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ACADEMIA ROMÂNĂ



Cornelia RADA

Valori identitare ale familiei românești contemporane în contextul globalizării *o abordare antropologică*



Editura Muzeului Național al Literaturii Române



Cornelia RADA

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CONTEMPORANE ÎN CONTEXTUL GLOBALIZĂRII
*O ABORDARE ANTROPOLOGICĂ***



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O ABORDARE ANTROPOLOGICĂ**

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Colecția *AULA MAGNA*



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ADDENDA

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Synthesis of the paper

Argument, conceptual details

The general objective of the study was the intensive determination and evaluation of the conjugal and family system's health, through a battery of questionnaires-tests and through focused interviews, in correlation with bio-psycho-socio-demographical characteristics. Through this research, I aimed to determine the family's internal functions – 1) economical; 2) pedagogical-educational and moral; 3) biological and sanitary; 4) solidarity – way of accomplishing it, along with evaluating cohesion, flexibility and communication within the family.

The major difference between the family and other social groups resides in the fact that it is a primary group, with direct relationships, in which each member represents a purpose for each other member, while family life is central to all. No other group fosters such psychological relationships, in which the culture of the family becomes the culture of each particular member, an aspect which has advantages and disadvantages alike, since each situation, positive or negative, is reflected on the individual. As a result, discovering the opinions and beliefs regarding the distribution of roles within the family, being preoccupied with the modalities of realizing the family's functions, helps us take measures to conserve the positive aspects and to counteract those which are maladaptive.

Values, as ideas about that which can be important in life, are formed first within the micro social environment of the family. Values, as expectations of human behavior in various situations, guide culture and norms.

There is a Romania of the great university centers, and a Romania of the small towns. There is an urban Romania, and a rural one. In each of

these "Romanians", families describe themselves and are perceived differently.

The identification and circumscription of the elements structuring "the Romanian family identity" is necessary, after which they must be compared to other models, other geographic spaces, which can truly outline this identity. What does "we" mean for others, and "others" mean for us?

The purport of globalization is not to promote economical and socio-cultural homogenization, but rather to protect positive values and promote cultural particularities, while enabling positive transfers from other areas. The paradox of the identity issue is that it simultaneously poses the problem of acknowledging one's roots and of searching for differences and uniqueness.

The family represents a small universe of cultural identity, which in the context of the globalization, naturally tends to react towards preserving the identity. Phenomena such as family migration in the free labor market or marriage internationalization imply the triggering of mechanisms for the psychosocial understanding and adaptation to new contexts.

The first dos and don'ts are learned in the family environment. People can be trained to think like winners/losers. Negative thinking acquired during family education, through expressions like "you're good for nothing", leads to the formulation of exclusivist generalizations, such as "my incompetence is always the cause of the problem". The pessimist explanatory style, based on a series of beliefs inoculated early on within the family, may be the premise for the onset of depression and of primitive defense mechanisms of the Self, such as denial, somatization, idealization, regression etc. The family can contribute to the teaching of positive habits, for individual and social benefit. In a balanced family, the bases for mature coping mechanisms of the Self may be set, such as humor, repression, asceticism, altruism, anticipation and sublimation (Seligman M., 1990; Gabbard O.G., 2005).

Experiences during childhood have a crucial role in building the adult personality. The correspondence between the child's temperaments with that of the parental figure avoids placing blame either on the parents or on the children. The DNA is both inherited and dependent on the

environment, as genes are in constant interaction with the environment. The parents' genetic heritage influences the type of parental care the person will receive, and the contribution of parents and other figures in the close environment acts like a filter for the expression of the genotype within the phenotype, with the parents having a crucial role in this. Interpreting the nature of the attachment relationship with the caretaker leads to certain processes of representation of the Self and of the other. An autonomous child will not feel at ease next to a dominating mother. A traumatic interpretation of the environment can have long term pathogenic effects. (Sandler J., 2003, pp. 12–26; Weaver I.C.G., Cervoni N., Champagne F.A. et al., 2004, pp. 847–854; Gabbard O. Glen, 2005).

Vulnerability emerges more often as a weakening acting field for present or previously active risk factors (Montreuil M., Doron J., 2009). The most proximal risk factors – such as inadequate parenting, mother's depressive symptoms and tension between parents – explain some of the child's problems. The most peripheral factors – such as small income and dangers regarding the community they reside in – are connected to the child's problems via the more proximal risk factors. This is an additional reason for ensuring a good psycho-emotional environment. The child's environment is comprised of multiple coexisting levels, and they are:

1. The macro-system, the most peripheral level, which subsumes the cultural values and beliefs;
2. The exosystem, which is comprised of the social structures in which families and individuals reside, such as: schools, places of worship, services, workplaces;
3. The micro-system, represented by the close frame in which the individual and his family reside; this includes all of the frames which regard the individual in the midst of his development process;
4. The ontogenetic level, which refers to individual factors which can act on the developmental processes (affect regularization, attachment processes, the development of the autonomous self, relationships with peers, school environment adaptation), during each stage of their evolution (Cicchetti D., Lynch M., 1993, pp. 96–118). As a result, the concept of risk requires an ecological

approach, taking into account all of the environmental levels, while considering the reciprocal influences of these levels in a transactional manner.

Identity – a construction which takes as long to complete as an entire lifetime, is expressed through communication about the self, in its “story”. The bases of culture in its widest sense – as a way of life shared by a group, including practices and knowledge, competences and values which have special significance within the group – are firstly acquired in the family.

The present times have raised new issues for family anthropology, namely: reciprocal parent-child socialization benefits, a process which is no longer a unilateral authoritative parent/child relationship; the children’s impact on the family’s economic status and the couple’s relationship; the impact of peer groups on children and on the family; the parent/child relationship in the case of work force migration, grandparents – substitute parents; the inter-generational relationship (reciprocal help and house management) as a result of the rising life expectancy – adults over 40 with living grandparents, parents and children; tri-generational reciprocal help.

The functions of the family – characteristics and challenges for the contemporary family

Like any institution, the family institution fulfills a series of functions: I. Internal functions: economic, pedagogical-educative and moral, biological and sanitary, as well as a function of family solidarity. II. External functions, which provide the group members with socialization and adequate integration into social life. (Voinea M., 1993, 1996).

The functions of the family reflect the cultural, biological and psychological aspects, the boundaries between them being almost imperceptible. Food-culture, sexual behavior, sleep patterns, biological aspects regarding age, health, gender characteristics, all of these are significantly influenced within this culture.

Internal and external factors have led to a change in family structure and functions. In the modern times, the importance of the family towards the realization of traditional functions has decreased. Here are some examples.

The economical function of the family has moved towards the market economy. The family has become more of an economic consumer than a producer. In traditional societies, the family was a primary economic unit. The role of the family in realizing the traditional economic function has diminished in modern times, except in certain fields such as agriculture – for example, in the case of farmers in the United States or in China, where family still plays an important role. However, family members are employed, have jobs or benefit from allowances etc., which is another expression of this function of the family.

Now medical reproductive technologies (such as surrogate mothers, for example), allow people to conceive children in non-traditional ways. Childcare is done predominantly in the exterior, in maternities, nurseries, kindergartens. The care of very elderly persons, sick, with mental and physical disabilities, has also moved to external institutions. The modern family devotes attention to socializing the child throughout her life. Young adults prefer to settle down in their own house, in order to live an independent life.

Religious practices have become less important, so that, from this secular perspective, the religious function of the family has lost in importance. Although going to church every Sunday with the entire family is no longer practiced, although Easter and Christmas have become more secular than religious, although baptism and the religious wedding have become less important, we can still see numerous families which enjoy these events together, in church.

Recreation, fun, which took place primarily within the family, as a way of manifesting and conserving family cohesion, have been taken over by external agents such as: movie theaters, theaters, museums, parks, clubs, various organizations etc. However, we can often see couples with or without children in these places, spending leisure time together and unwinding. Family members have fun together during vacations or on special occasions – such as weddings, birthdays and trips.

The family has not lost its functions, it has merely modified the ways they are undertaken and expressed, remaining one of the most important social institutions. As no direction is eternally constant, we cannot know which coordinates the family and its functions will drift towards in the far

future (<http://www.preservearticles.com/201104296045/notes-on-the-changing-functions-of-family.html>).

The postmodern family changed as well, as a consequence of contemporary circumstances. Here are some of them:

- The family is centered on children, but few of them, with some couples even deciding not to have children;
- The family is seen as a source of warmth, emotional support, family members sharing loving relationships with each-other;
- The family offers a feeling of identity;
- An increasing number of people are rejecting the traditional family, such as gay families, couples without children, or single persons.

The family is the primary model in the order of influences, having decisive effects on children regarding behavior, relation to social norms and values, the formation of conceptions on life and the world. The bases for fundamental relationships, such as subordinate, complementary and reciprocal, are built in the family. There is a tendency for spontaneous imitation and uncritical adoption of behavioral models, which is why the quality of the offered model is of the utmost importance.

Social life is undergoing an intense process of change, which can be analyzed from a family perspective at least regarding the following aspects:

- On the one hand, the father and mother are absorbed in their social and professional lives, so that contacts with the family's children is often insignificant, because parents return home stressed by the day's problems;
- On the other hand, the lack of a job for one or both parents brings financial precariousness and tense intra-family relations, with repercussions on the formation and development of the child's social personality;
- The extension of new family models and pseudo-models;
- Changes in marital and conjugal role distribution;
- Changes in family life philosophy, such as: the age for marriage has increased, the age at which the first sexual contact occurs has decreased, the number of persons with which someone has sexual

relations has increased, the birth of the first child within the family is occurring later in life, the number of children in the family has decreased etc.

The Persian proverb "It is easy to get wed, but difficult to build a family" highlights the fact that maintaining a family takes certain qualities and effort from the persons involved. Do people still have the availability to get invested in a marriage, to invest time and their financial and emotional resources in this institution?

The massive appearance of alternative lifestyles to the traditional family – such as celibacy, consensual cohabitation, marriage without children, mono-parental households –, along with the considerable drop in marriage numbers and natural increase make us wonder if the very existence of the society isn't in jeopardy, through this non-fulfillment of the reproductive function, that is to say of the perpetuation of life, which still belongs to the family.

As relativism is gaining ground, as the moral definitions of "right" and "wrong" are becoming subordinate to ethics, which has a more individual criterion, objectified in the efficacy of the action for the person acting, we wonder whether the family, as a declining nexus, can still integrate the individual, providing identity, or is it one of the few institutions left which can still perform this function?

"Despite many sins and dangers which have befallen humanity, the family has still proved to be the most historically stable institution" (The Blessed Father Daniel, 2012, p.65).

Designing the sample

The research was undertaken in Bucharest, Craiova, Satu Mare, the villages Cioroiși, Stolnici, and villages in Satu Mare County. In choosing these settlements, we have taken into account the possibility of ensuring contacts in order to collect data, as well as the fact that these statistical units have certain socio-demographic characteristics which offer them a distinct identity, such as: the number of inhabitants, the access to road, train and air transport, educational institutions and means of cultural development, the age of the settlement, traditions etc.

The sample, unrepresentative for the entire country, is comprised of N=1215 subjects, aged between 18 and 74, randomly selected. The determination of these age limits was done by taking into account the age of adulthood and the average lifespan on a national level in the year 2008, which was 73.03 years (76.68 years for women and 69.49 for men) (The annual Romanian statistic directory, National Statistics Institute, 2009).

During the first stage, subject selection was done using the city halls' population registries. Stratified random sampling was used. Prior to the random selection, we divided the population into equally distributed strata, based on residence environments, sexes, age groups and education levels. Thus, we insured the proportional representation of different population strata. The main technical criteria which stood at the foundation of our sample's size were: minimizing the sampling error, ensuring statistical strength ($1-\beta$), χ^2 (chi squared) of 80% for detecting medium size (0.3) effects and a significance threshold of $\alpha \leq 0.05$. Preliminary sample sizing calculations and empirical rules recommended in statistics indicated that a sample of circa 1200 subjects would be relatively optimal for the purposes of the desired investigation.

The basic structure of the sample took into account a relatively equal distribution of subjects in strata, considering residence environment, gender, and demographic age groups. Also, a balanced configuration based on instructive-educational level was aimed for concerning the entire sample, not on the basic structure of the sample as outlined earlier, as follows: 27.9% of subjects with low level education, comprising unschooled individuals, people with primary school education (four grades), middle-school education (5 to 10 grades), professional education, apprentices; 39.8% of subjects with medium level, comprising people with high school education, secondary education, foremen; 32.3% of subjects with high education level, comprising persons with higher education and post-university studies.

Of the total sample, 324 subjects were selected from the urban environment on an age criterion, in order to allow the outlining of family models in three generations; these subjects took part in 12 focus group type interviews, each with nine subjects at a time. In each settlement, 108 subjects took part in the interviews.

Measuring instruments

The data was collected through two questionnaires and through interview. The first questionnaire “omnibus”, with 96 items, was focused on the functions of the family. Each family function was systemized within the questionnaire in the following indicator chapters: 1) Economical aspects; 2) Sex, sexuality, gender; 3) Family planning, birth rate; 4) Family relationships, violence; 5) Mentalities, roles; 6) Education; 7) Health. These indicators were “translated” to multiple concrete, in depth items, referring to each function of the family. Also, demographic data was collected from respondents: age, marital status, ethnicity, religion, instructive-educational level, occupation etc.

The internal consistency of the questionnaire concerning scales used on item sets was estimated via reliability analysis, using Cronbach’s coefficient *alpha* α and, when necessary, the measuring scales were modified. The measuring scales used in the questionnaire were mostly ordinal (Often, Sometimes, and Never). The significance and validity tests for the anticipated models were based on the χ^2 statistic, with 5–20 degrees of freedom. The anticipated use of this type of test directly determined the establishment of the sample size and/or the restriction of the Likert type measuring scales. The pilot investigation yielded results which led to the completion of the omnibus questionnaire and was conducted on 50 subjects from urban and rural environments.

The second questionnaire, the Family Adaptability and Cohesiveness Evaluation Scale III, also known as the Circumplex Model, is comprised of 30 items, 16 of which evaluate cohesion and 14 of which evaluate adaptability (Olson D.H., 1993; 1991, pp. 30, 74–79; Ravi B., Shirali K.A., 1992, pp. 687–697; Rodick D.J., Henggeler S.W., 1986, pp. 77–87).

Through the centered, structured interview (guided or focused), axiological phenomena and issues which have significance on the marriage and the family were tackled. The interlocutors were asked to recount about communication, cohesion and flexibility within the family, being guided by myself (as interview operator), in accordance with specific questions about: boundaries between family members, availability to share space and time with the other members, and the ability to adapt to change. The interview guide contained items referring to aspects such as: emotional bond,

conjugal relationship, parent/child relationship, leadership, discipline, roles, rules, empathy, mutual disclosures, respect etc.

The quantitative results of the 11 chapters are supported qualitatively with individual *face to face* interviews, conducted as “*recounting the life problem*”, inspired by narrative theory (White M., Epston D., 1990). Also, certain chapters benefit from the presentation of photographs obtained during research, for the publication of which, in this volume, permission was obtained.

For the Czech Republic – Prague – and Italy – Rome and Taranto – I designed a smaller version of the omnibus questionnaire, comprised of 59 items, and used the *Family Adaptability and Cohesiveness Evaluation Scale III*, comprised of its 30 items. The questionnaires were translated into Czech and Italian respectively, and discussions with respondents were conducted in English. The samples were represented by 53 subjects in Prague, 100 in Rome and 43 in Taranto. This book will contain only data collected from Romania, pending a future comparative study using this data. Still, there will be references to bibliographical resources consulted during the research stages in these settlements, as well as to the inter-generational flux of Romanians working in Italy towards the family situated in Romania.

Ethical considerations

I have participated in collecting data and verifying answers along with four interview operators with experience in socio-logy, psychology and medicine. In order to provide personal comfort, a feeling of safety, and to avoid prestige reactions as much as possible, the interview operators were of the same gender and age as the respondents. The subjects were informed about the possibility to withdraw in every stage of the research, were assured of the confidentiality privileges etc. and signed an informed consent.

The research respects the moral principle of the person’s dignity, in accordance with Law no. 206 from 27.05.2004, modified and complemented by Ordinance 28/2011 regarding good conduct during scientific research, technological development and innovation, with the purpose of improving the quality of human life.

Final considerations- Results

Access to habitation

The access to habitation is a complex phenomenon which does not involve just the simple fact of owning or living in a habitation. It is a human fundamental need for both shelter and access to utilities and basic services. The right to habitation is a fundamental human right, explicitly or implicitly, stipulated by the Romanian legislation and by the international one alike. The house, the habitation becomes "home" the term imbricating the term "family". They are not neutral domestic spaces, but a representation of the inhabitants and a personal symbol too.

Although in the case of the sample originating in the rural environment the houses with 4 or 5 rooms are predominant, one cannot say there is any supplementary living space, as the size of the respective families is also large. The respondents in both environments live rather "crowded" than "comfortable".

In the urban area most of the 2 member households live in one room (59.5 %). However, it is to be noticed the high number of households of 3 or 4 members where every person has one room to live in. In the rural area the situation is less satisfactory, most of the 3 member households have only one room (33.3 %). In the case of the 3 or 4 member households one notices a deficit of 1 and even 2 rooms.

Compared to the European standards, Romania has a lower level of accessing current water, sewerage, and the dependences. We state that 7.9% of the urban houses are not connected to the abovementioned facilities. In the Stolnici hamlet as well as in the hamlets in Satu Mare County almost half of the homesteads are connected to the water supply network. Less than a quarter of the Cioroiăși respondents do not benefit from the water supply network.

The number of households having their toilet and bathroom connected to the city sewerage network is even lower than those connected to the public water network. The sewerage connection is significantly higher in the urban area. In this case, again, the habitation quality is lower in Cioroiăși where almost none of the respondents' households benefit from sewerage connection.

Only 4.9 % comply with such a habiting standard that assures normal or better living conditions; 27.4% of the respondents may be classified as living in poor conditions.

The rural area is characterized by a certain specificity of the interpersonal relations which are brought closer together by extended family relationships, tradition, friendship, cohesion. The entire village takes place at such events as weddings, religious ceremonies or funerals, not only in vivo, but also providing help even for the wealthiest of them who use the services of restaurants or catering.

However, the traditional popular culture, customs, folklore, genuine wealth of the rural area are still present and some of them such as Călușul – a traditional dance in Oltenia, now part of the immaterial UNESCO patrimony, the dances originating in the Oas area, the spectacular dances such as “Românescul”, “Codrenescul”, “Scuturatul”, “Ardeleana” make us well-known and admired in national and international competitions. Also, the ethnographic area Codru is renowned for its wooden churches in Corund, Soconzel, Stâna and Boldă, dating from the XVIIIth century. The site in Cioroiu Nou hamlet pertaining to the Cioroiu village is recorded on the list of historic monuments as a Dacian-Roman settlement and monument with medieval elements.

Size, structure and financial status

The size of a household consists in the number of members to be taken care of, the number of children influencing the household's income. The average income per person decreases as the number of children rises. In the analyzed sample the main line consists of 3 member families (29.7%), followed by 1-4 member households without significant differences between the 2 and also having relatively close margins. The 5 or more member families represent 20.3% and are more frequent in the rural area. The individuals with higher education more frequently belong to 3 member families (43.2%).

The minimum average age of children not longer living with their parents was of 23.89 years, a little higher than in the Northern and Western parts of Europe. For more than half of the households the income during an average month is of 1000-3000 RON. We stress that almost $\frac{1}{4}$ of the subjects

reported that the family they belong to earns an income of less than 1000 RON, usually this having the case of the 5 or more member families.

70.0% of the subjects may be characterized as living in *severe poverty* and only 6.2 % of them may state that the monthly income ensures them *a decent or a better level of living*.

Taking into consideration the low level of income reported by the subjects of this survey, one may say they have a realistic, even optimistic, perception of their income compared to their necessities, most individuals stating their income is sufficient for their basic necessities only. Most of the subjects are satisfied with a modest level of income of 750-2500 RON.

Sexual behaviour

The debut of sexual life is influenced by such aspects as the menarche and the first ejaculation. But the culture, the environment, the society and the world the individual lives in exert an important influence concerning the debut of sexual life. The first sexual experience represents a passing ritual towards adulthood, being perceived as an important event most people have memories related to. The loss of virginity is regarded as a major event with a special meaning and whose significance and performance manner differs according to gender.

The sexual rights are part of the human rights and generally regard the right of using the sexuality responsibly, freely and autonomously. It is the importance of the intrinsic experimentation of a pleasurable sexuality as fundamental means of communication and love between people that is appreciated.

Within our sample, 15 subjects (1.2%) had not begun their sexual life at the time of the research. Out of the 1200 subjects that began their sexual life, most of them, 34.8%, performed their first sexual act between 18-19 years of age. The number of those having begun their sexual life between 16-17 years of age is slightly lower, 30.1%. 7.3% had their first sexual intercourse earlier than the age of 15.

The average age of the sexual debut characterizing the entire sample was 18.52 years of age, this being 1 year lower for females (18.97) compared to the males (18.08), with a minimum of 13 years of age and a maximum of

35 years of age. The age of the first sexual intercourse was lower in men and those poorly educated in the rural area.

The percent of men starting their sex life earlier than 15 years of age is 3 times higher in men while the percent of those starting at an age within the interval of 20-24 is by 1.58 lower than for women.

Women waited longer before having their first sexual experience. According to the respondents' age groups it has been observed that the higher the age the less the percent of those starting earlier than 17. The age group regarding the first sexual act rises with the instructional-educational level.

Over 1/2 of the respondents did not form a couple with the person they had started their sexual life with, the percentage of women being double than that of men. The percentage of those married with their first sexual partner decreases as the instructional-educational level increases. 16.9% of the respondents that had already started their sexual life got married and began their sexual life in the same year, with the same person they formed a couple with, this situation being more frequent within the rural area especially for the female respondents.

Over half of the respondents got involved in a sexual act in an interval between one month – one year from the moment they met that person. 32.5% of the subjects knew for over a year the person they had their first sexual intercourse with, while 5.8 % knew the person for less than 1 week. In order to start their sexual life women needed more time to know their partner.

The usage of contraceptive methods during the first sexual act was very low (23.7%), being higher in the case of those with an average or high educational level.

The religious behaviour

Among the European states, the secular ones in the North-West and the more traditional ones in the South-West, there are differences regarding the religious practices, measured by the frequency of people attending church ceremonies or praying privately.

According to our research, most of the subjects have attended religious practices in church, only at major religious events (Christmas,

Easter, etc) 39.6% or even less 32.6%. Some of the subjects went to church on a weekly basis (14%), some only monthly (10.9%) while only 2.9% of them went to church more times a week. Compared to the anterior researches that stated higher percentage of attendance, these results are not good news for the churches in Romania.

Religion plays an important role in Romanians' daily life. 87.9% of the subjects evaluated themselves as religious persons, 11.1% not religious and 12 individuals declared themselves atheists.

84% of the subjects pray, meditate or take part in similar activities outside the church. In reference to the church as institution, the respondents stated it responded first to people's spiritual needs. Half of the respondents considered that church had an important role in the individual's and the family's morality. The lowest results the church obtained refer to its capacity of resolving the social problems throughout the country, more than 3/4 stating that church did not offer answers to these problems.

The percentage of those attending religious services on a weekly basis was higher in the Satu Mare rural area and in Satu Mare. The percentage of women attending church services is higher than that of men and of those individuals over 35.

If we observe those socialized during the post-communist era, after 1989, the 18-19 age group, we may notice that they attended the church ceremonies monthly, and only for major events, but this does not represent a major decrease of the religious practice among the young.

The religious practice measured by praying and private meditation was reported by 84% of the subjects, most of them belonging to the urban area and being mostly females. The self perceived religiosity is significantly higher in women as compared to men.

Generally, the premarital sexual behaviour was negatively associated with the religiosity. The female respondents who attended more often the religious ceremonies and prayed privately started their sexual life later in life.

The nuptial, marital behaviour

Knowing the age of one's first marriage is important for the size of the family and the habitation conditions. In the Romanian society the

universality of marriage is the specific national cultural model. The economical and political considerations, the wealth criteria decreased in importance as to marriage; these motives can not be imposed by parents any longer. The current priorities when choosing a partner for marriage are love, feelings, attachment. But as these alone do not suffice, finance stability is also considered out of one's own will.

In the entire research sample 1017 subjects were already married, the average age of the first marriage being 23.41, higher for men by 3 years, in the urban area with more than 2 years. The average age of the first marriage rises by 3 years for those with a better educational level. The percentage of the subjects getting married earlier than 24 was almost 5 times higher in the rural area, for women and for those with a low level of education.

The highest percentage is represented by those who met during leisure time (disco, dancing, clubs, film, theatre), in relatively equal percentage the partners met during visits (friends, families) and at the working place. The increasing of the marriage age enhanced the individuals' possibility of experiencing other relationships before marrying the person they had met in school.

Out of the 1028 married individuals, in consensual union, divorced or widowed, almost $\frac{3}{4}$ had love as motivation for getting married. When they got married, women were motivated by tradition, financial security, the desire to flee from parental constraint or by being forced by their parents, into a larger extent than men.

The reproductive behaviour

The level of fertility in the world generally varies according to country, culture, social and economical conditions together with the individual characteristics such as age. On the one hand, the increase of life standards and health level led to the decrease of mortality and morbidity and, on the other hand, the postponing of marriage, the limiting of sexual relationships, using birth control or practicing abortion decreased the level of fertility.

The population decrease with over one million inhabitants between 1992-2002, as well as the estimated one during the 2012 Romanian Census, the data of which are not published yet, indicate a reinforced demographic

decline. Since early in history, the fertility in Romania was similar to that in Eastern Europe countries with maximum values between 20-24 years of age. After 1989, although the fertility rate had dropped, the fertility still remained an early one, a tendency to level the birth percentage with those within the 25-29 years group being noticed. Concurrently, the percentage of births rose for the age group of 30-34.

The benefits, the higher financial stimuli for the families with children and for the children are associated with a slight increase of fertility or with a stimulation of the youth segments, this effect taking place at a later date.

Out of the 1215 subjects 69.2% were parents. Women were asked their age at the moment of the birth of their first child, their second, and their third child; while the men were asked their age when their partner gave birth to the first child, the second and then the third child.

Within the entire sample, the average age of the subjects becoming parents was 25.11 years old. Women, the subjects from the rural area and those poorly educated became parents while being aged over 23, at a lower average age than men, the subjects from the urban area and those with a medium and higher level of education.

Generally, the tendencies regarding the age when giving birth to the first child are similar to the ones of the age of the first marriage. Out of those who became parents before their 24th anniversary, a larger percentage belonged to those in Cioroiași followed by the ones in Stolnici. The largest percentage of those becoming parents between 30-34 years was recorded in Craiova, while the largest percentage for the 35 and over 35 years age group was recorded in Bucharest followed by Craiova. With increasing of the age group at the moment of the first child's birth the percentage of the respondents from the rural area decreased while the percentage of the subjects from urban area increased.

The average number of births was of 1.89 children with a minimum of 1 child and a maximum of 11 children. The largest percentage consisted in individuals with 1 child followed by those with 2 children.

The highest average number of born children was recorded in the rural area of Satu Mare. The specificity of the Halmeu village, the Cidreag hamlet the Satu Mare County is of families of 5 children and more, living in

consensual agreement and also families of many children belonging to the Penticostal religious community.

The average number of births was higher in the rural area, regarding those over 44 years old and with a low educational level. The average number of births increased from 1.34 for the 18-24 age group to 2.73 for the 60 and over year group. The Median doubles after 50 years. Therefore, for the subjects born before 1962 the number of born children concentrates on the value 2 and following this year, on 1.

To a large extent, the respondents' mothers gave birth to 2 children followed at a great distance by the ones giving birth to 3 children. Comparing the mothers' number of births to those of the female respondents and to the male respondents' partners one may easily observe the predominance of only one child in the children's generation (45%). The mothers that gave birth to one child had, to a large extent, children who also gave birth to only a child. Starting with 2-4 children born by the mother, the percentage of the number of children born has a tendency to decrease, to a great extent, to 1 child. The women having 2 children in the procreative family grew up in families with mothers giving birth to 5-9 children. The situations of children having a larger number of children than their mothers are scarce.

Questioned about the human motivation for having children, the subjects responded to a very large extent that children can represent "a great" *support during the senescence period* (62.8 %), that *they strengthen the couple* (60.9%), *offer a good stimulus to succeed in life* (56.2%). The reproductive instinct, the tradition, the prestige were to a smaller extent considered as motivations for bringing a child into the world. We can also note that within the „other reasons“ category 3.9% of the respondents mentioned as motives for procreation *the sense of life, the joy of family or the love for children*.

Education, culture, family

The meanings of morality, the values of culture are internalized by each individual by enculturation while from an anthropological standpoint personality is the ultimate carrier of culture. Culture means for some members of a society something natural they are not aware of, only when in contact with different cultures.

The strong influence of the biological and genetic aspects is obvious as to the growing up stages of the little child such as the progress from laying down to sitting and further on to walking, from the uttering of simple words to fluent speaking.

Nevertheless, everything children learn daily by interacting with their social environment is not specified in their genetic code. Some of the children's experiences are not planned by outside sources, they are random but some are performed according to a socializing calendar via parents. Personally, I was not able to find any study stating precisely the percentage of genetic and biological information of the human species and the percentage of the environmental factors and life style.

The modern parent is no longer an educator, but also a partner and an associate of the child who does not impose himself/herself but stimulates the child's capacity of understanding and sympathy in order to become aware of the consequences of his/her own actions. Considering the anti-cultural and anti-real values bombardment, the task is a difficult one for both categories of parents and of educators and teachers.

In the European countries as well as in those from other economically and socially well developed spaces the family became a democratic one by providing non-conditional love, together with the focusing on the control, constructive and order-oriented discipline and constant support.

The subjects in this study had to analyze which of the parents controlled/control their activities excessively and did not offer sufficient independence. Out of the entire sample, 4 of the subjects were raised in an orphanage, without parents and thus, in what concerns this item, only 1211 subjects answered. Over a half of the respondents stated they benefited of enough independence from both parents, apparently, the mothers exerting more parental control than the fathers. A very significant percentage declared having done their homeworks under mother's surveillance and control until the VIth grade. Subsequently, the mother remained a leader as to their supervising, throughout their period in school being more involved than their father even when they were overwhelmed by the difficulty of the school homework required to be done.

According to the residential standpoints, the independence offered to children was significantly larger in the urban area, which can be explained

by the larger opening towards the democratization of the education act in the city area. Men and women had a different rapport regarding the parental control. Male subjects were severely controlled by fathers while the female ones by mothers; it looks like a division of parental control according to gender. Men benefited of independence to a larger extent, while a high level of parental control was reported by the female respondents.

The individuals born after 1968 were educated in a less rigid manner, this being a more modern attitude towards the children surveillance and education. The independence offered by parents was reported to the lowest extent by the respondents with a low level of education, a too severe parental control was reported to the lowest extent by the respondents with a high level of education.

Within the sample, the parents' level of education strongly correlates, one noticing the educational homogamy. The mother's, father's and children's level of education are related to a tendency of the children's levels of education to be higher than the parents'.

It was obvious that in the present study we evaluated the manner in which the parents were in contact with the elementary and primary schools their children attended, as well as with those socio-demographical variables that influence this aspect. Most of those having children in school, visit the school their child attends, on a monthly basis. A more reduced contact with the school, "annually or even rarer", was observed as having an almost double percentage in the rural area, and almost triple for the male parent as well as for those parents with a low educational level.

The connection between the respondents' parents and the school was less satisfactory than that of the respondents with the school their children attended. The percentage of the respondents who benefited from a good "monthly" relation of their parents with their school was of only 17.4% (almost half, compared to the situation of the respondents and their children).

The respondents' favorite means for leisure time were watching TV, renting films, listening to tapes, CDs, meeting friends and neighbours. The least time was spent by going to the theatre, cinema, concerts, and exhibitions. Only a quarter of the subjects read or studied, or took walks or went on trips, which is a quite small percentage. Parents, on the contrary,

would like their children did more supplementary reading and studying, outdoor walking, practicing a sport and less TV watching.

The relationship with the extended family and with the one of origin

The parents are the most important and the closest support for their children until maturity and after. There comes a time when the adult children are the most important source of support for the elderly. These parent-child relationships appear as natural in the cycle of life. The parent-child mutual support is an important source of satisfaction in life. These mutual balanced exchanges, both material and emotional, lead to a feeling of well being, of usefulness for both sides. When these changes become imbalanced power inequalities and dependency emerge.

Of course, the inter-generations support is a complex problem, to say the least, from a cultural, economical, demographical and psychological perspective. The co-habitation resulted from necessity and need lead rather to tensions, conflicts and mutual isolation than to closeness. Voluntary co-habitation, resulted from inherited traditional arrangements according to norms such as responsibility, cohesion, inclusion felt as natural, generates a feeling of belonging.

Asked about the extent to which they practically helped (financially, emotionally, domestic cleaning, shopping etc.) their grandparents, parents, brothers and nephews/nieces we recorded answers starting at 95.9% (N=1165) for parents and 63.1% (N= 767) for nephews and nieces. Over ½ of the children helped their parents “a lot”. The grandparents, the siblings and the nephews/nieces received less support from the respondents. In the rural area support was given to a larger extent than in the urban area regarding all the categories of relatives, but especially grandparents, the percentage being almost double in the rural area.

For the present study we considered the extent to which grandparents contributed to the raising and the education of the respondents and the respondents’ children to be of a real interest. The percentage of the respondents was 92.7% (N=1126) regarding grandparents’ contribution to the raising and the education of the subjects and 71.3% (N=866) regarding grandparents’ contribution to the raising and the education of the subjects’

children. The distribution regarding the grandparents' support for their grandchildren and great-grandchildren was homogeneous for the 2 categories of beneficiaries, the high level of intensity ("a lot") being of almost 50 %. The rest, of about 50 %, benefited of "little" or "almost not all" help. According to the residential areas, the help received by the nephews from the grandparents favoured those living in the rural area.

When asked about the feeling they had when thinking about the family they had grown up in, 1215 of the respondents appreciated it as a sanctuary, a welcoming environment of affection. Out of those stating they had the feeling of imprisonment when thinking of their family, where parents proceeded with their children as they pleased shaping them according to their own pleasure, most originated in Bucharest while the fewer ones were from Cioroiași.

Men, more than women, tend to display a tendency not to consider the family of origin as a welcoming affectionate environment, considering that parents proceed with their children as they please, shaping them according to their own pleasure.

The subjects were asked to evaluate their relationships with the parents and between the parents, even if these ones were not alive anymore. Over 3/4 described their relationships with the parents and between the parents as friendly, the extent of friendly relationships with the mother being higher by 9.5%. Concurrently, in the cases where the relationships between parents were difficult or tensed, we generally encountered the same type of relationships of the children with both parents but in the mother's case the percentage was slightly lower.

Cohesion, flexibility and communication in the family

One of the modalities of describing a family is by using the cohesion, flexibility and communication constructs proposed by Olson. The evaluation scale of the conjugal and family system or the Circumplex Model is useful in the clinical evaluation, the couple and family treatment, and also for evaluating the efficiency of marital and family therapy intervention, identifying the problem families compared to the asymptomatic ones being an important empirical support when it comes to family related predictions.

The scores obtained for cohesion and adaptability may be represented on a Circumplex Model indicating the conjugal and family system type of model. The cohesion dimension, from low to high, is expressed according to the following 4 sub-patterns of conjugal and family system: *disengaged, separated, connected and enmeshed*.

The flexibility dimension, from low to high, is expressed according to the following 4 sub-patterns of conjugal and family system: *rigid, structured, flexible, and chaotic*.

By combining these 8 sub-patterns, 16 models of conjugal and family patterns result corresponding to the functioning models: *balanced, medium and unbalanced*. Olson stated the very low or very high scores regarding these dimensions indicate dysfunctional families. Nevertheless, this affirmation has not been always confirmed, especially when it came to cohesion.

We may say that that particular family belongs to one of the 16 family categories, but not that the 4, *chaotically disengaged, chaotically enmeshed, rigidly disengaged, rigidly enmeshed* are misbalanced families or unhealthy families. It is possible these 4 types of family (high scores) faced a difficult life event which determined them to act that way so they could "function". If, for instance, the family child were ill, it could be possible that only an extremely high cohesion be the functioning mechanism of that family, so that they could face the situation. Or, that once the event took place, almost all rules and roles of the family needed to change radically for the family to function.

Thus, this model must be regarded within the situational context and used with other evaluating instruments, but mostly accompanied by interviews as it was done throughout this study.

The scale was utilised for the entire sample of 1215 subjects. The individuals with children, married or together based on mutual agreement for over 3 years described the current family. Less than a quarter of the subjects described their family as being unbalanced.

In the entire sample most of the families function according to the *chaotically connected* pattern. The cohesion score, average to high, indicates a *connected* family characterized by emotional closeness with some sort of separation expecting loyalty. The involvement is strong but the personal distance is allowed, affectionate interactions being preferred. The conjugal

relationship is described as close with a certain degree of separation. The parent – child relationship is a close one, but with a clear delimitation between generations. The family stands more often together than separate, more on the inside than on the outside of the family. Very high flexibility scores indicate a *chaotic* family characterized by limited control, unsuccessful parental control, laissez-faire leadership. Very tolerant, preceded by long negotiations or impulsive decisions, the roles are less clear, often changed or applied inconstantly.

Out of the families with an average type of functioning, most live in the urban area. The percentage of the balanced type of families is higher in the urban area also. The 16 family models represented on a histogram indicate a higher concentration in the urban area of the *structurally disengaged* pattern followed by the *chaotically connected* one, while a concentration of the *chaotically connected* family pattern was observed in the rural area. Although these profiluris are different, both belong to the *medium* family functioning type.

Families in the urban area have the tendency to have lower cohesion scores and higher ones regarding the flexibility and the adaptability. The families in the rural area have the tendencies to have higher cohesion scores and lower ones concerning the flexibility.

The intensity of the cohesion has the tendency to be homogenously distributed according to age groups, sub-patterns, from disengaged (not engaged, detached) to dependent (involved). From the cohesion point of view the largest percentage, 58.2%, is held by the connected family sub-pattern identified in the persons aged over 35. With respect to the adaptability, the family belonging to the rigid sub-pattern was characteristic to the 35 years old individuals or younger. From the functioning point of view, the family type was different according to age group, the *unbalanced* type being found more often in families formed by younger individuals less than 35 years old.

Out of the 672 subjects, from the urban area, who responded to questionnaires a number of 324 subjects was selected for the focus groups, 108 from each locality (Bucharest, Craiova and Satu Mare).

For the interview guide 10 questions regarding cohesion were used, 5 regarding the flexibility and 6 regarding the family communication, inspired by the Circumplex Model (FACES III).

In this focus-groups attending sub-sample families belonging to the *structurally disengaged* (64 families), *chaotically connected* (56 families) and *flexibly separated* (41 families) are predominant. Almost half of this sub-sample belong to the category of families with an average level of functioning, almost 30 % of the balanced category. , the rest belonging to the misbalanced area of the Circumplex Model.

Almost three quarters of those who took part in the interview described their family as being very cohesive. These very strong emotional connections have been expressed by enthusiasm and pride by the young and the elderly alike, as well as by those who described their family of origin or of procreation. The introducing into the discussion, by the moderator, of the concept of *symbiotic attachment* emphasized the fact that these have a healthy feeling towards their family and its members, a secured one, finding in their family the love and the affectionate environment they need and that it is not about symbiosis. There was a low expression of cohesion within the groups from Bucharest and a very high one in Satu Mare.

Men described less involvement among family members compared to women, which is explicable considering the traditional distribution of the emotional role to women, both within and outside the family. This time also, nothing related to the intensity of the cohesion according to age groups was noticed in regard to the communication transactions during the interviews.

The individuals with children expressed an *enmeshed* type of cohesion, the subjects focusing the discussion on children, their importance and on their dedication to them. The individuals without children expressed homogenously a very high enmeshed cohesion and an average to high *connected* cohesion, more personal autonomy being noticed.

Over half of the participants in the interview described their family as having a very low flexibility regarding control, discipline, negotiations and rules which would correspond to the *rigid sub-pattern*. This was expressed within the discussions by the deep respect for rules that once established

needed to be observed. The children's position is one of subordination to their parents, their role being to execute, the parental control being of authoritative type.

Within the groups, the most traditionalist in respecting the discipline, the roles and the rules were those from Satu Mare followed by the one in Bucharest. In Craiova we identified a tendency for negotiation and democracy.

The interchangeability of roles between partners identified within the Bucharest and Craiova groups had different motivational expressions. In Bucharest, the situational type motivation was expressed naturally, while in Craiova the motivation of equal distribution of roles and interchangeability was expressed rather in a revendicative manner from positions indicating gender frustrations.

The discussions based on the 6 items evaluating the communication indicated that more than half of all participants describe within the conjugal system an average to high communication which indicates the Romanian family has good resources for communication.

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