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## **The Legacy of the Monographic Method in Lithuania**

### **Abstract**

This article attempted to overview the use of the monographic method in sociological research of Lithuania. Historically, the monographic method stimulated the development of rural sociology in Eastern European countries. The fulfilment of the aim is inevitably related to a question about institutionalisation and the development of sociology and such a sub-discipline as rural sociology in Lithuania.

The outcomes of the inquiry allow one to argue that the monographic method is in oblivion rather than in active use, belonging to the history of sociological research in Lithuania. However, the monographic method, often unnamed, is widely applied to contemporary local history research.

The geopolitical reasons had a significant impact on retardation in the institutionalisation and development of national sociology. The politics of national identity management, including those of science and education, can be among the important reasons for the absence of institutionalised rural sociology in Lithuania. However, a national social demographical context determining the permanent public and political need “to solve a peasant question” created the bulk of applied research in the Lithuanian countryside that can be considered as adequate data in the frame of rural sociology.

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**Keywords:** Lithuanian sociology, history of sociology, rural sociology, monographic method.

## Introduction

The monographic method refers to the scholarly description of the whole social reality of specific territorial, professional or family communities. It is defined as a method for inquiry of social phenomena when information about social units (settlement, factory, ethnic group, etc.) is collected with the purpose of thorough and explicit description of the essential characteristic of a subject (Yadov 1968: 54). The principal methods of data collection are direct observation and statistical data. Today, the monographic method implies interdisciplinary and multi-method approaches. However, interdisciplinary and multi-method research are typically defined as case-studies rather than the monographic method in contemporary sociological terminology.

There is some ambiguity in the perception of commonalities and differences between a monographic method and a monograph. In general, both terms refer to a set of research practices united by the subject of research. If the first refers to the method of collecting data in the field, then the second term means written outcomes of any detailed study of a subject. In other words, outcomes of research applying the monographic method are usually structured in a monograph, but a monograph does not necessarily indicate the monographic method.

The article structure reflects the main theoretical concepts applied for description and analysis of gathered data. Although with a different level of salience, the main postulates of the interrelated centre-periphery concept, new institutionalism approach, and social network analysis perspective are discussed in the following paragraphs.

The centre-periphery concept implies multiple asymmetrical power relations between the centre and the periphery, i.e. the centre dominates, and the periphery submits. The symbolic or actual domination of the centre over the periphery is multiple and multifaceted. Since knowledge and power are intricately related in the construction of knowledge and the institutionalisation of power, knowledge transfer usually takes the form of a one-way lane running from the centre to the periphery (Foucault 1980).

Knowledge transfer, however, does not exclude the possibility that the centre may use ideas that originated in the periphery.

The country of origin of the academic discipline of sociology is France, a French philosopher Auguste Comte (1798–1857) is regarded as the founder of sociology, and a French engineer, sociologist and economist Frederic Le Play (1806–1882) is considered among the main father-founders of the monographic method and applied sociology. Indeed, the ideas of Le Play had a profound impact on the development of national sociological schools in France, Romania, Poland, etc., and gained some popularity in Russia.

Until the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, Eastern European countries differed in predominantly agricultural population and rural economy, when a geographic factor of locality matters. For this reason, mainstream Western sociological concepts, including the monographic method, were usually applied to national rural areas and communities, often leading to the formulation of original sociological concepts in the “periphery”. At that time, Lithuania had limited possibilities to apply existing sociological concepts, including the monographic method, and developed a new concept before the WWI at least. The universities are among the main centres for knowledge production and transfer, but Lithuania had suspended operation of its Vilnius University from 1831 until 1919, hence in this context, Lithuania had a clear status of the periphery.

‘New institutionalism’ approaches elucidate a role of institutions in determining social and political outcomes (Powel 2007). Therefore, some postulates stemming from research based on the new institutionalism approaches are considered in the discussion of issues related to institutionalisation of sociology and rural sociology in Lithuania. First, the postulate of ‘critical junctures’, i.e. when a substantial institutional change takes place, defines periods of historical continuity-discontinuity in Lithuanian history of 19<sup>th</sup>–21<sup>st</sup> centuries, i.e. creation of the independent nation-state in 1918, loss of the independence and incorporation into the Soviet Union in 1940, re-establishment of the independent nation-state in 1990, and joining the European Union in 2004. Such postulates as a) institutions are an integral part of a causal chain alongside socioeconomic development and the diffusion of ideas; social causation is ‘path dependent’, b) the process of institutionalisation is dependent on the power relations of the actors who manage it; c) institutions affect the actors’ construction of

identities, self-images and preferences, may help to better understand how the processes of institutionalisation of sociology and rural sociology were managed in Lithuania.

A focus on the societal sector in the institutional approach makes it akin to social network analysis. The perspective of social network analysis deals with the relationship between human thought and its social context, or more broadly, with the connective structure of societies. It can offer vague answers to the questions which relations matter i.e. provides guidance on where to look for such answers (Marin, Wellman 2011). The perspective of social network analysis is saliently applied to the re-introduction of the monographic method in contemporary sociological research in Lithuania.

The empirical framework includes secondary sociological analysis of available relevant literature and sociological reflection of rethinking of the personal professional experience in Lithuanian sociology for more than 30 years.<sup>1</sup> The main limits of the article are related to the identification of issues rather than to insights of wider theoretical relevance. Also, the operationalisation of the concepts of the mentioned disciplines is not considered.

### **Interpretation of the development of sociology and rural sociological research in Lithuania**

The concept of continuity-discontinuity has been adopted for interpretation and justification of development processes in Eastern Europe after the collapse of communist regimes. Due to the restoration of the nation-state of Lithuania in 1990, some interest in the history of sociology in the national context emerged. The sociologists pointed out that Lithuanian sociology faced a problem in the search of its roots (Valantiejus 1995), moreover, the object of the history of sociology in Lithuania has not yet been finally formed (Vosyliūtė 2005).

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<sup>1</sup> Both authors of the article have worked at the Institute of Sociology since the middle 1980s. In Soviet times, the Institute was an integral part of the Institute of Philosophy, Sociology and Law of Lithuanian Academy of Science; today, the Institute is an integral part of Lithuanian Social Research Centre.

There is a relative consensus regarding the emergence of sociology in Lithuania. Virtually all Lithuanian researchers associate the rise of national sociology with the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, after which the first sparks of sociological thought appeared. At that time, intellectuals with different educational backgrounds (theologians, lawyers, economists, historians, etc.) as well as public and political activists analysed social issues using sociological concepts and published their findings (Vaicekauskaite 2013).

Nevertheless, the institutionalisation of sociology is viewed differently among national sociologists. Some argue that Lithuanian sociology underwent a process of institutionalisation when sociology began to be taught at the newly established Lithuanian University (Vytautas Magnus University since 1930) in Kaunas (the capital of Lithuania during the interwar period) in 1922 (Gaidys, Vosyliūtė 1994), while others bind institutionalisation of 'true' sociology in Lithuania with the establishment of the Laboratory of Sociology at Vilnius University in 1973 and Institute of Sociology within Soviet Lithuanian Academy of Sciences in 1977 (Leonavičius 2002, Vaicekauskaite 2013). In Soviet Lithuania, the first department of sociology was established at Vilnius University in 1989. Since the 1990s, the establishment of sociological units in national tertiary education institutions became some kind of 'must-have'.

The message about the gained status of the periphery in knowledge production due to Soviet regime is permanently constructed by national researchers. As a rule, the Soviet regime is considered as a principal cause for domination of applied empirical research in social sciences and humanities in Lithuania, which is partly true.

Soviet sociology as an imposed centre for Lithuanian sociology was on some kind of periphery of sociological knowledge production itself. At the same time, the history of Soviet sociology had the same algorithm of dynamics as in the West: the origin, heyday, decline, before and after the World War II (1939–1945), especially applied sociology, revival and subsequent contradictory development (Staroverov 2008: 40). During notorious Stalinism, sociology went into a latent state and a start to 'reborn' was given to Soviet sociology at the end of the 1950s (Gorshkov 2017: 19).

Lithuania returned to the field of institutionalised sociology when the so-called middle-range theory developed by American sociologist Robert K. Merton was accepted in the structure of Soviet sociological knowledge

founded on Marxist Leninist philosophy. It created a basis for conducting national empirical research in such subfields of sociology as the sociology of the family, sociology of work, sociology of leisure, urban sociology, etc. It was recalled that fieldwork of the Western applied sociology had focused on working-class, bourgeoisie and bureaucracy from the beginning, with the village and agrarian issues considered as a source for the capitalisation of society. The interest in rural sociology declined when the Western village entered the periphery of capitalist development, transferring instead into such disciplines as ethnography, ethnology, anthropology, etc. of primitive societies and developing countries.

In the 1960s–1970s, the interest of Western sociologists in rural sociology awakened due to the re-discovery of the works of Russian Soviet agrarian economist, sociologist and anthropologist Alexander Chayanov (1888–1937) by British sociologist and sovietologist, Teodor Shanin (1930–2020). Chayanov's theory about the stability of a peasant's household (he called as the consumption-labour-balance principle) was also very suitable for the critics of the Soviet system of the collective and state farm (Staroverov 2008: 41). In the 1960s, several important theoretical and applied empirical works for the re-birth of national 'sociologies' were published in the Soviet Union, with a monograph "Copanca 25 years after"<sup>2</sup> (1965) among them. The monograph devoted to the research of the Moldovan village, Copanca, by the monographic method had a profound impact on the development of Soviet rural sociology. The first monographic field research regarding Copanca village was conducted by the Romanian sociologist, ethnologist and historian Dimitrie Gusti (1880–1955) in 1934–1937, and repeated in the 1960s–1980s, and in 1995 and 2010 (Osipov, Staroverov 2014).

It would seem that in Lithuania, where the processes of industrialisation and, consequently, urbanisation accelerated only since the end of the 1950s, rural sociology as a tool to detect and explain social changes in the countryside should be developed. However, preference was given to the economic research of the Lithuanian countryside. The Lithuanian Scientific Research Institute of Agricultural Economics was founded in 1959 and re-structured to the Lithuanian Institute of Agrarian Economics in 1990.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Ru. "Копанка 25 лет спустя".

<sup>3</sup> It is foreseen that the Institute will be integrated in the structure of Lithuanian Social Research Center since 2021.

Contemporary Lithuanian researchers are rather focused on critics of detected cases of Soviet rural sociological research than on the search for the reasons for the absence of institutionalised rural sociology in Lithuania. It is noted that social problems of the rural planning, social structure of Soviet villages, peculiarities of work and leisure of rural population, as well as newly adopted roles of men (mechanists, livestock farmers) and women (milkers) were examined during Soviet times (Vosyliūtė 2011). Rightfully, Soviet rural sociological research is viewed as ideologically oriented towards the consolidation of the collective farm system, dominated by the methodology of applied empirical sociology (Valantiejus 2007: 227), lacked deeper meaning discovery and theoretical validity (Pruskus 2009).

Regarding the present state of the art in Lithuanian rural research, any criticism of the ideological context and methodological issues is avoided in the works of contemporary sociologists. After the restoration of Lithuania's independence in 1990, there is just a calculation of conducted project-research, for instance, rural communities during the Soviet period, the formation of rural communities in the post-Soviet period, the problems of rural employment, income inequality, unemployment and poverty exclusion, etc. (Leonavičius, Ozolinčiūtė 2008).

The brief overview of national sociology from a historical perspective demonstrates that some kind of rural sociology was and is practised on the periphery of sociological knowledge production in Lithuania.<sup>4</sup> Besides a factor of national politics of science and education, the issue of institutionalisation of rural sociology as a separate sub-field of sociology can be seen in the context of quantity and quality, including identity and preferences issues, of academic human resources.

### **Monographs about the Lithuanian countryside before the Soviet regime**

In support of the majority view of Lithuanian researchers claiming that sociological research has been practised in Lithuania since the late 19<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Since 1994, rural issues are also included in the institutionalised sub-field of Human geography within the Institute of Geography. In 2013, the institute of Human Geography

century, it is meaningful to follow the postulate of treating sociology as a continuation and a different form of pre-sociological knowledge (Sztompka 2002: 20). As a result, the statement that sociology, including the rural sociology, can be practised without institutional support (Kaleta 2019: 131) is accepted. In this context, all monographs devoted to the whole description of the Lithuanian countryside can be regarded as valuable sources of rural (pre-) sociological knowledge.

Local monographs can be considered as a cultural fact and a tool for the construction of historical consciousness within the area, therefore, national identity. Since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the construction of national identity is closely bound with local monographs describing local history (lore history), cultural heritage, people, their lives, customs, and traditions. The use of the monographic method to describe the Lithuanian countryside was influenced by neighbouring countries, such as Germany and Poland, where this method was more widely applied in local research (Purvinas 2017). As in many other Western European countries, the local monographs of Lithuanian villages, townships, parishes, etc. were mainly focused on ethnographic and historical (more precisely micro-historical) analysis. However, only in 1948, the start of systematic fieldwork, so-called ethnographic expeditions, may be considered as the institutionalisation of ethnography (ethnology) in Lithuania (Paukštytė-Šaknienė 2019: 124).

Some local authors and their monographs can be mentioned in the context of historical traces of application of the monographic method in Lithuania. Jonas Reitelaitis (1884–1966), a priest, historian and ethnographer, is among the major contributors to Lithuanian rural studies. His scientific heritage includes four monographs: “Gudeliai parish monograph” (1914), “Liškiava monograph” (1921–1922), “Leipalingis monograph” (1925) and monograph “Veisiejai” (1928). He used a multi-method approach, i.e. parish clerical documents, local population statistics and narratives provided by old people for the description of the everyday life of the rural population, including work of the peasants, income, customs, etc. Moreover, the events described in the monographs are related to the geopolitical situation and migration issues at the time. For instance, several men and women, girls and

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and Demography was established as a structural unit of the Lithuanian Social Research Centre.



boys, Jews, Lutherans, i.e. those who went to America, is shown (Pachomčik 2013).

The regional monograph “History of Suduva Suwalki”,<sup>5</sup> published in 1938 by the priest and historian Jonas Totoraitis (1872–1941), describes as many as 117 parish villages and towns. The monograph presents the region in the general context of the country’s history, revealing the process of land settlement, economic and administrative reforms, the creation of towns and parishes. The monograph describes the situation of peasants of the Suwalki region, focusing on issues related to serfdom and land reforms. It provides abundant statistical information on the land owned by peasants, their farms and obligations, the number of inhabitants, and their breakdown by gender, religion, nationality, and social status. All statistical information is presented and compared in the Lithuanian context (Pachomčik 2013).

In 1938, a monograph “The Holding of Samogitian Nobility in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century”<sup>6</sup> was published by a pedagogue and historian Vanda Daugirdaitė-Sruogienė (1899–1997). The monograph presents the geographical position of the Bugiai Manor, mentions the oldest inhabitants, and broadly describes the personality and family of the last owner. The monograph also deals with the Manor holdings, i.e. describes the nature and specifics of the holding, inventory, manor’s trade and the budget, and examines peasant everyday life, specifics of work, taxes paid by peasants, their obligations, and private life. Moreover, historical events in Bugiai Manor are analysed in the context of Lithuania (within the Russian Empire) and Europe (Pachomčik 2013).

It should be mentioned that local monographs on Lithuanian villages were written not only by Lithuanians but also by foreign researchers, among them the work “The village of Tritschuny in the Lithuanian-Belarusian border”<sup>7</sup> published by German engineer Hans Soeder in 1918 (Purvinas 2017) and the monograph “Matujzy Bolondziszki, Village of the Lida County”<sup>8</sup> published by Polish agrarian economist Witold Staniewicz in 1923 (Vosyliūtė 1981, 2005).

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<sup>5</sup> Lt. „Sudūvos Suvalkijos istorija“.

<sup>6</sup> Lt. „Žemaičių bajorų ūkis I pusėj XIX šimtmečio“.

<sup>7</sup> Ger. “Das Dorf Tritschuny im litauisch – weissruthenischen Grenzgebiet”.

<sup>8</sup> Pl. “Matujzy Bolondziszki, Wieś Powiatu Lidzkiego”.

The aforementioned monographs do not represent all rural field research in pre-Soviet Lithuania. These selected monographs demonstrate that the principles of the monographic method, that is, an examination of the interrelated and integrated whole by multi-method approach, were used during the field research in Lithuanian countryside, and some socio-logically valuable information was gathered. However, the first research on the use of the monographic method in Lithuania suggests that a few monographs about Lithuanian countryside are very narrow, consist of rather ethnographical than sociological elements and are not adequately justified by methodological traditions (Vosyliūtė 1981).

### **An attempt to legitimise the monographic method in Lithuanian sociology**

Anelė Vosyliūtė (1944–2019) was the first and only sociologist who tried to re-introduce and legitimise the monographic method in contemporary Lithuanian sociology. For this purpose, the monograph “Matujzy Bolondziszky, Village of the Lida County”<sup>9</sup> (hereinafter the Monograph) by Polish agrarian economist Witold Staniewicz<sup>10</sup> published in Vilnius in 1923 was taken as an example. Two articles on this topic were published, namely, in 1981 and 2005.

In brief, Matujzy Bolondziszky (*lt. Balandiškiiai*) village is situated about 60 km from Vilnius (today Lithuania) and 45 km from Lyda (today Belarus). At the time of the field research, the village was a part of the Vilnius region<sup>11</sup> and belonged to Poland. After World War I and local wars reframing the boundaries of the newly re-established Lithuania and Poland, the agriculture of the Vilnius region was in deep crisis and economic reforms were urgently needed. The author of the Monograph, Witold Staniewicz (1887–1966), taught political economy and agrarian politics at the re-opened Vilnius University (as Stefan Batory University) in 1919 and he was among the main reformers of the Vilnius region.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Pl. “Matujzy Bołondziszki Wieś Powiatu Lidzkiego. Studium społeczne i gospodarcze”.

<sup>10</sup> Lt. Vitoldas Stanevičius.

<sup>11</sup> Pl. Wileńszczyzna, Lt. Vilniaus kraštas.

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.vle.lt/Straipsnis/Witold-Staniewicz-89274>

The Monograph consists of a description of the geographic position, distribution and tillage of land, land fertility, historical and archaeological data, the demographical and economic situation of peasants, migration, cultural relations, family and style of life, including every day and holy day menu. An interdisciplinary and multi-method approach was applied, with the main method of field research being direct observation. In addition, quantitative and qualitative data were collected, i.e. available official materials from local authorities, data of population census (1921) and so-called expert interviews (talks with the best-informed peasants) were conducted (Vosyliūtė 1981, 2005).

The Lithuanian researcher points out that Staniewicz is very critical of the situation in the countryside of Vilnius region: social disintegration, the indifference of Polish authorities to the current needs of the peasantry, the low level of culture and education is demonstrated by field research. Special attention was paid to the non-effective extensive land use, fragmentation of land within a family, such effect of feudalism as the passivity of economic and cultural activity, need for paternalism. Finally, the pessimist future of the Matujzy Bolondziszky was foreseen, therefore, the proposed reforms were related to increasing farm productivity, economic culture and education of peasants (Vosyliūtė 1981, 2005).

It should be noted that Franciszek Bujak's monographs aimed to examine and reform economic and cultural relations in the Polish countryside were a reference group for Staniewicz's work. The Monograph has no methodological or methodical innovations, it is just an integral part of a series of works written in tradition of the monographic method in Poland.

Perhaps, the case of Matujzy Bolondziszky village is one of many from a point of view of Polish rural sociology. From a Lithuanian sociology point of view, however, it is considered as a unique sociological description of a village in the Vilnius region in the 1920s, which experienced the politics of active polonisation of the rural population. While Lithuanian ethnography (ethnology) is mainly focused on the construction of national cultural exclusivity and national identity, the Vilnius region was out of ethnographic attention till 1963 at least, because of the small number of the local population of Lithuanian origin (Paukštytė-Šaknienė 2019: 124).

Two articles on monographic method in Lithuania published by the author, 34 years apart, are interesting from a sociological point of view. Even a sketched comparison of the texts gives the possibility for some

insights that may have added value in understanding the common trends in sociological knowledge production in Lithuania. The analysis of historical documents from a contemporary point of view is the subject of academic discussion. However, following the principle of continuity, it is meaningful to consider both articles in the context of research politics at the time, and apply the perspective of social network analysis.

The article published in 1981 can be regarded as a research proposal prepared in response to the so-called problem research. At the end of the 1970s, a task of Soviet sociological research was re-oriented to the complex social problem, i.e. social structures, style of life, social territorial communities etc. The monographic method was revealed as state of the art in the field (including identification of gaps and contemporary challenges) and proposed as an extremely effective method for complex analysis of social objects. The proposal did not succeed. Though re-examination of the Matujzy Bolondziszky case was not directly proposed in the text of 1981, the comparison of Lithuanian and Moldavian cases gives some reasons to be discussed.

First, political reasons, i.e. a status of the disputed area and the possibility of demonstration of the advantages of the socialist management system did not matter. Moldavian Copanca village belonged to Romania and Lithuanian Matujzy Bolondziszky village to Poland before WWII, with both Romania and Poland being members of the so-called Socialist bloc countries. Similar to the positive social and economic changes in Copanca of the 1960s, the former 'village without future' could be expected in the Matujzy Bolondziszky village of the 1980s.

Second, the methodological peculiarities of monographic field research did not matter. Interdisciplinary, multi-methods and tricky issues of representation, including the validity of qualitative data, were formally accepted in Soviet sociological research.

Third, academic network issues matter strongly. The researchers of Copanca village remembered how important a close network was between Russian and Moldavian scholars and support of local authorities for conducting long-term research (Staroverov 2008; Osipov, Staroverov 2014). There is some sense to refer to the intersectional discrimination of the enthusiast of the monographic method in Lithuania. In the early 1980s, Anelė Vosyliūtė, a female mathematician by tertiary education, was an early stage researcher without a scientific degree. Moreover, she did not have

sufficient capacity to create a strong personal professional network, and her institutional ties were weak to recruit 'significant others' supporters.

The article of 2005 is published in a collection of articles devoted to national local history issues. It is less of a research proposal in the field of sociology, rather reflecting a contemporary style of sociological writing. For instance, "Staniewicz analyses the social world as a network of social positions and roles..." (Vosyliūtė 2005: 58). Also, the so-called social impact of the use of the monographic method on the rise of reputation/status of the examined locality and identity of the local population is pointed out. The article can be regarded as filling the gap in the theoretical framework of local history research in Lithuania, also as an attempt to justify and legitimise European tradition in the history of Lithuanian sociology.

The target groups of Vosyliūtė's article of 2005 demonstrate that the monographic method is regarded rather in the context of local history research.

### **Monographs about the Lithuanian countryside in contemporary Lithuania**

The tradition of local history research implying the use of the monographic method and publication of findings has not been interrupted in Lithuania. It should be noted that introduction to local history<sup>13</sup> has been institutionalised in the primary school curriculum and creation of local history museums supported by local authorities was popular during Soviet times.

It seems that Lithuanian researchers are not very interested in the examination of local monographs published in Soviet or contemporary Lithuania.

In contemporary Lithuania, the tradition of local monographs is continued by activities of the Versmė Publishing House established in 1994, which deals with the preparation and publishing of local monograph series under the title of "Lithuanian Parishes"<sup>14</sup>. The "Lithuanian Parishes" series is a multi-volume edition about Lithuania's towns and villages and

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<sup>13</sup> Lt. kraštotyra, ru. krayevedenie.

<sup>14</sup> Lt. „Lietuvos Valsčiai“.

their history from the olden times to the present day. Each monograph explores nature, traditional culture, trades, calendar and family traditions, custom laws, features of dialects and local sub-dialects, folklore, ethnical minorities and their traditions etc. of a particular village or town. Based on the reminiscences of people, archive data, scientific studies, written sources and materials of expeditions, each serial book is written by large teams of researchers: historians, archaeologists, ethnologists, folklorists, linguists, sociologists, geologists, geographers, biologists, and local lore investigators.

At the time of the pilot study, 38 local monographs of the planned 100 volumes were published, four volumes dedicated to the ‘parishes’ belonging to the Vilnius region before the WWII are among them. However, Šalčininkai volume, the ‘parish’ for which contemporary Matujzy Bolondziszky, i.e. Balandiškiiai village, belongs, has not yet been started.<sup>15</sup>

From a sociological point of view, interdisciplinary and multi-method approaches are used in the articles of the monographs of “Lithuanian Parishes”. However, most articles are largely descriptive and research methodologies are not adequately addressed. Nevertheless, this multi-volume edition can be considered as the representation of the monographic method in contemporary Lithuanian research.

## Conclusions

Like in most countries dominated by an agrarian (peasant) economy, the solution of the peasant question was considered as a key issue to solve other complex problems in national development. It would seem that the strong connection of the Lithuanian nation-state (re)building with the peasant question would lead to the institutionalisation of rural sociology. Formally, this would not happen if the notion of institutionalisation is limited to the establishment of a chair or department of rural sociology within a national university or research institution only.

In fact, rural social issues were integrated into the first fieldworks conducted in Lithuania from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Hence, collected data can be considered in terms of (pre)sociological knowledge and sociology.

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<sup>15</sup> <http://www.versme.lt/projektas.htm>

Since Soviet times, rural sociological research has been conducted within the frame of institutionalised sociology.

The monographic method was not settled in contemporary Lithuanian sociology, perhaps, because of the basic principles of the method, observation and interdisciplinary, rather than by the method's adaptation to the contemporary notion of sociological analysis of social phenomena. In other words, the monographic method did not attract a critical mass of Lithuanian sociologists despite sporadic attempts of a single powerless enthusiast. However, usually, not named, the principles of the monographic method are widely applied to contemporary local history field research.

There is an ongoing re-naming of the type of research based on the principles of the monographic method in Lithuania, both terms of systemic or complex research and/or a case study are used instead of a monographic method. One may say that the legacy of the monographic method is scattered through methodologies of Lithuanian social sciences and humanities.

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