I. SOCIOLOGIJA IR SOCIALINĖ POLITIKA

APPLICATION OF SOCIOCULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY FOR EMPLOYING MULTICULTURAL DIMENSION IN SOCIAL POLICY AND SOCIAL WORK STUDIES IN LITHUANIA

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Abstract

By arguing for the multicultural dimension to be employed in social policy as well as in social work studies in Lithuania, the article aims at explicit display of arguments for the anthropological perspective and anthropology itself to be applied for the implementation of that dimension. The article discusses applicability of such anthropological essential as sensitiveness to human nature. Conceptualized as analytical perspective of *cultural relativism* it enables "opening up and voicing" cultures and heritages of the most overlooked and marginalized social groups. Another key point of the discipline is to study people's lives from "their point of view". Such *emic* approach and prevailing usage of the field research methods enables the most vulnerable groups "to be heard" and it could become critical in particular in solving problems of misrepresentation of those groups. It is also stressed in conclusion that the best use of anthropology in multiculturalism-enhanced social work is its fieldwork-oriented methodology. So it could be the most instrumental as applied science, i.e. by monitoring social mobility, integration/segregation, acculturation processes and conflict situations of subaltern, migrant and minority groups as well as by being able to provide counseling, reconciliation and to develop multidimensional tolerance by using particular culture informed knowledge as well as skills of intercultural dialog.

Keywords: anthropology (sociocultural), multiculturalism, vulnerable groups, marginal groups, minorities, social policy, social work.

Introduction
A need for multicultural perspective for social support of vulnerable groups

Although at least from the ethnic diversity point of view Lithuania is a comparatively homogeneous Central and Eastern European country, nowadays it might be perceived as increasingly multicultural. Especially over the last five years when Lithuania has joined the European Union, distinct shapes of identity became explicit of a particular ethnic, religious and social minority groups and cultures. Those groups and cultures themselves became visible only or mainly by Lithuania's opening to globalization and Europeanization, and in many ways might still be voiceless and misrepresented. This applied in particular to the traditionally stigmatized ethnic minorities, like Roma, but also to new immigrant groups (Chechen), or new social minorities, like, for example, slam dwellers (in the town of Didžiasalis, District of Ignalina).
So despite that, would we agree on the question – is Lithuania already multicultural country or 'not yet', as if it is still waiting for new waves of immigrants and/or other changes to come - we would

argue for the multicultural perspective to be employed. First of all it is needed for better understanding of and for more efficient social assistance to those who belong to vulnerable social groups or subaltern cultures and, eventually, for the optimization of governmental social policies.

Furthermore, we would like to argue that the policies of social assistance have to be based on expertise provided by thorough scrutiny of current social and cultural dynamics of those – often stigmatized - groups and cultures in this country. The same is true for the larger Eastern European region striving to become a part of the EU. The current position of ten post-Communist countries in 'EU-land' and even more of those in the region still striving to become a part of it challenges its peoples' ways to reconsider and redefine their actual strategies and practices of acknowledgment of certain welfare providers like "own" state and its government. Social and cultural identification with, as well as loyalty to a particular nation-state is not only challenged by wishful subscription to benefits providing transnational union (European Union). It is also challenged by continuous and even recently increased uncertainty about their 'own', still in many ways post-communist state, and by the loss of trust in it, and reliance on alternative supports coming from foreign states and/or from outside the country based religious organizations.

Quest for belonging is a key issue in contemporary Europe, which becomes more and more "without borders" as well as the term 'collective identity', which became paradigmatic in the social sciences during the last three decades. Theoretically, issues of identities are linked to processes of globalization (Friedman 1996) and it is usually argued that the dialectic between the global and local creates new identities (Eriksen 2003). The idea of a rational, autonomous and coherent individual is often replaced by the idea of a contextualized human being influenced by rapid social, economic and political changes.

So the application of multicultural perspective on to the contemporary Lithuanian society's europeanization and globalization and especially in regard to the indicated target groups challenged by those processes is of particular need. It is also a practical need for delineation of the sociocultural identities of certain vulnerable ethnic and other minority groups as target groups for the social support policies and practices. The latter might be effective if only contemporary *know how* provided by well informed scientific inquiry is used. Investigation and research in diverse cases and in different contexts can assess the normative aspects of different theories. It can also provide much needed empirical material for understanding of vulnerable minority groups 'in need'.

Which scholarship field could do that? Which disciplines could tackle on?

We would argue for sociocultural anthropology as one of the most suitable disciplines to answer these questions. It is a social science, which puts emphasis on the need of thorough analysis of social and cultural life-ways and identities of the people explored from their own, from participant's, point of view. Potential tensions and conflicts between empowered and dis-empowered and often deprived ethnic and other social minority group identities may require strategies of accommodation and/or reconciliation. Anthropology in this case is ready to use its applied anthropology perspectives in dealing with tensions and contradictions between certain, value systems, life-ways and identities to be settled down.

So the aim of this article is to explicitly enhance the anthropological perspective and to show how anthropology enables to answer the questions of multiculturalism with regard to social work studies and practices by:

- approaching humanity with a particular comprehension of its similarity (same-ness) and difference (other-ness);
- employing effective methodology of the research *in situ*;
- being able to trace *multivocal* representations and to delineate floating identities of cultures and communities.

Prospective role of Sociocultural Anthropology in enhancing social policy practices and social work studies in Lithuania

A number of the social science disciplines are putting new analytical as well as applied science perspectives on to explorations of the contemporary gobalization and europeanization processes in Lithuanian society. Just to mention sociology, psychology and law as the most visible ones. The specialists of those fields being employed in the local branches of such international institutions like, for example, the European Monitoring Center on Racism and Xenophobia, are expected to be experts of intercultural communication and to be able to share their experience and advice in application of multiculturalism paradigm in social work.

What could be the place of sociocultural anthropology specialists' in that? What is the prospective role of the discipline of anthropology, still very little known in Lithuania, in enhancing social policy practices and social work studies in Lithuania. It could be delineated by its focal engagement in sensitiveness to human nature, in facing social reality with an *emic* approach, and in holistic and particularistic exploration of difference and other-ness.

Sensitiveness to human nature

The anthropology as disciple suffered much in the past, in particular during its evolutionist period in the nineteenth century, from Euro-centrism and already in its early phases of its development the paradigm *cultural relativism* was elaborated. Cultural relativism by definition aims at deconstruction of any preconceived nations, images and stereotypes of any culture or society. It also seeks to explore any particular culture in its own dynamics and treats its heritage as an almost unique entity. Nowadays it is also a must for any modern anthropologist to reflect his/her political attitudes, worldviews as well as moral and psychological constrains he/she feels by approaching people he/she is studying. What means to be not only sensitive to any forms of human nature but also to be reflexive.

Sensitiveness to human nature first of all is against any kind of ethnocentrism. For many years the role of sociocultural anthropology does not change from the 'classical' anthropology's sensitiveness to the "locals". Contemporary anthropologists nowadays more and more study Western societies. In this case nobody should be misguided by the traditional label of anthropology as a "science of primitives". By doing participant observation and *in situ* facing particular populations as well as by bringing evidence about their lifestyles described in ethnographies, anthropologists raised and still do raise self-awareness and self-esteem of the local people. It is applicable for the marginal- former extremely distant - colonial cultures as well as for the stigmatized and controversial groups in the Western societies.

Anthropologists are well known for *opening up* and *voicing* cultures and heritages of those who felt totally assimilated and had very slight and narrow comprehension of their cultural resources, heritage and tradition. Also, in James Clifford's words, showing *roots and routes* (Clifford 1997) to those who claim being rootless and bringing ethnicity to those who 'feel not ethnic anymore', as David Hollinger puts it – being in *postethnic* condition (Hollinger – 1995). Anthropologists do that by bringing prestige for and encouraging an understanding of the ideas that 'we all have our own cultures' and 'what we have in common could be proven in terms of culture shared by many generations of mutual descent'. Once voiced, that former silent or/and constrained ethnic and other vulnerable social groups are like groups of 'given new identities'. The elite of the certain group easily starts to manipulate that "new" sociocultural identity, and in a long run the identity politics of the group could grow into cultural revitalization and eventually into its social emancipation.

Facing social reality *in situ* with an *emic* approach

To face a human reality by employing *emic* approach is enshrined in prevailing in anthropology field research method, or ethnographic method. As it was just emphasized, anthropology is sensitive to a human nature. Furthermore it has exceptionally broad scale cross-cultural perspective. Such a perspective is based on a thorough microanalysis employing *emic* approach and studding people's lives from *their point of view* (cf. Harris 1998, Ciubrinskas 2007, Ciubrinskas 2008). It has positive moral impact on the weakest groups inasmuch as '*their points of view*' could become crucial in approaching and engaging in actual problems of misrepresentation and often stigmatization, and marginalization of their cultures and urgent needs of people.

What is needed most in Lithuania today is to study those people, their cultures in their engagements in current everyday situations and in everyday needs of those people. It seems that recently many social science disciplines tackled on poverty, unemployment, displacement as well as on some ethnic and other critical social minority groups paying attention to their ultimate needs and/or to their cultures in terms of their histories, languages, religions and cultural traditions. But quite seldom research projects were conducted *in-situ* and people themselves were approached. Of course short visits to localities where the people are situated are used in sociology and in some other disciplines. Questionnaires and conducted interviews are also popular methods of engagement.

Anthropology is different. It is totally devoted to 'facing' particular people by becoming confident with them and insisting on long lasting stays among the people within the group by doing participant observation of their lives in the whole complexity of events and happenings.

Anthropology and globalization

While being in essence a study of all humanity, and as it was already noted, while sensitive to human nature and its cultural peculiarities, even insularity, anthropology is, nevertheless open to the study of globalization. Anthropology provides concrete descriptions and analyses of the multifarious social formations of different social and cultural groups both as they challenge and resist, and as they adapt and adopt globalization. Those challenges are often called threats. Often answers to such threats are found by stressing a local sphere of culture and nurturing the uniqueness of the local sphere. The human sciences such as Lithuanian ethnology or folkloristic usually take as their aim the strategy of maintaining, describing and exploring 'uniqueness' of the local cultural heritage.

However, this is not enough for anthropology, it analyzes how human society changes and puts as much attention to dislocation as to rootedness, to fragmentation and multiculturalism as to homogenization as well as to hybridity of cultural forms (traditions) and integrated social experiences and lifestyles.

Through its comparative perspective, anthropology explicates very well those values, beliefs and practices that are common to all human societies and cultures. Anthropologists get to know local models of sociality and direct interaction – how to conciliate, negotiate and act in concert through their ethnographic emphasis on human dynamics and interaction at the micro level and by seeking to understand the logics people use in order to communicate effectively and competently. Anthropologists rely on the study of primary experience and participant observation is a method through which the anthropologist gains access not only to what people say and think but what they do, in the front stage (formal arena) and the backstage (informal arena) of life.

Holistic and particularistic approach in exploration of difference and other-ness

By using, already mentioned cultural relativism paradigm anthropology tends to be particularistic and holistic at the same time. Holism calls for understanding that the whole (of culture) is necessary to grasp before making any reification of particular part of it.

By its nature, as it has developed and as it is currently shaped in the US (where it is four – field science, that includes beside cultural anthropology also linguistics and archeology, and biological anthropology) anthropology is an interdisciplinary field of research. Regardless of where it is based, in which continent or country it assumes that human kind is so broad to cover it by narrow single discipline understanding. What anthropology pretends most is to insist on very broad understanding of culture where such ideas as *every human has his/her learned culture* and *cultures differ greatly* are taken as a starting point for any analysis of any particular, say subaltern culture, for example Roma or slum dwellers.

The logic of field-work demands multi-perspective understanding of any culture under investigation. One of the major methodological requirements for the anthropological research is to conduct it as a fieldwork and to enable multi-perspective participant observation. This means that what you see, hear, touch or smell by doing participant observation in the field should be *never taken for granted*. In order to be a good observer one should be as distant as possible to the culture, society and people he/she does research on. Such a major rule was very well followed when anthropologists did research in distant from the West areas. Things have changed when contemporary anthropologists started to do research in their own societies. So now they must cope with 'home blindness' and sometimes they are having problems by distancing themselves from the far too much familiar lifestyles they are focused on in their research. But despite some limitations there are priorities too.

Holism enables particularism and even more so it encourages multivocality of the 'voices' of the field of research. So, as it was just noted, anthropology is sensitive to any representation of any culture to be voiced, not only as we so much used to those of educated representing their 'written language' cultures. Such a particularist approach is the opening up of the field of ethnographic research on specific minority groups and enables to hear their own voices and their own social - cultural determinations and social strategies of conduct of their own lives. An outcome of that is the necessity to focus on identities manifested in everyday lives of the particular people. So the paradigm of identity appears as a key issue of the anthropological research in-depth.

From another point of view if we draw on the current situation in Lithuania and dare to ask, what are those social determinations and social strategies of particular undermined minority groups in the country? By following Leonidas Donskis (Donskis 2002) and Artūras Tereškinas (Tereskinas 1999, 2002) we have to admit that since the 'Singing Revolution' until recently quite an ethnocentric sentiment sounded very clearly in Lithuania's public discourses and in mass media. Dominant discourse

was focusing almost only on the dominant majoritarian – mainstream society and national culture. Just to use an example of the recent debates about dual citizenship (Dauksas 2006). Such a situation is providing grounds for marginalization and stigmatization of vulnerable groups and subaltern cultures, and burdens the application of multiculturalism. So in order to understand the effects and the extent to which the dominant discourse is dominating as well as to learn about the *demotic* discourse, to use Gerd Baumann's term (Baumann 1997), as alternative voice, expressed by certain social-cultural minority, an identity perspective or research paradigm needs to be employed.

Identity as a key issue of anthropological studies

In order to apply the multicultural perspective on to social work studies and practices in Lithuania it is especially important to focus research activities on the question how the diversity of ethnic, religious and other social minority groups intersect and how potential contradictions are managed. Namely sociocultural anthropology has an outstanding experience in exploring one of the most suitable paradigms to understand social realities of multiculturalism in general and vulnerable minorities in particular. It is a *paradigm of identity* and it is an adequate analytical tool to explore issues just raised – vulnerable groups challenged by globalization, Europeanization and even by ethnocentrism of the post-communist nation-states.

So both the quest for moral and cultural pluralism as well as the quest for distinct identity are focal in nowadays global (glocal) world with predominantly multiple identities. It raises the question, how identities of those 'silent' people and unrepresented cultures in Lithuania are constructed? Could their belonging to 'our own' and 'us' be durable or is it all flexible?

Although according to Manuel Castells, acclaimed specialist of 'power of identity', construction of identities and belongings uses building materials from such powerful and essential repositories and 'building materials' as ethnicity, collective memory, power apparatuses and religious revelations (Castells 1997). But in our case, those subaltern and vulnerable groups and cultures process all these materials and rearrange their meaning according to social determinations and cultural projects that are rooted in their social lives and from all those resources power of identity gets raised into *identity politics* and *politics of identity* (Hill, Wilson 2003).

Conclusion

The contemporary situation in Lithuania is quite advantageous for enhancement of multicultural perspective in social work studies and practice in Lithuania. Anthropology, still little known area in Lithuanian social sciences, offers prospective outcomes of the application of its theoretical and methodological competence for enhancing of multiculturalism paradigm in social work. It could be foreseen in anthropological expertise to analyze processes of increased social mobility of subaltern groups, the growth of new social strata and the formation of their social identity, integration and acculturation. Also in its capability to deal with the problems of transmigration (immigration, emigration, seasonal migration, repatriation) as well as with the problems of sociocultural segregation and isolation (integration of ethnic enclaves, for example, the Roma 'ghetto' in Vilnius) and finally, to develop tolerance toward ethnic-racial, religious and other minorities as well as improving interethnic and interracial tolerance through striving to overcome xenophobia, group or sectional isolation, and ethnocentrism.

Anthropologists, as sociocultural analysts, should be instrumental in developing national policies of multiculturalism and culturally adaptive responses to globalization.

In sum anthropology could best be used as applied science and by its fieldwork-oriented methodological nature is applicable for monitoring conflict situations as well as new resourceful field for social work studies and practices in Lithuania.

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SOCIALINĖS KULTŪRINĖS ANTROPOLOGIJOS TAIKYMAS LIETUVOS SOCIALINĖJE POLITIKOJE IR SOCIALINIO DARBO STUDIJOSE ĮGYVENDINANT MULTIKULTŪRALIZMO ASPEKTĄ

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Laikantis nuomonės, kad Lietuvos socialinėje politikoje ir socialinio darbo studijose būtina taikyti multikultūrinį požiūrį, šiame teoriniame straipsnyje siekiama pateikti keletą argumentų „už" ir, juos svarstant, atsakyti į klausimą, kaip antropologinė perspektyva ir pats antropologijos mokslas gali buti panaudotas šiam požiūriui įgyvendinti. Straipsnyje pristatomos tokios principinės antropologinės nuostatos kaip jautrumas žmogiškajai (kultūrinei) prigimčiai – žinomas kaip *kultūrinio reliatyvizmo* principas, jis „atveria" pačių labiausiai užmirštųjų ir atstumtųjų socialinių grupių kultūras kaip lygiavertes. Kita nuostata – metodologinė, siekianti pažinti kultūras ir visuomenes jų pačių požiūriu, t. y. taikant *eminę* perspektyvą bei antropologinius lauko tyrimo metodus, kurie padeda „išgirsti" pačias pažeidžiamiausias grupes. Tai itin svarbu siekiant išvengti dažnai pasitaikančio iškreipto minėtų grupių problemų pateikimo. Šios ir kitos straipsnyje pateiktos antropologinės nuostatos bei analitinės perspektyvos yra kaip argumentai „už" ir būdai, kaip įgyvendinti multikultūralizmo aspektą socialinėje politikoje ir socialiniame darbe. Straipsnis baigiamas išvada, kad efektyviausia, ką antropologija gali duoti įgyvendinat multikultūrinę dimensiją Lietuvos socialinėje politikoje bei socialinio darbo studijose, yra jos metodologinė orientacija į lauko tyrimus. Todėl ji gali geriausiai pasitarnauti kaip taikomasis mokslas, pvz., vykdant socialines atskirties, pažeidžiamų, „balso neturinčių" grupių, migrantų bei mažumų socialinio mobilumo, transmigracijos, integracijos/segregacijos, akultūracijos stebėseną, taip pat ir konfliktinių situacijų reguliavimą, paremtą konkrečių (pvz., konfliktuojančių) kultūrų pažinimu bei tarpkultūrinio dialogo išmanymu.

Padrindinės sąvokos: antropologija (socialinė kultūrinė), multikultūralizmas, pažeidžiamos grupės, marginalinės grupės, mažumos, socialinė politika, socialinis darbas.