

Foreword

Regional identity studies should be linked to space and place which are changing in time. In most cases, cultural and social identity represent individuality of changing cultural regions. Identity concepts are closely related to cultural, geographical, economic, political and other regions in space and time. We are a unique, and, at the same time, culturally interrelated part of a community of a big or small region or place. Cultural belonging to one region or another changes in the flow of globalisation. Contemporary regional discourses are intertwined with current developments in the global world. This publication focuses on how discoveries and interpretations of individuality of cultural identity are differently revealed by various scientific schools. All submitted papers show the unquestionable importance of understanding the identity of people and community as well as of others and oneself.

In November, 2005, the Department of Ethnology of the Lithuanian Institute of History organised a scientific international conference "Regions: Between Locality and Modernity". Historians, folklorists and cultural scholars of other areas presented different opinions in their papers on current scientific research on contemporary cultural and social processes in different regions. Regional-cultural studies are interdisciplinary. This publication comprises scientific articles of ethnologists, social anthropologists and other scholars researching very similar problems. Book reviews are dedicated to discussion and presentation of new research of local culture. Impressions from scientific conferences and implemented scientific projects demonstrate academic contacts we have established and issues we analyse. Most of the information covers studies of the Baltic region and current developments in changing European communities.

The publication is dedicated to mark the anniversary of the esteemed professor Irena Regina Merkienė, a winner of the Lithuanian National Science Award. We fondly remember her invigorating and innovative encouragement to search new areas of research objects and solutions to problems. Adopting advice of our teacher on how local cultural studies should be conducted and what research methods bring good results, we have compiled different scientific articles on identity and culture, defining cultural peculiarities of a region in space and time.

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