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# Does the Family System in Romania Follow the Pattern of Southern European Countries?

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Warsaw, FAMCHIP Conference, December 17-18th, 2013



## Weak family system

Individuals and  
individual values have priority  
→ importance of individual initiative  
→ institutions solidarity



**Central and northern Europe**

## Strong family system

Family group has the priority  
→ familial solidarity  
→ greater social cohesion  
→ more effective social control



**Mediterranean regions**

**Which model for Romania?**



## **Aim of the paper:**

to compare Romania with Western Europe, both North-West  
and South  
with Eastern Europe

## **INDICATORS:**

### **Family:**

- Leaving parental home
- Family formation
- Living arrangements  
of young people  
of the elderly

### **Exchange and support:**

- Proximity
- Contacts and help

### **Opinions**

## **DATA:**

Comparative sources:

- Official data collected by Eurostat
- Comparative surveys:
  - SHARE (people aged 50+)
  - GGG (18+)
  - Eurobarometer (by EU Commission)



## Leaving parental home

Countries with weak family ties:

- early leaving home
- go and live alone or with friends

Countries with strong family ties:

- delayed leaving home
- leaving home to marriage

## Average age at leaving the parental household, 2010

	<b>Finland</b>	<b>NL</b>	<b>France</b>	<b>Germany</b>	<b>Spain</b>	<b>Italy</b>	<b>Hungary</b>	<b>Romania</b>
Females	21-23	21-23	21-23	23-25	<b>25-28</b>	<b>28-30</b>	<b>25-28</b>	<b>25-28</b>
Males	23-25	23-25	23-25	25-27	<b>28-31</b>	<b>28-31</b>	<b>28-31</b>	<b>28-31</b>

Source: European Commission, 2012. Figures from maps



## Percentage people leaving home before the first union (cohort around 1960)

	Finland	NL	France	Germany	Spain	Italy	Hungary	Romania
<b>Females</b>	55	--	41	East: 33 West: 45	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>14</b>	--
<b>Males</b>	60	--	51	East: 43 West: 55	<b>25</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>18</b>	--

### Romania:

	% leaving home to live independently		Family formation within parental home	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
<b>1980-1989</b>	38%	27%	23%	13%
<b>1996-2005</b>	33%	22%	28%	14%



## Family formation

Countries with weak family ties:

- non-married couples
- non-marital childbearing

Countries with strong family ties:

- low incidence of non-married couples
- low incidence of non-marital childbearing

**Romania:**  
**Women who cohabited**  
**before age 40**

1980-1989	1996-2005
20%	35%

## Cohabitations in Italy

First unions as cohabitations (x 100 first unions)		Premarital cohabitations (x 100 marriages)	
Women born in the '50s	Women born in the '70s	Marriages before 1974	Marriages in 1999-2003
10%	25%	1.4%	25.1%



## % live births outside marriage, 2012

Finland	Netherlands	France (2011)	Germany	Spain	Italy	Hungary	Romania
44.5	46.6	55.8	34.5	35.5	28.0	44.5	31.0

Source: Eurostat

## % live births outside marriage in Romania and Italy, 1990-2012

	1990	2000	2005	2010	2012
Romania	4.0	25.5	28.5	27.7	31.0
Italy	6.5	9.7	15.0	25.4	28.0

Source: Eurostat



## Are these signs of weak family ties in Romania and Italy?

### Romania

- Cohabitation and out-of-wedlock births from less educated women, with low socio-economic status (economic constraints)
- Cohabitation with children → marriage

### Italy

- Cohabitations have increased when parents accepted. Not in contrast with parents
- Increased proportion of acknowledgment of out-of-wedlock children by both parents (17% in 1971, 86% in 1998, 95% in 2003)

**Different explanations, not in contrast with strong family ties**





## Living arrangements

Countries with weak family ties:  
Independence from parents  
& Support from the State →  
residential independence

Countries with strong family ties:  
Family solidarity →  
- co-residence between generations  
- low diffusion of living alone

	Finland	NL	France	Germany	Spain	Italy	Hungary	Romania
<b>People aged 20-34 living as</b>								
Single	19,7%	20,3%	14,9%	20,9%	<b>5,3%</b>	<b>6,0%</b>	<b>6,2%</b>	<b>3,1%</b>
child in the parental home	16,8%	20,7%	23,9%	24,6%	<b>51,1%</b>	<b>52,9%</b>	<b>34,0%</b>	<b>31,5%</b>
<b>People aged 65+ living as</b>								
Single person	38,0%	33,1%	30,7%	36,6%	<b>19,5%</b>	<b>26,8%</b>	<b>30,6%</b>	<b>23,6%</b>
with children	9,2%	6,5%	8,7%	3,2%	<b>23,8%</b>	<b>20,4%</b>	<b>8,9%</b>	<b>13,7%</b>
other institutional	3,1%	6,5%	5,7%	-	<b>2,3%</b>	<b>2,1%</b>	<b>2,5%</b>	<b>0,4%</b>

Source: Eurostat, **2001 Census Data**



## Family support

Countries with weak family ties:  
support from the State →  
residential independence

Countries with strong family ties:  
family solidarity →  
co-residence and proximity

## Proximity indicators between generations

Norway	NL	France	Germany	Spain	Italy	Hungary	Romania
<b>Parents 50+ co-residing with at least 1 child</b>							
23%	24%	24%	20%	<b>51%</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>37%</b>
<b>Parents 50+ with at least 1 child within 5 km</b>							
53%	64%	43%	57%	<b>78%</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>59%</b>

Source: SHARE, GGS



## Opinions

### Opinions about the responsibility of family and government/ society for care for older adults (x 100 respondents 50+)

	Personal care for older adults in need for assistance		Financial support for older adults in need for assistance	
	Totally/Mainly family	Government/ society	Totally/Mainly family	Government/ society
Norway	0.6	26.3	0.5	61.9
Netherlands	5.5	61.9	5.9	69.1
France	8.7	53.7	8.4	50.6
Germany	28.7	16.0	14.8	36.5
<b>Spain</b>	<b>31.4</b>	<b>23.2</b>	<b>22.2</b>	<b>34.9</b>
<b>Italy</b>	<b>29.5</b>	<b>20.6</b>	<b>17.5</b>	<b>37.8</b>
<b>Hungary</b>	-	-	-	-
<b>Romania</b>	<b>45.6</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>5.6</b>	<b>26.6</b>

Source: SHARE, GGS



## Opinions

### Opinions about the duty of parents/grandparents to care for their children/grandchildren (x 100 respondents 50+)

	To help the parents of their grandchildren in looking after young grandchildren		To contribute towards the economic security of grandchildren and their family	
	Agree/ strongly agree	Disagree/ strongly disagree	Agree/ strongly agree	Disagree/strongly disagree
Norway	50.9	15.8	42.6	19.2
Netherlands	28.5	42.0	25.1	43.2
France	69.4	9.7	49.4	17.5
Germany	74.8	7.4	39.8	27.9
<b>Spain</b>	<b>69.1</b>	<b>10.9</b>	<b>58.0</b>	<b>14.4</b>
<b>Italy</b>	<b>77.8</b>	<b>7.1</b>	<b>63.7</b>	<b>13.4</b>
<b>Hungary</b>	-	-	-	-
<b>Romania</b>	<b>79.9</b>	<b>3.4</b>	<b>74.4</b>	<b>4.0</b>

Source: SHARE, GGS



## Conclusions

**Do indicators confirm that Romania is a country with strong family ties?**

	<b>Italy</b>	<b>Romania</b>	<b>Hungary</b>
Age at leaving parental home	Yes	Nearly Yes	Yes
Direct marriage	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cohabitation	No → Yes	No → Yes	--
% out-of-wedlock births	No → Yes	No → Yes	No
Living arrangements of young people	Yes	Yes/No	Yes/No
Living arrangements of elderly	Yes	Yes	No
Proximity	Yes	No	Yes
Opinions about elderly support	Yes	Yes	Yes



## Conclusions: Open questions

- Did socialist regime affect family ties?
- What is the role of the Second Demographic Transition?  
Is Romania late on the path of the SDT, so that these are only traditional behaviours that will change when contextual conditions improve?  
Or are these signs of cultural, historical peculiarities in continuity with the past?
- Romania shares similarities also with other eastern countries. Should we consider also eastern European countries (some of them at least) within the strong family system?



## Conclusions:

### Has international perspective helped?

- Yes, as family systems are defined at an international level
- Yes, to discuss results, to avoid too simple conclusions (ex. cohabitation/non marital births)

### However:

- We need local explanation, at national level
- Have we selected the “right” indicators?  
Are there other variables?

