

**FINDING THE KEY TO THE GLASS DOOR:
DEMYSTIFYING THE REASONS FOR WOMEN'S
LOW PARTICIPATION IN THE LABOR MARKET**

February 2012

European Fund for the Balkans

Bringing the Western Balkans closer to the European Union

The Publisher:

Reactor- Research in Action

For the Publisher:

Neda Korunovska, President

Design:

Nadica Tanevska

Print:

Pro Point

Circulation:

600 copies

Free/Non-comercial Copy

This publication was made possible with funds from the European Fund for the Balkans through its Think and Link Programme. The contents of this publication are solely the responsibility of its authors and in no way reflect the positions of the donor

CIP - Каталогизација во публикација
Национална и универзитетска библиотека "Св. Климент Охридски",
Скопје

331.5-055.2(497.7)(047.31)

FINDING the key to the glass door : demystifying the reasons the women's low participacion in the labor market. - Skopje : Reactor - Research in action, 2012. - 58 стр. : табели ; B5

ISBN 978-608-4684-05-3

а) Жени - Вработеност - Македонија - Истражувања
COBISS.MK-ID 92957706

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*“The transition has generated an unprecedented loss of jobs. Between 1989 and 1997, an estimated 14 million jobs held by women disappeared across the region, amounting to well over half the total number of jobs lost. In all of the countries in Central and South East Europe and former Soviet Union, the proportion of adult women participating in the labor force was lower in 1997 compared to 1985... **Women’s decreasing participation in the labor force may have been related to drastically decreasing social benefits and state-financed childcare, steadily resurfacing traditional gender roles in families, and gender discrimination in the workplace.**”¹*

Executive Summary

The starting point for this study were the high economic inactivity rates among women in Macedonia, which reveal that women are placed at a serious disadvantage on the labor market compared to men. Having reviewed the official explanations for the low participation of women and based on an earlier study conducted by Reactor in four municipalities in the country, we came to the conclusion that those official explanations fail to address the problem in a significant and evidence-based manner. With this in mind, the goal of this study was to contribute towards a change in the discourse dominating public policies that aim to increase female employment in Macedonia. In order to do so, we first consulted the available official data and literature on this topic, on which we later based the questionnaire for a survey that we conducted on a representative, stratified sample of women and men aged 18+ in Macedonia (1045 participants in total).

This study challenges the officially accepted causes of female economic inactivity and unemployment, providing evidence that neither low education nor adherence to traditional norms and expectations are main contributors for women’s disadvantaged position on the labor market. We propose that more attention should be paid to direct discrimination on the job market and more measures are needed to ensure that women can better reconcile work and family life. We argue that the current explanations justify inaction

¹ Open Minds: Opportunities for Gender Equality in Education. A Report on Central and Southeastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. Open Society Institute, 2003: pg 6

on part of the authorities, as they lay the blame on the women (lack of qualifications) or on intra-family relations (traditional gender roles).

The results of our study are presented in four main parts. In the first part we provide a closer look at the official data on the status of women and men on the labor market in order to define the problem that is the subject of the research. In the second part we provide evidence to show that the officially accepted reasons for the low participation rates, i.e., lack of education and tradition, cannot account for the huge disparities between male and female participation. In the third part we analyze the overlooked reasons for the high female inactivity rates and draw attention to the areas in which the government can intervene to solve this problem. Finally, the last part contains specific recommendations that we arrived at based on the data collected through our research, which we believe should get more attention from the authorities and from all relevant institutions, and be used to better formulate the policies that address female inactivity and unemployment. If Macedonia is to get on board with the EU 2020 Strategy's goal of reaching 75% employment rate for women aged 20-64, the government needs to seriously reconsider its current policies aimed at improving women's position on the labor market, and it has to start by better understanding how we got here.

Introduction: Who Is Working and Who Is Not?

The transition that followed Macedonia's independence in 1991 radically altered the social status of the entire population. It increased the gap between women and men, both in terms of social status, opportunities and access to available resources in society². As a result, the Macedonian labor market presently puts women at a serious disadvantage compared to men. Today, one in two woman participates in the work force, compared to two in three men and only one in three women are employed, compared to one in two men³.

This problem can be overlooked if we only look at the unemployment rate⁴ isolated from other indicators. Even though the unemployment rate

² Gender Based Analysis of Social Protection and Active Employment Policies in the Republic of Macedonia, Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, 2010; available at: www.mtsp.gov.mk

³ Women and Men in Macedonia, 2010, <http://www.stat.gov.mk/Publikacii/Gender2010.pdf>

⁴ An unemployed person is defined as aged (15 to 65) without work during the reference week, available to start work within the next two weeks, and actively having sought employment at some time during the last four weeks. The unemployment rate is the number of people unemployed as a percentage of the labor force (Eurostat).

is one of the most common labor market indicators, it does not tell the whole story, as the unemployment rates of women and men in Macedonia reveal no differences (table 1), However, things look radically different if we look at female participation in the labor force and the employment-to-population-ratios of both sexes. For example, the employment⁵ and economic inactivity rates show that while the majority of men work (currently at 58.4%), just a little over a third of the woman are employed (37.5%). What is of bigger concern for the present study is that more than half of working-age women do not even attempt to enter the labor market, i.e., are economically inactive⁶ (table 2).

Table 1⁷

Unemployment rates for men and women, age 15+										
Period	2007		2008		2009		2010		2011	
	M	F								
Macedonia	34.5	35.5	33.5	34.2	31.8	32.8	31.9	32.2	32.1	29.7

Table 2⁸

Employment rates for men and women, aged 20 to 64												
Period	2006		2007		2008		2009		2010		2011	
	M	F	M	F								
EU 27	76.9	61.3	77.8	62.2	77.9	62.8	75.8	62.3	75.1	62.1		
Macedonia	53.6	34.0	54.0	35.8	56.2	36.2	58.4	37.1	58.4	37.5		
Croatia	67.6	53.7	70.3	54.5	70.7	55.2	68.2	55.5	67.6	53.0		

Table 3⁹

Economic inactivity rates for man and woman, age 15+												
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
	Macedonia	32.7	57.1	32.7	55.9	31.2	56.2	30.4	56.3	30.2	56.0	31.0

5 An **employed person** is a person aged 15 and over (or 16 and over in Iceland and Norway) who during the reference week performed work - even if only for one hour a week - for pay, profit or family gain. Alternatively, the person was not at work, but had a job or business from which he or she was temporarily absent due to illness, holiday, or education and training.

6 An **economically inactive** person is not part of the labor force, i.e. is not working (employed) nor is seeking a job (unemployed) (Eurostat).

7 Source: State Statistical Office <http://www.stat.gov.mk>

8 EUROSTAT; available at http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/refreshTableAction.do?tab=table&login=1&pcode=t2020_10&language=en

9 State Statistical Office

The high level of unemployment, coupled with low economic participation on the labor market is having a devastating effect on the working skills of Macedonian women¹⁰. It has been shown that unemployment, and especially long-term unemployment, is the strongest predictor of future inability to find a job. Long term unemployment, a state that 83.1 percent of unemployed women are in, causes “scars” with long-lasting negative consequences. Those scars include difficulties in both entering employment and sustaining any kind of fulfilling career, but are also known to predict lack of social and political participation, poor physical and mental health and even difficult relationships and social exclusion (Basic et al., 2009; Koller-Trbović et al., 2008; Pavis et al., 2001; Robins and Rutter, 1990; Atkinson and Hills, 1997).

These damaging effects on the working skills and future chances currently affect 117.013 unemployed and 461.184 economically inactive women in Macedonia. While the unemployed get the attention and support from the government, the inactive are not targeted as they are considered to be inactive by choice. With this the problem of the economically inactive women is not properly recognized, defined nor addressed by the authorities. The only explanation for the high inactivity rates provided in national strategic documents are the traditional role of women in the Macedonian family (where what tradition means is not clearly defined) or low education on part of the women.

This paper focuses on the inactive women for the following reasons: Firstly, we believe that the problem is too severe to be ignored. Secondly, we argue that many of the economically inactive are not inactive by choice. And thirdly, lead by our previous study, we do not accept that the high inactivity can be explained by low education and tradition. Our aim is to present new evidence about the issue and reasons behind the high inactivity rates among women, analyze the current situation, propose viable solutions but most importantly, put women’s economic inactivity back on the policy agenda and the public discourse.

¹⁰ Unemployment is considered long-term when longer than a year; data from State Statistical Office

01

**A CLOSER LOOK AT THE
PROPOSED CAUSES OF
INACTIVITY**

A Closer Look at the Proposed Causes of Inactivity

Education: the Myth

The theory that women are more likely to be inactive than men because they are less educated is not supported to any great extent by the available data. While this was true two decades ago, today the situation is significantly changed. The share of women in prime working age population with no skills or low skills is only 9 percent higher than that of men and there is equal percentage of men and women aged 24 to 65 with tertiary education (table 4). But even this difference should be taken with caution. It should be expected that the difference would have faded away by today, since this is based on data from the last census from 10 years ago. The education gap then was biggest among the oldest group (now older than 65), while there is almost no difference in educational attainment among the youngest.

Table 4¹¹

Population (age 24-65) by Level of Attained Education, 2002

No skilled and low skilled		Secondary education		Tertiary education	
M	F	M	F	M	F
37%	46%	53%	44%	10%	10%

Our present research also gives no support to the assumption that women's lower level of education is the reason behind gender differences in economic (in)activity rates. Our data shows gender differences in participation rates even among the equally educated young men and women. While **differences in the level of attained education are notable only after 45 years of age (annex 7, tables A7 and A7.2)**, the differences in participation rates are noticeable from the earliest age (see table 6 in tradition in Annex 1). Furthermore, uneducated women pay a much higher penalty on the labor market than uneducated men. Whereas one in three unskilled men in our sample are employed, this is true for only one in ten unskilled women¹² (see table 5).

Even if the differences in employment and activity rates between men and women can be explained for the low skilled workers (assuming that most

¹¹ Census 2002, State Statistical Office, Book V, Educational Characteristics, authors' own computations.

¹² Note that the analysis was done on respondents who are not in education process, nor retired.

available work for the unskilled is manual), there is no explanation for the differences among the respondents with secondary education (more than 50% of the working-age population have secondary education). While only one in ten men with a high school degree is inactive, this is true for every third woman.

Table 5¹³

Prime working age sample: respondents in education process not incl.

Level of education	Employment status		F	M
Primary	Employed	% within gender	10.8%	34.3%
	Unemployed	% within gender	15.0%	35.7%
	Inactive	% within gender	74.2%	30.0%
Secondary	Employed	% within gender	41.8%	52.5%
	Unemployed	% within gender	26.6%	35.5%
	Inactive	% within gender	31.6%	12.0%
Tertiary	Employed	% within gender	58.6%	68.0%
	Unemployed	% within gender	31.4%	25.3%
	Inactive	% within gender	10.0%	6.7%

What is more, in its latest South East Europe Regular Monitoring Report (November, 2011) the World Bank states that due to the structure of the economy that employs a low skill labor force, such as the agriculture or textile industry, **educational qualifications are not even that important for the Macedonian labor market:**

“...unemployment among those with low skills (no education beyond primary) is relatively close to the average unemployment rate. In contrast, low skill unemployment in EU-10 countries is more than double the average unemployment rate. The skill structure of employed reflects the structure of economies: agriculture ... is a low skill sector, and so is the textile industry which employs about a quarter of Macedonia’s manufacturing sector labor force.”

On the other hand, while activity levels and employment to population rates rise rapidly with an increased level of education, there is **no significant difference in unemployment rates between the female respondents with secondary education and tertiary education**

13 Primary research for the present study, REACTOR. Data collected 2011

(38.8% and 34.8%¹⁴). In fact, according to the data provided by the State Employment Agency for 2010, **the male-female ratio of unemployed persons by educational attainment reveals that women outnumber men only in the tertiary education group (60.2% female), so for every two unemployed men with a university education, there are three equally educated unemployed women.**

This means that even though the women with higher educational attainment are more likely to participate on the labor market, their chances of unemployment are same as those of women with only a secondary education. As a result, more than a third of the highly educated women looking for work are unable to find any. This is worrying because while education levels of women rise, the unemployment and employment rates stay the same. We believe that this makes it more likely that additional education will change the demographics of the inactive population (making it more educated) rather than increase activity rates and employment among women. This is even more problematic if we take into account that Fares and Tiongson (2007) showed that penalty for jobless spells in transition countries (Bosnia and Herzegovina) may be higher for educated workers.

Another disappointing finding was that the increase of the level of educational attainment among woman did not produce improvement in their status on the Macedonian labor market over time. Even though Macedonian woman are far more educated than thirty years ago, the employment rates are stagnating. With this in mind, we argue that the level of education can no longer be an excuse for the low economic activity of women, as there are no signs that the Macedonian labor market favors educated over less educated women and it is already failing to absorb the influx of highly educated women who continue to enter the market, as female graduates continue to outnumber the male. While we are certainly not suggesting that women should not be encouraged to further their education, what we want to emphasize is that a lack of education cannot be cited as the main reason for women's lower participation on the labor market compared to men and their disadvantaged position when they do participate.

14 Difference within the margin of error i.e. statistically non-significant

In this section we analyze the other popular explanation of female inactivity on the labor market: tradition. Since the official explanations do not go into details of what this “tradition” encompasses, we looked at tradition through its various definitions in order to reveal that whatever the understanding of the word, it fails to explain why women are not entering the labor market in larger numbers. The specific definitions of tradition that we use in this part of the study are the following: 1) tradition as commonly accepted belief that women should not work outside of the home, which is rooted in the past and survives over time; 2) tradition as a set of prescribed gender roles within the private sphere, which determines that women bear the responsibility of taking care of the home. One way to analyse the effects of tradition is to see it as a belief or a set of beliefs that is handed down from one generation to the next. In order to find out whether the idea that women should not be working outside the home has origins in the past, it is sufficient to look back to past available data on female employment rates and educational attainment and compare it to the current state of affairs. If we take 1980 as an example, we can see that despite the fact that women were less educated¹⁵ and gave birth to more children (total birth rate in 1980 was 2.43 compared to 1.44 in 2009),¹⁶ their participation in the labor market was still slightly higher than it is today (51.9% in 1980 compared to 50.8% in 2009¹⁷). Based on this data, it would seem that the ‘tradition’ that keeps women off the labor market is much more recent, especially if we consider that

“the socialist authorities held a high rate of female employment to be the main indicator of success. Quota arrangements helped women enter into representative, although quite powerless, organs at all levels.” (Andjelkovic, B., 1998:236).

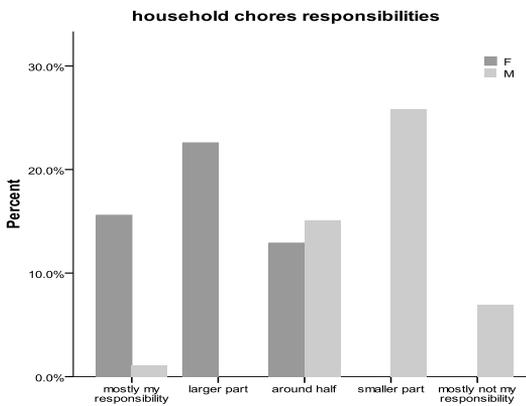
Considering that female employment was highly valued in socialist times and that female economic activity is only recently coming close to the pre-independence rates, it seems that the idea of economic inactivity among women as a traditional phenomenon does not hold up.

¹⁵ While there is no data available on women’s educational attainment for 1980, it is safe to assume that this is indeed the case based on the data from the last census in 2002, where there were enormous differences between the older and the younger age groups. For example, 68% of 60+ aged women had no or incomplete primary education, compared to 20% among the 40 to 59 group and 8% among those aged 30 to 39. Our current study confirms the trend; the younger respondents are more educated than the older respondents, and this is especially true for women.

¹⁶ World Bank, World Development Indicators.

¹⁷ ILO KILM data. This data differs slightly from national statistics, but is used here because there is no readily available national statistics for 1980.

On the other hand, if we look at tradition with regard to the traditional division of gender roles, the most common type of a Macedonian household¹⁸ is a one where the husband works and the wife does not: in our study, 40.1 percent of all respondents reported to live in “traditional” households (as opposed to 32.4 percent of respondents who reported that both partners do not work and 27.5% where both partners work). Moreover, in every possible scenario (whether both partners work, both are unemployed or only one partner works) the women are significantly more responsible for the household chores (cleaning, cooking, taking care of the children, etc.), even when they are the only employed partner (See graph 1).



Graph 1. Partner both work

To illustrate the point, among the respondents who live in households where both partners are employed, **74.7 percent of the women stated that the bigger part or most of the household chores were their responsibility**, compared to **67% of the male respondents who stated that only a small part of the household chores were their responsibility or not their responsibility at all**. This corresponds with the data from the latest Time Use Survey for 2009¹⁹, which reveals huge differences between employed women and men: while employed women spend 3 hours and 23 minutes on household activities, the average employed man spends about a third of that time, or 1 hour and 9 minutes on average. If we look at the numbers for women and men aged 20 to 64 regardless of their status on the labor market, the differences are even bigger: women spend 4

¹⁸ Present research, Reactor. Data collected 2011. Note that this part of the analysis was done only on the portion of the sample that was married and living with the spouse. 70.8 % of our sample fit these criteria.

¹⁹ Time Use Survey, 2009. State Statistical Office of the Republic of Macedonia www.stat.gov.mk

hours and 42 minutes on domestic activities, compared to the 1 hour and 23 minutes men dedicate to the home.

That the woman is responsible for the household chores is something that most Macedonians are aware of. In our survey only 15% of the men and 8% of women did not agree with the statement “when it comes to taking care for the home and family, the expectations for women are much bigger than those for men”.

Table 6

When it comes to care for the home and the family, expectations are higher for women than they are for men				
Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
58.5%	25.0%	5.5%	7.2%	4.9%

Despite the fact that both our data and the data from the Time Use Survey reveal that traditional gender roles in the private sphere are still dominant, this is not necessarily what prevents women from entering the labor market. On the one hand, Time Use Surveys conducted in other European countries reveal that women everywhere bear the burden of household chores. On the other hand, the results of our survey that are presented below show that the majority of men and women disagree with the statement that a woman’s place is in the home and not at work, and this is true even for men whose wives are economically inactive. Our study showed that, at least declaratively, the majority of Macedonians do not hold traditional attitudes, which is especially true for women, and this will be discussed in more detail in the following section.

Operationalizing Tradition: the Gender Role Orientation

In this section we present the findings from our study related to tradition and especially the gender role orientation of our respondents. We will shed light on the attitudes of the Macedonians concerning the traditional gender roles and the relationship of those attitudes to other important demographics such as age, educational attainment, place of residence, ethnicity, etc., as well as how traditional roles and attitudes are related to employment and economic activity on the labor market. We will discuss and show that women in Macedonia are reportedly less ‘traditional’ than

man, and the majority of them are of the opinion that their role is as much that of a working woman as it is of a primary caretaker. We will also show that the gender role orientation does not predict employment or activity on the labor market. Our results imply that when it comes to employment and activity on the labor market, other variables such as age, gender, education, ethnicity and place of residence (region) play a much bigger role than the attitudes on traditional gender roles, i.e., that gender is a much stronger predictor of (un)employment and economic inactivity than the gender role orientation.

Gender role and social role theory suggests that people's attitudes vary when it comes to the roles that women and men (should) take up in society. It proposes that the attitudes lie on a continuum between traditional and egalitarian points of view, where people with traditional attitudes would expect women to fulfil the family role while men fulfil the work role and people with egalitarian attitudes would have no such expectations (Judge and Livingston, 2008). In order to measure the gender role attitudes within our sample and ascertain whether the Macedonians truly hold traditional beliefs (i.e. operationalize the construct tradition), we used the Judge and Livingston gender role scale along with 5 additional items from a previous study (see Reactor, 2010) that loaded highly on the same factor as the original items²⁰. Example questions are "a woman's place is in the home, not the office or shop", and "it is much better if the man is the achiever outside the home and the woman takes care of the home and family" (for more information on the creation of the scale see Annex 2).

Our study showed that when it comes to attitudes, most of the women in Macedonia (40%) are egalitarian and almost the same percentage of men (39%) are traditional, so it is to be expected that the gender role orientation relates with the gender of the respondent. **On average, women are more egalitarian than man.** However, even though men are more traditional than women, it is worth noting that almost two thirds of men are with egalitarian or balanced views, so at least declaratively, the majority of Macedonians do not think that the place of the woman is exclusively in the home.

20 The coefficient alpha reliability score for the scale was good ($\alpha=.81$).

Table 7

Gender role orientation	F	M	Total
egalitarian	41.0%	26.7%	34.0%
balanced	29.2%	34.3%	31.7%
traditional	29.8%	39.0%	34.3%

There were other demographic characteristics of the respondents that related to the gender role orientation: age, ethnicity, place of residence and education all had an impact on the gender role orientation. **Younger, more educated respondents were on average more liberal than their older less educated fellow citizens.** Ethnic Albanians were also reportedly holding more traditional attitudes than the ethnic Macedonians.²¹

Even though closely related to crucial demographics such as gender, age, education and ethnicity, **the gender role orientation WAS NOT a significant predictor of employment, and what is more, neither was it a significant predictor of economic activity on the labor market.** With all things held constant, age, gender and educational attainment were the strongest (and only) predictors of unemployment, proving that the younger respondents, the women and the less educated have weaker chances on the Macedonian labor market, while traditional attitudes have no influence on the outcome (see logistic regression analysis in annexes 4 and 5).

The weak influence of the attitudes on the chances on the labor market for women, i.e., the weak influence of the gender role orientation on the economic activity level of the respondents (whether they are actively seeking jobs or economically inactive, i.e., not working and not looking to work) further shows that it is not traditional values that prevent women from working, but the direct discrimination on the labor market. **Women are less active and less employed than men irrespective of their gender role orientation.**

Furthermore, proving that the younger generations are less traditional than the older ones gives evidence to the notion that tradition cannot be seen as an explanation of low participation rates among women. This is especially true because **with age, the attitudes between women change more radically than the attitudes of men:** women younger than 45 are more

²¹ Note that even though our sample consisted of 6 more ethnicities, we only report the differences between Macedonians and Albanians as they were the only ethnicities who were represented by large enough samples

egalitarian than women over 45, whereas the attitudes of the different age groups among the men differed only with the oldest group (over 65)²². Nevertheless, **the inactivity level of young women is strikingly higher than that of young men**. One of the most indicative numbers for the state of the Macedonian labor market and the real reasons for low participation of women might be seen in a cross-tabulation between age groups, status on the labor market and gender.

Table 8²³

Age	Status on the labor market		F	M	Total
25-34	Employed	% within employed	41.2%	58.8%	100.0%
		% within gender	32.6%	52.6%	42.0%
	Unemployed	% within unemployed	50.8%	49.2%	100.0%
		% within gender	38.4%	42.1%	40.1%
	Inactive	% within inactive	86.2%	13.8%	100.0%
		% within gender	29.1%	5.3%	17.9%
35-44	Employed	% within employed	38.9%	61.1%	100.0%
		% within gender	40.4%	60.6%	50.7%
	Unemployed	% within unemployed	41.1%	58.9%	100.0%
		% within gender	22.1%	30.3%	26.3%
	Inactive	% within inactive	79.6%	20.4%	100.0%
		% within gender	37.5%	9.2%	23.0%
45-54	Employed	% within employed	38.5%	61.5%	100.0%
		% within gender	33.8%	58.0%	45.5%
	Unemployed	% within unemployed	34.5%	65.5%	100.0%
		% within gender	13.5%	27.5%	20.3%
	Inactive	% within inactive	79.6%	20.4%	100.0%
		% within gender	52.7%	14.5%	34.3%

As can be seen from the table above, 29.1% of our female respondents aged 25 to 34 reported that they are inactive, compared to only 5.3% of men. Bearing in mind that the 25 to 34 female group is the most egalitarian and the most educated age group in the sample (no differences between men and women in level of education), it is a clear indicator that neither education nor tradition can be seen as causes of low participation among women on the Macedonian labor market.

An additional factor that could be expected to contribute to economic

²² Even though statistically not significant, the difference in the gender role orientation among men of different age was in the expected direction: youngest respondents had on average most egalitarian attitudes, followed by the older category, followed by the older category and so on.

²³ Primary research for present study, REACTOR. Data collected 2011 Note that this analysis was done on the respondents that were not in education process. Because of these criteria the age group 18 to 24 was excluded from the analysis because of the small remaining sample size.

inactivity for the 25 to 34 age group is the fact that this group is in prime reproductive age, so it might be assumed that this is keeping them from entering the market. Our study results, however, reveal that having children did not contribute towards significant changes in activity. On the contrary, respondents with children were more likely to be employed or economically active than their peers with no children.

A closer look at the data reveals that in our sample 75% of the inactive women aged 25 to 34 reported having children younger than 12 years of age. For comparison, only 16% of the economically inactive women in the 35 to 44 age group and 5% of the 45 to 54 age group reported having children younger than 12. Based on this, one might expect that the next age group would have higher participation, i.e., lower economic inactivity rates for women. However, the economic inactivity rates are rising from 29.1% to 37.5% for the 35 to 44 group to a remarkable 52.7% for the 45 to 54 age group. And even though the inactivity rates are rising for men too, the gap between men and women is also widening from 23.8% to 38.2% difference in participation. As mentioned above, when all things were held constant, having children has positive relation to both employment status and economic activity. Furthermore, in the 25 to 34 group, there is **no difference in the unemployment rates between the women with and without children: it is 54%** for each group. We assume that the jump in economic inactivity in the older age categories is simply a sign of discouragement: the women that cannot find work simply give up.

That the disadvantage on the labor market is the main reason for high female inactivity is reflected in another number: **38.8% of the employed women are employed by the public sector** (as opposed to 26.1% of the employed man).

Table 9

Preferred sector in ideal circumstances	F	M
Public sector	55.3%	40.4%
NGO sector	4.3%	2.6%
Private sector	29.9%	49.8%
Prefer not to work	10.5%	7.2%

The public sector is not only the major employer of women, but also the preferred sector of women (see table 9). Secure jobs where women can safely return after maternity leave and where overtime work is not the practice is the most viable option for women. The private businesses in the meantime, who struggle in a bad economy, seem to think that they cannot afford to

employ women who might possibly leave the business to be mothers, or mothers of young children who are “distracted” and cannot work overtime or on weekends. It is a known practice, for example, that women are forced into signing agreements that they will not get pregnant over a determined period of time after signing an employment contract, or for women to be asked during employment interviews whether they have children or plan to have children in the near future, which the law specifically protects women from. Without clear implementation of the legislative protection, these discriminatory practices are pushing women out of the labor market and contributing to making the typical Macedonian household a traditional one. That this is not the preferred scenario for women nor for men is clearly shown in our data: **Most women want to work, most men think that women should work and above all, women who work and men who have employed spouses are happier.**

Firstly, table 10 shows that in ideal circumstances only 10.5% of women would choose not to work (as opposed to 7.2% of men, a statistically insignificant difference). Furthermore, when asked directly whether they chose or were forced into their respective conditions of working or not working, the majority of employed women stated that they work because they want to and an overwhelming majority of the economically inactive women stated that they are inactive because they were forced into inactivity.²⁴

Table 10

Do you work/look for work/not work because you want to or because you have to?

	Employed		Unemployed		Inactive	
	F	M	F	M	F	M
Want to	42.5%	27.2%	39.0%	23.4%	24.1%	30.0%
50/50	19.2%	26.7%	20.7%	27.0%	3.4%	8.0%
Have to	38.3%	46.1%	40.3%	49.6%	72.6%	62.0%

The differences with their male peers are also notable, as the majority of men state that they work because they have to work. This is indicative of two things: on the one hand, bad working conditions lead to a lack of job satisfaction, and on the other hand, men are placed under great pressure to be providers in the increasingly occurring male breadwinner model, as their partners are facing obstacles in entering the labor market. This is reflected in the life satisfaction scores in our sample: firstly because men are on average less happy than women, and secondly because men who

²⁴ Note that the analysis was done on respondents who are not in education process nor retired. The 7 point scale ranged from “100% want to ...” to “100% have to...” Only aggregated scores are shown.

have employed spouses are significantly happier than men who are the only employed spouse. Linear regression analysis confirms both assumptions. Life satisfaction is successfully predicted by both own employment and employment of partner, but actual income is a stronger predictor than employment (employment does not necessarily mean financial well being) and what is more, the perceived financial well-being is a stronger predictor than both employment and actual salary and the strongest predictor of life satisfaction in general (for the complete regression analysis, see annex 6). Lastly, as shown in table 7 above, 61% of men are categorized as liberal or with balanced views, meaning that on most of the gender role orientation questions they did not agree that women's place is exclusively at home and not at work.

Perhaps instead of interpreting the decline in women's economic activity on the labor market since Macedonia's independence in 1991 as caused by 'tradition', it could prove much more effective to see it for what it actually is: an unwanted result of the transition from a planned to a market economy in which women were hit the hardest. Adopting this view will make it clear that the current unsustainable male breadwinner model (unsustainable because low income for both men and women means that only dual earner households can hope for a decent standard of life) is only a temporary, post-transition phase, which needs to make room for targeted government initiatives aimed at returning to a gender equality model that favors the working woman.

An additional problem that accepting tradition as cause for inactivity can potentially create is that the women who fall under this category (women who stay off the labor market due to family responsibilities) run the risk of falling off the government's radar. A clear indication can be seen in the differences between the 2006 and 2011 National Employment Strategies (NES). While the 2006-2010 NES recognized that one of the key objectives for reducing gender inequalities on the labor market is to provide "better and more accessible conditions for care and accommodation of children as part of the child care system" (NES, 2010:15), this objective no longer appears in the new strategy, despite the fact that no public investments to achieve this goal were made between 2006-2010,²⁵ or even since the independence. What this lack of specific measures to provide better work-life balance conditions in the attempt to tackle high female inactivity can be understood to point to is that the policy makers have simply accepted that women are victims to tradition and no efforts have been made to explore further indicators, such as willingness to work despite inactivity or resignation due to labor market hostility. Our present research clearly suggests that this approach is ill-advised.

²⁵ Except for minor refurbishments, no significant investments have been made in this area.

02 THE OVERLOOKED REASONS BEHIND THE HIGH INACTIVITY RATES

The Overlooked Reasons behind the High Inactivity Rates

Discouraged and Discriminated but Unaware?

Having seen that the only official explanations (education and tradition) for strikingly high inactivity rates among woman are not evidence-based, one stays confounded with the real reasons behind woman's economic inactivity. In the EU, for example, 83% of the inactive population is not interested in working ('inactive in the statistical sense')²⁶. The Macedonian Labor Force Survey (LFS), however, does not provide an answer to this question. The Macedonian LFS does not attempt to get additional information on why women do not work and how favorable they perceive the labor market to be. The present study shows that, at least declaratively, only one in four women does not work by choice (table 8). In order to explain economic inactivity, the specific circumstances that made the rest of the women stay off the labor market must get more attention in official statistics and policy research. We argue that by neglecting women's economic inactivity in the last two decades, and by not adopting adequate measures, the policy makers have allowed a big share of women to be discouraged from the labor market. Discouraged workers are defined as persons who are not in the labor force, who are available for work, but no longer look for work because they think they will not find any.

However, lack of available jobs is not the only reason for discouragement and consequently, decreased participation. Direct discrimination that, for example, is reflected in the gender pay gap might be another reason why women are increasingly pushed out of the labor market. For example, in a 2009 report the International Labor Organization (ILO) stated that:

*"...Women experience systemic barriers in almost every aspect of work – this ranges from whether they have paid work at all (full-time or part-time); the type of work they obtain or are excluded from; the availability of support such as childcare; their pay, benefits and conditions of work; their access to higher paying "male" occupations; the insecurity of their jobs or enterprises; the absence of pension entitlements or benefits; and the lack of the time,"*²⁷

²⁶ Only 17% are willing to work, but are either not available to work, and/or are not seeking a job; ELFS 2010, Eurostat.

²⁷ Gender equality at the heart of decent work, Report VI for the 98th Session of the International Labor Conference, 2009, p. viii.

In the present study, as reflected in Table 11, 42.3% of our respondents agreed with the statement that if there are children or dependent elderly family members, it does not pay off for the mother of the family to work.

Table 11

If there are children or elderly family members in need of care, it is not cost effective for the mother to work

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
17.3%	25.0%	10.7%	23.4%	23.6%

This reflects the reality that the average female salary in most regions is lower than the actual cost to hire help and that if there is no institutional support in the form of kindergartens and geriatric facilities, it is economically unreasonable for the women to be active in the labor market. To solve this problem, there must be an increased effort from the authorities to establish affordable institutional help (see also discussion in the next chapter).

This problem is also reflected in the differences between how women and men who were categorized in the Labor Force Survey as not working or working part time due to the lack of suitable and affordable child care services judge the main deficiencies of the available child care services. More than half of the women (54.8 percent) chose the price (expensive services) as the main deficiency of child care services, whereas the men were least likely to chose this option (only 13.5 percent chose expensive services as the main deficiency of child care services).

Gender discrimination in the labor market is largely overlooked as a cause for low participation rates, which may be due to the fact that it is a heavily under researched field, with discrimination cases often going by unreported. This is despite the fact that there is a solid legislative framework that protects women and men from discrimination of any kind and gender discrimination specifically. With this in mind, part of our study focused on the awareness of the respondents of possible discrimination on the job market and in the work place, as well as their confidence in women’s capabilities and ambitions to advance in the workplace.

The first two questions specifically tested for awareness of gender discrimination on the job market and in the workplace. In the first case, we wanted to know what the expected outcome for the respondents would be if a woman and a man with equal qualifications apply for the same position. The responses we got were very divided: 41.6% disagreed and slightly more (46.5%) agreed that the man is more likely than the woman to get the job, with interestingly, no statistical difference in the responses

between the male and the female respondents.

Table 12

If a man and a woman with equal qualifications apply for the same position, it is more likely that the man will get the job

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
24%	22.5%	11.9%	17.8%	23.8%

While the responses varied heavily when it came to a specific case of a man and a woman applying for the same job, when asked generally whether women and men are given equal opportunities for advancement in the workplace, there is a clear tendency to agree that this is the case, with two thirds of the respondents agreeing with the statement “The opportunities for advancing in the workplace are equal for men and women.” It is worth noting here that the women in our sample were even more likely to agree with this statement than the men did.

Table 13

The opportunities for advancing in the workplace are equal for men and women

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
40.3%	26.3%	8.4%	14%	10.8%

One possible explanation for the differences in the responses to the two questions is that the first deals with labor market entry and the second with advancing with an already secured position, so these differences could only be reflecting the general situation that entering the job market is much more difficult for women than it is for men. On the other hand, the fact that the first question offers an individual case, whereas the second generalizes the issue could be seen as the respondents accepting that gender discrimination occurs in individual cases, but refuse to accept or are simply blind to it as a systemic problem. For example, even though women make up only 22.6% of Macedonian employers (and the respondents learned this fact at the end of the survey), a 29 year old, highly educated female respondent gave the following comment after participating in our study:

“..the woman in our society or more precisely in the business community is not underestimated at all. I believe that every woman has freedom to choose whether she wants to build a career OR raise children, and of course

rare are the cases where some manage to do both at the same time. This is the natural flow of things. Thus, women in our society choose themselves that they don't want to be ministers because they want to spend more time with their children. But, those who want to build a career... I have never met anyone not promoted because they were a woman. On the contrary, there are many successful female managers”.

This is a very typical example of the unawareness of the disadvantaged position women find themselves in. The respondent accepts that it's an either-or-case for women and sees no harm in the fact that they must choose between a family and a career, whereas the same does not apply to men.

Additionally, even though the majority of respondents do not subscribe to the “it's their own fault” attitude, still more than one in three Macedonians believes this to be the case. What is more, there are no gender differences in the pattern of answers, so a third of the women think they have mostly themselves to blame that they are not equally represented in the higher ranks in the business world.

Table 14

The fact that there are less women in management positions is mostly their own fault

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
15.9%	22.1%	10.4%	25%	26.6%

While there are clear signs of unawareness among the population of the growing disadvantages that women face on the labor market, the majority of Macedonians do not adhere to the stereotype that women do not possess the needed capabilities, qualifications or ambition to succeed in their careers.

Table 15

Men are more capable than women when it comes to business

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
18.3%	18.2%	11.5%	20.6%	31.4%

Women are not ambitious enough to build a career

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
7.3%	14%	8.5%	21.3%	48.8%

Women possess the necessary qualities, qualifications and leadership capacities to hold management positions

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
57%	30.7%	4.7%	5%	2.6%

Women are less interested in management positions

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
12.3%	22.7%	10.7%	17.1%	27.1%

The majority of our respondents and especially the women²⁸ did not agree that women lack interest, quality or have inferior capabilities compared to men for managerial positions and business. At the same time, they believe that the business sector is dominated by men who do not have confidence in women. The last attitude confirms Reactor's results from 2010 where exactly 50 percent of our respondents (all women) agreed that this is the case. What is even more interesting is that this is an opinion shared by the majority of men and women equally and that the employed tend to agree more with.

Table 16**The business sector is dominated by men who do not have confidence in women**

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
23.1%	32%	13.8%	16.8%	14.4%

All in all, what the group of questions on the perceptions of labor market discrimination reveals is that the majority of the population does not subscribe to the stereotype that men are more capable than women, even though there is a tendency among around a third of the participants to overlook the potential role of gender discrimination on the job market

28 Statistically significant differences in 3 out of 4 questions.

and in the workplace as a factor contributing to the lack of women in positions of power. The substantial percentages of those who believe that women are less interested in positions of power and that the lack of women in managerial positions is mostly their own fault reveal a tendency to perceive gender disparity both in the workforce and in management as an individual rather than a systemic problem.

03

**WORK-LIFE
BALANCE**

Work-Life Balance

The External Factors: Social Infrastructure and Male Involvement

Another overlooked reason for low activity rates that we attempted to shed a light on with our study is **the ‘divorce’ of Family and Labor Policies that occurred in the transitional period**. Prior to Macedonia’s independence, and typical for the Socialist system, the policies that targeted women on the labor market, including Labor and Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) policies, were all geared towards ensuring the woman’s labor market re-entry.

Over the past twenty years, family policies continued to fall out of sync with socioeconomic realities. Even when there have been attempts to reform the legislation, family policies and in particular parental leave policies come in the form of demographic reform, in the sense that they promoted family values and not market re-entry for mothers of young children. This coupled with little to no investment in childcare facilities since the independence means that women have fewer options for reconciling work and family life with no foreseeable changes towards facilitating market entry and re-entry in the future. In order to better understand the position of both men and women with regard to the availability of work-life balance instruments, a portion of our survey was dedicated to examining the level of awareness of existing obstacles, as well as favorability to increasing the father’s involvement in early childcare.

The first question in this set reveals the need for better services that would allow women to better balance their work and family obligations. An overwhelming majority of the sample, without significant differences between the men and the women, agree that there is a great need for better conditions to facilitate women’s working lives, such as a larger number and better access to kindergartens and flexible working arrangements for mothers of small children. In fact, this statement received more agreement than any other statement in the questionnaire, with as much as 92.5% agreeing that better conditions are indeed very much needed, and only an insignificant 0.8% voicing complete disagreement. What this shows once again is that the social infrastructure must be improved if women are expected to (re)enter the labor market.

Table 17**Better conditions to facilitate women’s working lives (such as a larger number and better access to kindergartens; flexible arrangements for mothers of small children) are very much needed in Macedonia**

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
69.5%	23%	2.9%	3.9%	0.8%

One of the issues that comes up with the existing parental leave policies in Macedonia is that although fathers have a legally guaranteed right to take paternity leave (but only **instead** of the mothers), almost no men use this right and maternity leave is still the norm. While this can probably be ascribed to the inflexibility of the offered arrangements, in the sense that the mother has to give up her right for the father to be able to exercise his²⁹, an additional factor that should be explored is whether or not men are willing to take paternity leave and whether this would be socially acceptable. The responses to the following two questions reveal that presumed cultural barriers³⁰ may, in fact, be exaggerated.

Over two thirds of our sample disagreed with the statement “It is shameful for men to take parental leave”, with a little over a quarter agreeing with this statement, which could point to the fact that there is less social stigma associated with paternity leave than was previously assumed. Opinions are slightly more divided when the question turns to actually exercising the right to paternity leave, despite the fact that the formulation of the statement presupposes acceptance from the community and employers. Confronted with the statement “Fathers in our country would readily take parental leave to take care of their newborn children if this was met with understanding from the community and in particular the employers”, more than half of the sample (55.2%) agreed and slightly over a third (34.6%) disagreed. It is interesting to note, however, that while women and men responded to the first questions along the same lines, there were significant differences in their responses to the second question: **men were significantly more likely to agree that given the right circumstances, fathers would willingly take paternity leave to take care of their children.**

29 A close reading of the Labor Relations Law reveals a general expectation that the father will not take the available parental leave

30 Fathers in Macedonia do not want to be mothers, Daily Newspaper “Dnevnik” on 18.03.2006, available at: <http://star.dnevnik.com.mk/default.aspx?pbroj=2916&stID=67536>

Table 18

It is shameful for men to take parental leave				
Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
17.9%	10.2%	4.7%	20.2%	47%

Fathers in our country would readily take parental leave to take care of their newborn children if this was met with understanding from the community and in particular the employers				
Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
26.4%	28.8%	10.3%	14.6%	20%

Reconciling Family and Labor Policies

If we take a closer look at the development of policies that target women and that have been adopted and implemented in the ongoing transitional period, we can see a significant shift in focus from gender equality to population policy that occurred especially in the past few years. The first indicators of the shift were government campaigns against abortion and incentives for a third child. An additional example are the changes to the Labor Relations Law proposed by the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy. As part of the National Demographic Strategy, the Ministry is promoting changes to the Labor Relations Law that would extend maternity leave from 9 to 12 months and add 2 optional ‘daddy months’ which can be taken simultaneously (replicating the 2007 German model, with a different payment scheme). While it is commendable that fathers are finally getting more attention in parental policy changes, in our opinion the maternity leave increase could only lead to increased inequalities on the labor market.

The reason why we oppose the introduction of the German parental leave model, i.e., increase of the maternity leave months, can be found in the context in which the German model was created. The model was introduced in 2007 and marked a paradigm shift in family policies in Germany with an aim to reconcile the family and gender equality approaches. Pre-2007 policies were mostly family oriented and 3-year parental leave was the norm, so the model was a reduction, and not an

increase of parental leave as is the case in Macedonia. Furthermore, the German reforms were an answer to the fact that longer parental leave failed to produce the expected results of increased birth rates of the pre-2007 model:

“[f]aced with the reality that neither the provision of ever longer parental leave nor the repeated increase of family allowances had any tangible effect in terms of higher birth rates, policy makers began to look to their European neighbors for possible policy solutions.” (Erler in Kamerman & Moss 132)

The German experience could serve as a good lesson for policy makers in Macedonia, because it reveals the futility of the expensive experiment that the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy is proposing with the changes to the Labor Relations Law. The case with Germany's development of parental leave policies makes it clear that there is no evidence to suggest that extending parental leave will result in increased fertility rates. On the other hand, there is sufficient research to suggest that countries that encourage women's labor market participation, coupled with providing options for work-life balance could lead to increased fertility rates. Luci and Thevenon show that:

“Total fertility rates have increased much more quickly in countries which encourage women's labor market participation, and the opportunity to reconcile work and family life has emerged as a key factor of the fertility rebound in a context of high female employment... OECD countries which combine relatively high fertility and female employment rates are generally those where conditions are favourable to working mothers... By contrast, countries which combine low fertility and low female employment rates, such as those of eastern and southern Europe and Germany, provide less favourable conditions for reconciling work and family life. In the future, the link between economic development and fertility will increasingly reflect the effectiveness of family policies.” (Luci and Thevenon 2011 pp 5)

04 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMENDATION: IN NEED OF A PARADIGM SHIFT

Conclusions and Recommendations: In Need of a Paradigm Shift

Inactivity rates among women currently account for the majority of gender inequality on the labor market, with one third of the inactive 15+ population entirely made up of women who are not seeking work due to responsibilities in the household. Considering the detrimental implications of these statistics, there have been numerous attempts to find the source of gender inequality among the inactive population, the majority of which has focused on the 'housewife' factor and ultimately explained this statistic away by resorting to 'tradition'. In this study we argued that 'tradition', even in the various different meanings attached to it, is not an exhaustive explanation for this problem. To accept it would mean ignoring more serious systemic labor market gender discrimination that cannot and should not be explained in a way that justifies not taking direct government action, in the sense that tackling tradition could be seen as state interference in private family matters.

Both the results of our survey and a close analysis of the position of women on the Macedonian labor market point to a need for a real paradigm shift if female employment is to be significantly increased in the long term. In this sense, the results from the present study should be used as a basis to motivate the institutions to abandon the explanations that use education and tradition (as insufficient and ungrounded) and pay closer attention to gender discrimination, allow for the reconciliation between family and work life, and design specific incentives to both attract economically inactive women to enter the labor market and make sure that they are not discriminated against when they seek employment. In order to achieve this, the authorities must first better understand the factors that discourage women from entering the labor market in order to target their active measures accordingly. The specific recommendations that we arrived at based on the results from this study are the following:

Collect more data on inactive women: While our study sheds new light on many of the obstacles that prevent women from entering and staying on the labor market, it is crucial that their experiences continue to be researched and closely analyzed. The fact that some of the data from our survey is not collected on a regular basis as part of the work done by the State Statistical Office points to major shortcomings in how the institutions design their policies, in that they are not evidence-based and do not

address the real needs of the Macedonian women. What is specifically missing from the existing available data is more in-depth information on the profile of economically inactive women who are discouraged from entering the labor market despite a willingness to work. This data can easily be collected as part of the Labor Force Survey, which is currently done in many EU countries.

Reconcile Labor and Family Policies: We discussed earlier that the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy has proposed changes to the Labor Relations Law that would see an increase in maternity leave, as an attempt to increase the low total fertility rate in the country. Considering that there is sufficient evidence to show that longer maternity leave does not lead to increased birth rates, what we propose instead is the introduction of a 12-month parental leave that comes with a ‘take it or leave it’ 3-month leave for fathers (i.e. stipulating that a certain amount of leave must be taken by the father or else both parents lose them). In addition to costing less, this alternative would provide more incentive for take up of parental leave by fathers, as well as contribute to evening the playing field for young women facing discrimination upon entry into the labor market because of their reproductive role.

Fight gender discrimination on the labor market and in the workplace: Gender discrimination on the labor market must be taken more seriously and targeted more efficiently in order to help women overcome institutional barriers that prevent them from entering the work force. Despite the strong legislative framework that protects against gender discrimination, there is numerous unofficial evidence to suggest that direct discrimination is prevalent, especially in the private sector, in the form of women being forced to sign ‘no-baby’ agreements (entering into agreement with the employer that she will not bear children for a defined period of time), being asked personal family questions during job interviews, as well as facing post-maternity lay offs. With this in mind, the government must target private sector gender discrimination offenders more seriously through increased controls and fines, as well as by encouraging whistleblowers. The Gender Equality Representative who operates within the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy should in particular be more invested in exposing labor market discrimination and take a proactive approach in seeking out discriminatory practices (as is her mandate), instead of waiting to be approached by victims of gender discrimination.

05 ANNEXES

Annex 1 – Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

Sampling procedure and response rate

The sample used for the study was national representative sample aged 18+. It was randomly selected, stratified sample reached by telephone. Sampling frame was based on electronic telephone book. Census 2002 data were used for population dynamics. The sample type was 2-staged stratified combined probability sample. Stratification was done according to quota criteria for type of settlement (urban/rural); age groups and gender.

Total sample consisted of 1047 respondents who completed the interview (50.1%). Out of 2065 respondents who were reached and asked to participate, 40.7% refused originally and 8.3% refused to or were interrupted during the interview.

Demographics of the sample

Age | Gender

51.3 percent of the respondents were female, mean age was 44.54. 14.1 percent were aged 18 to 24; 18.2 percent 25 to 34; 21.7 percent were 35 to 44 years of age; 14.6 percent 45 to 54; 15.8 percent were 55 to 64 and 15.6 percent were over the age of 65.

Ethnicity

66.5 percent of the sample declared themselves as ethnic Macedonians; 22.5 percent as Albanians; 4.3 percent were Turks; 2.8 percent Roma; and the rest were from other ethnicities (Serbs, Vlachs, Bosnians, Croatians and Russians). One respondent refused to state his ethnicity.

Place of residence

Geographically, most of the respondents came from the capital Skopje, 33.1 percent; 23.8 percent from the northwest region of the country including the town of Kumanovo; 20.6 percent were from the southwest of the country and the rest, 24.3 percent, from the central and eastern Macedonia. 36.3 percent came from the rural, 63.7 percent from the urban areas of the country.

Educational attainment

Considering the educational background of the respondents, 2.1 percent were without any education; more than one in five (22.1 percent) had only primary education; half of the respondents (53.3 percent) were high school graduates, 5.5 percent had higher degree (some college), 16.1 percent had university degree and only 0.9 percent a postgraduate degree.

Marital status and living situation

18.7 percent of the respondents were single; the vast majority of the sample (74.3 percent) in a relationship or married; 0.8 percent divorced and 6.2 percent widowed. 51.7 percent of the respondents had one or more children.

A typical respondent lives in a 4 member household (26.0 percent of the respondents); 33.6 percent lived in smaller households (only 3.3 percent of the respondents reported to live alone, 15.1 in a two member household and further 15.1 in a three member household). 18.5 percent reported to live in a 5 member household, 11.7 percent in a 6 member household and the rest, 10.3 percent in more than 6 member households. The largest household reported from one respondent was a 18 members household.

Status on the labor market

Of the 1047 respondents, 288 or 27.5 were employed full time; only 1.2 percent reported working unregistered; 0.9 percent short time; 1.0 percent short time unregistered. Only 1 respondent (0.1 percent) reported working for no monetary gain and 2 percent were self employed respondents. That makes 32.7 percent of the respondents that can be categorized as employed.

21.4 percent reported unemployment and in an active search for a job. Further 9.0 percent were not searching for a job at the moment, but plan to look for work in the future. 16.9 percent categorized themselves as permanently inactive (unemployed, not looking for a job and not planning to look for work in the future). 20.1 percent of the respondents were already retired.

Annex 2 – Gender Role Scale

The Creation Of The Gender Role Scale And The Gender Role Orientation Clusters

All attitudes questions were measured on a 7 point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7). An exploratory (unrestricted) principal components factor analysis (Varimax rotation) was performed in order to confirm single structure for the Gender Role Scale (Judge & Livingston, 2008) and eventually determine other factors. All Judge & Livingston (2008) items loaded heavily on the first factor (factor loadings over .5; see table A2). Three other questions (*If there are children or elderly family members in need of care, it is not cost effective for the mother to work; Men are more capable than women when it comes to business and For a balance in a relationship it is important that the man earns more than the woman*) also loaded on the factor. Because thematically they were congruent with traditional attitudes especially about the gender roles, we incorporated them in the Gender Role Orientation (GRO) index.

The resulting scores on the gender role scale (calculated as a mean value score on the 8 questions for each respondent) were normally distributed and spread across the whole range of the scale with a score of one (1) indicating a respondent with very egalitarian attitudes (strongly disagreed on all the GRO questions), a respondent with a score of four (4) somebody with balanced views and a respondent with a score of seven (7) a person with very traditional attitudes (agreed strongly on all GRO questions).

As the group was well dispersed across the GRO scale, a 33.3 percentile cut resulted in an almost perfect division between egalitarian, balanced and traditional respondents. We were thus able to cluster three groups of respondents depending on their scores: all participants with a score lower and equal to three (3) (on average they disagreed with the statements N=356; M=2.37; SD=.48) were categorized as egalitarian respondents; all who scored between 3 and 4.3 (agreed and disagreed in equal amounts N=332; M=3.63; SD=.33) were categorized in the balanced view respondents group and all respondents with a score higher than 4.3 (on average agreed with the statements N=359; M=5.26; SD =.70) were categorized as traditional. Ideally we would have wanted

the balanced group to be positioned between 3.5 to 4.5 but because the natural division in thirds was very close to the ideal scenario for statistical purposes (equal group sizes) we decided to advance our analysis with it.

Table A2

Principal Components Factor Analysis; Varimax Rotated Component Matrix

If a man and a woman with equal qualifications apply for the same position, it is more likely that the man will get the job

Women have less freedom because of the household and family responsibility

Man who do not work should take care of the children and the household

Fathers in our country would readily take parental leave to take care of their newborn children if this was met with understanding from the community and in particular the employers

If there are children or elderly family members in need of care, it is not cost effective for the mother to work

A woman's place is in the home, not the office or shop

A wife with a family has no time for outside employment;

Employment of wives leads to more juvenile delinquency

It is much better if the man is the achiever outside the home and the woman takes care of the home and family;

Women are much happier if they stay home and take care of children

Men are more capable than women when it comes to business

For a balance in a relationship it is important that the man earns more than the woman

Women are not ambitious enough to build a career

The fact that there are less women in management position is mostly their own fault

Women are less interested in management positions

That most man in Macedonia take less care for the household and the children is mostly their own choice, not natural predisposition

Whether a person succeeds in life depends mostly on the individual, not on his/her sex

Better conditions to facilitate women's working lives (such as a larger number and better access to kindergartens; flexible arrangements for mothers of small children) are very much needed in Macedonia

Women who don't work are isolated from society

Woman must have their own income

Questions that loaded alone on a factor

Increasing the number of employed women should not be one of the priorities of the national employment agency

It is irresponsible to send the elderly to the geriatric facilities; families should take care for them

The business sector is dominated by men who do not have confidence in women

When it comes to care for the home and the family, expectations are higher for women than they are for men

The opportunities for advancing in the workplace are equal for men and women

Questions that did not load clearly on none of the factors

It is natural that man participate less in household responsibilities (for example cooking, cleaning, taking care of the children etc.)

In our society housewives have the same status as employed women

Women possess the necessary qualities, qualifications and leadership capacities to hold management positions

For a woman with children and family its almost impossible to build a top political or business career

It is shameful for men to take parental leave

Note GRO = gender role orientation; Rotation converged in 22 iterations; Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.; Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

factor loadings

	Component									
GRO	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
.186	.104	.536	-.113	-.144	.167	.038	-.268	.099	-.281	
.117	.059	.592	.074	.167	.054	.053	.119	.072	.071	
-.007	-.073	.271	.088	.136	.562	-.065	-.071	.195	.024	
.142	.097	-.109	.027	-.045	.753	-.038	-.008	-.110	-.005	
.500	.162	.160	.054	-.009	-.251	-.077	-.266	-.003	-.045	
.700	.148	-.002	-.045	-.027	.059	.169	.007	.005	-.012	
.660	.245	.037	-.032	.085	.015	-.028	.036	.083	.038	
.651	.096	-.015	.067	.097	-.093	-.196	-.205	-.143	-.086	
.740	-.002	.090	-.036	-.161	.097	.111	.083	.048	.035	
.683	-.011	.127	-.157	-.102	.091	.148	.031	.039	.050	
.516	.238	.058	-.200	-.166	.031	.230	.278	.213	-.005	
.548	.066	.218	-.131	-.048	.061	.349	.040	.176	.011	
.277	.608	.012	-.121	.056	-.021	.095	-.067	.062	-.018	
.050	.666	-.049	.158	.081	.013	-.158	-.005	.087	.163	
.129	.571	.052	.007	-.054	-.003	.114	.144	.055	-.069	
-.093	.091	-.021	.709	.009	.010	-.072	.013	.018	-.044	
-.117	-.034	.066	.662	-.069	.002	-.014	.075	-.026	.163	
.050	-.166	.032	.508	.174	.315	.272	-.089	-.225	-.128	
-.031	.131	.094	.048	.682	.040	-.026	.089	-.026	-.207	
-.121	-.042	.167	-.156	.637	.055	.255	-.121	-.088	.325	
.142	.245	.110	-.082	-.069	.057	-.012	-.118	.616	.046	
.157	.008	-.055	.013	.087	-.063	.740	.000	-.052	.049	
.015	.094	.108	.061	.036	-.043	-.033	.799	-.060	-.092	
.171	-.185	.536	.072	.158	-.209	-.157	.232	-.088	.140	
.044	.069	.047	.068	-.074	.029	.017	-.078	.008	.825	
.143	.207	.415	-.104	-.345	-.126	.347	-.026	-.085	.002	
.145	.383	.066	-.112	-.345	.154	.157	-.176	-.463	.134	
-.286	-.060	.314	.177	.095	.164	-.057	-.047	-.348	.095	
.335	.340	.269	-.155	.180	-.095	-.054	.109	-.278	-.117	
.261	.164	.149	.008	-.054	-.368	.380	-.132	.245	-.199	

Annex 3 – Predictors of Gender Role Orientation

In order to determine the characteristics of the traditional and egalitarian respondents i.e. to examine the correlates of the gender role orientation; we conducted a multiple linear regression analysis with the GRO index set as an outcome variable.

Table A3

Predictors	B	SE B	95.0% CI for B	
(Constant)	2.65	0.15	[2.36	2.93]
Gender (female)	.45***	0.08	[0.30	0.60]
Age	.02***	0.00	[0.01	0.02]
Region (Skopje)				
North west and Kumanovo	.11	0.11	[-0.10	0.32]
Southwest	-.04	0.11	[-0.26	0.18]
East and central	.08	0.10	[-0.13	0.29]
Place of residence (urban)	-.22**	0.08	[-0.39	-0.06]
Ethnicity (Albanian)	.48***	0.10	[0.29	0.67]
Education (high school graduates)				
Primary or lower	.85***	0.11	[0.64	1.05]
Higher education: university and post grads	-.45***	0.09	[-0.64	-0.27]

Note: dependent variable: gender role orientation index; *p<.05; **p<.01, ***p<.001, CI = confidence interval
 $R^2=.25$; $F(8, 922)= 37.78$, $p=.000$ $N=1045$

As can be seen from table A3; gender, age, ethnicity, place of residence as well as education all predicted the gender role orientation whereas the region did not. The young, female, more educated, Macedonians living in the cities were more egalitarian than their older, male, less educated, Albanian peers living in the rural parts of the country. The model explained 25% of the variance in the gender role orientation attitudes.

Annex 4 – Predictors of Labor Market Activity

In order to determine what predicts activity on the labor market, i.e. to examine the correlates of labor market activity, we conducted a logistic regression with the labor market activity set as an outcome variable (dichotomized variable: 1-active on the labor market (respondent employed or searching for a job) and 0-inactive on the labor market i.e. not working and not looking for a job).

The retired respondents were not part of the analysis, so the sample size was smaller $N=835$. Because we excluded the retired respondents, 95% of the remaining respondents aged between 18 and 60 years of age, a prime working age. Hence, it was no wonder that the majority of them (67.5%) were active on the labor market (either working or looking for a job). Consequently, the base model on which our analysis was based correctly predicted 67.5% of the cases.

Our final model correctly predicted additional 10.1% of the cases and explained between 28 (Cox & Snell $R^2=.28$) and 39 (Nagelkerke $R^2=.39$) percent of the variance in activity. The Hosmer-Lemeshow goodness-of-fit test (GOF) (Hosmer, Lemeshow, & Klar, 1988) indicates how effective a model is in describing the outcome variable, with a nonsignificant Chi-square indicating an adequate fit (Dolcini & Nancy, 1994). Our model had a nonsignificant Hosmer and Lemeshow GOF, thus indicated a good model (Chi square (8) = 14.02, $p=.081$).

As can be seen from table A4, labor market activity was related to age, gender, ethnicity and region of the country (but not place of residence), as well as educational attainment, educational status and number of children. The gender role orientation however did not correlate with labor market activity! Male respondents, younger respondents as well as respondents from the east and central part of the country (especially compared to those living in the south west) were more likely to be active on the labor market. Additionally, more educated respondents and those who had children were also more likely to be active.

The influence of region on activity level indicates that the structure of the labor market might play a role in encouraging or discouraging participation in the work force!

Especially influential predictors were gender, ethnicity and education with females being 4.28 times less likely to participate in the market, the Roma being 8.33 times less likely and the highly educated respondents being 16 times more likely to participate on the labor market in comparison with the respondents with low level of education.

Respondents in the process of education were also less likely to participate on the labor market, i.e., those that were still studying were 6.8 times less likely to actively participate on the labor market.

Table A4

Predictor	B	SE	OR	95% Confidence Interval OR	
Constant					
Gender (female)	1.45	.19	4.28***	[2.94	6.22]
Age	-.02	.01	.99*	[.97	.10]
Region (east + central)					
Region Skopje	-.33	.27	.72	[.43	1.22]
Region north west	-.07	.28	.94	[.54	1.62]
Region south west	-.68	.283	.51*	[.29	.88]
Place of residence (urban)	-.30	.19	.79	[.54	1.16]
Ethnicity (Macedonian)					
Ethnicity Albanian	-.25	.23	.78	[.49	1.23]
Ethnicity Turkish	-.45	.42	.63	[.28	1.43]
Ethnicity Roma	2.12	.68	8.33**	[2.21	31.39]
Education (primary)					
Education secondary	1.12	.24	3.05***	[1.91	4.89]
Education tertiary	2.81	.36	16.64***	[8.29	33.41]
In education (yes)	1.92	.28	6.79***	[3.95	11.65]
Children (no children)	.48	.20	1.62*	[1.10	2.37]
Gender role orientation	-.14	.08	.87	[.75	1.01]

Note: dependent variable: activity on the labor market (yes|no); B) estimated coefficient; SE(B) = standard error; OR=odds ratio; ; *p<.05; **p<.01, ***p<.001, N=835 Cox & Snell R²=.28, Nagelkerke R²=.39 Hosmer and Lesmeshow Chi²(8) = 14.02, p=.081.

Annex 5 - Predictors of Employment

In order to determine what predicts employment, we conducted a logistic regression with the employment status set as an outcome variable (dichotomized variable: 1-employed and 0-unemployed including inactive).

The retired respondents were not part of the analysis, so the sample size was smaller $N=835$. Even though we excluded the retired respondents and 95% of the remaining respondents aged between 18 and 60 years of age, a prime working age, only 59.1% of our respondents were employed, indicating low employment rate in the country.

Thus, the base model on which our analysis was based correctly predicted 59.1% of the cases.

Our final model correctly predicted additional 10.4% of the cases and explained between 19 (Cox & Snell $R^2=.19$) and 25 (Nagelkerke $R^2=.25$) percent of the variance in employment. The Hosmer-Lemeshow goodness-of-fit test (GOF) was nonsignificant, thus indicated a good model (Chi square (8) = 8.34, $p=.401$).

As can be seen from table A5, employment was related to age, gender, ethnicity, as well as level of acquired education and whether the respondents have children. The gender role orientation however did not predict employment status.

Younger, female and Albanian respondents, as well as respondents with low levels of acquired education had lower chances on the labor market. Also, respondents with no children, as opposed to respondents with children had lower chances for employment.

When all things held constant, females were 2 times less likely to be employed, ethnic Albanians were 1.7 times less likely to be employed compared to ethnic Macedonian respondents and respondents with children were 2 times more likely to be employed than respondents with no children.

Education played a huge role as well: compared to respondents with low education, high school graduates were 2.6 times more likely to be employed whereas university graduates 7.5 times more likely to be employed.

Table A5

Predictor	B	SE	OR	95% CI OR	
Constant	-2.95	0.59	.05		
Gender (female)	0.70	0.16	2.02***	[1.47	2.79]
Age	0.02	0.01	1.02*	[1.00	1.03]
Region (east + central)					
Region Skopje	-0.26	0.23	0.77	[0.49	1.20]
Region north west	-0.32	0.24	0.73	[0.45	1.17]
Region south west	0.01	0.22	1.01	[0.65	1.56]
Place of residence (rural)	0.06	0.18	1.06	[0.75	1.49]
Ethnicity (Macedonian)					
Ethnicity Albanian	-0.51	0.21	0.60*	[0.40	0.91]
Ethnicity Turkish	-0.36	0.42	0.70	[0.31	1.57]
Ethnicity Roma	-0.52	0.54	0.60	[0.21	1.71]
Education (primary)					
Education secondary	0.95	0.24	2.58***	[1.61	4.15]
Education tertiary	2.01	0.29	7.49***	[4.27	13.16]
In education (no)	0.40	0.25	1.49	[0.91	2.41]
Children (no children)	0.76	0.17	2.15***	[1.53	3.02]
Gender role orientation	-0.11	0.07	0.89	[0.78	1.03]

Note: Dependant variable: employment status (yes/no) N=835

B = estimated coefficient; SE(B) = standard error; OR=odds ratio; ; *p<.05; **p<.01, ***p<.001,

Cox & Snell R²=.19, Nagelkerke R²=.25 Hosmer and Lesmeshow Chi²(8) = 8.34, p=.401.

Annex 6 - Predictors of Life Satisfaction

Finally, we wanted to investigate how the status on the labor market as well as the gender role orientation related to life satisfaction. We conducted four multiple linear regressions with the life satisfaction as dependent variable and the control variables (demographic characteristics) plus,

- employment status (to investigate the impact of actual employment on life satisfaction);
- the employment status of the partner (to investigate the influence of shared financial responsibility, but done in a separate analysis, because this question was answered only from the respondents who were in a relationship);
- actual income (to investigate the impact of income as opposed to just employment; and explore possible indicators for unsatisfying jobs); and lastly
- the perceived financial situation as a subjective indicator of financial well-being (because the subjective interpretation of financial “hardship” might be better predictor of life satisfaction as predictors.

Life satisfaction was measured on a single item that explicitly asked how the respondents judged their life situation on a scale from one to ten (Q: on a scale from one to ten, how would you judge your current life situation, if one was very bad and ten very good). Mean score for the sample was a little bit above the scale’s middle, the scores were well dispersed across the range. (M=5.78; SD=2.59).

As can be seen from the table A6, of the control variables, gender and age predict life satisfaction in all of the analyses. When all things held equal female respondents and younger respondents are on average more satisfied with their lives than male and older respondents. Education also plays a role, in two of the four regressions; the respondents with high education attainment (academics) were more satisfied than the respondents with only primary education.

The gender role orientation also plays a role: in three of the four regressions the more egalitarian the respondent the more satisfied with her life she or he is.

As expected, employment, employment of partner, actual income and perceived financial well-being all relate to life satisfaction. However, salary is a stronger predictor than both employment and employment of partner, whereas perceived financial situation is the strongest predictor of them all and alone explains massive 30 percent of the variance in life satisfaction.

Table A6

Predictor	Regression 1		Regression 2		Regression 3		Regression 4	
	B	Std. Error	B	Std. Error	B	Std. Error	B	Std. Error
Constant	7.95	0.38	7.41	0.52	7.40	0.39	4.25	0.36
Gender (female)	-.84***	0.17	-.77***	0.21	-.52**	0.17	-.43**	0.14
Age	-.04***	0.01	-.04***	0.01	-.04***	0.01	-.02**	0.01
Place of residence (urban)	.15	0.18	.26	0.20	.05	0.18	.11	0.15
Ethnicity (Albanian)	.15	0.20	.24	0.23	-.14	0.20	.00	0.16
Education (primary)								
Education secondary	-.41	0.25	-.70	0.27	-.31	0.25	-.35	0.21
Education tertiary	.62**	0.22	.85	0.26	.21	0.23	.43*	0.18
GRO score	-.15*	0.08	-.13	0.09	-.24**	0.08	-.16*	0.06
Employment status	.83***	0.19						
Employment status partner			.78***	0.22				
Income Perceived financial well-being					.64***	0.08	.59***	0.03
	N=739		N=546		N=640		N=738	
R ²	.17***		.21***		.22***		.44***	
Δ R ²	.02***		.02***		.07***		.30***	

Note: Dependent variable: life satisfaction; *p<.05; **p<.01, ***p<.001,

Annex 7 - Gender Differences in Attained Education

In order to establish the gender differences in acquired education we conducted Chi-square tests on age groups. As can be seen from the tables below, gender differences are only noticeable for the groups above 45 years of age.

Table A7 Cross-tabulation Age category x Gender

Age category			Gender		Total	
			Female	Male		
18 - 29	Education	Lower education	Count	20	11	31
		% within gender	15.3%	8.6%	12.0%	
	High school education	Count	75	86	161	
		% within gender	57.3%	67.2%	62.2%	
	Higher education	Count	36	31	67	
		% within gender	27.5%	24.2%	25.9%	
	Total	Count	131	128	259	
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%		
30 - 44	Education	Lower education	Count	39	26	65
		% within gender	25.0%	17.3%	21.2%	
	High school education	Count	84	88	172	
		% within gender	53.8%	58.7%	56.2%	
	Higher education	Count	33	36	69	
		% within gender	21.2%	24.0%	22.5%	
	Total	Count	156	150	306	
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%		
45 - 65	Education	Lower education	Count	71	40	111
		% within gender	40.6%	24.0%	32.5%	
	High school education	Count	77	97	174	
		% within gender	44.0%	58.1%	50.9%	
	Higher education	Count	27	30	57	
		% within gender	15.4%	18.0%	16.7%	
	Total	Count	175	167	342	
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%		
Over 66	Education	Lower education	Count	31	15	46
		% within gender	41.3%	23.1%	32.9%	
	High school education	Count	28	23	51	
		% within gender	37.3%	35.4%	36.4%	
	Higher education	Count	16	27	43	
		% within gender	21.3%	41.5%	30.7%	
	Total	Count	75	65	140	
	% within gender	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%		

Table A7.2 X² test gender differences in attained education

Age category	Test	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
18 - 29	Pearson Chi-Square	3.703	2	.157
	Likelihood Ratio	3.742	2	.154
	Linear-by-Linear Association	.000	1	.990
	N of Valid Cases	259		
30 - 44	Pearson Chi-Square	2.707	2	.258
	Likelihood Ratio	2.723	2	.256
	Linear-by-Linear Association	1.286	1	.257
	N of Valid Cases	306		
45 - 65	Pearson Chi-Square	10.933	2	.004
	Likelihood Ratio	11.049	2	.004
	Linear-by-Linear Association	4.044	1	.044
	N of Valid Cases	342		
over 66 years	Pearson Chi-Square	8.197	2	.017
	Likelihood Ratio	8.305	2	.016
	Linear-by-Linear Association	8.064	1	.005
	N of Valid Cases	140		

