

LIUTAURAS KRANIAUSKAS¹, SIGITA KRANIAUSKIENĖ², AUŠRA PAULAUSKIENĖ³

Urban Space, Festivals, and Consumption: Sociological Reflections on Two Festivals in Post-Soviet City

ABSTRACT

The article explores social relations between festivals, consumption, and urban spaces. The study deals with two city festivals, Sea Festival and International Short Film Festival Tinklai, in post-Soviet city Klaipeda, Lithuania, over the period of 1991–2010, and impact of consumption on the geography of festivals' locations within the city. We argue that modern festivals gradually move to those urban spaces which lost their functionality and can be easily transformed into temporary places of controlled consumption. Festivals set urban spaces for new sociality of emotional community, while physical arrangements of festival territories reproduce more general patterns of social distinctions and hierarchies. Methodological assumptions of the study come from Bourdieu's typology of taste, De Certeau's idea of urban space signification practices, and H. Lefebvre's theory of urban space production.

Keywords:

sociology of city, festivals, urban space, taste, consumption

¹ Center for Studies of Social Change, Klaipeda University, Lithuania, E-MAIL: liutauras.kraniauskas@gmail.com.

² Center for Studies of Social Change, Klaipeda University, Lithuania, E-MAIL: sigitak@yahoo.com.

³ English Language and Literature Department, LCC International University, Lithuania, E-MAIL: apaulauskiene@lcc.lt.

INTRODUCTION

Cities today are globally conscious and compete for economic and symbolic power. In their rivalry for virtual recognition and status, cities employ different resources, such as brand names, historical heritage, business opportunities, creative industry, and leisure infrastructure, but culture and entertainment in particular serve as an effective resource in establishing a desired image of a city in the global information space (Anholt, 2007; Lysgård, 2013; Stevenson, 2003). Art and music festivals have increasingly gained importance as representations, or ‘brands’, of cities. Thus, Edinburgh has become inseparably associated with the biggest international festival of stage arts, Roskilde with its rock music fiesta, Cannes with the award ceremony of its film festival, and Venice with its carnival. Such merges of city names and festivals have been functioning as global images.⁴

On a local level, too, festivals have grown in importance. In addition to serving as tourist attractions, they help to solve certain social problems. Festivals as social events improve the images of under-privileged towns and cities, strengthen the communities, and encourage cooperation between cultural workers and local policy makers (Bianchini and Parkinson, 1993; Evans, 2001; Florida, 2002; Laužikienė et al, 2010). Festival theorist Dragan Klaic aptly summarized the social significance of festivals for cities:

Increasingly, festivals are not just artistic package with appealing and valued content but instruments to re-examine the urban dynamics, focal points of sociability, and mental maps of local topography and rearrange the direction and patterns of mobility within the city space. (...) In the urban space, functionally dominated by housing and consumerism, festivals reaffirm the public sphere in its civic dimension, including polemic, debate, critique and collective passion for a certain art form or topic. As cities understand better the key success factors of urban renewal and grasp the limitation of a dreamt about tourist bonanza (that refuses to materialize

⁴ The best illustration of how festivals serve as city brands are cities’ websites and information materials for tourists. Although most cities are represented by the classical marketing formula of 5S (*Sightseeing, Shows, Shopping, Short breaks, Scotch whiskey*) (Buhalis, 2001), festivals and other cultural events have lately become central to city images. For example, the focal point of the website *Visit Scotland: Edinburgh and the Lothias* (<http://www.edinburgh.org/>) is the link to city festivals; moreover, it features a separate system of festivals and events search. The website that advertises Edinburgh’s brand specifically (<http://www.edinburghbrand.com>, not functional currently) contained multiple photos of city festivals and cultural events: African natives performing against the background of the modern Western city represented multicultural character of Edinburgh, while an orchestra playing classical music represented historical heritage of the city. Similarly, a Google search of keyword ‘Roskilde’ will immediately produce many links to *Roskilde Rock Festival* and a search of ‘Cannes’ links to Cannes film festival. In this way the festivals of many cities and towns are tightly woven into their urban identities.

in the multiplied drink holes and shopping malls), festivals appear as a precious force to mark the perimeters of the public sphere, upgrade it by the concentration of creative gestures and their collective (Klaic, 2010b, p. 53).

Both mentioned positions, global and local, emphasise the instrumental function of festivals. However, in this article, we will discuss festivals in relation to physical space, spatial dynamics, and consumption. Why do festivals take place in particular spaces? What does the analysis of the spatial dynamics of festivals reveal about social processes and social relations? What is the long-term relation between festivals and physical space? What roles in this spatial process are played by taste as a system of dispositions on the one hand, and specific consumption practices on the other?

The concept of ‘festival’ may include events of varying scope and function: from globally known high-budget festivals to local grass-root events. In this study, we analyze the ‘city festivals’. We define them as cultural events that not only mobilise certain groups of artists and performers to gather and present themselves as well as compete professionally but also generate intense public discourse, change city rhythms and movement trajectories of residents, and occupy as well as transform city spaces. Transformations of physical urban space in particular turn festivals into urban, rather than cultural, phenomena and, consequently, into objects of interest to urban studies. Furthermore, in the global world, local city festivals transcend their locality and potentially enter the global market.

The central issue of the article, specifically how festivals impact the dynamics of today’s urban spaces and daily social practices, will be explored in two contexts. The first context is a theoretical reconstruction and critique of culture-led urban development discourse represented by Henry Lefebvre, Michel De Certeau and Pierre Bourdieu. The second context is the empirical analysis of two post-Soviet festivals in Klaipėda city, Lithuania: Klaipėda Sea Festival and Tinklai International Short Film Festival.⁵ The two festivals illustrate the local discourse and, we presume, are more or less analogous to festivals held in various European cities and towns. This study does not focus on the history of the festivals or their organisational peculiarities and management issues. It is rather a sociological analysis of the festivals and urban processes that took place from 1991 to 2010 in the post-Soviet city of Klaipėda. Among numerous urban festivals in post-Soviet Lithuania, our choice fell on the two that, first, are connected with former indus-

⁵ Information about these festivals is available in festival websites and Facebook: Jūros šventė (<http://www.jurossvente.lt/>) and Tinklai International Short Film Festival (<https://www.facebook.com/tinklai>).

trial areas and their adaptation to cultural needs, and second, can be viewed as constituents of global city branding.

However, a short historical context of Klaipėda, Lithuanian port and third largest city, could be helpful at this point. Characteristically for Soviet urbanity, Klaipėda's development was conditioned by rapid industrialisation. The city expanded mainly due to new industrial enterprises that were integrated into the centralised Soviet economy.⁶ Until 1991, cultural life in Klaipėda, as in any Soviet city that was not a capital, was marginal and mostly performed ideological function. Upon restoration of Lithuania's independence, the majority of former Soviet industries lost their market, went bankrupt, and by 1998, the city had a substantial number of abandoned post-industrial spaces. Even in 2012 around 90 percent of those spaces still remain neglected. A few ambitious projects of reintegration of post-industrial spaces into the city fabric have been stopped by the recession of 2008.

Moreover, the changed political order, too, demanded a search of new urban identities in Klaipėda. The city aspired to replace the former, Soviet, image of an industrial port city with an image of a city where culture and education played a crucial role. This turn towards culture was expression of the growing number and symbolical power of the intellectuals and cultural institutions in the city. In 1990–2000, the first decade following the collapse of the Soviet system, the city artists, performers, and organizers of cultural projects were free to implement various artistic ideas because they were generously supported by local authorities. However, as a result of the cuts in funding, since 2001, a new, neoliberal, attitude of culture management has been emerging. Festivals were to become not mere local city events but instrumental factors in urban identity formation.

In this study, we use the term 'post-Soviet' not only as a temporal and geographic concept but also as a theoretical one. The term signifies conditions, structures and systems of the Soviet regime that constructed and sustained ideologically functional definitions of urban spaces and cultural patterns of behaviour whose residual manifestations can still be observed after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The vanishing social world of the Soviets still structures many aspects of changing everyday life. New ideological and cultural systems face the old structural conditions, and this encounter produces a real effect of the post-Soviet. In other words, post-Soviet context is characterised by a constant juxtaposition of old and new identities, discourses and behavioural patterns. By analysing the relation

⁶ During the Soviet times Klaipėda's population grew from 1 thousand residents in 1945, right after WW II, to 90 thousand in 1960 and up to 204 thousand in 1990, on the eve of Lithuania's restored independence. Its current population is 164 thousand.

between urban space and festival in a post-Soviet city, we try to determine the nature of interrelation between the two ideological and cultural systems, whether it is one of conflict, continuity, coexistence, subordination or domination.

CRITIQUE OF CITY FESTIVAL DISCOURSE

URBAN DIMENSION OF CULTURE MANAGEMENT: A LIVELY CITY AND ITS FESTIVALS

The growing interest of contemporary culture management and urban planning in urban festivals and cultural events can be illustrated by the steadily increasing number of international festivals in European cities (Klaic, 2010a) as well as the expanding field of urban culture in the discourse of culture management (Šešić, 2007; Delanty, Giorgi and Sassatelli, 2011; Stevenson, 2003; Klaic, 2010b). Large-scale international projects, such as European Capital of Culture, international film, theatre, music and folklore festivals, book fairs, and other cultural events stimulate new public and academic debates on culture. Such projects engender celebration as well as critique. Mark G. Connolly's (2013) critique of European Capital of Culture 2008 project in Liverpool is one of the recent examples.

Within such discourse of cultural planning, discussions switch from artistic, educational or aesthetic issues of the festivals to economic, social and instrumental functions of urban culture. For over two decades, leading figures of culture management have repeatedly claimed that creative industries, culture politics, cultural planning, and festivals create added value, economic as well as social (Bianchini and Parkinson, 1993; Garcia, 2004; Garcia, Melville and Cox, 2010). The following statements summarize the nature of this discourse.

1. Cultural projects and a city's artists, entertainers and culture project managers can profitably function as an independent market segment, that influences a city's economy and can attract financial resources from national and international funds as well as other resources.⁷
2. Cultural projects that target a city's community include various social groups and thus develop identities and relations of local residents as well as democratic and civic values.

⁷ We deliberately avoid using the term 'creative class' suggested by Richard Florida (2002), since it includes numerous professionals, such as scholars, professors, journalists, editors, architects, designers and the like. In post-Soviet context, the mentioned groups are perceived as distinct and rigid social groups, with their unique discourses and identities. Only artists and performers are treated as representatives of the creative class, because culture-led urban development discourse defines them in terms of instrumental function.

3. The emphasis on culture increases a city's competitiveness in the global tourism market, since cultural events and festivals successfully integrate into a city's marketing strategies that seek to attract as many tourists as possible and, consequently, ensure a monetary flow into a city's budget. In other words, cultural spectacles and events effectively function as instruments of a city's regeneration and empowerment.

With the help of this discourse, developed and communicated by artists, culture institutions, culture managers, and administrators, these groups reinforce their symbolic power and status in a city's economy. However, the discourse draws its vitality not from the inner dynamics of changing culture but from a city's problematic spaces, best identified by the prefix 'post-'. 'Post-' refers to urban spaces that had lost their functionality, are often neglected and unused, and have become problematic as a result of economic, social or technological change. As a rule, these are former industrial sites and buildings that are not easily adaptable to new functions. The retreat of an industry from a particular space results in a loss of its functionality. Territories and their physical infrastructures get deprived of their primary semantic meanings and social function assigned to them by previous industrial production. Classical examples of regenerated 'post' spaces could be urban territories where culture not only substantially changed former industrial spaces by adapting them to cultural needs but transformed identities of cities. Temple Bar district in Dublin, the regenerated areas of Glasgow, Guggenheim museum in Bilbao, Gateshead riversides in North Tyneside and Newcastle, and London Tate Modern museum are known as success cases of cultural and urban planning that have influenced a multiplication of similar projects in a number of European cities in 1990–2000 (Bianchini and Parkinson, 1993; Evans, 2001), and, later, in the cities of the former Soviet countries in Central and Eastern Europe (Šešić, 2007).

Big projects of urban regeneration often require huge investments and create a time gap between the projected vision and its implementation. Cleaning of the territory, taking care of real estate and property issues, relocating industrial production, looking for architectural solutions, ensuring sustainable funding, employing administrative personnel, negotiating with artists and administrators of creative industries, finding political solutions, ensuring the security of abandoned territories, and finally construction are time-consuming tasks that may take up to 10–15 years.

Moreover, social dissatisfaction caused by the lost functionality of a particular space, expressed as critique of urban policy of local authorities, should be controlled and managed throughout the process of a territory's conversion and

regeneration. Various festivals and cultural events offer a perfect tactical solution. Instant cultural invasions into 'post-'territories attract public attention to problematic spaces and transform them into temporary zones of new sociality. Despite different ideas and public goals behind them, festivals create temporary sociality and collective identities. Festivals create human presence instead of former absence in 'post-'spaces and, in this way, return city spaces to people and people to neglected spaces.

MEANINGS OF URBAN SPACES: DETERIORATION AND CREATION

Besides former industrial territories, prefix 'post-' can also be applied to other spaces of lost functionality, whose social significance has been erased by changes in economy or public life. Such urban and physical spaces include historical architectural landscapes, riversides, military sites, pedestrian streets, parks, concert arenas, city squares, residential areas, and buildings of representational purpose. The discussion of festival dynamics in post-Soviet context leads to the following question. What happens to the identity of a post-Soviet city when not only ideological constituents but the very perception of a changing city, its representations, and economic, technological and political structures that support such representations undergo fundamental changes?

Besides stimulating intellectual discussion among academia, this question calls for practical decisions of policy makers. While scholars and urban developers analyse and reflect on city processes, policy makers and managers attempt to rationally shape urban cultural processes and to steer them into socially acceptable directions. Scholarly studies about the successes and failures of specific cities become patterns to follow or to avoid for the policy makers and developers. The insights of scholars generate the visions of practitioners, which however often fail to repeat the former success stories and end up being only vague shadows of the original projects. To draw on Lefebvre, the discourse of culture-led urban development or regeneration aims to create official and orderly spaces with the help of *space representations*:

(Social) space is a (social) product... the space thus produced also serves as a tool of thought and action; that in addition to being means of production it is also a means of control, and hence of domination, of power: yet that, as such, is escapes in part from those who would make use of it. The social and political (state) forces which engender this space now seek, but fail, to master it completely; the very agency that has forced spatial reality towards a sort of uncontrollable autonomy now strives to run it into the ground, then shackle and enslave (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 26).

Space representations are always linked with the established order of relations, and the knowledge, signs and codes this order generates. Representation of space is a 'conceptualized space, the space of scientists, planners, urbanists, technocratic subdividers and social engineers, as of a certain type artists with a scientific bent – all of whom identify what is lived and what is perceived with what is conceived' (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 38).

The discourse of the city and its festivals, used by culture managers, obviously belongs to the sphere of ideology. On the one hand, it inspires policy makers and culture administrators to action and to mobilization and redistribution of financial resources. On the other hand, it hides power relations and economic inequality, when certain social groups profit from festivals and strengthen their status, while others become marginalized. This discourse spawns cultural projects that are shaped according to the success models but get a harsh reality check when implemented in practice.

The critique of this discourse varies in its sources and arguments (Lysgård, 2013; Connolly, 2013); however, the position that offers a *common normative model of urban dynamics* is particularly disturbing. The model structures the social action of city planners and becomes the norm of evaluation as well as analysis of such an action. It seeks to create a social reality and at the same time to make it knowledgeable. Such perspective precludes cognition of a social reality in any other way but with the help of this model. The dialectic nature of this situation is best revealed by culture experts and consultants, who encourage using this model in practice but, at the same time, warn about its limitations (Klaic, 2010a; Gibson and Stevenson, 2004).

Moreover the prefix 'post-' not only states the changed situation but also implies a *necessity* of political intervention into those social practices and realities that emerged as a result of lost functionality. This implied necessity stems not from the disavowal of former social world but from the dissatisfaction with the wild, uncontrollable present. In other words, a physical space and its semantic field cannot remain neglected and empty. 'Something is always happening in urban space. The void, the nothingness of action can only be apparent; neutrality is a limiting case. The void (a place) attracts; it has this sense and this end' (Lefebvre, 2003, p. 130).

Empty spaces and their semantic fields are soon filled with new meanings and practices, often unrelated to either their former functions or to new visions of city authorities attempting to take social control of those spaces. Underground electronic music parties, known as rave, that took root in Great Britain in 1988–1989 and soon spread to the rest of Europe, best illustrate such practices that are beyond official control. Rave parties frequently occupied neglected industrial spaces

as one-time locations that temporarily became dancing places, while their participants flaunted their wish to create their own social space in a physical space uncontrolled by city authorities (Redhead, 1990). Territories that lost or were in the process of losing their functions were taken over by such partisan tactics. The space that lost both its former sociality, most often connected to its functionality, and its official control, related to the efforts of powerful social groups to establish a new functionality in an empty semantic field, is called a *temporary autonomous zone*. This term was suggested by Hakim Bey (1991) to define a social space that defies formal structures of control. Other examples of such spaces could be an unsanctioned use of uninhabited spaces for living, the so-called ‘squatting’, danger-causing playing grounds of teenagers in former industrial territories, or homeless camps in neglected parks. Despite differences among them, all such practices share the tension between lost functionality and future visions on the one hand and temporary living practices on the other. They delineate an alternative field of symbolic meanings in physical spaces that refuse to give in to the dictate of administrative systems.

The above thoughts about the control of space through functional reasoning and partisan resistance practices support the categorization of De Certeau, who distinguishes between ‘observing’ (voyeur in French) and ‘strolling’ (*der Wandersmann* in German) social groups in a city.⁸ Urban theorists and planners, politicians and administrators observe a city ‘from above’, while less privileged groups of residents walk on foot (De Certeau, 1984, p. 92–93). City planners who see a city ‘from above’ act as powerful decision-makers. Their gaze is panoptic and perceives a city as a knowledgeable, plannable and controllable object, and as an abstract objectified space. They plan the city with little consideration for daily realities and spatial practices of its residents. Their gaze is disciplinary: it draws boundaries around territories and determines social interactions as well as the categories and mobility patterns of objects and subjects that are allowed presence in those spaces (De Certeau, 1984, p. 126–127). An observer’s position potentially introduces an element of social conflict in a target space. A conflict occurs when the actual interaction, objects and subjects as well as mobility trajectories defy the norms of classification:

As a transgression of the limit, a disobedience of the law of the place, it represents a departure, an attack on a state, the ambition of a conquering power, or the flight of an exile; in any case, the ‘betrayal’ of an order (De Certeau, 1984, p. 128).

⁸ De Certeau borrowed the term *der Wandersmann* from sixteenth-century German mystic Angelus Silesius (Lock, 1999).

The other way to experience, perceive and take control of city spaces is through daily practices and walking (De Certeau, 1984, p. 93). The semantic field of the physical space created by such practices radically differs from space representations created when gazing 'from above'. This space and its semantics are created by less privileged groups that are below the totalizing 'visual level'. They challenge official city representations and the categories imposed by them. Thus, daily life and its social practices, criticized and devalued by official discourse, are important for the appropriation of an urban space.

In De Certeau's critical perspective, the discourse of regeneration of cultural and urban spaces obviously belongs to the first type of the cognitive scheme. A new organization of space has to eliminate mental or social obstacles that contradict rationality. Rational planning is supposed to erase daily practices that occur in this space and to block out social groups, often asocial and deviant, engaged in these unsanctioned activities. It seeks to create a new abstract functionality and a conceptually orderly space endowed with mechanisms of self-control. It is pertinent to add that this discourse not only restricts but at the same time enables new consumers of space, often categorized as 'residents' or 'tourists'.

City festivals and spaces they occupy can either be seen 'from above' as space-objectifying and classifying systems and categories or can be signified through daily walking practices, that enable direct interaction among subjects, objects and physical space on a specific site of a festival. However, for the purposes of a sociological understanding, the dichotomies 'categorization *versus* practice' or 'observing *versus* walking', so actual to De Certeau, need to be reformulated. The methodological problem in this binary scheme is not so much an *a priori* statement of conflict or juxtaposition of two social practices, but observation-based reconstruction of existent collective identities. In other words, we read social identities of city residents by observing their spatial practices in the city festivals.

CITY FESTIVALS: FUNCTIONALITY VERSUS VITALITY

German philosopher Josef Pieper, when exploring connections between culture and leisure, discovered a transcendental meaning of festivals:

The holding of a festival means: an affirmation of the basic meaning of the world, and an agreement with it, and in fact it means to live out and fulfil one's inclusion in the world, in an extraordinary manner, different from the everyday (Pieper, 1998, p. 53).

For this thinker, a festival is an experience of *sacrum* transcending strict regime of daily productive labour as well as functionality implied by modernity.

A festival allows a modern individual to feel true freedom and harmony with the world, since leisure, relaxation and absence of exertion overcome the 'function' imposed by daily life. Functionality is incompatible with festivity and, if present, negates the very meaning of the word 'festival.'

Pieper's ideas obviously contradict the discourse of culture management which understands festivals as functions, and this contradiction deserves a more detailed explanation. Pieper's focus is on an individual as a passive non-productive subject of a festival. Functionality, or its absence thereof, can be observed in an individual's behaviour. Since in the discourse of culture management such a subject is called a consumer of culture, the status of a consumer opposes productivity. With regard to individual activity, Pieper's and culture management discourses seem similar, since they talk about the same subject in somewhat different languages. In both cases, festival participants reject any productive functionality. On the other hand, in culture management discourse, festival participants do perform a function: they must create a new value for a space meant for regeneration. As territories are real estate property, popular spaces that attract population can be sold at a higher price than neglected spaces. During a festival, individuals serve the regime of the social order that aims to create a productive and functional physical space. In other words, they participate in the production of space value. In this way, culture management discourse disavows 'festival for festivity's sake' for an illusion of celebration and imperceptibly reinstalls functionality and productivity into the sphere of leisure and freedom.

The relation between an individual's freedom and festivity has also been explored by Lefebvre. A big body of Lefebvre's work criticizes the capitalist system, while his concept of a festival, *la Fête*, serves as a core instrument of criticism. According to Lefebvre, the essence of *la Fête* is 'a celebration which consumes unproductively, without other advantage but pleasure and prestige and enormous riches in money and objects' (Lefebvre, 1996, p. 66). During a festival, less privileged social groups regain the space that, in daily life, is exploited for neo-capitalist system of industry. Similarly to the medieval *carnavalesque*, described by Michail Bakhtin, *La Fête* critiques the dominant system, while a real festival is a spontaneous and liberating burst of daily passions and desires (Бахтин, 1965).⁹

⁹ Bakhtin's *carnavalesque* is very similar to Lefebvre's *la Fête*. Although Bakhtin's concept is better known of the two, we give preference to that of Lefebvre's for two reasons. First, Bakhtin reconstructed the term of *carnavalesque* from Rabelais' novels, from the realm of fiction, while Lefebvre's term originated from his childhood experiences in and memories of a small French town (Merrifield, 2006). Second, as a theoretical concept, *carnavalesque* associates with grotesque, a restriction of the normative and an inversion of social hierarchies in the form of corporal transformations, while *la Fête* critiques consumption and rationalized production.

Such a festival, in Lefebvre's opinion, offers an opportunity for resistance against dominant city discourses on the one hand, and vitality on the other. In his utopian vision, a city's public spaces should be reborn as festival or carnival spaces that serve as expressions of freedom and resistance to capitalist logic of rational functionality. The main element of a festival in Lefebvre's theory is not its artistic side but its temporary reclaiming and winning back of an appropriated space. A space may have been appropriated for the needs of a social group but it has not become its permanent property. A festival serves as a temporary termination of dominance-based relations.

As already mentioned, the concept of a festival serves as an instrument of criticism for Lefebvre, since *la Fête* as such is a rare phenomenon in a contemporary city. The best illustrations of *la Fête* in the modern world are public actions, such as *Reclaim the Streets*, that protest the intensification of traffic on city streets and seek to transform them into communal spaces. Streets are reclaimed with carnival parades, spontaneous parties of electronic music, or bringing out furniture and passive collective sitting in the driving section of a street. Such actions temporarily paralyse traffic and undermine the function of a street as a space of rational and effective motorised mobility, and thus serve as a critique of a rushing individualistic and rational society. During such acts of reclaiming, streets turn into spaces of social interaction and communality. The initiators of such actions nostalgically romanticise the lost pre-technological world and justify their actions by a necessity to solve contemporary environmental issues and a responsibility for a clean world of the future.

When discussing the relation between festivals and city spaces, it is important to mention that most contemporary festivals take place in designated spaces. Concert halls and arenas, theatre stages, cinemas and the like are rationally ordered, functional and institutionalized places that are conducive to collective festivities. In these places whose implied social order, according to De Certeau, dictates a rigid set of social practices and identities, a phenomenon of feast, described by Pieper and Lefebvre, would be hard to find. Potential elements of *la Fête* are more likely to emerge outside such functional spaces. This imperative to negate space functionality allows us to bring in city spaces, marked by the prefix 'post-', as objects for observation and analysis.

The methodological linking of Lefebvre's and Certeau's ideas on festivals and urban space dynamics into one analytical model enables us to formulate hypotheses and questions for an empirical analysis of social control and the possibilities for liberation from such control. Which city festival manifests more options for liberation? How intense is the control of urban space? Which festivals and social

practices contribute to or restrain the social production as well as the control of space?

TWO FESTIVALS OF A POST-SOVIET CITY FROM SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

FESTIVAL AESTHETICS AND SOCIAL DISTINCTION

The targeted Klaipėda festivals, Sea Festival and Tinklai International Short Film Festival, can be defined in categories of taste typology suggested by Bourdieu (1984). If a festival is treated as an object whose value is determined by an individual who makes a leisure choice, then an object of cultural consumption represents a certain category of taste or aesthetic perception. Bourdieu distinguishes two categories of taste which should be perceived not just as two absolute homologies, but rather as two opposite extremes. All empirical cultural objects can be placed on the continuum between these two poles. The first extreme category is the *taste of sense* (*goût des sens* in French) that anticipates a practical and integral sensual match between form and content: beautiful events are supposed to happen in beautiful places. Such are common aesthetic pleasures related to carnal experiences and associated with lower social classes. This aesthetic sense is sometimes called the *taste of necessity*. At the opposite end of the continuum is the *taste of reflection* (*goût de la réflexion* in French). In this case, the perception of beauty transcends narrow artistic conventions. Such art disregards sensual aesthetic pleasures and offers unusual solutions to consumers of culture. This latter taste is characteristic of the new bourgeoisie that holds a higher status in the hierarchical social structure. A rejection of mass taste is an important social interaction, as it draws a distinction between social groups and collective identities:

Tastes (i.e., manifested preferences) are the practical affirmation of an inevitable difference. It is no accident that, when they have to be justified, they are asserted purely negatively, by the refusal of other tastes. In matters of taste, more than anywhere else, all determination is negation; and tastes are perhaps first and foremost distastes, disgust provoked by horror or visceral intolerance (‘sick-making’) of the tastes of others (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 56).

Cultural objects acceptable to some social groups become objects of criticism and derision for other groups.

Although Bourdieu focused on the analysis of art, music, literature and photography as indicators of social stratification, his typology of taste can be properly applied to the analysis of festivals. Festivals can be categorized by what aesthetic

relation one or another group develops towards them. Another important conclusion follows. Since festivals always take place in a space, taste categories should be manifested not only in the content of cultural events but also in the choice of physical spaces for organising these events, that attract, or fail to attract, particular social groups.

The two Klaipėda festivals, which are open-air events, perfectly fit into the typological field suggested by Bourdieu:

1. Sea Festival is an annual festival of popular culture held during the high season for tourism; it is meant for mass consumption and does not target any specific group of culture consumers. It originated in the Soviet era as a professional and ideological celebration of the workers of maritime industries. Traditionally it included a parade down the main street, a concert, an athletic competition and a disco. Klaipėda Sea Festival has not only survived the collapse of the Soviet Union but, since then, has considerably grown in scope and popularity. Today it has over a hundred events on its programme, such as concerts, discos, fairs, exhibitions, happenings, street performances, parades and workshops, and is orientated to mass consumer, a rather abstract category of 'city residents and guests'. The festival attracts up to 200–500 thousand people, who are entertained by 600–700 performers (Laužikienė, 2006, p. 109–115).

During the first decade of Lithuanian independence, this festival was organised by the Department of Culture of Klaipėda municipality and was funded from the city budget. However, since 2001, a newly founded public enterprise 'Jūros šventė' (Sea Festival) was made responsible for raising funds for the festival as well as other organisational matters. Although the city still contributes financially, municipal funding rarely covers even a third of the festival's costs.

When looking at Sea Festival from Bordieu's sociological perspective, it is obvious that participation in this festival does not require intellectual reflection. The events are organized in convenient representative spaces and streets that cater to mass taste and are as a rule decorated for festival purposes. Those public spaces are perceived by most people as attractive, popular and beautiful. Festival participants are frequently immersed into a huge crowd of moving bodies. Therefore the festival can be classified as belonging to the field of expression based on sensual taste and *low-brow* content.

2. Tinklai International Short Film Festival was a three to four-day event of film screenings and meetings with film directors. It takes place off-season, in early autumn, when evenings are dark enough but not too cold for open-air screenings.

Differently from Sea Festival, Tinklai Festival was a purely post-Soviet phenomenon. It was initiated in 1999 by a few film artists, the founders of public enterprise 'Panoptikumas' in Vilnius, whose mission was to demonstrate avant-garde films. Since then, Tinklai Festival has evolved into a refined event of high culture orientated towards sub-cultural consumption, and its geography has expanded beyond Klaipėda to other Lithuanian cities. Its content and form are structured by the taste of reflection. Its films are avant-garde, visually experimental and devoid of traditional plots. Their content defies narratives and structures of popular film. They do not seek to entertain but call for thought and reflection.

The festival attracted educated viewers capable of evaluating an object of culture and did not appeal to less refined consumers of popular movies. Film screenings frequently took place in non-traditional venues. As an illustration, the first festival in 1999 opened in an open-air ornithology lab and screened films on nets used for bird-catching. Such a venue required additional effort from viewers: they have to travel to an inconvenient location to 'consume culture.'

Naturally, Tinklai Festival attracted select and specific audience: mostly students of art, people in creative professions, university professors, and others who tend to associate themselves with bohemian lifestyle and have a substantial potential for critical interaction with popular culture. The presence of such an audience places Tinklai into the category of festivals meant for subcultural consumption. The festival survived 15 years and in 2013 there were the last screening.

Both festivals, Sea Festival and Tinklai Festival, have become significant signs in Klaipėda's cultural landscape. Their seasonal rhythm dictates the city's cultural life and mobilizes financial and labour resources. They seasonally change the daily routine by transforming city spaces and trajectories of mobility, both pedestrian and traffic. City residents look forward to these events, prepare for them and widely discuss them before and after the fact. Moreover, these festivals structure practices of social distinction. The intellectual fans of Tinklai avant-garde films avoided the crowded concerts of Sea Festival. They invited friends to Tinklai Festival but left Klaipėda during Sea Festival. Small businessmen thrive on Sea Festival but used gained any profit from Tinklai Festival. Through their relation to a specific festival, individuals demonstrate their social position in the structure of symbolical hierarchy. Festivals create an independent field of discourse, that none of the residents can avoid, and expose the social structure of city residents.

However, the understanding of festivals and their consumers should not be limited to social origins of taste drawn by Bourdieu or the reconstruction of differ-

ent patterns of culture consumption among social groups. The rhythm of daily and not daily practices can reveal the capacity of a specific space to generate consumers' physical behaviour. To better understand the city, we should analyse how city space representations are manifested in physical practices and how the invisible acquires visible expression. In other words, festival analysis must be reconnected with the study of its venue.

SPATIAL PRACTICES OF CULTURAL EVENTS: DISTINCTIONS, ORDER AND CONSUMPTION

Since both events have a rather long history, it is possible to track their geographical dynamics during 1991–2010: the festivals have changed locations and increased their spatial boundaries. These changes can be seen in maps No. 1–3. Visual urban dynamics of cultural events stimulates sociological imagination and encourages looking for patterns that combine elements of taste, structural environment and social practices.

We presume that practices of consumption accelerate spatial expansion of festivals; such practices transcend the mere consumption of a cultural object, an event or happening in this case, and multiply themselves in other forms. The festivals expand into spaces that are not necessarily culture-related and open up to new consumption practices.

TINKLAI FESTIVAL

The organisers of Tinklai Festival, representing reflective taste, had often selected film screening spaces that match this taste. During the first festivals (1999–2000), films were screened not only in the abandoned cinema theatre *Kapitolijus*, a well-known place for non-commercial films in 1992–1998, but also in open-air at night and such unusual places as neglected industrial hangars, walls of houses or Old Town courtyards. Film screening events became temporary invasions into those city spaces that had lost their previous functionality or did not have one.

The screening of short films did not include any other organised practices of consumption besides screening. No merchandise or food for purchase accompanied the screening and intellectual discussion. Neither the location nor the time of screening was favourable for small business.

Such events do not attract businesses for two reasons. Firstly, the audience consists of a very unusual group of culture consumers. Their subcultural identity is unfamiliar to small businesses used to catering to mass consumers and does not guarantee profit. Secondly, it is complicated for business people to meet all necessary hygiene and security requirements and to establish stands in untradi-



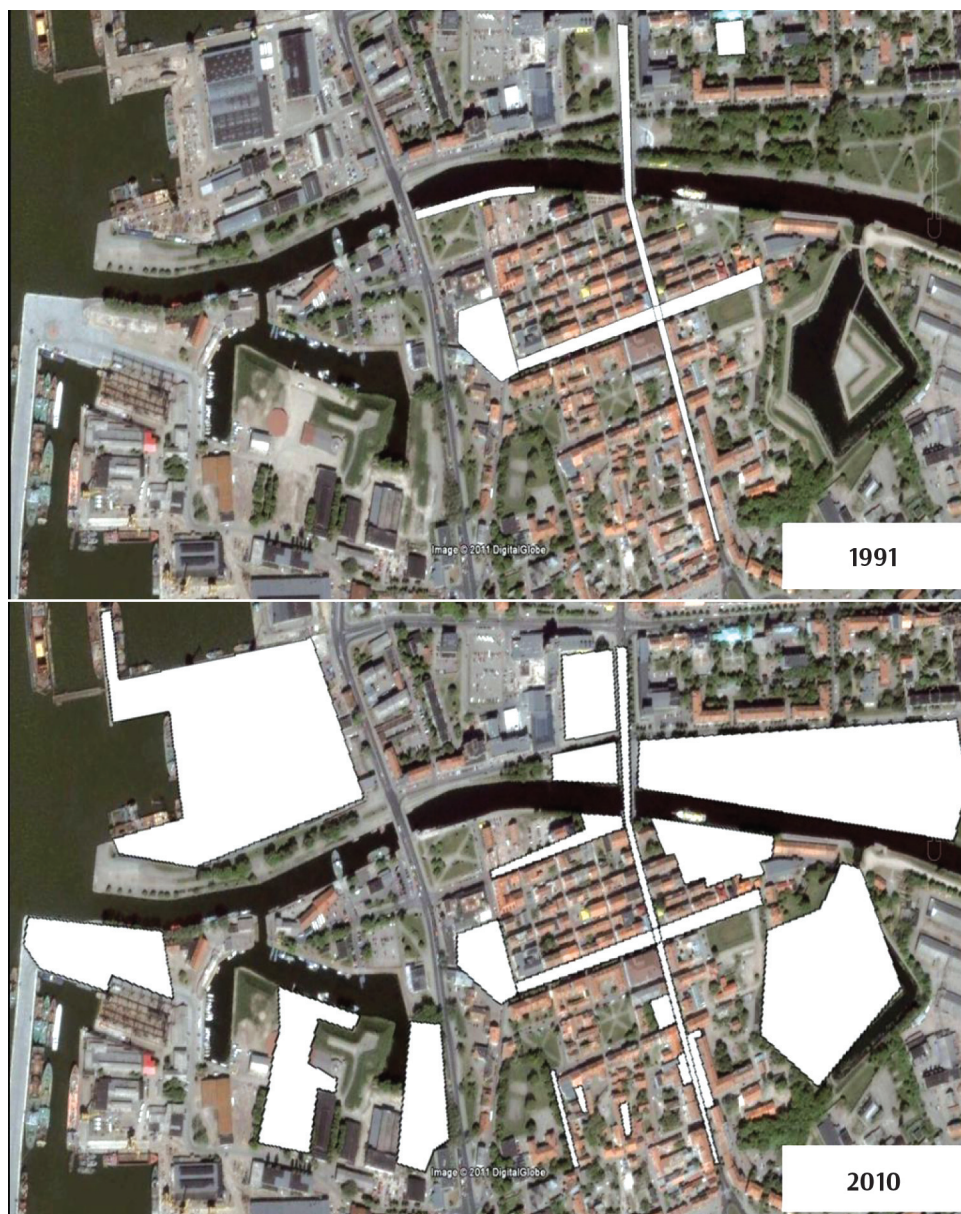
Map No. 1. Screening locations of Short film festival *Tinklai* in downtown Klaipėda in 1999–2010

1 – Abandoned cinema theatre *Kapitolijus* (1999–2000); 2 – Theatre Square (2002); 3 – Neglected warehouses along the river (2003); 4 – The hangar of former tobacco factory (2004–2006); 5 – Abandoned cinema theatre *Žemaitija* (2005); 6 – The Courtyard of the House of Artists (2008); 7 – A former yacht boathouse in a former shipyard (2007–2009); 8 – The hangar of former ship-repair dock (2010)

tional places. Business practice shows that investment into arrangement of non-functional spaces for business exceeds the profit. Therefore, culture that requires reflective taste is consumed in silence and with an empty stomach.

The dynamics of screening locations in Klaipėda was influenced by two important factors: the festival funding scheme and the control of urban space.

Firstly, during 2000–2010 neoliberal system of funding cultural projects was developing in Lithuania. Before 2000, the funding of cultural production depended on their artistic value on the one hand, and the status, social capital and social network of their creators on the other. Such a system of funding reproduced the established hierarchies within the cultural field. The new system of funding followed the rules of open competition and public procurement. Not the aesthetic



Maps No. 2–3. Locations of Sea Festival events in Klaipėda downtown in 1991 and 2010

or social value but the lowest price dictated the selection of cultural projects to be supported.

The share of public funding in Tinklai Festival budget shrank, and the budget became dependent on sponsors. Their interest in festival funding was determined by the effectiveness of advertising. The amount of funding depended on the size of audience who would get to see the brand names. Funding became harder to get, as Klaipėda film festival did not attract bigger crowds than 200–300 people. The new funding system called for new solutions, such as expansion of audience. The festival made a move to Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania, later to other cities, and is now held in five major Lithuanian cities (Vilnius, Kaunas, Klaipėda, Šiauliai, and Panevėžys). Geographic expansion led to the expansion of the group of target consumers and thus conformed to business interest.

Secondly, film screenings have moved from cinema theatres, either used or abandoned, to post-industrial spaces. The move to ‘post-’ spaces enhanced aesthetic experience and invited reflection. However, aestheticism was not the only factor in choosing such industrial spaces as the hangar of former tobacco factory or the yacht boathouse in former shipyards. The ‘taming’ of post-functional spaces in the context of urban regeneration increased the value of those spaces in the eyes of city residents and potential investors. Locations where screenings took place had been pre-planned as targets for radical reconstruction and development. Metaphorically speaking, uncontrolled and naturally chaotic environments with their peculiar aesthetics were to be transformed into disciplinary and profitable spaces. The goal of capital generation explains the logic of geographic dynamics and the choice of certain post-industrial spaces over the others.

In 1999–2004 the films were watched for free in open spaces, while from 2005 the festival returned to enclosed spaces. The first turn was influenced by the decline of cinema business in 1991–2002, while the latter was caused by a revival and commercialization of film industry. As an illustration, out of 10 cinema theatres in 1991, only two remained by 2002. In 1999 Kapitolių cinema theatre, that used to specialize in non-commercial cinema and hosted the first Tinklai Festival, was closed. Although this theatre had become a neglected ‘post-’ space of lost functionality, festival organizers managed to get a permission of the owners to use it as a temporary space for film screening in 1999 and 2000. In 2001 films were demonstrated in open spaces: the Theatre Square, on the walls of former warehouses and Old Town courtyards. From 2004 the festival moved to post-industrial spaces: the hangar of the former tobacco factory (2004–2006), the yacht boathouse of the former shipyard (2007–2009), and the hangar of the former ship-repair dock (2010). Since 2005, the entrance to film screenings had again become charged by

fee and thus more controlled. The re-installment of the financial model automatically reconnected the festival and its space with systems of administration and social control that, besides regulating the security of visitors and the control of financial operations, strengthened the mechanisms of social hierarchy. Consumption of higher culture was restored as a signifier of higher social status, since an admittance fee, although small, barred mass consumers of sensual pleasures.

This short overview of the festival's geography leads to the conclusion that the taste of reflection mostly rejects possibilities of consumption, other than consumption of culture itself. Therefore, under contemporary conditions, the consumption of higher culture can survive only due to spatial expansion that allows increasing the number of culture consumers or the symbolic value of the space. Possibly, neo-Marxists would gladly use this festival as a classical example of capital growth and expansion in the cultural field.

The post-Soviet nature of Tinklai Festival displayed itself in confrontation of the new discourse of culture consumption and the former functionality of space. The organisers of this film festival obviously sought to reject the patterns of social behaviour and definitions of space dictated by the Soviet regime. The initial charm of the festival can be explained by its retreat from the functional space of a Soviet cinema theatres and its *freedom from the legacy of Soviet definitions of space*. On the other hand, the consumption of avant-garde cinema initiates a new social hierarchy that negates the system and ideology of Soviet cinema based on homogenisation of audience, exclusion of heterogeneity and control of taste. However, here lies a post-Soviet paradox: post-industrial spaces, the neglected legacy of Soviet industry, invoke a *nostalgia* for their lost functionality and semantics that was inherent to them. A festival temporarily retrieved the lost functionality of those spaces, albeit in a different form, revitalized them and turns them into a new social and vital body. Former spaces of the hegemonic Soviet working class turned into territories of hegemonic consumers with refined taste. Consequently, a post-industrial space becomes a post-Soviet space.

It's interesting that transformation of post-industrial sites into more habitual places of capitalism with clear functionality undermined the very existence of such festival. In 2013 Klaipėda citizens witnessed the last cultural gatherings of fans Tinklai Festival. After fifteen years an alternative post-Soviet culture was surrender to the capitalist production of space.

SEA FESTIVAL

From the point of view of sociology of consumption, Sea Festival is a more interesting phenomenon than Tinklai Festival. Due to its huge variety of locations,

events, concerts, ideas, and decorations, and due to a combination of various social practices and creative solutions, Sea Festival can be seen as an example of hybrid consumption (Bryman, 2004). In the last decade the festival attracted around 200–300 thousand people. The organizers tend to double this number in media (Laužikienė, 2006) to get more funding from sponsors who seek to advertise their products or services. It is a matter of prestige for city officials and businessmen to organize and finance the festival.

During the Sea Festival, people overdrink and overeat, buy all kinds of merchandise and attend numerous shows. In this respect, Sea Festival can be compared to Bakhtin's *carnavalesque*. The abundance of supply tempts the visitors to go from stand to stand and from show to show in a big and crowded space. Like those strollers romanticized by De Certeau, they create a sociality of an urban space and master it. The focus on walking, shopping and entertainment distinguishes Sea Festival from Tinklai Festival with its focus on watching and conceptualizing the object of watching.

The abundance of events and people is exhausting to the senses and the body. An initial curiosity of strollers is soon replaced by tiredness and numbness, referred to as *Blasiertheit* by Georg Simmel. Saturation causes 'indifference toward the distinctions between things', when values and meanings of objects are obliterated and they are perceived as devoid of value (Simmel, 2002 (1903), p. 14). The festival itself undergoes similar devaluation. Abundance obliterates the semantics of the festival by erasing its meanings and symbolism. For this reason, each year Sea Festival has to expand even more and to offer new opportunities for entertainment and consumption.

Intense consumption during the festival should not be seen as the latest phenomenon spawned by the formation of consumer culture in Lithuania and the local authorities' initiative to commercialize Sea Festival. In late Soviet period, this festival similarly encouraged consumerist practices; however, they those practices had other meanings. Sea Festival used to be a great opportunity for city residents to obtain goods that were in short supply in Soviet times. City industries were instructed by the communist party nomenclature to provide such goods, be it meat, fish or textiles, to the festival's fair as a demonstration of their achievements. The appearance of such deficit products in the public space was an ideological practice that temporarily concealed the fact that those goods were inaccessible to ordinary citizens in their daily lives. An opportunity to obtain what people lacked attracted more visitors than the ideological content of the festival. Thus the festival was used as an ideological performance of professional industrial achievements that was immediately unmasked by consumption practices of Soviet people.

During 1995–2000 Sea Festival transformed from a Soviet professional feast of maritime industries into a post-Soviet celebration of *conspicuous consumption*. The transformation of the festival with consumption conspicuously overshadowing the professional prestige of maritime industries became symbolically complete in 2002, when a kilometre-long table was placed in the central street. The table that could simultaneously cater to over 5 thousand people became the central feature of Sea Festival.

Lately organizers have been trying to give this festival more refinement and to return sea symbolism and images: since 2004 these festivals have been thematic. Nevertheless the environment that structures social practices displays the festival's nature and its dependence on sensory pleasures and related aesthetic dispositions.

What are the characteristics of those locations that became the venues of the expanding Sea Festival during 1991–2010? First of all, those spaces are open, accessible, and easy to cross; they yield to regulation and control of crowd flows to avoid jams. Second, the festival expanded to spaces that lost their functionality and whose symbolic value the organizers wanted to increase. The public was allowed access to former industrial and socially neglected spaces that were undergoing essential functional changes and were safe for walking. For example, from 2005, the main concerts and events of the festival took place in the former shipyard on the left embankment of the river Dane, while from 2009 many events were already moved to the territory of another industrial place, the ship-building factory, on the opposite bank of the river. Industrial activities were terminated in both spaces, and they became accessible to festival organisers. It is important to note that big projects of development, both residential and commercial, were already planned for those territories. With prospects of real estate development in mind, festivals and cultural events become instruments for creating value for physical spaces. Festivals create a territory's symbolic and social value that later acquires its financial expression. This aspect of geographic expansion designates Sea Festival to the discourse of culture management and regeneration of urban spaces. Third, the festival has been moving from the city's outskirts to its centre. If in 1988 the majority of the festival's mass events were held outside the city up to 4 kilometres away from downtown, and in 1994–2002 in the squares of the southern part of the city, since 2003, these places have disappeared from the festival's geography. The majority of events are now concentrated in the Old Town by the river Dane.

It is obvious that geographic expansion is stimulated by the logic of abundance and consumption. Territories that are added to the map are used for outdoor cafes, souvenir stands, folk craft fairs, beer pubs, and carousels. 'During a festival,

around 600 additional trading spots are established on streets; therefore, in comparison with an ordinary weekend, consumption of goods and services increases 2–3 times' (Laužikienė, 2006, p. 109). Around 500–700 trade permissions are issued for the festival time. The explosion and implosion of consumption in city spaces legitimize Sea Festival as a celebration of excessive consumption.

The social practices of walking and consuming, nurtured by Sea Festival, create conditions for transforming the city's physical spaces of varying functions, such as former factories, roads and streets, parking areas, quays, and stadiums, into public gathering spaces. Territories of low social or economic value turn into profit-generating spaces. Thus the festival can be seen as a capital-accumulating event that creates city spaces.

Simultaneously an opposite process occurs. Practices nurtured by people temporarily negate the conceptuality and functionality of spaces created by city planners and administrators. Trade happens not in a sterile supermarket but on the street. People walk on roads designated for driving, use alcohol in places where its usage is normally illegal, while well-groomed lawns are given to merchandise stands and intensive trampling. Thus city spaces are temporarily appropriated and filled with people of lower social classes, whose bodies create a collective identity and an emotional community (Maffesoli, 1998). The negation of conceptuality and abstractness of urban spaces also negates the category of an abstract individual: individuals become a mass. This symbolic transformation is painful to those who value individualism. They are frustrated by the negation of individuality and the disregard for personal space, since keeping distance from other people closely correlates with their position in the structure of social hierarchy. Such people tend to express disgust and criticism towards Sea Festival and leave the crowded city during this fiesta.

Sea Festival clearly continues the tradition, social practices and identities formed by Soviet times. Our analysis reveals that consumption, ideologically unacceptable and concealed in Soviet times, has become an increasingly obvious and central function of the post-Soviet festival. The difference lies in the shift in hierarchy; the formerly privileged professional class of maritime industry has lost its status of symbolic power, while the formerly ideologically suspicious mass of consumers has taken the position of privilege in the new hierarchical structure created by the festival. Another important change concerns the functions of urban space; territories of purely ideological function under Soviet regime have been transformed into spaces of consumption. To illustrate, the main city square, a place of ideological solemnity and Soviet power symbolized by the monument to Lenin, has now become a space of hyper-consumption and entertainment. However, this

ideological shift in space semantics and practices can hardly be seen as a victory of capitalism over Soviet socialism. On the contrary, the post-Soviet festival, similarly to its Soviet counterpart, reproduces an identity of mass uniformity. The hegemonic working class has been transformed into the hegemonic class of consumers. Paradoxically, this transformation has occurred not in remote post-industrial territories but in the city centre and namely in those spaces that carry the memory of symbolic and ideological legacy of the Soviet regime. This is the most evident manifestation of the post-Soviet nature of Sea Festival in Klaipėda.

CONCLUSION: URBAN SPACE AND CONSUMPTION

What does this short discussion of the two festivals reveal about the space of a post-Soviet city? Similarly to Lefebvre, who argues that ‘social space works (along with its concept) as a tool for the analysis of society’ (1991, p. 34), we claim that the spatial analysis of local festivals becomes a key to knowing a city’s social structure and its identities.

Firstly, the content and social practices of the analysed festivals display social distinction and hierarchy. The festivals exhibit two opposing but complementary categories of Bourdieu’s and De Certeau’s typologies. Tinklai Festival nurtures critical and reflective aesthetics, where gaze, watching, and individualized contemplation of art objects dominate. It attracts a particular group distinguished by subcultural taste and critical disposition to popular culture. Sea Festival, on the other hand, attracts masses: it erases individuality and reflection of the consuming subject. Walking and consumption represent sensual and carnal experiences that repel the city’s intellectuals. Both festivals and their differences reveal a rather dynamic cultural environment, where cultural distinction becomes apparent primarily in the sphere of taste. Both festivals create distinct and competing collective identities.

Secondly, despite the differences between the festivals and their consumers, their spatial expansion exhibits the same pattern, where consumption plays a crucial role. The function of these urban festivals is to create temporary public spaces which can generate capital. The accumulation of such capital forms the identity of the city as a consumption space. Varying practices of consumption are crucial to the expansion of the festivals’ geography. Tinklai Festival prefers more enclosed and controlled spaces that are aesthetically acceptable to its individualised consumer with a reflective taste. The consumption patterns of Sea Festival transform physical city spaces into social spaces. These different meanings of con-

sumption reconstruct the attitude to consumption as the critique of mass society. In its broader understanding, consumption encompasses contemporary forms of sociality, that may seem unimportant or peripheral at first sight, but are in fact significant for the process of knowing today's society.

Thirdly, both festivals are subordinated to the discourse of regeneration of urban spaces, since they seek to transform non-functional city spaces into orderly, conceptual and profitable ones:

Global space establishes itself in the abstract as a void waiting to be filled, as a medium waiting to be colonized. How this could be done was a problem solved only later by the social practice of capitalism: eventually, however, this space would come to be filled by commercial images, signs and objects (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 125).

During festivals, socially neglected territories, by becoming sites for consumption, turn into sterile, hygienic, safe, controlled, and surveilled leisure spaces. The control is exercised through bureaucratic rules, regulations and standards. Spaces that refuse to submit to such bureaucratic order are erased from a festival's map, because a leisure place must be a consumption place, too. A festival, its territory, and its consumption practices become integral to the capitalist system of production, while the geographic expansion and acculturation of a space follow the inner logic of its dynamics.

What does this sociological stroll with Bourdieu, De Certeau and Lefebvre in the festivals of a post-Soviet city reveal about the post-Soviet context from a global perspective? Since these sociologists were critical of ideologies and concerned with individual freedom, they would be curious to discover that the festivals of post-Soviet societies mirror the social processes to which they have given much thought.

A historical view at the transformations of these festivals demonstrates the diminishing ideological control of the city's cultural life since the collapse of the Soviet system. In a post-Soviet society, urban festivals no longer were imposed the ideological function of constructing an image of a homogeneous and classless society. Newly found creative freedom generated new festivals, social practices and forms of expression. Furthermore, new festivals revealed a social differentiation formerly concealed by Soviet ideology. Social and cultural distinction became apparent in heterogeneity of taste and varying practices of culture consumption. The idea of freedom associated with a choice to consume what was aesthetically appealing.

As this study reveals, in our chosen urban festivals we observe a growing liberation from social restrictions and dominant categories. However, we point out

an illusory aspect of the culture's liberation from ideological control. The spatial analysis of the two festivals reveals how ideology sneaks in through the back door. Thus, while the popular city feast Sea Festival defies certain official categories by allowing the masses spontaneous partying and by creating an emotional community in an immediate ritual space, at the same time the masses remain under close surveillance and control exercised through spatial arrangements. Similarly, the intellectual Tinklai Festival exhibited subordination to locally operating disciplinary order. Moreover, the participants' individual reflection on an art product numbs the realization of socially imposed restrictions. Since both festivals embrace the spatial process, stimulated by consumption and capital accumulation, they subject the individual to the colonisation of urban space:

In the street, the neocapitalist organization of consumption is demonstrated by its power, which is not restricted to political power or repression (overt or covert). The street, a series of displays, an exhibition of objects for sale, illustrates just how the logic of merchandise is accompanied by a form of (passive) contemplation that assumes the appearance and significance of an aesthetics and an ethics. The accumulation of objects accompanies the growth of population and capital; it is transformed into an ideology, which, dissimulated beneath the traits of the legible and visible, comes to seem self-evident. In this sense we can speak of a colonization of the urban space, which takes place in the street through the image, through publicity, through the spectacle of objects – a “system of objects” that has become symbol and spectacle. Through the uniformization of the grid, visible in the modernization of old streets, objects (merchandise) take on the effects of colour and form that make them attractive. The parades, masquerades, balls, and folklore festivals authorized by a power structure caricaturize the appropriation and reappropriation of space (Lefebvre, 2003, p. 20-21).

Any space of sociality imposes social categories and practices of particular discourse, in our case culture-led urban development discourse. Therefore, in post-Soviet context, the idea of liberation may be illusory.

To conclude, let us imagine a scenario where Bourdieu, De Certeau or Lefebvre were to meet at one of city festivals in an unknown post-Soviet city, named Klaipėda. They would probably slowly sip beer or vodka (untypically to Frenchmen) and share sociological insights about the feast turmoil around them. One would observe social distinction, another would see everyday practices of resistance, and the third would witness social production of space. We believe, that despite the differences of their conceptual approaches, they would enjoy their drinks, while arguing about the troubles of neocapitalism in post-Soviet society. At the same time their behaviour would testify to the fact that the discourse of the

city as consumption space and the discourse of culture-led urban processes have become totally and globally subordinating urban space and culture for capital generation; actually, subordinating even the critics of these discourses.

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank our reviewers for their interest, constructive criticism, and valuable suggestions. The article uses the material of the research project 'Klaipėda's Development in 1990-2010: from Soviet Industrial Harbour to Multicultural City'. The research was funded by the Research Council of Lithuania (grant No.LIT-2-34).

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