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## **Conceptualizing Family and Career Woman in Lithuania: the standpoint of young people**

After restoration of Independent Lithuanian state in 1990 the country faces cardinal changes in family life and patterns. Decrease of marriage as well as marriage postponement, postponement of parenthood, increase in divorce and the numbers of young people living in consensual unions are among them. Cohabitation until the recent years was considered as \_deviant\_ partnership and was quite infrequent phenomenon in Lithuania. Since 1990s this phenomenon resembles a shape of explosion.

In the Soviet period women were viewed as rather taking care of the family than work, working part-time, devoting more to the household duties and the family; woman's as a homemaker's role was viewed as the most desirable from the perspective of woman, family, society. In recent years the proportion of women who preferred to be involved in professional activities with a high salary increased.

A team of 25 persons at the Department of Sociology at Vilnius University (3 assoc. professors, 1 master, 3 bachelors and 18 students in sociology) conducted a study to examine how college students view controversial concerns in family relationships, such as divorce, remarriage, cohabitation, single parents, gay and lesbian partnership as well as career woman issues. 500 college students (372 females and 128 males) were interviewed in 2003/2004 academic year. The quantitative data were obtained by two instruments, proposed by Jan Trost (Uppsala University). The list of 15 family like groups was used to find how people define the concept of family; a question about 4 elements closely connected and normatively stuck together in traditional family was included in the questionnaire.

Basing on the analysis of the public and academic discourse of career woman in Lithuania (1990-2004), a block of questions was constructed to examine the attitudes of the students towards career woman through the prism of images and interpersonal relations.

Results of the study revealed that some groups were classified as a family by few respondents. They got the label of \_unfavorable\_ groups. The respondents defined \_favorable\_ groups as \_normal\_. These had common characteristics, such as legal marriage and opposite sex couples. \_Unfavorable\_ groups were defined by respondents as a \_deviant\_. \_Deviance\_ was primarily related to divorce, separation and the same sex couples.

Data showed that 4 elements, namely, marriage, sexual intercourse, intention to have a baby and common domesticity, loose their normative power and are not normatively stuck together any more.

The analysis of the motives to make professional career disclosed 4 types of career woman, namely, super woman, materially incited woman, family breadwinner and feminine career woman. Professional career was associated with the difficulties in interpersonal relations in a couple, with friends, difficulties related to the lack of privacy and envy. Behavior strategies in solving family/career dilemma were disclosed, namely, self-constitution strategy , postponement of partnership (marriage), \_happy family\_ and \_super woman\_ strategies.