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Male Authority vs. Female Authority in Traditional Rural Society¹

Mircea Brie

Abstract. In traditional rural societies, the relationships between the two partners are genuine community patterns. It is not good to mingle male authority with these male's, just like it is not possible to reverse the roles. Each of them has clear-cut tasks on both inter-relational level and on the level of socio-economic activities within or outside the household.

The (male or female) authority in point is brought to the foreground as early as the first contacts between the partners. The whole "courtship", "proposal", "dealing" with the bride's father (moment often associated with engagement), wedding rituals, etc., show the division of authority between the two. The community and the Church are on man's side. The male has authority on his family. Yet, the authority originates in the role of representing the family in front of the community, a role assumed by man. The woman has authority on household. Yet she has internal control only when the mother-in-law and generally female community "consider she is able" to respond to the needs and duties this authority supposes. In several regions in France, for instance, the young wife has to be an "apprentice" for a year by her mother-in-law or another woman, if the former is absent. Man's authority is granted by civil and religious law, by family and community and especially by socio-professional structure of traditional society, by "male" and "female" professions. Male mortality (the man is the one who is exhausted, toils, sacrifices himself, dies first) entails respect finally leading to authority. The young man looking for a wife is not concerned if she can lead a cart or cope with field work (although they are not excluded). Most of the times, the "village rumours" inform him if the young woman is able to be a good housewife through a well built mental pattern.

From another perspective, the relationship between man and woman are most of the times dominated by the relationship between them and their exploitation. Thus, the equation is enlarged to husband – wife – land. The new relationship is framed by a cosmic universe, by meteorological season cycles. It is a unique relationship. Individual (and family!) life is influenced by the slightest whim of weather and nature in general. There are two types of relationships between the spouses: 1. the case of those under their parent, relatives, customs watch, when the woman has an inferior status; 2. the case of those emancipated, "evading" the traditional, when the husband accepts woman's "equality". In the latter case, we can speak of a love union, where "happiness" is more present, the husband imposes less authority on his wife, where there is a consensus between the spouses and their relationship is based on tenderness and physical pleasure.

Keywords : family, marriage, male authority, female authority, traditional rural society, status, role, collective mentalities

In traditional rural societies, the relations between two partners are drawn in the form of real patterns by community. Individual must conform oneself to them, whether it is male or female. Any departure from this framework can disrupt family relations and, worse, relatives' relations of the two with the community. It's not wise that male authority intermingle with female authority, insomuch as it's not possible that the two roles to be reversed. Each has clear tasks, both at the inter-relation level and at the level of socio-economic activities undertaken in the household or outside of it. Village condemns both the interfering and the abusive intervention of one partner in the management roles of the other. It was a disgrace to man for a woman to go to heath to do work that he had to do it. For instance, a woman did not ever get a scythe (not because she was not physically able!), and if she had done it, the whole village would have known immediately. In such a situation, the dishonour belonged not only to the man of the house, but to the entire male authority in the village. If the man wasn't able (for whatever reason), the other men had to take action: no woman was allowed do the work of a man. Rather, they join in days of labour, and do the work of the man who was unable to fulfil his role. In the same way, the disgrace was both to man and woman when the man was interfering, „helping" his wife in managing household activities that were directly related to her. On one hand, such community intervention finds its origin in

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the solidarity of traditional rural society, which helped the family left without support, and on the other hand, it finds it in the monopoly of the management authority, male or female.

Often, a young family, established after a recent marriage, lived in the house of the young man's father. Rarely happened that the young couple settled in the house of the girl's parents. Such a possibility was however seen, when the girl was the family's inheritress (whether she was the only child or her family had only girls). In this case, the young man's authority was brought into question, and even the community noted humorously and sarcastically that, the young son-in-law brought into parents-in-law home, „was married”. However, this kind of situation was, rarely encountered. Marriage with such a girl, despite the fact that she was inheriting parents' wealth and house, wasn't a good option for the young men in the village. It was a good choice for the poorer youth, orphans and those disowned after the elder brother's marriage in the parents' house. The young boy's frustration before the girl's father authority, but also the complex (fixation) that he had before his wife (heiress of the property) often led to tense situations in those families. Beyond all these, however, a young couple forced to live with their parents (regardless of which of them), continued to initiate the necessary living skills: „the man being initiated into activities specific to the heads of family, and the wife into womanly things, that she was going to learn from other women of the house, and also, she usually had to do the work that the other older sisters-in-law refused” (Mureşan, 2005, p. 217; Nicoară, 1997, p. 164). The two were doing the apprenticeship among the group itself, waiting in silence (any other variant could have led to their exclusion from the family, the more so as, in the family were other unmarried brothers) the change of generations. The new family will be able to express themselves as they please, only when parents were aging, and willingly ceding the authority to the young ones.

Authority in question (male or female) is brought into light from the first contacts of the two partners. The entire ritual of „attendance” („frequency”), of girl's „proposal”, of bridegroom's „haggle” with the bride's father (moment often associated with the engagement), of wedding, share out the authority between the two. A symbolic battle is given between the two for sharing authority even before the priest. Community and church are in favour of man. The man has total authority over his family. This authority is born from the role of representing the family in the community, role held by the man. The woman has authority over the interior space of the household. But the woman was acquiring internal control only, when mother-in-law and, in general, the female community „were considering her able” to meet the needs and duties arising from the authority with which she was invested. In several regions of France, for example, it was recognized a one year period during which the young wife was in a period of „probation” next to her mother-in-law or to another woman if the former was missing (See Segalen, 1980, p. 31-33). She was seeing to the house's „rig”, the household's image and adornment. Children were born of woman for the husband. Often, the young wife had to pass the test of „housewife”. This quality was obtained after passing through the „filter” of mother-in-law, and only later she was to acquire the status of an adult woman. In this case the young woman became *chatelaine*. Thus, she was acquiring a new social status, invested with power to control, even if only from an administrative point of view, the private sector (as a young girl in the house of her father, she didn't have this „privilege”). There are a lot of different symbols which put the woman in the new social status, „from fashion and prestige details to maternity” (Ciupe, 2003, p. 34). While the birth of a child was proof of sin and dissoluteness for the unmarried woman, for the wife was the „supreme attribute” (Ciupe, 2003, p. 34). Birth of a child was the evidence before the community, the woman's duty against her husband. Being married, the woman could now wear „adult clothes”. But, in the same time, she had to knit her hair, because she no longer had the privileges of an unmarried woman. All these symbolize the emancipation of woman from her father's house, but also the new control of man.

Man's authority is given by the civil and religious law, by family and community, but mostly by the socio-professional structure of traditional society, by the „male” and „female” professions. Male mortality (the man is the one who has more stress, who works more, sacrifices more and dies first) is able to trace a certain respect that ultimately leads to authority. When a young man looks for a wife, he doesn't pay attention if this knows how to lead an oxcart or if she can deal with field works (although these were not excluded). Most often, „the village mouth” was pointing out if the young woman was going to be a good housewife through a well-built mental pattern.

Viewed from another perspective, the relationship between man and woman is most often dominated by the relationship between two people and their exploitation. Thus, there is proposed an expanded version in the relationship husband - wife - land. This new relationship belongs to a cosmic universe, to seasonal and meteorological cycles. It is unique. Life of the individual (and of family!) is affected by the smallest change of weather, of nature in general.

The family was not in all cases a big one, often it was composed only of parents and children, but it was patriarchal. Husband's authority over his wife was total, and her subordination was accepted by everyone. There are developed real strategies to control land exploitation, including making matrimonial alliances to ensure the succession, the access to land. In most cases, young married couples depend economically on their parents, and this dependence links them to the community, to the mental collective. The young family needs to depend on other people, thing that creates pressure on the solidarity between spouses. Solidarity is often sought outside the family into age groups and sex category. Thus appears male and female solidarity. It outlines the work „organizations”, where they used to spend more time than in the family. Couple's autonomy increased in the family group, when economic independence was achieved, woman's role became important and the spirit of equality between spouses was imposed. Therefore, we have the two types of relationships between spouses: 1. those who are under the supervision of parents, kinship group, common law, and where woman has an inferior status, 2. those who are emancipated, „escaped” from the traditional, where the husband supports woman's „equality”. In the latter case we can talk of a union of love, where „happiness” is more present, the husband requires less authority over women. Where there is often a consensus between spouses, partners' relationship is based upon physical pleasure and tenderness. Many times, these couples meet difficulties because of the refusal of acceptance from the outside, of family disavow, of exclusion from inheritance share, and these lead to other types of problems that have repercussions on the lives of couples.

The place of woman in rural society, rural traditional family is also unique. Law makes her inferior (from a judicial point of view²), she is regarded as a producer, and has a privileged position if she owns land. We may talk about her exploitation, however her work depends largely on the man. She needs her husband's „benevolence”. Without any exception, our sources inform us that the woman appears in three main hypostases: „wife, mother of the family and domestic business leader” (Ciupală, 2003, p. 48). The order of these roles of her, considered to be of divine origin, it was just as listed above. The woman had to respond and be the main aim so that the „man should no longer be alone”, be a person who „gives birth to children” (being mostly in charge of their education and growth) and to ensure proper functioning of the household. External representation of the family was engaged to man. He is both the positive and negative image. The woman was less responsible before the community. The effects of woman's actions are transmitted to man. He still controls the public area. Under the effect of personal emancipation, the private area tends to escape the male control.

Traditional society is therefore based on complete husband's authority. Such a reality is spread all over Europe: the French Civil Code of 1803 states that „man must protect his wife and the wife has to obey her husband” (Guillaume, 1985, p. 174). In testimonies of foreign travellers of XVIII-XIX centuries, we meet the Romanian women being obedient to their husbands. They did not sit at the table with their husbands, but always stayed on their feet and were busy with household stuff. Even when, they were taking care of little children or were pregnant, their chatelaines' responsibilities weren't transferred to men. The only work that woman was not allowed to perform was grazing (Mureşan, 2005, p. 222). On the other hand, beyond the folklorist discourse about male authority and female subordination, the rural society recognizes that the spouses have complementary and solidary roles (Segalen, 1980, p. 167). Often the documents talk about women who do not meet husbands' whims. However, the woman has „an obligation to follow her spouse” (Chirilă, 2003, p. 74-75), and this duty says a lot. Upon marriage, she legally moves from the authority of the father under the authority of the husband. Rural world was not always a perfect world for male idealism. The woman often went by the spouse's word, ignoring then the traditional rules, bringing shame on the man. Such facts were overlooked or not with a view by man. Imposing the male will was not capable every time. Man was the one who choose to live or not with such a woman. But divorce was disgraceful for man. This is why, many of them have accepted (as they were doing several women dissatisfied by the way they were treated) to live with such women, the shame of separation being greater in some situations. We are presented a case, isolated because of the nature of actions of the two and of their consequences, in a letter dated from 8th April 1852 signed by Gârbea Florea and his father Gârbea Vasiliu from Cusuiş. There were requiring to the archpriest the separation of the (young) from Csabota Anişoara (AN DJ-BH, FEOO, dos. 38, f. 377). The reason of the divorce wasn't, as the letter indicated, that she began dating other men, nor that she got pregnant due to a such relationship with another man - after all of these her husband agreed to receive her back home. But the

² Such an opinion about woman is found not only in the Romanian space. Caragea's law or Calimach's Code for instance, were mentioning the judicial incapability of woman, “who is seen more as a property than as a person” (acc. Ciupală, 2003, p. 17).

fact that, when none of the two men were at home, she packed all of her things and moved to her parents (where she intended to give birth to the child). For the man, this was more than dishonourable after he accepted the woman to remain in his home. How could the woman want to leave him? His image in the village, not too honourable already, could not suffer such treatment from a woman. The fact that the woman left him moving into her father's house (so she was not banished!) was more unacceptable than her adultery. She had to obey him. If he accepted her back, then she had to comply with her husband's wishes. Woman's escape, produced in the absence of the two, was the real family breach, both in front of her husband and community, which was present in the moment of moving personal things from husband's house into the father's one. Such cases, although isolated, emphasize another facet of the imagined reality: rural society dominated by the male authority.

1. Origins and sources of the authorities of the two sexes

Family, its formation, relations between man, woman, children and relatives, but also the relations with the rest of community, are filtered through „the village mouth”. The need of a very strong solidarity necessary to those unfavourable conditions of those times, forced individuals to accept coexistence with other family members (including extended³) and with the rest of the community. Most often, individual behaviour takes expression of the collective behaviour. Such an influence of the community was underlined in traditional rural societies. Collective mentalities required rules and authoritarian systems that both men and women must comply with. Mentalities, „understood as a set of representations, beliefs, convictions, dominant images etc., situated at the threshold between conscious and unconscious, associated with attitudes, practices and behaviours which they expressed”, were collective forms and experiences that were influencing the family life (Plato, 2000, p. 17). In traditional rural world, lost in large part by the contemporaneity, the community was actively and closely interfering into the personal lives of its members during three main events: birth, marriage and death (Shorter, 1977, p. 263). From the perspective of symbols, this participation of community admits the individuals belonging not only to their own family, but also to a formation of a much wider community group.

Over time, however, this has known progressive dilutions, under the pressure of modernity factors. The state intervenes requiring and imposing different rules of family life. Profound changes can be found cut out for the integration of this area in an economic circuit which will lead to the imposition of some mutations in several economic districts. Economic development and spread of agricultural activities associated with urban development, whose influence was growing, implied changes in family relationships. Then, changes occur in relationships between family, domestic group and household resources (Goody, 2001, p. 103). However, these changes are not visible everywhere: some localities remain rooted in traditional, here the new appears more difficult. Major changes in the collective mental cannot be accomplished during the analyzed period, that is the second half of the 19th century - first decades of the 20th century.

The division of authority within the family between man and woman was influenced, even required, by the realities of existence of that family, by the contact and typology of the community where they were living, by the degree of dependence of the family towards relatives, by the socio-professional status, by the age and marital status of the two partners at the time of marriage etc.

a. **The family model** (pattern) was no doubt, both in the Romanian area and in other parts of Europe, a source for the assertion of certain types of authority among families.

The formation of the family was often the moment, when was decided the place of two partners in the family. In general, it was observed that when a young family was formed under the control of excessive parents, the male authority was more obvious. Preservation of traditional values was also much more possible. On the other hand, when marriage was based on a relationship built between the two partners, understanding tended towards equality of spouses, the authority being distributed between the two.

Still what is interesting is the cohabitation space distribution of roles and statuses, including of authority. Interior household space tends to become dominated by woman, while the man remains dominant besides it.

Social ritual of marriage in traditional rural areas encompassed three main components (Bozon, 1991, p. 50-51). The first was referring to objects and goods transfer (the most important was revealed by

³ Some authors found exactly in this need of the individual, the source and existential substrate of an extended family, which beside the family itself, contained the whole tribe of relatives of many degrees and generations (Mureşan, 2005, p. 205).

the mobile transportation of the portion offered by the girl's parents). The second emphasized „the person transportation”. Offered by her father, the girl was taken by her husband from her father's house. The entire wedding ceremonial is centred on this act of taking over the bride by groom and the accompanying persons. After this the new family was going to settle down in a new house. Finally, the third component was based on the roles and the statuses of each of them. The emphasis is always on the family and less on the community, this despite of the fact that the entire community participates actively to those rituals. Each ceremonial tried to reveal the place and the two spouses authority over family and household. Traditional ceremony marriage is structured by the asymmetry of role of woman and man, rose from social rituals foundation (Bozon, 1991, p. 50-51). Always the man seeks his bride at her home (never vice versa). The bride is distinguished by clothes, which is not the case for men. Often, the entire ritual of taking the bride turns into a sketch⁴ in which the main role goes to the bride and where the groom is more of a supernumerary. The emphasis falls on the symbolic exit from the house; bride's family „suffers” a loss of its members.

In parallel, the two young families established through marriage a pact of alliance and peace. Thus, the marriage became „the centre of a family which was composed of parallel and successive, upward and downward spaced levels, and which had as a starting point the recently formed couple” (apud Mureşan, 2005, p. 205; Ciobănel, 1996, p. 19). During the Middle Ages, and later on such a role of marriage was noted abundantly, and seemed to establish connections and understandings in a hostile world, where the woman was the pledge and instrument of good intention. Over time, the church, and not only, required in wedding ceremony the moment when the woman was asked to acknowledge voluntarily the marriage (Bock, 2002, p. 26). Secondly, from the perspective of the two families, marriage meant a transfer of money, goods and properties (Bock, 2002, p. 26). Many times, the young girl was endowed by her father with a trousseau that went by her future husband's wealth. Over time, this transfer of assets and properties of the two families knew a tone, due to a mutation that occurred in the structure and construction of a new family type. The new modern model of nuclear family made more way to the couple and wife image, and less to that of mother and young woman. Families of the two interfered less in the formation and stability of the new family. Transfer of goods, if made, rather took a single form, that of steering the new couple without leaving any place for „ransom” between the families of two parents.

Marriage of love or marriage of convenience? Freedom of the young or control of the parents? Difficult questions for our sources of information. However, the two mentioned models are present in this form under various combined constructions. Despite the attraction between two young, ethno-denominational and socio-professional determinism, in conjunction with family and community „preferences”, have the gift to shape the „love” of a young man for his partner. Marriage often appeared as a deal completed by parents, taking into account the fortune and good kind of family who were to be related; feelings of the youth being ordered later to match the choice. In other words, the love we talk about proved to be stronger when it was built by determinism and fewer constraints. Between the family union proposed by the parents (most often related to socio-material interests of the family) and free choice (including expression regarding illegitimate sexual relations) there is always a net distinction. Existing patterns varied, depending on the economic system of the household of the two families. Therefore, we may associate marriage between two young, to the socio-professional profile of the family in general and of those two in particular.

Analyzing this relationship between sincere love and socio-material interest, many historians and sociologists have made the mistake of abusive assimilation between love and sexual relations, putting across various behaviours of case studies on an area in which the realities were different. We believe that regional differences are very important and can lead to different marital behaviour. It is imperative to know these aspects of each specific region.

The two models of marriage in question are largely facets of mental constructions. In general, the traditional society preserves marriage dominated by material interest. In a traditional rural world, a young man who had an income, even if it was a tiny salary, was regarded as part of „good people” (though he was just a servant). As a result, he was desired by the young girls who aimed to leave the traditional. Young people were getting married in order to help and support themselves during life, including when discomfort was very high. Fortune was able to create a strong determinism which made some young people to go beyond the age or marital status of the future partner. Examples are numerous in this respect. On June 24th 1855, Laurentius Egerbenyi (47 years) from Băiţa (Bihor County), with a „very good material condition” was marrying Catherine Mayer, a young woman of only 21 years, from the same

⁴ Not a few times, mother and other close relatives of the bride, cry at her departure from family.

locality (AN DJ-BH, CRSC, dos. 84, f. 35-36). In the same parish, on 4th of August 1861, Carolus Varady (52 years) who was occupying an important job in the „mountain exploitation”, was marrying much younger Bontek Maria (22 years) (AN DJ-BH, CRSC, dos. 84, f. 40-41). On July 4th 1863, Josephus Novak (40 years), born in Moravia, but settled in Baița, where he got a significant professional status, was marrying Peter Iulianna of 19 years (AN-DJ BH, CRSC, dos. 84, f. 41-42).

Marriage made in a traditional society did not exclude love and deep feelings between partners. But they were not decisive in the family construction. Moreover, love taken into question was not a condition for contracting a marriage, and even less for the success of a new family. First of all, to get marry meant to form a team. This „model” knew many regional tones, and with the time elapse seemed to enfold requirements of modernity. The phenomenon was more visible in the city, and at the beginning of 20th century, and in some rural areas where the traditional was leaving place, under the influence of non-agricultural activities, to a process of socio-economic modernization. These changes led, as can easily be anticipated, to new mental perceptions, and then to another reaction of the community. Social norms were changing. Feelings became legitimate.

The young persons, less economically dependent on parents, emancipate and they decide for themselves when they choose a partner for marriage. From the new perspective, immoral was the marriage of material interest and without being accompanied by sincere feelings of the two spouses. There are many cases of young people who, refusing to accept parenthood „advice”, they „ran” together, and „got married of love”. The girl’s image, that let herself be taken during the Romanian round dance „against parents will” by the unaccepted lover, is present in folklore and collective mental⁵. From this perspective, love starts of the mutual attraction, of the looking at pleasure and of embracing it. Sorin Mitu, referring to several cut-outs of folklore, paints us two images of idealistic femininity. First, taken from a play published in 1768 and reproduced by Onisifor Ghibu in 1934 (Ghibu, 1934, p. 22-23), presents the stereotype image generally seen in traditional rural world (woman must be „white, fat and beautiful” (Mitu, 2000, p. 197)): „beautiful and broad in the beam” or with a „proud and fattish body /.../ and a roundish beam” (apud Mitu, 2000, p. 197). This image is not singular, it is even contradicted by new perceptions (the second proposed image): „not too tall nor too short/tenuous body and thin” (apud Mitu, 2000, p. 197) or „tall and nervy wench / like she’s virgate” (apud Mitu, 2000, p. 197).

b. **Community typology** affects directly the family. During the period analyzed by us, two young families no longer entirely controlled the marriage. If during the previous periods, marriage was decided exclusively by the families of the young, while sincere feelings of affection went into the second plan, now young people may choose their partner. Despite this radical transformation of mentality, community still has the leverage needed to control the formation of a new family. This control is more visible in the village, where features of traditional existence are more powerful, and more diluted in the city, where linking between family (usually nuclear) and community was formed on other rules.

Viewed from another perspective, the idea of a couple is very relative. Ethnographic studies have shown that the inhabitants of traditional villages were united more or less in the social relations of the family, but all were related to the community. Supporting the community is very strong in terms of ubiquitous mortality that dislocates families, making them vulnerable. Community in exchange doesn’t die and the individuals trust in it must remain strong. Family is somewhat a victim of this reality, the individual lives, but beyond the family, in the social group of family of origin and not only. Family solidarity depends on the economic crises, on the need for seasonal labour movement, sometimes seasonal migration becomes final. In the latter case, family solidarity increases, phenomenon generated by settling in a new community. Then, personal emancipation, exclusion from the sharing legacy, migration to the city, new professions a.s.o., lead to a significant increase of solidarity between partners.

2. Sharing roles in the traditional family. Male space - female space.

Statuses and roles within the family, father’s power and woman’s emancipation are interesting in terms of subject matter. The relation marriage - marriage and household - love is able to achieve human sensitivities. Man is in the eye of community, its welfare or its lack provides an image of the man. He is responsible for his actions before community, but the image of woman is transmitted to man. Main roles of public space belong to man (Ștefănescu, 2004, p. 57), women's space being the house and the household. The man was responsible for agro-pastoral works, for family relations with the authorities, for

⁵ After they lurk a while, they will return to the village and they will marry. In this case, the claim of fortune could not exist, however, remains at the parents’ discretion if they would eventually want to participate at the endowing of the new family (Marian, 2000, p. 104).

any trips to fairs or mill, in general exogenous activities. The woman, mistress of the household space, was taking care of the main activities related to household and house (varnishing them), of children education, as well as, of the garden. The man was the one who was taking the most important decisions, though he was also asking for his wife's opinion (Mureşan, 2005, p. 218).

Traditional families are often extended families. Along with husband, wife and any children, there are also living parents and siblings of one of the partners. „The emergence of a daughter-in-law about to relate to his spouse (or, more rarely, the coming of a son-in-law in the house of his heiress wife) meets some special problems of cohabitation” (Collomp, 1997, p. 257). Statuses and roles were kept even at the table. „The master of the house has the best place, place which remained empty in his absence...” (Collomp, 1997, p. 260). „Places assigned especially in the rooms of the dwelling, a ritual meal, skills since early childhood, good behaviour, gestures and way to express inside and outside the house; thus, a whole teaching system was developed, aimed to inspire the younger generation respect towards the elderly, and to force the dominant ones – little children, daughters-in-law - to consent the favours attributed to the elder son, to respect their parents” (Collomp, 1997, p. 261). In such a family each member had its own role, integrated into a system dominated by the „house father”.

House-cleaning-exploitation solidarity discovers a family organization of work that traces family roles and relations. In crisis situations (disasters, diseases etc.), which can often occur in the house-cleaning-exploitation equation, it calls for extended family solidarity. Uncles, aunts, cousins, grandchildren or other members of the family clan intervene to restore balance and harmony between man and his household. But in everyday life, work of each day is done by man, woman, parents of the two, and by any help of the children who were physically capable to cope with agricultural works.

In labour organization is present not only family solidarity, but also sex solidarity. As I stated before, when we talked about male and female authority, the relationship of solidarity between men or women of a community is quite obvious. This kind of solidarity was born from a need of mutual support, but also from a collective mentality which established the role of each sex in all daily activities. We identify female activities, but also exclusively male activities. In such a case the two (man and woman) were trying to integrate into the community of sex, going beyond family solidarity. Therefore, we identify a male and female solidarity. Community often interferes in relations between spouses through this relationship that separates the two partners. „Household had to produce and often they were living only to produce” (Segalen, 1980, p. 88). Reaching the conclusion that „the production of success ensures the existence of group” (Segalen, 1980, p. 88), Martine Segalen identifies in traditional rural society „sacrifice of the family relationship” in favour to extended relationships at the community level (especially through the male and female solidarity).

Through an almost total consensus, the interior activities are belonging mainly to woman and the outer ones to man. The house is for woman and the field is for man. This distribution of roles is not only in relation to specific activities, but also with objects, tools or animals that belong to or are present in both spaces. Scythe, axe, plough, cart, shovel etc. are tools predominantly used (if not exclusively) by man. Weaver, hoe, rake, tableware, oven, broom belong to the woman. Horses, oxen or dogs are animals that accompany the man. Poultry, cow, goat, cat or other animals that are within the household and are not used in field work are in woman's care and attention. And last, the boys go with the father and the girls with the mother.

The roles of the two sexes also depend on the seasons. We may observe a major change in the roles sharing between the crop (agricultural) and winter season, when activities outside the household were to transport hay, wood and possibly garbage on the field. During the agricultural season the man was engaged in activities outside the household (plowing, sowing, gathering hay, harvest, harvesting vineyard, fruits, potatoes and corn etc.). The activities of the household were only for woman (in this case, besides the cleaning, the woman had to take care of the animals and poultry, and nevertheless the garden, right behind the house). In contrast, during winter, the woman was carrying out inside activities (cleaning, weaving, handicraft etc.), while the man had to manage a great part of the household activities (which during the agricultural season belonged to woman). All these lead to identify a male space (field, forest, fair, maybe stable and yard - the last two at least during winter) and a feminine space (house, kitchen, garden, river, spring or fountain).

We identify a different sharing of roles of the two spouses not only with a net separation of their activities. Often, man and woman are working together in the same activity. What differs is the degree of involvement, the roles and the tasks.

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