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Gender Politics in Lithuania.
A Case of Gender-based Violence
against Woman in the Family

Santrauka

Viešosios ir privačios sferų rekonceptualizacija yra vienas iš pagrindinių posovietinės transformacijos procesų, sąlygojamas ir sąlygojantis lyčių politiką regione. Lyčių santykiai yra istoriškai struktūruoti pasitelkiant viešo/privataus sektorių dichotomiją kaip esminę ideologiškai ir socialiai konstruojamą egzistavimo formą, neatsiejamą nuo vyriškumo ir moteriškumo socialinių reikšmių, skirtingų lyčių veiklos formų, santykių dinamikos ir normatyvinės tvarkos. Kompleksinė sovietmečio viešosios ir privačios sferų tarpusavio priklausomybė ir sovietinė egalitarinė ideologija sustiprino vyrų ir moterų diferenciaciją bei sąlygojo probleminį moteriškumo pripažinimo kontekstą. Posovietiniam lyčių vaidmenų retradicionalizavimo diskursui būdingas privačios sferos idealizavimas ir izoliavimas, perėjimas nuo universalistinio, "egalitarinio" į esencialistinį, paremtą natūraliaisiais lyčių skirtumais, modelį. Tokiame "naujame" diskurse vyriškumas ir moteriškumas atrandamas iš naujo priešinant jį sovietinės egalitarinės normos belytiškumui. Šiame straipsnyje ideologinės ir kultūrinės viešo/privataus diskurso dilemos sudaro konceptualinį prievartos prieš moterį šeimoje reiškinio analizės pagrindą.

Post-communist societies in Eastern Europe have been confronting the challenging task of transformation imposed restructuring often described as rebuilding of civil society. It includes many dimensions of a social reality such as active citizenry formation, creation of civic institutions as a critical link between individuals and the state, freedom of opinion and expression, and of association and – centrally- the absence of violence at all societal levels as a means of imposing social order (Pierce, 2000). The dynamics of social change in post-socialist societies can be characterized by the centrality of gender to constructions of "ideal society". During the period of economic transformations and political upheaval, the questions of political and cultural identity came to the immediate fore with a particular emphasis placed on the family and on traditional roles for women. Moreover, "as gender roles become politicized, questions of personal life and reproductive rights are fiercely contested" (Moghadam, 1996:328).

Among the crucial changes in Eastern European economic and political dimensions, a reconceptualization of private and public spheres is one of the main transformational processes being shaped by and shaping the existing gender relations in the region. The relations between women and men have long been ordered around the public/private dichotomy as the basic arrangement of social existence. The discussion of this dichotomy is also central to almost two centuries of feminist writing and political struggle. Although some feminists treat the dichotomy as universal, trans-historical and trans-cultural feature of human existence, the feminist criticism is primarily directed at the separation and opposition between the public and private spheres in liberal theory and practice, the hierarchical connection and power dynamics between publicity and privacy as well as values and meanings attached to them.

The meaning of the public/private dichotomy has also been always linked to ideas about masculinity and femininity, with higher value and privilege being the most often attributed to what is coded as masculine/public/culture. In one of the most influential anthropological discussions, Ortner (1974:72)

argues that the only way to explain why the value universally assigned to women and their activities is lower than that assigned to men and their pursuits is that "women are "a symbol" of all that every culture defines as being of a lower order of existence than itself". The ideas that women are naturally tied to a lower order of "private"/nature (reproduction, caring and emotional support of the family) than the "public"/culture as a masculine and political domain are general responses to economic and family life arrangements in European capitalism and industrialization which systematically assured women's dependence on men in a range of gender regimes. The doctrine of separate spheres also prescribes different activities for women (private) and men (public) even if historical investigations suggest that the social activities between women and men were not so separate as the ideology is reflecting them. Women have never been completely excluded, of course, from public life; for example, in Lithuanian traditional family economy women took a large share in agricultural production, and sometimes even managed the distribution of work and resources. The exclusion of women from the public sphere as a certain distinct "gender problem" does not stay in the foreground in Lithuania today as well. But the way in which women are included is grounded, as firmly as their position in the domestic sphere, in patriarchal beliefs and practices, problems of adjustment to the masculine society structure and difficulties resulting from the double existence in both spheres.

In the context of gender based violence discussion, the concept of violence also gains its internal hierarchical division – one in which "public" is considered to be superior over private. As Susan Pierce (2000:1) puts it, a likely initial argument for the lack of gender based violence social visibility is that "these are not 'national' crimes". Seen as "natural", "personal", "private" or "domestic", its goals and consequences are obscured, and its use justified as chastisement or discipline[1]. When stripped of privatization, sexism, and sentimentalism, gender-based violence in the family is no less grave than any other forms of inhumane and subordinating "public" violence, which have been recognized by international community as *jus cogens*, or peremptory norms that bind universality and can

never be violated (Copelon, 1994).

Furthermore, the international human rights community recently challenged the "privacy" of the private sphere and the relevance of the private/public dichotomy to new definitions and assessment of human rights[2]. The human rights delineated by the *Universal Declaration* privileged the public sphere over the private where the former was meant to be the subject to state regulation, while the latter was thought to be exempt from governmental scrutiny. The new emphasis on gender based violence in private sphere by international human rights bodies has emerged from a growing recognition, pressed by decades of work by women's human rights groups, networks and coalitions, that traditional definitions of human rights relegated women to secondary or "special interest" status within human rights considerations. Besides quite ordinary notion that as human beings women have human rights, "women's human rights" is a revolutionary notion of international women's movement with its profound transformational potential based on the incorporation of women's lives and perspectives into human rights standards and practice[3] (Bunch, 1997). The research and examination of gender based violence or how this issue is addressed by "public", in general, in today's country is a valuable information source for understanding where the society stands in the reconstruction of civil society and its international integration.

During the soviet period a conspiracy of silence about the violent acts of the regime as well as of the reality within soviet private sphere was common and necessary. Even though soviet state imposed some measures for exposing the violent husbands publicly there was neither socio-cultural discourse conducive to recognizing and speaking of gender based violence against women nor effective mechanisms for recording its nature and extent. The first and second wave feminist movements which made a strong and definite emphasis on gender based violence show that the issue has long been skewed toward Western countries and lacked the global concern which preoccupied the field only very recently. Consequently, the gender-based violence became a new subject of scientific inquiry in Lithuania; it started to be publicly discussed at the very beginning of 1990s in the context of

new spaces for open discussions on different societal problems. The theory construction and testing in this field is at a very early stage of development. It is mostly characterized by descriptive work, with little causal modeling, explanations, contextual analysis, or attempts to construct integrated theories of different types of family violence. The diversity and ambiguity of definitions compromise and confuse the research findings on the distribution and severity of gender based violence making the comparability of the results of different studies, knowledge accumulation and generalization a complicated issue. The issue is further complicated by the complex play of cultural traditions, political polarization, economic constraints and inter-group power struggles that have their part in explaining of what has resulted as "incomplete dialectic regarding societal mandates on the issue" in Lithuania and other post-soviet societies (Pierce, 2000:2).

The main component complicating the discussion, solution, intervention and treatment of the problem is the issue of gender. The research data on gender based violence which have been gathered in Lithuania since 1994 reveals that the most of the victims of physical, emotional, sexual or economical abuse in Lithuanian family are women[4]. As Isabel Marcus (1996:7) has stated, "to locate it as a serious gender issue is to openly raise connections among intimacy, sexuality, power and violence – issues which are considered inappropriate for 'public' discussion." It moves us again towards the discussion of the complicated issue of privacy vs. publicity.

One of the main objectives of this article is to discuss the different social variables of soviet past as well as post-soviet present in relation to a continued form of direct and intended social control in Lithuania – gender based violence against women in the family. It starts with a cursory review of women's roles and opportunities in the context of shifting boundaries of the public/private dichotomy and soviet egalitarian ideology followed by the discussion of the re-traditionalization process and its implications for family life and gender-based violence within it. The way gender was organized under the socialism figures importantly in all aspects of family interaction and organization during the

last decade of democratization. The way the gender equality was legislated served to reinforce the significance of gender difference even while ostensibly undermining it. The further analysis includes a brief discussion of women's attitudes towards gender based violence as they were revealed in the survey on the social context of women abuse in Lithuanian families that was carried out in Lithuania in May, 2000. The survey was completed using a direct structured interview method. It represents the opinion of all Lithuanian women within the age group from 18 to 74 years. Sample size is 517 respondents. Women included in the survey were selected using multilevel random sampling procedure. The response rate of the survey was 66.3%.

The ideological and cultural dilemmas in private/public discourse

The development of private/public distinction was broadly discussed among Western scholars and has produced an impressive scholarly literature. The recent writings about public/private dichotomy have adopted several approaches. One of them is historical that discusses the public/private definitions as an aspect of ideologies, which are historically changing and shaped by particular national and political traditions. Another approach has been to typologize the forms this distinction has taken in different theoretical perspectives. In the context of post soviet transformations, Susan Gal and Gail Kligman's (2000) applied the discussion of the public/private distinction as cultural or semiotic category. By "semiotic" they mean an approach that considers how signs and their relationship contribute to the meaning-making properties of this dichotomy, how ordinary social actors as well as social theorists use and change the idea of "public/ private" as they order and understand their social lives.

In the context of this study the focus is given to soviet and following post-soviet transformations in the contextualization, actual practice and cultural meaning of this division in explaining the gender based violence in the private domain. The categories of "public" and "private" gain twofold meaning. One meaning of the dichotomy refers to the

assumption from the historical perspective that the public/private distinction is an aspect of ideology, closely related to the historical circumstances that it is trying to explain and shape. In other words, public and private meanings are dependent and relative to the prevailing ideological discourse, cultural and political context in which they are applied. It also carries an important insight from the feminist typological approach reflecting that, like any structural opposition, public and private always define and constitute each other. It is not only that the definition of what is public and private change, even within the single national or philosophical tradition; the placement of the boundary has itself been a matter of contention. The ability of the social actor or social institution to shift the boundary - introducing new issues or institutions into public debate - has been a source or sign of power. It is important to consider private and public not as a constant structural opposition, but as a field of contention and conflict in which the sense of continuity is produced by the very facts of constant use of this dichotomy. It implies another meaning of private/public as a discursive distinction which enables the repeated use of the categories in the face of their constantly changing content, because public and private are not only distinctive institutions, spheres of activities or even types of interaction. Once established it can be used to categorize, organize and contrast any kind of social facts: spaces, institutions, groups, activities, interactions. Thus, the exact distinction between public and private is also relative to the interactional situation in which it is applied (Gal & Kligman, 2000).

The gender regime of state socialism in East Central Europe was built out of the post World War I communist parties', leftist political organizations and some feminist groups' failed utopian ideas about the equality between women and men in the confrontation with the nationalist claims to increase post war population, thus to protect the motherhood. It also arose out of the Stalinist pronatalist policy as well as preexisting capitalist gender arrangements that structured male domination in public and private domains. In the period after World War II the communist states tried to reject and erase the existing institutionalized public/private dichotomy. Many of the distinctive characteristics of the

soviet state derive from this ideological rejection. This suggests the ways in which ideas about gender – and its linkage to the public/private shaped political economic arrangements. Ironically, new and subtle configurations of the dichotomy emerged in the course of four decades as state socialism succeeded in producing another gendered order with more subtle forms and configurations of this distinction that was no less effective in securing the men's privileged positions in the society and family. The post-soviet transformations of public and private are comprehensible only if seen as partly shaped by socialism itself.

In Western liberalism the private sphere encompasses two concepts and discourses: one of private, autonomous individual (male) seen in abstraction from familial relations and another one of the privacy of family, which contains the concept of female identity. In the soviet past, the private sphere was interpreted by the pattern of "family" (as a collective entity). The single individual was not in the center of thinking. Elaboration of family centered discourse and related set of practices was the way for the paternalistic state to exercise a great deal of its authority. As a result, the socialist "marriage" or the "family" in the context of demographic concerns "turned women's bodies into instruments to be used in the service of the state" (Kligman, 1992:365). The state's rhetoric about the family reflected the familiar cultural patters. Lithuanian "traditional" family structure is patriarchal; the dependency relationship of the patriarchal family organization in the country as well as in the whole soviet bloc was elevated to the socialist state's "legitimate" rule over its citizens. The intrusion of state institutions into what was formerly a private sphere of family and reproduction produced a fundamental change. Policies towards families made women and children less dependent on husbands or fathers, that is women were no longer restricted to the private or exclusively linked to it in discourse. In contrast to any previous peasant patterns, women were instead more directly dependent on the state.

The phenomenon which attracts more attention here is that the "private" being nested inside the "public" and vice versa in soviet state created the complex interdependencies between public/priva-

te, state/family, powerful "they" who run the country versus private "us" who sacrificed (Burawoy & Verdery, 1999; Funk & Mueller, 1993; Corrin, 1996; Haney, 1999; Waylen, 1994). The interdependencies of work, time, space and socialist bureaucracies created what Susan Gal (2000:51) calls the "instrumentalization of interpersonal relationship". According to her, "rather than any clear-cut "us" versus "them" or "private" versus "public", there was a ubiquitous self-embedding or interweaving of these categories". By seeking the centralization of all power, state socialism aimed at destroying social solidarities outside the families and promoted atomization of social life. Susan Gal (1997:126) in her article on *Gender in the Post-Socialist Transition* states that the created alienation outside the family produced "a concomitant neglect of ethics, care, and a concern for other people". The official rhetoric refused to acknowledge the legitimacy of private domains of interaction with the state extending its control into the bodies and minds of its citizens and appropriating the private realm of social interaction into itself. Consciousness was to be shaped accordingly. In the conditions of pervasive surveillance of soviet citizens, gender based violence in the soviet family was not supposed to be relegated to the domain of privacy and was provided with a space for intimates, family members or friends to inform on each other. Violent husband could be publicly exposed, punished or experience some controlling means by such organizations as trade unions or local community leaders. Juozeliūnienė and Kanopienė (1995:157) claim that even if the family life could not be entirely controlled by the state, because of its private nature, it was nevertheless under the strict control of the state, "subjected to destructive influence of official ideological doctrine". It was an official position, that private matters could be controlled and regulated in a form of spouses complains against each other in case of alcoholism, adultery or violence. Individual women who were very active in raising the issue of their husbands' violence in public and protecting their personal well-being often were attacked in media campaigns that reasserted the rationale of national over individual interests and attacked the "unhealthy" spirit of individualism as unacceptable in soviet society. These campaigns

spread a message for the families to solve the intimate problems peacefully for the sake of common socialist goals. As Susan Gal (1997) in her article on the abortion debate in Hungary states, the argument of the responsibility of every person to subordinate personal choice to the overriding interests of the socialist state also provided powerful justification of the restrictive abortion policy in 1973-74 in Hungary.

Moreover, the official soviet ideology in the context of private/public discussion can be also characterized by the state attempts to shift various traditional family functions to state responsibility, thus resulting in the lack of personal responsibility among family members, lack of concern for the individual and the future. As Juozeliūnienė and Kanopienė (1995:158) state, "this tendency was manifested in lack of responsibility for children's upbringing, in neglect of elderly parents, in disregard for the health of family members, in nonchalance towards financial matters, and in child abuse and family violence". Family members' well being, emotional satisfaction in marriage, tolerance and respect was constantly being suppressed as individual concerns in the family.

From an ideological perspective, the paternalistic state viewed itself as beneficent which claimed for itself the prerogative to define the public good. Although their intent was meant to be fully encompassing and controlling, ideological programs for public good purpose and their political rhetoric are insufficient to account for what actually happened: "contrary to standard assumptions about totalitarian states, there was no one-to-one correspondence between what was dictated at the top and what actually happened" (Kligman, 1992:370). While misrecognizing the complex interdependencies of 'us' versus 'them', 'public' versus 'private', in everyday life people did not live solely in ideological scripts. They rather insisted on and referred to the distinction between these oppositions tracing private to familial, trustworthy and reliable 'we' being in an opposition to unreliable, public 'they' who were in charge of the state. Alienation from the state created the relationship of the extreme dependency on each other in the family that led to a dynamic of high-level demands and expectations from each other. The failure resultant emotional outbursts, fa-

mily conflicts, aggressive acts or even extreme cases of domestic violence between spouses in many cases, contrary to the official rhetoric, had never reached the untrustworthy and unreliable public, as they were condemned to familial privacy by family members themselves. The violent incidents were also reinforced by religious proclamations to be kept and resolved inside the family itself. Nevertheless, the privacy of the family with its related problems was never so explicitly separated from public concerns by the socialist state ideology as it has been enforced since the collapse of the system.

In post-soviet Lithuania, the family with its intimate system within the privacy of one's own home, was separated from the restrictions and conformity of out of home social life under socialism, getting "a terrain of new confrontations" (Lobodzinska, 1995:264). The issue of gender-based violence against women within the family has been officially "depublicized", that is attributed to privacy as being family's own problem and resolvable inside the family itself. The gender-based violence "privatization" was well confirmed by the majority of survey respondents (65.5%) who agreed that violence against woman in the family must be solved by family itself. This attitude gives a considerable freedom for abuse practice in families away from the watchful eye of the state. In Pierce's (2000:3) words, the protection of family privacy in post soviet society is moving towards having the status of "a state-sanctioned norm".

Regarding the gendered meanings of public and private, the structures of feeling within gender relations and the images of masculinity and femininity it is important to emphasize the endless work of women during the soviet past in combining household labor, child care and wage work. Women's centrality in the household and full time participation in the labor force resulted in their sense of superiority, power and self-esteem, on the one hand, and sense of victimization, on the other hand, at their never being able to do enough of anything, especially mothering. As Bystydzienski (1995:193) states in his study on pressing problems and possible solutions for women in post-soviet societies, women's views of their economic participation during the soviet era indicated "a high degree of dissatisfaction, feelings of inadequacy, and perceptions of discrimination <...> being overworked, overtired, and too worried about their domestic responsibilities to take their jobs seriously <...> their jobs being of low quality, often boring, and with little prospects for advancement".

Concerning the gender based victimization of women it is only recently that Lithuanian scholars working on gender issues approach the problem of violence against women by regarding women as 'victims' owning to the representation of the traditionally strong position of women in the society and to an imposed egalitarian ideology. As discussed at length by different scholars (Havelkova, 1993; Berry, 1995; Reingardienė, 1997), the nuclear family concept and gendered arrangements in it does not pertain to the Eastern European family in the same sense as it is applied to Western family structure. First, the family cooperation and its members' unity was developed as a defense basis against the common opponent during the soviet past. A network of collaborating family members was necessary for survival conditioned by a low economic standard of living and a housing crisis. Second, men's even temporary absence from the families during past wars, resistance or underground movements, made its impact on family functioning and at the same time created an elevated position of mother in household. Women gained the traditionally sanctioned authority in decision-making practices focused on family matters by replacing their absent men's roles in the families, by passing national culture to the offspring during periods of national oppression, by managing family budget and having a decision making power. Even in the presence of both spouses, the families' socio-occupational structure and other miseries of socialism, like low income, small family budgets sufficient for only basic needs or time-consuming shopping limited to essentials caused a special mastery to be developed, which became the responsibility of many women in Lithuania. The income distribution and budgetary decisions in many families became women's specialty as well. Women's power in the family in terms of decision making as well as their power to sustain an appropriate domestic standard and gender relationship was officially legitimized by feminine "nature" to control the private sphere

and to shape other family members. Regarding women as "victims" in today's context calls for disclosure of the confining and burdensome nature of women's multiple roles and related oppressive intra-familial interaction not only in the traditional family structure or soviet past, but also of its continuing effect to women's disadvantage in the broader context of post-soviet transformations.

As the negative outcome of the soviet egalitarian ideology often raised by the Russian scholars working on gender identity issues in post-soviet societies (Tarkhova, 1993; Iagodinski, 1990; Aleshina and Volovich, 1991) is the demise of femininity. They claim that females had lost some of the essential aspects of femininity, such as tenderness, kindness, concern for others, many of them, according to Iagodinski (1990:64), tried "to take reins of family life into their own hands", which was a disaster not only for society but for individual families too. Tarkhova (1993) goes further to claim, that the demise of father's status in the family and the reinforced impression of active woman and passive man, had a negative effect on children, especially boys, who were deprived of strong, positive male role models and this led to a manifestation of extreme, negative forms of men behavior: aggression and violence. A demise in femininity, furthermore, has been linked to the inevitable demise in morals in society as women were always expected to act as a guarantors of society's moral health, to soften and humanize society, and encourage men to be strong and protective (Attwood, 1996). Despite the supposed commitment to equality between sexes, the public and scholarly concern has often been expressed about the moral collapse it brings to society: increasing rates of gender based violence is one of the outcomes of this collapse. While explicitly claiming gender essentialist and naturalized views and generalizations, they have not analyzed in-depth what aspects of egalitarian ideology caused shifts in males and females roles and how this ideology was institutionalized and enforced in practice. The traditional patriarchal gendered order in society is perceived as a natural state of gender arrangement. The narrow-minded arguments are soaked with gender roles' stereotypes and completely ignorant of broader social context as well as – gender, as socially constr-

ructed beliefs about femininity and masculinity in society, thus continuing to endorse the roles traditionally ascribed to men and women.

In contrast to "brave victim", soviet reality also represented an image of a soviet man who acted, according to Gal & Kligman (2000:54) as a "big child" in the family: "disorganized, needy, dependent, vulnerable, demanding to be taken care of and sheltered, to be humored as he occasionally acted out with aggression, alcoholism, womanizing, or absenteeism". The paternalist state's provided picture of masculinity was that of dominance, with men occupying leading positions in the state sector and being served within household, and was not linked to men's roles in families and households. I note the contrast between these images and the forms of masculinity and femininity in the earlier bourgeois world, and in the contemporaneous West, where masculinity male aggressiveness and the breadwinner role remained hegemonic.

In the conditions of an emerging market economy and privatization of the post soviet economy in the country, it is more men than women who are increasingly associated with the idealized even romanticized dynamic, capitalist sector of the economy while feminized occupations and professions remain largely in the disadvantaged public sector. This is not only a matter of occupational segregation but of cultural expectations as well. The mainstream publications on labor segregation by gender often raise the issues about the personal qualities required by emerging market economy and the impact of this demand on individual self-perception, self-fulfillment and well-being. It is often proclaimed that the market economy requires those traits, which have traditionally been ascribed to men - entrepreneurship, individual responsibility, activity, initiative, rationality, willingness to take risks, aggressiveness - and the demise of state socialism has been accompanied by a celebration of masculinity but only in a new forms of its representations (Attwood, 1996). The problem is that not long time ago men were confronted with fundamental contradiction: they were socialized to act "like men" but were given no legitimate ways they could do so, since there was no space for initiative, competition or individual responsibility under the strict paternalist control of the soviet state. The planned

economy and the labor market, the traditional male arena, was based on qualities which are traditionally assumed to be "feminine": collective responsibility, implementation (of state decisions), instrumental attitude towards work, conservatism, etc. (Waylen, 1994). Denied positive outlets for their masculinity, many men turned to negative forms of activity, including alcoholism, family fights and crimes. As current observers states, it is not that these men have changed, but that they have remained in a "big child" mode of soviet manhood, which is no longer desired. Other scholars (Berry, 1995; Fraser, 1997) envisage men playing the main role in market economy and family stress coming mainly from their deficiencies rather than shifting gender roles in labor market.

Although the public/private patterns and their gendering are readily discernible at the level of work stereotypes and labor market as a whole, the closer look allows us to see that although women are generally associated with public employment, the public and private are more complexly nested in the occupational lives of individual women than the cultural stereotypes would suggest. In the context of current understandings of public and private in the region it is more difficult to envision the unified "us" against a monolithic "them" controlling the state. Post-soviet patters also fail to match the earlier bourgeois ideals of the separate spheres. Nor do current gender alignments of public and private mirror patters of workplace gender relations in contemporary Western Europe or United States.

In the absence of reliable data about the prevalence of male to female violence in Lithuanian family before and since 1989, it would be empirically presumptuous to state how conditions of the transformations have impacted the incidence of this phenomenon in families. However, the survey data exposes the domestic sphere as a place where all tensions, unachieved expectations and social pressures usually are accumulated and expressed. Financial insecurity and uncertainty, related to high rates of unemployment, fears over public services and their deteriorating quality in the context of the recent reduction, reorganization or elimination process, increasing families' dependence on single, mostly men's income and feminization of poverty are only a few factors that are likely to feed into

the problem of domestic violence. The findings of the survey generally revealed quite high prevalence of the stressful experience among women and men, which is significantly correlated with different forms of women and children victimization in the private domain.

Talking about women's vulnerability to all disadvantages of post-soviet age, Nansy Fraser (1997) emphasizes gender not only as political-economic differentiation, but particularly its role as a primary target of cultural-valuational differentiation. The latter form of differentiation encompasses elements that bring feminine and related private agendas within the problematic of recognition.

> Certainly, a major feature of gender injustice is androcentrism: the authoritative construction of norms that privilege traits associated with masculinity. Along with this goes cultural sexism: the pervasive devaluation and disparagement[5] of things coded as "feminine", paradigmatically-but not only- women" (Fraser, 1997: 20).

The explicit manifestation of the devalued femininity is well reflected in normative acceptance of gender based violence, including sexual harassment, as the obvious reflections of "manhood", thus natural and not worth to cope with. In one out of ten cases (9.3%) the survey respondents agreed (another 7.7% were undecided) that in certain circumstances husband can spank his wife. If the existence of the common value system is assumed to be true for the most forms of "public" crimes or violations of human rights, the existence of common belief system regarding gender based violence in the family is doubtful. There is a sufficient normative ambiguity and culturally prescribed powers to men that a clear moral consensus does not in fact exist. Overcoming androcentrism and sexism in our society requires changing the cultural valuations and their practical expressions that privilege masculinity and deprive women from equal opportunities and choices.

The above argumentation suggests that public and private are ideologically determined as well as socially constructed categories reflected in the images of femininity and masculinity, gender relationship – violence against women in this case - and existing normative order. The post soviet transformations in Lithuania brought with them a shift in

private/public dichotomy as well as gender identities and representations through which soviet gender regime was constituted. The devaluation of femininity as injustice of recognition is expresses in many forms of harms and violence suffered by women, including sexual exploitation, assault and pervasive domestic violence; trivializing, objectifying and demeaning stereotypical images in media; attitudinal discrimination; subjection to androcentric norms in relation to which women appear lesser or deviant and that work to disadvantage them even without any intention to discriminate; marginalization in public spheres and deliberative bodies (Dobash & Dobash, 1992; Yllö & Bograd, 1988; Fraser, 1997).

Soviet egalitarianism

While examining the celebration of gender "equality" during socialism, many scholars refer to how protective legislation was used to create and justify the unequal gendered organization of the economy rather than enhancing real gender equality (Eisenstein, 1993; Gal & Kligman, 2000; Kligman, 1994). The socialist egalitarianism equates women equality with their entrance into the labor market and it singles women out for "protection". As Eisenstein (1993:308) points out, "this is the "logical" extension of the patriarchal underpinnings of socialist equality for women: the institution of motherhood must be enforced alongside and within the market". Women refer to this egalitarianism as the "false equality" or "forced emancipation", as women's entrance into the labor market was accompanied by the enforcement of women's domestic and secondary wage earner's status. Moreover, the special provisions to women (free day care, maternity leaves) were supposed to assist women in their roles, rather than to reorganize domestic responsibilities between the partners in domestic sphere. These entitlements, according to Gail Kligman (1994), functioned as positive incentives and were progressive in intention if not in their implementation. In this way protective legislation constructed women's choices as different, enforced women's differentiation from men in order to ensure women's distinction from men. Treating women and men differently not necessarily negates the fair tre-

atment. Sexual equality specifies diversity inherent in equality itself. Individuals are diverse and our gender diversifies us further. Diversity underlies the democratic project by including the concept of individuality that embraces the differences among people. Equality can't merely mean the sameness of treatment and this socialist construction of equality in gender terms must be reinvented. Equal treatment encompasses the uniqueness and similarity simultaneously and must underpin the individual freedom too, for people to be equally free. Women's singling out for "protection" means her engendering as a mother, as a potential bearer of children first, as enforcing an existing gender code in society. Women's involvement into the market then is her supposedly equal treatment with a man (as a mother, not as an individual), but after this gender differentiation is put in place. Thus, women's choices are constructed as different to ensure her domesticity. This is not about recognizing women's uniqueness, individuality or specialness in ways that would allow the greater freedom of choice and equal opportunities.

The picture of protective socialist legislation is far more complicated and problematic, especially in its transformation towards the "free" market. The special supportive provisions for women in a shortage economy in reality provided for women much needed assistance. It results in what Eisenstein (1993: 309) summarized in a statement that "even if there is a big difference between "assistance" and equality, no one wants to give up the former without the assurance of the latter". The transformation processes and new reforms to women's maternity and child-care provisions are increasingly perceived by women as a threat to their even partial empowerment in domestic as well as public spheres. In the process of rejecting totalitarian socialism, patriarchal gender relations have been rearticulated in old ways of patriarchal democracy. Redirected their "purely womanly mission" women will have to wait for the reforms or preventive measures, as whatever restructuring happens in the society all attention is directed towards reforming the public sphere.

The conclusion that follows is that although the gender equality was ideologically praised throughout the Eastern bloc, the equality was more rea-

dily achieved in rhetoric than in practice. Legislation on women's rights as workers came into conflict with women's roles as mothers and their obligations as reproducers of the labor force. Special provisions or occupational advances for women were not coupled with any particular emphasis on changing gender roles in the family which were further exacerbated by the paternalist structure of the soviet state.

Gender naturalization and differentiation

Women's full employment in soviet labor market was an integral aspect of soviet economies and a means for securing women's full economic and social equality. As a result of soviet ideology and also economic necessities on the part of the family, more than 80% of women in soviet states were involved in the labor market. This otherwise positive feature had its considerable disadvantages for women, as their participation in the labor market did not free them from their duties and responsibilities at home. The ideology had a clear instrumental purpose to mask any unhappiness of soviet woman in a misguided attempt to equalize and homogenize the sexes.

By 1990, in the context of glasnost and perestroika, many Lithuanian women expressed yearning for a traditional female role centered on the family and home. Moreover, the demographic trends in the country such as lower marriage rates, rising rates of divorce, declining birth rates became the focus of anxious discussions on the "emancipatory" soviet ideology being not in favor of reproduction of the labor force for the soviet labor market. As Moghadam (1996:339) concludes in his study on patriarchy and post-communism in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, in the 1980s "for the first time since 1920s, Soviet writers began to suggest that female liberation and family stability may be incompatible". A growing number of studies by soviet scholars documented the conflicting demands of women's dual role, the constraints it places on occupational mobility, and its harmful effects on women's health and the well being of their families (Lapidus, 1993). Contradictory attitudes towards women's role in 1980s Soviet Union can also be found in Gorbachev's *Perestroika*, where

he, on the one hand, claims that "today it is imperative for the country to more actively involve women in the management of the economy, in cultural development and public life" (Gorbachev, 1988:116), and, on the other hand, concludes, that the breakdown of family life is to blame for an array of Soviet social problems and that "we should make it possible for women to return to their purely womanly mission" (ibid. 117-18).

The process of change after the collapse of the soviet system has reinforced a movement toward what may be called "retraditionalization" in Lithuania, that is, a professed return to traditional values and family life, including national identity and religion. As Barbara Einhorn (2001) observes, this "new"/old discourse represents the shift from a universalistic, egalitarian model to an essentialist, difference based model. Within this "new" discourse the femininity and masculinity have been "rediscovered" in contrast to the asexuality ascribed retrospectively to the soviet egalitarian norm. The femininity, read either maternity or porn, reflects traditional family values on the one hand, and the growing sex trade on the other (UNISEF, 1999).

The essentialist and gender difference based model entails the nationalist claims to reshape the nation against the debilitating "mothering" of socialism, to reconfigure the family yet again, compelling women back into nurturing roles "natural" to their sex and restoring to men their "natural" family authority. As several scholars have observed (Jähnert, 2001; Verdery, 1996), the nature left as the last truth in a collapsing system. The state's usurpation of the familial-patriarchal authority is now giving way to policies and attitudes at recovering the lost authority for men in nuclear families. Numerous articles in popular press and magazines spoke of the need for Lithuanian men to become real men again instead of the wimps that socialism had made them. They argued that "soviet mothering" made men weak and lacking in authority, and to alter this requires restoring the autonomy to the family and authority to the father. These writings are pervaded with essentialism or an emphasis on "natural differences" that suit women to nurturing and emotional roles. Even more important are texts depicting the aggressiveness that socialism encouraged in women, the lack of affection and unders-

tanding as well as their destructive aggressiveness within the family and against their male partners. What is at issue here is precisely the emphasis on women's "natural" nurturing and emotional roles. For women it means that their roles in society are being redefined into, what McWilliams (1998) calls, "old ways of doing things", with the emphasis on their place in family. According to McWilliams (1998:122), the "old ways" prescribed to women often have "gender-specific scripts attached to them and have little to do with what the women consider to be their "traditional ways"". McClintock (1993) makes a similar point in what she refers to as "temporal anomaly within nationalism", which she describes as shifting between the nostalgia for the past and the impatient getting rid of the past. She argues that the temporal anomaly is typically resolved by approaching the contradiction as a "natural division of gender".

> Women are represented as the atavistic and authentic "body" of national tradition (inert, backward-looking and natural) embodying nationalism's conservative principle of continuity. Men, by contrast, represent the progressive agent of national modernity (forward thrusting, potent and historic), embodying nationalism's progressive or revolutionary principle of discontinuity. Nationalism's anomalous relation to time is thus managed as a natural relation to gender (McClintock, 1993:66).

The emerged national narrative of post-socialism gendered time by figuring women as "the conservative repository of the national archaic", the guardians of morality. The national rhetoric called on women to adopt the role of the self-sacrificing and unquestioning mother. In the conditions of transformational stresses and uncertainties it was not supposed to be a hard task for women as, according to some observers, women today are better equipped to deal with post-soviet gendered arrangements and changes in general because "their identities are closely linked to the solid foundation of the family, a site of familiarity and normalcy in a time of general upheaval and in some cases war" (Gal & Kligman 2000:68-69). Even the statistics of higher men's morbidity and mortality since 1989 in Lithuania have been explained in terms of women's lower stress levels of their continuing fulfillment of roles in private households and of considerable social pressure on men to meet the finan-

cial provider's expectations of their family members and society in general.

The reality though was far more contradictory and complicated than what the national rhetoric called upon it. Even though for some women the exit from the labor market in favor of full-time mothering was preferable, in part because it represented a privilege that women were denied under socialism, in practice women were and are of necessity economically active in both private and public spheres in both economic systems. For the majority of women, the matter of choosing the work or to raise families is idealistic in the context of contemporary market economy. Combined with diminishing and/or disappearing state social provisions' benefits working women are increasingly confronted by the contradictory demands of family and paid employment. The structured prioritization of capitalist organization delegates family responsibility to the private sphere, making most household labor the responsibility of the family on its own. As Gail Kligman (1994:260) states, "no matter how inadequate social services were in the former socialist states, the dilemma was at least recognized, though provisions varied considerably". The today's state is no longer able or willing to adequately subsidize work leaves for family care. Most women must continue to work and to simply take on additional kin work to satisfy their familial responsibilities. Multiple demands upon women in productive and reproductive spheres disempower them, give rise not only to the structural discrimination of women in the labor market, but also put a tremendous burden on family welfare and its stable functioning.

The above argument exposes the problematic outcome of the shifts in individual – state responsibility. The paternalist soviet state appropriated within itself the patriarchal prerogatives of more traditional family organization. The state's capture of these patriarchal rights to women's reproduction as well as to men's and women's labor changed the very foundations of individual responsibility. The paternalist dependency relations instilled under the previous ideology have prevented individuals from taking responsibility for their own actions, lives and those of their families which has to be newly reinvented today.

Idealization and isolation of the post-soviet "private"

Idealization and isolation of the post-soviet Lithuanian family is a part of the "retraditionalization" process that refers to specific emphasis on family analysis. As many scholars have noted (Funk & Mueller, 1993; Kligman, 1992; Burawoy & Verdery, 1999), the family in East Central European public discourse differs from the patterns in Western Europe and United States, first of all, as it is popularly considered the institution that provides continuity with the past during the current period of dramatic social restructuring. National revival in Lithuania and the following ideological transformations were occupied by family idealization and romanticization of the traditional private household as 'authentic', even by its sacralization, while the state and other institutions were not much trusted and viewed with suspicion. This image survives even if during the last years there were profound changes in family forms, fertility and divorce rates, gender roles within the family and the reported increasing rates in the prevalence of violence against women in the family. It is further reinforced by the main concern and increased role of the Catholic Church during the last decade to preserve the sanctity of the family – the private patriarchal *sanctum*. The specific targets of church proclamation - divorce, abortion, or violence in the family – have been expressed in terms of a pro-family and anti-feminist discourse. According to Ailbhe Smyth (1996:67), the denial of women's rights to independence, autonomy and physical integrity by church authorities "produces and maintains the social contexts and structures which 'legitimate' violence against women". Hoff (1994:632) further observes, that "anti-choice arguments usually reflect civic and religious attitudes that implicitly condone or encourage violence against women...". The state, although being very reluctant to intervene in domestic violence cases, clearly proscribes women's rights to control their fertility or to leave unhappy or abusive marriage. In conservative Catholic ideology and politics, the family as an abstract ideal is of much higher value than the rights, freedoms, autonomy and survival of women and children.

In sum, the celebration of the country's national revival and its independence flourished the traditional values of Lithuanian family and its exceptional role in the context of the uncertainties of the post-soviet age. While idealizing the family based in marriage, reinforcing women's and children's obedience to their male immediate family members as well as privatizing any family tension, conflict or violence, the Catholic ideology in this way contributes powerfully towards producing and reinforcing a patriarchal ideology in the society. It constructs femininity as "naturally" domestic and dependent, and masculinity as public, dominant and controlling. Recently, women's organizations and women activists increasingly question these conservative ideological assumptions together with any patriarchal societal constructions and constraints when talking about them openly and attracting public attention. This is a part of a consciousness raising movement to make these issues socially visible in the country, to question the existing gender stereotypes, traditional gender expectations and the infinite privacy of family life.

Violence as an individual problem and private concern

Violence against women in Lithuanian society is still not identified by the public as a significant problem and, thus, has not gained much attention. Even if it is recognized as a problem by a certain segment of the population, it is very often distinguished from other forms of punishable violence in society, relegating it to form of "discipline", response to "provocation" or momentary outburst of a drunk man. In this way, the problem has been minimized or even denied, or in Marcus (1994:17) terms, "viewed as individual and aberrant rather than a culturally justified and endorsed systemic practice designed to silence and to coerce a clearly identifiable population". This section of the article refers to the views and attitudes of the women as revealed in the survey results, which inform the tendency to isolate the problem from its public nature and to reduce it to single factors. The section introduces and analyzes the respondents' attitudes towards a few statements on domestic violence. Each of them stresses a single factor as

the main issue of the problem (alcohol, mentally disturbed behavior, lower social status) or relegates domestic violence exclusively to the private sphere with the only problem preventive measures being located within the family itself. This, as well as accusations of women being provocative receivers of violence, and the normative ambiguity surrounding domestic violence attitudes, have a prominent significance for the social control mechanism within Lithuanian society.

The social knowledge of gender-based violence in the family in Lithuania separates violence survivors from the "normal" ones and separates the family as the good and proper source of personal discipline in the society from pathological households that cannot sustain the appropriate domestic standards. In general public and scientific debates about the issue of domestic violence it is almost inseparable from the subject of alcohol abuse in Lithuanian families and society in general. The reasons of abuse are held to lie deep within the body or personality of its participants or in their culture. When asked to evaluate some widespread reasoning of males' violent behavior in their families, 86.4% of the survey respondents agreed with the statement that alcoholism is a main reason of domestic violence in Lithuanian society (see table 1)[6]. Table 1 shows the interviewed women's response distribution on the attitude scale as it was applied in the survey.

Table 1. The distribution of the respondents' opinion on the attitude scale on domestic violence (in percentage).

	Completely agree	Agree	Neither agree, nor disagree	Disagree	Completely disagree
Alcoholism is a main reason of domestic violence	37.1	49.3	8.1	3.5	2.0
In certain circumstances spanking a child as means of punishment is acceptable	6.6	55.5	15.7	19.6	2.5
Woman abuse problem in the family must be solved by family itself	15.1	50.4	14.7	16.8	3.0
In most cases woman abuse in the family is related to mentally disturbed woman/man's behavior	9.4	36.5	25.7	21.8	6.5
In certain circumstances husband can spank his wife	2.2	7.1	7.7	42.6	40.3
In most cases women are provoking violence against themselves	2.3	22.9	31.2	31.5	12.1
Spousal violence is the problem of the lower social status families	14.9	33.5	18.9	21.5	11.1

The recently provided statistics also builds a base to give alcohol a considerable weight in the explanation of the problem. According to the data of the Municipal Police Service under the jurisdiction of the Police Department, Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Lithuania, 60-63% of domestic violence crimes from 1994-1997 were committed by persons in a state of intoxication (Šeduikienė, 1999). Jūratė Rimkuvienė (1999) pointing to the statistical data about the women who were treated for traumas at the Maxillo-Facial Surgery Department of Vilnius University Žalgiris Hospital from 1996-1997 concludes that 31% of violence survivors take alcohol moderately and 14.3% regularly. The 1997 survey on Violence against women revealed that in 65% of the most serious male to female violence incidents women were attacked by their drunk partner (Purvaneckienė, 1999b).

The alcoholism is very often relegated to the widespread societal problem stemming from the soviet past which has already become a cultural norm and "institution" in a sense that "the popular craving for alcohol has played as equally important role as a set of needs, values and attitudes related to the most essential determinants of social behavior: needs for food, for sex, for freedom, and for prosperity and success" (Segal, 1990:527). It is a particularly charged site in contemporary Lithuanian culture because it provides a focal point for concerns about such issues as gender roles, relations, individual well-being, dissolution of marriages, abandonment of children and domestic violence. Women's lives, especially in rural areas of the country, continue to be fundamentally differentiated from men's by the domestic aspect of life, with its inequitable distribution of labor within family, the inadequate social and economic services, and above all the necessity of living with alcohol and its related devastating effects. Coping with a drunken husband is still widely accepted as a part of the woman's as maternal savior's and redeemer's role in our culture, in which essentialized roles have long been the norm in gender relations. They put a considerable pressure on the part of women, including the crucial psychological bonds of self-sacrifice, blame and guilt, which dictates to many people a woman's tolerance of physical and psychological abuse from a drunk husband.

The popular opinion very often portrays people as frustrated to the point of violence, edgy and alienated. They seek release in drink, in a form of social escapism from a frustrating reality in general and also resultant alcohol affected behavior outcomes. The best evidence against the disinhibitory theory comes from cross-cultural studies of drinking behavior, showing that people's reaction to drinking varies from culture to culture. If society believes that alcohol and drugs release the tendencies for violent behavior, people are given a "time out" from the normal rules of social behavior when they drink or when people believe they are drunk. Gelles (1997:10) who analyzed the impact of different social variables on offenders' behavior states that finally "violent spouses and parents learn that if they want not to be held responsible for their violence, they should either drink before they hit, or at least say they were drunk".

There are two main approaches relating to the explanations of abusive drinkers' behavior, the first focusing on "destructive and aggressive male ethos" which threatens the stability of family relationship and portrays woman as a victim in this relationship. The second one points to man as a victim in the private arena. In this case, all of his vices are glossed over, women are portrayed as calculating, unfeeling, driving men to distraction by their insults, nagging, making them to feel "weak" and "unneeded", confused by and resentful of their wives' demands, thus being an ultimate stimulus for men's drinking and violence. Four out of ten women (25.2 %) in Lithuania agree that in most cases women are provoking violence themselves. This perpetrator's victimization approach encompassing a big deal of violence justification is very conducive to violence legitimization and its sustainability in the society. When women were asked to remember the most serious violent incident in their family relationship committed by their current or previous partner, 67% of them indicated that their partner was under the influence of alcohol when this happened. The conflict followed by violent behavior in 41% of cases was primarily related with woman's partner being drunk.[76]

The attitudes that are supportive of the single factorial reasoning of the problem display a tendency in a part of the population to isolate the pro-

blem within the narrow domain of perception, which advances the incidence of the problem itself and complicates the preventive means too. The figures outlined above prove that alcohol plays a prominent role but it has to be analyzed as part of a multi-factor and multi-layer context of the problem. Isolating it as a dominant single explanant of abuse ignores the broader social context of the problem where it is created and unfolds. The relatively high score for connecting the violence to mentally disturbed woman/man's behavior (see Table 1) also adds to the tendency to reduce the issue to the individual level of reasoning and to limit it to a certain social group of people thus ignoring its widespread and multi-level character. One more misconception, which is broadly discussed in gender-based violence literature and has recently gained a widespread public support in Lithuania (48.4% support in this survey), is the belief that spousal violence is the problem of the lower social status families. Rimkuvienė (1999) pointed to hospital statistics again when concluding that 62.9% of women who survived domestic violence were unemployed. The perceptional isolation of the phenomenon within a certain group in the society considerably narrows the focus of concern. Moreover, it works as an indirect mechanism to prevent mentally "undisturbed" women of wealthier and not "alcoholic" families from approaching the problem in public and getting a public attention in a form of formal or informal social control.

Social control theory increasingly gaining prominence in the study of gender based violence assumes the existence of a common value system in society that is eventually internalized into a belief system by the majority of the societal members. This is assumed to be true for most forms of crime or violation of human rights, but the existence of a common belief system regarding domestic violence is doubtful. There is a sufficient normative ambiguity about wife or child abuse that a clear moral consensus does not in fact exist. The ambiguity arises because striking a family member is seen by many people as an acceptable action in certain conditions. The statement that In certain circumstances spanking a child as a means of punishment is acceptable (italic mine) was one of the measures of normative violence in the private sphere (see

table 3) and it got substantial support from the respondents (62.1%). The statement that In certain circumstances husband can spank his wife is much less supported among the female respondents, but still was agreed on in one out of ten cases (9.3%) by the surveyed women with another 7.7% being undecided about it. The ambiguous belief system and normative approval of some forms of violence in family is one of the factors that contribute to the incidence of the problem and its social ignorance. As Johnson (1998) points out, the normative ambiguity permits people to suspend the moral belief that violence is wrong, neutralizes the harm of the act and prevents outside intervention. It also plays a function in isolating the family as it ascribes some forms of violence to the private concerns of the family. Moreover, the family violence "privatization" was further confirmed by the majority of women's agreement with the statement (65.5%) that the gender-based violence problem in the family must be solved by the family itself. This attitude has its roots in the patriarchal organization of the "closed" traditional family and the powerful religious messages about inappropriateness of the subjects of intimacy and domestic violence for public discussion, enforcing every individual effort to resolve any intimate problem within the family itself. The attitude of gender based violence as exclusively the involved actors' problem also goes back to the soviet "us" versus "them" dichotomy, where "them" represents unreliable, untrustworthy and helpless state control with no effective mechanisms in place to combat the violence in the family. Furthermore, as argued above, during post-socialist transformations the issue of gender based violence has been officially depublicized. The state's failure to prevent and punish violent domestic incidents, "public" crimes' prioritization over "private" ones, application of different standards of victimization as well as state "protection" of privacy has made family privacy a state sanctioned norm and has led to state complicity in domestic crimes. This official position, ineffective preventive mechanisms and impunity have given a freedom to the offender's power and control manifestations and his violent actions. A victim blaming approach also informs the prevailing attitude that violence is an outcome of women's giving up their traditionally

strong position in the family and their traditional roles in the family. It also reveals the demise of femininity approaches, emphasizing women's reduced kindness, caring and concern for others and their provoking behavior. According to these approaches, victims are also no less responsible for not understanding and supporting their male partners who have difficulties to deal with increasing unemployment, their supposed financial provider's role and new required qualities of the market economy. Because of these big expectations on women Khodyreva (1996:32) claims that "in case of divorce or the husband drinking heavily it is the woman who has always been blamed, evidenced in present day sayings like 'a husband never leaves a good wife' or 'a good wife's husband would never drink hard'". This informs as well as confirms the problematic of the feminine devaluation in society that Nancy Fraser (1997) was talking about. The whole patriarchal social structural arrangements, feminization of poverty, androcentric norms in society reinforced by the trivializing and objectifying stereotypical media images of "feminine" and the mystified presentation of gender based violence in society work to privilege masculinity and to disempower women from equal opportunities and choices. These factors, when combined with the specific social organization of the familial privacy and normative violence in society, act in favor of gender based violence against woman in the private realm.

Conclusions

The rebuilding of civil society carries with it the task to broaden the conception to include publicity and privacy as related characteristics in civil society, not actual spaces, and to broaden its application to issues of women's integration into the civil society in the context of basic violation of their rights. The creation of social order spans the public and private divide (Pierce: 2000). As Turpin and Kurtz (1997:162) have asked, "Can people brought up to accept brutal practices...in their private lives realistically be accepted to create society free of torture, repression, warfare, and terrorism?".

During the soviet past the issue of gender based violence was embedded in an oppressive ideological discourse and a conspiracy of silence that in general was not conducive to recognizing and speaking about this phenomenon. The discussion of the ideological and cultural dynamics within the private/public dichotomy during the soviet past and its post-soviet dilemmas serves as a departure point for gender based violence discussion in this study. It exposes political/economic as well as cultural/valuational differentiation within this dichotomy with higher value and privilege being attributed to what is called "public" or "masculine" and which brings feminine within the problematic of recognition. The study reveals the complex interdependencies between private/public or us/they dichotomies of the soviet state and the impact of state intended instrumentalization of interpersonal relationship. In everyday life people used the complex subdivisions as a means of gaining a measure of strategic flexibility in a system of apparently rigid social structures.

The study also presented more elaborated analysis of the new confrontations of the post-soviet family, images of masculinity and femininity in the context of soviet egalitarianist ideology and post-soviet moves towards retraditionalization or gender naturalization, focusing on gender based violence against women in the family as a part of this process, in which the subject has been officially depublicized and is gaining status of a state sanctioned norm. The analysis of women's attitudes towards domestic violence exposed the normative ambiguity surrounding domestic violence that contributes to the social ignorance of the problem in the society. It also reveals the tendency to isolate the problem of violence against women within the narrow domain of individual factors, which omits the systemic practices designed to intentionally control a clearly identifiable population.

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Notes:

1 The survey on Violence against women carried out in 2000 reveals, that f.e. in case of child abuse, 62.1% of female respondents agree that in certain circumstances spanking a child as means of punishment is acceptable.

2 It was only in 1990s that gender violence was publicly recognized on the international level as a human rights issue.

3 Lithuania as many other Eastern European countries has signed the international human right treaties, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) or 1995 Beijing Platform for Action.

4 Police as well as statistical department have recently begun to keep records that differentiate the gender of victims. According to the data of the Municipal Police Service of 1997, 89 % of victims of domestic violence in case of police intervention are women (Šeduikiene, 1999).

5 Gender disparagement can take many forms, of course, including conservative stereotypes that appear to celebrate, rather than demean, "femininity" (Fraser, 1997).

6 The response distribution in the table 1 is presented in the same form scale as it was applied in the questionnaire with the response options varying from 'completely agree' to 'completely disagree'. This is a classical Likert type scale which provides the respondents with the broader variance of answer options. In the analysis of the data, the 'completely agree' and 'agree' answers are summed up as both representing the attitude supportive responses.

7 The respondents of the survey were provided with 12 possible conflict areas in the family to choose from as well as with a choice to list unmentioned sources of conflict in their families followed by their partner's violent behavior towards them. Male partner being drunk was one of the conflict sources, indicated by women, which led to violence against surveyed women by their partners.

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