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GENDER BAROMETER. ROMANIA 2018

Introductive study



Asociația Centrul de suport și formare pentru dezvoltarea unei societăți echitabile

Foreword

Gender Barometer. Romania 2018 has been published almost two decades away since the last similar study conducted in Romania, in a social and political context that sees gender studies and feminist theories facing a strong backlash. The study reveals people's attitudes and perceptions regarding gender equality, relations between women and men, participation in the public life, gender roles, but also on current topics, such as the introduction of sexual education in schools or street harassment. The data gathered provides a much clearer picture of gender inequalities and the various problems faced by women in terms of age, ethnicity, class or education, with the purpose of substantiating gender-sensitive public policies.

Different generations of feminists have helped shape the research directions and the questions included in the research tool. Researchers who have begun to develop feminist knowledge since the transition period, graduates of the gender studies developed since 2000, women's rights activists that worked in the past few years in the field, they have all worked together in order to develop this study. The publication of *Gender Barometer. Romania 2018* could not be possible without our partners Cenform Association and without the Institute of Marketing and Surveys (IMAS), and therefore we thank them for their professionalism and dedication.

We thank everyone who chooses to fight every day for a world where all the girls and women can live safely and have equal chances for living the life they wish and dream without patriarchal borders.

Andreea Bragă
Executive Director
FILIA Center

18 Years: Progress, Stagnation, and Tendencies

Introductory study

Laura Grünberg, Research Coordinator

Introduction

Gender Barometer. Romania 2018 is a study made by the IMAS Polls Institute in collaboration with the Center for Curricular Development and Gender Studies - FILIA and the Support and Training Center for the Development of a Fair Society. The study was conducted between November 15, 2018 and December 23, 2018, on a representative sample of 1140 people. This survey, which is 18 years away from the latest research of this type (Romanian Barometer, Romania 2000, Open Society Foundation and Gallup Romania) is part of a larger project run by the FILIA Center NGO. The project "EGAL - Civic Dialogue and Advocacy for Gender-Based Public Policies" aims at formulating a gender-sensitive alternative gender policy that will prioritize issues of interest for today's women in Romania, women in their diversity, ethnicity, living and education levels, etc. This research has been introduced as a component of the wider approach, and will serve as empirical basis for starting this elaborated public policy document.

The research followed the specific steps of such a methodological approach (the methodological details can be found in the IMAS report). In addition, in order to anchor the research in the demarche of a feminist organization, the 1140 interviewees received through the field operators a synthetic document with current data and information on violence against women, salary, representation and reputation, as well as information and contacts of governmental and non-governmental institutions with responsibilities in this field (see Appendix).

In the preparatory phase of the research tool, the FILIA Center team (including Laura Grünberg - Research Coordinator, Andreea Braga - President of FILIA, and Elena Samoilă and Andreea Rusu - Research Assistants) identified and consulted over 30 experts in gender, sociologists and activists involved in research projects. A part of them, to whom we thank, offered feedback, information, and research sources useful for finishing the scouring tool/ the research tool: Ioana Borza, Sorana Constantinescu, Daniela Roventa Frumușani, Valentina Marinescu, Dumitru Sandu, Alexandrina Satnoianu, Romina Surugiu, Sebastian Țoc, Lazăr Vlăsceanu, Mălina Voicu, and Ovidiu Voicu.

The present study aims (i) to anchor research in the global, regional and local context of contradictory, often violent, reactions against gender policies; (ii) to detail a series of methodological options for a generalist and comparative study that would lead to capturing aspects

of intersectionality, as well as some ambiguous, contradictory attitudes of the population towards gendered themes; (iii) highlight some general conclusions of the research.

Further analysis, based on this study, can more accurately identify the gender dimension of the perceptions of the Romanian population on specific themes and can surprise the tendencies related to the way people report to gender equality. Such research is important not only for specialists and gender equality activists working in the field of gender equality, but also for all those involved in designing and implementing public policies tailored on the real needs of citizens.

1. Global Context: Recovery, regression, resistance to gender equality policies

Gender Barometer. Romania 2018 is an opinion poll conducted 18 years apart from the previous one, during a time that was special not only for Romania, but for the whole world. It is a time when nationalist, fundamentalist and conservative accents are increasingly present in public discourses. It is a time when gender equality policies in particular are characterized by rebound, regress, or, at least, resistance. In the United States, the phenomenon #metoo or the last presidential elections have revealed the magnitude of misogynistic and sexist manifestations; in Hungary Gender Studies are forbidden and the Central European University (CEU) abolished; Poland abrogated abortion laws; the Istanbul Convention is being challenged explicitly by more and more countries for using the concept of gender-based violence, being even declared unconstitutional, as the recent case of Bulgaria shows. Other countries, such as Turkey or Venezuela, are not friendly either to gender equality policies.

Given the context, the scientific interest in studying this process has grown. For some, it falls into a more general tendency of de-democratization, as well as steady democratic backsliding, (Bermeo, 2016; Greskovits, 2015). With specific reference to resilience or even hostility towards gender equality policies, specialists operationalize this reality in a variety of ways. For example, Kriszan and Rogebard detail the regression process on gender equality by referring to four complementary aspects: the delegitimization of gender discrimination as the subject of gender policies; the demolition and reformation of existing gender policies; the undermining of the implementation of existing gender policies and the erosion of evaluation and inclusion mechanisms (Kriszan, Rogebard, 2018, p.93). In various other recent reports and documents, critical analyses are made on the understanding of the motivations and consequences of the intensifying recurrence of anti-gender discourses in more and more countries. Inglehart and Norris (2016) talk about the “suffocation” felt against political correctness but this is more relevant for western than for eastern democracies (Bucur, Miroiu, 2019, p.167). There are discussions that gender ideology could be the

"symbolic binder" of such speeches (Kovats, Poim, 2015). Around this phrase seems to be a combination of "anti" groups: religious fundamentalists, critics of identity politics, and the tyranny of political correctness, those who contest minority rights or are against affirmative policies, sexual education in schools, reproductive rights, etc. (FEMM, 2018, p.8). The issue of marriage between persons of the same sexual orientation seems to be the Trojan horse of the public debate against equal opportunities, its legalization being considered a dangerous step that will lead to the destruction of the family and the end of the human species. This mobilization against "gender ideology" has some transnational aspects noted by specialists. There are, for example, identified omnipresent triggers: the Istanbul convention, same-sex marriage, sex education in schools. There is also a certain hyperbolized common language in which fear is exacerbated and gender equality equivalent with something deviant and pathological (Kovats, Poim, 2015). It is also considered that there is a gap in research interest between studying this phenomenon of regression of democracy (Bermeo, 2016, Greskovits, 2015) and the concrete analysis of the gendered aspects and implications of this phenomenon.

The phenomenon of stagnation and even regression in terms of gender equality has also been documented by statistical data that, not only at the European level, indicate marginal progress in the field of gender equality in the last period.¹ Despite some remarkable progress in various aspects of social life in the last decades, there are still significant gaps, segregation, inequality and gender discrimination that have been illustrated by statistics. Cecilia Ridgeway develops the concept of cultural gap to analyze the persistence of these gender inequalities that is not necessarily correlated with material progress (Ridgeway, 2011). The rhythm of change is slow, progress is "in snail steps" as the latest Gender Equality Index in the EU (EIGE, 2015) states. The 2016 Global Economic Forum report (WEF, 2016) also shows that the rate of progress in gender equality is decreasing, highlighting in particular the dangers of regression in reducing economic gaps where feminized areas of activity will be in the near future most affected by the consequences of the fourth industrial revolution that will valorize the skills of science and technology (STEM). The 2018 Report of the European Parliament's Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality (FEMM, 2018) aimed to identify areas, measures, and initiatives that contributed to the emergence and extent of reluctance to continue efforts in the field of gender equality in six European countries (Romania, alongside Austria, Hungary, Italy, Poland, and Slovakia). The study shows that there is a set of areas (such as education, health and reproductive rights, the prevention and the fight against

¹ The expression appears in numerous official documents like *Gender Equality Index 2015*, EIGE or *Challenges to women's rights in the EU-Gender discrimination, sexist hate speech and gender based violence against women and girls*, 2017. EU Agency for Fundamental Rights, p.3, http://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/just/document.cfm?doc_id=48258.

women's violence) and an institutional framework with some common characteristics that can largely explain the phenomenon of gender rebound in these countries. But, according to the report, apart from the similarities, there are also differences related to the intensity and the effects of this resistance. Sometimes there is only an anti-gender equality rhetoric at the level of public discourse, but in other situations it translates into concrete measures and initiatives that, in extreme cases, become counter-measures, backwards in the field (FEMM, 2018, p.8 -9). The study also showed that this backlash is better held back in countries with a longer history of democracy and a strong women movement, unlike those with a still vivid memory of "state feminism" with a movement of women still incipient (such as the Eastern and Central European countries). In this regional context hostile to gender equality, Romania is facing a rhetoric of anti-gender equality, the demonetization of the gender theme, but the conservative pressures do not have the same magnitude as in other countries in the region, and the women's movement managed to annihilate certain derails, put pressure on the authorities in order to create competent institutions and updated normative frameworks on various issues, especially in the area of gender violence.

The overall situation is paradoxical. On the one hand there is empirical evidence of the persistence of inequalities and gender discrimination in the family, education, health, politics, the labor market in general, but, on the other hand, gender discrimination is no longer perceived as a priority issue. ²On this contradictory ground, anti-gender equality discourses make their way to the public sphere and women's movement (and, in general, the civic space) are facing funding and "public access" difficulties, or some important themes (such as violence at women's address, affirmative policies, reproductive rights, etc.) are reinterpreted, minimized, denatured.

It is likely that the field of gender equality will, to a certain extent, be the victim of its own successes. The important progress of the last decades (gaining fundamental rights such as voting, education, ownership, setting up international bodies and mechanisms to monitor progress in the field, developing scientific knowledge in the area of Gender Studies, institutionalizing gender equality policies through the creation of international, national, governmental and non-governmental bodies, etc.) can have perverse effects, with the public opinion feeling "the battle" is over and there is no longer any justification for investing in the promotion of gender equality today (Grünberg, 2013). But this cannot be the only explanation for the hostility towards continuing efforts in the field of gender equality. We need to understand in depth the springs of this status-quo.

Efforts have already been made in this regard. For example, an effort has been made to sharpen the discourse on gender discrimination, to broaden the palette of "sexisms" identified and researched for a deeper understanding of today's realities in which women and men in their

²²See for example *Discrimination in the European Union. Perceptions, Experiences, Attitudes*, 2008.

diversity live together, negotiate their roles and access to power. Beyond the analysis of direct and indirect discrimination, attention is more focused on other types of gender discrimination. On one hand (i) multiple gender discrimination and, on the other hand, ambivalent forms of sexism such as subtle or hidden sexism (Benokraitis, 1986), ambivalent sexism (Glick & Fiske, 1999, 2001), modern sexism (Swim et al., 1995) or neo-sexism (Toujas et al., 1995). A richer sexism taxonomy that takes into account the ambivalent attitudes of men to women, the existing conflict between equalitarian values, present at a collective mental level in democratic societies, and negative residual feelings towards women is useful in understanding the mechanisms of individually or collectively denying the existence of gender / gender based discrimination that explicitly and implicitly contributes to diminishing support for social policies targeted towards reducing gender inequalities.

The intersectional approach to gender discrimination, considered a new paradigm for addressing social inequalities, including gender, also has the potential to delineate the limitations of monolithic discourses of gender equality and their lack of efficiency. The intersectional approach to gender inequalities takes into account the different forms of inequality but also the interactions between them, the fact that different forms of inequality and discrimination interact with each other and through socio-political-economic structures producing specific "matrices of domination" (Collins, 1990). There are many authors who have theorized and operated with this concept (Crenshaw, 1991; Hancock 2007; McCall, 2015; Verloo, 2018), including us (Popa, 2008; Vincze, 2006; Grünberg, 2005). Beyond the trappings and methodological dilemmas of this new approach, the intersectional approach to gender inequality analysis provides an updated framework to understand the opposition's explanation, and especially implicit in the efforts in the field.

This very short theoretical incursion was only aimed at highlighting the importance of the problem of resistance to gender equality discourses for the future of gender-sensitive public policies, importance recognized at both a regional and a global level by specialists in the field.

2. National Context: Romania and anti-gender equality responses

At this point, those who really work in the field of gender equality in Romania, not those who just have a short-time position in specialized institutions, face a public anti-gender equality speech. The retention, the resistance or even the opposition towards the continuation and development of public policies in the field of equal opportunities is sometimes felt directly (for

example, money is being redirected by the capital's city hall from the support of victims of domestic violence to other problems), but most of the time it is about affecting the legitimacy and effectiveness of existing laws and initiatives (Roggeband, Krizstan, 2018). There is no longer a set of issues that constitute a matter of priority, a neutral or even offensive discourse in relation to gender issues is discreetly infiltrating. The public interest and the investments in gender equality policies are getting smaller, the principles of these policies are being attacked from different directions, institutions created to support them are weakened (either financially - especially in the case of NGOs or by putting incompetent people in key positions), laws are not obeyed, mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the results of their implementation are not in place.

We have benchmarks that justify the statement that Romania is also facing a wave of resistance to gender equality policies. Even if the referendum for the traditional family failed, this initiative has highlighted the strong reactions to the "gender ideology" that, as the referendum supporters say, will make the children of Romania transsexual. Even if at the level of academic feminism "Gender Studies" are well represented and integrated in the field of socio-human disciplines, even if the normative framework on gender equality is a good one and in the field of domestic violence important progress has been made, even if they are institutions (ANES, CNCDD, NGOs, Chambers of Equal Opportunities in the Chamber of Deputies, etc.), the progress in Romania in the field of gender equality is more modest than in many other EU countries .

The results of the latest Gender Equality Index by the European Institute for Gender Equality indicate a general "snail steps" progress at the European level and place Romania at the bottom of the Gender Equality Index (EIGE, 2017). The recent report of the World Bank (Romania-Gender Assessment, 2018) points to a number of advances in the presence of women in scientific fields considered masculine and to the creation of a legal and institutional framework for addressing gender issues but at the same time notes the empty side of the glass : the high rate of infant mortality (especially for the Roma population), the relatively high number of young women in the so-called NEET group (people no longer in education, employed or in any form of vocational training) ; high pregnancy rate among teenagers; the unequal distribution of time for domestic chores between women and men.

Romania was also part of various comparative studies focusing on gender equality issues (FEMM, 2018, pp. 61-71). The analysis of the Romanian situation in this comparative context highlighted the formally good aspects: the legislative framework (Law no. 202/2002 on equal opportunities and treatment of women and men or the legislation on violence against women), the institutional framework (the establishment and sooner the re-establishment of ANES) as well as a number of concrete initiatives (such as an attempt to force companies to hire at least one gender

expert³), but also issues that came with a series of perverse effects. In terms of exploring initiatives in the sphere of backlash, the report mentions among others: controversies and public anti-feminist speeches related to the Referendum on the Traditional Family of 2018; various attempts to weaken the force of NGOs through sub-financing, exclusion from various consultations or control of those to be part of such consultation bodies under the pretext of the SOROS conspiracy, changing reporting arrangements for NGOs; the lack of a gender mainstreaming policy in the curriculum; lack of sexual education and education for reproductive health in schools; the lack of involvement of important actors in the implementation of the Istanbul Convention, although Romania is a signatory; attempts to restrict the right to abortion (2012)⁴, prohibit education on reproductive rights in schools in the context in which Romania is a champion at the birth rate among teenagers; the 2008 economic crisis which has greatly affected women's living standards; the existence of special groups of women (such as Roma women) who are subject to multiple discrimination in the context in which Romania has gender equality legislation and provisions on multiple discrimination (for which there is no monitoring methodology!).

In conclusion, there is enough evidence that Romania, beyond a series of achievements that no one contests, falls within the regional and global context unfavorable to consistent and assumed investment in the field of equal opportunities in general and gender equality in particular.

3. The Barometer of Gender. Romania 2018: Objectives and structure

Gender Barometer. Romania 2018 appears on the regional and global background of this status-quo, briefly characterized. The barometer belongs to a general type with an integrated comparative component and was conceived so that its results are useful for an updated understanding of the perception and attitudes of the Romanian population of 2018 towards different components of the social construction of gender (so it did not follow just gender differences on different themes, domains, institutions). For anchoring it in current discourses on gender issues, research has had two important directions of secondary approach. On one hand, we wanted to capture aspects of multidimensionality / intersectionality regarding the way the Romanian population reports on various gendered themes. The study itself and, in particular, the database provides the possibility of

³ Gender expert is a profession that was recently added in the Romanian Nomenclature of Professions. Being considered a success in the field, the way in which a person is qualified for this kind of expertise, the approach of ANES of this formative direction, the lack of integration of specialists created by higher education institutions in Master Programs or Doctoral Studies or of persons from NGOs with an extended experience in this domain, has transformed in so far a success in a failure.

⁴ To which we may add the arising phenomenon of refusal from doctors working in the public health system to perform an abortion on request (see for example the ECPI 2014 report; http://www.ecpi.ro/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Raport_Refuzul_la_efectuarea_avortului_la_cerere_in_Romania.pdf)

analyses emerging from the classic paradigm of women vs. men. On the other hand, an important stake in the research was highlighting aspects related to the general climate in Romania regarding gender equality. In this sense, we tried to capture a more nuanced spectrum of perceptions about the situation of women in relation to men in both private and public life, attitudes of support, restraint, doubt or even hostility to public discourses in the field of gender equality. We will briefly detail these principle options.

Being a barometer of opinion on the basis of which gender-sensitive public policies were proposed, the need for a **generalist** barometer was obvious. In order to provide an empirical basis on which to build the public policy, it has to cover diverse themes, varied issues of current interest in the field of gender analysis. A thematic barometer which explored in depth only some aspects of interest, regardless of their importance was inappropriate (violence against women, models of masculinity, gender and time management, gender and sexuality, gender and technology, etc.). In the selection of topics, we also considered the avoidance of ample subjects that would have required barometers and stand-alone qualitative studies (e.g. violence, sexuality) without question. Also, in finalizing the questionnaire we tried to take into account the type of items used in current international studies (Gender Equality Index, WVS or other Barometers and surveys conducted at the European and international level) so that the results could be used in various contexts of comparative analysis.

Financial and time restrictions also determined the final selection and structure of the questionnaire. Taking into account the methodological constraints (topics that did not match quantitative research or continuity issues between the two barometers that could not be methodologically correlated), a mix of particular themes with more general themes was chosen. At the same time, in the various aspects touched, the update of approach perspectives was attempted. As such, we can talk about some aspects to be found in the questionnaire. Concerning the topic of violence, items were introduced on sexual harassment. Regarding the distribution of domestic and public roles, we insisted on issues related to (i) approach/report on leisure time, (ii) parenting, and (iii) the family / career balance. We also introduced two sets of questions that include items related to the attitude of Romanians towards the role of Romania's entry into the EU, to gender equality and the need to continue or not the efforts in the field. On this last level, the barometer contains questions about gender perspectives through which the general perceptions and attitudes of the population have been captured over the current situation of gender equality in the family and in the public sphere. The more subtle research interest consisted in observing some ambiguous, uncertain, contradictory attitudes about these issues. This set of items was inspired by recent research in the literature on the subtle or hidden sexism (Benokraitis, 1986), ambivalent sexism (Glick & Fiske, 1999, 2001), neo-sexism (Toujas et al. chosen by the scale of modern sexism, from which a few

questions were taken (Swim et al., 1995). We considered it necessary to provide a minimum of information on these little researched aspects in Romania for further studies to start from and to identify a wider spectrum of manifestations in relation to the themes of gender equality in today's Romania: from the denial of the need to further efforts in the domain to antagonistic or resentment attitudes towards women's "claims" or affirmative policies. The IMAS team has identified and formulated an interesting typology with four segments of the population identified by their reference to a series of gendered aspects: the moderns, the compliant traditionalists, the classical traditionalists and the parochial behaviorists. This study only provides a start for such analyses.

The comparative component of the barometer was also important to capture the dynamics of gender models. 18 years after the last opinion poll, it was important that the data could provide a comparative picture of the perceptions about the gender roles and gender relations of the Romanian society. The period 2000-2018 was rich in major events for the development of democracy in Romania, which joined in 2004 in NATO and then in 2007 in the European Union. 2008 was the year of a major economic crisis all over the world, a crisis that has obviously affected Romania as well. Romania's political life was in this period of time constantly tensioned, with no continuity in public policies in any field, with the flourishing of institutions of extraction (Vlăsceanu, Hâncean, 2014) who did not have an interest in promoting social justice or innovation. The last years have brought a strong wave of emigration to the West, with contact to the values and models from countries with a rich democratic tradition, which were not echoed by major changes in the mentality at home. It is also a time when academic feminism and the movement of women have become institutionalized and acquired substance (Miroiu, 2015; Grünberg 2014). In this respect, the questionnaire underlying the research contains a series of questions identical to those in 2000. Some are general questions (related to opinions on gender equality) and some are particular. However, it should be noted that the large gap between the last Barometer (2000) and the lack of some depth information related to the 2000 methodology made the comparative level complicated.

As we have already mentioned, intersectionality and the illustration of various attitudes related to gender equality policies have been a red thread of the barometer. We tried to capture elements of gender intersection with age, level of education, family situation, region, or residence environment. The sampling did not allow relevant comments on "gender and ethnicity" or "gender and sexuality". But we wanted to say something about the differences between women (and men), not just between women and men. We were interested both in the differences and in the similarities. The database offers the possibility of further analyses much more detailed than those presented in this report. The survey also provides some important insights into how the population currently perceives the situation of women in relation to men and the need to continue investing in gender-sensitive public policies.

Beyond certain constraints and limitations in connection with time, financial resources, and methodology (on the comparative component) inherent in such research, we hope that this Barometer offers a range of interesting up-to-date data that can form the basis for future research. The intention was to provide a type of socially resonant knowledge - from which all those interested can find effective collective (public-policy) strategies in the field of promoting gender equality.

4. Issues of Relevance of Results for Gender-Sensitive Public Policies

The specific findings of the research are presented on specific themes in the IMAS report. We will only mention a number of issues arising from this research, which we consider to be of particular importance for the future development of gender-sensitive public policies.

- **Happy men and happy women in a country that goes in the wrong direction**

Research reveals a very high (73%) level of dissatisfaction among men and women as well regarding the direction in which the country is going. At the same time, two-thirds of people (64.8%) say they are very satisfied or quite satisfied with various aspects of their lives (family life, health, physical appearance, material situation). A clear gender differentiation is only observed in terms of job satisfaction - men being significantly more satisfied with this aspect than women (43.9% versus 31.1%). Explanations may be diverse and require complementary analysis. But it can be said that this tear of perceptions between individual satisfaction with different aspects of life and dissatisfaction with the direction in which things go in the country does not provide a favorable framework of interest to public policies. It seems that alongside such a strong external emigration there is also a type of internal emigration from which people derive contentment resources in their lives, ignoring the situation of their country of residence. Between the "country" and its people seems to be a rupture: the country goes bad, but people are happy with their lives. The population does not perceive the political dimension of their individual lives. This may explain the placement of Romania as the country with the greatest European gap between optimism and satisfaction (Sandu, 2019, p. 31). It is an important topic of reflection for future gender equality policies because their effectiveness is closely linked to the credit given by their beneficiaries.

- **Mix of moderns, traditionalists and parochials regarding the approach to gender**

By running exploratory factorial analyses, the study offers a series of information suggesting the presence of diverse population attitudes at the level of gender perceptions. Four segments of the population were identified (methodological and content details in the IMAS study)

| Segmente (latențe) | Indicatorii cu scoruri maxime pe latențele identificate |
|---|--|
| Segmentul modernității de gen | O mama care lucrează poate fi la fel de grijulie față de copiii săi precum una care nu lucrează. Ambii soți trebuie să câștige bani pentru întreținerea familiei. E un lucru bun că acum și bărbații își pot lua concediul de îngrijire a copilului. |
| Segmentul tradiționalismului compliant la egalitatea de gen | Societatea a ajuns în punctul în care femeile și bărbații au șanse egale de succes. În prezent, discriminarea împotriva femeilor nu este o problemă în România. În România, Uniunea Europeană a influențat pozitiv egalitatea de șanse între femei și bărbați. |
| Segmentul tradiționalismului clasic | Viata de familie are de suferit atunci când femeia are o slujbă cu norma întreagă (8 ore). Ce își doresc cu adevărat femeile este să aibă familie și copii, nu slujbă. |
| Segmentul comportamentului parohial | În ultimii ani, s-a discutat prea mult despre modul în care sunt tratate femeile în România. Promovarea egalității de șanse la locul de muncă avantajează femeile. |

Metoda de extragere: Analiza componentelor principale
Metoda de rotație: Varimax cu normalizare Kaiser

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- *The segment of gender modernity:* people who, among others, think that reconciling family and professional life is needed; they are more satisfied with their professional lives and believe that discrimination still exists in Romania
- *The segment of compliant traditionalism:* People who believe that gender equality has become a reality with the support of European institutions, rely on private partnership and seem to have the greatest satisfaction in their family life
- *The segment of classical traditionalism:* Gender conservatives believe that women are the ones who especially want a family and children, but they believe that both spouses have to earn money for the family, higher education is more important to boys and have the least satisfaction with their professional life
- *The segment of parochial behavior:* people who consider gender issues to be redundant, over-discussed in Romania in recent years, value paternal leave very little, and are generally dissatisfied with their professional life.

A careful look at the results indicates the presence of a mix of traditionalist responses (such as "a woman must follow her husband" - 50.8% or "the husband is the head of the family" - 69.8%) along with responses from a much more modern perception of the dynamics of roles and gender relations (disagreement with the statement that men are more able to lead than women - a question where 57.2% of women responded in disagreement, or agreement with statements such as "both spouses must earn money for family maintenance - 87% or "it's a good thing now that men can take paternal leave" -68%). Also noteworthy is the existence of border line perceptions between conservatism and modernism, of oscillation between conservative hard and soft values and modern values in formation, contradictory positions even. The barometer has the potential to identify aspects of this oscillation between conservatism and modernism. We believe that this incipient early reality outlined in this study needs to be investigated in depth. Gender-sensitive public policies will be effective if they succeed in emerging from the paradigm of complementarity or dichotomy

between women and men, being able to propose strategies tailored to the dynamics of society, resonating with diverse perceptions of the people about the issue of gender equality.

It is worth mentioning that this type of incipient results is linked to a series of international studies on gender dynamics in the current society by specific fields, studies identifying for example, as we have already mentioned, the presence of neo-sexism, ambivalent or modern sexism (Glick & Fiske, 2011 , Swim 1995, Benokraitis, 1997) or mega gender tendencies at a global level such as: a hybrid traditionalism - a mix of views and perceptions of gender equality; role contradictions such as: emancipated women but who at the same time appreciate their important role in domestic life (Global Consumer Trends, 2014).

- **Dynamics of perceptions about gender issues.**

The perception of the population about roles and gender relations is, as expected, in a dynamic form. Synthetically, the comparative component of the research reveals the existence of fixed themes, frozen in time in an area of conservative approaches, but also a visible change towards more modern attitudes on a number of other aspects.

Perceptions remain **constant** on issues such as:

- There is less solidarity between women than between men - perception remains relatively constant (41% in 2018 versus 46% in 2000).
- Attitude towards the legalization of prostitution. Similar to the 2000 survey, the majority of the population considers that prostitution should be banned (51.2% in 2018, 51% in 2000), the proportion of women with this position being higher than that of men in both 2000 and 2018.
- Comparable percentages in 2000 and 2018 on those who agree with the statement that "it is more of a woman's than a man's duty to handle household chores" (58% in 2018 vs. 63% in 2000)
- Maintaining a perception of the complementary and unbalanced distribution of household chores. In 2000, at least 80% of respondents considered that food preparation, home cleaning, washing of clothes and dishes, ironing of laundry are activities performed by women only, and home repairs are men's apprenticeship. With small fluctuations these percentages are valid in 2018 as well. The same can be said about the percentages of 2000 and 2018 related to "private partnership" - percentages below 10% (insignificantly lower in 2000) of those who declare that various domestic activities are made by "both partners".

Instead, on various other themes, a **dynamic of perceptions** is clearly observed:

- Greater acceptance of women for the position of country president. If 73% preferred a male president in 2000 (and 3% female president) in 2018 only 46.9% said they were in favor of a male president.
- 54% of respondents agreed in 2000 with the statement that "men are more able to lead than women". This percentage dropped to 44.2% in 2018.
- The tendency of agreement is also shrinking with the statement that "women are too busy with household affairs and have no time for leadership" (68% in 2000 versus 44% in 2018).
- If in 2000, 43% felt that women did not trust their strengths, this percentage dropped significantly (30.7%) in 2018. In addition, there is an upward trend in disagreement with the statement "women are afraid of great responsibilities" (from 55% in 2000 to 65% in 2018).
- **Domestic violence** is considered more a public matter than a private, intimate, context in which the Police is the first institution to which the population would resort to such situations. 35% of respondents considered in 2000 that partners should be allowed to solve their own problems (28% identified relatives as a solution) unlike 2018 when only 20% of the respondent considers that it is a problem to be resolved between the involved parties and the majority place the police as an institution to which they would turn for such situations. The decrease of the percentage may mean a progress in what it means to shift the understanding of this phenomenon not just as a private phenomenon but as one that needs to find a solution beyond the couple, in the public services. Highly mentioning the Police is evidence of the success of the last period in reviewing the normative framework and in training the police workers to put an end to these issues.
- A change of perception regarding the **contribution to the family budget**. In 2000, 70% of respondents agreed that *"it is more of a male duty than a female duty to be the breadwinners,"* a percentage that decreased (61%) in 2018.
- Regarding **child raising**, even if there were methodological differences between the two barometers, 71% of people considered in 2000 that both parents had to take care of raising the children (and 28% said the mother was the main parent with this responsibility) and in 2018 the percentage increased significantly to 80.3%.
- *"The man is the head of the family and the woman is the master of the house,"* or "the woman has to follow her husband" are high-rate answers both in 2000 and 2018. However, the data show a statistically significant decrease in the response rate. 83% considered in 2000 that the man was the head of the family compared to only 70% in 2018. 78% considered in 2000 that the woman is the master of the house compared to only 51% in 2018. Segmentation by gender also shows significant differences. For example, in 2018 64.6 % of all respondents agree that "the woman

has to follow her husband" (compared to 78% in 2000), but after gender segmentation, only 58.9% of women, compared to 70.6% of men, say they agree. The perception of complementarity of gender roles in the family is a constant but the group of conservatives is higher among men. From this point of view, future initiatives in the field of private partnership promotion should specifically address this duality of perception among the population.

Of course, these comparisons (and others in the barometer) have to be contextualized, correlated with other studies, and carefully interpreted. What is worth pointing to is that where there are statistically relevant differences, they indicate a progress in 2018 as compared to 2000, in the sense that gender perceptions and gender relations are subject to modernization, abandoning the traditional functionalist paradigm. There are also positive trends in the infusion of European values, the internalization of norms and behaviors seen outside the country, the maturing of democracy, etc. There are trends that public policies under construction can and must take into account. The multidimensional profile of this population with values in the process of modernization needs to be better analyzed. These people, women and men alike, are important allies in the future construction of gender-sensitive public policies. Beyond this comparative level, we briefly mention some other results of the 2018 Gender Barometer that deserve attention:

- **Health investment is most desirable for both women and men**

Both women and men would invest money from the country's budget primarily in healthcare (43.2%), education (18.4%) and infrastructure (12.5%). On sub-samples of women / men there is difference to be noted, in the sense that men place the infrastructure second and the education third.

- **The majority wants but the minority wins (in relation to sex education in schools)**

We want sexual education in schools but after successive unsuccessful attempts to introduce this subject is only an optional in the broader "Health Education" subject: The study shows that three-quarters of the respondents are for teaching sexual education in schools, grades V-VIII (much rather young people in Transylvania and with an income higher than 1800 RON). Support is therefore great. However, initiatives of revising the school curriculum have systematically failed under the pressure of minority groups of contestants (supported by actors with significant symbolic power such as the Orthodox Church, abbreviated BOR in Romanian) and not because of the broad resistance of the society. Why? How should we formulate, promote and explain future initiatives so that they can have as a final result the formal introduction of sex education in schools?

- **Tolerance among young women for harassment in public space?**

As expected, women are disturbed by gestures that fall into the phenomenon of "street harassment", youngsters often mentioning that they have faced such inappropriate gestures. What is interesting is that by analyzing the sub-sample of women by age, in older age groups it is stated in a statistically significantly higher percentage than that recorded in the 18-29 year age segment that they perceive certain behaviors as disturbing (insistent watching, whistling, winking). Data analysis by region reveals higher percentages of women who say they have had such experiences in Moldova. The question that arises for public policy in the field is: What kind of information and education campaigns should be conceived to increase the degree of understanding regarding the negative aspects of this phenomenon among young women who, according to the study, appear to be more tolerant in certain aspects. The working methods, the language used, the arguments in terms of self-respect and violation of rights should probably be reviewed. Of course, these observations must be correlated with other data, including qualitative, to better understand the degree of tolerance.

- **Free time = household responsibilities especially for women**

Watching TV is the main leisure activity. In terms of housework, 42.2% of women spend their spare time doing chores, as opposed to only 16.2% of men. People in the 30-59 age group are self-perceiving themselves as having less time than the partner/husband/wife, regardless of gender (more obvious in rural areas). Men with higher education are more likely to have less time off than their partner (male sub-sample). Women with secondary education are more likely to perceive themselves as having less time than their partners (female sub-sample).

- **Both parents should deal with raising children but men cannot raise children as well as women**

80.3% of the sample (80.7% of women and 79.7% of men) agree that both parents should be involved in raising children. In contrast, 48.9% of women and 49.2% of men consider that men cannot raise children as well as women (as opposed to 31.9% of women and 33.8% of men who responded affirmatively). From theory to practice is a long way. Generally speaking, there is a need for private partnership or this agreement is being declared, but there is a strong traditional component of women's and men's skills. It may be a lack of perception of the distinction between maternity as an experience (birth) and maternity as child raising work. This fluctuation, this ambiguity may be important for the one who imagines gender-sensitive public policies in the field, perhaps being about the need for a greater focus on the educational and formative component of the "father's expertise".

- **Grandparents, being the baby sitters**

52.6% of parents say they have often turned to grandparents to take care of their children. Given that the category of third-age people is one that is feminized and vulnerable in Romania from the point of view of the quality of life, this aspect deserves attention in the elaboration of future public policies.

- **Gender discrimination is no longer a problem in Romania, but... gender discrimination does exist**

An important barrier to implementing gender-sensitive public policies is the denial of the need for such policies. Like a transplant - if there is no donor / beneficiary compatibility, the operation will be a failure. Data from the 2018 Gender Barometer seems to indicate an incompatibility between the efforts of those who consider the issues of gender equality and the rightful beneficiaries of these efforts. 50.3% of the sample think that "*gender discrimination is no longer a problem in Romania*" (47.5% of women agree with this!). At the same time, 47.3% of respondents agree that "*women often do not get jobs because they are women*" (women in proportion higher than men - 54.1%). So, gender discrimination is no longer perceived as a problem, but ... gender discrimination exists! In the same contradictory context, 62% of respondents agree with the statement that "*society has reached the point where women and men have equal chances of success*" but in large numbers (38.5%) believe that "*promoting equal opportunities at the workplace benefits women*" (compared with only 25.9% who disagree). Without the possibility of comparisons, it is worth taking into account that in the 2000 Barometer, half of respondents answered NO at the time at the question "*you believe that there is real gender equality in Romania*". It is therefore an important change of perception that needs to be carefully studied. At the same time other contradictions are observed. It is an important component of research, closely linked to the understanding of recent forms of hostility towards gender policies, especially in relation to affirmative policies in the field.

Conclusions

We just presented and briefly outlined some of the results of the 2018 Gender Barometer conducted with IMAS support. These preliminary analyses outline some characteristics of the population's perceptions of gender equality issues. The following should be noted:

- A dynamic Romania in terms of gender perceptions, dynamic showing a modernization of these;
- A general context of low perception of the need for equal opportunities policies (either ignorance of potential issues - such as the case of family life-work-life balance, or the perception that gender issues have been resolved and are not a priority anymore);
- A Romania that oscillates between conservative, compliant and modern attitudes regarding gender equality issues;
- A visible percentage of people that manifest contradictory, confused, undecided attitudes on different gendered issues. In this specific research contexts, it seems at times that gender/gender equality is not a relevant topic for the way in which people understand/question their day to day life. It seems that, through the questionnaire, a lot of people have thought for the very first time at these topics. The good part is that the aggregated weight of those undecided people- of those who adopt contradictory attitudes is higher than that of convinced traditionalists, which allows for a larger space of intervention. On the other hand, their distribution follows the share of distribution in the population⁵
- A gender conservatism especially linked to gender roles in the private sphere *vs.* more modern attitudes towards gender partnerships in the public sphere. As Bucur & Miroiu also noticed in a recent study (2018, p.169) “women began to contest unequal gender relations more vocally in politics and they seldom explicitly quest these dynamics in the home” . It is a conclusion that resonates similarly with Ridgeway's theory of cultural divergence, generally perceptions of gender do not correspond to changing material conditions in a society, and that the importance and significance of gender is much stronger in the private life, in the family so here there is a greater resistance to gender equality (Ridgeway, 2011).
- Differences of perceptions and attitudes correlated not only with sex/gender, but also with age, level of education, residence environment, and marital status.

Subsequent analyses, based on this study, can identify with greater precision who the allies could be and who are the ones that should be sensitized and coopted in the process of formulating and implementing gendered public policies, meaning public policies in which the issues of equal opportunities are a means of achieving the objectives and are subject to challenges so that the differences in practical and strategic needs between different social groups are recognized and

⁵ Observations based on complementary analysis, added to the ones from the INES study, conducted with the help of Ștefania Matei, Faculty of Sociology, University of Bucharest

appropriately addressed. Women and men alike, in their multidimensionality, would only benefit from such an approach.

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