ARCHITECTURE AS A FEMININE PROFESSION AND THE FEMINIZATION OF THE ARCHITECT PROFESSION IN ROMANIA

Valentina MARINESCU[*]

Abstract: *Architecture in Romania appears to be in a more "feminized"position in recent years as compared with its status in Western European countries, where it can be assessed as being more "masculine". The Romanian women architects are not only less well paid but also they feel the existence of a clear-cut distinction between the material and vocational aspects related to their profession. Special analyzes devoted to the "feminization" of this occupation in Romania pointed out the fact that one could witness the beginning of a change in the direction of "feministation" of architecture as regards the values and ethics. The paper aims at presenting the main axes along which the architecture started to be feminized as a profession in Romania after 1989. There are also suggested some directions of analysis related to the situation of women in this occupation in the future and arguments for further reseaches on this topic were made.*

Keywords: *archictecture, women, feminisation of profession, motivation, gender-gap*

Introduction

At the level of the European Union the principle according to which men and women receive equal pay for equal work has been enshrined since 1957 in the trans-national treaties, this being the case with Article 157 of the European Union's Basic Treaty (Parlamentul European, 2017). In this respect, Article 157 of the European Union's Fundamental Treaty stimulates the existence of positive action in order to motivate women to participate in economic activity (in question here it is the so-called "increasing the working abilities of women"). Furthermore, Article 19 of the same Treaty allows national government to combat all forms of discrimination at work, including that which is grounded of gender (*ibidem*).

In Romania's case the European legislation regarding equal payment between women and men is harmonized with the national legislation. This is the case of the Law no. 202 / 2002 about equal opportunities for women and men (Parlamentul Romaniei, 2013), which granted the equality of payment and treatment at work between women and men.

Although the issue of "gender equality"" between women and men is no longer among the main objectives on the gender mainstreaming agenda, the experts in this domain had drawn attention at the persistence of gender-based discrimination as regards the wages (Witz, 1990: 675-690), the "glass ceiling" phenomena which exist in organizations (Lyness and Thompson, 1997: 359-375) and the "double burden" of women's work (Hochschild and Machung, 1990).

[*] University of Bucharest. E-mail: ymarinescu9@yahoo.com

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With direct reference to the architect profession, the issue at stake related to the principle of equality between women and men points both to the legal framework and to the real situation of the existing relationship between the two sexes as the statistics and documents captured them in connection to this occupation.

Public opinion about gender equality in Romania

In Romania one can notice the existence of some significant differences between women and men as regards the levels of participation in economic activities and the level wages each of them earned for the work they did. This was obvious both as regards the public opinion about the principle of gender equality and in connection to what statistical data about activities and earnings could say to us.

Thus, in the case of the phrase "Equality of rights between women and men meant for me…" 30% of the respondents of a national survey in Romania stated that this meant for them "equal rights" while for 19.5% respondents it covered the case of "the mutual understanding / mutual aid / trust" and for 7.7% of them it meant "the access at the same professions" (Fundația pentru o Societate Deschisă, 2000).

On the other hand, 4.1% of the respondents gave a negative definition to the above-mentioned question, saying that "there is no equality of rights between women and men" in Romania.

At a more specific question – "Can we speak about real gender equality in Romania?" - 50.6% of the respondents had declared that "there is no real gender equality" (*ibidem*).

Moreover, according to the same set of data, at the level of the public opinion there is a clear stereotyping of activities, women being seen as working more frequently in economic sectors such as textile industry, education, health, commerce, while men were identified with construction and transport, justice, banking sector and government (*ibidem*).

The segmentation of occupations and gender pay

The difference between Romanian women and men could also be found in the statistical data about the segmentation of occupations and gender payment in recent years in Romania.

Thus, in 2014 and 2015 in Romania only 58.5% of the working-aged women were "full time" employed as compared to 76.8% men (European Commission, 2017: 54). At the same time, the wage's difference between women and men for the same work was of 5.8%. The same official statistics showed that in the same years (2014 and 2015) the rate of total gender segregation for occupations[1] was of 23% and the rate of gender segregation for X productive sector was of 18.1% (European Commission, 2017: 57).

Data about gender differences among occupations in Romania pointed out that in 2016 men worked mainly in the construction and extractive industries, where they

[1] This index refers to the proportion of the employed population who should change their occupation / sector of activity to ensure a uniform distribution of women and men across sectors and occupations. The value of this index should vary between 0 (no segregation) to 50 (complete segregation).

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accounted for 87.3% and 83.5% of all employees (Institutul Național de Statistică, 2016). In the same year, the activities characterized by a higher rate of women's invovement were health and social work (80% of the total number of employees), education (71%), insurance services (69.9%), hotels and restaurants (60.9%) (*ibidem*). As regards the wages, in 2016, women earned in average around 7% less than men in the same positions on the labor market and they had have an average gross monthly salary of 2,453 lei (as compared to 2,646 lei per months for men) and an average monthly salary of 1,783 lei (as compared to 1,928 lei monthly for men) (*ibidem*).

Romanian architect women statistical images

In the case of the present analysis one must state that we have to specify that it is extremely difficult to identify what is the ratio of the Romanian women working as architects after 1989.

Starting from the standard classification of different occupations one can notice that "architect" as a profession is included in the " International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-88)" (Muncii și Justiției Sociale, 2017) within the Major Group 1 of Work ("Members of the Legislative Body, Executive, High Heads of Public Administration, Leaders and Senior Officials") - with a single entry, "Chief Architect" (code: 122301) (*ibidem*) and within Major Group 2 of Work ("Specialists in Different Fields of Activity") where we have a whole class of sub-categories labelled as "Architects, Designers, Topographers and Designers" (code: 216). Under the last label one can find the following distinct occupations: "architect for buildings, architect as conductor, architect for restoration, architect as consultant, architect as expert, architect as expert inspector, architect as designer, researcher in architecture, landscape architect, architect as urbanist" (*ibidem*). Neither the National Institute of Statistics nor the Ministry of Labor seems to collect and / or owned data which would allow us to picture the architect profession according to these specific sub-categories.

At the same time, it is worth mentioning that in Romania the statistics are not segmented along some significantly socio-demographic dimensions such as gender, age, occupation, level of instruction etc. In the absence of refined statistics, we can only identify the proportion of the female population within architecture field according to the general sector of activity. Thus, in 2014 from the total population employed in non-agricultural domains in Romania, only 1.6% women had worked in "construction sector" (while the percentage for males in this activity was of 16.8%) (Institutul Național de Statistică, 2015: 103) and 46.32% women were emplyed in "professional, scientific and technical activities" (Institutul Național de Statistică, 2015: 121).

Once again, from Romanian official statistics, thus, we can not know how large is the share of women in a specific occupation, such as architecture.

According to the data that were gayhered at the European level, the number of women in the category "Architecture and engineering, testing and technical analysis" had increased in Romania for the period 2013-2017, from about 7,000 to 10,000 persons. For this cathegory one could also notice the existence of two decreases in numbers for female architects, those taking

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place in 2015 and 2016, years in which the number of Romanian architect women was less than 8,000 (Eurostat, 2017).

A study made at the level of the entire European Union, however, pointed out that, in Romania, the ratio between women and men in the field of architecure was relatively balanced in 2014: 55% men vs. 45% women (Architects' Council of Europe, 2016). At two years distance, in 2016, the percentage of women architects had dramatic decrease (with over a half) to 23% women vs. 77% men (*ibidem*).

The "feminization" of architecture as profession in Romania

The phenomenon of "feminisation" for some sectors of activity is clear and directly linked to the principle of equality between women and men.

In general, the term "feminisation of occupations" refers to "the historical process through which certain occupations are considered to be typical feminine occupations due to the fact that mostly women are working within them" (Dragomir and Miroiu, 2002: 149). Studies about this subject pointed to the fact that the consequences of this feminisation for some occupations included the decrease of the prestige and of the social value associated with them and, from here, the existence of a lower status and smaller wages than in the case of activities made by men (*ibidem*).

What can we say about this phenomenon in the case of architecture as profession in Romania?

In 2016 the earnings for the Romanian architects were, in general, among the lowest in Europe, and only Latvia have had a lower level. Thus, a Romanian architect earns on average 9,822 euros per year in the private sector and 7,585 euros per year in the public one (Architects' Council of Europe, 2016). That state of affairs places him or her below the level of their counterparts even in Eastern and Southeast European countries, such as Bulgaria or Turkey. An explanation for this situation is the general situation of the Romanian economy (its general level of development) which had an impact on the level of earnings for the Romanians in general.

At the subjective / personal level, one can notice the existence of a so-called "personal dissonance"about this profession. Thus, a study from 2015 found a significant difference between the level of personal satisfaction of Romanian architects in relation to their chosen profession, with a score of 8.1 (compared to a maximum of 10), on one hand and, on the other, the level of personal satisfaction with the earnings they have, with a score of only 4.8 (Architects' Council of Europe, 2016). Greece, Slovenia and Portugal were the only European countries where the differences between these two indicators were higher than in Romania that year.

From the above-mentioned data we can assess that, at a very general level, architecture in Romania appears to be more "feminized" as compared to its status in the case of Western developed countries, where it is a more "masculine" activity. Generally speaking, Romanian architects not only are less paid but also feel the existence of a separation between the material and vocational aspects of their profession.

Some researches made on the topic of the "feminization" for the architecture as an occupation in Romania had drawn attention to the fact that we are witnessing the beginning of a new process: the interconnection between the more "masculine" ethis and new "feminine"

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values of work (Niculae, 2012: xxx-xxx). Thus, some Romanian authors had brought to light the data concerning the increase in the number of female graduates in during the last years, when more than 60% of the graduates from Faculties of Architecture had been women, and they have as specific fields of expertise especially "Interior design" and "Urbanism and landscaping" (*ibidem*). Given the fact that this "feminization" of architecture is an early-stage phenomenon, one could not assess its future scale of development and, from here, the implications of this trend for the social status of architecture as profession in Romania.

Conclusions

At the end of this paper, we can only suggest some direction of future analysis related to the situation of Romanian architect women.

A first axis is the one of answering at the question "Why there were non-linear developments in women's occupation in this field of activity?" Future research could, as such, identify the causes that have led (and may lead in the future) to the sharp decline or sudden increase in the number of women who were (or are) occupied in architecture as working domain in Romania.

The second dimension is the empirican analysis of the inter-connection between the typical "feminine" values with the more "masculine" ethos of this occupation. The research could focus on the specific type of female knowledge and women's emotions which could influence, could change and add value at the works made by Romanian architects, irrespective of their gender (Niculae, 2012: xxx-xxx).

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