

# Review of the volume “Gender Image and the Choice of Conjugal Cohabitation”, by Gabriela Bran, Maria Irina Nicoleta Bătrînu, and Iulian Apostu (coord.), Etica Pro Expert, 2023

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## Abstract

*The work Gender Image and the Choice of Conjugal Cohabitation, coordinated by Iulian Apostu and written by Gabriela Bran, and Maria Irina Nicoleta Bătrînu, analyzes the complexity of gender relations and perceptions of conjugal cohabitation in contemporary society. The book explores the evolution of the woman's image over time, from traditional stereotypes to new perspectives on gender equality. At the same time, it addresses the dilemmas between marriage and consensual union, examining young people's perspectives on these options. The study combines theoretical analysis with findings from recent social research, providing a comprehensive overview of the dynamics of gender relations and the influence of cultural norms on cohabitation choices. The work represents a valuable starting point for understanding social and cultural change from a gender perspective.*

**Keywords:** *Gender image; conjugal cohabitation; social stereotypes; marriage; consensual union; gender relations; gender equality; contemporary culture.*

The book *Gender Image and the Choice of Conjugal Cohabitation* offers a broad and in-depth analysis of timely and relevant themes for contemporary society. The authors adopt an interdisciplinary approach, combining sociological, psychological, and

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cultural perspectives to provide a comprehensive understanding of the transformations in gender relations and conjugal cohabitation choices (Apostu, 2016).

The book is divided into two main chapters, each addressing essential aspects of the subject. The first chapter, *The Image of the Contemporary Woman - Between Stereotype and Reality*, analyzes the evolution of the woman's image through the lens of social norms and values. It highlights the transition of women from the traditional, subordinate role to that of an autonomous and empowered figure. The sections dedicated to feminine stereotypes across various domains - family, mass media, and professional life - offer a clear perspective on the social pressures and expectations that shape female identity (Diekman & Eagly, 2000).

The second chapter, *Marriage versus Cohabitation - The Dilemma of a Choice*, explores how contemporary young people perceive these cohabitation options. The book emphasizes the factors influencing couples' decisions, such as social pressures, individual freedom, and the desire for independence. Particularly compelling is the analysis of consensual unions as an alternative to marriage, shedding light on the advantages and disadvantages of both options.

## **1. Sociological and Cultural Perspectives**

The book *Gender Image and the Choice of Conjugal Cohabitation* stands out for its harmonious integration of previous research with modern sociological perspectives, offering a detailed analysis of how traditional social norms confront the changes brought about by modernity. This approach makes the work a valuable resource for understanding the dynamics of gender relations and the cultural transformations in contemporary society.

A central focus of the analysis is the influence of the traditional family on the perpetuation of gender stereotypes (Nistor, 2023). The authors emphasize that the traditional family - where the man is perceived as the primary financial provider and the woman as the caretaker of the home and children - has long been the norm in patriarchal societies. These well-defined roles have been passed down from generation to generation, contributing to the creation of a rigid gender image and limiting opportunities for women.

The book explores how these stereotypes are reflected not only in family structure, but also in other areas of life such as education, the labor market, and media representation. Even though modernity has brought about significant changes, many of these

traditional norms persist and continue to have a deep impact on individual choices. The authors explain how today's young people often face contradictory pressures - on one hand, the traditional expectations of family and community, and on the other hand, their desire for independence and the ambition to overcome these constraints.

Another important aspect analyzed in the book is the way in which modern cultural norms emphasize individual autonomy and authenticity. This allows young people to construct their own identities, less influenced by traditional stereotypes. However, the authors highlight that this freedom is often accompanied by uncertainty and inner conflict, especially in social contexts that still uphold traditional norms.

The topic of the book is undeniably timely, reflecting the social and cultural transformations that characterize the contemporary world. Gender relations and cohabitation choices are subjects of intense debate in modern society, and the book successfully captures the complexity of these dynamics. In a time marked by cultural transitions, where traditional values coexist with modern tendencies toward autonomy and equality, the work offers a detailed and balanced analysis of how individuals perceive and navigate these changes (Gubernskaya, 2010).

The relevance of the topic is further enhanced by the fact that the authors address not only traditional perspectives on gender and conjugal relationships but also the challenges young people face when making decisions about cohabitation. Topics such as gender stereotypes, social pressures, and the advantages and disadvantages of consensual unions are explored with a depth that makes the book useful for both researchers and the general public. Moreover, the book provides a platform for future reflection on gender equality, the modernity of relationships, and the influence of cultural norms on personal choices (Jamieson et al., 2002).

## 2. Conclusions

*Gender Image and the Choice of Conjugal Cohabitation* is a valuable contribution to the specialized literature, offering a detailed and in-depth understanding of the dynamics of gender relations and contemporary social transformations. The book not only highlights the stereotypes that persist in society, but also provides a clear picture of how young people shape their conjugal relationships based on their needs and cultural pressures. It is an essential work for researchers, educators, and students interested in sociology, psychology, and

gender studies, as well as for the general public seeking a better understanding of the social changes shaping the modern world.

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