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Marital Roles and Relations in State Socialist Romania

Jill Massino

Utilizing socialist legislation, propaganda, and oral history interviews with urban women and men, this article explores how marital roles were refashioned in socialist Romania. Although the image of the idle husband and overburdened wife was perhaps more typical than not, family roles did undergo change over the course of socialist rule, evident in men's participation in household duties from food procurement to childcare. While related to women's increased economic autonomy and assertiveness within the home and the promotion of egalitarian family models, these changes were also rooted in the misapplication of socialist theory. Thus, the demands of labor force participation, combined with state failure to fully socialize childcare and substantially improve the material conditions of its subjects in some cases inadvertently fostered more equitable marital relations. By analyzing the diversity and fluidity of marital relations as well as the active engagement of women and men in reinforcing, challenging, or renegotiating family roles the article moves beyond the domineering husband/oppressed wife dichotomy toward a more nuanced understanding of marriage under state socialism.

> Two men meet and one says: "how are you, I haven't seen you in a while." The other responds: "hey I'm happy because yesterday I bought a washing machine and now things are much easier." The other one replies: "oh yeah, well, I simply got married."
>
> —Joke in socialist Romania

> The burden of washing fell on Onuţ. He washed, he ironed.
>
> —Stela, artist, in her late forties

Although feminist scholars have explored how women's participation in the labor force positively affected their status and self-identities under state socialism, on the whole their view of marriage has been much less optimistic. For instance, with regard to socialist Romania historian Doina Pasca Harsanyi has claimed that "gender roles were modified in form, not in essence. Common wisdom required that a man be also somehow superior to his wife (more education, a superior position, etc.) for it was widely believed that peace in the home might suffer once the traditional patriarchal pattern was disrupted."[1] Other scholars of the region have similarly stressed the continued influence of patriarchal beliefs and practices—along with such

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policies as maternity leave and women's underrepresentation in politics and high-paying posts—in explaining the persistence of traditionally gendered family roles.[2] Although anthropologist Katherine Verdery has claimed that the "parent state," by providing welfare services to families, undermined men's authority in the home, she concludes that "the larger division of labor in the socialist family remained decidedly gendered."[3]

These studies offer important insight into the gendered dimensions of state policy, propaganda, and family life under state socialism. However, they neglect the diversity and fluidity of marital roles and relations as well as the active engagement of women and men in reinforcing, challenging, or renegotiating traditional family roles. Although socialism did not wholly revolutionize marriage, it did, in part, succeed in reformulating marriage patterns and practices through policy and propaganda. For instance, the expansion of industry and education offered women new professional opportunities, which lessened their economic dependence on men and afforded them greater freedom in choosing a spouse. Moreover, changes in family codes reconfigured women's marital status from dependents to equals, and socialist propaganda stressed the important role of men in parenting and household duties. While the image of the idle husband and overburdened wife was perhaps more typical than not, as women increasingly entered the labor force, some men began to take part in domestic life, from child care and food procurement to cooking and cleaning.

Utilizing socialist legislation and policy, the party women's magazine *Femeia* (Woman), oral history interviews, and scholarship on gender in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, this article explores marriage under state socialism through the lenses of gender and everyday life.[4] I follow the lead of historian Donna Harsch, examining how legislative measures, the emergence of a public discourse about marriage, sexuality, and reproduction, and the broader achievements of the socialist program—urbanization, industrialization, and mass education and employment—affected marriage patterns and practices.[5] Instead of dismissing socialist policy and propaganda as token nods to gender equality, I argue that they offered women and men new ways of thinking about marriage and their roles within it.[6] Moreover, I consider the state's complex relationship to tradition, exploring how it at once undermined and promoted traditional values and gender norms.[7] For instance, although propaganda encouraged men to take up a greater share of household duties, such gender-specific family policies as maternity leave targeted mothers rather than parents. The party similarly condemned women's sacrificial role in the family as a symbol of backwardness at the same time as it urged women to make sacrifices for the party and the nation.

In the end, whatever the purpose of these official policies and ideological inscriptions, they were mediated, contested, reinforced, and in some cases ignored by individuals on an everyday level. Thus, while I am interested in how the state used gender in formulating policy, reconceptualizing citizenship, and reorganizing spaces, I am especially concerned with how relations between husbands and wives played out on the ground. In this capacity, I build on the work of scholars of gender and state socialism and *Alltagsgeschichte* (the history of everyday life) who have challenged the totalizing narratives of the Cold War and revised conventional wisdom regarding state power over its subjects by exploring not only how individuals were *affected by*, but also how they *responded to*, state policies in their daily lives.[8] For instance, the temporal demands placed on women in the labor force, combined with domestic responsibilities, in many cases created a "double burden" for women, though it should be noted that women in other (including Western) countries faced similar situations and that some women in Eastern Europe viewed the combination of work and family as normal—as multiple roles to fulfill, rather than a double burden.[9] This, along with the material difficulties faced by many families, often necessitated that men assume some domestic duties if a comfortable standard of living was to be maintained. Thus, women's successful negotiation of the double burden was, at least in some cases, the result of men's participation in domestic duties. In this respect, men's conceptions of gender roles may have been less rigid and less traditional than has been previously assumed.

In order to provide a diverse portrait of marital relations, I examine the recollections of women and men from different educational, socioeconomic, and occupational backgrounds. I focus primarily on the generation that came of age in the 1960s and 1970s because this generation was born into and spent the majority of their lives under the socialist system and because the official media devoted considerable attention to marriage and spousal relations during this period. However, in order to trace continuity and change over time, I also include the recollections of women and men who married during the first and last decades of socialist rule. Moreover, although I focus on urban women, since many of the women I interviewed grew up in rural areas I consider how their upbringing affected their attitudes toward marriage and relationships with their husbands.

The interviews, which were conducted in Romania in 2003 and 2009, follow the life history approach.[10] Like historian Luisa Passerini I view oral history as a potentially rich source for exploring the subjective nature of life under socialism and understanding the larger political, social, and cultural universe of socialism.[11] Oral histories provide a holistic and in-depth portrait of individuals' lives, while also offering people a medium for articulating their identities and reclaiming parts of the past. Yet oral histories represent a

particular construction of the past and are thus mediated by the discourses to which the subject has had access (official slogans of women's equality, religious beliefs, political pluralism, the market economy, NATO and the EU). In addition, people's memories of the past are refracted through their everyday experiences of the transition, which, for many, has been characterized by poverty, social alienation, and an overall dissatisfaction with the market economy and political process. While such dissatisfaction can translate into veneration of the socialist past, or what some scholars refer to as "communist nostalgia," women's frustration over the loss of what they consider natural, basic rights (guaranteed work and state-subsidized vacations) is not necessarily evidence of nostalgia. Rather, it is an unsentimental response to a real sense of displacement and uncertainty. Thus, while these recollections may have been influenced by the transition, this does not negate their significance or validity as sources for understanding the personal meanings that women and men ascribed to marriage, family, and life more generally under state socialism.

Industrialization and the Transformation of Women's Roles and Identities

Upon the communist takeover in 1947, the new socialist government was faced not only with consolidating power, but also with industrializing and modernizing the country. Women, comprising over half of the country's population, were essential in the drive to modernize and were well represented in the labor force.[12] Although women's participation in the labor force was a feature of modernizing societies in the West, the scale on which they were employed in socialist Eastern Europe far exceeded that of the West. For example, by 1970 74.9 percent of women aged twenty to fifty-nine in Romania were employed outside the home, compared with 54.2 percent in the U.K. and 51.2 percent in France.[13]As in Western Europe and the United States, in socialist Romania industrialization and the expansion of education offered women new occupational opportunities. Leaving behind the insular worlds of their villages, beginning in the late 1950s women relocated en masse to cities and industrial towns, attending university and taking up work in factories, the emerging bureaucracy, and in medicine, law, and education. Yet in contrast to most capitalist countries, in Romania women's shift into the labor force occurred rapidly and was accompanied by legislation that codified women's equal rights in public and private domains.[14] Moreover, under socialism women's public identities were validated by visual propaganda that glorified their roles as laborers, activists, mothers, and equal socialist citizens.

Free of parental supervision and more or less economically independent, women, especially those who came of age in the 1960s and 1970s, experienced a different world than that of their mothers and grandmothers. As a result of women's increased personal and financial autonomy, marriage began to lose its economic basis; couples increasingly married out of personal choice rather than parental demand or economic need. Moreover, as women's identities became associated with their roles as laborers and professionals, postponing marriage in favor of educational and occupational advancement became—at least in official propaganda—more acceptable.

In addition to promoting gender equality in the workforce, socialist policy promoted gender equality within marriage.[15] The Family Code of 1956 equalized spousal roles, allowed for equal guardianship of children, and secularized marriage. The state also outlined the new ideal for marriage: "family relations should be based on reciprocal friendship and affection" in which the couple "owes each other moral and material support."[16] Furthermore, article 7 of the 1956 Family Code legislated that both spouses were equally responsible for the education and care of their children and for the conduct of the household.[17] In 1948 consensual divorce was replaced by divorce through judicial process. While this law was intended to uphold the primacy of the family, it was also intended to protect women from spousal abandonment. Thus, in terms of gender equality it was somewhat ambiguous, and for some women progressive.[18] Finally, in 1957, following the lead of the Soviet Union, abortion was decriminalized and made available on demand.

During the second half of socialist rule, however, more regressive family policies were introduced—in particular Decree 770, which recriminalized abortion and, essentially, placed women's bodies under state surveillance.[19] The decree had tragic effects upon women's psychological and physical well-being, resulting in, according to official statistics, 9,452 maternal deaths between 1965 and 1989.[20] To further encourage reproduction, in 1966 the state tightened divorce legislation: the grounds on which individuals could sue for divorce were seriously limited and the entire process became more lengthy and costly.[21] Rather than an evolutionary progression of enlightened and women-friendly legislation, then, socialist family policy was characterized by inconsistencies, contradictions, and, by the 1970s, a regressive retreat from Marxist principles to conservative nationalism.

Despite the lack of uniformity in family and reproductive policies, women's roles and identities did broaden under socialism as their widescale participation in the labor force and public sphere meant that marital status, while important, was no longer their primary identifier. In articles, letters, and personal testimonies in *Femeia*, young women were encouraged to cultivate skills and talents prior to marriage and exercise caution in selecting a mate. In an advice column published in April 1966, a young

woman who queries, "When will I find a husband?" is advised not to rush into marriage, but to instead take pride in her work, volunteer in her community, and relish relationships with her female comrades.[22] In addition the magazine encouraged couples to get to know each other "naturally" and gradually before marriage, and distinguished between marriage for love, and marriage for other, less acceptable reasons: parental pressure, to be more adult-like, and "to have a beautiful wife to display."[23] Marriages motivated by reasons other than love, propagandists argued, often led to divorce, an outcome the state wanted to deter at any cost, especially after 1966 with the introduction of pronatalist policies.

Although the expectation was that women (and men) would eventually marry and have children, during young adulthood women's energies were to be channeled into building socialism. Thus, in official representations the single woman did not carry the same type of negative stigma as she did in Romanian society more generally.[24] In socialist imagery too, beginning in the 1960s women began to appear more modern, carefree, and even sexy. For instance, an image from the winter 1969–70 issue of *Moda* features two young, sultry, and sophisticated-looking women clad in mini dresses with cocktails and cigarettes in hand posing next to a drink cart in (their?) living room (see Figure 1). The message was that the new socialist woman could enjoy all the pleasures of her Western counterpart—and do so without the company of men, and without being criticized for overindulgence, immorality, or feminist deviation. This shift in the representation of women coincided, for a brief period, with rising living standards and increased access to consumer goods and cultural productions—including Western films, music, and fashion. Such material palliatives had become common throughout the Soviet bloc, a strategy designed to maintain support for the Party, stave off popular discontent, and refashion socialist citizenship. [25]

Despite such progressive renditions, the new single woman of 1960s and 1970s Romania, like the "new woman" of 1920s America and Western Europe, had to proceed with caution as she negotiated these new cultural and social spaces. Her roles and social worlds may have broadened significantly, but traditional behaviors and attitudes were slow to change. Fearing popular responses to a radical transformation in gender roles, the state relied at once upon traditional and progressive conceptions of gender, promoting co-education and creating opportunities for young adults of the opposite sex to interact socially, while remaining silent on or discouraging premarital sex, and criminalizing same-sex relations.[26] To be sure, courtship patterns changed somewhat: work, the university, and weekend outings now rivaled dances and cafés as popular venues for meeting the opposite sex. However, on the whole young women were reared according to a deeply ingrained cultural code of ethics that promoted sexual innocence and ignorance.[27]

Figure 1. New Winter Eveningwear, *Moda,* Winter 1969–70.

According to Clio, who grew up in a highly cultured, urban family and attended high school in the early 1970s: "They [the teachers] didn't say a word about sexuality and relationships . . . they were condemned during that period . . . if you had a boyfriend in high school it wasn't very accepted from a social perspective . . . girls who had boyfriends were categorized as loose . . . and we [my sister and I] were not allowed . . . the prevailing belief was that you needed to be careful because 'boys can ruin your future reputation.'"[28] Indeed, in some rural circles the notion of a young, single woman moving to a city was considered morally taboo, as Tatiana noted in reflecting on her marriage at age eighteen in 1973: "I had a [marriage] ceremony, because [otherwise] my mother wouldn't have allowed me to

leave home [single]. The upbringing was that women who leave are like that [promiscuous]. She said, 'you'll get married, have a civil ceremony and then you can leave.' That's how it was, I didn't blame her for this. That's what they were used to."[29] Although Tatiana's willingness to adhere to traditional mores and marry prior to moving was rooted in her respect for her mother, it was also related to her desire to leave her rural environs. Recognizing that city life would offer her new occupational, social, and cultural opportunities, marriage allowed her to live with the man she loved and also carve out a new life for herself. Considered from this perspective marriage could be a form of liberation.

While marriage might liberate women from the constraints of rural life, it could also liberate them (as well as men) from communal living in the dorms. Thus, the privileging of married couples for state housing often led to youthful marriages. As one middle-aged male professor claimed, "[It] was exhorted that if you married you'd have certain advantages . . . you'd get a place to live. Many did this [got married] in order to get away from the dormitories."[30] In addition, marriage was also a means of attaining residency in Bucharest and, thereby, having access to jobs and other services available in the city. Indeed, in the comedic film "Buletin de Bucureşti" (1982) Silvia, the protagonist, marries a Bucharest resident in an effort—albeit failed because she divorces in a few days—to get residency status in the city, which would have spared her from being sent to some rural backwater for her three years of civil service (*repartiţie*).[31] On the whole it appears that practical concerns, cultural norms, and personal choice—rather than official discourses about marriage—influenced marriage patterns during the socialist period as the most common age for first marriage between 1957 and 1988 (for women and men alike) was between twenty and twenty-four.[32] The exception to this was the period between 1962 and 1971 when the most common age for first marriage for women actually declined to below twenty (though it remained between twenty and twenty-four for men).[33] This reinforces the notion that, when marrying, individuals were guided more by practical and personal factors than by socialist propaganda.

Creating the New Socialist Husband and Wife

By providing women with full-time employment and equal wages, Friedrich Engels believed, equality between the sexes would be achieved. Men's recognition of women as equal workers would in turn abolish patriarchal behaviors and attitudes, transforming how the sexes related to one another at work and at home. The marriage contract would thus be reformulated; women would cease to be the domestic and sexual slaves of their husbands and instead become their confidantes. The socialist me-

dia promoted such attitudes, as is illustrated in the following "personal reflection" published in *Scânteia*, the main communist daily, on 8 March 1953 (International Women's Day): "I was also one of those who believed women are good only for the frying pan and children. However, once I began recognizing my wife's abilities and contributions a new life began in our house. We read together and discussed articles together. . . . I realize that she understands things just as well as me, some things even much better . . . only now, after ten years of marriage are we getting to know each other. I now know that you cannot have a happy home unless husbands and wives are comrades in life, as well as in struggle."[34] Although intended to validate Engels's claim that once women were equal partners in industry they would also be equal partners in the family, the article served as a warning. It urged men to reassess their attitudes toward women and change their outmoded ways lest they miss out on the joys of socialist marriage.

In addition to these personal reflections, from the late 1960s *Femeia* began to feature articles and advice columns on marital relations. One such column entitled "Viaţa in Doi" (Life Together) offered its readers relationship surveys and opinion polls (the results of which appeared in a subsequent issue), compatibility quizzes, and articles by psychologists and marriage experts focusing on typical problems faced by couples during the first years of marriage. For example, one opinion poll asked whether it was possible to model a husband.[35] Readers answered with an emphatic "yes," describing how they succeeded in transforming their husbands from self-centered sloths into domestically conscientious and caring comrades.

A tender and loving husband was not just important for women, but for the Romanian nation, especially after 1966 with the introduction of pronatalist policies. This was because, according to official sexologists, women derived more pleasure from the emotional than the physical act of sex. Thus, it followed that if married couples were to fulfill their procreative role, women needed to desire sex, which meant that men needed to focus on women's emotional needs alongside their physical ones. The state's apparent concern for women's sexual satisfaction was evident in both official sex manuals and articles on sexual problems that appeared in *Femeia* after 1966.[36] In a piece entitled "Nevroza Sexuala," (Sexual Anxiety), the consequences of sexual underperformance (on the part of men) and dissatisfaction (on the part of women) was explored.[37] Accompanied by an image of a young and attractive, yet troubled-looking woman, the article described the manifold problems that result from sexual anxiety, including depression, distractedness, reduced creativity, indigestion, and hypertension.[38] Another article argued that frigidity, in addition to being the result of stress, trauma, glandular problems, and drug and alcohol abuse, was, in some cases, caused by the use of contraceptives.[39] Considering Roma-

nians' conservative attitude toward sex, such frank discussion of women's sexuality probably appeared scandalous to some, though others may have found it educational or even curious. However, far from mimicking the racy articles found on the pages of Western magazines like *Cosmopolitan*, these pieces were designed to demystify the sexual act to expressly help women regain their sexual desire so that they could procreate. Thus, women's sexual pleasure, if it was even a concern, was at best secondary to building—or more aptly reproducing—the socialist nation.

In reality, the anxiety women faced in sexual matters was related more to the difficulties in obtaining contraceptives and draconian reproductive policies than to the aforementioned physical and psychological problems. Indeed, sex was often accompanied by fear of an unwanted pregnancy. [40] Luana recalled that she "felt as if there was a fear all the time. Please God. I don't want to get pregnant."[41] These sentiments were, no doubt, shared by many women during the period, but because sex continues to be a highly private matter in Romania, other respondents did not speak about this issue with me.

In addition to companionship and sexual health, men's roles as fathers and in the household more generally were the subject of articles, studies, and surveys published in the magazine. One article, accompanied by an image of a man vacuuming, asked: "do you respect your wife, the mother of your children?" According to the poll featured in the article, of the men who admitted to doing housework, 62 percent helped because they "wanted their wives to be healthy…for a longer period of time," 28 percent noted they wanted to "serve as an example for their children," and a mere 10 percent helped out because they wanted their wives to be "happy, sweet, and relaxed."[42] When asked to elaborate on the issue of housework, other respondents offer selfish reasons for not helping their wives, such as: "I won't make sacrifices for her," or "if I help her too much, she will take over."[43] Meanwhile, only one man claimed that he helped his wife because he "wanted a beautiful family life."[44] The article lamented that men were still self-centered, "lacking understanding and respect for women," which, at some point, could "degenerate into condemnable behavior."[45] At the same time, the survey suggested that women were in part responsible for enabling such insensitivity. For example, when a group of women were asked if they taught their sons how to iron their pants, sew on a button, wash a plate, or clean a potato, they laughed and shook their heads asserting, "that's women's work."[46]

Meanwhile a section entitled "Şcoala Părinţilor" (Parenting School) advised women and men on a host of parenting issues, from disciplining unruly children to setting progressive examples for gender relations within the family. In the July 1970 issue, which focused on spousal abuse and authoritarian fathering, the magazine chided men for acting in ways that were

not only harmful to their wives, but also to the psychological development of their children.[47] Such official acknowledgement of domestic violence may have affected battered women's attitudes toward it (e.g. they may have recognized that it was not natural and thus not inevitable). At the same time, since no specific legislation existed with regard to domestic violence and since domestic violence was typically ignored by state authorities, battered women had no real legal recourse for dealing with it.[48]

Experts offered numerous explanations for the continued existence of gender inequality and sexist practices in Romania. In a hopeful piece entitled "We Will Surpass the Patriarchy," professor of philosophy Alexandru Tănase argued that the existence of "egotistical" and "chauvinistic" behavior among men, as well as women's "fatalistic acceptance of their inferior position," has kept society from completely surpassing the patriarchy.[49] Presenting himself as an exemplar of socialist manhood, Tănase challenged men to reform their barbaric and bourgeois behaviors and urged women to discard the cult of sacrifice and assert themselves as equal comrades.[50] Furthermore, images were mobilized to transform men's attitudes and behaviors by offering new models of the ideal socialist husband. For example, the article "The New Type of Husband: A Reality, a Goal, a Trend?" featured an image of a young, attractive and well-dressed husband—alongside his similarly young, attractive, and fashionably clad wife—with briefcase in one hand and baby and duster in the other (See Figure 2). Meanwhile an article on fatherhood showed a column of men pushing baby carriages (See Figure 3). The message was that, far from being "women's work," engaging in housework and childcare was a sign of modern, socialist masculinity. Rather than treating his wife as a domestic slave, the new socialist man was a hardworking, sensitive, and progressive husband—as well as an expert diaper changer.

Such images and articles were designed to challenge gender stereotypes and urge men to assume responsibility for domestic chores. As such, their very existence complicates the claim that the socialist state wholly disregarded the domestic sphere as a site for transforming gender roles. At the same time, by emphasizing that women's equality could not be achieved by policy alone, but also required transforming men's attitudes, the state placed the onus on individual men to change their outmoded behaviors. Though certainly appropriate, by urging men to help in the household, the state deflected attention away from its failure to fully socialize childcare and lighten domestic burdens by providing families with affordable consumer durables such as washing machines. Moreover, the attention that *Femeia* devoted to men's roles as husbands and fathers paled in comparison to the attention it devoted to women's roles as wives and mothers. Therefore, efforts to promote gender equality in the family were often tempered by

Figure 2. "The New Type of Husband," *Femeia,* September 1969. The husband, though presented as a domestic helper, is at the foreground while his wife stands "behind" him.

images and articles that, particularly after 1966, glorified women's natural roles as mothers, and such policies as maternity leave, which reinforced gendered caregiving.

Refashioning Roles or Reinforcing Tradition? Family Relations and Responsibilities

While the intent behind the images and articles in *Femeia* may have been more strategic than genuine, they were not necessarily considered as such by the men and women who encountered them. By chiding men who failed

Figure 3. "What Type of Father are You?" *Femeia*, July 1970.

to contribute to domestic tasks while lauding those who did, the magazine provided women with models of the ideal husband, thereby instructing women on what to look for in a man. And, although *Femeia* was a women's magazine, because it also featured articles written by and for men—as well as games and crossword puzzles—it was occasionally glanced over or even read by men. For instance, Ioan, a former police officer, claimed that the magazine was good "for articles on health, how to arrange the house, one's surroundings" and that "the people, the women who wrote [for it], wrote very well, and with the interests of their readers [in mind]."[51] Thus

it is possible that some men may have taken the relationship quizzes and even read the articles about domestic discord, however, it is impossible to know if this affected their behavior in the home.

According to some of my respondents their effect was modest at best since many men continued to see themselves as heads of households who could assert their authority as they saw fit. For example, after bearing two children Tatiana wanted to earn her high school diploma by attending night school, but her husband, a factory boss, was vehemently opposed to the idea, arguing that he would never be happy with a wife who was as well educated as he. Reflecting on her naiveté Tatiana clamed that she "left night school as he said. And I regret it very much. Because I don't feel fulfilled. I don't feel as if it's right. I couldn't have done it? He went to high school and university; I could have done it as well. He was very selfish in this regard. We both should have done it together."[52] In this case state support for women's educational advancement actually exacerbated rather than diminished sexist attitudes. Beyond this, such resistance was also practically rooted: night school would have taken Tatiana away from the home, placing some of the domestic responsibilities on her husband's shoulders. As a result of her desire for family harmony, in the end Tatiana chose to forgo night school. Sociologist Hana Havelková has suggested that women's willingness to bow to the desires of their husbands may have been a strategy employed to boost their husbands' self-confidence and thereby counter or neutralize the emasculating and disempowering effects of communist rule.[53] Although perhaps not motivated by such reasons, Tatiana's acceptance of such behavior, albeit reluctant, contributed to the perpetuation of those very attitudes she resented.

Some women would not tolerate such behavior. Valeria, a nurse who married a doctor in the late 1950s, described her relationship in the following way:

> When a colleague became an adult, then the man began to be dominant. Even if both partners had a job, he is dominant, because that's what he heard in his family, and that's what he saw around him and this type of education is contagious. When I married there was a difference of twelve years, I was twenty, he thirty-two. . . . I had just come from adolescence. I went into marriage straight from boarding school not knowing how to defend my interests. When I realized that a woman could defend herself and when I realized the slogans that were being used—equality between women and men—I began to earn my rights, freedom of thought, of behavior, to rest, to not be an obedient slave. I wouldn't take it. Especially when I saw the movie *Spartacus*. . . . I decided to leave, because I realized I was not put on this earth to be a slave. After the divorce

> I decided to go to college, I wanted to change my life. I thought, if I finish university I will have more power to change my life: to change my job and also to change my destiny.[54]

According to Valeria, during adolescence gender relations were more or less equitable, however, with marriage men's attitudes towards their wives assumed a more patriarchal character. Although she claimed that her age and naiveté were in part to blame for her husband's domineering attitude, overall his behavior was rooted in his traditional upbringing, which socialist policy had not fundamentally altered. Rather than accept such treatment, Valeria, spurred on by socialist rhetoric of sexual equality and Stanley Kubrick's *Spartacus*, divorced her husband and refashioned her life according to her hopes and desires.

For many women, however, divorce was simply not a viable option, for a host of reasons: financial or emotional dependence on husbands; inability to find housing; desire for their children to be raised by both parents; fear of demotion or ineligibility for promotion. Elena claimed that "as a divorced woman you were looked down upon . . . it was very difficult, if not impossible, to be promoted . . . and even people around you, your family, your parents, looked down on you and condemned you even if your husband had an affair or was drinking and abused you. . . . The common thinking was—and I think still is in some families—that a woman should endure because we are different . . . we are not like men . . . you had to be married as a woman . . . and women looked on their men as gifts . . . as if to say 'look at me, I'm a respectable woman, I am married' . . . being divorced or not married meant that you were much more vulnerable at work and in society . . . any man, any colleague, any director could harass you."[55]According to the women I interviewed, none of them faced harassment or suffered professionally as a result of their divorces. However, a number of them recalled being criticized by their parents for "not making the marriage work" or being the object of gossip by neighbors who viewed them as failed wives. As a result of these factors, then, many women chose to stay married, however unhappily.

While the persistence of traditional behaviors and attitudes was most seriously evident in the form of adultery and spousal abuse (physical or psychological) and more generally in men's control over their wives, it was also evident in men's unwillingness to participate in domestic duties. In large part, men's attitudes toward housework were shaped by cultural values, which deemed housework feminine. This notion was not only perpetuated by men, but by women, in particular mothers who pampered their sons, catering to their every need. As a result, when men married or entered into relationships with women they often expected their partners to

assume the domestic duties performed by their mothers. Elena, who moved in with her boyfriend in the mid-1980s, recalled that "when we decided to move in together he expected me to treat him as his mother did . . . but I didn't . . . and his mother told me, that's my duty to wash his trousers, to cook for him, to clean for him and I said, 'ok is he disabled, I can help him if he's disabled . . . if not he should do these things himself' and from that moment on I totally refused to do these things for him. . . . And little by little he was able to wash dishes, to cook some eggs for himself, to wash his trousers and to keep clean."[56] In some cases, women responded by employing more traditional methods, like flattery, to coax their husbands into performing household chores. Angela, a former woodworker in her late thirties asserted that "you need to know how to deal with men here [in Romania]: to leave them to do things when they want. If you push him . . . or if I say something in a certain tone . . . a tone of superiority because you want it resolved immediately, well it might not be resolved. But if I leave him [alone] speak nicely to him or say that he can do it when he wants, then he does it."[57] The fact that Elena and Angela made such demands or hints at all reveals that they conceived of their relationships as more or less equal partnerships. For them traditional gender roles were not natural and unalterable, but the product of tradition, upbringing, and habit. Because they worked as much as their partners they believed it only fair that the men should also help around the house. Although their demands were in part rooted in the notion of *Eigensinn* (self-will), because this fundamentally involved challenging traditional notions of gender roles, it demonstrates that some women not only recognized the inequality of existing relations but possessed the self-confidence to confront their partners about it.[58]

The significance of men's help in the household was an important component in women's conceptualization of their marriages. For instance, when I queried, "Do you and your husband get along well?" some women made reference to love and companionship in their answers, however, others also made reference to men's participation in household chores. This illustrates that practical and everyday concerns fundamentally affected women's perceptions of what constituted a good marriage. Rather than being simply (or necessarily) a source of economic security in which men and women assumed distinctly gendered roles, some of my respondents viewed marriage as a more or less equal partnership in which both husband and wife contributed to the financial stability of the household as well as its proper functioning.[59]

For instance, Aneta, a retired factory worker in her late sixties, noted that she was "very happy" because she and her husband shared domestic duties, asserting "I looked very forward to coming home. . . . I could hardly wait to come home, to eat . . . to do the chores. I was aware that I had a

husband that would help me, for example, if today I iron, tomorrow I wash, he did the rest. For me it appeared a very easy life."[60] In addition, Aneta's husband shopped for groceries, waited in line for food, and looked after the children. Moreover, since he was a tailor he made the family's clothing, sparing Aneta the time and energy of having to shop for it. Far from viewing the responsibilities of home and work as burdensome, Aneta recalled that hers was "a very easy life."

In some cases sharing meant that men performed more traditionally masculine tasks such as beating rugs and repair work while women cooked, cleaned, and did laundry. In other cases men performed more traditionally feminine tasks such as cleaning, cooking, and ironing. As Iuliana, a retired factory worker in her late fifties, recalled about her husband's role in the household: "He is very capable in that respect. He knows how to make anything, cozonac [a labor-intensive Romanian sweet bread] as well as sarmale [stuffed cabbage rolls]. He helped me a great deal . . . he knows how to iron and make any type of food. But he doesn't know how to hammer a nail, change a pipe."[61] Although scholars point to patriarchal attitudes and men's unwillingness to participate in household duties as evidence of women's continued subordination under state socialism, according to the aforementioned women, their successful negotiation of the double burden was often related to their husband's participation in domestic duties.[62] This is not to argue that men assumed one-half, one-quarter, or even one-eighth of all household tasks or assumed them with enthusiasm. Indeed, since women are accustomed to performing the vast majority of household duties in Romania, it is quite possible that my respondents overemphasized the degree to which their husbands helped them. Or, that they didn't allow their husbands to do certain things—cook, iron, wash clothing—for fear they might ruin things. At the same time, it cannot be assumed that their responses are gross exaggerations or sugar-coated representations of reality. Thus it seems that, in some instances, men's contributions to running the household were much more substantial than has previously been noted by scholars and that this in turn impacted the nature of marital relations.

What were men's motivations for participating in household duties? In some instances it was rooted in genuine sensitivity to the dual demands faced by their wives, as was the case of Mircea J., a retired pharmacist in his early eighties, who contrasted his views on housework with those of his male coworkers, "It depends on the family, the conception. There were men who couldn't fathom collaborating on the domestic level . . . from my point of view, we lived during the same difficult periods, women's situation was very difficult. I would characterize it in the following way: I said that women are not guilty of anything because women do two shifts, one at the office, the other at home. When I said, at the office, that I washed dishes

one of my colleagues asked: 'How can you do such feminine work?' I said, 'but your wife, does she work?' He said 'yes.' And I replied, 'so she has to, without fail, work two jobs while you read the paper?'" [63] Additionally, men's willingness to help around the house was a function of the particular task being performed. As Mircea H., an owner of a construction company in his late sixties put it: "Naturally men waited in line; I would go and my wife would stay at home with the children."[64] Moreover, Marcela, an art teacher in her late fifties commented that her husband "didn't help me in the sense that he did housework. . . . I can't even describe how clumsy he was. But he had other attributes, he could get a hold of food that you couldn't find, we never went without meat, coffee, or anything, he succeeded in finding it. He was the type who managed to make circles of friends, and one of them was a guy at a restaurant. He had many acquaintances in the area and there he bought [food] at cost from the restaurant."[65]

In interpreting these passages it is important not to let conventional, Western feminist conceptions of housework color our analysis. Scholars of socialism argue that because men tended to assume responsibility for weekly, biweekly or even monthly jobs, such as maintenance and household repairs, they spent considerably less time per week on domestic chores.[66] However, the Romanian case complicates this claim. For instance, with the reintroduction of rationing in the 1980s, queuing for food became a daily activity for which many men assumed (or shared) responsibility. Although grocery shopping may appear a meager contribution from our current vantage point, the efforts of Mircea and Marcela's husband were much more significant than picking up a few items at the corner store. Indeed, in the context of the material shortages that characterized life in Romania during the 1980s it might be more useful to think of these activities as food procurement rather than shopping. At the time, procuring food required a good deal of time, energy, and fortitude, be it going from shop to shop, negotiating deals with restaurant owners or chefs, or standing in a queue for hours for a kilo of cheese. Compared with other countries in socialist Eastern Europe where queuing was never as prevalent, the widespread participation of Romanian men in procuring food can be considered exceptional.[67]

Although men's responsibilities for these duties lightened women's burden, freeing them up for other duties such as cooking and childcare (see Figure 4), these efforts do not necessarily reflect a feminist consciousness on the part of men. Because both men and women have historically been involved in food procurement in Romania, it did not assume a negative stigma as was the case with traditionally feminine chores such as cooking and cleaning.[68] Indeed, the experience of braving subzero temperatures in the dark of winter for a liter of milk may have been construed by some men as indicative of their physical endurance and masculinity. Considering the

Figure 4. Matilda Niţa and daughter Florintina make pastries in the kitchen while husband Dimitru does the shopping, *Femeia,* February 1980.

control the regime exerted over most aspects of life, food procurement thus may have served as a means of articulating their breadwinner status and reasserting control over the home.

In addition to procuring food, some men were actively involved in childcare. This was necessitated by the lack of sufficient state-run childcare facilities and by the fact that many parents could not rely on relatives as a source of childcare.[69] Thus, many couples resorted to the alternate shift system. Stela recalled that "we shared. My husband organized his schedule so that his classes were mainly in the afternoon and he stayed with the kids in the mornings."[70] The alternate shift system obviously had many disadvantages. For one, families rarely spent time together as a whole—with the exception of Sundays, and, depending on the type of job parents held, Saturdays. On the other hand, because it was shared by both parents, childcare assumed a less gendered connotation. Rodica recalled that "when he [her husband] had time, he helped me, I can't say he didn't. As you can imagine, a three month old girl and no one to stay with her . . . we were not in a position to pay a babysitter to look after the kid, he had to work a different shift so that we could both look after her. He in the morning and me in the afternoon."[71] Rodica's husband's involvement in childcare is especially

noteworthy since, at the time (the mid-1980s), there were no disposable diapers in Romania. Additionally, because gas was rationed, heating water for bathing and milk for feeding could take up to three hours. In contrast to Poland and East Germany, where the state was more effective in meeting the childcare needs of working families, and Hungary, where by the 1980s women were being pushed out of the labor force and encouraged to assume full responsibility for the household, in Romania men were more likely to be involved in childrearing.[72]

Conclusion

Marriage, both as represented in policy and propaganda and experienced by women and men in their daily lives, assumed diverse meanings over the course of socialist rule in Romania. On the one hand, women's mass participation in paid labor, their recognition as equal socialist citizens in legislation, policy, and state media, and their increased engagement in public and social life challenged their subordinate status. These factors, combined with women's increased earning power and relocation to cities, lessened the control their families exerted over them, allowing them greater freedom in choosing a spouse. On the other hand, the passage of maternity leave—rather than family leave—and, beginning in 1996, the implementation of draconian reproductive policies and the glorification of motherhood reinforced traditional gender roles, while also undermining women's bodily autonomy. Moreover, although propagandists sought to degender domestic labor by condemning patriarchal practices and presenting egalitarian family models, by late socialism many men still tended to view housework as "women's work."

Despite this, my findings reveal that some men did perform household chores, from food procurement to childcare. Did men undergo transformation—as Engels had envisaged—as a result of working alongside women, or did they simply recognize that traditionally gendered practices were incompatible with the realities of daily life under state socialism? As a corollary to this, did men's participation in the home reveal an increased flexibility in their definitions of masculinity and greater sensitivity to women's multiple responsibilities? In certain cases, the marriage may have been more egalitarian from the onset, creating a basis for domestic cooperation. In others cases, men's experiences working alongside women, combined with slogans of gender equality, may have facilitated their increased participation in the household. Another explanation lies in the particular job being performed: as noted, some men preferred shopping and childcare to ironing and washing dishes—although a few men willingly did both. At the same time, women's efforts to renegotiate family roles, be it through

subtle persuasion or outright pressure, must be considered. As illustrated, women's increased sense of self-worth as a result of engaging in paid labor convinced them that household responsibilities should be shared. Finally, the temporal demands placed upon women, combined with the material difficulties faced by many families in the 1980s, simply necessitated that men help out in the home if a comfortable or at least sustainable standard of living was to be maintained. Ironically, then, the failure of state socialism to make good on its promises of socialized childcare and housework and to improve the material lives of its citizens may have fostered more equitable marital relations. If this was indeed the case, it confirms the conclusions of sociologist Arlie Hochschild who found that joint responsibility for housework evolved more easily when it was linked to necessity rather than abstract slogans of gender equality. [73]

Whatever the motivating factors, my findings indicate that in certain cases, spousal relations did undergo change during state socialism—as is evident in men's participation in housework and women's positive evaluations of their marriages. This is not to claim that domestic duties were divided equally between women and men or to ignore the contributions of other family members (such as grandparents), but rather to acknowledge that women's successful negotiation of the double burden was in part related to their husband's participation in household chores. By the same token, state socialism by no means ushered in a period of marital bliss as some women continued to be the target of physical and psychological abuse, a situation they were often unable to escape due to numerous factors from housing shortages to the introduction of regressive divorce legislation in 1966.

By analyzing the diversity and fluidity of marital roles and relations as well as the active engagement of women and men in reinforcing, challenging, or renegotiating family roles we move beyond the domineering husband/oppressed wife dichotomy toward a more nuanced understanding of marital relations. This involves acknowledging the continued existence of gender inequality within some families, while also recognizing that some men and women worked together to resolve domestic duties to ensure a sustainable standard of living.

Notes

This article has benefited greatly from the careful reading and suggestions of Jill Smith, Ben St. John, Jim Schneider, and the anonymous reviewers for the *Journal of Women's History.*

[1]Although Harsanyi acknowledges that men helped around the house in some capacity, she does not interpret this as an indication of men's sensitivity to

women's double burden or as evidence of increased gender equality within the family. Doina Pasca Harsanyi, "Participation of Women in the Workforce: the Case of Romania," in *Family, Women and Employment in Central Eastern Europe*, ed. Barbara Lobodzinska (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1995), 215.

[2]See, for example, Barbara Wolfe Jancar, *Women under Communism* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978); Hilda Scott, *Women and Socialism: Experiences from Eastern Europe* (London: Allison & Busby, 1976); Gail Warshofsky Lapidus, *Women in Soviet Society: Equality, Development, and Social Change* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978); Sharon L. Wolchik and Alfred G. Meyer, eds., *Women, State, and Party in Eastern Europe* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1985); Sonia Kruks, Rayna Rapp, and Marilyn B. Young, eds., *Promissory Notes: Women in the Transition to Socialism* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1989); and Chris Corrin, ed., *Superwomen and the Double Burden: Women's Experience of Change in Central and Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union* (London: Scarlet Press, 1992).

[3]Katherine Verdery, *What Was Socialism, and What Comes Next?* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 24–25; 65–66.

[4]*Femeia* was edited by the official communist women's organizations the Democratic Union of Women in Romania (1947–1957) and the National Council of Women (1958–1989). My conception of gender follows Joan Scott's definition as the socially and culturally produced ideas about differences between the sexes and their reproduction and perpetuation in discourses, relationships, and institutions. See Joan W. Scott, "Gender: a Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *The American Historical Review* 91, no. 5 (1986): 1053–75.

[5]Donna Harsch, *Revenge of the Domestic: Women, the Family, and Communism in the German Democratic Republic* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007).

[6]I follow the lead of Choi Chatterjee, who views socialist discourse as "not merely symbolic—camouflage for the exercise of power," but instead as "an integral part of politics" that sought to legitimate the communist program for women and the population more generally. Choi Chatterjee, *Celebrating Women: Gender, Festival Culture, and Bolshevik Ideology, 1910–1939* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2002).

[7]For a fascinating examination of the mobilization of nationalist discourse for socialist ends in Ceauşescu's Romania, see Katherine Verdery, *National Ideology under Socialism: Identity and Cultural Politics in Ceauşescu's Romania* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

[8]On gender and state socialism, see, for example, Harsch, *Revenge of the Domestic*; Lynne Haney, *Inventing the Needy: Gender and the Politics of Welfare in Hungary* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); and Shana Penn and Jill Massino, eds., *Gender Politics and Everyday Life in State Socialist Eastern and Central Europe* (New York: Palgrave, 2009). On the history of everyday life with regard to the USSR and Eastern Europe, see Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); Stephen Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a Civilization* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); Padraic Kenney, *A Carnival of Revolution: Central*

Europe 1989 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002); David Crowley and Susan E. Reid, eds., *Socialist Spaces: Sites of Everyday Life in the Eastern Bloc* (Oxford: Berg, 2002); Susan E. Reid and David Crowley, eds., *Style and Socialism: Modernity and Material Culture in Post-War Eastern Europe* (Oxford: Berg, 2000).

[9]For instance, in the case of Bulgaria Maria Todorova has argued that the "double burden" needs to be viewed "as part of a cultural tradition deeply embedded in rural life, where women did carry out this double function and where an alternative viable role model was, for all practical purposes, non-existent." Maria Todorova, "Historical Tradition and Transformation in Bulgaria: Women's Issues or Feminist Issues?" *Journal of Women's History* 5, no. 3 (1994): 129–43.

[10]109 interviews were conducted, 79 by me and 30 by sociology students at the University of Transylvania. All interviews were conducted in Romanian without an interpreter. Respondents were selected through word of mouth and the snowball method. For the sake of privacy I use only their first name when identifying my respondents. All ages given reflect the age of the respondent at the time of the interview.

[11]See Luisa Passerini, ed., *International Yearbook of Oral History and Life Stories: Volume I: Memory and Totalitarianism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); and Rubie Watson, ed., *Memory, History, and Opposition under State Socialism* (Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 1994).

[12]In 1957, the first year the total labor force was measured in terms of gender, women constituted 27 percent of all workers. *Anuarul statistic al Republicii Populare Romîne, 1958* (Bucharest: Direcţia Centrală de Statistică, 1958).

[13]*Yearbook of Labor Statistics* (Geneva, 1975).

[14]On women wage earners in the United States, see Alice Kessler-Harris, *Out to Work: A History of Wage-Earning Women in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982).

[15]I employ the term "promote" rather than "guarantee" to differentiate between policy as legislated and policy as instituted. Although women were guaranteed equal pay for equal work and equal access to almost all occupations, they were overrepresented in unskilled and semiskilled jobs and in teaching and medicine, which led to the feminization and devaluation (both symbolically and monetarily) of these positions.

[16]Ministerul Justiţiei, "Codul Familiei al Republicii Populare Române din aprilie" in *Coleţie de Legi, Decrete, Hotâriri şi Dispoziţi 1956* (Bucharest: Editura de Stat pentru Literatură Economică şi Juridică, 1956), 63–64. Compared with family laws in the West, this was quite progressive. For instance, until the mid-1960s the Napoleonic Code, which defined married women as legal subordinates of their husbands, remained in force in France. Andrée Michael and Geneviève Texier, *La condition de la francaise d'aujourd'hui* (Geneva: Editions Gonthier, 1964), 79–80.

[17]"Codul Familiei," 64.

[18]Consiliul Legislativ, "Legea Nr. 18 din 12 Februarie pentru modificarea codului de procedură civilă," in *Colecţiune de Legi şi Regulamente 1948* (Bucureşti: Imprimeria Centrală, 1948), 82–83.

[19]In 1966, under Decree 770, abortion became a criminal offence in socialist Romania. Women who sought illegal abortions—along with the individuals who performed them—faced fines, job loss, the revocation of licenses (doctors) and, in some cases, imprisonment. Ministerul Justiţiei, "Decretul nr. 770 din 1 octombrie 1966 pentru reglementarea întreruperii cursului sarcinii" and "Decretul nr. 771 din 1 octombrie 1966 pentru modificarea Codului penal," in *Coleţie de Legi, Decrete, Hotâriri şi Alte Acte Normative 1966* (Bucureşti: Editura Ştiinţifica, 1967), 30–31.

[20]The actual figure is estimated to be in the tens of thousands since many abortions were performed clandestinely and thus went unreported. Kligman, *Politics of Duplicity*, 214.

[21]In 1966 access to divorce was sharply curtailed. Reconciliation was usually imposed by state jurists in cases of infidelity, battery, degrading behavior, incurable diseases, and even in cases of attempted murder by one of the spouses. In addition a tax of 3,000 to 6,000 lei was imposed on the party who filed for divorce. Ministerul Justiţiei, "Decretul nr. 779 din 8 octombrie 1966 pentru modificarea unor dispoziţii legale privitoare la divorţ" in *Coleţie de Legi, Decrete, Hotâriri şi Alte Acte Normative* (Bucureşti: Editura Ştiinţifica, 1967), 35–39.

[22]*Femeia,* April 1966.

[23]Mihai Stoian, "Dialog cu mine însumi despre viața în doi: o profesiune care se invața," *Femeia,* April 1967.

[24]Despite such progressive representations, from a cultural perspective the general belief was that a woman would marry in her early twenties and if she did not she was typically referred to as an old maid (fată mare), especially in rural areas. See Gail Kligman, "The Rites of Women: Oral Poetry, Ideology, and the Socialization of Peasant Women in Contemporary Romania," in Wolchik and Meyer, *Women, State, and Party*, 325–27.

[25]For a discussion of the use of beauty, fashion, and other consumer goods as a source of political legitimacy, see Judd Stitziel, *Fashioning Socialism: Clothing, Politics and Consumer Culture in East Germany* (Oxford: Berg, 2005); and Susan E. Reid, "Cold War in the Kitchen: Gender and the De-Stalinization of Consumer Taste in the Soviet Union under Khrushchev," *Slavic Review* 61, no. 2 (2002): 211–52.

[26]By "traditional conceptions of gender" I mean attitudes and beliefs that are predicated on the presumed differences (biological, emotional, intellectual) between men and women and are mobilized to restrict women to particular roles and spaces. According to Romanian political scientist Mihaela Miroiu, who came of age in the 1970s, the only sex education adolescents received was "sanitary education," which focused on hygiene and physiology. Additionally, *Vita Sexualis*, a handbook on sexual life written during the interwar period, also served as a medium for learning about sexuality, but the book was difficult to procure. Mihaela Miroiu, in conversation with the author, March, 2004. Article 200 of the Penal Code, passed in 1966, criminalized

sexual relations between persons of the same sex, especially those between adults and minors. Punishments for transgressing these laws ranged from one to seven years imprisonment, though a person might face up to twenty five years in prison if it was determined that these relations resulted in bodily harm, death, or suicide of one of the parties involved. The law was repealed in 2001. See "Romania," on *Sodomy Laws*, http://www.sodomylaws.org/world/romania/romania.htm.

[27]Adriana Babăn, "Women's Sexuality in Romania," in *Reproducing Gender: Politics, Publics, and Everyday Life after Socialism,* ed. Susan Gal and Gail Kligman (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 329. Because sexuality is considered a highly private matter in Romania it is difficult to determine the extent to which women engaged in pre-marital intercourse.

[28]Clio, interview with author, June 2003.

[29]Tatiana, interview with author, May 2003.

[30]Mircea I., interview by Ionuţ Iuria, July 2003. Couples in urban areas typically married at an older age than those in rural areas, living first in the city's workers' dorms and then in an efficiency (*garsonieră*), which they received through state enterprises. Bosses, higher party members, or those with connections usually received larger apartments or houses. Meanwhile, single individuals were placed on a waitlist, often facing years of dormitory living.

[31]*Buletin de Bucureşti*, directed by Virgil Calotescu (Bucharest: Casa de Filme Patru, 1982).

[32]*Anuarul statistic al Republicii Socialiste România, 1967–1989*.

[33]*Anuarul statistic al Republicii Socialiste România, 1967*; *1974*.

[34]*Scânteia*, 8 March 1953.

[35]"Se poate modela un soţ?" *Femeia*, February 1972.

[36]For an excellent analysis of sexology and state policy toward sexuality under Ceauşescu, see Erin Biebuyck "The Collectivization of Pleasure: Normative Sexuality in Post-1966 Romania," *Aspasia: International Yearbook of Central, Eastern, and Southeastern European Women's and Gender History* 4 (forthcoming, 2010).

[37]"Nevroza Sexuala," *Femeia,* June 1971.

[38]Ibid.

[39]*Femeia,* June 1986. Official sexologists also warned against "anti-biological" contraceptives. Biebuyck "The Collectivization of Pleasure."

[40]Although not illegal, contraceptives were neither manufactured in nor imported into Romania. See Thomas J. Kell and Viviana Andreescu, "Fertility Policy in Ceauşescu's Romania," *Journal of Family History* 24, no. 4 (1999): 481.

[41]Luana, interview with author, July 2003.

[42]Elisabeta Moraru, "Respectați-O!" *Femeia,* December 1966.

[43]Ibid.

[44]Ibid.

[45]Ibid.

[46]Ibid.

[47]*Femeia,* July 1970. This issue also included a quiz for men to evaluate their parenting style.

[48]In some cases factory directors or apartment bloc managers intervened on behalf of the abused woman, however, because no statistics were kept on domestic violence it is unknown how many cases were brought to the attention of the authorities.

[49]"'Să depăsim patriarhatul!' spune un bărbat," *Femeia,* February 1974.

[50]Ibid.

[51]Ioan, interview with author, June 2009.

[52]Tatiana, interview with author, May 2003.

[53]Hana Havelkova, "A Few Pre-feminist Thoughts," in Funk and Mueller, *Gender Politics and Post-Communism*, 69.

[54]Valeria, interview with author, June 2003.

[55]Elena, interview with author, May 2009. Under Ceauşescu divorce was construed as a civic failing, was recorded in workplace files, and could be used as a basis for denying individuals promotion. Kligman, *Politics of Duplicity*, 51.

[56]Ibid.

[57]Angela, interview with author, May 2003.

[58]Alf Lüdtke employs the term *Eigensinn* (self-will) to theorize worker demand for increased wages and improved conditions in imperial Germany, however, this term is also appropriate for conceptualizing women's demands for improved living conditions in the context of the household and family. See Alf Lüdtke, "Organizational Order or Eigensinn? Workers' Privacy and Workers' Politics in Imperial Germany," in *Rites of Power, Symbolism, Ritual and Politics since the Middle Ages*, ed. Sean Wilentz (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985).

[59]Donna Harsch found that more progressive definitions of marital happiness emerged in the late 1960s and early 1970s in East Germany as incompatibility and men's unwillingness to participate in childcare and in the household—rather than alcohol abuse and/or spousal abuse—increasingly became the basis upon which women filed for divorce. Harsch, *Revenge of the Domestic*, 294–95.

[60]Aneta, interview by Anca Coman, June 2003.

[61]Iuliana, interview with author, June 2003.

[62]See Lobodzinska, *Family, Women, and Employment*; Barbara Einhorn, *Cinderella Goes to Market: Citizenship, Gender and Women's Movements in East Central Europe* (London: Verso, 1993); and Funk and Mueller, *Gender Politics and Post-Communism.*

[63]Mircea J., interview with author, July 2003.

[64]Mircea H., interview by Ionuţ Iuria, July 2003.

[65]Marcela, interview by Anca Coman, June 2003.

[66]Studies demonstrate that men devoted considerably less time per week to domestic duties than women and that their participation did not increase substantially over the course of communist rule. However, such analyses do not address how men's participation in the secondary economy and their responsibility for food procurement may have affected their ability to participate in other household chores. For data on the sexual division of household labor, see Lobodzinska, *Family, Women, and Employment*; Einhorn, *Cinderella Goes to Market*; and Funk and Mueller, *Gender Politics and Post-Communism*.

[67]Men also queued up in the 1980s in Poland during martial law, though usually for alcohol, not food. Jean Robinson, conversation with author, 23 April 2007.

[68]In Romania the sexual division of labor is not simply a matter of spatial separateness, but complementarity. Typically, men slaughtered the animals while women prepared them. See Gail Kligman, *The Wedding of the Dead: Ritual, Poetics, and Popular Culture in Transylvania* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 50–51.

[69]Although childcare was ostensibly available to all, according to official statistics, in 1985 only 8.7 percent of all one, two, and three-year olds were admitted to state-run daycare in socialist Romania. Kligman, *Politics of Duplicity,* 83.

[70]Stela, interview with author, May 2003.

[71]Rodica, interview by Anca Coman, June 2003.

[72]See Susan Gal, "Gender in the Post-Socialist Transition: The Abortion Debate in Hungary," *East European Politics and Societies* 8, no. 2 (1994): 256–86; and Julia Szalai, "Some Aspects of the Changing Situation of Women in Hungary," *Signs* 17, no. 1 (1991), 161. "Maternity leave" was extended to men in Hungary after 1985; however, the vast majority of men did not take it.

[73]Arlie Hochschild with Anne Machung, *The Second Shift: Working Parents and the Revolution at Home* (New York: Viking, 1989).