

## **Why Ghanaian and Russian women study Public administration?**

The global processes of incorporating women into the labor market, including the civil service, are paying off. Today, there is a trend towards the feminization of the civil service: in Russia, more than 70% of civil servants are women, and in Ghana - more than 50%. Thus despite the high numbers of females in the civil service, gender disparities and discriminations remain a critical phenomenon in the civil service in Ghana. There is a “gender pyramid” in Russia and Ghana, when only a small proportion of women have an access to decisions-making level.

In both countries, one of the main reasons for women to join civil service is flexible work schedule, which enabled them to combine work and family and job security. Despite all the differences in socio-economic development situation in Russia and Ghana with the motivation of women to work for the government is quite similar: they joined because of the benefits they were told the civil service gives to its employees, such as job security, study leave, retirement benefits, allowances, good salary and a few indicated they joined because there was no job in the private sector. However the question arises how this women made a decision to get education applicable to continue their professional life in public sector.

This study is based on semi-structured in-depth interviews with 30 women from all over Ghana and 30 women from Russia who work in the various civil services offices in various regions of their countries.

While most of the Ghanaian young women in the service indicated that due to their background in terms of education it automatically made them a civil service worker, the Russian women made their complicated choice to work for the government after getting major in Public Administration. We came to the conclusion that, with many differences, the mechanisms of choosing the future profession of a civil servant in Russia and Ghana are quite similar: this is the ‘inheritance mechanism’ (when someone from relatives already works for the state), or the desire for a girl to get ‘female’ profession. According to the results of our research it’s hardly possible to relegate public service as a "comfortable women's job", but at the same time women do choose higher education in this field and more over desire for further training.

**Keywords:** PA education, civil service education, Russia, Ghana, women.

## **Introduction**

The global processes of incorporating women into the labor market, including the civil service, are paying off. Today, there is a trend towards the feminization of the civil service: in Russia, more than 70% of civil servants are women, and in Ghana - more than 50%. Thus despite the high numbers of females in the civil service, gender disparities and discriminations remain a critical phenomenon in the civil service in Ghana. There is a “gender pyramid” in Russia and Ghana, when only a small proportion of women have an access to decisions-making level.

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differences in socio-economic development situation in Russia and Ghana with the motivation of women to work for the government is quite similar: they joined because of the benefits they were told the civil service gives to its employees, such as job security, study leave, retirement benefits, allowances, good salary and a few indicated they joined because there was no job in the private sector. However the question arises how these women made a decision to get education applicable to continue their professional life in public sector.

While neo-liberal approach emphasizes the strengthening of the female presence in government bodies, representatives of gender approaches argue for reproduction in the power structures of patriarchal scheme of women subjugation by men, pushing them to low-status positions that involve performing routine work. Our study was based on a set of 32 semi-structured interviews with women in Russia and 30 interviews with Ghanaian women respectfully who have an experience of working in the civil service (minimum 2 years without a break). The results were guided by the qualitative analysis of the text in order to identify the main topics crucial for this group of women due to the nature of their type and level of education and personal life.

## **Legal framework**

### **RUSSIA**

There are several mechanisms in the state policy of the Russian Federation to ensure the gender equality. Equal rights are guaranteed by the Constitution of the Russian Federation which declares that “men and women shall enjoy equal rights and freedoms and have equal opportunities to exercise them”. Apart from this, according to the Constitution, international acts on women's rights, which were ratified in Russia, act as an integral part of the country's legislative system. United Nations key documents on women rights which were adopted in Russia are:

- The 1979 UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), ratified by the USSR in 1981;
- Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (1993);
- UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (1993);
- The 1995 Beijing Platform for Action;
- The 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals for the period 2015-2030, among which is the gender equality achievement and empowerment of all women and girls.

Principles of equal rights for men and women are also fixed in other documents, such as the Family Code, the Labor Code, etc. Nevertheless, we can still talk about the significant difference between what happens de jure and de-facto when it comes to women's rights in the Russian Federation.

As for the institutional structures representing the interests of women in Russia, there are very few of them left today. There are the State Duma Committee on Family Affairs, Women, and Children, the Department for Demographic Policy and Social Protection of Population under the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Russian Federation functioning. However, the basis of the activities of these institutions lays primarily around the family and children. Even reports on the activities of the institutions, published on their official websites, confirm a shifted focus on children, motherhood and family. Obviously, the interests of women at the federal level cannot be reduced only to the role of mother and wife.

One of the most obvious problems in the legislative system is the absence in the Russian legislation of an official definition of the concept of "discrimination against women". The United Nations Committee has repeatedly pointed out this shortcoming, calling for liquidation of the discrepancy with international norms.<sup>1</sup> The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women defines discrimination against women as "...any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field."<sup>2</sup> Because of the lack of an official definition of discrimination against women in Russian legislation, many law enforcement officials and agencies experience lack of knowledge about the problem, which negatively impacts on ensuring gender equality in practice. It is important to consider the fact that there are no laws on gender equality the same as the very definition of "gender equality" in the national legislative system when speaking about gender equality in Russia.

In 2003, women's non-governmental organizations attempted to cooperate with the State Duma Committee on Family Affairs, Women, and Children to promote the draft law "On State Guarantees of Men and Women Equal Rights, Freedoms and Equal Opportunities to Exercise

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<sup>1</sup> Novikova E.A. State policy in the field of gender equality (political aspect) // Intellectual potential of the XXI century: stages of knowledge: Collection of materials of the XIV Youth International, Scientific and Practical Conference. Novosibirsk: 2013. p. 54.

<sup>2</sup> The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women // UN URL: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/>

Them in the Russian Federation." Adoption of this law would have make it possible to significantly advance the development of gender equality in the Russian legal field, as it contained several progressive provisions that did not exist before. Thus, the draft law contained a definition of gender inequality, the guarantee of equal rights for women and men in employment, a standard used for equal pay for men and women, provided they fulfill identical duties. The same document raised the topic of quotas for men and women participation in the government. However, this legislative initiative has always remained a point of issue. In 2003 it managed to advance only to the stage of the first reading<sup>3</sup> and then in the summer of 2017, according to news agencies, the topic of the was raised in the State Duma again. State Duma Committee on Family Affairs, Women, and Children organized an ad-hoc working group to draft and complete the bill for the second reading.<sup>4</sup> What will happen with the bill is not yet known.

## **GHANA**

Fundamental human rights and freedoms of Ghana's citizens are guaranteed by the 1992 Constitution. Article 17 also guarantees protection against discrimination and enjoins the state to take steps to end all forms of discrimination on grounds of gender, race, colour, ethnicity, religion and creed, social and economic status. The state is obligated to end all forms of discrimination through law reform and affirmative action by Article 35.

Along with that there are national laws in Ghana relative to specific segments of its population such as the Labour Act 2003 (Act 651) and the Children's Act 1998 (Act 560). As for the women's rights, there some laws which have been adopted with the purpose to improve the situation. For example, Marriage Laws, Intestate Succession Law PNDC Law 111 (1985), Customary Marriage and Divorce Registration Law PNDC Law 112 (1985). Criminal Code of Ghana has been laced with some amendments of the criminal law which have provisions to broaden protection against sexual violence and to protect women from harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation.<sup>5</sup>

Ghana ratified several international and regional women's rights protection instruments and has obligations under them. Among these documents:

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<sup>3</sup> Voronina O.A. The policy of gender equality in modern Russia: problems and contradictions // Woman in Russian society. 2013. № 3 (68). P. 14.

<sup>4</sup> The State Duma created a working group on the bill on gender equality // RIA Novosti URL: <https://ria.ru/society/20171114/1508762434.html> (appeal date: 05/10/18) The Women's Manifesto for Ghana 2004. P. 35.

<sup>5</sup> The Women's Manifesto for Ghana 2004. P. 35.

- The 1979 UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), ratified in 1986
- Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa Maputo Protocol, ratified in 2007
- CEDAW Protocol signed in 2000

Government is obligated to incorporate the provisions of these instruments into national laws.

Apart from that, the country is committed to the provisions of the laws which have arisen from UN Conferences on women's rights. This includes:

- The 1985 Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies (NFLS)
- The 1995 Beijing Platform for Action (PfA)
- The 2000 review of Beijing commitments
- Vienna Human Rights Conference
- International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) (1994)
- The Social Summit (1994)
- The 2000 Millennium Development Goals

However, women in Ghana continue to experience the discrimination. International laws are not fully incorporated to the national legislation of Ghana while national laws are often not enough to repeal discriminatory laws. Another important difficulty is that laws are often poor implemented and the reason for this issue is bias against some population groups (for example, poor women and men), lack of resources, constant delays in the court process, patriarchal environment and attitudes which leads to systematic gender inequality. There are problems with the availability of the legal processes and awareness of laws on women's rights in the society because of the low quality of the legal education institutions.<sup>6</sup>

## **Ghana vs Russia in numbers**

Before switching to interviews, it is necessary some "big picture" basing on available statistics. In this section we will employ the data of Global Gender Gap Report<sup>7</sup>, focusing on the only two countries - Russia and Ghana.

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<sup>6</sup> The Women's Manifesto for Ghana 2004. P. 36.

<sup>7</sup> "Global Gender Gap Report" by The World Economic Forum, <https://www.weforum.org/reports/the-global-gender-gap-report-2017>

It should be mentioned that we use the methodology and data "as it is" provided by the authors of these indexes. Should we adjust any measures or variables, it will be highlighted in the text.

## **Global Gender Gap Index**

The total index includes four dimensions: labour market gender equality ("Economic Participation and Opportunity"), access to education ("Education attainment"), life expectancy ("Health and Survival") and access to politics ("Political Empowerment").

Most of variables are calculated as a ratio of a female share in actors or statistics to a male share. Sometimes - and it is mentioned in the description of variables - such a concept can be adjusted (male/female rather than female/male). Next, resulting values are compared with some ideal benchmark (usually it is "1" for gender equality with only two exceptions<sup>8</sup>).

The period of reports is from 2006 to 2017 including. Although total index value and all subindexes are reported throughout the period, the set of additional statistics has been changing from the first report to current times, so we will focus on indexes and subindexes.

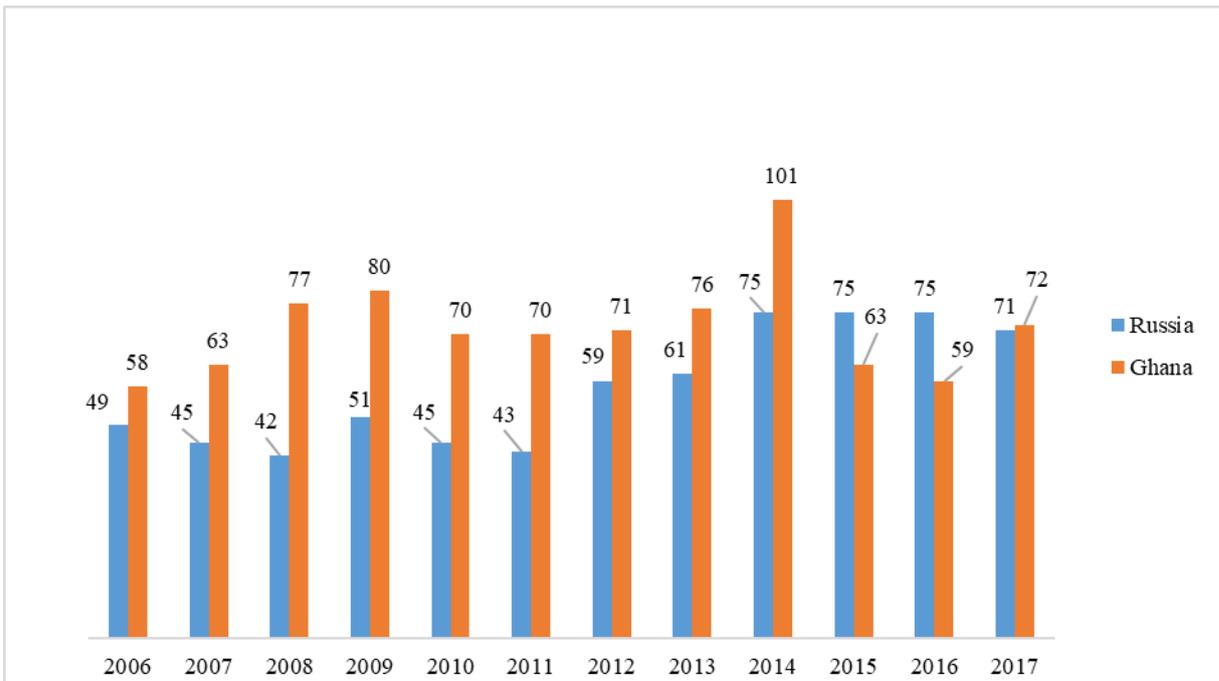
## **Total Index Values**

In general, Russia and Ghana take nearly the same positions in the rankings: the 71st and the 72nd in 2017 respectively. Nevertheless, it does not necessarily imply that the stories behind such results are identical.

Figure 1. Russia and Ghana in GGGP total rankings

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<sup>8</sup> Exceptions are made for life expectancy (benchmark: 1.06) and sex ratio (benchmark: 0.94) by the authors, see e.g. (The World Economic Forum, 2006).



Note: the higher the value, the weaker the gender balance is in a country.

*Figure 1* illustrates the main dynamics of Russia and Ghana towards gender equality. It can be easily seen that Russia in general was more successful country than Ghana in terms of gender gaps except for 2015 and 2016. Such a shift can be explained by major changes in one or several subindexes, hence, we should discover each of them to distinguish important trend for further analysis and interpretation.

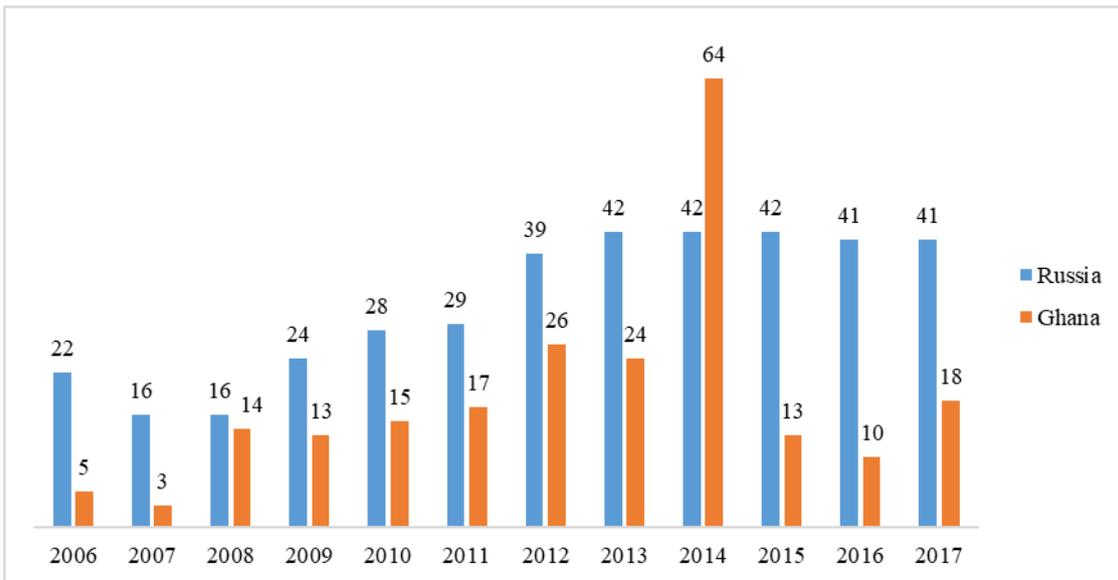
## Economic Participation and Opportunity

From 2006 to 2017, except for one year, Ghana was one of leaders in terms of labour market conditions and fairness for women. According to *Figure 2*, it holds top-30 ranks, while Russia is on average among 40-42 positions in this ranking.

There are several possible reasons for such a difference between two countries:

1. Women of Ghana are better represented in labour force (see *Figure 6* and *Figure 7*);

Figure 2. Economic Participation and opportunity, rankings



Note: the higher the value, the weaker the gender balance is in a country.

Russian women are less fairly paid according to the results of surveys (men are subjectively paid higher for the similar work) and to the statistics (earned income by PPP), as it is shown in Figure 6 and Figure 7;

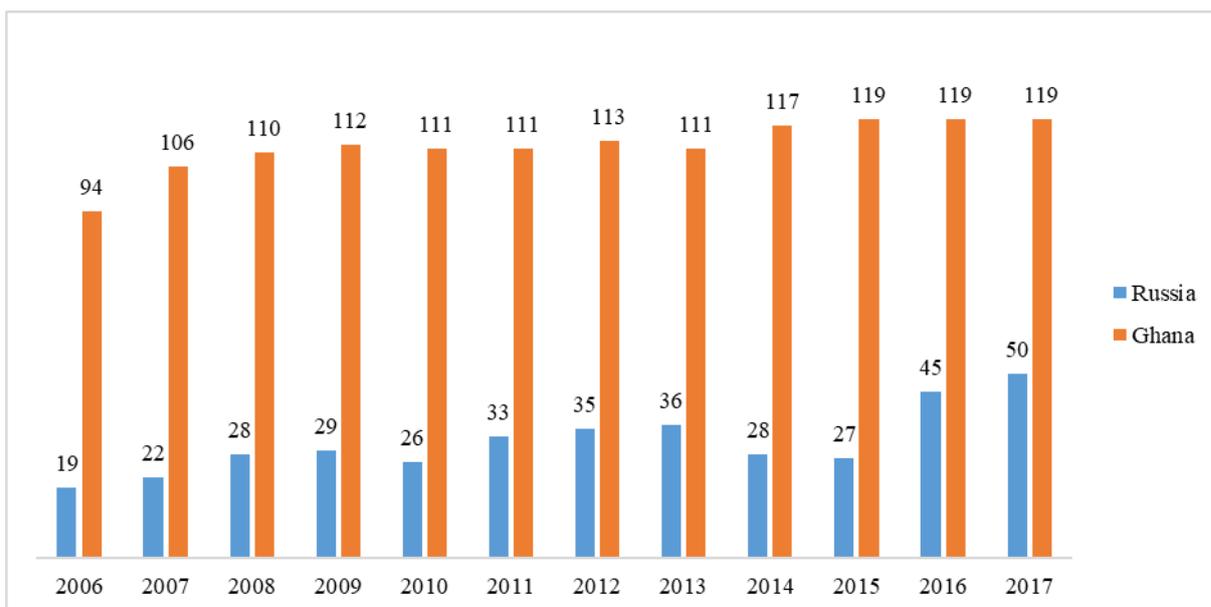
2. There is a sudden increase in number of "legislators, senior officials and managers" in Ghana since 2014 (see Figure 7), despite the noticeable disruption in "professional and technical workers" (in Russia such an area is gender-balanced, while in Ghana women account for approximately only one-third of such workers).

To sum up, in Ghana men and women in general have the same level of income and employment, while some industries have more male employees. We should restrain ourselves from labelling such distribution as "good" or "bad", since it is all about ratios rather than being highly paid: it still can be true that women in Russia earn more than women of Ghana, while such an output still can be lower in comparison with Russian male employees.

## Educational Attainment

Concerning access to education, Russia is among the leaders of this rankings (see *Figure 3*): gender balance is achieved in literacy rate and enrolment rate on all stages of education (*Figure 8*). Ghana is somehow different story: women are still less literate than men and tertiary education is mostly male business: the ratio of female tertiary students to male tertiary students is only 0,692 (*Figure 9*).

Figure 3. Educational attainment, rankings

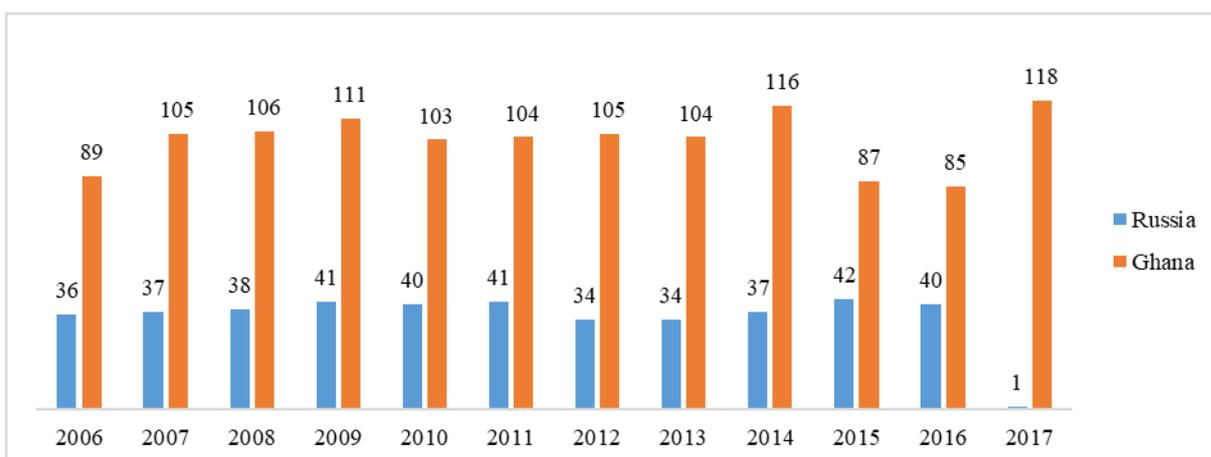


Note: the higher the value, the weaker the gender balance is in a country

## Health and Survival

The value of key indicators for both Ghana and Russia are almost identical (Figure 10 and Figure 11), this situation is stable through reporting period. The female share of population is slightly less than male one, while the expectancy of life is distributed in the opposite way. Nevertheless, both countries are close to the leaders (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Health and survival, rankings

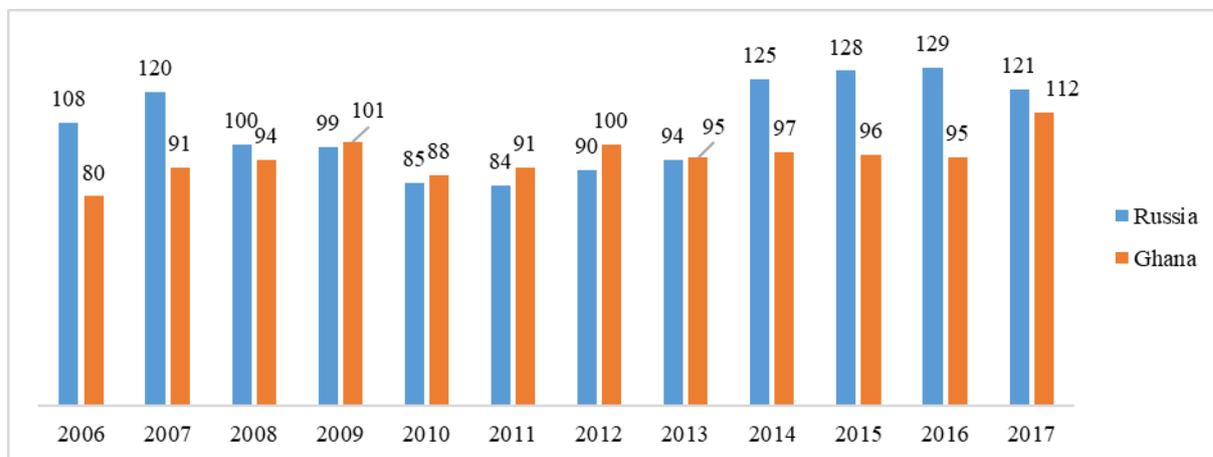


Note: the higher the value, the weaker the gender balance is in a particular country.

## Political Empowerment

Providing women with an opportunity to participate in public administration is a hard challenge not only for Ghana and Russia, but also for all participants of Global Gender Gap Index. Low values of this subindex is a widespread problem for both Ghana and Russia: there are both below 90 positions (see Figure 5).

Figure 5. Political empowerment, rankings



Note: the higher the value, the weaker the gender balance is in a particular country

What is more interesting, there are more female members of parliament in Russia than in Ghana (Figure 12), while it is the opposite in case of ministerial positions (Figure 13).

## Intermediate summary

The institutional background of Ghana and Russia differs a lot: access to education and for women could lead to higher entry barrier in some markets. However, this is not the case for public administration and higher management position, since significantly more women of Ghana take these positions comparing with Russian women.

Such a difference could also explain greater economic and labour inequality between women of Russia and Ghana, while gender structure of labour force can be also an argument for such a hypothesis.

Should we address the problem of self-rationing by Russian women towards leading position in business organizations or civil services, we should admit that it is not access to education or healthcare to be blamed for creating it. Hence, further qualitative rather than quantitative analysis is required for finding some behavioural biases or hidden factors affecting career choices of women in Ghana and Russia.

## Methodology

We conducted 32 semi-structured in-depth interviews with women employed in the civil service, namely, in the federal executive bodies of the Russian Federation and 30 semi-structured in-depth interviews, with each lasting between 45 minutes to one and half an hour. The respondents are from different agencies of Russia and Ghana and have different cultural backgrounds. Despite their different backgrounds and socializations, all these women have spent time working in the civil service and this has influenced the way they order their lives. The interview guide represents a short biographical interview focusing on the periods of school and higher education, career choice and path, some questions were related to making a family. The hermeneutic qualitative analysis was applied to the text: information from the text was coded and later on was analyzed in light of the theoretical concepts mentioned above.

## The results of the study

### How do women obtain jobs in power structures?

Our study shows that the initial motivation for obtaining relevant very often both in Russia and Ghana is related to the “inheritance mechanism” (which to some extent does not correspond to the results obtained by Chirikova A.<sup>9</sup>: someone from the women’s family worked in public administration occupying low and middle positions or there are traditions of state service in the family, e.g. military service. Since gender stereotypes do not help women’s professionalization in the military service, young women end up choosing civil service:

*“My father is from the military, which is also a State Service ...well, my grandmother is a deputy of Regional Duma, so it seemed to me that I would also become a deputy in case of going to work in the civil service .. it seemed very cool ..she helped people, yes...she had a waiting room, she addressed social and other issues, she had loyal electorate” (Federal Agency of Scientific Organizations, Russia)*

*“My father serves in the police, he is an investigator. When I was young, he told me many interesting things, thus he instilled in me the love of jurisprudence. He wanted me*

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<sup>9</sup> Chirikova A. The Woman in Government and Business: A Comparative Analysis of Russian and French Practices // Comparative Politics. 2013. № 2 (12) p. 1-21.

*to specialize in crimes, but it is not for me...*” (**The State Duma of the Russian Federation, Russia**)

*“My father is a huge influence in my life even when it comes to which service to choose to work with. He gave me the advantages of joining the public service because he himself was with the public service.”* (**Ghana**)

*“As to who influenced me to join the civil service, I would solely give that to my mother, she herself was a former worker at the ministries. She told me about the advantages like retirement benefits, ability to gain study leave and job security.”* (**Ghana**)

*“As to how I got into the civil service, I would give that credit to my aunt who herself is a caterer at the agricultural ministries in the upper east region. She linked me up with a head of the department after my first degree, where I was offered a job.”* (**Ghana**)

Some respondents chose job in PA because they were looking for a profession in the humanitarian field, which would be at the interface of different sciences. This is typical for honored girls, who cannot make a firm choice of the profession after graduation:

*“After high school I wanted to receive broad enough education ... I did not know what exactly I wanted to do ... PA offered languages, historical and political orientation, i.e. it offered opportunities for further search”* (**The Ministry of Natural Recourses and Ecology, Russia**)

In the future, such initial motivation often shapes an “expert” attitude towards itself in the profession and consequently encourages to seek a career “of a specialist in her field”, but not an administrator, who manages people:

*“[my specialty is...] to be able to interact well with other people ... strategic skills are needed...to think how to motivate a person to do something...dep analysis is needed to analyze the salary system, overall, it is such a system, where you should be a VERY good expert in both human recourses and in the field you enter, because human recourses is exclusively about applications, like mathematics.* (**The Government of Moscow, Russia**)

In the rest of the cases respondents ended up in Public Administration more or less occasionally:

*«I graduated from the University in 2009, that was a crisis year, so it was hard to find a job. Obviously, I was not going to work in the public service, but it just happened that back then there were no decent job at all, I was hired for a lower-level position ... at the beginning I thought that it was temporary, but it has been being 6 years already since I am working there, I liked it». (The Federal Tax Service, Russia).*

Desire to “be in the middle of the action”, close to the place where government decisions are taken:

*“This kind of a sense of ownership of a governmental decision-making process and of making history (Rosimuschestvo),*

to influence the situation in the country or to be a part of state machine:

*“Since I was a teenager I had a desire to work for the good of the country. So, I decided that there is no better place to fulfill this dream” (Rosimuschestvo)*

*I thought that I could change something in Russian (The office of the Government of the Russian Federation).*

*The respect I have when people see me in the uniform is overwhelming.(Ghana, Arm forces in Takoradi).*

Sometimes a decision about “promotion” in the PA field is taken by superior men:

*“I arrived at an interview to the leader and I was told to start working here within two weeks. [The leader] was looking for me for two weeks to conduct an interview, but I kept refusing. Then I arrived and was told that I had one day to take a correct decision and to arrive to work (The Ministry of Labour and Social Protection)*

*“My father is also a great influence on my career choice and which service to join because he was an ex-army officer” (Ghana, Arm forces in Takoradi).*

or by parents, who influence the girl at the stage of profession choice and who think that work for the government will “feed” anyways:

*“My parents ...wanted me to become a police officer... when I finished school there was a crisis of 2007-8 ... all industry in the city stopped and many people lost their jobs, so my parents paid attention to those professions which would feed IN ANY CASE, which is police, teaching, civil service etc.” (The Government of Moscow)*

In many cases, several factors influence all together:

*“I graduated from high school with honors and was enrolled in the tax academy under the Ministry of Finance of Russian Federation. I graduated from it with two diplomas with honors as an economist plus an interpreter in professional communications ... I was working as a financial analyst, analyzing business projects. Why I paid attention to the civil service... some of my relatives are civil servants, I was growing up among them and understand well how it all works over there...I know all the problem which take place in practice, especially everything related to the local government (Uprava), I want to work “in the filed”, I want to do real things to...” (The Ministry of Economic Development)*

Interestingly, already at the stage of discussion the choice of the profession often there showed up statements that civil service is attractive as a “female” job, i.e. a job with social security:

*“Overall, civil service means social security for a woman. Well, probably in terms of salary civil service is behind private structures. But for a young woman it is always important to have maternity leave, social payments and the security of the position you occupied. Partially that is why I chose civil service”. (The State Duma of the Russian Federation).*

*“...for me working in the health ministry is rightly fit for women but my other field as an accountant is not really a woman field. With accountancy, I would say the ratio of*

*men to women is 2: 8, and it is very difficult for the woman to climb the ladder”.***(Health Ministry, Ghana).**

## **Gender discrimination**

Many women, talking about their work, often did not catch what they were actually talking about discriminatory practices. The cultural code of male excellence is embedded not only in the perceptions about the world, but also in the personal career views of women in both Russia and Ghana. Although some women revlex over this situation, they more report it as a natural phenomenon that cannot be changed. Therefore, they are forced to adapt to these conditions and adapt to them.

*“In my workplace, if you a woman as I said earlier it rather gives you more headache to do more to succeed because if you give 100% to what the men do you would not be appreciated they expect 120% from you to be given the same appreciation they would give to the men. So been women mean harder work and more responsibilities.”***(Ghana)**

*“So far, for nearly 30 decades of my work, here I discovered that when there is a mistake done and it happens to be a man's fault it is brushed aside after the person involved is made aware and corrections made. However when it is a female, after that, anytime there is a work and they give it to that particular female she is reminded of her past mistake, which should not be so»* **(Ghana).**

## **Glass ceiling**

Many of our respondents openly stated that they were difficult to promote due to the fact that they were women. And this was not due to the heavy workload with domestic work or the presence of children (as a difficulty for them), but above all as a stereotypical view of superior male colleagues:

*«I know am responsible and very determined but however, my gender as a female would work against me because even at my district I am denied of promotion due to the fact of being female».***(Ghana, Ministry of Health in the Northern Region)**

*«...when the question arises about who is better to raise and you are equal, it will always increase mainly a man, I think. And we have had this too often, if you are equal for all other indicators, then a man will be raised» (Federal Antimonopoly Service of Russia).*

## **Conclusion**

According to the results of our research it's hardly possible to relegate public service as a "comfortable women's job" both in Russian and Ghana, despite different cultural and socio-economic backgrounds of two countries. At the same time women force to join work in public agencies and more over desire for further promotion. However not all of them succeed, mostly because of "double occupancy" from one hand, and because of segregation practices from the other. Both Russian and Ghanaian female civil servants faces problems with the promotion, mostly it's causes related to 'glass ceiling' or other discriminative practices like glass cliff, glass walls and glass escalator: while women the ladder in public agencies as a female-dominated profession, their male peers glide past them on an invisible escalator, getting straight to the top.

The main point for practitioners though is to discover a combination of productive and reproductive roles conflict for women in public administration. In addition, an even greater interest are the opportunities and constraints for women to improve their skills or to obtain additional qualifications, holding a civil service position.

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## Appendix

Figure 6. Economic Participation and Opportunity in Russia, subindex values

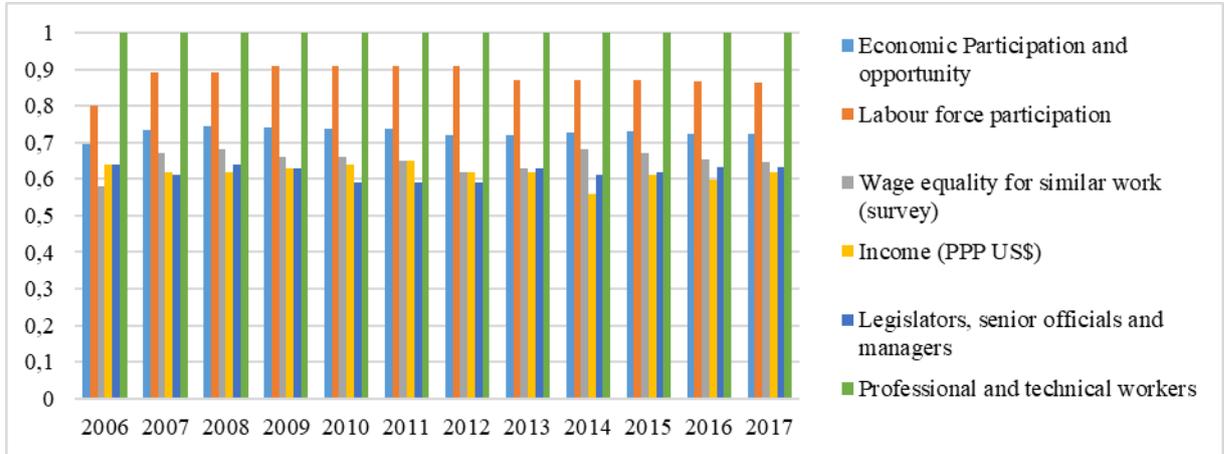


Figure 7. Economic Participation and Opportunity in Ghana, subindex values

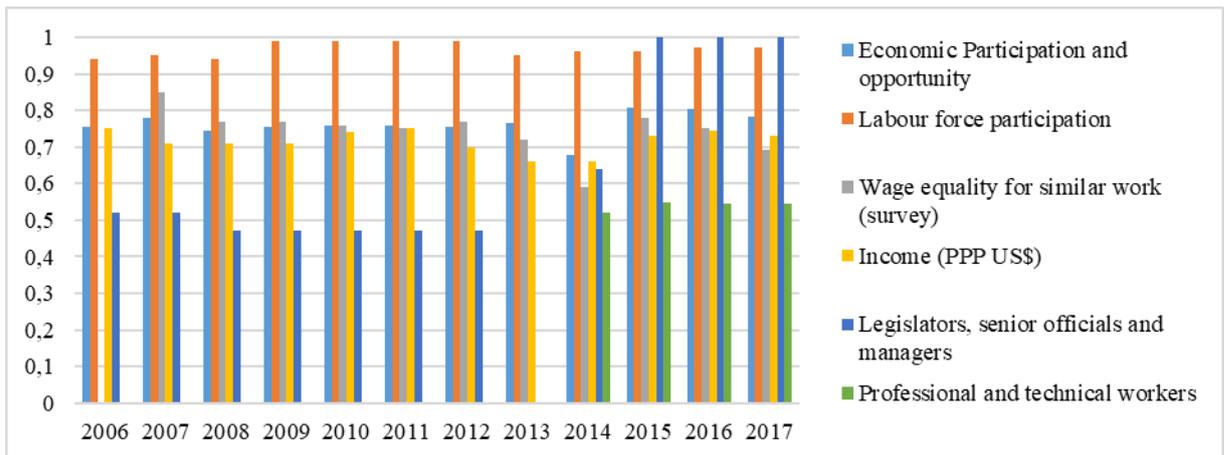


Figure 8. Education attainment in Russia, subindex values



Figure 9. Education attainment in Ghana, subindex values

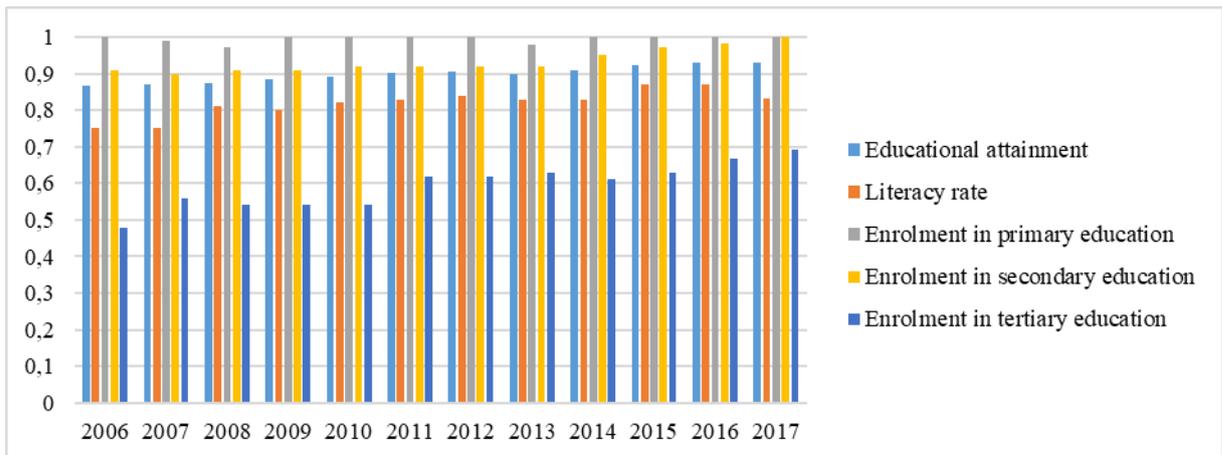


Figure 10. Health and survival in Russia, subindex values

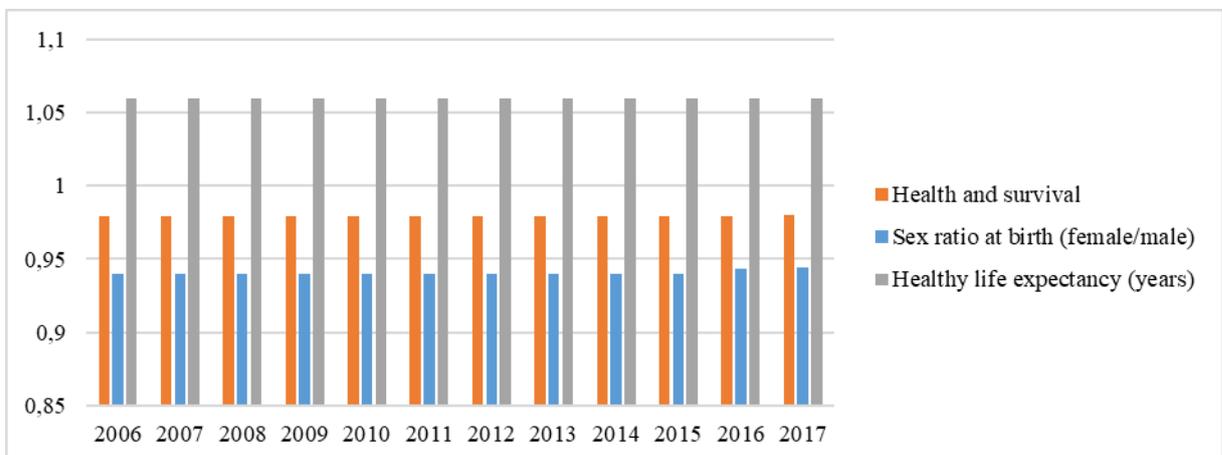


Figure 11. Health and survival in Ghana, subindex values

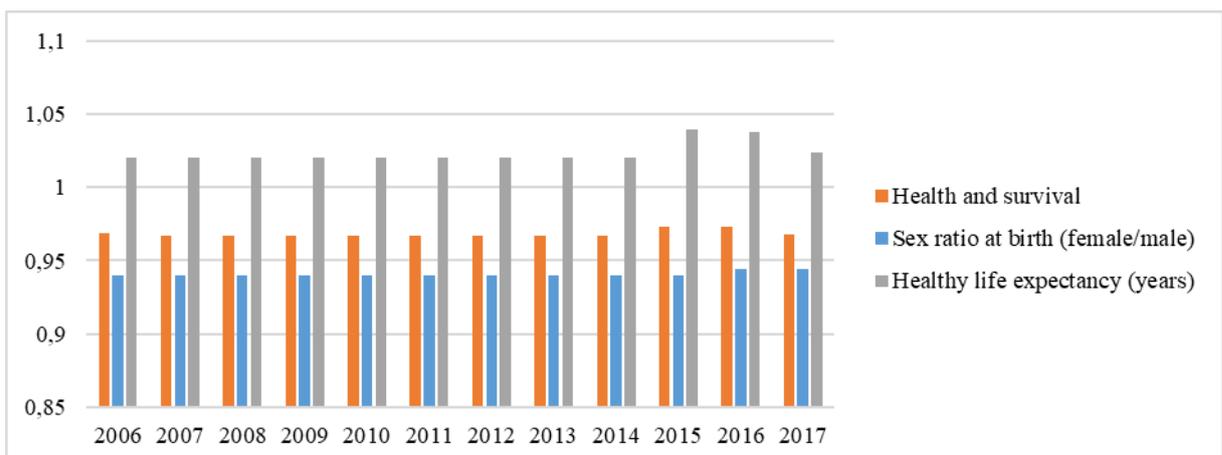


Figure 12. Political empowerment in Russia, subindex values

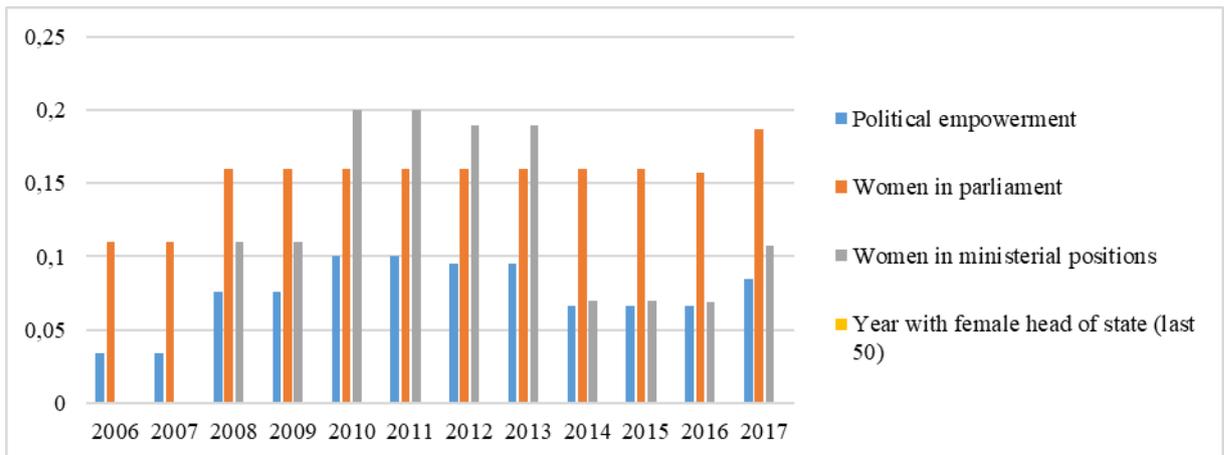


Figure 13. Political empowerment in Ghana, subindex values

