

## Reflections of Disability in Lithuanian Media: the Case of Daily Newspaper the “Lietuvos rytas”

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### Abstract

The article presents theoretical conceptualisation of the phenomenon of disability shall be provided by the article as well as theoretical reasoning of disability as social construct. Reflection on phenomenon of disability in Lithuanian mass-media (in the daily newspaper “Lietuvos rytas”) shall be revealed by following the results of the empirical research and variations in representation of disability during the periods that were selected for the analysis (years 1995, 2003 and 2010) shall be presented.

**Keywords:** disability, reflections of disability phenomenon, media, daily newspaper “Lietuvos rytas”, social construct.

### Introduction

After Lithuania had restored its independence, vast opportunities for analyzing disability as social phenomenon opened up. Perception of existing reality is a start of potential changes, therefore it is very important to examine, what attitude towards disabled people is constructed in the Lithuanian press, because the prime topicalities of the social life are reflected primarily by the press. According to Giddens (2000), press and electronic mass media have the greatest influence on how the “distant events” affect the close and intimate aspects of a person’s life (Giddens, 2000, p. 13). Attitude to the disabled that is constructed by the media is of high importance for development of identity of people with disability as well as for fundamental structure of social relations. The media establishes stereotypes of the disabled people as actually existing models. The disabled often encounter the problem of identity construction: disabled people sort of get lost amongst the images attached to them by the media. Media is an influential agent that forms attitudes of the members of the society towards persons with disability. It is also important that negative attitude towards the disabled is the remnant from Soviet times, it will change only during the years and it will depend on efforts of the members of society and also on human perception.

In Lithuania we find only a few scientifically valuable researches that disclose the trends of representation of the disabled on Lithuanian media, namely – research “*Structure and directionality of the social image of physical disability in Lithuanian media (newspapers)*” performed by Ruskus and Daugela (2003), and joint research of Sweden, Norway and Lithuania– “*Image of the disabled in Lithuania – an approach of Scandinavia*” performed in 2009 (Ljuslinder, Mataityte-Dirziene, Morlandsto, 2009). The research performed by Ruskus and Dirgela (2003) discloses the structure of depiction of physical disability by the media as being multi-dimensional and ambiguous: persons with physical disability are shown as realizing their defects and being able to overcome them, but also the disabled are treated as the object of the approach and treatment by medical institutions (Ruskus and Daugela, 2003).

The results of joint research of Sweden, Norway and Lithuania (Ljuslinder, Mataityte-Dirziene, Morlandsto, 2009) have disclosed that crimes committed by mentally-disabled persons in all three countries are mostly popular topic of the articles. The articles about crimes and mental disorders may create and help to maintain the image of persons with mental disorders as dangerous, unstable and inclined to violence, so the depiction of persons with mental disorders only strengthens negative stereotypes and stigmatization. It is important to note that researches on people with disabilities in Lithuania are differentiated, i.e. they represent some one form of disability: mental (Ljuslinder, Mataityte-Dirziene, Morlandsto, 2009) or physical disability (Ruskus and Daugele (2003). We were unable to find any joint research that incorporates both forms of disability depicted in Lithuanian media.

Hojjer and Rasmussen (2005), who performed investigation in Sweden, made a conclusion that in many articles and news announcements journalists fail to see the difference between a person and the cri-

me and that the proposition “mentally sick” is often used as the explanation of motive of the crime. A different attitude to a murderer with mental disability is practically impossible to find in new announcements (Ljuslinder, Mataityte-Dirziene, Morlandsto, 2009).

Conclusions of the research (2006) by the Norwegian scientist Morlandsto indicate that difference exists between how the journalists intend to describe the area of mental health and how it is actually announced in the newspapers. The journalists claim they intend to present actual experience of the persons with mental disorders; nevertheless, they rarely talk to such people. Instead of talking to them, journalists usually talk to doctors and politicians (Ljuslinder, Mataityte-Dirziene, Morlandsto, 2009).

The research carried out in New Zealand by Coverdale, Nairn, Claasen (2002) has shown that negative aspects are dominant and they create stereotypical and stigmatizing view of mental disorders (Coverdale, Nairn, Claasen, 2002). Analyzing the Canadian media, Stuart (2006) states that the media presents a highly dramatised and distorted image of the persons with mental disorders, particularly emphasizing dangerousness, criminal nature and unpredictability (Stuart, 2006).

It becomes possible to affirm that foreign scientists are interested in representation of the disabled in the media; nevertheless, the majority of researches that were carried out were oriented to the dimension of mental disability. Lithuanian researchers have paid more attention to analysis of situation of the disabled in educational system and labour market (Ruskus, et.al., 2007; Seporaityte and Tereskinas, 2007, et. al.); public entity “Global initiative in psychiatry” initiates researches on mentally disabled people (“*General assessment of skills of the disabled and their work results*” (2007); “*Economic evaluation of employment of people with mental and intellectual disability in Lithuania*” (2008) and others), and Lithuanian Union of Students (LSS) periodically investigates situation of the disabled students in higher education (“*The disabled in higher education 2010*”).

The **scientific problem of the research** is what reflections on disability phenomenon were dominant in daily newspaper the “Lietuvos Rytas” (in 1995, 2003 and 2010)? What changes in representation of disability reveal during the periods that were selected for analysis (years 1995, 2003 and 2010)?

The **aim of the research** is to disclose the reflections on disability phenomenon in Lithuanian media.

The **subject of the research** is reflections on disability phenomenon in daily newspaper the “Lietuvos rytas”.

The **methods of the research** are analysis of scientific literature; content analysis.

## **Theoretical conceptualization of phenomenon of disability**

For first time the conception and classification of disability was provided by the World Health Organization (WHO) in the year 1980 (WHO, 1980) (Hirschberg, 2003; Albrecht, Seelman, Bury, 2001). In the WHO model disability is defined as inability due to disorder of a human organism to do activity that is traditionally considered as normal by the society (Karlo, 2010; Holzhofer, 2008). Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities declares that “Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others” (Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2009, Article 1). According to Stange (2004), disability is any strong and evident deviation in physical or mental condition of a person, which gives the disabled person “negative features” and generally evokes negative reactions of other members of the society.

The concept of “reflection on phenomenon of disability” used in the article describes disability as outer expression, outcome or result of society’s attitude that is disclosed by the articles of the “Lietuvos Rytas”. Reflection is any outer expression, outcome or result of something (Oxford English Dictionary, 2003).

Oliver (1990), cited by Hanrahan (2005), provides definition of disability as based on three elements (Hanrahan, 2005):

1. Social limitations and negative attitude of the society towards disability as well as capabilities of a disabled person to participate in social life;
2. Perception of disability by a disabled person himself;
3. Construction and perception of identity of a disabled person, i.e. identification with other persons who have disability (Hanrahan, 2005).

Sociologically, disability is understood as restriction of the individual from participation in social life, in comparison with other members of the society (Thie, 2008). Disability is construed socially; therefore disability might be treated not as impairment/disorder of physical or mental functions, but as limited social involvement as well as limited social interaction (Thie, 2008). Perception of disability is different in each society, because different criteria are referred to when defining disability. Disability is the result of functional disorders and outer factors that determine existence of the individual. In opinion of Jantzen (1987), cited by Thie (2008), the historical context, approaches, myths as well as stereotypes of disability which have been dominant in a particular so-

ciety are highly important for perception of disability (Thie, 2008). The historical context shall be briefly reviewed in the article.

During antiquity the belief was prevailing that the disabled children should be sent back to gods; it was a sort of immolation. It is important to notice that only newborns with physical disability, i.e. which pertain to the category of “deformed bodies”, were left to the fate. People with mental disabilities were part of society, because they did not have evident abnormalities and physically conformed to the norms of society of that time. In the IV<sup>th</sup> century after Christ the Roman civil law recalled the murdering law; nevertheless, the codes prohibited the disabled to pursue education and the disabled children received no citizenship. Rather often disabled slaves were figures of fun and they played the role of clowns at the venues (Albrecht, Seelman, Bury, 2001).

During Middle Ages disability was characterized by dual perception: the disabled people belonged to society, but they were not equal with other members of it. The members of the society recognized the existence of the disabled; nevertheless, the disability as such still was perceived as embodiment of the demonic power. Weighty influence on the change in attitudes to the disabled was made by evolution of the Christian mind (Kolblin, 2008). According to the Christian belief the disabled were perceived as creations of God and His aspiration to create harmony of the world, which would be characterized by variety. Therefore we can state that Christianity integrated disability as the norm.

The economic growth and development of cities during the Middle Ages created new forms of social solidarity of the citizens. Special institutions for the sick, the disabled, and for other people with special needs began to be created in communities (Weber, 2002). Probably institutionalization was a way to create a medical and psychological environment necessary for people with disabilities, but it was also significant in creation of the space of social exclusion for the disabled.

Rapid processes of industrialization that were taking place at the end of the XVIII century stipulated segregation of the weak and the disabled. People were divided and appreciated according to their usefulness for manufacturing process, the disabled were not included in manufacturing process; they were perceived as “the holdouts of the progress” and were pushed out of the society (Mayer, 2001). Lack of the competences of sociality in society formed negative attitudes towards the disabled and their image was surrounded by stereotypes and myths.

Darwinian attitude towards a human being as undistinguished from animals and in need to fight for

his existence and survival had an influence on ideology of the Third Reich. The disabled persons were perceived as threats to the purity of the Aryan blood and treated as superfluous and useless part of society, so at the end of 1939 implementation of the “T4” (the programme for euthanasia of the disabled) was begun (Albrecht, Seelman, Bury, 2003). Historical facts tell us that during the years 1907-1949 about 47 thousands of people with intellectual disorders were sterilized in 30 states of the United States of America. Sterilization programme in Europe was actively pursued by Denmark (1930-1954) and Sweden (1930-1940) (Albrecht, Seelman, Bury, 2003).

Essential changes that took place in the USA and Western Europe at the beginning of the XX century have formed new holistic approach to the disabled people and their needs (Pivorienė, 2003). The movement for the rights of the disabled citizens that started to develop actively in 1970 widely declared the idea: “We aren’t disabled, but we become such”. This idea was beginning of critical glance and assessment of situation of the disabled people in the society; it has also determined changes in attitudes to the disabled as well as started studies of disability as social phenomenon (Schonwiese, 2005). In 1964 Jean Vanier established “Arch” community in France, which united people with mental disability as well as the seculars living with them. Currently about 135 “Arch” communities are established all over the world.

It can be said that years 1988-1989 were the years of breakthrough in the policy towards the disabled in the European Union. In 1990 the Council issued a resolution that regulated integration of disabled pupils and students in educational system. The Directive 2000/78/EC of 2000 on equal treatment during hiring and employment has formed occupational politics towards the disabled people (Dromantiene, 2005). In Lithuania after it restored independence, the interest in the problems of the disabled became intensive, the legal basis oriented to the needs of the disabled people is being created (in 1991 the Law on Social Integration of Invalids of the Republic of Lithuania (amended in 2004) was passed; 1998 saw the Law on Special Education of the Republic of Lithuania, 2003 – the Law on Equal Opportunities of the Republic of Lithuania, etc.). In order to draw attention of the society and various institutions, year 1996 in Lithuania and year 2003 in Europe were declared as the Years of Disabled.

To sum up, as historical periods changed, so did the criteria of perception of disability and the formation of phenomenon of disability. Scientific discourse analyses medical and social models of disability that are characterized by differences in treatment of the nature of the phenomenon of disability as well

as reasons of its origination, also by different possibilities and methods of integration of the disabled people.

In medical model disability is based on categories of “normality” and “abnormality”; a disabled person is perceived as the “victim” who needs assistance and help of other people. Disability is named as pathology that prevents full participation in social life and that forms the group of the disabled as a socially excluded group (Renggli, 2005). In the individual model disability is regarded as a medical problem and negative situation arising out of deviations from the norm is denied. All hopes of the disabled are directed to medical treatment with the aim to become “normal”, or they come to terms with their situation and accept their disability, adapt to their role as the disabled and thus develop their identity of the disabled (Dell Orto, Pover, 2007).

Social model proposes that enabling of a disabled person depends not only on the disorder, but also on what reaction the disabled receives from the environment around him, thus disproving the affirmation of the medical model of disability, namely that disability is solely the person’s own problem (Swain, French, Barnes, Thomas, 2004). A disabled person faces difficulties not because of the fact of his disability, but because of assessments, attitudes and groundless stereotypes of the society. It can be said that the paradigm of social model of disability transfers disability from micro level to macro level: a person becomes disabled not because of his functional disorders, but because of inaccessibility of social space, economic and legal restraints and hostile social environment. The social model assigns considerable importance to adaptation and maintenance not only of the physical environment (architectural constructions), but also of the emotional (media, valuables, behaviour norms) one. The attitude of society becomes an indicator that allows for evaluation of what model of perception of disability prevails in that society.

### **Disability as social construct**

Theory of symbolic interactionism (Mead, Cooley, Blumer) emphasizes the importance of social norms and the statuses, impressions and attitudes, role distribution and social interaction for construction of disability as social phenomenon. It can be stated that disability is a socially constructed reality. According to symbolic interactionism, success or failure of integration of the disabled people depend not on the level of their disability, but on social environment and social norms and attitudes dominant in it. The theory of symbolic interactionism stresses that attitudes are formed not only by initiative of a personality. Members of society transfer the impressions and pro-

positions to other people thus affecting and influencing them accordingly. Thus individuals intercept the culture of the society and by such means it becomes a value system composed of casual knowledge, propositions, attitudes, images, etc. (Luhmann, 2006). The advocates of the paradigm of the symbolic interactionism perceive disability as experience of daily life in the society as perceived by such people; it depends on culture of the society including present, past and future information as well as social relations.

Mead (1934) says that an individual begins to perceive self and becomes the object only by accepting the attitudes upon him by other individuals in the context of social environment and behaviour. Communication takes important place in the process of formation of individual’s self-consciousness, which gives the form to behaviour, by which the individual can become the object for himself (Kaeckenmeister, 2008). It can be stated that self-consciousness originates out of social experience and the society is the space of experience of self-consciousness of the individual.

Cooley (1964), with reference to own theory of the looking-glass self, says that self perception by the person evolves as this person communicates with other persons. Attitude of the other persons shapes the social nature of each individual person. Evaluation by other persons is very important for the individual, because interactions of the individual with the surroundings and the people around highly depend on it (Yeung, Martin, 2003).

Hetzel (2009) notes that the disabled encounter difficulties because of perception of disability as social phenomenon by the members of society. Social conditions that meet the demands of the disabled let the disabled people feel being full members of the society and, in consideration of the needs of the disabled, the attitudes of the society towards the disabled change. The attention paid to the needs of the disabled and efforts to integrate them into society is a new phenomenon, therefore the concept of disability and the contact with a disabled person generates respective social reactions – some declare friendly attitudes while others ignore such a person. As emphasized by Hetzel (2009), social reaction to the disabled is multifaceted, because it covers different attitudes of society as well as norms of the behaviour. Each society has its own respective standards; nevertheless, the boundary between the norm and deviation from it (disability) is not clearly established.

The results of investigation by Reinikainen (2004), cited by Seporaityte (2006), have shown that different attitudes towards disabled men and women prevail in society: a disabled man is perceived as an active person who has the family, liked occupation

and job, while a disabled woman is defined according to her defects, i.e. what she lacks and who she is not due to her disability. More often a disabled woman is perceived as a person who requires patronage and care, as being lonely and without her family (Seporaityte, 2006). Behrisch (2006) states that parenthood of the disabled men is evaluated favourably, but motherhood of the disabled women receives sceptical attitude (Behrisch, 2006). The majority of life areas, including sexuality and parenthood/motherhood, in opinion of the society, are “forbidden” (or irrelevant) for a disabled, but for a disabled himself they are part of his life and also his ambition (Seporaityte, 2006). The conclusion can be drawn that analysis of the attitudes towards disability reveals the aspect of sexuality and issue of gender inequality.

Analysing disability as a social construct the researchers ask a question of what meaning of disability is created by the mass media. “The media is meant being agent of sociocultural reproductions of the society par excellence. We receive information and news that are not ours from the media, which McLuhan called ...*continuation of our feelings* (1967)” (Ljuslinder, Mataityte-Dirziene, Morlandsto, 2009). Berger and Luckmann (1995), cited by Galehr (2005), perceive mass-media as a mediator between the individual and the society (in respect of their attitudes, opinions, provisions and valuations) (Galehr, 2005). According to Borcsa (2001), cited by Galehr (2005), the majority of people has weak or no direct contacts with a disabled person, therefore it can be said that the encounter with otherness (disability) and the experience of it is formed by the media. The media builds the image of disability which is in distance from reality, i.e. it represents a distorted reality. The practice shows that normal people often do not distinguish between the image of the disabled people in the media and in real life (Galehr, 2005).

According to Murner (2003), cited by Zach (2009), at the beginning of the XXI century, when mass communication means started spreading quickly, the disability was represented in the media as deviation from the norm, as nonconformity to expectations of the society, with primary focus being not on commonness of the disabled to the society, but their peculiarity. A person belongs to various social groups, thus his identity is multidimensional. Each social group is related to individual behaviour as well as to expectations of the society from the individual. It is the expectations of the society in respect of individual/group that form the stereotypes that determine subsequent social interaction between the individual/group and the society (Zach, 2009).

By conveying information, the media simultaneously forms new attitude of the consumers (viewers, readers) to the object of information (e.g. personal feature of the individual, his behaviour, etc.). Negative perception of the self by the disabled is formed by negative social attitudes, negative experience of the disabled person and the stigmatization. The disabled encounter various barriers resulting from the reactions of people around and their attitude towards the disability. The development of own autonomy and identity is very important for each individual, because it determines his life opportunities and further participation in the society’s life (Uphoff, Kauz, Schellong, 2010).

In summary, disability is a socially constructed reality that is a product of the entirety of standpoints and attitudes as well as value orientation of members of the public. Negative attitudes towards the disabled as well as the attitude towards disability that is formed by discourses of the media determine the identity of the disabled, perception of disability as social phenomenon and also define the place and role of the disabled people in society. Formation of the attitude towards the disabled seems to be in a vicious society-media circle: the media not only reflects standpoints and attitudes of the society, but also causes feedback, i.e. shapes the opinion of an individual as well as public opinion.

## **Research methodology**

All the issues of daily newspaper the “Lietuvos rytas” that were published in years 1995, 2003 and 2010 and their supplements were selected for the research. Such a selection of the periods for analysis is related to aspiration to disclose how disability was represented by daily newspaper the “Lietuvos rytas” before the Year of Disabled (before 1996) and during the Year of Disabled (in 2003); while use of articles of the daily newspaper of 2010 was aimed at disclosing the currently prevailing trends representing disability. The selection is related to aspiration to observe models of presentation of the disabled persons in the daily newspaper and to disclose qualitative changes in the reflections on phenomenon of disability. A qualitative content analysis method was selected for the research.

**Research sample:** probability-systematic.

**Research categories.** The identified categories (see Table 1) are individually reviewed during the process of the work with the aim to compare publications from various periods.

### Research categories

The category	The articles attributed to the category
Legal aspects of the problems of the disabled	The articles related to various sessions of the Council, national resolutions, proposals and laws on disability. Also the articles in which the opinion of the disabled about laws relevant to the disabled is clarified.
Cultural integration of the disabled	The articles related to various events, in which a disabled person participates (exhibitions, seminars, camping, participation in sports, integration within the scope of education, etc.).
Integration of the disabled into the labour market	The articles related to employment opportunities for the disabled and disclosure of attitude of employers to the disabled.
Medical aspects of disability	The articles related to representation of a disabled as a patient (expression of the medical model of disability), the latest achievements of medicine and technology which are useful for solution of the problems of the disabled.
Social support for the disabled	The articles related to non-material and material support provided for persons with disability (social allowances, benefits, disability pensions, provision with supportive means, and organization of concerts and spare time activities for the disabled).
Accessibility of services and adaptation of environment for the demands of the disabled	The articles related to activities of the disabled persons in various associations, non-governmental organizations; articles related to foundation of the culture, health, science and public sectors and their transformation for the disabled persons.
Personal experience of the disabled	The articles related to experiences, reminiscences of the disabled as well as to their moral support and mutual help.
Deviant behaviour of the disabled	The articles on the criminal acts of the disabled, murder, thefts, violation of the laws, violence. Also articles on suicidal behaviour of the disabled individuals and on the level of poverty among them.
Disabled person in context of family institution	The articles related to care/carelessness by the family of its disabled member, also to family roles (father or mother) of the disabled themselves.
Representation of the disabled as victim	The articles on physical or sexual violence experienced by the disabled, also articles presenting the disabled as victims of accident, theft or fraud.

During the research the main indicators (categories) were gathered for the work, so as to make analysis of the selected articles systematic. The most important criterion for selection of articles was representation of disability and the disabled persons in various aspects. Articles or portions of them, related in one way or another to representation of disability or the disabled are the main object of the research. The selected articles were read, the context of the articles was analyzed, and subcategories were looked for. First, the publications of daily newspaper the "Lietuvos rytas" of the analyzed period (years 1995, 2003 and 2010) were collected together with their supplements ("Vartai", "Sporto arena", "Bendraamziai", "Rytai – Vakarai", "Gyvenimo budas", "Savaitgalis", "Sveikatos gidas", "MES!!!"). The following supplements of daily newspaper the "Lietuvos rytas" were not selected for the analysis: "Bustas", "TV antena", "Stilius", "Krepšinis" and "Greitkelis", because during initial analysis of the articles of these supplements no articles on any aspect of disability were found, therefore the said supplements were left out. 441 articles of daily newspaper the "Lietuvos rytas" were used for the research on the topic of disability. The selected articles were attributed to categories and subcategories

that were identified during investigation. Forward theoretical definitions as well as categories provided beforehand were avoided during the investigation process. The categories were identified manifestly; the research did not follow any specific forward hypothetical scheme in order to ensure the principle of openness as inherent and mandatory for each qualitative research.

#### Analysis of results of the research

Each category identified while analyzing and organizing the articles shall be presented in this part of the paper in order to observe how a disabled person is depicted in the selected issues of daily newspaper the "Lietuvos rytas" in each case, what reflections on phenomenon of disability are dominant in daily newspaper the "Lietuvos Rytas" during selected periods (the years 1995, 2003 and 2010).

#### *Legal aspects of the problems of the disabled.*

During the year 1995 (in comparison with the years 2003 and 2010) the opinion of the disabled themselves on the legal basis as well as interest in laws on the disabled is revealed more broadly, furthermore, experience of the disabled as subject concerning empiri-

cal experience of certain decisions are reflected more extensively in the issues of the newspaper (*“Why the fund for invalids, which might help to render better social support for the disabled persons, has not been established till now?”*) (“The Law was made for themselves, but not for the disabled”, 5<sup>th</sup> of October, 1995, № 234, p. 4). Societal institutions kind of declare interest in problems of the disabled; nevertheless, they avoid participation of the disabled both in process of adoption of the laws and solving the problems concerning improvement of life of the disabled: *“The chairman of association of the disabled, which was sitting in a wheelchair, could not ascend to the session hall on the second floor. Some participants were joking that <...> nobody is interested in problems of the disabled”*. (“Conversation of the city leaders with the disabled at the canteen”, 15<sup>th</sup> of September, 1995, № 217, p. 17). The articles of daily newspaper the “Lietuvos rytas” of years 2003 and 2010 are characterized by openness in presenting the legal problems the disabled encounter, the articles reflect the struggle of the disabled themselves for their rights and liberties, and for possibility to preserve personal dignity: *“Condemned to live by the law. Previously a volunteer fire-man, this person is completely paralysed now <...> He has become mute and almost blind. Today V. Humbert has the only wish – to withdraw from life. Euthanasia in France, like in many other European countries, is strictly forbidden”* (“At place of French barricades – the volleys of the words for breath or death”, 4<sup>th</sup> of January, 2003, № 2 p. 8); *“The novelties that make daily existence and relaxation of a foreigner easier are inaccessible dream for a disabled Lithuanian. These means are too expensive not only for the disabled, but also for the state”* (“The disabled can only dream about the life abroad of their brothers of fate”, 12<sup>th</sup> of October, 2010, № 19, p. 1). During all periods that were selected for analysis of daily newspaper the “Lietuvos rytas” (years 1995, 2003 and 2010) no articles were found in which the opinion/position of the society or institutions about the gaps in the laws in respect of the disabled would be provided.

**Cultural integration of the disabled.** In the articles attributed to this category favourable attitudes towards the disabled are reflected, benevolent attitude towards cultural activity of the disabled persons is declared, the main character in the articles is a disabled person (“The combinations on chessboard shall be arranged by the blinds”, 2<sup>nd</sup> of May, 2003, № 100, p. 13) and the reflections on phenomenon of disability are characterized by positivity and energy. The articles prove that disability is no longer an obstacle that prevents seeking own goals and achievements; initiatives of the disabled to overcome barriers built

by disability are reflected here: *“Previously unseen numbers of the invalids have tested their physical capabilities”* (“Hundreds of runners of the Olympic mile”, 19<sup>th</sup> of June, 1995, № 143, p. 12). *“<...> the winner of Paralympic game, the champion of the world and Europe, resident of Kaunas city <...> (“Pathfinders shall help the blind runners to orient themselves”, 19<sup>th</sup> of September, 2003, № 37, p. 16). Very often the description of actual cultural event is accompanied by the collective dimension, i.e. the disabled persons strive, study, participate, and they like to be together (“The rehabilitation camping for invalids was arranged”, 19<sup>th</sup> of July, 1995, № 167, p. 7). In the articles of daily newspaper the “Lietuvos rytas” of 1995 the aspects of tenacity and initiative of the disabled persons are reflected, the disabled do not name their situation as an obstacles to their active life, rest, striving for education and enjoying life. Though the article “The disabled were praised” (4<sup>th</sup> of February, 2010, № 28, p. 4) reveals that the disabled actively participate in both academic activities and the sports as well as in culture (*“The president D. Grybauskaitė has met the disabled who actively participate in science, sports and arts <...>*); nevertheless, in publications of daily newspaper of 2010 (in comparison to years 1995 and 2003) the aspects of cultural integration of the disabled and information concerning improvements in this domain which are important for persons with disability are missing. Such a change forms negative attitude of the members of the society towards the disabled people, namely that the disabled persons during the years become more and more passive, less visible, they participate in outer events more and more rarely. Decreased attention to cultural integration of the disabled people shapes the attitude that disability is the problem of the disabled people themselves and that the disabled should solve this problem themselves, within a circle of “disadvantaged by the fate”. Nevertheless, it is important to emphasize that the article published in daily newspaper the “Lietuvos rytas” in 2010 for the first time represents an individual with disability as a teacher, active agent of social and cultural life, as a human being who by means of his experience teaches others: *“Excellent relations with the parents are the best therapy for the sightless painter. She “will teach <...> in the 4<sup>th</sup> international summer art academy “Art Baltica 2010” (“Blindness is not an obstacle to drawing and painting”, 22<sup>nd</sup> of July, 2010, № 163, p. 14).**

**Integration of the disabled in the labour market.** In 1995 hurtful realities of that time has been reflected as well as rising need for changing the system of integration of the disabled in the labour market: *“90% of sight invalids of the employable age have been working at five enterprises owned by the Association of*

*the Blinds and Partially Sighted, but since the year 1991 the manufacturing began to decrease and many of the blinds lost their jobs*". Only the associations that represent the interests of the disabled undertake the initiative to employ the disabled, and the articles reflect the actual attitude of the employers towards a disabled employee: *"Many of the employers actually do not intend to employ people, who have a disability"*, however, the disabled themselves tend to devalue themselves and their capabilities; by having negative attitudes they doom themselves to unemployment and poverty, undermine their self esteem: *"But my friends who also don't see don't even try to search for job, because they are convinced that they shall not be employed by anyone"* ("The hope most often reflects the light of the world to the blind", 3<sup>rd</sup> of June, 1995, № 129, p. 41). In the year 2003 (the Year of the Disabled) the articles reflecting establishment and improvement of conditions for employment of the disabled people, positive changes within the area of professional activity were absent, moreover, the disabled did not show personal initiative to enter the labour market. Nevertheless, the articles stress that the possibility to use the potential of the disabled in the labour market exists and introduce foreign experience: *"<...> some of the disabled are characterized by the quality not to move for a long time and these people often pose at art schools. Other disabled are particularly diligent - <...> in Denmark they are employed even as plasterers"*. ("The officials have offered the disabled to swindle", 17<sup>th</sup> of May, 2003, № 113, p. 10). By means of quality the articles that were attributed to the category of daily newspaper the "Lietuvos rytas" of 2010 were most outstanding. Positive changes within the scope of professional activity of the disabled have been presented as well as attention to involvement of the disabled in the labour market: *"The disabled help the police officers of Panevezys city to take care of citizens' safety. The disabled shall receive the salary of 800-1000 Litas per month for their work"* ("The disabled render help to police", 21<sup>st</sup> of June, 2010, № 140, p. 20). *"Blind waiters serve the visitors in restaurants where neither natural nor artificial light is available"* ("Blind Lithuanian woman works among waiters", 6<sup>th</sup> of November, 2010, № 44, p. 13).

**Medical aspects of disability.** Though by means of quantity during analyzed periods (during the years 1995, 2003 and 2010) strong changes in the articles attributable to this category is observed, by means of quality the character of reflection on phenomenon of disability remains the same. The disabled are introduced in the articles as dependent, unable to take care of themselves and their friends and relatives, they are burden to the family and medical tre-

atment is the only way to help a person with disability to "correspond" to the norms of society. *"Very often, without care by other people, they (mentally disabled) would be unable even to survive as they refuse treatment and do not beware of dangers around them"* ("Are the psychiatrists to blame for the increase in numbers of mental patients?" 30<sup>th</sup> of March, 1995, № 74, p. 4). Positive attitudes are reflected in the articles in respect of physically disabled people, but other forms of disability are sort of ignored. The opinion is formed that searching for solutions to the problems of the mentally disabled is futile, or probably impossible. The disability is reflected as a pathology that prevents from full participation in the life of society. The reflections on medical model of disability can also be found in the articles: integration of the disabled in the society is possible only when the disabled socially adapt to the norms of the society and conform to the criteria of "normality": *"It is expected that by application of such device, it will be possible to help paralytic people to restore movement of the body in future <...>"* ("A hope for paralytics", 15<sup>th</sup> of October, 2010, № 241, p. 15). Open presentation of a disabled as a patient, dependent, helpless and disadvantaged during the Year of the Disabled (in issues of year 2003) caused great surprise: *"<...> the seriously ill patients who have selected Palanga city rehabilitation hospital remain grateful for all their life for the restored enjoyment of life and for proper preparation for difficult life of an invalid"* ("Palanga city rehabilitation hospital: the hope to enjoy life is returned there", 24<sup>th</sup> of June, 2003, № 145, p. 3). In daily newspaper the "Lietuvos rytas" of the year 2010 the tendency to represent the disabled as incapable to live independently remained (*"The disabled can't duly maintain not only themselves, but also their property"*, "The disabled were left without care", 4<sup>th</sup> of March, 2010, № 51, p. 19).

**Social support for the disabled.** The disabled people are represented in the articles as vulnerable; as unable to maintain themselves and their well-being without the initiative coming from outside. In articles of daily newspaper the "Lietuvos rytas" of the year 1995 such epithets for the disabled prevail: "disadvantaged by the fate", "underdog" ("The feast was presented to children disadvantaged by the fate", 1<sup>st</sup> of February, 1995, № 26, p. 17) and "humble" ("Businesswoman shall give food to humble pensioners", 10<sup>th</sup> of January, 1995, № 7, p. 17). Though at the first glance the articles seem positive, full of optimistic thoughts that the disabled finally have a possibility to function "normally" in the society, however, in subtexts of many articles one can see representation of weakness of a disabled person, his noncompliance with the social norms as well as his difference and



stigma. By such means a disabled person is reflected as expecting help and grateful for provision of it. Material support in 1995 was often initiated by the representatives of foreign countries (“Norwegians’ shipment to Utena city patients and invalids”, 1<sup>st</sup> of February, 1995, № 26, p. 17); this shows that Lithuanian society of that time lacked solidarity and attention to the needs of the disabled people. After Lithuania has restored its independence, soviet idea of institutionalization of the disabled began to decline and the disabled people became more visible in society; all this is reflected in the articles of daily newspaper the “Lietuvos rytas” of years 2003 and 2010: the articles of these periods represent increased interest of the Lithuanian society in realia of life of the disabled and more attention is paid to support for people with disabilities (“The dolphins were hugely rewarded for their paintings”, 1<sup>st</sup> of July, 2003, № 151, p. 6; “Kornelijus already can hear and pronounces first words”, 21<sup>st</sup> of August, 2010, № 189, p. 4); furthermore, disabled people themselves do not assume the role of “pauper and victim” and they inform the society about their needs: “<...> the pension of Kupiskis town has applied to the Ministry of Social Security and Labour with the request to transfer the used computers to the pension <...>” (“Charges of Kupiskis city pension received computers”, 28<sup>th</sup> of March, 2003, № 72, p. 17). In the year 2003 more active private outer initiative might be observed in respect of disabled people. Such behaviour is typical to people of high social class of the society (“The youngsters stricken by disability were heated by attention of the stars”, 22<sup>nd</sup> of January, 2003, № 3, p. 3). It may be possible to state that taking care on the weak and the “disadvantaged by the fate” has become “fashionable”.

**Accessibility of services and adaptation of environment for the needs of the disabled.** Most of the articles in this category are of informational nature (provide concrete and detailed information), are characterized by consistent description of events and main ideas, as well as by aims that are sought by outer initiative (“Transport for invalids”, 22<sup>nd</sup> of November, 1995, № 274, p. 19), and how it shall help the disabled people (“The blinds shall use bank cards”, 24<sup>th</sup> of July, 2003, № 171, p. 12). A disabled man is portrayed as dependent on goals and decisions of others, like an object of the decisions of others. In 1995 the newspaper described public area adaptation, establishment of various institutions and transformation of them for the needs of the disabled people most fully. Special institutions being in compliance with the needs of the disabled are being created, manifestations of idea of institutionalization of the disabled might be observed in this category (“<...> the school for deaf and dull of hearing children was decided to be

*established in the seaport town*”, “A school for the disadvantaged by the fate in Klaipeda city”, 29<sup>th</sup> of July, 1995, № 146, p. 21). In daily newspaper the “Lietuvos rytas” of year 2010 the disregard of the disabled in public space is revealed: “<...> *the disabled are welcome only to shopping centres of the seaport town. Access of state institutions is impossible without the help of other people. Movement on the sidewalks of central part of the city in wheelchairs is also very difficult <...>*” (“The doors are closed for the disabled”, 16<sup>th</sup> of December, 2010, № 288, p. 19). In issues of daily newspaper the “Lietuvos rytas” of the year 1995 the first steps of the outer initiative towards accessibility and adaptation of the environment for the needs of the disabled are reflected; nevertheless, wider and more complex alterations and transformations of the public space were not found in issues of the years 2003 and 2010.

**Personal experience of the disabled.** The articles attributed to this category reflect personal experiences of people with disability, declaration of strength of the disabled people prevails in these articles as well as their striving and ability to live full life (“Challenge to the fate: marathon kilometres by wheelchair”, 8<sup>th</sup> of May, 1995, № 106, p. 9; “Desire to feel happy – challenge for disability”, 1<sup>st</sup> of March, 2003, № 9, p. 1).

Disability in the articles is disclosed as a personality test that forces a human being to rethink his life values (“Not only love, but also work help the family to forget its illnesses and misfortunes”, 3<sup>rd</sup> of June, 1995, № 129, p. 45). It is important to note that in the narratives introduced by the daily newspaper in 1995 which describe personal experiences of the disabled of Lithuania ambiguous emotions are simultaneously present: the disabled attempt to cling to life and feel being of full value; nevertheless, it is always remembered that they have disability, and disability is presented by the articles as the main cause of unfulfilled ambitions and lost hopes: a disabled person is represented in presence of his disability. Meanwhile the articles that present personal experiences of the disabled people abroad are full of optimism, positive emotions and positive future visions: “*Michael aspired activity. He was working at the department of wheelchair’s company, he has obtained driver’s licence and studied trade*” (“The men stricken by disability in many cases are really better lovers”, 16<sup>th</sup> of December, 1995, № 295, p. 16); “*If one confines only to my disability, then many aspects are ignored: I am a woman with profession, I am an independent woman, I am adopted mother and the beloved. Disability has never been a problem for me*” (“A. Zemp: healthy men do not want disabled women”, 23<sup>rd</sup> of September, 1995, № 224, p. 16). Publicist genre is do-

minant in majority of the articles; the disabled himself as a subject reveals in the articles together with his own fate. It can be said that this category reveals the self-representation of the disabled, in a sense it is representation from their inner perspective. The articles of the year 1995 are more social and freer; activities of the day centres, centres of communities of disabled, various associations of the disabled and the disabled people themselves can be seen. Daily newspaper the "Lietuvos rytas" of 1995 reflects the difficulties of that time that were encountered by the disabled (namely, the difficulties of employment, using public transport, unsuitable daily conditions, etc.). In the year 1995 manifestations of more active participation of the disabled in various organizations could be found, meanwhile in newspaper of years 2003 and 2010 organizational activity of the disabled people sort of remains at "underground" of the society. Physically disabled people are represented in the articles as inspiring by their life stories, willpower and enthusiasm, they are represented as examples for healthy people: "*Ph. Croizon, who has crossed the English Channel, is not able to get on his prostheses and fins, but it seems that nothing else is impossible for him. I do not want my disability to control me. I want to control it myself*" <...> ("The Frenchman already sees the merciless reverse of fortune as a present to him", 25<sup>th</sup> of September, 2010, № 38, p. 1).

**Deviant behaviour of the disabled.** Mental disability is represented in the articles as a cause of deviant behaviour and aspects of institutionalization and medicalization are revealed. The articles of the years 2003 and 2010 are characterized as dramatic and dramatic nature is reflected by both the title of the article and its contents. It is important to note that in articles, which were attributed to this category of daily newspaper the "Lietuvos rytas" of 2010, more and more often such concepts as "pervert", "kidnapper", "debauchee" and "madman" are used ("The murderer shall be treated by psychiatrists", 14<sup>th</sup> of December, 2010, № 286, p. 7; "The kidnapper of the child shall be tested by psychiatrists", 1<sup>st</sup> of March, 2010, № 48, p. 8). Stereotyped and mystified reflections on mental disability that prevail in these articles marginalize mentally disabled persons, they are perceived as a group being located outside the society. During all the analysed periods (during 1995, 2003 and 2010) the disability is represented as unbearable burden for the disabled himself, which stimulates suicidal behaviour: "*The man with mental disability has the weight hung on his neck and his hands were tied behind his back*" ("The puzzle about the drowned", 15<sup>th</sup> of April, 2010, № 84, p. 6). Clinical-corrective model of perception of disability prevails in the articles, the institutionalization of a disabled is perceived as social control

and medical approach confirms the boundaries of social normality, beyond which the disabled find themselves. The articles of 2003 and 2010 in the category describe in detail the course of the crimes committed by the disabled persons, represent the mentally handicapped persons as characterized by unexplainable cruelty. In articles of 1995 only essential facts are revealed which represent deviant behaviour of the disabled persons, whereas articles of 2003 and 2010 are characterized by brutality, cause negative emotions and form negative attitudes towards mentally disabled persons. Characterization of a disabled as deviant in articles of daily newspaper the "Lietuvos rytas" becomes increasingly more detailed: in years 2003 and 2010 the disabled persons are described with all details: name, surname, often the photo, meanwhile in articles of 1995 only their initials are provided.

**A disabled person in context of family institution.** By daily newspaper the "Lietuvos rytas" during the selected periods (years 1995, 2003 and 2010) a disabled person was represented as unable to take care of his own children ("*Mentally disturbed Kazakh woman stored at home a mummy of her daughter for three years as she expected that her daughter shall be raised from the dead by aliens*" ("Mother was waiting for her daughter to be raised from the dead by aliens", 19<sup>th</sup> of July, 2003, № 167, p. 28); and as not realizing the importance of developing the child (this is reflected in the dimension of mental disability). The articles represent the disability of a child as sign of his exclusiveness and stigma: "<...> *the policemen freed a 6 year old girl who was kept by her parents in the cage in a storehouse. <...> because she is mentally handicapped and must be isolated*" ("Children become the victims of unexplainable cruelty", 26<sup>th</sup> of September, 2003, № 225, p. 7). Nevertheless, inner trials of the mothers as well as their experiences in upbringing a child stricken by disability are reflected in the articles, too; these articles are characterized by subjectivity, sensitivity and openness ("The parents are getting ready to teach their deaf children", 7<sup>th</sup> of July, 1995, № 157, p. 17). The disability is reflected as suffering, and disability of the child often is named in the articles as the cause of divorce of the parents.

Nevertheless, it would be erroneous to state that only negative reflections on phenomenon of disability are presented in daily newspaper the "Lietuvos rytas". The newspaper has also published articles that present a disabled person as responsible, caring, able to take care of wellbeing of his family: "*The family of deaf people taught their daughter and the son talking, but they never heard their voices*" ("Parents who never knew the world of sounds miss for laugh of their children", 10<sup>th</sup> of June, 2003, № 133, p. 1; "<...> *the woman lives very modestly – she is an in-*

valid of group II, in addition, she attends her son who is an invalid of group I <...>”, “Not only owls start family in the hollow”, 17<sup>th</sup> of February, 1995, № 39, p. 27).

**Representation of the disabled as victims.** Negative attitudes to the disabled are reflected by the articles, a disabled person is represented as experiencing anger and aggression from people around: “<...> the assistant of the teacher of training group for children with intellect disorders has beaten the pupil of this group by the floor brush <...> (“Anyksčiai: the educator has beaten the child with intellectual disorder”, 2<sup>nd</sup> of November, 1995, № 231, p. 3). Unexplainable cruelty towards the disabled is disclosed, soviet ideology deeply rooted in Lithuanian society is shown: “Patients with mental disability are restrained in straitjackets, food is stolen from them and the disobedient ones are punished with physical punishments (“The residential care home for the disabled feels like a the palace of executioner”, 4<sup>th</sup> of March, 2010, № 51, p. 5), also negligence by the state of the problems of the disabled: “<...> emergency service at number 112 is useless for people with hearing disability” (“Deaf people are helpless if face of danger”, 29<sup>th</sup> of January, 2010, № 23, p. 1). Physical disability is treated as the cause of disaster and dramatic irony may be noticed in titles of the published articles (“Legless driver has driven into the river”, 4<sup>th</sup> of December, 2003, № 283, p. 17; “Picker of deadwood has overrated his potential”, 6<sup>th</sup> of November, 2010, № 254, p. 27, etc).

## Conclusions

Historical disability context, attitudes as well as respective myths and stereotypes that prevail in society highly influence the perception of disability. The theory of symbolic interactionism emphasizes the importance of social norms and the statuses, images and provisions, role distribution as well as social interaction for construction of disability as social phenomenon. Social reality constructed in the discourses of the media changes perception of reality, creates certain schemes and sets criteria on what shall be treated as “norm” in society. Representation of disability and construction of identity of the disabled by the media reflects the attitude of society to the disabled and enables identification of stereotypes of the disabled persons.

The analysis of the articles revealed that the articles of daily newspaper the “Lietuvos rytas” of year 1995 can be described as the reason for social exclusion, they reflect the patriarchal attitudes towards disabled people. Articles of 1995 show attention to people with mental disabilities, but depict such people

as a marginal group which is only modestly asking for support and consolation.

Disability is defined in articles as challenging, as personal effort, as if displaying a disabled person in encounter with disability. Articles of 1995 reflect the collective dimension of the disabled that cannot be seen in articles of 2003 and 2010. Articles of this year reveal efforts of various companies and organizations to help the disabled (recreational facilities for disabled people, etc.), and in 2003 an image of disabled people as beneficiaries of financial aid was changed.

Besides the articles on the disabled in the “Lietuvos rytas” daily newspaper in 2003 and 2010 there were more and more photos presenting people with disabilities, illustrating their problems, achievements and merits. Growing attention to problems of the disabled in a public discourse brings the disabled closer to the public, reduces social exclusion, shapes more favourable attitudes of society members towards the disabled. However, it is important to note that articles of the newspaper the “Lietuvos rytas” which present a positive experience of the disabled and improvements in social life of the disabled in 2003 and 2010 are usually moved to newspaper extras, so likely they do not always reach the audience.

In 2010 the disabled people are represented as more passive, less visible, less and less visibly involved socially, a tendency to inform the society about experience of celebrity families growing disabled children is observed. Articles of 2010 reflect public anger and aggression directed towards mentally disabled people, as well as present state negligence and indifference to the problems of the disabled.

In all the periods (years 1995, 2003 and 2010) selected for the analysis daily newspaper the “Lietuvos rytas” reflects differential involvement of disabled people in sports: sports activities are carried out in a closed circle of disabled people. Disability is represented as a personal tragedy resulting from disorders of the body’s physical or psychological functions, as inconformity to social norms, uniqueness, stigma, and unbearable burden on the disabled person, which promotes suicidal behaviour. Mental disability is stereotyped and mystified, regarded as the cause of deviant behaviour, aspects of institutionalization and medicalization are reflected.

Stereotyped and mystified reflections of the phenomenon of disability prevail in articles of the daily newspaper the “Lietuvos rytas”, however in all the periods chosen for analysis (1995, 2003 and 2010) some articles were published that reveal open-minded and proactive personal/collective efforts of the disabled to resist social pressure, to aim for full social participation as well as to change the perception of disability in society.

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## Negalės fenomeno atspindžiai Lietuvos žiniasklaidoje: dienraščio „Lietuvos rytas“ atvejis

### Santrauka

Žiniasklaidos diskursuose konstruojama socialinė tikrovė keičia realybės suvokimą, sukuria tam tikras schemas bei nustato kriterijus, kas visuomenėje gali būti traktuojama kaip „norma“. Žiniasklaidoje formuojamas požiūris į negalę lemia neįgaliųjų identitetą, negalės kaip socialinio reiškinio suvokimą, apibrėžia neįgalaus asmens vietą ir vaidmenį visuomenėje. Požiūrio į neįgaliuosius formavimasis yra tarsi užburtame visuomenės – žiniasklaidos rate: žiniasklaida ne tik atspindi visuomenės nuostatas ir požiūrius, bet ir sukelia grįžtamąjį ryšį, t. y. formuoja individo ir viešąją nuomonę.

Egzistuojančios realybės suvokimas – tai potencialių pokyčių pradžia, todėl labai svarbu iširti, koks požiūris į neįgaliuosius kuriamas Lietuvos spaudoje, kadangi būtent spaudoje ryškiausiai atsispindi svarbiausios socialinio gyvenimo aktualijos.

**Mokslinė problema** sprendžiama per šiuos probleminius klausimus: kokie negalės fenomeno atspindžiai vyrauja dienraštyje „Lietuvos rytas“ (1995, 2003 ir 2010 metais)? Kokie negalės reprezentavimo pokyčiai atsiskleidžia analizei pasirinktais laikotarpiais (1995, 2003 ir 2010 metais)?

**Tyrimo tikslas** – atskleisti negalės fenomeno atspindžius Lietuvos žiniasklaidoje.

**Tyrimo objektas** – negalės fenomeno atspindžiai dienraštyje „Lietuvos rytas“.

**Tyrimo metodai:** mokslinės literatūros analizė; turinio (*content*) analizė.

Tyrimui pasirinkti visi 1995, 2003 ir 2010 metais išleisti dienraščio „Lietuvos rytas“ numeriai su priedais. Toks analizuojamų laikotarpių pasirinkimas susijęs su siekiu atskleisti, kaip negalė dienraštyje „Lietuvos rytas“ buvo reprezentuojama prieš Neįgaliųjų metus (1996 m.), Neįgaliųjų metais (2003 m.), o analizei pasirinktais 2010 m. dienraščio straipsniais siekiama atskleisti šiuo metu vyraujančias negalės reprezentavimo tendencijas. Pasirinkimas susijęs su siekiu pastebėti neįgaliųjų asmenų vaizdavimo dienraštyje modelius ir atskleisti negalės fenomeno atspindžių kokybinius pokyčius.

Dienraščio „Lietuvos rytas“ analizės metu atsiskleidė sąvokos „invalidas“ kaita: 1995 m. dienraščio numeriuose ši sąvoka buvo dažniausia vartojama žmonėms su negalia įvardyti, o 2003 m. dienraštyje publikuojama vis daugiau straipsnių, kuriuose vartojama sąvoka „neįgalusis“, „negalios ištiktas“. 2010 m. dienraščio straipsniuose šalia žodžių „neįgalusis“, „neįgalumas“ vis dažniau minimos deviantinių elgesį atspindinčios sąvokos „iškrypėlis“, „grobėjas“, „ištvirkėlis“, „žudikas“, „pamišėlis“ ir pan.

Dienraštyje vyrauja stereotipuoti negalės fenomeno atspindžiai.

2003 m. ir 2010 m. dienraščio „Lietuvos rytas“ numeriuose šalia straipsnių, susijusių su neįgaliaisiais, daugėjo nuotraukų, reprezentuojančių asmenis su negale, iliustruojančių jų problemas, pasiekimus, nuopelnus. Viešajame diskurse didėjantis dėmesys neįgaliųjų problemoms priartina neįgalųjį prie visuomenės, mažina socialinę atskirtį, formuoja palankesnes visuomenės narių nuostatas neįgaliųjų atžvilgiu. Tačiau reikia pabrėžti, kad dienraščio „Lietuvos rytas“ straipsniai, kuriuose pristatoma teigiama neįgaliųjų patirtis, pozityvūs poslinkiai neįgaliųjų socialiniame gyvenime 2003 ir 2010 m. nukeliami į dienraščio priedus, todėl daroma prielaida, jog ši informacija ne visada pasiekia skaitytojų auditorijas.

2010 m. neįgalieji reprezentuojami kaip pasyvesni, mažiau matomi, vis rečiau kur nors dalyvaujantys išoriškai. Be to, pastebima tendencija informuoti apie visuomenei žinomų žmonių šeimų, auginančių neįgalius vaikus, patirtį. 2010 m. straipsniuose atsispindi aplinkinių pyktis ir agresija, nukreipta prieš psichiškai neįgalius asmenis, taip pat valstybės aplaidumas, abejingumas neįgaliųjų problemoms.

Visais analizei pasirinktais laikotarpiais dienraštyje „Lietuvos rytas“ atsispindi diferencijuotas neįgaliųjų dalyvavimas sporte: sportinė veikla vykdoma uždarame neįgaliųjų rate. Negalė reprezentuojama kaip asmeninė tragedija, kylanti dėl fizinių ar psichologinių organizmo funkcijų sutrikimų, kaip visuomenės normų neatitikimas, išskirtinumas, stigma ir nepakeliama našta pačiam neįgaliajam, skatinanti suicidinę elgseną. Psichikos neįgalieji reprezentuojami kaip patiriantys seksualinę prievartą, negebantys savęs apginti, o fizinė negalė – kaip nelaimingo atsitikimo, mirties priežastis. Psichikos negalė yra stereotipuojama ir mistifikuojama, straipsniuose traktuojama kaip deviantinės elgsenos priežastis, atsispindi institucionalizacijos ir medikalizacijos aspektai.

Dienraščio „Lietuvos rytas“ straipsniuose vyrauja stereotipuoti ir mistifikuoti negalės fenomeno atspindžiai, tačiau visais analizei pasirinktais laikotarpiais publikuota straipsnių, kuriuose atsiskleidžia sąmoningos ir proaktyvios asmeninės / kolektyvinės neįgaliųjų pastangos atsispirti socialiniam spaudimui, siekti visapusio socialinio dalyvumo ir keisti negalės suvokimą visuomenėje.

**Pagrindiniai žodžiai:** negalė, negalės fenomeno atspindžiai, žiniasklaida, dienraštis „Lietuvos rytas“, socialinis konstruktas.

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