

**- PAPER TITLE**

Are affirmative actions plans in favor of women in Albania a right way to decrease gender bias?

**- ABSTRACT**

The participation of Albanian women in labour market declined after the fall of communism. In 1989, the rate of female employment was 77.8% while in 2001 it was 49.7%. On the other hand, the fall of communism didn't affect the male employment. In 1989, the male employment rate was 77.2% while in 2001 it was 74.8% (Muça, Llagami, Bozo & al., 2004). Likewise after the fall of communism, women's politic participation is significantly reduced. During years 1974-1978, women held 35.2% of the seats while in 2004, women held 5.7% of the seats (Muca, Llambiri, Xhepa & al., 2004) and in 2006, women hold 7.1% of the seats (Albanian Parliament, 2006).

In Albania as in many European countries, the Affirmative Action Plans (AAP) are considered as a solution to women discrimination. «*Affirmative Action Plans aim at equilibrating the numerical representation of various social categories in a given field or their representations in decision-making positions of this field* » (Lorenzi-Cioldi, 2002, p. 218). Acceptance of AAP is affected by structural factors as type of procedure, type of justification and individual characteristic as gender or education (Kravitz & Klineberg, 2000). The AAPs can differ according to the importance given to personal characteristics on the one hand, and membership characteristics of beneficiary on the other (Lorenzi-Cioldi, 2002). Kravitz, Harrison, Turner & al., (1997) categorize AAPs as follows: *Weak preferential treatment* whereby decisions favor the more qualified applicant unless qualifications are equivalent, in which case the minority applicant is favored. *Strong preferential treatment* whereby decisions are based solely on demographic status. *Preferential treatment* (neither weak nor strong) whereby decisions are based on both merit and demographic status, with relative weighting left unspecified. On the other hand, giving a compensatory or diversity justification for an AAP can help increase acceptance of AAP (Doverspike, Taylor, & Arthur, 2000). In *compensatory justification*, the AAP is a way to compensate for past or actual discrimination against women while in *diversity justification* the AAP is a way to increase diversity and organizational effectiveness (Thomas, 1990).

The study conducted in Albania with 334 managers reveals that evaluations of AAPs are strongly related to the weighting of personal or membership characteristics. Attitudes toward AAPs can be explained by the fact that individuals think of affirmative action in terms of fairness. Procedures that give too much weight to group membership are considered less fair than procedure based on individual characteristics. Acceptance of affirmative action is also influenced by perceived justification of procedure. Providing a compensatory justification for an AAP leads to more positive evaluations

than did providing diversity justification. According to the compensatory justification, AAPs aim at making up for previous discrimination.

Attitudes toward affirmative action plans are also influenced by individuals' characteristics as gender and level of education. Women evaluated AAPs more positively than did men. This finding is consistent with individual self-interests. AAPs will help women fight sex-based discrimination and ensure their representation in power positions. The more educated are more negative toward affirmative action than the less educated. This opposition can be explained by the fact that the more educated could feel threatened by AAP.

#### **- BIOGRAPHY**

I am following my PhD in Geneva and Lausanne Universities, Switzerland under the direction of professors Fabio Lorenzi-Cioldi and Alain Clémence. My PhD thesis deals with gender, women discrimination and gender bias in Albania, their presence in decision-making process, glass ceiling and affirmative action plans in favor of Albanian women. I am interested to know the effects of affirmative action plans on women self-evaluation and on the way others value them.

I aim at submitting my first publication based in two studies conducted in Albania.

On the other hand, with Professor Gabriel Mugny and Doctor Armand Chatard we have submitted for publication two articles:

- *Students' sociopolitical attitudes as a function of their field of study and level of educational attainment: A group socialization perspective.*
- *When a communist country becomes capitalist: Implications for individualism and collectivism among three generations of Albanians.*

#### **- INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION**

Faculté de psychologie et des sciences de l'éducation (FPSE)

Bureau 6132, Genève, Suisse

Tel. +41 22 379 93 35

E-mail: [Klea.Faniko@unil.ch](mailto:Klea.Faniko@unil.ch)