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(UN)FASHIONABLE DISCIPLINES: GENDER STUDIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN ROMANIA. INTEGRATION OR AUTONOMY?*

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ABSTRACT

Research on the mechanisms, politics, and practices at work in the process institutionalization of women's and gender studies in higher education in Central and Eastern Europe show a definite, albeit often uneven and sometimes precarious, dynamic of inclusion of this field of teaching and research, inside and outside officially recognized academic structures during the last two decades or so. In this article I investigate some of the institutional mechanisms, transnational higher education structures and interests, and personal investments and strategies that shape the current configuration of gender studies generally in higher education in Romania and particularly at the University of Bucharest. I argue that the inclusion of gender studies in higher education in Romania should be integrated within the larger, multiple and overlapping binds of national and transnational social, economic and political transformations started in the early 1990s and accelerated at the end of the decade and especially at the beginning of the millennium. Within this framework, not only specific to the Romanian context, but, as shown in several studies, also to other Central and Eastern European countries, the annexation of gender-related concerns, equal opportunities legislation and gender studies as a valid field of teaching and research by various governmental and institutional agents in Romania could be read as part of the larger endorsement of the "democratization agenda." However, it is necessary to understand these dynamics of institutional change and international financial and political interests as undoubtedly influencing local options and opportunities, but not always uniformly and unidirectionally informing the form and content of the teaching and research practices undertaken locally.

KEYWORDS

- *institutionalization of gender studies*
- *higher education*
- *gendering education*
- *mainstreaming gender*
- *integration vs. autonomy*
- *Romania*

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Introduction

Research on the mechanisms, politics, and practices at work in the process of institutionalization of women's and gender studies¹ in higher education in Central and Eastern Europe show a definite, albeit often uneven and sometimes precarious, dynamic of inclusion of this field of teaching and research, inside and outside officially recognized academic structures during the last two decades or so. In this study I investigate some of the institutional politics and mechanisms, as well as the individual endeavors and strategies of the academics involved in the process of gendering higher education curricula at the University of Bucharest, both within various disciplines and courses of studies, and as a newly established separate graduate program. I argue that for an accurate and nuanced understanding of the particular constellation of various agents, factors and strategies that led to the present-day configuration of gender studies as a field of academic teaching and research Romania, the process of its (partial and often contested) inclusion should be integrated within the larger, multiple and overlapping binds of national and transnational social, economic and political transformations started in the early 1990s and accelerated at the end of the decade and especially at the beginning of the millennium. Within this framework, not only specific to the Romanian context, but, as shown in several studies, also to other Central and Eastern European countries, the annexation of gender-related concerns, equal opportunities legislation and gender studies as an acceptable field of teaching and research by various governmental and institutional agents in Romania could be read as a part of the larger endorsement of the discourse and agenda of democratization, human rights, and liberal market economy. Thus, on the one hand, the category of gender was not necessarily relevant and important in itself, and, on the other, the local actors who strove to raise awareness, run activist and academic projects and programs were faced with the difficult choice of either subduing (at least partially) to the political agenda and the conceptualization and methodological models imposed by the financing international (western European and north American) bodies or remain at the

1 The debate over the naming of this field of academic inquiry and teaching, in various geo-political and temporal contexts, has a long history and is ongoing (see, for example, J Wallach Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis" *American Historical Review*, vol. 91, no. 5, 1986, pp. 1053-1075, reprinted in, J Wallach Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1999, pp. 28-50; R Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects. Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1994; M Miroiu, *Guidelines for Promoting Gender Equity in Higher Education in Central and Eastern Europe*, UNESCO-CEPES, Studies in Higher Education, Bucharest, 2001, pp. 94-97). Yet, since in Romanian higher education virtually all the initiators and promoters of academic programs in this field opted for 'gender studies', I will use this term wherever I refer to the Romanian context. Mihaela Miroiu, a Romanian prominent feminist academic and founder of the first graduate program in gender studies in Romania, points out that "Of course, a name has a powerful creative force, but in Romania it is necessary to accommodate, simultaneously, the creation of both a modern and post-modern strategy. Then, to call what the other and others are undertaking, Feminist Studies, Women's Studies, or Gender Studies is, at this stage, a matter of option and adaptability. To what extent can they be 'unreasonable' in order to be accepted, and to what extent can they be 'reasonable' in order to avoid assimilation are matters of practical wisdom. For example, in Romania, when someone has a liberal feminist approach, he or she is labeled as a radical" (M Miroiu, "And-And' Strategy: A Romanian Experience" in L. Grünberg (ed.), *Good Practice in Promoting Gender Equality in Higher Education in Central and Eastern Europe*, UNESCO-CEPES Studies in Higher Education, Bucharest, 2001, p. 118). There are, however, courses offered at various universities, including the University of Bucharest, whose titles include "women," "feminine," "feminism," and "feminist".

margins of the academic, public, and activist scenes and retain their critical stance towards both local gender inequalities and larger global asymmetries.²

In this article, I firstly present a synthetic assessment of gender equality in higher education in Romania, including relevant legislation, at national and organizational levels, concerning gender equality in education and higher education, quantitative data on women and men in higher education (student enrolment and faculty, distribution by academic field, academic hierarchy, leadership aspects). In the next section of the paper I offer a concise overview of the existing research tackling the institutionalization of gender studies in higher education in Central and Eastern Europe and in Romania and I briefly examine the social, political, historical, as well as institutional and personal factors and contexts that have been identified as contributing to the inclusion of gender components and gender courses at the level of undergraduate higher education (Bachelor's degree) curricula in various social and humanities disciplines in Romanian universities starting before the mid-1990s. I also look at the more or less successful establishment, between 1998 and 2003, of three separate and autonomous graduate level programs (Master's programs) with a main focus on gender studies. In the third section of this paper I investigate departmental and university mechanisms, transnational higher education structures and politics, and personal investments and interests that shape the current configuration of gender studies in the University of Bucharest. In this section I use data from official departmental curricula, inter-university and inter-departmental partnerships and curriculum development projects, as well as information, perspectives and opinions provided in the semi-structured interviews I conducted with members of the university management and with academics teaching in some of the departments (faculties) that include gender studies in their curricula. In the last section I briefly summarize the findings of the research and discuss a few possible recommendations.

Dynamics of Participation: Laws, Regulations, and Numbers in Higher Education in Romania

In this section of the paper I first present an overview of the relevant laws and secondary legislation (such as Government Decisions and Ministerial Orders) that regulate the educational process in Romania, with the main focus on women's and men's access to education and higher education, anti-discrimination on the basis of gender and the possibilities of affirmative policies. Here I also look at the relevant acts specifically regulating the educational process within the University of Bucharest, as a case study. Secondly, I look at the statistical data available concerning access to education and higher education in Romania, as well as those available for the University of Bucharest, including students and teaching staff, and looking at specialization orientation, university titles and management positions. I will show

² See, for example, K Ghodsee, 'Feminism-by-Design: Emerging Capitalisms, Cultural Feminism, and Women's Nongovernmental Organizations in Postsocialist Eastern Europe', *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, vol. 29, no. 3, 2004, pp. 727-753; S Zimmermann, 'The Institutionalization of Women's and Gender Studies in Higher Education in Central and Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union: Asymmetric Politics and the Regional-Transnational Configuration', *East Central Europe/ E'Europe du Centre-Est. Eine wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift*, vol. 34-35, no. 1-2, 2007-2008, pp. 131-160.

that the general legal framework of education and the specific acts regulating higher education provide for equal access to all levels, specializations, and management positions for all involved in higher education, as well as the general student enrollment figures show a balanced participation to higher education for women and men and entry-level teaching positions are also gender balanced. However, when looking at percentages of women and men by specializations followed, both students' and faculty's figures show an uneven distribution, with significantly higher women's concentration in the social sciences and humanities, medical and economic studies and higher men's enrollment in computer science, technical and agricultural education. Moreover, data on women's and men's academic titles and management positions, throughout higher education in Romania, show a substantial gender gap in favor of male academics, especially for age groups over 45.

National Legislative and Institutional Regulations. The general legal framework that stipulates "equality among citizens" is the Constitution of Romania,³ which in its fourth article specifies that "Romania is the common and indivisible homeland of all its citizens, without any discrimination on account of race, nationality, ethnic origin, language, religion, sex, opinion, political adherence, property or social origin" (par. 2).⁴ Article 32 of the same act regulates, in general terms, the educational process, specifying that "[t]he right to education is provided by the compulsory general education, by education in high schools and vocational schools, by higher education, as well as other forms of instruction and graduate improvement" (par. 1), but making no direct reference to sex/ gender, neither as a possible category for discrimination, nor for affirmative policies. The same article stipulates that public education is free and that "social scholarships" will be granted by the state "to children or young people coming from disadvantaged families and to those institutionalized" (again without any reference to sex/ gender) and both provisions' application remain to be regulated by additional laws.

The Law no. 202/ 2002 on the Equality of Opportunities and Treatment between Women and Men also specifies the equal access of women and men to all forms of education and training and the prevention and elimination of direct and indirect discrimination in access to education (articles 2 and 15). In counter-distinction to the former Law on Education (no. 85/ 1995), which does not contain any requirements related to the elimination of stereotyped gender roles and models in education, article 16 mandates the Ministry of Education to ensure education and training "in the spirit of equality of opportunities between the sexes" and to promote "those textbooks, university courses, guidelines for curricula which do not contain either sex discrimination aspects, or negative models and stereotypes regarding women's and men's role in public and family life."⁵

3 The current *Constitution of Romania* was adopted in November 1991 and amended by the Law no. 429/ 2003 on the revision of the Constitution of Romania. Retrieved 20 February 2012 from <<http://www.cdep.ro/pls/dic/site.page?id=371>>.

4 See <http://www.cdep.ro/pls/dic/site.page?den=act2_2&par1=1#t1c0s0a1>. Retrieved 21 February 2012.

5 See <http://www.mmuncii.ro/pub/imagemanager/images/file/Legislatie/LEGI/L202-2002_rep.pdf>, Retrieved 21 February 2012. The Law No. 202/ 2002, on the Equality of Opportunities and Treatment between Women and Men, was amended in 2007.

Both the Law on Education of 1995, the fundamental legal framework that regulated the educational process until 2011, and the new Law on National Education, passed in January 2011, stipulate equal access to all levels and forms of education, irrespective of “social and material condition, sex, race, nationality, political and religious affiliation” (Law no. 84/ 1995, art. 5, par. 1)⁶ and “free of any form of discrimination” (Law no. 1/ 2011, art. 1, par. 4).⁷ The new Law on National Education also specifies a series of principles that govern all levels of education, among which “the principle of equity – on the basis of which the access to learning is undertaken free of discrimination” (art. 3, par. a), “the principle of ensuring equality of opportunities” (art. 3, par. j), “the principle of social inclusion” (art. 3, par. o). Specifically in the section on higher education, article 118, paragraph 1 restates the “principle of equity” and paragraph 2 stipulates as inadmissible “discriminations on basis of age, ethnicity, sex, social origin, political or religious orientation, sexual orientation and other types of discrimination, except for affirmative measures provided by the law.” The 2011 law additionally requires all higher education institutions, within its principle of “public responsibility,” to “respect the policies of equity and university ethics, comprised in the Code of ethics and professional deontology approved by the university senate” (art. 124, par. 1). However, the law does not include within the minimum requirements for the code of ethics and professional deontology to be developed by each university any provisions related to any form of discrimination, including sex/ gender (art. 130, par. 1). Although the current Code of ethics of the University of Bucharest, for instance, contains the above mentioned gender-related references, the former one, active until July 2012, did not.⁸

By contrast, the National School of Political Studies and Public Administration (NSPSA) from Bucharest included already in its 2006 Code of ethics several principles and values that it “especially promotes,” among which, for example, the principle of “rightfulness and equity” (art. 1), according to which “members of the NSPSA will be treated justly, fairly and equitably;” the NSPSA does not allow discrimination or exploitation, either directly or indirectly, and adopts “firm measures for nondiscrimination and equality of opportunities in access to studies, promotion and programs” (art. 3). Another principle that is meant to prevent various forms of unfair treatment and discrimination is “respect and tolerance,” according to which the NSPSA “promotes the existence of an academic and residential community where each person’s dignity is respected in a climate free of any manifestation and form of harassment, exploitation, humiliation, contempt, threat or intimidation.” The same principle explicitly mentions that the NSPSA does not “allow misogynistic, racist, chauvinistic, xenophobe, homophobe manifestations and sexual harassment” (art. 9).⁹

6 See <http://www.cdep.ro/pls/legis/legis_pck.act_text?idt=21091>. Retrieved 21 February 2012.

7 See <<http://www.edu.ro/index.php>>. Retrieved 21 February 2012.

8 The only exception is a brief mentioning of “sexual harassment” that should be “strictly monitored” and “severely punished.” See <http://unibuc.ro/n/despre/legi_regul.php>. Retrieved 2 August 2012.

9 See <http://snspsa.ro/sites/default/files/docs/cod_eti_c_0.pdf>. Retrieved 2 August 2012.

However, the University Charter, contains provisions related to nondiscrimination: “Academic freedom does not justify licentious, obscene, discriminatory practices based on ethnic, racial, social origin, sex or sexual orientation, political opinions, religion, age, nor other behaviors lacking in ethical integrity” (art. 23, par. 4). Also according to this Charter, access to the academic community, either as a student or as faculty member, including management positions, cannot be “restricted on bases pertaining to sex, race, ethnicity, political or religious conviction” (art. 44).¹⁰

A relevant legislative provision, which can function as a contributing factor for the relatively rapid inclusion of gender-related components in higher education in Romania, is related to the autonomy of universities, which is “guaranteed” in the Constitution of Romania (art. 32, par. 6).¹¹ The same principle was maintained by both the Law on Education of 1995 and is now repeatedly asserted in the new Law on National Education. In the 1995 law, article 12, paragraph 3, stipulated that “within higher education, the curricula and the syllabi are established according to university autonomy and national standards,” and article 13 reconfirmed that “university autonomy is guaranteed.”¹² The 2011 law also includes in the series of principles stipulated in article 3 and applicable to all levels of education “the principle of university autonomy,” which is reiterated in the chapter on higher education, article 118, paragraph 1.

Students and Faculty in Higher Education. Women make up more than half of the student body in higher education, both public and private. During the last decade, for example, women’s enrollment in public undergraduate higher education was between 53-54% (see table 1). Considering forms of learning, women attend in higher percentages regular classes and distance learning education (between 52-54% for the former and 57-58% for the latter), while men’s participation is significantly higher in evening classes (between 73-84%) and reduced attendance (68.45% in the last academic year, increasing from 50.28 in 2004-2005); however, during the last five years, women’s enrollment in evening classes increased by about 10%. Nevertheless, the total enrollment decreased by 8.50% during the last five years, with women’s enrollment decreasing slightly more (10%; see table 1).

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¹⁰ See <http://www.unibuc.ro/n/despre/docs/2012/mai/02_21_54_11Carta_Universitatii_din_Bucuresti.pdf>.

Retrieved 3 August 2012. The University Charter was approved by the Senate of the University of Bucharest on July 27, 2011. The previous Charter, approved in 2006 and amended in 2008, contained less specific provisions pertaining to gender discrimination.

¹¹ See <<http://www.cdep.ro/pls/dic/site.page?id=371&id1=2&par1=2>>. Retrieved 25 February 2012.

¹² See <http://www.cdep.ro/pls/legis/legis_pck.htp_act_text?id=21091>. Retrieved 25 February 2012.

last academic year, increasing from 50.28 in 2004-2005); however, during the last five years, women's enrollment in evening classes increased by about 10%. Nevertheless, the total enrollment decreased by 8.50% during the last five years, with women's enrollment decreasing slightly more (10%; see table 1).

Table 1. Student enrollment in public undergraduate higher education in Romania, by form of learning, during the last decade¹³

Form of learning	2001 - 2002			2004 - 2005			2009 - 2010		
	Total	Women		Total	Women		Total	Women	
		No.	%		No.	%		No.	%
Total	435,406	231,891	53.25	495,034	269,152	54.37	452,982	242,016	53.42
Regular classes	364,413	192,826	52.91	405,045	219,008	54.07	373,469	202,030	54.09
Evening classes	3,210	687	21.40	1,148	173	15.06	1,626	429	26.38
Reduced attendance	21,776	11,630	53.40	20,072	9,980	49.72	19,117	6,032	31.55
Distance learning	46,007	26,748	58.13	68,769	39,991	58.15	58,770	33,525	57.04

The most obvious student segregation by gender in higher education is visible in the areas of study women and men attend (see table 2). While women tend to concentrate in medical studies (69.28% for the last academic year and increasing by almost 5% since 2001), economic studies (64.71% in 2009-2010), general university education (about 67% throughout the decade), law (62.72% in 2009-2010, with an increase of more than 6% during the last ten years), and arts (between 54%-56% during 2001-2010), men attend in significantly higher numbers technical education (between 71%-73%) and agricultural education (54%-64% in the last decade).

¹³ I compiled the data and calculated the percentages from information provided in three publications produced by the Romanian National Institute of Statistics, *Higher Education at the Beginning of the Academic Year 2001-2002*, National Institute of Statistics, Bucharest, 2002; Romanian National Institute of Statistics, *Higher Education at the Beginning of the Academic Year 2004-2005*, National Institute of Statistics, Bucharest, 2005; Romanian National Institute of Statistics, *Higher Education at the Beginning of the Academic Year 2009-2010*, National Institute of Statistics, Bucharest, 2010.

Table 2. Student enrollment in public undergraduate higher education in Romania, by areas of study during the last decade¹⁴

Area of study	2001-2002			2004-2005			2009-2010		
	Total	Women No.	%	Total	Women No.	%	Total	Women No.	%
<i>Total</i>	435,406	231,891	53.25	495,034	269,152	54.37	452,982	242,016	53.42
Technical education	127,536	34,149	26.77	136,413	37,852	27.74	140,730	40,283	28.62
Agricultural education	15,810	7,195	45.50	19,614	6,970	35.53	14,698	5,303	36.07
Economic education	83,457	54,220	64.96	109,918	72,628	66.07	93,505	60,516	64.71
Medical education	31,112	20,075	64.52	32,995	22,322	67.65	44,165	30,598	69.28
General university education*	143,934	97,420	67.68	160,102	108,852	67.98	129,023	86,459	67.01
Law	26,000	14,688	56.49	27,262	15,658	57.43	22,853	14,334	62.72
Arts	7,557	4,144	54.83	8,730	4,870	55.78	8,008	4,523	56.48

Note: * See Table 8 for student enrollment in general university education break down by specialization and gender

Overall, in general university education,¹⁵ women's enrollment is considerably higher, approximately 67% during the last ten years. Women outnumber men in social sciences and in humanities, as well as in natural and exact sciences (see table 3). The only specializations overwhelmingly dominated by male enrollment are theology, computer science, and physical education, where women's enrollment is not only lower, but decreasing during the last decade. For example, women's enrollment in computer science decreased by 5% during the last five years and in theology by almost 20%. Also a tendency of decreasing women's enrollment in either rather gender balanced disciplines, or in disciplines where women students

14 I compiled the data and calculated the percentages from information provided in three publications produced by the Romanian National Institute of Statistics, 2002, pp. 4-11; Romanian National Institute of Statistics, 2005, pp. 6-13; Romanian National Institute of Statistics, 2010, pp. 4-11.

15 According to the official auditing biannually completed by the Romanian National Institute of Statistics, "(general) university education" comprises the social sciences and the humanities, the natural and exact sciences, as well as computer science, theology, physical education, etc. (see table 3 for all fields and disciplines and student enrollment)..

dominate can be observed: for example, in physics, women's enrollment decreased by 15% during the last decade (from 59.35% to 44.11%), and in geology by almost 10% during the last five years (from 53.76% to 44%). In disciplines where women's enrollment was and is still high, the same tendency of decreased women's enrollment is discernible in the last decade's statistics: biology (from 82.81% in 2001 to 75.87 in 2009), chemistry (from 84.70% in 2001 to 79.13% in 2009), geography (from 70.86% in 2004 to 64.64 in 2009), political sciences (from 63.46 in 2001 to 60.42 in 2009), international relations and European studies (from 77.55% in 2004 to 73.44 in 2009), sociology (from 81.36% in 2004 to 78.77% in 2009). The fields where women's enrollment was higher and continues to increase are mathematics (from 60.67% in 2004 to 63.38% in 2009), philosophy (from 55.43% in 2001 to 66.72% in 2009), psychology (82.52% in 2004 to 84.43% in 2009), education studies (92.04% in 2004 to 96.21% in 2009), social work (85.67% in 2004 to 87.49% in 2009), journalism and communication studies (from 65.49% in 2001 to 75.36% in 2009).

Thus, I believe both women's and men's concentration in particular and different academic and therefore professional areas, and the tendencies of increasing and/or decreasing enrollment could be justified by a combination of "traditional" gender roles and economic and financial orientations. For example, the top two disciplinary fields where women's enrollment is overwhelmingly higher than men's (education sciences and philology – see table 3) most likely provide the graduates with a job opportunity in secondary education, which is highly underpaid in Romania. Even disciplines like mathematics, chemistry or philosophy, "traditionally" considered "masculine" areas, and where women's participation is still low in many countries, are dominated by women in higher education in Romania, but these also most likely lead to jobs in education and research, where financial resources and, to some extent, prestige are lower. On the other hand, computer science, where men comprise more than two thirds of the students, offer much better paid job opportunities. A combination of economic and political factors could also explain the (yet) slight decrease in women's enrollment in such disciplines and specializations as political sciences, international relations, and even sociology, which start to be seen as opportunities openers.

Table 3. Student enrollment in public undergraduate general university education (see table 2) by discipline/ specialization¹⁶

Discipline/ specialization	2001-2002			2004-2005			2009-2010		
	Total	Women		Total	Women		Total	Women	
		No.	%		No.	%		No.	%
<i>Total</i>	143,934	97,420	67.68	160,102	108,852	67.98	129,023	86,459	67.01
Mathematics and computer science*	13,118	6,300	48.02	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mathematics	-	-	-	5,839	3,543	60.67	2,141	1,357	63.38
Computer science	-	-	-	6,802	2,297	33.76	6,926	1,963	28.34
Physics	3,514	2,086	59.35	3,210	1,670	52.02	1,360	600	44.11
Chemistry	3,523	2,984	84.70	2,901	2,310	79.62	1,414	1,119	79.13
Biology	5,515	4,567	82.81	5,902	4,668	79.09	4,033	3,060	75.87
Geography and geology**	8,736	6,073	69.51	-	-	-	-	-	-
Geography	-	-	-	10,545	7,473	70.86	9,358	6,047	64.61
Geology	-	-	-	1,300	699	53.76	400	176	44.00
Muscology***	141	103	73.04	-	-	-	-	-	-
History	8,375	4,714	56.28	8,318	4,871	58.55	3,411	1,904	55.81
Philosophy	2,412	1,337	55.43	2,609	1,724	66.07	1,241	828	66.72
Philology	24,199	21,970	90.78	29,192	26,317	90.15	20,042	17,736	88.49
Political sciences	4,292	2,724	63.46	4,470	2,798	62.59	2,906	1,756	60.42
Administrative sciences	13,712	9,825	71.65	16,200	10,501	64.82	14,300	9,973	69.74
Physical education and sports	12,163	3,830	31.48	11,851	3,350	28.26	10,351	3,150	30.43
Sociology-psychology-pedagogy****	25,389	21,785	85.80	-	-	-	-	-	-

16 I compiled the data and calculated the percentages from information provided in three publications produced by the Romanian National Institute of Statistics, 2002, pp. 8-11; Romanian National Institute of Statistics, 2005, pp. 10-13; Romanian National Institute of Statistics, 2010, pp. 8-11.

Table 3. (continued)

Psychology	-	-	-	6,336	5,229	82.52	7,152	6,039	84.43
Education sciences (psycho-pedagogy)	-	-	-	12,142	11,176	92.04	11,782	11,336	96.21
Sociology	-	-	-	3,682	2,996	81.36	2,690	2,119	78.77
Social Work	-	-	-	4,936	4,229	85.67	5,309	4,645	87.49
Journalism/ communication studies	5,891	3,858	65.49	9,575	6,888	71.93	8,990	6,775	75.36
International relations and European studies*****	-	-		2,049	1,589	77.55	4,120	3,026	73.44
Theology	12,925	5,264	40.72	12,243	4,524	36.95	9,263	1,599	17.26
Environmental science*****	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,288	838	65.06
Cultural studies*****	-	-	-	-	-	-	546	413	75.64

Note: * Data provided jointly for the two specializations only for the academic year 2001-2002. For the academic years 2004-2005 and 2009-2010 the information is provided separately for mathematics and computer science; ** For 2001-2002 the data is provided in bulk for geography and geology, while for the academic years 2004-2005 and 2009-2010 the information is provided separately for the two specializations; *** No data provided for the specialization in museology for the academic years 2004-2005 and 2009-2010; **** Data was provided in bulk for the three specializations for the academic year 2001-2002, while for the academic years 2004-2005 and 2009-2010 the data was provided separately for the psychology, educational sciences (psycho-pedagogy), sociology, and social work; ***** No data provided for this specialization for the academic year 2001-2002; ***** Data available for the specialization in environmental studies only for the academic year 2009-2010; ***** For the specialization in cultural studies data is provided only for the academic year 2009-2010.

Statistical information for the University of Bucharest with respect to student enrollment is not publicly available. The National Institute of Statistics does not provide data concerning students differentiated by universities, much less by disciplines/ specializations within specific educational institutions. However, from the internal statistics provided by the University of Bucharest,¹⁷ the general trends of student enrollment valid for higher education in Romania are broadly applicable for the University of Bucharest as well. For example, women enroll in greater numbers

17 And it is interesting that 1) I had to submit an official written request pending approval by the university senate to get access to this data and 2) no centralized information on student enrollment is available, so I had to skim through hundreds of pages for each academic year to get the numbers I needed.

in undergraduate education in administrative studies, biology, chemistry, philosophy, geography, history, journalism and mass communication studies, literary studies and foreign languages, psychology, education sciences, sociology, social work, political sciences. Male students' enrollment is higher in mathematics and computer science (taken together), physics, geology and geophysics, and Christian Orthodox theology (while in Baptist and Roman Catholic theology women's enrollment is higher than men's).¹⁸ Another tendency observable from the data I collected shows that women students tend to concentrate in regular state-subsidized education, while in regular unsubsidized education, reduced enrollment, and distance learning (all the latter forms of education require a tuition to be paid by the students) their percentages decrease.¹⁹

Women make up less than half of the teaching staff in higher education institutions in Romania, but there is an overall increase by approximately 6% (from 39.12 in 2001 to 45.71 in 2009) during the last decade. However, there are significant asymmetries between women and men, both regarding academic titles²⁰ and management positions. While women hold more than half of the two lowest academic titles (54%-58% teaching assistants and 51%-56% assistant lecturers during the last decade), less than one third of full professorships is held by women, with an increase by 10% during the last ten years (from 17.44% in 2001 to 28.20% in 2009). An even higher augmentation of women's percentage is observable during the past decade for associate professor title, where the increase in women holding this position is almost 14% (see table 4). Given the slightly larger concentration of women at the bottom of the academic titles hierarchy and the steady increase of women at the top, it is likely that a more gender balanced faculty will occur during the following two or three decades.

18 All information is for the academic year 2010-2011 and was compiled from the archives of the University of Bucharest, volume *S.C.I.*, (Bucharest: University of Bucharest, 2010-2011), pages unnumbered.

19 For example, for the 2010-2011 academic year, at the Faculty of Mathematics and Computer Science, considering the two specialization areas taken together, women make up 44.18% in regular state-subsidized education, 35.04% in regular unsubsidized education, and 24.78% in distance learning. The same is true for specializations where women form the vast majority of students, like at the Faculty of Psychology and Education Sciences: there are 93.90% women enrolled in regular state-subsidized educations, 82.60% women in regular tuition paying education, and 81.46% in distance learning (data compiled and percentages calculated using information from the volume *S.C.I.*, (Bucharest: University of Bucharest, 2010-2011), pages unnumbered.

20 The academic hierarchy in higher education in Romania is made up of five titles, from the lowest to the highest as follows: teaching assistant (*preparator/are*), assistant lecturer (*asistent/ă*), lecturer (*lector/ă*), associate professor (*conferențiar/ă*), professor (*profesor/ară*). According to the new law of education and in conformity with larger transformations in higher education in Romania, including "alignment" to European educational systems, the teaching assistant position will disappear and will be taken over by PhD students.

Table 4. Faculty academic title in public higher education institutions in Romania, during the last decade²¹

Academic Title	2001-2002			2004-2005			2009-2010		
	Total	Women		Total	Women		Total	Women	
		No.	%		No.	%		No.	%
<i>General Total</i>	25,174	9,849	39.12	26,790	11,189	41.76	26,757	12,232	45.71
Professor	4,356	760	17.44	5,057	1,055	20.86	5,082	1,437	28.20
Associate professor	3,852	1,188	30.84	4,285	1,638	38.22	4,867	2,167	44.52
Lecturer	7,068	3,074	43.49	6,844	3,129	45.71	7,149	3,583	50.11
Assistant lecturer	5,987	3,083	51.49	6,725	3,663	54.46	6,739	3,821	56.69
Teaching assistant	3,038	1,651	54.34	3,054	1,625	53.20	1,825	1,072	58.73
Consultant teaching staff	837	78	9.31	795	70	8.80	1,095	152	13.88
Teaching staff with research workload*	36	15	41.66	30	9	30.00	-	-	-

Note: * For teaching staff with research workload information is available only for 2001-2002 and 2004-2005.

The general distribution of faculty by gender and academic title in higher education institutions in Romania is, by and large, valid for the University of Bucharest as well, although women's overall participation tends to be slightly higher (by 2 to 3%). Women hold top academic titles in larger numbers and the increase over the last decade is also more substantial compared to the general trend in higher education institutions. For example, at the University of Bucharest, women held 23.41% of professorships in 2001 (17.44% for all higher education institutions in Romania) and their ratio increased to 35.08% in 2009 (compared to the national 28.20% percentage), thus more than 11%. If for lecturer and associate professor the raise is not as significant, for the two bottoms academic titles, the boost is again remarkable – 10% for assistant lecturer and 24% for teaching assistant from 2001 to 2009 (see table 5). This trend could be read positively, supporting the hypothesis of a more gender balanced higher education faculty in two to three decades, and negatively, with men choosing better paid and higher prestige occupational areas.

21 I compiled the data and calculated the percentages from information provided in three publications produced by the Romanian National Institute of Statistics, 2002, V; Romanian National Institute of Statistics, 2005, V; Romanian National Institute of Statistics, 2010, V.

The category “consultant teaching staff” shows an interesting dynamic with respect to both gender and age (see tables 7 and 8 in the annex). In higher education institutions in Romania, it generally (but not exclusively) includes teaching staff who reached the retirement age, but who chose and were accepted by the university to continue teaching. For the academic year 2004-2005 women made up only 8.80% of this category, and in 2009-2010 the percentage of women increased by 5%. When considering the age variable for regular faculty, the percentage of women in the age group of 65 years and over is extremely low: 12.5% in 2004 and 15.51% in 2009. For the age group 60-64 years, women’s presence is slightly higher, but steady (about 25%) during the last five years (see tables 7 and 8 in the annex). It would be worthwhile to look into this disparity using qualitative research methods and inquire into the institutional mechanisms and practices and the individual choices that could account for it.

Table 5. Faculty by gender and academic title at the University of Bucharest, during the last decade²²

Academic Title	2001-2002			2004-2005			2009-2010		
	Total	Women		Total	Women		Total	Women	
		No.	%		No.	%		No.	%
<i>General Total</i>	1,551	641	41.32	1,588	689	43.38	1,402	674	48.07
Professor	316	74	23.41	352	91	25.85	305	107	35.08
Associate Professor	226	92	40.70	257	119	46.30	271	127	46.86
Lecturer	413	196	47.45	426	196	46.00	372	190	51.07
Assistant lecturer	360	189	52.50	342	197	57.60	259	161	62.16
Teaching assistant	154	75	48.70	128	72	56.25	81	59	72.83
Consultant teaching staff	80	14	17.5	83	14	16.86	114	30	26.31
Teaching staff with research workload*	2	1	50.00	-	-	-	-	-	-

Note: * Data for this category was only provided for the academic year 2001-2002.

Statistical data on institutional management show the unequal distribution of women and men throughout higher education institutions in Romania: there

22 I compiled the data and calculated the percentages from information provided in three publications produced by the Romanian National Institute of Statistics, 2002, 94-95; Romanian National Institute of Statistics, 2005, 88-89; Romanian National Institute of Statistics, 2010, pp. 114-115.

were 25.89% women with management positions in 2004 and 30.14% in 2009.²³ Currently, at the University of Bucharest, the rector is a man and two of the five pro-rectors are women (40%). It is also relevant, however, that the male pro-rectors' areas of management are academic programs and publications, scientific research and financing, international relations, while one of the women pro-rectors deals with "student social problems" and human resources,²⁴ thus rendering visible a distribution of management tasks at the intersection of "traditional" gender roles and academic prestige and importance. At the level of faculty and department management, no statistical information is available for the University of Bucharest. By manually searching each faculty's and department's websites and counting management positions, I found that currently less than a quarter of deans are women (21.05%), one third of vice-dean positions are occupied by women, while women department/ chair heads make up 41.89% (see table 6).

Table 6. Current faculty with management positions at the University of Bucharest by level and gender²⁵

Management position	Total	Women	
		No.	%
Dean	19	4	21.05
Vice-dean	33	11	33.33
Scientific secretary	19	6	31.57
Department/ Chair Head	74	31	41.89

Although most of the faculty I interviewed was aware of the gender asymmetry and some even acknowledged a form of "glass ceiling," in both academic titles and management positions, none considered that any policies were appropriate or desirable to increase women's accession to higher academic titles or to management positions. Justifications provided for this reluctance ranged from "the famous communist provision of 33% women in all areas" to the "meritocracy principle," "intellectual and human value," "scientific accomplishment" in higher education, conceived as entirely neuter to gender.²⁶ Most mentioned the existence of "equal opportunities" or "non-discriminatory" policies in the national legal frameworks and specifically in the University of Bucharest Charta, thus rendering any gender targeted policies superfluous, if not outright wrong and unfair. Moreover, one of the

23 Romanian National Institute of Statistics, 2005, pp. 94-95 and Romanian National Institute of Statistics, 2010, pp. 124-125.

24 According to the website of the University of Bucharest. Retrieved 4 February 2012 <<http://unibuc.ro/n/organizare/conducere.php>>.

25 I compiled and calculated the information using the website of the University of Bucharest and each faculty's websites.

26 Pro-rectors Maria Voinea and Romița Iucu, Dean Mihai Coman, Chair head Ionela Băluță, Vice-dean Silvia Marton etc. (personal interviews, January-February 2011).

male pro-rectors, when explicitly asked about the gender disparities in distribution by academic titles and management positions, contended that:

This doesn't mean that the university created selective mechanisms that would create such a structure, such a type of sampling. Of course, it is a construction that has rather a social source than an institutional one. This stratification has not been the product of a selection; not we, as institutional representatives, have produced these final hierarchies that you talk about, statistically speaking. With respect to a balanced approach, they are a definite source of interpretations, but I believe that a woman has never been rejected from a management position, when she ran against a man, because she is a woman. [...] Our only option in our case is intellectual value, human value, scientific achievement and less belonging to [one] gender. This is an absolutely natural criterion in an institution such as the University of Bucharest.²⁷

In contrast, one of the women pro-rectors I interviewed observed and commented at length on the overt and covert gender biased attitudes and practices of the general academic environment in Romania, mentioning explicit obstructive attempts towards the advancement of women academics, but not referring to and not being able to recall such blatant cases at the University of Bucharest. At the same time, the same pro-rector admitted that she was reserved towards the possibility of introducing affirmative policies for women in higher education, especially due to the negatively perceived experiences (including personal incidents) and the inappropriate application of the mandatory “30% women” requirement during the “communist” regime.²⁸

A Program of Their Own? Inclusion of Gender Studies in Higher Education in Romania

In this section I present a brief overview of gender studies in higher education in Central and Eastern Europe and in Romania. I show that existing research identified a combination of individual scientific and career pursuits, institutional and policy transformations triggered by national and international educational, economic and political mechanisms and interests that could account for the inclusion of gender-related issues and gender studies in post-1990 curricula in higher education institutions and in training, research and activist nongovernmental organizations in Central and Eastern Europe. I argue that the rapid and partially successful inclusion of gender studies in Romania came along other transformations at the levels of the educational system and of the economic, social and political order. As Susan Zimmermann extensively, analytically and critically shows in her study on the institutionalization of women's and gender studies in Central and Eastern Europe and in the post-Soviet space, within this framework of conceptualizing the post-1989/1991 transformations, the category of gender was used not only for its critical potential of examining existing social, economic and political asymmetries,

27 Pro-rector Romița Iucu (personal interview, February 2011).

28 Pro-rector Maria Voinea (personal interview, January 2011).

but also as a means for imposing a specifically western model of liberal democracy and free market economy²⁹.

While in Western Europe the emergence and later institutionalization of women's and gender studies in higher education in the 1980s mostly followed and was for the greater part in close connection with and reliance on women's movements of the 1960s and 1970s and their militant concerns and activist agendas,³⁰ in Central and Eastern Europe the inclusion and institutionalization of women's and gender studies within higher education institutions pursued a different path. Studies looking at the process of institutionalization of women's and gender studies in Central and Eastern Europe showed that, though not uniformly, this field of teaching and research penetrated, after the regime change of 1989/1991, rather rapidly and in part successfully in either officially recognized academic programs at the level of university education, or in independent centers of studies and in privately financed universities.³¹

In Romania, after 1990, women's studies, feminism and generally gender issues were, at best, met largely with skepticism, if not outright rejection, by both dominant intellectual and media discourses, and by the bulk of the academic environment.³² At the same time, the inclusion of gender studies courses and the establishment of separate graduate programs with a main focus on gender studies within public higher education institutions occurred relatively rapidly and to some extent successfully during the mid-90s and early 2000s.³³ The resistance to feminism

29 Zimmermann, 2007-2008, pp. 131-160. See also G Griffin, 'Co-option or Transformation? Women's and Gender Studies Worldwide', paper presented at the conference *Societies in Transition: Challenges to Women in Gender Studies* (Carl von Ossietzky University, Oldenburg, Germany, June 28-July 2, 2001); Ghodsee, 2004, pp. 727-753; K Ghodsee, 'Nongovernmental Ogres? How Feminist NGOs Undermine Women in Postsocialist Eastern Europe', *The International Journal of Not-for-Profit Law*, vol. 8, no. 3, May 2006. Retrieved 10 February 2012 from <http://www.icnl.org/research/journal/vol8iss3/art_2.htm>.

30 See, for example, Y Ergas, 'Feminisms of the 1970s' in G Duby & M Perrot (eds.), *A History of Women in the West*, Françoise Thébaud, vol. 5, Cambridge, 1994, pp. 527-547; G Griffin (ed.), *Women's Employment, Women's Studies, and Equal Opportunities 1945-2001*, The University of Hull, Hull, 2002.

31 See L Grünberg (ed.), *Good Practice in Promoting Gender Equality in Higher Education in Central and Eastern Europe*, UNESCO-CEPES, Studies in Higher Education, Bucharest, 2001; Zimmermann, 2007-2008; T-E Văcărescu, 'The Short Exultant Life of Gender Studies in Romania: Gender Studies and Curriculum Transformation' (Curricular Research Project, OSI-HESP, 2006). Retrieved 22 January 2012 from <http://web.ceu.hu/crc/crc_resfel_draft2006.html> (restricted access); M Frunză, 'Introduction des études de genre dans le système d'enseignement supérieur de Roumanie. Défis et perspectives', *Chronique Feministe*, no. 101, (June-Dec. 2008), pp. 15-22; I Cîrstocea, 'Sociology of a new field of knowledge: gender studies in postcommunist Eastern Europe', *G.SPE Working Papers*, 2009. Retrieved 22 January 2012 from <<http://prisme.u-strasbg.fr/workingpapers/WPCirtocea.pdf>>.

32 See, for the Romanian case, M Miroiu, 'Feminismul ca politică a modernizării' in Mungiu-Pippidi, A, (ed.), *Doctrine politice - Concepte universale și realități românești*, Polirom, Iasi, 1998, pp. 252-274; M Frunză, 'Equal Chances? The Ambiguity of the Romanian Liberal Discourse' in Frunză, M & T-E Văcărescu (eds.), *Gender and the (Post) East/ West Divide*, Limes, Cluj-Napoca, 2004, pp. 97-110; M Miroiu, *Neprețuitele femei. Publicistică feminină*, Polirom, Iasi, 2006.

33 See M Nicolaescu, 'Rolul cursurilor universitare cu tematică feminină' in Băluță, I, & I Cîrstocea, (eds.), *Direcții și teme de cercetare în studiile de gen din România*, École Doctorale en Sciences Sociales. Europe Centrale și Colegiul Noua Europă, București, 2003, pp. 221-230; L Popescu, 'Studiile de gen la Școala Națională de Științe Politice și Administrative' in Băluță, I, & I Cîrstocea, (eds.), *Direcții și teme de cercetare în studiile de gen din România*, École Doctorale en Sciences Sociales. Europe Centrale și Colegiul Noua Europă, București, 2003, pp. 207-212; E Magyari-Vincze, 'Studiile de gen la Cluj' in Băluță, I, & I Cîrstocea, (eds.), *Direcții și teme de cercetare în studiile de gen din România*, École Doctorale en Sciences Sociales. Europe Centrale și Colegiul Noua Europă, București, 2003, pp. 213-220; R Dascăl, 'Despre studiile de gen la Timișoara' in Băluță, I, & I Cîrstocea, (eds.), *Direcții și teme de cercetare în studiile de gen din România*, École Doctorale en Sciences Sociales. Europe Centrale

and gender concerns is in most studies read within, on the one hand, the particular social and political contexts specific to the “post-communist” countries before the regime change of 1989/1991,³⁴ and, on the other, on the perceived imported “western” character of this field of social, cultural and political critique and activism.³⁵

It is interesting that state socialism’s official assertion of women’s equality with men could function both as an explanation for the rejection of post-1990 concerns for women’s and gender issues, including research and teaching in these areas, and as a justification for the rapid acceptance, at least in some contexts, of gender as a category for policies as well as scholarly interest. This apparent paradox could be explained by the fact that, on the one hand, women’s and men’s equality was postulated in the official socialist ideology and discourse, thus making gender-related concerns either unnecessary, since equality had already been achieved, or a specifically “communist” issue, rejected by the dominant anti-communist discourse. On the other hand, since the category of gender was, according to official “socialist” ideology and practice, subdued to that of class, the new “western” model of democracy and human rights discourse brought it to the fore, thus establishing itself as different from socialist ideology, also by means of using gender as a “symbolic marker” of western democratic transformations, including economic, political and educational structures.³⁶

The emergence of women’s and gender studies in Central and Eastern Europe can be traced back to the late 1980s. Zimmermann distinguishes three broad stages in the institutionalization of this field for Central and Eastern European and former Soviet Union space. The first one, starting in the late 1980s until mid-1990s is the period of endeavors and activities to introduce women’s studies/ gender studies in these regions, mostly within non-governmental organizations and informal settings, some supported by international actors (such as the United Nations and the World Bank). In this period no significant institutional changes occur, and training courses as well as research only take place outside the officially recognized framework of higher education.³⁷

The next phase, roughly from 1995 to 2000, is considered by Zimmermann the “time of the Americans,” when funds were mostly coming from North American and Anglo-Saxon international organizations (such as the MacArthur Foundation and the Open Society Institute) and the first substantial steps were being taken towards the institutionalization of women’s and gender studies within (mostly)

și Colegiul Noua Europă, București, 2003, pp. 231-236.

34 See, for example, E Bahovec, N Vodopivec & T Salecl, ‘Chapter 6: SLOVENIA’ in G Griffin (ed.), *Women’s Employment, Women’s Studies, and Equal Opportunities 1945-2001*, The University of Hull, Hull, 2002, pp. 313-321; A Pető, ‘Introduction’ in Andrea Pető (ed.), *Teaching Gender Studies in Hungary*, Ministry of Youth, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, Budapest, 2006, pp. 8-9. This explanation using the “communist heritage” was also mentioned by Ionela Băluță, an academic who teaches gender related courses at the Faculty of Political Sciences, University of Bucharest, and who is the coordinator of the recently authorized Master program on Politics of Equal Opportunities. However, Băluță indicated the clichéd character of this too easily accepted justification for the resistance to feminism or to affirmative policies for women (personal interview with Ionela Băluță, February 11, 2011).

35 See Miroiu, 2001, pp. 117-118.

36 See Zimmermann, 2007-2008, pp. 140-141.

37 Zimmermann, 2007-2008, pp. 133-135.

private higher education institutions. This is the result of the “internationalized and privately funded parallel sector or shadow network of higher education,”³⁸ which led to full scale gender studies courses and (especially graduate) programs and outreach activities. It is especially during this phase and within these processes that Zimmermann identifies the constitution of the category of gender and of gender studies as one of the “symbolic markers” of the much broader agenda of “westernization” and “liberal globalization.”³⁹ The same mechanisms are identified by Gabriele Griffin, in a range of geo-political contexts, who points out the close correlation of “gender-conscious transformation of society” with efforts targeting democratization and free market economy, supported by such international organizations as the United Nations and the World Bank.⁴⁰

The third phase of the institutionalization of women’s and gender studies started in 2000 and is ongoing. For Central and Eastern Europe this phase shifted from an (mostly) American influence to an European Union influence, under the requirements put forward by the Bologna Declaration (1999) and the subsequent communiqués.⁴¹ The “Bologna process” sought to enforce standardization of higher education systems in the EU countries and in the “accession zone,” targeting institutional reform on several levels and with several goals: academic degrees easily recognizable throughout the educational structures that adhered to the Bologna process; a system of two cycles of study comprising three phases (Bachelor, Masters, and Doctoral); transferable credits that would allow for a high mobility of students, instructors and researchers, inter-university cooperation, and an “European dimension” in higher education. Although individual countries are not legally compelled to implement the various policies advanced by the “Bologna process,” the hegemonic character of this framework makes it difficult if not impossible for local and national actors to survive and work outside it. Combined with these reforms designed for higher education, requirements put forward by the European Union, through the *acquis communautaire*, established the major focus areas that the acceding countries had to fulfill. Within these conditions, equality of opportunities, gender mainstreaming and teaching and research in these areas became important signposts for the democratization of Central and Eastern countries wishing to join the European Union. It thus opened the way for a different path to the institutionalization of women’s and gender studies, this time mostly in public higher education institutions and with European Union sanction and funding.⁴²

Considering the general dynamics and timing of the institutionalization of women’s and gender studies in Central and Eastern Europe, gender studies issues penetrated Romanian higher education in somewhat different ways and at a rather early stage. First, there were gender components in some courses at undergraduate and graduate levels in the social sciences and humanities in several

38 Zimmermann, 2007-2008, pp. 135.

39 Zimmermann, 2007-2008, 141.

40 Griffin, 2001

41 See <http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/education_training_youth/lifelong_learning/c11088_en.htm>. Retrieved 20 February 2012.

42 Zimmermann (2007-2008), pp. 148-156.

universities in Romania in the early and mid-1990s. For example, at the Faculty of Sociology, at the Faculty of Philosophy, at the Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literatures, and at the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication Studies from the University of Bucharest, courses with a focus on gender and feminism started to be taught during 1993-1995.⁴³ Moreover, a graduate Master's program in gender studies was established and started to function in 1998, at the National School of Political Studies and Public Administration (NSPSPA) in Bucharest, as the first program in gender studies granting an officially recognized diploma by an educational system from Central and Eastern Europe.⁴⁴

Second, the gender studies courses, modules and graduate programs were introduced from the start within public higher education institutions. In several university centers from Romania, such as Bucharest, Cluj, and Timișoara, optional as well as mandatory undergraduate and graduate courses in gender studies were offered by public higher education institutions. This is the case of the Master's program in Gender Studies from the National School of Political Studies and Public Administration, created in 1998. Another example is the Interdisciplinary Group for Gender Studies, established in 2000 at the Institute for Cultural Anthropology from Babeș-Bolyai University in Cluj, which taught a two-year gender studies module for undergraduate students enrolled in different specializations and offered a graduation certificate.⁴⁵ In 2003 two more Master's programs with the main focus on gender studies were created: the Master's program on Gender, Differences and Inequalities at Babeș-Bolyai University in Cluj⁴⁶ and the Master's program on Socio-Cultural Gender: Interdisciplinary Approaches at the West University in Timișoara,⁴⁷ both universities being public higher education institutions and granting officially recognized graduate degrees.⁴⁸

Third, some of these courses and one of the graduate programs in gender studies were taught, at least during the initial years, without any or significant external funding. The first gender and/ or feminism-related courses introduced at the University of Bucharest in the early and mid-1990s were not supported by either American, or western European organizations and foundations. The same is true for the establishment of the Master's program in Gender Studies from Bucharest, which – as Mihaela Miroiu, its founder, explained – was supported exclusively through state budget funds.⁴⁹ It is true that the academics teaching these courses were acquainted to gender and feminist concepts and approaches and used “western” bibliography, but this influence could be conceived as more oblique than funding and curriculum development models. In contrast, the Master's programs from Cluj and Timișoara benefitted from external funding, especially American

43 Mihaela Miroiu & Laura Grünberg, Chair head Daniela Roventă-Frumușani (personal interviews, July 2006).

44 See Miroiu, 2001, pp. 124-125; Văcărescu, 2006; Frunză, 2008.

45 See Frunză, 2008.

46 The initiator and coordinator of this graduate program was Enikő Magyar-Vincze.

47 The founder and coordinator of the Master's program was Reghina Dască.

48 See Văcărescu, 2006; Frunză, 2008.

49 Mihaela Miroiu (personal interview, July 2006).

and British, through the Open Society Foundation (Cluj and Timișoara) and the University of Sussex and the University of Nijmegen (Cluj).⁵⁰

Although there are several variations in the institutional mechanisms, financial support and individual and networking strategies involved in the processes of inclusion of gender studies in higher education in the three university centers discussed succinctly above, briefly mentioning some underlying factors and transformations could shed new light on the dynamics of the inclusion of gender studies in higher education in Romania.

First, gender studies could become part of the officially recognized curricula due to a relative opening and flexibility of the Romanian higher education system, which, as shown above, included the principle of “university autonomy” in the national legislative framework and strove to implement, to a certain degree, higher education reform. For example, during the late 1990s, when the first Master’s program in gender studies was established, the Ministry of Education was going through a “very reformist”⁵¹ period, which made possible the introduction of new subject areas.

Second, flexibility of the education system alone does not entirely justify the introduction of new fields of teaching and research. Thus, the interpersonal relationships, the high academic standing and the management positions of those promoting either gender components in courses at the undergraduate level, or gender studies graduate programs had a fundamental impact in the fairly rapid and (to some extent and in some institutions) successful acceptance of this field as a legitimate scholarly enterprise. This “personalization” of the field could be read positively, as an opportunity to include gender studies in public higher education, and adversely, as an “immature field” which substitutes deficiency of academic legitimacy and “epistemic necessity” with a strong personal scholarly and/ or management authority.⁵² Therefore, the courses and programs run the risk of being dismantled as soon as their promoters, for one reason or another, cannot or would not continue being involved in them. This factor may have contributed to the discontinuation of the graduate programs in gender studies at the West University in Timișoara in 2006 and at Babeș-Bolyai University in Cluj in 2008.

Third, although external international (European and American) financial, logistical, and curriculum support differed in source, timing, and extent, in one form or another, sooner or later, it contributed to the professionalization of the teaching staff, to the endowment of the programs and of the research and outreach centers set up to function along and support the gender studies graduate programs,⁵³ and to the foci of the gender studies programs themselves. Thus, all

⁵⁰ Frunză, 2008.

⁵¹ Mihaela Miroiu (personal interview, July 2006).

⁵² Mihaela Miroiu quoted in Văcărescu, 2008.

⁵³ For example, the Society for Feminist Analyses AnA and the Center for Gender Studies and Curriculum Development: FILIA had, at different stages, an important input in the development of the Master’s program in Bucharest. While AnA had not benefited, during the early and mid-1990s, from permanent external financial assistance, both Ana and FILIA ran

three Master's programs restructured their curricula and general conceptual and practical orientations after the first years of their existence. This was, of course, due to various institutional and political factors and strategies, as well as to the perceived social and political structural and legislative transformations. For example, from a general curriculum that provided the first cohorts of students with diverse conceptual and methodological approaches to gender studies and feminism, the Master's program in Bucharest shifted its emphasis to a narrower approach focused on gender in/ and public policy, a change that was observable in both curriculum and name of the program – in 2001 it became Gender Studies and Public Policy, in 2005 Gender Studies and European Politics⁵⁴ and it currently functions as Politics, Gender and Minorities.⁵⁵ These transformations in the conceptualization of gender studies teaching and research constitute markers of the process of “european-unionization” and “marketization” of higher education in general, and of this field in particular.⁵⁶ Thus, it is essential to understand these dynamics of institutional change and international financial and political interests as undoubtedly influencing local options and opportunities, but not always uniformly and unidirectionally informing the form and content of the teaching and research practices undertaken locally.

The Discipline that Has No Room? Uneven Inclusion of Gender Studies at the University of Bucharest

As shown in the previous sections, to get a more complex and accurate picture of the inclusion of gender studies in higher education in Central and Eastern Europe and in Romania, one should look both at the local and national institutional mechanisms, priorities and transformations, and at the larger global and transnational politics and interests. In this section I present a concise overview of the inclusion of gender studies at undergraduate and graduate levels at the University of Bucharest. I investigate departmental and university practices, transnational higher education structures and politics, and personal investments and interests that shape the current configuration of gender studies at the University of Bucharest. I use data from faculties' curricula, inter-university and inter-departmental partnerships and curriculum development projects, as well as information, assessments, and perspectives provided in the semi-structured interviews I conducted with members of the university management, departmental leadership, and academics teaching in some of the departments that include gender studies courses in their curricula.

In several studies and European research reports, the institutionalization of women's and gender studies is circumscribed to six basic phases: the activist phase, the establishment phase, the integration phase, the professionalization phase, the

programs supported by international organizations during late 1990s and the 2000s. On the other hand, the Center for Gender Studies at Babeş-Bolyai University in Cluj and the Interdisciplinary Center for Gender Studies at the West University in Timișoara had been set up in the early 2000s with western European and US financial support.

54 Văcărescu, 2006; Frunză, 2008.

55 For the Master's program's mission, goal, courses, and teaching staff, see <<http://www.politice.ro/programa/politici-gen-si-minoritati>>. Retrieved 2 August 2012.

56 See Văcărescu, 2006; Frunză, 2008; Zimmermann, 2007-2008.

disciplinization phase, and the autonomy phase.⁵⁷ Of course, these phases do not necessarily have to occur successively and each phase's degree of completion may differ according to various country and institutional specificities. Moreover, as different research reports show, no European country has achieved full institutionalization of women's studies/ gender studies according to this model.⁵⁸ The main indicators established for estimating women's studies/ gender studies level of institutionalization include: the number of chairs/ professors and lectureships; the presence of autonomous women's studies/ gender studies centers or departments; the academic standing of the teaching and research staff involved; the number and variety of degree awarding undergraduate and graduate programs; the number of disciplines involved in women's studies/ gender studies; the amount and kind of financial support; the research capacity; the recognition of the discipline by the higher education decision-making bodies.⁵⁹

Although this model, with its accompanying institutionalization indicators, may, to some extent, be useful in evaluating and comparing diverse institutional mechanisms and practices, I believe that setting a rigid teleological pattern and using it indiscriminately may, at best, fail to acknowledge various countries' idiosyncrasies with respect to educational, financial and political factors and priorities, as well as personal commitments and pursuits at play in the process of including gender studies in higher education curricula. At worst, it may run the risk of imposing a set of external and thus irrelevant and unusable standards that neither have an explanatory power for the processes taking place in individual local educational settings, nor allow for different and meaningful transformations.

Consequently, I use a more flexible notion of institutionalization, that does not necessarily follow the "European" model mentioned above, but which could more adequately account for the specific processes that took place in higher education institutions and research centers in Romania. Given, on the one hand, the particular understandings of the teaching and research staff involved in gender studies in Romania of the "dilemma" of separation versus integration (or autonomy versus integration⁶⁰) of the field, and, on the other hand, the specificities of the introduction of gender studies courses and the establishment of gender studies graduate programs in Romanian public higher education, I consider the use of the

57 Griffin explains the six phases as follows: "The activist phase: individual optional modules begin to appear within traditional disciplines though most Women's Studies-related work is carried out outside the academy; The establishment phase: generic and thematic Women's Studies modules are introduced; interdisciplinary co-teaching units are established; The integration phase: Women's Studies modules become part of the core compulsory provision of traditional disciplines; The professionalization phase: Women's Studies degree programmes are introduced and Women's Studies staff including professors are appointed; The disciplinization phase: department-like centres for teaching, research and documentation are established; The autonomy phase: Women's Studies functions like any other discipline with the same accreditation, funding, and degree-awarding rights" (G Griffin, 'The Institutionalization of Women's Studies in Europe' in Griffin, G, (ed.), *Doing Women's Studies. Employment Opportunities, Personal Impacts and Social Consequences*, Zed Books, London & New York, 2005, pp. 89-90.

58 For example the research project 'Employment and Women's Studies: The Impact of Women's Studies Training on Women's Employment in Europe', undertaken between 2001 and 2003 and financed by the Directorate General XII of the European Union. Part of the findings was published in the volume edited by Griffin, 2005.

59 Griffin, 2005, pp. 90-91.

60 See G. Bock, 'Challenging Dichotomies: Perspectives on Women's History' in K. Offen, R. Roach Pierson & J. Rendall (eds.), *Writing Women's History. International Perspectives*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1991), pp. 1-23

notion of inclusion more suitable than institutionalization. In this context, inclusion should be understood as a dynamic and flexible process, which incorporates both positive and negative aspects. It includes creative institutional and personal strategies for promoting gender studies in higher education curricula, as well as academic disregard and institutional indifference and even obstructions. As revealed by the research undertaken, the inclusion of gender studies in various faculties' curricula at the University of Bucharest and the academics' approaches to gender inclusive curriculum is a composite process that entail both advancements and setbacks.

As already mentioned in the previous section, gender and feminism related courses started to be taught at several faculties from the University of Bucharest before the mid-1990s. Such courses were mostly offered as elective and included introduction to gender issues in sociology and social work (at the Faculty of Sociology and Social Work), feminist philosophy (at the Faculty of Philosophy), feminist literary criticism (at the Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literatures), gender and media (at the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication Studies).⁶¹ The introduction of such courses in public higher education curricula was the result of a combination of factors that included the academics' interest and commitment to the newly "discovered" field, their perception of it as a "niche" that was worth exploring, and the fairly open departmental curricula, which were going, during the 1990s, through the first process of transformation after the regime change. The institutional mechanisms, understood as active involvement through political, financial or technical support, did not contribute to the inclusion of gender studies courses other than ensuring curriculum autonomy to the departments and chairs and thus not deterring initiatives of curriculum innovation.

During the 2000s, other departments from the University of Bucharest included women and gender related courses, for example a course on the construction of gender taught within the French track at the Faculty of Political Sciences, one on women's history in the 19th century at the Faculty of History, and one on gender in advertising at the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication Studies. All the courses mentioned above were taught at undergraduate level. Currently, courses with a main focus on gender and/ or women, at undergraduate and graduate levels, continue to be taught at the same faculties and generally by the same academics.

For instance, at Bachelor's level, at the Faculty of History, Alin Ciupală's course, titled *Woman's Place in the Public and Private Spheres in 19th Century Romanian Society*, was taught from 2000 to 2006, but discontinued due to budgetary cutbacks. A new course, *Body and Sexuality in 19th Century* is now offered by the same academic. Alin Ciupală also currently teaches the course *Gender Discourses in Arts* for the Master's program on the History of Art and the Philosophy of Culture, at the same faculty.⁶² At the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication Studies a course on gender in communication and advertising has been taught starting in 2002

61 Mihaela Miroiu, Laura Grünberg, Chair head Daniela Roventă-Frumușani (personal interviews, July 2006); Oana Băluță and Romina Surugiu (personal interviews, February 2011).

62 Chair head Alin Ciupală (personal interview, February 2011).

and it is still offered by the author of this article. At the Faculty of Political Sciences, Ionela Băluță introduced the first course on gender in the faculty's curriculum in 2000, she later reconfigured it into two separate courses that are currently offered, one on women and politics and the other on feminism and political ideologies. She also teaches a course on equal opportunities policies in the European Union offered in the Master's program on European and Romanian Politics.⁶³

Also at the Faculty of Political Sciences, but in cooperation with three other faculties from the University of Bucharest, a graduate program on Equal Opportunities Policies in the European Union and in Romania has been accepted by the University Senate last academic year and started operating in October 2011.⁶⁴ As Ionela Băluță, the initiator of the Masters' program, explained, there are three main axes included in the program: gender, ethnicity and poverty.⁶⁵ This is the first program with a fundamental gender component established at the University of Bucharest and I will discuss below some of the institutional mechanisms, academic strategies and personal contributions involved in its design.

Another significant example for the inclusion of gender studies in the curriculum is provided by the Faculty of Sociology and Social Work, where the Master's program Research in Sociology (taught in English) offers, starting last academic year, a course on Gender Studies. Laura Grünberg, the academic who teaches this course, considers that the new management of the faculty, and especially the Head of the Sociology Department (at the time), Lazăr Vlăsceanu, is very open to curriculum change and he especially promotes gender studies. She also observed an increase in students' interest in the topic, correspondingly reflected in the raising number of Bachelor's theses with a main focus on gender during the last years.⁶⁶ Moreover, she pointed out that a new online academic journal, initiated and coordinated by Cosima Rughiniș, an academic from the Faculty of Sociology and Social Work, recently had a special issue on "Women and Men."⁶⁷ All these endeavors, some promoted by academics not necessarily specializing in gender studies, constitute signs of an increased awareness of the significance of gender studies in higher education teaching and research and can be read as positive undertakings for integrating gender studies in academic curricula.

However, there are several disciplines and/ or specializations in the social sciences and humanities where gender-related components and courses are not included in the faculties' curricula or their inclusion is minimal. Such is the case

63 Chair head Ionela Băluță (personal interview, February 2011). See also the Master's curriculum on <<http://www.fspub.unibuc.ro/fspub/programe-de-studii/master/politica-european-i-romneasc>>. Retrieved 2 February 2011.

64 Beside the university's approval of content, format, partners, etc., any program of study has to go through a process of accreditation by an autonomous public institution, the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (see <<http://www.aracis.ro/nc/en/about-aracis/>>. Retrieved 2 February 2011.

65 Chair head Ionela Băluță (personal interview, February 2011)

66 Laura Grünberg (personal conversation, February 2011).

67 See *Journal of Comparative Research in Anthropology and Sociology*, [online journal]. Retrieved 2 August 2012 from <<http://compaso.eu/archive/vol1iss/>>.

for psychology and education studies,⁶⁸ philosophy, law. Moreover, even within the disciplines/ specializations where gender-related concerns and gender studies are included, they are not part of the core curriculum, but they occupy a rather marginal position. Their inclusion in the curriculum is closely related to the few academics whose research interests are in gender studies and who teach them. Several reasons have been offered for this marginal and contested position of gender studies in higher education in Romania.

From the interviews conducted with members of university management and faculty management, as well as teaching staff involved in one way or another in gender studies, I could identify three broad categories of perceived obstacles or difficulties the field faces in the process of inclusion in higher education curriculum. There is first the broad socio-cultural and political context that produces a resistance to gender related issues and concerns which translates into a negative perception of gender studies in the academic environment. Alin Ciupală, for instance, articulated this within the backwardness paradigm, considering Romanian society to be a “traditionalist society”, attached, to a large extent, to “certain values particular to a traditionalist society which understands values specific to a western cultural and mental space with reservedness and even with difficulty.”⁶⁹ The same negative perception, this time justified by most academics’ lack of knowledge in the field, is discussed by Ionela Băluță. She identified both the larger social and cultural representations and the specific educational and scientific patterns, chiefly manifest in “generation” differences, as a factor contributing to an overall dismissal of gender studies in the academic environment:

There still is a negative perception or, at best, a total ignorance of gender studies as a scientific field. [...] there is no knowledge, especially for the generations educated before 1990, there is no knowledge of the scientific field, at least at a basic level, like we know – each specializing in sociology, psychology etc. –, we have basic knowledge in several other disciplines. [...] It has to do with the horizon of the social representations we live in, and someone who is not interested in the scientific field of gender studies, someone who doesn’t have an education in the field is, from this point of view of the representations related to feminism, to gender, just as ingenuous – I’m sorry to say it – as any ordinary person. And this person could be an excellent philosopher, an excellent philologist; if he is cognitively gender blind, I think he reproduces just as naively common representations as my neighbor.⁷⁰

A second obstacle in the inclusion of gender studies in higher education curriculum in general and at the University of Bucharest in particular is located in the disciplinary area, ranging from issues related to academic legitimacy, external contestations, different conceptualizations of gender studies by academics working in the field, disciplinary boundaries. For instance, Silvia Marton considers that the most challenging difficulty is the establishment of gender studies as a legitimate

68 Lavinia Bărlogeanu (personal interview, February 2011).

69 Chair head Alin Ciupală (personal interview, February 2011).

70 Chair head Ionela Băluță (personal interview, February 2011).

academic and intellectual pursuit, which has not reached the status enjoyed by other new fields, such as communication studies or the history of political ideas. She also situates the intellectual debates over the scientific standing of gender studies in Romania in comparison to “western” models: “The most interesting obstacle, as well as the most problematic, is an intellectual one: gender studies still struggle – all the more in Romania – to find that uncriticizable place as an intellectual pursuit. The Romanian intellectual debate is probably similar to what was going on in the 1970s and 1980s in the USA.”⁷¹ Similar concerns were voiced by Alin Ciupală, again referring to the “western” model that, in his view, could be used to learn from: “I believe that this situation shows the immaturity of gender studies in Romania, because we only repeat some of the errors that were made by those who first organized gender studies in the western space. Instead of learning from the rich and long experience of the western academic environment, all we do is echo a beginning that will hold us back”.⁷²

The examination of disciplinary “boundaries,” the various conceptualizations and definitions of both the field under consideration and the appropriate role of higher education with respect to its critical potential, including the “activist” dimension of women’s studies, feminism and gender studies have been extensively analyzed and discussed in the literature. These aspects are also read by some of the academics teaching gender studies at the University of Bucharest as acute factors that contributed to the marginal position of the field and could influence its future configuration. For instance, Silvia Marton believes that “the confusion” between gender studies and feminism constitutes one of the most important challenges to the establishment of the field: “Feminism is militantism, it’s political action [...] It is a sphere of activity that can become itself object of study in the university, but it’s not the university’s preoccupation. However, gender studies are an intellectual interrogation as any other, looking at citizenship in the 19th century, at women in... as any other scholarly field. So this confusion is of no help to gender studies.”⁷³ On the same line of argumentation, Ionela Băluță identifies one of the reasons for the reluctance of the academic environment to this field in the conditions gender studies and feminism were introduced in higher education. She believes that the conflation of scholarly enterprises with activist approaches produced a general dismissal of gender studies as not sufficiently “scientific” and too closely associated with militantism:

It has to do with the way gender studies entered in Romania, in the academic environment. [...] And the fact that gender studies penetrated the academic environment at the same time and somehow in a sort of symbiosis with the establishment of feminism, of the feminist movement, strengthened – I think – especially in the academic sphere, the conviction that one cannot study this issue

71 Vice-dean Silvia Marton (personal interview, February 2011).

72 Chair head Alin Ciupală (personal interview, February 2011).

73 Vice-dean Silvia Marton (personal interview, February 2011). All opinions and judgments expressed in interviews quotations belong exclusively to the interviewees and some of them might constitute points of view that I neither endorse, nor support.

without being that sort of militant feminist. Without people bothering to learn what academic feminism means and to look at the diversity of contemporary feminist movements, for there is a very broad spectrum – radical feminism, moderate feminism, multicultural feminism, etc. [...] And then, the fact that these academic studies have been, from the start – I repeat –, connected to the feminist movement leads to a rejection based on the motivation “this is not science, this is militantism.”⁷⁴

Also related to disciplinary issues, one other impediment for the wider and more substantial inclusion on gender studies in higher education curriculum was identified – by virtually all the academics interviewed – in the lack of a solid conceptual and methodological apparatus in gender studies research produced in Romania and in the scarcity of the teaching staff specializing in the field.⁷⁵ As Oana Băluță put it, “[i]n order to introduce a gender perspective, one needs to produce specialists, to draw experts in the institution. One needs maybe more time than the University of Bucharest had during the period after 1990, although it’s been 20 years – and to me that seems enough.”⁷⁶

Another set of obstacles, located at the intersection of disciplinary practices and individual academics’ priorities and concerns, was detectable in the interviews conducted. The mono-disciplinary approach and the rigidity of some academics in decision-making positions within faculties to change the curriculum were considered by pro-rector Maria Voinea as contributing to the slow inclusion of gender studies: “Since the number of hours and courses cannot exceed an established amount, each academic teaching a particular discipline tries to include his subjects, those that for years, for dozens of years, for entire generations, were part of the students’ education in that particular field. Thus, newer disciplines or orientations are avoided.”⁷⁷ A different but related justification was provided by Dean Mihai Coman, who characterized Romanian educational system as “aged” and who identified the symptoms in the unwillingness of many high standing academics, and thus of their disciplines, to open up to new perspectives, to include new directions of scholarly inquiries.⁷⁸

A third area of difficulties, but in close connection with the above discussed ones, consists in the institutional mechanisms that could function as both obstacles and (indirect) support. For instance, the lack of legitimacy of the field translates into the absence of gender studies as a recognized discipline or even specialization in the Ministry of Education’s nomenclature,⁷⁹ which circularly leads to disciplinary and institutional obstacles in the inclusion of gender studies courses in curricula, specializing staff in disciplines, and accrediting study programs with a main component on gender at different educational levels. On the other hand, the higher education system, which, as already shown, stipulates, as one of its fundamental

74 Chair head Ionela Băluță (personal interview, February 2011).

75 Chair head Alin Ciupală, Chair head Ionela Băluță (personal interviews, February 2011).

76 Oana Băluță (personal interview, February 2011).

77 Pro-rector Maria Voinea (personal interview, January 2011).

78 Dean Mihai Coman (personal interview, February 2011).

79 Chair head Ionela Băluță, Vice-dean Silvia Marton (personal interviews, February 2011).

principles, university autonomy and academic freedom, allows for the inclusion of gender studies in various curricula, though only as marginal subjects.

Yet, several academics I interviewed explained that there was a noticeable opening, during the last decade, of the academic environment and that various disciplines and courses include gender as one of the categories of analysis.⁸⁰ This (partial and unevenly distributed across disciplines) inclusion was also visible in the curriculum research undertaken, which shows that so-called “general” courses in various disciplines and specializations include at least a few topics on gender and/ or women and/ or feminism. For example, courses and seminars on social structures of communication, political studies, semiotics etc. taught at the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication Studies;⁸¹ courses on the history of poverty, citizenship and social inclusion/ exclusion, theories of justice, taught at the Faculty of Political Sciences.⁸² The inclusion of gender issues in such courses was justified, in the view of the academics interviewed, by the particularities of the disciplines, both conceptual and strategic. Conceptually, in such disciplines as political sciences, sociology, anthropology, education sciences, media studies, history, law, the gender component is essential and failing to include it amounts to partial and inaccurate knowledge production.⁸³ Strategically, faculties that include gender studies in their curricula are considered open and up to date with current international (read “western”) academic trends and scholarly interests, thus rendering such courses and programs financeable within European Union transnational educational projects. Moreover, some academics mentioned the raising students’ interest in the field, at least during the last five years, and the fact that, though some ambiguous reactions to gender and feminism were mentioned, the topic is starting to be seen as “cool” by students, as one academic put it, however, not least because it is an issue perceived as “very contemporary, very present in Europe, in the world. They are very sensitive to this.”⁸⁴

Students’ interest in gender-related topics was indicated by all academics I spoke to. Although the faculties I concentrated my study on do not have a database of theses’ titles and the theses are not accessible for examination, the interviewees explained that there are many theses, at all levels of study, that have as a main focus gender, women and feminist inquiries.⁸⁵ Moreover, during the last five years at least, an increased prior awareness of gender and a rising recognition of it as a relevant category of investigation were detectable in the student body.⁸⁶

80 Chair head Ionela Băluță, Vice-dean Silvia Marton, Pro-rector Maria Voinea, Dean Mihai Coman (personal interviews, January-February 2011).

81 Romina Surugiu, Zoltán Rostás, Oana Băluță, Dean Mihai Coman, (personal interviews, January-February 2011).

82 Vice-dean Silvia Marton (personal interview, February 2011).

83 Pro-rector Maria Voinea, Dean Mihai Coman, Chair head Ionela Băluță, Vice-dean Silvia Marton, Oana Băluță, Lavinia Bârlogeanu (personal interviews, January-February 2011).

84 Vice-dean Silvia Marton (personal interview, February 2011).

85 Dean Mihai Coman, Chair head Ionela Băluță, Vice-dean Silvia Marton, Romina Surugiu, Chair head Alin Ciupală (personal interviews, February 2011).

86 Chair head Ionela Băluță (personal interviews, February 2011). The same increase in students’ prior awareness during the last years compared to ten years ago is supported by my own experience with students when teaching gender either included in semiotics, for instance, or as a separate course on gender in media and advertising.

Thus, considering the institutional mechanisms, financing priorities, disciplinary obstacles, and personal strategies at play in the process of inclusion of gender in higher education curriculum, the fact that most academics involved in the field considered that gender should be both taught within a separate program of study and included in various disciplines and curricula is justified.⁸⁷ However, there are differences in the academics' understandings of the way this "double" inclusion should/ might work, as well as slightly divergent explanations for the necessity of using both strategies. For example, Ionela Băluță acknowledges the positive impact that a separate program might have on the legitimacy of the field, but considers that, before establishing one, it is necessary to start by introducing gender components in courses at all levels of education, testing the reception of the issues, and preparing a specialized teaching staff:

From personal experience, I started by introducing [gender studies] at the Bachelor's level, so I offered elective courses. And to me this is the easiest way, given the fact that we neither have many specialists, nor is it a very developed, very autonomous academic field and it does not enjoy enough scientific legitimacy. [...] So I think it is useful to begin with such subjects, to see students' receptivity, then to start talking to colleagues and to make them sensitive to these topics – at least this is how I succeeded. But it is obvious that in order to have visibility and to have an impact, the creation of such programs – maybe not necessarily on gender studies, but with an important concentration in gender studies [...] – I think it amounts to a phase when [gender studies] consolidate as a discipline.⁸⁸

Silvia Marton considers gender studies "an autonomous discipline, a trans-disciplinary discipline, with a trans-disciplinary approach." At the same time, she indicates that in her view, gender studies should not function as a separate field, but should rather be integrated in all disciplines. Nevertheless, within the particular context of Romanian higher education, and for purposes of raising visibility and establishing academic legitimacy, a separate program would be beneficial, although only for a limited period:

It would really be best [for gender studies] not to be a separate field of study, but to be already integrated in what is being taught. But if we are not there yet, then it is beneficial to have a separate program. And I believe that in the Romanian case, at the University of Bucharest, such a separate program is *still* – temporally speaking – needed. We [at the Faculty of Political Sciences] include gender, ethnic discriminations, so a broader approach, in several courses – this is very good. But for now – I will not use the word stage – a separate program is also needed, in order to make it more visible, to establish it as an intellectually pertinent object of study. But also because it is still an acute social matter, so it is not only an academic issue. And then this visibility, its delimitation as an autonomous program within a university, faculty, are still necessary.⁸⁹

87 Chair head Ionela Băluță, Vice-dean Silvia Marton, Oana Băluță, Romina Surugiu, Chair head Alin Ciupală (personal interviews, February 2011).

88 Chair head Ionela Băluță (personal interview, February 2011)

89 Vice-dean Silvia Marton (personal interview, February 2011).

The new Master's program on Equal Opportunities Policies in Romania and in the European Union, offered starting the academic year 2011–2012 at the University of Bucharest, is an interesting example that combines in its conceptual, structural, institutional, and personal establishment story several mechanisms and strategies discussed in this paper. First, it is mostly a personal endeavor, originating in the individual scholarly and political interests of the academic who promoted it. Ionela Băluță had already been teaching several courses on gender at the Bachelor's and Master's levels for a decade when she presented to the faculty council the project for the graduate program which, moreover, was going to be part of an international academic cooperation. Yet, as long as Băluță was not supported by the faculty management, the program she proposed did not receive the approval of the board and was thus abandoned. One year later, within a few months, the entire faculty management changed and she received immediate acceptance to start working on the project for the graduate program. She also became chair head, which undoubtedly helped. However, Băluță reads this acceptance not necessarily related to the specific subjects included in the program, but rather within a general opening of the new management to institutional development.

Second, new academic programs are considered institutionally attractive and worth supporting if they comply with a set of norms and values imposed by the transformation of the educational system in accordance with the Bologna process. These programs' conceptual configuration is therefore influenced by transnational political interests. As discussed in the previous sections, such topics as gender, ethnicity, equal opportunities, human rights constitute benchmarks of democratization and are thus institutionally supported, in spite of a general skeptical perception of their scientific standing in the Romanian academic environment. This may be seen as both beneficial for the inclusion of gender studies, since it can be strategically used by academics working in the field as an entry mechanism, and negatively, as an artificial import that could add to the unwillingness of the general academic environment to accept gender studies as a legitimate field of teaching and research.

Third, and in connection with the previous point, structural and financial mechanisms, also influenced by transnational dynamics, shape the practical design of academic programs. For instance, in order for the Master's program on Equal Opportunities Policies in Romania and in the European Union to be considered sustainable and thus to be accepted, it had to be designed in cooperation with several departments and preferably to include international collaboration. Consequently, the program incorporates academics from the Faculties of Political Sciences, Sociology, Psychology, Journalism and Mass Communication Studies and it is part of an international higher education group financed by the European Commission. So, in this case, not the program per se (or not only) was institutionally supported by the University of Bucharest management, but the specific format which could receive additional funding.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Gender studies, as a field of teaching and research, have been introduced in public higher education in Romania during the early and mid-1990s. Although some disciplines included gender as a category of analysis and there have been three separate graduate programs with a main focus on gender studies, the field is mostly met with skepticism by the general academic environment and it is perceived to lack scientific legitimacy. This is also visible in the uneven inclusion of gender in various disciplines, the marginalization of the field throughout higher education curricula, and the “personalization” of gender studies courses and programs. However, during the last decade, an increase in course offerings and teaching staff specializing in gender studies might be contributing to the slow, albeit steady inclusion of gender in higher education in Romania in general and at the University of Bucharest in particular. This increase should be understood as a result of a combination of institutional mechanisms and transformations (such as the principle of university autonomy and academic freedom, and “alignment”⁹⁰ to European Union educational systems), transnational political interests (the “democratization agenda,” which includes gender as one of its components), but also local concerns and personal investments and strategies. Although these various mechanisms and interests may produce tensions, the academics and researchers who do gender studies could look for ways to creatively use them to respond to the perceived necessities of higher education and to critically address broader social and political issues.

In closing, I succinctly present some of the recommendations indicated by some of the academics I interviewed. It needs to be mentioned that there were divergent opinions with respect to the approaches and strategies considered appropriate, useful or feasible for the more substantial and evenly distributed across disciplines inclusion of gender in higher education.

1. At the institutional level: the introduction of gender studies in the nomenclature of officially recognized fields of study and specializations; the academic recognition for the introduction of gender-related components in various disciplines, both in the university specific individual self-evaluation forms, and in the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education’s accreditation/excellence criteria.

2. Concerning the teaching staff: more substantial and meaningful collaboration between academics doing gender studies – this should be done at two levels: (a) within the same higher education institution and between university centers and (b) across disciplinary boundaries; co-teaching courses, co-authoring research projects, discussion seminars and workshops constitute some of the means to accomplish it; discussions in formal and informal contexts with colleagues teaching and researching in various disciplines to raise awareness and create sensitivity to gender issues, including invited speakers in courses offered; drawing graduate students who already work on gender issues to teach seminars and courses.

90 Pro-rector Romiță Iucu (personal interview, February 2011).

3. At the disciplinary level: the consolidation and grounding of the field through more extensive, more theoretically solid and more critical research on gender issues in Romania; the increase visibility of both teaching and research in the academic environment through conferences, debates, etc.

ANNEX

Table 7. Faculty by academic title, age and gender in higher education in Romania, 2004-2005*

Age groups	Total/ Women (no. and %)	Total	Professor	Associate professor	Lecturer	Assistant lecturer	Teaching assistant	Consultant teaching staff	Teaching staff with research workload
<i>General</i>	<i>Total</i>	26,790	5,057	4,285	6,844	6,725	3,054	795	30
	<i>Women no.</i>	11,189	1,055	1,638	3,129	3,663	1,625	70	9
	<i>Women %</i>	41.76	20.86	38.22	45.71	54.46	53.20	8.80	30.00
	<i>Total</i>	395	-	1	6	8	380	-	-
Under 25 years	<i>Women no.</i>	210	-	0	2	6	202	-	-
	<i>Women %</i>	53.16	-	0.00	33.33	75.00	53.15	-	-
	<i>Total</i>	4,063	-	-	230	1,761	2,072	-	-
25-29	<i>Women no.</i>	2,140	-	-	119	925	1,096	-	-
	<i>Women %</i>	52.67	-	-	51.73	52.52	52.89	-	-
	<i>Total</i>	4,068	2	78	1,259	2,228	484	15	2
30-34	<i>Women no.</i>	2,116	1	36	611	1,199	268	0	1
	<i>Women %</i>	52.01	50.00	46.15	48.53	53.81	55.37	0	50.00
	<i>Total</i>	4,025	102	532	1,721	1,524	113	27	6
35-39	<i>Women no.</i>	2,137	30	253	877	918	56	1	2
	<i>Women %</i>	53.09	29.41	47.55	50.95	60.23	49.55	3.70	33.33
	<i>Total</i>	2,555	204	713	1,139	482	4	8	5
40-44	<i>Women no.</i>	1,135	56	277	546	254	2	0	0
	<i>Women %</i>	44.42	27.45	38.84	47.93	52.69	50.00	0.00	0.00

Table 7. (continued)

Total	2,713	492	851	1,057	300	1	8	4
Women no.	1,051	105	296	469	180	1	0	0
Women %	38.73	21.34	34.78	44.37	60.00	100.00	0.00	0.00
Total	2,979	968	898	875	232	-	3	3
Women no.	1,011	222	343	333	111	-	0	2
Women %	33.93	22.93	38.19	38.05	47.84	-	0.00	66.66
Total	2,387	1,199	633	404	138	-	9	4
Women no.	698	248	245	144	58	-	1	2
Women %	29.24	20.68	38.70	35.64	42.02	-	11.00	50.00
Total	1,909	1,305	434	118	43	-	8	1
Women no.	479	287	158	24	10	-	0	0
Women %	25.09	21.99	36.40	20.33	23.25	-	0.00	0.00
Total	1,696	785	145	35	9	-	717	5
Women no.	212	106	30	4	2	-	68	2
Women %	12.5	13.50	20.68	11.42	22.22	-	9.48	40.00

Note: * Data compiled and percentages calculated from information provided in the publication National Institute of Statistics, 2005, pp. 94-95.

Table 8. Faculty by academic title, age and gender in higher education in Romania, 2009-2010*

Age groups	Total/ Women (no. and %)	Total	Professor	Associate professor	Lecturer	Assistant lecturer	Teaching assistant	Consultant teaching staff
<i>General</i>	<i>Total</i>	26,757	5,082	4,867	7,149	6,739	1,825	1,095
	<i>Women no.</i>	12,232	1,437	2,167	3,583	3,821	1,072	152
<i>Total</i>	<i>Women %</i>	45.71	28.27	44.52	50.11	56.69	58.73	13.88
Under 25 years	Total	220	-	-	-	62	158	-
	Women no.	128	-	-	-	26	102	-
	Women %	58.18	-	-	-	41.93	64.55	-
25-29	Total	2,219	-	-	163	1,087	969	-
	Women no.	1,247	-	-	88	593	566	-
	Women %	56.19	-	-	53.98	54.55	58.41	-
30-34	Total	4,748	6	151	1,656	2,386	547	2
	Women no.	2,549	4	66	843	1,325	311	0
	Women %	53.68	66.66	43.70	50.90	55.53	56.85	0.00
35-39	Total	3,969	95	605	1,704	1,448	115	2
	Women no.	2,214	40	302	900	900	72	0
	Women %	55.78	42.10	49.91	52.81	62.15	62.60	0.00
40-44	Total	3,960	399	1,025	1,546	954	28	8
	Women no.	2,178	189	516	868	585	19	1
	Women %	55.00	47.36	50.34	56.14	61.32	67.85	12.50
45-49	Total	2,466	533	833	747	337	4	12
	Women no.	1,179	184	418	385	189	2	1
	Women %	47.81	34.52	50.18	51.53	56.08	50.00	8.33
50-54	Total	2,687	901	871	669	230	2	14
	Women no.	1,066	286	366	297	114	0	3
	Women %	39.67	31.74	42.02	44.39	49.56	0.00	21.42
55-59	Total	2,671	1,222	800	485	146	2	16
	Women no.	885	317	320	180	68	0	0
	Women %	33.13	25.94	40.00	37.11	46.57	0.00	0.00
60-64	Total	2,032	1,295	488	170	69	-	10
	Women no.	509	322	154	20	13	-	0
	Women %	25.04	24.86	31.55	11.76	18.84	-	0.00
65 years and over	Total	1,785	631	94	9	20	-	1,031
	Women no.	277	95	25	2	8	-	147
	Women %	15.51	15.05	26.59	22.22	40.00	-	14.25

Note: * Data compiled and percentages calculated from information provided in National Institute of Statistics, 2010, pp. 124-125

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