





IMPACT OF GENDER DIVISION OF FAMILY AND HOUSEHOLD CHORES ON PROFESSIONAL LIVES OF WORKING WOMEN IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA


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INTRODUCTION


- There are gender inequalities and prejudices in Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- Many agree that most responsibilities in the household typically fall more on women and that fathers are not good enough to caring for children as mothers.
- As a result, women suffer discrimination in the labour market because employers do not trust that they will be able to successfully manage all obligations, but also discrimination against women in the appointment to management positions.


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- Women in BaH wrongly associate the issue of equality with the issue of increasing violence against women, and not with indicators on the labour market or distribution of household chores.
 - "Men's" jobs in the house are related to small repairs, while women are responsible for washing, cleaning and cooking.
 - A study conducted in BaH found that about 95% of men and 78% of women were satisfied with this distribution of work.
 - Differences in the household burden of women and men are very pronounced. The gender gap is conditioned by the structure of the family, *i.e.* the presence of small children. The deepest gender gap occurs in the category of women and men who have middle-aged children.
 - Women spend 34 hours more than men doing housework and taking care of children and other household members.
 - *(Research conducted in 2020 by an independent agency. Some data taken from the published report of the Agency for Gender Equality of BaH and the database of the BaH Ombudsman Institution).*


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- The vast majority of household and family chores are actually "*women's chores*", i.e. they are performed exclusively or mostly by women.
 - In as many as 93.8% of relationships all, or most of the mentioned jobs, are performed by women. Men take on responsibilities such as playing and walking with the child and helping the child in something. Employed women spend five times more time on routine household chores than their partners. Three-fifths of women (61.4%) spend an average of more than 20 hours on child care, and almost two-thirds of men (63.8%) spend less than 20 hours a week. The most significant factor, which affects how much time women spend doing routine household chores, is the involvement of men in doing them.
 - When it comes to the professional involvement of women, they are often asked questions about their plans to start a family, about the number and age of children, which is worrying and discriminating.


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- Analysis of the labour market shows that there are typically female and typically male occupations in Bosnia and Herzegovina. There is also existing difference in wages in the private sector, where men have higher wages than women.
 - Discrimination is also reflected in the differently regulated rights of women to maternity leave in different parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the fact that maternity leave is not always paid. Some women lose their jobs after becoming pregnant.
 - The share of employed women with small children has slightly increased compared to previous years. The unemployment rate in Bosnia and Herzegovina is 17.4% (the share of the female population in the registered unemployed is 58.5%).


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- Out of the total number of unemployed women, 8% are women with higher education, while the percentage of men is only 3%.
 - In general, women between the ages of 16-64 make up only 38% of the active workforce in BaH, which is the lowest level of representation of women on the labour market in Southeast Europe.
 - The relationship between the average monthly earnings of women and their partners is unequal. In BaH, women earn only 53.7% of men's income. In slightly less than a third of cases (30.2%) the woman and her partner have the same income, and in almost every other relationship (in 46.2% of cases) the man belongs to a higher income category. In only 13.6% of cases it is the woman who earns more.

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- As expected, higher flexibility at work (e.g. flexible working hours, the possibility of working from home and the possibility of switching from full-time to part-time work and vice versa, etc.) is more often experienced by highly educated women and women who are employed for an indefinite period and self-employed women.
 - And when it comes to work demands that can have the greatest impact on women's family obligations (e.g. shift work, weekend work, business trips, taking work home, etc.), data show that as many as three fifths of women constantly work on weekends, and almost half of them work in shifts.
 - More than two thirds of women (67%), when they have to choose between work and family, almost always and more often give priority to family.
 - Women who have children almost always prioritize family over other women, and highly educated women were more often than others in a situation where they had to choose between work demands and family obligations.

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- Almost half of women experienced some of the negative consequences of caring for children and their upbringing on a woman's career (*e.g.*, working under significantly greater stress, looking for an additional source of income due to an increase in the family's financial needs, giving up a career, etc.).
 - There are clear predictors for most of these negative consequences: the woman's level of education, the type of contract under which she works (type of employment), the type of ownership of the company/organization in which she works, and the number of children.
 - Namely, highly educated women, women employed on a temporary basis, occasionally self-employed women, and women who work in the private sector, as well as women who have more than one child, have a significantly higher chance of experiencing one of the aforementioned negative consequences.

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- On the other hand, the data show that doing housework and other family responsibilities did not have a very large impact or the negative consequences for the professional life of working women (*e.g.* giving up professional training or business trips, experiencing conflicts with colleagues or superiors at work, etc. .) on the job.
 - As in the case of the influence of obligations related to the care of children and their upbringing, there are certain factors that significantly influence the fact that a woman will have some of the aforementioned difficulties in her professional life.
 - Women over 40 years old, women with a lower educational level, those who are employed in agriculture, those who are employed in the private sector, those who are employed as chief directors, board members, etc., and those who have more than one child have a significantly higher chance of having some of the negative consequences mentioned.

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- The most frequent consequences of conflict between family and business obligations are lack of time for yourself, lack of sleep and stress - every other working woman in the sample feels them several times a month or more often.
 - And as important predictors of negative consequences for a woman's health and well-being, women's age, level of education, number of children and flexibility at work proved to be important. Namely, women older than 40, those with a lower level of education, women who have more than one child, and women who have more flexible jobs (and in all cases at the expense of women who were absent from work due to family situations) significantly more often feel some from the negative consequences of the conflict between private and business life.
 - It seems that women in Bosnia and Herzegovina quite successfully balance private and business obligations (or they have become accustomed to such a way of functioning over the generations).

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- However, the type of company in which the woman works and the type of contract under which she works proved to be important predictors for the occurrence of a greater number of negative consequences for the woman's career.
 - Women who work in the private sector and on fixed-term contracts are more likely to feel insecure in their workplace and have a greater chance of having some of the above-mentioned negative consequences for their careers.
 - The regulation of the position of women employed in the private sector and their legal protection is something that should be tried to work on, through support to employers who hire and retain them in their workplaces or at least in terms of raising public awareness.

CONCLUSION

- Women in Bosnia and Herzegovina take on most of the responsibilities in the household, perform most of the mental tasks, as well as the obligations and demands of their jobs, all with lower average incomes and numerous negative consequences for their careers, well-being and health.
- Bosnia and Herzegovina uses comprehensive strategies for gender equality and the entire network of gender institutional mechanisms.
- There are specific strategies for the economic empowerment of women, with the aim of encouraging female entrepreneurship, but continuous efforts are needed to improve gender equality in the areas of economic and social power.
- Employment strategies and economic strategies in Bosnia and Herzegovina recognize that women are underrepresented in employment, but that in general there are no strategic links between the employment of women and the economic development of the country.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Investing in education and mindset shift - Measures should be taken to create equal opportunities and access to education for girls and boys, women and men at every age, including members of vulnerable groups in any area (specialy rural) and with the same prospects for future professional life.
- It is necessary to take measures to eliminate discrimination based on gender in work, employment and the labour market, and to ensure equal opportunities for women and men in accessing economic resources, including poverty reduction through new macroeconomic and development strategies.
- It is necessary to maintain and further improve regional and international cooperation with the aim of defining measures to achieve gender equality in all areas of life and joint implementation of programs, projects and activities for the advancement of gender equality.