

With Valentines Day Beckoning, ACNielsen's Love and Marriage Barometer Reveals

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Globally, 70 Percent of Us Still Believe Marriage Is for Life, and Three in Four Say It Is a Lifetime Goal (Especially in the USA)

But for Catholic Southern European Countries, Marriage Today Is "Irrelevant, Not for Life and Not a Lifetime Goal"

77 Percent of Europeans Believe a Long-Term Stable Relationship Is Just as Good as Marriage, but Not So for 50 Percent of Americans and Russians

As champagne houses and rose growers all over the world prepare for their biggest daily profits of the year, a Valentine's Day survey released by ACNielsen today has revealed some surprising views on what love, romance and marriage really mean in the 21st century.

"Record high divorce statistics combined with rising co-habitation rates and an increasing number of children born to common-law couples in the past ten years have certainly made the western world wonder if the age-old concept of 'to have and to hold till death do us part' is fast becoming a dying tradition," said Patrick Dodd, President, ACNielsen, Europe.

But with all things love and romance celebrated all over the world tomorrow, the concept of 'love, till death do us part' is alive and well, according to over 25,000 consumers polled online in 46 countries last December. "Seventy percent of people surveyed say that marriage is for life (with American consumers topping the list at 78 percent) and three out of five (60 percent) saying that marriage is one of their lifetime goals," said Dodd.

Survey results indicate that the concept of marriage today might be largely dominated by a country's cultural and religious beliefs "with very opposing views among consumers in the developed West and emerging East.

Another surprising result is that in the USA, more men than women believed that marriage is for life and relevant in today's society.

Muslim and Catholic strongholds in Asia top global rankings for believing that marriage "is for life", lead by Indonesians (91 percent), and Filipinos and Malaysians (both 89 percent).

"One of the most interesting results of this survey is that the deeply Catholic nations of southern Europe "Spain, Italy and Portugal" say marriage today is irrelevant and do not believe it is for life," said Dodd.

Over 70 percent of Portuguese and Italians and 68 percent of Spaniards say marriage is irrelevant today "and of those who make it to the church altar, only one in three Portuguese and Spaniards believe that marriage is for life! In Italy, where the Catholic church still maintains a strong cultural presence and where divorce rates are the lowest in Europe, only half (48 percent) believe that marriage today will last a lifetime.

Only last week, Portugal was a nation divided over a highly controversial law which will decriminalize abortion. Meanwhile the Italian parliament finally passed a law which would finally give unwedded couples the same legal rights as married couples "with much criticism from the Catholic Church. "Given the relatively slow social and legal changes in southern European Catholic countries, it's no surprise that a new-found independence has totally challenged and changed the concept of love and marriage in these countries," said Dodd.

As a consequence, less than half of Europeans polled said that marriage is one of their lifetime goals "in contrast to 67 percent of Asians.

Instead of marriage, three out of four (77 percent) of Europeans (the highest group globally, with an even split between men and women) said a stable, long term relationship is as good as marriage. "Across Europe, especially western Europe, for the first time in history women are chasing careers instead of husbands and valuing independence over marriage as a life-long ambition. And the majority of men in these countries are in agreement too. There appears to be an equal rejection of the traditional concept of marriage across both sexes," said Dodd.

Over 80 percent of Spaniards, Belgians, French and Dutch said that a stable, long term relationship is a good as marriage, the highest ranking countries globally to think so.

Asian and Muslim nations were not in favour of replacing marriage with long term relationships, and neither were 50 percent of Americans, Russians, South Africans and Hungarians.

Asian Muslim countries of Indonesia (87 percent) and Malaysia (82 percent) ranked globally most in favour of marriage as a life goal “ while at the other end of the love and marriage barometer, 74 percent of Greek consumers say marriage is not a lifetime goal for them, while 68 percent of South Koreans say marriage is definitely not for life!

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