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Who is afraid of
the big bad “ring”?
Gender differ-
ences when consider-
ing couple formation
in a newfangled EU
capital

Abstract:

This paper aims at analyzing and presenting the findings of an inquiry carried out in the spring of 2006 in Bucharest. The inquiry itself originally set out to investigate the effect of different gender and religious beliefs and practice with respect to couple formation and related issues, with particular reference to varying corresponding attitudes towards relationships between the men and women. The inquiry was conducted on a sample of inhabitants of Bucharest, the capital city, and one of the most significant urban areas of Romania on the verge of EU accession. Statistically, significant differences were observed with respect to couple formation, depth of religious beliefs, and the corresponding degree of religious practice, in addition to the stated reasons for marriage in the first place, and hence, to the prospective partner's attributes and selection criteria, both subjective (emotional) and objective (practical and pragmatic).

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We live in an era that is marked by profound changes in the system of social values regarding family life in general, as well as non-marital cohabitation, partners' roles and responsibilities, and the demographic behavior of the population in general. These social changes were first observed in Western Europe, during the second part of the last century, and have only recently started to be transferred to and to “contaminate” Central and South-Eastern Europe, where the speed of change is even faster due to the conditions of rapid economic and social transition encountered since the early '90s.

The main characteristics of this recent evolution are manifested in a “higher flexibility” in initiating, sustaining, and terminating relationships, as indicated by the increase of non-marital cohabitation of couples, and an ever increasing divorce rate (Hărăguș, 2005). Marriage postponement as an acceptable social option, and as a by-product of further extension of training periods, the deferral of bearing children at young ages, frequent change of partners' roles within the relationship, as well as placing career aspirations at the top of women's priorities, all of which contribute to the current picture of these ever-changing social values, which in turn generate new life-style practices and new personal arrangements that are sometimes imposed on young couples through peer pressure.

The international literature abounds with studies on family life in general, and new life styles in particular, especially new types of cohabitation, distribution of household tasks, and the demographic impact of behavioral change of partnerships and the process of reproduction, while fewer studies exist that deal with values, expectations and perceptions, and the impact on couple formation (marital or non-marital). Romanian demographic and sociologic literature encompasses studies and analyses regarding the evolutions of the family institution, before and after 1990, but the specific issue of selecting a life partner has been only tangentially “addressed,” due to a lack of specific data, namely longitudinal type inquiries. This indicates the important significance of the aforementioned inquiry.

These types of data sources are considered to be the only ones capable of highlighting not only the numerous and complex systems of determinants in choosing the marital or non-marital partner, but also the whole interdependent dynamics existing between the demographic processes and the economic, social, and cultural changes. The general tendency in this sphere is just to continue moving forward. However, in 2004, at the initiative of the United Nations' Economic Commission for Europe, the Gender and Generations Programs were launched, in which Romania took part. These programs are multidisciplinary regional research of the panel type, and aim at supplying transversal and longitudinal data for the population with ages between 17 and 79 years old, for all participating countries (Mureșan, 2005).

Within this context, the present demarche aims at determining whether the Romanian capital's population, known for its avant-garde demographic behavior compared to the rest of the country, subscribes to the current trend of European change in terms of couple formation and reproductive behavior. The specific aspects related to social behavior issues discussed here can be detected in a series of attitudes, norms, and perceptions, reporting on the specific influence derived, mainly based on the function of gender and religion, as can be gleaned from the demo-scope inquiry carried out in Bucharest. In Western Europe, these types of inquiries have been regularly organized since the end of the '50s and their collective conclusions have led to the “notion” that the choice of a partner, regardless of the type of cohabitation, has become just like that of the choice of a job, or even considering the option of having children or not, acquiring a house, or the choice of best friends, one of the most important life decisions with

complex implications not only for individuals, but also for the entire society (Girard, 1981; Bozon, 1988, 1990).

An entire system of values underpins the marital or non-marital partnership, comprising economic, social, cultural, gender, religious, and psychological factors, whose influences affect any prospective corresponding outcome, and these factors are sometimes interdependent and interfere with choices and how they may be arrived at. A series of scientific research has helped to identify these factors, formalize them, and has tried to quantify them.

The theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 2005) offers an explanation of the decision-making process for the choice of a partner and cohabitation modalities. The impact of the subjective attitudes and norms and also of the perception of behavioral control differs with respect to gender. Numerous other criteria, like place of residence, level of instruction and education, social class, personal and family wealth, or even parents' and close friends' influence and interference, as well as religious beliefs and the degree of adherence to practicing religious rituals, are taken into consideration (Laplante, Miller, and Malherbe, 2005).

Religious affiliation influences economic and demographic behavior through its impact on the perceptions regarding costs and benefits of the numerous decisions made by individuals and families (Lehrer, 2004). Additionally, for behaviors that pertain to married-couple households, as opposed to individuals, religion counts because it is a complementary trait in marriage, affecting many activities that husband and wife engage in together.

The aspect of religion itself encompasses many dimensions, such as commitment to the religion, the strength of religious beliefs, and participation in religious activities individually or as part of a congregation. That religion may even have an impact on economic and demographic outcomes, partly because it accentuates the effects of affiliation, partly because of its generally positive influence on health and wellbeing (or the mere perception of such influence), can have repercussions for such outcomes.

In Western countries, the transformations afflicting both the institutions of family and marriage, as well as the new values related to couple formation, appeared to result from a background of profound economic, social, and cultural change (Gherghel, 2005). First of all, non-discriminatory access to instruction and training, prolongation of the duration of formal studies, and educational diversification have provoked significant changes of life style itself, in addition to how the populace views the inherent value of children within the social constructs of society, and consequently a corresponding parent-child- relationship transformation.

Secondly, the intensive participation of women in the labor market and the resulting change of their social status have essentially modified the man-woman balance, resulting in a near equal distribution of domestic chores, and have increased the possibility of greater independence of a woman from her family. The direct consequences of such developments are reflected in modified family behavior, characterized by the postponement of marriage, and deferral of the birth of the first child, resulting in the decrease of marital fertility. Thus the preference for a non-marital cohabitation has become the default choice, which is only natural. It allows a couple to live without long-term commitment and with more options to achieve educational and professional objectives (Gherghel, 2005).

Thirdly, new contraception techniques have become ever more effective and accessible, providing more options (especially for women) for managing life in stages, in line

with their corresponding professional and educational objectives. In time, this particular aspect of freedom has systematically eroded the importance of tradition and has diminished the perceived value and sanctity of marriage.

These changes in attitudes regarding marriage have created a double dissociation: between marriage and sexuality, as well as between sexuality and reproduction. Through transitivity, marriage is no longer necessarily associated with reproduction since sexuality as a required intermediary in this bi-dissociation is already allowed by the newly accepted social norms. Sexuality in cohabitation gains territory, as it implies neither long term commitments nor children that would consume important resources and might affect certain individual life objectives. According to Castells (1999), all these evolutions have collectively led to the virtual bankruptcy of the patriarchal family.

The compound effect of the three main tendencies, starting in the '60s, is:

- (a) development of a global and information based economy,
- (b) new fertility control technologies, and,
- (c) emergence of feminist movements.

Further, the progress of science and the development of information and communication technologies have accelerated the formation of the global information based society, with new professional demands for the individuals on the labor market. The high standards of professional proficiency and availability suppose mobility, flexibility of the work schedule, dynamism, and multidimensionality that are themselves paradoxically vivid constraints for traditional family life strategies. In addition, the paid work of women has modified the balance of power between the two genders, as man is no longer the only financial support of the family, and from that moment onwards, man's dominance continuously fades away as women's financial autonomy increases.

Progress in medical science in general, and in new reproduction aids and techniques in particular, offers women the ability to control both timing and fertility, resulting in a wider range of options. Such freedom of choice translates into positive impact on women's self-esteem.

Homosexual movements have further compounded the effects of the newly emancipated women on society, which results in further undermining the very base of the patriarchal system, predominantly dependent on heterosexuality (Castells, 1999). The outcome of the bankruptcy of the patriarchal system is not disappearance of the family, but its profound transformation, through the dissolution of relations between the patriarchal triad: marriage-family-heterosexuality. Taking its place are the new diversified types of partnerships, where couples are formed in a non-traditional fashion based on three common elements. Two of these – the support network and the central role of women – determine the redistribution of roles and responsibilities through negotiations. The third refers to a new model of allowed arrangements that suppose multiple partners along the normal lifecycle.

For Ulrich Beck (1992), during the transition from the industrial society to the risk society, individuals become more individualistic, less constrained by structures, but needing to face the challenge of constructing their own individual biography. So the individual becomes the entrepreneur of his or her universe, education, fortune, and destiny through labor market, personal life planning, and organization.

This process of social transformation is akin to "de-traditionalization," not only in the public, but also in the private sphere. In the public sphere this means the bankruptcy of the nuclear family based on division of roles between genders and unequal distri-

bution of rights between men and women. The new set of options arising out of this background is the diversity of life arrangements that depend on individual choice. The transformation of the family takes part in a global process of social-transformation, through each of the individuals seeking to evolve in relation to social structures and to build up "the chosen biography" (Ulrich Beck, 1992).

Romania's social and demographic evolution is no exception to these tendencies. However, unlike other European countries, there is a certain deviation of time, rhythm, and intensity in the manifestation of the demographic behavior of partnerships, explained by demo-social-psycho evolutions, severely imprinted by the communist regime through strict control of reproduction behavior prior to December 1989.

The profound economic, social, and political transformations after 1989 generated a demographic cost through the transition period. Of the various components of this cost, we will only focus on the aspects of redefining the institution of marriage and reconstruction of public and private space.

The demographic evolutions from 1990 to the present, which are manifestly indicated by decrease of state control on the family through the sharp decrease in the birth rate, the great number of abortions (the peak years were 1990-1991), the increase (between 1990-1991) followed by the relative stability of the divorce rate, the slight increase of average life expectancy, strong emigration (record figures 1990-1991) that fluctuates along election cycles, and an infant mortality rate of 14 deaths per 1000 during the first year of life, which was the second highest rate in Europe in 2006 (surpassed only by Albania).

The first recorded demographic of a consensual unions as a civil status variant is cited in the Population and Households Census of March, 2002. According to the recorded data, Romanians are rather conservative when it comes to the question of marriage, where the great majority opted for traditional marriage partnerships. The proportion of population that opted for non-marital cohabitation represented only 3.8% of the whole population. The majority of these are from the younger generations, between 20 and 34 years old and living in the country side. Out of all people in non-marital partnerships, 73.6% were single, 17.9% divorced, 7.1% widowers, and 1.4% married.

Although the traditional marriage was found to be, still, the most frequent model of cohabitation in Romania, other forms of cohabitation appeared to be gaining territory. The demographic behavior transformation after 1990 was predictable, but the speed and intensity of change were found to be surprisingly high. These changes are due not only to the abrogation of forced childbearing legislation, but also to the economic and social constraints generated by the economic transition (the decrease in real income, unemployment, inflation, and the shortage of dwelling space). These elements all influenced decisions regarding marriage and reproduction.

In the long run, the state control measures have provoked important political and socio-psychological consequences through the imposition of the One-Party-State. The model of resources redistribution, based on an egalitarian ideology, created a balance of forces in which the individual was ever more dependent on the state systems. This balanced model invoked an infant behavior of society and the development of an assisted mentality (Gherghel, 2005).

By monopolizing the public space, the state forced the individual to withdraw into the familial environment. For this very reason, Romanians can be classified, in general, as those of similar East-European models, characterized on the one hand by a limited spread of cohabitation, combined with a high rate of fertility outside of marriage

(Hărăguș, 2005), and on the other hand by early marriage and maternity.

An entire system of values underpins the marital or non-marital partnership, comprising economic, social, cultural, religious, and psychological factors whose influences affect any outcome and are sometimes interdependent and interfere with choices and how they are made at. In this context, various kinds of motivations that make up the foundation upon which choosing a partner depends, which is not a random process, are of great interest. Numerous factors have a major influence, like the place of residence, level of instruction and education, social class, religion and religiosity, personal and family wealth, and even the interference of parents and close friends play a part and are taken into consideration. At the same time, the couple formation process itself is dependent on people's values regarding intimate relationships. Recent trends confirm ample changes of these values, provoking the transition from the modern family (couple), initiated by the romantic love, to the post-modern family (couple), with two careers, sustained by a "pure relationship" and "confluent love" (Rughiniș, 2002).

The causes of these transformations reside mainly in "atomization of various social circles," which allowed the increase of the importance of intimate relationship and lead to "society individualization." People are increasingly defined as individuals and not as mere members of a certain social category, and guided by values like happiness, liberty, and self fulfillment. Consequently, within private family life there is the individual private life of partners, who live the so called "pure relationship," characterized by democracy, symmetry and individual autonomy (Rughiniș, 2002).

Confluent love is active and contingent, as opposed to the notion of romantic love, which is "everlasting" and "unique." The postmodern individual searches for the special relationship and not for the special partner, so that what matters is what partner is suitable for mutual happiness and satisfaction. The quality of couple life became the essence of the family (Valér, 2005).

Romania is not an exception to the rule. Unlike other European countries, there is a certain lag in time, rhythm and intensity in the manifestation of changes in the demographic behavior of partnerships. The Romanian models fit in with those other Eastern-European models, which are characterized on one side by a wide spread of cohabitation, combined with high levels of extramarital fertility (Hărăguș, 2005), and on the other by young marriages and fertility at the same time. There are functioning differences between urban and rural, where the urban population has a behavior more oriented towards postmodern values of non-marital cohabitation or a family with two careers and postponement of fertility (see table no 1).

**Table no. 1. Relevant indicators for the demographic behaviour of partners
Romania and Bucharest - 1990 and 2005**

Indicator	Romania		Urban		Rural		Bucharest	
	1990	2005	1990	2005	1990	2005	1990	2005
Average age at first marriage for men (years)	25,0	28,5	25,1	28,9	24,9	27,9	26,0	30,5
Average age at first marriage for women (years)	22,0	25,2	22,6	26,1	21,3	23,5	23,7	27,9
Average age of husband at the date of divorce (years)	36,9	38,9	37,1	39,0	36,8	38,7	37,9	39,6
Average age of wife at the date of divorce (years)	33,4	35,4	33,9	35,8	32,7	34,4	34,9	36,7
Marriage rate (no. of marriages at 1000 inhabitants)	8,30	6,6	8,75	7,8	7,76	5,0	9,2	9,6*
Divorce rate (no. of divorces at 1000 inhabitants)	1,42	1,54	2,10	2,0	0,67	0,97	2,26	1,61
Percentage of birth outside marriage (%)	19,7**	28,5	17,1	25,0	22,1	32,6	20,1	25,6
Total fertility rate (no. of children/women)	1,8	1,3	1,6	1,2	2,3	1,5	1,4	1,1
Average age of mother at birth of their children (years)	25,0	26,7	25,7	27,6	24,5	25,7	26,0	28,8

• The marriages of the Romanian citizens abroad are included

• **data available from 1995

Source: „Situația demografică a României - 2005”, National Institute of Statistics, Bucharest, 2006;

„Anuarul demografic al României 2006”, INS, București, 2006.

The urban world is more inclined towards individualism, and the unconscious importation of new models of life arrangements. Consequently, there are varied influences and possible outcomes that may vary in their effects on different genders with respect to the new system of values, attitudes, and perceptions affecting the process of couple formation. With few notable exceptions, the level of adoption of the evolutionary indicators presented continued to accelerate progressively between 1990 and 2005, on both the residency location and gender differentiation, and, in most cases, gender dependent variations have also kept their same natural corresponding orientation.

At almost each significant indicator, the evolution of the population of Bucharest towards new lifestyles and social attitudes continues unabated, confirming an even higher intensity of accentuation of mentality, set attitudes, and newly accepted norms, especially where changes regarding nuptial and reproductive behavioral aspects are concerned. Therefore the population of the capital city tends to blindly and unconsciously imitate behavior patters newly imported from occidental countries, which would make it justifiable to label the newly formed Bucharest society as truly postmodern, particularly when measuring current behaviors and accepted norms and attitudes towards the process of couple formation.

On one hand, the evolution of the age factor at first marriage firmly reflects the trend toward postponement of marriage to much older ages than was previously the case, and consequentially, on the other hand, the increase of the corresponding age at divorce, which might be attributed to the change of mental attitudes with easier acceptance of alternative forms of cohabitation, be it the solitary model, or that of acquiring more than one partner along the life-cycle, either officially recognized or not. The increase of the percentage of children born outside marriage is relevant for these types of life arrangements: from 19.7% of all children born in 1995 to more than 25% of all children born in 2006. The increase of the mother's age at first birth also confirms the tendency toward deferment of this demographic event, or even to give it up altogether, if we take into consideration the marginal increase of the total fertility rate. The age of the average first-time mother in Bucharest 2005 was almost 29 years old, which is 3 years older than the same statistic from 15 years earlier.

Couple formation options correlate with a series of characteristics, including religious affiliation, as well as that of prospective partners. That is a particularly important factor that should be born in mind and taken into consideration when formulating a foundation for the conclusions of the inquiry, and one should pay specific attention to the population's religious structure, as declared through sample responses of the

Population and Households Census of March 2002, whether for the whole country, in general, or for Bucharest in particular. (Please see table no.2.)

Table no. 2 Population's structure according to religion at the Population's Census, March 2002

(% from total)

Religion	Romanian		Bucharest	
	Masculine	Feminine	Masculine	Feminine
Orthodox	87,08	86,52	96,00	96,10
Romano-catholic	4,68	4,79	1,11	1,27
Reformed	3,21	3,26	0,09	0,10
Pentecostal	1,42	1,57	0,22	0,29
Greco-catholic	0,86	0,91	0,33	0,39
Baptist	0,52	0,65	0,22	0,19
Non-believers	0,06	0,02	0,22	0,10
Without religion	0,07	0,04	0,07	0,05
Other or not declared	2,10	2,24	1,73	1,51
Total	100,00	100,00	100,00	100,00

Source: Own calculations on data from Recensământul populației și locuințelor – România-18 martie 2002, INS, Bucharest, 2003,

As can be gleaned from the table above, the majority of the country's population declares allegiance to the Orthodox faith, followed by Roman Catholicism, Reformed, and Pentecostal. Bucharest's population is found to be even more homogeneous, although still representative of the overall national structure. Therefore our best endeavors will be focused on gender differences in general, and even more sharply focused on religious affiliations, degree of adherence to stated beliefs as well as actual practice of religious ceremonies and rituals of both partners, and the effect these aspects may have on their respective social attitudes and corresponding behavioral influences.

Some methodological considerations

An inquiry was conducted in Bucharest, applied to a sample of 1453 individuals, and aimed at exploring, analyzing, and highlighting gender differences when balancing between the vast and ever changing myriad of necessities, perceptions, and expectations associated with sharing one's life with another person. The target population comprised adults between the ages of eighteen and forty-nine who declared having a partner for the last 2 months. In order to achieve an accurate representation of the selected sample, the structure of the target population of the 6 sectors of Bucharest was taken into consideration, as illustrated in table no 3:

Sector	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
Sample volume	156	268	303	230	226	270	1453

Table 3

Bucharest Target Sample Proportions per Sector

The sample was designed using a quota wherein the selection criteria were based

on the two main variables: gender and age. These two variables were decided upon in accordance with:

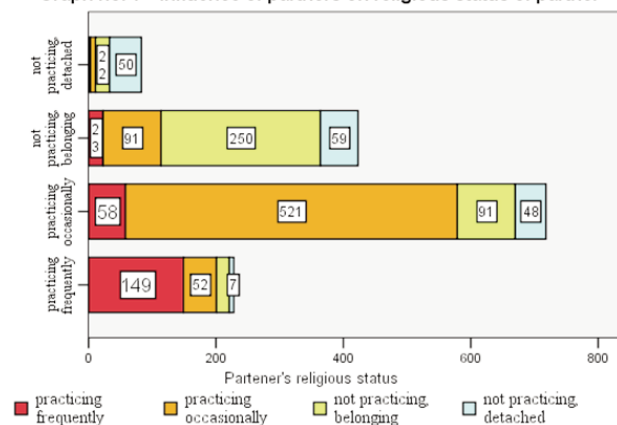
- data availability from administrative sources regarding the structure of the target population;
- simplicity and ease of identification, resulting in an easier job for the interview operators;
- strong correlation to the corresponding interest variables of the study.

The inquiry took place between the 15th and 21st of May, 2006, using the face-to-face interview method. The field research was carried out by the 3rd year Statistics students of the Faculty of Cybernetics, Statistics and Economic Informatics (Academy of Economic Studies of Bucharest) as an application of their studies of the Demography and Social Statistics and Sampling and Inquiry Techniques courses. The questionnaire used as a basis for the interviews comprised 38 questions, grouped into distinct sections regarding: general information, dating, first impression, the choice of a partner, marriage, cohabitation, intentions related to intended future reproduction considerations, and behavior and other ancillary and associated information. When analyzing the answers collected, we will present here only those differences related to gender and religious belief and practice that are statistically significant.¹

Religious status of the respondents in relation to that of their partners

By further analyzing the respondents' distribution, with particular reference to their beliefs, practices, and commitment to religion (as depicted in chart no.1) we can deduce that even if only 15.7% are frequent practitioners, a pervading feeling of belonging to their specific religion can be detected among most respondents (49.4% practice occasionally, and 29.1% have a strong feeling of belonging but rarely practice any rituals).

Graph no. 1 Influence of partners on religious status of partner

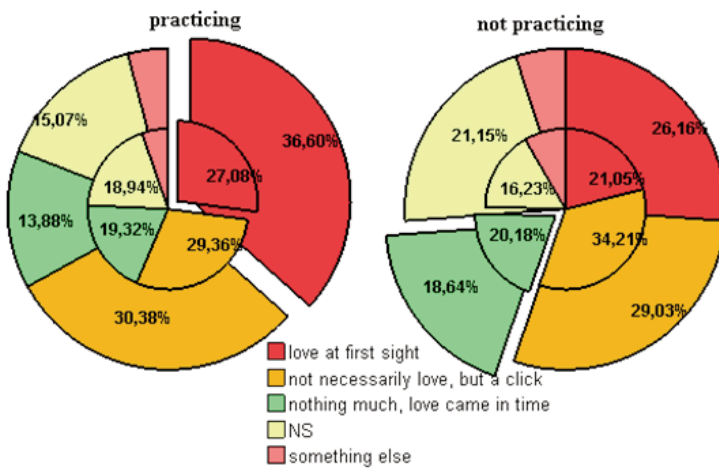


The religious behavior² of a partner coincides with that of the respondent for 65.4% of those who practice frequently, and an even higher percentage of 72.6% was detected for those who practice occasionally. A lower but still significant percentage of 59.1% was detected for those who do not practice, even though the feeling of belonging to a religion exists, while a percentage of 59.1% was measured for that part of the sample respondents who declared that they do not have a religious practice or behavior.

First impression

A larger proportion of men (32.42%) than women (25.26%) declared that they felt "love at first sight."³ Differences in attitude exist between practicing and non-practicing individuals. A rather strong trend emphasizing the existence of a strong feeling between partners at their first date, manifested more strongly by the masculine gender, representing 36.6% of male practicing partners, compared with a lower percentage of 26.16% for those who do not practice religious ritual regularly.⁴

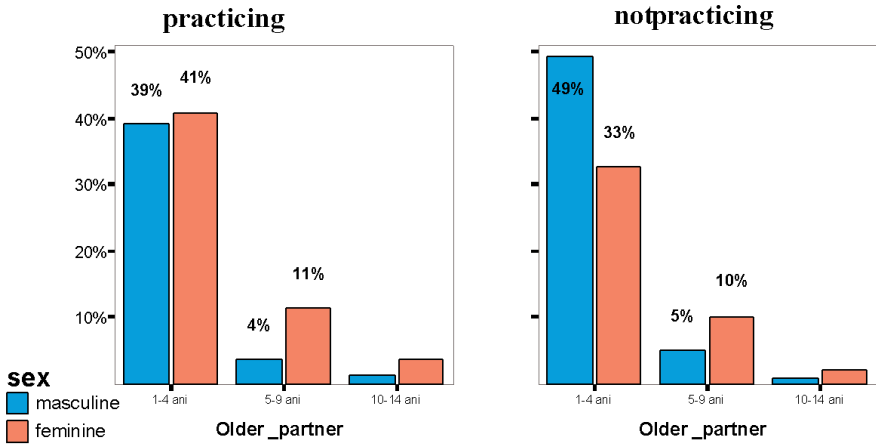
Graph no. 2. Feelings at first date function of religion
masculine (outer circle) feminine (inner circle)



Age discrepancy

Men (88.38%) in a larger proportion than women (72.85%) declared that they would accept living with someone older than themselves by a difference of 1-4 years, but less man (8.61%) than women (20.93%) would accept living with someone older than themselves by a difference 5-9 years (as depicted in chart no 3)⁵.

Gender difference has even more weight for non-practicing individuals. Male respondents in this category indicated that they would easily accept a partner older than themselves. While only 39% of practicing males would accept a partner up to four years older than themselves, non-practicing males indicated that they would accept an older partner at an even higher percentage of 49% of cases.⁶ These results confirm the contin-

Graph no. 3: The degree of acceptance of an older partner given religious status

uation of the traditional model of couple formation wherein the man is older than the woman.

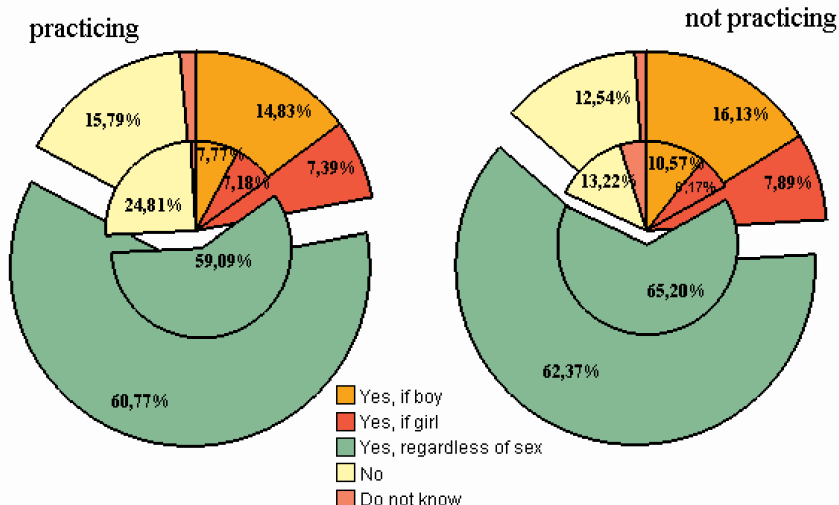
A much larger proportion of women (29.89%) than men (4.88%) would not accept living with someone younger, regardless of the degree of age difference. Men in general would accept a partner 3.4 years older than themselves on average, while women would accept a slightly larger difference of some 4.5 years on average.

More men (54.38%) than women (49.6%) declared that physical attraction does count at youth.

Premarital sex

Both genders would encourage their children to live with an intended spouse, regardless of their gender, with the exception of a small proportion of both sexes who would not.⁷

Graph no. 4. Would you advice your child to have sexual relations before marriage?
 masculine (outer circle) / feminine (inner circle)



By further analyzing the aspect of religious belief in considering sexual relationships before marriage one can detect firm indications of rejection of this particular notion much more frequently among women than men. For practicing women it almost does not matter what sex their offspring may be in influencing their strict refusal to the notion of sex before marriage, while there hardly exists any difference between practicing and non-practicing men when it comes to differentiating on the notion of sex before marriage. Out of the 101 men who would not advise their children to live with a prospective partner before marriage, 50.5% are 40 years old or older. The proportion of those who would advise their children to live with their chosen partner before marriage decreases with age. For instance, 72.1% of the 20-24 age group approve of this practice, compared with only 51% from those 40 years old or older.

As for women, even more have a distinctly different attitude, where 21.32% (compared with 14.49% for men) choose not to advise their children to live with a prospective partner before marriage⁸.

Both genders agreed that the start-up of a family should occur only when both partners have realized economic stability.

Ideal Partner's attributes

Regarding the importance of the partner's attributes, both genders place fidelity at the top of the list, followed by intelligence and sense of humor. Following that, men rank the other relevant attributes differently from women: men rank physical appearance first, followed by household skills and then material wealth, while women ranked household skills and material wealth first, followed by physical appearance.

Men					Women					
Material wealth 6,22	Household skills 7,53	Physical appearance 7,81	Sense of humour 8,06	Intelligence 8,53	Fidelity 9,2 9,25	Intelligence 8,71	Sense of humour 8,15	Material wealth 7,34	Household skills 7,41	Physical appearance 7,05

The changing nature of reasons for marriage as influenced by evolving lifestyle and values system in the post-modern urban society represented by the inhabitants of the Romanian capital is summarized below.

							Imminence of a child birth	Marriage is the expression of true love
Formality for the parent's sake		Financial and/or administrati ve reasons		Neither of the partners did want to live with parents	Next logical step after living together	When couple wants to have children		
3,89	<	3,95	Men	4,85	5,42	6,32	6,84	7,2
3,93	>	3,37	Women	4,35	5,53	6,00	6,53	7,64

As can be gleaned from the results summarized above, both genders identify similar basic reasons when deciding to commit to a marital engagement, especially the top five priorities, while both genders vary slightly when considering their sixth and seventh points on their lists of reasons.

The next natural step in human endeavor, after marriage (albeit belated and carefully considered) and giving birth to a first child, is the decision whether or not to have a second child. There are a number of factors that can influence that decision, both as incentives and as inhibiting factors. When it comes to ranking these factors, the results from the sample are summarized bellow.

Men							Workplace stability
						Own house	
					Support in children's raising and supervision		
				Excellent conditions for instruction and supervision in the day care network			
			State allocation for children ≥50€/ month/ child				
		Family revenues ≥ 500€/ month					
Friendly fees for kindergartens	A state budget financed wage of 100 € / month for a grandparent						
5.29	5.54	5.83	6.01	5.42	6.53	7.7	8.35

Women							Workplace stability
						Family revenues ≥500€/ month	
					Own house		
			Excellent conditions for instruction and supervision in the day care network	Support in children's raising and supervision			
A state budget financed wage of 100€/ month for a grandparent	Friendly fees for kindergartens	State allocation for children ≥50€/ month/ child					
5.49	5.81	6.07	6.64	6.64	7.61	7.9	8.23

As can be deduced from analyzing the results above, the list of factors affecting the decision making process for men and women, when it comes to deciding on a second baby, varies when it concerns very personal issues, while such factors are similarly expressed where it concerns factors derived from broader social values.

In **conclusion**, couple formation behavior of men and women in Bucharest is still a modern, with some traditional accents, although post-modern values imported from Western Europe along the way to EU accession have begun to be more and more present as a natural derivative of harmonization of laws and norms, both public and private. Adding to this momentum of change is the influence resulting from foreign firms investing in the country's varied industries, allied to corporate cultural training that has naturally introduced concepts of personal freedom of expression, manifesting itself broadly as a rebellion against all things old or associated with the old regime and its perceived values. The influence of free media, in particular, has had a great impact in shaping the

attitudes of youth towards romantic love, whether through movies, literature, or the proliferation of entertainment programs of different formats.

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Notes:

1. The following test was devised as a statistical tool comparing and analysing the significance of gender differences as obtained from the results of the survey questionnaire. The comparison of two Test's statistics is:

$$z_c = \frac{w_1 - w_2}{\sqrt{\bar{w}(1 - \bar{w})\left(\frac{1}{n_1} + \frac{1}{n_2}\right)}}$$

where:

w1= observed proportion in sample 1;

w2= observed proportion in sample 2

n1= sample volume 1;

n2= sample volume 2;

w = estimated variance based on the samples' proportions is: .

$$\bar{w} = \frac{n_1 w_1 + n_2 w_2}{n_1 + n_2}$$

The calculated value is then compared with the theoretic value, corresponding to the desired significance level.

The bilateral test's hypotheses are:

H0: $p_1 = p_2$ and H1: $p_1 \neq p_2$ (p_1 and p_2 are proportions in the target population)

Contingency Coefficient, Pearson's C was used to test the strength of the correlation. The contingency coefficient is an adjustment to phi, intended to adapt it to tables larger than 2-by-2. C is equal to the square root of chi-square divided by chi-square plus n, the sample size:

$$C = \sqrt{\chi^2 / (\chi^2 + n)}$$

C has a maximum approaching but never totally reaching 1.0 only for large tables, and some researchers recommend it only for 5-by-5 tables or larger. For smaller tables the level of association will be estimated, even when all observations are on the diagonal of a table.

2. Other important aspects can also be revealed by the analysis of the respondents' distribution of their religious status, as compared with that of their corresponding partners. The 2 value of 1081.409 (significance level of 0,0000001) calculated on the basis of a contingency table designed for the variables: „religious status of respondent” and „religious status of the partner” shows a strong relationship between the religious behavior of the partners within a couple. The contingency coefficient $C = 0.653$ indicates that association is of medium intensity.

3. The difference between the two genders is statistically significant ($z_c = 3.014$) at

a significance level $\alpha=0.05$.

4. This difference is statistically significant ($z_c=4.29$) for a probability of 99.99%

5. The difference between the two genders is statistically significant ($z_c=7.43$) at a significance level at $\alpha=0.01$.

6. The difference between the above two categories is statistically significant ($z_c=3.2$), at a significance level of $\alpha=0.0013$.

7. The difference is statistically significant at $\alpha=0.01$. Age has a statistically significant influence for $\alpha=0.01$. The contingency coefficient is 0.228, which, even if small, is still statistically significant.

8. The difference is statistically significant ($z_c=3.38$) at a significance level of $\alpha=0.01$.

Statistical Indicators System regarding Religious Phenomena¹

Abstract:

The approaching ways in religious phenomenon quantitative studies are, most of the times, based only on the evolution of adherent flows and population structure from a religious point of view. In this paper, an integrated statistical indicators system will be designed. The main purpose of the system is to enhance the quality and coherence of the religious phenomenon. The most important indicators from the integrated system are: context indicators (political, economical, socio-cultural, demographical), basic indicators, level and structure indicators, participation indicators, resource indicators (spiritual, human and pecuniary), quality, efficiency and outcomes (religious freedom, social connections, international relationships). Designing a complete, coherent system of indicators is necessary for a correct approach in studying the religious phenomenon. Statistical indicators can supply quantitative data for the operational description of the religious phenomenon. The indicators' system makes possible not only a descriptive analysis but also some advanced statistical techniques (e.g. regression and correlation method).

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Key words:

indicators system, statistical indicators, quantitative, indicators, religion

Motto:

“Not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted.”

Albert Einstein

Preamble

Various systems of statistical indicators exist and are unanimously accepted from the system of macroeconomic statistical indicators, financial indicators, and the corresponding educational media indicators. From this viewpoint, designing a system of statistical indicators for the religious area represents a challenge but, at the same time an implementation of statistic system analysis in the field of religious studies.

Why should one come up with statistical indicators about religion? The answers are various and pay attention to:

- a correct and comprehensive operational description
- making possible quantitative analyses
- descriptive statistic methods
- advanced statistical techniques
- studying religion as a system
- making easier comparisons (regional, international, and inter-religious etc.)

Before proceeding to the composition of the indicators system, we must answer the question: “What is a statistical indicator?”. Isaic-Maniu, Pecican, Ștefănescu, Vodă, Wagner (2003)² consider that: „the statistical indicator is an instrument that characterizes – in numbers – the structure, correlations, and time changes of various socio-economic phenomena” while Johnstone (1985)³ believes that “the indicator is operational