



Meta-analysis of gender and science research

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1. Introduction

Only since 1990 female scientists as a specific social group have become the focus of empirical researches carried out by Lithuanian scientists. The first study of this kind was published in 1993 (by O. Voverienė and I. Dagtė), in which the activities of female PhDs (habilitated doctors) were briefly discussed. Later study of 1996 (by Stankūnienė, 1996), although it has referred to female scientists only fragmentally, should be singled out as it has focused on a greater concern demonstrated by female scientists to preserve the position as a scientist than the one demonstrated by male scientists in the times of scientists' extensive emigration.

Since 2000 studies on women's situation in the Lithuanian science and the system of education in general have become more frequent. It reflects a relatively increasing interest of female and male scientists in the issue (Purvaneckienė, 2000, 2001; Purvaneckas and Purvaneckienė, 2000; Novelskaitė, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2005; Taljūnaitė and Žvinklienė, 2001; Žvinklienė, 2003). Different studies show that such factors as economic growth and socio-cultural changes of post-communist societies as well as internal social derivatives, which are characteristic only of the scientific community, have influenced women's participation in Lithuanian academic community and their career perspectives. Despite the positive change towards the women's representation in the public domains, academic community remains highly segregated by gender with women representing power relation that pertain to a masculine world by definition. A minor number of women at the top of academic structure is due more to the discriminative practices in advancing women in science than to the low levels of their professional ambitions.

However, as the situation of financing researches is rather complicated, the most of studies in their essence reflect descriptive aspects of women's situation in different fields of science, e.g. that women defend dissertations at a younger age than men, that most favourable career opportunities for women in terms of habilitation are in medical sciences and least favourable - in physical and technical sciences (although women defending PhD dominated in 2000, they still made up 30% of all obtaining a scientific degree in physical and technical sciences). Nevertheless, most often only standard interpretations are proposed in the conclusions of these research results, no scientifically grounded recommendations, the implementation of which could be of big value to improve the situation in the Lithuanian science in general and the situation of female scientists in particular. The research lacks feminist critiques of public policy discourses about scientific excellence and gender mainstreaming policies in education and science in general. There is a lack of critical reflections on more elaborated analysis of power dynamics, on how power relations are produced and reproduced in academic community and how the educational identities are constructed.

2. Analysis by topics

2.1. Horizontal and vertical segregation

Research questions

The studies tackling the phenomenon of gender and science are very scarce in the country. Nevertheless, the horizontal and vertical segregation is one of the most popular areas of research in Lithuania. The literature review revealed three main issues of research:

- the articles that mostly focus on the trends and tendencies of women's participation in Lithuanian academic (scientific) community from 1990 to 2008 and discuss social factors and patterns governing women's participation: how did the status of women in Lithuanian scientific community has changed since 1990, and how could these

changes may be bound up with the alterations in entire Lithuanian society and in Lithuanian scientific community in particular?

- the articles that focus on the reasons and practices of discrimination of women in science: what are the main reasons of discrimination? What are the peculiarities of discrimination practices in academic (scientific) institutions?
- the analysis of women's career paths in science; how and what kind of women do a career in science? How does it differ from men's career paths?

The research in this area is mostly focused on state-of-art reviews and statistical compilations, showing the recent tendencies of women's distribution in different areas of science, feminisation of certain areas (i.e. medicine) and under-representation of women in another areas (mostly ICT). There are qualitative studies as well, based on interviews, which helped to reveal women's attitudes towards the *glass ceiling*, reasons of their under-representation in science and their career strategies. The particular attention is given to women in medical sciences.

Research approaches

The most of the research is based on the historical approach to the soviet past and post-soviet transformations in science. The studies highlight the influence of the specific gender policy implemented in the country during the communist regime on the post-soviet conditions. The context of economic, social and political transformations and their outcomes to women gains a particular importance in the studies. Moreover, a lot of data and statistical figures are analyzed in the context of the reforms in science and education that have been implemented since the beginning of 90s and have not been completed yet.

The interest in gender and science and unequal distribution of women and men in sciences is very recent and started to be researched just since 2000. The majority of articles (26 out of 34) that deal with gender and science in Lithuania are focused on the issues of vertical and horizontal segregation and the majority of them have been written since 2000 (just 1 in 1995). A few leading researchers in this area could be distinguished:

- Aurelija Novelskaite, a researcher in sociology at Social Research Institute, was the first scholar who did an extensive sociological analysis on women's participation in Lithuanian academic (scientific) community in post-soviet period in her doctoral thesis. She also wrote another 11 articles, based on statistics and qualitative research, about the dynamics and changing patterns of women in science.
- Alina Zvinkliene, a researcher in sociology at Social Research Institute, worked as a national expert for the European report "Waste of talents: turning private struggles into a public issue. Women and science in the Enwise countries", which was commissioned by the Research Directorate - General in order to assess the conditions and status of women scientists in the Central and Eastern European countries and the Baltic States. Following the ETAN report on Promoting Excellence through Mainstreaming Gender Equality, which dealt essentially with the situation of women scientists in the current EU Member States, this report is the result of one of the actions of the Science and Society Action Plan: to promote gender equality in science in a wider Europe.
- Dalia Satkovskiene, the associate professor in physics at Vilnius University, is an editor of the book "Women in Sciences and High Technology in the Baltic States: Problems and Solutions", the first of this kind, which provides with an overview of the problems women meet in their scientific careers in five countries: Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Poland and Romania. The book is based on the research results obtained during implementation of FP6 project "Baltic States Network: Women in Sciences and High Technology" (BASNET). The book also provides with the elaborate analysis of women's scientific careers in the above mentioned countries, women's participation in decision making bodies of scientific institutions and their views about solving the problem of gender inequality in science. The insights are based on the qualitative studies –in-depth interviews of scientists and policy makers - in all countries.
- Giedre Purvaneckiene, the associate professor in education sciences at Vilnius University, draws her attention to the distribution of women in education system in

general in the country. She observes that many more women than men strive for better education in Lithuania; around two thirds of the graduates from universities are women, but their presence in technical studies remains very low. Moreover, they play just a secondary role in education policy decision making.

The most of the studies on vertical and horizontal gender segregation in science have been carried out in public universities (Vilnius University, Vytautas Magnus University, Siauliai University) and Social Research Institute (public research institute) in Lithuania.

The most of the studies provide with the statistical data mostly reflecting higher education sector and government sector, just very rarely business enterprise sector and private non-profit sector. Due to increase of women in medical sciences, this area gained a particular attention by several scholars (Ina Dagyte, Aurelija Novelskaite). In some cases, the studies are based on the interview materials with women, less often with men, in sciences.

Findings

The review of studies (2000-2008) on horizontal and vertical segregation can be summarized as follows:

- The importance of education in Soviet past has led to the emergence of a considerable proportion of highly-qualified women, active in all public spheres and notably in science. The transition period has led to the restructuring of the research systems in the Central and Eastern European countries and can generally be characterised by the sharp decline in funding allocated to science, the decrease of the research population, in changes of formal and informal requirements for scientific productivity, in numerous reformations of legal basis and institutional structures of Lithuanian science and education system. Even though these changes affected male and female scientists equally, the consequences of the transition have left women scientists in a more vulnerable situation.
- The patterns of women's participation in Lithuanian academic community in 1950-2000 reflect changing ideological contexts as well as altering social structures. Although such interdependencies are characteristic, discovered behavioural diversity of Lithuanian women in academic community is atypical of (at least) some Western countries, but reflect patterns typical of other post-communist ones (i.e. Baltic states).
- Despite the increasing number of women in science, they are still under-represented in many areas, particularly in ICT and engineering sciences. Their career opportunities are limited by external social factors acting in the society at large, as well as by internal social derivatives which are characteristic only for the scientific community.
- The crucial obstacles in women scientists' career are related to the lack of transparency of employment procedures: in the process of appointment to a certain position not only professional achievements are at play, but also informal recommendations and support of colleagues (preferably male).
- The key problems that women face in their scientific careers are as follows:
 - pay gap between male and female scientists, the design of fellowships for single child-free individuals or difficulties of returning to science after a career break.
 - The social factors influencing the number and positions of women in science are the public attitudes concerning the standard of sufficient education for a woman, and how science - its branches, specialization, namely research and/or teaching - is associated with a female career.
- A minor number of women in the highest academic positions are due more to the discriminative practices in advancing women in science in all levels of their academic career than to the low level of professional ambitions of academic women.
- Despite the fact that women on average have better education and qualifications than men, women play just a secondary role in education and science policy making (on national or local levels).

In a few cases the analysis of vertical and horizontal segregation deals with the pay gap issue as well. Those insights are not reflected in 2.2 part, because pay and funding is not a subject of any particular study, just mentioned in several articles as an illustration of vertical segregation.

Gaps

- The area lacks broader scientific interest;
- The lack of gender segregated data about women's and men's positions and achievements in different institutional sectors, scientific fields and/or life course;
- The analysis in majority of cases is focused on public higher education sector; there is a lack of knowledge about such institutional sectors as: business enterprise sector and/or private non-profit sector;
- The prevalence of descriptive studies; the lack of analytical research and more elaborated methodological tools;
- Other social characteristics (female scientists' age or ethnicity) are too rarely taken into account.

2.2. Pay and funding

Research questions

This area is very under-researched in Lithuania. The pay gap is mostly discussed in the context of vertical segregation in public universities and research institutes.

Research approaches

During 2007-2008m, the group of scholars at Vilnius University has carried out FP6 project "Baltic States Network: Women in Sciences and High Technology" (BASNET). The state-of-art review of problems of women working in sciences discusses the issues of wage discrimination of women in technical sciences, the need to develop gender-sensitive indicators for the assessment of scientific excellence, the need for positive measures/affirmative actions to advance women's scientific careers.

The state of the art report entitled "Waste of talents: turning private struggles into a public issue. Women and Science in the Enwise countries", which was commissioned by the Research Directorate - General in order to assess the conditions and status of women scientists in the Central and Eastern European countries (including the Baltic States), discuss the issues of research funding in Higher education and Research & Development sectors. The analysis focuses on the "funding without freedom" context of the soviet past and post-soviet present of "freedom without funding".

Findings

- The BASNET research results revealed, that gendered problems related to research funding were linked to many issues, such as mismatch of parental leave with the funding systems, 'academic' vs. 'biological' age, nontransparent practices of recruitment to research projects or graduate schools, lack of support and encouragement, research groups' dynamics, as well as sometimes overt gender bias in evaluation. The gate-keepers of research funding in Lithuania comprise middle-aged male academics.
- The Enwise report observes another reason of pay gap/vertical segregation at universities. In the post-soviet context, the university staff duties in the field of teaching increased as a consequence of the increasing numbers of students, which does not facilitate extending the research capacities in universities. Taking into account the high percentage of women at the positions of lecturer and/or assistant professor, the situation suggests that the majority of university women are used as *workers of education* with little space left for their research. Furthermore, combined with their low remuneration, this situation is both profitable for the university system and meets the social demand of universities, namely, to provide increasing services under conditions of stagnating funding. The number of women in much better paid leadership positions in institutions of higher education is still very small.
- Inadequate funding, poor infrastructure and outdated equipment in the country are all factors that impede the development of research communities, especially in areas

where the expenditure on R&D is low. As these areas tend to be those where a large proportion of female scientists are employed, women scientists face a higher risk of missing out on research opportunities.

Gaps

- The research on pay and funding have not gained an adequate scholarly attention till now;
- There is no research that would specifically focus on this area;
- There are no studies that would analyse gender inequalities in decision making over funding distributions, access to funding and outcomes of certain distributions for women and men.

2.3. Stereotypes and identity

Research questions

It is one of the emerging and quite popular research areas within the field. The research mostly focuses on two topics:

- The social construction of science. This issues of why certain areas in science are treated as masculine or feminine and that science – its branches, specialization, research, scientific excellence - is a highly gendered institution with clear hierarchical divisions between women and men are analysed.
- The social construction of gender identity. The studies mostly analyse processes of gender socialization that produce and reproduce gender norms and stereotypes, which prevent women from making “non-typical” professional choices.

Research approaches

The research in this area is basically based on social constructivist approaches.

The social construction of science

Academic (scientific) work has historically been attributed to elite. The research at the end of the last century shows that lecturing and research were the most prestigious activities in the Baltic States during the last century, thus, predominated by men. The recent statistical data shows that academic community becomes more and more feminized. However, increasing portions of women among scientists do not mean that the general order of power distribution changes simultaneously; in fact, traditional hierarchies with men at the top remain stable in Lithuanian academy. The feminization of academic work is often explained by the arguments of the declining social status and prestige of academic work. Despite the trends towards the so-called feminization of certain disciplines, mostly in humanities and social sciences, science after all remain to be perceived as a highly masculine activity.

The exact (or hard) sciences historically provided very limited access to women. Only a few women are known as great mathematicians and physicists. This situation forms the opinion that hard sciences are under the competence of men. Nowadays men scientists usually refer to the minority of men, the discoveries of whom had the great impact on the scientific knowledge and life quality of society. The context in which a female scientist model does not exist prevents girls from choosing those sciences.

The social construction of gender

The research in the field of social construction of gender identities is mostly based on social psychological perspectives. The methods used are qualitative in all cases: interviews with women in science or content analysis.

The research on women in sciences and high technologies (2007) indicates that social environment does not motivate girls to choose so called „masculine“ professions. In most cases it is observed that education system plays an important role in creating ideas about gender that are often unconscious ways to deal with female and male students. The studies of education system mostly analyse teaching materials with the help of content analysis tools. The researchers observe that, f.e. teaching in physics is not oriented to female students at all. The textbooks are written by men, they engage boys, the examples given reflect masculine hobbies. A woman physicists' role model is almost absent, which is a necessary practice in order to motivate girls to choose this profession.

The studies that analyse women's self-identification and their own subjective feelings (based on women's in-depth interviews) observe that woman is always "the other" in science (the male world), must adapt to it and employ various strategies for this. Woman does not feel free to speak out her feelings, ideas and experiences, she speaks about herself as about some abstract professional. Woman is able to "became something" (e.g. to have successful professional career) only with the help of men or by adopting the masculine strategies. Women acknowledge their otherness and obediently fall silent or gingerly try to expose their femininity (sexuality).

It is important to mention that recently there is a conceptual shift from focusing on women identities, motivation or individual characteristics towards challenging academia, its structures and practices.

Findings

The first efforts to study the social construction of science and gender identity in Lithuania reveal that:

- The historical tradition of male supremacy in science creates unfavourable social environment with dominating and privileged men and subordinated women. In such environment women are treated as non-perspective because of their psychological characteristics and, as supposed, because of the lack of aptitudes and competence.
- One of the main factors that have negative influence on women's self-perception and their academic careers is an influence of stereotypes, prevailing attitudes that efficiency of leadership is to a high degree determined by personality traits such as good control of emotions, determinations that are usually attributed to men's identities. Women are not seen as potentially good leaders, because they are associated with different characteristics: being too emotional, unable to defend the interests of department or research team, etc.
- The traditions of girls' education have also great importance. The school is not the place, where girls are stimulated or motivated to have interest in deep studying of mathematics, physics, taking part in contests. The ambitions, persistency, expediency of girls are not being developed.
- The content analysis of teaching materials at schools shows that gender partiality is directly or indirectly expressed in textbooks by placing women and men in stereotypical gender roles, invisibility or inadequate presentation of female gender, i.e. by presenting information and visuals that underestimate or undervalue women's roles and achievements.
- Unfavourable social environment, insufficient estimation of female scientists work in academia, low possibilities of career development as well as family cares often lead to the situation when women decline their professional ambitions and adapt themselves to status quo refusing to compete in the male environment and leaving for themselves a possibility to do research work not striving for higher positions in career.

Gaps

- Conceptual reflections about epistemology of science from gender perspective are clearly lacking. Neutrality of science is almost an unquestionable issue.
- The analytical analysis of the social construction of science in terms of power is weak as well.

- The studies about the reproduction of gender stereotypes at schools and families are basically descriptive, lack broader social structural approach and deeper analytical insights.
- No research has been identified in relation to cognitive abilities.

2.4. Science as a labour activity

Research questions

Research in this area is basically focused on:

- the historical analysis of women's specific relation to public (science) and private spheres;
- the barriers that women meet in their scientific careers.

Research approaches

Many studies provide an insight into the specific relation of women to public (science) and private spheres from a historical perspective. The specific gender policy implemented in Lithuania and other post communist countries during the communist regime, characteristics of which included the equal right to and the obligation of full-time employment, as well as access to education regardless of gender is considered. This policy was supplemented by the availability of childcare facilities, legal protection and state support for the working mother in order to ease women's "natural" double burden. Given almost fifty years of full female employment and the permanent growth of women's professional skills, added to the availability of a childcare infrastructure that made full time employment possible, women's low representation in leading positions in science, their low career prospects as well as different scenarios of personal and professional life-course are analyzed.

The insights about barriers that women meet in their scientific career are mostly based on qualitative studies (interviews with women in science). A part of studies focuses on cultural norms and attitudes, related to women's primary responsibility for homemaking and childcare that prevent women from making academic career or raise difficulties of returning to science after a career break. Other studies analyse women's strategies of success in balancing professional and family lives. They are based on in-depth interviews with rather successful Lithuanian women scientists

Findings

- The research results acknowledge the legacy of the communist gender policy. The importance of education, and access to it, has led to the emergence of a considerable proportion of highly-qualified women active in all public spheres and notably in science in communist and post-communist periods. But women's achievements and their active role in public sphere did not ease their burden at home. Women experience intensive double roles' conflict, which makes them vulnerable and prevents from making academic career.
- Child-care is one of the most important reasons why women are behind of men in making scientific career. Women are facing big tensions of work and family conflict because of the widespread belief that women are primarily responsible for raising children and it is up to individual woman to work out the strategies of reconciliation. The only acceptable time of promotion of women in science is at the moment when they are back from child-care leave.
- Family responsibilities determine the geographical mobility as well. Graduate female students in hard sciences and HT often take up jobs not related with their qualification in order to avoid disturbing family by moving out. This leads to scaling down women's ambitions to accommodate family and scientific career.
- The women who have reached high levels within the scientific community are clearly individuals who have been able to exercise and develop their capacity to fulfil their potential and to experience a sense of their own self-agency without suffering defeat.

Nevertheless, even these women can feel vulnerable by unexpected discriminatory assaults from those who try to diminish them. It distinguishes the situation of women from men scientists.

Gaps

The theoretical debates in the area of science as a labour activity are very weak. There are no broader empirical studies about the organization of scientific work, working time and work/life balance. The more elaborated analysis is needed on how gender inequalities in science are related to organization of scientific activity.

2.5. Scientific excellence

Just one chapter about scientific excellence was identified, which deals with science evaluation and selection system: management, metrics and networks.

The chapter is based on compilation of ideas of different foreign authors who discuss the prevalence of gender neutral approach and/or gender –based double standards in selection and evaluation procedures.

There are no studies about scientific excellence in national context.

2.6 Gender in research contents

This area is very much under researched in Lithuania. It is dominated just by historical perspective, which aims to highlight the scientific contributions made by women.

The studies present the biographies of women in science (especially in medicine) and their contributions to certain scientific fields. Their goal is to make women's achievements visible. They usually discuss the personal and professional life-courses of those women, but the epistemological analysis from gender perspective is absent.

The contributions to the field from epistemological perspective are absent. In general, the gender perspective predominates in social sciences and humanities. In the field of technical sciences the debate about gender is non-existent.

2.7 Policies towards gender equality in science

Research questions

This area just recently gained a little bigger attention. Thus, the research on this matter is very narrow. Those few studies consider:

- the general debate on gender equality in higher education and research and raise the question: what are possibilities of gender mainstreaming as a long-term strategy in science? The different historical and contextual variables that prevent the effective implementation of gender mainstreaming in national context are analyzed;
- good practices of gender mainstreaming in science in advanced countries (focus is on the role of state in ensuring gender equality).

Research approaches

The analysis is mostly based on policy documents, statistical data and quantitative data. The good practices of gender mainstreaming in six countries (Germany, Austria, United Kingdom, Finland, Sweden, Norway) are outlined in a publication called "Women in sciences and high technology in the Baltic states". They are based on the analysis of legal frameworks, institutions and affirmative action plans in those countries that function to ensure gender

equality in science. This study also provides the recommendations for policy actions to encourage women's active participation in sciences and HT.

Findings

- The current political and legal means of gender mainstreaming in science are not sufficient, they require reconsideration and political will throughout.
- Despite the fact that more and more women have been entering the realm of science in Lithuania during the last 15 years, they are still experiencing different discriminatory obstacles in their careers in all areas of science.
- The lack of consistent data on the distribution of men and women in science at all levels of the hierarchy, together with the lack of research on women in science issues in Lithuania are a key hindrance in gender mainstreaming. The availability of sex-disaggregated data and monitoring of the position of women in science at national level needs to be systematised in order to promote gender equality in all private and public research institutions in the country.
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Gaps

Gender mainstreaming, in general, is totally new area of research, just like the measures of equality policy themselves. The research on evaluation of gender mainstreaming measures or affirmative actions is non-existent.

3. Conclusions

The interest in gender and science and unequal distribution of women and men in sciences in Lithuania is very recent and started to be researched more in-depth just since 2000. Only 34 articles have been identified dealing with the issue in one or another way. The horizontal and vertical segregation in science is the most popular area of research in Lithuania. The articles mostly focus on the trends and tendencies of women's participation in Lithuanian academic (scientific) community from 1990 to 2008 and discuss social factors and patterns governing women's participation. The studies particularly highlight the influence of the specific gender policy implemented in the country during the communist regime and the impact it made on post-communist conditions. The context of general economic, social and political transformations as well as restructuring of science and education system and their impact on women's status in science gains a particular importance in the studies as well. The most of the studies in this area are rather descriptive, based on state-of-art reviews and statistical data. Due to increase of women in medical sciences, this area gained relatively bigger attention than other fields of science.

The social construction of science is one of the emerging and recently quite popular research areas. Nevertheless, the theoretical framework is rather weak. Conceptual reflections about epistemology of science from gender perspective are clearly lacking. Neutrality of science (from gender perspective) is almost an unquestionable issue. The analysis is mostly based on the compilation of the international literature on the topic.

An interest in science as labour activity and policies towards gender equality in science is also noted. The first attempts, again, are rather fragmentary, descriptive and lack deeper analytical insights.

The analysis of existing literature reveals the following gaps in research:

- The empirical research on many relevant issues is clearly lacking;

- The analysis of horizontal and vertical segregation lacks attention (and gender segregated data) to women's and men's positions and achievements in different institutional sectors, scientific fields and/or life course;
- The analysis in majority of cases is focused on public higher education sector; there is a lack of knowledge about such institutional sectors as: business enterprise sector and/or private non-profit sector;
- The descriptive studies prevail. There is lack of critical reflections and more elaborated analysis of power dynamics, on how power relations are produced and reproduced in academic community and how the educational identities are constructed;
- The longitudinal studies regarding women's scientific careers, their personal and professional life-course are absent;
- Other social characteristics of female scientists' (age or ethnicity) are not taken into account at all (intersectionality approach).

There are research topics that are not addressed in more depth in national context at all:

- Pay and funding. There are no studies that would analyse gender pay gap or gender inequalities in decision making over funding distributions, access to funding and outcomes of certain distributions for women and men.
- Stereotypes and identity. No publications written in the area of cognitive skills.
- Science as labour activity. There are no broader empirical studies about the organization of scientific work and how gender inequalities in science are related to organization of scientific activity.
- Scientific excellence. The only piece of literature presents the compilation of ideas of different foreign authors which are not even discussed in relation to national context.
- Gender in research contents. The contributions to the field from epistemological perspective are absent.
- Policies towards gender equality in science. The research in this field is just beginning. There is no analysis of national science laws in relation to gender equality discourse, the research evaluating gender mainstreaming measures or need for affirmative actions does not exist as well.

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