

REVISITING DISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVES

SOCIAL / CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY IN LITHUANIA: THE POLITICS AND PRACTICE OF THE DISCIPLINE *

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ABSTRACT

Social or Cultural Anthropology, in the Western sense, is little known territory in parts of contemporary East Europe. It is the case in Lithuania where biological anthropology traditionally claims the term anthropology for itself. Lithuanian ethnology and sociology partially fill the void normally covered by anthropology. There were definite political, academic and practical factors that stunted the growth of anthropology in Lithuania. The aim of this article is to identify these factors, and to define the sphere and the field of research and instruction, that should be allocated to anthropology. I seek also to present the case for an urgent need of the discipline to be established in the educational, research and applied frontiers of contemporary Lithuanian society. It has been even more complicated to establish the importance and capability of socio-cultural anthropology as a *separate* field of endeavour *vis-à-vis* Lithuanian ethnology. While socio-cultural anthropology in the West examined *the other* and *otherness*, there was no political interest for a newly independent nation-state in a discipline with a *wrong* focus.

KEY WORDS: social anthropology, cultural anthropology, ethnology, humanities, social sciences, soviet times, politization of the discipline, institutionalization of the discipline.

ANOTACIJA

Socialinė ir / ar kultūrinė antropologija vakarietiška prasme Lietuvoje menkai pažįstama. Dabartinėje Lietuvos socialinių ir humanitarinių mokslų sistemoje socialinės-kultūrinės antropologijos vis dar nesama. Jos teritoriją tradiciškai užima biologinė (fizinė) antropologija ir / arba etnologija. Straipsnyje aptariamas socialinės-kultūrinės antropologijos kelias į Lietuvos socialinių humanitarinių mokslų sistemą, nuo ilgametės vietinės etnologijos tradicijos, susitelkusios „į mūsų pačių savasties“ etnografinį studijavimą, iki ideologinių bei politinių standartų, įpavidalinusių etnologijos raidą nuo pat tarpukario iki šių dienų. Ypač atkreipiamas dėmesys į disciplinos politizavimą, tiek sovietmečiu, kai dominuojančiai ideologijai manipuluojant „liaudies tradicijomis“ jai oponavo nacionalizmas, tiek ir postkomunistiniu laikotarpiu, kai šalia „mūsų tradicijas“ studijuojančios etnokultūrinės orientacijos susiklostė globalų tarpkultūrinio palyginamumo požiūrį diegianti antropologija. Taip pat aptariamas socialinės-kultūrinės antropologijos nišos atsiradimas Lietuvos aukštosiose mokyklose bei socialinės antropologijos kaip studijų ir mokslo disciplinos institucionalizavimo raida.

PAGRINDINIAI ŽODŽIAI: socialinė antropologija, kultūrinė antropologija, etnologija, humanitariniai mokslai, socialiniai mokslai, sovietmetis, disciplinos politizavimas, disciplinos institucionalizavimas.

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Introduction

Social or Cultural Anthropology, in the Western sense, is little known territory in parts of contemporary East Europe. It is the case in Lithuania where biological anthropology traditionally claims the term anthropology for itself. Lithuanian ethnology¹ and sociology partially fill the void

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¹ Ethnology has two distinct meanings:

normally covered by anthropology. There were definite political, academic and practical factors that stunted the growth of anthropology in Lithuania.

The aim of this article is to identify these factors, and to define the sphere and the field of research and instruction, that should be allocated to anthropology. I seek also to present the case for an urgent need of the discipline to be established in the educational, research and applied frontiers of contemporary Lithuanian society.

The rapid impact of Westernization, the country's entry into European institutions, the perplexities of a multitude of new choices, all need the comparative understandings that anthropology can provide. Lithuania's market economy, a more and more open society with an emphasis on the local in the face of the global provides a good soil for anthropology to take root. The qualitative methodology of the discipline, furthermore, offers a bridge to a deeper understanding of the individual in society and a link to other disciplines that deal with the human condition. Nevertheless, all these possible problems for the discipline to tackle in are taken on by the other 'newly established' disciplines, which have multiplied in the region.

The Baltic States belong to a dynamic part of the 'New Europe', where institutional change is evident with restructuring of the educational system according to EU requirements. The education and research institutions in Lithuania show a rapid research and curriculum development in the social sciences. After the coming of independence in the early 1990s, sociology as well as political science and business administration gained recognition. The same happened to religious studies. However, it took much longer, more than a decade, for anthropology to be accepted in academia. Why?

One reason was the pre-eminence of Lithuanian ethnology, formerly of *Ethnography* (*Etnografija*) in the East European sense², or *Volkskunde* and biological anthropology. Both were in-

a) ethnology is synonymous with sociocultural anthropology (in the USA, France, Great Britain, Spain, Portugal, Holland); [actually ethnology was originally intended by Tyler to refer to cross cultural comparison using ethnographies-and still that meaning predominates in the U.S.].

b) ethnology is the study of culture (especially traditional) and daily life on a regional or separate country degree, also called European Ethnology (in the Central, Northern and Eastern European countries). Studying almost only its own country or region, European Ethnology, in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, essentially continues the German *Volkskunde* - folk culture studies - tradition and conjoins the neighbouring sciences of folkloristics and history. Meanwhile sociocultural anthropology either combining with sociology (in Poland, Hungary, and Latvia) or with European ethnology (in Poland and Russia) makes its first steps in this post-communist space (Čiubrinskas – 2004:61-62).

² Ethnography in *Volkskundian* as well as in Soviet scholarship understanding means collections and descriptions and has nothing to do with the Malinowskian revolution which brought 'presentism'. The latter was assumed as being 100 percent social science methodology rather strange for salvage ethnographies busy with memorial pasts.

'Ethnography' in that way was a field study of 'domestic exotics' to be found in the rural hinterlands of the nation-states, in Lithuania it got a name 'ethnic culture studies' which actually was and still is a substitute or synonym for ethnology, and bearers of the ethnic culture in this case are the Lithuanian nationals of the Lithuanian ethnicity.

'Ethnographic' data collecting was and is organised via expeditions-field trips on the spot spending some days even weeks in the area under research.

Such 'ethnography' was/is focused on the culture history and in many ways appeared as 'salvage ethnography of memory cultures'. It was busy to document cultures or traits and patterns of 'traditions', which were 'disappearing' or expected to disappear in the near future. General method in the field was description, gathering of data depended on verbal statements (tape recorded) recited by seated informants and on interviews with seated informants based on questionnaires.

tended to cover the field and methodology distinctive of sociocultural anthropology and followed the 'national scholarly tradition', which, according to the majority of state education policy makers, had to be observed.

Biological anthropology was not only established as an important and distinguished national field of studies, but became equated with sociocultural anthropology in practically all former Central/East European socialist countries. In some cases it became one of the prominent fields of study. In all aspects of scientific life (personnel, hierarchy of research themes, funding of research, etc.) physical anthropology has always been privileged (Godina 2002:4) to this day.

It has been even more complicated to establish the importance and capability of sociocultural anthropology as a *separate* field of endeavour *vis-a-vis* Lithuanian ethnology. Being rooted in *Volkskunde*, a discipline born of Romantic nation-state building ideology of Central/East Europe, it acted throughout most of the twentieth century and entered into the twenty-first as one of a central disciplines in national identity formation and national revival.

If Nordic ethnology *Folklivsforskning*, renamed into *European Ethnology* by the Swede Sigurd Erixon in 1930s, was strongly influenced by the American cultural anthropology in the 1960s, and was aware of innovations in social theory and opened the field to anthropologists, East European *Etnografija*, was focused instead on the exploration of "*our own* " culture, originally understood as *folk* or *traditional* culture in Lithuania or today phrased as *everyday-life* or as *ethnic culture* studies³.

While sociocultural anthropology in the West examined *the other* and *otherness*, there was no political interest for a newly independent nation-state in a discipline with a *wrong* focus.

Formation of anthropology: dominant ideologies and research paradigms

Several historical obstacles, in terms of the dominant ideologies, have stood in the way of establishing anthropology in Lithuania. For the last half of the last century, Marxism-Leninism disallowed any challenges to unilinear evolutionism, derived from Lewis H. Morgan by the way of Friedrich Engels, and established an ideological hegemony whose influence has continued in Eastern Europe almost until the present. Old-fashioned, unilinear evolutionism of the nineteenth century continued to dominate in Russian anthropology up to the early 1990s (Gellner 1980, 1988), and it remains even nowadays immensely influential among Russian anthropologists (Bondarenko & Korotayev 2003:235). However, during the interwar period the impact of nationalism and *Kulturgeschichte* were dominant ideologies and research paradigms and also made a significant in the formation of the discipline in Central/Eastern Europe, and later served as a counter-establishment ideology throughout the soviet regime.

Meanwhile, it is quite risky to consider Ethnology as a scientific discipline in Lithuania; it is often *not* considered a science. Instead, it is frequently referred to as a "bogus science", not only by lay people but also by its nearest colleagues the historians. "Science originates from the establish-

The outcome of such - Volkskundian or soviet ethnography was the ethnography of descriptions and accounts, treated as valid information blocks (data) to make generalisation after. These blocks were used almost without any filtering and interpretation of field-notes against comparative theory, but quite often it was done against contextual documentary materials.

³ 'Ethnic culture studies' (*etninės kultūros studijos*) - the most popular term to describe the field of expertise of the discipline of ethnology and folklore studies in Lithuania. In many cases it is a substitute or synonym for ethnology, as a scholarship which focuses on studying *the culture* which is locked in ethnicity. In this case the culture is supposed to be traditionally Lithuanian and its bearers are supposed to be ethnic Lithuanians.

ment of its object and from working out its methods not from the material that is randomly collected for it." (Greimas 1993:15). That is, contemporary Lithuanian ethnology has its roots in its material heritage: museum collections and documentary archives. This material heritage was inherited by Lithuanian ethnology and is frequently referred to as "ethnography"⁴ consisting as it does of mere descriptions of village traditions and accumulation of ethnographic material. According to Algirdas Julius Greimas, such "an ethnographic archive, organized by the independent efforts of countrymen is thereby heterogenic and can serve several ideological tendencies." (ibid.).

What ideological trends have monopolized the field of ethnological research remain to be discussed.

Lithuanian ethnology (*tautotyra*) during 1920s - 1930s

The first Institute of Ethnology, called *Zakład Etnologii* was established in 1924, in Polish at that time, Vilnius University. This institute was comprised of the Chair of Ethnology and of the Ethnographic museum. Professor Cezaria Baudouin de Courtenay-Ehrenkreutzowa (1885-1967), founder of the Institute, followed a descriptive-observational methodology. She considered the main aim of the Institute to be the organization of ethnographic field-research in the historical lands of the Great Duchy of Lithuania and the adjacent territories as well as the collection of artefacts for the museum. The well known Polish ethnologist of the time, Kazimierz Moszynski (1887-1959), brought from Krakow a socio-cultural evolutionist methodology that was quite out-of-date at the time. Although, according to one Moszynski's student, Pranė Dundulienė, who later became a professor of Ethnology at Vilnius University, Moszynski began to develop a more critical stance toward evolution. She wrote that "After combining the methodological concepts of evolutionism and diffusionism, he created a trend that was called *critical evolutionism*" (Dundulienė 1978:60-61).

Overall, the Polish period of Lithuanian Ethnology at Vilnius University left behind primarily ethnographical material, particularly on the Vilnius region that still remains on display in museum exhibits in Vilnius and elsewhere.

The second major step in developing Ethnology was the founding of the Chair of Ethnology *Etnikos katedra* in 1934 at Vytautas Magnus University (VMU) in Kaunas. *Etnika* was defined by Jonas Balys, undoubtedly the most prominent ethnologist-folklorist of the interwar period and of the Lithuanian emigration:

"The very name already shows that it is a science about nations - "*tautamokslis*". The part of *etnika* that studies us and our closest neighbours is "*tautotyra*". *Tautotyra* aspires to provide a real picture of the life of European nations, to understand the external and internal essence of every nation in its historical development..." (Balys 1934: 16).

As J. Balys sees it, "*tautotyra*" could be considered equivalent to German *Volkskunde* and Swedish *folklivforskning*.

Balys defended his Ph.D. at the University of Vienna, in the environment of the creator of the cultural-historical method in ethnology, Wilhelm Schmidt. As a scientist, Balys was an active opponent of both romanticism and evolutionism, and had striven to ensure the authenticity of re-

⁴ "The very fact that discipline was invariably called '*ethnografija*' produced a 'labelling effect'. Indeed, it was mostly ethnography in its pristine sense - i.e., 'description of the peoples'- rather than sociocultural anthropology. Most ethnographers mainly studied topics relating to material culture such as (ethnic) housing, food, clothing etc., in order to establish patterns of historic cultural evolution (ethnogenesis, etc.)" (Bondarenko & Korotayev 2003:235).

corded data and took great care in making research conclusions. Balys did put much stress on his cultural-historical perspective and a strong positivistic stance: "as there are no "iron laws" in the spiritual sphere (neither are there absolutes in the technical sphere), we therefore have to follow the historical method by first collecting facts, then evaluating them critically and only then making conclusions" (cf. Čiubrinskas 1993: 303).

The polemics between the two methodologies of evolutionism and the cultural - historical method could be considered as symptomatic of the maturity of ethnological studies in pre-war Vytautas Magnus University traces of which continued in the post-war soviet Lithuania and have some followers today.

Generally speaking, pre-war Lithuanian ethnology was dominated by local-regional descriptivism, the focus of which was museological – monumental type documentation of the cultural peculiarities of local people. Research was confined to folkloristic descriptions of local cultures or to the search of criteria of recurrence of ethnographic types of distinct artefacts or phenomena.

Soviet Ethnography: late 1940s-1980s

The first changes that the Soviets made have given the discipline a new name. In all the institutions that pursued the study of ethnology the term of *Etnografija* was introduced. Since 1932 in Soviet Russia ethnology, as well as sociocultural anthropology, had been proclaimed 'bourgeois pseudo-sciences' and their place was taken by ethnography (Bromlej 1989, Bondarenko & Korotayev 2003).

In Soviet Lithuania, *Etnografija* was defined as "a branch of the science of history which studies the peculiarities of and development of the material, social and spiritual cultures of the peoples" (Vyšniauskaitė 1964: 9). It should be noted that the *people's culture* both in pre-Soviet *Tautotyra* and in Soviet *Etnografija*, at least by the beginning of the 1980s, was mostly associated with the countryside, peasantry or Soviet collective farm peasants and the concept of culture itself corresponded closely, in ideology, to the romanticism of the 19th century.

Institutionally, ethnology as a discipline also became attached to the science of history. In 1945, it was established as a subdivision of Archaeology-Ethnography in the Institute of History at the Academy of Science, and since 1961 the Section for Ethnography became separate, but still a sub-field to history. This subsidiary role characterised Ethnology through the whole Soviet period, until the end of 1980s and some arrogant "pure" historians, working with *written* sources, considered ethnological studies merely "old wives' tales". Consequently, to be scientific, an ethnographer had to be a historian first not putting trust in the data collected using field research methods but verifying them on the basis of historical that is written, sources. Additionally one had to apply strictly Marxist historicism which, especially during the first post-war decades, was straightforward unilinear evolutionism, requiring researchers incorporate their results into evolutionary, almost organic stages, called "social orders." All the peoples of the world had to pass through those named stages. Ethnology, aspiring to its own scientific peculiarity, at best, could use the Soviet fraction of the cultural-historic methodology - the concept of *economic-cultural types* and *historical-geographic areas*, defined by Nikolaj Čeboksarov. Even these types and areas were understood as developmental stages determined by the mode of production. (Čeboksarovas & Čeboksarova 1977:137).

Since the late 1960s, unilinear evolutionism, under the impact of cultural materialism, turned into classical positivism, but still within the conceptual theoretical frame of historical mate-

rialism. However, in regard to the object and method of research, the underlying subject of study was the *antiquity of the countryside* as revealed through *ethnographic* methods. Researchers focused their attention on the descriptions, iconography and collection of antiquities found in the countryside. These antiquities were all categorized under the rubric of "folk traditions" and, because they were fast disappearing, were deemed in urgent need of collection. For the Lithuanian ethnologists it meant a truly patriotic mission of collecting *authentic* and *typical* survivals of Lithuanian folk antiquities. Their main motto was:

Folk antiquities are disappearing, old folk tradition performers are dying, therefore there is an urgent need for the salvaging of (i.e., the collection, restoring and maintenance of) what is left *in situ*; the analytic research meanwhile can be postponed for the following generations. (Milius 1999).

This motto was consistent, with the methodology of positivism that was dominant at the time, and it was reminiscent of the historical particularism school of Franz Boas in the United States. Additionally, this position was made consistent with the perspective of evolutionism, core of historical materialism, still central in the Lithuanian social sciences and humanities at the time. Evolutionism advocated the search for relics or survivals in the present while holding that these relics were authentic fragments of the past, 'social orders', according to Marxist schema. These relics held out the possibility of a comprehensive reconstruction of that past. But the Communist Party also obliged the ethnographers to undertake the recording/description of "material culture and labour traditions that bring progress and produce boon" especially concentrating on the studies of the "socialist present" (Milius 1992: 11).

Methodologies that had been applied effectively by Western scientists could neither be considered nor, of course, implemented, by scientists without approval from Moscow. Even conjectures over how to interpret contemporary everyday life were disallowed. Ethnologists, even in the studies of the traditions of the past, had to work "by order," being compelled to study, for example, material culture rather than, spiritual matters which considered "dangerous" to the regime.

Nationalist vs. socialist perspective in applied ethnology: manipulation of 'the tradition'

Lithuanian nationalism was a posture, however, that had an influence on ethnologists and their studies. Some of the research works were especially influenced by a romantic interpretation of Lithuanian traditions, and, true to their motto of collecting the *"antiquities of their own culture"*, sought to find traces of "truly traditional" Lithuanian culture and, went even deeper searching for "authentic traditions" of the pre-Christian Baltic past.

As at the end of the nineteenth century, manifestations of the *spirit of the nation*, in the forms of magic, rituals, myths and symbols were valued most highly. Despite scientific criticism, the recorded memoirs of a Soviet collective farm "peasant" might be seen as an echo of archaic traditions, and the patterns of home made cloths found in a Soviet collective farm village interpreted as archaic, authentic Baltic symbols.

Such an essentialist 'culture collecting' approach, as James Clifford terms it (Clifford 1988:231), also served as counter-establishment research strategy of the period. This research focus was counter-establishment, ideologically anti-Soviet and against Party imposed ideological guidelines to study only the overt materialist-cultural traditions. This formulation of a distant romantic past predating Soviet present, excluded Soviet dogma in theory and method and increased the importance of the role of applied ethnology (or ethnography) as well as of folklore studies.

Ethnographers were "in competition" to find "*the most archaic past.*" For this reason, many ethnologists would sometimes trespass the boundaries of the positivist analysis of *traditional folk culture* and even the boundaries of any academic discourse to reconstruct "deep cultural layers." They would claim to have found fresh *traces* of primeval ethno-genetic Lithuanian culture and attempt like contemporary history studies, to record or "fixate" the "a priori view of the past <...>and be the guardians of a collective memory [...] involved in actions aimed at protecting the nation" (Sužiedėlis 1996: 18).

There was an anti-establishment if not nationalist drive to make ethnology (as well as folkloristic) a relevant discipline that nurtured the Lithuanian traditional culture. The subject of research itself as well as the analytical experience of *national/folk* traditions implied the notion of relevance. A professional promise was nurtured to perpetuate Lithuanian ethnography collections as *authentic* texts or as compendia of standard national traditions. While being "scientifically esteemed," such compendia were suitable for practices and local practitioners of the traditional culture "nurturance" and "revival".

In its concern for folk culture and national traditions Lithuanian nationalist ideology of the 1960s-1980s was akin to that of the "culture builders" (Lofgren and Frykman 1987) among the Romantic intelligentsia at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century. The Herderian concept of *Volksgeist*, the "genuine folk spirit" enshrined in traditional culture and language, was invoked in both periods. The Romantic intellectuals of this period and the neo-Romantic revivalists of the 1960s-80s shared the same general attitude to folk culture, identifying it as the "peasants' culture" as "genuine", "ancient" and "traditional" and, eventually, "national" at the core (Čiubrinskas-2000a.:42). During the period of *perestroika* ethnic culture (*etninė kultūra*) gained a threefold definition: the name of Lithuanian traditional folk culture, the subject of the discipline of Lithuanian ethnology and 'the traditions' to be nurtured and reconstructed by professional ethnologists.

Ethnology (ethnography) of the Soviet period, therefore, functioned as an "applied" discipline and served two ideologies: counter-establishment nationalism and the dominant ideology that required an active participation of ethnologists (ethnographers) in the "creation of new, socialistic traditions." Since the general ideological line of the regime defined Soviet culture as "socialistic in content and national in form," the "forms" could be national (sanctioned, of course "from the top") whereas the content had to be new, but distinguished by anti-religious and socialist content. While organizing civil ceremonials of births (registering the name), marriages and funerals, for example, a certain dose of archaic local (i.e. Lithuanian) tradition was allowed, but there would be a strict selection of only those forms, 'invented traditions', whose content had passed muster with the Party guardians, would impeccably suit the Soviet nomenclature in their content.

To be involved in applied ethnology at the museum or folklore archive, to manipulate the logo of '*tradicinė liaudies kultūra*' (traditional culture of labouring masses) as a substitute for Lithuanian folk culture antiquities (traditions) was not complicated. Of course, much sophistication was needed to explain religious motives in that culture as aesthetic or somehow 'politically correct'. It was much more complicated to get scholarly publications through the censor and maintain your status as scholar. At a minimum, it was necessary to follow the methodology of historical materialism eventually refurbished into positivism. Ethnologists therefore paid tribute to the creation of Soviet traditions by offering *scientific advice* on how to standardize old cultural forms to mesh with the new content. The field itself was threatened by being turned into a tool for assimilation or dena-

tionalization, especially during the middle 1960s, when there was a drive to implement the Brezhnev ideology of the "fusion of nations". Ethnologists had to show that, for example, the lifestyle and consumption of Lithuanians working in towns and those on the collective farms were essentially the same when compared to workers from other "brotherly republics".

In sum, the two ideologies, competed with one another: the dominant one, working to create a socialist tradition and opposing it, a nationalist thrust, full of neo-Romantic zeal, striving to recreate the 'the golden past' and to secure a status quo for *survivals* of the traditional culture. This was particularly evident in the applied field of the discipline, where ethnologists worked as experts dealing in *folk traditions*.

Ethno-culturalization of ethnology during the *Singing revolution*

As was mentioned, the paradigm of 'authenticity', thoroughly well explored by positivism, enabled Lithuanian scholars to confront the Soviet establishment. The "authentic Lithuanian" traditions that were called by ethnologists "typical and specific local or regional cultural traits" were an effective counterbalance to the new, and therefore "inauthentic", Soviet culture that was brought into Lithuania. The search for genuine folk-culture roots of Lithuanian culture followed by the 'singing revolution' at the end of the 1980s *perestroika* period brought a time florescence for the ethnologists. There were so many offers from the increasingly free press to write articles on specific Lithuanian ceremonies, traditions and festivals that it was impossible to keep up with the requests.

During *perestroika* the discipline of Ethnology was renamed again as *ethnic culture studies*. It became a synonym for traditional Lithuanian folk culture and was publicly approved in the new post-Soviet school manuals:

The new Lithuanian school faces an important task to nurture ethnic culture, to encourage the recognition of its expressions by schoolchildren, to teach them values and perpetuate the traditions of ethnic culture. (Čepienė 1992: 3).

The "Singing revolution" showed the effectiveness of Lithuanian ethnology as an applied discipline and a scholarship that had resisted to the soviet regime. Essentially this was the situation from the late 1980s to 1991, and it has, of course, influenced the current attitudes to emerging of Social Anthropology, a quite different discipline with a comparative relativistic reach, a holistic concept of culture, not binding the observer to his or her roots, race, or bloodline.

Anthropologization of ethnology in the era of post-communism

In the era of post-communism quite a few East/Central European ethnological (former ethnographic) institutions changed their names to *ethnology and cultural anthropology*. The new label recognizes the fact that anthropology has lately become fashionable along with other trends in Western scholarship. Folklorists and ethnographers gave up their identities overnight, and, calling themselves 'anthropologists' offered courses in cultural history, folk culture and worldview. Former departments of ethnology (or ethnography, Volkskunde etc.) were now named departments of ethnology and cultural anthropology (Godina 2002:13).

Cris Hann has described this process of contemporary European Ethnology becoming national anthropology (Hann 2003). Its practitioners subscribe to the thesis that ethnology can be equated with social and cultural anthropology. They have taken to following nomenclature of the US, Brit-

ish and German anthropologists who understand ethnology, as it has been understood and practiced in the West, however as more or less a synonym of sociocultural anthropology. At the same time, there is distinction, acknowledged by many post-soviet scholars, between these two separate fields. The Slovenian anthropologist Vesna Godina points out that delimiting ethnology from anthropology rests on mostly unclear criteria. The modern paradigms of 'anthropology at home', 'anthropology back home', a 'native anthropology' or 'indigenous ethnology' were not recognized by the Central/East European ethnologists, she questioned, as new (Godina 2002). The East European ethnologists' point of view is that, in so far as West European anthropology no longer insists on *otherness* as its subject of study, their approach is sociocultural and always has been. The praxis in post-socialist countries, therefore, is marked by a tendency to equate "reclassified" ethnology with anthropology, a tendency directly linked to the 'money and power dilemma'(Godina 2002:9). It has become both fashionable and gain-full to use the label of anthropology to attracting prestige and raise funds.

There remains a clear difference, nevertheless, in all East European countries between ethnology, with its long and recognized tradition, and sociocultural anthropology which lacks, in most cases, any tradition at all (Godina 2002:7). Gathering, collecting, describing and registering expeditions of ethnologists and long term fieldwork which includes participant observation, done by anthropologists is different not only in amount of time spent in the field but also in content, orientation and research paradigms such as synchronic investigation and comparative methods. The Czech anthropologist Peter Skalnik points very clear that the discipline of anthropology does not appear with a formal change of the name.

Those who maintain that ethnology(ethnography) is a synonym for anthropology and therefore anthropology is not actually needed, underestimate the strength of the historical sciences tradition, for they must know well that by making no distinction they automatically - in the specific conditions of Central/East Europe - help to preserve the ancient regime (that is soviet system - V.C.) (Skalnik 2002: VII-VIII).

Beginnings of sociocultural anthropology

In 1989, with the support of Lithuanian-Americans several initiatives have been taken to re-open the Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas as the first modern Western university in Lithuania. In 1990, the Department of Anthropology was founded there with a support from the Lithuanian Diaspora in the US and Canada. The first two presidents were Lithuanian-Americans and set up a system modelled on the North American university with a strong emphasis on English, and a foreign-faculty-friendly attitude. The head of the Anthropology Department, Liucija Baškauskas and the three other anthropologists of Lithuanian background, from the US and Canada were started to give instruction in cultural anthropology including an integrated introductory course. Before the program in anthropology was fully established, however, after two years of operation, the Department was re-structured (Anglickienė 2001)) and integrated into the newly-formed, but actually old fashioned, *Volkskunde* focused department of Ethnology and Folklore Studies. It was a step towards conformity with the predominantly 'nationalist' educational politics in the country. A highly placed academic commented on the decision suggesting that:

... we don't need to be taught about Africa: there is an urgent need to learn about our traditions instead. Even more so, we should learn more about our traditions because they are dying and the former, Soviet regime was not in favour of studying it. (Sauka 1999).

The second attempt to found an anthropology program was at Vilnius University in 1991-2003. Since the beginning of 1990s several steps were taken for adopting sociocultural anthropology at the History Faculty of Vilnius University. Vytis Čiubrinskas started to teach an introductory course in sociocultural anthropology. Contacts were established with anthropological programs at Lund, Copenhagen and in London in the years 1995-1998. This made a crucial impact on the curriculum development of the history program by expanding its orbit to include courses in anthropology. The co-operation and TEMPUS, later SOCRATES, student/teacher exchange program with Lund and Copenhagen anthropology departments made it possible for two students, Vilnius University graduates, to get their MA in Social Anthropology at Lund University. At one time there were four anthropology faculties and four to six courses in anthropology taught in the Culture History Department. In 1996, an unofficial Centre for Social Anthropology and Ethnology was founded. Scandinavian colleagues donated books in anthropology. The Soros Foundation granted research funds for programs on ethnic minorities. Weekly research seminars at the Centre on 'Current issues in Sociocultural Anthropology' were organized in 2000 and continued for four years.

The 1996-2002 year period saw the expansion of anthropology borders. The first International Nordic-Baltic School of Anthropology for research students was organised in 1996. Credit courses for Ph.D. students were given by Jonathan Friedman in 2000 and Steven Sampson in 2001. Since 2001 the number of anthropology courses at Vilnius University increased with the launching of the new B A Program in Cultural History and Anthropology. International teaching -including distance learning courses given simultaneously for Copenhagen and Vilnius students -were under way to being established on a permanent basis. It was hoped that eventually this program would split into two separate programs and the first independent anthropology studies program in Lithuania will emerge.

However, in spite of the fact that the anthropology program was extremely popular and attracted some excellent students, it was largely abandoned. It was felt in some quarters in the Faculty of History that anthropology failed to "integrate" into history and, in fact, "competed" with it. In 2003 the discipline was reduced to a minimum and the Centre was closed down.

Defining a research niche for the anthropology

Research activities in the field of sociocultural anthropology have been stunted by a general ignorance in the country of its potential and the general perception of "culture" as intellectual achievement or confusion with national "ethnic culture". Small wonder then, that sociocultural anthropology in its Western guise, a discipline with a comparative, relativistic reach, a holistic concept of culture, not binding the observer to his or her roots, race, or bloodline, has not found a ready soil in the academic world or among the intelligentsia. Some academic authorities have called anthropology 'an American concoction' asserting that 'we have our own tradition'. In the widely-read journal 'Domains of Culture' (Kultūros barai), a round-table discussion reported in 1999 and titled "Does Lithuania need Sociocultural Anthropology?" raised a question: 'couldn't Lithuanian ethnologists do what anthropologists do?' implying equivalence between home-bred ethnology and 'cosmopolitan' anthropology (Čiubrinskas 2000). Sociocultural anthropology was assumed as a field of scholarship with no 'tradition in the spectrum of national science development'. One of the participants questioned:

Do we really need this novelty? Are we not capable of achieving these proposed aims within existing research fields and institutions and within existing resources and research? (Sauka 1999).

These attitudes are by no means universal, but they provide cash-starved university administrators with ready-made arguments why yet another department, centre, or program should not be set up, which would duplicate potential analogues already in existence.

At the same time the terms *anthropology*, *social anthropology* and *cultural anthropology* have gained a currency, that bespeak a mistaken understanding: more a theoretical perspective than a separate academic discipline. Fascination with sociocultural anthropology has led folklorists and ethnographers to give up their identities and call themselves 'anthropologists'; academic courses in cultural history, folk culture and worldview were being offered under the name of 'anthropology'. The lack of confidence in sociocultural anthropology as a discipline within the Lithuanian academic world is due to several reasons:

First of all it is the uncertain position of anthropology and its location between humanities and social sciences. Seen from the humanities - history, Lithuanian ethnology, folklore studies, cultural studies perspective it is the methodological prejudice against 'a-historic' or even 'anti-historic' focus of social and cultural anthropology. Seen from the local social sciences point of view anthropology appears too much bound in qualitative analysis.

Second, the nationalist ideology and politics of rebuilding the nation-state, in early 1990s, promoted 'national' disciplines - Lithuanian history, language, folklore by reinforcing their role as 'identity cornerstones' while dismissing 'globalizing' ones, like anthropology, for 'not being in focus'. 'Home-bred ethnology' against 'cosmopolitan' anthropology is such a stance that enables the 'national' and well established disciplines to monopolize some basic social science categories such as 'ethnicity' or 'culture' by including them in the curriculum of the newly emerged discipline of 'Lithuanian ethnic culture studies' and teaching courses such as 'Cultural anthropology of Lithuanians'.

Third, sociocultural anthropology was almost unknown in Lithuania until the 1990s: there were no local professionals educated as anthropologists and scarcely any anthropological fieldwork research conducted in the country. Nevertheless from the early 1990s Lithuania attracted some anthropologists from the West. As was mentioned, Lithuanian-Americans had been the first to start teaching anthropology, and they were among the first to conduct research here. The first anthropologist to teach anthropology on a regular basis in 2001 was Romas Vaštokas (Vaštokas 2005), the first anthropology textbook in translation appeared in 1993 (Harris 1993), the first monograph based on ethnographic fieldwork done by the Danish anthropologist Pernille Hohnen, during the late 1990s, appeared in 2003 (Hohnen 2003).

But still at present, public understanding of the problems facing the Lithuanian community comes, to a large extent, from sources that have not examined them at the grass-root level and are not professionally prepared to suggest solutions. Sociological surveys are still predominant in the field instead as well as public commentaries. In contrast to that, such analytical instruments as fieldwork, holism, and global comparison, provided by the discipline of anthropology are major that probes to understand the urgent problems.

Finally, there was little to no interest to launch anthropology programmes or even to include sociocultural anthropology as a subject in curriculum development of the country's higher education or university programs. There was no success to 'form the structure' at Vilnius University despite efforts of a small local interest group to attract colleagues from other countries to come and teach anthropology in Lithuania and the anthropological research was carried out by foreign anthropologists. One anthropologist from Japan, five from the US, three from Canada and two from

Denmark worked in Lithuania, worked in the field on. Processes of social transformation; the interaction of economic and moral factors at the *Gariūnai* market; the ethnic identity of Lithuanian Karaites; and the problematic of social gender change and problems of ethnic and cultural minorities. Based on these studies, doctoral dissertations have been defended at the Universities of Copenhagen and Concordia in Montreal.

At present, anthropologists from USA, Denmark and Germany continue research on the phenomenon of "the new rich"; on social memory and regionalism in the Neringa district; and work is being done in the area of cognitive anthropology.

Postscript

While the Vilnius anthropology offerings still functioned, the Lithuanian Anthropological Association was founded (2003) and in the same year the first ever international conference of anthropologists was organized, appropriately titled "Defining Ourselves: Establishing Anthropology in the Baltic States". There were scholars from all the Baltic rim countries as well as England, Canada and the USA. The topics ranged over the proper definition of the discipline, the subject matter of our enquiry, the urgency of understanding the post-soviet "transition", and, of course, the need for teachers and the training of students. At the concluding round table the Sociology Department at Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas offered to establish an Anthropology program.

The MA Program in Social Anthropology was developed by Ron Vaštokas and Vytis Čiubrinskas with the support of the sociologist Jolanta Kuznecovienė. Ideas for the Program and its future expansion (there is a provisional plan to create the Baltic MA in Anthropology) were provided by Finn Sivert Nielsen, University of Copenhagen, Steven Sampson, Lund University, as well as the other participants at the Nordic-Baltic Anthropology Network group meeting, held in December 2003 at the University of Latvia in Riga. The academic experience kindly shared by the colleagues in Scandinavia and in the US, in particular by Jonathan Hill, the Chair of the Department of Anthropology at the Southern Illinois University also made an impact on the shape of the Program. In the spring of 2004, the Senate of Vytautas Magnus University and the Lithuanian Ministry of Science and Education approved the Program.

Kaunas University is a new, small, post-soviet institution with a strong "Anglo-Saxon" bias, and a flexible teaching agenda to accommodate visiting faculty. The small M. A. program, with specialization in "transition" issues, is now in its second year, is attracting considerable student interest and taps all the available teaching talent at home and abroad. The program plans to expand in both directions, become an autonomous department, attract students and faculty from neighbouring countries and is awaiting the return of young Lithuanian anthropologist completing their Ph. D's in several Western universities: Donatas Brandišauskas (University of Aberdeen), Mantas Kvedaravičius (Oxford University), Jurgita Saltanavičiūtė (Oklahoma University) etc. It appears to be a permanent beachhead that, after earlier unsuccessful attempts, looks forward to establishing the discipline in Lithuania in the academic world and training professionals to address the multitude of issues in a society undergoing strains of fundamental change and searching for new structures and stability.

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SOCIOKULTŪRINĖ ANTROPOLOGIJA LIETUVOJE: POLITIKA IR PRAKTIKA

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Santrauka

Socialinė ir / ar kultūrinė antropologija vakarietiška prasme Lietuvoje menkai pažįstama. Dabartinėje Lietuvos socialinių ir humanitarinių mokslų sistemoje socialinės-kultūrinės antropologijos vis dar nesama. Jos teritoriją tradiciškai užima biologinė (fizinė) antropologija ir/arba etnologija. Reikia skirti dvi etnologijos termino reikšmes: 1) sociokultūrinės antropologijos sinonimas (JAV,

Prancūzijoje ir kt. Vakarų Europos šalyse), 2) kultūros (ypač tradicinės) ir kasdienybės studijos regioniniu ar atskiros šalies mastu (Vokietijoje ir kt. Vidurio / Rytų Europos šalyse).

Lietuvos įstojimas į Europos Sąjungą bei globalizacijos procesai kelia naujus iššūkius. Išskyla poreikis juos suprasti lyginamojoje pasaulinėje tarpkultūrinėje perspektyvoje. Baltijos šalys, kaip itin dinamiškas vad. Naujosios Europos regionas, pasižymi mokslo ir studijų pertvarkymais. Čia išvirtino daugybė naujų, sovietmečiu „nežinomų“ disciplinų, pvz., verslo vadyba ar politologija, tačiau antropologijos neatsiranda. Kyla klausimas – kodėl?

Šiame straipsnyje būtent ir nagrinėjamos socialinės-kultūrinės antropologijos kelias į Lietuvos socialinių humanitarinių mokslų sistemą, nuo ilgametės vietinės etnologijos tradicijos, susitelkusios „į mūsų pačių savasties“ etnografinį studijavimą, iki ideologinių bei politinių standartų, įpavidalinusių etnologijos raidą nuo pat tarpukario iki šių dienų. Ypač atkreipiamas dėmesys į disciplinos politizavimą, tiek sovietmečiu, kai dominuojančiai ideologijai manipuliuojant *liaudies tradicijomis* jai oponavo nacionalizmas, tiek ir postkomunistiniu laikotarpiu, kai šalia *mūsų tradicijas* studijuojančios etnokultūrinės orientacijos susiklostė globalų tarpkultūrinio palyginamumo požiūrį diegianti antropologija. Taip pat aptariamas socialinės-kultūrinės antropologijos nišos atsiradimas Lietuvos aukštosiose mokyklose bei socialinės antropologijos kaip studijų ir mokslo disciplinos institucionalizavimo raida.

Straipsnis baigiamas aptariant disciplinos įtvirtinimą Vytauto Didžiojo universitete Kaune, kur 2004 m. įkurta Socialinės antropologijos magistro studijų programa, o 2005 m. – Socialinės antropologijos tyrimų centras.

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