

BEING A TRANSMIGRANT IN CONTEMPORARY WORLD: LITHUANIAN MIGRANTS' QUESTS FOR IDENTITY

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the article is to explore how the migrant identity (especially, of the first generation) is changing under the influence of migration. Accordingly in the first part of the article the transnationalism and the concept of transmigration in relation to migratory experience are discussed, the second part is focused on the questions of identity and its boundaries, and the third part is based on the interpretation of empirical data from anthropological fieldwork by paying attention to the background, language and festivals of the immigrants as particular markers of the identity construction of the Lithuanian migrants in Northern Ireland.

KEY WORDS: boundaries, identity, migration, transmigrant, transnationalism, Lithuanian migrants, Northern Ireland.

ANOTACIJA

Straipsnyje domimasi, kaip migranto identitetas (ir ypač pirmosios kartos migranto) keičiasi veikiamas migravimo patirties. Pirmojoje straipsnio dalyje aptariama transnacionalizmo ir transmigracijos paradigma šiuolaikinės migracijos analizei, antrojoje dalyje dėmesys skiriamas identiteto ir ribų klausimams, trečiojoje, remiantis antropologinio tyrimo empiriniais duomenimis, analizuojami kilmės, kalbos ir švenčių elementai kaip svarbūs migrantų (lietuvių Šiaurės Airijoje) identifikacijos žymenys.

PAGRINDINIAI ŽODŽIAI: identitetas, lietuviai migrantai, migracija, ribos, Šiaurės Airija, transmigrantas, transnacionalizmas.

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The article aims to discuss how the identity of migrants (especially, of the first generation) shifts under the influence of migratory experience. The main focus is on the theoretical approach of transnationalism and transmigration, as well as on the concepts of identity and its intrinsic boundaries. The theoretical discussion is complemented by the pieces of empirical data from the author's fieldwork among Lithuanian migrants in Northern Ireland, and particular attention is given to the elements of background (the Lithuanian origin, Lithuanian citizenship, Lithuanian first names), language (Lithuanian, English) and festivals (personal, calendar, national).

The anthropological fieldwork was carried out in Northern Ireland (further – NI) among Lithuanian migrants in October 2006 – June 2007. Undoubtedly, Lithuanians in NI are not a homogenous group and consequently the data of the fieldwork cannot be extended to all Lithuanian immigrants living in NI. The label “Lithuanian migrants” indicates the informants of the fieldwork and the label “Lithuanian” refers generally to a person who emigrated from Lithuania (not his/her ethnicity). The term “local NI inhabitants” refers to Irish and English residents in NI.

Transnationalism in the life of contemporary migrants

The theoretical approach of transnationalism and transmigration, which appeared in around 1990¹ and is aimed at the exploration of the complexity of migration processes, defines the large part of contemporary migrants as transmigrants, who maintain multiple attachments and variously (socially, economically, politically, and culturally) participate in the life of several countries (usually, of the host country and of the country of origin). For example, they learn new language, work, study, pay taxes, open bank accounts, raise children and they let them to schools in the host country, and at the same time they invest in the country of origin, send money and gifts to their family members and relatives, buy property, build houses, participate in the festivals of home country etc.². According Nina Glick Schiller and others³ and John Lie⁴, the transmigrants could be described as immigrants, whose everyday lives depend on the multiple and constant relations that transcend national and international borders (or boundaries) and whose public identities are configured in relation to more than one country. By many scholars⁵ diaspora is seen in the context of transnationalism as an adequate representation of transnational communities, networks and ties.

Live academic discussions also are going about how exactly to define a transmigrant and what kind of markers have to be used for that particular definition. For example, there are notions, that the concept transnationalism itself is used too widely to cover all migrants and migration⁶, that

¹ See: GLICK SCHILLER, N.; BASCH, L. & BLANC-SZANTON, C. Transnationalism: A New Analytic Framework for Understanding Migration. In: Nina Glick Schiller, Linda Basch, and Cristina Blanc-Szanton (eds.). *Toward a Transnational Perspective on Migration: Race, Class, Ethnicity, and Nationalism Reconsidered*. New York: The New York Academy of Sciences, 1992, p. 1–24; GLICK SCHILLER, N.; BASCH, L. & BLANC-SZANTON, C. From Immigrant to Transmigrant: Theorizing Transnational Migration. *Anthropological Quarterly* 68 (1), 1995, p. 48–63; BASH, L.; GLICK-SCHILLER, N.; SZANTON BLANC, C. *Nations Unbound: Transnational Projects, Postcolonial Predicaments, and Deterritorialized Nation-States*. New York: Gordon and Breach Publishers, 1994; GUARNIZO, L. E. & SMITH, M. P. The Locations of Nationalism. In: Michael P. Smith & Luis E. Guarnizo (eds.). *Transnationalism from Below*. New Brunswick & London: Transaction Publishers, 1999, p. 3–35; LEVITT, P. *Transnational Migrants: When “Home” Means More than One Country*. MPI: Migration Information Source, 2004. At www.migrationinformation.org/Feature/print.cfm/ID=261 (accessed 05/12/2005); PORTES, A. *Globalization from Below: The Rise of Transnational Communities*. WPTC-98-01, 1997. At www.transcomm.ox.ac.uk/working%20papers/portes.pdf (accessed 09/03/2009); PORTES, A. Introduction: The Debates and Significance of Immigrant Transnationalism. *Global Networks* 1 (3), 2001, p. 181–193. For the critique see: GRILLO, R. D. *Transnational Migration and Multiculturalism in Europe*. WPTC-01-08, 2001. At www.trans-comm.ox.ac.uk/working%20papers/WPTC-01-08%20Grillo.pdf (accessed 09/03/2009); GUARNIZO, L. E. The Emergence of a Transnational Social Formation and the Mirage of Return Migration Among Dominican Transmigrants. *Identities* 4 (2), 1997, p. 281–322; OLWIG, K. F. & SØRENSEN, N. N. Mobile Livelihoods: Making a Living in the World. In: Nina Nyberg Sørensen and Karen Fog Olwig (eds.), *Work and Migration: Life and Livelihoods in a Globalizing World*. London: Routledge, 2002, p. 3–19; PORTES, A. Conclusion: Theoretical Convergences and Empirical Evidence in the Study of Immigrant Transnationalism. *IMR* 37 (3), 2003, p. 874–892; VERTOVEC, S. Transnationalism and Identity. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 27 (4), 2001, p. 573–582.

² See: BRETTEL, C. *Anthropology and Migration: Essays on Transnationalism, Ethnicity, and Identity*. Walnut Creek, Lanham, New York, Oxford: Altamira Press, 2003 (book on “transnational” activities of Portuguese migrants).

³ See: GLICK SCHILLER, N.; BASCH, L. & BLANC-SZANTON, C. From Immigrant (...) 1995.

⁴ See: LIE, J. Review: From International Migration to Transnational Diaspora. *Contemporary Sociology* 24 (4), 1995, p. 303–306.

⁵ See: KOOPMANS, R. & STATHAM, P. How National Citizenship Shapes Transnationalism: Migrant and Minority Claims-Making in Germany, Great Britain and the Netherlands. In: Christian Joppke & Ewa Morawska (eds.). *Toward Assimilation and Citizenship: Immigrants in Liberal Nation-States*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003, p. 195–238; LIE, J. (...) 1995; POVZRANOVIC-FRYKMAN, M. Challenges of Belonging in Diaspora and Exile: An Introduction. In: Maja Povrzanović-Frykman (ed.), *Beyond Integration: Challenges of Belonging in Diaspora and Exile*. Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2001, p. 11–40.

⁶ See: KOOPMANS, R. & STATHAM, P. (...) 2003.

the largest part of migrants are just accidental transnational actors, but not the transmigrants⁷ or that temporary labour migrants living abroad for several years, sending remittances, communicating with their families in the country of origin and rarely visiting them could not be qualified as transmigrants, because transmigrants are only these migrants whose whole existence is formed by participating in the transnational communities, which are based on migration⁸ and so on.

Turning briefly from theory to empirical data of the fieldwork I have found that contemporary Lithuanian migrants (since 1990 to nowadays) represent mostly economic/labour migrants (and are perceived as such). Their choice of the host country was basically grounded on labour market and social networks, but the socio-political and technological advantages were also taken into account. The United Kingdom (further – UK) and Ireland opening their job markets without any restrictions, considerably short geographical distance from Lithuania, cheap flights/bus travels made moving to and forth much easier, as well as facilitated and eased family reunions etc.

Very roughly speaking Lithuanian migrants in Northern Ireland could be characterized by heightened pragmatism with very clear economic interests. They share from 1 to 10 years of migration experience, legal and ex-illegal status in the UK or other countries. But (as it is noticed by Eleonore Kofman and her colleagues⁹) over the time there is a tendency that migrants pass from one category of migrants into the other. So even though among Lithuanian migrants' in Northern Ireland economic interests were very important, but those interests were not the sole reason for migration: the fieldwork disclosed many family reunion cases and a few “love” migrants.

The fieldwork gave a clear evidence that Lithuanian migrants variously participate in the life of two countries (of origin and of host) by voting in Lithuania or NI, living and working in NI and visiting Lithuania for different reasons (nostalgia, kinship, pragmatic needs, visits to doctors, (re) constructions of their houses or flats), buying houses in NI and in Lithuania (or maintaining the old ones), inscribing children in NI schools and sending them for holidays to Lithuania, starting businesses in NI, and sending remittances to Lithuania. These are the most visible, but not the only examples of the Lithuanian migrants' lives in between two countries.

All of the migrants maintained stronger or weaker ties with the country of origin based on their more active (e.g. visits, remittances, political participation) or passive (e.g. following the news of life in Lithuania, reading its newspapers, watching TV programmes, bringing “Lithuanian” artefacts) personal practices and activities. However during the fieldwork it became very clear that it would be very difficult to find anything similar to the “collective practices” that could resemble some kind of transnational community, diaspora or collective transnational activities which would be seen and felt in both – the host country and the country of origin. There was none of the Lithuanian organisations, associations, self-support groups or similar transnational activities. But at the same time there were the first signs of group initiatives – first lessons of unofficial Lithuanian weekend school, irregular Lithuanian Catholic masses, attempts to establish “official” ethnic community's organisation. So having such a picture (or data, to be exact) of Lithuanians in NI, it raises a question, do they qualify for transmigrants or not and could their practices qualify as transnationalist or not?

⁷ See: LEVITT, P. (...) 2004.

⁸ See: CASTLES, S. & MILLER, M. J. *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World*. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.

⁹ See: KOFMAN, E.; PHIZACKLEA, A.; RAGHURAM, P. & SALES, R. *Gender and International Migration in Europe: Employment, Welfare and Politics*. London and New York: Routledge, 2000.

Coming back to the theoretical discussion about who is and who is not a transmigrant, it is useful to turn to the works of Georges Fouron and Glick Schiller¹⁰, who use to point out that transmigrants have to be distinguished from others living abroad, as those “who communicate, conduct various commercial, diplomatic, and recreational activities across nation-state borders, and imagine themselves to be elsewhere without entering into daily routine of social reproduction within two or more different states”¹¹. And at the same time transnational ties can be differently constructed depending on diverse reasons and different migrants: some migrants during incorporation in their host country diminish their transnational ties; the others revive or construct new ones with their country of origin only when they become fully incorporated¹². Annie Phizacklea¹³ and Ewa Morawska¹⁴ also advocate that transnationalism could refer not only to such “big” or “large” scale practices as establishing business that joins two countries, or having big political or cultural interests, but it can be much more modest or smaller – for example, remittances – if it is constantly maintained.

Whereas there is no general model of who and when are transmigrants and it seems it might not be in the nearest future, thereby referring to the fieldwork data I support Fouron and Glick Schiller, Phizacklea and Morawska viewpoints that not necessarily constant participation or large group (or collective) practices are the markers of transnationalism, that is, I imply that Lithuanian migrants in NI can be approached as transmigrants.

(Trans) migrant’s identity: the complexity of identifications and boundaries

The term of identity if to be described very generally could be defined as “a constant drawing of boundaries in associating and dissociating through certain markers, dimensions, symbols, that is, through various layers of mentality, behaviour and feelings”¹⁵. It is not debatable anymore that identity is constructed not in a vacuum, but socially – through various interactions of people, that is, different boundaries are drawn in relation of someone toward another. This kind of interactive construction of boundaries is very well illustrated by Fredrik Barth¹⁶ in his already classical constructivist definition of ethnic identity. Consequently, this shows that that identity has a very situational nature: in the different situations different layers of identity are activated. The same is valid for the boundaries – depending on the situation becoming permeable or impermeable.

Migrants’ identity was always a very fascinating subject of research for the anthropologists and generally for social scientists. According to Nikos Papastergiadis¹⁷, identity is always between

¹⁰ See: FOURON, G. & GLICK SCHILLER, N. All in the Family: Gender, Transnational Migration, and the Nation State. *Identities* 7 (4), 2001, p. 539–582.

¹¹ Ibid, p. 544.

¹² See: FOURON, G. & GLICK SCHILLER, N. (...) 2001.

¹³ See: PHIZACKLEA, A. Migration Theory and Migratory Realities: A Gendered Perspective? In: Danièle Joly (ed.), *International Migration in the New Millennium: Global Movement and Settlement*. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2004, p. 121–140.

¹⁴ See: MORAWSKA, E. The Sociology and History of Immigration: Reflections of Practitioner. In: Michael Bommes and Ewa Morawska (eds.), *International Migration Research: Constructions, Omissions and the Promises of Interdisciplinarity*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005, p. 203–239.

¹⁵ ČIUBRINSKAS, V. Tautinio identiteto antropologinio tyrinėjimo klausimai. In: Vytis Čiubrinškas & Jolanta Kuznecovienė (eds.), *Lietuviškojo identiteto trajektorijos*. Kaunas: Vytauto Didžiojo universiteto leidykla, 2008, p. 13.

¹⁶ See: BARTH, F. Introduction. In: Fredrik Barth (ed.), *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1969, p. 9–38.

¹⁷ See: PASTERGIADIS, N. *The Turbulence of Migration: Globalization, Deterritorialization and Hybridity*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000.

fixity and openness, always asks for memory and experience and is shaped in the “third space” (in the zone between the familiar and the foreign). That’s why various inventories or artefacts such as modes of dress, livelihood, language, cuisine, music, ritual, religious belief and other symbolic matters are often carried with the migrants from the country of origin and retained, revived or re-made in the new places, but never totally forgotten¹⁸. As it is noticed by Meenakshi Thapan¹⁹, the first generation migrants maintain and take on traditional rituals, keep on one-dimensional strong identity whereas the second generation migrants perceive their identity in hyphenated terms, feeling that they are the part of the host country’s society by sharing, reproducing and using its culture.

The fieldwork data about Lithuanian migrants in NI provides a lot of material in relation to migrant identity. Not expanding into details in this part of the text I simply maintain that migrants’ identities are indeed very complex, situational and made of many complementing layers of identification: “long-term migrant”, “temporary migrant”, “legal migrant”, “illegal migrant”, “unhappy person in Lithuania”, “happy migrant in NI”, “always Lithuanian”, “never one hundred percent local” etc. Some of these identifications are constructed by themselves, some – imposed externally and internalised. Personal experiences play a significant role in how one or the other place or a person are perceived, and the constant shorter or longer returning to Lithuania do have a great influence in migrants identifications, feelings, and experiences.

The construction of transmigrants’ identities goes in the transnational spaces or social fields that span more than one place, but as the result, transmigrants do not fully belong to any of these places – they get caught in the particular space “in-between”²⁰, where they construct their racial, ethnic, class, national and gender identities²¹, which produce the variety of transmigrants’ biographies and identifications²². It means that transmigrants do not leave their origin and past behind, but take it with them²³, and consequently pre-migration networks, culture, and capital stays important²⁴. The phenomenon which was termed “the dual frame of reference” by Luis Guarnizo²⁵ is a perfect example how transmigrants’ identity is shaped in relation to more than one country.

While speaking about identity it is important to stress that recently in the field of anthropology the concept of identity is seen as problematic²⁶ and of the debatable use in for the studies. At the same time the idea of boundaries (drawing, marking, replacing etc.) becomes more and more popular and already has existence as a separate concept²⁷. Neither the appraisal nor critique of identity as

¹⁸ For more see: CASTLES, S. & MILLER, M. J. (...) 2003; HARRISON, S. Cultural Boundaries. *Anthropology Today* 15 (5), 1999, p. 10–13; THAPAN, M. Introduction ‘Making Incomplete’: Identity, Woman and the State. In: Meenakshi Thapan (ed.). *Transnational Migration and the Politics of Identity*. New Delhi, Thousand Oaks, London: Sage Publications, 2005, p. 23–62. On Lithuanians see: ČIUBRINSKAS, V. Transnacionalinis identitetas ir paveldas: lietuviškumas diasporoje. *Sociologija: Mintis ir veiksmas* 2, 2005, p. 41–54.

¹⁹ See: THAPAN, M. (...) 2005.

²⁰ See: GRILLO, R. D. *Transnational Migration and Multiculturalism in Europe*. WPTC-01-08, 2001. At www.transcomm.ox.ac.uk/working%20papers/WPTC-01-08%20Grillo.pdf (accessed 09/03/2009).

²¹ See: POVRZANOVIĆ-FRYKMAN, M. (...) 2001.

²² See: LIE, J. (...) 1995.

²³ See: KOOPMANS, R. & STATHAM, P. (...) 2003.

²⁴ See: LIE, J. (...) 1995.

²⁵ It represents the tendency of transmigrants for the constant comparison and contrast of their situation in the host country with their previous experience in the country of origin. See: GUARNIZO, L. E. (...) 1997.

²⁶ For more see: ČIUBRINSKAS, V. (...) 2008.

²⁷ This is very well seen in the growing of studies devoted to the “boundaries”. See, for example: ASSMUTH, L. Nation Building and Everyday Life in the Borderlands between Estonia, Latvia and Russia. *Focaal*, 2003, p. 59–70; WILSON, T. M. & DONNAN, H. Territory, Identity and the Places in-between: Culture and Power in European Borderlands. In: Thomas M. Wilson & Hastings Donnan (eds.). *Culture and Power at the Edges of the State*. Munster: Lit Verlag, 2005, p. 1–30.

a concept in itself is the aim of this article, but even in dismissing identity as an old-fashioned concept I still think that the idea of various identifications by drawing boundaries remains very useful in the analysis of migration and migrants' lives, because it fairly well catches the situational character, fluidity-rigidity dualism and the "material" expressions of migrants attempts to define who they are and who are the "others", how they are in relation to "others", where is "their own" place etc.

Shifting boundaries: origin, language and festivals as the markers of belonging and identifications

Before-mentioned Thapan statement about the strong one-dimensional identity of first generation migrants²⁸ might not be fully true in the context of transnationalism. According to Nadjé Al-Ali and Khalid Koser²⁹, nonetheless a great sense of belonging to a specific place is accompanied by the wish to reproduce and/or reinvent "traditions" and "cultures" associated with home, but as time passes by it become inevitable for the former homes to develop strange, unusual and alien elements in the eyes of those who migrated abroad, and the "here" and "there" become more blurry and difficult to sustain. In order to find out what kind of identifications and belonging Lithuanian transmigrants maintain and represent, I will further examine (building on the fieldwork data) three important elements – origin, language, and festivals – as the markers that Lithuanian migrants use in the processes of identification, belonging, and drawing of boundaries.

Lithuanian background: to become local or to stay as a person "from Lithuania"?

Being of "Lithuanian origin". The majority of migrants define themselves as "Lithuanian" explaining that for Lithuanians it is not only "impossible to become one hundred percent Irish or English" or "local", but also there is "no need for that". Such a point of view is supported by further explanations about different mentalities, different places of birth and growing up and also by the attitudes of the local NI inhabitants etc. Still there might be specific situations when Lithuanian migrants choose to manipulate with their place of origin while communicating with local inhabitants of NI. For example, the convenience shop owner uses to tell to her Irish or English clients that she comes from Russia simply because everybody knows Russia and you don't have to do so many explanations as she has if she mentions Lithuania. But such situations and choices are extremely rare in comparison to general tendency to represent himself/herself as "Lithuanian". Children of migrants (the so called second generation) are also encouraged to be proud of their different ethnic background and accentuate it. But the fieldwork also revealed that children of migrants are not sure about the "advantages" of having different ethnic background and sometimes feel disturbed by being "different" from their classmates (Irish or English).

Usually Lithuanian migrants are not concerned about citizenship questions – they have Lithuanian citizenship and do not see any problems with that, because:

[...] you are who you are and the passport does not change anything, so why to change.
(Virginija)

²⁸ See: THAPAN, M. (...) 2005.

²⁹ See: AL-ALI, K. & KOSER, K. Transnationalism, International Migration and Home. In: Nadjé Al-Ali and Khalid Koser (eds.), *New Approaches to Migration? Transnational Communities and the Transformation of Home*. Routledge: London and New York, 2002, p. 1–14.

However, two informants were considering getting the UK citizenship because of “practical reasons” – “it is easier to travel” and “on the borders you have less problems with UK passport than with Lithuanian”. Though giving UK, Irish or Lithuanian citizenship to their children, born in the host country³⁰ is totally a different matter: some were undergoing all the “hardships”, “absurd” and “problems” to get the Lithuanian passports for their children, the others decided not to bother with getting for their children Lithuanian citizenship. The choice to give or not to give Lithuanian citizenship and passport commonly is based on the simplicity of the formal procedures of attaining passport in UK or Ireland (“it is convenient”, “less bureaucracy”) in comparison with procedures off getting Lithuanian. Among all the informants, who “gave” their children UK citizenship, only one mother doubted this decision a little, because “if Lithuania will not accept double citizenship, there might be difficulties if the family decides upon returning to live in Lithuania”.

“Confusions” with the Lithuanian names. It is common experience for the migrants from Lithuania that the local NI inhabitants have difficulties pronouncing and remembering of “strange” Lithuanian names. Thus migrants use to solve this “inconvenience” using different strategies. Some stubbornly stick with their original Lithuanian name despite the difficulties and some decide to use “new English” name or nickname. Naturally, those with short Lithuanian names do not face this problem. For newly born children migrant give names that would be easy to pronounce in any language (eg. without letters š, ž, č) or that would have similarities in other languages, for example, Dominykas, Antoni Henrik, Giedrius, Saulė, Ana Marija, Katrin Sofi.

When migrants choose to “take on” new name they use the ones by which they are called in English language or simply transform their names into their English version, for example, Jane (Jūratė), Violet (Violeta), Ed (Edvinas), Ingrid (Ingrida), Gabriel (Gabrielius), Ramona (Ramunė), Paul (Paulius), Morning (Rytis). The “new” name does not mean that original Lithuanian name is not valid anymore; “new” name usually is used only in socialising with local NI inhabitants – neighbours, work colleagues, classmates, clients, taxi drivers etc. The choice to use “new” name is usually based on the reasons that the original one is “very difficult to pronounce”, “nobody understands anyway”, “does not want to discomfort others”, “got tired of correcting”, “it is easier” and so on. Sometimes taking a “new” name means striving to “belong”, and this is especially true in the case of children (usually at school). But the original name is always used among Lithuanians.

The ones who decide to go on with their original names say something along these lines: “no need to become monkeys, the locals can learn”, “everybody perfectly understands”, “people learn to pronounce it”. Sometimes taking a “new” name is only a temporary choice and it is used only in the beginning of the adaptation period, but after some time migrant returns to his/her original name. It is interesting that the encouragement “to return” to original name often comes not from migrant himself/herself, but from the “outside” – non Lithuanian colleagues or friends:

One colleague from Australia asked me what my true name was. I told Ramunė. So he asked, why I had changed it into Ramona. Well, I answered, that I had no idea, maybe because I wanted to save the precious time of the people – their and mine. He said it was their problem if they couldn’t pronounce his name. And I thought, really... From that time on... Well, I thought about it and why I had to change my name just to make other people’s lives easier. No. So now they still call me Ramona despite how many times I correct them with Ramunė. (Ramunė)

³⁰ There is *ius soli* principle in the UK and Ireland – all children born in the country’s territory get their citizenship.

And when the “comeback” to the original name is made, the person usually sticks to it.

So the migrants' general perception of themselves as Lithuanians, the accentuation of their country of origin and not thinking that it is possible to become Irish or English, or local, as well as being content of bearing of the Lithuanian citizenship, – all that discloses the intensity and power of their ethnic identity. At the same time it is an expression of strengthening of the boundaries against local NI inhabitants and other migrant groups. But the tendency to take on and use “new” names (even though the original name is also maintained) in socialising with English speaking people signalize about the efforts to weaken boundaries between the immigrants themselves and local NI inhabitants and also about the interactive development of the new layer of identification. The names for the children that would sound well in both languages also might be approached as the strategy helping to enter and fit easily in both societies. However it is too little data for discussing the processes of identification and of boundaries' drawn by the second generation (children of migrants), but I might presuppose that their strategies will be much more oriented toward weakening of the boundaries with the local NI inhabitants and development of more layers of identification with the host country.

Language: English and Lithuanian languages as connecting or alienating elements?

The common language used by Lithuanian migrants in the private space (at home) is the one they spoke in their families in Lithuania – mostly Lithuanian and sometimes Russian. The majority of migrants point up that they love and respect their native language and that Lithuanians among themselves should speak Lithuanian language (e.g. “Lithuanians with Lithuanians have to speak in native language”, “coming home you close the door and it is Lithuanian Republic, so you have to speak in Lithuanian”). The ones, who had small children, made remarks about their wishes for their children not to forget Lithuanian language and admitted that teaching children Lithuanian language while living abroad is a difficult task:

If you want that your child would speak Lithuanian, you need to visit Lithuania. When you read books, for example, some of children raise questions, some – not. It depends on the child. You read a tale and there are the words they do not understand and will not understand for a long time. And later, when they grow up, you don't read anymore and they don't learn these words. (Virginija)

During the fieldwork it was very visible how migrants' children, especially the younger ones, were gradually loosing their ability to speak Lithuanian language freely and getting the “foreign” accent. Parents also notice this change, but their reactions are different: some take efforts to teach children their native language skills, the others do not find this to be a problem and are happy about how prompt children are learning English – “very nice English language comes”. Therefore, how well a child will know his/hers native language depends mostly on the parents' efforts and decisions, because according to one informant,

[...] a child is not yet so conscious, for him is good there, where is good for him. (Sigita)

Despite migrants' assertions about speaking Lithuanian language at home, the fieldwork revealed that migrants' private space – home – is a place where actually several languages “meet”. One example of such situations is an ethnically mixed family, where husband or wife are English speaking

(Irish, English, American). It's common that they teach each other their native languages, but very often precisely English becomes dominant. The other example of the situations when you hear English in Lithuanian homes is because of younger children attending NI kindergartens, schools and having English speaking friends. With their parents they speak in Lithuanian language, but among themselves (with brothers, sisters, and friends) or even with themselves (when playing alone) children use more English. And again, some parents don't like such situations and make efforts to stop using English at home, and the others are quite happy or at least not worried about it. There are already families whose small children speak Lithuanian very poorly or almost do not speak at all.

In the public space – at workplaces, shops, governmental institutions, schools, hospitals etc. – Russian, Polish and English are used in order to communicate with migrants from other countries and local NI inhabitants. English is very important while living in NI, but it would be inaccurate to say that English for migrants functions as the main language of a public space or, more specifically, of a workplace. For example, despite the fact that the migrants' employers are mostly English or Irish, many colleagues at work come from other Eastern European countries or Lithuania, so Russian and/or Lithuanian might be used much more often than English. During the fieldwork it became evident that it was possible to survive in NI without English or only with minimal knowledge of it, because migrant can ask their friends, family members, colleagues, special organizations for migrants for the “language help”. If there is a need when going to doctors, court, filling forms etc. migrant with poor English language skills may apply for the “official interpreter”.

The large part of Lithuanian migrants in NI already have better or weaker knowledge of English, some of them attend different English language courses, but a general tendency is that English language skills among the majority of migrants remain very weak. Not all migrants have motivation to learn English or deepen their knowledge of it because of different reasons – “plans to return to Lithuania soon”, “I survive without it”, “I am lazy”, “it is too far to go to attend the language courses”, “it is too expensive to go”, “I am too tired after work” etc. There are a number of families where children speak much better English than their parents, so if there is a need these children are also used as “interpreters”, helping their parents to solve problems with landowners, doctors, employers etc.

Hence the knowledge of Lithuanian, Russian, Polish among the first generation of migrants might be seen as connecting them with the other migrants from Eastern Europe and the weak knowledge of English – as strongly separating from local NI inhabitants. So in the first case marker of language is employed to diminish boundaries against other migrants and identify with them, while in the latter case the (English) language marker is used for the retention of boundaries against English-speaking local NI inhabitants.

Though the above-mentioned remark is not valid for the growing second generation of Lithuanian migrants – children. Migrants' children knowledge of English (and of the local accents) links them more and more with local NI inhabitants (the boundary is diminishing). And their gradual losing of Lithuanian language skills already starts to burden their communication with other Lithuanians, for example, the ones living in Lithuania (relatives, grandparents), and it serves as a good example of development of a completely new boundary in comparison with their parents case.

Festivals: “our” and “their” festivals and traditions

Among the migrants' most celebrated festivals are the personal ones – birthdays – and the main national holidays like Christmas, New Year and Easter, sometimes – Saint Patrick or Halloween.

Still the majority of migrants admitted that they don't celebrate "their festivals" (festivals celebrated in NI), because they "don't understand them", "it is not our festivals", "I work during these festivals" etc. But the Halloween night, which is not popular in Lithuania at all, gains more popularity in the Lithuanian migrant families with small children. Also migrants very rarely commemorate such national Lithuanian state holidays as March 11th or February 16th, because "we don't know how...the patriotism should be taught from the childhood", "in Lithuania in the families nobody celebrates these", "it is not engrained in us" etc. Of course, not all migrants have possibilities to celebrate Christmas, New Year or Easter which are very important festivals in Lithuania, because of the type of work, especially if they work in the sectors of catering or hotels.

There is also a tendency to celebrate birthdays in "Lithuanian style" what means the celebration goes at home (in a house or a flat) with a bunch of people, lots of food and alcohol, that is, "not in Irish style", even though guests are of various nationalities. Occasionally migrants head to nightclubs or pubs after a pre-parting at home. Such birthday parties at home not always end peacefully – sometimes police is called by neighbours because of noise or too loud music; sometimes there start a bit of fighting among guests themselves.

A part of migrants use to return to Lithuania for celebration of Christmas or Easter. The migrants celebrating Easter or Christmas in NI say that they are longing for the type of festival "as in Lithuania" and are very happy if they manage to organize the celebration "almost the same as in Lithuania". Easter and Christmas may be celebrated in the ethnically homogenous circle, but it is not rare to have people of other nationalities as well. When there are some festivities organized to celebrate Easter or Christmas together, these events are mostly oriented towards children: children play Lithuanian folk games, sing folk songs, tell about customs, perform a play, dance, and get gifts and so on. In celebration of Christmas or Easter in NI not all the traditions are maintained: some elements are forgotten or just not followed (e.g. instead of dying eggs for Easter migrants buy chocolate eggs), some new "non Lithuanian" elements find place (e.g. specific Irish or English food), but one trait common for local NI inhabitants – going to pubs during the festivals – is not practiced and even not understood by Lithuanians.

Thus common celebration of different festivals at home (and not in pubs), the efforts to retain or to revive the Lithuanian holiday traditions and styles, ignorance of NI festivals and also teaching children about traditions, show the first generation migrants' identification with their home country culture and represent quite a strong boundary existing between Lithuanian migrants and local NI inhabitants. But the adaptation of new "non Lithuanian" elements, backsliding from Lithuanian traditions or their simplifications already indicate that this boundary has a tendency to weaken over the years.

In conclusion, this short analysis of the empirical data on the contemporary Lithuanian migrants in NI demonstrates how complex and situational might be migrants' identifications and construction of boundaries. The data basically supports Thapan remark about strong identity of first generation migrants³¹, but I would argue against the second part of the statement – the one-dimensionality of their identity. The empirical data discussed in this article in relation to three identity markers (Lithuanian background, language and festivals), even there are much more of such markers, already points out the small changes in migrants' identification layers: new experiences of migration and adaptation, multiple attachments, accommodation to the life in NI and the resistance to it, visits to Lithuania, transnationalism, – all this do have the visible influence on migrants identifications, loyalties, belongings. Because the identity of a transmigrant is multilayered, constantly written

³¹ See: THAPAN, M. (...) 2005.

and rewritten, simultaneously followed by the change and shift of various existing boundaries and content within them as well as by creation of the new ones.

And it is evident that even the first generation of Lithuanian migrants in NI already are on the quest for their identities trying to reconcile their roots and routes³², even though they might not be fully aware of this. It is not difficult to predict that over the years the small changes (e.g. in relation to the use of language, notions about citizenship and themselves, celebration of festivals, that were already observed during the fieldwork) in Lithuanian migrants' ethnic identity may become even more apparent. By the word "changes" I do not mean that ethnic identity will be lost or saved. What I have in mind is that after a several years we could get an interesting picture of what was lost and gained or even born "in translation" between people, cultures and countries in relation to identities of Lithuanian migrants' in NI: are they still "from Lithuania" or maybe already "locals", "migrants" or "citizens of the United Kingdom", "rooted" or still "on the route"?

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³² To paraphrase Clifford: "Diaspora discourse articulates, or bends together, both roots and routes construct..." (CLIFFORD, J. *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*. Cambridge, Massachusetts, London: Harvard University Press, 1997, p. 251.)

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BŪTI TRANSMIGRANTU ŠIANDIENINIAME PASAULYJE: LIETUVIŲ MIGRANTŲ IDENTITETO PAIEŠKOS

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Santrauka

Straipsnyje aptariama, kaip šiandieninio migranto, o tiksliau – transmigranto, identitetas (ypač pirmosios kartos) keičiasi veikiamas migravimo patirties. Thapan (2005) teigimu, pirmosios kartos imigrantai dažnai išlaiko ir atlieka tradicinius ritualus, prisiima vienadimensį ir tvirtą identitetą, tuo tarpu antroji karta savo identitetą jau įvardija ne tokiomis aiškiosiomis sąvokomis ir jaučia, kad jie yra priimančios visuomenės bei kultūros, kuria jie dalijasi, kuria ir vartoja, dalis.

Transmigrantai palaiko šeiminius, socialinius, ekonominius, religinius ir politinius ryšius su savo kilmės šalimi netgi jei jie emigravo į naują šalį ir tapo inkorporuoti į naują visuomenę, t. y.

faktiškai gyvena dviejose šalyse. Transnacionalizmo ir transmigracijos paradigma vartoja transnacionalizmo sąvoką būtent šio tipo tarptautinei migracijai (transmigracijai) bei tokių migrantų (transmigrantų) kasdienybei apibūdinti. Tačiau ne iki galo išplėtotas transmigranto apibrėžimas iki šiol kelia diskusijas, kokie migrantai ir kada gali būti apibrėžiami kaip transmigrantai. Straipsnyje lietuviai migrantai Šiaurės Airijoje traktuojami kaip transmigrantai.

Identifikacijos ribų brėžimas yra glaudžiai susipynęs su saistymosi, priklausymo, savęs apibrėžimo, „kito“ išskyrimo konstrukcijomis. Kiekvienas identitetas yra apibrėžiamas ar identifikacija vyksta ne vakuume, o socialiai – per asmenų interakciją, t. y. įvairios ribos yra konstruojamos per santykį (susisiejant ar atsiskiriant). Skirtingose situacijose suaktyvinami skirtingi identiteto klodai, lygiai taip pat skirtingose situacijose ribos gali tapti pralaidžios arba nepersmelkiamos. Nors šiandieninėje antropologijoje identiteto sąvoka yra traktuojama kaip probleminė, tačiau identifikacijos ribų idėja šiame straipsnyje matoma kaip naudingas analitinis įrankis analizuojant migracijos fenomeną.

Remiantis antropologinio tyrimo Šiaurės Airijoje duomenimis, diskutuojama, kaip kilmės, kalbos ir švenčių žymenys yra lietuvių migrantų (tiksliau – transmigrantų) naudojami saviidentifikacijai, priklausymui, riboms konstruoti.

1. Tai, kad dauguma migrantų iš Lietuvos neplanuoja atsisakyti Lietuvos pilietybės, save pristato kaip lietuvius ir nemano, kad įmanoma tapti airiais/anglais/vietiniais, – visa tai žymi ribų tarp vietinės visuomenės ir kitų migrantų grupių stiprinimą naudojantis kilmės kriterijumi. Tačiau taktiką pasikeisti savo sudėtingiau ištariamus vardus į „suanglintus“ bendraujant su anglakalbiais, kitoje aplinkoje išlaikant originalų vardą, greičiausiai reikėtų traktuoti kaip siekį susilpninti ribas tarp savęs ir vietinių Šiaurės Airijos gyventojų.

2. Migrantų lietuvių, rusų, lenkų kalbų mokėjimą galima įvardyti kaip vienijantį juos su migrantais iš Lietuvos ir kitų Rytų ir Vidurio Europos šalių bruožą, o anglų kalbos nemokėjimą – kaip vis dar stipriai skiriantį nuo vietinių Šiaurės Airijos gyventojų. Taigi, pirmuoju atveju identifikacijos ribos pasižymi pralaidumu saistantis su kitais migrantais, tuo tarpu antruoju ribos iš esmės išlieka nepralaidžios.

3. Švenčių šventimas namuose, pastangos išsaugoti ir atgaivinti lietuviškas šventimo tradicijas, Šiaurės Airijoje švenčiamų švenčių atmetimas, vaikų mokymas tradicijų ir pan. rodo migrantų identifikaciją su gimtosios šalies kultūra ir egzistuojančią mažai pralaidžią ribą tarp lietuvių ir Šiaurės Airijos gyventojų. Visgi „naujų“ nelietuviškų elementų švenčiant lietuviškas šventes atsiradimas, lietuviškų tradicijų pamiršimas arba nesilaikymas jau atskleidžia, kad minėtoji riba laikui bėgant silpnės.

Taigi, nors pasitvirtino dalis Thapan (2005) teiginio apie pirmosios kartos migrantų identiteto tvirtumą, tačiau empirinių duomenų analizė parodė, kad jis tikrai nėra vienadimensis. Atvirkščiai, migracinė ir adaptacinė patirtis, transnacionalizmas, kelionės į Lietuvą, prisitaikymas prie gyvenimo Šiaurės Airijoje stiliaus ir priešinimasis jam, – visa tai turi įtakos migrantų identifikacijos, lojalumo ribų konstravimui, ir po kurio laiko tai taps vis labiau matoma. Tad transmigranto identitetas yra daugiasluoksnis, nuolat perrašomas, kaip ir nuolat kintančios, braižomos ir perbraižomos, nykstančios ir kuriamos naujos ribos. Pirmosios kartos lietuviai migrantai jau ieško savojo identiteto, kuris galėtų sujungti šaknis ir naujus kelius, nors galbūt patys to dar gerai nesuvokia.