

## EXAMINING GENDER-ROLE ATTITUDE: THE ROLE OF FAMILY RELATIONS, SELF-ESTEEM, LOCUS OF CONTROL AND SELF-EFFICACY<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract:** The present study examined differences in egalitarianism and traditionalism in gender-role attitudes within students' population at University of Nis. These attitudes were examined according to the intensity of four major social and psychological categories: family relations, global self-esteem, social self-efficacy and externality of locus of control. Also, possible discrimination between these two groups was investigated. Measuring instruments: The Attitudes toward gender equality scale (Ravlic & Raboteg-Šarić, 2002), Faces IV questionnaire (Olson & Gorrall, 2006), a self-concept scale (Bezinović, 1988) with subscales: General Self-esteem (Rosenberg scale) and Locus of control, Perceived Social Self-Efficacy (PSSE) Scale (Caprara & Steca, 2005). The research sample consisted of 390 students of the University of Niš from various faculties and field orientation toward natural and social sciences. For statistical analysis of the data, the analysis of variance and canonical discriminant analysis were used. According to the analyses, it was determined that persons with egalitarian gender-role tendency may be discriminated against those of traditional tendency based on the identified levels of cohesion and flexibility in family functioning, as well as intensity of global self-esteem and internal locus of a control. In organizing certain interventions, it is important to have in mind that overcoming traditional perceptions on gender roles and strengthening and improvement egalitarian gender-role attitudes of new generations should not be only scientific goal and research material. It also should be the first task and achievement of modern society and representation of what is the personification of justice, democracy, and equality and above all kindness and humanity.

**Keywords:** gender roles, egalitarianism versus traditionalism, family relations, self-esteem, locus of control

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## Introduction

When considering the findings of recent research, it is not surprising that contemporary families are becoming increasingly individualized. Thus, the phenomenon of the so-called nuclear family norm, composed of a heterosexual married couple raising their children with traditional gender roles and division of labor, is facing growing challenges. Traditional and often rigid perspectives on gender roles are being put to a unique test due to industrialization, rapid advancements in science, technology, and engineering, the widespread accessibility of education, and more intense efforts towards greater female participation in the labor market. As the transformation of traditional gender role patterns is considered not only a societal but also a personal progress, many authors have directed their research interests towards the phenomenon of gender revolution over the past five decades. At its core lies the aspiration for gender equality prosperity, which logically leads to the modification of attitudes towards gender roles. While some have studied the motives behind attitude changes and the presence of gender stereotypes across different age groups, others have focused on expectations and ideologies regarding gender roles. Some researchers have delved into socio-cultural dimensions, while others have examined behavioral patterns and the intergenerational transmission of beliefs. Additionally, a group of researchers has focused on personal factors and factors within the family itself. However, it seems that research is lacking both on a national and international level, which incorporates very specific personal categories (locus of control, self-efficacy, and self-esteem) and family factors (dimensions of family functioning) within its analyses. Encompassing these factors could lead to insights into dominant attitudes towards gender roles, whether there are differences between initial and current attitudes, and whether approaches to gender socialization change during education, integrate during work engagement, or if there is a discriminatory impact from individuals favoring traditional attitudes towards those who prefer non-traditional views. An especially intriguing question is how attitudes towards gender roles and the way they are lived change not only over time but also over the family life cycle, with different ages and within various contexts. While the issue of changing traditional attitudes towards gender roles may be seen as unpopular and outdated in the modern era, it remains a matter of social interest and significance. In recent years, it appears that the gender revolution has somewhat slowed its pace and even halted in certain indicators within the territory of the Republic of Serbia. This issue is important not only for researchers and the academic community but also for society as a whole. Certainly, the justification for this issue cannot be solely understood from the perspective of the slow development of countries caught in global and transitional movements, including our own country. It is a question that encompasses society as a whole and needs to be adequately examined within the context of contemporary educational trends.

### **Gender role attitudes – an overview of some definitions**

Broadly speaking, attitudes towards gender roles are often defined as perceptions and beliefs regarding the distinct roles of men and women, and in relevant literature, they span a continuum from traditional at one end to liberal at the other. Kraiss suggests (Kraiss, 2006) that traditional attitudes towards gender roles reflect perceptions about distinctive roles of men and women, where men fulfill their roles through instrumental and provider activities, while women satisfy their roles through nurturing, maintaining, and taking care of the home and household members, as well as parenting activities (Kulik, 2018). Contrary to these views, authors also point to somewhat different, non-traditional, or liberal-oriented attitudes towards gender roles that emphasize the equal competence of men and women in fulfilling the same social roles (Fényes, 2014; Lindsay, 2015; Martin, 1990). Egalitarian attitudes toward gender roles do not support the idea of gender-specific family and business roles; rather, they emphasize unity, fairness, equal rights, roles, and responsibilities for both men and women. According to Walby (2005), egalitarian attitudes contain the idea that individuals have access to the same rights and opportunities regardless of gender, and they should be treated according to the same principles, norms, and standards. These attitudes could be considered as a more advanced level of liberal views. However, it is important to note that the categorization of attitudes towards gender roles present in the available literature can be grouped into three categories: (a) attitudes about division of labor in the family, (b) attitudes related to roles in the public sphere, and (c) general attitudes unrelated to specific spheres where roles manifest. Given the complexity, multidimensionality, specifics, and value of the concept of attitudes towards gender roles, as well as the potential for understanding it from various contexts, perspectives, and angles, it is not surprising that there is no single universal definition among authors of different orientations that encompasses every aspect. The heterogeneity present in defining attitudes towards gender roles arises as a direct consequence of authors' diverse theoretical and practical needs. Some authors may emphasize specific characteristics that others do not focus on or do not consider as determining factors. Furthermore, differences in defining this concept also arise due to uneven treatment of the term and its potential conflation with other related concepts. Therefore, defining this concept is far from an easy or simple process, especially considering the possibilities of viewing it in various contexts and within the frameworks of different research and scientific disciplines, diverse researcher preferences and orientations. Hence, it is undoubtedly difficult to define it with any consensus among researchers. However, some common points can be identified that could be seen as intersections and interconnections in the definition of a theme that remains relevant among both scientific and professional communities to this day. It would be redundant to analyze all the definitions of attitudes towards gender roles, but it is beneficial to highlight some that are often mentioned in the literature. For clarity, a brief tabular presentation of definitions is provided, which emerged as a result of reviewing and analyzing different answers to the question of what attitudes towards gender roles are and how they are defined. This attempt aims to identify distinct ways of conceptualizing attitudes in various fields such as psychology, andragogy, anthropology, sociology, and others.

**Figure 1**  
*Gender-role attitudes definitions*

<b>Year</b>	<b>Author/s</b>	<b>Definition: Gender-role attitudes are...</b>
2015	Constantin	"...beliefs that individuals express regarding appropriate roles for men and women in a given institutional and cultural environment"
2010	Lee et al.	"...often defined as the cognitive representation of what is believed appropriate for male and female roles in a specific cultural context rooted in historic development and differs across societies"
2010	Hatchman	"...an individual's perceptions of gender social norms, behavioral patterns, and the attitudinal tendencies held by them"
2009	Davis &Greenstein	"...the underlying concept of an individual's level of support for a division of paid work and family responsibilities that is based on the notion of separated spheres"
2006	Bergh	"...normative beliefs about what gender relations in society should be like, or the extent to which a person supports the norm of gender equality"
2004	Pfau-Effinger	"...societal assumptions regarding people's views about what constitutes a correct gender relation or a fair division of tasks between women and men"
1995	Amato & Booth	"...individual's acceptance of specialized roles for husbands and wives"
1987	Eagly	"...shared expectations that apply to individuals on the basis of their socially identified gender"
1976	Brogan & Kutner	,"...beliefs about ideal role behaviors for men and women which particularity concern their ideal involvement in family and work roles"

Todorović and Simić (2014: 9) and Janković and Todorović (2016: 7) state that the learning of gender roles begins from early childhood, in the process of socializing male and female children. Attitudes regarding gender roles are generally conceived to vary along a continuum between two opposites most commonly labeled as traditional and egalitarian. They highlight that modern families encompass both traditional and egalitarian gender roles. It is important to keep in mind that during adolescence, young people, due to their level of cognitive maturity, are capable of questioning and reconfiguring their assumptions about gender roles. They can differentiate between descriptive and prescriptive gender norms and create cognitive representations of new, more complex social arrangements. Furthermore, post-adolescent socialization connected to the societal value system depends on closer social context and long-term cultural context. As individuals grow and mature, the effects of their social environment become more evident in their development. Therefore, after adolescence, through the enhancement of knowledge and experience, traditionalism and egalitarianism as competing concepts can integrate to avoid cognitive dissonance.

### **Shift from traditional to non-traditional gender-role attitudes**

In earlier studies that remained relevant until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, gender was predominantly assessed based on biological criteria, and gender roles were largely described through the existing biological differences between men and women. Such a researcher-oriented focus on studying gender roles came into question when authors began to perceive gender roles not only as a category determined by biological factors but also started incorporating other factors like political, social, cultural, economic, and religious aspects into their analyses.

A special interest in the concept of attitudes towards gender roles, their more explicit determination, interpretation, and identification of constitutive elements, has permeated various discussions and debates since the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. The challenge in defining this concept, whether in implicit or explicit form, has been highlighted by many authors who linked definitions of attitudes towards gender roles with contemporary views on gender equality and the accompanying gender revolution with all its ups and downs. Contemporary researchers' efforts appear to be directed towards a more comprehensive study of the essence and specifics of gender roles. These efforts involve attempting to understand them within the framework of social expectations and cognitive structures, which inevitably raises the question of traditional versus contemporary perceptions of gender roles. Specifically, the traditional division of gender roles in which the male role was associated with being the breadwinner of the family and providing material security, while the female role was linked to homemaking, childcare, caring for elderly family members, and maintaining the household, began to crumble in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Researchers who have tested attitudes towards gender roles based on traditional, or more colloquially, sexist perspectives, have come to conclusions about gender polarization. This concept suggests that behaviors and attitudes that are acceptable for women are not seen as appropriate for men, and vice versa (Glick et al., 2000; Bem, 1985). Furthermore, in research endeavors, perceptions of gender roles were often evaluated within the framework of participants' agreement with societal norms of masculinity and femininity. In such studies, any agreement with conventional norms was interpreted as an inclination towards traditional attitudes towards gender roles, while disagreement was seen as advocating liberal attitudes towards gender roles.

The essentialist-oriented approach of theorists who argue that gender differences stem solely from biological sex has faced severe criticisms. Over time, as the female role underwent significant changes and expanded beyond the domestic sphere due to modernization (particularly in Western societies), increased access to education, higher participation of women in the labor market, granting of civil and economic opportunities, and their cultural and life aspects entering public spaces, attitudes were also modified. In fact, assessing individuals' perceptions through agreement or disagreement with common stereotypes and norms regarding gender roles in research studies could not remain sustainable or compatible with the contemporary reality. Today, the social construction of gender roles is more flexible, and changes in gender roles are evident in various life domains for both sexes, including family (Lamb, 2010),

work (Lamb, 2010), and interpersonal relationships (Serewicz & Gale, 2008). This has led to the demand for a change in the methodological approach to assessing gender roles. There is a need to link the degree of agreement with egalitarian perspectives rather than relying solely on measuring alignment with stereotypes when assessing gender roles. Certainly, there is room for the social constructivism approach, which posits that human development is socially situated and that knowledge is constructed through interaction with others. Or, as suggested by Belić and Jovanović (2015: 78), gender roles are constructed through social interaction, which is multidimensional and involves specific expectations from the social environment for men and women. Among other influences, feminist theories have played a significant role in modifying the perception of gender in line with a social constructivist standpoint. These theories assert that men and women are differently positioned, categorized, and stratified within the social structure. Gender differences are rarely neutral, and in almost all societies, gender serves as an important form of social stratification and a criterion for the emergence of social inequalities and discrimination (Bartolac & colleagues, 2011: cited by Belić, Jovanović, 2015). Accordingly, various perceptions and expectations can be reflected in attitudes towards various social issues, primarily attitudes towards gender roles. A gender perspective argues that individual behavior and roles hold gender significance, which reflects how people conceptualize gender. To understand differences in the experiences of men and women, it is necessary to consider the structure and symbols, resources and beliefs, institutions and interactions within the scope of study and analysis. Important to note are some interesting observations made by Belić and Jovanović (2015). With modernization, they argue that roles performed by women become more complex. In the process of transforming traditional gender roles, women's roles are expanded, deepened, and enhanced, while men's roles transform at a slower pace. An interesting fact is that employed women, regardless of their occupation or level of education, continue to predominantly lead household chores, childcare, and the care of elderly or sick family members.

According to the findings of some research, both social and individual factors contribute to shaping non-traditional attitudes towards gender roles: socialization and level of education (Bolzendahl & Myers, 2004; Bryant, 2003), personal experience (Davis & Greenstein, 2009; Cassidy & Warren, 1996), age and life experience (Lynott and McCandless, 2000; Brooks & Bolzendahl, 2004; Inglehart & Welzel, 2005), women's employment (Fortin, 2005; Hoffman, 1989), family background (Vella, 1994), women's empowerment, and governmental efforts to improve family policies (Sjöberg, 2004; Knudsen and Wærness, 2001), societal norms, values, and preferences in the context of gender-specific work arrangements (Haas, 2005), motherhood, and income distribution within households (Boehnke, 2011). Although a review of the literature reveals numerous other variables that play a role in forming attitudes towards gender roles, and despite the fact that this is an extensively studied topic worldwide and across various scientific disciplines, it seems that there are not enough such studies in the Republic of Serbia. Additionally, the existing studies are mostly oriented towards investigating the sociological aspects of gender roles, stereotypes, and expectations, with less focus on a multidisciplinary approach and

comprehensive analysis of attitudes towards gender roles, their constitutive elements, and key social and psychological categories that significantly contribute to the development and shaping of attitudes. These categories include family relationships, global self-esteem, social self-efficacy, and locus of control. In a more in-depth research of this topic, both psychological and sociological correlates that underlie the orientation towards traditional or contemporary attitudes towards gender roles need to be considered equally.

## **Method**

### **Research goals**

Research goals can be specified through several parts:

On the one hand, to examine whether there are statistically significant differences in the intensity of different aspects of family relations (cohesion, flexibility, disengagement, entanglement, rigidity, chaoticity, communication and satisfaction with family in general), overall self-esteem, social self-efficacy, external of locus of control between the persons with tendency to egalitarianism toward gender roles and persons with tendency to traditionalism toward gender roles; and on the other hand, to examine whether persons with tendency to egalitarianism toward gender roles may be discriminated against individuals with tendency to traditionalism toward gender roles, based on the intensity of different aspects of family relations (cohesion, flexibility, disengagement, entanglement, rigidity, chaoticity, communication and satisfaction with family in general), overall self-esteem, social self-efficacy, external locus of control.

### **Participants**

The research sample consisted of 390 respondents, 205 of whom (52.6%) were female, while 185 (47.4%) were male. Within the sample there were students from five different faculties of University of Nis (natural sciences' students and the students of social sciences and humanities were included) during the 2022/23 school year. The equal number of students was selected from each faculty - from the Faculty of Electronic Engineering, Faculty of Medicine, Faculty of Economics, Faculty of Occupational Safety and the Faculty of Philosophy (N= 78 from each institution) and the age of the respondents varied from 19 to 27.

### **Measuring instruments:**

The Attitudes toward gender equality scale (Ravlic & Raboteg-Šarić, 2002) measures attitudes toward equality between women and men, as two distinctive gender groups. It is a five-point Likert scale, consisting of items constructed in both directions. High scores on the scale suggest that person does not discriminate people at gender basis, and low scores indicate existence of traditional or conservative attitudes about

social roles of women and men. Scale has the following subscales, that is, it measures the following aspects of gender equality: egalitarianism toward parenting roles, egalitarianism toward heterosexual roles, egalitarianism toward professional roles and egalitarianism toward educational roles (because of a large amount of data for analysis, the subscale egalitarianism toward marriage roles was excluded).

In order to measure the quality of family communication and satisfaction with the family, the Faces IV questionnaire was used (Olson & Gorrall, 2006). Faces IV provides a comprehensive assessment of family cohesion and flexibility dimensions using six scales. Designed as a self-report assessment for the Circumplex Model of Couple and Family Systems, Faces IV focuses on both balanced (healthy) and unbalanced (problematic) aspects of family functioning. The two balanced Faces IV scales are balanced cohesion and balanced flexibility. These balanced scales are very similar to cohesion and flexibility as measured by Faces II and Faces III.

A self-concept scale (Bezinović, 1988) designed to measure the self-concepts of adolescents was used. It is a five-point Likert scale, consisting of items constructed in both directions. Just two selected subscales were used in this study: General Self-esteem (also known as Rosenberg scale) and Locus of control – externality/internality.

The Perceived Social Self-Efficacy (PSSE) Scale measures people's beliefs in their capabilities to voice their own opinions with others, to work cooperatively and share personal experiences with others, and to manage interpersonal conflicts. PSSE is positively related to self-esteem, life satisfaction, and optimism (Caprara & Steca, 2005).

The reliability of the used instruments has been proven through the research process: the value of Cronbach alpha for the questionnaire by which attitudes toward gender equality roles was measured is .790; it is .815 in case of the questionnaire by which family relations were measured; while the Cronbach alpha for the questionnaire for measuring overall self-esteem is .875; Cronbach alpha is .848 for the questionnaire which measures the externality of the locus of control and Cronbach alpha for the questionnaire which measures the social self-efficacy is .787. It can be concluded from these findings that all the questionnaires used have satisfactory reliability.

All statistical analyzes were performed in SPSS 22.0 (SPSS Inc, Chicago, Illinois) statistical package. The ANOVA (F-test) was used to compare the groups of respondents. Discriminant analysis was used to discriminate different groups of respondents based on their differences in family relations, general self-esteem, locus of control and social self-efficacy. All p-values that were 0.05 or less were considered significant.

## Results

The canonical discriminant analysis was applied to evaluate whether it is possible to differentiate between respondents characterized by a pronounced egalitarian attitudes toward gender roles and those who exhibited more traditional attitudes, and based on a set of variables that make up the: 1. Circumplex model of family functioning – Balanced Cohesion, Balanced Flexibility, Disengagement, Enmeshment, Rigidity and Chaoticity, Family Communication, and Family Satisfaction; 2. Overall self-esteem;



3. Locus of control, and 4. Social self-efficacy (Table 1 and Table 2). Before those analysis were done, correlation analysis was conducted; it is important to have in mind that all correlations had low intensity ( $r < 0.3$ ), which strongly ensures that there are no indications for multicollinearity in further predictions (Allison, 1999). Moreover, we also ran a specific test for multicollinearity, and we can conclude that specific indicators for multicollinearity were also at tolerable levels (Field, 2009) – Tolerance score for every predictor was over 0.20 and VIF (Variance Inflation Factor) below 10.

**Table 1***Chi-square and functions at group centroids of canonical discriminant functions*

Wilks' Lambda	Chi-square	Sig.	Function 1	
.746	108.826	.000	Tendency to traditionalism toward gender roles	-.511
			Tendency to egalitarianism toward gender roles	.663

The values of the group centroids (average discriminant scores for each of the groups) range from - 0.511 among respondents with pronounced traditionalism toward gender roles, to 0.663 among those respondents with more pronounced tendency to egalitarianism toward gender roles (Table 1). The discriminant function was performed for eleven factors, Wilks' Lambda = 0.746, Chi-square = 108.826,  $p < 0.01$ .

**Table 2***Means and structure matrix of canonical discriminant functions*

	Tendency to traditionalism toward gender roles	Tendency to egalitarianism toward gender roles	F	p	Stand. Can. Disc. Func. Coef.
	Mean	Mean			
Balanced cohesion	26.5047	27.5091	4.348	<b>.038</b>	<b>.458</b>
Balanced flexibility	24.0467	24.1333	.041	.840	-.111
Disengagement	17.5794	17.3212	.366	.545	.186
Enmeshment	17.4953	15.5818	26.817	<b>.000</b>	<b>-.222</b>
Rigidity	18.5561	16.5939	21.022	<b>.000</b>	<b>-.406</b>
Chaoticity	16.9486	16.2485	2.647	.105	.092
Family communication	37.5187	37.9758	.355	.552	-.369
Family satisfaction	37.1776	38.3030	1.875	.172	.241
Rosenberg self-esteem scale	34.9533	40.9333	71.037	<b>.000</b>	<b>.825</b>
Locus of control - externality	30.2477	27.3455	14.944	<b>.000</b>	<b>-.198</b>
Social self-efficacy	88.2617	90.1455	1.187	.277	-.166

Based on the data shown in Table 2, it can be concluded that respondents with pronounced egalitarianism attitudes toward gender roles are characterized by internal locus of control and especially high degree of self-esteem. In addition, Balanced cohesion was well expressed within their primary family relations, contrary to Enmeshment and Rigidness, which were less pronounced. On the other hand, respondents characterized by a pronounced traditional attitude toward gender roles produced the opposite results, as they are characterized external locus of control, pronounced Enmeshment and Rigidness within their family relations, but less pronounced self-esteem. They also experience less Balanced cohesion within family interactions.

The canonical discriminant analysis was also applied to evaluate whether it is possible to differentiate between respondents characterized by a pronounced egalitarianism toward parenting, heterosexual, professional and educational roles and those respondents who exhibited more traditional forms of attitudes for those social roles all of that based on a set of variables that made up the: 1. Circumplex model of family functioning – Balanced Cohesion, Balanced Flexibility, Disengagement, Enmeshment, Rigidity and Chaoticity, Family Communication, and Family Satisfaction, 2. Overall self-esteem, 3. Locus of control, and 4. Social self-efficacy (Tables 3 to 10).

**Table 3**

*Chi-square and functions at group centroids of canonical discriminant functions*

Wilks' Lambda	Chi-square	Sig.	Function 1	
.764	101.312	.000	Tendency to traditionalism toward parenting roles	-.523
			Tendency to egalitarianism toward parenting roles	.587

The values of the group centroids (average discriminant scores for each of the groups) range from - 0.523 among respondents with pronounced traditionalism toward parenting roles to 0.587 among those respondents with more pronounced tendency to egalitarianism toward parenting roles (Table 3). The discriminant function was performed for eleven factors, Wilks' Lambda = 0.764, Chi-square = 101.312,  $p < 0.01$ .

**Table 4***Means and structure matrix of canonical discriminant functions*

	Tendency to traditionalism toward parenting roles	Tendency to egalitarianism toward parenting roles	F	p	Stand. Can. Disc. Func. Coef.
	Mean	Mean			
Balanced cohesion	26.2463	27.7403	<b>10.147</b>	<b>.002</b>	<b>.589</b>
Balanced flexibility	23.9458	24.2873	.657	.418	-.201
Disengagement	17.6502	17.3425	.532	.466	.226
Enmeshment	17.3892	15.8840	<b>16.720</b>	<b>.000</b>	<b>-.159</b>
Rigidness	18.3300	17.0110	<b>9.524</b>	<b>.002</b>	<b>-.280</b>
Chaoticity	16.9310	16.3646	1.777	.183	.115
Family communication	36.1084	38.4088	<b>7.008</b>	<b>.044</b>	<b>.177</b>
Family satisfaction	36.0148	38.4696	<b>6.264</b>	<b>.032</b>	<b>.154</b>
Rosenberg self-esteem scale	34.8128	40.5801	<b>67.871</b>	<b>.000</b>	<b>.765</b>
Locus of control - externality	30.6847	27.1271	<b>23.862</b>	<b>.000</b>	<b>-.377</b>
Social self-efficacy	87.7586	90.5525	2.724	.100	-.108

The set of results presented in Table 4 lead to conclusions that respondents with pronounced egalitarianism attitudes toward parenting roles are characterized by internal locus of control and higher degree of self-esteem. In addition, Balanced cohesion was well expressed within their family relations, but also Family communication and Family satisfaction, contrary to Enmeshment and Rigidness, which were less pronounced. On the other hand, respondents characterized by a pronounced traditional attitude toward gender roles produced the opposite results, as they are characterized external locus of control, less pronounced self-esteem and less pronounced Family satisfaction and Family communication but pronounced Enmeshment and Rigidness within their family relations. They also experience less Balanced cohesion within family interactions.

**Table 5***Chi-square and functions at group centroids of canonical discriminant functions*

Wilks' Lambda	Chi-square	Sig.	Function 1
.898	40.769	.000	Tendency to traditionalism toward heterosexual roles -.271
			Tendency to egalitarianism toward heterosexual roles .419

The values of the group centroids (average discriminant scores for each of the groups) range from - 0.271 among respondents with pronounced traditionalism toward heterosexual roles to 0.419 among those respondents with more pronounced tendency to egalitarianism toward heterosexual roles (Table 5). The discriminant function was performed for eleven factors, Wilks' Lambda = 0.989, Chi-square = 40.769,  $p < 0.01$ .

**Table 6**  
*Means and structure matrix of canonical discriminant functions*

	Tendency to traditionalism toward heterosexual roles	Tendency to egalitarianism toward heterosexual roles	F	p	Stand. Can. Disc. Func. Coef.
	Mean	Mean			
Balanced cohesion	27.0000	26.9007	.042	.838	.518
Balanced flexibility	24.4017	23.7219	2.472	.117	-.211
Disengagement	17.3120	17.7947	1.261	.262	.259
Enmeshment	17.0385	16.0927	6.153	<b>.014</b>	<b>-.103</b>
Rigidity	18.3162	16.7748	12.602	<b>.000</b>	<b>-.512</b>
Chaoticity	16.4829	16.9139	.985	.322	.310
Family communication	38.1795	37.0662	2.108	.147	-.558
Family satisfaction	37.8889	37.4636	.265	.607	.336
Rosenberg self-esteem scale	36.5043	39.1258	11.804	<b>.001</b>	<b>.685</b>
Locus of control - externality	29.8248	27.7748	7.299	<b>.007</b>	<b>-.216</b>
Social self-efficacy	89.3718	88.4106	.305	.581	-.247

From the data shown in Table 6, it can be concluded that respondents with more egalitarian attitudes toward heterosexual roles are characterized by internal locus of control and high degree of self-esteem. Enmeshment and Rigidity are less pronounced within their family relations. On the other hand, respondents characterized by an expressed traditional attitude toward heterosexual roles produced the opposite results, as they are characterized external locus of control, pronounced Enmeshment and Rigidity within their family relations, and less pronounced self-esteem.

**Table 7**  
*Chi-square and functions at group centroids of canonical discriminant functions*

Wilks' Lambda	Chi-square	Sig.	Function 1
.754	106.680	.000	Tendency to traditionalism toward professional roles Tendency to egalitarianism toward professional roles
			-.545 .596

The values of the group centroids (average discriminant scores for each of the groups) range from - 0.545 among respondents with pronounced traditionalism toward professional roles to 0.696 among those respondents with more pronounced tendency to egalitarianism toward professional roles (Table 7). The discriminant function was performed for eleven factors, Wilks' Lambda = 0.754, Chi-square = 106.680,  $p < 0.01$ .

**Table 8**  
*Means and structure matrix of canonical discriminant functions*

	Tendency to traditionalism toward professional roles	Tendency to egalitarianism toward professional roles	F	p	Stand. Can. Disc. Func. Coef.
	Mean	Mean			
Balanced cohesion	26.3433	27.6359	7.580	<b>.006</b>	<b>.528</b>
Balanced flexibility	24.0896	24.1848	.050	.822	-.263
Disengagement	17.8308	17.1413	2.703	.101	.088
Enmeshment	17.3682	15.9022	15.862	<b>.000</b>	<b>-.086</b>
Rigidness	18.4627	16.8913	13.749	<b>.000</b>	<b>-.332</b>
Chaoticity	17.9398	16.2283	4.679	<b>.046</b>	<b>-.051</b>
Family communication	37.2587	38.2717	1.826	.177	-.286
Family satisfaction	36.1851	38.5272	4.685	<b>.046</b>	<b>.216</b>
Rosenberg self-esteem scale	34.6368	40.6957	76.873	<b>.000</b>	<b>.852</b>
Locus of control - externality	30.5075	27.3967	18.077	<b>.000</b>	<b>-.272</b>
Social selfefficacy	88.1791	89.8859	1.010	.316	-.192

The data presented in Table 8 leads to a conclusion that respondents with expressed egalitarian attitudes toward professional roles are characterized by internal locus of control and higher degree of self-esteem. In addition, Balanced cohesion was well expressed within their family relations and Family satisfaction also, contrary to Enmeshment, Rigidness and Chaotic levels of family functioning, which were less pronounced. On the other hand, respondents characterized by a pronounced traditional attitude toward professional roles produced the opposite results, as they are characterized by external locus of control, less pronounced self-esteem, and less pronounced Family satisfaction, but pronounced Enmeshment, Chaoticity and Rigidity within their family relations. They experience less Balanced cohesion within family interactions, too.

**Table 9**

*Chi-square and functions at group centroids of canonical discriminant functions*

Wilks' Lambda	Chi-square	Sig.	Function 1	
.835	67.431	.000	Tendency to traditionalism toward educational roles	-.402
			Tendency to egalitarianism toward educational roles	.489

The values of the group centroids (average discriminant scores for each of the groups) range from - 0.420 among respondents with pronounced traditionalism toward educational roles to 0.489 among those respondents with more pronounced tendency to egalitarianism toward educational roles (Table 9). The discriminant function was performed for eleven factors, Wilks 'Lambda = 0.835, Chi-square = 67.431,  $p < 0.01$ .

**Table 10**

*Means and structure matrix of canonical discriminant functions*

	Tendency to traditionalism toward educational roles	Tendency to egalitarianism toward educational roles	F	p	Stand. Can. Disc. Func. Coef.
	Mean	Mean			
Balanced cohesion	26.7368	27.2267	1.041	.308	.457
Balanced flexibility	24.2488	23.9535	.475	.491	-.204
Disengagement	17.3014	17.6628	.731	.393	.361
Enmeshment	17.1435	16.0756	8.045	<b>.005</b>	<b>-.046</b>
Rigidness	18.5167	16.7326	17.519	<b>.000</b>	<b>-.531</b>
Chaoticity	16.5885	16.7093	.079	.779	.247
Family communication	37.6555	37.8372	.057	.812	-.294
Family satisfaction	37.2297	38.2500	1.563	.212	.435
Rosenberg self-esteem scale	35.8373	39.6453	26.395	<b>.000</b>	<b>.755</b>
Locus of control - externality	30.0861	27.6802	10.317	<b>.001</b>	<b>-.236</b>
Social self-efficacy	89.5120	88.3837	.429	.513	-.320

Based on all presented research data from table 1 to table 10, it is evident that individuals who are characterized by the egalitarianism toward gender roles may be discriminated by those with tendency to traditionalism toward gender roles, based on the intensity of different levels of family functioning (cohesion, enmeshment, rigidness, chaoticity, communication and satisfaction within family), overall self-esteem and of course externality-internality of locus of control.

## Discussion and conclusion

The research findings obtained in this study unequivocally indicate that relationships stemming from the family context, along with current self-esteem and the external-internal locus of control, are significant constructs when examining individuals' attitudes towards gender roles. It has been demonstrated that there is a possibility of differentiation between individuals who hold egalitarian attitudes towards gender roles and those who possess traditional views, based on variables such as locus of control, self-esteem, and various dimensions relevant to family functioning, primarily.

Such research results, highlighting the significance of relationships within our family, are not unexpected when considering the viewpoints of numerous authors who emphasize that the modern social context views the family as an embodiment of unity and individuality, love and solidarity, primarily based on open and clear communication, roles shared through agreement, abilities, and inclinations – concepts that are affirmed by the notions of the contemporary family built on experiences and findings of systemic therapists regarding functional family relationships (Dragišić-Labaš, 2002).

Role changes are considered to be crucial indicators of the shift from a traditional to an egalitarian type of family, which indeed is a trend in the evolution of the modern family (Janković & Todorović, 2016). In this context, Whitaker suggests that healthy families can resist the pressures of the dominant male culture (Milojković et al., 1997). Some sources indicate that family relationships play a central role in shaping an individual over the course of life (Merz et al., 2009; Parke et al., 1989). Family members are linked in important ways through each stage of life and these relationships are an important source of social connection and social influence for individuals throughout their lives (Umberson et al., 2010). Family connections can provide a greater sense of meaning and purpose as well as social and tangible resources (Hartwell & Benson, 2007; Kawachi & Berkman, 2001).

In our research, balanced cohesion emerged as a significant factor in distinguishing individuals who hold egalitarian attitudes towards gender roles from those with traditional beliefs, which is in serious alignment with the assumptions that balanced levels of cohesion and flexibility are most suitable for healthy family functioning, while imbalanced levels of cohesion and flexibility are associated with problematic family functioning (Olson & Gorall, 2006).

Additionally, the findings indicated significant differences in the unbalanced aspects of flexibility between individuals with egalitarian attitudes and those with traditional beliefs towards gender roles, with higher levels of rigidity and chaos being more pronounced among those inclined towards traditional attitudes. All of this is consistent with the premise of authors like Olson and Gorall, who proposed in the Circumplex model of family functioning that a rigid relationship involves a dominant individual with high levels of control, limited agreements as most decisions are imposed by the “leader.” Rules are strictly defined and never change. A

chaotic relationship is characterized by unstable or limited leadership. Decisions are made impulsively and without sufficient thought. Roles are unclear and often shift from one member to another (Olson & Gorall, 2006). The research conducted by Matejević and Jovanović (2014) yielded interesting data. Namely, the findings imply that patriarchal and contemporary principles coexist side by side and that, in a very specific way, they define adolescents' perceptions that simultaneously aspire to be more contemporary while being enmeshed in patriarchal beliefs that have been passed down through generations. They concluded that transition contributes significantly to the development of a different value system and perception of parental roles, but that, on the other hand, the generational transfer of family culture has an impact on the traditional continuity, which is evident in students' perceptions. The results highlight the students' current views on how family's function and how parents should parent, which is crucial for their acceptance of parental roles in the future because they show a tendency toward an equitable distribution of family roles and capable parenting (Matejevic, Jovanovic, 2014: 551). Similarly, Matejević, Todorović, and Jovanović (2015: 194) also discuss the existence of stereotypes in our culture related to double standards and thus double criteria in assessing the behavior of men and women. Specifically, they highlight the tendency to critically evaluate the behavior of women who are mothers due to the presence of the stereotype that she is responsible and "to blame" for raising children. Because she is a mother, more is expected of her compared to fathers. It could be argued that the criticism of mothers' behavior stems from the traditionally established greater responsibility attributed to her upbringing and care of children, as well as the ingrained expectation that she fits better into that role, simply by following her maternal instinct. The transmission of such prejudices and expectations is somewhat understandable, given that traces of patriarchal culture still exist in Serbia and that the family is viewed as a system operating through transactional patterns consisting of repeated interactions that establish behavioral patterns.

The results related to unbalanced aspects of family cohesion showed that individuals with traditional attitudes are characterized by a significantly higher level of enmeshment within family relationships compared to individuals with egalitarian attitudes towards gender roles. As emphasized by Olson (2000), excessive enmeshment within the family represents extreme closeness and loyalty, where family members become highly dependent on each other (Olson, 2000).

An important finding of the research is the fact that based on the level of self-esteem and external locus of control, it is possible to distinguish between individuals who lean towards egalitarian attitudes towards gender roles compared to those who tend towards traditional attitudes. Self-esteem is significantly more pronounced among individuals with egalitarian attitudes, and additionally, they exhibit a dominant internal locus of control. Results of some studies in this field indicate that gender-roles' attitudes and stereotypes are closely associated with person's self-esteem. According to self-categorization theory, self-stereotyping occurs on all group relevant attributes or dimensions (Turner et al., 1987). Thus, positive gender role attitudes can promote self-esteem (Pryor, 1994; Oswald & Lindstedt, 2006).



However, the internalization of negative group stereotypes may threaten one's social identity and lead to a reduction in person's self-esteem (Katz et al., 2002). For the disadvantaged female group, internalization of the lesser value that women hold in society might lead to their negative personal evaluation of self, and it has been documented that girl begins to demonstrate lower self-esteem than do boy in adolescence (Katz et al., 2002).

Furthermore, it can be added that stereotypical gender roles can have a direct impact on the values upon which individuals' lives are based. When expectations about gender roles are in conflict with an individual's core values, they can create tension and hinder self-expression, while efforts to fulfill one's potential may be negatively influenced.

Examining the findings regarding differences in external-internal locus of control between individuals with egalitarian and traditional attitudes towards gender roles, similar relationships have been found in other studies (Chia, 1995; Hennecke, 2023; Minnigerode, 1976). Findings of Valentine (1999) indicate positive relations among locus of control and men's negative stereotypes of women who work, which suggests that men who feel a lack of personal control may oppose women working outside of their home. The results also indicate that men with greater personal control may be more accepting of women in non-traditional gender roles than men with an external locus of control.

Traditional beliefs regard women's appropriate role as homemakers and men's as breadwinners. On the other hand, egalitarian attitudes refer to a more equal distribution of professional and family life responsibilities between men and women. Gender role attitudes are a complex and multifaceted concept (Bazik, 2001). They can refer to many topics such as stereotypes about both genders, equality of opportunity in schooling and employment, proper roles in the family, division of household and childcare labor and acceptance of macro-level social change.

The concepts we develop regarding gender roles that aim towards egalitarianism as opposed to traditionalism are not just scientific facts and significant research material; they represent one of the most important achievements of modern society and create the foundation of what embodies justice, democracy, equality, and above all, righteousness, and humanity. Having in mind obtained result as well as tendencies of modern society, it seems that future educational initiatives should be oriented precisely towards fostering more democratic school culture. Within cross curricular learning and extracurricular activities from elementary school toward secondary school and forward learners should develop the awareness about the existence of prejudices and stereotypes, and their impact on the formation of people's attitudes and behaviour. Also, educational activities should be oriented toward the importance of overcoming prejudices and stereotypes and the efforts of teachers and other experts to equip students with cognitive tools. These tools can be a valuable resource for raising the awareness of young people about the modern family, but also the form of pedagogical culture necessary for functioning in the modern world. Besides that, various developmental programs of education and parenting programs can be of great benefit in terms of building the value system of young people, their attitudes,

and beliefs in accordance with contemporary social movements and tendencies, but also a good basis for equal consideration and treatment in terms of behavior, roles, and self-efficacy.

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## **ISTRAŽIVANJE STAVOVA PREMA RODNIM ULOGAMA: ZNAČAJ PORODIČNIH ODNOSA, SAMOPOŠTOVANJA, LOKUSA KONTROLE I SAMOEFIKASNOSTI**

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**Apstrakt:** U istraživanju su ispitivane razlike u egalitarizmu i tradicionalizmu u pogledu stavova prema rodnim ulogama kod studenata Univerziteta u Nišu. Stavovi su razmatrani u okviru četiri sociopsihološke kategorije: porodični odnosi, globalno samopoštovanje, socijalna samoeфикаsnost i eksternalnost lokusa kontrole. Ispitivana je i mogućnost da se na osnovu navedenih varijabli napravi distinkcija između ispitanika sa izraženim egalitarnim i ispitanika za izraženim tradicionalnim stavovima prema rodnim ulogama. Instrumenti: Skala stavova o rodnoj jednakosti (Ravlic & Raboteg-Šarić, 2002), Upitnik Faces IV (Olson & Gorrall, 2006), Skala self koncepta (Bezinović, 1988) i to subskale Samopoštovanje (Rosenberg scale) i skala Eksternalnosti/internalnosti lokusa kontrole, Skala socijalne samoeфикаsnosti – PSSE (Caprara & Steca, 2005). Uzorak istraživanja čini 390 studenata Univerziteta u

Nišu sa različitih fakulteta i različitih polja profesionalnih orijentacija, kako prirodnih tako i društveno-humanističkih nauka. Korišćene su analiza varijanse i kanonička diskriminaciona analiza. Rezultati su pokazali da osobe sa tendencijom ka egalitarnim stavovima prema rodnim ulogama karakteriše visok nivo kohezije i fleksibilnosti u porodičnom funkcionisanju, izraženije samopoštovanje i interni lokus kontrole, a sve to u odnosu na osobe sa tendencijom ka tradicionalnim stavovima prema rodnim ulogama. Shvatanja koja budemo gradili u pogledu rodnih uloga koja bi težila izgradnji egalitarizma nasuprot tradicionalizmu nisu samo naučna činjenica i značajan istraživački materijal, već predstavljaju jedan od najznačajnijih ostvarenja savremenog čovečanstva i čine temelj onoga što je personifikacija pravde, demokratije i jednakosti, a pre svega dobrote i ljudskosti.

***Ključne reči:*** rodne uloge, egalitarizam naspram tradicionalizma, porodični odnosi, samopoštovanje, lokus kontrole

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