



Between “National Tradition” and Human Condition: Politics, Methodology and Epistemology amidst Post-socialist Change

Vytis Ciubrinskas
Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas, Lithuania

Abstract

The article explores the disciplinary rivalry between “national ethnology” and sociocultural anthropology in post-socialist Lithuania. I unpack the influence of national identity politics on the research and teaching strategies, methodologies and epistemologies of these two fields. In particular I show how institutional politics has shaped disciplinary practices at two major universities – Vilnius and Vytautas Magnus University - and explore the effects on its participants.

Introduction

Sociocultural anthropology takes a very particular form in post-socialist Central and Eastern Europe. Historically, German thinkers and writers have played a major role in the academic agendas in this European region. Herder’s “recognition of the unique spirit of each people, conceived of as a separate organism, developing according to its own specific trajectory” (Hann 2007a: 9) was an early variant of cultural relativism. But at the same time Herder’s work made *nation* and *folk* into synonyms (Hann 2007b: 261) and laid the ground for “studying peoples”, first of all in Germany, distinguished between just peoples (*Völkerkunde*) and as those peoples who do belong to nation as folk (*Volkskunde*). Such a division had a lasting effect on scholarship in Central and Eastern Europe during the era of nationalist mobilization (Hann 2007a: 7), that followed the collapse of the region’s empires in the nineteenth century. A similar politics followed the disintegration of Soviet bloc at the end of twentieth century.

During the twentieth century in this region two disciplines appeared – the general one (ethnology, ethnography, anthropology) and the national one. The latter was given the label “national ethnography” in 1960s by the Hungarian scholar Tamas Hofer. In his influential article published in *Current Anthropology* he made a comparison of two professional personalities - “anthropologists” and “native ethnographers” - doing fieldwork in rural hinterlands of Central Europe (1968, 315). Other scholars have since echoed this division. Orvar Löfgren used to call it the “ethnology of the nation” (Löfgren 2008:119); Chris Hann proposed calling it “nation-centered anthropology” (2007a: 9). The most common term is “European Ethnology”, well represented by the journal *Ethnologia Europaea*.

As has been also widely acknowledged (Hofer 1968, 2005, Stocking 1982, Gellner 1996, Skalnik 2002, Hann 2003, 2005, 2007a, Verdery 2007, Löfgren 2008) the distinction between “national ethnology” and sociocultural anthropology has largely been made on ideological and political grounds: the first was linked to “nation-building” and the second to “empire-building”. Such nationalist and colonial backgrounds shaped the politics of knowledge and the different epistemologies being deployed, (re)producing “hierarchies of knowledge” between Western (cosmopolitan) and Central and Eastern (national) scholarship (Buchowski 2004).

What are the institutional contexts where particular ideologies, methodologies and epistemologies are produced, reproduced and contested in the field? This paper is a participant-informed reflection on teaching and doing research in these discipline(s) in the course of ongoing social and institutional changes in Lithuania during the last three decades. My aim is to link the local disciplinary politics of Lithuanian ethnology and sociocultural anthropology with national identity politics and education-research policies in the period of the late socialist and post-socialist change. I unpack the influence of dominant discourses of “ethnic-national culture” and “Lithuanian studies” on the research and teaching strategies of these two fields. I also explore how academic practices at two major universities of the country - Vilnius University and Vytautas Magnus University - were shaped by institutional policies.

The paper uses documentary sources but is primarily based on the data obtained from informants who were particularly close to the events accompanying the growth and decline of the sociocultural anthropology as a discipline in Lithuania. My own involvement allows me to give an account “from a participant’s point of view”.

Historicising the Lithuanian discipline: the politics of “National” Ethnography

National ethnography in the Central Eastern Europe acted on “behalf of the nation” (Kaschuba 2006[1999]) during the period of nation-building in the nineteenth century, and through the nation - rebuilding processes at the end of the twentieth century entered into the twenty-first century as one of a central disciplines for national identity formation. According to Ernest Gellner it appeared in the “spring of nations” period as studies of memory cultures, to build a “normative image of the traditional folk culture” (1996) and nationalism itself began in the region with ethnography, which appeared first as a “salvage operation”, as he puts it:

The interest of folklorists and ethnographers lay in the description, collection, study, preservation, and often exaltation of their national (peasant) cultures. This holds true particularly for the countries of the “third time zone” of Europe, “which presented the greatest problems from the viewpoint of the implementation of the nationalist principle of one culture, one state.... Many of the peasant cultures were not clearly endowed with a normative High Culture at all...[As a consequence]... nationalism began with ethnography, half descriptive, half normative, a kind of salvage operation [my emphasis – VC] and cultural engineering combined.” (Gellner 1996:115-6).

During the interwar period of the 1918-1939 national ethnography was used to build a “normative” image of the “national tradition” (following the Herderian understanding of it – as folk traditions). It underwent predominantly descriptivist documenting of “local/regional culture” and cultural-historical paradigm have been predominantly used for the analysis of data (cf. Hann 2003:16).

Jonas Balys, the most prominent Lithuanian ethnologist-folklorist of the interwar period, educated in Vienna where he defended his Ph.D in 1932 under Wilhelm Schmidt and became a typical practitioner of *Kulturgeschichte* type of *Volkskunde*, took a major step in developing ethnology in Kaunas, the then capital city of Lithuania. He founded the Programme and Department of Ethnology (*Etnikos katedra*) in 1934 at Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas but descriptivism and “culture collecting” (Clifford 1997) and even “salvage ethnography” still dominated Lithuanian ethnology. Archives and museums were filled of local culture collections much of the materials were used for the publication of a series of local history monographs.

After the Soviet occupation of Lithuania in 1940 the discipline was defined as “a branch of history” (Vysniauskaitis 1964: 9). It was dominated by Marxian-Leninist historical materialism and institutionalized throughout the country as a subfield of history. At the end of the 1940s, Department of Ethnography was founded at Vilnius University and a similar establishment appeared at the Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences.

“National” ethnography in Lithuania of the Soviet period served two ideologies - the dominant propaganda of the regime and a kind of counter-establishment ideology. The former required

participation of ethnologists in the creation of the "new" socialist traditions. The ethnologists were expected to take part in "cultural engineering", re-modeling "the bad old traditions" of the pre-socialist period, or creating "new-progressive-socialist" ceremonials.

The counter-establishment ideology and nonconformist politics of identity began to emerge, and became influential among professional ethnologists who dealt with Lithuanian traditions. Thus methodological nationalism was quite obvious challenge for the practitioners of the discipline which actually became "weapons of the weak" against methodological Marxism-Leninism. The main moral imperative of national ethnographers throughout the field again was - as Gellner described nation building period (Gellner 1996) - to collect the Lithuanian "traditional culture", to teach about it, and eventually to create a repository of the folk =national culture heritage (Ciubrinskas 2000).

The popularity of the discipline of Lithuanian ethnology and folklore studies grew significantly after the fall of the Iron Curtain at the end of 1980s. It was sought after as a discipline able to prove "authentic Lithuanian-ness", and became of core importance for national identity politics in the *perestroika* period. Ethnologists and folklorists, along with other Lithuanian studies professionals – Lithuanian history, language, art and literature specialists employed at the national research institutions and universities were supposed to be an 'experts' in the field of Lithuanian traditional folk culture.

It was a time when ethnologists could act publicly, and there were many offers from the increasingly open media to write an article or speak out on nationhood i.e. rootedness of the national culture in ancient Lithuanian mythology, rituals, symbols and traditions. The public presentations and publications of leading ethnology and folklore professors of the period - such as Norbertas Velius and Prane Dundulienė - became highly popular. They were seen as experts in "genuine" Lithuanian culture, dear to many and ignored during Soviet rule. The field of ethnology received growing public recognition, igniting public interest in (re)creating national cultural heritage. (Ciubrinskas 2000).

Through the focus on "traditions" the discipline became a key site for the construction of national identity politics in the post-socialist period. According to Catherine Verdery, Central and Eastern Europe was and in some respects still is, busy and preoccupied with identity politics. After numerous fieldwork trips in Romania and elsewhere in Central and Eastern Europe she admits that post-socialist processes of nation building are re-enacting the hundred year old rhetoric of "looking to the folk to reveal the nation's original character" (2007:49).

"Untouched by Nationalism": Anthropology and Attempts to "Nationalize" It

The period of post-socialism marked the emergence of sociocultural anthropology in Central and Easter Europe. Contrary to national ethnology it was seen as a field "untouched by nationalism" or Marxist-Leninism (cf. Buchowski 2007:10). Instead it was perceived as a product of Westernization. In opposition to "national" ethnographies, it paved the way to learn about the peoples of the world in comparative perspective and challenged the natural order of the nationally established social sciences and humanities.

It was supported by the Open Society Lithuania Foundation, a local branch of the Soros Foundation known for its promotion of the new fields of knowledge and scholarship. It came "from the West" mainly through the cooperation with the Scandinavian anthropologists at Lund and Copenhagen universities and also due to Lithuanian diaspora anthropologists from the US and Canada. The Scandinavian input appeared in mid 1990s at Vilnius University, where already since 1991 a few courses in sociocultural anthropology were taught for students of history and sociology programmes by two instructors, one locally based and the other a diasporic Canadian Lithuanian. With the support of the Soros Foundation and the Nordic Ministry of Education, visiting professorships of the Scandinavian anthropologists and two field-schools led by Melcher Ekströmer from Lund University were also hosted there.

Sociocultural anthropology first appeared in the university curriculum at Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas. After being closed down in the Stalinist period it was reopened with support from diasporic scholars in 1989 as a modern Western university and as an example of the export of Western higher education standards to post-socialist Lithuania. The Department of Cultural Anthropology was founded in 1990 by the Lithuanian-American Liucija Baskauskas, who with another anthropologists from the US and Canadian diaspora started to give instruction in cultural anthropology (Vastokas 2005).

Lithuanian-American professors were an excellent example of “missionary work for Lithuania”. The mission - ‘to be of use to a country devastated by communism’ - rested on the identity politics and moral duty of those forced to emigrate in the mid 1940s (see more in Ciubrinskas 2009). The best example of the “missionary work for Lithuania” was this participation in the re-establishment of the pre-soviet era universities. Syllabi of particular courses and entire study programs were transplanted from overseas.

Yet this did not happen in the field of anthropology. In just a few years of very successful progress in the instruction of anthropology, which attracted hundreds of students, the department had been ‘converted’ to the *Volkskunde* approach of Ethnology and Folklore Studies (Anglickiene 2001). It happened even before the programme in anthropology was fully established. The official explanation for this was the ‘adjustment’ of the field of sociocultural anthropology to the national system (register) of sciences and scholarships, where the discipline of Anthropology was not listed but Ethnology was.

The rationale behind this change was to strengthen the field of "national" ethnography by moving the extremely popular discipline of anthropology from the Faculty of Social Sciences to the Humanities and reducing its teaching to a minimum. Instead it was reframed as ‘ethnic culture studies’ and promoting the field of studying ‘our own’ Lithuanian and Baltic folklore and traditions. Many students resisted this move and continued their studies in social sciences and eventually got a degree in Sociology, because anthropology was not included in Lithuanian science nomenclature. At the same time since 1993 ‘national’ ethnology and folklore studies with few anthropology courses integrated into their curriculum and taught by diaspora anthropologists also gained popularity and a couple of dozen students chose the Programme of Ethnology and Folklore as their major (Apanavicius 2009).

This change of disciplinary constellation marked a step towards conforming with the national culture politics in the post-'Singing Revolution' period. It was also a step to embrace methodological nationalism of the curriculum and a reified and even ethnified image of the Lithuanian culture. Even more than a decade later, in 2004 when I became employed at Vytautas Magnus University, the syllabus of a course titled “Ethnic culture of Lithuanians” (in the aforementioned programme of Ethnology and Folklore) was the most conspicuous example of it.

At the same time the discipline of sociocultural anthropology also underwent similar ‘conversions’, conformity and labeling in the other countries of the region. In the era of post-socialism, a number of Central and Eastern European ethnological (former ethnographic) institutions were (re)named *ethnology and cultural anthropology* departments. The most common way was to simply add the fashionable label of “anthropology” to the name of any *Volkskunde* department, as a way of signalling an interest in Western scholarship. Folklorists and ethnographers changed their identities also recently changed its name into the Department of Comparative Cultures Studies and Ethnology. As the field of anthropology grew in popularity the "label" of anthropology was also added to the department at Vilnius University.

Since the first introductory course of anthropology was put into the history curriculum the module has been successfully expending, partly due to cooperation with Scandinavian anthropologists and growing interest in anthropology from students across all the Baltic States region. The first Nordic-Baltic graduate students’ summer school of social anthropology led by Jonathan Friedman (Lund University) and Ake Norburg (Copenhagen University) took place in Vilnius in 1996. In the year of 2000 and 2001 several graduate credit courses were given by the visiting professors Jonathan Friedman and Steven Sampson (Lund University). It brought first hand acquaintance with sociocultural anthropology for few dozens of local graduate students mainly from the fields of history and political science.

The attraction of sociocultural anthropology was noticed by the administrators of the School of History of Vilnius University as a modern alternative to the ‘national’ ethnography. Here as in the other post-

soviet contexts, it became both fashionable and fruitful to use the label of anthropology and the Programme of Cultural History and Anthropology was launched in 2000, registered in the field of History.

According to the Slovenian anthropologist Vesna Godina, new establishments, departments, programmes provide a rare opportunity to attract prestige and raise funds for research and teaching. They also furnish new power bases for Deans, Heads and Chairs (2002:9). It was assumed by the School's administrators that anthropology would become a small niche in this history-focused Programme. The goal was to make history studies more attractive for students.

However the interest in the anthropology courses grew significantly in comparison to those in history and in three years the Programme began to attract the best students. Instead of majoring in fields of 'history proper', like medieval or modern history, students ended up by specialising in anthropology as their major field of studies, as it offered new ways of approaching history and the past through an anthropological lens.

At the same time the field of anthropology was given publicity and popularity through the research seminars held at the School of History, organized by the small but very enthusiastic anthropology faculty, including a former ethnologist, who did postdoctoral studies in anthropology, diaspora anthropologists and a couple of young graduates (one with the PhD) in social anthropology from Lund University. The anthropology classes in the curriculum of history and the weekly research seminars, with a significant number of professional anthropologists as guest-speakers, provided a forum for discussion of anthropological approaches.

Two years of these activities led to methodological distrust amongst historian colleagues at the School. In the autumn of 2002, some of them, led by the Dean of the School - who also was a Chair of the Programme of Cultural History and Anthropology Study Committee - initiated a faculty discussion on the methodological value of the discipline of sociocultural anthropology. The discussion, dominated by historians, insisted on merging of anthropology into the teaching and research of the young historians of the School. The Dean himself promoted "fashionable" models of history as *Alltagsgeschichte*, *Historische Anthropologie*, *Oral History* etc.

The consequent methodological discrepancy let historians dominate the curriculum on the mutual committees by openly criticizing the Programme students' papers, including BA and MA Thesis, because of their use of the "wrong" methods, i.e. participant observations, descriptive observations, in-depth interviews etc. and not enough relying on documents.

So eventually anthropology at Vilnius University lost the 'competition' with the discipline of history as the Dean of the School decided to reshape the Programme in such a way as to exclude all modules of anthropology except for the introductory course, but to leave the name of anthropology in the title of the Programme. Since 2003 the programme has provided only modules in history studies but it continues to attract new enrolment of students fascinated by the novel label - "anthropology" - in its title.

So the field of history gained attractiveness, new students and new resources at the expense of, anthropology. History in Lithuania is not social history, it primarily focuses on the national history and thus is part of the humanities and Lithuanian studies. In this case the "nationalization" of anthropology happened not through its "conversion" into ethnology and folklore as it was at VMU but through the marginalization of its methodology and the manipulation of the name. In both, Kaunas and Vilnius it led to the empowerment of Lithuanian studies. Why?

“Lithuanian Studies” vs. “Teaching about Africa”

As I have shown above, the post-soviet change in Lithuanian humanities and in social sciences was a conversion from a totalitarian model to the national one, where the “Lithuanian studies” were given the state priority and financial support by issuing special laws, decrees and programs for development of such disciplines as Lithuanian language and literature, Lithuanian history, Lithuanian archaeology, Lithuanian ethnology, etc. (Law of 2002; Law of 2007; Law of 2006; Decree of 2009). Along with the

other "Lithuanian studies" disciplines "national" ethnography, given the name of Lithuanian ethnology became reinforced by its role in providing an "cornerstone identity". During the post-socialist period the national "home bred" ethnology claimed expertise in its "own" culture and the whole project was understood as a revival of "national culture" as a totality based on certain dispositions of cultural logic (Klumbyte 2003:291) where nation" and "national identity" were communicated through the symbols related to kinship terms (e.g. "family", "blood" etc.) (ibid). Important role in this communication was attributed to the term "ethnic culture", which was coined as a substitute to both "folk culture" and national culture.

In the mid 1980s at the very beginning of *Perestroika*, the re-conceptualization of the Lithuanian national culture was vital for the new counter-totalitarian ideology. For the the new more liberal and pluralistic societal order novel social categories were welcome. Central East European intelligentsia became public educators and offered new benchmarks and definitions. One such redefinitions was an old category of "ethnos" which under the influence of the Russian ethnologist Julijan Bromlej(cf. Sokolovskij and Tishkov 2002) substituted for the term 'folk'. The term 'ethnos' taken from his rather pan-ethnic theory of society (Bromley 1987) was especially popular in the field of interdisciplinary studies of ethno-genesis and was applied across the broad field of Lithuanian studies, from Lithuanian archaeology and linguistics up to history, ethnology and folklore studies.

Moreover the new term "ethnic culture" suited the cultural engineering of the period and became instrumental in Lithuanian national and cultural identity politics. At first it was used as a substitute for folk (traditional) culture but it also worked to bridge bridges between the state-less, "ethnic" situation of the Lithuanian nation with the new ethno-nationalist quest for the Lithuanian nation-state. In public discourse "ethnic culture" also meant "national culture". Thus "ethnic culture" studies became part of the subject matter of such disciplines as Lithuanian ethnology, folklore and ethnomusicology. Through this new label of "ethnic culture studies", first of all applied to the discipline of Ethnology, this field of studies acquired a new status as a 'Lithuanian discipline' *par excellence*.

This label became a tool for ethnification. The categories of ethnicity and culture were used in such a way that doing "ethnic culture studies" meant studying *culture* that is locked in *ethnicity*. It was a repetition of Herderian reification of culture by studying culture as tradition and making 'ethnicity' along with 'tradition' into "typical" cultural traits and treasures'(Ciubrinskas 2000).

Ethnification of culture in the national identity politics of Lithuanians was inevitable during the Soviet occupation period, when Lithuania actually was in a state-less situation. The politics of empowerment used *ethnicity* as its main building material (Castells 1997) against the "melting pot" politics of the regime. It became even more of an anachronism after the country regained its national status in 1990 and e the ethnification of culture started to be institutionalized by the state. Immediately after the restoration of independence in 1990, "ethnic culture" was approved in the new post-Soviet school manuals as a substitute for traditional Lithuanian folk culture: "The new Lithuanian school faces the important task of nurturing ethnic culture, to encourage the recognition of its expressions by schoolchildren, to teach them values and perpetuate the ethnic culture traditions." (Cepien 1992: 3). It implied, if not encouraged, the construction of mono-culturalist identity and the term 'ethnic culture' became central in discourses on Lithuanian national identity where ethno-national descent along with the ancestry line - "to be Lithuanian means being of Lithuanian descent and raised in Lithuania" – was used as the predominant marker of national identity (Kuznecoviene 2007, 2009).

The network of "ethnic culture" institutions mushroomed in the country, especially after the Lithuanian Parliament's Council for the Protection of Ethnic Culture was founded in 2000 as a follow up of "the Law on Principles of State Protection of Ethnic Culture" passed in the year of 1999 (Law of 1999). The definition of "ethnic culture" itself, used here, is the best example of ethnification and Herderisation of culture:

Article 2. 4. Ethnic Culture includes the sum total of cultural properties, created by the entire nation(ethnos), passed from generation to generation and constantly renewed, which makes it possible to preserve the national identity and consciousness..." (ibid : 1).

So the term of "ethnic culture", backed up by national identity politics and institutionalized by the state, became a label for anything that was not foreign culture. In the early 1990s it was a challenge to confront such a marked culture (Appadurai 1996) as "Lithuanian ethnic culture" and to teach anthropology (at a time I taught at Vilnius University) within comparative and constructivist perspectives on cultures and to insist on Fredrik Barth's conceptualization of ethnicity. In opposition to the "Lithuanian disciplines", anthropology was portrayed as ill-focused, and as paving the way to a cosmopolitan identity which disregards studies of "our own traditions". Xenophobic and sometimes arrogant attitudes towards anthropology were widespread among the academics of the Lithuanian studies and at best it was seen as an epistemological challenge.

According to Romas Vastokas, a well-known Lithuanian diasporic anthropologist, who was a university professor in Vilnius and Kaunas for the last twenty years, throughout the whole period of post-Soviet change, "anthropology in Lithuania lacked conformity because the general perception of the society is that "culture" is an intellectual achievement and/or it is confused with a national "ethnic culture" (Vastokas 2005).

A round-table discussion held by the George Soros Foundation in Vilnius in 1999 was entitled "Does Lithuania need Sociocultural Anthropology?" Sociocultural anthropology was treated as a novelty, a field of scholarship without a tradition in the spectrum of national scientific development. Responding to the question put by the moderator - "Couldn't Lithuanian ethnologists do what anthropologists do?" - one of the participants of the discussion, the head of the country's leading folklore research institution made a statement:

Do we really need this novelty? Are we not capable of achieving these proposed aims within existing research fields and institutions and within existing resources and research? Yes we are, we don't need to be taught about Africa: there is an urgent need to learn about *our traditions* [my emphasis – VC] instead. Even more so, we should learn more about our traditions because they are dying and the former, Soviet regime was not in favor of studying them (Sauka 1999).

Such essentialist notions about studying "our own" traditions as "ethnic culture" (in synonymic usage with ethnology) remain influential (cf. Vaiskunas 2013). Despite that, since 2004, a study program in social anthropology has been launched at Vytautas Magnus University and the field of anthropology received the state approval as a separate discipline of studies in 2010. The teaching is led by four local and two visiting faculty, all of whom seek to put "traditions" but in global comparative perspective.

A decade of Anthropology in Practice

In 2004, the Master's Programme in Social Anthropology was launched at Vytautas Magnus University (see Ciubrinskas 2005) and up to this day it is the only such programme in the country. Its focus is on social change (post-socialist and post-colonial), on the politics of identity, with a regional emphasis on Central/East Europe. The curriculum includes courses on the Anthropology of Postsocialism and Political Anthropology, as well as the Politics of Identity and Transnationalism. The Programme is still treated as a "post-socialist novelty", separated by the disciplinary line from "nation-centered" Ethnology although it already has more than sixty graduates, of whom are six who defended their PhDs.

These strategic applications and epistemological challenges are particularly palpable when teaching "social change". The module Anthropology of Post-socialism is a good example of how practicing one single course in anthropology programme can challenge methodological nationalism. It tackles the categories of "uncertainty", "politics of memory", "emotion of nostalgia" etc. and helps students to confront the reification of culture. The essentialization and ethnification of the "past" is seen as constructed, i.e. neither objectified as tradition nor an essential framework for understanding of

socialist past. The practices and consequences of Soviet ethnic relations are used to exemplify the manipulation of “ethnic pasts” and as a model for understanding of politics of ethnification of any culture. The Soviet definition of “national culture” is just one of many reifications of culture.

The strategic value of the programme is expressed in terms of the internationalization of studies. The competences acquired by the students and their abilities in intercultural understanding of sociocultural change in post-socialist Eurasia are different in learning outcomes from other programs carried out in related fields, i.e. in Sociology or in Ethnology. The role of international cooperation with the European and overseas departments of social and cultural anthropology, and in particular the cooperation with the Southern Illinois University, in the USA, Max Planck Institute of Social Anthropology, in Germany, and participation in Circum Baltic Teaching Network (2004-2007) led by Finn Sivert Nielsen at the Copenhagen University was and is focal. It ensures the credibility of the discipline of anthropology at Lithuanian universities by its international recognition.

Conclusion

Two anthropological disciplines are still visible in the post-socialist panorama of Lithuanian social sciences and humanities. The first is “national” ethnography, a field that began as a descriptivist cultural-historical methodology, later acted as an applied discipline “for” and “against” the Soviet establishment, and eventually became a strategic field in the post-Soviet period. Its expertise was seen as “revealing the nation's original character” and engineering a “cultural tradition”. It is still very much engaged in these paradigms of “tradition” and “ethnic culture”. Whilst its approach today is increasingly constructivist perspective it remains “Lithuanian” in its geography and epistemology and thus remains vulnerable to methodological nationalism.

Sociocultural Anthropology is a product of post-socialist change and seeks to challenge attempts by the field of “Lithuanian studies” to *lithuanianize* culture, history and heritage studies by appropriating the label of “anthropology”. The two are portrayed as synonymous. A similar approach is visible in the discipline of Lithuanian history which at Vilnius University has a program titled Cultural History and Anthropology that does not offer a substantial number of courses in anthropology.

Chris Hann calls for both fields of anthropology and ethnology to be united in “methodological pluralism” (Hann 2006). Interdisciplinary dialogue is the hope. One example is the journal *Lithuanian Ethnology: Studies in Social Anthropology and Ethnology*. It was established in 2001 and encourages analysis of “that which could appear to be “Lithuanian” but only if the methodology used is comparable to that applied in the study of “foreign cultures”, for instance, Hawaiian culture in the Pacific Ocean”.

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