

VYTAUTAS MAGNUS UNIVERSITY

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**CONSTRUCTION OF IDENTITIES
IN TRANSNATIONAL MIGRATION:
CONTEMPORARY IMMIGRANTS FROM LITHUANIA
IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

Summary of Doctoral Dissertation

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VYTAUTO DIDŽIOJO UNIVERSITETAS

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**IDENTITETŲ KONSTRAVIMAS
TRANSNACIONALINĖJE MIGRACIJOJE:
ŠIUOLAIKINIAI IMIGRANTAI IŠ LIETUVOS
JUNGTINĖSE AMERIKOS VALSTIJOSE**

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**CONSTRUCTION OF IDENTITIES
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INTRODUCTION

In 1991, when the Independence of the Republic of Lithuania was reestablished, there were 3.7 million inhabitants in the country, but according to the data of the latest 2011 Census, there were 3.054 million inhabitants in Lithuania. V. Stankuniene (2011) summarized the data provided by the Lithuanian Department of Statistics and stated that from 1990 to 2010 315,000 people declared emigration from Lithuania. If undeclared and illegal emigration were taken into account as well, it could be concluded that during the period mentioned above, approximately 600 thousand people emigrated from Lithuania. Although migration statistics evaluation methods provide a possibility to evaluate the real situation with precision (Stankuniene 2011), it is, nevertheless, difficult to talk about reliable and accurate statistical data, because the data from the Migration Department under the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania and the Lithuanian Department of Statistics often differ, and journalists, academics, foreign Lithuanian communities, and Statistics Departments of host countries all provide divergent data concerning migration. The mentioned situation emerged because of illegal migration flows, when the migrants do not declare their departure.

The total emigration flow trends followed in the public space are clear – with the laws of the free market economy coming into effect, with the cancellation of limits to migration, and especially upon Lithuania's entrance into the European Union in 2004, some Lithuanian inhabitants have emigrated without plans of returning to live in Lithuania; others have continually been going abroad for seasonal work; still others have emigrated with plans to return to Lithuania upon gaining money and experience; there are cases of remigration as well. Emigration processes necessarily influence the economic, social and demographic life of Lithuania.

The relevance of the emigration topic is strengthened by the attention given in the mass media to various life stories of people who emigrated from Lithuania and established themselves in different foreign countries and their ambiguous position toward Lithuania and the emigration processes in general. In the new place, the “moved” (liet. “išjudėję”) people tend to communicate with people of a similar ethnic background, but sometimes the situation is opposite and the vicinity of fellow-countrymen is avoided. Here the questions arise: why, in what circumstances, and how do immigrants from Lithuania in the host country (not)befriend, (not)cooperate, (not)communicate and (not)bond with people of the same ethnic background, with the main community of the host country, and with other ethnic groups living in the country? Why does the contact with the country of origin, from which the person emigrated either become more intensive, is maintained or terminated? That is to say, how do the contemporary immigrants from Lithuania construct their identities in the USA?

This doctoral thesis distinguishes between two categories of people with Lithuanian origins in the USA: a) contemporary immigrants from Lithuania are those who migrated to the USA after the independence of Lithuania was reestablished, in other words they are economic migrants or *post-1990 arrivals* (liet. *trečiabangiai*), *new migrants* (liet. *naujieji migrantai*), *contemporary migrants* (liet. *šiandieniniai migrantai*); b) the American Lithuanian category is comprised of political migrants who left at the end of World War II, fleeing from the Communists regime, or *displaced persons* (liet. *dipukai*) and their children. By our definition the American Lithuanian category also includes 19th century economic migrants, *greenhorns* (liet. *grynoriai*), and their descendants, although very few of them were met during the research. Therefore, the differences between the first two emigration waves from Lithuania – at the end of the 19th century and during World War II - were not accentuated and these waves are presented as the illustrative context to develop the thesis topic about the contemporary immigrants from Lithuania.

Thus the scientific **problem** of this thesis is formulated by the following questions:

- Because of what reasons and how do the contemporary immigrants from Lithuania in the United States bond or do not bond among themselves, with American Lithuanians, with the host country and with the country of origin?

- How important are the Lithuanian community and other ethnic organizations to contemporary immigrants from Lithuania and American Lithuanians in the United States for creating and retaining social relations, providing social services to the immigrant families and their children, and keeping relations with the native country?
- In what forms does inclusion and acculturation of contemporary immigrants take place in the USA, depending on one's association or dissociation with the country of origin?

The **object** of the study. The identity formation in the United States of America of the contemporary immigrants from Lithuania in various ethnic organizations of the Lithuanian community, through their relationships with American inhabitants of different nationalities and with Lithuania, or, in other words, identity construction in transnational migration.

The main **goal** of the study. To identify the configurations of constructed identities of the contemporary immigrants from Lithuania, which can be sensed in the ethnic organizations of the Lithuanian community in the United States of America, in relationships with inhabitants of different nationalities in America, and in transnational ties with Lithuania.

Tasks of the thesis:

- To perform a theoretical analysis of concepts of transnationalism, transnational migration, transnational community and their meaning in the research of migration processes by stressing the capacity and association of the migrating people with the surrounding people.
- To analyze the theoretical concepts of cultural, ethnic and institutional identities of the migrants, opening various possibilities to study the identity construction of the migrants.
- To identify the main ethnic spaces in the United States of America, where contemporary immigrants from Lithuania create and prove socio-cultural identity in one form or another.

- To empirically research the social relations of contemporary immigrants amongst themselves, with American Lithuanians and with surrounding members of the society of the United States.
- To define the forms of keeping ties with Lithuania as the country of origin, that can influence the decision of the part of the immigrants to come back to Lithuania or to be transmigrants instead of assimilating into the host country.
- To identify dominant “Lithuanian” identity configurations of the contemporary immigrants from Lithuania in transnational migration.

Methods of the work. Analysis of scientific literature, in which the theoretical paradigms of transnationalism and identity are discussed; migration and identity research and their correlation and importance to the development of the topic of my thesis are reviewed.

Empirical data analysis. Empirical data for this thesis was gathered by performing an ethnographic field study in two stages. An exploratory field study was done in March, 2007 on the West Coast of the USA, in California (CA): San Diego, Santa Monica, Los Angeles, Mission Viejo, and Orange County. The main field study was done in April-June, 2008, on the East Coast: New York (NY), Pittsfield (MA), Jersey City (NJ), Philadelphia(PA.), Brattleboro (VT) and in the Central part: Chicago (IL).

The **structure** of the thesis. The thesis consists of 7 parts. In the introduction the relevancy of this topic, the problem of the thesis and its scientific novelty are presented, and a short introduction of the United States of America as the immigrants’ target country is added. The aim, object, and tasks of the thesis are formulated, methods used are presented, and the key concepts used in the thesis text are defined. A broad review of literature regarding questions of Lithuanian identity and emigration from Lithuania is presented, and the characteristics of the emigration waves that are important to this thesis are described.

In the theoretical part (I.) the key perspectives of transnationalism and transnational spaces were introduced and theoretically validated. These theoretical approaches, were meaningful for analyzing the nuances of contemporary migrants’ movements with an aim to understand why the migrants move, how, and in which forms

they establish themselves in foreign societies. The theoretical aspects of migrant identity formation in transnational migration were analyzed, which provide a wide analytical perspective that cannot be reduced to the construction of a narrow, one-sided image of the migrants.

In the methodological part (II.) the methods used for data collection in the anthropological field study were discussed, as well as their importance; a lot of attention was paid to a reflexive consideration of the field study, which validates the appropriateness of the anthropological approach for the analysis and presentation of this thesis topic.

In the part of empirical data analysis (III.) a detailed introduction to the stages of establishment of contemporary immigrants from Lithuania in the United States of America is provided. The creation of social relationships and interactions with the host country, its inhabitants and other immigrants of post-socialist origin in the USA, as well as with representatives of the same emigration wave and American Lithuanians, the maintenance of ethnic spaces, in which the identification with Lithuanian people of the same origin is being created, maintained or rejected, as well as keeping up transnational relations with Lithuania – all of these elements are very important for the formation of identities in transnational migration. The empirical part was concluded with the most important, conclusive part of the created and dominant configurations of the contemporary immigrants from Lithuania who moved to America.

At the end of thesis are conclusions, bibliography, and the annexes.

Novelty of the thesis. The novelty of the thesis is that it crystallizes the main tendencies of identity configurations of one ethnic group of the United States of America – contemporary immigrants from Lithuania. Research was done according to an anthropological methodology and the theoretical perspective of transnationalism, which have been quite rarely used in Lithuanian migration studies. The data regarding the migration processes of contemporary immigrants from Lithuania to the USA, the context of the host country, and certain ethnic spaces created in the host country where social relationships with surrounding people and people of the same origin are up kept– was gathered using the “emic” perspective. It is important to notice that people from various social strata, different education, age, and gender participated in our

research; some of them had contacts with the Lithuanian ethnic community, and others did not.

An important accent of the thesis is a direct fixation of the forms of transnationalism practiced by contemporary immigrants from Lithuania, which answers why a part of the contemporary migrants do not become involved in transnational practices. Migration policy-makers and lobbyists who initiate the development of strategies for more productive economic and cultural cooperation with emigrants from Lithuania living in foreign countries, should pay attention to such practical and applicable aspects, as well as representatives of anthropology, sociology and other social sciences, who study identity and migration. We hope that this thesis will contribute to furthering and deepening theoretical and practical discussions on migration by highlighting the creation and recreation of the “Lithuanian” identity of contemporary immigrants from Lithuania who participate in transnational migration.

CONCLUSIONS

1. In a time of globalization and intensifying migration it is very important to understand the directions, intensity, localization and transnationalism of how 'moving' people's identities are constructed and conditioned by migration processes. Hence, anthropologic field studies are undoubtedly important not only for addressing questions of immigrant integration, acculturation and rising conflicts with surrounding people, but also primarily because they can provide explanations of immigrants' decisions, needs, self-understanding, relationships, and thereby further the discussion about the change of living place.

In this thesis one immigrant group of the United States was analyzed, with the aim of focusing on the identity construction of contemporary immigrants from Lithuania, namely, *trečiabangiai*. By discussing their labor activities, the steps they take to establish themselves in the USA, their selectively created social relations and the links they forge with surrounding people, local Americans, other people of the same emigration wave from Lithuania, as well as with immigrants from other post-socialist countries, we compared the *trečiabangiai* with the first and the second wave immigrants from Lithuania. The contemporary immigrants' from Lithuania involvement with or disassociation from the ethnic organizations that were created, attended and supported by people of various emigration waves from Lithuania was analyzed. An important accent of the thesis is the analysis of the forms of transnational activity and of maintaining relations with Lithuania.

2. After analyzing theoretical approaches and paradigms of transnationalism, we found out that most theoreticians (e.g. Glick Schiller, Basch and Blanc – Santon 1995, Faist 2000, Svašek 2002, Glick Schiller 2005, Vertovec 2009) define transnationalism as the process or state in which the deliberate choices of migrating people become very important. Transnationalism as a state is concurrent with globalization processes where booming and accessible communication technologies have enabled people to cross borders in other ways in addition to the physical one. Rephrasing S. Vertovec (2009) and M. Svašek (2002) we can state that migrants, participating in transnational processes should understand that it is not necessary to belong to a particular locality or particular country; successful integration in the host

country is possible at the same time as one remains integrated in the life of the country of origin. In other words, transnationalism reveals the possibilities of migrating people to live not in a “place”, but in a “space” among several states and question the necessity of loyalty to just one state.

Transnationalism, as a theoretical approach, is presented in this thesis as one of the most meaningful approaches for considering the value of social connections to the migration processes. This approach allows one to better grasp the nuances of how contemporary immigrants or transnational agents connect with each other, with the surrounding people in the host country, and with the native country. In short, it helps to grasp the dominant identity configurations of contemporary immigrants from Lithuania who moved to the USA.

In this thesis transnational migration is understood as the movement of people across states’ borders, while staying connected with the country of origin. We agree with the opinion of Faist (2000) that such transnational processes usually take place in three forms: contacting with close people of the native country while being in the host country, traveling to the country of origin, and – the third form – participation in the immigrants’ community organizations, created by the people with the same country of origin. Participation in the transnational migration process usually creates uncertainty about the future and raises questions about one’s origins and background as well as about one’s loyalty, dependence or nonconformity to one or other country or nation. For this reason participants of transnational migration make efforts to create a transnational “home” – close, psychologically safe spaces that cross over the borders of a state.

After analyzing the transnational community as a theoretical perspective and agreeing with Adamson (2002) and Hernes (2004), we can state that transnational communities are formations spanning several states as networks with flexible “borders,” which involve immigrants communities’ organizations as well as organized and non-organized initiatives in the native country that seek to cooperate with emigrants. For the existence of such networks, voluntary activity based on similar values, is very important.

3. Reviewing the theoretical collective identity paradigms of social anthropology and sociology we can state that the identity constructed by migrants in

transnational migration is a processual formation (Gupta and Ferguson 1992, Hall 1996) - which is mobile, often culturally (Baumann 2002), ethnically (Barth 1996), and institutionally (Castells 2004, Čiubrinskas 2008b) affected, and able to take on different forms and aims, such as representing one's ascription or non-ascription to the particular group, comparison, categorization, stereotyping, and creating or recreating a variety of ties with places, people and the past.

Applying the identity theoretical approach in this thesis allows the possibility of considering the "emic" perspective to research the most important aspects of how the contemporary immigrants from Lithuania establish themselves in the US. These aspects include: various forms of bonding among themselves and with surrounding people in the host society, the aims of forging social relations, as well as reasons for not bonding but rather drawing "boundaries" between themselves and "strangers", as well as forging ties with the country of origin. At the same time, this perspective allows one to reveal the variety of identities of the researched immigrant group, as well as the different aims, contexts, and intensity of their construction.

Both the theoretical identity paradigm and an anthropological methodology allow us to conclude that transmigration processes do not create universal and unambiguous identities, but rather, highlight the complex, complicated, multiple, variegated and multi-layered contours of the identities.

4. The participation of contemporary immigrants from Lithuania in the organizations created by the people of the same origin, contributes to the creation of their socio-cultural identity that is confirmed in ethnically isolated spaces. The findings showed that attending ethnic Lithuanian schools, churches and associated *parishes* where mass is held in Lithuanian, American-Lithuanian community organizations, various ethnic clubs, camps, Lithuanian bars, restaurants, and shops reveals the engagement of the contemporary immigrants to seek out people of the same origin and forge ties with people of a similar fate. The immigrants seek to know or to remember the history of their country of origin, and the customs and traditions for celebrating festivals; likewise, they seek to spread the "Lithuanian spirit" that would not let the children of immigrants or the people of Lithuanian origin *become Americans*. They simultaneously seek to confirm/create an emotional attachment to the ethnic background as well as create the basis for the transnational process.

Ethnic “Lithuanian” organizations in New York usually perform a double function. Each organization hosts formal and declared religious, educational, sports, entertainment and cultural events and activities. The secondary function of these organizations is very important as well: they are of practical use to the contemporary immigrant as they help them to adapt to the foreign environment or provide opportunities for self-realization.

If the declared purposes of the *parishes* and Lithuanian schools are focused on fulfilling the social and practical needs of the Lithuanian community in the United States, so too the formal activities of Lithuanian community organizations aim *to help Lithuania* as well. These organizations can be described as missionary because donations are collected and packages are prepared for Lithuanian schools, hospitals, and museums; moreover, they cooperate with artistic groups from Lithuania. This is a direct example of the transnational process, when participating transmigrants construct and validate their Lithuanian identity.

Although the majority of active “Lithuanian” ethnic organizations in the United States were established by the members of the first and the second migration waves, our research showed that during the last ten years there are more initiatives of the contemporary immigrants – the members of the third wave – to create new organizations, to organize leisure activities that gather together fellow countrymen, to continue the traditions of Lithuanian schools by highlighting the importance of Lithuanian education and inculturation of those children whose parents migrated from Lithuania. Nevertheless, there are very few such active people, who establish the organizations, organize events and help the organizers. A relatively small part of the contemporary migrants are passive participants of established organizations, who attend events only during the biggest festivals. They tend to explain their inactiveness in the Lithuanian community organizations by blaming the felt competition between *displaced people* and *trečiabangiai*. In their view, it is unacceptable to have a binding membership, especially based on ethnicity, when living in a *multicultural country with unlimited possibilities*.

5. After concluding the anthropological field study we empirically determined that contemporary immigrants from Lithuania do not join the social circles

of the local inhabitants and do not limit themselves by communicating and cooperating with the members of the same third emigration wave for various reasons.

As the informants stated, there is a *cultural gap* between contemporary immigrants from Lithuania and American Lithuanians and their descendents. A negative attitude towards the reasons of emigration and their involvement/ non-involvement with the “nurturance of Lithuanian spirit” prevails, and therefore the immigrants do not know each other and do not communicate among themselves. Although part of the contemporary immigrants from Lithuania quite often spend time with persons of the same immigration wave, they nevertheless often have a negative opinion about each other, criticize the *trečiabangiai* for their the main goal of material benefit, their poor education, provinciality, closure, dishonesty, their simulated forgetfulness of the Lithuanian language and the fact, that children are not brought up in a *Lithuanian* way.

Contemporary immigrants from Lithuania often do not form close friendships with local Americans or communicate only in formal working surroundings. Although most of the contemporary immigrants to the United States fulfilled their economical expectations, the country continues to impress them because of its cultural variety, climatic conditions and natural variety. Yet a negative attitude also exists toward Americans, different races, all American “culture” or the lack thereof, as well as negative evaluation of American policy towards illegal migration.

Moreover, contemporary immigrants actively and for various purposes communicate and form social and economical networks with immigrants from other post-socialist countries with whom they share knowledge of Russian language, a common history, experience, lifestyle, and attitude towards leisure time.

6. Direct connection with the country of origin is one aspect of transnational migration and tangible evidence of being a transmigrant. Very few contemporary immigrants experience transnationalism and the understanding of belonging to a global place as a transitional state toward total dissociation from Lithuania, rejection of the Lithuanian language and ethnic background, and assimilation in the USA.

Voluntary, regular visits, communication in the virtual space, real estate and business transactions in the country of origin and the host country, the decoration of private home space using “Lithuanian” symbols and so on, all create the vision of a

transnational “home”, which helps one to feel safe, comfortable and enables the contemporary immigrants from Lithuania to talk about the possibilities of coming back to live in Lithuania. Because of this most of the *trečiabangiai* who participated in this research had doubts about the mentioned necessity to be loyal to one state; they express their dissatisfaction and participate in discussions and protests for the possibility to have double citizenship—both a strategically useful American, and an emotionally meaningful Lithuanian citizenship.

7. Although during the times of globalization people have many opportunities to move, cross borders, and strategies such as “Global Lithuania” have developed together with attempts to define the concept of “global Lithuanian”, the conclusions drawn from this empirical study allow us to state that the identity of the contemporary immigrants from Lithuania is, nevertheless, spatially constructed and locally strengthened as having bonds with Lithuania in one way or another. Although the people surveyed were of the same emigration wave, period, and geographical territory, and despite the fact that they emigrated from the same economic, social, and political conditions, they are not homogeneous in their socio-cultural identity. Rather, a certain dissolution, and duality tend to surface as two dominant configurations of the “Lithuanian spirit” emerge.

During the anthropological survey that was conducted in two stages on the West coast and later in the East and Central parts of America with the aim of documenting the everyday life activities of the contemporary immigrants from Lithuania, their relationships in the USA and with the country of origin, it was discovered that part of the contemporary immigrants from Lithuania tend to maintain and sometimes to strengthen their “brought” and relatively static ethnic – “Lithuanian” – identity. This involves creating *Lithuanian* families and teaching children *to be Lithuanians*. Although we live in a global world where everything is constantly changing, and migration can become a way of life, it seems as though one need not strive to establish themselves in a certain country, nor stress their origins, but rather could enjoy their “cosmopolitan” status to communicate freely through modern technologies with people in all continents to create business, information and financial flow networks. Nevertheless, in the abstracted “steady Lithuanian” identity

configuration of the contemporary immigrants from Lithuania, the stability and relative non-variation of “Lithuanian” identity is an important aspect.

This static “Lithuanian” configuration is closely related to the principles of *displaced persons* not to assimilate into the foreign society, and to organize or at least to participate in “Lithuanian” activity. The non-integration of contemporary immigrants from Lithuania into the foreign society is expressed by the endogamy of Lithuanian families, the search for partners from Lithuania, and in some cases a deliberate search for roommates, colleagues, and friends to spend one’s leisure time with amongst the contemporary immigrants from Lithuania. *Trečiabangiai* search for a Lithuanian partner not only because of economical interests, but also out of cultural interest, such as the desire to celebrate festivals in a “Lithuanian” way, according to customs brought from Lithuania. Although, for example, weekend Lithuanian classes in ethnic schools are assigned to the static “Lithuanian” configuration, as they are geared toward learning the Lithuanian language and getting acquainted with “Lithuanian” customs and their usage, nevertheless, the children spend most of their time in American schools, are friends with those who speak only English, and the *Americanization* trends tend to prevail in their everyday lives.

Another part of the contemporary immigrants from Lithuania to the USA in most of the cases understand their emigration from the country of origin and present transnationalism as a challenge to their ethnic identity; the cultural, economic, political, and social conditions of the host country enable them in different contexts and circumstances to manipulate their ethnicity and to choose, as it was mentioned above, either the “*more useful*” citizenship of the host country or to seek double citizenship. Therefore another identity configuration created by the contemporary immigrants from Lithuania was what we have called contextual-dynamic. It reveals, that “Lithuanianness” is used differently in different contexts, depending on whether it is expressed in a private or public space, and on the knowledge people have about Lithuania or their interest to discuss and learn more about it. In many rising situations people tend to manipulate their origin and present it as an advantage, but in some cases when it is associated with a negative *status of emigrant*, this identity is not accentuated or is even denied.

For the configuration of a contextual-dynamic identity, social networks amongst friends and acquaintances with a similar education background, interests or common experience are created. Here there is an active communication with the people of the same origin in informal surroundings where tourism is propagated and festival customs are maintained, in such a way that there is a relaxation from work and the psychological pressure *emigrant stamp* that is present in the public space. Very often such informal communication of the contemporary immigrants from Lithuania with other *trečiabangiai* groups of friends is an alternative to participation in the formal “Lithuanian” organizations, which were created and dominant by people of the first and the second emigration waves from Lithuania. Usually there are no ties among such groups, due to the tendency “brought over” from Lithuania to harbor negative attitudes towards other *Lithuanians*, which are sometimes expressed as hate towards people of the same origin, a mood of competition, and skeptical evaluations of their lack of education, the strive for material prosperity, *Americanization* and lifestyle of the contemporary immigrants from Lithuania.

LIST OF PUBLISHED WORKS ON THE TOPIC OF THE DISSERTATION

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3. Akstinavičiute, Ieva, 2008, The Models of Lithuanian Transmigrants Identity: Expectations and Reality, Andrijauskas, Antanas, Rubavičius Vytautas (eds.) *The Continuation of the national identity and self Creation During the Eurointegration*, Vilnius: Kronta, p.314-325. ISBN 978-609-401-016-3. (in Lithuanian)
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6. Akstinavičiute, Ieva, 2006, An Anthropological Perspective on the Idea of „Home“ a Diaspora Goal or a Safe Place While „on the Move“? *Oikos. Lithuanian Migration and Diaspora Studies*, 2: 30-42, ISSN 1822 – 5152 (in Lithuanian)
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IDENTITETŲ KONSTRAVIMAS TRANSNACIONALINĖJE MIGRACIJOJE: ŠIUOLAIKINIAI IMIGRANTAI IŠ LIETUVOS JUNGTINĖSE AMERIKOS VALSTIJOSE

REZIUME

Šiuolaikiniai globalizacijos procesai pristato naujas žmonių migracijos formas, galimybes, akcentuojami įvairūs jų integracijos, akultūracijos, adaptacijos ar izoliacijos svetimose šalyse aspektai. Žmonės tapo kosmopolitiški, lengvai peržengiantys savo gyvenimo įvairių aspektų ir prasmų sienas, pavyzdžiui, klasės, rasės, lyties, kultūros ar gyvenamos valstybės. Tad bet kuris terminas su priešdėliu „trans–“, kai viskas yra labai sąlygiška, nuolatinėje kaitoje ir konfrontacijoje su įvairiakrypčiais bei įvairaus intensyvumo iššūkiais, tampa vis dažniau vartotinas kaip funkcionalus, reiškiantis ne vien tik lokalumo, valstybių, grupės sienų nuolatinį peržengimą, bet ir įvairiakrypčių gyvenimo stilių propagavimą, atspindi nuolatinį identiteto ar kam nors priklausymo konstravimą / perkonstravimą arba galbūt nepriklausymo sustiprinimą.

Antropologinėse diskusijose apie tarptautinę migraciją dažniausiai akcentuojamas individų poreikis keisti gyvenamą vietą, įsitvirtinimas tikslo šalyje nevenigiant migravimo tiek tarp žemynų, tiek tarp skirtingų valstybių. Vienais atvejais gyvenamoji vieta keičiama vieną kartą, stabiliai įsitvirtinama ir net asimiliuojamasi, kitais – keičiama daugybę kartų, taip pat grįžtama į anksčiau gyventas vietas ar gimtinę, todėl nieko nebestebina žmonių prisirišimas prie kelių gyvenamų vietų, ar neprisirišimas nei prie vienos vietovės, leidžiantis kalbėti apie transnacionalinės migracijos sąvokos prasmingumą. Migracijos studijose, pasak C. B. Brettell, antropologai labiausiai domisi migruojančiųjų individų įsitikinimų ir elgesio koreliacijomis, socialiniais santykiais ir ryšiais su aplinkiniais bei vietos etnine bendruomene, socialinių organizacijų priimančioje šalyje formavimusi, taip pat identiteto ir etniškumo klausimais, būdingais tiek pačiam migraciniam procesui, tiek imigrantų bendruomenėms, kitaip tariant, antropologai domisi, kaip migraciniai

procesai sukelia kultūrinius pokyčius ir kaip veikia etninį migrantų identitetą (Brettell 2008: 114).

P. Kalnius teigia, kad „kultūriškai vienuose aplinkoje kultūrinė tapatybė (arba etniškai vienuose aplinkoje – etninė tapatybė) yra iš esmės mažai ką reiškiančios sąvokos. Turimoji tapatybė aktualizuojama ir labai sureikšminama patekus į kitą kultūrinę aplinką“ (Kalnius 2002: 37). A. Čepaitienė papildytą, kad „tapatumas ar su(si)tapatinimas, kaip asmens savęs suvokimas, visais atvejais pabrėžia sąmoningumo aspektą ir liudija tai, kad jis nėra kasdienybėje nuolat patiriamas įvykis ar reiškinys. Tai konkrečių situacijų, kontekstų, laikotarpių ar lygmenų įvykis“ (Čepaitienė 2010: 2). I. W. Schröderis (2009) pritarė, kad identiteto, tapatybės sąvoka negali būti universaliai vartojama neatsižvelgiant į marginalizuotų grupių daugumos visuomenėje socialinės nelygybės, socialinės erdvės, kurioje atsidūrę veikėjai politizuoja tapatybės tematiką bei istoriškai susiformavusių tapatinimosi patirčių, veiklų kategorijas, kurios yra neišvengiamos identiteto konstravime. Taigi identitetų sąvoka migracinių procesų tyrimuose, ypač atsižvelgus į kuriamus socialinius santykius ir ryšius priimančioje šalyje, yra neišvengiamai prasminga, aktuali ir taikytina.

Transnacionalūs migracijos procesai, kuomet globalizacijos procesų dėka yra nuolat peržengiamos vienos ar kelių valstybių sienos, vyksta pakartotinė regioninė integracija ir kultūros sklaida, suteikia žmonėms potencialo kurti naujus, transnacionalius identitetus, kurie peržengia lokalių identitetų ribas, pasižymi savo lankstumu, prisitaikomumu, kintamumu laike ir erdvėje. Dažnu atveju transnacionalūs identitetai savyje inkorporuoja patirtis, vertybes iš kilmės ir priimančios šalies, todėl neišvengiamai kyla klausimai, pavyzdžiui, kas aš esu, kas nepriklauso „mums“, kaip tinkamai elgtis naujoje aplinkoje?

1991 m., atkūrus Lietuvos Respublikos nepriklausomybę, Lietuvoje gyveno 3,7 milijono gyventojų, tačiau paskutiniojo visuotinio gyventojų surašymo duomenimis, 2011 m. Lietuvoje gyveno 3,054 milijono gyventojų. V. Stankūnienė (2011) apibendrina Lietuvos Statistikos departamento duomenis ir teigia, kad nuo 1990 iki 2010 metų emigravimą iš Lietuvos deklaravo apie 315 tūkst. žmonių, nors įvertinus nedeklaruotas ir nelegalios migracijos galimybes, minimu laikotarpiu iš Lietuvos emigravo apie 600 tūkst. žmonių.

Bendros emigracijos iš Lietuvos srautų tendencijos, stebimos viešojoje erdvėje, yra aiškios – pradėjus veikti laisvos ekonominės rinkos dėsniams, panaikinus migracinius suvaržymus, Lietuvai 2004 m. įstojus į Europos Sąjungą vieni Lietuvos gyventojai emigruoja neplanuodami grįžti gyventi į gimtąją šalį, kiti svetur vyksta dirbti sezoninių darbų, treči emigruoja, bet planuoja užsidirbę pinigų, pasisėmę patirties grįžti gyventi į Lietuvą, pasitaiko ir reemigracijos atvejų. Emigraciniai procesai neišvengiamai daro įtaką ekonominiam, socialiniam, demografiniam Lietuvos gyvenimui.

Emigracijos iš Lietuvos temos aktualumą patvirtina žiniasklaidoje pasirodančios emigravusių iš Lietuvos ir užsienio šalyse įsikūrusių asmenų skirtingos gyvenimo istorijos, nevienareikšmiška pozicija Lietuvos ir apskritai emigracinių procesų atžvilgiu. Naujoje vietoje „išjudėję“ asmenys yra linę bendrauti su panašių etninių šaknų asmenimis, tačiau neretai yra kaip tik vengiama bendrataučių kaimynystės. Tad kyla klausimai – kodėl, kokiais atvejais ir kaip imigrantai iš Lietuvos priimančioje šalyje (ne)susidraugauja, (ne)bendradarbiauja, (ne)bendrauja ir (ne)susisaisto tarpusavyje su tų pačių etninių šaknų asmenimis, su priimančios šalies pagrindine visuomene, kitomis toje šalyje gyvenančiomis etninėmis grupėmis? Kodėl suintensyvėja ir kaip palaikomi ar nepalaikomi ryšiai su kilmės šalimi, iš kurios buvo emigruota? Tai yra, kaip šiuolaikiniai imigrantai iš Lietuvos JAV konstruoja savo identitetus?

Darbo problema. Kiekybiškai gausiame, įvairiakrypčiame nuolatiniame Lietuvos gyventojų judėjime, eurointegracijos, globalizacijos procesų veikiamame kontekste atsiranda poreikis suprasti, kokia šiuo metu yra migruojančių lietuvių tautinė tapatybė, viešajame diskurse bandoma net kelti klausimus, kaip ją išsaugoti ir ar reikia / įmanoma ją saugoti? Kokios yra masiškai iš Lietuvos emigruojančiųjų pozicijos ir nuostatos Lietuvos atžvilgiu, grįžimo gyventi į Lietuvą perspektyvos, ar aktualus jiems patiems „lietuviškasis“ identitetas, kokios jo formos kuriamos, ar vyksta etninio identiteto kaita globaliame pasaulyje? Taip pat reiktų pažymėti, kad šiandieninė emigracija iš Lietuvos nėra naujas reiškinys. Į Vakarų iš Lietuvos didžiausias srautas žmonių patraukė dar XIX a. pabaigoje, taip pat Antrojo pasaulinio karo pabaigoje, tad už Lietuvos ribų, ypač JAV, gyvena nemažai lietuvių, jų kelių kartų palikuonys (Eidintas 1993).

Šiame disertaciniame darbe išskiriame dvi iš Lietuvos kilusių ir JAV gyvenančių žmonių kategorijas: a) šiandieninių imigrantų iš Lietuvos JAV kategorijai priskiriami iš nepriklausomos Lietuvos Respublikos emigravę asmenys, dar kitaip vadinami ekonominiai migrantai arba *trečiabangiai*, *naujieji migrantai*, *šiandieniniai migrantai*; b) Amerikos lietuvių kategorijai priskiriami Antrojo pasaulinio karo pabaigoje nuo komunistinio režimo iš Lietuvos pasitraukę politiniai migrantai, kitaip *dipukai*, ir jų vaikai. Mūsų pasirinkimu, Amerikos lietuvių kategorijai priskirtini ir XIX a. pabaigos ekonominiai migrantai *gynoriai* ir jų palikuonys, nors pastarųjų tyrimo metu buvo sutikta labai mažai. Taigi neakcentuojami pirmųjų dviejų – XIX a. pab. – Antrojo pasaulinio karo laikotarpio – emigracinių bangų iš Lietuvos skirtumai, šios bangos pateikiamos kaip iliustratyvus kontekstas disertacinio darbo temai apie šiuolaikinius imigrantus iš Lietuvos plėtoti.

Disertacinio darbo mokslinę **problemą** formuluojame tokiais klausimais:

- Dėl kokių priežasčių ir kaip šiandieniniai imigrantai iš Lietuvos JAV saistosi ar nesisaisto tarpusavyje, su Amerikos lietuviais, su priimančia ir su kilmės šalimis?
- Kiek JAV Lietuvių Bendruomenė, etninės organizacijos yra svarbios šiuolaikiniams imigrantams iš Lietuvos ir Amerikos lietuviams Jungtinėse Amerikos Valstijose kuriant bei išlaikant socialinius ryšius, suteikiant socialines paslaugas imigrantų šeimoms ir jų vaikams, palaikant ryšius su gimtąja šalimi?
- Kokiomis formomis vyksta šiandieninių imigrantų įsitraukimas, akulturacija JAV, tiek jaučiant sąsajas su kilmės šalimi, tiek nuo jos atsiribojus?

Darbo objektas. Šiuolaikinių imigrantų iš Lietuvos Jungtinėse Amerikos Valstijose identitetų konstravimas įvairiose lietuvių bendruomenės etninėse organizacijose ir per santykius su skirtingų tautybių JAV gyventojais bei Lietuva, kitaip tariant, identitetų konstravimas transnacionalinėje migracijoje.

Darbo tikslas. Nustatyti šiuolaikinių imigrantų iš Lietuvos konstruojamų identitetų konfigūracijas, kurios gali būti įprasminamos etninėse lietuvių bendruomenės organizacijose JAV ir santykiuose su skirtingų tautybių Amerikos gyventojais bei transnacionaliniais ryšiais su Lietuva.

Šio disertacinio **darbo uždaviniai:**

- Atlikti teorinę transnacionalizmo, transmigrantų, transnacionalios migracijos, transnacionalių bendruomenių sąvokų, jų reikšmės migracinių procesų tyrimuose, pabrėžiant erdviškumą ir migruojančiųjų saistymąsi su aplinkiniais gyventojais, analizę.
- Išanalizuoti migrantų kultūrinių, etninių ir institucinių identitetų teorines sąvokas, atveriančias įvairiapusiškas migrantų identitetų konstravimo tyrimo galimybes.
- Nustatyti pagrindines etnines erdves, kuriose šiandieniniai imigrantai iš Lietuvos JAV vienokia ar kitokia forma kuria, pasitvirtina sociokultūrinį identitetą.
- Empiriškai ištirti imigrantų iš Lietuvos formuojamus socialinius ryšius tarpusavyje, su Amerikos lietuviais ir su kitais JAV visuomenės atstovais.
- Apibrėžti ryšių palaikymo su Lietuva, kaip kilmės šalimi, formas, galinčias daryti įtaką dalies imigrantų sprendimams grįžti gyventi į Lietuvą ar būti transmigrantais, o ne asimiliuotis priimančioje šalyje.
- Nustatyti dominuojančias šiuolaikinių imigrantų iš Lietuvos „lietuviškojo“ identiteto konfigūracijas transnacionalinėje migracijoje.

Darbo metodai

Mokslinės literatūros, kurioje aptariamos transnacionalumo, identitetų teorinės paradigmos, apžvelgiami migraciniai, tapatybių tyrimai, jų koreliacija ir reikšmė mūsų disertacijos tematikos plėtojimui, analizė.

Empirinių duomenų analizė. Disertacinio darbo empiriniai duomenys gauti atliekant etnografinį lauko tyrimą dviem etapais. Žvalgomasis lauko tyrimas buvo atliekamas 2007 m. kovo mėnesį JAV Vakarų pakrantėje, Kalifornijoje: San Diege, Santa Monikoje, Los Andžele, Mišen Viedžio (Mission Viejo), Oranžijos apygardoje (Orange County). Pagrindinis lauko tyrimas buvo atliekamas 2008 m. balandžio – birželio mėnesiais Rytų pakrantėje (Niujorke, Pitsfilde (Masačiuosetso valstija), Džersio Sityje (Naujojo Džersio valstija), Bratlebore (Vermonto valstija), Filadelfijoje) ir Vidurio Amerikoje (Čikagoje (Ilinojaus valstija)).

Disertacinio darbo naujumas. Remdamiesi Lietuvoje migraciniuose tyrimuose dar pakankamai mažai taikyta antropologine metodologija ir teorine transnacionalizmo perspektyva iškristalizuojame vienos JAV etninės grupės, t. y. šiandieninių imigrantų iš

Lietuvos, identitetų konfigūravimo pagrindines tendencijas. Duomenys apie šiandieninių imigrantų iš Lietuvos į JAV migracinius procesus, priimančios šalies kontekstą, priimančioje šalyje sukurtas etnines erdves, kuriose palaikomi socialiniai santykiai su aplinkiniais gyventojais bei bendrakilmiais, buvo gauti per „emic“ perspektyvą. Svarbu pažymėti, kad mūsų tyrime dalyvavo įvairių socialinių sluoksnių atstovai – skirtingo išsilavinimo, amžiaus, lyties, taip pat tiek dalyvaujantys, tiek nepalaikantys jokių ryšių su JAV Lietuvių Bendruomene asmenys.

Svarbiu disertacijos akcentu yra tiesioginis šiandieninių imigrantų iš Lietuvos praktikuojamo transnacionalizmo formų fiksavimas bei atsakymai, kodėl tam tikra šiandieninių migrantų dalis neįsitraukia į transnacionalias praktikas. Į tokius praktinę ir taikomąją vertę turinčius aspektus derėtų atsižvelgti migracijos politikos formuotojams, lobistams, inicijuojantiems produktyvesnių ekonominio, kultūrinio bendradarbiavimo su emigrantais iš Lietuvos svetimose šalyse strategijų kūrimą, taip pat antropologijos, sociologijos, kitų socialinių mokslų atstovams, vykdančiams identiteto, migracijos tyrimus. Tikimės, kad šis disertacinis darbas, kuriame akcentuojamas transnacionalinėje migracijoje dalyvaujančių šiandieninių imigrantų iš Lietuvos „lietuviškojo“ identiteto kūrimas ir perkūrimas, prisidės prie tolimesnės, gilesnės teorinės ir praktinės diskusijos migracijos tema plėtojimo.

Disertacijos **struktūrą** sudaro 7 dalys. Įvadinėje dalyje pristatytas disertacinio darbo temos aktualumas, darbo problematiškumas, mokslinis naujumas, trumpai supažindinama su JAV kaip imigrantų tikslo šalimi. Suformuluotas disertacinio darbo tikslas, objektas, uždaviniai, pristatomi naudoti darbo metodai, operacionalizuojami svarbiausi disertacijos tekste vartojami terminai. Pateikiama plati lietuviškosios tapatybės, emigracijos iš Lietuvos literatūros apžvalga, supažindinama su emigracinių bangų iš Lietuvos, kurios vienaip ar kitaip reikšmingos mūsų darbe, charakteristikomis.

Teorinėje dalyje (I.) pristatomos ir teoriškai pagrindžiamos svarbiausios transnacionalumo, transnacionalios erdvės perspektyvos, teorinės prieigos, kurios yra reikšmingos analizuojant šiandieninių migrantų judėjimo niuansus, bandant suprasti, kodėl jie juda, kaip, kokiomis formomis įsitvirtina priimančiose visuomenėse. Taip pat analizuojami migrantų identitetų darybos transnacionalinėje migracijoje teoriniai aspektai, kurie pateikia plačią jų analizės perspektyvą ir neleidžia apsiriboti siauru, vienus migrantų poveikslo formavimu.

Metodologinėje dalyje (II.) aptariami antropologinio lauko tyrimo metu empirinių duomenų rinkimui naudoti metodai, jų svarba, ypač daug dėmesio skiriama refleksijų, kurios tik pagrindžia antropologinės metodologinės prieigos taiklumą disertacinei problematikai analizuoti, apie lauko tyrimą pristatymui.

Empirinių duomenų analizės dalyje (III.) nuodugniai supažindinama su šiuolaikinių imigrantų iš Lietuvos įsitvirtinimo JAV etapais. Socialinių santykių ir ryšių su priimančiąja šalimi, jos gyventojais, su kitais posocialistinių šalių kilmės imigrantais JAV, su tos pačios emigracinės bangos atstovais ir Amerikos lietuviais kūrimas, etninių erdvių, kuriose vienaip ar kitaip kuriamas, pasitvirtinamas ar niveliuojamas tapatinimasis su lietuviais, bendrakilmiais, taip pat transnacionalių santykių su Lietuva palaikymas – neišvengiamai svarbūs identitetų transnacionalinėje migracijoje formavimuisi. Empirinė dalis baigiama svarbiausia, išvadine šiuolaikinių imigrantų iš Lietuvos Amerikoje susikuriamų ir dominuojančių konfigūracijų dalimi.

Disertacinio darbo pabaigoje pateikiamos išvados, bibliografija (abėcėline tvarka pateiktas literatūros sąrašas, internetinės nuorodos, šaltiniai), o paskutiniuoju dalyje pateikiami priedai.

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**CONSTRUCTION OF IDENTITIES IN TRANSNATIONAL
MIGRATION: CONTEMPORARY IMMIGRANTS FROM
LITHUANIA IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

Summary of Doctoral Dissertation

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