

**DISTRIBUTION OF FAMILY ROLES**

**HANNA KALUHINA, SVIATLANA ASTAPCHUK**  
**Polotsk State University, Belarus**

*Today we can see the change in family roles. Traditional roles of men and women have been undergoing a shift. For a long period of time a man was the breadwinner and the head of the family, making important decisions. A woman was completely attached to the family. Nowadays, men and women tend to have equal economic, political and social rights and possibilities. The new social roles resulted in significant changes in the family roles.*

There are various debates and views on the term "family". In today's Belarusian society a family is often described as a unit of people that are related, either legally through marriage or biologically. There are many different types of families (nuclear family, single parent family, childless family and others) [3].

The main problem of scientific research consists in studying the specifics features of matrimonial interactions, modern distribution of family roles. Many researchers describe a crisis of a family and one of its causes may be the fear of young people to marry because of the conflict ideas about family life and the relations between spouses. Young married people have some distortion of an image of a family and an image of a spouse [2]. As a result, "family myths" are formed that affect the nature of matrimonial interaction and activity of a family in general.

Such outstanding psychologists as K. Kirkpatrick, S. V. Kovalyov, G. Navaytis and many others were engaged in studying this issue.

Today Belarus ranks second in the world in the number of divorces [1]. One of the main reasons is the spouses' discrepancy of ideas of family roles. Marriage has become less important from the economic point of view for women, who are now able to undertake paid work outside the home, which leads to their increasing financial independence and ability to form separate households [4].

Along with this, there have been marked changes in people's attitudes regarding marriage in recent years. Besides, the choice available to couples and individuals has become more extensive. As a result, fewer people are getting married. Women's economic independence has also contributed to the increased divorce rates over the last four decades [4].

In our research, we supposed there was a gender difference in the way family roles are distributed.

We analyzed modern researches in psychology and pedagogical science on the issue family relations; marital communication as the core of the family system; gender stereotypes in functional and role structure of the family. We made analysis of students' ideas about the distribution of family roles.

We used a questionnaire, which included 32 family roles. This questionnaire included the roles described by Y. E. Alyoshina, L. Y. Gozman, E. M. Dubrovskaya, S. V. Kovalyov. In the questionnaire, the following roles were presented: "a household manager", "a buyer of products", "one who earns money", "a treasurer", "a poor performer of duties", "one who cleans home", "one who takes out garbage", "a cook", "one who cleans the table after meals", "one who looks after pets", "an organizer of holidays and entertainments", "an errands runner", "a decision-maker", "a mender of broken things", "a mediator in a conflict", "one who likes to be ill", "a supporter of strict discipline", "a chief accuser", "one who consoles the offended", "one who evades discussion of issues", "a creator of trouble for others", "one who keeps away from family problems", "one who makes sacrifice for the sake of others", "a family volcano", "one who nurses a grievance", "a joker", "a master/mistress", "one who is responsible for baby care", "a tutor", "an organizer of family subculture", "one who is responsible for maintenance of family relations", "a psychotherapist".

70 students took part in our research, 35 females and 35 males; aged from 17 to 21. The majority of the students were from Belarus, but among them, there were also young people from Turkmenistan. All of the students were of humanities faculty and technical faculties of Polotsk State University.

The task given to the students was to mark in the first column of the table the roles, typical of women; in the second column - roles typical of men, and in the third column it was necessary to choose five most important family roles.

It would be interesting to discuss the choice of 5 most important family roles. The females chose such roles as "one who earns money", "a decision-maker", "a household manager", "one who is responsible for baby care", "a master/mistress". The males were of the same option.

The distinctions between the ways the students distributed the family roles are significant. Most obviously, these distinctions are visible on the example of such roles as "a household manager", "one who earns money", "a treasurer", "a cook", "one who looks after pets", "an errands runner", "a supporter of strict

discipline", "one who makes sacrifice for the sake of others", "one who is responsible for baby care", "a tutor", "an organizer of family subculture". We can see that this list generally contains the roles concerning the household part of marriage.

Analyzing the quantitative data we considered the gender choice of family roles in a percentage ratio. It would be interesting to pay attention to some of them. Only 66% of the females believed that wives were to be "treasurers". It is interesting to notice that the males had exactly the opposite point of view.

89% of the females chose the role "cook" as a typical role for women. But 40% of the young men nevertheless were sure that "a man is the best cook". Most of the females (69%) decided that the role "an errands runner" is typical of males. While 63% of the young men, on the contrary, attributed this role to women.

Only 3% of the women chose the role "mender of broken things" as typical of women. It is quite amazing that 31% of the young men also thought that this role was typical of women.

69% of the females defined the family role "one who makes sacrifice for the sake of others" as typical of women. And 63% of the young men, on the contrary, considered this role was typical of men.

The fact that the role of "joker" was chosen as typical of men not only by 80% of the females but also 69% of the young men is very curious.

The results of the most important roles for males and females are shown in the diagram (Fig. 1, 2).

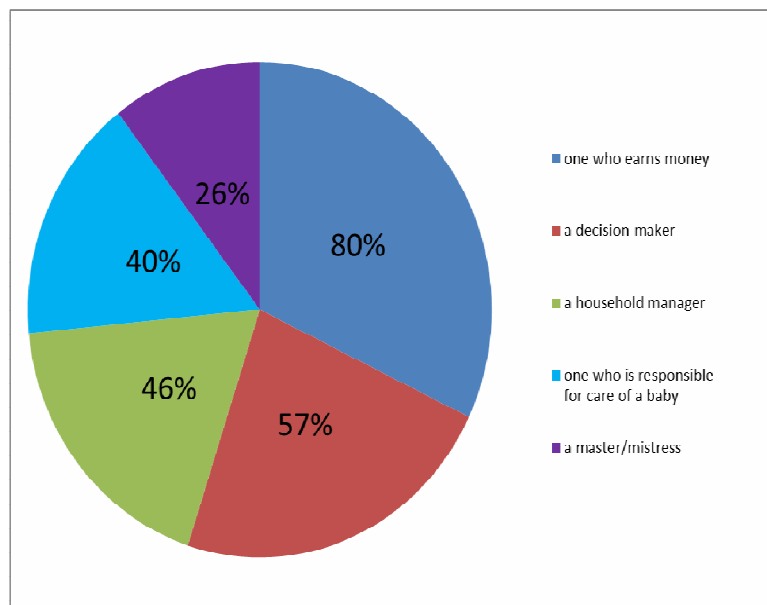


Fig. 1. Most important family roles (females)

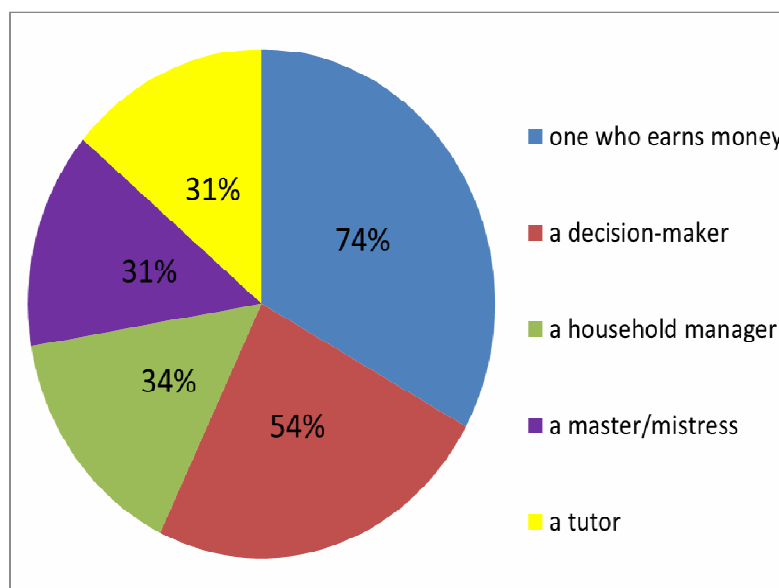


Fig. 2. Most important family roles (males)

Statistically, over the past few years the divorce rates have increased in Belarus. That's why it is very important to study the issue of family roles distribution. It would subsequently help newly-married couples, or those who are going to marry, to find understanding of the forthcoming responsibility.

Analyzing the results of our research it was revealed that the views on gender distribution of family roles considerably differed.

The change in the distribution of family roles is going on. The shift of gender roles in the past 30 years has been huge. It has happened so quickly that men and women are still trying to sort out what the new roles mean to them. Although women are no longer expected to be the keepers of the house, in reality, they are in most families. Although men are generally open to the successes enjoyed by the women they share their lives with, some still find it hard to celebrate a woman's triumphs because they feel it diminishes their own.

However, rather than blaming each other for the situation, men and women are increasingly willing to work together to learn about their new roles. Successful marriage partners learn to negotiate and share tasks. It will take time to sort out all the implications of the changing gender roles, but new expectations should result in better relationships.

#### REFERENCES

1. Статистика браков и разводов в Республике Беларусь на 2014 год [Электронный ресурс] /Новости24. – Минск, 2014. – Режим доступа: <http://novosti24.by/semia/v-belarusi-v-2014-godu-snizilos-kolichestvo-brakov-i-razvodov.html>. – Date of access: 20.12.2016.
2. Семейное воспитание детей [Электронный ресурс] / ЯГПУ, Центр информационных технологий обучения, 2003. – Режим доступа: <http://cito-web.yspu.org/link1/metod/met86/node8.html>. – Date of access: 20.12.2016.
3. История становления семьи [Электронный ресурс] / Студопедия. – Минск, 2015. – Режим доступа : <http://studopedia.su/kontakt.php>. – Date of access: 23.12.2016.
4. British Family Gender Roles [Electronic resource]. – Mode of access: <http://www.interestingarticles.com/social-issues/british-family-gender-roles-and-consumerism-3493.html#ixzz4VZcCE9Le>. – Date of access: 10.01.2017.