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**THE MANIFESTATION AND DEVELOPMENT
OF NEW RELIGIONS IN LITHUANIA: CASE
STUDY OF THE *ART OF LIVING*
*FOUNDATION***

SUMMARY OF DOCTORAL DISSERTATION
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VYTAUTO DIDŽIOJO UNIVERSITETAS

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**NAUJŲJŲ RELIGIJŲ RAIŠKA IR YPATUMAI
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ATVEJO STUDIJA**

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INTRODUCTION

The problem of the work. The social changes in society that were brought about by the processes of modernization, urbanization and globalization have also had an impact upon the institution of religion. The shift from a traditional to a modern society was marked by a change from traditional, usually understood as religious, values to modern and lately to postmodern values. The challenges that religion faced in modern society were at both the organizational and individual levels.

Scholars have observed (Davie 1994; Casanova 1994; Berger 2001) that in some countries traditional religious institutions are strong and supported by society, although church attendance has been falling all the time since the 1960s. Some people display their belonging to traditional religions but at the same time construct their own belief systems that may contradict those of the religious community they belong to. Such tendencies have been named as “belonging without believing” (Borowik 1994; Casanova 1994). These tendencies reveal a change in contemporary religiosity from traditionally understood religion, which is inherited, to a kind which is chosen. New opportunities for freedom of religion to emerge have shown up in the post-communist countries after the break-up of communism, which also gave opportunities to the emergence of religious alternatives. These alternatives have suggested innovation – limitation or sometimes abolition of the strict requirements for membership. Meanwhile the differences in the membership of religious communities are reflected in the other tendency of religious change observed in most Western societies. It has been observed that a considerable part of society does not belong to any religious community, but declare that they are spiritual but not religious. Such tendencies have been called “believing without belonging”, and explained as the tendency of individuals to construct their own belief system without declaring their belonging to any religious organization (Davie 1994).

Such changes illustrate the emergence of a need to search for alternative religiosity in these societies. Sometimes these searches end in belonging to alternative religious or so-called spiritual groups. The need for a search for religiosity and spirituality in both tendencies of changing roles of religion in contemporary societies

raises questions about the meanings of being religious in modern society and in general about the place of religion in the life of the contemporary individual.

However, although these tendencies do not belong to any religious group in particular a spread of ideas that are disseminated by particular new religions may be observed. Thus the links between new religions and people who do not belong to any religious group and say that they are religious might be observed when one looks at research on new religions and membership within them. Trying to understand the contemporary tendencies to search for spirituality, therefore, it is worth facing up to the studies of new religions that disseminate spirituality and support the discourse on it.

In this study belonging and attraction to alternative new religious ideas and groups is seen as a sign that marks the shift in religion itself and its place in modern society. A difference should be pointed out between people who tend to belong to such groups and those who do not end up adhering to any particular group but continue to support such spiritual ideas. It should be stressed that the majority of seeking people do not become members of any religious or spiritual group, a fact which may also be seen as a sign of individualism in modernity. But despite the rise of individualism there is still a minority that tends to become adherents and choose the alternative religious and spiritual groups. In the academic literature such groups are usually called new religious movements and new religions, and they are one of the manifestations of religion in modern society. It is observed that some of the new religious groups tend to call themselves spiritual rather than religious and say that they propose new spirituality to the society. Demand tends to be answered by offers; the religious scene is not an exception. Maybe people do not want to be associated with religiosity that is related to traditional society any more, but instead search for a new spirituality that marks modernity and post-modernity? Or is a new spirituality a religion of modernity and post-modernity? Meanwhile the question of why people are attracted to spiritual groups remains unanswered and still poses a challenge. Though some answers are given by studies on new religious movements and their types, for instance Wallis (1984) proposed a type of world-affirming movements that present themselves as spiritual groups. Studies on groups that disseminate spirituality are fragmentary in comparison with other new religious movements. Together with the need to research the

peculiarities of the religious movements that disseminate spirituality, it is important to answer the question of what the adherents of these movements are searching for.

Usually, studies on the rise and manifestation of new religious movements that disseminate spirituality are conducted in Western societies and related to the social changes in this context. Meanwhile changes after the fall of communism on the part of Central and Eastern Europe have also affected the institution of religion and raised many new questions. The role of religion in the post-communist societies has been researched by sociologists of religion mainly from Central and Eastern Europe (Borowik 1994, 2002, 2004; Borowik, Doktor 2001; Zrinscak 2002; Pollack 2003), who have observed that after the fall of communism these societies faced few processes. The process of religious revival with the resurgence of national churches and the emergence of new religions is typical of such societies, and usually took five to ten years. Meanwhile, afterwards in most such societies the decline in church attendance and the shift from traditional religious values to alternative new religious ideas and values occurred in the same way as in the majority of Western societies.

The second process observed in post-communist societies is therefore the rise of individualism. Nevertheless, the majority of the population in post-communist societies still declare their belonging to the mainstream religions – similar tendencies as in the Western societies within the field of new religions; the rise of so-called spiritual groups and the need for a search for spirituality have been observed in the post-communist countries, too. Thus several questions related to the **research problem** should be raised. What is modern religion? How is religiosity constructed in Western and post-communist societies? What are the main similarities and differences? It has already been mentioned that new religions are one of the manifestations of religion in modern societies, thus they have to receive special attention. Durkheim ([1937] 2001) wrote about the functions of deviance in the society and said that deviance – in this case new religion – allows us to see the changing needs of society in particular spheres and forecast the direction of its change.

In this study, therefore, special attention to new religions is paid when religion is contextualized within post-communist and Lithuanian societies. With the aim of answering the raised questions a particular form of organization was chosen for the

research. It was expected that this research would reveal the peculiarities of the manifestation of the organization in Lithuania and subjective attitudes of its members towards the society they are surrounded by. The Art of Living Foundation is one of the most popular new religions in Lithuania, and one that has not been researched either in particular or in the global contexts, thus its study is very relevant. Research on this group is also relevant because of its self-representation as the group which disseminates spirituality. Mentioned above were such tendencies of spirituality in the contemporary world, thus the question should be raised as to how the members of this group give a sense to their activities in it.

The relevance of the work. This work is relevant both to the field of sociology of religion and to the study of new religions globally and in Lithuania. After the social changes in the 1990s attempts were made to study religion in Lithuania, including research on virtues of the population and analysis of its data (Juknevičius 1998, 2005; Žiliukaitė 2000, 2001), research on religious identity (Laumenskaitė, Navickas, Maslauskaitė 2000), several studies on religiosity (Advilonienė 2005, 2006; Kuznecovienė 1999, 2003, 2005b) and analysis of the relationship between Church and State (Kuznecovienė 1999, 2003, 2005b; Žiliukaitė, Glodenis 2001). Research was conducted on particular new religious movements: neo-pagan (Delis 2006), the charismatic “Word of Faith” movement (Lankauskas 2002, Glodenis 2002), the Osho religious communities in Lithuania (Glodenis 2003), and Satanism and the New Age milieu in Lithuania (Ališauskienė 2002b, 2003, 2004, 2006, 2009). The phenomenon of new religiosity was also researched from the perspective of subcultural studies, for instance through studies on the construction of neo-pagan identity in the culture of the Lithuanian youth underground and in general religious groups that influence different subcultural styles (Ramanauskaitė 2002a, 2002b, 2004). In general it should be said that until recently research in this field was limited to studies of particular new religious movements, their doctrines, rituals and mythology, but they were not studied and analyzed in the context of manifestation of modern religiosity.

The subject of the work – the new religion named Art of Living Foundation.

The objective of the work – to research the ways of manifestation and peculiarities of new religions in post-communist society in Lithuania, invoking a case study of the Art of Living Foundation.

The main tasks of the work:

- To analyze the peculiarities of the manifestation of modern and traditional religion
- To analyze the peculiarities of the manifestation of religion in post-communist societies
- To reveal the religious situation in Lithuania with a special focus on new religions
- To research the Art of Living Foundation, its foundation, beliefs, practices, structure and activities
- To analyze the differences in the attitudes of the Art of Living Foundation members in Lithuania and Denmark towards the membership and leadership and the relationship between religiosity and spirituality and relations with society.

The novelty of the work. Studies on the phenomenon of modern religiosity are new, and rarely gain the attention of social scientists. The reasons for this are that the homogenous religious composition of Lithuanian society puts into shade the existence of religious alternatives, and interest in religious studies in general is insignificant. Thus the selection of the topic for this work and its originality in the context of social sciences in Lithuania are the aspects of novelty of this work.

1. On the basis of analysis of research of modern religion (Bellah 1964; Luckmann 1967; Gellner 1983; Davie 1994; Casanova 1994; Baumann 1998; Heelas 1998; Bruce 1998; Norris, Inglehart 2004; Barker 2005) a scheme of ideal types of traditional and modern religion is created; the features of these phenomena are distinguished and discussed.
2. An analysis was conducted of the manifestation of religion in post-communist societies based on the works of scholars (Casanova 1994; Barker 1997; Borowik 1997, 2002, 2004, 2007; Kaariainen 1999; Pollack 2003), revealing the

peculiarities of this social context in the field of religion.

3. The social processes that have occurred in post-communist societies were analyzed, and on the basis of this the religious situation of Lithuania is described.
4. The legal and social presuppositions for freedom of religion, tolerance and the existence of religious minorities in Lithuania were analyzed.
5. The attitudes and organized reactions of Lithuanian society to the new religions were described.
6. Quantitative and qualitative data about the Art of Living Foundation were collected.
7. The attitudes of the members of the Art of Living Foundation towards its membership, leadership, and the relationship between religiosity and spirituality and relations with society were analyzed.
8. The peculiarities of the manifestation of the Art of Living Foundation in Lithuania were described.

The methods of the work. In this work the case study method was applied, consisting of the following:

- An analysis of the academic literature was applied in researching modern religion, the peculiarities of its manifestation, religion in post-communist societies and in Lithuania.
- Document analysis was applied for research on the preconditions for freedom of religion and Church-State relations in post-communist and Lithuanian societies.
- An analysis of quantitative data of two surveys conducted in 2007 was applied for research on the religious situation in Lithuania with the aim of revealing society's attitude towards new religions.
- An analysis of qualitative research data (participant observation in Art of Living Foundation activities in Lithuania, Denmark, Great Britain and Poland and 20 semi-structured interviews) was applied with the aim of researching the Art of Living Foundation, its features and peculiarities in Lithuania.

Structure of the work. This work consists of an introduction, six chapters, conclusions, bibliographical list and appendixes.

REVIEW OF THE CONTENT OF THE DISSERTATION

Chapter 1. Religion in Western Societies is dedicated to an analysis of the peculiarities of the manifestation of modern religion in Western societies. This chapter consists of four sections.

1.1. *Definitions of religion and problems of its research.* The problems of defining religion in a modern social context are analyzed here. It is stated that the definitions of religion are influenced by historical and social circumstances and should be valued critically.

1.2. *Factors of formation of modern religion.* An analysis of the factors that influence the formation of modern religion are presented here. There are a few categories of factors that influenced the emergence of modern religion – ideological, structural and valuable – and they are described on the basis of analysis of the work of contemporary sociologists.

1.3. *Traditional and modern religion: differences and peculiarities.* This paragraph is dedicated to analysis of the features of traditional and modern religion, which is presented as a basis for the construction of the scheme of ideal types for the comparison of both phenomena. Features such as anxiety, authority, orientation, aim, experience, etc. are discussed regarding traditional and modern religion, allowing us to analyze differences and similarities of these two types of forms of religion in traditional and modern society.

1.4. *Forms of manifestations of modern religion: new religions.* The last paragraph of the first chapter is devoted to the analysis of forms of manifestation of modern religion – new religions, their features and types. It appears that the world-affirming type of new religions, according to the Wallis typology, is the most appropriate for the analysis of modern religion.

Chapter 2. Religion in post-communist societies. This chapter is designed for analysis of religion, its role and place in post-communist society. This chapter consists of two

sections, the second of which has four subsections.

2.1. *Religious life in the communist period.* Religious life during the communist period in the now post-communist countries is analyzed here. The differences between the Soviet Republics and the other countries that suffered under the communist regime in the sphere of religion (the restraint of freedom of religion, nationalization of Church property, etc.) are discussed.

2.2. *Religious processes in the post-communist societies.* The main religious processes (religious revival or desecularization and individualization) that occurred in these societies are analyzed here in four parts, special attention being paid to the situation of new religions. 2.1.2. *Preconditions for freedom of religion* discusses how the conditions for freedom of religion were created in the post-communist societies. It appears that in the majority of countries quite liberal regulations of freedom of religion were confirmed in their Constitutions. 2.1.3. *Church and State relations* discusses the process of creation of such a relationship in post-communist societies. The national churches played a considerable role in these processes. 2.1.4. *Features of religiosity in post-communist societies* were analyzed on the basis of data from surveys conducted in these societies and their analysis by contemporary sociologists of religion.

Chapter 3. Religion in Lithuania in 1990-2008. This chapter is dedicated to the analysis of religion, its place and role in Lithuanian society. It consists of six sections.

3.1. *Religious map of Lithuania.* The figures of religious life in Lithuania are presented here.

3.2. *Preconditions for freedom of religion.* The articles of the Constitution regulating the sphere of freedom of religion are analyzed here.

3.3. *Church-State relations in Lithuania.* The laws regulating Church-State relations are analyzed and discussed from the perspective of religious minorities, especially new religions. The Lithuanian Roman Catholic Church is the main actor on the scene of Church-State relations.

3.4. *Features of religiosity in Lithuania.* Religiosity in Lithuania after the regaining of independence has undergone a few processes. Firstly, religious revival with certain social euphoria, and lately individualization that influenced the rise of individual religiosity phenomenon, have affected the society.

3.5. *Religious minorities in Lithuania.* Lithuania had a long history of religious tolerance when different religious groups coexisted. Meanwhile the issue of religious tolerance for believers of different faiths has become important because surveys have revealed that society has little knowledge about other faiths and their believers and would discuss the possibility of limiting their activities.

3.6. *New religions and society in Lithuania.* The relationship between new religions and society in Lithuania is a very new issue in the history of this country. Religious revival in the early 1990s brought in the issue of new religions onto the agenda of social scientists who research these groups. The issue of society and new religions is approached from three perspectives: 3.6.1. *Organized reactions of Lithuanian society towards new religions.* Anti-cult and counter-cult movements have both been manifested in Lithuania during the period in question; 3.6.2. *Mass media and new religions in Lithuania.* The mass media were an important actor in creating the negative discourse about new religions in society; 3.6.3. *Society's attitudes towards new religions.* Recent surveys have revealed that Lithuanian society has more negative than positive attitudes to new religions. The attitudes differ according to the character of the new religions.

Chapter 4. Art of Living Foundation as a new religion. From the perspective of the theories of new religions the Art of Living Foundation is one among other new religions, as is also supported by analysis of the group's history, beliefs, practices, structure, and activities.

4.1. *Art of Living Foundation: an overview* presents the main sources about the group and its aims. The group presents itself as one disseminating secular spirituality and aiming at human unity based on human values.

4.2. *Founder and teaching of Art of Living Foundation.* The founder of the group, Ravi Shankar, is one of several contemporary Indian gurus who teach about human values around the world. His teaching is based on ancient Hindu writings and adapted for the contemporary human, approaching his/her modern problems. The main core of the practices taught by Ravi Shankar is *Sudarshan Kriya* breathing technique.

4.3. *Organizational structure.* The main core of the Art of Living Foundation is based on analysis of data from the secondary sources about AOL (books, newspapers,

journals, websites, etc.) This chapter also includes discussion about the place of Art of Living on the religious map of Lithuania.

4.4. *Art of Living Foundation as a new religion* discusses the organization from the perspective of theories of new religions, contextualizes it within the history of religions and traces its origins from Hinduism and Transcendental Meditation. 4.4.1. *The distinction between religiosity and spirituality in the doctrine of Art of Living*. The distinction between spirituality and religiosity in the Art of Living Foundation doctrine is one of the core ideas of Ravi Shankar and leads to the emergence of a new idea of secular spirituality, which became very important in the spread of the organization in the West.

4.5. *Manifestation of the Art of Living Foundation in post-communist countries* discusses the forms of manifestation of the group in post-communist countries, and particularly in Lithuania. It is observed that the manifestations of religious alternatives are related to the status of mainstream religion in the society and depend on how much the latter is secularized. A portrait of the Lithuanian who knows about the Art of Living Foundation is presented; it appears that he/she lives in the one of the largest cities, is educated and works.

Chapter 5. Methodology of empirical research. The methodology of the work as well as qualitative and quantitative methods that were used for the gathering of data are discussed here. Participant observation and semi-structured interviews with informants from the Art of Living Foundation are the main qualitative methods applied in this work; they were invoked for the research on the group, its peculiarities and members' attitudes towards it. Quantitative methods – two surveys and their data – were analyzed with the aim of discussing the attitudes of Lithuanian society towards new religions and particularly the Art of Living Foundation. The methodological and ethical problems that arose during the research are discussed here, too.

Chapter 6. Manifestation of the Art of Living Foundation as a modern religion in the post-communist society of Lithuania. Analysis of data of empirical research. This chapter consist of four parts and presents an analysis of data from interviews with AOL members in Lithuania and Denmark.

6.1. *Peculiarities of membership in the Art of Living Foundation*. Analyzes informants'

narratives about their meeting with the group, the entry processes, individual change after entry and the concept of membership in the group. 6.1.1. *Reasons that brought people to the Art of Living Foundation* reveals that before coming to the group informants were searching for spirituality among other religious alternatives. The majority of informants were searching for some sort of spirituality to enable them to cope with the problems of modern individuals – stress, existential anxiety, etc. 6.1.2. *Individual changes* reveal that the majority of informants experienced individual changes after they came to the Art of Living Foundation; these changes were both individual (emotional, psychological, physiological) and societal (relations with family, friends). 6.1.3. *Being a part of the Art of Living Foundation* reveals the peculiarities of membership in the group. It was observed that there are few types of membership among informants and in general in the organization. The *devotees*, according to Beckford, are the swamis and the majority of teachers, and the *adepts-clients* are the minority of informants, but in general it is also a very popular type of membership in this group. The representatives of the latter type of membership admire Ravi Shankar and his teaching, use his practices, visit satsangs, but may not be loyal to this group; usually they have a pluralistic attitude to the group and see it as one of many religious alternatives.

6.2. *Leadership in the Art of Living Foundation* reveals how Ravi Shankar is accepted by the informants. 6.2.1. *Meeting with Ravi Shankar* reveals how informants met Ravi Shankar and what their impression was. The narratives raise questions about the charisma of Ravi Shankar and its construction by members of the group. 6.2.2. *Ravi Shankar and relations with him* continues the analysis of the construction of Ravi Shankar's charisma with the narratives of the informants discussing their relations with the leader of the group. It was observed that informants attribute different characteristics to Ravi Shankar, such as the ability to be in a few places at the same time, peculiarities of the eye, etc. The narratives of informants revealed the processes of legitimation of the leader, he was compared with other spiritual leaders and put on one level with political leaders.

6.3. *Meanings of religiosity and spirituality in the Art of Living Foundation* discusses the relationship of informants with the religious tradition and spirituality found in the

doctrine of the group. 6.3.1. *Religious life of the members of the Art of Living Foundation* reveals how informants construct their relations with the religious tradition they inherited from the parents. It was observed that the majority of informants experienced religious socialization from their grandparents (Lithuania) or at school (Denmark); in both cases the narratives reveal that religion was not internalized and did not find a place in the lives of the informants. 6.3.2. *Religiosity and spirituality: in search for the model of relationship* discusses the meanings of religiosity and spirituality informants have and the model of relationship of these phenomena. Two types of models were distinguished according to the narratives of informants. The *devotees* usually supported the model found in the doctrine of Ravi Shankar and the *adepts-clients* supported the model usually distributed by New Agers, according to Barker.

6.4. *Art of Living Foundation, society and possibilities for coexistence* reveals the peculiarities of relations between Art of Living Foundation members and the rest of society. Although the group itself declares pluralistic attitudes towards other religious communities, they receive negative opinions from their inner circles because of their individual changes, while on the larger scale society does not declare negative attitudes towards groups of spiritual self-development.

Conclusions

An analysis of the manifestations and peculiarities of modern religion and its comparison with traditional religion allows us to conclude that:

- Researchers of religion in a contemporary social context confront the problem of its definition, which is influenced by the changes of manifestation and place of religion in Western societies. It should be stated that until recently contemporary academia has used the interpretation of religion and its role in society which is ordinary for Western civilization, and this fact raises both theoretical and practical problems. This kind of situation stimulates continuation of studies on this phenomenon and the seeking of common agreement about the change in concept of religion.
- Ideological (utilitarianism, egalitarianism), values (career, consumerism) and structural (modernization, globalization) were the main sociocultural factors that

influenced the emergence of modern religion.

- Traditional religion is related to traditional society with its values. Its main features are the inheritance of religious tradition and the production of answers to the ontological questions, its orientation is transcendental and its authority is God. Modern religion or religion in modern society, on the other hand, is a matter of choice. Its main features are the production of answers to the modern existential questions, this worldly orientation and the exaltation of self.
- The world affirming new religious movements is, according to Wallis's typology (1984), the best example that illustrates modern religion. One of the main features of such groups is that they present themselves as spiritual and not religious organizations; they also do not have a deity, hierarchy, etc.

An analysis of the manifestation of religion and religiosity in the post-communist societies allows to conclude that:

- After the break-up of the Communist Bloc all the post-communist societies went through a period of religious revival which lasted from five to ten years. Later these societies were affected by the process of religious individualism. This process was marked by belonging to so-called traditional religious communities, which was declared by the majority of the post-communist societies. Meanwhile the tendencies of religious individualism in the majority of Western societies was marked by a decreasing number in the population belonging to any religious community.
- The period of religious revival in the post-communist societies was distinguished by the emergence of freedom of religion and the foundation of Church-State relations. In the case of the setting-up of the laws regulating freedom of religion in the majority of post-communist societies, meanwhile, the liberal model was adopted. In the case of establishing Church-State relations, different law restrictions were created that influenced the fact that the idea of religious pluralism had not become a part of culture in these societies yet.
- Religiosity of the majority of post-communist societies manifested with the syncretism of beliefs when elements of official and nonofficial doctrines are

combined. Similar tendencies of religiosity are observed in the majority of Western societies.

- The intensity and character of manifestation of religious alternatives in the post-communist countries is influenced by the situation of mainstream religious tradition and its supporting institutions; if the latter is more secularized then the religious alternative becomes a part of its syncretic faith system; if it is not secularized then the religious alternative becomes its religious rival.

An analysis of social and legal spheres of Lithuanian society in 1990-2008 allows us to conclude that:

- After the regaining of independence foundations were laid for the freedom of religion and for Church-State relations with the laws regulating these fields. In the field of freedom of religion Lithuania appears to be among the countries that support the liberal model of regulation of this issue. Meanwhile in the field of Church-State relations Lithuania appears to be among other countries like Italy, Belgium, Austria and Germany who support the model of different recognition of religious communities. The majority of Lithuanians declare their belonging to the Roman Catholic Church, thus naturally this community became the main actor in the religious and social life of the country.
- Together with other post-communist countries Lithuanian society faced a few processes in the sphere of religion – religious revival which were manifested in the refounding of religious life and religious individualism, marked by the emergence of the phenomenon of individual religiosity.
- The activities of new religions in Lithuania were followed by different reactions in society. Quantitative surveys revealed that the Lithuanian population is not tolerant towards believers of other faiths and expressed the opinion that their civic rights should be limited. Also it was revealed that the Lithuanian population is quite tolerant towards groups of spiritual self-development. It was observed that the Lithuanian population has little knowledge about new religions, and only few people had personally met members of such groups. The negative opinions about new religions in Lithuanian society were mainly formed by the mass media.

The research on the Art of Living Foundation, its history, doctrine, practices, structure and functions based on the secondary sources and those provided by the organization revealed that:

- The Art of Living Foundation presents itself as a spiritual organization which was founded in USA in 1982 by Indian guru Ravi Shankar Ramanayakanpet. The main core of Ravi Shankar's doctrine became secular spirituality, which is based on ancient Hindu writings and the breathing technique Sudarshan Kriya which was founded by the group's leader. Following theories of new religions the Art of Living Foundation should be called a new global religion. Analysis of the group's doctrine, structure and activities reveals this.
- The doctrine and practices of the Art of Living Foundation echo the conditions that are raised for religion in modern society, i.e. answer the existential problems of the modern individual. He/she experiences anxiety and stress because of the challenges in everyday life that are related to the differentiation of roles and spheres influenced by modernization.
- Individual action is emphasized in the doctrine of the Art of Living Foundation, but in practice the elements of collective action are incorporated. Hereby individuals in the modern society are affected by religious individualism but they choose a doctrine which is attractive to them, incorporating collective action, manifested by common rituals, meditations, breathing exercises, chanting.
- Membership in the Art of Living Foundation is arbitrary. The informants were not inclined to talk about membership, or said that there is no membership at all in this organization. This might refer to the features of modern religion.
- The Art of Living Foundation includes features of both traditional and modern religion, thus it should not be considered as coinciding with any of the ideal types of religion. This illustrates the fact that religion in modern society might integrate the features of both traditional and modern religion.
- Although the Art of Living Foundation in Lithuania presents itself as a spiritual organization, according to the identifying features of modern religion it finds itself among other new religions of a similar character like Sahadza Yoga,

Sathya Sai Baba, Brahma Kumaris, etc. The quantitative surveys revealed that around 6 percent of the Lithuanian population knows of the Art of Living Foundation.

With the aim of revealing the attitudes of members of the Art of Living Foundation towards this organization and its peculiarities in Lithuania and Denmark an analysis of the interviews was conducted, allowing us to conclude that:

- The majority of informants were brought to the Art of Living Foundation by stress, increased speed of life and the problems it creates, and a search for the answers to modern existential questions. The majority of informants expressed their negative attitude towards the values of modern society, such as seeking a career, but at the same time they rejected the values of traditional society, like the creation of family.
- According to Beckford's model of membership in new religions the relations of informants with the Art of Living Foundation might be divided into two types: *devotees* (swamis and teachers) and *adepts-clients* (permanent visitors) Swamis commit their life to the organization, they live and work in its ashrams, while teachers give most of their time to the purposes of organization in the society in which they live. Adepts-clients are the permanent visitors of Art of Living Foundation activities, they attend courses and participate in satsangs, and they are distinguished from other clients in their loyalty to the organization.
- The informants emphasized the neutrality of the Art of Living Foundation towards the mainstream religious community and religion in general. The majority of informants thus remained faithful to their religious tradition, “consuming” it together with the teaching and practices of the Art of Living Foundation and making it syncretic. The relations of informants with their traditional religion were influenced by the failures of religious socialization.
- The majority of informants underwent changes after they became members of the Art of Living Foundation. Such changes are typical of members of new religions, and relate to the tendency to draw boundaries between life before and

after the Art of Living Foundation and between us in the organization and them who are not yet in it.

- According to the relations with the leader of the Art of Living Foundation informants may be divided into two types – *spiritualists* and *pragmatists*. In the first case the relationships with the leader have religious aspects; he is adored, admired and attributed supernatural characteristics. In the second case informants maintain a pragmatic relationship with the leader of the group; he is understood as the one who provides “useful” information and practices.
- Both in the doctrine of the Art of Living Foundation and in the narratives of informants pluralistic attitudes were shown towards other religious, spiritual ideas and the organizations that provide them.
- The majority of informants faced negative reactions from society towards the changes in their lives that were related to their activities in the Art of Living Foundation.

In order to reveal the peculiarities of the Art of Living Foundation in Lithuania an analysis of empirical data was conducted, revealing that:

- In general the comparison of the Art of Living Foundation in Lithuania and Denmark allowed similarities to be found in both organizations, their teachings, structure, practices, etc. But it should be stated that acting in different local social contexts is influenced by them too.
- Lithuanian informants emphasized the scientism which might be found in the doctrine and practices of the Art of Living Foundation. The emphasis of scientism might be interpreted as the understanding of science which is related to scientific atheism, as the only legitimating system. Meanwhile informants from Denmark did not emphasize scientism in the doctrine and practices of the Art of Living Foundation.
- The majority of Lithuanian informants emphasized the absence of membership in the Art of Living Foundation, which according to them indicated the non-religious character of the group. Meanwhile the majority of informants from Denmark did not avoid talking about religious aspects of the activities of the Art

of Living Foundation, and forecasted that in the future this organization may become one more common religious community.

- Some informants from Lithuania had witnessed negative societal reactions to the religious matter related to the changes in their lives. Thus the narratives of informants supported the general knowledge about negative Lithuanian society's attitudes towards believers of other faiths. Meanwhile the majority of informants from Denmark said that they met with positive attitudes from society towards their activities and thus they supported the idea about the tradition of religious pluralism in this country.

APPROBATION:

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REZIUMĖ

Modernizacijos, urbanizacijos, industrializacijos ir globalizacijos procesai, vykstantys šiuolaikiniame pasaulyje neišvengiamai palietė ir religijos instituciją. Perėjimas nuo tradicinės prie modernios visuomenės buvo pažymėtas tradicinių, dažniausiai suprantamų kaip religinių vertybių pakeitimo moderniomis, vėliau postmoderniomis vertybėmis. Iššūkiai, su kuriais susidūrė religijos institucija šiuolaikiniame pasaulyje, o ypač Vakarų visuomenėse aptinkami tiek individualioje, tiek organizacinėje šio socialinio reiškinių srityje.

Mokslininkai pastebėjo (Davie 1994, Casanova 1994), kad kai kuriose visuomenėse tradicinės religinės institucijos išlieka stiprios ir visuomenės palaikomos, nors bažnyčių lankomumas mažėja nuo 6-ojo dešimtmečio iki šiol. Be sumažėjusio bažnyčių lankomumo pokyčiai religingumo srityje pasireiškė ir tendencija, kai dalis žmonių deklaruoja savo priklausymą vienai ar kitai religinei bendruomenei, tačiau yra linkę patys konstruoti savo tikėjimo sistemą, kuri kartais gali būti ir prieštaraujanti tos bendruomenės, kuriai priklauso tikėjimo mokymui. Tokios tendencijos mokslininkų buvo pavadintos „priklausymu be tikėjimo“. Dažniausiai tokios aptinkamos Rytų ir Vidurio Europoje, kur daugiau nei penkiasdešimt metų religijos institucijos išgyveno priverstinę sekuliarizaciją (Borowik 1994, Casanova 1994). Tendencija „priklausyti be tikėjimo“ atspindi religijos kaitą šiuolaikiniame socialiniame kontekste nuo tradiciškai suvokiamos religijos, kuri būdavo paveldima ir tiesiog perimama link pasirenkamos religijos.

Pokomunistinėse visuomenėse atsivėrusios galimybės religijos laisvei taip pat sudarė sąlygas religinių alternatyvų plėtrai. Savo ruožtu šios religinės alternatyvos pasiūlė ir dar vieną naujovę – griežtų narystės reikalavimų apribojimą arba esant poreikiui ir visišką panaikinimą. Tuo metu būtent narystės religinėse bendruomenėse skirtumai atspindi kitose religijos kaitos tendencijose, dažniau aptinkamoje Vakarų visuomenėse. Pastebėta, jog čia žymi visuomenės dalis nebesieja savęs su jokia konkrečia religine bendruomene, tačiau teigia esantys tikintys arba dvasingi. Ši tendencija buvo pavadinta „tikėti nepriklausant“ (Davie 1994).

Tokie pokyčiai šiose visuomenėse parodo iškilusį poreikį alternatyvaus

religingumo paieškoms. Kartais tokios paieškos atveda prie narystės alternatyvaus religingumo arba vadinamose dvasinėse grupėse. Religinių ir dvasinių alternatyvų paieškos skatina kelti klausimus apie buvimo religingu modernioje visuomenėje reikšmes arba apskritai apie religijos vietą šiuolaikinio žmogaus gyvenime.

Vis dėlto, nepaisant tendencijų nepriklausyti jokioms religinėms grupėms galima aptikti tam tikrų religinių grupių skleidžiamų idėjų paplitimą, tad pasitelkiant šių grupių ir narystės jose tyrimus galima stebėti tam tikras sąsajas tarp naujųjų religijų ir žmonių, savęs nelaikančių jokios grupės nariais, bet laikančiais save dvasingais. Todėl siekiant atskleisti šiuolaikines dvasingumo paieškų tendencijas būtų tikslinga atsigręžti į naujasias religijas, skleidžiančias dvasingumą ir palaikančias diskursą apie jį.

Šiame darbe alternatyvių religinių ir dvasinių idėjų bei jas palaikančių grupių paieška yra suprantama kaip ženklas, žymintis religijos pokyčius modernioje visuomenėje. Tačiau reiktų atskirti tuos, kurie siekia priklausyti kokiai nors bendruomenei ir tuos, kurie žavisi tam tikromis idėjomis, bet nesieja savęs su jokia tokias idėjas propaguojančia grupe. Dauguma dvasingumo ieškančių žmonių, netampa tam tikrų grupių nariais ir tai gali būti siejama su individualizmu, kuris užėmė ypatingą vietą modernizacijos eroje. Tačiau nepaisant individualizmo paplitimo, vis dar išlieka mažuma, kuri deklaruoja savo priklausomybę alternatyvias religines ir dvasines idėjas skleidžiančioms grupėms. Šios naujosios religinės arba dvasinės grupės mokslinėje literatūroje dažniausiai vadinamos naujaisiais religiniais judėjimais arba naujomis religijomis yra viena iš religijos modernioje visuomenėje raiškos formų. Pastebima tendencija, kad kai kurios religinės grupės yra linkusios save vadinti dvasinėmis, o ne religinėmis ir teigia skleidžiančios naująją dvasingumą. Paklausa dažniausiai sulaukia pasiūlos – religijos sritis čia ne išimtis. Galbūt žmonės nebenori būti susiję su religija, kuri yra siejama su tradicine visuomene ir jos vertybėmis, o vietoje jos ieško dvasingumo, kuris jų nuomone žymi modernius ir postmodernius laikus? Tuo metu religijos tyrinėtojai kelia klausimus, kuo dvasingumą skleidžiančios grupės yra patrauklios ir kodėl žmonės dalyvauja jų veikloje. Nors kai kuriuos atsakymus yra pateikę naujų religinių grupių ir jų tipų studijos, pavyzdžiui, Roy Wallisas (1984), kuris naujųjų religinių judėjimų tipologijoje išskyrė „pasaulį patvirtinančius religinius judėjimus“ ir teigė, kad vienas iš svarbiausių šių grupių bruožų – prisistatyti

dvasingumą skleidžiančia grupe. Tokių grupių tyrimai yra fragmentiški, palyginus su kitais, kur kas labiau ištirtais naujaisiais religiniais judėjimas. Taip pat manytina, kad greta būtinybės ištirti dvasingumą skleidžiančių religinių judėjimų ypatumus reikėtų kelti klausimus ir apie šių judėjimų sekėjų poreikius, kitaip tariant, kodėl žmonės ieško dvasingumo, bet ne religingumo.

Dvasingumą skleidžiančių grupių iškilimas ir veikla dažniausiai yra tyrinėjama Vakarų visuomenių kontekste ir yra siejama su pokyčiais šiame socialiniame kontekste. Tuo metu po komunistinio režimo žlugimo dalis Vidurio bei Rytų Europos valstybių išgyveno permainas, palietusias religijos instituciją ir iškėlė daug naujų klausimų. Religijos vaidmenį pokomunistinėse visuomenėse tyrinėjo sociologai iš Rytų ir Vidurio Europos (Borowik 1994, 2002, 2004; Borowik, Doktor 2001, Zrinscak 2002, Pollack 2003), kurie pastebėjo, kad žlugus komunizmui pokomunistinės visuomenės išgyveno net kelis religinius virsmus. Šias visuomenes palietė religinis atgimimas, kurio metu iš pagrindžio iškilo nacionalinės bažnyčios bei pradėjo kurtis naujosios religijos. Religinis atgimimas pokomunistinėse visuomenėse truko maždaug penkerius-dešimt metų (manytina, kad tai laikotarpis nuo 1990 iki 1999 m.). Bet vėliau pastebimai sumažėjo bažnyčių lankomumas, ir prasidėjo vertybių kaitos procesai, panašūs kaip ir Vakarų visuomenėse.

Antrasis požymis, kurį aptiko anksčiau minėti mokslininkai pokomunistinių visuomenių religiniame gyvenime – individualizacija. Priklausymo religinėms bendruomenėms rodikliai individualizacijos proceso metu pokomunistinėse visuomenėse išliko panašūs, kaip ir religinio atgimimo laikotarpiu. Tačiau kaip ir Vakaruose, čia yra pastebimos naujų religinių bei dvasinių grupių iškilimo ir apskritai dvasingumo paieškų tendencijos. Tad išryškėja **tyrimo problema** su tokiais klausimais: kokia yra modernioji religija; kaip yra konstruojamas religingumas Vakarų ir pokomunistinėse visuomenėse; kokie yra esminiai skirtumai ir panašumai?

Kalbant apie religiją modernioje visuomenėje, kaip vieną iš jos raiškos formų galima įvardyti naująsias religijas, tad joms reikėtų skirti didesnę dėmesį. Anot Emile'o Durkheimo, kalbėjusio apie deviacijos funkcijas visuomenėje (deviacija – šiuo atveju naujoji religija), leidžia kalbėti apie atsinaujinančius visuomenės poreikius tam tikroje srityje ir prognozuoti, kuria linkme ji galėtų keistis (Durkheim 2001).

Šiame darbe kontekstualizuojant religiją pokomunistinėse, taip pat ir Lietuvos visuomenėse bei analizuojant religijos kaitą, ypatingas dėmesys skiriamas naujosioms religijoms. Siekiant atsakyti į išsikeltus klausimus buvo pasirinkta konkreti organizacija „Gyvenimo meno“ fondas, kurioje atliktas tyrimas leistų atskleisti subjektyvias jos narių nuostatas juos supančios visuomenės atžvilgiu bei šios organizacijos raišką ir ypatumus Lietuvoje. „Gyvenimo meno“ fondas yra viena iš pastaraisiais metais populiarumo Lietuvoje sulaukusių naujųjų religijų, kuri nėra tyrinėta ir tarptautiniu mastu, tad jos tyrimai pasirodė esantys aktualūs. „Gyvenimo meno“ fondo tyrimas aktualus yra ir dėl to, kad organizacija prisistato kaip skleidžianti dvasingumą. Apie tendencijas dvasingumo srityje šiuolaikiniame pasaulyje jau buvo užsiminta, tad remiantis pirminėmis žiniomis apie „Gyvenimo meno“ fondą galima kelti klausimą svarbų šiam darbui – kaip organizacijos nariai įprasmina joje savo veiklą?

Darbo objektas – naujoji religija „Gyvenimo meno“ fondas.

Darbo tikslas – ištirti naujųjų religijų raiškos būdus ir ypatumus pokomunistinėje Lietuvos visuomenėje, pasitelkiant „Gyvenimo meno“ fondo atvejo analizę.

Darbo uždaviniai:

- Išanalizuoti modernaus ir tradicinio religingumo raiškos ypatumus Vakarų visuomenėse.
- Išanalizuoti religijos raiškos pokomunistinėse visuomenėse ypatumus.
- Atskleisti religijos ir religingumo situaciją Lietuvoje, ypatingą dėmesį skiriant naujosioms religijoms.
- Aprašyti „Gyvenimo meno“ fondą, jo istoriją, mokymą, praktikas, struktūrą ir funkcijas.
- Atskleisti „Gyvenimo meno“ fondo narių Lietuvoje ir Danijoje požiūrių į narystę, lyderystę ir religingumo/dvasingumo santykį bei santykių su visuomene skirtumus.

Darbo metodai. Darbe taikytas – atvejo studijos metodas, kurį sudarė:

- mokslinės literatūros analizė taikyta analizuojant modernųjį religingumą, jo raišką ir ypatumus, religiją pokomunistinėje visuomenėje bei Lietuvoje.
- dokumentų analizė taikyta tiriant teises prielaidas religijos laisvės sklaidai bei bažnyčios ir valstybės santykių raišką pokomunistinėse ir Lietuvos visuomenėse.

- kiekybinis tyrimas (dvi reprezentatyvios apklausos) buvo taikomas analizuojant religijos raišką pokomunistinėje Lietuvos visuomenėje bei siekiant atskleisti visuomenės požiūrį į naująsias religijas.
- kokybiniai tyrimai: dalyvaujamas stebėjimas „Gyvenimo meno“ fondo renginiuose Lietuvoje, Danijoje, Didžiojoje Britanijoje ir Lenkijoje bei pusiau struktūruotas interviu (20 interviu su „Gyvenimo meno“ fondo nariais Danijoje ir Lietuvoje).

Darbo naujumas. Modernaus religingumo reiškinių tyrimai Lietuvoje yra nauja ir socialinių mokslų atstovų dėmesio retai sulaukianti sritis. Galima išskirti kelias tokio reiškinių priežastis – religijos srityje Lietuvos visuomenės homogeniška sudėtis, užgožianti bet kokių religinių alternatyvų egzistenciją bei menkas susidomėjimas religijos mokslais apskritai. Tad šio darbo temos pasirinkimas, jos originalumas Lietuvos socialinių mokslų kontekste yra vienas iš darbo naujumo aspektų. Taip pat galima išskirti šiuos darbo naujumo aspektus:

1. Moderniosios religijos tyrimų (Bellah 1964, Luckmann 1967, Gellner 1983, Davie 1994, Casanova 1994, Bauman 1998, Heelas 1998, Bruce 1998, Norris, Inglehart 2004, Barker 2005) Vakarų visuomenėse analizės pagrindu sukurta modernaus ir tradicinio religingumo idealiųjų tipų schema, išskirti ir aptarti šiems tipams būdingi bruožai.
2. Atlikta religijos raiškos pokomunistinėse visuomenėse analizė pasitelkiant šį reiškinį tyrusių mokslininkų darbus (Casanova 1994, Barker 1997, Borowik 1997, 2002, 2004, 2007, Kaariainen 1999, Pollack 2003). Čia atskleidžiami pokomunistinio socialinio konteksto sąlygoti ypatumai, aptinkami religijos srityje.
3. Aprašyti religinio atgimimo ir individualizacijos procesai pokomunistinėse visuomenėse, kurių pagrindu atskleista religijos situacija Lietuvoje.
4. Išanalizuotos teisinės ir socialinės religijos laisvės, tolerancijos ir religinių mažumų egzistavimo prielaidos Lietuvoje.
5. Aptarti Lietuvos visuomenės požiūriai į naująsias religijas, išskirtos bei išanalizuotos organizuotos visuomenės reakcijos į šių grupių veiklą.
6. Surinkti kiekybiniai bei kokybiniai duomenys apie naująją religiją, vadinamą

„Gyvenimo meno“ fondu.

7. Ištirti „Gyvenimo meno“ fondo narių požiūriai į narystę, lyderystę ir dvasingumo/religingumo skirtį „Gyvenimo meno“ fonde bei santykius su visuomene.
8. Aprašyti „Gyvenimo meno“ fondo raiškos ypatumai Lietuvoje.

Darbo struktūra. Šį darbą sudaro įvadas, šeši skyriai, išvados, literatūros sąrašas bei priedai.

Pirmajame skyriuje yra analizuojama religijos raiška Vakarų visuomenėse. Aptiriamos religijos apibrėžties moderniame socialiniame kontekste problemos, analizuojamos prielaidos moderniosios religijos iškilimui. Analizuojami tradicinės ir moderniosios religijos bruožai, kurių pagrindu yra sukurama idealių tipų schema leidžianti palyginti šiuos du reiškinius. Paskutiniame skyriaus paragrafe yra analizuojamos moderniosios religijos raiškos formos, naujosios religijos, jų bruožai, tipai.

Antrajame darbo skyriuje yra aptariama religija pokomunistinėje visuomenėje, analizuojami pagrindiniai procesai vykę po Sovietų sąjungos žlugimo religijos srityje – religinis atgimimas (desecularisation) ir religinis individualizmas. Nacionalinių bažnyčių iškilimas, religinių mažumų vaidmuo analizuojamas skiriant didesnę dėmesį naujųjų religijų vietai šiose visuomenėse.

Trečiasis darbo skyrius skirtas religijos situacijos Lietuvos visuomenėje analizei. Čia aptariami pagrindiniai religinio Lietuvos gyvenimo veikėjai ir įvykiai, specialus dėmesys skiriamas religinių mažumų ir naujųjų religijų situacijai aptarti. Analizuojant religijos vaidmenį Lietuvoje pasitelkiami antrinių šaltinių duomenys – aptariami pastarųjų metų tyrimai, kuriuose atsispindi religinių mažumų ir naujųjų religijų situacija, visuomenės požiūris į jas.

Ketvirtajame skyriuje pristatomas „Gyvenimo meno“ fondas, jo istorija, tikėjimas, praktikos ir veikla bei bruožai, atskleidžiantys jį kaip naująją religiją. Čia remiasi antrinių šaltinių duomenų apie „Gyvenimo meno“ fondą analize (knygos, laikraščiai, žurnalai, interneto svetainės, filmai ir pan.). Remiantis ankstesniuose skyriuose atlikta religinių alternatyvų veiklos pokomunistinėse visuomenėse analize ketvirtojo darbo skyriaus paskutiniame paragrafe yra aptariama „Gyvenimo meno“

fondo vieta Lietuvos religiniame žemėlapyje.

Penktajame skyriuje pristatoma empirinio tyrimo metodologija, kiekybiniai bei kokybiniai metodai, taikyti renkant empirinę medžiagą. Aptariamos tyrimo metu iškilusios metodologinės problemos, etikos klausimai.

Šeštajame darbo skyriuje skyriuje yra analizuojama dalyvaujamojo stebėjimo bei pusiau struktūruotų interviu su „Gyvenimo meno“ fondo nariais Lietuvoje ir Danijoje duomenys. Analizėje išskirtos keturios pagrindinės sritys: narystės, lyderystės, religingumo/dvasingumo skirtis bei santykis su visuomene, leidžiančios atskleisti „Gyvenimo meno“ fondo raiškos pokomunistinėje visuomenėje ypatumus.

Paskutinė darbo dalis – išvados, kurioje pateikiamos teorinę bei empirinę darbo dalis apibendrinančios išvados.