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CONTEXTS OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM: THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL APPROACH TO ACCESS TO EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT: *The article discusses the theoretical assumptions of research, the expression of education in modern society, analyzes scientific theories, and presents the development of educational accessibility in Europe and Lithuania. The relationship between public transformation and access to education is also analyzed, the essence of access to education and the problem of access to education in a transformed society are analyzed. The methodology and methodology of empirical research on the accessibility of education for students of grades II – IV G are presented. Lithuanian and EU documents regulating education reform and accessibility are analyzed, the results of the research on accessibility of education for students of grades II – IV G and their interpretation are presented. The preconditions for the provision of educational and social services that ensure equal access to education for pupils of grades II – IV G are also discussed.*

KEY WORDS: *access to education, education system, educational and social assumptions guaranteeing.*

INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the most important factors that determines both the development of the society and the human achievements in modern society. Education is a social practice which includes education and cultural communication in the broadest sense, as well as actions of human reproduction at large. These two components are not replaceable, rather, they complement one another. Therefore, in education, one of the most important social institutions, various social fields and activity forces (production, politics, etc.), their values interact with each other, struggling to prevail (Palazzeschi, 2003). Generally, even the society's level of development is measured by the achievements in education. Mostly, public growth is closely linked with the quality of education, and the individual's future depends on the opportunity of participation in education system, on the accessibility of performance and education. Education accessibility issue becomes particularly important and problematic in the context of the transformation of society. Society transformation in Lithuania is quite specific, and has also been greatly influenced by the collapse of the Soviet Union and the restoration of Lithuanian independence. Thereafter, the post-Soviet reality was faced, and its specificity, attributed to the former socialist world, appeared. According to Z. Norkus (2008), post-Communist capitalism has not been created on the ruins of socialism, rather out of the ruins of socialism. Radical changes took place in people's relations, the transition to the free market and democracy was made. Education system and education requirements have been changing during the transformation of the society; the need to reform education that meets the needs of the period, political ideology has emerged.

Education accessibility has become of great relevance in the European Union in recent decades, when the attention has been paid to its integral influence in shaping social, cultural, economic and political situation. Education accessibility enhances each country's or region's intellectual potential and promotes integration into the economic competitiveness of the area, not only in the context of the European countries, but also in international forums. This decade, all EU member states launched a decentralization of education management by promoting employment and reducing unemployment. In the Republic of Lithuania, on the basis of the principle of subsidiarity,

education decentralization and responsible management are under implementation; schools, municipal and state functions are redistributed, municipality responsibility to education accessibility has increased. The priority direction of education reform in the Republic of Lithuania is the development of infrastructure, i.e., the reorganization of the network of education services and the optimization that would guarantee access to learning. Education accessibility is particularly relevant for socially marginalized and poor citizens.

The authors (Trakšelys et al, 2020; Martišauskienė, D. et al, 2019; Martišauskienė, D. et al, 2016; K. Trakšelys, 2014; A. Juodaitytė, 2000 et al) analyze how to attain the realization of secondary education adapted to the times and the needs of modern society during the transformation of the society in Lithuania and reforming education system. The scientific literature (J. Guščinskienė, R. Brazienė (2004), J. Buzaitytė-Kašalynienė (2003), G. Kaminskienė (2002), E. Štuopytė (2002), A. Juodaitytė (2001)), emphasizes, that the provision of social services to school ensures the accessibility to education for the disadvantaged people. Thus, during the transformation of society other social services spectrum and school functions have changed. This has become especially relevant during the increase of unemployment, economic recession, the reorganization of schools, etc.

The analysis of the accessibility to education focuses on comprehensive school reform, as the completed education on lower levels lays the foundation for the successful continuation of studies in higher education and influences individual's social and cultural reproduction. In addition, social and political factors primarily affect the lower (primary, basic, secondary) levels of education institutions and have an impact on the access to education, equality of rights of participation in the educational process, learning contents, and educational functions. Therefore, it is very important to ensure the accessibility to education for all individuals, irrespective of their position in the social system, during the transformation of society. II–IV G class students are chosen as the respondents of empirical research. Three factors determine this choice: (1) the fact that education is compulsory for children until 16 in Lithuania, and II–IV G class students fall under this age group, when they need free choice to continue to attend school or not, because school attendance depends on the number of factors (social, material, motivation, etc.); (2) usually the secondary type schools were reorganized, which have become the primary

and basic-type schools, that III–IV G class students from the reorganized or closed schools are forced to choose to travel to the closest appropriate type of local schools; (3) according to the data of the Department of Statistics of 2019, 18,415 children from social risk families have been studying, 25 per cent of X–XII (II–IV G) class students being among them. Therefore, this group of students living in material deprivation also face the problem of accessibility to education.

EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT: A THEORETICAL APPROACH TO EDUCATIONAL ACCESS

Western type public modernity theories are assumed as a process, for which developing societies approach the developed societies reaching a certain level of economic growth, a certain level of public participation and the democratic stage of development, giving the individual more physical, social and economic mobility. Education institute had to become one of the key factors in promoting and ensuring the individual's mobility in the modern society. The modern world gives weight to education, as well. Education has to become the sole and essential instrument to help to rise from any social class to a higher stratum. Therefore, education becomes compulsory to avoid social groups in a modern society that may become not integrated and separated from the society. The goal of a modern society is to provide equal opportunities for individual to learn and to meet the needs of the era. In modernity, education institute should become the basis of social security, safeguarding an individual against various social risks in the future.

According to functionalists, every public entire social element, including education institute, contributes to the stability of society. T. Brameldo (Ališauskas, 2010) believes that education is the site of society change.

The analysis of this article on the transformation of society and the individual's position in the transformed society refers to theoretical access to structural functionalism. With the approach to this theory, it can be said that inequality in education stems from the ascription to social class, strata, ethnic groups, etc., also due to individual's achievements, which are usually associated with the innate talents and efforts. Modern society justifies only the latter factors that determine inequality; they are considered as functional and correct. However, emphasizing the importance of the society moral consensus, education

accessibility barriers are completely unjustified, since one of education roles is to regulate social stability, and to reduce social tension in the society. Functionalists argue that education can overcome stratification and inequality.

The analysis of an individual's social functioning and social stratification is based on the approach to capital theory. Thus, the participation of education players in the education system, also the accessibility of education to an individual depends on the volume and structure of the available capital. With reference to the available amount of capital P. Bourdieu reveals the specifics of social classes. Such concept of capital decides the attitudes of the accessibility to education and the equivalent participation in education system. Participation in individual's reproduction process and education system, based on the approach to this theory, is defined by individual's habits (habitus) and harmony with individual's social status.

Usually the society sets the requirements for habits and social status by some influences. Inequality and access to education may vary, and vary not only between groups but also within them, because capital owned by the group, because the group members own capital may also vary. In particular, cultural capital emphasizes the accessibility to education and equal participation in the system of education, because it is a much greater prominence of the presence in the education system than parents' social, economic situation.

The theory of social conflict argues that conflicts can be identified among all social systems and the educational institute. In terms of social conflict society is the actual and potential arena for conflicts. R. Dahrendorf (1996) concludes that conflicts and constraints stem from structural positions in a society. According to the conflict theory, teachers occupy a privileged position compared to students. It should be noted that any privilege or power demonstration can provoke conflicts. R. Collins (1988) also distinguishes two groups of individuals: order enforcers and order recipients. Order enforcing individuals, according to the author, often self-identify with the organization and its ideals. Order recipient individuals often have their own culture, language code, are passive performers of rituals and observe. Usually teachers or the dominant social group of students who dictate own rules and demonstrate the predominance, establish the order of the education institute.

Network activity theory aims to analyze and describe reciprocal link models in the social system. The followers of this theory keep to the opinion that social structures need to be investigated first, as the players' behavior is constrained by social structures. Very often it is the case at education institution that students from the disadvantaged families with negative evaluations or various disorders, are often isolated from the classroom and school community. Isolation comes out with minimal communication, exclusion from cultural or cognitive activities, and social discrimination.

Social constructivism theory argues that the awareness of the world is based on the gained experience that we reflect. In this case we actively create the knowledge by questioning, exploring and evaluating the information which was given before. The pupil, who is taught by a teacher, gains the knowledge actively and not mechanically. This theory allows to analyze the attitude of education participants towards educational accessibility and the participation in educational system on equal rights for pupils from different social groups.

Humanistic training theory proposes that the student is the centre of education. The most important points of humanistic training theory are "self-actualization" and the promotion of the child's emotional experiences. This theory suggests that human's behaviour is one of the symptoms of his inner world manifestation. In order to understand the behaviour of the student, it is important to understand his inner life – it is important to communicate with student and to have a deep knowledge of his inner life. The main reasons of his behaviour reside in emotions, attitudes, beliefs, values, hopes and aspirations. In school the student should feel free, be an equal member of the community, be free from fears, discrimination and bullying, because the theorists always emphasize the security of child's emotions and freedom. If freedom of student will become the accumulation of positive experience, there will be positive conditions for personality growth, expression and humanistic moral training. On this basis the social peer-to-peer and student-teacher relationships, can be normalized.

In summary, this study asserts that an individual finds himself in an ambiguous situation in the transformed society. On the one hand as if public system ensures equality for all individuals and a well-balanced participation in public life, in education, on the other hand, an individual finds

oneself in a conflicting situation due to different capital amounts during the public degradation and social structures. Individuals are socially and economically in different social tiers, thus social differentiation in society moves into schools. However, modern society must ensure that all members, regardless of the individual's economic and social status, have the accessibility to education and equal participation in education.

The approach to access to education depends on the historical period and the ideology. The development of education is primarily related to the religious training in Church, but it was not a general education. In Europe and in Lithuania the most significant factor for education was Reformation, the foundation of Education Commission and the compulsory primary education in the inter-war Lithuania, which could be defined as a formal start of educational access in Lithuania. In the Soviet period the volume of compulsory education was extended – the attention was drawn to the physical aspects of accessibility, geographical network of schools, etc. After the restoration of independence of Lithuania, the concept of educational access changed, so it gained aspects of social and economic problems.

EMPIRICAL RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Modernization theories allow to understand the significance of education institute in modern society when researching the transformation of education institute.

The theory of structural functionalism. The object of this theory – different segment players. Functionalism highlights the significance of moral consensus to sustain public order and stability. Moral consensus also regulates the behaviour of public members and allows to keep order and stability.

Capital theory. Participating in the process of individual's reproduction and education system, based on the access to this theory, is described by an individual's habits (habitus) and according to what complies with the individual's social status.

The conflict of social theory asserts that conflicts can be identified in all social systems, in education institute among them as well.

Social constructivism theory. On preparation of questionnaire construction it is crucial to analyze the social environment, subjective experience

of respondents and the ability to interpret events. For the education access the social environment is particularly important. The social environment consists of communication with other people, understanding of the environmental effects and its changes, interpretation of events.

Humanistic training theory. On the basis of this theory the issues of instrumentation, which questions students' emotionality, freedom, education on equal rights, were formulated. These questions outline the relations between teacher and student and their cooperation. They ensure access of education, equivalence, respect and create positive climate in school and in classes.

Ethical principles of the research. Fundamental ethics norms, as being crucial to maintain a balance between the desire to obtain objective information, moral norms and the security of participants, have been retained during the empirical study, because the study participants were II–IV G class pupils. The study aimed the respondents to be competent to consider the issue under investigation, to complete questionnaires of the study on a voluntary basis, to receive full information on the research and its objectives. Since the author conducted the study, the students were given access to the questionnaire to find out if they known all concepts and terms. All respondents participated in the survey on a voluntary basis (verbal consent was obtained and the questionnaire completed).

The research methods and organization. The respondent groups (control and target) were submitted identical questionnaire, which aimed to investigate and determine whether student responses to questions about the accessibility to education and equal participation in education differ when they belong to different social groups. The questionnaire was made on the assertion principle, the respondents were asked to evaluate each assertion from 1 to 5 (1 – completely inappropriate; 5 – totally appropriate). Individual interviews were taken. The students completed the questionnaires during a lesson (45 min); they were not influenced by the researcher or other persons. Only the interviewer was present in the classroom during the filling of forms. The respondents put the completed questionnaires into envelopes, thus confidentiality was guaranteed. Since the survey was conducted in the classroom, the return of questionnaires was 100 per cent.

The selection of respondents. Random selection method has been used at selecting the respondents socially not disadvantaged (control group). The study has been conducted in 12 those days Klaipėda, Telšiai, Šiauliai and Kaunas districts various type (basic, secondary and high) schools. Then, with reference to the survey data of 2014–2020, 80 171 (general totality) II–IV G class pupils studied in those days counties. The disadvantaged students amounted to 8341 (target group), and to 71 830 (control group) students, who were outside social support. The surveyed respondents amounted to 1200 control group, and to 325 target group respondents.

The statistical analysis. The quantitative study applied descriptive and multivariate statistical methods – factor, cluster, correlation, and the analysis of variance. The factor analysis method has been used to study the survey variables inner structure. It is important to cover the entire structure, to identify the individual structure of components interdependence in the analysis of the accessibility to education for different social groups. One of the most appropriate methods of the study is the graph making. The graph-tree form of the accessibility to education for different social group component interdependence decides on the following: the more branched and complex the graph, the greater interdependence of the components.

QUALITATIVE STUDY THE ANALYSIS OF LITHUANIAN AND EU LEGAL DOCUMENTS UNDERLYING EDUCATION REFORM AND ACCESSIBILITY AND QUANTITATIVE STUDY THE RESEARCH OF ACCESSIBILITY TO EDUCATION FOR II–IV G CLASS STUDENTS.

After the detailed analysis of the documents, we trace that the analysis of Lithuanian and the European Union strategic documents shows a high degree harmony in the change of general and educational goals. The objectives of Regulations to National Education Strategies of 2003–2012 are totally consistent with the objectives of the State Long-term Development Strategy. Education and contextual data analysis shows that educational policy is relevant and meets the real state of education and complies with the National Lisbon Strategy Implementation Programme. Further period of education strategy

planning is related to the Lisbon Strategy, the experience in National Education Strategy modeling.

Since the re-establishment of independence there was not given enough attention to education access in Lithuania. However, during the education reform in Lithuania (2001–2003) the indirect effort was made in order to guarantee equal opportunities and education access. It resulted that in Lithuanian legal documents the notion of “access to education” is not presented, even though the documentation clearly highlight and describe the measures which guarantee access to education. In 2011, the Law on Education of Republic of Lithuania emphasizes access to education dividing it into separate section (Section III). It provides Lithuanian population with the right and obligation to learn Lithuanian language and to have religion classes. It emphasizes and describes the access to education to employed persons, ensures the opportunity to learn for members of social exclusion groups, persons with special needs or mobility disabilities. The Act defines compulsory education, which ensures and guarantees compulsory education to people under 16 on the basis of primary and basic education for Lithuanian nationals, who live in the Republic of Lithuania, and the foreigners, who have the right of permanent or temporary residence in the Republic of Lithuania. It can be said that the legal base of Republic of Lithuania is sufficient to ensure the access to education for students from different social groups and different skills and it meets the standards of the era and matches legal documents of European Union, which regulate core principles of education.

By the results of the research it can be argued that many of the analyzed documents, related to the theory of education in Lithuania, are not fully implemented in practice. The opinion of the majority that education is the basis for social security is widespread, because an individual is able to protect oneself against many risks. Moreover, findings of the research suggest that the transformed Lithuanian education institute is not the basis for social security and accessibility to education is not fully guaranteed. School cannot ensure security for everyone on equal rights. Socially disadvantaged respondents do not feel safe (emotionally, physically). The sense of insecurity appears because of the social stratification of the society. In many cases students are discriminated on property basis (they are discriminated by peers, teachers, knowledge evaluation, etc.). It is obvious that the answers to the issues of the questionnaire

differ substantially between the control and the target groups of respondents. The respondents of the control group have better living conditions, belong to the higher social group, the existing rules in school are focused on the middle layer, etc.). According to the respondents of the target group, wealthier students demonstrate their social position – they have different rules in school during classes. Based on the survey results of the analysis, it can be argued that socially disadvantaged students are less self-confident because of their financial position. Low self-esteem formation is observed. According to the respondents of the target group, they would be more happier if they were richer. The respondents of this particular group blame their parents because of their social position, but parents themselves, by the opinion of respondents, feel discrimination. Many of them are reluctant to attend class parents' meetings because more affluent parents are dominating during the discussions on class affairs, and they impose their proposals. The aim of social services is to mitigate social inequality, reducing poverty and social exclusion. However, according to the survey results, it should be noted that the rendering of social services at school becomes the basis for discrimination. All socially disadvantaged individuals are entitled to free meals, but many refuse free meals. Reasons for denial: peers bullying, taunt, feeling ashamed. This is confirmed by the respondents of the control group. The survey data allow the suggestion that school social services are not of high quality. Social workers, psychologists, and tutors do not perform their direct functions competently. Students cannot talk to school administration and school professional because of their physical, psychological bullying and violence. The survey responses affirm that social integration and socialization functions are not carried out at schools in full. The survey responses relate to social background and the learning outcomes. The disadvantaged students have not enough money to buy the necessary training aids, lack of money prevents them from going on sightseeing trips, participating in contests, and so on. This leads to cultural isolation and reduces the learning opportunities. Meanwhile, the control group respondents affirm that they do not feel the lack of money for the acquiring of training aids, they can hire private tutors. Thus, the preparation for lessons and additional training influences the final assessment (grade). Also, many disadvantaged students do not have the right conditions for learning at home, cannot attend the payable non-formal education activities. Social differences mostly reveal themselves during art,

technology, English and physical education lessons. Target and control group respondents' answers also distinguished when responding about the role of students in the classroom. The richer students most often dominate in the classroom. They feel more confident and daring. The level of their self-esteem is high. The survey results showed that the richer pupils' solutions and proposals receive better attention. The survey results also ascertain that the tutors are not always interested in students' social/economic conditions, although interest in pupils' living conditions would adequately represent the student when discussing his/her issues. Consequently, the target group members do not feel equivalent class members. This makes even be ashamed of their family members (parents, brothers, sisters, etc.). It is also emphasized that the transformed Lithuanian educational institute does not fully guarantee equal accessibility to education and participation in the educational process for all social groups. The ideological and political aspects, the curriculum, etc. were addressed during the transformation of Education institute. However, Education institute is not yet completely ready to ensure the safety of an individual, student's self-esteem, equality, to integrate children from the disadvantaged families, children with disabilities, special needs, etc. Based on the analysis of scientific literature and the research results it can be deduced that the shaped hypothesis – Lithuanian education system does not ensure the accessibility to general education in full, because it was designed for the less differentiated social structure, has been verified.

EDUCATIONAL AND SOCIAL ASSUMPTIONS GUARANTEEING ACCESS TO EDUCATION FOR GRADE II-IV STUDENTS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM (2010–2020)

The investigation established that the welfare recipient students designate the following problems that prevent significant barriers in access to education and equivalence in participation and learning process: differentiation of disadvantaged pupils by teachers and students by social, property status of parents; the lack of communication and cooperation between pupils and teachers; unfavourable school and classroom microclimate for disadvantaged students and teaching of special needs; inappropriate educational assistance to the educational process. The causes of problems are: the lack of interaction

between teachers, school professionals, students, and their parents and ineffective involvement and empowerment of the ideas of the school.

The reduction of social tensions between different social groups. In order to prevent discrimination against students and school differentiation by society, property status of parents in educational institutions, educational and social services are provided. The aim of these services is to reduce social tensions between different social groups and to ensure access to education and equivalence.

The effective communication of education participants. The investigation revealed the lack of cooperation and communication between student, teacher, and school. It is possible to minimize the scale of the problem, if individual peculiarities of child development, family relationships, reasons for unsuccessful learning, etc. would be considered.

Creation of favourable school climate and learning environment. Friendly climate in school and classroom could be created after assessment of student's personal qualities, development of physical and spiritual strength, and creation of social security. The child must participate equally in the education system, teachers have to accept the student and try to cherish him.

Socialization and successful integration of students of all social groups and with different abilities. The study found that students from low-income families and students with special educational needs are not liked by classmates, so they are not integrated into the school community and not feel emotionally safe. Successful integration and socialization of students would be ensured if the equivalence and education access would be guaranteed. So one of the major educational assumptions, which guarantee access to education, is to ensure that all social groups and mixed ability pupils successful socialize and integrate – in other words, it is important to provide quality of education that would ensure not only subject knowledge transfer, but would develop an independent, constructive-looking, clear-formed values and capable to function in nowadays personality. Programs should be differentiated and adjusted to the specific student. School professionals (social workers, psychologists, special educators, etc.) are generally charged to provide educational and social support to students, to ensure integration and socialization of all social.

Pedagogical and psychological support. The aim of pedagogical and psychological support is to guarantee to children from all social groups

and with different skills the access to education and equal rights in the educational process. It should be noted that educational psychological support was given to students in the Soviet education system. Only after the declaration of independence, in contrast to the Soviet system of education, children with special education needs started to go to public schools – before that they had special schools. In Lithuania pedagogical psychological help for children of all abilities are given in 4 levels. The first level – the commission of special education at school; the second level – Educational and Psychological Centre in municipality; the third level is regional – Educational and Psychological Centre; the fourth level – the state level, Centre of Special Education and Psychology.

The analysis of pedagogical-psychological assistance model shows that there are enough measures to help integrate the various skills and social marginalized students into the school community and to properly include them in the learning process. However, as shown by the survey results, it is clear that not all of them are effectively used.

CONCLUSIONS

1. The analyzed social transformation process stipulates new society development opportunities and challenges; more pronounced social differentiation, manifesting the exclusion of some social groups, isolation of the socially disadvantaged, marginalization, and the growing social inequality.
2. A set of stress fields emerged within the context of the transformation of the society in Lithuania:
 - conflicting approaches to education, raising ambitious expectations to tackle inequality, poverty, social justice, social cohesion and the general well-being, personal fulfillment and self-realization issues while devaluation of education and without proper financing;
 - conflict between global and local – between the traditional and secular values, between national identity and cosmopolitanism; between the concept of national school and openness to world cultures;
 - conflict between better social mobility conditions created by education and elitist tendencies;

- conflict between social security and social risks;
- conflict between humanistic approach to students' learning and the promotion of competition.

All this led to the following problems in accessibility to education: a non-optimal arrangement of school network, which complicates physical reach of schools; breakdown of students by parents' social situation; lack of emotional, social, and physical safety of students, reducing motivation; lack of high-quality educational and social services and inclusive education (learning), which do not help to overcome all the problems of social exclusion; insufficient accessibility of educational (learning) content and availability of individualization and differentiation of educational (learning) process.

3. During the period of social transformation are revealed such educational functions, which reconstruct the society, influence its development and respond to educational, social, economic and political changes. Education becomes the guarantee of social security, increases social cohesion of the society and reduces social exclusion, protects individuals against various risks in the future and provides the opportunity for social mobility in societies that experience significant transformations. The secured accessibility to education assumes a social aspect, because it not only satisfies various education players and the society needs, but also guarantees social justice in the society.
4. The definition of accessibility to education in scientific literature is the created opportunity for any person according to their abilities and needs to use quality education, guaranteed by the state. Key aspects of accessibility to education, distinguished on the base of scientific literature and legal documents, are physical reach of school; the optimum layout of the network of schools; students' equivalent participation in the educational process, regardless of social status; favorable microclimate that ensures emotional, social, physical security; learning motivation; involving education; qualitative educational and social services; availability of education (learning) content; individualization and differentiation of educational (learning) process. The guarantee of all the above-mentioned aspects of accessibility to education today ensures equivalent participation in the process of education for those who experience social exclusion,

- students with special needs and disabilities, gifted students, also foreign citizens, Lithuanian citizens living abroad, ethnic minorities and equal participation of orphans in the process of education (learning). Scientists propose to solve education accessibility problem for future society differently:
- develop learning outside the institution, because a new approach to learning and new technology opportunities highlight learning in the presence of real-life situations, solving real life problems, learning in virtual networks and using the media, efficiency; in future, this could reduce the need physically to reach the educational institution as all the world round created educational environments become open and available to learning;
 - accessibility to education to be reached not by differentiating or individualizing self-education, excluding students with special needs, gifted, non-native speakers as separate groups, but naturally accepting all the diversity of learners, focusing on the personal needs of each student and the development of learning situations, ensuring each authentic learning.
5. EU and LR document analysis indicates that while reforming the Lithuanian education system, the emphasis was on EU states' experience, their educational models and the challenges to education system under the processes of globalization. However, Lithuanian, as a post-Soviet country inherent society transformation processes were ignored, giving rise to large, modern countries not relevant challenges to the change of education system. Therefore, while reforming the Lithuanian education system the reduction of students' social differences was not duly prepared to provide an effective education support services, thereby assuring access to education.
- Empirical research showed that the transformation of Lithuanian society affects education and equal participation in education, as school students are divided according to social and cultural background, which condition learning, inequality of students' social resources, quality of education, discrimination, differentiation in class, and accessibility to education II–IV G grades disadvantaged children often incur educators and peers discrimination for their social status – according to the students, the selection of friends depends on the social status, they are ashamed of their family members (parents, brothers, sisters), are not satisfied with

their family social status, they are constantly reminded of their social position;

- social status influences learning results and achievements – according to the disadvantaged respondents, they lack money to buy all the necessary learning materials; the majority of them are socially and culturally isolated because of their social and economic situation; due to the lack of funds they cannot pay to attend non-formal education classes, participate in the Olympiads or go on school organized sightseeing excursions; according to them, teachers are pre-disposed to poorer students, and this tells on the teacher's assessment of their knowledge;
- in schools, where the study was carried out, microclimate is not favorable for different social groups and skills students, integration into the school community weakly affects different social groups, children from disadvantaged families, students with special needs, equal participation in the educational process is not ensured; according to many X–XII (II–IV G) grades disadvantaged students, they feel emotionally, physically unsafe at the school, wealthier students use their position, they are subject to other rules; decisions and proposals of students from wealthy families receive greater acceptance and support in dealing with class issues; social class differentiation is apparent, the absence of the relationship between the disadvantaged and affluent students; the disadvantaged students do not fit to their peers;
- it was found that many of the II–IV G classes disadvantaged students suffer bullying, discrimination, insecurity, cultural and physical isolation, discomfort.

Thus, the study confirmed assumption and the defensive statements prove that social tensions not reduced, but on the contrary, even more increased if educational assistance, educational and social services not properly organized and provided.

6. Theoretical and empirical analysis of accessibility to education within the context of the transformation of Lithuanian society allows to distinguish these educational and social services and tools that would ensure the II–IV G classes students more successful access to education and equal participation in education: reduction of social tensions between different social groups,

effective communication of the training participants, creation of a positive school microclimate and learning environment; successful integration and socialization of all social groups and all abilities pupils; orientation to the natural diversity of learners without dividing them into groups according to social status and the capacities; more active use of open educational environments under development of schools, country and the world; better quality educational, social and educational assistance for the needs of each student and family.

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