

Recenzijos

GLOBAL DEPENDENCY NETWORKS AND THE FATE OF LITHUANIA: A RELATIONAL APPROACH

It is a continuous challenge for social scientists to link their academically driven theoretical perspectives and 'real world' analyses based on empirical observations. Abstract theoretical ideas are often believed to be detached from the ways in which 'ordinary' people observe how the empirical world operates. Maintaining a balance between theory and empirical data is, therefore, critical in appealing to audiences both in and outside of academia. This is why studies using multiple methods and multi-level analyses are considered valuable and challenging.

In his new book, *The New Cold War in the Post-Socialist Era-Domination through Multi-Dependency in Lithuania*¹, Vincentas Giedraitis (2007) attempts precisely to achieve this balance by applying seemingly inaccessible sociological theoretical perspectives to his analysis of the small Baltic country of Lithuania. In doing so, Giedraitis combines micro-level perspectives with macro analysis and draws from both qualitative and quantitative data. The study illustrates the conditions of

this relatively less known country in a multi-dimensional manner.

Giedraitis' basic argument is fairly simple yet convincing. Once the largest state in Europe and the first Soviet republic to declare independence from the Soviet Union, Lithuania, according to Giedraitis, is now situated within the "new battleground" of other powerful states and political alliances, such as the European Union, Russia, the United States, which are seeking a new form of dominant relations with less powerful states. In this process of creating a new international order, Lithuania, Giedraitis argues, is now embedded in structurally interlocking networks that create the condition of multiple dependencies. Going beyond the economic dependency approach (e.g., Böröcz 1992) which relies on the notion of dual dependency, Giedraitis examines the trajectory that Lithuania has followed after the disintegration of the Soviet Union by falling into the condition of a multi-dependency that maintains a geopolitical, economic, and energy dependency.

It is perhaps easy to overlook the importance of the contribution that this type of study makes since its empirical focus might not be appealing to those unfamiliar with the particular locale. Likewise, if one sees Giedraitis

¹ Giedraitis, Vincentas. *The New Cold War in the Post-Socialist Era- Domination through Multi-Dependency in Lithuania*. Saarbrücken, Germany: VDM Verlag Dr. Mueller. 237 p. ISBN-13 978-3836427920.

tis' study as a mere descriptive survey of an exotic country with a population of only a little over three million, then they would be clearly missing the importance of this study. To be sure, his empirical description is illuminating and informative, partially due to his accessibility to the data and cultural familiarity with Lithuania. Theoretically, however, the points he suggests have larger implications.

Informed by the power-dependence approach by Emerson (1962) and other similar perspectives, the fundamental epistemology in Giedraitis' study is very much consistent with the new contemporary trend of anti-essential epistemology. The utility of the a relational approach in social science in general and sociology in particular has been increasingly recognized (e.g., Emirbayer 1997; Fuchs 2001). For instance, the promise that dependency theories and world-systems perspectives show in recent globalization and international literature include a focus on the relationships, rather than essential attributes, of the analysed entity. Because such a 'network' approach focuses on the 'relationships' among elements, it is inherently structural. Furthermore, it is readily applicable anywhere, anytime, regardless of essential qualities such as time, size, or location, leaving the possibility for further generalization. Giedraitis shows that the relationships between political entities, or networks between states, inevitably involve a multiplicity of criteria on which the

relationships are constructed. It is incomplete only to discuss a network of domination and dependency. Networks are always multiple and heterogeneous in the empirical world just as domination as a relationship consists of more than simple, rigid, one-way coercion; it is a mutually influencing relationship based on various factors. The condition of multi-dependency that Lithuania is currently facing, as Giedraitis argues, at least involves three geopolitical, economic, and energy network nodes: the U.S, the E.U., and Russia. However, the relationships are by no means stable. The perceived stability and trajectory may be described historically since in networks past relations and reputation do matter. Networks have particular histories that influence the current formation of new network ties.

Overall, this study provides a fresh and useful insight into understudied areas with strong theoretical implications for future research. In fact, Giedraitis' study could be the first study of the kind to look at Lithuania's condition involving multiple dependencies in a heterogeneous manner. This particular approach should be useful in examining other states and political formations experiencing similar dependency conditions. With multi-method and multiple level analyses, this book puts a recognizable 'face' on some of the abstract concepts that dependency and globalization theories offer.

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PASAULINIAI PRIKLAUSOMYBĖS TINKLAI IR LIETUVOS LIKIMAS RELIATYVIU POŽIŪRIU

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Santrauka

Vincentas Rolandas Giedraitis savo naujoje knygoje „Naujas šaltasis karas posocialistinėje eroje – daugia-priklausomybės dominavimas Lietuvoje“ (2007) holistiniais tyrimo metodais nagrinėja Lietuvos ekonominę, politinę ir karinę priklausomybę nuo kitų valstybių. Autorius teigia, kad Europos Sąjunga, Rusijos Federacija ir Jungtinės Amerikos Valstijos „kovoja“ dėl įtakos Lie-

tuvoje. Pavyzdžiui, autorius aprašo priemones, kuriomis Rusija išnaudoja Lietuvos (ir Europos šalių) ekonomikos priklausomybę nuo Rusijos naftos pasiūlos, kad galėtų savo naudai paveikti Lietuvos ekonominę bei politinę padėtį. Kita vertus, autorius aiškina ne vien ekonominius Lietuvos priklausomybės nuo kitų valstybių aspektus, bet ir politologinius bei sociologinius.