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Solidarity with the Elderly in Romania

Horatiu RUSU¹

Abstract

European societies are confronted in the medium and long term with major demographic transformations in respect of an increase in the size of the elderly population and a decrease in the numbers of the youngest. These changes raise important sustainability problems for the public social security systems (e.g. pensions, health). In Eastern Europe, such challenges go along with the transition economies' problems. Solidarity between generations and more specifically inter-generational family solidarity are discussed in the literature as one of the solutions in respect of the complex challenges these changes represent for public care systems for the elderly. Thus, questions of public concern, support and care for the elderly persons and of the factors that underpin these attitudes become relevant. This paper seeks to ascertain if and how a combination of socioeconomic indicators, value orientations and family structure related indicators (with a focus on the latter), might contribute to explanations concerning attitudes towards the elderly in Romania. For this purpose, an individual-level analysis of the Romanian data of the World Values Study 2012 was employed. The results provide mixed evidence in supporting the importance of family-related indicators for attitudes of solidarity toward the elderly. While there is not enough evidence supporting a relation between the structure of opportunity and family size with the solidarity attitudes, a relation with familial experiences (marital status) exists and is important.

Keywords: attitudes, intergenerational solidarity, solidarity with the elderly, Europe, family solidarity.

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Introduction

Official projections concerning the European Union's countries underline that population ageing will be an important trend for the coming decades (European Commission, 2012). An increase in the numbers of elderly people across Europe, poses important challenges to the public social security systems (e.g. pensions, health) and raises important questions about their sustainability. Among these challenges one of crucial significance is concerned with the level of solidarity that exists between and within generations.

Numerous studies tackle the problem of solidarity with older generations (Bengtson & Roberts, 1991; Silverstein & Bengtson, 1997; Bawin-Legros & Stassen, 2002; Daatland, 2007; Cruz-Saco & Zelenev, 2010; Krzyzowski, 2011; Timonen, Conlon, Scharf & Carney, 2013). However many of them are focused on relationships across generations at family level. They are essentially concerned with the microsocial or private dimension of intergenerational solidarity. The other dimension of intergenerational solidarity, the macrosocial dimension, focuses on relations between the young and the elderly at society level (Bengtson & Oyama, 2010). This paper examines the macrosocial dimension of solidarity in Romania. The main objective is to analyse the factors that potentially contribute to shaping attitudes concerning solidarity between the young and the elderly. The paper contributes to the literature by investigating a dimension of solidarity which, to my knowledge, was not been addressed in Romania. The first section of the paper presents the context of the study along with official demographic projections concerning elderly persons. The second section presents some of the aspects that underpin social solidarity with a focus on solidarity with the elderly. The third part presents the data and methodology. The fourth part contains the results of the analysis. The last section consists of concluding remarks.

Context

Demographic tendencies in EU countries, together with recent economic and financial challenges, have placed a strain on public transfer mechanisms thereby calling into question the effectiveness of social solidarity as a mechanism for providing ongoing social and economic support for the elderly. The economic and budgetary projections of the European Commission (2012) indicate that policies targeting ageing (processes and consequences) need to be contextualized both at EU and at a country level (and probably in greater depth at a regional level).

Demographic projections show that, in the EU, the proportion of the population aged 65 years and over, as percentage of the total population, is expected to increase to about 10.5% by 2060 (European Commission, 2012: 299). In Romania

the trends are even more concerning: the demographic old age dependency ratio is expected to rise from 24.5% in 2015 to 68.3% in 2055, that is about 11% above the European average; the economic old age dependency ratio is also expected to increase from 35.5% in 2015 to 104.4% in 2055, that is approximately 32% above the European average (European Commission, 2012: 324-325). That data announce one of the steepest demographic changes in Europe. Other projections, considering the prospective old-age dependency ratio, show that Romania already is, and will remain, one of the ten 'oldest countries' in the world. (Sanderson and Scherbov, 2008:13)

However, in Romania, the demographic and intergenerational solidarity issues have rarely been highlighted on the public agenda. Indeed, such topics have largely been debated in the context of the tentative steps needed to reform the (public) health and pension systems. Excepting some isolated instances at the beginning of the financial crisis, it has rarely been made explicit publicly that intergenerational solidarity is embodied in the transfer mechanisms of the public PAYG or other pre-funded pension systems. Official political discourses seldom considers the idea that the state barely supports the burden of the public pensions system and urgent measures are necessary to redress the situation. Still, the models and expectations of intergenerational solidarity that can inform such policy measures are expressed in different ways around the world (see Daatland, 1997; Reher, 1998; Cruz-Saco & Zelenev, 2010; Dykstra & Fokkema, 2011). Therefore the question regarding the factors that underpin the attitudes toward the elderly persons in Romania become that much more relevant.

Solidarity with the elderly: definition and related factors

Classical sociological theory conceived social solidarity as a central element for the constitution and functioning of societies (Durkheim, 1984). Even though it could still be interpreted as a societal characteristic (i.e. an integrative mechanism) current theory regards solidarity rather as a quality or characteristic of individuals, e.g. a problem of individual choice (Rusu & Gheorghita, 2014). From the latter perspective solidarity could be defined as: a "reaction to a condition which afflicts certain 'others' independently of their personal or social character" (Arnsperger & Varoufakis, 2003: 158); a mutual, non-instrumental concern between the members of a community (Mason, 2000: 27); "the willingness to help others or to support the group one belongs to, without immediately getting something in return" (de Beer & Koster, 2009: 15); or, more specifically as "preparedness to share resources with others by personal contribution to those in struggle or in need and through taxation and redistribution organised by the state" Stjernř (2005: 2). Since modern societies explicitly link solidarity with the redistributive mechanisms of states, between and within generations solidarity has started to be increasingly debated.

Generational solidarity can be a descendant (directed toward the young) or ascendant (directed toward the elderly) process. The concept coined to designate such relations is that of intergenerational solidarity. That is defined as a bond or an intentional connection between persons of different ages (Cruz-Saco, 2010). Bengtson and Oyama (2010) differentiate two levels of solidarity between generations: “macrogens” and “microgens”. The first referring to the macrosocial level is commonly named intergenerational solidarity. The latter refers usually to the microsocal level of the family and it is known as intergenerational solidarity at family level (for a private - public differentiation see Timonen et al., 2013). When both between and within generations relations are considered (as in this paper), as a bond between and among persons belonging to both different and same ages, the term to be used here is solidarity with the elderly.

Solidarity with older generations is seen as an affective or cognitive reaction to ageing and its associated problems, which is reflected in an attitude of inclusive (active) concern toward the elderly. Several factors are said to be connected with the solidarity toward the elderly: family structure, size and relations (Bengtson and Roberts, 1991; Daatland, 2007; Dykstra & Fokkema, 2011; Cais & Folguera, 2013); religiosity (Dykstra & Fokkema, 2011; Cais & Folguera, 2013); individualisation (Abela, 2004); work status (de Beer & Koster, 2009; Voicu, Rusu & Comsa, 2013); health (Dykstra & Fokkema, 2011); age, gender, education, economic situation (Dykstra & Fokkema, 2011; Cais & Folguera, 2013; Timonen *et al.*, 2013); size of locality where respondents live (Cais & Folguera, 2013; Voicu *et al.*, 2013). They can be grouped in three categories: family structure-related indicators; value orientations indicators; and socioeconomic status and resource indicators. These are now examined in that order.

First, consideration is given to family related aspects. Factors that reinforce positive attitudes toward elderly are mostly studied within the framework of intergenerational family solidarity. Such factors are: geographic proximity and the number of family members. Ward (2011) finds some evidence that societal level attitudes about intergenerational relations are related to familial expectations in what concerns solidarity; that is solidarity at a private level, i.e. solidarity at a macro-level. Garstka, Hummert and Branscombe (2005) studying, from a social identity theory perspective, the way in which intergenerational relations and outcomes are framed, also suggest that intergenerational relations within the family may be reflected in intergenerational solidarity at macrosocial level.

The most well-known theoretical model of intergenerational solidarity discusses a multifaceted construct reflecting six dimensions: affection, association, consensus, function/resource sharing, normative and structural (Bengtson & Roberts, 1991). The structural dimension is of particular relevance for this study. It refers to the opportunity structures that exist for intergenerational interaction reflected in number, type and geographic proximity of family members. Greater

opportunity for interaction indicates the potential for higher levels of intergenerational association, the effect of proximity being very strong (Bengtson & Roberts, 1991). Roberts, Richards and Bengtson (1991) also note that the residential propinquity is a very good indicator for intergenerational association. In a different study of intergenerational relations, Moor and Komter (2012) consider co-residence, the number of generations within families, the number of parents and the number of siblings/children as creating opportunities for increased levels of emotional exchange. However they find that the number of children and the number of generations does not affect upward emotional exchanges, between adult children and parents.

Marital status is also a relevant factor. Parental divorce is negatively associated with intergenerational solidarity (Dykstra & Fokkema, 2011; Daatland, 2007). In what concerns ascending solidarity relations of the children with older parents and parents-in-law, Daatland (2007) finds no difference between married and unmarried children. Cais and Folguera (2013) also show that when no other family related and socioeconomic indicators are included in the analysis, being married is more likely to facilitate an attitude favouring that an elderly dependant should rely on social services rather than on family. Still when controlling for other variables (e.g. economic situation, confidence in social services) the marital status first partially and then completely loses its statistical significance. On the other hand, Moor and Komter test whether “people who have to cope with difficulties regarding their own household are less likely to engage in emotional exchange with their parents” (2012: 157). That is what they call the “emotional preoccupation hypothesis”. However their results contradict the hypothesis: a divorce experience reinforces emotional exchanges between adult children and their parents.

Modernization, globalization and the cultural changes they bring are supposedly associated with a weakening of the social bonds and traditional solidarities. Religiosity and individualisation are among the value orientations’ indicators used in the literature to reflect such a relation.

Religion “is an important community value that often nurtures intergenerational relationships” (Cruz-Saco, 2010: 13). Cais and Folguera (2013) observe that in Spain, peoples’ religiosity is closely linked to family solidarity: a religious person is twice as likely as a non-religious person to opt for family care of dependants instead of relying on social services. On the other hand, individualisation, as an orientation toward individual independence or autonomy, should be negatively related with solidarity (Abela, 2004; de Beer & Koster, 2009). Attention is turned next to socioeconomic indicators, used as controls in most studies of intergenerational solidarity. Timonen *et al.* (2013) consider that intergenerational solidarity both at family and societal level is strongly influenced by socioeconomic factors. However, the evidences concerning these relations are mixed.

People's work status is a relevant indicator of solidarity attitudes (Arts & Gellisen, 2001; de Beer & Koster, 2009: 94-99) due to the fact it classifies people as contributors and beneficiaries of the redistributive system. Arts and Gellisen (2001: 294) present evidence to support the view that the self-employed are less inclined to value a high level of solidarity with the elderly, while the unemployed favour higher level of solidarity than those who are working. Therefore, it should be expected that those who benefit of social transfers are more solidaristic than the people belonging to other categories. In a study concerning solidarity attitudes in Romania, Voicu *et. al.* (2013) find that employed persons have the greatest level of solidarity with the elderly compared with almost all the other categories (retired, unemployed, and other persons not working) except students. For Moor and Komter (2012) the unemployed are less likely to have emotional exchanges with parents, compared to people who work fulltime.

Persons enjoying better health are reported as possessing less solidarity, because they consider too much is spent on programs for the elderly (Ward, 2001). Dykstra and Fokkema (2011), in their analysis of the types of late-life families in Western Europe, find that health problems of the parents favour ascending and inhibit descending familialism (living nearby, frequent contact, endorsement of family obligation norms, and help in kind from children to parents respectively from parents to children). That is when parents experience health issues they are rather receivers than providers of help within their families.

In general it is acknowledged that younger people are more supportive of the elderly than the older adults with the family (Bengtson & Oyama, 2010; Ward, 2011; Timonen *et al.*, 2013). Nevertheless that assertion is refined in other studies. Cais and Folguera (2013) for example observe that once controlled for variables of structure and family relationships, age is not a significant predictor when favouring family over services provided care of elderly, for the category of people over 65 years. It still remains significant for the age group of 51 to 65 and the explanation is related to the work-family balance.

Gender is included in the analysis because theoretically it reflects patterns of support within families. Women supposedly are more likely to offer and receive intergenerational care and support than men (Spitze & Logan, 1989; Silverstein & Bengtson, 1997). A similar perspective is to be found in the work of Moor and Komter (2012:162): "women are more likely than men to engage in emotional exchanges with both their parents and their children". Others do not find evidence for gender differences (Ward, 2011). Therefore, it might be expected that if the relationship between gender and solidarity with the elderly is significant, in Romania women will be less likely to support state intervention through the provision of public care support. The assumption is based on the idea that if women offer more support than men within the private, family setting, they will acknowledge the situation in terms of it attaching an increased value to their role within the family.

Education has no impact on intergenerational solidarity preferences in the study of Cais and Folguera (2013). Intermediate and high education when compared with a low education status have a negative impact on ascending familialism, a positive impact on supportive at distance relations and no impact on descending familialism. Those having a high education status are more likely to be part of autonomous families than those belonging to a low or intermediate education category (Dykstra and Fokkema, 2011). Ward (2001: 201) also notices mixed effects of education on intergenerational solidarity: “better-educated respondents were more likely to say too much is spent on older people but were also less likely to say older people are treated fairly among respondents younger than 60 and were more supportive of programs among respondents age 60 and older”. On the other hand, Moor and Komter (2012) find that education increases the chances of emotional exchanges between generations. Considering the results of other studies on solidarity in Romania (Voicu *et. al.*, 2013) a positive relation between education and solidarity with the elderly might be expected.

A high economic status decreases the likelihood of ascending familialism and increases the chances of the elderly being supported at a distance by individual family units later in life (Dykstra and Fokkema, 2011). Timonen *et al.* (2013: 174) note that “solidarity towards older people was particularly marked among young people from the low and middle SES groups”. On the other hand, Ward (2001:201) concludes that “income is not related to societal-level attitudes” of solidarity.

When compared to people living in big cities (over a million inhabitants), those living in small towns (10,000 to 100,000 inhabitants) are less likely to consider that it is better to rely on social services than on the family in what concerns the care of elder dependants. This is explained through the scarcity of formal resources in small towns (Cais and Folguera, 2013). A scarcity of formal public or private health and care resources in small towns and rural area is also the case of Romania and thus might be expected that people living here are less solidaristic.

Hypotheses

Intergenerational family solidarity (characteristic for the traditional societies) is often seen as one of the solutions in complementing expected deficiencies of the states’ transfer mechanisms in current societies (Bawin-Legros & Stassen, 2002; Cruz-Saco, 2010). However, there is not much information about what feeds the attitudes toward the elderly in Romania. We could speculate that Romanians incline toward a Southern European model of intergenerational solidarity: a model characterized by strong family links that rely more on the family as the source of support for the elderly (see Reher, 1998). This might be first due to a lack of (or the inappropriateness of) care and support services. Second, it might be

due to the fact that in Romania, according to the Population and Housing Census of 2011 (INS, 2013), about 9,1% of the population live in three-generation family households and 41,8% in a two-generation household (6,7 % of the two-generation households have at least one parent, grandparent or nephew in their composition). Considering these, a possible relation between family structure and solidarity at societal level becomes relevant for age-related policy design in Romania. Therefore the main question in this paper is: what impact do family structures and experiences have on attitudes toward older people in Romania? A similar relationship was explored by Ward (2011). He expected that family structure influences family solidarity, family attitudes and ultimately societal attitudes but his results did not provide sufficient evidence to fully support the assumption. Two main hypotheses are under investigation. First, derived from the inter-generational family solidarity literature, it is assumed that the residential propinquity and the family size correlate positively with solidaristic attitudes (H1). Second, inspired by the “emotional preoccupation hypothesis” (Moor & Komter, 2012), it can be expected that negative familial experiences or history (reflected by a marital status of divorced or separated) inhibit solidaristic attitudes (H2).

Data and measurement

The analysis is based on the 2012 World Values Survey (WVS) Romania database. Data were collected between October and November 2012. The sample of 1503 respondents is representative at country level (the analysis is performed using the weighting system provided by the Romanian Group for the study of Values - detailed information available at <http://www.romanianvalues.ro/english/databases>).

Binomial logistic regression modelling was employed to test the hypothesis. Listwise deletion was used for the cases of a refusal to answer (I will not answer that) and cases of indecision (I do not know). The software used is SPSS 21.

The dependant variable is people’s opinion on whether “elderly persons are a burden to society”. The answers are based on a four points scale where 1 means “strongly agree”, 2 “agree”, 3 “disagree” and 4 “strongly disagree”. This item represents the dependant variable. In the analysis it was coded as a binary variable, where a value of 1 denotes an attitude of solidarity.

Turning to the independent variables, the residential propinquity of family members is measured through a dummy variable. If the respondent is living with his/her parents the answer is coded ‘1’. The family size (or the number of family members) is measured through a proxy variable counting the number of children in the family. The variable was coded to vary from ‘0’ to ‘5’, all those respondents having more than five children being considered as having 5. The marital status

(reflecting familial experiences) is measured through the following categories: married and living together (reference category) versus divorced and separated, widowed and single.

Religiosity is measured here as the importance people give to religion (4-point scale, the higher value denoting more importance given to religion). The exact phrasing of the question is: "...how important it is in your life: ... religion".

The measure used for individualisation is the achievement motivation index (Inglehart, 1997: 390). Its values are given by the subtraction between the sum of two indicators that denote the spirit of "Protestantism" (perseverance/determination and thrift) and the sum of two indicators that denote the preference for the traditionalism (religiosity and obedience). The index response scale ranges from 1 to 5, higher values indicating higher support for individualisation.

The subjective health was measured base on the following question: "All in all, how would you describe your state of health these days?". The response scale ranges from 1 (very good) to 4 (poor).

The control variables included in the analysis are: age, gender (dummy variable where female is coded 1), education (measured with a proxy for the number of year of education), employment status (where '1' denotes an employed person and '0' all the other possible status), size of town (three categories: rural, urban area below 200.000 inhabitants and big cities above 200.000 inhabitants) and a subjective measure of household income (a ten-point scale coded categorical as follows: the first three points denote a low income category, the last three a high income category and the rest indicate a middle income category).

Analysis and results

Three blocks of variables were successively entered into the model: first the socioeconomic indicators; second value orientation indicators; and third, family structure and relations indicators (see *Table 1*). The existence of a relationship between the independent variables and the dependant variable is supported in what concerns the first and third block of variables.

The results of the analysis shows in the first block that age, work status, education, the category of income and the place of residence are significant. The most important predictors in this block are age and education. An increase in age decreases the odds of solidarity, holding all the other independent variables constant. This tells us that ageing inhibits attitudes of solidarity with the elderly. The finding is consonant with the results in the literature showing that younger persons tend to be more solidaristic with the elderly than the elderly themselves. For each increase of one unit of the level of education variable a 0,116 increase in

the log-odds of solidarity is expected, holding all the other independent variables constant. The results concerning both educational and work status are consonant with other results obtained by Voicu et al. (2013) for Romania. For an employed individual, the odds of having a solidaristic attitude are 1.76 times larger than the odds for a person that is not employed. Education increases the odds of being solidaristic. For a person belonging to the middle income category the odds of having a solidaristic attitude are 37,8% smaller than the odds for a person belonging to the lowest income category. For a person living in a big urban area (>200,000 inhabitants) the odds of having a solidaristic attitude are 1,68 times larger than the odds for a person living in a rural area. The (subjective) state of health and sex are slightly significant. Being female decrease the odds of having a solidaristic attitude. The finding is similar with the results in the literature discussing the patterns of support within families. A poorer health also decrease the odds of a solidaristic attitude with the elderly. There is an obvious link between ageing and health deficits and very likely the respondents are aware of it. It is also possible that a respondent experiencing poor health considers himself/herself a burden for the others because the need for assistance and, bearing that in mind, to construct a similar evaluation for the elderly. All the variables in block one remain significant and the direction of the relations is preserved when variables in block two are added into the model. However when variables in block three are introduced age and sex are no longer significant.

In the second block of the model are added variables measuring respondent's value orientations: religiosity and individualisation. Religiosity is not significantly connected with solidarity toward older people. Thus, the findings reflected in the literature are not confirmed here. However caution is needed because of different measures of religiosity in literature. On the other hand, individualisation is slightly significant: the more oriented toward individualisation the respondent is, the smaller the odds of being solidaristic. That result is confirming (at a $p=0,1$ level) the theoretical expectations pointed out above. When variables in block three are added the direction of the relation and the marginal significance level is preserved.

The last block includes variables related to the structure and relations of the family. The most important predictors in the full model are: education, the work status and marital status. The directions of relations and (most of) the significance levels hold when the second and then the third blocks are introduced. The only notable exception concerns age: when the marital status is introduced in to the model age has no longer a significant relation with the predicted variable.

Table 1: Logistic regression model. Dependant variable: solidarity with the elderly persons (agreeing that older people are not a burden on society)

	Block 1			Block 1+2			Block 1+2+3		
	B	Wald	Exp(B)	B	Wald	Exp(B)	B	Wald	Exp(B)
Constant	2.293***			2.447***			1.890**		
Age	- .019***	12.289	0.981	- .018***	11.674	0.982	-0.011	2.574	0.989
Sex (1=female)	-.273 ⁺	2.789	0.761	-.296 ⁺	3.176	0.744	-.209	1.417	0.812
Employed (1=yes)	.566**	7.943	1.762	.581**	8.249	1.789	.701***	11.495	2.034
Education	.116***	16.388	1.123	.118***	16.432	1.125	.124***	17.534	1.132
Lowest category of income - self ascribed									
Self ascribed household income: middle category	-.474*	6.309	0.622	-.484*	6.518	0.617	-.542**	7.993	0.581
Self ascribed household income: highest category	-.459	2.139	0.632	-.486	2.211	0.627	-.546 ⁺	2.939	0.579
Rural area									
Urban area (<200.000)	.069	.150	1.072	.071	0.159	1.074	.056	.095	1.057
Urban area (200.000+)	.481*	4.042	1.618	.481*	4.023	1.618	.539*	4.884	1.714
Subjective state of health (1 to 4)	-.187 ⁺	2.892	0.829	-.202 ⁺	3.319	0.817	-.211 ⁺	3.602	0.810
Individualisation (1 to 5)				-.149 ⁺	3.136	0.861	-.151 ⁺	3.202	0.860
Religion important (1 to 4)				-.038	0.113	0.963	-.041	.126	0.960
Married and living together as married									
Divorced and Separated							- 1.015***	11.441	0.362
Widowed							-.255	1.082	0.775
Single							.709 ⁺	3.550	2.032
Living with parents (1=yes)							.123	.215	1.131
Number of children							.067	.831	1.069
Cox and Snell R Square	9.9%			10.1%			11.3%		
Nagelkerke R Square	16.6%			16.9%			18.9%		
Omnibus test (model)	$\chi^2=137.095$; df=9; p=0.000			$\chi^2=140.244$; df=11; p=0.000			$\chi^2=157.330$; df=16; p=0.000		
Omnibus test (block)	$\chi^2=137.095$; df=9; p=0.000			$\chi^2=3.149$; df=2; p=0.207			$\chi^2=17.086$; df=5; p=0.004		
Hosmer and Lemeshow Test	$\chi^2=4.923$; df=8; p=0.766			$\chi^2=6.755$; df=8; p=0.563			$\chi^2=9.687$; df=8; p=0.288		
-2Log likelihood	1059.702			1056.553			1039.467		
Number of cases included in the analysis	1323			1323			1323		

Notes:

a) ***p<0.001; **p<0.01; *p<0.05; ⁺p<0.1;

b) The initial sample size is 1503. The non-responses and the "don't know" responses were excluded from the analysis; 9 outliers were also excluded;

c) There are no multicollinearity effects.

Neither the opportunity structure for intergenerational interaction nor the family size have significant influences on solidarity. It appears that living together with parents and living in bigger families does not make one more likely to be solidaristic toward the elderly, as might have been expected. Therefore the first hypothesis (H1) is not confirmed.

However the marital status is significantly related with the dependant. The second hypothesis (H2) is confirmed: being divorced or separated decrees the odds of being solidaristic than among the married people and living together as married people. In other words a major life event that generated stress that may be framed as an unhappy or unsuccessful family experience influences attitudes toward the elderly. It is possible that divorced people are more focused on dealing with everyday life and less empathetic with an elderly person's potential difficulties. There is also some marginal evidence that, being single (not married and not living with a partner) doubles the odds of having solidaristic attitudes than among the married and living together as married people. Holding all the other variables at their mean values (predicted probabilities and marginal effects computation was run with STATA 13), the probability of being solidaristic with the elderly is about 87% among those married or living together as married and about 70% among those divorced or separated. Also, when holding all the other variables at their mean values, the probability of being solidaristic with the elderly is about 6% higher among those living in big cities then among those living in rural localities; about 8% higher among those employed then among those unemployed. There is also some evidence (relation is slightly significant) that belonging to the highest income category decrease the odds of being solidaristic than for a person belonging to the lowest income category. It appears that there is a greater likelihood of poorer respondents being solidaristic with the elderly than for other categories of income: the probability of being solidaristic with the elderly is about 91% among those belonging to in the lowest income category and about 85% among those in the middle and higher category of income when all the other variables are set to their mean values. Summing up: the probability of being solidaristic with the elderly among those separated or divorced, ascribing themselves to the medium income category, living in rural areas, and not working is about 57%, while the probability of being solidaristic among those married or living together, ascribing themselves to the lowest income category, living in big towns areas, and employed is about 96% when all the other variables are set to their mean values. The respondents in the first category appear to be the ones who have most chances to consider that the older are a burden for society. That might be cause by a stressful familial experience doubled by a feeling of vulnerability in respect to the social security systems (the person is not working and lives in an area where the care and health systems for the elderly are defectuous) and very likely a lower level of education.

Conclusion

Solidarity between generations and more specifically solidarity based on familial resources and relationships are discussed in the literature as one of the solutions complementing the complex challenges the demographic changes pose to the public systems for caring the elderly. Thus, the questions of public concern, support and care for the elderly persons and of the factors that underpin these attitudes become relevant. This paper analysed the contribution family structure related indicators, value orientations and socioeconomic indicators have in explaining the attitudes toward the elderly persons in Romania. Informed by the intergenerational family solidarity literature, it was assumed, on the one hand, that the opportunity structure and the family size correlate positively with the solidarity attitudes. On the other hand, it was expected that negative familial experiences inhibit solidaristic attitudes toward the elderly.

The results show that being divorced or separated and belonging to the middle category of income are factors that decrease the chances of being solidaristic with the old persons. There is also some evidence (slightly significant) that a relation between (a self ascribed) poorer health and solidarity works in the same direction. The same apply to individualisation. On the contrary, being employed, living in a large urban area, being married or living together as married increase the chances of being solidaristic with the old persons. Education also facilitates solidarity.

The most important predictors in the analysis appear to be the education, the work status and the marital status. The higher the level of education the more chances are for a person to be solidaristic with the elderly. The explanations may reside on the fact that the educated persons are more open-minded and understand better the functioning of society. Being employed doubles the odds of being solidaristic than not being employed. It is possible that employed people are more solidaristic with the elderly because they rely more on the security systems, contribute financially directly to them and understand their role, and probably expect to benefit of them at their turn. Married people and living together people are more likely to be solidaristic with the elderly. It is possible that people being in such a relation that involves mutual care and very likely contributions to the daily expenses understand better the benefits on relying on other people and the value of commitment. On the other hand divorced and separated persons might be less emotionally concerned about the elderly because they have to cope with their own difficulties.

The analysis indicates the categories where the support towards elderly needs to be reinforced or more support needs to be build. Findings might also leave a question mark regarding the importance of the structure of opportunity indicators and of the negative familial experiences in the sphere of the private intergenerational solidarity in Romania. Additional research, focused on the microsocial

level, needs to be done to verify these relations. The results do not bring enough evidence to support the idea that the structure of opportunity or the size of the family has significant effects on the attitudes of solidarity with the older persons. It appears that in Romania a solidaristic attitude is not a question of density or opportunity structure but rather a question of family type.

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