

REVIEWS

**ČIUBRINSKAS, VYTIS & KUZNECOVIENĖ, JOLANTA (EDS.).
THE TRAJECTORIES OF LITHUANIAN IDENTITY. STUDY.
KAUNAS: VYTAUTAS MAGNUS UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2008**

(Čiubrinskas, Vytis, Kuznecovienė, Jolanta (sud.). *Lietuviškojo identiteto trajektorijos. Studija*. Kaunas: Vytauto Didžiojo universiteto leidykla, 2008)

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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” 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 Kuznecovienė 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 Kuznecovienė “Lithuanian, who Celebrates Festivals: The Range of Lithuanian-ness” is already based on the synthesis of quantitative and qualitative empirical data. Kuznecovienė 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 Kuznecovienė “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

and collective levels. The first article “The Expression of Lithuanian National Identity in the Contexts of Globalization: Between Locality and Multiculturalism” by Štutiniėnė 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.