

Preface

The issue of this journal is dedicated to examining two main topics. The first part of the articles discusses important family policy problems such as marital disruption, the role of fatherhood in post-divorce relationships, gender inequality and fertility changes. The second part of the issue analyzes the broader concepts in political sociology and social policy in general. The main results reveal the question on different state policies implementation concerning pension reform, self-government system and citizen participation in public policy.

In their article “Fathering after Union Dissolution: Father-child Contacts”, Aušra Maslauskaitė and Deimantė Kuconytė examine the postdivorce father-child contact in Lithuania and discuss sociological factors that influence its character. The analysis of the national survey of single mothers and their reports on the father-child connections demonstrates that the frequency of child-father contact is relatively lower in Lithuania than in some other Western European countries. In the authors’ opinion, the frequency of contacts is positively linked to the father’s involvement in the child maintenance. The socio-legal analysis of post-divorce fatherhood makes the authors conclude that the Lithuanian legal system has substantial shortcomings and needs to be oriented towards the activation of father-child contact.

Using the Gender Equality Index 2015 created and calculated by EIGE, Laima Andrikienė and Rūta Vaičiūnienė demonstrate that in 2005, 2010 and 2012, the gender asymmetry in Lithuania grew, while the average gender equality throughout the European Union increased. The negative trend in gender equality has been recorded in four of the six key – work, knowledge, time, and power – domains, and positive – in other two domains of money and health. According to the authors, a double burden of employment and unequal distribution of family responsibilities is one of the reasons for this gender misbalance and inequality.

In her article “Turn towards a New Family Formation and Fertility Pattern”, Dovilė Galdauskaitė presents the theory of second demographic transition (SDT) and describes changes in matrimonial and childbearing behaviour that started after the mid-1960s in developed countries. The change of family model from traditional to modern, and the growth of cohabitation and divorces are considered as the main features of SDT. Despite the criticism

directed to SDT, the author concludes that this theory is a well-developed analytical instrument that can be used to analyze changes in demographic behaviour in different social contexts.

Daiva Skučienė's article "Ideological Trends in the Lithuanian Pension Policy in 2009–2015" examines the ideological direction of the Lithuanian pension policy during the period of 2009–2015. According to the author, during the analyzed period not pure neoliberal or interventionist but more mixed model of the pension policy prevailed in Lithuania. Socioeconomic challenges such as fiscal pressure, demographical aging, and the need for more strict private pension market supervision, the decrease of social exclusion and the assurance of higher financial equality through generations determined this model in the country.

The last three articles of the issue analyze the results of the research project "Mayors in Lithuania: Political Leadership in Local Government". Jurga Bučaitė-Vilkė article "Two Different Visions of Local Democracy? Representation of Interests, Leadership and Citizens' Participation in Self-governance" examines the changes in political leadership on local governance level, emphasizing the attitudes and values of citizens towards different notions of local democratic participation. The theoretical notions of local democracy are illustrated using the empirical data from a public opinion survey of Lithuanian residents in 2016. According to the author, the principal objective of the study was to reveal the changes in attitudes and values towards local democratic participation and local leadership (for example, mayor institution) in Lithuania referring to the context of decentralization and other local governance reforms.

In her article "The Paths of Political Career of Lithuanian Mayors" Aistė Lazauskienė demonstrates the different paths of the political career of Lithuania mayors in municipalities emphasizing their political and professional experience on local governance level. The author provides empirical data results which reveal the specificity of Lithuanian mayors' career which depends heavily on local political parties' support. Political party membership becomes the most common trend of local leadership on the municipal level. Arvydas Mikalauskas article "Mayorship in Lithuania: Public Opinion Research" reveals the roles of mayors' leadership on local governance level, what expectations the society has towards local political leadership. Referring to empirical results the author summarizes that the mayor's functions are more associated with administrative and/or managerial rather than political roles. The mayorship's capability to represent public interests highly depends on administrative skills to mobilize internal organizational resources. Contrary the ability to establish external networks among different social, economic or political partners is considered as a less efficient strategy.

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Guest Editor