CHAPTER 25

Transnational Fragmentation of Globality: Eastern-European Post-Socialist Strategies in Chicago

Vytis Ciubrinskas

Introduction

Since 1990, developments in urban anthropology have focused on the legitimacy of grassroots action and also the relationship between local and supralocal organizations or institutional practices as they affect urban dynamics (Pardo et al. 2013, 4–5). This shift is evident in research which focuses on the 'interrelationship between migrants and cities' and 'look[s] at the relationship between the locality and globality including historical transnationalism linked to labor migration' (GlickSchiller and Çağlar 2011, cited in Prato and Pardo 2013, 98). Within the context of this relatively new domain of urban studies, I wish also to include post-socialist transnationalism. The processes of post-socialist transformation, especially large-scale international migration from Central and Eastern European countries (e.g. Poland, the Baltic States, Ukraine and Russia) to the Western hemisphere are creating 'new realities' in Western urban settings.

This chapter is based on ethnographic fieldwork conducted in 2006 and 2013 in different neighbourhoods of Chicago and its suburban areas, such as Lemont, among Chicagoans with a Lithuanian background. I explore a perspective of social enactment of difference through the ethnification of post-socialist immigrants by addressing their intraethnic and interethnic networking. This perspective focuses on strategies of loyalty and belonging, and on strategies aimed at achieving a 'good life' and prosperity in terms of capitalism and global entrepreneurship through the post-socialist practices of local networking

V. Ciubrinskas (✉)
Centre for Social Anthropology, Vyatautas Magnus University, Kaunas, Lithuania

I. Pardo, G.B. Prato (eds.), *The Palgrave Handbook of Urban Ethnography*, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-64289-5_25

among *one's own* group. I shall argue for a grassroots understanding of the complexities of transnationalism from an urban anthropology perspective which addresses a new web of intra- and interethnic relations among Chicagoans with an Eastern European background who are eager to share a 'common culture' and acquire (post-)socialist social capital. It comes up as two strategies: ethnification (as enactment of intraethnic ties and cultural citizenship) and compartmentalization (creating *one's own* spaces based on social capital transmitted from oversees). Both strategies are actually strategies of coping with downward mobility and assimilationist processes that threaten to submerge cultural identities into a Euro-American identity. In particular, diachronic processes of assimilation are resisted by (re)creating a social sphere for the ethnic and interethnic life of *one's own people* of the Eastern European region.

The transnational strategies and practices of contemporary post-socialist immigrants provide vivid examples of what urban anthropologists are taking increasing interest inthat is, social relations between local (community or urban neighbourhood) and supra-local (i.e. regional, national and transnational) levels—in other words, how microlevel networks such as 'family-kinship' or networks of *one's own people* function in transnational contexts.

Transnational processes posit mobility as an 'expansion of space for personal and familial livelihood practices' (Olwig Karin and Sorensen 2002, 6), and also as an important factor for the implementation and representation of cultural difference and distinctive social capital. It is important to identify how participation in transnational networks, engagement in mobile living situations and the creation of transnational loyalties (Vertovec 2009) have led to the creation of 'new realities' based on the blending of local–immigrant cultural contexts that reshape urban space and the embedded social contexts.

The enactment of immigrant culture or cultural citizenship and loyalty to an overseas homeland is usually based on the recognition of one's heritage as well as experiencing a livelihood that is distinctive in its transplanted context, and as one acquires social capital connected to one's overseas birthplace and networks. This mixture of loyalties, connections and transformations will be portrayed as remarkable in this arena of global capitalism, where processes of fragmentation of globality, such as ethnification, are occurring.

In this case, 'the city stands out as a crucial arena in which citizenship … identity and belonging … are constantly renegotiated' (Prato and Pardo 2013, 99; see also Appadurai and Holston 1999; Prato 2006). For the Lithuanian diaspora that is the subject of this study, the urban area of Chicago becomes the setting for a quest for grassroots actions. It should be noted that this is the largest urban population of Lithuanians living outside Lithuania and has only recently been challenged by that in London.[1] The grassroots activities we are considering rely on extensive social networks, based almost entirely on individual resourcefulness. Social bonds used among the recent post-socialist immigrants to create a circle of *one's own people* or to achieve a 'good life and prosperity' include sharing an ethnic language or a *lingua franca* (in most cases made up of Russian, Polish and English), a festive culture, gossip, lifestyles and

so on, but the most important strategy is the in-group reciprocity practised in the East European neighbourhoods among immigrants who share social capital and a legacy of poor living conditions in the former socialist economies.

This perspective urges us to understand the comparative scale of global fragmentation manifested in urban dynamics such as those brought out by the ethnification of city life that takes place beyond the China Town-type ethnic enclaves or by 'festive ethnicity' representations, such as the Chicago Neighbourhood Festivals or Taste of Chicago Festival.

Chicago has become a major immigrant and multicultural urban hub in the North Atlantic hemisphere. Over the last 150 years, it has become the main destination for immigrants from Poland and Lithuania, as well as for other Eastern Europeans (Thomas and Znaniecki 1958; Green 1975; Erdmans 2006, 1998; Fainhauz 1977; Eidintas 2003; Kuzmickaite 2003; Senn 2005). Chicago historian Dominic Pacyga, who compared the influx of immigrants to the city after the Second World War, has noticed that 'while Europeans dominated the pre-1950 immigration, both Hispanics and Asians would come to dominate the post-1965 immigrant numbers (2009, 389–90). With the end of the Iron Curtain and the Soviet system, Central and Eastern European immigrant numbers began to grow again. For example, Mary Erdmans noted that from 1986 to 1996, Poles provided the largest total number of legal immigrants to Chicago proper (Erdmans 2006, 116). Thus the Lithuanians who settled in Chicago at that time had opportunities to develop social networks and identities based not only on their Lithuanian identity but also on their post-socialist and Eastern European region-based identities.

The pattern of recent Lithuanian immigration to Chicago is similar to that of the Polish. Starting from proportional numbers of Poles in Chicago and the whole of the USA, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, 133,797 Polish immigrants lived in metropolitan Chicago, joining an estimated 900,000 Polish Americans. Pacyga noted that 'Besides those Poles entering the country legally as refugees [of communism] or the requisite permission there were also large numbers of "vacationers" from Poland who often disappeared into the Polish American underground economy' (Pacyga 2009, 389–390).

The recent post-socialist wave of Lithuanian labour migration to the USA got under way in the late 1980s during the period of *Perestroika* and reached its climax in the early 1990s, right after the re-establishment of Lithuania's independence in 1990. From 1990 to 1996, an estimated 30,000 Lithuanians arrived in the USA in a variety of ways: as labour migrants; using immigration schemes based on family reunion; as part of the Green Card lottery; and as 'tourists', many of whom overstayed their visas. The US Census of 2010 estimates 654,000 Lithuanian Americans (Cidzikaite 2013), and between 1988 and 2000 approximately 20,000 new Lithuanians came and in the Chicago metropolitan area, including suburbs, there resided an estimated 100,000 second and third-generation Lithuanian Americans (Kuzmickaite 2003, 75–6).

The new wave of post-socialist immigrants brought 'new realities' to the city. Although many of these newer immigrants were better educated and held managerial and professional positions in Eastern Europe, large numbers were illegal. They came with particular experiences and livelihoods, with a command of Russian, which became the *lingua franca* for all immigrants coming from the former Soviet bloc countries (Ciubrinskas 2004, 58). They shared a moral economy based on *blat* (the Russian term for an 'economy of favours' (Ledeneva 1998). *Blat* as a basis for the development and dynamics of socioeconomic networks of support was widespread in Eastern Europe. There, 'the regime made people preoccupied with a shortage of everyday goods. [Consequently,] [t]hey learned how to use illegal middleman and connections (*blat*), and how to turn to the second economy and the black market' (Vardys and Sedaitis 1997, 73). In Gediminas Lankauskas' terms, it was 'knowing how to spin around' (Lankauskas 2013, 56) by knowing how to make do and be involved in the extensive use of social networks of friends and co-workers. 'Effective "spinning" required a great deal of cultural knowledge, as well as substantial investment in social networks and their constitutive informal contacts ("family, friends, workers' collective") as sites for storing and reproducing valued social capital' (ibid.). It was based on one's own resourcefulness, a sort of social prestige and social capital which appeared to be important for successful immigrant life overseas, at least at the beginning.

In a post-socialist Eastern European context, transnational processes posit social networking and 'knowing how to spin around' in order to accumulate good and valued services in a shortage economy of totalitarian socialism. Among post-socialist Eastern Europeans, the ability to 'spin around' is a distinctive mark of social capital, as intended by Pier Bourdieu: the building of informal networks which include personal relationships, family and household patterns, friendship and community ties, and mutual help in economic and social matters (Castles and Miller 2003, 27; see also Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, 119). For post-socialist East European immigrants, social capital brought from oversees meant accumulating or extending personal networks, and the experiences and knowledge of making a living in a totalitarian regime and perpetual economic shortage by making suprakin ties of trust and creating groups of friends of *one's own people* (Ciubrinskas 2004, 56, 2014, 17–18). These groups are comparable to the suprafamilial personalized coalitions found in Mediterranean societies— the so-called 'friends of friends' (Boissevain 1974; Giordano 2012).

The quest to develop 'friends of friends' networks among the post-socialist immigrants rivals the quest to preserve one's own cultural heritage (language, symbols etc.) and the enactment of cultural citizenship. In this sense, among the immigrants from post-Soviet countries, transnationalism becomes a mode of cultural reproduction of social formations (Vertovec 2009; Al-Ali and Koser 2002, 2) and, according to Helen Kopnina's research in London and Amsterdam (2005, 131), social capital becomes a 'culturally important' strategy.

Ethnification: Post-Socialist Immigrants' Intraethnic Bonds

In Jonathan Friedman's view, globalization promotes the decentralization of capital accumulation, which produces fragmentation, and this in turn leads to 'a [re]turn to roots, to ethnicity and other collective identities' (Friedman 2002, 295). Fragmentation takes such forms as indigenization, nationalization (in terms of ethnification of the nation-state), regionalism and immigrant ethnification (ibid., 295–6). 'Immigrant ethnification' is central to understanding transnational migration and transnationalism itself, which, according to Steven Vertovec, is the establishment of an 'avenue of capital' in which very significant remittances often go beyond just the economic dimension and 'do not just flow back to the people's country of origin but to and from and throughout the network' (Vertovec 1999, 447–462). This is best exemplified by ethnic entrepreneurs whose management skills and moral control over human resources (knowledge of cultural idioms, norms and, in our case, *culturally important* strategies of social conduct) are very much culturally embedded. Immigrant cultural embeddedness, which often turns into cultural citizenship, is usually seen as a fundamental point of departure for their categorization and for treating them as 'radically different culturally' (Olwig 2003, 66).

On the other hand, as widely proven, international labour migrants and refugees themselves also want their cultural distinctiveness to be recognized and valued. They are therefore highly motivated to claim ownership of their cultural heritage practices and identity by constructing histories about their roots and by shaping their public and political practices of homeland, nationalism and cultural citizenship (Malkki 1992; Olwig and Hastrup 1997; Appadurai 1996; Kronh-Hansen 2003). Cultural citizenship in the USA could be understood as a form of multiculturalism that began in the 1970s and 1980s and, according to Lofgren, made cultural differences mainstream while making the USA 'more 'American' and more 'ethnic' at the same time (Lofgren 1998, 41–42). Thus immigrant ethnification, as a form of fragmentation of globalism, implies essentialism, homogenization and exclusiveness of cultural resource—that is, the cultural embeddedness of immigrants as a resource for their social networking incorporated in a diaspora life which could act as a model of cultural citizenship. In this case, the approach to citizenship as a prime expression of loyalty is altered by the concern with the moral and performative dimensions of membership beyond the domain of legal rights (Glick-Schiller and Caglar 2009).

The Lithuanian diaspora (particularly those born in Chicago) is a good example of how cultural citizenship and loyalty to translocal descent are constructed. Since the early 1950s, forced migrants—the 'refugees of communism'—forged a diasporic nationalist strategy 'to stay Lithuanian everywhere and forever'.[2] This strategy has been promoted through ethnic organizations and networks. It has been noticeable in Chicago since the 1970s when the headquarters of the global umbrella organization, the Lithuanian World

Community, founded in 1946 (Kucas 1975), was moved to the Chicago suburb of Lemont.

In the 1990s, a Lithuanian American wave began to leave the so-called 'Lithuanian neighbourhoods' and move to the south-western suburbs mostly inhabited by white lower middle-class families with 'good schools' for children.[3] A significant number settled around the suburb of Lemont, which from the late 1970s had already been known as the centre of the Lithuanian diaspora in the USA (the Lithuanian World Center was established there in 1978). Although later immigrants dispersed to other neighbourhoods, most remained rather close to the ethnically marked epicentre in Lemont. This model of settling down allowed their children to attend Lithuanian Saturday school, practise sports (basketball), stay close to the Lithuanian church and receive various ethnic services (e.g. buying Lithuanian food, going to a Lithuanian hair salon and attending a private Lithuanian doctor's office). Living close to other Lithuanians helped to avoid marginalization, labelling and the widespread practice of considering them as exotic migrants just on the basis of their 'incomprehensible' names.

The recent wave of immigration has been busy creating its own ethnic organizations. In addition to the already existing ethnic Saturday schools in the Lithuanian Youth Center at Gage Park and in Lemont, both of which were founded by the earlier immigrants, the new immigrants established a school in the northern part of Chicago—Naperville. Besides the existing diasporic media, they also started to publish their own newspapers. In the early 2010s, three Lithuanian newspapers were published in Chicago—*Langas, Vakarai and Čikagos Aidas*—and a radio station, *Studija R*, was established. They opened new sports clubs in Lemont, including a now thriving basketball league (the Chicago Lithuanian Basketball League, consisting of 15 teams), as well as other clubs, studios, ateliers and so on. Lithuanian capital enterprises (e.g. international transportation business company Atlantic Express and also Unlimited Carriers, both in the south-western suburbs) were established and a prestigious business club (the Chicagoland Lithuanians Rotary Club) launched.

The most popular way of maintaining intraethnic ties is to establish links through ethnic schools which serve as umbrella organizations for ethnic life, and through festive culture, including sports, concerts and private parties and gatherings of *one's own people*. As informants often say, one of the most popular forms of connecting and maintaining ethnic bonds is 'through children'. Ethnic (Saturday) schools, Lithuanian Catholic churches, ethnic leisure clubs, workshops and so on are attended by children. Most of the newer Lithuanian settlers, because of their residential dispersal, maintain their Lithuanian identity through active participation in these leisure time activities. They attend ethnic clubs (dancing, theatre, opera, etc.) and concerts which take place in schools, parish halls, cultural centres and Lithuanian restaurants which host shows by performers from Lithuania. Informants, when asked what connects them with other

Lithuanians in Chicago, usually list four things: basketball; parties; school- because it is through children that they meet other Lithuanians and the Youth Center, so called *kultūrnamis* ('culture house') with concert hall where, as I was told, 'something is always happening–now Landsbergis, now Storpirštis… besides you can dress up'.

Such ethnic institutions as Saturday schools and 'culture house' function as umbrella organizations that create a locus for networking which, if needed, leads to possible employment with Lithuanian companies, and this dynamic becomes part of an ethnic maintenance mechanism, as the networking becomes a means to an end to meeting other Lithuanians. Furthermore, since the locus of places provides a kind of historical map of immigrant waves and trajectories in the Chicago area, they also create a geospatial network of activity and affiliation. For instance, the Youth Center is located in the area that used to be populated by earlier Lithuanian immigrants (Gage Park), while the basketball centre is in Lemont.

Language is maintained as a marker of common identity and is widely represented in the Lithuanian media created by the current wave of immigrants. In everyday life, many informants are indignant about or mock those who do not maintain Lithuanian language. They say that Chicago is a gratifying place because

> Living in Chicago … there are no chances to lose Lithuanian language, how many Lithuanian restaurants, how many shops are there, wherever you go you will run into Lithuanians. That's what it is about Chicago—there is no excuse to not know Lithuanian. (Jonas, 30, engineer)

Giving such prominence to language also means stressing the importance of cultural heritage, origin and 'roots', which stimulates deep ties between immigrants. According to one of the informants,

> it happens here that we curse and argue with each other but in a way you still can't renounce those roots. (Zita, 35, employee at a Lithuanian-ownership company)

It speaks for the cultural embeddedness of immigrants, in *emic* terms—*šaknys* ('roots' or 'rootedness'). Migration itself is often viewed as 'uprooting'. One informant who was 'brought' to Chicago when she was 19 interpreted it as her 'uprooting'. She thought:

> that's it, there is no more world, 'mother, I hate you, why did you bring me here?' The trauma has healed but she says: 'you know, those people who have left, psychologically are very unhappy. (Nijole, 22, employee at a Lithuanian office in Chicago)

So in such cases the ethnic ties become a substitute for the ties left behind in a homeland and create a sort of extended family connection in the host country.

Construction of *One's Own* Spaces: Lifestyle Identities and Loyalties

Since the 1980s, the diaspora of Lithuanian Chicagoans started moving from their ethnic neighbourhoods in south-west Chicago to mainly white lower middle-class suburbs with 'good schools' for their kids. They clustered around the suburb of Lemont, which is ethnically 'unmarked' but known as the focal centre of the Lithuanian diaspora in Chicago.[4] The same pattern has been followed by the new post-socialist immigrants who arrived in the early 2000s. Such a trajectory could be understood as going beyond the creation of another ethnic niche or Lithuanian neighbourhood in Chicago. According to Neringa Liubiniene, who did research among the Lithuanian immigrants in Northern Ireland, it could be viewed as an attempt to build one's *own space* based on an intimate connection with *one's own* fellows. *Home* becomes a significant encompassing cultural trope as it is (re)conceived as a network of family, relative and friendship relationships (Liubiniene 2009). It creates a compartmentalized 'lifestyle' arena, different from the ethnic enclave and open to interethnic networking with other immigrants from the Eastern European region, particularly in this case Poles and those who speak Russian.

Such compartmentalization could be explained by new immigrants distancing themselves from the rest of the Lithuanian diaspora dominant by the DP (displaced persons) wave that came as a result of forced immigration. These older immigrants view the new Lithuanians as 'lacking Lithuanian culture' because they were 'contaminated' by being exposed to 'communist culture' (Ciubrinskas 2004, 61). Even in early 2010s in New York the post-socialist wave of Lithuanians may still be labeled as *tarybukai* (little Soviets), considered as 'traitors of the homeland' who 'tend to hide taxes' (Kripiene 2012).

So in this sense the participation of post-socialist immigrants in 'Lithuanian activities' in Chicago, as in New York (Kripiene 2012), is filled with some sort of scepticism, uncertainty and often disappointment. Even though they attend Lithuanian services in Catholic churches, bring children to Saturday schools or participate in cultural events, they still have a hard time getting recognition and support from the diaspora, which still holds most of the ethnic organizations in their grip.

On the other hand, recent ethnographic research indicates that many recent (post-socialism) Lithuanian immigrants are linked to each other in a kind of symbolic opposition to older Lithuanian Americans, through frequent social interactions and by expressing (post-)socialist Lithuanian practices and speech. This plays an important role in distancing the new wave of immigrants from the rest of the Lithuanian diaspora in the USA, especially the displaced persons wave of immigration. Kuznecoviene's research in London (2014) shows that the identity of Lithuanian immigrants is situational. Situated identities, particularly of minority groups of immigrants that are themselves fragments, hinders them from devoting themselves to maintaining (in this case) Lithuanian culture.

At the same time, adopting situated identities is an adaptive strategy that helps minimize marginalization risks and allows immigrants to deal more effectively with issues related to illegal status (Liubiniene 2009), to become established and to create a 'good life'.

The most important aspect in attaching oneself to the host country is 'the will for material wellbeing'. This is clearly stated in a response from Jurga, a 25-year-old employee in a Lithuanian-owned company in Chicago, who said: 'It seems that we are all attached to our material wellbeing. If someone told us that Lithuania will change and that one could gain an equal amount of revenue or that one could lead a similar life there [i.e. in Lithuania], I think everyone would leave immediately."

'Learning to live' in a new place is equally included in the construction of one's codes for belonging to the circle of *one's own people*. In other words, Lithuanian immigrants are motivated to create a fractured sense of *'one's own people'*: one part based on Lithuanianness and the other on loyalty to the host country. In this way a 'new reality' is formed both at the social level of urban spaces and at the situated level of the person since new immigrants take it on themselves to create their *own space* by adopting new lifestyles and blending sociocultural factors from both host and home countries.

Although the majority continues to identify with Lithuania, opinions regarding the questions of citizenship and loyalty tend to diverge. This may be influenced by the fact that most of our informants maintain their Lithuanian citizenship—'all of us are Lithuanian citizens' (Tomas, 34, construction worker). However, when it comes to voting, people are very reluctant. Although all their needs for voting easily are met by the Lithuanian Consulate in Chicago, few immigrants take part in elections. The home country is portrayed emotionally and culturally, and often it is not seen as the state, so loyalty becomes fragmented down to the level of one's 'roots', origins, language and a nostalgic youth. Daiva, a 26-year-old informant working in a Lithuanian-owned company, said: 'Everyone would like to die in Lithuania, because our roots, our language and our memories of young days are all there […] I don't feel as a member of Lithuanian Republic, but I do feel Lithuanian.'

When informants stress their 'roots', one may discern an almost fundamental aspect of 'Lithuanianness' that is tied neither to a precise territory nor to a place. Rather, one finds an attachment described by David Hollinger (1995) as *rooted cosmopolitanism*, which reflects the self-construction of fragmented identities that disregard both home and host states. The informants appear to focus mainly on descent as 'roots' with the home country and on 'material wellbeing' and cosmopolitan lifestyle in the host country. An informant claims:

> I have an American passport, but I am Lithuanian. They ask me, for example when we were traveling in Europe last year, and I always answer that I am a Lithuanian coming from Lithuania, not from America. I am a Lithuanian but I live in Chicago, and that's all. Well, I am a Lithuanian. Well, the passport doesn't make any difference. (Jonas, 30, engineer)

Although often I get a fully cosmopolitan response as well:

> I ascribe myself neither to Lithuania, nor to America, I don't ascribe myself as belonging to any country. I may as well live in Brazil. (Robertas, 41, businessman)

Many informants claim a double, Lithuanian American, identity: 'I am neither American, nor Lithuanian, but a Lithuanian American.' Such self-identification is more common among the more educated, studying or graduated (mostly from the US colleges) immigrants who have American friends from school and are usually open to assimilation and making steps towards the hyphenated Lithuanian American identity.

The double-identity decision speaks to the question of loyalty. In this respect, our informants clearly divide themselves into two distinct groups. The unattainability of double citizenship poses difficulties for the members of the first group. They must choose which one they want to keep: whether to maintain the old, Lithuanian one, or to accept the new one—that of a US citizen. Informants are particularly sensitive when speaking of this matter. A woman who accepted US citizenship and thus lost Lithuanian citizenship, for example, laments:

> We have been deprived of the opportunity to be Lithuanians. […] We are taken for traitors. […] If we had this opportunity, […] our little Lithuania would gain more revenue. (Ieva, 28, employee of a Lithuanian-owned company)

Others stress the redundancy or even harmfulness of double citizenship:

> If you live in one country and you decide the fate of both. […] They want to have the double-citizenship, to live in America, but they don't give a damn about Lithuania. (Rimantas, 32, worker in a transportation company)

> Patriotism ends with eating *cepelinai*. […] They want to make the double-citizenship only for the benefits [for the insurance and the guarantees] […] everyone's property, compensations for children, that's all. In any case, many take [the American citizenship] while keeping their Lithuanian passports to, as they say, take the most from both. (Tomas, 34, construction worker)

On the one hand, these claims suggest a certain indignation, while at the same time expressing cynicism not only towards citizenship but, in a way, towards loyalty itself. Within this process, fragmented identities become compartmentalized—identities that ignore both states by refusing integration (or by remaining conditionally illegal) into the main society (in our case, Americanization) and remain a minority even in their own parallel society, as part of structural exclusion (Kockel 2010, 74).

Loyalty to the host country is also discouraged by the illegal status of a considerable number of immigrants—according to various informants, about 10–20% remain illegal (Kripiene 2012) and have no connection to either state. It has been said that many of these undocumented Lithuanian workers work as truck drivers (living in their trucks) or take care of the elderly 'without showing themselves outside of the home' of their employers. In addition to that, those who own US passports hurry to help their relatives or family members join them in the USA by means of a Green Card, thus it is evident that there exists a situational 'consuming' of citizenship that seeks benefit for *one's own* 'fellows'.

These living conditions interact with the aforementioned situational identity. Such a sense of belonging—essentially an alternative to an ethnicity-based bonding—is usually associated with an individual lifestyle trajectory that depends on one's career and personal interests. According to circumstances, it draws on ethnic culture, ethnic communalism and Lithuanian citizenship, and may be defined as a manipulative, lifestyle identity (Friedman 1994). In many ways, it goes beyond ethnicity and the state(s) (both the homeland and the host country) and relies on *one's own people* circles in newly created, ethnically unmarked *own spaces*.

Construction of Interethnic Circles and Recreating the Region

A significant number of new post-socialism Lithuanian immigrants in Chicago transcend ethnic boundaries and easily get into social networks with undocumented or not fully documented immigrants from post-socialist Eastern Europe (especially Poles, Ukrainians and Russians). These interethnic networks are built on *one's own people* circles using mixed Russian-English-Polish language as a *lingua franca*, sharing workplaces and having strong relationships with their friends and relatives in their home countries.

In trying to understand how networking in interethnic circles of *one's own people* operates, we can use Alena Ledeneva's (1998) research on the economy of favours in Soviet Russia—that is, the mechanism of personal networks and ties (*blat*) based on trust and mutual exchange of services which constituted an informal economic practice in totalitarian regimes. Under the conditions of economic shortage, these ties were created in order to make a living through social networks. The need to provide for oneself and the norm of mutual reciprocity associated with strong (kinship) ties morally obliged individuals in these networks to come to the aid of the people one knew or who were members of one's community (Ledeneva 1998).

A similar situation of 'economic shortage' was experienced by the migrants who moved to the USA between 1989 and 2005, approximately during the first 15 years after Lithuania regained independence. Not knowing English and often working illegally 'without papers', those who overstayed their tourist

visas before 2009 when the visa requirement was waived would settle in an ethnic neighbourhood, staying in the basements of the diaspora Lithuanian's homes. They would do any job, and interacted with other immigrants from post-socialist Eastern Europe in the workplaces using Russian or a mixture of Russian, Polish and English as their *lingua franca*. As Rimantas, a 32-year-old employess of a Lithuanian capital transportation company, said, 'You get a mixed language—English, Polish, Russian.' These underground immigrants could easily enter the workforce by tapping into friendship or acquaintanceship networks of immigrants from post-socialist Central and Eastern Europe. Especially resilient ties were established through work. On arrival, some Lithuanian immigrants found employment together with Poles and Russians, as in the case of an informant who worked with Poles on night shifts for a cleaning company; these workmates became part of the circle of *one's own people* (fieldwork diary).

According to the research data, immigrants were often employed in construction, trucking, parcel transportation, auto repair, office cleaning, public food services, cosmetology and elderly care. Some immigrants worked in legal and medical services and for insurance agencies. Vaidas, the 39-year-old head of an insurance and real-estate company, said: 'We do a lot of business with Russians, Poles, especially real estate agents.' Even though some are self-employed, such as subcontractors for long-route haulage, bookkeepers and insurance agents, they are still closely related to the general market where they enter into work relations with companies usually run by people from ex-socialist countries. These immigrants share some key features. First, most of them work in fields that seldom require educational or professional qualifications. Doing these jobs, most of them feel that they have lost their profession, specialism or status. Sometimes the job might be illegal. So immigrants from different countries are bonded not only by their immigrant status but also by their low status in the labour market. Most are satisfied with their relatively low status probably because it corresponds to experiences that immigrants have brought from their post-Soviet countries of origin where pay cheques in some sectors of the labour market were given in 'envelopes'. Other unifying factors are the expectation to receive abundant, quick and non-taxable income, and choosing work based on the size of pay regardless of whether it will be earned legally. As the head of a Lithuanian-owned company in Chicago said,

> When an American comes to us looking for a job he asks what benefits he will get, when a Lithuanian or a Russian comes, all he wants to know is how much wages we will pay.

Violetta Parutis, who did research in London, noted that when searching for employment, many economic immigrants from post-socialist Poland and Lithuania aim for extra benefits, such as tax-exempt income and unlimited overtime (Parutis 2011, 52). They choose to work in relatively well-paid jobs, such as in construction and in private homes (old people, people with

disabilities, childcare). Parutis notes that for those immigrants who are better educated and have a greater knowledge of English, such work would only be a starting position to increase their cultural capital, as they strive to adjust to the environment and improve their language skills in order to get a better job in the future (ibid.).

The status of Eastern European immigrants in their places of employment in Chicago, and their expectations, attitudes and, possibly, social networks, are all based on shared experiences that are conditioned not only by their marginal immigrant status but also by their cultural understanding of how to manage economic shortage—a knowledge that they acquired in their countries of origin. Ethnographic research revealed tax evasion, exchange of services and concealment of various infringements. For example, I was told of a job that required two drivers but was done by one driver who worked overtime (fieldnotes). The exchange of services and favours among the immigrants from the Central Eastern European region can be partially equated with *blat* relations—involving circumvention of formal ways in order to access and manipulate resources (Ledeneva 1998, 37). Fieldwork among the Lithuanians in New York (Kripiene 2012) and Chicago (Ciubrinskas 2013, 2014) have documented patterns of *blat* or exchange and reciprocity in immigrant networks, especially in relation to 'finding a job' or 'getting an education'. In Chicago, the exchange of information and services or the manipulation of employment and income (legal and illegal) as well as information about profitable jobs, provision of work orders and clients, information about ways and forms to organize 'shadow' financial accounting ('black accounting') and so on are the most popular forms of *blat* found in the Eastern European job market.

Similarly, immigrants from the same post-socialist region share certain 'common culture' and leisure time activities, as well as discourses, patterns of consumption, festive culture and a sense of humour that is mutually understood. They shop in the same Polish, Lithuanian or Russian shops and are used to advertisements and other information in all three languages in the local Eastern European media (newspapers, radio stations). Movies from Eastern Europe, especially in Russian, are easily available for rent in most Lithuanian markets (observational data). Many immigrants from the post-socialist bloc are also used to visiting Russian restaurants in the northern part of Chicago 'in a white outfit' (dressed up).

When asked who they make friends with in Chicago, informants mostly said that they are friends with 'Lithuanians and Europeans but not with Americans'. Interestingly, Euro-Americans and immigrants from Western Europe are not considered 'Europeans'; only immigrants from Eastern Europe are. Informants tend to describe their friends as follows:

> Friends from Europe are mostly Lithuanians, but there are also Poles, zero Americans. (Simona, 25, studies and works in a Lithuanian-owned company)
>
> Friends—Russians, Lithuanians, Poles, because we are different, we dress differently, we eat different food, we talk different, we have different jokes. (Daiva, 26, employee at a Lithuanian capital company)

Some immigrants studied in Chicago suburban schools and colleges together with Poles, Russians and other students from Eastern Europe. As Simona, a 25-year-old Lithuanian student who also works in a Lithuanian-owned company, notes, 'At school, I was friends with Poles, Russians, Lithuanians, but not with Americans. We used to celebrate birthdays together … and also Christmas." Thus interethnic, former Eastern European bloc-related ties are easily created in the south-west of Chicago. They deal with structural or channelled multiculturalism—well defined by Baumann (1997) in his research in London as the 'dominant discourse'—and ethnic communalism through the interethnic networks of Eastern European immigrants from the former Communist region. Labour migrants as well as 'brain drain' immigrants with a Lithuanian, Ukrainian, Russian or Polish background are (re)creating the Eastern European region by using their *lingua franca* and sharing workplaces, the media and festive culture.

Conclusion

Current research on post-socialist Lithuanian immigration in Chicago (Kuzmickaite 2003; Ciubrinskas 2013, 2014), New York (Kripiene 2012) and London (Parutis 2011; Kuznecoviene 2014) shows the impact of the fragmentation of globality in diversifying the loyalties and the sense of belonging of the new immigrants. This appears to be how East European post-socialism is transnationalized in urban and suburban Chicago. It could be suggested that in contrast to understanding post-socialist immigration as a process of deterritorialization, we are encouraged to see it as a process of reterritorialization, as an attempt to create a new reality of *own spaces* made of *one's own* circles for Eastern Europeans in Chicago. Instead of assimilating into US society, post-socialist immigrants employ strategies of ethnification via cultural citizenship and lifestyle strategies which go beyond ethnic community lines by creating a new kind of belonging, which is compartmentalized within *one's own people* circles.

In addressing the question of how local and supralocal social networks and loyalties have been created among the Lithuanian immigrants in Chicago's urban dynamics, it is worth stressing that the translocal relationality of transnational urbanites is resourceful. It is expressed in the enactment of specific social resources and social capital built on bonds of intimacy, in-group reciprocity and networks of *one's own people* which embrace patrimonial family–kinship linkages, loyalties to homeland heritages and roots, ethnic identity and cultural citizenship. But it goes beyond intraethnic relationality, for social networks of *one's own people* include Lithuanians, Poles, Russians and Ukrainians, who have their own *lingua franca*, share workplaces and, in many ways, live in an ecological interethnic niche. It is both a result of fragmentation of ethnic grouping and a creation of a new ethnic hybridity based on common socialist experiences and sensibilities vis-à-vis their marginalization by the majority population.

The fragmentation of Lithuanian immigrant life leads to the development of social networks beyond those of the ethnic community. New social groupings are constructed as *one's own people* networks, which may include non-Lithuanians but are typically limited to other Eastern Europeans. This reformatting of the immigrant notion of *one's own people* can be considered to be a result of the transfer to the new setting of the exchange of services and favours that were an indispensable part of the way social capital was accumulated in the country of origin. These networks, first enacted through the ethnic circles of *one's own people*, often surpass ethnically defined boundaries to include other immigrants from the former Soviet bloc countries. Interethnic circles of *one's own people* are created and used to establish compartmentalized lifestyle identities, alliances and *own spaces*. The bonds of intraethnic and interethnic networking, exchange and reciprocity (favour for favour) take place among friends, acquaintances, relatives and colleagues. These bonds stress common interests and the resourcefulness of people who are expected to have the 'ability to deal with the situation' (Lankauskas 2013). Members of these ethnically hybrid groups are expected to be able to find and exploit work and know how to access legal and illegal resources. Such bonding can be seen as an *own space* alternative not only to the dominant US social institutions but also to the monoethnic spaces created by earlier presocialist waves of immigrants who, by and large, created ethnically based institutions and ethnic communities. It is also the recognition, re-enactment and re-creation of the post-socialist reality as 'translation' of the former totalitarian Eastern European region in the multicultural arena of urban and suburban Chicago.

Notes

1. For many Poles, Chicago was seen as a friendly, even 'Polish', city (Pacyga 2009; Erdmans 1998). The city of Chicago has been the largest Lithuanian city outside of Lithuania since the 1900s. In the early 1920s there were more ethnic Lithuanians in Chicago than in Kaunas, at the time Lithuania's capital and largest city (Kavoliunas 1994). Only recently, London outnumbered Chicago with its Lithuanian immigrant population: according to official statistics in 2011 there were 40,000 Lithuanians in London (Lietuvos Rytas 2013).
2. Forced migration of Lithuanian immigrants to the USA includes those political refugees and exiles, and their descendants, who, at the end of the Second World War, fled from the Communist regime in Eastern Europe to the West and became concentrated in the displaced persons (DP) camps in post-Nazi Germany. In the late 1940s they were given an opportunity to move to North America, the UK, Australia and so forth. At least 30,000 of these Lithuanians from the DP camps settled in the USA, of whom about 12,000–15,000 settled in Chicago (Kucas 1975). Their experience in the DP camps became a social memory resource for later generations, was an exercise in living in a country (as well as in the city of Chicago) without really being a part of it, and served as a model identity after they settled in the USA. Most, if not all, of them underwent ethnic 'Lithuanian' enculturation in their families and Saturday schools, and through the efforts of

the Lithuanian American Community. The term "DPs" was coined to refer to Lithuanian political refugees and exiles who reached the USA from DP camps in Germany at the end of the Second World War.

3. Most were of the so-called DP generation who immigrated in the early 1950s after leaving the DP camps in early post-Second World War Germany.
4. Likely all of the Lithuanian diaspora in the USA know that Lemont is the new centre of Lithuanian culture in the USA.

References

Al-Ali, Nadje, and Khalid Koser. 2002. Transnationalism, International Migration and Home. In *New Approaches to Migration? Transnational Communities and the Transformation of Home*, ed. Nadje Al-Ali and Khalid Koser, 1–14. London: Routledge.

Appadurai, Arjun. 1996. *Modernity at Large. Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press.

Appadurai, Arjun, and James Holston. 1999. Introduction: Cities and Citizenship. In *Cities and Citizenship*, ed. James Holston, 1–18. Durham: Duke University Press.

Baumann, Gerd. 1997. Dominant and Demotic Discourses of Culture; Their Relevance to Multi-ethnic Alliances. In *Debating Cultural Hybridity. Multi-cultural Identities and Politics of Anti-racism*, ed. Pnina Werbner and Tariq Modood, 209–225. London: Zed Books.

Boissevain, Jeremy. 1974. *Friends of Friends: Networks, Manipulators and Coalitions*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Bourdieu, Pierre, and L. Wacquant. 1992. *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Castles, Stephen, and Mark Miller. 2003. *The Age of Migration*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Cidzikaite, Dalia. 2013. What Is America and Who Are Lithuanians Living in America. http://slaptai.lt/index.php/gyvenimo-skandalai/7337-kas-yra-amerika-ir-kas-yra-amerikoje-gyvenantys-lietuviai.html (in Lithuanian).

Ciubrinskas, Vytis. 2004. Transnational Identity and Heritage: Lithuania Imagined, Constructed and Contested. In *Communicating Cultures*, ed. Ulrich Kockel and Máiréad Nic Craith, 42–66. Munster: LIT Verlag.

———. 2013. Diaspora as a Resource of Homeland Nationalism Forged Oversees and Contested Back Home. The Case of Lithuanian-Americans. In *Diaspora as a Resource. Comparative Studies in Strategies, Networks and Urban Space*, ed. Waltraud Kokot, Christian Giordano, and Mijal Gandelsman-Trier, 105–119. Zurich: LIT Verlag.

———. 2014. Trajectories of Bonding of Post-socialist Migrants in Chicago: Networking of In-groups and Manipulation of Loyalties to the State(s). *Ethnicity Studies* 2: 9–28. (in Lithuanian).

Eidintas, Alfonsas. 2003. *Lithuanian Emigration to the United States 1868–1950*. Vilnius: Science and Encyclopedia Publishing Institute.

Erdmans, Mary P. 1998. *Opposite Poles: Immigrants and Ethnics in Polish Chicago 1976–1990*. University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press.

———. 2006. New Chicago Polonia: Urban and Suburban. In *The New Chicago: A Social and Cultural Analysis*, ed. John P. Koval et al., 115–127. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Fainhauz, David. 1977. *Lithuanians in Multi-ethnic Chicago Until World War II*. Chicago: Lithuanian Library Press and Loyola University Press.

Friedman, Jonathan. 1994. *Cultural Identity and Global Process*. London: Sage.

———. 2002. Transnationalization, Socio-Political Disorder, and Ethnification as Expressions of Declining of Global Hegemony. In *The Anthropology of Politics. A Reader in Ethnography, Theory, and Critique*, ed. Joan Vincent, 285–300. Oxford: Blackwell.

Giordano, Christian. 2012. The Anthropology of Mediterranean Societies. In *A Companion to the Anthropology of Europe*, ed. Urich Kockel, Máiréad Nic Craith, and Jonas Frykman, 13–31. Oxford: Blackwell.

Glick-Schiller, Nina, and Ayse Çağlar. 2009. Towards a Comparative Theory of Locality in in Migration Studies: Migrant Incorporation and City Scale. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 35 (2): 177–202.

———. 2011. *Locating Migration: Rescaling Cities and Migrants*. London: Cornell University Press.

Green, Victor. 1975. *For God and Country; the Rise of Polish and Lithuanian Ethnic Consciousness in America 1860–1910*. Madison, WI: State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

Hollinger, David. 1995. *Post-ethnic America: Beyond Multiculturalism*. New York: Basic Books.

Kavoliunas, Jonas. 1994. Lithuanian-American Population Growing, Becoming More Geographically Dispersed. *Lituanus* 40 (2): 9–14.

Kockel, Ullrich. 2010. *Re-visioning Europe. Frontiers, Place and Journeys in Debatable Lands*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Kopnina, Helen. 2005. *East to West Migration: Russian Migrants in Western Europe*. Farnham: Ashgate.

Kripiene, Ieva. 2012. *Construction of Identities in Transnational Migration: Contemporary Immigrants from Lithuania in the United States of America*. PhD Thesis, Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas (in Lithuanian).

Kronh-Hansen, Christian. 2003. Into Our Time: The Anthropology of Political Life in the Era of Globalization. In *Globalization. Studies in Anthropology*, ed. Thomas H. Eriksen, 78–98. London: Pluto Press.

Kucas, Antanas. 1975. *Lithuanians in America*. Boston, MA: Encyclopedia Lituanica Press.

Kuzmickaite, Daiva K. 2003. *Between Two Worlds: Recent Lithuanian Immigrants in Chicago (1988–2000)*. Vilnius: Versus Aureus.

Kuznecoviene, Jolanta. 2014. 'Place, Citizenship and Learning to be Lithuanian': The Case of Immigrant Identity Construction in London. In *Transnationalism and Fragmentation of National Identity*, ed. Vytis Ciubrinskas, Darius Dauksas, Jolanta Kuznecoviene, L. Liutauras Labanauskas, and Meilute Taljunaite, 67–86. Vilnius: Versus Aureus, Vytautas Magnus University.

Lankauskas, Gediminas. 2013. Missing Socialism Again? The Malaise of Nostalgia in post-Soviet Lithuania. In *Anthropology and Nostalgia*, ed. David Berliner and Olivia Angé, 35–60. Oxford: Berghahn.

Ledeneva, Alena. 1998. *Russia's Economy of Favors: Blat, Networking and Informal Exchange*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lietuvos Rytas. 2013. Britai skaiciuoja kiek lietuviu gyvena ju salyje. http://www.lrytas.lt/lietuvos-diena/aktualijos/britai-skaiciuoja-kiek-lietuviu-gyvena-ju-salyje.htm

Liubiniene, Neringa. 2009. *Migrants from Lithuania in Northern Ireland: Construction of 'Own Space'*. PhD Thesis, Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas (in Lithuanian).

Lofgren, Orvar. 1998. Consuming America: Ethnicity and National Identity in the Marketplace. In *After Consensus. Critical Challenge and Social Change in America*, ed. Hans Lofgren and Alan Shima, 41–61. Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis, Gotheborg University Press: Gothenburg.

Malkki, Lisa. 1992. National Geographic: The Rooting of Peoples and the Territorialization of National Identity Among Scholars and Refugees. *Cultural Anthropology* 7 (1): 24–44.

Olwig, Karin F. 2003. Global Places and Place-identities: Lessons from Caribbean Research. In *Globalization: Studies in Anthropology*, ed. Thomas H. Eriksen, 58–77. London: Pluto Press.

Olwig, Karin F., and Kirsten Hastrup. 1997. *Siting Culture. The Shifting Anthropological Object*. London: Routledge.

Olwig, Karin F., and Ninna N. Sorensen. 2002. *Work and Migration: Life and Livelihoods in a Globalizing World*. London: Routledge.

Pacyga, D. 2009. *Chicago: A Biography*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Pardo, Italo, Giuliana B. Prato, and W. Wolfgang Kaltenbacher. 2013. Le positionement de l'anthropologie urbanine. In *Le Positionement de l'Anthropologie Urbaine*, ed. Italo Pardo, Giuliana B. Prato, and Wolfgang Katenbacher, 3–11. Special Issue of *Diogene* 251–252. Paris: Presses Universitarie de France.

Parutis, Violetta. 2011. Economic Migrants or 'Middling Transnationals'? East European Migrants Experience of Work in the UK. *International Migration* 52 (1): 36–55.

Prato, Giuliana B. 2006. Introduction: Citizenship as Geo-Political Project. In *Political Ideology, Identity, Citizenship: Anthropological Approaches*, ed. Giuliana B. Prato, XX–XX. Florence: Firenze University Press.

Prato, Giuliana B., and Italo Pardo. 2013. Urban Anthropology. *Urbanities* 3 (2): 80–110. www.anthrojournal-urbanities.com

Senn, Alfred E. 2005. Lithuanians. In *Encyclopedia of Chicago*. Accessed 15 December 2015. http://encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org

Thomas, William I., and Florian Znaniecki. 1958. *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America*. New York: Dover Publications.

Vardys, Stanley, and Judith Sedaitis. 1997. *Lithuania: The Rebel Nation*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Vertovec, Steven. 1999. Conceiving and Researching Transnationalism. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 22 (2): 447–462.

———. 2009. *Transnationalism: Key Ideas*. London: Routledge.