

# Gender Differences in Attitudes on Gender Equality

Luba Habodászová<sup>1</sup>

Business and Management Department, Webster University Vienna

**Gender Differences in Attitudes on Gender Equality.** The study analyzes attitudes on gender equality within a family in Slovakia. Specifically, binomial and ordered probit estimation is used to identify demographical characteristics that influence the likelihood of selecting a specific answer to an attitudinal question. In addition, marginal effects on statistically significant variables are reported in order to demonstrate the impact of these variables. The results show that differences in opinions on gender related issues between men and women are present on majority of questions analyzed, supporting views of the presence of traditional role division within a family. In addition to gender, education is another strong predictor of attitudes on gender roles to some extent offsetting gender differences. The presence of traditional views on gender roles may represent an obstacle to the enforcement of anti-discrimination legislation.

Sociológia 2010, Vol. 42 (No. 6: 603-618)

*Key words:* gender equality; labour market discrimination

## Introduction

The current situation of women in Slovakia on the labour market and their position in society in general still shows a high degree of gender discrimination. In spite of new anti-discrimination legislation, mainly prompted by the accession of Slovakia to the European Union, enforcement and implementation are lacking behind the declared intention of the government to address gender inequality (Kvapilová 2006). In addition, gender stereotypes persist, which is visible in areas like study and career choices by women or underrepresentation of women in political life. The most pressing is the situation on the labour market, where women experience a lower employment rate, a higher unemployment rate and segregation into occupations and industries with lower wages (Piscová 2006; Kvapilová 2006).

This paper concentrates specifically on the perceptions of the role of women in family and its consequences. The main motivation is driven by the belief that the ability of the society to absorb new legislative measures guaranteeing equal rights for men and women rests on the attitudes towards gender equality embedded in people's minds that have their roots in the family. Widespread attitudes reflecting the traditional model of the family regarding the gender roles can represent an obstacle to implementation and enforcement of gender equality legislation. The traditional division of labour within a family carries over to other aspects of interaction among men and women in society, with transparent consequences on the job market. In other words, the presence of

---

<sup>1</sup> Address: Luba Habodászová, PhD., Webster University Vienna, Berchtoldgasse 1, 1220 Vienna, Austria, contact: lhabodaszova99@webster.edu, phone: 0903742669.

gender inequality in society at large naturally mirrors the situation within the family.

This study reveals the presence of so-called “double-burden” of women documented elsewhere (Filadelfiová et al, 2006, Bútorová et al, 2008). The traditional model of a family, in which a man is the breadwinner and a woman takes care of the household and children, has evolved since the last century to reflect an increase in the labour market participation of women. The modern arrangement of a typical family is that both partners are labour market participants; however, the remnants of household work and child caretaking are responsibility of mainly women. Thus, equality within the family is obscured: both partners work creating a perception of equality, but the care of children and routine daily household responsibilities are not shared equally. This unequal division of residual household work, it is argued, is one of the main sources of discrimination against women on the labour market and in society in general, as women are expected to spend more time in the household production including childcare.

It has to be noted, however, that there is an evidence of a shift in a trend towards “participatory” model of family, in which both partners share responsibilities for the household chores and child caretaking (Filadelfiová et al, 2006). The support for this shift in our study is visible in the opinions of men: even though they are more likely to subscribe to traditional role division than women, at the same time the total share of them openly subscribing to this view in general does not represent the opinion of majority.

In addition to documenting the degree of attitudes reflecting the modified traditional model, the study investigates if there are individual characteristics that correlate with these attitudes. We found that the gender differences in opinions are persistent, however of varying magnitude, even after controlling for observable demographical characteristics. In almost all estimations, gender is the most significant variable. That can be interpreted as gender differences being deeply rooted and not significantly varied across different socio-demographic groups. In other words, gender variable is the most significant determinant of attitudes on gender inequality. However, other individual characteristics matter, mainly education. Specifically, higher levels of education tend to reduce the gender difference.

The reported opinions possibly reflect actual situation in the family only to some extent and caution should be exercised in interpretation in that the respondents may subscribe to an opinion, which they do not necessarily follow in their everyday lives. It may be true that a man thinks that “the role of a man is to make money; the role of a woman is to take care of the house”, but in reality both partners may be equal participants in household chores. This study is not trying to analyze individual choices, or the possible difference between

choices and opinions, but instead it looks solely at opinions about the role of women in the family as a ground for support of implementing gender equality legislation. For our purposes that is more important: the motivation of this analysis is driven by attitudes, not choices.

The paper is organized as follows. The first section describes the data and methodology used. The second section describes empirical findings in three topical categories: The division of labour within a household, the choice between childcare and work, and Specific measures to improve the life of women. The third section discusses the findings. Lastly, the conclusion ends the paper.

## **I. Methodology and data**

The dataset utilized in this study was collected in May-June 2006 and consists of adult 2,521 respondents. The sampling used the following strata: gender, age, education, nationality, region and settlement size. The detailed description and thorough analysis of the sample responses is available in Bahna (2006).

First, we present unconditional responses by gender for selected attitudinal question. Then, the binomial and ordered probit techniques are employed to estimate the marginal effects for gender and other individual characteristics. Calculation of marginal effects allows us to compare the likelihood of the agreement/disagreement in the opinion of two hypothetical persons. For example, we can compare the relative likelihood of an agreeable response of a college educated working non-married man with a high school educated non-working married woman. In other words, marginal effects tell us about the importance of individual characteristics in presenting one's attitude. However, it does not tell us about the absolute size of the prevailing attitude in the sample or population. For example, we may find that men are more likely to agree with the statement than women, but that does not necessarily mean that a majority of men would agree. To illustrate, suppose the following situation (question C part IV): 49 % of men and 43 % of women agree with the statement "a child of preschool age is likely to suffer if the mother works". The marginal effect on the variable "male" is almost 8 %. That means that men are more likely to agree with the statement than women by 8 %. Notice that it does not imply that a majority of men share this view. Instead of the question "how many people share this view?" with marginal effects we are asking "who are the people who share this view?"

The observable characteristics that are included in the estimation and for which the marginal effects are calculated include gender, age, education, labour market status, family status, a number of children, a household size and the presence of the Internet. Furthermore, the settlement size and region variables

are included, but due to space limitation they are not reported. The detailed description of these covariates is in the appendix.

## II. Analysis of attitudes

### Part A: Division of Labour in the Household

In the first section we look at the subset of questions on opinions about the role of men and women in the household. Respondents were asked to what extent they agree or disagree with the following statements:

- A. Both, man and woman should be contributing to the household budget.
- B. The role of a man is to make money; the role of a woman is to take care of the house.
- C. Men should participate in household chores more than they do now.
- D. Men should participate in childcare more than they do now.

The original questionnaire allowed for five possible answers (strongly agree, rather agree, neither agree nor disagree, rather disagree, strongly disagree) with an option “can’t judge”. The answers are lumped into three categories: disagree, neither agree nor disagree, and agree. Those who answered “can’t judge” were eliminated from the sample. Table 1 shows percentage of responses for each gender and for the whole sample for each category of responses.

**Table 1: Division of Labour in the Household, frequency of responses by gender**

Question	Response	Male	Female	Total	N
A	Disagree	2,8	2,9	<b>2,9</b>	2504
	Neither	8,1	6,6	<b>7,3</b>	
	Agree	89,1	90,4	<b>89,8</b>	
B	Disagree	21,8	31,1	<b>26,6</b>	2509
	Neither	27,6	29,6	<b>28,7</b>	
	Agree	50,6	39,2	<b>44,7</b>	
C	Disagree	21,1	4,3	<b>12,4</b>	2471
	Neither	34	16,8	<b>25</b>	
	Agree	44,9	78,9	<b>62,6</b>	
D	Disagree	15,6	4,7	<b>9,9</b>	2455
	Neither	31,5	16,7	<b>23,8</b>	
	Agree	52,9	78,6	<b>66,3</b>	

Almost 90 percent of respondents agree with the statement that both partners should contribute to the household budget and this opinion seems to be shared by men and women equally. Almost 45 percent of respondents believe in traditional division of labour in a house in that men are breadwinners and women are housekeepers. This opinion is shared by men more than by women. Opinion about men not being sufficient participants in household chores is shared by almost 62 percent of respondents, but these are mostly women (79 percent of women versus 45 percent of men). Finally, 66 percent of the sample views men as not helping enough with children. Again, more women than men are agreeing with this statement. One can conclude that even though both men and women view the household more as a ground for equal partnership (question A) rather than the place for traditional roles of men and women (question B), in reality such equality does not materialize (question C and D), at least in the opinion of women. In order to dissect the differences in opinions further we turn to analysis of covariates in addition to gender.

In the following table (Table 2), marginal effects are reported for the categories neither agree nor disagree (coded as 1) and agree (coded as 2), where the category “disagree” is a reference category. For visual simplicity, only variables that are significant at least at the 10 % significant level are reported.

**Table 2: Division of Labour in the Household, marginal effects**

	A		B		C		D	
	Y=1	Y=2	Y=1	Y=2	Y=1	Y=2	Y=1	Y=2
Male			-2,2***	12,2	17,1***	-33,9	13,7***	-24,8
Age			-0,1***	0,3				
High Sch	-2,3**	3,6						
Maturita	-2,6**	4	1,1**	-6,9			-4,6**	7,9
College	-2,8*	4,1	1,2***	-11,4	-5,9**	10,2	-5**	8,3
Married			-0,8**	4,5				
Nchild								
Work								
Internet								
Hshlsize								
N	2504		2509		2471		2455	
Pseudo R squared	0,023		0,028		0,084		0,054	
% correctly predicted	89,8		47,6		62,9		66,3	

Note: Elementary education omitted from educational categories. The specification contained controls for region and settlement size not reported in the table. Marginal effects for continuous variables are calculated at the sample means. The category Y=0 (disagree) is omitted since the marginal effects for one variable have to sum up to 0. Full report available upon request.

\*\*\*significant at 1 %, \*\*significant at 5 %, \*significant at 10 %, significance reported on marginal effect for one response category only due to space limitations

Looking at the first statement – both, man and woman, should be contributing to the household budget – the significant variables are educational categories with positive marginal effects in the last category (agree). That means that people who have more schooling are more likely to agree with the statement on average. For example, having completed high school increases the probability of agreeing by 3.6 % (all other things equal), having completed high school with the state exam “maturita” increases the probability by almost 4 % and having completed college increases the probability by 4.1 %.

The numbers for the second statement – man’s job is to make money, woman’s job is to take care of the house – show gender, age, education and marital status differences. Being a man increases the probability of agreeing by 12.2 %. Older people are more likely to agree.<sup>2</sup> Having completed education with “maturita” decreases the probability of agreeing by almost 7 % and college education reduces it by 11.4 %. Being married or cohabitating increases the probability by 4.5 %. Combining the effects, completion of college education almost wipes out the effect of being a male. In other words, if men tend to agree with the statement on traditional roles in general, men with a college education do not have particularly higher tendency to agree with the statement (the probability of agreeing drops to 0.8 percent).

The third statement – that men should participate in household chores more than they do now – indicates that being a man reduces the probability of choosing an agreeable response by almost 34 %. However, this large difference is somewhat reduced by the effect of education, where having completed college leads to smaller likelihood that a man will disagree, however, still large – it drops to 23.7 %. Fourth statement is rather similar in nature – men should be taking part in childcare more than they do now – shows very similar pattern. Being a male reduces the likelihood of agreeing by 25 % and higher education tends to reduce the gender gap.

To summarize, the gender and educational differences tend to be the most important determinants of differences in opinions about the role of men and women in the household. The results show that men compared to women (all other things being the same) are less likely to think that they should participate more in the housework or help with children and are more likely to support traditional division of labour within the household. In addition, these gender differences in opinions are reduced by the impact of higher levels of education – maturita and college degrees in particular.

---

<sup>2</sup> The interpretation of marginal effects changes for continuous variables. The marginal effect is calculated at the mean of the sample. That means that increasing the age by 1 year from the sample mean of roughly 43 years of age increases the probability of agreeing by 0.3 %.

Part B: The choice between childcare and work

In this section we look at questions about working mothers with children of preschool age. The possibilities for responses were identical to answers in the previous section and the same coding was employed. Statements a respondent could agree or disagree to various degrees were:

- A. Working mother can have equally warm and secure relationship with her child as a nonworking mother.
- B. A child of preschool age is likely to suffer if the mother works.
- C. Generally speaking, family life suffers if the mother works full-time.
- D. It's ok to have a job, but what most women really want is home and children.
- E. Being a housewife is equally rewarding as working for pay.
- F. Having a job is the best way for a woman to be independent.

Similarly as before, answers are lumped into three categories: disagree, neither agree nor disagree, and agree. Table 3 shows percentage of responses for each gender and for the whole sample for each category of responses.

**Table 3: The choice between childcare and work, frequency of responses by gender**

Question	Response	Male	Female	Total	N
A	Disagree	18,8	15,6	<b>15,9</b>	2453
	Neither	13,7	9,6	<b>11,5</b>	
	Agree	67,5	77,1	<b>72,5</b>	
B	Disagree	30,6	37,4	<b>34,2</b>	2428
	Neither	20,8	19,2	<b>19,9</b>	
	Agree	48,6	43,4	<b>45,9</b>	
C	Disagree	29,6	34,6	<b>32,2</b>	2477
	Neither	22	21,8	<b>21,9</b>	
	Agree	48,4	43,6	<b>45,9</b>	
D	Disagree	9,8	11,2	<b>10,5</b>	2420
	Neither	23,5	25,6	<b>24,6</b>	
	Agree	66,7	63,3	<b>64,9</b>	
E	Disagree	30,5	39,7	<b>35,4</b>	2362
	Neither	27,4	21,6	<b>24,3</b>	
	Agree	42	38,7	<b>40,3</b>	
F	Disagree	13,2	9,9	<b>11,4</b>	2400
	Neither	26,7	22,7	<b>24,5</b>	
	Agree	60,2	67,5	<b>64</b>	

The first question asks for an opinion about the outcome for the mother-child relationship when a woman chooses to work. An overwhelming portion of the sample – 72.5 % of respondents, more women than men – believes that a working mother can have a good relationship with her child. However, when the statement is rephrased to reflect the impact on the child, almost 46 % of the respondents believe that a preschool-aged child suffers when the mother is working. We suspect that the inconsistency in responses stems from the fact that the first statement is speaking of a child in general, whereas the second statement specifies the age of a child, particularly a pre-school age. The third question about the family life when the mother works shows the same distribution of responses – 46 % of the sample agrees that the family life suffers. 65 % of respondents – again a larger proportion of men than women – think that the priority for a woman is to have a family. However, the percentage that agrees that being a housewife is equally rewarding as working drops to 40 %. Work for pay is viewed as the best way for a woman to be independent by 64 % of all respondents and almost 68 % of women.

From these numbers it seems that women are viewed as primary caretakers of children and family in general, capable of combining work and good relationship with children. Even though staying at home is not overwhelmingly viewed as rewarding, majority of respondents think that having a family is a priority. The dilemma of choosing between working or staying at home is strengthened by the fact that participating in the labour market is viewed as the way to independence of women.

To shed more light on the opinions about the role of women in the child rearing we turn to marginal effect analysis (Table 4). Similarly as before, marginal effects are reported for the categories neither agree nor disagree (coded as 1) and agree (coded as 2). For visual simplicity, only variables that are significant at least at the 10 % significant level are reported.

The first statement – a working mother can have equally warm and secure relationship with her child as a nonworking mother – seems to generate disagreement in men; men are by 7.1 % more likely to disagree than women (the number is calculated by combining the reported effects of “neither” and “agree” since marginal effects have to sum up to zero). Those people who work have a higher probability of agreeing by 4.5 %.

Men are more likely to agree with the second statement – a child of preschool age is likely to suffer if the mother works – the probability of agreeing is increased by 7.7 % for men. Older people are also more likely to agree, but college education reduces the probability of agreeing with the statement. College degree wipes out the gender difference in that educated men tend to have the same opinion as women without college degree. But college

educated men are more concerned about the impact on the child if the mother works compared to college educated women.

Table 4: **The choice between childcare and work, marginal effects**

	A		B		C		D		E		F	
	Y=1	Y=2	Y=1	Y=2	Y=1	Y=2	Y=1	Y=2	Y=1	Y=2	Y=1	Y=2
Male	2,8***	-9,9	-0,6***	7,7	-0,6***	5,9	-1,7*	3,3	-0,3***	6,8	4***	-8,1
Age			-0,02**	0,2	-0,02**	0,2			-0,01**	0,2		
High Sch												
Maturita			0,4*	-5,3								
College			0,3*	-7,9							-4,3*	7,8
Married												
Nchild					-0,2*	1,8	-1,3**	2,5	-0,1**	2,1		
Work	-1,1**	4,5									-2,1*	4,2
Internet												
Hshsize												
N	2453		2428		2477		2420		2362		2400	
Pseudo R squared	0,019		0,015		0,015		0,015		0,02		0,013	
% correctly predicted	72,5		62,8		47,8		64,9		45,9		64	

Note: Elementary education omitted from educational categories. The specification contained controls for region and settlement size not reported in the table. Marginal effects for continuous variables are calculated at the sample means. The category Y=0 (disagree) is omitted since the marginal effects for one variable have to sum up to 0. Full report available upon request.

\*\*\*significant at 1 %, \*\*significant at 5 %, \*significant at 10 %

The third statement - generally speaking, family life suffers if the mother works full-time – increases the probability of agreeing for men by almost 6 %. Similarly, age tends to increase the probability of agreeing. The number of children is also a significant variable in this question. Increasing the number of children by one from the sample average of 1.4 increases the probability of agreeing by almost 2 %. One can conclude that mothers are viewed as important household “workers” when families grow in size.

The statement – it is ok to have a job, but what most women really want is home and children – generates two predictors for higher probability of agreeing: gender and the number of children. Men and respondents with a larger number of children are more likely to agree.

The statement - Being a housewife is equally rewarding as working for pay – is supported by men more than by women. The probability of agreeing is higher for men by almost 7 %. Older people and respondents with larger number of children also tend to agree more.

Men in general are less likely to agree with the statement “Having a job is the best way for a woman to be independent”. However, men with a college

education agree to almost the same degree as women without college degree. Those people who work have higher probability of agreeing by little over 4 %. Combining the effects for illustration we can make the following observation: women with college education are 8 % more likely to agree with this statement than men with college education and 16 % more likely than men without college education.

In conclusion, men are more likely than women to subscribe to traditional view of the role of women in the household as the quality of family and children well-being is lowered when the mother works. Similarly, families with more children and older people are more likely to believe in traditional roles. Education does not seem to matter as much as it did in the previous section. In a few instances (question B and F), college education offsets the impact of being a male and the gender differences are wiped out. Work also reduces the probability of agreeing with traditional role of women, albeit only in two questions, however, this effect is not as strong as the effect of gender. For example, there would still be a difference in opinions between working men and non-working women in general in that the effect of gender would be dominant over the effect of working.

#### Part C: Specific measures to improve the life of women

In this section we look at responses about what specific measures should be undertaken to improve the life of women in the society. The question reads “Please think about specific measures in the area of employment and family that could improve the life of women in our society. Choose three options at most.” There were 10 options to choose from. The following table (Table 5) shows the frequency of responses such that a response was counted if it appeared among the three chosen ones and a rank shows the importance after counting percentage of the sample selecting a measure.

Notice that the numbers drop further down the table (with the exception of the first option, which chosen only by a handful of respondents). Unfortunately, that may mean that respondents might have not read the whole list of options and, instead, after finding three measures they liked they did not read further. Since we are not able to say if this pattern of answering is randomly distributed in population, or if it is indeed the case, the analysis here may not be accurate. In other words, if the list of options was reordered, the results may be different. An alternative explanation is that the least frequently chosen options are indeed viewed as not important measures in reaching gender equality and improving the lives of women, especially since they may be viewed as less urgent measures, or measures that lead to positive outcomes only over a longer time span than the more frequently chosen options. For example, encouraging women to study in traditionally male-dominated fields or higher preparation of women for public job, which may lead to reduction of the gender wage gap or

strengthening of women position on the labour market, may be perceived as a measure with more distant outcomes than the direct support for pay equalization and positive discrimination in public jobs.

**Table 5: Specific measures to improve the life of women, frequency of responses by gender**

	Male	Female	Total	N	Rank
Nothing especially for women	7,6	1	<b>4,2</b>	2521	10
Increase the women's pay to the level of men	42,9	65	<b>54,3</b>	2521	3
Flexible work time, part time for women, such that women can combine work and care for the family more easily	60,5	62,3	<b>61,4</b>	2521	1
Increase financial governmental support (tax allowances, parental benefits, family benefits, ...)	55,5	55,7	<b>55,6</b>	2521	2
Not favour men when hiring, firing	14	23,6	<b>19</b>	2521	6
More of affordable services for families (childcare, care for elderly)	26,8	25,6	<b>26,2</b>	2521	4
Increase women participation in public and managerial jobs	22,6	18,6	<b>20,6</b>	2521	5
Publicly criticize manifestation of male superiority	8	12,9	<b>10,5</b>	2521	7
Increase preparation of women for public jobs	6,6	6,2	<b>6,4</b>	2521	9
Encourage women to study traditionally male dominated fields	10,7	5,4	<b>8</b>	2521	8

Nevertheless, the most frequently chosen measure relates to the issue of combining work and family for women. The wording of the option suggests that it is women who bear the responsibility for the family and need flexible work arrangements to be able to do so. True equality between genders would be manifested in selecting the statement calling for flexible work time for men as well. Unfortunately, such option was not on the list and we are unable to test directly the hypothesis that the burden of the care for the family is indeed on women only. More important, the view that women need flexible work arrangements is shared by men and women equally. That implies that women accept the view that they are in need of flexible work such that they can perform their role as family care-takers in addition to being the labour market participants. At the same time, men are asking for flexible work time for women as often as women do.

Men and women seem to share equally the opinion that families should receive larger governmental support in the form of tax allowances, parental and family benefits, which is the second most frequently chosen measure. However, when it comes down to equalizing the pay for work, it is

predominantly women who think that their pay should be increased to the level of men. The next most frequently chosen option is the desire for more of affordable services for families and here the men and women show similar degree of agreement. More men than women tend to think that women participation in public and managerial jobs should be increased, however, the gender difference does not seem to be large. The gender difference again increases in question of favouring men in hiring and layoffs, where women are more likely to view this as a problem.

The marginal effects for the positive response are reported in Table 6.

**Table 6: Specific measures to improve the life of women, marginal effects**

	Flexible Work	Gov. support	Equal Pay	Family services	Glass ceiling	Labour market	Criticism in media	Encourage Study
Rank	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Male			-22,6***		-3,6**	-9,6***	-4,7***	5.1***
Age								
High Sch								
Maturita		-8,4**			8,8***			
College		-9,7**						
Married		5,3**		4,6**				
Nchild								-1,2*
Work	6,4***					-3,6**		
Internet								2,3*
Hshlsize				-1,5*				
N	2521	2521	2521	2521	2521	2521	2521	2521
Pseudo R squared	0,016	0,014	0,045	0,013	0,02	0,033	0,03	0,036
% correctly predicted	61,7	57	61,1	73,8	79,4	81	89,5	92

Note: The last two options according to the rank are not reported. Elementary education omitted from educational categories. The specification contained controls for region and settlement size not reported in the table. Marginal effects for continuous variables are calculated at the sample means. The category Y=0 (not selected) is omitted since the marginal effects for one variable have to sum up to 0. Full report available upon request.

\*\*\*significant at 1 %, \*\*significant at 5 %, \*significant at 10 %

According to the table above, after controlling for individual characteristics the gender differences in opinions on what measures should be taken to betterment of lives of women persist. The probability that men think that equal pay is a measure to improve lives of women is astonishing 23 percent lower compared to women. Men, compared to women, are also less likely to agree that increasing participation of women in public and managerial jobs is desirable. Furthermore, they do not think a support of equal practices on the labour market when it comes down to hiring/firing is needed. Similarly, they do not advocate public criticism of manifestation of male superiority compared to women. However, they are more likely than women to see the way for

improvement of women's lives in encouraging women to study male dominated fields.

In this set of variables we don't see the effect of education reducing the gender differences in opinions. Actually, in only one variable – calling for governmental intervention – we see the educational effect in that people with matura and college degrees are less likely to advocate the role of government in improving lives of women. However, at the same time, we see that those who are married are more likely to expect the governmental help.

### **III. Discussion**

Traditionally women have been viewed as primary family and children care-takers as this division of labour was efficient (Becker 1976). An increase in the labour market participation of women in more recent history simply reflects the fact that household work has become less labour intensive and time consuming, thus allowing a move of women from the household production to the market production. This sectoral shift of employment for women does not necessarily imply progress towards gender equality. In other words, it does not automatically free women from the responsibility of the remnants of the household work, such as residual child care-taking and cleaning. The combined burden of household work in addition to work for pay is stressful for women and the family in general, the claim supported by the numbers from the survey: 46 percent of respondents agree with the statement “generally speaking, family life suffers if the mother works full-time”.

Therefore, it is not straightforward to interpret the general support of men and of the society for the women labour market participation as a clear signal of the progress towards gender equality. As we saw before, a vast majority of respondents, both men and women, say that women should contribute to the family budget, but it seems that such choice has its costs in lower well-being of the family, mainly reported by men. The interpretation can be that men support the choice of women to work for pay, however, they do not necessarily take over a fair share in household chores and child rearing, the claim made mostly by women.

Higher labour market participation of women, however, affects the position of women within the family. The ability of women to work for pay, thus making their contribution to the family more tangible, may improve their power position within the family. In our dataset, the majority of men show an understanding of the economic independence of women resulting from work for pay. Similarly, almost all respondents say that “both man and woman should be contributing to the household budget” indicating the fact that it has become fairly common for women to work for pay. However, responses by

men suggest that women's financial contribution is possibly viewed only as supplemental to the family budget.

Implications of the presence of "double burden" on the position of women on the labour market and in the society are fairly straightforward. It can be argued that it is only natural for a woman to face labour market discrimination if the general perception is that she already has a job commitment elsewhere. In addition, given responses in our survey, women also demonstrate that their understanding of equality is rather ambiguous. They are calling for more flexible work hours and governmental assistance to combine work and family more easily as much as men do<sup>3</sup>. In other words, they seem to accept the "double-burden" and are calling for the governmental intervention to relieve it.

A more readily available alternative to reduction of the stress of "double burden" and its consequences on the labour market is present and that is an increase in the participation of men in the household work and child rearing. It can be argued that such alternative is already utilized and there is a progress towards more equal division of labour within a household as, for example, education seems to close the gender gap. Similarly, even though gender differences persist in opinions on gender related issues, the proportion of male respondents openly subscribing to traditional model is not alarmingly high. In addition, we see that significant portion of men demonstrate understanding of the need of their participation in the household chores and child caretaking.

The implication of this and similar studies for the governmental intervention in the process of reaching gender equality in the society is that the public policy should not ignore importance of the family in this process. For instance, the legislation should openly encourage participatory model of family by, for example, supporting active role of men in child rearing responsibilities. Existing measures banning open discrimination on the labour market are likely to lead to more hidden forms of discrimination. Removing stereotypes of the role of a man and a woman within a family on all levels of society may be a long term process, however, with certainly more successful outcomes than attempts to remove consequences of gender discrimination directly.

## **Conclusion**

The study shows that attitudes towards gender equality are rather obscured by the presence of "double-burden" of combining the work for pay and family responsibilities for women. We find evidence that attitudes supporting more traditional division of labour within the family are still persistent with negative impact on the general well-being of a family. In addition, the study also shows

---

<sup>3</sup> It has to be noted, however, that a less gender biased questionnaire would include an option "flexible work time for men so they can combine work and care for family more easily".

that the gender is the most important predictor for the differences in opinions on gender equality. Men in general are more likely to subscribe to traditional views of the role of women within the family. Education seems to cushion this effect to some extent.

It remains to be analyzed further whether more equal division of labour within the family is needed or if the governmental intervention is a remedy for reducing the stress of a modern family as a measure of reducing gender inequality. The presence of “double-burden” and the general acceptance of such model in society directly contribute to the position of women in the society. As long as women are expected to bear disproportional responsibility for combining work and family, an unequal treatment in other areas of the society becomes only a natural consequence.

*Euba Habodászová, PhD works as a Junior Research Faculty at the department of Business and Management at Webster University Vienna, Austria and as a lecturer at City University, Bratislava, Slovakia. She received her PhD at Indiana University Bloomington, Indiana, USA. Her research interests include labour market and transition economics.*

#### REFERENCES

- BECKER, G., 1976: *A Theory of the Allocation of Time*. The Economic Approach to Human Behavior, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- BAHNA, M., 2006: *Rodová rovnosť a trh práce na Slovensku. Správa z reprezentatívneho výskumu*. Slovensko na ceste k rodovej rovnosti. Bratislava: Európska rómska pracovná agentúra, Sociologický ústav SAV, s. 41-78.
- BÚTOROVÁ, Z. et al., 2008: *She and He in Slovakia, Gender and Age in the Period of Transition*. Bratislava: Institute for Public Affairs.
- PISCOVÁ, M., 2006: *Rovnosť príležitostí z hľadiska realizácie politiky zamestnanosti*. Slovensko na ceste k rodovej rovnosti. Bratislava: Európska rómska pracovná agentúra, Sociologický ústav SAV, s. 79-114.
- KVAPILOVÁ, E., 2006: *Implementácia princípu rovnosti žien a mužov na trhu práce*. Slovensko na ceste k rodovej rovnosti. Bratislava: Európska rómska pracovná agentúra, Sociologický ústav SAV, s. 11-28.
- FILADELFIOVÁ, J. – KICZKOVÁ, Z. – SZAPUOVÁ, M., 2006: *Úloha mužov pri podpore rodovej rovnosti: Participácia otcov na domácej starostlivosti*. Bratislava: Slovenské národné stredisko pre ľudské práva.

## Appendix

### Descriptive statistics for independent variables

Name of the variable	Description	Mean	Standard deviation for continuous variables	N
Male	Dummy variable, male = 1, female = 0	0,48		2521
Age		43,4	16,16	2521
ELEMENTARY	Dummy variable, 1 = complete or incomplete elementary education	0,13		2521
HIGHSCH	Dummy variable, 1 = high school	0,42		2521
MATURITA	Dummy variable, 1 = high school with state exam "maturita"	0,34		2521
COLLEGE	Dummy variable, 1 = bachelor or university education	0,11		2521
MARRIED	Dummy variable, 1=married or with live-in partner	0,60		2521
NCHILD	Number of children	1,4	1,21	2521
WORK	Dummy variable, 1 = working full-time or part-time	0,58		2521
INTERNET	Dummy variable, 1 = internet in the household	0,22		2521
HSHLSIZE	Household size	3,21	1,38	2521
<2000	Dummy variable, 1 = settlement size up to 2000	0,31		2521
<5000	Dummy variable, 1 = settlement size up from 2000 up to 5000	0,13		2521
<20 000	Dummy variable, 1 = settlement size from 5000 up to 20 000	0,16		2521
<50 000	Dummy variable, 1 = settlement size from 20 000 up to 50 000	0,15		2521
<100 000	Dummy variable, 1= settlement size from 50 000 up to 100 000	0,12		2521
>100 000	Dummy variable, 1= settlement size above 100 000	0,13		2521
Bratislava	Regional dummy variable	0,12		2521
Trnava	Regional dummy variable	0,11		2521
Trenčín	Regional dummy variable	0,11		2521
Nitra	Regional dummy variable	0,14		2521
Žilina	Regional dummy variable	0,13		2521
Banská Bystrica	Regional dummy variable	0,13		2521
Prešov	Regional dummy variable	0,14		2521
Košice	Regional dummy variable	0,14		2521