

Solidarity and Individualism in the Gender Relations – the Dilemma of the Power Relations within the Contemporary Couple

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Abstract: *The general idea regarding the relations between the contemporary marital partners describes the marital relations through a fair and modern attitude. Thus, the idea of marital modernity seems already certain and well assimilated in most marital environments. However, the national statistical data do not validate the same balance in terms of marital role equity, the relationships between partners or in terms of the distribution of power within the couple. The culture in which the young people have grown has a greater influence upon them than the glitter of the new values of equity and marital balance. In the 2000 Gender Barometer, 63% of the respondents believed it was a woman's duty to take care of the household chores, while in 2018, their share was 58%. We can therefore speak of a modernity of mentalities, but a very slow one, as in almost 2 decades, the general evolution in terms of role equity is only 5% and regarding the superior ability of the man to lead the family, the indicators note an evolution of 9.8%. (Grünberg, 2019).*

The contemporaneity surprises the young couple at the intersection between the traditional system and the modern system or at the intersection between the marital modernity and the postmodernity; in both situations, the strategy of managing the solidarity and the access to power is a priority.

The study starts from the premise of the fact that the new valences of the marital modernity managed to produce obvious changes in the declared behavior rather than in the actually played behavior.

Keywords: *role distribution, power management within the couple, gender attitude, marital equity/inequity, relational solidarity/individualism.*

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Introduction

As shown by social studies, the gender equity in the Romanian marital space is relative; however, this can be considered a subjective perception. If for some women the social differences between the sexes are a problem, for others the difference is not felt, therefore, nor complained about. In these cases and within certain limits, the social hierarchy has its positive effects.

For some women, this state of affairs can be like an expression of convenience due to the comfort of having a clear set of roles and responsibilities; this is a much more socialized and internalized accessible option which guarantees the minimum marital stability experienced in the environment of origin. For other women, the censorship of some socially predetermined roles becomes a double problem regarding the fulfillment, both in terms of their social and professional development and in terms of the entire functional construction of their couple. In this case, the personal autonomy is strongly counteracted by the imperatives of the reference community.

The relationships between the partners, the role distribution, the access to decision-making, the gender attitude and the social acceptance appear to be predetermined by the reference community, a fact that considerably diminishes the personal autonomy. In specialized studies, the decisional autonomy, based upon reason and consent is considered to be the expressive autonomy of each individual (Sandu, 2020, p. 261).

Often, there is a difference between the personal opinion and the socially exposed opinion and the partners anticipate the fact that the society values the desirable truth more than that of individual experiences or needs that do not always fall within the classical limits of the social rules. For this reason, Goffman says, individuals would rather play roles and wear this mask of socially desirable attitudes and statements with which they do not always agree. Thus, the communication is ritualized and it becomes the expression of a community will (Goffman, 2009).

The contemporary society cannot be functionally categorized as traditional, however, as a whole, it cannot be considered modern in its entirety either. The evolution from traditionality to modernity and from modernity to postmodernity was gradual and differentiated, depending on each individual's ability to adapt, assimilate and assume the new values of maritality. In this respect, the social impact of the "dissidence" is still being experienced because the socialization of the vast majority of young people

took place in the environments of traditional influence of their own families of origin.

If we look at it from the perspective of the relationship between a man and a woman, the first need for autonomy is the woman's need. As it evolved in the shadow of tradition, the male status was protected with priority from the perspective of the role assumption, the gender hierarchy and the decision-making priority. The reduction of the traditional imperatives created the premise of a functional reconstruction, providing the women with the necessary openness for personal autonomy, however, on a background of traditional primary socialization.

However, the desire for personal and career fulfillment did not always provide the expected effect as the new condition brought men a double (domestic and career) assumption and therefore, more of an overcrowding of roles than autonomy and equity. Gradually, this very double assumption offered the woman two important resources of influence in the marital space: the man's dependence on the set of tasks managed by women and, in sufficiently numerous situations, her autonomy and also her financial dominance.

From the male perspective, the decrease in traditional imperatives creates the first identity dilemma – the status is no longer supported so much by the tradition and thus, the source of his power is consistently diminished. As he lacks the power that tradition offered him, the contemporary man has two courses of action at hand: he validates his status in the new functional context by assuming the marital equity, or he continues to cultivate his traditional status, by choosing partners who still allow this type of functionality.

Pleck Joseph (1977) explains this problem starting from the belief that this identity crisis exists because of the pressures put on men due to social, economic, historical and political changes that have forced men to try to meet the many conflicting and contradictory demands made required by the male role. Finally men are confused about what they should achieve in order to become socially masculine and they try to overcome the prescribed roles of the traditional concept of masculinity (Lemon, 1995).

If we look at it from another viewpoint, the diversity of information, especially of virtual sources, creates the premise of new approaches to maritality that can highlight this identity crisis (Vlad, 2017, p. 67). The individuals build their marital dreams by referring to their own ideals; they begin to look for their right partner who originates less in the cultural environment of socialization and more in a virtual space where the social control can no longer censor their dreams.

The man and the woman – neuroscience approaches

Undoubtedly, the social media have influenced the behaviors of men and women or the way someone relates to a man or a woman, and the social mentalities about gender have and will continue to bear the cultural imprint of the environments of origin. The scientific data say that the biological structure of men and women shows some remarkable differences that make the differences in the male or the female manifestation noticeable and which, in the light of new scientific discoveries, highlight a set of qualities in women that are not so well defined in the neuro-psychic structure of men.

However, according to a social stereotype, women must be like men if they want to be treated as equals.

In the first stages of research on the brain, in the stage where assessments were intuitive rather than concretely demonstrated, it was believed that the weight of the brain also provides the measure of male intelligence in relation to the female intelligence (thesis promoted by Titu Maiorescu). The modern science has demonstrated that this thesis cannot be supported. Since 1881, Sofia Nădejde offers a series of logical and medical arguments, according to the scientific level of that age. She responds to him in the journal „*Comportamentul*” no. 24/1881 stating that it would be more logical to relate the weight of the brain to the total weight of a man, and such a ratio would rather show the superiority of women in relation to men (Popescu, 2004, p. 69).

Many of the gender differences are determined by hormonal influences on the brain (Pletzer, 2015).

The human brain is divided into two hemispheres that are connected to each other by a channel of variable size, depending on the gender. The left hemisphere of the brain provides the person with practical sense, logical thinking, vocabulary, speech, deduction, order and so on. The right hemisphere holds the elements of creativity, artistic inclinations, visual, intuition, overall vision and orientation in space and so forth (Tudose, 2005, p. 22).

Neurologist Roger Gorski confirms that, in the case of women, the channel of communication between the two hemispheres of the brain is thicker, a fact that provides them with a connection between the two hemispheres of about 30% greater. The wider opening of the corpus callosum gives the woman a greater ability to relate and a much more fluent speech than the man (Pease & Pease, 2008, p.120). These aspects give the women a greater ability to communicate and they are also more empathetic than men (Pang et al., 2023).

Another female quality, an extension of the gender characteristics, is the education of children. Her emotional sensitivity, according to her genetic structure, identifies much better the needs and emotions of children and she increasingly tends to impose her ideas on the rising and education of children.

Then, the genetic makeup of the woman never made her inferior to the man. With superior relational abilities, with innate psycho-social abilities and with many other qualities experienced over time, the woman was in a permanent relationship of equality with the man, although society did not always recognize this condition. Because of this, the need to participate in making decisions that are directly related to one's own person remains a permanent necessity. Women feel the need for verbal delicacy, intercommunication and permanent mutual assurance of feelings (Smalley, 2005, p. 232).

If the female way of approaching life is relational, the male is genetically structured differently and he will act instrumentally. The smaller opening of the corpus callosum forces it to react directly, functionally, focused on solving problems. For him, the feminine way of developing certain activities, of communicating certain aspects in detail, seems more difficult to support.

The structure of the male brain is not nearly as flexible as that of the female brain. The male brain no longer carries elements specific to one hemisphere to the other. Consequently, the flow of information from one hemisphere to the other is more difficult than in women. This particularity forces the man to be as functional and organized as possible in his speech. Men's sentences are simpler, the formulations are much better centered on a subject and have an uncomplicated structure: a simple introduction, the issue in brief, the point of view and the conclusion.

For this reason, conversations on multiple levels of communication are more difficult for men to manage. The studies carried out on the sick man's brain show that if the left side of the brain is impacted, he loses the ability to speak. Also, men who have the right side of the brain partially or totally impacted lose the ability to orient themselves in space, the ability to think three-dimensionally and to rotate objects in the mind to appreciate their angles, shape, and so on. (Tudose, 2005, p. 23).

The smaller number of nerve connections between the two hemispheres results in a better compartmentalized brain in men. At the end of the day, the woman still analyzes messages, while the man structures them better and sediments them. With a smaller number of connections connecting the two hemispheres, the brain is forced to structure and deposit

information in specific areas, while the woman can process it more often, so to leave it less structured.

The desire to achieve many things, to always achieve success, to be in control and to mark one's spheres of influence make the man more possessive than the woman. Consequently, in the system of personal needs, the man sums up the need for ownership, control and self-esteem (Smalley, 2005, p.234)

Methodology

The study proposes a quantitative analysis of the dynamics of relationships between men and women from the perspective of approaching the solidarity or the relational individualism and also from the perspective of power management within the contemporary couple. Recent studies highlight this state of transition between the 3 major marital systems – traditionalism, modernism and postmodernism. Thus, a gap is noticed between the role perceived and the one actually played, an aspect explained by G. W. Allport (1981) by the fact that the perceived role is based on the evaluative-affective component, while the role actually played highlights the individual's ability to behaviorally translate the role requirements (Iluț, 2005).

For this reason, the study starts from the premise that the difference between the culture in which the individual was socialized and the actual behavior he plays can also be understood as a form of resistance to the imperatives related to which the individual was socialized. Thus, the declared behavior becomes the formal role he plays in relation to the social expectation and the actual behavior played is the concrete expression of his own vision of married life. In this context, the logic according to which the solidarity is understood and also the access to power become elements that provide the individual with resources for his own resilience.

The research is exploratory and is based on the sociological investigation and the research tool is the questionnaire. Regarding the type of sampling, the study is based on the principle of non-random convenience sampling, as the total size is 628 respondents. The study aims to analyze gender opinions regarding the image of couple solidarity and to identify gender strategies for power management in couples.

The dilemma of solidarity versus the relational individualism in the contemporary couple

The problem of building solidarity in the contemporary married couple is one of the great challenges of socio-psychological analysis because the way in which young people understand solidarity makes it migrate from the initial quality of family function to the consequence of functionality. This new logic of functionality places the individual as the priority of any marital situation and the fulfillment is considered to be an individual act which is not always shared. Therefore, each partner sees in the other partner the resource of personal fulfillment and the solidarity is the derivative of the two individual fulfillments.

At the level of the entire sample, 61.3% believe the fact that the lack of marital solidarity is one of the factors impacting marital relations and 75% believe that the marital individualism is a generator of conflicts. However, 36.3% agree with the statement that too much trust in the partner impacts the marital relationships. Applying the Select Cases function in SPSS to identify the profile of this social category highlights the fact that the followers of limited trust are also those who complain about the lack of solidarity of the other partner. Therefore, at least for this social category, the solidarity is rather a condition which attributes blame to the other than one assumed by that very person.

The assessment by gender indicates that 41.9% of men believe that the increased trust impacts the marital relations, while for women, the registered indicator is 33%, a fact that justifies a greater need for affiliation for women than for men and also a greater empathetic power and empathetic desire of women.

Looking at the respondents' marital status, 40% of married people and 26.5% of cohabiting people believe that too much trust impacts the marital relations. It is interesting to state that the longevity of some marriages does not correlate with a higher level of relationship quality and that, often, the individual's attitude of self-protection, the unresolved conflicts often translated more into scandals and less into mediation topics and resources, built the premise of relationships devoid of emotional content. In this case, out of the desire for self-protection (the mutual level of trust being diminished), the partners feel that too much trust generates more insecurity than internal cohesion.

In the case of cohabiting partners, the social pressure is lessened. As Giddens stated, relationships last as long as the love feeling lasts (Giddens, 1997). The dissolution and restoration of the relationship no longer bear the

same criticism because society does not evaluate cohabitation status and marital status in the same manner. Also, the decision to dissolve is easier for unmarried partners than for married partners. This is why the gradual investment in trust for cohabiting partners has the function of also measuring its impact at the partnership level.

The institution of marriage assumes a different group dimension, the elements of trust circulate from one micro-group to another, from one kinship line to another and the effects are more difficult to control. For this reason, the costs of trust are higher for married partners than for those who cohabit and this aspect is also found in the statistical data presented above.

By following the same identity crisis mentioned by Lemon (1995), the analysis of social indicators becomes slightly counterintuitive – the partners speak of a strategically controlled level of trust in order not to become vulnerable and, also, they also speak at a large extent of the need for joint responsibility and involvement. To the same extent, we are talking about the security of the personal budget, the security of the personal heritage and the fact that the reluctance to get involved in marital relations impacts the stability of the couple. The optics of the ideas, of the response options, often have a double measure: the ideas of good, involvement, the assumption of values often become elements that describe the set of debts of the other, while the elements that build the idea of security, of fulfilling needs are those that are perceived in terms of expectations.

The nature of involvement and assumption often appears to be a consistent challenge for some young people and the sense of duty towards the other has diminished considerably. On this aspect, Gilles Lipovetsky drew attention in the French society since 1993 when he draws attention on the fact that "parallel to the social depreciation of individual debts, the postmodern societies have largely given up promoting the unconditional imperative to honor the debts of inter-individual morality. There are rare places and moments today where the obligation to devote one's life to one's neighbor vibrates: while categorical exhortations to do good deeds are replaced by norms of self-love, the altruistic values have ceased to be moral evidence in the eyes of individuals and families" (Lipovetsky, 1996).

67.8% of the respondents declare that the reluctance to get involved in the marital relationship impacts the partnership. Among them, 37.1% women and 54.5% men are believe that for the happiness of the couple one has to make a compromise regarding time. Also from this category, 22.2% of men and 20% of women believe that for the happiness of the couple one must follow one's personal interest. And also in this category, 45.5% of men

and 20% of women believe that believing too much in marriage is a form of vulnerability.

The evaluation of the indicators, using the control variables, shows certain distortions regarding the sense of common duty for married life and their analysis marks the difference between the answer considered to be desirable and the antithesis of one's own behavior and marital expectations. The involvement in the relationship therefore implies the acceptance of compromises at certain times and trust becomes a form of individual vulnerability.

Generally speaking, the idea of solidarity is associated with maritality to a large extent. Almost 82% of the people surveyed consider it to be an important resource for maritality.

However, the image of the solidarity indicates some reference to itself and its analysis is not too far from itself. 51.2% of men and 55.5% of women see solidarity as a contextual situation, a momentary situation, not one of permanent value. Also from the gender perspective, 34.7% of men and 36.3% of women believe that solidarity is a mistake, each individual having to take care of their personal needs. The solidarity often appears as a contextual situation, not a permanent situation. The logic of the relational individualism does not exclude solidarity manifestations, but it does not ensure its constancy.

A partner appears as a source of the other's fulfillment and the momentary solidarity becomes more a form of protecting one's own source of fulfillment than as an expression of dedication to the partner. In this regard, the analysis shows a statistically significant relationship between the solidarity, as a general principle and the solidarity, as an effect of personal fulfillment. Thus, the correlation between the variable "Solidarity is a basic principle for a marital relationship" and "Solidarity is an effect of personal fulfillment" is significant and positive.

From the contemporary viewpoint, the happiness within the couple presupposes the existence of two individual plans, each with personal and also with common projections. From this perspective, each partner is trained, both in the personal realm and in that of the partner. The logic of giving is conditioned by the logic of receiving and this codependency builds the reason to be together, each needing the other for each other's own fulfillment. The two fulfillments create common happiness and the old function of solidarity becomes only an effect of the two individual fulfillments. And also in this sense, 35.4% of the respondents believe solidarity to be a mistake because each partner should take care of his own needs.

This attitude towards solidarity can find its origin in the very logic of the initial merger – the partner is seen as a resource of personal fulfillment. Individuals no longer feel like giving too much to the other because they can no longer measure the risks of doing so. In this sense, the awareness of the previous failures will have a strong effect on future relationships. Roussel specifies this aspect in the French society in 1989: "All the choices reveal, without a doubt, more or less of the previous biographies of the partners. The dramatic failure of a love experience, for example, will lead to a less ambitious conception of solidarity and to forms of connection in which prudence leads to other tendencies" (Roussel, 1989, p. 150)

The idea of solidarity is not excluded from the general logic of the marital manifestation of the young generations, but it no longer has its initial value – that of the function of the couple or family. The concept of solidarity is closely related to the initial optics – that of the romantic fusion. The decision to be together matters because everyone sees their partner as a resource of personal fulfillment. For this reason, the solidarity is defined as being more of a situation of context, the partners showing their support, rather to protect their resource of personal fulfillment than from an independent principle, culturally assimilated from the families of origin.

Martine Segalen draws attention to the fact that the optics of marital relations are constantly changing and the old phrase "the family is the basic cell of society" must be changed to "the individual is the basic cell of society" (2011). Individuals see themselves, first of all, as autonomous and then as part of the couple, and the interaction between them targets the sets of individual needs that help them feel motivated and fulfilled through the couple.

For the situation of the Romanian couples, the analysis of the relationship between the temporary nature of solidarity and the solidarity, as a form of yielding in favor of the other, shows a degree of positive correlation of medium intensity (Sig .000, Pearson Correlation .529). The correlation highlights once again the impermanent nature of the solidarity. Approximately 35% of the entire sample does not give solidarity a functional value, as it was defined in the classic theories of the family. The analysis of this profile highlights the fact that 77.3% of them are female. The women's solidarity is often understood as solidarity in relation to the social norm and women no longer wish to return to the old structures of the marital manifestation.

The analysis of the classical functional structure as well as the modern structured highlighted in all studies the inequitable nature of the gender relations, role relations and the access to decisions. The solidarity

with the social norm that defined the relationships between partners generated a state of inequity that is today demandingly counteracted by the attitude of the contemporary women. And, as expected, the share of individuals who see solidarity as a mistake or a momentary state has urban origins up to 81.8%.

Power and dominance within the couple

The optics of understanding solidarity will also influence the power relationship between the partners because they establish boundaries of interaction and fulfillment is, only in the background, a shared state. The analysis of the relationship between solidarity, as a wrong attitude, and the desire to control the relationship shows a low-level positive correlation.

At the level of the entire sample, 14.5% of all respondents believe that a secure marital relationship is one in which they feel they can have control. The analysis of this category highlights the fact that 61.1% are women and 83.3% of them come from urban environments.

32.8% of the respondents believe that for a safe married life, it would be best for one partner to be able to influence his or her partner's decisions. An important aspect is the fact that the gender ratio is equal, 50% of the respondents are women and 50% are men. In terms of the marital status, 57.1% are married and, as for their backgrounds, 85.7% come from urban areas and 24.3% come from rural areas.

The access to the decision-making process, the possession of the resources for domination ensures the individual the guarantee of his own fulfillment. There is already an obvious male evolution towards the benchmarks of an equitable relationship, both in the form of assuming roles and in the gender attitude. However, the new functionality benchmarks prioritize the individual and this aspect makes each partner build resources and strategies to have access to the decision but also to hold the power in the couple.

One of the main resources of power within a couple remains the financial capacity of each of the members of the couple, the tendency to have greater influence in the decision-making process is that of the partner with the best financial situation. As highlighted in the table below, individuals who have higher incomes than their partner's, have a greater tendency to want to influence the decisions in the couple's life.

A SAFE MATRIMONIAL RELATIONSHIP IS ONE IN WHICH I FEEL I CAN INFLUENCE MY PARTNER'S DECISIONS			
In general, your income is:	Disagreement	Neither agreement nor disagreement	Agreement
Higher than your partner's	22,9%	31,8%	45,3%
Lower than the partner's	35,5%	29,0%	35,5%
The same as the partner's	34,5%	34,5%	31%

Source: Authors' own conception

Also, the study also analyzed the opinions regarding the idea that "To be happy in a couple, you need to know your partner's weaknesses." Thus, the statistical data highlighted the fact that 48% of the respondents agree with this opinion. The analysis of this profile shows that 42.9% of the respondents have incomes lower than those of their partners and 38.1% have incomes equal to their life partner's.

The willingness to use the weaknesses of the life partner can have as an explanatory hypothesis the counterbalancing of the power ratio between the partner who contributes a larger share of the budget and the other partner who manages his or her weaknesses. The approach by gender is no longer as different as in the case of the indicators above, but it is statistically significant, the share of women in this category being 58.4% and that of men, 41.6%.

The analysis by age category of the study highlights two big stages in the partners' strategy of using the other's weaknesses. First of all, there is a gradual increase in the desire to manipulate and maintain marital power and control, since the beginning of the couple.

Age categories	Exploiting your partner's weakness
18 - 20 years old	16,7 %
21 - 23 years old	19,4 %
24 - 27 years old	27,8 %
28 - 39 years old	11,1 %
40 years old and over	25,0 %

Source: Authors' own conception

Often, the claim of manipulation is at most an exchange between partners as each are under the impression of dominating/manipulating the other, and the Pearson correlation between the two variables finds a positive, medium-level degree of association.

Correlations			
		In marital relationships, women tend to manipulate men	Most often, men are aware of their female partner's manipulations
In marital relationships, women tend to manipulate men	Pearson Correlation	1	.578**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	119	114
Most often, men are aware of their female partner's manipulations	Pearson Correlation	.578**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	114	115

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Authors' own conception

Correlations			
		In marital relationships, men tend to manipulate women	Most often, women are aware of men's manipulations
In marital relationships, men tend to manipulate women	Pearson Correlation	1	.567**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	120	117
Most often, women are aware of men's manipulations	Pearson Correlation	.567**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	117	118

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Authors' own conception

The use of manipulation or its claim appear as mutually controlled resources of dominance; however, each for the achievement of individual goals and needs. By the nature of the intimate interaction, that of role communication or in the relationships with family subsystems the partners make their weaknesses and limits obvious and their use shows the degree of individualism of the marital relationship.

The development of such strategies to achieve goals subsequently creates mindsets and actions of prevention and individual protection for each of the partners. Against this background, many stereotypes are created that fuel the state of dysfunction of the partners. One of these is the need for the male manipulation in order to meet the demands of life partners.

The analysis of the correlation tables shows a continuous female concern to adapt men for married life and, for this reason, their techniques for maintaining control and power in the couple seem to be useful. Thus, between the variable "women lead family life best" and the variable "women know best what is useful for a couple's life" there is a high degree of association (Pearson Correlation .868, Sig. 000). As the indicators regarding the distribution of domestic tasks in the contemporary couple also show, most of the tasks are controlled and directed by women.

In this process, the construction of functional behaviors associated with what appears to be useful in a couple life stimulates women to use all their available resources for their fulfillment. Women's management of the domestic group provides them with both control and dominance resources. Today's contemporaneity offers the woman the opportunity to manage her own marital relationship contrary to the old traditional prescriptions, therefore, the old concept of "the woman, the mistress of the house" changes its valence from the quality of submissive to that of dominant.

Conclusions

The evaluation of the social indicators resulting from the study shows a paradigm shift regarding the type of marital union. The contemporary social trends capture a moment of value intersection between the classic trends of the family, those with traditional role influences and the modern and postmodern ones of marital coexistence.

The main functional transformation is observed in the form of building solidarity, the partners relying more and more on personal fulfillment through the couple. Society still receives cultural influences on how to fulfill marital functions and the roles associated with them; therefore, we find modern statements but traditional behaviors and we also find individualistic orientations in terms of personal fulfillment. As highlighted above, women have an obvious direction for the modernization of gender relations, for the equity of domestic tasks, but they still assume the direct roles as well as those of coordinating the activities that define the broad sum of domestic tasks.

Happiness tends to be viewed more and more as a personal project, not a project shared by the couple, with respondents consistently being in favor of the idea that in order to achieve happiness as a couple, your needs are the most important. Also, the construction of happiness is increasingly linked to the idea of compromise. Happiness is an individual construction and the partner is a resource of personal fulfillment. The compromise is a

concession to the other and the fulfillment of the other's needs is a condition of reciprocity for the personal fulfillment.

From the analyzed data, compromise is more common in men than in women, and also in manipulation strategies, most often, women use manipulation techniques more often than their partners. This is also the context for which solidarity can no longer be considered a function but, rather, a consequence thereof – solidarity being an effect of the each individual happiness.

The reconstruction of the idea of solidarity and also the structural fluctuations that define the new valences of the marital functionality sometimes fuel the feeling of insecurity, a fact that stimulates the need for self-protection. The study demonstrates a greater need for autonomy for women, as they are much more disadvantaged by the functional imperatives of the marital tradition.

Today, partners discuss and accept the idea of the couple solidarity, but they see it more as a context than as a permanent status. The permanence presupposes the assumption and this contradicts the new logic of the maritality – the relational individualism. For this reason, almost a third of the respondents want to be able to influence their spouse's decisions in order to have power and control in their own relationship.

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