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SOCIOCULTURAL MINORITIES**

Edited by VYTIS ČIUBRINSKAS and JONAS MARDOSA

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The Downside of Transparency: Europeanization, Standardization and Disobedient Markets at the Margins of Europe

Asta Vonderau

Based on a case study that follows the introduction process of cash registers in Lithuanian open air markets, this paper investigates the local forms and effects of European policies of transparency and standardization. Building on anthropological research on transparency, standardization and policies, the introduction of cash registers is studied as an implementation of European governmentality leading to new forms of personhood and social exclusion. The paper shows how Europeanization is negotiated in the specific context of open-air markets that traditionally are perceived as being unruly spaces. It highlights the gap between the apparently transparent and clear vision of Europeanization through standardization and its daily messiness and disorder.

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Europeanization through Standardization

Trying to characterize Lithuania's 20 years of political, economic and social development after the fall of the Iron Curtain, 'Europeanization' would undoubtedly be a guiding term. Within the Lithuanian public sphere, Europeanization or the 'way back to Europe' still stands for the restoration of a 'national normality' inhibited by the Soviet occupation and for the only possible chance to evade the political, economic and cultural influence of eastern neighboring states. The political and economic integration into EU structures is given highest priority by the Lithuanian politics and economy. All political parties, economical groups

and public organizations agree on the necessity of such an integration. This consensus certainly results from the collective experience of the Soviet occupation, but also from the involvement and dependency of these groups and institutions concerning the distribution and acquirement of European Structural Funds (Vonderau 2008; Vonderau 2010). As elsewhere in (Eastern-)Europe, the process of Europeanization in Lithuania is promoted mainly through the implementation of (Western-)European political and economic standards: from the Lithuanian entry into the European Techno Zone as a result of the *Acquise Communautaire* to new structures of organization, forms of administrative regulation, and auditing mechanisms that are introduced within various sectors of society, affecting both individual lives and working environments (Dunn 2005: 177).

As Susan Leigh Star and Geoffrey Bowker observe, standardization processes connect social contexts, groups of actors, forms of knowledge, technologies, and things across geographical and other distances, uniting, for instance, the various social contexts of the EU Member States into a corporate political constellation and economic zone. Furthermore, through standardization these connections are normalized and differences become invisible, whenever knowledge about a 'collective normality' is produced. Star and Bowker identify the making visible of standardization processes and the investigation of their impact on everyday life as a research task for social and cultural studies, to which this article contributes (Bowker, Star 1999). The following case study focuses on Europeanization processes that have been prompted by standardization initiatives. Its argumentation is based on observations and on the analysis of media (self-)representations and discussions among various actors involved, including state institutions, private companies, policy makers, representatives of the media, and marketers. My interest mainly is to study public negotiations of European standards and their local meanings, and not everyday life practices related to the implementation of standards. Hence, rather than an exhaustive ethnography, this article presents a methodological experiment, an attempt to demonstrate the effects of Europeanization on daily life in anthropological terms.

In Lithuanian political discourse, formalizing informal economies and increasing transparency through standardization is understood to be necessary for Europeanization, both economically and in the sense of a symbolic rescue from the shadows of the socialist past, soviet governmentality, and soviet modes of personhood.¹ According to the logic of this discourse, it is compliance with Eu-

¹The considerations presented in this article are based on an analysis of the political and media discourse (the largest Lithuanian newspapers and online news portals as *Lietuvos Rytas*, *Veidas*, *Verslo žinios*, *Delfi*, *Alfa* etc.) of the last three to four years. These texts could be analyzed regarding source criticism, especially since they represent various political positions and are geared towards different readerships, but this article is less concerned with a historical reconstruction but more with methodological thoughts about research of political fields (of power).

ropean standards that allows the symbolic transition from Eastern to Western Europe. As Elizabeth Dunn observes, 'EU Standards, and the normative power they contain, have become key tools of "transition" in Eastern Europe because they claim to have a kind of disciplinary power that makes economies and producers commensurable' (Dunn 2005: 183). Following Dunn, processes of Europeanization in Lithuanian open-air markets can be described as implementations of a neoliberal governmentality and subjectivity. If Europeanization in Lithuania through the first years appeared to be linear and fluent due to its economic profitability and support from the social majority, this situation changed with the financial and economic crisis, which hit the still young and unstable Lithuanian economy in 2008. Not only were incisive savings imposed by the EU as a condition for further financial support, but saving measures and strategies – for instance overall wage and pension cuts, tax increases, and the reduction of state institutional structures – were also implemented at national level, aiming to prevent the country's economic collapse. These strategies were devised in the so-called *National Agreement (Nacionalinis Susitarimas)*, a document signed in autumn 2009 by the Lithuanian government, trade unions, representatives of the trading and workers' organizations, and other societal groups. The *National Agreement* proclaimed the solidarity of these groups in a 'uniquely difficult period,' binding them to the common goal of restoring economic stability in the country by means of committing to retrieve three billion Litas (ca. 1 billion Euro) from the informal economy (Lietuvos Respublikos 2009: 2). Following such calls for economic austerity and self-control, Europeanization became a difficult and exhausting process for many Lithuanian citizens.

Soon after the Lithuanian government had announced a 'difficult period' (*sunkmetis*) marked by austerity and transparency programs, it also announced its decision to enforce the use of cash registers for trading on open-air markets.² According to official explanations, this regulatory measure was meant to permit the transfer of one billion Litas (or one-third of the amount estimated in the *National Agreement*) from the shadows of informal market trade.³ Yet this decision, which mainly affected merchants and one-man companies, led to unexpected strong resistance among the marketers, and provoked a public debate that spread through newspapers, TV shows, demonstrations, petitions and even hunger strikes. In what follows, I would like to consider the Lithuanian cash register regulation, with its blending of EU standards, a national discourse of transparency, and specific local social contexts, as a friction-prone way of

² The Lithuanian Government decided on 27 12 2010 (with effect on 01 02 2011) about the obligation to use cash registers for food trading on open-air markets. In the following year (with effect since 01 05 2012) this regulation was also extended for other products on open-air markets.

³ Šešėlis... 2011.

Europeanization. I will demonstrate, first, how the state takes over the role of a 'normative agent' (Dunn 2005: 180) that tries to enforce a particular understanding of successful Europeanization through the *emergence* of society from its *shadows*. Second, I want to examine the way in which different groups and individuals discuss normative public policies, also by contradicting or scrutinizing it. I understand the so-called 'informal' economy not as a deviant phenomenon characteristic of transitional societies, but as an integral part of Lithuania's economic system that, however, contradicts some influential Western notions of Europeanization and transparency (Morris, Polese 2014). What needs to be considered, then, is how transparency and visibility are negotiated, (re)produced and implemented, and what other 'shadows' – in the sense of *regimes of visibility* (Hempel et al. 2010) – emerge as a result of a normative process of Europeanization.

Open-Air Markets as 'Other Spaces'

In Lithuania, as in other Eastern European countries, open-air markets are seen as peripheral phenomena, clearly distinguished and spatially separated from 'normal' urban spaces, to some extent beyond state control and resistant to the established order. Accordingly, individuals trading on these markets are also considered to be different or as deviating from dominant notions of a 'good citizen' (Vonderau 2010; Hohnen 2003; Römhild 2010). Remarkably, despite their rather negative public image, these markets remained significant sites of economic activity for many Lithuanians over the years, unaffected by the economic transformation from state-controlled to free market. The reason why open-air markets came to the fore of transparency policy, and why the apparently incidental obligation to use cash registers provoked a public debate might lie in the social function of open-air markets as 'other spaces' in the sense defined by Michel Foucault (Foucault 1992). Foucault describes other spaces or heterotopias as peculiarly steady precisely because these spaces are capable of adapting, able to function in the course of social changes. Furthermore, he states that a heterotopia is 'capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible' (Foucault 1986: 25). The Eastern European open-air markets that have existed since socialism can in this sense also be characterized as a peculiar mixture of future and past, of imagined capitalism and actual socialism, of western-inspired entrepreneurship and eastern bazaar. Other spaces 'function at full capacity when men arrive at a sort of absolute break with their traditional time' (Foucault 1986: 26) – and respectively, open-air markets reached their period of prosperity during the collapse of the Soviet Union and the post-socialist transformation.

Places of Friction and Compensation

Referring to the biggest European open-air market for used cars located in the Lithuanian town of Marijampolė, German historian Karl Schlögel has spoken of a 'node' between east and west where Europeanization *from below* is expedited. He describes the market as a *place of compensation* where the material and social shortcomings and inequalities of European societies are compensated and leveled out (Schlögel 2005: 17–18). In his view, the second-hand car dealers appear as the true *experts of Europe* – as mobile, flexible, multilingual and cosmopolitan (Schlögel 2005: 14). The balancing function of open-air markets becomes especially obvious in the context of post-socialist societies where these markets serve as testbeds to experiment with forms of trading, national regulation, and imaginations of a better life (Schlögel 2005; Vonderau 2010; Hohnen 2003; Römhild 2010). However, open-air markets should certainly not be understood as absolutely free spaces (in terms of being unregulated) given that their territories and actors have been, and still are, subjects to a constant monitoring by economic and political actors. In fact, Eastern European open-air markets are shaped by interlinked structures, actors and practices that do not (or are not allowed to) belong together according to the hegemonic political and media self-image of the Lithuanian state. These markets thus have always been places of compensation, but also places of friction where paradoxes and contradictions of social order and of the respective political regime were reflected. This historical role can be illustrated using the example of Gariūnai, the biggest Lithuanian open-air market and an epitome of Lithuanian open-air trading.

Gariūnai during Socialism

As is well-known, private entrepreneurial activities were not allowed under Socialism. Only a few markets existed in Lithuania's capital Vilnius and other major towns for trading self-produced agricultural goods. With the decline of the Soviet economy and its growing economic deficits, the informal economy of these markets underwent fundamental changes. Increasingly, the trading would involve products such as clothing, household appliances and other everyday commodities which were difficult to find in regular stores. Some of these goods came to the markets from the state owned stores and manufactories, others were produced illegally in private, mostly made from purloined materials or with state-equipment, still others were smuggled in from neighboring countries. State ideologists pictured these forms of trading as capitalistic, immoral and socially inferior. Merchants were punished, expelled from the marketplace, and presented in the media as philistine, indolent individuals – 'speculating' at the expense of honest citizens. However, these measures did not stop illegal trading; both the

Soviet leadership and the traders themselves were aware that markets did curtail the enormous shortcomings of the Soviet economy, balancing the growing tension between the socialist ideology of abundance, and the everyday realities of the deficit state (Hohnen 2003; Vonderau 2010). Although open-air markets thus contributed to preserve political stability, they were at the same time places where collective social imaginations of a better life were being acted out through illegal forms of consumption and trading (Appadurai 1998). Such imaginations, closely linked to ideas of Western material well-being, materialized in things purchased at open-air markets – although such things often were not directly related to the Western world of consumption, but rather symbolized it. Notions of a better life in the West met with real-life opportunities and the practices of market traders became a unique mixture of old and new – an experience of modernity at the end of the Soviet Union, or what Caroline Humphrey ironically and accurately related to as ‘Karl Mars and Friedrich Snickers’ (Humphrey 1995: 50). In the last years of the Soviet regime these imaginations achieved the power to disrupt the system, contributing to the end of the socialist empire (Siegrist 1997: 35–36). Paraphrasing Foucault, one could say that they made people break with their conventional time. It was precisely the growing tension between the official political ideology and the social reality as observable in the open-air markets of late socialism that led to the legalization of the first private companies in 1986 under the leadership of Gorbachev. In this way, a new economic and political time was initiated and the meaning of the open-air markets as other spaces began to change.

...and Post-Socialism

Within the last months of its existence, the government of the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic decided to displace the traders of a farmers’ market formerly located in central Vilnius to a separate territory at the outskirts of the city in order to make them less visible, and more difficult to reach. Half a year later, Lithuania declared its independence. Moscow responded with an economic blockade. State owned stores had nothing to offer, and consumers nothing to spend because factories, kolkhozes, and other institutions were not able to pay salaries. Due to a shortage of money, the collapse of centralized distribution structures, a lack of financial institutions and limited liability of contracts, the consumer goods sector was mainly based on personal networks and agreements. This situation resulted in an economy of natural produce which had, according to Katherine Verdery, more in common with feudalistic, than with capitalist structures (Verdery 1996: 206). Furthermore, the legislative framework of Lithuania’s society did not correspond to the realities of every day life. The borders between different states became permeable as did those between legality and illegality, and what was previously forbidden (as for instance private economic

activity) was now suddenly permitted. New economic and social structures only gradually came into being. Because of its geographical location at the western border of the former USSR, Lithuania became a transit point for products from all over the world; the vision of Western prosperity and of a better life seemed to have come within short reach.

But despite the great range of goods, up until the beginnings of the 1990s the Lithuanian average income was too low to allow to purchase them. In this situation, Gariūnai opened at the outskirts of the city as Lithuania's first legal open-air market. The previously intended act of exclusion thus turned into an act of recognition, as private trade gained a different status due to the change of the system. Gariūnai covered ten hectares of land, and with its tens of thousands of traders and customers from all over the former USSR, Poland and Asia, it was up to the mid 1990s considered to be the largest marketplace in Europe. 'Gariūnai' became an established term and a symbol for all traders and open-air markets that emerged during that time in Lithuania. As noted, open-air markets served as spaces of compensation: They satisfied the demand for cheap consumer goods and enabled low-income consumers who could not afford the Western products that constituted, at least partly, their visions of a better life (Vonderau 2010). In the context of an economic vacuum, Gariūnai provided a framework for developing business ideas, laying the foundations for later companies and individual capital accumulation.

Yet even though Gariūnai can be characterized as the first free market of Lithuania, it should be noted that in its networks, trading forms and routes, this market resembled much more an oriental bazaar than a Western regulated market and remained predominately oriented towards the East – in the direction of the former USSR and Asia – rather than westward (Hohnen 2003). Traders were working under the hardest and most precarious conditions, but were able to acquire knowledge valuable in the context of the years of isolation which Lithuanian society then experienced; for these traders were moving around together with the global flows of capital and commodities, becoming experts in forming transnational networks, detecting loopholes and market gaps, or in navigating the confusing contexts of social transformation. They were no longer socialist citizens bound to the collective and dependent on it. In their self-conception and business strategies, traders were also not necessarily comparable to Western European economic agents, which is why they were almost invisible for the EU audit mechanisms slowly entering Lithuania. The stereotypical image of the 'Gariūnai Boys' (Gariūnų berniukai) circulating to this day dates back to this period, an image of an aggressive, uneducated yet determined trader who makes his money in minimum time with unfathomable business and puts his new wealth on show through material symbols like branded clothing, oversized jewelry or luxury

limousines. Open-air markets in the early post-socialist years thus combined the seemingly incompatible: both the aspiring new rich who established their businesses, and the poorer sections of society pre-occupied with their own survival; they combined images of Western consumption and entrepreneurial energy with a move eastwards that stood against Lithuania's Europeanization policies.

Gariūnai Today

With its explosive development Gariūnai and other open-air markets were competing with Western market structures that for a long time mattered only for a minority of top earners. That way, the open-air market again served as a place of economic and symbolic compensation at a time of social reform that has been characterized as 'making capitalism without capitalists' (Stoica 2004: 237). Despite the normalization of formal market structures, an increasing purchasing power and a higher availability of cheap goods, many Lithuanians still trade on open-air markets such as Gariūnai to support their existence. The sellers are often very small or one-man companies benefitting from regional tax and price differences, low-income customers, and grey areas of jurisdiction. Most of them only achieve very limited turnovers and therefore are included in a category of retailers eligible to receive compensation through EU programs and the *National Agreement* such as tax benefits.⁴ Customers are difficult to quantify, as they arrive legally or illegally from Belarus, Russia or Asian countries often only staying for a short time on the market (Lukaitytė 2010). The current Lithuanian policy seems to be aware of the importance of the open-air markets as spaces with considerable economic and symbolic potential. For instance, prior to elections, politicians organize shopping tours or even chess games with Gariūnai-traders, with the clear intention to harmonize open-air markets with official policy and to regulate them economically. This relationship between governmental policies and the realities of open-air markets reveals a contradiction between the ideological project to establish a free market, and the narrowing of this market to one fitted to a Western-oriented, homogeneous society.

In the course of Lithuania's Europeanization efforts, the modernization of Gariūnai was planned – the transformation of the open-air market into *Gariūnai Businesspark*. This project obtained the status of a 'project of national importance' (*valstybinės svarbos projektas*) endowed with high subsidies (Digrytė 2007; Tvaskienė 2012).⁵ The area of the open-air market was fenced, modern salesrooms

⁴ See for instance the European Portal for Retail Trade (*Europos...* 2015).

⁵ Gariūnai is administrated by three private incorporated companies. The official classification of the actual private project of market modernization as a project of national importance in 2005 led to public discussions about the necessity and correctness of the government's decision. *Gariūnai...* 2015.

and sanitary facilities were set up that corresponded to European hygiene standards. Market traders were bound to use these facilities and to pay for them.⁶ Due to the building of restaurants, playgrounds and similar facilities, the market began to resemble a shopping mall or an amusement park. In the public promotion of Gariūnai, attempts to turn the market into an example of 'genuinely Lithuanian' trading traditions became obvious. On Gariūnai's website, for instance, one finds pictures of Lithuanian craftsmen selling their handcrafted products in the context of a national festival: scenes untypical for the daily routine of the market. In such representations, the market appears as a well-regulated, European-Lithuanian space. Its actual ethnic and social diversity as well as transnational networks are concealed. Conflicts caused by attempts to introduce European standards are also hidden. This includes, among others, in 2010 the forced relocation of traders from their old, original selling shacks to newly built modern salesrooms with high rental fees; those unwilling to move got their electricity cut off. At that time, the resistance of the traders aroused sufficient public interest so that their relocation could be stopped. The municipal authorities responsible for the implementation of this modernization project accused, in turn, the market operators of incorrect conduct, in an attempt to extricate themselves from the situation (Murauskaitė 2010).⁷ In this very situation, however, the so-called cash register conflict erupted during which the protesting marketers questioned the normative model of Europeanization through standardization and questioned the role of the state as a 'normative agent.' This conflict will be analyzed below.

Semantics of the Shadow Economy

'The government is aware of the necessity to reinforce the campaign against the informal economy in a time of crisis by dedicating its whole attention to the prosecution of smuggling, tax avoidance and illegal trafficking': With these words, the *National Agreement* emphasized the need to generate transparency (Lietuvos Respublikos... 2009: 2). Implementing such official decisions into practice, political measures are represented by policies that bring ideological concepts, administrative procedures, technologies and actors on various levels (*scales*) of society in relation to each other. In this way, rationalities of governance and forms of knowledge are (re-)produced or re-negotiated. Cris Shore and Susan Wright consider these links produced by policies to be a fundamental

⁶Lithuanian Government decision, 14 07 2005.

⁷Simultaneously with the outward presentation of Gariūnai as an European market the marketers were and still are described in the media as non-European and non-Lithuanian, mafia-like, immoral, non-transparent, messy and dirty. In this discourse the market and the marketers appear as an antitype of Europeanization which is understood as the return to normality, national values, order and cleanness.

organizational principle of today's societies because they 'provide a way of conceptualising and symbolising social relations around which people live their lives and structure their realities' (Shore, Wright 2011: 2). Although policies are politically motivated and economically calculated assemblages of discourses, bureaucratic practices, people or technologies that often follow a similar pattern, they produce not only rationalities but also disorders (*messiness*). Indeed, the local effects of policies can be considerably different according to the socio-cultural context (*domains of meaning*) they belong to (Shore, Wright 2011: 1). Hence, EU-wide market economy standards and political models of Europeanization turn out very differently in any given context even if the concepts and standards function as 'boundary objects' (Bowker, Star 1999) meant to create a shared horizon of norms and values for all the groups involved. Using the example of the Lithuanian open-air markets, the (dis-)order of Europeanization through standardization will now be discussed in order to show how the signification of transparency is negotiated among different policy actors and groups: 'How does a policy mean'? (Shore, Wright 2011: 20).

(Dis)Order of Policy

The de facto existence of corruption and the need to achieve transparency in Lithuania was documented in the *National Agreement* and associated media reports through testimonies of experts like *Transparency International* or the World Bank study *Doing Business* and was not being questioned by any of the involved groups (Lietuvos Respublikos... 2009; Žukauskas 2011). The goal of combatting corruption, achieving transparency and Europeanization through standardization seemed consensual during the planning of the crisis-intervention policy. The Lithuanian government announced its decision of combatting 'the shadow' jointly with the Ministry of the Interior, the Prime Minister and those of other government representatives. For these authorities there was no doubt that the introduction of cash registers on open-air markets would guarantee the transparency of trading, control the amounts of revenues, ensure a better tax administration, strengthen the mutual trust between customers and vendors and protect the consumer rights.⁸ The implied understanding of markets and their traders as nontransparent in official statements was supported by statistics and results of police controls.⁹ It was also confirmed by Lithuania's highest authority, with the Lithuanian President declaring: 'I support the reduction of the informal economy and I support transparency and that has to be compulsory for all kinds

⁸Lithuanian Government decision, 14 07 2005.

Valstybinė... 2011; Nacionalinio... 2010; Kasos aparatų turgaus... 2011.

⁹See for instance Čepulionytė 2010; Premjeras... 2011.

of trading, for all citizens: to pay taxes, to adhere to conscientious, responsible management and not to try and live at the expense of other social groups of our society.¹⁰

However, this consent dissolved in a variety of voices and opinions when the time came to identify the particularly 'shady' sectors of society and to define the criteria of their disclosure. During the implementation of these policies on open-air markets, a growing number of groups joined an increasing controversial discussion. Among them were, for instance, the opposition parties which were committed to Europeanization but questioned the policies of the governing majority by interpreting the obligation to use cash registers as a financial and organizational burden on market retailers, who were pictured as producers of national cultural heritage in economically difficult times. In this way, the mainly economic-based position of the government was confronted with cultural arguments and with the question whether the achievement of transparency or the preservation of national craft and commercial traditions (supported by the EU as well) should be given priority.¹¹ The national argument was brought up by the *Association of the Lithuanian Retailers (Lietuvos smulkiųjų verslininkų ir prekybininkų asociacija)* and the market management presenting the traders as heroic bearers of national traditions. Retail representatives interpreted the government policy not only as a destruction of national traditions but also as a break with the *National Agreement* whose declared aim had been, among others, to support the retail trade and to discuss the political decisions in dialogue with all involved groups of the agreement. In this way, the concrete measures of the government were criticized by the retailers, and the implied classification of the open-air markets as other spaces and their traders as disobedient subjects was challenged.

Trade representatives referred in particular to the expertise of the Lithuanian Institute for the Free Market (*Lietuvos laisvosios rinkos institutas*) which described the existence of an informal economy on open-air markets as unproven and depicted the cash register regulation as a displacement of retailing in favor of wholesale. According to this position, the 'shadow' was not to be located on the free markets but within wholesale organizations, especially in alcohol and cigarette trade.¹² Market traders who had been interviewed in countless media reports also saw themselves as being pushed out of the free market by measures of the government, into employment contracts and illegality or even forced to emigrate, hence excluded from the national community.¹³ However, the

¹⁰ Plikā... 2011.

¹¹ Again in this argumentation the actual transnationality of the open-air markets was not taken into account. See, e.g. Turgūs... 2010.

¹² Lietuvos laisvosios... 2011a; Smulkiųjų... 2011.

¹³ See e.g. Pokalbis... 2011; Dumalakas 2011.

presentation of the market trade as a genuine Lithuanian tradition did not turn out to be an effective strategy in the long run. The government also knew how to play the national card and asserted that the cash registers would hinder the import of cheap foreign products to Lithuania, such as Polish meat, and that way promote the production of national goods.

In this weave of opinions and positions, the continually upcoming 'real (Western-)Europe' served as a symbolic space for all the actors involved, providing empirical clues of a 'right' Europeanization. During the cash register-debate, various of the involved groups were repeatedly questioning whether this was the billing practice on (Western-)European open-air markets and whether the decision of the Lithuanian government signified actual Europeanization. For this reason, representatives of various parties referred to their Western experiences, using narrations of what they thought they had seen and experienced differed considerably. For instance, the representative of the Christian Democratic Party (*Tevynės sąjunga, Krikščionys demokratai*), Kęstutis Masiulis, alleged in a discussion on the online news portal *Alfa.lt* that he had been to Berlin and had bought raspberries on the street where a cash register was used 'even in winter' (Lietuvos laisvosios... 2011b; Čepulionytė 2011). His opponent from the Social Democratic Party, Vytenis Povilas Andriukaitis, reported in the same forum on not having seen any cash registers on Western open-air markets, neither in Berlin nor in Vienna.¹⁴ Pointing to her 'actual experiences' in the West the chairwoman of the Association of the Retailers accused the government in a public statement of having negligently lied to the Lithuanian people with the claim that cash registers are used on open-air markets in Western Europe. To provide evidence of this charge, she presented video material from Brussels brought along by a retailers delegation. It has to be mentioned in this context that neither in eyewitness accounts nor in other media reports the precise political and economical backgrounds of similar regulations in other countries have been analyzed or the purpose of such a comparability of the different social contexts has been questioned. Europe remained, as stated above, the symbolic horizon of reference to imagine a culturally rich, moral and shadow-free Europeanization (Vonderau 2008).

The Cash Register Person: Materiality of Policy

When policies organize society by linking different actors, discourses, ideological concepts, technologies, and bureaucratic-administrative practices, then this connection is certainly not only discursive but also of a material and physical nature. Linking EU standards and measures for economic transparency, and na-

¹⁴ Ar tinkama... 2012.

tional plans of Europeanization within the specific contexts of open-air markets, the cash register policy meant in practice that every retailer had to purchase one, program it correctly and use it regularly. On each single workspace a cash register had to be connected on the basis of the registration procedure determined by the Lithuanian tax authority.¹⁵ Even if the already described discursive links between the conceptions of economic shadows, ideas of Europeanization and symbolic meanings of open-air markets as disobedient spaces were relatively easily installed by decision-makers, it was much more difficult to establish the connection on material and physical level.

One problem, for instance, was the hunger strike by some of the representatives of the Retailer Association after an unsuccessful demonstration in front of the Lithuanian Parliament. This 130-days activity forced the government, which was not very open to dialogue but at the same time concerned about European criticism, to seek consent with traders and to take into account a renegotiation of the cash register policy.¹⁶ However, even after the rapprochement between the two parties, it remained almost impossible to install cash registers in the work world of market traders. Many of the retailers did not have a permanent place to work which is why a registration of the cash registers was not feasible. Moreover, many of them earned so little that it was impossible to prosecute them for not following the regulation. Parallel to the protest campaigns, a debate erupted about the practical advantages and disadvantages arising from the technologization of market trading based on cash registers. Many of the retailers interviewed in media alleged that the cash registers affected trading and complicated it, not only because one needed to learn how to use and maintain it, and had to pay for it, but also because the registers were not designed for the harsh working conditions on open-air markets and could be damaged by cold weather or rain.¹⁷ The traders worried that these 'flaccidities' of the cash registers could cause suspicion and damage their public reputation due to supposed incorrect accounting. They presented themselves as powerless mediators between the cash register on the one side, and the customers on the other side who would not be interested but run away when viewing the cash registers and state inspectors. In response to these concerns, the authorities emphasized the exceptional stability and endurance of modern cash registers that would be operational up to minus 45 degrees Celsius and would function several days without electricity. In the worst case, according to the tax authority, one could turn to the cashbook as an alternative and enter the accounting data there.¹⁸ In line with the official line of reasoning, media

¹⁵ Valstybinė... 2011.

¹⁶ Ūkio... 2011.

¹⁷ Kasos aparatų visiems... 2011; Tavorienė 2009.

¹⁸ Dėl šalčio... 2012; Valstybinė...2012.

reports tried to provide a forum for customers supporting the introduction of cash registers on open-air markets.

Even if these material oppositions were not able to stop the implementation of transparency policies on open-air markets, they managed to qualify to some extent the official classification of the markets as particularly nontransparent spaces avoiding for example performance measurements and controls. Knowing that the discussed implementation of cash registers would be monitored by the media and by the public authorities concerning its effectiveness, the traders made such a monitoring of Europeanization through standardization difficult by means of their individual physical presence or non-presence at the market place. With the introduction of the cash register obligation the open-air markets changed their appearance: Both press and the public authorities were ready, but most of the marketers did not appear. Many of them had their trade license only extended to the day of the policy implementation and left the authorities and media in uncertainty about whether they would return to the market, change their occupation, or even emigrate.¹⁹ Stores selling cash registers did not record a higher demand for their products. And even the traders already possessing a cash register stashed them away under their goods. The obvious lack of success of the regulation gave rise to criticism by the opposition, leading to further public debates about where the economic 'shadow' should be searched, and which sectors of society should be made transparent and European. In answer to these questions, the government initiated selective police controls and investigations to justify the meaning of the combat against the shadows on open-air markets.²⁰

As a result of this never-ending controversy, a new version of the cash register policy arose, restricting the scope of the Europeanization through standardization in terms of space and time. Decision makers were persuaded by the alleged fragility of the cash registers and made an exception for traders working outside or in half open shacks. In addition, excluded from the cash register obligation were traders with limited turnovers and those who traded only one day a week on the market or were selling self-produced goods defined as belonging to the category of cultural heritage.

This small scale negotiation resulted in almost absurd provisions trying to regulate each part of the open-air trading. On its website, the Lithuanian tax authority noted that the cash register was not necessary if one wanted to sell self-angled fish from the porch of one's own house in the summer. Though these exceptions seemed to be marginal, as part of the complex austerity and trans-

¹⁹ Kijuskienė 2011; Lukaitytė 2011; Pabalių... 2012.

²⁰ Ramoškaitė 2010; A. Kubilius... 2011; Reidas... 2010.

parency measures they still offered (although unintended) possibilities for individual freedom and interpretation within the framework of the new standards introduced. For instance, they opened up opportunities to present one's trading as contributing to national heritage, or to gain entry to the very narrowly defined category of low-income earners by transferring parts one's business to a different name and person; another method was to simply place the products in front of the door of the shack. Such strategies for dealing with the new regulation were rapidly spreading on open-air markets. Despite the fact that the obligation of using cash registers by now is well established and most of the retailers have purchased the device and returned to their workplace, it remains uncertain if and when they switch on the cash registers in order to create the requested material linkage between European standards of transparency, a national endeavor of Europeanization, and the worlds they live and work in. Even if the government regards the success of the cash register policy as proven by increasing sales on open-air markets, opponents argue that these figures are merely due to an improvement of the macroeconomic situation and unrelated to transparency measures.²¹

To this day, the open-air markets remain 'other spaces' that cannot be made completely transparent by European standards and audit mechanisms, marking the shaded borders of the EU's normative governmentality that functions by means of providing transparency and standardization (Dunn 2005). Dunn describes the barely adjustable spaces of open-air markets and the ability of their traders to avoid Europeanization through standardization as a 'backlash of the normative form of governmentality as a characteristic of the European Union' (Dunn 2005: 175).

Conclusion: Good Enough for Government Use

This discussion of the cash register debate shows how the hegemonic political and economic rationality of Europeanization is extended to the hardly standardized spaces of Eastern European open-air markets through policies of transparency articulated in infrastructural reforms, administrative procedures, technological innovations, and media reports. This rationality is legitimized through the production of a regime of visibility that contemplates and classifies open-air markets and their traders as especially shady spaces and individuals (Strathern 2000: 2–3; Krasmann 2010). Concepts such as *transparency* that appear ideologically founded and problematic in the Lithuanian context serve as an instrument of Europeanization policy and constitute a horizon of reference for all

²¹ Kasos aparatai... 2012; Valstybinė mokesčių... 2012; Sytas 2011; Jokūbaitis 2012.

actors and groups involved (including their opponents). In their boundary function, these concepts not only combine supranational and national policies and economies but also relate the European centers of power to individual lives and work worlds (Star, Griesemer 1999). A closer treatment of the implementation process of the cash register policy also points out that these politically planned and economically calculated links only achieve limited effects in the everyday. Seemingly explicit European standards turn out to be defined by different economic and political interests, social positions, and cultural values. They may take on diverse forms and effects in concrete spatial and temporal contexts. An ethnographic analysis of Europeanization through standardization makes visible how political and economic rationality are constructed. It would be naïve, however, to relativize the hegemonic effect of European governmentality and to idealize open-air markets as free, unregulated zones. As holds true for Foucault's 'other spaces', markets are neither located outside society, nor are they unaffected by other social developments (Foucault 1992). It would be equally problematic to believe that Europeanization aimed at complete transparency, since this would lead to a disappearance of the subject to be governed, making governance itself superfluous (Alkemeyer, Villa 2010). When it comes to the daily implementation of political and economic rationalities, this is not a matter of complete transparency but more of a loose linkage between ideal standards of transparency, and the practices of their implementation, reproduction and representation. Precisely the looseness of this linkage is central to Europeanization through standardization and its attempt to make spaces and subject *just about* governable: 'The idiom "good enough for government use" embodies the common-sense accommodations of the slip between the ideal standard and the contingencies of practice' (Bowker, Star 1999: 15). Open-air markets as 'other spaces' represent sites of ethnographic research where the limits of the dominant political and economic rationality are revealed, and where the slip between ideology and everyday practice of Europeanization becomes tangible.

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Neigiami skaidrumo aspektai: europeizacija, standartizacija ir maištingos turgavietės Europos pakraščiuose

Asta Vonderau

Santrauka

Šiame straipsnyje nagrinėjamos vietinės europietiškos valdysenos formos bei padariniai. Autorės darbas remiasi antropologiniais skaidrumo, standartizacijos ir įtvirtintų nuostatų tyrimais bei kasos aparatų įvedimo Lietuvos lauko turgavietėse atvejo analize.

Pirmojoje straipsnio dalyje apibūdinama istorinė lauko turgaviečių raida Lietuvoje nuo sovietmečio iki šių dienų. Aptariamas socialinis šių prekyviečių, kaip trinties ir kompensacijos erdvių, kurios suteikė galimybę naujoms prekybos ir vartojimo formoms bei sukūrė atsvarą ekonominiam deficitui ir socialinei atskirčiai, vaidmuo. Straipsnyje argumentuojama, kad ši lauko turgaviečių atsvaros funkcija atlaikė politines ir kultūrinės laikmečio transformacijas, per kurias turgavietės išsaugojo savo viešąjį įvaizdį, kuriam būdingi nepaklusnių „alternatyvių erdvių“ (‘other spaces’), kurios tik iš dalies tėra integruotos į dominuojančią socialinę santvarką, bruožai.

Antrojoje straipsnio dalyje analizuojamas santykis tarp lauko turgaviečių – „alternatyvių erdvių“ – bei valstybinių institucijų, bandančių standartizacijos būdu įdiegti normatyvinį europeizacijos modelį ir pereiti prie kasos aparatų naudojimo. Straipsnyje atskleidžiama, kaip oficialiajame politiniame ir viešajame diskurse konstruojamas šešėlinis lauko turgaviečių įvaizdis, kurį būtina nuskaidrinti ir sueuropinti standartizacijos būdu. Kasos aparatų įvedimas inicijuojamas kaip priemonė šiam tikslui pasiekti. Tačiau ši, regis, banali priemonė virsta konfliktiniu procesu, kuriame persipina labai skirtingi veikėjai (prekybininkai, valdžios institucijos, žiniasklaida, vartotojai ir t. t.) ir jų interesai. Šio proceso eigoje išryškėja ne tik alternatyvios skaidrumo bei šešėlinės ekonomikos sampratos, bet taip pat įvairios kasdienės rezistencijos formos, kurios priešinasi ir sunaikina normatyvinę europeizaciją.

Etnografinis kasos aparatų įvedimo proceso tyrimas parodo, kad politiškai suplanuotos ir ekonomiškai apskaičiuotos priemonės, skirtos ekonominiam skaidrumui pasiekti, turi ribotą poveikį kasdienybėje. Iš pažiūros detalai aiškūs europietiški standartai yra naujai interpretuojami priklausomai nuo skirtingų politinių ir ekonominių interesų, socialinės pozicijos ir kultūrinių vertybių. Konkrečiuose laiko ir erdvės kontekstuose jie gali įgyti skirtingas formas ir turėti skirtingą poveikį.

Iš kitos pusės, būtų naivu reliatyvizuoti hegemoninį europietiškos valdyse nos poveikį ir idealizuoti lauko turgavietes kaip laisvas ir nereguliuojamas zonas. Kaip yra pasakyta apie Foucault „alternatyvias erdves“, turgavietės nėra nei už visuomenės ribų, nei nepalietos kitų socialinių įvykių (Foucault 1992). Vienodai problemiška būtų tikėti, kad europeizacija siektų visiško skaidrumo, kuris vestų prie valdomo subjekto išnykimo ir padarytų valdžią savaime nebereikalinga (Alkemeyer, Villa 2010). Įgyvendinant kasdienį politinį ir ekonominį racionalumą, ne tiek svarbus visiškas skaidrumas, kiek labiau laisvas ryšys tarp idealių tipiškai sukonstruotų skaidrumo standartų bei šių standartų realizavimo, reprodukcijos ir reprezentacijos. Būtent šis ryšio laisvumas ir yra svarbiausias europeizacijos per standartizaciją procese ir jo mėginimuose paversti erdvę ir subjektus *beveik* suvaldomais: idiomatinis posakis, kad „valdžiai užtektinai gas ir toks“, išreiškia sveiko proto prisitaikymą prie slidaus perėjimo nuo idealių standartų prie atsitiktinumų praktikoje (Bowker, Star 1999: 15). Lauko turgavietės kaip „alternatyvios erdvės“ atstovauja toms etnografinio tyrimo vietoms, kuriose atskleidžiamas vyraujančio politinio ir ekonominio racionalumo ribotumas ir kuriose darosi apčiuopiama slidi riba tarp ideologijos ir kasdienės europeizacijos praktikos.

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