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Original research paper

UDC 305-055.2+347.628

DOI: 10.7251/SOCEN1407005M

Accepted 21. 1. 2014.

The social role of mother after the cessation of marital and extra-marital relationship

Abstract

The article deals with the role of mother during the time of marital relation and after its cessation from the sociological point of view. It presents several theoretical lines of the institution of motherhood together with the historical development of mother's role. It also provides a description of marital relationship, as well as reasons that lead to its breakup (divorce). In addition, it also gives an outline of consequences related to the execution of mother's and father's social role. After the cessation of marital and extra-marital relationship the role of mothers is significantly increased, whereas the role of fathers is importantly diminished. However, such scenario is not in accordance with mothers' expectations. Both parents are usually prepared to keep contact and to co-operate for well-being of their children because they perceive such co-operation as important and needed. Mothers often expect fathers' co-operation if they see the father's influence on their child(ren) as positive. Nonetheless, there are some mothers who reject any contact with the father of their child(ren) after the divorce, yet they are prepared to seek help concerning the counselling, and express their overall contentment with the functioning of the existing state institutions. Yet, they often don't have any oversight and are not familiar with NGO's and their operation.

Keywords: *motherhood, marital relation, family, divorce/cessation of marital relationship, the role of father.*

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Introduction

Today, the family still represents the basic cell of every society. The way of life, lifestyle, rhythm and role change have led to the point where a woman who once was confined only to her roles of mother and housewife assumed the functions of the role that, in the past, was ascribed to men only. Consequently, men nowadays frequently find themselves in a role not really suitable to their disposition. Nevertheless, most of them come to terms with its requirements, thereby confirming that their ability to take care of children is far from being merely accidental. The new state of affairs already amounts to the fact that they are quite capable of looking after for their descendants, together with the role(s) they have to fulfill outside their families.

A more active role of man/father within the family is definitely of interest to most of women - this way, they can pursue their career and other activities to a much greater extent. During the observation of this role, however, we were mainly interested in performance of mothers' role after the cessation of marital or extra-marital relationship in ever growing cases of children staying with their fathers.

In modern Slovene society, we can observe an increase in cessation of extra-marital relationships and partner co-habitats compared to newly registered marital relationships. The number of single mothers is growing, and that phenomenon, of course, raises the question about the role of father after marital and extra-marital relationship cessation. The relation between mother and father after the end of their relationship invariably exerts a direct influence on the development of their children. Still, the fact mentioned is often neglected by society - with respect to both parents. Such findings are confirmed by the countless complications with the legal allocation of children to one of their parents where the society and public opinion are still, in most cases, biased in favour of child's mother.

1. Some sociological features of the post-modern family

The family is defined as a group of persons living in common household that consists of at least one child and at least one adult; further, the group is mutually connected by marital relationship - either by co-habitation, and/or parental relationship.³

³ Antonella Pinnelli, Hans Joachim, Hoffmann-Nowotny and Beat Fux, *Fecondita e nuove forme di unione in Europa*, Milano: Sapere, 2004. pp.28.

In sociological research, Brown's typology⁴ of families was widely used. The classification is as follows:

- *nuclear families* (families with two or more parents);
- *classical extended families* (vertically and horizontally extended families consisting of more nuclear families connected by relation of kinship and joined location of living);
- *modified extended families* (families that are geographically separated but keep regular family connections and offer mutual support);
- *single-parent families*;
- *reorganised families* (re-established families with at least one social, but not biological parent).

Ideal type image of nuclear family according to one of classical authors of functionalist sociology Talcott Parsons is made up of a married couple (an employed father and a mother who is a housewife) together with their children. Astonishingly, this type today accords with less than 20 per cent of families in Europe⁵.

Similarly to other countries, the statistical monitoring of household and families in our county is performed by The Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia, but most of the research is done at various institutes and research centers of different faculties.

The topics of research reports, monographies and articles of professional scientists from the Faculty of Social Sciences are very diverse: conceptualization of family policies, integration relationships, gender relationships, sexual structure of privacy, family typology, social networks and social support of families, quality of family life, harmonization of family life and employment, sexual hierarchy, natality, "new fatherhood" and parenthood⁶.

2. Family in Slovenia

Number of families in Slovenia grows slower than the number of households. According to the data of 2002 census people in Slovenia then lived in 685,000 households and 556,000 families that, on average, had 3 members. Among private households there were 552,000 (76%) family households and

⁴ Ken Brown, *An Introduction to Sociology*, Cambridge: Blackwell Publisher. 1992. Pp. 210-212.

⁵ John Muncie and Michael Langan, *Introduction: Public definitions and privates*. U: Muncie and et.: "Understanding the Family", London: Sage and The Open University Press. 1997. p.11.

⁶ Tanja Rener, Alenka Švab, Tjaša Žakelj i Živa Humer, *Analiza očetovstva ter predlogi za izboljšave družinske politike na področju usklajevanja dela in družine. Zaključno poročilo (CRP)*, Ljubljana: ARRS, MDSSZ, Fakulteta za družbene vede, Center za socialno psihologijo, 2006. p. 28

153,000 (24%) non-family households (150,000 single-member and 13,000 multi-member households).

According to 2002 census, 150,000 lived on their own (single-member households), among them were almost twice as many women (62%) than men (38%). These numbers are 2,2-times bigger than 1948 data, thus representing the biggest share of single-member households after the Second World War. As to the last census, the single-member households were inhabited by younger men and men in their later active years, whereas most of women in single-member households had already reached their sixtieth year of age.

Number of families in Slovenia is growing, but the number of their members is smaller. The most frequent type of family is married couple with children. An average family with children consequently has 3,4 members.

Family statistically consists of parents and their children living in the same household and not yet having a family of their own. Family can also be made up of a husband and wife only, or (two) partners in extra-marital community that live together. When a child becomes a parent or gets married, it starts living in an extra-marital community, or leaves his/her original family, he or she stops being statistically considered as a member of his/her parental family.⁷

3. Role of woman/mother in the current post-modern Slovenian society

Both sexes are biologically so dependend on each other and their tasks are so intimately intertwined and so complementary that almost every disagreement among them can have serious consequences for both, individual and society.

Jogan states that material and moral overburdening of women still represents a universal feature of Slovenian post-modern society.⁸ They are much more overloaded with family and household tasks than men despite their usual employment activity outside home. As for the institution of household, she now has the opportunity of taking advantage of modern technology that has become affordable due to higher family income, for the most part with the supposition that it will ease common family works. But the help of technology can be considered relative. In reality, it even increases their overloading in a given field of work, whereas the reduced amount of time calls for entirely different type of tasks. For even if modern technology support can be said to include ever higher number of appliances together with their equipment, from specially adapted spoon to digitally-led oven, it has not, as some expected, stimulated a decrease in share

⁷ www.stat.si/novice_poglej.asp?ID=549

⁸ Maca Jogan, *Seksizem v vsakdanjem življenju*, Ljubljana: FDV, 2001. p. 185.

of Slovenian women with full-time employment. Probably such development of things came about due to the fact that women's work within the household was always understood as work devoid of economic value, for the most part as a kind of free domestic service.

Often the family members see the female household work as something self-evident and thus "taken for granted because it has always been like that..." - Last but not least, statistical data confirm the imbalance: adult Slovenian man spends for his household activity approx. 7 hours on average, compared to 28.5 hours that are on average spent for household work by Slovenian women. Slovenian men spend approx 17.8 hours on average per week for taking care of and educating of their children, whereas women devote to the same work on average 27.3 hours weekly. It is through learning of such experience (by stereotypization) that children become familiar with the role of woman in the sphere of private - when they acquire adequate sexual preferences, abilities, personal attributes, behaviour and concept of themselves that includes the process of sexual typification.

3.1. Role of mother in Slovenian Society

The role of mother in modern society is undergoing a significant change. Therefore, a comparison with the past is possible only in the sense of her direct family role, yet even about the change we could argue that on the basis of the father's role it shifted in favour of mother (we shall mention only a possibility of taking a paternal leave for father, for example).

A modern mother can occur in several different functions simultaneously, ranging from housewife, mother, wife, employed woman, creative person and researcher, up to sportswoman that is capable of achieving top results in her career. All this and even more is conditioned by favourable family policy and the role of man/father within the family or modern society.

Still, we could list a number of problems when addressing a relationship between family and work. One of them is certainly parental leave. In Slovenia, we distinguish four different kinds: maternal leave, paternal leave, nursing-and-custody leave, and adoption leave.⁹

4. Marital relationship

Marriage, wedded life and having family with children still remains one of principal goals for many young people that enter the world of adulthood. In

⁹ Alenka Švab, *Skrb med delom in družino*, Ljubljana: Teorija in praksa, Letnik 40, št. 6. p.121.

the countries of developed world marry and start family life about nine tenths of people. Marriage, wedlock and family thus still represent social and cultural norm.

In Western cultural society today it is normal for the process of marital partner to be based upon body contact, mutual attraction and love.

Similarities and other factors that have influence on mutual attraction and partnership, sooner or later become important for development of closer partnership relations. Still, the highest share of marriages is contracted among the persons of similar social position, social-economic status, race, nationality and religion.¹⁰

4.1. Dissolution of marriage

Divorce or dissolution of legal marital relationship becomes a usual part of family development. Supposedly, the highest share of divorced marriages can be observed among younger adult couples with small children who separate already during the first years of marital relationship. Divorce, especially if it happens at an earlier stage of life, is often followed by the reorganization of families and many children have to go through another marriage of at least one, if not both, parents.

Statistical data for Slovenia show an increase in number of divorced marriages, and a continuation of such trend is very likely. Unfortunately, apart from the official statistics there has been no additional recent research on family life in relation to divorce and reorganization of families as a segment of family development. According to same estimations, the share of reorganised families in Slovenia is around 30% ; as for the current family trends it is highly probable that the divorce share will grow.¹¹ The formation of the reorganized families means a lot of change also in the relationship within the family, as well as between the families. Therefore, reorganized families establish new family relations and practices, previously unknown to our society¹².

In Slovenia, the number of new marriages in 2005 fell under 6 thousand for the first time, and the number of divorced couples increased by 10% in comparison with the previous year. However, the trend can be observed not only in Slovenia, but also in other member states of EU.

Yet, even if in Slovenia the number of divorced marriages appears to be exceptionally high when compared to the number of the newly wedded couples it

¹⁰ Janek Musek, *Ljubezen, družina, vrednote*. Ljubljana: Educy, 1995. pp. 130-131.

¹¹ Tanja Rener, Alenka Švab, Tjaša Žakelj i Živa Humer, *Analiza očetovstva ter predlogi za izboljšave družinske politike na področju usklajevanja dela in družine. Zaključno poročilo (CRP)*, Ljubljana: ARRS, MDDSZ, Fakulteta za družbene vede, Center za socialno psihologijo, 2006. Str. 28

¹² Carol Smart and Brene Neale, *Family fragments?* Cambridge - Oxford: Polity Press, 1999.

should be emphasised that the share of divorced marriages in 2004 was one of the lowest among the EU states.

Marriages that fell apart in 2005, had been lasting approx. for 16 years. Three decades ago, among all divorced marriages there was about a third of relationships that fell apart during the first three years of marriages, about a fourth of marriages that before the separation were lasting from 5 to 9 years, and only about 12 per cent of marriages were divorced after 20 years of matrimony.¹³

Table 1. *Marriages and divorce from 1977 to 2007.*

	1977	1987	1997	2006	2007
Newly conducted marriages	15.026	10.307	7.500	6.368	6.373
Divorced marriages Per 1000 inhabitants	2.406	2.163	1.996	2.334	2.617
Newly conducted marriages	8,2	5,2	3,8	3,2	3,2
Divorced marriages	1,3	1,1	1,0	1,2	1,3
Number of divorced couples per 1000 new marriages	160,1	209,9	266,1	366,5	411,0
Average age of the bridegroom	27,5	27,0	30,7	32,8	33,2
of the bride	24,2	23,7	27,6	30,0	30,3
at their first conducted marriage of the bridegroom	25,8	25,6	28,5	30,6	30,7
of the bride	22,6	22,5	25,6	28,1	28,1

(Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia)

4.2. Reasons for divorce in Slovenian society

In Slovenia, the dissolution of marriage is defined under the seventh paragraph of the second part of the Matrimonial Relationship and Family Relationships Act (7. točki II. Dela ZZZDR) under the title “Cessation of Matrimonial Relationship” in 65th and 66th Article of the Act. Among the ways for cessation of matrimonial relationship listed under 63th Article are: death of a spouse, declaration of spouse’s death and dissolution of marital relationship.

In Slovenia, too, the combination of guilt factor with the principle of undermined marital relationship is no longer acknowledged, and is fully substituted with the system of undermined marital relationship. As the main reason for divorce Slovenia inferred the insupportability of marital relationship that, at the same time, is the only reason for divorce it acknowledges. In the Matrimonial Relationship and Family Relationships Act, Slovenia also allows for the possibility of consensual divorce. (Geč – Korošec, Kraljić, 1997, 103).

¹³ http://www.stat.si/novica_prikazi.aspx?id=363

5. Extra-marital relationship

R. Celster supposed that the extra-marital relationship in most cases applies to some temporary period, as most of persons living together in that manner gets married sooner or later. In some cases, one of the partners could be separated, but not formally divorced from his/her previous partner, and consequently cannot re-marry. Others treat the period of extra-marital relationship as experimental relation, and intend to marry if it proves satisfactory for both parties. Most of couples living in an extra-marital relationship intend to get married and do so especially if they have children.

Nonetheless, J. Chandler represents a different opinion arguing that the time which the couples spend together in an extra-marital community seemingly becomes ever longer thus representing a long-term alternative to marital relationship¹⁴ (Haralambos, 2001, 378–379).

6. Research

Our research included a population of women and men (all of them after the cessation of extra-marital relationship) with children of school age, or kids that have to be cared for, as well as men and women with adult children. The research was based on method applied to the quote sample of divorced men and women living in Slovenia.

In the following sub-chapters we will present some our findings. The research included two questionnaires, one for mothers and one for fathers. We gathered the results by the help of postal service, via the internet and snowball questioning. I also asked for the assistance of Social work centers. The total sum of questionnaires was 450; 260 of them were intended for mothers and 190 for fathers. 203 questionnaires were also returned - 144 from mothers and 59 from fathers.

6.1. Analysis of the gathered empirical results

For the needs of empirical work, the following hypotheses were verified:

Hypothesis 1, where we assumed that the majority of kids after the cessation of marital and extra-marital relationships is assigned to the custody of their mothers is confirmed because the empirical data exemplified the fact that the vast majority of children (90.1%) after separation of partners comes to live with their mothers.

¹⁴ See in: Michael Haralambos, *Sociologija: Teme in pogledi*, Ljubljana: DZS.2001. str. 378-379.

Table 2. *Who got the children?*

			Sex		Total
			male	female	
Who got the children?	I did.	Count	12	127	139
		% within Sex	20.0%	90.1%	69.2%
	My partner did.	Count	42	1	43
		% within Sex	70.0%	7%	21.4%
	Shared custody	Count	3	11	14
		% within Sex	5.0%	7.8%	7.0%
	Other	Count	3	2	5
		% within Sex	5.0%	1.4%	2.5%
Total		Count	60	141	201
		% within Sex	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

The obtained empirical data show that majority of kids after the cessation of marital and extra-marital relationships is assigned to the custody of their mothers regardless if we analyse the answers of mothers or fathers (90.1% of mothers and 70.0% of fathers), although we can observe certain discrepancy in a sense that, according to some answers of divorced mothers, these numbers also included men that took care for their children more frequently; this means that cases where kids would live with both of their separated parents were relatively rare, irrespective of divorced mothers (7.8%) or fathers (5.0%).

Hypothesis 2, where we assumed that the level of compliance with the official decision on parental custody would differ according to the sex of parent can be seen as confirmed because the vast majority of female interviewees (89.3%) and vast majority of male interviewees (83.1%) agreed with the final court decision.

Table 3. *Agreeing with the final court decision*

			Sex		Total
			male	female	
Agreeing with the final court decision	yes	Count	49	125	174
		% within Sex	83.1%	89.3%	87.4%
	no	Count	8	5	13
		% within Sex	13.6%	3.6%	6.5%
	MA	Count	2	10	12
		% within Sex	3.4%	7.1%	6.0%
Total		Count	59	140	199
		% within Sex	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Legend: MA – missing answers

On the basis of the given results we could imply that the majority of interviews agreed with the final official decision of assigning the child to his/her mother, although there is statistically significant difference ($p < 0,05$) among both sexes - after all, men showed higher level of disagreement with the official decision. It is interesting that within the group who disagrees with the final court decision we also find three cases who disagree with court's rule, although the custody over children was assigned to them (amounting to 13% or 6.5%). Two of these cases apply to men, which according to sexual representation within this pattern may indicate a wish or tendency for their children not to be assigned to them, but to their mothers.

The biggest share of parents not living with their child (ren) (totalling 55, of which there are 46 men and 9 women) get to see their sons or daughters once a week. The share of those who could see them every day is only 3.6%.

Hypothesis 3, where we assumed that parents after the cessation of their (extra-) marital relationship are not prepared for common taking over of parental responsibilities is confirmed. According to the answers obtained, mothers and fathers reject the common taking over of parental responsibilities, unless they regard it as beneficial with respect to their children.

Table 4. *Frequential distribution: Are you, otherwise, prepared to meet other parent for the sake of child's well-being?*

Sex			Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
male	Valid	yes	39	63.9 %	81.3 %	81.3 %
		no	9	14.8 %	18.8 %	100.0 %
		Total	48	78.7 %	100.0 %	
	Missing	System	13	21.3 %		
	Total		61	100.0 %		
female	Valid	Yes	111	78.2 %	84.7 %	84.7 %
		No	20	14.1 %	15.3 %	100.0 %
		Total	131	92.3 %	100.0 %	
	Missing	System	11	7.7 %		
	Total		142	100.0 %		

In most cases, female (84.7%) and male (81.3%) interviewees are prepared to meet their previous partner(s), if the well-being of their child(ren) is concerned.

Hypothesis 4, where we assume that differences in performance of parental roles before and after the cessation of marital relationship occur for different reasons, is rejected because the results of empirical research show that the role of fathers before and after the cessation of marital relationship did not diminish significantly.

In that respect, however, we may presume that, according to the differences regarding the assignment of children, the role of fathers, after all, became somewhat lessened.

Table 5. *Who has the fewer roles after the cessation of relationship?*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	father	48	23.6 %	34.0 %	34.0 %
	mother	52	25.6 %	36.9 %	70.9 %
	both equally	28	13.8 %	19.9 %	90.8 %
	no difference	13	6.4 %	9.2 %	100.0 %
	Total	141	69.5 %	100.0 %	
Missing	System	62	30.5 %		
Total		203	100.0 %		

The data from the table above show just the opposite. According to the estimations of interviews, after the cessation of relationship both sexes have approximately the same amount of roles to fulfill when taking care of their offspring (men 23.6%; women 25.6%). In relation to the category of sex the results are very close. Yet, interestingly, male interviewees are convinced that upon the cessation of relationship, fewer parental roles are performed by their female counterparts, whereas women are convinced the truth is quite the opposite. Probably, such discrepancies indicate the absence in perceiving change concerning the fulfilment of parental roles which can be said of both sexes. In that case, it is perhaps the most worrying aspect (irrespective to the group) that most of those who answered the question (about 70%) think the parental role(s) - either fathers' or mothers' after their separation decreased. Nonetheless, the majority of interviewees provided no answer to that question.

Hypothesis 5, by which we assumed that the most of parents are convinced their contacts after the cessation of marital or extra-marital are more or less necessary, is confirmed. With the help of empirical research I came to the finding that all interviews consider keeping their contacts even after their separation as important. Interviewed mothers argue that they do not prevent their child (ren)'s father(s) from having contacts with their descendants. Most of them even state that fathers want to keep frequent contacts with their common children and to participate, directly or indirectly, in their education and upbringing.

Table 6. *After the cessation of partner relationship, I allow my former partner to participate in the education and upbringing of our child(ren)*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	I completely agree.	14	6,9	9,5	9,5
	2,00	1	,5	,7	10,1
	3,00	10	4,9	6,8	16,9
	4,00	15	7,4	10,1	27,0
	Popolnoma se ne Strinjam.	108	53,2	73,0	100,0
	Total	148	72,9	100,0	
Missing	System	55	27,1		
Total		203	100,0		

Female interviews categorically deny that they would prevent their former partners to participate in the education and upbringing of their children. Negative answers to that statement were given by 53.2% of female interviews, but only 6.9% of female interviewees answered positively.

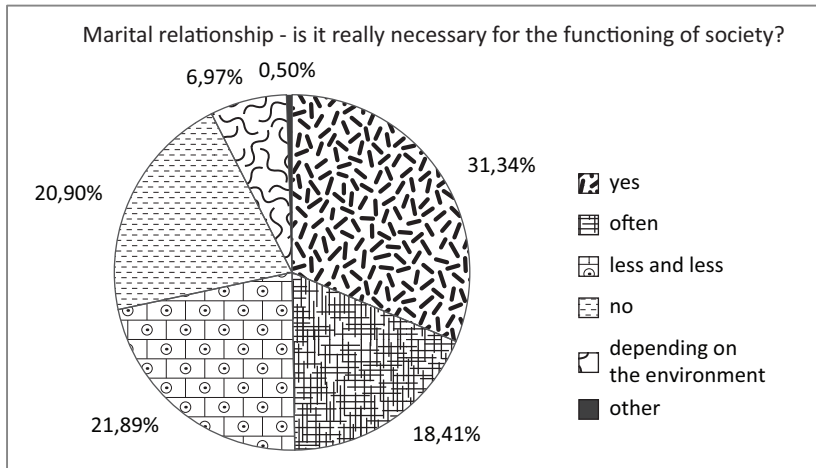
Hypothesis 6, *by which we assumed that traditional form of marriage bears no importance with respect to the functioning of society is confirmed, although a lot of interviews still believe for marital relationship to be important, but not conditional in relation to society's normal functioning.*

On the basis of the given results therefore, we can conclude that the contacts between father and his child after the breakup of marital and extra-marital relationship are considered important, as most of the interviewed fathers and mothers agree on that point.

Concerning the **hypothesis 7**, *by which we assumed that the interviewees do not perceive the traditional form of marriage as necessary for the functioning of society I conclude that most of the interviewees believe the marital relationship is important or necessary with respect to the functioning of society, as the average value of answers inclined towards 2 which means "often". In other words, most of the interviewees believe that the marital relationship is necessary or often necessary for the society's functioning, but it should be mentioned that also relatively big share of the interviews expressed the opinion that marital relationship is gradually losing its importance for its proper functioning.*

The results of average comparison (t-test) showed that, in this case, there is no statistically significant difference between the average answers of men and women ($p > 0,05$).

Graph 1. The importance of marital relationship - shares and the averages according to the category of sex.



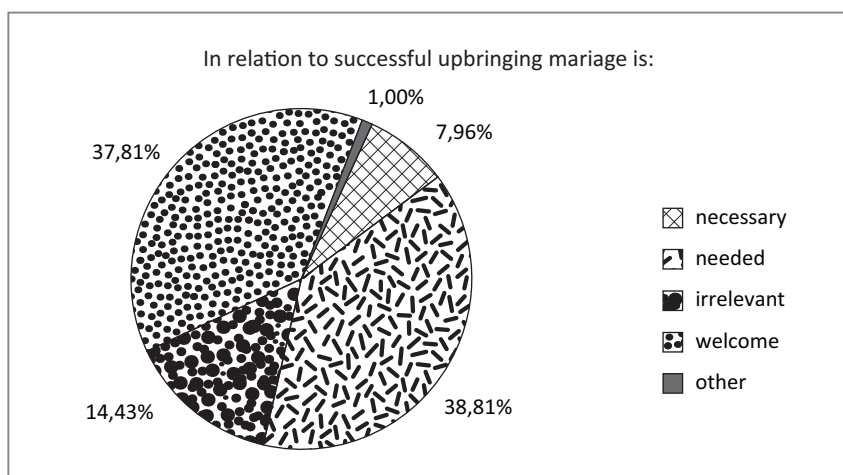
	N	M	SD	SE	95% Interval of trust for M		Min (1=yes) Lower Bound	Max (4=no) Upper Bound
					sp. meja	zg. meja		
male	55	2,3273	1,13944	,15364	2,0192	2,6353	1,00	4,00
female	131	2,3588	1,18366	,10342	2,1542	2,5634	1,00	4,00
Total	186	2,3495	1,16778	,08563	2,1805	2,5184	1,00	4,00

Note: The data exclude all persons who chose categories "depending on the environment" and "other"

Hypothesis 8, by which we assumed that most of the interviews believe that marital relationship is necessary for the education and the upbringing of children, according to the results indicates that most of the respondents are in favour of opinion that it has a positive influence on the upbringing and education. To be more specific, almost 8% believe for marital relationship to be necessary for the successful upbringing and education of children, whilst 39% of them think it is needed; apart from that, next 38% of interviewees believe it represents a welcome circumstance, and only 14% consider marital relationship as irrelevant for the successful upbringing and education of children.

Similarly, the analysis in this case yielded no statistically significant difference ($p > 0,05$) in relation to the category of sex.

Graph 3: Is marital relationship necessary for the successful education and upbringing of the children (percentage shares).



	N Lower Bound	M Upper Bound	SD Lower Bound	SE Upper Bound	95% Interval of trust for M		Min (1=nec- essary) Lower Bound	Max (4=irrel- evant) Upper Bound
					sp. meja	zg. meja		
male	55	2,4727	,93995	,12674	2,2186	2,7268	1,00	4,00
female	128	2,6406	,79104	,06992	2,5023	2,7790	1,00	4,00
Total	183	2,5902	,83949	,06206	2,4677	2,7126	1,00	4,00

Opomba: 1=necessary, 2=needed, 3=welcome, 4=irrelevant

We find at least persons in favour of mentioned belief among the age group ranging from 20 to 29 years, whereas the most persons who are in favour of it belong to the age groups 'younger than 20' and '50 or more' years.

Hypothesis 9, by which we assumed that divorced parents' trust into the existing state institutions authorised for resolving problems related to children was rather low, is confirmed, because divorced parents, after the breakup of either marital or extra-marital relationship, seek help with the state institutions thus having a lot of experience with their advisors. Higher level of trust is shown by female respondents whereas their male counterparts' trust is much lower. We may relevantly conclude that such situation arises due to the decisions on the assignment of custody rights over their children and following agreements defining the frequency of contacts among the divorced fathers and their descendants.

39.3% of male respondents and 34.5% of female interviewees was ready to get included into various civil associations that provide help to the divorced persons after the breakup of their marital and extra-marital relationship. Neverthe-

less, a considerable number of them are not interested in that kind of assistance (27.9% of male and 28.1% of female interviewees).

Table 9. *Readiness for participation in the associations for support*

Sex			Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
male	Valid	yes	24	39.3%	39.3%	39.3%
		no	17	27.9%	27.9%	67.2%
		do not know	20	32.8%	32.8%	100.0%
		Total	61	100.0%	100.0%	
female	Valid	yes	48	33.8%	34.5%	34.5%
		no	39	27.5%	28.1%	62.6%
		do not know	52	36.6%	37.4%	100.0%
		Total	139	97.9%	100.0%	
	Missing	System	3	2.1%		
	Total		142	100.0%		

7. Concluding remarks

Social role of mother after the cessation of marital and extra-marital relationship in Slovenian post-modern society has changed significantly in the last few decades. We can estimate that the role of father in Slovenian family is becoming increasingly important in relation to the discussed as well as other situations. In years since the introduction of democracy, however, the role of mother in our society is undergoing even more substantial change. The process can be observed with regard to almost every field of social interest, reaching from the educational structure to the increasingly equalised conditions of acquiring the necessary qualifications for (better) employment and working place.

Within her family, woman - mother does not fulfil only her primary role of housewife but can boast with important achievements in the course of her education and career, thus obtaining very important social position(s) within the narrow, Slovenian as well as broader global framework.

Hence, entering a marital relationship gradually becomes the crucial part of reflection on every relationship. The partners take more time for the preparational period and are thinking about themselves and each other. Perhaps, when doing so they are led by some kind of anxiety related to the possibility of future common life because, on average, a third of marriages in Slovenian society end in divorce.

Also, the concept of motherhood is gaining more and more importance within modern Slovenian society. Next to their usual roles of mother and housewife they dedicate an increasing amount of time also to themselves. They are becom-

ing an important factor in Slovenian politics which can also be observed with the assignment of several important ministries within the Slovenian government to female candidates. Their educational and professional capacities can be proved in the top administration of some economic and non-economic institutions. Due to the simultaneous role of woman as mother we can also spot some tendency for the improvement of their career promotion possibilities by guaranteeing them free nursing and care for children (free nursery school for second child).

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