

Regional Studies Association - A Leading and Impactful Community

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Lesla Reynolds

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ELECTORAL POLITICS, FIRM-LEVEL CORRUPTION AND PERFORMANCE: EVIDENCE FROM TURKISH REGIONS	152
<i>Mehmet Pinar</i> <i>Pinar Deniz</i> <i>B. Can Karahasan</i>	
MORE INFRASTRUCTURE AND FEWER BOATS. EUROPEAN FISHERIES POLICY AND THE ARTIFICIALISATION OF THE COAST IN GALICIA REGION (SPAIN)	153
<i>Angeles Piñeiro-Antelo</i> <i>María José Piñeira-Mantiñán</i>	
MAPPING CULTURAL AND CREATIVE INDUSTRY CLUSTERS IN A WORLD HERITAGE SITE: A RELATIONAL APPROACH	153
<i>Athena Piterou</i> <i>Jin Hooi Chan</i> <i>Intan Hashim</i> <i>Suet Leng Khoo</i> <i>Hooi Hooi Lean</i>	
PRODUCING REGIONAL KNOWLEDGE: THE RISE, FALL, AND RETURN OF REGIONAL GOVERNANCE IN CHICAGOLAND, 1957-2018	154
<i>Donald Planey</i>	
POVERTY AT A LOCAL LEVEL: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS BETWEEN SPAIN AND THE UNITED KINGDOM	154
<i>Maria Plotnikova</i> <i>Diana Gutierrez-Posada</i>	
REGIONAL SOCIOECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND ADOLESCENT FERTILITY: THE CASE OF LITHUANIA	155
<i>Gintare Pociute-Sereikiene</i> <i>Vaida Tretjakova</i> <i>Rūta Ubarevičienė</i> <i>Lina Šumskaitė</i>	
PARTICIPATION IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT – THE VIEW OF NON-PARTICIPANTS	155
<i>Kim Pollermann</i>	
FROM SMART GROWTH TO SMARTER EUROPE: LEARNING FROM SMART SPECIALISATION IMPLEMENTATION	156
<i>Laura Polverari</i> <i>Viktoriya Dozhdeva</i>	

## **REGIONAL SOCIOECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND ADOLESCENT FERTILITY: THE CASE OF LITHUANIA**

Gintare Pociute-Sereikiene, Lithuanian Social Research Centre, Lithuania

Vaida Tretjakova, Lithuanian Social Centre, Lithuania

Rūta Ubarevičienė, Lithuanian Social Centre, Lithuania

Lina Šumskaitė, Lithuanian Social Centre, Lithuania

Lithuania is one of the countries that has a relatively high level of adolescent fertility. Despite the fact that adolescent fertility rate (AFR) has decreased in the last decades, this indicator in Lithuania is still around three times higher than in Scandinavian countries and two times higher compared to Western European countries.

According to worldwide analysis (United Nations, 2013), higher levels of adolescent fertility are characteristic of developing and poor countries. In those cases when high AFR is observed in developed regions, research links it to social and economic inequalities within countries (Santelli et al. 2017) and inadequate sexual education. Therefore, probable determinants of high AFR hide inside Lithuania: it might be the gap in sexual education or influenced by unequal socio-spatial development of the country. In this presentation we leave the topic of sexual education aside and focus our attention on the socioeconomic environment of the country. Our findings show that AFR is significantly higher in less developed peripheral rural regions and lower in the municipalities of major cities.

The object of this presentation is to look into the association of adolescent fertility rate and a number of different demographic and socioeconomic indicators. Based on the findings of the correlation analysis we intend to answer the question of how much of the spatial differentiation of adolescent fertility rate can be explained by macro level regional socioeconomic disadvantage.

The presentation introduces the geographical component of the research project "Spatial differentiation of adolescent fertility in Lithuania: socioeconomic environment, the role of sexual education and individual experiences" (financed by the Lithuanian Research Council, contract No. S-MIP-17-115).

## **PARTICIPATION IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT – THE VIEW OF NON-PARTICIPANTS**

Kim Pollermann, Thünen-Institute of Rural Studies, Germany

To address the challenges in rural areas the support for rural development with participatory approaches has a long tradition in EU funding programmes. One corresponding instrument is LEADER/CLLD, which is a place-based, participatory approach to bring together public, private and civil society organisations. Within LEADER the different stakeholders come together in a Local Action Group (LAG) as a type of a public-private partnership. Those groups collaborate on the basis of an integrated local development strategy (LDS) and administer own budgets to support projects.

Although there are usually broad participation opportunities, some observations in literature mention problems like that only the "usual suspects" (age over 40, higher education, male) get involved in such participations.

It is a well established instrument to ask the participants of such processes about their view of the cooperation within their LEADER decision making body to examine their satisfaction with decision making procedures or their estimations about the output quality. But for some research questions an external view would be more appropriate. Thus, this contribution brings into focus the estimations of non-participants to examine their opinions about possibilities for participation or the legitimacy of decision-making within LEADER-processes.