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THE TRAJECTORIES OF LITHUANIAN IDENTITY. STUDY.
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“The Trajectories of Lithuanian Identity” book was published in the year of 2008. It is based on the project “Expression Models of Lithuanian National Identity: Social Memory, Cultural Succession and Changes under Conditions of Globalization”, which was carried out in 2005-2006 by the Centre of Social Anthropology at Vytautas Magnus University together with the Institute of Social Research and funded by the Lithuanian State Science and Studies Foundation. According to the authors (P. 5), this book gives a picture of the variety of expressions of contemporary Lithuanian-ness as a socio-cultural identity, highlights different modal parameters of identification, and delineates the peculiarities of the shifts of the nowadays Lithuanian national identity.

After breaking away from the closure of the Iron Curtain, Lithuanian people found out themselves under the sway of many new possibilities of the “free world” and as well as under effects of globalization, transnationalism, Euro-integration, migration, nationalism etc. Therefore in this context the book’s authors efforts to employ interdisciplinary approach (combination of anthropology and sociology) and methodology (emic – etic) in order to explore among Lithuanians what it means to be a Lithuanian, to discover existing conceptions of Lithuanian-ness and to flag its various expression modes, are indeed well-timed and very welcomed. The book “Trajectories of Lithuanian Identity” alongside the foreword and introductory article has four parts that are connected by two main motives – identity and Lithuanian-ness. These parts nicely complement one another and disclose different characteristics of Lithuanian national identity.

In the introductory article “National Identity in the World of Disintegrating Connections: Trajectories of Lithuanian-ness” Vytaoutas Vytis Čiubrinskas not only presents the structure of the study, but also brings into attention problems and goals of the project, its theoretical premises and problematic aspects. The most challenging theoretical problems during the project were two. First one is the ongoing polemic in the field of contemporary anthropology around the very conception of collective identity and the questioning of its usage, and also the non-existence of a fixed term for identity – “identitetas” or “tapatybė” – in Lithuanian social and humanitarian sciences. Čiubrinskas advocates the term “identitetas”, which embraces not only likeness, but difference and otherness as well. Second problematic issue is the polysemy of the term “nation”, which includes two very different categories: ethnicity and citizenship. According to Čiubrinskas, the presentation of the particular context is the way out to solve such a problem. That is precisely why the title of the book contains
a word “trajectories” – it helps to incorporate “diverse dimensions of nationality as identification with the nation (Lithuanians/Lithuania)” (p. 8).

The first part of the book “Ethnic/National Identity: Theoretical Problems and Research Directions” is intended for the overviews of theoretical problems and methodologies related to the research on identity. In the article “The Questions of the Anthropological Methodological Research on Identity” Čiubrinskas building on the works of F. Barth, J. Friedman, T. H. Eriksen, C. Geertz discusses several important dimensions (consciousness, activity, politics) of the category of identity, and the advantages of the appliance of the anthropological approach in the research on the national identity. The joint article by Darius Daukšas and Čiubrinskas “Ethnicity and Nationality: The Anthropological Approach” presents the development of the concepts of ethnicity and nationality, and the particular attention is given to the theoretical paradigms of primordialism and instrumentalism. Meilutė Taljūnaitė in the “Sociological Research on National Identity in Lithuania (to 2005)” gives a thorough overview of the works and research on the national identity done by Lithuanian scientists from the pre-war Lithuanian Republic to the year of 2005. In her overview Taljūnaitė also singles out different research directions and discusses various concepts of national identity, the means of its measurement and operationalisation.

The second part “Modal Parameters of Lithuanian-ness” puts its attention on the configurations and types of Lithuanian-ness, ritualized sociality, and the processes of becoming Lithuanian or loosing Lithuanian-ness. In “Lithuanian National Identity: characteristics and Types” Jolanta Kuznecovičienė using qualitative empirical data presents several prevailing configurations (that are only “relatively stable” (p. 55)) of Lithuanian national identity, and the most salient of them are “to be born/to grow in Lithuania” and “moral-emotional ties with Lithuania” (p. 73). The second article by Kuznecovičienė “Lithuanian, who Celebrates Festivals: The Range of Lithuanian-ness” is already based on the synthesis of quantitative and qualitative empirical data. Kuznecovičienė describes the role of festivals for the construction of national identity and argues that contemporary Lithuanian-ness is practiced much more in the familial (private) circle than publicly (during the State festivals or use of State symbols). The last article by Kuznecovičienė “Constituents of Non-Lithuanian-ness: Making of Boundaries between the Own and the Other” searches the answer about how open or closed is Lithuanian society as a national community. The author finds that “Lithuanian-ness based on civic values is not recognized and the openness to the Other hardly could be defined as a feature of Lithuanian identity” (p. 107).

The effects of space, time, stability and change on the construction of identity are on the focus in the third part of the book – “Identity Framed by Time and Space: Collective Memory and Displaced Self”. In the article “Social Memory and Lithuanian National Identity” Irena Šutinienė discusses the links of shifting and fragmented social memory with a national identity, especially the role and the function of social memory in such identity. Šutinienė states that mythologized nation history stories and collective memory still hold importance in construction of Lithuanian national identity, only their usage changes during the construction processes of identity at the individual level. In “Lithuanian-ness of Diaspora: Identity of Repatriates in Post-socialist Lithuania” in his analysis of the relation between repatriation and national identity Čiubrinskas remarks that repatriates bring their “Lithuanian-ness of Diaspora” (p. 147) which differently – depending on the context – affects (hardens or facilitates) their acculturation and identification in Lithuania.

The last part of the book “Trajectories of Globalized Lithuanian-ness: From Obligation to Moral Choice” gives insights into the challenges of globalization to the national identity at the individual
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and collective levels. The first article “The Expression of Lithuanian National Identity in the Contexts of Globalization: Between Locality and Multiculturalism” by Šutinienė examines the changes of expressions of national identity at the individual level in the context of cultural heterogeneity and deterritorialization. She notices that even though the dominant conception of Lithuanian national identity is ethnic, but in the expressions and constructions of the national identity there is an increase of subjectivity, individualization and modernity in all contexts (local, transnational, multicultural). In his article “Globalization and Identity: Personal Notes on Lithuanian Identity Discourses” Leonidas Donskis shares his personal reflections and invites to rethink, what it means to be a Lithuanian. Donskis accentuates that even though there are many ways to Lithuanian-ness, but for the Lithuania at the 21st century it should be more important the models of identity as of moral choice than of obligation.

All the above mentioned articles nicely extend and supplement one another while illustrating the complexity and multilayered nature of the national identity. Notwithstanding the authors’ claims that there is not a single model how to be a Lithuanian or what is the “true” Lithuanian national identity, still in the end of the book the reader would expect to find an article or an epilogue summarizing all the book’s articles, their aims, main insights and conclusions. Giving even a brief generalized synthesis of configurations or trajectories of Lithuanian identity the authors would only benefit, because it is very easy to get lost among the various expressions, modalities, types, characteristics, configurations etc. So after reading the whole book the reader is still left with an unclear and tangled idea about the predominant configurations and trajectories of Lithuanian national identity of nowadays Lithuanian society. Regardless of the latter remarks, it is important to underline that this innovative interdisciplinary study on national identity that links together anthropology and sociology nicely demonstrates the potential of suchlike approach to the research and analysis of contemporary socio-cultural processes and phenomenon, including the tricky questions of identity and nation.

So, presented in this survey series ‘Lithuanian Ethnology’ (LE V–VI), as in previous volumes, are devoted to publish scientific articles, conference materials, book reviews on various themes of social anthropology and ethnology studies from Lithuania and Central/East Europe. Texts are published in Lithuanian and in English languages. Since the year 2001 eight volumes appeared, one per year². The Editorial board consists from outstanding Lithuanian and foreign anthropologists and ethnologists, such as Dr. Vytis Čiubrinskas (editor-in-chief, Centre for Social Anthropology at Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas), Dr. Auksoulë Čepaitienė (Lithuanian Institute of History in Vilnius), Prof. Jonathan Friedman (École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, Lund University, Sweden), Prof. Orvar Löfgren (Lund University, Sweden), Dr. Jonas Mardosa (Vilnius Pedagogical University), Prof. Vacys Milius (1926–2005; Lithuanian Institute of History), Dr. Žilvytis Šaknys (Lithuanian Institute of History) and Dr. Danguolė Svidinskaitė (secretary, Lithuanian Institute of History).

As it was pointed by LE Editor-in-chief Dr. Vytis Čiubrinskas in the 1st volume, “… this annual journal of ethnological studies, appearing for the first time in Lithuania, seeks to provide its readers with current and important research in the fields of socio-cultural anthropology and ethnology done in Lithuania and abroad. … In this journal we are looking for interdisciplinary connections, seeking, in particular, to break the border between ethnology and socio-cultural anthropology. … We want to integrate studies that are clearly cognate in their methodology and aim. … We seek to encourage scholarly colloquy … analyzing differences and similarities between cultures and


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 societies, between us and them, between majority and minority, dominant and marginal, local and immigrant” (LE I: 6–7).

Mentioned above attitudes are predominant in the following LE volumes as well.

**Lithuanian Ethnology, Vol. 5 (14)**

LE V volume is edited by ethnologist Dr. Auksuolė Čepaitienė, and it is devoted to the problems of everydayness. As it is mentioned if Foreword, “this topic does not seem new to Lithuanian ethnologists. Since the inter-war period, … the interest of the researchers and enthusiasts of ethnography has been focused on the rural daily cycle and lifestyle. The present publication, however, attempts to cast a different glance at everydayness. Instead of analyzing the everyday life of human beings, it investigates the daily social, recurrent condition and people’s environment that can comprise the most varied and unrelated things. The return to topic of everydayness was prompted by the ongoing fundamental social changes, bringing commonplace everyday issues to the fore as well” (LE V: 7).

When the publications were going to press, LE Editorial board member, Professor Vacys Milius died on October 2, 2005. He was a distinguished ethnographer, a long time member and one-time head of the Department of Ethnology of the Lithuanian Institute of History, a professor of Vytautas Magnus University and a teacher of many of our young generation ethnologists. Professor V. Milius devoted his all life to Lithuanian ethnology, which, at present, is virtually inconceivable without his works and activities. The basic concept of LE V issue – everydayness and culture – was an important sphere of his research. LE V volume is dedicated to the memory of Prof. Vacys Milius (1926 12 08 – 2005 10 02).

The first article by Auksuolė Čepaitienė ‘An Introduction into the Study of Everyday Life: Everyday Life as the Culture Ordering Space’ (LE V: 11–26) deals with mentioned above idea of this volume, which sets its specific interest in the study of everyday life and culture. It discusses aspects, methodologically significant for the analysis of this research theme, as well as in the papers of other authors of the volume. According to the author, inter-subjectivity of the social world and objectivity of social facts, are the influential aspects which shape the epistemologies of the theme. Within this theoretical and methodological context, the paper aims to look at everyday life as a discourse, and as physically close human reality. It shows how the space of everyday tends to include various phenomena, which are and are not necessarily physically present, and establishes the order in its own particular way. It discusses how the discourse and the space of everyday re-categorises and transforms the human world full of things, ideas, symbols, social relations, rituals, meanings and values, while setting the light on one area or items and shadowing the other. Although it is apparent that everyday reality is defined through detachment from symbolic worlds, and tendencies of routinising are advocating stability the change, dynamism and creativity seems to be its part and parcel as well. The enduring persistence of life rhythm might be changed with the new ordering of time; the distant areas, the celebrity or the symbolic events might enter into everyday and become integrated and transformed easily; the holistic images of the worlds there become fragmented and the details emphasised. The article underlines the ethnographic explicitness and cultural instrumentality of everyday reality and tries to show its conceptual and methodological

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significance. It suggests that “… everyday life, as the social space situated around the “here” and the “now” and culture, are in reciprocal relationship. It emphasises that everyday life is the space for cultural development where it becomes enduring, and culture is in order, which provides the form and shape for everyday life” (LE V: 26).

An article by (at peace) Vacys Milius ‘Everyday Works Distribution in a Lithuanian Village of the Second Half of the 19th – First Half of the 20th Century’ (LE V: 27-34) continues the everyday life research actualities. On the grounds of previous research and local descriptions, works here are examined in the following sequence: general works; works done by men, women, and children; and seasonal works carried out by the above mentioned group members. Author points, that all traditional Lithuanian village life was connected with agricultural work and animal husbandry. “Women were additionally engaged in food preparation, child rearing, textile production, and textile product conservation. General works included manuring, mowing, rye harvesting, thrashing, flax processing, milling by hand-operated millstones, and mushroom gathering in south-east regions.

Men carried out work mostly related to horses, such as fuel provision or building material preparation in winter, yet men also engaged in bee-keeping, barley malt beer brewing and home-made whiskey production. The range of works done by women covered spinning, weaving, knitting, and milk processing for the production of milk products. Children were trained to carry out work tasks as early as possible: children (boys in the main) were engaged in herding, helping adults to carry out housework or look after smaller children” (LE V: 34).

Žilvytis Šaknys (Lithuanian Institute of History) examines Lithuanian village and small town community life in late 19th and early 21st century against the background of rural Lithuania, Belarus, Poland, and Latvia. In his article ‘“Different Time” within the Rhythm of Lithuanian Youth Life’ (LE V: 35–52) author emphasizes, that “… a chance to control folk culture directly is determined by numerous factors, and human age is one of them. Given that culture is an integral whole of constituent cultures created by different age groups, special attention is to be given to the culture created or adopted by youth, including teenagers” (LE V: 50). According to author, modelled by family, peers and village community, and controlled by economic needs and the church, youth leisure used to be monotonous during Advent and Lent in traditional culture. In the interwar period, the range of control exercised jointly by parents and church was narrowed by the control imposed by intellectual non-clerical elite. Culture, heading for modernity, introduced definite corrections in favour of a more flexible understanding of Advent and Lent as the periods of “different” time. Essential changes were brought about by the 1940s. Soviet deportations, World War II, and post-war resistance forced a huge number of young people to spend almost a decade suspended in “Advent and Lent time”. Shortly after the 1940s, that had checked the cultural modernisation process, we could see efforts made by governmental power elite to dissociate youth from parents’ or church control, and to monopolise folk culture, including youth itself. The popular movement of 1988-1990 immediately restored clerical and intellectual elite to power. The period of national rebirth also restored the positive value of old traditions giving power to customs uprooted in the period of Soviet rule; it returned Advent and Lent their traditional seasonal value. Under the current conditions of reduced control over village youth leisure by governmental institutions, parents and church, coupled with the hastened rate of globalisation processes, the specific characteristics of Advent and Lent as the periods of “different” time tend to fade away again (LE V: 51).
The thesis by Stephen Gudeman, that “community equity cannot be ‘traded’ for market efficiency, because they pertain to different realms of value” is examined in the article ‘Community Equity in Contemporary Economy’ by Vida Savoniakaitė (Lithuanian Institute of History, LE V: 53–64). An author investigates the everyday life of aukštaitai. She points: “The culture of aukštaitai, who live in small towns and villages, has been substantially modified by political changes of the last decade. Strategic requirements of the European Union agrarian policy, subsidies, their future and possible influences on the agrarian economy and other spheres of internal policy, or everyday life, are being discussed anew” (LE V: 63). This paper examines the mentality of aukštaitai as a folk economy. Savoniakaitė notes, that mental structure of aukštaitai clearly shows that the farmers’ memories and mentality are deeply rooted in time, experience of daily round as well as the influence of the collective system. During Soviet times it was common to pay for work with grain, vegetables and other goods. The vitality of home economy is, of course, determined by small plots of farmland, low prices of agricultural produce in markets, and, in most cases, limited spending power of the people. The mentality of the aukštaitai daily round and trading activities is quite conservative. Finally, when we remember natural trade, the characteristics of aukštaitai mentality, show the level of work specialization that is associated not with the things of everyday life of a farmer, but with a country’s agrarian policy, activities of institutions, flows of global capital, or problems of less developed rural communities. The generosity at home that aukštaitai show, demonstrates the “equity of community” that is not sold and is not directly dependent on market needs. Morality and identities of aukštaitai are created by the logic of “situated reason” of everyday culture even today, and these identities remain as signs of local culture that demonstrate communal cultural heritage that weaves, currently, into global economic social changes and networks (LE V: 63–64).

The ecclesiastical domain, especially the hierarchical activities and encounters of the ordinary faithful with bishops are usually interpreted as an interruption of everyday life, an antithesis to everyday. This point is examined in the article ‘The Everyday of a Bishop: Antanas Baranauskas, a Concealed Suffragan’ by Paulius Subačius (Vilnius University, LE V: 65–74). According to author, the higher clericals had their own forms of everyday life, that were hardly knowable not only to the general public, but to cultural researchers as well. The biography of bishop Antanas Baranauskas (1835-1902), a famous Lithuanian writer and linguist, seems to have been explored in considerable depth. However, there is a rather broad gap, namely, his everyday ecclesiastical activity as a suffragan of the Samogitian diocese (1884-1897). This article discusses the aspects that show up in his routine administrative correspondence and letters to Hugo Weber, Jan Baudouin de Courtenay, etc. The article makes several assumptions. First – that before becoming the official coadjutor of the bishop, Baranauskas had already found himself in the centre of everyday regulation of ecclesiastical life. Second, that together with other incentives, his interest in mathematics could be induced by his first serious encounter with bookkeeping, after becoming the official. The article offers the first documentation of the support, offered by the poet to his brother Anupras Baranauskas by leasing a small estate in Vievėnai (West Lithuania, near Telšiai), which belonged to him as a suffragan, under favourable auspices. Besides the historical analysis, the article offers methodological remarks on why biographers, influenced by the heritage of Romanticism, tend to an unequal treatment of the everyday occupations of the cultural elite and on how such a tendency might be avoided (LE V: 74).

Specific historical information is selected and published in the article ‘Italians in the Everyday Life of Lithuanian Grand Duchy in the 16th – 17th C.C.’ by Aušra Banušytė (Vytautas Magnus University, LE V: 75–96). She points, that visitors from other countries made a significant impact on the content of political, cultural, and social life of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania [henceforth – GDL] at that times. These included ambassadors, papal nuncios, merchants, medics, soldiers, nobles, musicians, architects, painters, and sculptors. Within the limits of one article it is difficult to discuss the contribution of many foreigners – French, German, Italian – in the multinational culture of the GDL. This article, therefore, focus only on the Italians who in the 16th – 17th centuries were the most important carriers of the Renaissance and Baroque culture, not only in the GDL, but also in other Central European countries: Germany, Austria, Hungary, and Poland. From the scholarship and sources presented hereby it is known that the interest of Italians in Lithuania, and in Poland coincided with the Christianization of the country when, together with papal legates, came the merchants. During the period of the late middle Ages, Genoese and Venetian merchants, who had their colonies on the Black Sea, passed through Poland and the Slavonic lands of the GDL. In addition to goods such as various cloths, draperies, fur, wine, and oil, which were mostly the luxury goods, the Italian merchants were engaged in slave commerce. In the later period of the 16th – 17th centuries, some of the Italian merchants who had come to Poland, transferred their activity to and settled in Lithuania. In addition to the merchants in the courts, there were also Italian ambassadors, papal nuncios, or Italian humanists. During the period of Reformation, many heretics came to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth to find refuge in this country. Being in close contact with the richest noble families, the Italians very often became the mediators between the Lithuanian nobles and the courts of Italian dukes. (LE V: 94–96). Summarizing, Banušytė emphasizes, that “the presence of the Italian community of merchants, artists, artisans, and others in Lithuania signified contacts and rapprochement of Lithuania’s culture with that of Europe” (LE V: 96).

“Europa” Everyday: Identities and Strategies’ by Vilius Ivanauskas (Lithuanian Institute of History, LE V: 97–112). This article deals with the influence of “european” contexts in the activities and strategies of the participants of Lithuanian youth NGOs. Author certifies that “European contexts” signify financial support from EU and other western donors, who provide assistance to Eastern European societies. By looking at ethnographic observations of few activists in one Lithuanian youth NGO, an author tries to derive coherence between their identities and personal strategies in the “project” environment. Money, partnership networks and “western” themes (civic society, market economy, human rights, etc.) make invasions in the youth “activists” daily-activities. These European contexts support the motivations, strategies and attitudes of the participants. They perform not only in the NGO’s environment, but in social networks as well. These networks reflect possibilities “to participate” in the NGO, and in the “projects”. Ivanauskas points, that instead of paying attention to the NGO’s declarations about “openness” to every young person, we should mention the existence of an informal system of co-option and selection. Thus, people participating in a “project” environment are also tied to informal relations. Having appropriate education, skills of representation and communication, and better opportunities for a future career, they express “otherness” among less active young people. Youth activists live in globalized contexts. They regularly go abroad to participate in different seminars, make personal contacts with foreign activists, invite them to Lithuania. These observations lead to conclusions about the building of double identities among youth activists: they perceive themselves as “Europeans” and at the same
time as “Lithuanians”. These implications give an impetus to look at global and local perspectives, in the contexts of different “European” influences on Lithuanian society (LE V: 112).

An article ‘Ethnic Groups and Social Aspects of Language’ by Vida Beresnevičiūtė (Institute for Social Research, LE V: 113–126) deals with aspects of social domination of language in respect to social relations of ethnic groups. The discussion is based mostly on theoretical considerations of P. Bourdieu, W. Kymlicka and secondary empirical data that reflect tendencies of Lithuanian society. In most cases a state has one official language. Social researchers maintain that within the framework of social interactions, residents who know the official language find themselves in a more favourable situation, whereas those who do not know the language or whose mother tongue is different are disadvantaged. Language, as one of the key characteristics of ethnic groups is a reminder of visible and invisible borders that exist and that are drawn in everyday issues, such as deciding on a child’s school, looking for a job or choosing a place of residence (LE V: 126). Beresnevičiūtė points, that majority of Lithuania’s population are uniform in appearance and culture; therefore language could be treated as one of the differentiating categories of ethnic groups. Language is an integral part of social life, and its usage becomes a means of social recognition, evaluation, classification and stereotyping. Also, language could be interpreted as an expression of a position taken in the social sphere or a means of competition in different social spheres. In everyday interactions, we are sensitive to various accents, intonations and vocabularies used and pay attention to different languages, accents or surnames and thereby presume the ethnic origin of the speaker. Author states, that analysing the social aspects of language, as one of the criteria of ethnicity, one conceives the latter’s social weight and influence on social relations. Language, as an instrument of social interaction, supposes symbolic power relations that serve for the interests of one group far more than the other (LE V: 126).

‘Dimensions of Ethnicity in Mass Media: Lithuanian Press in the Russian Language on the Membership in the European Union’ by Monika Frėjutė-Rakauskienė (Institute for Social Research, LE V: 127–138). The article focuses on discussion of the role of the Lithuanian press in the Russian language for the ethnic minorities. The author presents the reflections on the process of Euro-integration covered by the Lithuanian press in the Russian language before the referendum of the 10-11 May 2003. The article is based on research conducted in December 2003 by the Institute for Social Research in the framework of the project “The perceptions of European Integration by the ethnic dimension”. Four main Russian language newspapers were reviewed and the following conclusions were reached: It became evident that the press, designed specially for Russians, is declarative: the articles are translated from analogues in the Lithuanian language, reprinted from Russian press, and presents information without any comments. Efforts of the press in mediation between state and citizen were evident, however: the press had low impact on the Euro-integration process in the Russian ethnic community, because it did not try to formulate and respond to specific interests of the Russian audience. Author concludes, that “… the Lithuanian press in the Russian language did not reflect prior and original opinions of Lithuanian Russians towards the EU or the processes of integration. It is difficult to answer the following question: who are the authoritative opinion shapers (leaders) in the Russian community on the question of Lithuanian integration to the EU? Leading articles published in the press in Russian language reflect and convey the prevailing opinion of Lithuanian citizens and repeat popular arguments “for” and “against” Lithuanian integration into the EU (LE V: 138).
The article ‘Environmental Realia Transformation as Reflected in the Names of Ornamental Patterns of Lithuanian Woven Sashes: A Search for Folk Thought Principles’ by Vytautas Tumėnas (Lithuanian Institute of History, LE V: 139–154) attempts to reveal the original characteristics of Lithuanian folk visual/mytho-poetical “ornamental” thinking and its relations with the real and the mythical environment of a Lithuanian villager. It examines the semantic qualities of patterns woven onto Lithuanian traditional pick-up sashes (accumulated in museums, or portrayed on paper or other medium during ethnographic expeditions, or found in published sources) investigating into the folk names of ornamental patterns, their origins, and the typology of their component parts (ornamental motives). According to author, semantic meaning of ornamental pattern, together with other cultural signs, symbols and language, is utilised in the general structure of meanings or all-embracing metaphor, involving a wide variety of associations with domestic or wild animals, or plants, or parts of human body, or operations carried out in agricultural and kitchen activities. The mytho-poetical names of such signs, as component parts of a pattern, single the refined objects, or the objects having a ritual context, or their special parts (e.g. their interiors), out of their immediate environment. Apparently, it is tradition that plays a crucial role in the visual mytho-poetical interpretations of everyday, as reflected in the semantic meanings of ornamental pattern woven onto sashes. The following conclusion is made: the names of ornamental patterns imply a multifarious character of folk typology based on the variance of image and name interface, as well as on the fusion of archaic tradition and innovation (LE V: 154).

‘Images of Saints in Everyday Life: Transformations of Functions’ are examined in so titled article by Skaidrė Urbonienė (Lithuanian National Museum, LE V: 155–170). She notes that at the end of the 19th – early 20th century, sacral monuments with images of saints were erected in farmsteads or near them, in cultivable fields, at roadsides and crossroads, as well as remote and dangerous places. People had contacts with sacral images everyday, not only in churches on holy days. Soviet occupation was characterized by a planned massive destruction of sacral monuments and prohibition on building new or repairing old ones. But in spite of restrictions, people continued to build monuments in remote places where local authorities rarely came. After restoration of independence this tradition blossomed into massive erection of sacral monuments. Images of saints in farmstead monuments are the objects of this research and include all sorts of images: old and new sculpture (wooden, gypsum, metal) as well as pictures. On the basis of data collected by the author during ethnographic fieldwork in 1995, 2000, 2003, and material from the end of the 19th – early 20th centuries the article seeks to reveal the continuity and transformation of functions of these images. To show the role and place of sacred images in today’s everyday life of rural people attention is directed to a person’s relation to the whole monument. “The monument is more significant in the everyday life of women, who are the mainstay of religiosity. There is a noticeable difference in the perception of function between generations: older people prefer the religious significance of the monument, the younger generation its aesthetic value. Symbolical meaning of the sanctity of a monument as a family memory is important to various age groups”, concludes Skaidrė Urbonienė (LE V: 170).

An article ‘From Monument to “Smūtkelis”: Memory and Everyday of the Monument’ by Rasa Čepaitienė (Lithuanian Institute of History, LE V: 171–188) analyses socio-cultural representations of public monuments, focusing especially on their anthropological dimension. It is largely based on Western anthropologists’ and heritage specialists’ polemic of this kind in the academic press. Much attention in the text is paid on the analysis of social role of the monument, especially
on its relation to historical memory, as well as to the various aspects of a monuments’ utilization. In consideration of this, the vandalism phenomenon of a monuments’ is also analysed, especially in the context of post-communist countries. Eventually, points Rasa Čepaitienė, ascertaining differences of the state of monuments between West and East, the question of reasoning, meaning and scope of cross-craft, which has revived in Lithuania after rebirth of independence, is raised. It is noteworthy, that the popularity and scope of this phenomenon contradicts the already mentioned decline of the monument in the West. Taking this into account, the article endeavours to sort out whether this is a temporal or connective status related mainly to the radical changes of historical memory in the post-communist society, especially to its traumatic dimension. The question is raised whether Lithuanian cross-craft has any possibilities to remain authentic and relevant in Lithuanian society struggling with global issues (LE V: 188).

‘Toys in Folk Culture’ by Nijolė Pluuraitė (The Open Air Museum of Lithuania, LE V: 189–208). This article discusses toys made in Lithuania at the end of 19th and beginning of 20th (till 1945) and explores the relationship between toys and the daily life of country people. Craftsmen rarely made toys; they found the task unprofitable, points Nijolė Pluuraitė. The prevailing opinion of villagers was that toys were necessary only for little children; older children had to make toys themselves. At the time, child labour was more valued than their games. The most widespread and popular handmade toys, according to author, were balls, sound making toys (whistles, rattles), moving toys (tops, swivels, mills), guns (throwing and shooting), vehicles (hoops, trundles, pushcarts, scooters). Children used to make apple-shaped balls from cow and sheep hair in the spring time. The first factory made ball from rubber and leather appeared in west and south-west part of Lithuania at the beginning of the 20th century. The most ancient toys were tops, made from bone. The oldest one is known from the 14th century. The top toys named ‘žvirblis’ (sparrow), made from a bow with a spill, ‘ožiukas’ (goatling) made from breastbone of goose, were not widely spread but were loved by children. Children played with toys to relax, points Nijolė Pluuraitė. They used to spend their leisure time and simply to have fun. The need to make toys by hand encouraged children to be creative, communicable, sharing. Handmade toys were not preserved: they were simple, unstable, undecorated, and short-lived. Such toys survived until the middle of the 20th century and were replaced by factory made toys after World War II (LE V: 208).

There are also reviews on actual publications by Irma Šidiškienė (LE V: 209–211), Arūnas Vaičekauskas (LE V: 211–216), Egidija Ramanauskaitė (LE V: 216–221), Manfred Klein and Gerhard Bauer (LE V: 221–226), Dalia Bernotaitė-Beliauskiene (LE V: 226–233), Rūta Šimonytė-Žarskiene (LE V: 233–237), written by Dalia Marcinkevičienė, Žilvytis Šaknys, Gintautas Mažeikis, Angelė Vyšniauskaitė, Skaidrė Urbonienė, Irma Šidiškienė, and Gaila Kirdienė, as well as information about important conferences (LE V: 239–244), and research projects and programmes (LE V: 245–248) in the last part of LE V volume.


“Contemporary European societies are more and more open to and living in highly differentiated modes of life. Such a situation is a challenge to the social sciences. Anthropology and European ethnology are the most sensitive disciples to take the diversity of human lives and cultures. Anthropology does that on a global scale; European ethnology’s scope is more regional
and distinctive. Fortunately, Anthropology of Europe is a flexible, growing sub-discipline, so the European field can be shared by both disciplines and provides a perfect arena for collaboration”, notes editor of this volume Dr. Vytiš Čiubrinskas in Foreword (LE VI: 9). He continues: “Lithuanian Ethnology: Studies in Social Anthropology and Ethnology from its very beginning in 2001, as the title of the journal inscribes, stands for the cooperation of these two disciplines, at least methodologically. This volume includes a variety of articles, two of which illustrate this point” (ibid.). In sum, Vytiš Čiubrinskas hopes that “the articles included in this volume of Lithuanian Ethnology leave message with the reader that both anthropological and European ethnology perspectives, in Chris Hann’s words, are “creatively cross-fertilized” by using of the same ethnographic methodology” (LE VI: 10).

The first one, ‘Comparative Social Structure or Local Folk Culture? Towards a Unified Anthropological Tradition in Eurasia’ (LE VI: 11–30) written by Chris Hann (Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Halle/Saale, Germany), one of the leading experts of post-communist anthropology, focuses on unifying the anthropological tradition and clearly proves that European ethnology and social anthropology are “two different styles of anthropology” and that they are “equally valid” and should compliment each other. (LE VI: 9). Chris Hann points in the Abstract of the article: “Tradition is not a much theorised term in the discipline in which I received my training in Britain, social anthropology. This may seem a surprising shortcoming, given the popular view that anthropologists are specialists in the customs/cultures/traditions of exotic peoples. In the first half of this paper I shall briefly outline how this neglect has come about, in a branch of anthropology which since the late nineteenth century developed its own distinctive academic tradition, based on wide-ranging comparisons and on fieldwork, which carries with it a ‘presentist’ orientation. In the second part I turn to another vision of the anthropological enterprise, one that stakes its raison d’être in a specific understanding of tradition. Again the concept may not receive theoretical elaboration, but in this case it has been the key tacit premise of a discipline which, even when fieldwork is undertaken, is oriented fundamentally towards the past. My conclusion is that the different styles of anthropology are equally valid and that they should complement each other. I look forward to the day when trench warfare between various ‘national traditions’ will give way to creative cross-fertilisation, not only within countries but at the level of individual anthropology departments” (LE VI: 11).

Thomas Schippers, the French anthropologist – Europeanist from the Institute of Mediterranean and Comparative Ethnology in Aix-en-Provence, in the article ‘From Things to Signs: Changing Perspectives in the Study of Material Culture in Europe’ (LE VI: 31–45) deals with the changing perspectives in the study of material culture in Europe. He emphasizes that “…the material dimensions of human cultures could be approached as new, more ‘visualized and iconized worlds’ of consumption and thus of central interest to the ‘cultural expertise’ provided by both European and ‘general’ ethnologists” (LE VI: 9). According to the author, “…the central topic of this paper concerns the study of the material aspects of culture within the discipline of European ethnology. This disciplinary sub-field has undergone quite spectacular changes during the last half century. Not only have the methodological and theoretical perspectives in the study of material culture changed in various directions but, even more importantly, the material world of European societies itself has undergone an unprecedented transformation due to industrialisation and post-industrial globalisation. The conception, production, circulation and use of material (as well as of immaterial) goods have become among the main characteristics of the growing complexity of our
contemporary world. In this paper I would like to discuss some milestones in the ways that European ethnology (but also “general” ethnology or social and cultural anthropology) have approached and analysed the material dimensions of human cultures” (LE VI: 31).

According to Vytis Čiubrinskas, the other articles in this volume focus on the collective identity processes as well as the emotional-moral dimensions of post-socialist realities and use the ‘anthropology at home’ perspective (LE VI: 9).

Gediminas Lankauskas, the Lithuanian-Canadian anthropologist from Concordia University in Montreal, in his article ‘On the Sensory Memory of Socialism’ (LE VI: 47–71) uses the case of the Museum of Soviet Sculptures in Grūtas Park, Lithuania, to exemplify how the exhibition of the statues and the taste of the ‘Soviet dishes’ in the museum cafe, create a sensory memory of socialism. His conclusion is that the museum offers an alternative reality to capitalist commoditization and consumerism. It provides a ‘nostalgic longing’ not for socialism as an oppressive totalitarian system but for the quotidian sociability centred on kin and friends that the system inadvertently produced and perpetuated (LE VI: 10). Following the author, Grūtas Park is also interesting as a site of commemoration where the period of Soviet rule is objectified by using predominantly non-verbal media of recollection. Specifically, this museum is intriguing not only as a site of memory where the socialist past is made present through visual representations, but also as a locus of commemoration that implicates the sense of taste. Distancing itself from logo-centric methodologies that privilege narrative and text in memory research, the present paper insists on the importance of the senses in practices of social recall (LE VI: 71). Gediminas Lankauskas points in the Summary of the article: “The paper begins with a discussion of the key features of public recall in Soviet Lithuania. Then it moves on to examine practices of remembering at the present post-socialist moment of unsettling systemic change. In the ethnographic section, I take the reader for a stroll through Grūtas for a more ‘phenomenological’ experience of the Park. The excursion concludes with a Soviet-style lunch at its cafe. I pay particular attention to the manners in which differing artefacts displayed at Grūtas, as well as dishes and drinks on offer at the cafe, work to activate the sensorium of sight and taste as means for memorializing socialism” (LE VI: 71).

The article by Vytis Čiubrinskas “Migrants of Nostalgia: Identity and Social Uncertainty of Transnational Repatriates in Post-Communist Lithuania” (LE VI: 73–93) discusses the moral imperative ‘to be of use for Lithuania’, coined by the Lithuanian political emigrants of the World War II, as a type of nostalgia. Encultured as Lithuanian patriots, Lithuanian-Americans as well as the other diaspora Lithuanians, on their way back to Lithuania, are challenged by the uncertainty of post-soviet Lithuanian society. Returnees are in need not only of social integration but also acculturation and re-identification with the new Lithuania’s reality (LE VI: 10). According to author, the problems of in-placement, the re-rooting and re-homing of the transnational, up-rooted and displaced Lithuanian migrants, are the focus of this chapter: the transnational model of Lithuanian identity, transplanted to foreign soil and brought back by the Lithuanian transmigrants. Key questions to be answered are: what is brought back to Lithuania by the returnees in terms of social capital and heritage; what are the shapes of identity among transmigrants in a transitional society; how identities that are brought back from the country of domicile are challenged? (LE VI: 91–92).

Petras Kalnius, the ethnologist from the Lithuanian Institute of History, deals with the problem of delineation of regional borders as regional identity markers in his article ‘Self-Awareness of the Local Population of the Boundary of Upper Lithuania (Aukštaitija) and Samogitia (Žemaitija)’ (LE VI: 95–121). The case of the border-zone of the two main regions in Lithuania: Aukštai-
tija and Žemaitija is used. The article explores the mental delineation of the border. It argues that, as the sources for local identity, the popularity of the spoken vernacular language, as well as the numbers of local population, born and raised in the border-zone decreases, so does the regional identity itself (LE VI: 9). The article is based on the newest data, collected during ethnographic expeditions: during the period from 2002 to 2003 the author completed a survey in fifty boundary localities of Upper Lithuanian and Samogitian dialects using the interview method with participation of approximately 300 respondents. The material obtained is compared with the data of studies, completed by linguists, historians and ethnology experts. The author perceives Samogitians not as the territorial political community of Samogitia eldership, which was subordinated by the Great Duchy of Lithuania till the 18th century, but as the cultural community, which identifies itself by the dialect and attributes of traditional culture. Petras Kalnius points, that “… the metamorphosis of the conception of being Samogitian (transition from the political administrative to cultural conception of Samogitian) had started and materialized itself in the 19th century. Although the transition from the territorial conception of Samogitian to cultural conception of Samogitian is closely related to the period of the Lithuanian national movement at the end of the 19th century, the ambivalent conception of the Samogitian at the start of the 20th century was a relatively frequent phenomenon. Being Samogitian was more and more often identified by the use of the Samogitian dialect only after the restoration of the state of Lithuania. Currently, regional self-awareness of Samogitians, from the point of view of historical administrative territorial dependence, is completely extinct” (LE VI: 120–121).

Aušra Simonuikšytė (Vilnius University) presents an ethno-historic account of the history and memory of Roma population in Lithuania. Her analysis, based on life histories, and published in the article ‘Lithuanian Roma: between History and Memory’ (LE VI: 123–154) shows the centrality of the ethnic identity in the formation, sustaining and reinforcing of the collective memory of this ethnic minority (LE VI: 9–10). The article purposes to overview historical investigations of the Roma community in Lithuania, covering the period from 15th till the middle of the 20th century. Also, on the basis of the Roma’s life stories collected in different regions of Lithuania, it intends to uncover Roma perspective on historical events of the 20th century. Aušra Simonuikšytė points, that “… historical and linguistic evidence, as well as field research data, call into question the popular image of the Roma as unrooted wanderers, strangers alien to Lithuanian culture. At least one Roma group calling itself litovska roma (or polska roma in the Vilnius region) could be considered a historical ethnic minority of Lithuania living in the country since the 15th century” (LE VI: 150). She also reminds, that the Polish romologist Lech Mroz has discovered the use of the ethnonyms ‘Lithuanian’, ‘Polish’, ‘Hungarian’ and ‘Wallachian’ Roma in historical documents of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth of the 17th century. Mroz argues that historical documents give enough evidence of early ethnic and social differentiation among the Roma in Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. The Russian romologist N. Demeter also suggests that the territory of roaming of one Roma group usually rarely exceeds 300-500 square kilometres, and only some very exceptional circumstances may induce them to leave their accustomed locality. This explains the relatively slow rate of historical migration of Roma from India to Europe and ethnic diversification of Roma all over Europe (LE VI: 150–151).

Danguolė Svidinskaitė (Lithuanian Institute of History), in her article ‘Troubled Faith: Religion, Self and the Construction of Morality’ (LE VI: 155–185), based on her research of everyday life religiosity in Lithuania today, deals with a very sensitive issue: an encounter of the local
population with the local clergy. The author provides the readers with a thorough analysis of how local knowledge, morals and ritual, if altered or omitted by the priests, will affect the faith of the believers (LE VI: 10). The article analyses the individual’s relationship to religion and pays attention to the perceptions of faith and its discourse related to the priests and the religious institution. During fieldwork ‘at home’ at the end of the 20th century and at the beginning of the 21st one, based on interviews and, partly, on participant observation, the author derived the impression that the topic of clergy was quite important and related to the individual’s attitude to religion in Lithuania. The ethnographic case which is chosen for analysis seems suitable as an example of reflexivity of one’s own (and, at the same time, others’) faith. At the same time, attention is paid to the individual context of implication. This usually disappears when one treats a group and when an examination is based on many cases, searching for common features between them. The individuality of this case, therefore, should be underlined. It is linked to a person’s life story. According to Danguolė Svidinskaitė, “… faith was understood by this practitioner as a system which embodied and ensured the moral and social order in their community and, generally, in society. In this perspective the article also deals with the construction of morality. It seemed that the faith was routine to the individual. His faith and faith in general, as a system, was imagined as always existing and never disappearing. … Defining the relationship of the individual to religion, it is important to note that the experienced past, which had been localized in the community of the native village, or, in the broader sense, in the native country in pre-Soviet and later time, offered the interlocutor meaning to reflect on his own, and on others’, relationship to religion. In this way, it empowered the religious identity of the individual, as well as his moral and social knowledge in reaching decisions about what was proper and not proper at the end of the 20th century (LE VI: 184).

Renatas Delis (Vytautas Magnus University) in his study ‘The Neo-pagan Movement in Post-Soviet Lithuania – Constructing an Alternative Lithuanian Identity as a Response to the Conditions of Modernity?’ (LE VI: 187–225) explores the processes of representation of the national identity. He suggests that the Neo-pagan movement, known as counter-establishmental during the Soviet regime, is still popular today because it gives an alternative and an attractive model of Lithuanian identity by means of sacralization, archaization and, eventually, ethnification of traditional Lithuanian folk culture (LE VI: 10). This article focuses on the analysis of those main constituent elements of the common discourse of the Neo-pagan movement in post-soviet Lithuania through which we can grasp an understanding of Lithuanianess constructed in that movement. Author points: “First, an analysis is provided of how Lithuanian neo-pagans construct their understanding about Lithuanianess trough their interpretation of traditional Lithuanian culture and the construction of neo-pagan belief. Second, suggestions are made as to what that understanding can tell us about the reasons why the movement exists in contemporary Lithuania and what is its meaning considering the wider context of post-soviet Lithuanian society and culture. In the article the author takes the view that ethnicity and nationalism, or to be more specific, national identity, is socially constructed and is not a natural given. In the contemporary modern world, ideas about ethnicity and nationalism are often employed by different social-cultural groups as a powerful strategy to ground their aspirations and goals. It enables them to claim a legitimacy and authenticity for their identity. Lithuanian neo-pagans do this in their own way” (LE VI: 222). According to Renatas Delis, the discussed research material shows that such understanding of Lithuanianess in the neo-pagan movement assumes a clear primordial, anti-civilizational and anti-modern aspect. What can this kind of construct of Lithuanian identity tell us about the reasons for the existence and
persistence of the neo-pagan movement in contemporary Lithuania? What could the existence of the neo-pagan movement in post-soviet Lithuania tell us about the wider context of contemporary Lithuanian culture and society? (LE VI: 224–225).


These way Lithuanian Ethnology volumes 5 and 6 reflect the current actualities of Lithuanian, European and world-wide ethnology and socio-cultural anthropology research life.
NERINGA LIUBINIENĖ. MIGRANTS FROM LITHUANIA IN NORTHERN IRELAND: CONSTRUCTION OF ‘OWN SPACE’. DOCTORAL DISSERTATION. KAUNAS: VYTAUTAS MAGNUS UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2009


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The end of August 2009 marked an important point in the development of the social sciences in Lithuania. The significance of this date is that it saw the defence of the first doctoral dissertation written from an anthropological perspective. The author of this work is Neringa Liubinienė, an associate member of the Social Anthropology Centre at Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas. Liubinienė conducted her previous research in the fields of ethnology and sociology, and some of her varied research interests include expressions of collective identity, the anthropology of space and place, and the processes of migration. Therefore, this kind of debut looks promising for the future development of social anthropology in Lithuania where, according to Vytis Čiubrinskas, anthropology “is badly needed” (Khazaleh 2007; see also: Čiubrinskas 2009).

In Lithuania migration, and especially emigration and return migration are (and will, apparently, remain) the subject of numerous heated debates. Liubinienė’s anthropological research, and the dissertation based on it, suggests a new and promising analytical angle on these debates. Anthropological fieldwork methods allowed the author to gather valuable immediate knowledge of her research participants’ migratory experiences and, only with reference to them, to construct explanatory theoretical models. These very thorough research methods suggested to Liubinienė a master-key to the conceptualisations of the experiences of her research participants – the “construction of one’s own space”.

Not surprisingly, the title of this dissertation also reveals its anthropological approach. By calling her research participants “migrants”, Liubinienė tries to be as neutral as possible without using either etic pronouns (such as transmigrants) or those of sending (emigrants) or receiving (immigrants) countries (p. 9). Moreover, “Migrants from Lithuania in Northern Ireland” is not only directly relevant to both countries but also to international academia, and to anyone interested in the processes of migration. Firstly, in Lithuania there have not been any significant studies on Northern Ireland so far. Secondly, according to Liubinienė, the main focus of migration investigations in Northern Ireland (and also in the rest of the United Kingdom) is directed to social, economic, and policy-making issues (p. 17). Thus, her decision to look for local knowledge and to listen carefully to the migrants’ voices led her to several important considerations. That is, how do migrants attribute themselves to a certain place (or places) in their everyday life, what impact does the migratory experience leave on the perception of space, and how does the formation of one’s “own space” take place? In order to answer these questions, the author did much more than reviewing, systematizing and presenting all the relevant theoretical perspectives and empirical research on contemporary migration and space and place perception. She also brought to the light – and this is the undeniable enduring value of this
research – the instantaneous migratory experiences of particular people (migrants from Lithuania), of certain duration (13 10 2006 – 10 06 2007) and of an exact place (Northern Ireland).

This conception of the “construction of one’s own space” is unfolded through the five dissertation sections and summed up in the sixth. The sixth section is followed by an impressive list of over 200 references as well as visual and descriptive appendices, indicating how, with whom and where the research was conducted.

The first section sketches the issues of movement and attachment in the globalized world. It then introduces the dissertation’s objective, aims and tasks, provides a list of definitions, and synthesizes all the relevant current studies on immigration to Ireland and emigration from Lithuania since 1990. However, some of the dissertation’s aims and tasks repeat themselves, and the list of definitions is somewhat eclectic. Also, Liubinienė tends to overstate the quantitative nature of Audra Sipavičienė’s research (p. 18).

The second section, “Theoretical Conceptualization of Place, Space and Migration”, is particularly thought-provoking. Needless to say, perceptions of time and space are inherent in human cognition and, thus, any thorough analysis of how people make sense of their environment, what meanings they attach to them, and why, is very welcome. In this case, Liubinienė seeks to analyse the way in which a contemporary migrant experiences place and space. In order to achieve this, the section is divided into three chapters, covering the evolution of the concept of “place” in anthropology, transnational spaces, movements and multiple loyalties, and an individual’s connection with places through the “sense of place”, “home” and “livelihood”. Although the application of the etic perspective of the 19th century classical anthropologists to today’s consideration of migratory experiences appears dubious (p. 22–24), Liubinienė succeeds in providing a comprehensive and critical review of (trans)national migration and its impact on the perception of territoriality. She also detects several shortcomings in recent theoretical explanations of it. According to her, the idea of “home” has a lot in common with the “sense of place” notion, and yet outstretches it. Liubinienė points out that the concept of “home” implies quite a positive assessment of a place, excludes power relations, emphasizes emotional attachments, polarizes the reader towards either the country of departure or the country of settlement and, in general, reflects a sedentary way of thinking. In contrast, the concept of “livelihood” places more emphasis on movement yet also puts too much weight on the economical, i.e. rational, aspects of attachments to places (p. 45). Having noted this, Liubinienė suggests a new approach – the concept of one’s own space. According to this, one’s “… “own space” is a relatively safe, familiar and convenient zone of living and operating, which is created and maintained by a migrant (or a group of migrants), whereas its parameters – social, cultural and other – are formed and transformed by (trans)migration processes and its boundaries are drawn by experiences, emotions and identifications of actors themselves” (p. 18, English summary of the dissertation).

The third section brings in an overview of facts and figures relating to emigration from Lithuania and immigration to Northern Ireland extracted from academic literature, documents, decrees and the media. There is a closer look at the migratory issues in Northern Ireland, with two subchapters: one on migration policy in Northern Ireland, and another on immigration, public discourse, segregation and racism.

In comparison to other similar publications, “Migrants from Lithuania in Northern Ireland…” seems to be exceptional in its firm and consistent pursuance of anthropological methods and outlook, even though the author claims it to be interdisciplinary. The author herself, apparently, feels that she is doing quite a pioneering job and thus in charge of revealing the “politics and poetics”
of ethnography-making (i.e., its collection and writing). A subchapter, “Anthropological methodological approach” is devoted to this. While a professional anthropologist would find its content to be merely truisms, its general contribution to the popularisation of anthropology in Lithuania is considerable. This subchapter provides a way of introducing her own anthropological fieldwork. Such factors as who carried out the qualitative research, how, where and when have great influences on the nature of the data and how it is interpreted. To set them forth is one’s duty, and not an “unwarranted, narcissistic display” (Reinharz, 1997).

It also worth noting that the nature of Liubinienė’s research has major difficulties in fitting the established definitions of fieldwork. On the one hand, it is a conspicuous example of *anthropology at home*, because her research participants are from the same country as her. On the other hand, just as in classical anthropology, Liubinienė set out to do her fieldwork “over there in their place” (p. 58). She was from Lithuania, thus an *insider*, yet a researcher, a non-emigrant, thus an *outsider*. Despite all of this, it is clear that Liubinienė is capable of tackling all these contradictions and employing various research methods, both desk- (the analysis of media discourses, documents and literature) and fieldwork-based (participant/direct observation, semi-structured interviews and informal conversations). Interestingly, Liubinienė points out that during her research her role as a translator brought her positive and negative *experience* (Lith.: “*patirtis*”) because she had the opportunity to observe not only the way migrants interacted among themselves but also the way the local Irish employees and executives behaved towards them (p. 66). In this kind of research one might wonder whether such an experience should be considered as negative (or, indeed, whether *experience* can be negative at all).

In many regards the fifth section is the highlight of the whole dissertation. It demonstrates how the idea of one’s “own space” manifests itself in a certain transmigrant setting. Extensive quotes, and references to the participant observation data, provide the reader with many important pieces of information, forming a competent *thick description*. However, one might wonder who the “floor staff” (floor staff?) are and why they interact only with “floor staff” but not the “bar staff” (p. 81), while presuming that Arnoldas and Arnas are one and the same respondent. Further, one might wish for a more profound analysis of the data gathered, as in some cases there is an impression that the author has only summarized respondents’ ideas. An analysis of this kind would also benefit more from being supplemented by the insights of the reviewed literature. Despite all this, the good old truth about anthropology is that it advances not by getting better answers but by asking better questions. And Neringa Liubinienė clearly does that. Incidentally, Neringa writes that during her fieldwork research period she had some “existential questions” as well. She says there were times when she would ask herself about “what I’m doing here” and “does anyone really care about it” (p. 66). What kind of an answer could be suggested to the author of this mature and valuable doctoral thesis?

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DONATA PETRUŽYTĖ. WASTE PICKERS’ WAY OF LIFE: CASE STUDY OF THE DUMP OF KAR̄IOTIŠKĖS. DOCTORAL DISSERTATION. VILNIUS: VILNIUS UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2009


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Studies of the lifestyle of specific groups in society have become more popular in recent years; in particular socially excluded groups such as the disabled, the homeless, the unemployed, or ethnic or religious minorities. The coexistence of these groups reflects the state and structure of society, and attracts researchers by its “otherness” and subcultural lifestyle features. The dissertation “Waste Pickers’ Way of Life: Case Study of the Dump of Kariotiškės”, defended by Donata Petružytė at Vilnius University at the end 2009, enriches these studies. The author of the study was a trainee at the University of Lapland (Finland) and a doctoral student in the Institute for Social Research at Vilnius University. Her interests cover such subjects as concentration places of territorial social problems and groups belonging to them. In the dissertation she looks at one of these territories – the dump and its community – and presents a very detailed sociocultural and socioeconomic “portrait” of it.

Donata Petružytė’s dissertation focuses on the way of living of waste pickers. By using “way of life” and “mode of life” as synonyms, the author describes them as “the whole of characteristics that are typical for the life activity of an individual or a group aimed at fulfilling the basic needs of a person” (p. 9). This topic is studied by ethnologists and anthropologists as a form of cultural expression which allows us to “look into concrete empirical situation and a way to grasp essences of life and their variety that often disappears when one looks from afar or from above” (p. 9). Both subject and approach – the use of visual ethnography in research on subcultural groups – makes the work unique and the first of its kind in Lithuania.

The author’s interdisciplinary view (including ethnology, anthropology and sociology) can be clearly seen not only at the beginning of work but throughout the thesis. Several issues intertwine within the work. Waste pickers are clearly presented as an autonomic subcultural group, distinguished by its work specifics, and separate from homeless people. At the same time, this group is presented in the context of a post-communist country – Lithuania – comparing it with similar groups existing in other countries. By choosing the group of waste pickers living in one of the biggest and “richest” Lithuanian dumps – Kariotiškės (district of Trakai, 30 km north west from Vilnius) – and presenting in detail their daily subcultural expression (treating waste picking not as acquiring waste, but as acquiring resources) the author “includes” a new group into the map of social groups in Lithuania.

The work consists of three parts. The first reviews studies of waste pickers in Lithuania and elsewhere, discusses the main theoretical characteristics of waste picking as an economic activity, and presents theoretical concepts of work sociology, anthropological waste theory, social geography etc.
Through a short historical review, the role of waste pickers and their place in the societies of Western and developing countries is discussed, and the main aspects of their way of living are defined.

In this part the author also presents the place of waste pickers in the Lithuanian waste management system, covering production and consumption sectors, collection and transportation of waste, and, in the end, disposal. By separating types of waste pickers, and giving definitions of them and their work activities, she allows the reader to see the wider context of the problem. The presentation of historical tendencies of this phenomenon (in Lithuania and the world) reveals its development and perception. By demonstrating the characteristics of the phenomenon, the author is able to identify the most distinctive features of the group, and to construct various models of waste pickers’ way of living. Its important aspects include work/earning, features of the group’s lifestyle, and the influence of workers who directly communicate with it (e.g. waste buyers, dump workers, etc.)

The second part of the work is dedicated to defining the research methodology and methods. A comprehensive description of the method of visual ethnography and its possible uses in sociological research is presented, through the discussion of certain features of its use in the research process. The courage of the author in choosing this method, which requires considerable efforts and preliminary preparation, allowed her to analyze the phenomenon directly and reveal its expressive dimension. At the same time, the chosen method allowed the author to document a phenomenon which is now passing into history. Extensive field study (2006 – 2008) allowed the author to get to know the group very well, and to reflect on herself as a researcher. In the second part of the work the author, writing about the cyclicity of the research, shares some useful self-reflections: “In the end (of the research – R. I.) we started participating in that about which we were only told at the beginning. <...> We started identifying the inaccurate information provided to us at the beginning” (p. 106). It is gratifying that the research had an expansive stage. That is, the author visited other dumps in Lithuania, communicated with waste pickers and the staff, tractor and waste truck drivers, the inhabitants of surrounding villages and towns, medics and so on.

The third part of the work is devoted to presenting the results of the research carried out, and is illustrated by extensive visual and interview material. At the beginning, the author provides a general presentation of the context of the dump, its evolution since 1987 and, finally, the issues of its closure (the dump was officially closed at the end of the year 2007, work there ended in March 2008).

In the following chapters, the author consistently presents the characteristics specific to the subculture group, social demographic characteristics, and the process of coming to the group. Discussing the specification of the work, the author raises a question which is the most important when talking about this group – picking waste. What is this: a way of living or a way to survive? The group analyzed is not homogeneous, so it is impossible to provide an unambiguous answer. To approach the specifics of the group’s work, the author analyses in detail the questions of work/activity, describing the work time of waste pickers, the tools they use, their income, the specifics of the things found – secondary materials, valuable findings (money, jewellery, etc.) versus resources (food products).

Not less interesting and important is the chapter on waste pickers’ homes. In this chapter the maps of houses and yards of the subculture are drawn. The long time spent in field work allows the author to discuss in detail waste pickers’ dietary habits, hygiene peculiarities, the connotations attached to the usage of intoxicating substances and drugs, and the meaning of holidays and free time.

It is gratifying that the author dared to choose a topic that is often marginalized in the social sciences and humanities. It is not a secret that the researchers of certain excluded groups are thought to be the same as the group they have researched, and cannot avoid a marginal position. It is equally
important that in the course of her field work the author was able to find and recognize the person, to reflect her/his dignity, at the same time keeping the objective position of herself as a researcher. This dissertation provides an opportunity to recognize the “other”, and, getting to know that person, to come closer, to diminish social exclusion and to develop intercultural tolerance.

Even having finished the dissertation its author continues to visit the dump, and there is hope that her work may continue. The visual material gathered during the ethnographic research will soon be shown in the movie “The Field of Magic”, whose filmmaker was helping the author during the fieldwork.