nobel Prize and Prize in Economic Sciences have been awarded to women 47 times between 1901 and 2014. Only one woman, Marie Curie, has been honored twice, with the 1903 Nobel Prize in Physics and the 1911 Nobel Prize in Chemistry. This means that 46 women in total have been awarded the Nobel Prize between 1901 and 2014. (Nobel Prize Awarded Women, n.d.)17 Women's difficulties, issues of gender studies or of discrimination require conceptual thinking for the major structures and representation in terms of fairness and justness of some concepts and training practices that, within the internal structure of institutions, disclose research issues at policy level, where the social sciences are the most vulnerable and exposed to reasons based on innovation. Specializations and innovations arise where a vacuum occurs between two related fields<sup>18</sup> and where the abundance of information can lead to a certain stagnation of research, so they must be taken into account for purposes of separation or delimitation of specialization (Găşpărel, 2014). For "social science innovation occurs most often, and produces the most important results at the intersection of disciplines. This phenomenon is also due to the effect of continuous fragmentation of social sciences in narrow specialization and of recombining these specialties in a cross manner, inside what we call «hybrid» fields" (Dogan & Phare, 1997).19

It will therefore be understood why an interdisciplinary university training (Why working across subject areas, 2014)<sup>20</sup>, accompanied by approaches and publications at the intersection of fields on a background of gender representation can lead to exclusion, marginalization, marked by an obvious *methodological* lack in what we call selection and promotion. This is because we subsume Vasile Tonoiu's position that "scientific theory must also learn to submit to uncertainty and taste the pleasures of discovery. Here is a realistic and bright statement of scientific research ethics and methodology which detects both the inalienable restrictive unilateral programs they opted for and the need to exploit and monetize them, knowing that, in general, they have the

ability to correct and revise, especially within this systematic exploitation, problems that require breaking the "original" frame coordination of different perspectives and methods, controlling and complementing each other that will sooner or later arise " (Tonoiu, 1978).<sup>21</sup>

#### 3. IMPLICATIONS AND ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITIES ON THE PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

"Even if the scientific research is changing in many directions in relation to what it was practised a decade ago, the role of personalities in achieving major breakthroughs cannot be underestimated. The chance or coincidences also remain significant in research. Someone must "groom in time", see what others before them have not noticed. Researchers of the 21<sup>st</sup> century will have the chance of new discoveries if they try to understand new comments, and not to devote to some trodden paths or some fashionable ways". (Cernescu, 2010)<sup>22</sup>

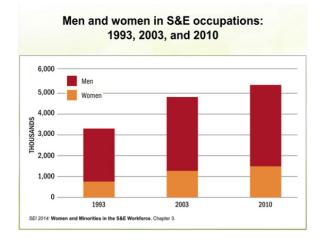


Fig. 1. Women in Science (Women in Science, 2015)<sup>23</sup>

The specific methodology of ethical knowledge is one that requires recovery and re-definitions of the used method, whether we consider what might be called *spiritual sciences* or other criteria of scientific context. This is because "using methods is also related to spiritual sciences activity. It also differs from popular science fiction by some evidence – but all these relate more to the raw materials than the conclusions

drawn from them. Here, things are not in such a way that science can provide the truth by its methodology. Here, it can even happen that within the unscientific work of the dilettante to be more truth than within the methodical exploitation of the material".(Gadamer, 1990)<sup>24</sup> What it might be assumed is that the possibility reveals a diversity of understandings of difference and equality in terms of gender equality or discrimination, based on criteria of authority argument.(Bochenski, 2006)25 Therefore, if we want to understand the effects of some minimizations or marginalizations of the efficiency of what we called science and creation, we will do it, if it does not matter anyway how we can justify the higher education by an astonishing discrepancy within the academic training criteria and the percentage of entering the labor market in areas of efficiency and academic background. "In order to be happy, a higher percentage of people in Western countries need more than a subsistence level; they want, moreover, to feel that they have success in life. In some jobs, such as scientific research, people who do not earn much may have such a feeling, but in most of the jobs the income has become the measure of success. At this point, we reach an aspect in life where an element of resignation is desirable in most cases because, in a competitive world, visible success is possible only for a minority". (Russell, 2011)<sup>26</sup> What we want to emphasize here is that woman often cannot find herself within the *minority success* that Russell speaks about and that her efforts will double during the professional competition in a world that is not hers in terms of *representation* and *perception* of value – of taste / beauty theory.

If there is one science, says Roberto Poli as a promoter of innovation in the ethical research and methodological framework, "we have a unique object of interest and, correspondingly, a unique research methodology". (Poli, 2009)<sup>27</sup> On the other hand, such a vision can cause ethical doubts and disagreements at the level of knowledge, because "a reconstitution as acceptable and effective of the process of scientific creation will not be possible without the fundamental knowledge and heuristic approaches and the way they operate within the birth strategy of the new works". (Botez, 1978)<sup>28</sup>

The resort to the size of this recognition is a call to the criteria of what the philosophical space has in its "argumentative bones", the extent and scope of knowledge, which constructs a social and scientific life that inevitably causes literary value. "The exaggeration of rationalism has led scientists to observe only the rational aspect of their business, the imaginative, emotional and empirical conjecture being neglected" (Botez, 1978).<sup>29</sup> What I mean here is that contemporary analytic thinking tends towards a type of *writing* that often cancels just the literary value of philosophical works, which in their coverage develop dimensions specific to creative and original documents, which science and philosophy cannot capture within the key of assessment and analytic criteria of reasoning, assessment and valorisation".<sup>30</sup>

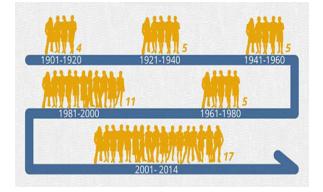
#### 4. DISCRIMINATION VERSUS PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

For the Romanian framework and for what we consider to be acknowledged worldwide, the Nobel Prizes and woman's representation by Herta Müller at the Awards for Literature, remain landmarks of that creation which is often accompanied by sacrifice and certain adoration of the expressiveness of thought, feeling, within the key of life valuing, and of the individual in general. To the question why Hortensia Papadat-Bengescu or other names from the Romanian literature were not promoted and nominated for such awards, there can answer only those dealing with policies for promoting labor and exploitation of women, the art of writing / literature and research<sup>31</sup>. And here we subsume Gadamer's view that "not even in relationship with the research we do not have absolutely reliable criteria by which the outstanding genuine performance and claim naked could be distinguished"<sup>32</sup> because he adds: "understanding the compliance of any knowledge through the historical and social forces that move the present is not only a theoretical weakness of our faith in knowledge, but it also means a real lack of defense in front of the voluntary forces of time (Gadamer, 1990). The sciences of the spirit are made by these trends in their job, are evaluated

in view of the force that their knowledge is represented in terms of social, political, religious or any other point of view. This enhances the pressure that the force exerts on the spirit". (Gadamer, 1990)<sup>33</sup>

We believe therefore that, by the concept of "epistemological ethics"<sup>34</sup>, the title of my book implies the possibility of building that epistemological apparatus applicable to ethics that can create new coordinates to ethical analysis from *local to global*, because otherwise there appears the risk of an imbalance that the educational philosophy has never lacked in the past (Găşpărel, 2014).

Within the margin of argumentation aimed at *truth and power* disciplines, we can now better explain why the knowledge, creation and feminine writing product can often stand within the assessment key of deontic type. After such methodological practice and thinking on the role of women in terms of *power* and significance of *truth*, the common armor of the two academic coordinates are likely to be identified. However, all these reveal an extremely rare female portrait that the *curricula* do not maintain and the *academic monographs* and *bibliographies* minimize.



**Fig. 2. Nobel Prize Awarded Women** (Nobel Prize Awarded Women, n.d.)

The current conditions of higher education and entering the labor market during the economic crisis are issues that could lead to a rapid improvement in comparison with the situation of 1996, when UNESCO Commission published data on the state of education worldwide. In this respect, *The European Pact* on Gender Equality adopted by *the European Council in March 2006* encouraged the *Member States* to (Manual pentru abordarea integratoare a egalității de gen, 2008)<sup>35</sup>:

1. promote employment for women and reduce gender differences. The Pact requires Member States to examine ways in which the social welfare system can become more accessible to women in terms of employment;

2. adopt measures for promoting a better balance between work and personal lives (Barcelona targets on childcare, care for dependents, promotion of parental leave);

3. strengthen governance through gender mainstreaming, notably by encouraging Member States to incorporate a gender perspective in their national reform programs. In the Roadmap for equality between women and men (2006-2010), the European Commission states as key priorities the economic independence of women and men and reconciliation of work, private and family life. These are only some of the details of social policies to meet the challenges of women in academia, in order to promote their business.

EU normative ethics (Ian Manners) is based on several actions that would consist of: moral persuasion; reasoning power; shame force, which would add more voluntary compliance factors: internal clarity of the norm; legitimacy and coherence; far between well-established standards and values prevailing standards. These data correlated with Romanian women's issues in academia, in what we call excellence research, become the subject of attention to a series of ethical issues (Manners, 2008)<sup>36</sup>. On the other hand, the issue of underrepresentation in philosophy is one of international out of date. The risks of such issues can be reflected on the entire area of what we call philosophy of education. The first solution to such a problem can be found in the *four stages of* gender mainstreaming as a disposal program of discrimination in education and in improving the policies to promote women in excellence research. Solutions are therefore considered in:

(i) *Organization*. In this first stage, focus is laid on implementation and organization, as well as on building awareness and participation.

(ii) *Documentation about gender differences*. The purpose of the second step is to describe gender inequality with regard to participation, resources, norms, values and rights, and to evaluate trends without political involvement.

(iii) *Evaluation of political impact*. The third step is to analyze the potential impact on gender policy with reference to participation, resources, norms, values and rights.

(iv) *Policy restatement*. The fourth step is to identify ways in which policy could be rephrased to promote gender equality.

### **5. CONCLUSIONS**

Relating to the specific context of teaching and to the research situation in Romania, we subsume Alina Mungiu Pippidi's vision who, to the question: What is not going in our education system?, responded that: the two essential problems are found both in university training, in research and, last but not least, in our education system - "at university and research levels, we have too few performers: everyone who is able to publish at international level leaves the country, a drama in a country whose economic recovery will never be substantial if not accompanied by an increase in creativity and technology, that is on the top of the planetary brain drain. The second problem is as serious as the first one: our education seems disconnected from the needs of our economy and society (...)" (Mungiu - Pippidi, 2012)<sup>37</sup>. Within reasoning on several ethical guidelines (professional ethics / ethics and consequentialism), the analytic method carefully brings forth a certain inconsistency on the criteria of universality and indivisibility of human rights, based on what the ethical procedural rules bring- in university training and then in the labor market. The difficulty of women, issues of gender studies or discrimination, requires a conceptual practice to the major structures of representation and thinking in terms of fairness and righteousness of some concepts and training practices which, within the internal structure of institutions, reveal issues at the level of research policy, where social sciences are the most vulnerable and exposed to reasons based on innovation (European research funding, 2014; Manual pentru abordarea integratoare a egalității de gen, 2008).<sup>38</sup>

*Gender equality* or *discrimination* is a matter of ethics, where the *moral values* and contextual and reasoning criteria agree with the role and place

of women in creation and science - *in the plurality of thought and societies*.

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#### Endnotes

- 1. This paper is supported by the Sectoral Operational Programme Human Resources Development (SOP HRD), financed by the European Social Fund and the Romanian Government under the contract number POSDRU/144/6.3/S/127928.
- 2. Ian Manners, 'Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms?', Journal of Common Market Studies 40 (2): 235–58; Gasper D. Migration, Gender and Social Justice: Perspectives on Human Insecurity -Hexagon Series on Human and Environmental Security and Peace.
- 3. Some of the arguments here discussed are based on my presentation: Cornelia Margareta Găşpărel, Implicații și responsabilități etice în politicile de formare și cercetare privind inserția femeii în mediul academic din România/ Implications and ethical responsibilities in training and research policies on employment of women in Romanian academia, held at the International Congress of Apollonia University, Preparing future, promoting excellence. Section Social Justice and academic policies, February 26 -March 1, 2015, Iasi, Romania.

- 4. Romanian Official Gazette (Part I, Laws, Ordinances, Resolutions and other Acts), August 3, 2011. Art. 4 par. a.) Doctoral degree - higher cycle university studies whose aim is to develop skilled human resource in achieving scientific research, capable of entering the highly qualified labor market. They consist of molding research through research-development and innovation and is a professional research experiment (...)" p. 2.
- 5. See requirements for 2005 (year of Doctoral School establishment, in accordance with the *Treatise of Bologna*) on Doctoral School enrollment conditions and with the actual situation on the labor market insertion according to *gender* and *activity areas* in strict conjunction with *areas of efficiency*.
- 6. Here we also consider the fundamental field of *philosophy*.
- 7. Cei mai buni oameni de ştiință tineri ai Europei au fost premiați la Varșovia/The best of Europe's young scientists were honored in Warsaw, http://europa.eu/rapid/ press-release\_IP-14-1027\_ro.htm.
- Manual pentru abordarea integratoare a egalității de gen

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- 12. Jacques Delors, Works Cited, p. 28.
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