Baltic Readings 2006
October 21
Conference program

Venue – the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Latvia.

Address – Lomonosova street 1A, Riga, Latvia (see the attached file for directions)

Schedule:
10-11:00 – Registration of participants
11-11:15 – Opening words by Mareks Niklass, President of Latvian Sociological Association
11:15-13:00 – Plenary session
13:00-14:00 – Lunch break
14:00-15:30 – Workshops
15:30-16:00 – Coffee break
16:00-17:00 – Workshops
17:00-17:30 – Plenary session. Presentations of representatives of each workshop.
17:30–19:00 - Informal part (discussions, refreshments, coffee, wine)

Technical information:
There will be laptop computers and media projectors (for PowerPoint presentations) available for participants.

Miscellaneous:
The schedule is quite tight, therefore, participants are requested to spend no more than 20 minutes on each presentation.
A number of prospective participants haven't sent their abstracts yet. Therefore, the composition of the workshops and the program itself could change accordingly.

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EU Enlargement: Economic and Social Implications for Latvia

In my presentation, I am going to elaborate on the effects of the EU enlargement process on Latvia, namely, the increase in economic growth and wealth, mass emigration and ethnic integration. I argue that the accession into the EU not only brought more money for economic growth but also had adverse effects on the development of Latvia – mass emigration, labor shortages, rising inequality in incomes and access to resources. I also argue the EU enlargement to some extent facilitated ethnic integration in Latvia: the number of applications for naturalization and those people who had been granted the Latvian citizenship substantially increased. My conclusions are mainly drawn from statistical sources. However, I also use the data obtained from a large scale survey on the geographical mobility of the labor force in Latvia.

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EU Accession, the Stronger State and the Development of the Agricultural Structure in the Baltic Countries

Accession to the European Union has had a clearly positive impact on the agricultural development of all the Baltic republics: enterprises have been able to strengthen themselves and make investments. This has been attributed to three reasons: First, EU price controls have stabilized the terms of agricultural production making agriculture more predictable and less risky for the farmer. Second, only EU has established an agricultural finance system that, for the first time after the independence of the Baltic republics, considers the unique circumstances of agriculture in comparison to other sectors. Third, improved agricultural guidance and information systems have provided a better balance between financing needs and sources of funding. The improvement of the agricultural control system is clearly visible at the local level, as evidenced by interviews conducted in three remote municipalities, one in each country. The movement toward a stronger state is also clearly evident in national statistics, albeit with a different emphasis in Estonia on the one hand, and Latvia and Lithuania on the other hand.

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The abstract is to be sent later on.

Workshops

Social Integration

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Does Generational Conflict at Work Exist? Theoretical and Empirical Strategies to Measure Generational Differences.

The paper presents some strategies and theoretical approaches to generational differences at work.

Problem. Importance to talk about generations, generational differences increased with talks about "ageing society". It is intended that population of EU will stop to grow and ageing working society will have to support all elder people. Proportion of it could be from 24 % at 2004 till 47 % at 2050 year. Individuals in different birth cohorts form their own professional identities and employment preferences under different economic and social conditions (D. Finegold, S. Mohrman, G. M. Spreitzer; B. Bova, M. Kroth). They say that intergenerational tension between generations at work is "latent" and "hided conflict form" between groups that is influences by different values and attitudes between generations. Grigas (1996, 1998) tells that new technologies are changing relationship between generations and communication gains new forms.

Keywords: generational tensions, generational conflict, work, organization.

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Disposition Traits of Returned Convicts as an Impediment to Their Social Reintegration

A problem of reintegration of returned convicts into society seems to be hardly surmountable. People who have no place in society expand marginal stratum, set off their understanding of values, actual behaviour and way of life against society's standards and interests. Returned convicts find it difficult to reintegrate into normal society's life not only because of their disintegrated social ties, absence of dwelling-place and marketable speciality. Their personality characteristics prevent them from joining society too. The report deals with the disposition traits of convicts and returned convicts. The circumstances determining the development of disposition traits in the negative direction are revealed. Disposition traits of convicts and returned convicts are compared with society's opinion of convicts' personality.

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Prisoners' Value Attitudes

 The main problems of the prisoners' life are connected with their integration into the society in future. On the other hand a lot of people's security problems are connected with the indefinite values of former prisoners. In real life such indistinctness manifested itself in different forms of unmotivated cruel actions.
 In order to integrate the prisoners it is necessary to know the peculiarities of their value attitudes and to state the factors determining them. The purpose is to reveal the hierarchy of the values of prisoners: the most appreciated human values, the idea of the meaning of life and success, the attitude towards the native country.

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Beggary in Lithuania: insiders or outsiders?

Nowadays social exclusion and beggarliness has become more actual discourse. This article analyses:
- historical development of poverty;
- the phenomenon of social exclusion from the different theoretical perspectives;
- social determination of beggary;
- Point of view of students to the beggars and their style of life.

Although poverty could be characterized from the different perspectives, but on of them is social exclusion, that could be one of prepositions of beggary. Investigation of view–point of students' pointed out some differences depending on their future specialty. This investigation should be an illustration of differentiation the points of view to social excluded people in Lithuania.

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Measuring social exclusion: theoretical and methodological implications

Social economical transformation in Eastern European region, processes of integration and globalization, welfare state reforms, raises new challenges and new opportunities. Increasing social differentiation in Lithuanian society caused growing part of population that could be assigned to socially excluded groups. Academic discussion about social exclusion started only in late 90s in European Union. Different aspects of social exclusion were analysed by Andress (1999), Cousins (1998), Friedrichs, Jagodzinski (1998), Gans (1995), Jordan (1996), Kronauer (1997), Levitas, Pantanzis, Patsios, D., Townsend (2000), Littlewood, Herkommer (1999), Martin, (1996), Paluckiene (1999), Paugam (1998), Poviliunas (2003; 2001). Rimkute (2003), Room (1995), Vosyliute (2002), Whelan, B., Whelan, C.T. (1995), Zaleckiene (1998), Zapf, (1995) and etc. Concept of social exclusion includes concept of poverty, marginalisation, diminished possibilities of individuals participate in social, political and economical life of society. Purpose of the paper is to analyse theoretical implications and to propose methodological framework for measurement of social exclusion.

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Challenges of social integration and the changing notion of community in the age of information society: the case of diffusion of ICT in Lithuanian rural communities

This paper analyses the changing notion of community in the making of information society. One of the important social aspects of these processes is the diffusion of ICT – informational communication technology – in different societal locales, and the impact of ICT on social interaction and community. This paper is based on the on-going research into ICT diffusion in the rural communities of Lithuania. The study is theoretically and methodologically based on two strands of sociological theory. First, from the perspective of social organization it stems from classical notions of community and its varying interpretations. On the other hand, the spectrum of impacts and changes of social interaction and notions of community in the information age (see Castells, 1996) are analyzed from the perspective of contemporary theory of institutional isomorphism (Powell and di Maggio, 1991) that has been widely applied in the recent sociological studies in different organizational fields. The study of diffusion of ICT in society, and Lithuanian rural communities in particular, is based on (classical by now) and widely applied theory of the diffusion of innovations following the works of Everett Roggers (1983) et al. The paper discusses patterns and factors of ICT diffusion in Lithuanian rural communities. The redefined notion of community as conceived in the paper does not transgress the boundaries of geographical place. By contrast, as the study finds out, those rural dwellers that are most engaged in community activities are at the same time (or most often) among innovators and front-runners in the adoption of internet and other ICT-based innovations for personal and community use. Yet, as the study concludes the very process of ICT diffusion in Lithuanian rural areas is in the early adoption stage to follow the normal distribution or S-shape model as reflected in different innovation and diffusion studies. The paper also discusses the institutional factors of the internet diffusion in rural Lithuania. The data show that there are 3 types of institutional impacts for Internet diffusion in rural communities; these types refer to the three types of institutional isomorphism shaping the processes of organizational change (primarily focusing on the internet diffusion): (1) coercive, (2) mimetic; and (3) normative. Coercive and normative isomorphism is found to be the most significant in shaping the diffusion of ICT in Lithuanian rural communities.

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Employment problems in small towns in Latvia

Small towns' exhibits an urban settlement pattern even functioning as "rural town" with small number of inhabitants. Small towns could play important role as potting points for development in regions and rural society. Changes in rural society and in work patterns, employment modes and solving unemployment problems could facilitate towns as spatial and social mediators. The role of small could be affected by geographical placement, educational and employment challenges and other factors. Path-dependence lets explain the role of institutions in local differences. There is question how could be characterized changes in employment sphere in small towns in Latvia after accession to EU? Answer to this question will be finding through case studies in Latvia towns.
Key words: small towns, employment, path-dependency.

Research on NGOs

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Philanthropy In Post-Communist Lithuania: Challenges And Perspectives

Philanthropy, as civic tradition is coming back to Lithuania, as well as to other post-communist European countries, however at the same time these concepts has acquired new qualities of modernity, based not only on Christian morality but also on corporative, strategic principles of business and public policy. Ambiguity is perhaps the principal characteristic that emerges from the picture of the post-communist non-profit sector, the coexistence of the old and new creates a pervasive tension between the pre-communist traditional values and the modern action provoked by the nowadays surroundings (Salamon, 1999: 33).
The analysis of philanthropy in post-communist Lithuania reveals the peculiarities of philanthropy related to the changes of philanthropy concept that occurred last century in western sociology, non-existence of philanthropic tradition during the communist period, specific value-cultural heritage of communist time, underdeveloped philanthropic culture, problematic role of the State and perverted philanthropy perception, situated between its traditional and modern concepts.

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Intended workshop: Research on NGOs

Influence of Internationally Active NGOs on Community Development

Presentation will analyse influence of NGO's project spread in the Baltic Sea Region (Norway, Sweden, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Russia), which activities were oriented to the development of local communities. While comparison of one's own region may lead to its positioning on peripheral place in centre-periphery scale, connections with similar regions and experience taken from them may strengthen regional identity and a wish to develop one's own region, stress and strengthen its aspects of identification.

Over two thirds of young project participants assert that they gained positive feelings toward their own regions through participation in the project and value this change of attitude. To participants point of view project built closer connections between youth and local government officials and between different generations in local communities. The great majority of the project participants believed that the project has stimulated positive changes in their communities.

Life-quality aspects

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The Influence of International Communication on Knowledge

The result of international communication is that people can step outside of their own subjective positions and see the world objectively. Activities in projects show the ways in which identities and locations shape to knowledge. It made knowledge as a simple way of thinking about communications, different cultures, professional planning, entrepreneurship.

Our researches show, that projects as sources of knowledge are more useful to students then to officials, give more knowledge to post-soviet countries' officials and students from Western countries. For a long time cultures of Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia were close to Scandinavians. Therefore students as well as politicians, local government officers, project co-ordinators, teachers know as well as history, traditions, art, architecture of countries which take part in projects.

There are some differences in cultural knowledge between the researched regions: Russian, Norwegian and Swedish students, as compared to Baltic countries, more often said that the organisation of international project events or participation in them increased knowledge about their own and other cultures a lot. Information about culture was not approachable to students of researched countries at the last period and the projects compensated for this shortage.

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Quality of Life in Latvia: Differences between Ethnic Groups

Quality of life is a sociological category that is applied to show the degree of satisfaction with materialistic and cultural needs of people in all aspects of social life. Ethnicity as a resource of quality of life has been popular with the Latvian society because of a multinational feature of its population. Assuming the existence of such differences, we need to ascertain whether they are significant and cause social inequality in the development of values and standards of quality of life among ethnic groups at the current stage of social development.

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Access to health care – availability, accessibility and affordability

Access to health care services is analyzed from the perspective of accessibility, availability and affordability. It gives insight on satisfaction with provided health services for various groups of population.
Paper gives insight on financing of health care services for various groups of population and whether and how risk of social exclusion is targeted through the social policy and health care policy.
Paper is based on analyses of statistics, survey data (LU FSI, 2006) and qualitative data.

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Divorce Culture and Marital Gender Equality – Eastern European Countries Compared

There had been attempts to prove that gender equality in marriage is connected to the extent to which divorce culture is characteristic for the particular society. Analysis of this issue was carried out on the basis of data gained in ISSP Family and Gender Roles module survey (1994) data. In presentation this issue will be explored in post soviet context – making comparison between Latvia and other countries. As a methodological guideline analysis done by American researcher Carrie Yodanis will be used. There such variables as gender role ideology, level of marital gender inequality, divorce attitudes are calculated on the basis of particular ISSP survey data.

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Changes In The Occupational Structure Of Rural Population After Decollectivisation

Decollectivisation of Soviet rural economy brought inevitable changes in occupational structure of rural population in Lithuania. Kolkhoz and sovhoz being the main employers were deconstructed and organization of work based on occupational categories of kolkhoz and sovhoz were no longer directly relevant. The aim of the paper is to show how occupation structure of rural population changed after decollectivisation, during the period from 1990 to 2005. Further paper estimates the role of occupational categories of former kolkhoz employees in their coping with after-decollectivisation difficulties (unemployment, decrease of income, lower quality of social services, etc.). To show the differences, data from Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia is compared.

Empirical data included in the paper is based on the research project "Coping strategies among the working-age population in the Baltic Countryside 1990-2005" funded by Finland's academy. Research is based on kolkhoz and local government records and retrospective opinions of local experts.

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Coping Strategies And Employment Of People In Former Aizkalne Kolkhoz 1990-2005

Social transformations having taken place in Latvia during the last 15 years have dramatically affected the lives of people both the urban and rural communities. The changes in the ideological, governing and especially, the economical system have had had differing on the people's lives, as they had different resources at their disposal. After breakdown of Soviet rural economy and kolkhoz as the main production unit and employer, people in rural areas used different strategies to adapt to the new social and economic situation.

The basic research question to be answered in the paper is: what strategies the former kolkhoz employees have applied to adapt to the new labour market conditions in 1990-2005. The aspects having impact of different employment choices and outcomes are explored.

Empirical data used in the paper is based on kolkhoz and local government records and retrospective opinions of local experts collected in research project "Coping strategies among the working-age population in the Baltic Countryside 1990-2005" funded by Finland's academy.

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Succeeding in rural life.
What has changed since Soviet time?

Transformation from Soviet planning economy to democratic market economy brought restructuring of economy, occupations and resources. It also altered the meaning of work, initiated value shift and forced stratification. The aim of the paper is to clarify the essence of changes by looking at modifications of social hierarchy of kolkhoz community. It is analysed what factors were behind the social perception of person's position in strata of living conditions in 1990 and 2005; which of the persons' characteristics at starting point influenced perception of his position 15 years later. To reveal the differences between three Baltic countries, one kolkhoz from each country was studied. The research is based on kolkhoz and local government records and retrospective opinions of local experts.

Ethnic integration

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Multiculturalism and acculturation: views of Latvians and other ethnic groups in Latvia

Acculturation is the process of all changes that take place when individuals of different ethnoculural groups come into prolonged contact with one another (Berry, 1992). In the recent literature on acculturation the main focus is on development of bidimensional models of acculturation, acculturation orientations of both the host majority and immigrant groups and their interplay with state integration policies (Arends-Toth, Van de Vijver 2003). This paper is going to be on the analysis of acculturation strategies supported by Latvians and other ethnic groups in Latvia. The study is based on both quantitative and qualitative analysis of five acculturation stories corresponding five acculturation models – assimilation, separation, integration, marginalization and fusion.

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Costruction Of "Nationalism" In Latvian Integration Policy

There are two ways of interpreting the term "nationalism", however – "ethnic nationalism" and "civic nationalism." These terms reveal the framework within which the nation is formed. Rogers Brubaker compares the emergence of emotions of nationalism in Germany and France and argues that such emotions can emerge both before and after the establishment of a nation state. In Germany, such emotions existed before the establishment of the nation state, and this served as a stimulus for establishing the state. In France, emotions of nationalism emerged after the state was established, emanating from national institutions, the political community and the sense of civic belonging.[1] French society is unified in political terms, and participation therein is determined by citizenship. Here we can speak of civic nationalism. Society in Germany is unified on the basis of ethnicity, which is an example of ethnic nationalism.[2] If these terms are applied in Latvia, then it is clear that ethnic nationalism describes very well the efforts of Latvians to restore national independence in the late 1980s. If, however, we look at the minorities which gained Latvian citizenship only after the restoration of independence, the concept of civic nationalism must be used. The fact that political and ethnic principles exist in parallel in Latvia poses the question of how public integration policies are to be developed.

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Ethno-political discourses in Latvia in the context of EU enlargement

The society of Latvia like majority of other European Union countries and societies is characterised by cultural and linguistic plurality. There are two dominating sociolinguistic communities: Latvian and Russian language communities in Latvia. Results of recent research projects on ethnopolitical issues allow to speak of different ethno-political discourses dominating in these communities. In accordance with theoretical assumptions of critical discourse analysis, the existence of conflicting discourses can be looked as an eventual basis of a wider sociopolitical or ethnic conflict. At the same time there are several indications and contexts that ensure the conflict is not about to turn into violence or any ethno-political crisis. The first task of this paper is to characterise the most important indications of ethno-political discourse cleavage. The second task is to reveal how the accession of Latvia to EU is being affected the relationship between Latvian and Russian sociolinguistic groups towards ethnic integration or *vice versa* – disintegration.

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[1] Brubaker, R. (1992). Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, p. 23.

[2] *Ibid*, p. 24.

Discourse analysis (general issues)

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Towards the Risk Society?

In the paper the authoress is analysing such phenomena as risk and social control. Social production of wealth in postindustrial society is accompanied by the risk (U. Beck). The informational whiffs reveal many forces (ecological destruction, the acts of terrorism, social maladies and others) which are devastating different places of the world. The people sometime are incapable to act counter to such great power, they are uncontrolling their situation. The reflection of people about different dangers (which character is constantly changing) is revealing different their aspects and evaluation. As our investigation shows, in respondents' opinion delinquency, drug consumption and alcoholism are acknowledged as the most dangerous to the Lithuanian society; other threats are appreciable as less precarious.

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The image of Lithuania: attitudes of population

The sociological investigation of population provided in 2004 in Lithuania represents the attitudes of the population towards their country during the first year membership in the European Union. The analysis of connection between Lithuanian social structure and social-cultural behaviour shows that majority of the respondents are disposed to be proud of Lithuanian citizenship. The investigation denies the prevailing opinion explored by mass-media that inhabitants of Lithuania are not proud of their country. Only some part of respondents consider Lithuania as a province of Europe.
While conscious about the importance of preserving the uniqueness of their country, the respondents consider the ruling Lithuanian institutions (and school as well) to be the main institutions to preserve the uniqueness of Lithuania.

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Capability argument in social sciences

This paper discusses increasingly popular capability notion and argument in studies of social and economic development processes. Capability exemplifies ability of individuals, organisations, regions and other actors to undertake and implement action. It is linked with knowledge, initiative, risk taking, choice of individual and collective strategies, mobilisation and use of resources and other processes and factors. The paper puts forward an idea that capability concept and approach can

better explain the fast economic development and social transformation of Baltic countries. Explanations of social processes based on capability argument can better reveal human sources and driving forces behind of current social transformations than "traditional" structuration, transition, institutional and network theories.

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Foucault VS Lacan

If one is trying to understand theoretical meaning of word discourse then there is two main authors to start with – Foucault and Lacan. However sociology accepts only Foucault discourse interpretation why is often viewed as a father of theoretical discourse while Lacan is viewed just as a pseudo-scientist. One can easily accept such classification but still such view's needs an explanation.
This topic tries to compare discourse theories of Lacan and Foucault. To achieve that author will analyze differences between Lacan and Foucault understandings of subject, power, and knowledge. This base analysis will allow point out those differences and similarities which could gives us a hint how we should interpret work of two mentioned theorists.

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Terrorism as Social "Avian Influenza"

There is an explanation for the terrorism as a contemporary mode of a military operation. Alternatively, I propose to perceive terrorism as a creation of sign of virus kind with a high permutation degree to destroy existing social semiotic systems (which ensure the life of an inidvidual). On the whole, for diffusion of such signs there is no need for physical referents but the sensation of vulnerability and fear, as in the case of fear of the avian influenza. Therefore, the aim of the research is to examine how sensation of fear and belonging to space and civilization have changed (the world's geopolitical map) after the Latvia's joining the military operations in Iraque, NATO end EU. In research publications of last 10 years in daily newspapers "Diena" and "Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze" devoted to terrorism issue are going to be analysed using semiotic and discourse analyses.

Migration

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Refugee values from experts' point of view: An illustration from Latvia

While the old 15 EU countries have received asylum-seekers and refugees for several decades, in Latvia these issues are still new. Therefore this paper discusses which notions Latvian experts (people who directly face issues concerning refugees) have about the values held by refugees and what their overall attitudes are towards these people. Despite the fact that compared to Latvia, there is different ethnic structure in Denmark, it is possible to find a lot of similarities among these countries. Maybe even Denmark is somehow an example of what can be expected for us in the future. While it was expected, after joining the EU, that the amount of asylum-seekers and refugees would grow, there have not been any visible changes during the last two years. The current little quantity of asylum-seekers and the confidence about the consistency of the current situation experts substantiate with arguments that can be divided in three greater groups – Latvia's overall socioeconomic situation, the geographical location and the cultural factors. As experts in Latvia tend to assert, the arrival of asylum-seekers in Latvia still can not be considered as intentional but rather as an accidental and unwished interruption on the way to an initially chosen country of destination.

Pārsla Eglīte

Life Values and Plans of Potential and Actual Emigrees From Latvia

In 2004 a survey on attitudes and characteristics of persons having or not experience of staying outside Latvia was carried out.
Questionnaires (871) were collected by the snow-ball method. As the collection is not representative only the comparison of rather homogenous groups is used in analysis.
The data collected allow to compare self-evaluation of one's life quality and certain life values – already at one's disposal or to be obtained – between those never lived abroad and those with such experience. Distribution of answers differs more by age than mobility already demonstrated. Less mobile respondents more often plan to reach the goals in Latvia.

Education

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Educational level of partners and the risk of divorce

The impact of education on risk of divorce has widely been discussed by many researchers. There does not exist a common agreement about how to examine it as well as what is the direction of this impact. Do for example persons with a higher education divorce with a higher or lower probability than others? The purpose of current analysis is to clarify how to examine the impact of the educational level of partners on the risk of divorce in Estonia.

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Interconnection of Higher Education Quality with Social, Economical and Political Orientation of European Societies

Goal: To investigate the interconnection of the quality of higher education and orientation of the development of European societies. **Object of the investigation:** The individuals of the higher education system of the several countries of Europe and Russia (for comparison). **Subject of the investigation:** The position of the individuals of the system of higher education concerning the quality of higher education in the country they live. **Main hypothesis:** Subjective perception of the quality of higher education is changed according to the orientation of the development of a concrete society. **Novelty of the investigation:** THE QUALITY OF HIGHER EDUCATION is studied not with the categories "high-low", but in the context of the functional compliance to the structure of a society.

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Sociology of education and sociology in civic studies at Estonian schools

The paper will critically analyze two interrelated subjects. First, it will review sociological studies on students, schools and educational system. Second, it will investigate the role of sociological concepts in education theory, teacher education, national curriculum and civic studies. Mikk Titma and his associates have conducted longitudinal studies on students value orientations since 1960's. Among others, they have revealed an increase in material values and a decrease in social values in the last decades. Kaarel Haav has developed an original framework in organizational sociology and implemented it in comparative studies on schools and school systems in Estonia and European Union.

The paper also evaluates the role of sociological concepts in educational theories, curriculum development and civic textbooks in Estonia. The role seems to be insignificant and inadequate.