WOMEN’S ROLE AND STATUS IN LITHUANIAN SCIENTIFIC
COMMUNITY: do they change?

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GENDER, STATUS AND ROLE IN THE CONTEXT OF SCIENTIFIC
COMMUNITY: Introductory empirical and theoretical implications

Status and role are two closely interweaved social elements. The role, as one’s everyday
behavior, is predetermined by his/her status position in any social establishment (Landis
1986:71). On the other hand, behavior is a practical expression of one’s roles in everyday
interactions and may be seen as one of the factors which directly predetermine the level of
(potential) social status to be attained. Indeed there are a lot of additional factors which have
more or less important effect in any situation. These may vary from empirically grasped social
characteristics of individual (e. g. class, gender, age, nationality, etc.) and of social institutions
(e. g. stereotypes of socialization, cultural traditions and norms, economical conditions,
ideology, etc.) to ones of rather supernatural nature (e. g. chance, luck, unconscious sympathy,
etc.). In spite of all this, we will further concentrate our attention on gender as “socially
constructed category”, which reflects cultural coding and mores (Bradley and Khor, 1993:354),
and on women, who (as well as men) are a particular group with special biophysiological and
social characteristics (including social status and role related peculiarities).

K. Bradley and D. Khor suggest, that gender is “central to the cultural construction of
what is considered public and private and what is considered economic, social, and political”
(Bradley and Khor, 1993:355). They assert that emphasis on these two domains and three
dimensions “clarifies the conceptualization of status of women and systematizes subsequent
empirical efforts to analyze […] status of women” (Bradley and Khor, 1993:354). Similarly,
employment and household division is defined as “two interdependent structural foundations on
which our present system of gender hierarchy appears to rest” (Ridgeway, 1997:218) by other
authors. E. O. Wright with colleagues (Wright et al., 1995:408) suggests that there are three
main factors which predetermine women’s advance in this hierarchy. These are a) gender
differences in aspirations and occupational preferences, that roots in socialization processes and
in adaptive preference formation; b) gender differences in employment settings, which
materialize in particular organizational and job related characteristics, and c) active gender
discrimination, stemming out of men’s likeness to act in ways that preserve male privileges and
advantages on the one hand, and in high societal priority attached to male values and male
standards of living, on the another. Indeed all these three may be recognized in men’s and
women’s interactions in public sphere as well as in private one. However the research reports,
that gender discrimination is main factor which restrict women’s climbing the hierarchy (Wright
et al., 1995:408). Women’s individual aspirations seem to be most important in home
environment (Layte, 1998) though.

In the particular institutional surrounding (it is scientific/academic organization in this
case) as in a public domain manifestations of all three – economical, political and social
dimensions (with rare exclusions) may be easily contracted into formal position. That is, the
higher position means the higher income, more time for personal research, prestige, amount of
social and material resources available, and so on. Also, there exist special informal levers of climbing the hierarchy in scientific community. That is special qualification categories such as PhD degree (Kent and Palmer, 1999:20) and scientific work output expressed in numbers of publications (Long et al., 1993). Women possess number of particular physical (e.g. child bearing, monthly menstruation, menopause and alike) and social (e.g. priority to family matters, necessity to adopt male values and rules in scientific surrounding, and so on) characteristics. Taking into account them, lower women’s participation in scientific sphere (especially in higher positions) looks rather natural, as it is already predetermined by variety of factors in advance. However this is not an issue only by itself. As Wright et al. notes, “women’s underrepresentation in positions of authority (especially in high levels) is not simply an instance of gender inequality; it is probably a significant cause of gender inequality […] as gender inequality in workplace authority becomes a key institutional element in the reproduction of gender inequality throughout work organizations” (Wright et al., 1995:407-408). Taking into account women’s discrimination cases reported in some studies (A study, 1999; Wenneras and Wold; 1997) and the peculiarities of women’s personal characteristics, we maintain, that gender segregation and stratification in scientific community is predetermined by the factors of twofold nature: peculiarities of earlier mentioned personal women’s characteristics (and self-identifications) and of institutional elements.

Regardless all the said, it is important to draw attention to Soviet science as a system of special institutional structures and social institutions. First of all, soviet science system was entirely controlled and funded by the state represented by Communist party. There was continuously substantial funding for science an technology (Dyker, 1998:240) and rather low competition for positions level (Taljunaite and Zvinkliene, 2002:24). In addition, there was no post-doctoral research system in Soviet Union, which would have a significant impact on women’s career in science (Abbott, 1998; McNeil and Sher). Even in late 1990s it was reported that women much better represented and have more power in former communist countries than in other European states (Women in science, 1998). However after the collapse of the Soviet state all social systems and institutions (including science and scientific) changed dramatically. As L. Mindeli reports, “the initial years of transition to a market economy demonstrated panic and confusion among government officials and the scientific community about the future of scientific development” (Mideli, 1998:63). Resting upon remarks of other authors (Taljunaite and Zvinkliene, 2002; Zubova, 1998), it is most likely, that the main obstacle for the development of science and growth of scientific community in post-soviet periods relates to decrease in funding for this sector. The financial problems led to decrease of the number of available positions and increase in competition, to deterioration of working conditions and making scientific work more problematic in terms of receiving of equipment and instruments, and so on.

Recurring to women, the most specific phenomena of early 1990s was strong support for traditional gender roles (Narusk, 1996): may women “took the emerging democracy as an opportunity to return to the family” (Krupavicius and Matonyte, 2003:82). However in later years processes related to free economy market conditions, political democratization and diffusion of western culture in Lithuania (as well as in other post-soviet countries too) changed women’s (as well as men’s) behavioral patterns is such fields as reproduction and marriage (Stankuniene, 1997), self recognition and self-realization (Aidis, 1999) and so forth.

Thus the main question we provoke here is if/how did the women’s status change in Lithuanian scientific community in the context of altering societal conditions after 1990? Considering above mentioned close interplay between status and role, the same question is adjusted to the women’s role too. Looking for the answer we have organized statistical and narrative data on women’s situation in Lithuanian scientific community according two lines further. The first one will be traced in the spaces of scientific degrees and positions as “hard” constructions of formal women’s status in the community. The second one will lay in the realm of “soft” examples of witnessing about behavioral women’s role expressions in everyday interactions in public (at workplace) and in private (at home) domains.

Examples of everyday practice demonstrate, that modern researchers usually are holding positions, which express status in three (or even four) fields of expertise and claim for adequate triple (or even fourfold) role fulfilling (Braimoh, 1999; Sirilli, 1998; Todd and Bird, 2000). That is practice of research, teaching and administration in academic/scientific establishments and consulting activity outside them. Indeed such manifold role and status expressions brings special problems. In spite of this the context related to purely research sphere are treated to be most important among them (Long et al., 1993; Merton, 1973:520).

Women’s participation in scientific realm is specific phenomena because it includes things and processes common for all women’s employment on the one hand (e.g. three phase professional career model) and have to adopt male values based behavioral patterns and characteristics which predominates in scientific establishments on the another (e.g. structure of scientific path in post-doc and tenured positions terms).

Holton (1998) reports, that the meaning of “good science” and some forms of scientific work are different in among women’s and men’s populations. Regardless the evidence, that women’s scientific product are worse men’s not in the least (Astin, 1993), women seem to be less productive than men are (Cole and Zuckerman, 1997). In addition, women tend to concentrate on teaching (Glover and Fielding, 1999; Kent and Palmer, 1999) and are inclined to engage in time-consuming pastoral work with students which can inhibit progress with research activity (Kent and Palmer, 1999:24). Undoubtedly such behavior impede women to attain higher hierarchical positions in particular organizations. From another side, women’s representation on higher stages of scientific hierarchy may have not only gender equality context, but serve as positive role example for other women (Sonnert, 1998) and to ensure better (equal) work conditions for all scientists (A Study).

Two scientific degrees (doctor of science and Habilus doctor of science) system was preserved in Lithuania since Soviet period (the candidate of science doctor and the doctor of science were equivalents in Soviet period). According to current Lithuanian Law, there are many cases when scientific positions hold requirement for particular degree (e.g. only PhD may occupy position of senior researcher). This manifests importance of scientific achievements for one’s career in Lithuanian scientific community.

Further, we are going to compare tendencies of acquisition of the first and the second degree in science in women’s and men’s groups in Lithuania concentrating on 1990 and later years. Short discussion of women’s participation in decision making and science policy formatting bodies will be presented after.

1. The first degree

In early post war period Lithuanian scientists was not very active in obtaining scientific degrees. The real increase in the numbers is evident only in 1960s, then, comparing to earlier decade, it increased more than four times (from 417 scientists in 1950-1959 to 1777 in 1960-1969) (see Pic. 1.). Indeed the alteration associates with tremendous deportation of Lithuanian intellectuals to Siberia in 1940s firstly (Matukonis, 1997). Actually in early post-war period there were no many potential scientists. The increase in the numbers afterwards reflects intensive development of science (especially physical and technological fields) in new Soviet state and directly associates with soviet science policy. The same tendencies are evident in other Soviet republics of that time (Gvishiani et al., 1976).

In 1970-1979 the number of scientific degrees obtained by Lithuanian scientists increased only in half comparing to the number in decade before. This number remained approximately stable in some next decades. That is, 2887 dissertations were defended by
Lithuanians in total in 1970-1979; 2770 dissertations were defended in 1980-1989. The number of dissertations decreased to 2101 ones in 1990-1999 though. Regardless that 1284 scientists obtained the first degree in three year period since beginning of 2000 to the end of 2002. The number make up approximately a half of the numbers associated with some earlier decades. This leads to state that Lithuanian scientific community is growing again. However gender distribution among doctors of science deserves particular attention.

Women constituted only 28 % of all Lithuanians who defended the first dissertations in 1950-1959 as well as in 1960-1969. Percent of women slightly increased (up to 32 %) in next two decades (1970-1979 and 1980-1989). In 1990-1999 women constituted already 40 % of all new scientists’ population. The grow of women’s portion in Lithuanian scientific began to change in 1990 then dramatically decreased men’s who seek for scientific degree numbers (see Pic. 2.). Even regardless evidently increased men’s numbers in middle of 1990s and later, there were much more women seeking for PhD in Lithuania in the same time. During last three years (2000-2003) the percent of women in total number of young scientists reached 53 %.

Similar tendencies of gender participation in academic sphere (indeed it includes scientific activity too) are reported, for example, in USA too (Benjamin, 1998). E. Benjamin links this phenomena to the “social practices that differentiate the market situation of women and men”. That is women give higher value for highly competitive academic work because they are less mobile and have fewer professional alternatives outside this realm. The higher women’s unemployment ratios comparing to men’s in Lithuanian labor market (Kanopiene, 2000:71) would support the idea that Benjamin’s statement is a case in Lithuania too. Another argument comes from men’s side: men give up academic institutions consciously, because “knowledge related prestigious may be acquired more successfully with help of consultative and expert practice rather then with a help of traditional university structures” (Matonyte, 2002:9). It should be noticed , that the number of dissertations defended by women decreased by 5,6 % (from 890 women’s in total in 1980-1989 to 840 women’s in 1990-1999. The number of men decreased by 33 % correspondingly (from 1880 men’s in total in 1980-1989 to 1260 men’s in
However such alterations occurred according different lines in different fields of science (see Pic. 3.).

The numbers of men who obtained the first degree in 1980-1989 and in 1990-1999 most dramatically changed in social (decreased by 18 % in later decade) and in technological (decreased by 10 % in later decade). Decrease is less evident in the fields of natural and exact, and humanitarian sciences (decreased by 5 % in later decade) and is not fixed in agricultural and medical sciences (decreased by 1 % or even lees). Accordingly, among female scientists the tendencies are rather different. The number of dissertations significantly (by 12.5 %) decreased only in the field of technological sciences in women’s population. Excluding field of social sciences (the number of dissertations decreased by 4 %), women have demonstrated more active

Picture 3.
Distribution in the fields of science in women’s (a) and men’s (b) populations in 1950-2002

(a) In women’s population

(b) In men’s population
involvement in all other fields of science in 1990-1999 comparing to 1980-1989. Thus we can ascertain only the shrinking of the field of technological sciences in Lithuania after 1990. That associates with the strongest effect of decreased funding for science in the period (Zubova, 1998:77). However women’s priorities for different fields of sciences remained stable regardless slight change of gender distribution in the fields of sciences. The change associates with men’s withdrawal from some fields in general. The most evident this is in the field of social sciences. That is, women constituted 40 % in the total number of defended dissertations in 1980-1989 and 58 % in 1990-1999 correspondingly.

Thus, the data lead to conclude, that women’s inclinations to obtain the first degree in science remain relatively unchanged after 1990; the alterations are evident in men’s population though.

2. The second degree

In 2002.12.31 there were 1298 scientists who had the second degree of science (doctor Habilitatus) in Lithuania. This number constituted 11.4 % of all (11358) scientists. However it is important to note, that near a half (49 %) these scientists obtained the degree in 1990 and later. That is, 666 Lithuanians defended the second dissertations in soviet period (in near 40 years since 1950 to 1989) and 630 ones in 12 years duration post-soviet period (1990-2002). Lithuanian experts relate such tendencies to decreased requirements for the dissertations in Lithuania after 1990. The number alteration maybe an issue of changes in the procedures of degree acquisition too. The most important is to note that all second dissertations were to be defended outside Lithuania, that is in Russian scientific institutions (in Moscow, Sanct Petersburg, etc.). Considering traditional women’s role to be strongly bound to home and family, the opportunity to obtain the degree without leaving from home country gains special importance. The most important aspect is that they was able to be defended in home institutions. Thus, comparing 1980-1989 and 1990-1999, it is evidently more

**Picture 4.**

**Number of second dissertations defended by men and women in 1980-2002 period**
significant grow of Habilus doctors of science in female scientists’ population. In numerical expressions this is: during 1990-1999 men’s number increased by 23 % (from 323 to 419), and women’s number increased by 57 % (from 40 to 92) correspondingly.

Comparing overall tendencies of habilitation in men’s and women’s populations it is evident, that there are very few women with second degrees ($N_w=203$; 16 % of total habilitated population). The first idea is that these numbers represent natural gender proportions. That is, the lower women’s habilitation rates reflect the lesser number of women with the first degrees in Lithuania. However this is not the true. Some calculations show that the second degree of science have 15 % of all men with the first ones. Women with Habilitatus degree constitute only 5 % of corresponding women’s group. That may indicate any of earlier mentioned aspects of women’s career in science (e. g. women’s preferences for scientific and family life, social and material women’s work conditions, and so on). In spite of this there are at lest two statistical evidences calling for specific attention.

Regardless decreasing number of the second dissertations defended by men in the late 1990s in general (see Pic. 4., smoothed straight line), the tendencies of the second dissertations defense were rather similar in men’s and women’s populations in 1980-2002 (see Pic. 4., dotted line). This leads to conclude that very same factors draw these processes both in male and female scientific populations. Restructure of scientific organizations, alteration of legal regulations and alike science system reformation related elements maybe presented as examples of such factors. Thus we presuppose, that earlier mentioned doubling of female doctors of science Habilus represents the strong tendency of feminization of Lithuanian scientific community which endure some decades already (e. g. 26 women obtained the second degree of science in 1970-1979, 40 and 92 women in 1980-1989 and 1990-1999 correspondingly). The same tendency prolongs in the beginning years on XXI c. (25 women obtained the second degree of science in 2000-2002).

3. Participation in decision making and policy formatting bodies

Lithuanian Academy of Sciences (LAS) was the main center for and the highest body of scientific work coordination in soviet period. There were 27 academics and 35 expert members in the organization. However only 3 women were elected to this body in 1970s. The status of LAS has changed after 1990s: academy became stated funded institution which joins most eminent Lithuanian and foreign scientists. Important fact is that 8 women were elected to this body since 1990 – since the year then academy lost it’s power in the scientific world.

Today specialized governmental institutions and expert groups form science policy in Lithuania. The main of them are Ministry of Education and Science (established in 1994) with Department for Science and Studies (established in 1998) and Lithuanian Science Council jointly with Senates at universities and Councils at research institutes. Women are represented in these institutions poorly though. For example, there are on 2 women and 21 men in Lithuanian Science Council, 1 women and 10 men in the Board of Lithuanian State Foundation for Science and Studies. Women’s representation in other institutions are not much better.

Senate is the highest decision making and policy formatting body in Lithuanian university. Unfortunately because of incomplete data on universities’ web sites it is impossible to present precise data on women’s representation in Senates and reveal the tendencies of their participation in time without special investigation. Fragmented data shows that women constitute from 5 % (1 women of 21 Senate members) to 16-17 % (11 of 71; 7 of 42) and even to 24 % (8 of 24) in the Senates of Lithuanian universities.

Women’s participation in the decision making and policy formation procedures is not much different at Lithuanian research institutes. In this field only fragmented data maybe found too. However the data demonstrates that women are represented approximately two times better in the Councils of institutes with humanitarian profile comparing to ones with biological profile (correspondingly, women constitute 60-70 % and 25-35 % of the total number of Council members). Indeed the smallest numbers of women are found at the Councils of research
institutions in the fields of agricultural, physical, engineering sciences. There are no any woman or they constitute from 6 % to 13 % of Council members in these institutes.

These numbers give no base to decide about their fluctuations depending on institution type, size, acknowledgment, years of establishment and other characteristics. Women’s power in decision making processes is even more unclear (later will be presented an example of women’s experience in alike establishment). Regardless that the numbers demonstrate really miserable women’s status in the sphere of Lithuanian science policy formation, they let us to make some conclusions. Firstly, there is some evidence, that women become more evident in politically powerful establishments in recent decades comparing to soviet period. Secondly, taking into account that all fields of science were purely male dominated some time ago, there is a ground to believe that women already gain rather powerful status in such fields of science as humanities (unfortunately, there is no adequate data on institutions in the fields of social and medical sciences to support or to reject this statement). Thus we can assert the idea of feminization of Lithuanian science here again.

III. WOMEN’S ROLES IN SCIENTIFIC ENVIRONMENT AND IN PRIVATE REALM

This part of the paper is based on materials of interviews with five women scientists (see the endnote 1 on data source). Two of interviewed women – Dana and Vanda are born in 1950s, obtained PhDs in 1980s; Simona is born in 1960s and obtained PhD in 1990s; Laura and Rasa are born in 1970s with PhDs obtained in 2000s. Vanda, Dana and Simona are recognized persons in Lithuanian scientific community already; Laura and Rasa are on the very beginning of their scientific path at present. All these women (excepting Rasa), have children and are married (excepting Rasa and Simona). Basing on the narratives of these women, we will concentrate on their role expressions in everyday situations in two realms – public (e. i. professional activity) and private (e. i. domestic environment) here. After some discourses on gender discrimination and feminism will be presented.

1. Public realm / professional environment

Public sphere usually associates with a man. Even more the fields of public activity related to higher economical status (e. g. comparing voluntary activity in charity organizations and professional career in employment sector). The association goes still stronger in such traditionally male dominated fields of professional activity as science is. Following such a rude logic of increasing strength of male culture one should arrive at conclusion that woman in scientific environment confronts/meets double might of male values and male rules comparing to every woman working in female dominated field (e. g. in secondary school, nursing, etc.) and triple one comparing any women working in non-governmental sector (i. e. community activities).

It is already earlier mentioned, that women must adopt to male-oriented values and rules (Kent and Palmer, 1999) and working standards (Long et al., 1993) in scientific environment. This must be a case for women in Lithuanian scientific community too. Seeking to explore the phenomena deeper in Lithuania and referring to earlier mentioned gender differences we distinguish two different types of interaction here. That is, the interaction between “same” actors, i. e. woman with woman, and interaction between “different” actors, i. e. woman with man.

1. Woman – woman interaction

Feminist sociology suggests, that “women are socialized to see themselves through the eyes of men (Lengermann and Niebrugge-Brantley, 1992:491). This leads to suppose, that women approach other women from the men’s perspective on the one hand, and (at least sometimes) try to behave in male manner, on the other. In other words, women tends to value other women as
＜less than” or “unequal to” men simply because such a view is commonly adopted and is almost habitual; women’s intention to undertake traditionally male behavior and values is rational and much simpler comparing to female ones (e. g. rejection of responsibilities for home care). Thus it is not surprising, that patterns of such women’s behavior in scientific environment is found in almost all analyzed stories. As it is in our respondents’ words:

**VANDA:** I have to hire them [employees – A.N.] by myself for my office. The specifics of the positions I suggest is that mostly women come to take them. When I have to choose a person [in hiring process – A.N] I always think about if she has a family, if she has children. Of course, if I see that she suits my requirements, that moment is not so important. But all the same I would like there were not such things [family, children – A.N.]. I understand that. But it is as it is.

Regardless Vanda’s early experience (she successfully acquired PhD having two baby age children) it is evident, that she gives priority to men or to ‘untraditional’ women who have no family. Such Vanda’s behavior is understandable as simply rational in a context of “currently accepted gender stereotypes which incorporate assumptions of men’s greater status value” (Ridgeway, 1997:221). The same examples come from other women’s everyday experiences in scientific environment too:

**RASA:** I was working in a project...In a second year I was told about restriction of funding for it and that we have to finish it in any case. That meant that I will have to analyze the data and write report without any payment [...] The leader of that project was a scientific advisor of my PhD research and I could not to say her “no” in that time. [...] After some time I was introduced to academically younger than me male student and told that he would do some analysis for a small but payment [...] The result was that I had to spent more time on this job explaining him what kind of analysis I need and how the results should be presented, and modifying tables and graphs made by him, etc. because very same analysis I did at the end of the first year of that project. Maybe I was not so good as he was in statistical analysis, but to say the true I didn’t learnt from him anything. Maybe that is my problem...

**SIMONA:** I had never been invited to faculty sittings when I were holding that [high administrative – A.N.] position. And now he receives invitations each time. I know why: she [the dean of faculty – A.N.] is afraid that Simona can see and can say what she sees; and he [men holding that position at present – A.N.] cannot say a word there.

These passages reports dominance of traditional patriarchal values and attitudes even in woman – women interactions. However there are rather opposite experiences reported in analyzed women’s stories:

**RASA:** I was unsuccessfully looking for funds to participate in an scientific event abroad. [...] There was only one person from academic realm who came to help me. It was a woman. [...] She simply remitted me amount of money I could to purchase a ticket and to pay some taxes. I would not be able to take a part in that event without her help for sure.[...] Well, she is my colleague and I have worked in some projects which were headed by her. But without any doubts she was not obligated to solve my problems. But she did...

**DANA:** I was lucky to get into good academic environment. And that environment was headed by women. That means the nearest micro medium was favorable for me as for woman. Were no any controversies. And my inexperience had been extenuated. At last, I was taught how to behave with them, with those men.
The words of witnesses reveal and confirm once again the importance of presence of economically and socially mighty women in scientific community. Also the last excerpts grant practical meaning to above reported growing numbers of female scientists (especially in higher levels of hierarchies). That is the less frustrating socialization in scientific community, realization of women’s opportunity to communicate with world’s scientific professionals and to rise her qualification. Our instances give ground to believe that there are other facts of affirmative actions in women’s everyday practices which lead to reorganize gendered structures in scientific world regardless direct gender discrimination practices.

2. Woman – man interaction

Revealing specifics of woman – man interaction in Lithuanian scientific environment we will distinguish two aspects: how women experience and present themselves in scientific environment and what female scientists report about men’s behavioral patterns related to gender roles.

In spite of close interweaving of two these, we singled out positive men’s actions supporting women’s scientific career and negative actions such as discrimination, ignorance and alike. For example, women tell:

RASA: There were two men who made or were able to make fatal things in my scientific way [...] Very simple: he gave me a position which kept me to stay in this field. [...] I am very grateful [for the second of them – A.N.] for elementary understanding of particular things around me in university in general and in my papers and research specifically. [...] I think, I would not make my PhD research without him in some sense.

DANA: Very eminent male professor who has high position in administrative hierarchy of our university had very big effect on my academic life. In early 1990s he taught me how to contact with western academic society.

LAURA: He was a great authority for me as a scientist, as a generator of ideas, as a person... [...] He organized a probation in foreign university for me. [...] It was the first time I left from Lithuania. And the time I spent there was very important for me as well as for scientist and as for person.

VANDA: In early 1990s he [special international program foreign coordinator – A.N.] he chose me. I don’t know why. [...] This let me to improve my economical situation [...] I understood, that work in this program has changed so much things in my life. I understood very many new things. I understood that I am not so stupid and lagging behind and do not understand what they [foreign lecturers – A.N.] are teaching and what is to be taught, what is to be changed. [...] This let me to appreciate myself: [...] It was qualitative leap. [...] I understood that I did not want to be in the position I was suggested. All this was related to my personality. As woman’s personality also.

On the one hand, it is important to note, that such examples of supportive men’s behavior are reported after 1990 only. The same is to be said even about elder women’s accounts. Thus, there is some probability that men’s attitude towards female scientist was changing in last decades in Lithuanian scientific community. On the other hand, these stories and experiences seem natural, as mostly men manage financial resources, have decision making power and strong network relations in scientific environment still. To put it in other words, “men form women’s [scientific – A.N.] career” (Taljunaite and
Thus, it is evident that traditional male and female status roles remain stable in the community. The next passage also gives support for this statement.

DANA: It was informal teaching. I should say it was very nice communication, business-like communication. The only thing I noticed: I am allowed to learn and the teaching is given very generously, but we have particular rules – I cannot criticize him in any case. That means, I had to be a grateful side. And I really was the grateful side.

The passage reveals specific women’s behavioral pattern: obedience and submission to more powerful men. Looking from the rational choice angle, such woman’s behavior is rather sound: she would lose if she will try to break such rules. However our respondents’ argumentation shows the roots of such behavior are hidden much deeper.

2. Domestic realm

There are numerous studies reporting the special women’s role in private life in Lithuania [e.g. Kraniauskiene, 2002; Tureikyte, 1997] as well as abroad [e.g. Haller and Hoellinger, 1994; Narusk, 1996]. Peculiarity of woman’s role at home lies mainly in expectations to be a “good mother”, a “good housewife”, moral and caring about relatives (Kraniauskiene, 2002), i.e. to be a “real women” seeking to please man at any cost (Vaisliauskiene, 1995). Trying to meet such requirements woman performs the largest part of unpaid domestic work regardless her employment status (Davies and Carrier). Thus it is natural that combination of family and employment requirements mostly affects only women’s life course (Kanopienė, 1995; Kruger and Baldus, 1999). However studies reports that women contribute less to domestic work then they spend more time for paid work, then they feel they have more decision-making power, then they work in male-dominated professions (Davies and Carrier); women supports nontraditional gender roles in family stronger then they are full time employed, have advanced degrees, have higher educated spouses (Cassidy and Warren, 1996). Besides that some authors note that there is no significant differences comparing women’s role in home environment and patterns of family formation in the highly industrialized Western and in post-soviet countries (Panayotova and Brayfield, 1997; Stankūnienė, 1997).

Our respondents female scientists, who have high degrees, high social status and high incomes, and live with highly educated spouses, tell:

DANA: Less or more, but I have to keep those three angles [of home – A.N.] […] What do I do? The biggest my quality is that I do not need much of sleeping. If I get slept for 6 hours I am very ok. It is enough for me […] usually I get up earlier and then I get time to do something […] At the evening I can prepare meal for the next day still […] He [spouse – A.N.] tries to help me […] sometimes he comes and prepares breakfast: any sandwiches …

VANDA: When I am asked if there are any problems related to division of labor in my family, I say: “there are no any problems, because I do all domestic work at home” […] What kind of problems could be here? I have to wash dishes, I have to prepare meal, I have to wash clothes, I have to clean apartments. I have to do everything […] Today I have got up at 5 o’clock. I have prepared soup. Have ironed shirts for my husband and son. Have took out dogs. Have prepared lunch for my son to take to a work and at 8 o’clock I was at work. And that is same for each day. This is my life. I never leave from my work place at 5 o’clock. Never. Yesterday I finished working with students at 10 after 8 o’clock in the evening. I came to work at 8 o’clock yesterday […] However my husband drives me to work place every morning and takes home in the evening […] I do not read newspapers, listen to news, watch TV much. In general, TV
serves as a background, which is at home only because my husband watches it […] My husband reads, listens, watches. And he told me all the news […]

The conclusion can be the only: regardless very poor contribution of spouses these women seem to be taking all responsibilities at home. Both of them acknowledge that and say:

DANA: It is not easy to coordinate all [family and employment – A.N.] activities for me.

VANDA: It is very difficult for me [to work so much as she does – A.N.] […] I do not know how long I will be able to work in this way […] I can do all this now. But it is very difficult. Even physically hard.

However at the same time both of them are rather satisfied with such situation in their families and feel free and easy in their employment:

DANA: family helped for my academic career. Summarizing: yes. And I could not say that it prevents by any means. We [respondent and her spouse] are colleagues, besides that. And we are friends […] Not only my life is academic, but also our family is academic too. That means that our academic world goes on at home too. And now our son does not fall out from that world. He dives as a fish in it.

VANDA: I can say, that I am happy as a women in general for sure […] [my family – A.N.] do not restricts [my career – A.N.]. I can say, it is in contrary. I always say and have been saying, that I have good family, very good husband. I think, this is not the biggest fault for taking in heart that he does not washes dishes, isn’t it? There are other things […] there were other moments in my life. And I could say for sure: yes, there is a man besides me who could do everything for to help me to overcome difficult moments in my life […] and then I have to condone him all the rest. I am not a present also.

Presented excerpts from women’s life stories give ground to refuse great part of earlier quoted findings. Both of the respondents are economically independent and hold very high status positions in scientific world. As it is in Vanda’s words:

VANDA: I am only one women who reached such position. And, I would say. I am appreciated […] I feel a partner with my spouse. I earn not less than he […] His earning is very good. And he has high value at his work. He consults with me on his professional questions very often. I can give him that consultation and so on. I do not feel worse him not in the least. At all. Even financially. Practically I am not dependent on him financially always. I do not need beg him for money if I want to buy something for myself even now. I can do that. I earn enough by myself. And I do not have any financial problems for sure.

Hence, these women performs amount of the home routine tasks and are satisfied with such a “division of labor” at home. Social exchange theory evidently would fail explaining home situation of these two women as it did in other studies of gender role in home environment (Layte, 1998). R. Layte suggests other theoretical explanation for this phenomena. That is symbolic interaction theory. In this context “the partners in the household have gender identities that are the products of their socialization” (Layte, 1998:517).

Lithuania has strong tradition of catholic patriarchality (Trinkuniene and Trinkunas, 1999). In addition, Lithuanian people had experience of soviet ideology of “gender equality” which aimed at increasing labor force and securing patriarchal gender structure (Aidis, 1999:62). It was natural for women double or even triple load of work at home, in economical sector, and as social activist. Even secondary school was strongly oriented to teach ‘proper’
gender roles in Lithuania during Soviet period. There were compulsory classes on cooking, sewing, knitting, etc. for girls and joinery, electrification, etc. for boys at school. It is natural that women who were socialized in such system feel rather comfortable performing almost all domestic work after a full-day working our in professional field. In our case, women’s family models may be directly related to their parent’s families also:

DANA: We live with my mother and she settled the rules from the very beginning: the kitchen is woman’s place. At the beginning even my husband was not allowed to come to kitchen except for eating.

VANDA: My husband grew up in such a family where father was like on a stage. My family was absolutely different: mother was everything in our place. There was a cult of mother in our family. My father created that cult and he kept it till the end of life. […] This is what my father wanted: both me and my sister are successful in our career path. […] And my mother-in-law does not understand my up to now.

Thus, if to take into account earlier mentioned traditional ideology and the most significant roles (mother and father) in socialization prose, the view seems rather natural. On the other hand, it is natural that continuously performing specific (domestic in this case) tasks special habits and skills are developed. After a time it becomes even unnatural and simply irrational (in the sense of time wasting) to behave in another way. ‘Properly’ socialized women keep performing most time consuming household responsibilities on daily base (“female tasks”) (Davies and Carrier) in spite of their economical share to family budget and social power. The situation remain unchanged in general even in the presence of efforts to change it:

DANA: We are trying to brake these stereotypes now, but it is not easy for us, because we are not young […] He [respondent’s spouse – A.N.] tries to help me, but he fails, as he has no experience [in home work – A.N.] […] He tries to do, but – poor him – sometimes I can do everything much faster by myself instead.

The last fragment represent evident attempt to reorient gender roles towards more egalitarian model. The common sense prompts this depends highly on individual personalities who participate in the intercourse. For example, Vanda’s husband seems to be much more traditional men than Dana’s:

VANDA: Approximately after three years being married I understood, that either I would try to make of him someone who I want to make, this would end with divorce, because he would never do that. He would not wash dishes, he would not clean floor; or I will take this and will try to live somehow. I chose the later version. And I live with my husband 27 years […] I reconciled with this. Either you take that, or you do not. Because it is senseless to fight with that.

Regardless that, some instances of Vanda’s behavior may be treated as a fighting the situation she created many years ago by herself:

VANDA: Today my son said, he lost a shirt button. I replayed him: “wait, my dear… take a needle and sew”. [‘Convenient’ mother – A.N., respondent’s term] would say: “poor child, let me do this for you right now” instead of my “I have no time right now”.

Vanda’s narrative presents even more controversies in her current life. In spite of the above cited excerpts from her life story, she says also:
VANDA: Where are no such problems like some time before. But family is still. And it demands. And you have to harmonize to it. You cannot ignore particular things. I have to renounce many things because of that [family – A.N.]. For example, to leave from home for a longer period. I know I cannot because my family will be unsatisfied. I understand that.

It seems Vanda tries to present herself by narrative as “good mother” and “good wife” in traditional sense. However some examples of Vanda’s everyday behavior cited above and the next one introduce her as becoming more selfish. In spite of the fact that early Vanda’s life experience symbolized nakedly woman’s compromise (e. g. devotion to family) in the patriarchal world, recently she becomes aware of modern time requirements:

VANDA: practically, I have traveled all over Europe since 1996. I have participated in a great number of different of projects. I have met a great variety of people. And I stay in touch with them till now. European Union open very big opportunities for sure. For women too.

Summarizing here presented excerpts from female scientists life stories it should be noticed at least two things. First, nor economical, nor social woman’s status in public sphere does not predetermine her role at home. It seems that the main drive to behave in the way women behave is their habits obtained during socialization process. Regardless that Vanda believes:

VANDA: My daughter will never live in family like I do. She will never get up for to prepare a dinner, she will never iron her husband’s shirt the last minute before to run to work. She will never do this. She is absolutely different.

Unfortunately this is only hope “for better future for our children” (especially for a woman): Vanda’s daughter had not family because of young age.

Secondly, there is some basis to believe, that Vanda’s and Dana’s role behavior in family changes in the time. Indeed this means that women become recognizing their role and start fighting for themselves the be recognized and valued.

3. Discourse on gender discrimination and feminism

Feminism is may be understood as a “politics predicated on the belief that women are oppressed; a social movement dedicated to political change” (Kitzinger, 2000:163) as well as a scientific endeavor of normative and epistemological discussions, and theory development (Chafetz, 1997:97). Also term gender discrimination may be defined as a “passive or active behavior, by which one expresses abasement, contempt, restricts somebody’s rights or gives privileges due to somebody’s gender” (Law of Lithuanian Republic) in normative terms and in academic terms as “actual behavior resulting in unfavorable and unequal treatment of individuals or group” (women in general or particular woman in our case) (Layte, 1986: 406). The most impressive example in this context is found in Vanda’s story:

VANDA: Then I began to work here I could hear such epithets about women from her mouth […] I would not like repeating them here. At present he never uses them. He never talk about women in the same manner he did some time ago. […] I can remember one moment: I took a law on men’s and women’s equal rights from internet. […] Accidentally I met him. He says: “what do you have here?” I say: “I took a law”. He: “What kind is it?” Me: “On equal rights”. He pricked up his eyes: “Why?” “I need to read” – I answer. And then I understood that it is the moment when he felt it could be
some problems here [...] He did not ignored the fact I had the law. [...] And now I feel entirely different here. Five years passed though. [...] I am not discriminated certainly. I am honorable here. However this cost me much of work and sometimes so unpleasant minutes (deep breath).

The excerpt bears witness the law on women’s and men’s equal opportunities may have actual influence on men’s and women’s everyday interactions in Lithuanian scientific community. However Dana denies the effect of the law in everyday situations and presents her arguments for gender stratification and segregation in Lithuanian society:

DANA: It [the law – A.N.] does not working much. There is a tradition of life. And the tradition of life is accepted by women themselves. [...] I think, men had more opportunities to get educated. Next. They express authority. [...] Woman has to adopt to the conditions given by male life pattern in Lithuania. If you are able to force yourself into them – you live and you can do an influence even. If you are not able – you are housewife and that is all. [...] I do not think the situation in Lithuania is very bad [comparing to other countries – A.N.].

Vanda’s argumentation:

VANDA: I think, in many cases women are guilty by themselves because not always they evaluate their possibilities and themselves adequate. And for sure it is very difficult to be a woman among men. because you have to overtake particular [...] male qualities.

Thus both women gender system treat as natural and rather comprehensible. Regardless that they acknowledge that women mast adopt to male world for to be successful in this society. However that adaptation comes through nakedly female practices. That is self-denial, self-scarification, obedience and alike.

Rather impressive example comes out from Dana’s story:

DANA: Let’s say in this way: I have never felt clear discrimination. [...] Maybe I could call it as ‘hidden ignorance’. It is always. [...] The first half of year I was only woman there [in policy formatting organization – A.N.]. [...] I saw, they are listening HOW I was talking. [...] WHAT I am talking about and that I am talking about rational things, that I am [special field – A.N.] researcher and we are discussing the problems of the field [respondent was expert in – A.N.] They began to hear me only after a half of year. And it was not seldom that my words made them nervous. [...] After some time everyone forgot what I was talking about, but something has left in their mind. [...] An then after some time they start talking the same things I was talking about. But the thing is presented already as their idea. I was glad for my ideas became established. However they did not remain as mine.

Vanda is weighting gender discrimination in Lithuanian scientific community in very same way:

VANDA: Woman starts feeling that she is discriminated [...] then she understood she has attained something already, but her gender prohibits her to take a position which she could take if she would be a man [...] I want to say, there is a very paradox. On the one hand, I have not experienced any gender discrimination here. However on the other hand, I am the only woman who has reached such position and, I could say, who is recognized.

However younger woman makes some separations in this context:
LAURA: I could not say there are gender discrimination between my colleagues who are of nearly same age and hold same position. However I can see some manifestations of gender discrimination in elder colleagues’ everyday behaviors. For example, my male colleagues are treated as better organizers than women are in all cases. [...] I am asked about my health, about my family related matters [by colleagues – A.N.] sometimes, but my male colleagues receive such questions never.

The last quotations corresponds to findings of other research made abroad in some sense. That is, women are linked to refuse existence of gender discrimination and they begun to feel gender discrimination only in later phases of their career in science (A Study). However our respondents recognize:

VANDA: If you would ask about women’s discrimination here …let’s say, there is no such… there is rather skeptical attitude towards woman. And woman have to work significantly more to prove, to gain a right to be such a person she really can be. That is a fact. [...] I do not recognize feminism at all, because I have my own theory on this. It would be possible to talk about gender equality only if man could bear a baby only. Still they cannot do this, we will never be able to be equal.

Acknowledging theirs inequality women of different age think off different ways to overcome men in daily practice and in any competition for a position and/or recognition. For example, younger scientists believe:

RASA: I am sure [...] I can be recognized only because my work [in the field of science – A.N.]. But I feel I am not so confident as my male colleagues are. I always think I am not so good as other are. [...] Usually I try to stay inconspicuous.

LAURA: The only way to win this competition is effective work: number of high quality papers, successful projects, etc. If I will be better in this, I win, if I will not ...

Elder women ‘know’ other ways which seem traditionally female. The experience shows such methods work in traditionally male sphere though:

VANDA: It is much easier to win in some matters for me than men [...] They accept me both as a woman and as a colleague, but that, that I am a women, several times helped me surely. I am sure. Maybe sometimes I use to be too emotional in decision making in some matters, and men get flustered facing such, let’s say, sincerity, frankness, emotionality. And it is the peculiar arm. [...] 

Thus presented instances lead to conclude that even highly educated women in high hierarchical positions are unwilling to acknowledge that gender discrimination exists in their organizational surroundings. In spite of their intentions they have report clearly discriminating situations though.

CONCLUSIONS

Presented statistical data clearly indicates that women’s status in Lithuanian scientific community is changing since the beginning of 1990s. The alteration manifests by two side process. That is a substantial decrease in the numbers of men obtaining both first and second degrees in science on the one hand, and quite contrary tendencies in women’s population. That
leads to unequivocal conclusion: Lithuanian scientific community experience rapid feminization which may be explained in “institutional shrinking” (Matonyte, 2002:9) terms. That is, women come to science by “roundabout about way” (when men leave from the field for other more prestigious sectors). As Ridgeway notes (1997:230), the aggregate result of this phenomena related processes maybe preservation of same gender stratification and segregation patterns.

In spite of that, presented women’s narratives witness operation of rather strong male priority manifesting values. Indeed they lead to gender discrimination and other negative gender related issues in current Lithuanian scientific society. Hence, regardless the fact that women are gaining a power by attaining higher hierarchical positions, female scientists still remain in disadvantageous situation

Indeed presented excerpts from female scientists’ life stories may be meet with sound critics for subjective selection of examples and accidental choice of respondents. The argument replaying to this is that we tried to look for negative issues (e. g. examples of women’s discrimination) with the same thoroughness as for positive (e. g. examples of support for women’s career). The largest part of the examples we have presented above reflect very same women’s experiences that are reported in the earlier studies of other authors (Lane, 1999; Taljunaite and Zvinkliene, 2002). Our respondents reported that they have undergone a variety of positive as well as negative situations. Their behavioral patterns and personal arguments demonstrate standing probability, that women are linked to maintain traditionally patriarchal gender values and roles by themselves though. Consequently even very rare examples of braking gender categorization traditions in everyday practices (e. g. priority for woman in respect to man) and appearing mechanisms which aim to ensure gender equality (e. g. the law) give a ground to believe the situation are changing. Thus, our reported changes in women’s role and status may be “not the error, but real, fundamental phenomena, related to specifically cultural (civilization related) transformation” (Matonyte, 2002:9).

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1 The date are obtained from Department of Science and Studies by the Ministry of education and Science, Lithuania.

2 Interviews were conducted by the author of the paper in spring (2002) and in summer (2003).