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Havelkova, Hana

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## Ignored But Assumed. Family and Gender Between Public and Private Realm

HANA HAVELKOVÁ\*

Institute of Humanities, Charles University, Prague

**Abstract:** In the analysis of the social transformation after the collapse of the communist regime, the way the transformation of the public sphere is made possible by the strategies within the private sphere has been insufficiently investigated. In particular, the role of women as the bearers of these strategies has been ignored but assumed. This paper posits that this is also due to the omission of the concepts of the public and the private and the concept of gender as analytical sociological tools. It deals with the private-public relationship in modern society as an open process in which gender relations are not only formed, but in return also form the connotations of these spheres according to gender understanding. On this theoretical base, possible ways of rethinking the model of the bourgeois family, which, in Czech society, has a normative power, are suggested with reference to Arendt's and Habermas' concepts. Thus, the current process of the socialisation under changing conditions can be dealt with as a complex problem of interrelations between the private and public spheres broadening the thus far narrow and static conception of the family and bridging the so far separately solved problems of family and gender.

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Within the analyses of the social transformation after the collapse of the communist regime, analysis of the transformation of the underlying relationship between the private and public spheres is virtually non-existent. And yet it is precisely in this area that major structural shifts, both in terms of modern and democratic “standards”, can be shown. Under the communist regime, both the absence of a market economy and a democratic political system reduced the importance of the public existence of citizens and emphasized their private life. With the restoration of the public realm after 1989, the importance, demands and overburdening of private life have not declined. This might seem paradoxical, but it is not. The public strategies of societal transformation could not be possible without the loyalty of the citizens who bear the social impact of the transformation process (through, for example, the threats to their accustomed standard of living) and cope with this impact by complex and demanding private strategies. Besides economic factors, they also face destabilized social conditions including an increase in criminality in general and drug consumption by young people in particular. The family, of course, continues to be regarded as the main moral bastion – probably more than under communism. We can say that the public economic and political strategies rely to a large extent upon the capacity of Czech families to cope with difficult situations. Yet the more this capacity is assumed by the liberalist leaders of the transformation, the more it is in fact ignored.

Although private coping strategies are discussed by some sociologists in great detail, the agents of these strategies in their analyses are “people and households” [Večerník 1994] or “families” [Možný 1994]. The way this very area is gendered continues to be

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\*) Direct all correspondence to: PhDr. Hana Havelková, CSc., Institute of Humanities, Charles University, Legerova 63, 120 00 Praha 2, phone + 42 2 24 22 65 53-6.

ignored, although it is not too difficult to show that those who “coordinate” and mostly realise these strategies are women. This correlates with the fact that the revival of the public sphere after 1989 considerably increased men’s involvement in it.

A gender perspective is urgently needed, yet in the Czech social sciences the very concept “gender” is as little used as an analytical tool as are the concepts of the public and the private. Both are the result of the country’s lengthy isolation. Not only has the feminist parole “personal is political” not yet been uttered here, but the works that have theorized the public-private issue since the early 1960s such as those by Hannah Arendt or Jürgen Habermas have not yet been translated into Czech and are virtually unknown. In addition, the implementation of the gender perspective in the Czech environment is apparently being prevented by a specific emphasis on the concept of the family linked with the high value of the family in society.

It is for this reason that I wrote this paper: to argue that the concepts of “gender” and “private and public” are especially valuable to the analysis of the family concept. Since the paper was addressed first of all to the Czech sociological audience, I pointed out that neither can the family perspective be a substitute for the gender perspective nor need it contradict it. Given the absence of the theorizing of the public-private issue in general, I did not begin my exploration of the gender perspective from the feminist starting points; instead I tried to connect it directly with more or less gender neutral theories on public-private. I did so because I believe that on the one hand, an understanding of the underlying public-private structure of Czech society is not possible without the inclusion of the gender perspective, but that on the other hand, the local specificities in gender relations must be explored against the more general analysis of the specific characteristics of the public and private realms in this society.

In the same way, I pay attention to the expectations connected to the bourgeois family model which, despite the tendency towards a greater diversity of the real forms of family life (similar to those in Western societies), seems to play a different role under the specific circumstances of Czech society. Unlike in my previous articles addressed to the Western audience where I explained the specific status of the family in Czech society [Havelková 1993a, 1993b], here, on the contrary, I criticise the overly traditional way the family is thought of, a way which, first and foremost, in no way corresponds to the real biography of the vast majority of Czech women.

#### **Categories of the public and the private**

The origin of modern society was connected with a fundamental structural transformation: the creation of a public space for *intercourse* between free individuals on the one hand, and the creation of a private sphere for the *formation* of these free individuals, on the other. The process of individualization takes place and is manifest in the *relationship* between these realms. Their institutional *separation*, unknown and unthinkable in a traditional society, is as significant as is their mutual *interdependence*.

In spite of the fact that this is undeniably one of the fundamental structures of modern society, until recently political philosophy and sociology in most cases did not operate directly with the categories of the private and the public in their conceptual framework. Instead they spoke simply of the discrete institutions themselves. The relationship between the private and public spheres was most frequently dealt with in terms of a relationship between the individual and society or the family and the state, between

provisions under public law and private law, etc. This is still the approach adopted in the Czech social sciences, including sociology.

The reasons for this were undoubtedly methodological: sociology in particular, emerging as a positivist science, concentrated on clearly definable formations and their functions. However, the private and public spheres not only do not represent such institutions but can best be characterized as two *dimensions of existence* of the life of the individual. The fundamental definition of the public and private is, therefore, a philosophical one. Moreover, the concepts of the public and private indicate the flexible *attributes* of institutions, a kind of indeterminacy. It is probably no accident that these concepts experienced a revival only with the arrival of the “sociological imagination” and the frontal critique of modern society which had become so predominant in the 1960s. It is increasingly apparent that when profound social changes are to be analyzed, these categories possess a specific heuristic potential, thereby providing a better understanding of the social transformations than the concepts previously employed – such as concepts of the individual and society, the family and the state. I believe this to be doubly true of an analysis of the current transformation of our society.

The failure to exploit the advantages of the categories of the private and the public has yet another cause: the inherent lack of interest of liberal theories in the private sphere, a disinterest which prevailed until recently. The private sphere was considered to be the personal affair of each individual, in total disregard of the differentiated status of “personal affairs” for either sex. This, again, is a predominant view in Czech theories.

In my paper I would like to point out that while it is true that the relationship between the private and the public *determines the social role* of the two sexes, the opposite also applies: namely that in the relationship between the private and the public, the social (political) *perception of the gender roles* is one of the major *structuring* elements. If the institution of the family plays a key role in these relations, it is essential to question, expand and deepen its current conception. I consider the contradiction between the concealed normativity of the family as the bourgeois family, and the existing conditions in our society as a problem which has received insufficient attention.

#### **The public and the private in the light of human activities and their connotations**

Though the Athenian polis was, from the sociological point a view, a traditional society, its political organization caused a separation of the public and private realms. Historically, this was the first such separation of these spheres. While the differences between the modern and traditional societies are decisive for the character of these spheres in the former, the connotations associated with both the public and private spheres and recorded in the Athenian polis have, remarkably, recurred in modern times.

According to Hannah Arendt, Athenian democracy was founded on the relationship between the public and private spheres; and yet the evaluation of the two spheres is *asymmetrical*. Democracy in the Greek *polis*, she maintained, was possible only thanks to the *oikos*, the private organization of the economy within the household. The relationship between the public and the private was a relationship between *necessity and freedom*: “As living beings, concerned with the preservation of life, men are confronted with and driven by necessity. Necessity must be mastered only through domination. Hence the freedom of the ‘good life’ rests on the domination of necessity. The mastery of necessity then has as its goal the controlling of the necessities of life, which coerce men and hold them in their

power. But such domination can be accomplished only by controlling and doing violence to others, who as slaves relieve free men from themselves being coerced by necessity.” [Arendt 1987: 117-118]. Private life and political life constitute two “orders of existence” (Aristotle). Hannah Arendt does not explicitly mention women, yet it is well known that they were restricted to the private space and, consequently, subject to all its implications of lesser prestige, status and dignity.

This analysis is connected with Arendt’s fundamental philosophical conception of *vita activa* which is reflected in three fundamental human activities: *labour*, *work* and *action*. *Labour* corresponds to processes of the human body and natural processes and is defined by necessity since it concerns *life* and the need for its preservation; it includes *reproduction* in the wider sense. It does not safeguard individual survival alone but the life of the species as well. *Work*, in contrast, produces an artificial world of things different from nature but, at the same time, introduces the dimension of permanence and endlessness into life. It overcomes the transitoriness of *labour*. In spite of this, Arendt considers only participation in the “common world” i.e. *action*, political action – to be a supreme human activity. If the justification of *labour* is the reproduction of life as such, and the justification of *work* is the production of (useful) things, then the justification of *action* is to give life a purpose, make it significant, and only in this way, profoundly human. As long as action results in establishing and maintaining political formations, it creates the possibility for memory, for history [Arendt 1958].

In ancient democracy, the polis was the only domain of action and hence the only ensuing possibility of full humanity. As pointed out, it was founded on the lack of freedom of the excluded – slaves and women as well as foreigners and some free men. The significance of the contraposition freedom-necessity is complemented by others: permanence-transitoriness, light-dark, etc. As Jürgen Habermas maintains, these connotations of the concepts of the public and the private (in part, expressed by the renaissance) have retained their “peculiarly normative power” [Habermas 1989: 4]. They are also accepted in their full strength in a 1949 analysis of the woman’s fate by Simone de Beauvoir, where she describes, from an existentialist position, the then contemporary existence of the man as *transcendence* and the existence of the woman as *immanence*. “Every subject plays his part as such specifically through exploits or projects that serve as a mode of transcendence. He achieves liberty only through a continual reaching out toward other liberties. There is no justification for present existence other than its expansion into an indefinitely open future. Every time transcendence falls back into immanence, stagnation, there is a degradation of existence into the en soi – the brutish life of subjection to given conditions – and of liberty into constraint and contingency” [Beauvoir 1974: xxxiii]. So, if women want to be “included into the human *Mitsein*” [Ibid.: 5], there is no other road than the “endeavoring to make their escape from the sphere hitherto assigned them “ [Ibid.: 5]. The inferiority of reproduction (the woman’s domain) is expressed even more explicitly in connection with the explanation as to why women have accepted their subordinate position in history: “The warrior put his life in jeopardy to elevate the prestige of the horde [...] and in this he proved dramatically that life is not the supreme value for man, but on the contrary that it should be made to serve ends more important than itself [...] For it is not in giving life but in risking life that man is raised above the animal. That is why superiority has been accorded in humanity not to the sex that brings forth but to that which kills [...] Her [woman’s] misfortune is to have been biologically destined for the repeti-

tion of Life, when even in her own view Life does not carry within itself its reasons for being, reasons that are more important than the life itself.” [Ibid.: 72-73]

In modern society too, the contraposition of the private and public life is understood as the contraposition of complete and incomplete *humanity*; yet it is only here that the exclusion of the woman from *action* becomes a theme. Even though one could never speak of the public and the private sphere within modern society as exclusive domains of one or the other sex, the exclusion of women from that which Habermas calls the political public sphere nevertheless persists. Representatives of different analyses of the so-called women’s question, liberals (J. S. Mill), socialists (Bebel) or humanists (Masaryk) all agreed on this point. They linked equality of the sexes or the emancipation of women precisely with women’s participation in public affairs. Yet emancipation along the lines of the universalization of civil rights made only slow progress. Critics argued that this approach was half-hearted, formalist and led only to tokenism. The reason, according to Habermas [1989], is that in the case of women it is not merely a matter of expanding democratic participation (as was the case for lower class men), since the exclusion of women also rests on an underlying social structure. Its correction does not impact only on the economic sphere but on the internal private space of the family too.<sup>1</sup>

This, however, says nothing more than that the functions in the public sphere remain *vitally dependent* on functions in the private sphere. As the emancipation of women advanced, the question of who will carry out functions in the private sphere and how this is to be done, has become increasingly acute. In our society, this question has long ceased to be purely ideological since the presence of women in the public sector (although not in the sense of total participation in the political public) is a *reality* and, in a certain sense, even the social norm to an extent not experienced by any Western society. Under these circumstances, the theme of the dependence of the public sphere on the private sphere is of particular urgency.

This situation has the unquestionable disadvantage that Czech society has so far not been involved in the feminist debate which has been in progress in Western theory since the early 1980s. In this debate, gender *equality* was seen to require the recognition and respect for gender *difference*. In theory and in practice, the specific female perspective began to be evaluated in connection with an evaluation of the “*life-world*” or *everyday life*. The experience of women, women’s sensitivity and moral attitudes are losing the stigma of inferiority. It is only thus that the abovementioned connotations of the public and private spheres as well as the uneven evaluation of human activities are being changed. The *preservation of life* is beginning to have a higher value than war, while the content of the concepts of transcendence and immanence is changing.

It might appear that stressing the role of the mother and the significance of the family in our country corresponds to the trend; this is something the mass media have been saying loud and clear since 1989. But this rhetoric does not concur with the cultural process which took place in the West. A rise in values related to *public virtues* is more in keeping with our reality, i.e. competitiveness, performance and public prestige. The connotations of the public and private spheres have not changed greatly, and the pressure to restore the traditional division of roles on the basis of sex is, therefore, problematic. It is

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<sup>1</sup>) In the Preface to the 18th German edition of *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit* (1993), Habermas admits that he only became aware of this twenty years after having written it.

incredible how little interest our social sciences show in *the conditions determining the actual performance* of the functions expected of the family. It appears that the conservative declaration, like the post-modern adoration of the moral superiority of women, is a matter for the intellectual elite – but only a part of it. The great majority of the population is torn between the dream of the harmonious family and the reality of the exceptionally high percentage of women holding jobs of their own free will or due to economic pressure. Under these circumstances, social sciences are charged with finding an answer to the Kantian question “*How is a functioning family possible?*”

The relationship between family ideology and reality concerns not only better or worse functioning families. The *normativity of the family model* determines the *normativity of the gender roles* for those who are already in the family, for those who are just entering it or leaving it, as well as for those who have never lived in it. Ivo Možný convincingly documents that the share of the nuclear family is an absolute *minority* in our population: “We definitely cannot claim that such an arrangement is today in our country a majority arrangement of the fundamental social micro-structure of human relations, forming the basis of our everyday existence, or, to put it differently, of our normal way of life during the time not spent at work. It is more often an ideal, a harmonious memory, a permanent goal of our endeavour rather than a reality valid for everyone.” [Možný 1990: 23]. But what is the content of this “memory”, of its illusion and at the same time, of that which we consider worthy of our endeavour? Možný’s analyses lead from sociology towards psychology, concentrating especially on one of the contents of the ideal conception of the family as the site of love conceived as a monogamous relationship. My reflections go in the opposite direction, to *the political-philosophical implications of family normativity*.

#### **Shift in the content of the concepts of the private and the public in modern society**

The content and function of human activities in the private and public spheres in modern society differ substantially from those in ancient society. According to Hannah Arendt, the shift in the character of the *public sphere* is the fundamental characteristic of *society*, society being a term which according to her, could only be applied to the modern society. “The emergence of society – the rise of housekeeping, its activities, problems, and organizational devices – from the shadowy interior of the household into the light of the public sphere has not only blurred the old borderline between private and political, it has also changed almost beyond recognition the meaning of the two terms and their significance for the life of the individual and the citizen.” [Arendt 1958: 38]

Does this not refute all I have said thus far about the relationship between the private and the public in a modern democracy? Not at all, because just as the public space has been filled with new functions, so has the private space. The remarkable thing is that despite the fundamental change in the “content” of these spheres, the relationship between them repeats the Athenian model, i.e. the dependence of the public on the private in the sense of anchoring public “freedom”. The question arises as to what degree this relationship is a structural prerequisite for democracy as such.

Arendt maintains that activities have shifted into the public political sphere which she characterized by the concepts of labour and work; it is no longer the supreme sphere of political action. And this is precisely what Arendt has in mind: she is afraid that with the emergence of the social, the political in the classical sense of the free intercourse of autonomous and unique individuals participating in a common human world is threatened

in modern society. In this sense, Arendt argues, the sharp boundary between the private and public has been eliminated. Production and reproduction in addition to action, have become part of the political. This has been expressed in an articulate manner in Arendt's definition of (modern) society: "Society is the form in which the fact of mutual dependence for the sake of life and nothing else assumes public significance and where the activities connected with sheer survival are permitted to appear in public." [Ibid.: 46] She feels that this leads to a de facto devaluation of political action and, hence, to the public sphere as such.

At the same time, so Arendt argues, modern individualism brought an immense enrichment of the private sphere. "[...] we call private today a sphere of intimacy whose beginnings we may be able to trace back to late Roman, though hardly to any period of Greek antiquity, but whose peculiar manifoldness and variety were certainly unknown to any period prior to the modern age." [Ibid.: 38] According to her, what is decisive for the character of the private in modern times is that historically it has emerged as an antithesis to the social and not to the political. This is the source of its primary function, namely to guarantee intimacy. Therefore, it is in a closer and more substantial relationship with the social than with the political [Ibid.: 38]. Whereas the social, as distinct from the political, is determined primarily by economic activity, the role of the private concerns rather two dimensions of the existence of the modern "private human being": as owner and as a human being as such.

Jürgen Habermas, who analyzed the emergence of the public and private spheres from traditional feudal society, draws a distinction between two areas of the public sphere and two levels of private life. He distinguishes between public administration, which has become separated from traditional power structures (initially understood as the authorities), and the bourgeois public, civil society emerging from below. The latter, however, consists both of private, independent persons whose activity is nevertheless publicly relevant and of a strata of intellectuals (*Bildungsbürger*). When consciously addressing and controlling the public administration, the bourgeois public represents the political public which is not identical with the purely economic behaviour of individuals. So here it is also a question of distinguishing between the political and the social as does Arendt. Habermas holds that the line between public and private spheres extended right through the home [Habermas 1989: 45]. The private sphere is the place where the owner confirms his independence from the market and his independence as a "human being" from his role as owner.

The family is the private institution which, according to Arendt, is to "safeguard intimacy" and, according to Habermas, to create a consciousness of the independence of the "human being". It is therefore necessary to differentiate between the concept of the private in the economic sense of private enterprise and in the narrower sense of intimate life, which was ruled by the normativity of the bourgeois family. The model of the bourgeois family has specific features. The internal space of the patriarchal nuclear family is the "scene of a psychological emancipation which corresponded to the political-economic one" [Ibid.: 46]. It is also the creation site of bourgeois culture and morals. The bourgeois family rests on a specific ideology since it is based on the illusion of independence i.e., on the negation of its economic origin and function. Yet Habermas maintains that it can be understood only if we realize that it is not purely ideology, that it was and is a substantial reality as well.



The ideology of the bourgeois family is characterized by three fundamental features: voluntariness (it appears to be established freely and to be maintained without coercion), the community of love, and cultivation (here there is supposed to be a non-instrumental development of abilities for their own sake). These three features merge into one concept of humanity [Ibid.: 47]. In Habermas' view, this idea clashes with reality, above all, because not only is the family not exempt from the constraint of the social norms, but because it is an institution deriving from necessity (not from one's own free will). "It played its precisely defined role in the process of the reproduction of capital. As a genealogical link it guaranteed a continuity of personnel that consisted materially in the accumulation of capital". But, in the first place, "As an agency of society it served especially the task of that difficult mediation through which, in spite of the illusion of freedom, strict conformity with societally necessary requirements was brought about." [Ibid.: 47]

That is where the core of the sophisticated relationship between freedom and necessity lies in modern society, a relationship which proceeds along the line dividing the private and the public and which is intrinsically "gendered", in other words, the opposite of a sexually neutral relationship. It is the woman who must ensure "strict conformity with the societally necessary requirements", guarantee the cultivation of family intimacy, thus giving that "appearance of freedom". This is not just any kind of necessity. The family represents an important instrument of social integration once the ties of traditional society have disintegrated. A society based on intercourse between autonomous individuals is vitally dependent on this integration function. The development of the personality in the family, family cultivation, has assumed exceptional importance. In the family, Riesman's inner directed man has been programmed to withstand the test of the public world and be capable of communication.

The defining characteristic of the woman was closely linked with the ideology of the bourgeois family. The woman had to be tied to the family. The German historian Ute Gerhard refers to German pedagogical literature to demonstrate that whereas in the late 18th century the role of the woman was still seen as a social necessity, in the middle of the 19th century it was already perceived as the natural role of the woman. She quotes the educator Campe (*Advice of the Father*, 1789) who claimed that the true mission of the woman consists of the "wife as gladdening the heart", "mother as educator" and "the woman as representative of domestic existence" [Gerhard 1978: 128]. Campe distinguishes between two definitions of the woman (Frau): the general (as a human being) and the specific (as the "Weib"). Her general role is to raise herself and others by goal-directed education with a purpose and using all her forces and abilities, but her specific role obliterates that which is general "in view of her mission as a female (Weib) and her tie to objects and activities lying within the realm of her female role". The important thing is, however, that Campe does not see this special role of the woman as privilege it had been in feudal times, but as an "unfavourable relationship", as a state of affairs which "in our current perception of the world is considered as dependent and leading to a spiritual as well as physical weakening" [see Gerhard 1978: 130]. The internal ideological contradiction is here quite explicit, and it is probably no coincidence that the greater the philosopher of freedom, the more patriarchal his opinion of the woman – Fichte especially stood out in this respect.

Here, democracy comes into contradiction with the fundamental premises of its self-understanding. In dealing with this conflict, the woman's question received its name, while the resolution was the goal of the women's movement. But as I have tried to show, the conflict was not merely ideological or consisting merely in the "belatedness" of individual liberation for women but was part of the very conditions for the functioning of modern democracy, and is therefore much more profound. Yet it is also untenable. The question of "how the well functioning family is possible" is connected to the elimination of this conflict, and it is senseless to raise it in an isolated manner, without dealing with gender relations in the family and in public life. The changes in the relationship of the private and public spheres reveal which functions of the family are essential and alive; they also reveal the spontaneous situation in the development of gender relations in society as a whole, i.e., what expectations are realistic vis-a-vis the family depending on what can be expected of real individuals and of a given society.

### **The bourgeois family – still an acceptable model?**

To analyze this, one must recognize what was initially only partially real in the original model of the bourgeois family. The argument of personal autonomy is naturally of primary importance. The fact that in the era of human and civil rights, the woman was dependent and subordinated, that she was always dependent on a specific man (Simone de Beauvoir uses the term "vassal") and kept in this dependence by public law, i.e., by having neither ownership nor civil (human) rights, was an unsustainable state of affairs per se. For the woman, the premises of voluntary entry into marriage and remaining in that state was questionable from the very beginning (the right to divorce was one of the means of women's emancipation). The idea of the community of love combined with the institution of the marriage contract, frequently a "marriage for money", was problematic too, as was the illusion of cultivation which was to be the purpose in itself. The requirements of the profession contradicted this ideal.

Habermas breaks down the myth of the bourgeois family as an institution which, by not going beyond the scope of social pressures, is not in a position to live up to all ideal expectations: the ideal of freedom from social requirements, pure love and the cultivation of the personality for its own purpose. But at the same time, it seems that it is only in the family that it is possible (to attempt) to come close to these ideals. In doing so, its ideal nature also becomes real since it implies "humanity of the intimate relationship between human beings who, under the aegis of the family, were nothing more than human [Habermas 1989: 48]. From our own experience we know for example, that in the contradiction between the cultivation of the personality and mere training in skills, the individual mostly receives the former in the family.

The family was also seen as the guardian of morals, a moral institution. Richard Sennett [1992] demonstrates how the world of fierce public competition gradually loses moral attributes and how these are increasingly tied to the family. In accordance with this, the woman is portrayed as a moral being. We have seen, however, that all these virtuous roles of women were, in fact, not recognized by society, probably precisely because they took place in private. The mercilessness of the final judgment was determined by the connotations of the public space of transcendence and the private space by "mere" immanence.

Where was equality not introduced? In two types of activity, both vitally important for modern society: unpaid care (covering the material, educational and emotional func-

tion) and paid work outside the family, connected with power (male domination in the public sphere and in the family). The tension produced by the internal ideological contradiction of modern society, which is the true cause of the tension between the gender roles, is, however, not the only self-disintegrating element in the bourgeois family. Two further ones should be mentioned. First, the ideological factor of the bourgeois family lay also in the fact that in the past the nuclear family was statistically even less frequent than it is today. The normativity of the family was especially hard on all who did not live in it, but it hit women – whether single or one-parent providers – and their children – not to mention illegitimate children – harder. This resulted in the pauperization of women. Second, it is not true that the woman was only expected to perform her humanizing role. Neil McKendrick [1974] points out that one always counted on the woman's economic contribution – in working class families even on her work outside the home, in bourgeois families on her running of the household whereby the economic activity was reduced to sheer prudence. When specifying the “virtues” of women, thriftiness was always ranked highest. But McKendrick maintains that her role in social production was of key significance. Yet public work by women was connected purely with routine and mechanical jobs.

Arendt's categories can be applied when reviewing the overall situation. What does it enable us to deduce? The category of labour (work securing a basic livelihood) has been split. As a political task of supporting the population – a social task, in other words –, it has become a public matter. What remains of it in the private space has been both reduced to the reproduction of the species (engendering and giving birth), and also expanded and enriched by securing intimacy and the reproduction of the autonomous individual (emotional and moral education). Reproduction in the private sector is the task of the woman. Production (manufacture, work) has also been shifted from the private sector to the public sector. All that remains in the private sector is “thriftiness”, and not “economy” in the full sense of the word. Historically, however, the woman has never been totally excluded from participation in production. More affluent sections of bourgeois women and girls about whose “useless and futile life” a great deal has been written constituted one exception. Yet woman has never been a “homo faber”, a “creator” in the true sense because this would require a connection with a third fundamental type of human activity, political action. Up until the 20th century, women were virtually barred from action.

Enlightened thinkers always saw an evident connection between this exclusion of the woman from action (not from the public space as such, where they were always present as workers), i.e. from the political public, and between the failure to appreciate her more extensive role in social reproduction. Masaryk sees a chance to fulfil the moral mission of the family as defined by the civil equality of the woman, which allows her to play her full role in the family as “a human being” and thus perform her educational role far better. He put his finger on all that prevented such an opening: on the one hand specific superstitions, on the other hand, a concept of parenthood which deprives the father of responsibility for (especially emotional) education. According to Masaryk, fatherhood is no less “sacred” than motherhood. Masaryk was thus against the hypertrophic myth of motherhood which is closely linked with the described ideology of the bourgeois family. As regards superstitions, he gives prominence to the superstition of the household, relying on the conviction that a person must do certain things for himself in the home. Here the woman is artificially kept busier than necessary. Masaryk speaks of an “unreasonable economy of forces”. He also points to the concealed political public potential of women

which he sees in the 19th century, the century of social questions, in their social task [Masaryk 1930]. The first collective female activities were indeed conducted in the social field as philanthropic, educational, health and other activities and as care for single mothers and children. Masaryk's view was rather unique. The answer as to why the bourgeois society took the path along which the woman was excluded from the public realm and why, for such a long time, it closed its eyes to the fact that in doing so, it indirectly weakened the educational function is probably that this was the line of least resistance, namely the line of continuing tradition.

#### **The sexual contract and the transition period**

Feminists are probably right when they argue that patriarchy survived for so long in modern society simply because men wanted to retain it. Carole Pateman entered into sharp polemics with the present evaluation of the social contract: "Contract is far from being opposed to patriarchy; contract is the *means* through which modern patriarchy is constituted." [Pateman 1988: 2]. Carole Pateman attempts to bring order to the chaos around the concept of patriarchy. She distinguishes between *traditional, paternal* patriarchy and *modern, fraternal* patriarchy. "Patriarchy ceased to be paternal long ago. Modern civil society is not structured by kinship and the power of fathers; in the modern world, women are subordinated to men *as men*, or to men as a fraternity. The original contract takes place after the political defeat of the father and creates modern *fraternal patriarchy*." [Pateman's emphasis; *ibid.*: 3]

Carole Pateman's concept of the sexual contract as being original certainly offers an explanation of the "classical" nature of the institution of the bourgeois family and appears to bear out our thesis that the cause of the disintegrating tension within the bourgeois family is the reproduction of the Athenian connotations of the private and public spheres in modern society, where they are in fact an anachronism.

It can be summed up as follows: these connotations construed a non-symmetrical evaluation of the private and public spheres in a modern democracy, but themselves evidently proceeded from an asymmetrical evaluation of the gender dominant in the one or the other sphere, i.e., from the inherited (rooted above all in the religion) hierarchic relationship between man and woman. If it is true that the exclusion of women from the political public sphere seeks to conserve the ideal of the bourgeois family in its rigid and problematic form, then the opposite is also true, namely that this ideal of the family is reproduced in correspondence with the social image of man and woman and their relationship.

The dilemma of saving the family or opening the public space to women has always been an artificial dilemma but one that nowadays is being revived in our country. It would probably be right to clarify our terms: safeguarding the family by safeguarding the woman against the public realm is not a conservative but a reactionary stance in the full sense of the word. I consider the road of the humanization and cultivation of gender relations in the private and public space as conservative in the positive sense. These relations unquestionably require a lengthy period of cultural refinement.

A false solution to a false dilemma has its sad modus in our society and probably in all post-communist societies. Women are protected above all against the political public but in no way against work outside the home. In this way, everything that is meant to form the worthy side of their family function is drastically limited as a result of their eco-

conomic family functions. The idea of a woman politically active, among other things, in order to contribute to the better achievement of the woman's reproduction mission in the widest sense of the word, is still not a current part of the sociological imagination in our country.

We cannot and do not wish to give up the values which the family, of all social institutions, can cultivate best. The type of love which may develop in the family, the type of education, forming a (moral) personality which the individual can best receive in the family are unquestionably the values which attach us to the bourgeois ideal of the family. But if it is to function it must first of all rid itself of its anachronistic patriarchal elements (a step of negation) and, secondly, replace them with a new type of parental authority (the positive step). The third condition is for society to make a more realistic assessment of which functions (and individuals) are not covered by the institution of the present-day family.

According to Max Horkheimer, we are currently in a transitional phase. Its significance and complexity lie in the fact that neither does the family appear to be capable of offering sufficient care and love, nor is society sufficiently interested; nor does it possess the means of substituting the family in cultivating young people, at least in part [Horkheimer 1988: 211-212]. Let us repeat that fatal neglect of this interest is the historical consequence of underestimating care as a vital social activity. For the reasons we have mentioned, i.e. the minority of the nuclear family and its frequent unreliability which must be looked squarely in the face, Horkheimer maintains that it is essential to supplement and replace weak family solidarity with a new type of social solidarity. In the concepts of the private and the public this means that the public must take over some of the functions of the private sphere in a modern (democratic) society, and it must do this by means of three fundamental methods: 1. the full appreciation of female private work, specific female "adeptness". 2. the assumption of the responsibility for care, mainly for dependent members of society. 3. the cultivation of social solidarity. Max Horkheimer puts it as follows: "[...] the problem today is that at this point of time we live in an interim stage, and that on the one hand the family is threatened, since the feudal era as well as the era of entrepreneurs has passed, but that on the other hand, society is still not arranged the way it should be so that the individual really could love it" [Ibid.: 215-216].

One could hardly give a clearer characterization of the problem of social integration as a problem which does not stand and fall with the family but which lies somewhere in between the family and society. In brief, a necessary correction of ideology lies in separating the mission of the family from its patriarchal form, which must be regarded as a transitory historical form. The correction of connotations of the public and private spheres, while facilitating their passage in both directions is, of course, connected with this; this alone can ease what Carole Pateman calls "fraternal patriarchy".

This is the direction taken by internal feminist debates on the abovementioned motto "the personal is political". It must be pointed out that its interpretations represent a very broad scale of theoretical and practical attitudes. The common meaning of this motto is shifting political attention to the sphere of everyday life, thereby broadening the content of democracy. "When politics is redefined, so too is democracy." [Phillips 1993: 95] Anne Phillips puts a question mark on those feminist tendencies which fully assimilate the personal and the political. She believes that the more fruitful line of enquiry is to ask whether an over-assimilation of the personal and political does not endanger what is posi-

tive about private life [Ibid.: 103]. She reproduces the position of Jean Bethke Elshtain [1981] who makes a distinction between the public and the personal, resting on the difference of activities. According to her, it is not that politics exists 'out there' in a recognizable space of its own, but that some things we do are political and other things we do are not [quoted from Phillips 1993: 105]. Jean Bethke Elshtain's argument is substantial in both ways. She knows that if we treat the personal as thoroughly identical to the political, we run the twin risks of believing our lives can be made perfect and of handing over to others the responsibility for making them so [according to Phillips 1993: 106]. Nevertheless it is true that "As long as the seemingly intimate relations between men and women (or parents and children) are structured by state regulation, economic conditions and patriarchal power, then these relations are already politicized whether we want it or not." [Phillips 1993: 106] I deliberately mention Jean Bethke Elshtain as an example of a feminism not excluding a rather conservative approach.

### **Indicating areas of specificity**

The mentioned conceptual network enables an analysis of a number of phenomena in Czech society. Moreover, so I believe, it makes it possible to understand some of its peculiarities. Irrespective of the degree to which our specific features are evident, they must be recognized to avoid an unqualified application of a number of analytical instruments. For the moment, we lack the historical, especially historical-sociological data to do so. In spite of this, I would like to at least indicate several directions in which it is possible to look for Czech specifics through the prism of the concepts private-public, women-men and family-society. I refer to my previous papers, where I went into some of these themes in a more detailed way. Here only the main theses included in these articles can be presented.

The first direction leads to the history of the origin of modern Czech society in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Works by American scholars in Slavic studies, written during the past ten years, arrive at extraordinary conclusions. They concur that at that time, the Czech public was more than in other countries in favour of women's emancipation, indeed, they go so far as to claim that there was a conspicuously weak "patriarchy". They see the reason for this in a mutually supportive relationship between the Czech women's movement and the national Revivalist movement. My own research confirms that in Czech literature, for example, we do not come across the same kind of "patriarchic" ideology of the family as, say, in German literature. It appears that with regard to attitudes towards gender questions in our country one can speak of a kind of uninterrupted continuity of the liberalistic tradition in which I include, in a certain sense, the communist era [see Havelková 1995].

The second direction of analyses is of key importance given the present situation. An analysis of the private and public spheres in the communist era shows a very fundamental shift in the content and functions of these spheres, of the activities performed within them, as well as in their social evaluation, and thus in the connotations of the public and private spheres. Since they are therefore different from those which I mentioned as typical for a modern (democratic) society, we have to be cautious of the confusions of concepts when using them for analysis [for more, see Havelková 1993a, 1993b]. I agree with Možný [1991] that during that period our society including family relations and gender relations was a combination of modern and pre-modern social forms. However, I do not agree with him on the point that the patriarchy in general was vanishing [Možný

1990], certainly not when it came to paternal authority. In this sense, so I believe, the family in our country experienced some kind of “modernization” without feminism. But in the sense of Carole Pateman’s fraternal patriarchy, the picture would be somewhat different, and the proof thereof not merely the absence of women in politics.

With regard to the third direction – current society in the process of transformation – its characteristic feature is the empirical contradiction between the value of the family and the value work outside the home has for the woman. All that applies to social transformation in general applies twice as much to these questions: they are more profound, more complex and also more concealed. The fact that our way of women’s emancipation and the modernization of family relations connected with it went, in the first place, via the financial independence of women, makes this modernization too one-sided and partnership culture too fragile: I suspect that women in our country are afraid to give up their jobs also because they are afraid that their financial dependence could be sustained by neither their husbands nor by them, that the institution of the head of the family would be restored in some tragicomic form. We can thus conclude with the paradox that, probably more than by anything else, the renaissance of the cultivating role of women in the family is hampered by a low gender culture. It is far from certain that our society is prepared to fully respect the woman as a woman.

#### **Specifically gender specific**

In what follows I try to demonstrate that the analysis of the current social situation (here, the situation of women) in our country by means of the concepts of “public” and “private” does not work through the mere transfer of a theoretical viewpoint developed in a Western context.

The feminist political theorist Susan Moller Okin has demonstrated how the family (especially as gendered) has been “ignored but assumed” by all liberal theories, including the recent, “enlightened” ones [Okin 1989: 39-40]. The main argument of the feminist critique of liberal theories is the position of women in domestic life as determining their status in the public realm: even though women are no longer confined to the realm of family life, “the still heavily gendered structure of family life affects the relative positions of men and women in the ‘public’ world outside, which in turn reverberate within the family.” [Okin 1989: 42]

This general formulation definitely also applies to the position of Czech women. But as soon as the argument becomes more concrete, conspicuous differences arise. It cannot be stressed and repeated enough that our society has been developing for more than forty years in non-liberal and non-bourgeois conditions. As I tried to argue above, the structural arrangements inherited from this time have not been removed by recent political changes, but rather used in the new context, filled with new content and thus further reproduced. My claim, then, is that in societies such as the Czech one, what is “ignored but assumed” is different from what is ignored but assumed in western democracies and that consequently there must be also a somewhat different starting point in feminist criticism. I believe that generally speaking, the gender determination through the domestic position in Czech society is, on the one hand, less pertinent and, on the other, more so.

Besides the quasi-bourgeois model of the woman as the main carer and the man as the main breadwinner, in Czech families there is also the socialist model of the woman as

the second but necessary breadwinner. To support her arguments, Okin stresses the low percentage of women holding full-time year-round jobs in the USA. This has not been the case for Czech women, the majority of whom had had full-time, year-round and life-long jobs for forty years. This has not only made them an irreplaceable segment of the labour market but an irreplaceable second breadwinner as well, to such an extent that women today perceive their job outside the family as their “duty”, as do often their husbands and their social surroundings. Thus, as compared to Western women who also often work outside the home, it is not just that there has been a difference as to the number of working women: in addition, a different image and understanding of woman has developed as not bound primarily to the family, but also almost automatically as employed. This situation has not changed greatly since 1989: in the 90s, some 45% of the total labor force is still constituted by women (47% in 1989). Moreover, a “continuous employment” model is typical for Czech women, who “during their productive years combine work and family and continue to work even when they have children, or only with very short interruptions. Such a high degree of work activity is exceptional among Western European women” [Čermáková 1995: 8]. The recent liberalization of the economy and society has brought new opportunities for women. It is estimated that about 10% have improved their professional and social status since 1989 [Čermáková 1995: 14]. Due to their internalized responsibility as the second breadwinner, part of their coping strategies is to take on an additional jobs, sometimes a second, or even a third. On average, their work activity has also increased in quantity.

This means that under communism, not only was women’s domestic work assumed in Czech society, but so too was their work outside the home. Paradoxically, this did not lessen their responsibility for the family as a whole. On the contrary. Precisely due to their double burden, women had to organize the family’s life in order to manage it [comp. Havelková 1993a]. Correspondingly, sociological research of the mid-80s testified to the vanishing authority of the father in the Czech family [Možný 1990] and revealed the most frequent complaint of Czech women to be men’s diminished responsibility for the family. So if we return to Okin’s formulation of “the still heavily gendered structure of family life”, it applies in the Czech case above all to the division of domestic labor. In other areas of family life too, however, considerable differences from the Western experience can be found and need to be scrutinized.

As I have tried to argue, this model of double assumption has not only been reproduced since 1989, but even strengthened, for women are as desperately “needed” in the family as they eagerly take part in the competition in the labor market. This of course means increased intrinsic dilemmas and conflicts, first of all in women – not just in “people and households”. The situation is “gender-specific” in a very specific way.

To sum up, considering both the liberalist theory as ignoring family and gender and its feminist critique in the Czech context, at least three specific realities must be taken into account. Firstly, an ideal of the family model inherited from the bourgeois or even pre-bourgeois time, which under communism acquired the specific role of a “harmonized memory” (Možný) and which it keeps playing due also to the fact that no discussions on changing the institution of the family and no real discussion on changing gender roles took place. Such discussions have only started, slowly and hesitatingly, in recent years. Secondly, a reality brought about by the communist gender model, which in fact opposes this ideal model, characterized by the determination of a woman as both a private and



public (working) person and by her increased financial and organizational role in the family. Thirdly, the current reality where the two previous conditions are being used in the new context: the first one by a direct appeal to women's caring capacity (to cope with the increasingly tense psychological situation in families), the second one by indirect pressure towards their increased working activity (to cope with the economic hardships in families). Women pay for the public social peace by inter- or intrapersonal conflicts, which can already be traced in recent demographic trends which reveal both an increase in divorce (almost every second marriage in Prague) and a dramatic decline in population (a sudden change in young women's marital strategies).

### Conclusions

The relationship between the private and the public spheres in modern society is brought out in the paper as an open process. In analysing this, I have concentrated mainly on its gender dimension which, to a large extent, determined this relationship and which was in turn reproduced by it. From a noetic point of view, this analysis serves as a missing link in questions of the family and gender problems which in our country have been studied more or less separately. As I tried to show, however, the gender problems in modern society are closely linked with the problems of the process of individualization, i.e., of social integration of a modern type. Understandably, therefore, the heuristic potential of the analyses carried out goes beyond the gender problem and is, in my opinion, most topical, especially in a society in the process of transformation such as ours, where a kind of repetition of the process of individualization is taking place.

HANA HAVELKOVÁ graduated in sociology from the Faculty of Arts of Masaryk University, Brno. In the 1980s she worked at the Institute of Philosophy of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences. She currently lectures in ethics, the theory of society and feminist thought at the Institute of Humanities, Charles University. She was editor of the collection, *Human Rights, Women and Society* (1992), *Is there a Central European model of Marriage and Family?* (1995) and co-editor of the issue on gender and feminism of the *Sociologický časopis* (vol. 31, no. 1, 1995).

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