

### Trends in gender beliefs in Romania: 1993-2008

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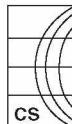
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# Trends in gender beliefs in Romania: 1993–2008

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## Abstract

The impact of modernization and industrialization on gender arrangements has been different depending on the gender culture that predominated when the modernization process started. Romania was among the most rural societies in Europe after the Second World War. Women's involvement in agricultural activity was very high, but the gender division of work was a very traditional one. The communist regimes promoted a full employment policy for the entire population but did nothing to encourage gender equality in the private space. This article focuses on the Romanian case, aiming to identify the dynamics of gender beliefs during the post-communist period. Using data from two waves of the European Values Survey (1990, 1999), as well as data provided by the Public Opinion Barometer 2007 and by Family Life – 2008, the authors carried out standard cohort decomposition methods in order to detect the mechanism that produced the most variation in gender beliefs.

## Keywords

cohort decomposition method, Eastern Europe, gender beliefs, Romania, social values

## Introduction

The analyses dedicated to the dynamics of gender beliefs in Europe and North America are mainly based on the assumption that most of the industrial societies have been characterized by the male breadwinner model of gender relations. Research focused on advanced

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industrialized societies, such as the United States, Great Britain or Germany, approach the topic from this perspective (Baxter and Kane, 1995; Bolzendahl and Myers, 2004; Scott et al., 1996). According to this model, the gender beliefs shared by the family members led them to assign different roles to men and women. Over time, processes associated with industrialization and modernization, such as changes in educational attainment, the labour market and demographic structure, led to changes in gender beliefs. Under the influence of these processes, people became more willing to accept similar roles for both sexes.

By the end of the Second World War, when rapid modernization began (Pfau-Effinger, 1998), not all European societies had similar gender cultures. The model of male breadwinner/female carer was prevalent in many countries in Western Europe, while in other societies the agrarian family economic model predominated. According to Pfau-Effinger (1998, 2004), the first model relies on the strict separation between public and private social spheres and on the idea of gender complementarity, the husband being in charge of working in the public sphere, while the wife is responsible for the domestic work. The second model is based on the idea of mutual dependence between genders, both of them contributing to the family's economic activity. Both husband and wife work together for the household's economy, both being involved in the agricultural activities though performing different tasks. Women's economic activity is seen as being as important as that performed by men for the family's survival. The impact of modernization and industrialization on gender arrangements was different depending on the gender culture that predominated when the modernization process started. After the Second World War, the communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe initiated a significant process of industrialization and societal modernization (Murgescu, 2010). The changes in gender arrangements followed a completely different path in Central and Eastern Europe as compared to the path followed in western societies. The communist regimes promoted a full employment policy for women, as well as for men, but did nothing to encourage gender equality in the private space (Gal and Kligman, 2000; Heitlinger, 1985). The result was a significant persistence of traditional values and gender stereotypes (Kalmijn, 2003).

Previous work on gender issues in post-communist countries predicted an advancement of patriarchal values and attitudes, after the breakdown of the communist regime (Lobodzinska, 1996; Panayatova and Brayfield, 1997). The prediction was based on the assumption of declining female participation in the labour force and on the supposition that post-communist citizens would have rejected gender equality as a part of the communist ideology. The studies dedicated to the dynamics of gender beliefs in post-communist countries, most of which focused on the case of Eastern Germany, did not support this hypothesis (Braun et al., 1994; Lee et al., 2007). However, Romania was, and still is, a more rural society than Eastern Germany, and Ceaușescu's regime promoted the agrarian model of family life.

The present article focuses on the Romanian case, aiming to identify the dynamics of gender beliefs during the post-communist period. We have chosen Romania for the current analysis, for three different reasons. First, it is an example of a society in which the communist policy of full employment for women was introduced in a context in which the agrarian model predominated. Similarly to other countries in the region, Romania was mainly an agrarian society before the Second World War; there, the male breadwinner model was rather marginal. Second, Ceaușescu's regime promoted a model of family

specific to the rural areas, with a higher fertility rate and a lower divorce rate (Kligman, 1998), which hampered the advancement of gender equality in the private space; this is completely different from the model promoted in other countries in the Soviet bloc. Third, the privatization of the economy advanced slowly during the transition period, and the social policies were aimed at protecting jobs (Zamfir, 1999). While women's participation in the labour market did not dramatically decrease, the family policies promoted by the former regime were abandoned in 1990.

We aim to answer the following questions: Did Romanians return to the agrarian family model after 1990, rejecting the communist policy of full employment, or did they adopt the model of gender equality in work and private life? If the second assumption is true, what was the main mechanism of the social change – population turnover, or individual change under the impact of contextual changes?

Our analyses are based on data from two waves of the European Values Survey carried out in 1993 and 1999 (included in the integrated dataset: European and World Values Surveys, 2006), as well as on data provided by the Public Opinion Barometer (2007) and by Family Life (2008). This combination allows longitudinal comparisons. We have used standard cohort decomposition methods in order to detect the mechanism that produced the most variation in gender beliefs.

In the first section, we provide a short overview of the existing theories explaining the dynamics of gender beliefs, and we elaborate on our hypotheses. The second part introduces the indicators and the strategy used for analysis, while the third comprises the data analysis. The final section is dedicated to the conclusions and a short discussion.

## Theoretical framework

### *Mechanisms of change in gender attitudes and beliefs*

Gender beliefs are ‘normative beliefs about what gender relations in society should be like, or the extent to which a person supports the norm of gender equality’ (Bergh, 2006: 6). The changes in gender beliefs towards more equality between women and men, reported by various studies, have been related to female employment (Banaszak and Plutzer, 1993; Baxter and Kane, 1995; Bolzendahl and Myers, 2004), increasing levels of education (Brewster and Padavic, 2000; Cunningham et al., 2005), the availability of public childcare (Brewster and Padavic, 2000), the evolution of fertility and birth control methods (Brooks and Bolzendahl, 2004; Kroska and Elman, 2009) and family formation and dissolution (Amato and Booth, 1991, 1995; Cunningham et al., 2005). These transformations are associated with an increase in the general level of economic and social development produced by industrialization and modernization.

Several different models are used to explain why individuals change their gender attitudes and beliefs; these include: interest-based explanations, exposure-based explanations (Bolzendahl and Myers, 2004), ideological learning (Brooks and Bolzendahl, 2004) and control models (Kroska and Elman, 2009). Interest-based explanations rely on the idea that individuals hold pro-feminist attitudes when they can benefit from gender equality (Bolzendahl and Myers, 2004). Interest-based models explain why women share more egalitarian attitudes than men do, and why working women are in favour of female

employment. The same mechanism is used to explain why men hold egalitarian attitudes when they are not able to fully provide for their households and they benefit from their spouses' wages.

Exposure-based models assume that changes in gender attitudes and beliefs occur when the individual is exposed to pro-feminist ideas, or to situations that promote increased support for gender equality (Bolzendahl and Myers, 2004). Exposure operates through three different mechanisms: education, socialization and personal experience. Education exposes both women and men to feminist ideas, while work experience exposes women to discriminatory practices that make them aware of inequality. Working also provides women with the opportunity to demonstrate that they are able to perform in the labour market (Banaszak and Plutzer, 1993), and can combine work and family life. Moreover, a working mother exposes her children to feminist ideas.

The ideological learning perspective assumes that 'changing attitudes towards gender roles are linked to other attitudinal changes' (Brooks and Bolzendahl, 2004: 111). A stronger support for gender equality occurs as an outcome of a larger process of change in beliefs and attitudes. Brooks and Bolzendahl (2004) linked this change to the increasing individualism and civic liberalism in the United States, while Voicu (2009) showed how support for democracy shapes gender beliefs in European countries.

Control models rely on the assumption that individuals seek to maintain meanings and that 'they adjust their attitudes to match their behaviour' (Kroska and Elman, 2009: 379). If the background and the behaviour are less egalitarian than the attitudes, the egalitarianism decreases, while if the behaviour is more egalitarian, the attitudes shift in a more egalitarian direction. This mechanism explains why the experience of marriage and parenthood shifts attitudes towards more inegalitarian directions (Kroska and Elman, 2009), while divorce as a non-traditional behaviour exerts the opposite effect (Amato and Booth, 1991, 1995).

We consider the four explanations as being complementary, and we use them as tools to help us predict how gender beliefs have evolved; they also assist in determining which mechanism generated the change. The aim of this article is not to test these theories, but to predict the dynamics of gender beliefs in Romania.

According to the theories of social change, transformations in social values, beliefs and attitudes may occur as a result of two different mechanisms: cohort replacement and intra-cohort change. The first one relies on the assumption that values and beliefs are formed during the childhood and youth stages, and remain stable during adult life. As Mannheim (1952 [1927]) and Ryder (1965) have pointed out, early formative experiences leave an imprint on the values and attitudes of generations or cohorts. Each cohort will differ significantly from the others, depending on the type of social, economic and political context experienced during the formative period. Social change then results from cohort replacement; younger cohorts socialized in a different social and political context, replacing the older ones.

The other mechanism, of intra-cohort change, assumes that social change is the result of changes in individual values due either to social, economic and political events experienced during adulthood, or to life cycle changes. Sears and Valentino (1997) point out that a special event, such as the Great Depression, the Second World War or the French Revolution, makes new issues salient in life and may cause some changes in early orientations.

Previous studies that decomposed changes in gender beliefs found that both mechanisms – cohort replacement and intra-cohort change – are involved in the liberalization of these beliefs. However, the contribution of the two mechanisms to changes in gender beliefs differs from one country to another and from one moment in time to another. In the United States, two-thirds of the pro-feminist changes during the 1970s and 1980s were due to intra-cohort change (Mason and Lu, 1988), while between the mid-1980s and 1990s, population turnover was the main mechanism of change (Scott et al., 1996). Comparing East and West Germany during the post-communist period, Lee et al. (2007) found a higher contribution from population turnover in West Germany, while in the East, the change in gender beliefs was mainly produced by intra-cohort change. While there is higher variability in the contribution of the two processes to the liberalization of gender beliefs, many of the researchers studying this topic have come to the conclusion that intra-cohort change is produced by contextual changes, while ageing has no effect (Brooks and Bolzendahl, 2004).

### *Gender equality in Romania*

By the end of the Second World War, Romania was a ‘rural society’, with 77 percent of the population living in rural settlements in 1946 (CNS, 1996) and working in the agricultural sector. The tasks were divided by sex and age (Cernea, 1974). The man was the head of the household unit, the patriarchal model of the family being widespread in the region (Stahl, 2000). Childcare was mainly the woman’s task, but the extended family was involved too, with grandparents or older children also engaged in caring for young children (Majuru, 2006). This model is similar to the agrarian family economic gender model described by Pfau-Effinger (1998).

The communist regime initiated industrialization and changed the household’s structure (Sandu, 1985). By the end of the communist period, only 22 percent of the population was employed in agriculture (CNS, 1996), and the rate of participation by women in the labour force was 79 percent (Kligman, 1998). The collectivization of agriculture transformed the gender relations inside the agrarian family and turned rural women into agricultural workers (Kideckel, 2006). The increase in female involvement in the labour market changed the gender beliefs in a more egalitarian direction. However, the state did nothing to promote equality inside the family or to encourage sharing of domestic tasks (Gal and Kligman, 2000; Heitlinger, 1985).

Different welfare states are associated with different patterns of women’s employment (Crompton and Harris, 1997), while family policies shape the way in which women reconcile paid and unpaid work (Sjöberg, 2004). Public facilities for childcare, availability of paid maternity leave or public help for the elderly have a strong impact on gender beliefs. Public childcare was available, but the preschool enrolment was lower as compared to other countries in the region. In 1989, the pre-primary enrolment rate was above 85 percent in Hungary and Ukraine, while in Romania it was only 63 percent (UNICEF, 1993). Maternity leave was limited to 112 days, and many families used informal alternatives to combine family obligations and working life (Kligman, 1998; Verdery, 1996).

There are differences regarding the family policies promoted by Romania, depending on the period under review. During the first years of communism, the policies were similar

to those promoted in other communist countries, encouraging divorce, birth control methods and women's independence (Kideckel, 2006). The family policies promoted after Ceaușescu came into power in 1965 differed from those that were implemented in other countries in the region. Ceaușescu's regime considered the family as the 'basic society's cell' and tried to impose the agrarian family model on the entire society (Kligman, 1998). Divorce was a very long and difficult process. The pronatalist state policies encouraged the large family model by imposing a ban on abortion and contraception methods, and by providing financial incentives for large families (Gal and Kligman, 2000; Kligman, 1998).

In a way, the communist model fitted the agrarian family model. Working in the labour market was easily adapted to the traditional gender roles, and the shift towards more favourable attitudes on women's employment was a normal consequence of the official politics. Women entering the paid labour market adapted their attitudes due to the interest-based mechanism, while the children of these women were exposed to the model of full employment of women, and adopted a corresponding attitude.

Parenthood has a negative impact on pro-feminist attitudes and beliefs, while having an increased number of children strengthens this effect (Cunningham et al., 2005; Kroska and Elman, 2009). Even if the population found various strategies to reduce the fertility rate, the rate was higher as compared to the period when birth control was allowed, indicating that the birth rate was above the 'desired' one.<sup>1</sup> The divorce experience has proved to be helpful in pushing attitudinal change in egalitarian directions, as Amato and Booth (1991, 1995) have shown. In Romania, the lack of this experience impeded the development of an equalitarian gender culture. The result was a huge gap between the beliefs related to women's involvement in paid work and those concerning the private life.

After 1989, the increased social support for democratic values such as tolerance, human rights and equal opportunities led to the advancement of gender equality, based on the ideological learning process (Voicu, 2009). The Romanian population became more tolerant and more inclined to support minority rights (Comşa and Rusu, 2011), which fuelled egalitarian gender beliefs and attitudes, and due to the ideological learning process, produced change via the intra-cohort change mechanism. We expect democratization to engender greater support for gender equality in all life domains.

The post-communist transformation resulted in poverty and decreased incomes (Zamfir, 1999). Having a second wage became a necessity in many families (Adler and Brayfield, 1997; Braun et al., 1994; Haller and Hoellinger, 1994). We can predict via the interest-based mechanism that general support for women's employment did not decrease during the transition period, as it was in the interest of both women and men to maintain it.

The government focused instead on protecting women's rights as workers and was less concerned with the private domain. The social policies of the period partly continued the employment policies that had been promoted by the former regime, aiming to protect the population by protecting jobs (Zamfir, 1999). The unemployment rate was lower compared to other countries in the region (Fodor et al., 2002), but due to the end of the full employment policy, women's participation in the labour force declined from 79 percent in 1990 to 61 percent in 2007 (INSS, 2009). A similar trend was also registered for men.

The social policies promoted favourable attitudes towards women's employment by encouraging the female population to be active in the labour market. Benefits such as paid maternity leave or post-natal leave are provided only for employed mothers (Zamfir,

1999). However, a decline of 20 percent in the female active population has some consequences for gender beliefs. We expect that due to the exposure effect, lower participation of women in paid work will generate reduced support in the younger cohort for female employment.

The childcare system suffered many transformations after 1990 due to the privatization of the state enterprises that provided childcare during the communist regime (Zamfir, 1999). However, the enrolment in preschool education did not dramatically decrease because the fertility rate has halved in the last 20 years (Mureşan, 2008) so there has not been so much pressure on the public childcare system even if the total number of childcare facilities has decreased. The enrolment rate in kindergarten decreased in the early 1990s but rose in the following years, with the rates exceeding those registered during the communist period.<sup>2</sup>

The extended family still plays an important role in caring for children (Preda, 2002) and, starting in 2005, the state policy has been to encourage women to re-enter the labour market promptly after childbirth. Parents may choose to take parental leave until the child reaches two years old or to receive a lump sum monthly, in addition to their wages, specifically to pay for private care (Monitorul Oficial, 2005). Although maternal employment decreased during the post-communist transition,<sup>3</sup> about 45 percent of mothers having children up to three years old are economically active, while 60 percent of those women with children between three and six years old actively participate in the labour market (UNICEF, 2005). As long as the state encourages maternal employment and public alternatives for childcare are available,<sup>4</sup> there are strong reasons to expect a favourable trend towards gender equality.

Some transformation has occurred in family life, too. The most important examples were the dramatic drop in the fertility rate (Mureşan, 2008), the slight decrease in the number of marriages (CNS, 1996; Eurostat, 2009) and the rise in the divorce rate (Eurostat, 2009). We expect to find a boost in the pro-equality gender ideology generated by the liberalization of family life, based on the control mechanism. All the demographic trends mentioned are likely to raise the egalitarian gender ideology among the younger cohorts, generating enhancement of such ideology by population turnover. The intra-cohort change is likely to occur too, because people are confronted with more egalitarian influences, which force them to transform their attitudes and beliefs in accordance with the control models.

Since 2000, new legislation allows fathers to take parental leave to care for their young children. Although there are no official data about the gender distribution of the beneficiaries of parental leave, we can assume that in the context of the higher unemployment rate among men, families may choose to keep the women in the labour force and involve the fathers in childcare. This can lead to an intra-cohort transformation towards egalitarian gender beliefs, due to the control mechanism.

We expect to identify a general trend towards increasingly egalitarian gender beliefs in Romania. Even if we anticipate a negative effect from cohort replacement on support for female employment, we expect to find stronger contextual effects which will counterbalance the negative impact of population turnover and to detect a generally positive trend towards support for women's employment. However, we expect to identify a different speed of change in different dimensions, due to the higher concern of state policy

with maintaining female employment at a higher rate. We anticipate that population turnover will exert a slowing effect on support for women's employment. Women are significantly more supportive of gender equality than men are, because such an attitude is in their interest (Fan and Mooney, 2000). Therefore, we expect to find stronger support for gender equality among women in all the dimensions investigated. However, there are no reasons to expect a different variation between the female and the male population, in our target dimensions. In summary, the following are the hypotheses for this study:

*H1:* Support for gender equality has increased in Romania during the post-communist period. However, the pace of change has been faster for beliefs regarding the importance of work for women and those regarding the consequences of maternal employment, but has been slower for gender ideology.

*H2:* Support for gender equality is higher among the female population as compared to males, but the longitudinal trends are similar over the period investigated.

*H3:* Intra-cohort change and population turnover are both involved in the transformation of gender beliefs, but we expect a stronger effect of the first process due to the significant transformation that occurred during the reference period in all the dimensions analysed.

*H4:* Cohort replacement exerts a negative impact on support for women's employment due to the transformation of the employment pattern in the last decades.

## Data and method

We analysed the social change in gender beliefs in Romania between 1993 and 2008 using cross-sectional data from two waves of the European Values Survey (1993 and 1999), data from the Romanian Public Opinion Barometer (2007) and data from the Family Life survey (2008). Stratified multi-stage random samples were used, except in the case of the 1993 European Values Survey (EVS), for which a quota sampling scheme was employed. The 2007 Public Opinion Barometer (POB) results were weighted to adjust the sample distribution by gender, age and residential area, while the 2008 Family Life (FL) results were weighted to adjust the sample distribution by gender and age. The period spanned by the four surveys allowed for an examination of trends in gender beliefs in Romania after the fall of communism, and we set out to decompose the total social change in gender beliefs across this time span, into change that was due to cohort replacement and change that was due to intra-cohort processes.

We have focused our analysis on three theoretical dimensions of gender beliefs: beliefs defining an egalitarian gender ideology, beliefs about the importance of work for women and beliefs about the consequences of women's employment upon their families. These dimensions capture gender beliefs regarding two important domains of life that are affected by changes in gender roles: family and work. Previous research has identified these dimensions (as such, or in addition to other dimensions of gender beliefs) as theoretically and empirically suitable in a variety of countries, including former communist countries (Braun et al., 1994; Haller et al., 2000; Scott et al., 1996).

The trends in regard to each of these dimensions were explored using three survey items, each tapping a different dimension. The *gender ideology* dimension is captured by the item: 'A job is alright, but what most women really want is a home and children'

(labelled here as WANTHOME); the *importance of work for women* dimension is measured by the item: ‘Having a job is the best way for a woman to be an independent person’ (FEMJOB); and the *consequences of women working* dimension is measured by the item: ‘A preschool child is likely to suffer if his or her mother works’ (FEPRESCH).<sup>5</sup>

In the three items described above, agreement with the beliefs that having a job is important for women, and brings personal development benefits without hurting family life, denotes egalitarian gender beliefs. For the analyses presented in this article, the items were scaled in an egalitarian direction (a value of 1 was given for responses that indicated agreement and strong agreement with the egalitarian gender belief and a value of 0 was given for responses that indicated disagreement and strong disagreement with the egalitarian gender belief).

### **Decomposition models**

Our analyses first explored whether the levels of support for each of these gender beliefs in the population were similar or, alternatively, whether there was more support among the Romanian population for some of these beliefs and less support for others. We were also interested in whether the trends over time, in regard to these items, would reflect a movement towards increasingly egalitarian gender beliefs or a movement in the opposite direction. Second, we decomposed the changes observed between 1993 and 2008 into changes due to processes related to the succession of cohorts, and changes due to intra-cohort processes. To do so, we adapted the linear regression decomposition of social change techniques proposed by Firebaugh (1989, 1992) for interval level variables to apply to the decomposition of change for dichotomous variables. This was based on previous work by Brooks and colleagues (Brooks, 2000; Brooks and Manza, 1997). We paid special attention to possible gender differences in the patterns of change in gender beliefs.

The decomposition of social change (SC) into its two components – cohort replacement (CR) and intra-cohort change (ICC) – is based on the idea that over time, trends describing shifts in public opinion, attitudes or beliefs do not result solely from changes in the outlook of individuals, but also from changes in population membership due to the succession of cohorts.

The linear decomposition method uses information on  $Y$  (the variable of interest), survey year and birth year in pooled cross-sectional data. In order to partition social change into its components, cross-sectional data from various points in time are pooled, and a regression model of the variable of interest on survey year and birth year is used to compute the components of change (Firebaugh, 1989, 1992). Since our variables of interest were dichotomous, we used a logistic regression equation and decomposed effects using the logit coefficients from this equation, following the procedures for dichotomous variable decomposition outlined in previous work (Brooks, 2000; Brooks and Manza, 1997). The logistic regression equation used was:

$$\ln\left(\frac{\pi}{1-\pi}\right) = b_0 + b_1 * \text{Survey Year} + b_2 * \text{Birth Year},$$

where  $\pi$  is the probability of agreeing with the egalitarian gender belief. ICC was then computed as a product of the *Survey Year* slope and the time span between the initial survey year and the final survey year. CR was computed as the difference in the mean birth years between the final and the initial survey years, multiplied by the *Birth Year* slope. The amount of social change was computed as the difference between the log odds of agreeing with the egalitarian gender belief at the final and the initial time points.

### *Decomposition models with controls*

Cohort replacement theories assume that cohort differences reflect the exogenous influences on the generational and cohort experiences, rather than the endogenous effects of factors like education or technological development (Alwin, 1990). Consequently, we estimated the values of the social change components both in a baseline model, without the use of any control variables, and in a model that controlled for the influences of education, employment status, marital status and number of children. We controlled for these variables in order to estimate the cohort replacement effects, net of cohort differences in schooling, employment status, marital status and number of children. We assumed that there were significant inter-cohort differences in these variables and that these differences would contribute to the size of the cohort replacement effect.

Levels of education were measured by the length in years of enrolment in schooling.<sup>6</sup> Employment status categorized respondents into those employed at the time of the surveys and those who were unemployed or inactive at the time of the surveys. The latter category was used as a reference category in the logistic regression models. Marital status was measured using two categories: married respondents, including only legally married respondents, and all other respondents, using the latter category as a reference category in the logistic regression models. Number of children was measured on a scale of 0 (no children) to 3 (three or more children).

## **Results**

### *Levels and trends*

The results regarding levels of support for egalitarian gender beliefs within the Romanian population, between 1993 and 2008, suggest that an egalitarian gender ideology (WANTHOME) is supported by small percentages of respondents, while the beliefs that women's employment does not harm children of preschool age (FEPRESCH) and that it is important for women to work (FEMJOB) are more widespread among the Romanian population (see Table 1). The percentages of the population supporting each gender belief in 1993 are a reflection of the gap during the communist regime between policies supporting women's employment and those promoting gender equality in the private sphere. While the focus on full employment of women resulted in relatively high levels of support for the importance of women's employment (FEMJOB), and intermediate levels of support for the belief that maternal employment does not hurt children (FEPRESCH), the lack of involvement of communist regimes in promoting gender equality in the private sphere resulted in very low levels of support for the gender ideology item (WANTHOME).

**Table 1.** Support for egalitarian beliefs over time by gender and survey year (in percentages)<sup>a</sup>

	Women				Men				Gender differences <sup>e</sup>																							
	1993		1999		2007		2008		1993			1999			2007			2008														
	EVS <sup>b</sup>	EVS	POB <sup>c</sup>	FL <sup>d</sup>	EVS	EVS	POB	FL	EVS	χ <sup>2</sup>	d.f.	p	EVS	χ <sup>2</sup>	d.f.	p	POB	χ <sup>2</sup>	d.f.	p	FL	χ <sup>2</sup>	d.f.	p								
WANTHOME	20.53	16.79	23.63	26.23	16.09	13.14	25.70	25.77	3.448	1	.063	2.758	1	.097	1.023	1	.312	.030	1	.863	(531)	(548)	(965)	(719)	(516)	(510)	(858)	(627)	(1047)	(1058)	(1822)	(1347)
FEMJOB	74.51	84.69	86.62	86.20	61.09	78.33	79.27	83.76	20.778	1	.000	6.659	1	.010	17.509	1	.000	1.586	1	.208	(510)	(490)	(970)	(717)	(496)	(503)	(874)	(640)	(1006)	(993)	(1844)	(1357)
FEPRESCH	40.56	54.14	57.07	58.25	42.99	51.71	55.12	57.79	.643	1	.423	.635	1	.426	.704	1	.401	.026	1	.872	(535)	(543)	(961)	(721)	(521)	(526)	(879)	(633)	(1056)	(1069)	(1840)	(1354)

<sup>a</sup>Valid Ns in parentheses. Weighted results for 2007 and 2008.

<sup>b</sup>EVS – European Values Survey.

<sup>c</sup>POB – Public Opinion Barometer.

<sup>d</sup>FL – Family Life Survey.

<sup>e</sup>Pearson  $\chi^2$  test for equality of proportions of egalitarian respondents across gender groups.

In terms of general trends over time, the percentages of respondents adhering to egalitarian gender beliefs gradually increased over the period under study. The data support our first hypothesis: as expected, the pace of change over time was faster for beliefs regarding the importance of work for women and the consequences of maternal employment, while being slower for beliefs about gender ideology. In general, the percentages of women supporting egalitarian gender beliefs are comparable or slightly higher when compared to the percentages of men, but by the end of the time period under study, any gender differences existing in previous years were seen to have disappeared. The general trends in support for egalitarian gender beliefs over time are similar for both genders, confirming our second hypothesis.

The results suggest that since 1990, more Romanians have adopted an egalitarian family model, with increasing support in the population for gender equality, both in the private sphere and in the labour market. The rankings of support for each gender belief remained unchanged between 1993 and 2008, with the two items regarding women's employment receiving support from higher percentages of the population compared to the gender ideology item. This suggests that egalitarian gender ideology beliefs not only received the lowest level of support among the Romanian population, but were also the most difficult to change.

In our analyses of trends in gender beliefs, we were interested in whether cohort differences in schooling, employment status, marital status and number of children contributed to the size of the cohort replacement effect. The later-born cohorts have significantly higher levels of education, higher rates of current participation in the labour market, a lower mean number of children and a lower incidence of being married, compared to the earlier-born cohorts.<sup>7</sup> Since higher levels of education and participation in the labour market tend to shift gender beliefs in an egalitarian direction, and since marriage and parenthood tend to shift gender beliefs in a less egalitarian direction, given these characteristics of later-born cohorts, we expected that controlling for these variables in the decomposition models would have explained a part of the cohort replacement effect. Our data captured the respondents' employment status at the time of the survey, and consequently earlier-born cohorts were expected to be employed in smaller percentages, since most of their members were past retirement age. Marital status was also recorded at the time of the survey. While information regarding whether respondents had ever been employed or had ever been married would have been better predictors of gender beliefs, unfortunately these variables were not recorded in our data.

### ***Decomposition results***

There was significant social change in gender beliefs between 1993 and 2008 in all dimensions, and for both men and women (see Table 2a and Table 2b). The decomposition results support our third hypothesis: cohort replacement and individual change are both involved in changing gender beliefs over time, but their contributions differ between men and women, as well as along the three dimensions considered in the present analysis. Among both men and women, intra-cohort change is the main mechanism driving the trends towards more egalitarian gender beliefs (intra-cohort change components are positive and statistically significant, with the exception of ICC among women in regard

**Table 2a.** Logistic regression decomposition results – women, 1993–2008<sup>a</sup>

	No controls				Controlling for education, employment, marital status and number of children			
	SC <sup>b</sup>	ICC <sup>c</sup>	CR <sup>d</sup>	N <sup>e</sup>	SC	ICC	CR	N
WANTHOME	0.319*	0.158	0.186***	2763	0.319*	0.415**	0.056 <sup>+</sup>	2650
FEMJOB	0.759***	0.781***	-0.038	2687	0.759***	0.870***	-0.104**	2583
FEPRRESCH	0.715***	0.495***	0.114***	2761	0.715***	0.656***	0.056*	2653

\*\*\*\*  $p < .001$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*  $p < .05$ ; +  $p < .1$ .

<sup>b</sup>SC = social change.

<sup>c</sup>ICC = intra-cohort change.

<sup>d</sup>CR = cohort replacement.

<sup>e</sup>N = listwise sample size for the analysis.

**Table 2b.** Logistic regression decomposition results – men, 1993–2008<sup>a</sup>

	No controls				Controlling for education, employment, marital status and number of children			
	SC <sup>b</sup>	ICC <sup>c</sup>	CR <sup>d</sup>	N <sup>e</sup>	SC	ICC	CR	N
WANTHOME	0.594***	0.612***	0.171***	2511	0.594***	0.874***	0.060	2389
FEMJOB	1.189***	1.004***	-0.035	2512	1.189***	0.971***	-0.046	2389
FEPRRESCH	0.596***	0.390***	0.119***	2559	0.596***	0.453***	0.100*	2439

\* \*\*\*  $p < .001$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*  $p < .05$ ; +  $p < .1$ .

<sup>b</sup>SC = social change.

<sup>c</sup>ICC = intra-cohort change.

<sup>d</sup>CR = cohort replacement.

<sup>e</sup>N = listwise sample size for the analysis.

to the WANTHOME item). With this exception, the intra-cohort change component amounts to between approximately 65 and 100 percent of the total social change observed in responses to the three gender belief items. This suggests that the primary sources of change in gender beliefs between 1993 and 2008 have been period events related to the fall of the socialist regimes in 1989. The change due to cohort replacement is modest in size, but statistically significant in the case of gender ideology (WANTHOME) and consequences of women working (FEPRRESCH).

In the models with no controls, cohort replacement made no significant contribution to the change observed for the importance of work for women. Our expectation was that the cohort replacement component in this case would have been negative and statistically significant, due to decreased participation of women in the labour market after 1989. The results partially support the fourth hypothesis, as the data showed negative but statistically non-significant CR components in the models with no controls. When controlling for other factors that might account for cohort differences in gender beliefs, the third hypothesis is supported only among women.

In general, accounting for the influences of the control variables decreased the size of the CR components (see Table 2a and Table 2b). This suggests that a part of the population turnover effect is due to the fact that younger cohorts are characterized by higher educational levels, higher percentages of current participation in the labour market and smaller percentages of married people with a large number of children. In the case of gender ideology, these cohort differences on the control variables account for most of the cohort replacement effect among women and for the entire cohort replacement effect among men.

In sum, the observed changes suggest that the proportion of the Romanian population adopting egalitarian gender beliefs increased in the period between 1993 and 2008. Much of this change was driven by changes in the outlook of individuals, triggered by period factors. Cohort replacement was still a significant mechanism of change, particularly for the gender ideology and the consequences of women working dimensions, but it contributed in small proportions to the overall social change.

## Conclusions

This article investigates the dynamics of gender beliefs in Romania during the post-communist period, focusing on the variations in three different dimensions: gender ideology, beliefs about the importance of work for women and beliefs about the effects of maternal employment. The data validate our hypotheses and support previous findings, indicating that in Central and Eastern Europe, professional emancipation was not enough to transform the traditional gender ideology (Braun et al., 1994).

The present article is important not only for those people aiming to study Romanian society. The results are relevant for researchers interested in changes in gender beliefs and in the effects of the post-communist transition on gender relations, as well as on how relations are conceived by the population. The results show how women's participation in the labour market shapes only the attitudes towards female employment, while gender ideology is less affected. The data show that in spite of the pessimistic predictions expecting a strong rejection of gender equality in post-communist countries in Central and Eastern Europe, the population still supports female employment and accepts maternal employment.

Our results indicate significant progress towards more egalitarian gender beliefs in all the investigated dimensions. The trends are similar for both sexes, while the differences between the beliefs shared by women and those shared by men seem to be quite small. However, gender ideology still lags behind support for maternal employment and female employment. Even though in the post-communist period Romania encourages employment for men and women, the gender ideology still assigns different roles for each gender. According to Panayatova and Brayfield (1997), the incremental gains of women in terms of access to employment and political power are not sufficient to induce an egalitarian gender ideology. The transformation in gender ideology might be the result of a threshold effect occurring when a critical mass of women gains access to a certain type of resource. Future research should investigate whether, under the impact of societal democratization, the women in Romania will attain enough resources to reach the mentioned threshold.

The data indicate a convergence in the gender beliefs shared by women and men in Romania. In the beginning of the period investigated, women were more egalitarian as compared to men, but the variation did not occur as quickly as it did in the case of the male population. The factors influencing gender beliefs have had a similar effect on the beliefs shared by both genders, as stated in our hypotheses. However, men reacted more rapidly than women did.

The main mechanism of transformation in gender beliefs is intra-cohort change. According to our results, for the male population intra-cohort change is highly significant and has an important contribution to the dynamic of the three dimensions under investigation, while cohort replacement seems to be significant in terms of support for maternal employment. Intra-cohort change has a highly significant role in the transformation of all investigated dimensions of women's gender beliefs, while cohort replacement had a reduced input in effecting social change. One might say that social context is more important for gender beliefs and that changes in family life, the labour market, or family policy could generate a significant variation.

Social policies that support employment for the active population are in line with the policies promoted by the communist regime and they maintain stronger support for women's employment. However, the decreases in female labour force participation during the post-communist period lead to a moderate decline in support among younger generations of women for female employment. We assume that this trend is generated by the exposure of some members of the younger generation to the trend in which being a housewife has been promoted as a model, which was not done in the past. We expect that this trend will not continue over time if female participation in the labour force does not vary in the future. Further studies should address this topic and look into whether these cohorts, socialized during the post-communist transition, will maintain their attitudes and beliefs in the long run. Studies should also explore whether the new generation that will reach adulthood in the next decade will share the same attitudes and beliefs, or whether they will be less willing to support female participation in paid work.

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## Notes

1. The total fertility rate ranged between 3.67 in 1967 and 2.17 in 1982, during Ceaușescu's regime, and dropped from 1.60 in 1991 to 1.29 in 2004, during the post-communist period (Mureșan, 2008: 442).
2. According to Eurostat, 77 percent of four-year-old children and 86 percent of five- and six-year-old children were attending kindergarten in 2007.

3. In 1995 the percentage of employed mothers was 78.4 (UNICEF, 2003).
4. In 2007, a total of 637,235 public childcare places were available for a preschool population of 650,000 children (National Institute for Statistics, 2009).
5. Although the use of a single indicator for each theoretical dimension constitutes a limitation of the present analysis, our preliminary exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses including other items that have been used in prior research to operationalize these dimensions suggested that a multiple indicator structure is not tenable in all years and for both gender groups. We decomposed the social change in each of the available items, but due to space limitations we have chosen to present results for the three items that comprise the strongest egalitarian statements for each of the theoretical gender beliefs dimensions (WANTHOME, FEMJOB and FEPRESCH).
6. Length of enrolment in schooling was measured differently in each of the surveys we employed. In order to maintain comparability between surveys, we recoded the different measures to reflect the number of completed years of schooling.
7. Results available on request.

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## Résumé

L'effet de la modernisation et de l'industrialisation sur les dispositions de genre ont varié selon la culture de genre qui prédominait quand le processus de modernisation a commencé. La Roumanie faisait partie des sociétés les plus rurales d'Europe après la seconde guerre mondiale. La participation des femmes au travail agricole était très forte, mais la division du travail selon les genres était très traditionnelle. Les régimes communistes ont encouragé une politique de plein emploi pour toute la population mais n'ont rien fait pour promouvoir l'égalité entre les genres dans l'espace privé. Cet article présente le cas de la Roumanie pour identifier les dynamiques en matière de croyances sur le genre pendant la période post-communiste. Utilisant des données de deux vagues d'enquêtes sur les valeurs des Européens (1990, 1999), ainsi que des données du Baromètre de l'Opinion Publique de 2007 et de la Vie de Famille de 2008, nous avons mis en œuvre des méthodes standart de décomposition de cohortes, de manière à identifier les mécanismes qui produisent les plus grands changements dans les croyances sur le genre.

## Mots-clés

croyances sur le genre, Europe de l'Est, méthode de décomposition des cohortes, Roumanie, valeurs sociales

## Resumen

El impacto de la modernización y la industrialización en acuerdos de género fue diferente dependiendo de la cultura de género que predominaba cuando comenzó el proceso de modernización. Rumania estaba entre las sociedades más rurales en Europa después de la segunda guerra mundial. La participación de las mujeres en actividades agrícolas era muy elevada, pero la división de género del trabajo era muy tradicional. Los regímenes comunistas promovieron una política de pleno empleo para toda la población pero no hicieron nada para fomentar la igualdad de género en el espacio privado. El presente artículo se centra en el caso rumano, buscando identificar las dinámicas de creencias de género durante el periodo poscomunista. Usando datos provenientes de dos oleadas de la Encuesta Europea de Valores (1990, 1999), así como datos proporcionados por el Barómetro de Opinión Pública 2007 y por Vida Familiar – 2008, llevamos a cabo métodos estándar de descomposición de cohortes, para detectar el mecanismo que produjo la mayoría de variaciones en creencias de género.

**Palabras clave**

creencias de género, Europa del Este, método de descomposición de cohortes, Rumanía, valores sociales