

In Memoriam: Professor Dr Vincentas Rolandas Giedraitis (1972–2025)

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Abstract. This tribute, penned in the shadow of profound loss, honors the life and legacy of Prof. Dr Vincentas Rolandas Giedraitis, a luminary in economic history, socioeconomics, and criminology whose rigorous scholarship illuminated the turbulent waters of emerging markets. Vincentas Rolandas Giedraitis was a prominent Lithuanian economist whose academic legacy reflects substantial contributions to empirical economics, sustainability, and interdisciplinary policy research. With a strong citation record and publications in leading international journals, his research addressed key issues such as maternal health, energy consumption, economic development, and environmental sustainability. His work applied rigorous econometric and statistical methods to examine socioeconomic inequalities, energy security, and institutional transformation, particularly in Central and Eastern Europe and developing regions. Beyond research, prof. V. R. Giedraitis played a pivotal role in advancing academic publishing and international collaboration. At Vilnius University, he strengthened doctoral training, mentored young scholars, and led interdisciplinary initiatives. His editorial leadership enhanced the international visibility of economic journals and fostered partnerships with institutions such as Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv. His legacy endures through his scholarly contributions, institutional leadership, and lasting influence on economic research and academic communities.

Keywords: economic inequality, energy policy, globalization, healthcare system, economic history, socioeconomics, and criminology

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Prof. Dr Vincentas R. Giedraitis' scholarly oeuvre, spanning over 30 peer-reviewed publications as cataloged in his Scopus profile (Scopus ID: 12242734700), reflects a career dedicated to the empirical heart of economics. With an h-index of 10 and more than 778 citations, his work resonates in journals such as "BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth", and "Energy Policy". His Google Scholar profile (1,643 citations, h-index 16) further amplifies this impact (Google Scholar, 2025), incorporating working papers and conference proceedings that extended his reach beyond formal academia. At the core of his interests lay globalization, economic inequality, energy policy, and health factors, where he wielded time series models like a surgeon's scalpel to probe the veins of market volatility.

Prof. Vincentas R. Giedraitis's most cited works, as reflected in his Google Scholar profile, demonstrate his interdisciplinary impact across public health, environmental economics, energy policy, and socioeconomic development in transitional economies. His top-cited article, "Determinants of maternal health service utilization in Ethiopia: analysis of the 2011 Ethiopian Demographic and Health Survey" (513 citations, 2014), co-authored with Tarekegn S. and Lieberman L. (Tarekegn et al., 2014), uses logistic regression to identify socioeconomic, demographic, and access-related barriers to maternal healthcare in Ethiopia, highlighting education, wealth, and rural residence as key predictors. The second most cited, "Energy consumption, human well-being and economic development in central and eastern European nations: A cautionary tale of sustainability" (209 citations, 2014), with Jorgenson A. and Alekseyko A. (Jorgenson et al. 2014), employs panel data analysis to reveal a decoupling between energy use and human development in post-Soviet states, warning that growth-driven energy policies may undermine long-term sustainability. Third, "Nutritional habits among high-performance endurance athletes" (176 citations, 2015), led by Baranauskas M. and involving Giedraitis V. (Baranauskas et al., 2015), surveys dietary patterns in Lithuanian athletes, finding deficiencies in micronutrients despite high caloric intake, with implications for performance and health policy.

The fourth most cited, "Estimating the interrelation between energy security and macroeconomic factors in European countries" (100 citations, 2018), co-authored with Stavytskyy A., Kharlamova G., and Šumskis V. (Stavytskyy et al., 2018), applies gravity and panel models to show that GDP, trade openness, and political stability significantly enhance energy security, particularly in CEE nations vulnerable to supply disruptions. Finally, "Shrimp cultivation with water salinity in Bangladesh: The implications of an ecological model" (100 citations, 2013), with Rahman M., Lieberman L. (Rahman et al., 2013), and others, critiques intensive shrimp farming's environmental trade-offs, using ecological-economic modeling to link salinity intrusion with reduced rice yields and livelihood insecurity. These five papers collectively account for over 1,150 citations, underscoring Giedraitis's influence in applied policy research.

Overall, Prof. Giedraitis's publication themes span global health and development (maternal and infant mortality, nutrition, healthcare access in low-income settings), environmental and energy economics (emissions-GDP dynamics, energy security, sustainability in transition economies), macroeconomics and institutions (tax policy, shadow economy, globalization, innovation during crises), and socioeconomic drivers of behavior

(crime, divorce, public administration reform). His work consistently bridges rigorous econometric and survey-based methods with real-world policy challenges in post-Soviet, South Asian, and European contexts, often emphasizing equity, sustainability, and institutional reform.

Prof. Dr Vincentas Rolandas Giedraitis, a Lithuanian economist and professor at Vilnius University created his trace in academic publishing. He began his work with the journal *Ekonomika* in the early 2000s, when the publication (established in 1960 as Lithuania's leading economics journal) was seeking modernization to integrate into the international academic space. As a young researcher with a PhD earned in 2006 from the University of California, Giedraitis joined the editorial team at the invitation of Vilnius University's Faculty of Economics. Initially serving as a scientific editor, he was the brilliant networker who focused on attracting articles in theoretical and applied economics, particularly those addressing market transformations in Central and Eastern Europe. His contribution quickly became evident through his ability to bridge local research with global trends, such as economic crises and inequality.

From 2008-2009, Prof. Vincentas R. Giedraitis became managing editor and later deputy editor-in-chief, marking a turning point in the journal's international expansion. Under his leadership, *Ekonomika* established partnerships with Wrocław University of Economics (Poland) and Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv (Ukraine), broadening the author base and thematic scope to include post-Soviet transformations, energy security, and sustainable development. Giedraitis actively engaged over 50 scholars from Europe and the United States, including experts in macroeconomics and ecological economics, while implementing a rigorous peer-review process with a rejection rate of approximately 40 %. Thanks to his efforts, the journal received funding from the European Social Fund between 2016 and 2019, enabling the transition to English-language publications and quarterly releases.

Over nearly 20 years (from the early 2000s to 2025), Giedraitis remained a central figure in the development of *Ekonomika*, transforming it into a leading platform for economic policy research in the CEE region, entering Scopus and WoS. Beyond editorial duties, he published dozens of articles in the journal, curated special issues on the impact of crises on pollution emissions and income inequality and participated in international projects on energy efficiency. Even after assuming the role of editor-in-chief in later years, Giedraitis maintained a focus on mentoring young researchers and practitioners, ensuring sustained growth in the journal's citation metrics in databases such as Scopus and Google Scholar. This long-term dedication made *Ekonomika* an integral part of Lithuanian and regional economic scholarship.

The academic publishing activity was as well remarkable not only in Lithuania, but in Ukraine as well (Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, 2025). Giedraitis's contribution to the *Bulletin of Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv. Economics* was significant within the framework of international collaboration, particularly from the mid-2010s as the journal integrated into European academic networks. As a member of the editorial board, he actively facilitated joint research between Ukrainian and Lithuanian

scholars, focusing on energy security, economic crises, and sustainable development, areas aligned with his expertise. He co-authored publications in the journal, including studies on energy security models in Europe and the influence of macroeconomic factors on regional economies, promoting knowledge exchange across Central and Eastern Europe. Through the partnership with *Ekonomika*, Giedraitis helped implement international peer-review standards and English-language issues, enhancing the journal's visibility and citation impact in Scopus and other databases, while engaging over 20 Ukrainian co-authors in collaborative projects in recent years. This involvement not only broadened the journal's thematic range but also strengthened its role as a platform for post-Soviet economic transformation studies.

Professor Vincentas Rolandas Giedraitis serves as guest editor for the MDPI Sustainability Special Issue titled “Integrating Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into the Transformation of the World Economy” (MDPI, 2025), launched in the journal's “Sustainability” section with a submission deadline of 30 June 2026. Giedraitis's expertise in theoretical economics and sustainable development complements, amplifying CEE perspectives in global dialogues and boosting the issue's visibility (3,464 views) through MDPI's open-access platform.

Professor Vincentas R. Giedraitis made a significant contribution to the preparation of doctoral students. His course on History of economic thought and seminars on Research methods, which in various years he delivered for the doctoral students of the faculty, left a remarkable impact on the students. Many of them grew in confidence, capability, and competence, thanks to his guidance and support. Vincentas was very respected by his students, and it was evident to all who knew him. He treated each student with dignity and respect.

As head of the Department of Theoretical Economics, he organised the scientific and educational activities of the department. On his initiative, the members of the department were involved in various scientific research regarding energy safety, sustainable development and health economics. He had a passion for blending knowledge from various fields and working on interdisciplinary topics.

As a member of the faculty council, he added his commitment to the administrative aspects of life at our university. His participation helped to shape important decisions that have benefitted our community. He was a voice of fairness and goodwill. Among his colleagues, Vincentas was known for his good mood, readiness to help and friendly communication. Whether in discussion or coworking, he appeared not only as a colleague but also as a true friend.

One of the greatest achievements of his life was the preservation of the journal *Ekonomika*. As one of the leading editors of the journal, he and his editorial team contributed to the fact that the journal began to be referenced in major respected scientific databases. This scientific journal served as a bridge between the faculty and our main foreign partner, the Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv. He was a steadfast friend of Ukraine, a reliable partner and co-author to numerous Ukrainian scholars, and a tireless supporter of the country's academic community during its most challenging times. Through joint

publications, editorial collaborations (including the ongoing MDPI Sustainability Special Issue with Ganna Kharlamova), and active participation in Ukrainian-led research networks, he consistently amplified Ukrainian voices in global economic and sustainability debates. His most profound act of solidarity came through initiating and crowdfunding the Children of War project “*A multimedia platform and book documenting the impact of conflict on Ukrainian youth*” which grew from a grassroots initiative into a powerful educational and humanitarian resource. Even in his final wishes, Giedraitis requested that no flowers be brought to his funeral, instead urging donations to the Armed Forces of Ukraine (ZSU), a gesture that reflected his deep moral commitment and unwavering support for Ukraine’s resilience and sovereignty. Being a passionate supporter of Ukraine, Vincent wanted to see its victory; it is sad that he passed away and could not witness it.

Beyond metrics, Prof. V. R. Giedraitis’ impact is etched in the lives he touched. To his students, he was the professor who lingered after lectures, unraveling a stubborn regression over coffee; to colleagues, the co-author whose drafts arrived at dawn, laced with footnotes that anticipated every critique. His collaborations, spanning Poland, Latvia, and Ukraine, fostered a network of Baltic economists, culminating in joint grants from Horizon Europe. Even in illness, he mentored remotely, his emails a blend of wry humor and incisive feedback: “Data lies; models reveal – choose wisely.”

Professor Vincentas Rolandas Giedraitis legacy stays in the minds and hearts of all who were fortunate to know him. Let us continue his work, and may his memory inspire us.

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