

THE BALTIC ANTHROPOLOGY CONFERENCE AT KLAIPĖDA UNIVERSITY

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The second conference (it wasn't called this way in official papers) on socio-cultural anthropology in Lithuania 'Defining Region: Baltic Area Studies from Sociocultural Anthropology and Interdisciplinary Perspectives' was held in May 19-22, 2005, organized by the Institute of Baltic Sea Region History and Archaeology, Klaipėda University in collaboration with the Centre of Social Anthropology, Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas. It was supported by the Lithuanian Science and Studies Foundation, and co-sponsored by the Klaipėda based hotel 'Baltpark', as well as the Simon Dach House, the Stasys Šimkus Conservatoire and the Ethnoculture Centre of Klaipėda Municipality.

The aim of the conference was to continue discussions started at the first Baltic anthropology conference ('Defining Ourselves: Establishing Anthropology in the Baltics', held at the Vilnius University, October 3-5, 2003). It was important to analyze already defined scientific research directions of anthropology here and to share information concerning new perspectives of this discipline in the Baltic States. The main attention was given to elaboration of the Baltic Area studies. Also the establishing of anthropological research directions at the Institute of Baltic Sea Region History and Archaeology, Klaipėda University has been discussed.

The conference was greeted and opened by the Rector of Klaipėda University Professor Vladas Žulkus. The keynote presentations were given by Professor Thomas K. Schippers (France), Professor Reginald Byron (Wales, UK), Professor Ullrich Kockel (England, UK), and Professor Máiréad Nic Craith (North Ireland, UK). About 40 participants of the conference presented 31 papers here. They came from 10 countries, including Baltic Sea Region states (Lithuania, Latvia), Scandinavia (Finland, Norway, Denmark), East Europe (Russia), West Europe (France, Germany, UK) and USA.

Greetings have been followed by the leaders of conference Organizing Committee Professor Rimantas Sliužinskas (Klaipėda University) and Dr. Vytis Čiubrinskas (Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas), who also expressed gratitude for all foreign participants, who came to this conference to continue just started work establishing the discipline of anthropology in the context of worldwide perspectives and to share their experience with young generation of Lithuanian and other Baltic anthropologists, also widely presented at this conference.

The methodological background was put by Professor Reginald Byron (University of Wales, Swansea, UK), who presented paper 'On the Politic of Multiculturalism: Three Mortal Sins'. According to him, we now live in a world that seems to be increasingly concerned with 'ethnic identity' and 'ethnic rights', and more conscious of 'ethnicity' and 'identity' in all sorts of ways. The marketplace in stories about ethnicity and culture is now truly global. When the words 'culture', 'ethnicity' and 'identity' are heard on television, or read in newspapers, magazines, and books, there is a temptation for most people to assume that what is being talked about, or written, is *anthropological* or social scientific in character. R. Byron argued that, in popular discourses about multiculturalism, these words may be used in ways that are completely incompatible with our scientific understandings of them. He focussed on three interrelated concepts, which were called 'the Three Mortal Sins': *Ethnocentrism*, *Essentialism*, and *Primordialism*.

Professor Ullrich Kockel (University of the West of England, Bristol, UK) talked about heritage and tradition revisited: towards a European Ethnology for the 21st century. In his paper he considered examples of how culture and identity are utilised, under the banner of 'heritage', to promote development. The underlying purpose of such development is, arguably, the fostering of social cohesion in an expanding Europe seeking 'unity in diversity'. U. Kockel seeks to interpret some aspects of the relationship between identity, heritage and tradition in a contemporary European development context from a comparative anthropological perspective in the tradition of European ethnology.

Professor Máiréad Nic Craith (University of Ulster, Northern Ireland, UK) presented arguments for a re-appraisal of the disciplinary boundaries of anthropology, suggesting that the politics of cultural and linguistic identity within the specific context of Europe should become a strong focus of research for anthropologists. The Eastern enlargement of the EU gives urgency to our thinking about Europe and would greatly benefit from a fresh anthropological/ethnological approach. For anthropologists in the Baltic Region, where the emergence of EU citizenship almost coincided with the acquisition of independence, these issues are particularly pertinent.

Dr. Thomas K. Schippers (Institut d'Ethnologie Méditerranéenne et Comparative, France) gave his comments about cultures in space and some reflections on mapping them out. He admitted, that cultures considered as scholarly constructs made of both immaterially (cognitively) and materially 'branded' items, constantly differentiate from each other both in time and in space. The spatial dynamics of cultures as they can be studied with the help of (carto)graphic tools. It will explore the heuristic interest of 'mapping out' cultural data, but also list some methodological and theoretic difficulties inherent to this type of analysis. This paper suggested some topics for a discussion around the anthropological interest for 'space and culture' in modern contexts where maps have become important parts of 'world view(s)' and even sometimes icons of belonging.

The 1st session 'Cultures in Space' has been chaired by Dr. Jeanette Edwards (UK) and Dr. Robert G. Minnich (Norway).

Dr. Anja Peleikis (Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Halle, Germany) talked about understanding the presence through the past: anthropological and historical research on the Curonian Spit in Lithuania. She contributed to the topic of 'defining the Baltic area' by focusing on history inspired and translocal anthropological approaches. A. Peleikis argued that for understanding the present situation, interests and agency on the local, national and regional level we need to have a detailed knowledge not only of the recent past but also of the pre-World-War-II period. She also suggested that for defining the 'Baltic area' we need to develop a non-territorial perspective to the concepts of 'locality', 'region' and 'area'.

Dr. Robert Gary Minnich (University of Bergen, Norway) presented some reflections over inter-disciplinary cooperation in the study of an inter-state region: the Austro-Italian-Slovene borderland. Combining perspectives drawn from history, geography, economy and socio-cultural anthropology the so-called Three Border Region was viewed implicitly as part of what anthropologists have called the "Circum-Alpine culture area." R. G. Minnich argued that the research strategy adopted for this inter-disciplinary regional study can be applied elsewhere as a framework for successful research cooperation.

Dr. Jeanette Edwards (University of Manchester, UK) presented her paper which reflects on the *Euro* in *Euro-American* kinship in Lithuania and UK. She draws on an EC funded project which has focused, broadly speaking, on the way in which different 'publics' across several European

countries (Spain, Italy, France, Lithuania, Hungary, Norway and Britain) explore some of the social and ethical implications of new reproductive and genetic technologies. J. Edwards draws on fieldwork in Lithuania and England, and makes a start at unpacking some of the similarities and differences in 'kinship thinking' between the two.

Dr. Auksuolė Čepaitienė (The Lithuanian Institute of History, Vilnius, Lithuania) use to see *Region* from inside. She presented results of participation at the international project 'Public Understanding of Genetics'. According to her, to conduct the ethnographic research means to do a job of investigating something, which is always geographically located in a particular place: a village, a city, a country, or an area. A map is the first attribute of an ethnographer. But anytime we, as ethnographers, take the map and choose the ethnographic site to study it becomes immediately filled in our imagination with the discourses already produced by historical, political, social, cultural, or local contexts.

Marina Hakkarainen (PhD Cand., The European University at St. Petersburg, Russia) focussed her attention on the margins: minority groups in Pechory borderland. The status of this borderland changed several times during the last century. In connection with it a composition of population and particularly ethnic groups' places in the social space were changing. She took into consideration three ethnic minority groups: the Finns, the Half-believers (the Seto), and the Germans. In that time Pechory as an inner borderland gave them optima to preserve their ethnic and religious identity in circumstances of ethnic suppressions.

Trangdai Tranguyen (PhD Cand., Stockholm University, Sweden / Stanford University, USA) talked about immigrant placenta fellows across the Baltic lands: the Vietnamese-Swedish case. The paper is sharing a common past and passage that these individuals imbue a new sense of dual realities in ethnography.

The 2nd session 'Multiculturalism: Remaking of Boundaries' was chaired by Dr. Laura Assmuth (Finland) and Dr. Vytis Čiubrinskas (Lithuania).

Dr. Laura Assmuth (University of Helsinki, Finland) shared her information on her fieldwork across borders in the Baltic Region: methodological and practical lessons of a research project in which she studied and compared ethnic and local identities and cross-border interaction in two cases of newly established borders in the former Soviet Union: the Russian-Estonian and Russian-Latvian border areas. L. Assmuth discussed what kinds of methodological and practical lessons can be learned from a research framework that entails many different and complicated border-crossings (cultural, linguistic, logistical and administrative).

Dr. Ingo W. Schröder (Philipps University, Marburg / Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas) talked about religious pluralism in post-socialist societies: preliminary thoughts on a Lithuanian research project. He discussed on different theoretical approaches to the religious field with reference to a research project on religious identities in post-socialist Lithuania. These general analytical reflections will be applied to a preliminary sketch of the religious and moral field in Lithuania.

Dr. Jeanne Kormina (Higher School of Economics, St. Petersburg, Russia) discussed about Russians in Latvia: the native's point of view. She emphasized concepts of patriotism, motherland, and ethnicity as they are understood and used by local people living on the Latvian side of the border.

Aija Lulle (PhD Cand., University of Latvia) presented her paper on *local* and *global*: case study on Latvian-Russian border, based on empirical data, gathered in fieldwork on Latvian-Russian border (Lavry in Russia and Pededze in Latvia) in August 2004, together with scientists

from Finland, Estonia, and Russia in a research, led by researcher Laura Assmuth, and comparing cross-border interaction and movement in newly established border in the former Soviet Union.

East Europe problematic was continued by Oleg Pachenkov (Centre for Independent Social Research, St. Petersburg, Russia). He talked about *flea market* as an institution of *everyday economy* in post-Soviet Russia (case study of the biggest *flea market* in St.-Petersburg). He addressed the issues of everyday life worlds of post-soviet people, the “system” challenges to these life worlds and the “everyday economy” phenomenon.

The 3rd session ‘Identity, Heritage and Tradition’ was chaired by Professor Rimantas Sliužinskas and Dr. Gintautas Mažeikis (Lithuania).

Torstein Bach (Orkla Industrial Museum, Norway) presented his papers on a slice of culture: folklorists’ practices during his anthropological fieldwork in Estonia in 1997. He approached various folklorists’ traditions and practices in Setumaa and Kihnu, where music, texts, costumes and food traditions were studiously documented. An important question is what the inclusion of the broader context in folkloric studies can contribute to the discipline.

Dr. Arūnas Vaicekauskas (Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas, Lithuania) commented the carnival culture in the Baltic Region: tendencies and evolution. The analysis starts from the characterization of the historical specific of the different parts of Baltic region. According to him, the local specific of Lithuania is that the traditional country style masks still remain side by side with the modern personages in our day carnivals.

Professor Rimantas Sliužinskas and Dr. Silva Pocyte (Klaipėda University, Lithuania) presented their research project on the tradition of Klaipėda region Lutheran psalms singing as an object for interdisciplinary regional studies. What level of importance the Lutheran psalms have in the everyday life of local people during last years, in the context of once more generally changing society? Are they important in the formation of their self consciousness, world outlook, whole scale of cultural and moral values? What local people think themselves about those psalms at present? Are those psalms singing traditions different in particular localities? Those and other questions were raised in the context of interdisciplinary studies, including sociocultural anthropology, regional history, art history, linguistics, ethnology, ethnomusicology, religious and education studies, etc.

Dr. Nijolė Strakauskaitė (Klaipėda University, Lithuania) presented her materials about Adalbert Bezenberger (1851-1922) as a researcher of history and ethnology in the context of Lithuanian-German cross-cultural relationships. She pointed, that A. Bezenberger edited and published international linguistic periodicals, led archaeological expeditions, and travelled around East Prussia, Latvia and Lithuania several times investigating the dialects and collecting folklore. Bezenberger spent forty summers on the Curonian Spit and investigated specific dialect of the fisherman. Bezenberger’s works about East Prussian ethnology and archaeology are still actual for us from the scientific point of view.

Dr. Ruth Leiserowitz (Humboldt-University, Berlin, Germany / Klaipėda University, Lithuania) gave her information on living with the border inside and outside (the case of *Wolf’s Children* in the Baltic region 1947-1997). Thousands of East Prussian children left the new founded Soviet region Kaliningrad in 1946-1947. Illegal they crossed the border to Lithuania and went through the Baltic region, knowing, that people who moved could get food pretty soon which guaranteed life. Only the political changes opened possibilities to return to their original biography, which started to become a very difficult process. R. Leiserowitz research shows, that the former children looked back on 50 years, a time, when they felt the territorial border to their former homeland, the reli-

gious difference and the social distinction to their new context – several borders inside and outside. These borders were crossed many times, but saved several functions on the mental maps and in the constructed narrative space.

The 4th session ‘Anthropology in New Europe, Part 1’ was chaired by Professor Victor C. de Munck (USA) and Dr. Laura Assmuth (Finland)

Professor Victor C. de Munck (Dept. of Anthropology, State University of New York in New-Paltz, USA) discussed on science and post-modernism as dead ends in his presentation. Could a Baltic school of anthropology emerge to chart a new course? He suggested that anthropology is so institutionalized in the United States and Canada and these departments are so wrought with pervasive factionalism that there is no easy way out of; departments seem locked in perpetual intra-tribal warfare. According to V. C. de Munck, Baltic anthropologists if allied and working together have the potential to develop a new school of anthropology. The trouble, as always is institutional support, funds, and social solidarity.

Dr. Vytyis Čiubrinskas (Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas, Lithuania) presented his thoughts on sociocultural anthropology in Lithuania and about the politics and practice of the discipline. He admitted that Social or Cultural Anthropology, in the Western sense, is little known territory in parts of contemporary East Europe. It is the case in Lithuania where biological anthropology traditionally claims the term anthropology for itself. Lithuanian ethnology and sociology partially fill the void normally covered by anthropology. There were definite political, academic and practical factors that stunted the growth of anthropology in Lithuania. The aim of his presentation was to identify these factors, and to define the sphere and the field of research and instruction, that should be allocated to anthropology.

Dr. Gintautas Mažeikis (Šiauliai University, Lithuania) discussed social and political participation of the disabled from political anthropology viewpoint. A content of notion of social and political participation is analysed on the basis of reports of local government of Lithuanian municipalities about activity of the disabled in the period of 2002-2004 years. According to G. Mažeikis, political and social cooperation of people, compatibility of team working and leader activity produces consensual power. However the disabled are more influenced by coercive power from outside especially from different administrations. The quantity of micro and macro conflicts and the process of solving of these problems with active participation of the disabled in political arena are real signs of social and political participation.

Neringa Liubinienė (Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas, Lithuania) presented her papers on the framing of the Baltic Region from the contemporary anthropological perspective. She points, that talking about the Baltic region initially there comes a question, what kind of definition could be attributed to the words ‘Baltic region’. Does this phrase connect/separate the rest of the world and aforesaid region geographically or culturally, or politically, historically or maybe in all or none of these aspects? Is this region lived out and articulated by its inhabitants, or maybe it is only a product of different fields of interests (political, cultural, social, economical) and it exists only as some kind of ‘theoretical construction’?

Darius Daukšas (The Lithuanian Institute of History, Vilnius, Lithuania) was interested in defining belonging: citizenship as a form of ethnic inclusion and exclusion (the cases from post-Soviet Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania). He concluded that historical and social backgrounds are different here and these differences are at varying degree seen in the laws on citizenship of these countries.

The last 5th session ‘Anthropology in New Europe, Part 2’ was chaired by Dr. Ingo Schröder and Dr. Anja Peleikis (Germany).

Jurgita Saltanavičiūtė (PhD Cand., University of Oklahoma, USA) presented her opinion on Lithuanian paganism: a native perspective. She compared definitions, methodology, and politics in the studies of Baltic and Native American religions, or spirituality and belief systems. Discussing studies of Lithuanian paganism, she employed two perspectives: a viewpoint of a “native” Lithuanian combined with the anthropology of “Native” North America.

Danguolė Svidinskaitė (The Lithuanian Institute of History, Vilnius, Lithuania) talked on the empowered or disempowered subject of research (experience from fieldwork ‘at home’ on religiosity, Lithuanian case). She pointed, that the subjects of research and the results obtained are shaping the disciplines and representing at least in part the society or culture. The subject of research can be considered and (or) presented as important, of less importance or not important at all. That is why it requires attention to be paid to the factors, which have influence on it.

Mindaugas Stankūnas (University of Medicine, Kaunas, Lithuania) presented medical anthropology as the new partner in public health research and practice from international to national perspective. The aim of his presentation was to demonstrate the background and ways of implementation of medical anthropology in public health research and practice. He concluded, that the role of anthropology is rising in the face of globalization and cosmopolitanism. Holistical studies about human nature, cultural and social factors should become fundamental public health discipline and schools of public health should include them in their curriculums.

Asta Vonderau (Institute of European Ethnology, Humboldt-University, Berlin, Germany) talked about consumption and cultural difference: social change in post-Socialist Lithuania. Her paper was based on her PhD project which analyzes new definitions of cultural categories and social differences that became prominent after the change to the free market economy and after the emerging of a capitalist type consumer society in Lithuania. She described cultural visions of a ‘good life’ and images of ‘successful person’ which are dominant in today’s Lithuanian public discourse and demonstrate, how these visions and images changed since the Soviet times.

Ida Harboe Knudsen (Aarhus University, Denmark) presented her notices on trade and exchange among farmers in a post-Soviet Lithuanian village. By introducing two families from my fieldwork I will give further examples of the economical and social strategies of trade and exchange which the households rely on. I shall show how the internal resources are an object of great importance to the degree in which the families rely on others as a compensatory resource.

Linas Svolkinas (PhD Cand., Copenhagen University, Denmark) talked about strategies and tactics: defining a new moral behaviour in the public spaces of Vilnius. This paper reflected the theory of practice to explore and explain the effects of the beer drinking law, adopted in 2001 by the Supreme Administrative Court of Lithuania Republic. L. Svolkinas suggested that lacking means of participation in the decision making process, common citizens immerse into acts of resistance: tactical manoeuvres, creative acts of hidden transcripts of how to subvert and challenge the law.

Final discussions were chaired by Professor R. Byron, Professor V. C. de Munck, Dr. T. Schippers and Dr. R. G. Minnich. The main theme was pointed about sociocultural anthropology perspectives in Baltic States, Lithuania and particularly at Klaipėda University.

Culture programme for all participants of the conference was provided at Klaipėda municipality ethnoculture centre. Folklore group ‘Alka’ at common dancing evening presented unique Klaipėda region folk songs, dances and traditional instrumental music.

The entertainment at Institute of Baltic Sea Region History and Archaeology was held by Head of this Institute Dr. Silva Pocyte last evening.

Finally full day excursion to Neringa National Park was arranged for all guests by organizers of the conference. Everybody were able to continue personal discussions at the Mount of Witches (Juodkrantė), Nida dunes, other open air Neringa localities, full of dry sand and salted winds nearby Curonian Lagoon waters and on the nearby situated Baltic Sea beaches.

The same way, as three years ago at the 1st conference, the common photos of all conference participants will help to save memories of this symposium.

