

Preface

This issue of the journal is devoted to the analysis of different facets of social exclusion. Focusing on different risk groups, Lithuanian scholars assess their position and the impact of risk factors that produce their social exclusion. As the research presented here demonstrates, such factors as unsatisfactory consumption, the lack of social support networks, low general quality of life, chronic disease, chronic illness and alcoholism, play a key role in determining social exclusion.

In her article “Lone Mothers, Consumption and Social Exclusion,” Aušra Maslauskaitė analyzes consumption resources and practices of lone mothers with under-aged children that, in her opinion, constitute one of the key dimensions of the social exclusion and reflect the extent that these women have to the socio-normative way of life.

Jurga-Bučaitė Vilkė focuses on the issue of social support networks used by socially excluded groups to reduce the negative effects of social stigmatization. Her article “Can Unemployment Restrain? Community Action, Social Support Networks and Public Participation” deals with young unemployed Lithuanian men’s attempts to maintain social support networks. Her research demonstrates that young unemployed men with lower education have weaker social ties and are more socially marginalized compared to men with higher education who use available social and symbolic capital more efficiently to reduce social and economic risks caused by unemployment.

In his article “Unemployed Men, Good Life and Social Exclusion,” Artūras Tereškinas examines the relation between social exclusion and quality of life or “good life” in 23–39-year-old unemployed men’s lives. Apart from several respondents living in the countryside and involved in occasional illegal low-wage jobs, most unemployed men did not experience poverty as one of the indicators of social exclusion. However, the loss of a job for them meant not a material deprivation but rather unrealized visions of their lives, complex strategies of survival and negative affects and emotions. The author argues that to some extent the respondents are socially excluded on affective and emotional level because unemployment intensifies the feelings of insecur-

rity and shame, psychological discomfort, self-doubt, and the lack of respect and respectability.

Rūta Petkevičiūtė and Rasa Indriliūnaitė analyze different aspects of the lives of male residents at Lithuanian homeless shelters. Using insights of criminological and sociological theories, Rūta Petkevičiūtė explores the dynamic connection between incarceration and homelessness and identifies specific vulnerabilities related to unemployment, family background, addiction, and stigmatization. Her analysis presented in the article “Social Exclusion and Criminalization: the Case Study of Homeless Ex-convicts” demonstrates that their experiences of poverty, incarceration, homelessness, unstable family and foster houses point to homeless men’s multidimensional social exclusion and insurmountable cycle of homelessness and incarceration. In her article “(Self-)Involvement in Social Service System: the Attitudes of Homeless Shelter Residents and Staff at Social Service Institutions,” Rasa Indriliūnaitė discusses the “culture of welfare dependency” and the practices of marginalization, assimilation, control and deviation produced by the interaction of homeless shelters and their residents.

The next two articles focus on the relation between chronic disease and chronic illness and social exclusion. In their article “Subjective Social Exclusion as an Aspect of Chronic Illness Experience,” Giedrė Baltrušaitytė and Vylius Leonavičius argue that social aspects of chronic illness experience are closely related to the physical ones and that persons’ social exclusion depends on their chronic condition, individual characteristics and biographical trajectory. The article “Social Exclusion as an Aspect of Chronic Illness Experience: Macro and Mezzo Social Levels” written by Vylius Leonavičius, Giedrė Baltrušaitytė and Eglė Večiorskytė discusses the influence of chronic illness to the social relations of patients and their social environment. The authors argue that chronic illness reduces the time and financial resources of ill persons and limits their possibilities to participate in the public space.

In her article “Defining Concepts of the Use of Alcohol and Alcohol Dependence: the Aspect of Social Inclusion,” Ilona Tamutienė argues that definitions of the use of alcohol and alcohol dependence should include social dimension that would enable us to identify social and cultural norms that promote or limit the use of alcohol. Social dimension also allows us to grasp better the consequences of drinking, particularly its harmful impact on a family, primary social ties and broader society.

The analysis presented in all these articles may become an important means in developing policy strategies that target the risk factors that produce social exclusion.

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