

## Preface

This issue of the journal includes the papers that cover the variety of theoretical perspectives and research strategies. The broad range of topics encompasses gender, sexuality and family studies, religion, culture, public health and socioeconomic development policies at municipal level. Distinct methodological approaches and original interpretation of the empirical data are also characteristic of the articles.

Artūras Tereškinas uses ethnographic methodological approach to explore the normativity of gender and sexual norms. Focusing on the contextual examples of state and institutional regulation of sexuality, the author raises the question of the possibility of alternative conceptions of intimacy and sexuality in Lithuania. Tereškinas points to an institutional tension between social groups that attempt to sustain the traditional concepts of sexuality and intimate behavior in Lithuania. The new forms of legal restrictions or attempts to ignore international practices, for example, the ratification of Istanbul Convention leave different forms of intimacies unrecognizable and precarious.

Paul Glavey uses the symbolism of the Confederate Battle Flag to investigate the relationship between music genre and the manifestations of racism and white supremacy. His article “Flagging Support for Rockabilly Rebels: The Confederate Battle Flag’s Place in the Current European Rockabilly Scene” demonstrates that the flag as a longstanding symbol of the rockabilly scene should be reconsidered because of the growing right-wing political extremism and racism. The European rockabilly scene should reinterpret the flag in order to maintain its cultural identity.

Vilius Leonavičius and Almanė Pakrijauskaitė’s article “Alcohol Consumption: Socio-Environmental Context and Male Identity” examines the relationship between gender and alcohol consumption practices. By using the analysis of alcohol consumption habits, the authors identify the processes of the masculine identity construction affected by social norms and other contextual factors. The problem of alcohol consumption is interpreted using Wardo’s (2011) social and environmental context model. The model integrates various physical-geographical, time, social and personal-historical as well as gender identity factors.

Gintarė Počė explores the discourse of religious communities in Lithuanian mass media. The article entitled “Religion as Sensation. The Analysis of Religious Mass Media Headlines in the Daily Newspaper ‘Lietuvos rytas’” investigates the questions of how the public opinion constructs the images of religious communities, what characterizes the rhetoric of Lithuanian daily newspapers related to religious diversity and religious attitudes and what differences exist between traditional and non-traditional religious movements.

Ieva Dryžaitė’s article “Working Families and Precarious Life” focuses on working families highlighting the issues of job security, employment rights and work-life balance. The precarious work affects families in different social strata, but the poor families have the highest level of risk in job and family spheres. The author argues that the diversity of emerging labor forms and the lack of social welfare provisions influence the biographies of families differently.

Emphasizing the issues of territorial development policy and the participation of inhabitants in local decision-making, the last two articles discuss socio-economic problems in municipalities. The article entitled “Territorial Development in Lithuanian Municipalities: A Territorial Capital Approach” introduces the concept of territorial capital that enables the authors to analyze the discourse of spatial socioeconomic differences in the Lithuanian municipalities. The authors examine the issue of territorial development by pointing to different strategies of mobilizing territorial resources in different-size rural, urban and suburban municipalities. The results of the qualitative research demonstrate that the rural municipality favors community capital and social connectedness; there the economic or geographic territorial advantages are less important. On the contrary, in the urban and suburban municipalities the territorial capital is thought of as a combination of municipal services, labor resources and public infrastructure.

An article by Jurga Bučaitė-Vilkė examines the participation of local government, communities and business interest groups in the intermunicipal cooperation arrangements. The author uses the approach of network governance to answer the question of democratic legitimacy in intermunicipal cooperation. The results reveal the level of involvement of local interest groups in collaborative networks and uncover participation strategies that reflect the characteristics of democratic participation such as efficiency, accountability, transparency and inclusion.

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