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SAL

Society and Lifestyles: Towards Enhancing Social Harmonisation through Knowledge of Subcultural Communities

Specific Targeted Research Project
Thematic Priority 7: Citizens and Governance in a Knowledge-based Society

8.6 – Publishable final activity report

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Dissemination Level		
PU	Public	✓
PP	Restricted to other programme participants (including the Commission Services)	
RE	Restricted to a group specified by the consortium (including the Commission Services)	
CO	Confidential, only for members of the consortium (including the Commission Services)	

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PUBLISHABLE EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The overall aim of the project was to extend knowledge about values and religions in Europe by investigating groups representing various values and religious beliefs in post-Soviet countries. Further it sought to enhance the integration of groups with different values and religions into the life of the society-at-large based on a harmonious coexistence of individuals and sub-groups. The research scope included case studies on 'taste', lifestyle subcultures such as hip-hop, punks, anti-fascists, skinheads, hippies and others; new religious groups such as Hare Krishna, Neo-Pagans, Vissarion, Anastasia, theosophical groups and others as well as ethnic and religious minority cultures such as Muslims, Roma communities, a Baptist religious confession group and others.

The area of research involved the post-Soviet countries of Europe. After a half century of Communist rule, the cultural heritage of post-Soviet societies still differs sharply from the cultural heritage of Western countries. However, until the start of this project, there had been no systematic research on subcultural communities with their different values and religious beliefs in the post-Soviet region.

The main idea of the project was to understand how groups arise, function and disappear. These topics can help to explore questions of identity formation by individuals as participants of different groups. They also have an impact on solving such issues as social cohesion, intergroup tensions, discord and violence.

The researchers on this project formulated the following goals:

- To examine the dominant processes leading to the division of contemporary society into separate social groups with different socio-cultural identities;
- To identify the reasons for the rise of new cultural groups in the region and to explore the main reasons for the formation of the ideas of resistance which proliferate in subgroups and movements across post-Soviet countries.

Specific objectives

- To analyse interactions by groups members within groups in terms of their creating their subcultural reality as well as their agreements and disagreements and, in this connection,
  - o to study the individual behaviour of members within groups;
  - o to analyse the dominant values, beliefs, worldviews and ways of communication in different groups;
  - o to understand the meanings of lifestyles proliferating among the groups' members.
- To study the perceptions of group members regarding their individual identities and the impact of subcultural values on their individuality.
- To analyse environmental influences on group members as well as their self-expressions (including their demands to influence the society)
  - o to identify different tensions within groups and among different groups as well as among the groups and society;
  - o to analyse communications between different groups as well as their communications with society in terms of tolerance and intolerance.

2. CONTRACTORS INVOLVED

The project included the following 15 partners from 10 countries, of which thirteen comprised the original consortium, and the last two were included as a result of the project extension after its 1st year, following the successful bid for extending the SAL project to two Targeted Third Countries – Russian Federation and Moldova:

- Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania (VMU)
- Europarama, Lithuania (EP)
- Institute of Lithuanian Scientific Society, Lithuania (MSI)
- University of Central Lancashire, United Kingdom (UCLAN)
- University of SS. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava Slovakia (UCM)
- Tallinn University, Estonia (TLU)
- Daugavpils University, Latvia (DU)
- University of Pécs, Hungary (UofPecs)
- Warsaw Agricultural University, Poland (WAU)
- Dunarea de Jos University of Galati, Romania, (UGAL)
- University of Warwick, United Kingdom (UW)
- University of Salford, United Kingdom (USAL)
- Centre for Analytic Studies and Development, Russia (CASD)
- Scientific Research Centre Region, Russia (SRC Region)
- Centre of Sociological, Political and Psychological Analysis and Investigations, Moldova (CIVIS)

3. WORK PERFORMED

Project definition. At the first stage of the project, during the workshops, the project organisation, fieldwork methodology and a multidisciplinary theoretical framework *for the investigation* of subcultural communities was overviewed. Specifications for an electronic archive for data storage and electronic tools for data analysis were discussed.

Fieldwork. The research work included two separate fieldworks. Fieldwork 1 was designed for ethnographical work in different focus groups. This fieldwork included preparative work for research by analysing literature on the research of groups (including subcultural communities and social networks). Mapping of groups was done with the aim to determine their genres (trends) and their localisation in post-Soviet countries. Semi-structured, ethnographic fieldworks with different groups were performed using the methods of participant observation, in-depth interviews and analyses of oral, written and audiovisual materials and websites produced by groups' members. Indicators of societal tensions, as revealed by this part of fieldwork research, were determined and these served as the basis for structuring Fieldwork 2. During Fieldwork 2, a questionnaire which includes closed and open-ended questions was designed for systematic comparative analysis. Methodology for the comparative analyses was developed and verified during Fieldwork 2. Comparative studies within similar subcultural groups were performed and data were structured for a systematic comparative analysis using the Excel on-line format in Google docs.

Electronic archive system (EAS). Researchers developed this for data storage as well as for sharing the developed tools for the analysis and systematisation of qualitative as well as quantitative data.

Data systematisation using EAS, NVivo and SPSS. Computer tools (scripts) for qualitative data systematisation were developed by researchers and uploaded into the SAL electronic archive for partners' use. Computer programs, NVivo for qualitative analysis and SPSS, were used by the partners as well.

Field verification. Performed at different sites in Lithuania**,** this focused on establishing a socio-cultural environment for communications between groups' members, researchers and members of the society-at-large. Five cultural events for such activities were organised during the project.

Utilisation of results and project dissemination activities. One was modelling the theory based on indicators from the empirical work. Recommendations for policy makers on the basis of researcher-obtained empirical evidences during fieldworks were developed. The project also involved dissemination of information via joint work by scholars and groups' members during workshops, conferences and cultural events. Three international conferences were organised at Vytautas Magnus University (Lithuania), Salford University (UK) and University of Galati (Romania) over the three years of the project. In addition over ten international workshops were held in Lithuania, Latvia, Russia, Moldova, Slovakia and Hungary for developing the research theory and methodology. Project findings were also disseminated via the SAL archive and website. Two volumes of SAL project results are in-progress for publication. Articles in academic journals are published, and others are prepared for publication.

3.1 Work organisation and data amount

During the workshops, research groups were formed for investigating case studies on 'Taste' / lifestyle subcultural groups, New religious groups and Ethnic / religious groups. For comparative work, researchers chose either a discursive comparison (research based on theories of culture and subcultures) or a systematic comparison based on the Systems theory approach. The dynamics of the project is illustrated in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1. Project dynamics

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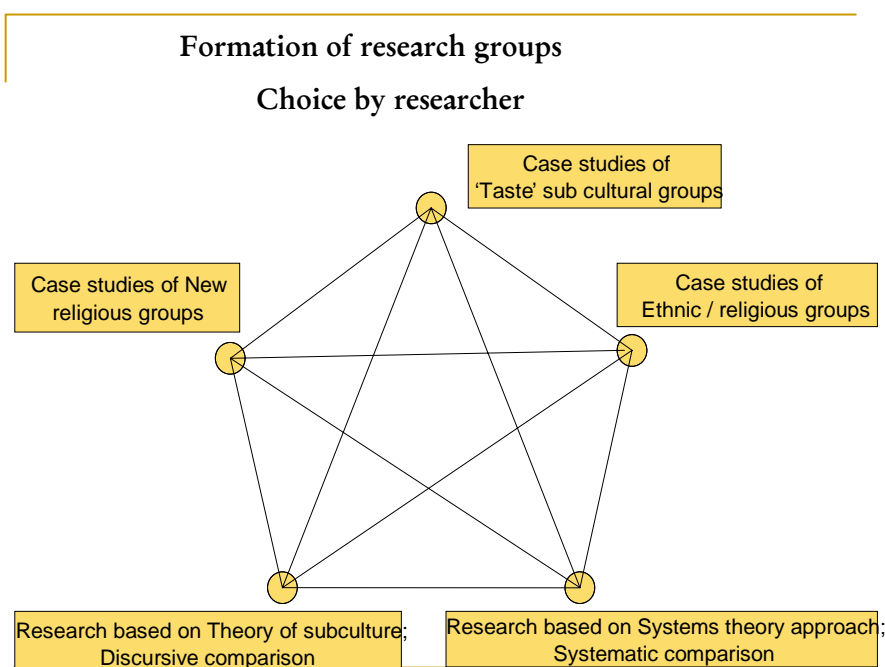
3.2 Scope of the research

The SAL project focused on case studies and on the comparative analyses of various subcultural groups. The countries covered included Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Russia and Slovakia. The following groups from different countries were investigated:

1) **'Taste' / lifestyle subcultures:**
   - Drug-user youth groups in Sochi and Vorkuta, Russia and cannabis users in Estonia
   - Eco-Villagers in Slovakia
   - Euro-Indians in Slovakia
   - Cossacks ethnic revival movements in the Krasnodar region of Southern Russia
   - Skinheads in Kazan and Vorkuta, Russia and in Lithuania
   - Anti-Fa (anti-Fascist) youth groups in Saint Petersburg, Russia
   - DIY (Do it Yourself / punk) youth groups in Saint Petersburg, Russia
   - Hip-hop groups in Rakvere, Estonia, in Romania and in Lithuania
   - Hippies in the 1970s in Lithuania
   - Gangs in Kazan, Russia

2) **New religious movements, religious / philosophical groups:**
   - Neo-Pagans / Dievturi in Latvia; Neo-Pagans in Saint Petersburg, Russia and in Lithuania; Key leaders / activists of selected Neo-Pagan groups in Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Ukraine, Hungary and Serbia
   - Hare Krishna communities in Moldova and in Lithuania
   - India-inspired New religious movements in Slovakia (Hare Krishnas, Yoga in Daily Life, Sahaja Yoga, Shri Chinmoy)
   - Anastasia community (New religious movement) in Lithuania
   - Vissarion community (New religious movement) in Lithuania
   - Theosophy movement in Latvia

3) **Ethnic minorities and religious minorities**
   - Gypsies / Roma community in Hungary
   - Muslims in Slovakia
   - Metropolitan Church of Bessarabia in Moldova
   - Baptist community in Moldova

3.3 Amount of data gathered on different groups and research methods employed

Table 1 below shows the amount of data on different groups gathered by SAL researchers as well as the methods of research employed. There were 30 case studies (including 4 surveys) performed by the partners using the methods of semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, long-lasting participant observation and content analysis. Data was collected from 1,478 respondents (the mass fitting a minimum of 30,000 pages in A4 format). Data from 209 respondents (including transcribed texts of in-depth interviews and data from questionnaires) were analysed using systematic tools. (See *Part 1, Section 3* of Final report for more detailed statistics.) This data from 209 respondents additionally involves a minimum of 3,500 pages in A4 format.

Table 1: Subculture groups investigated, methods used and data amount gathered by partners

Group	Data for case studies (including ethnographic fieldworks [e. f.] with surveys by: No. of respondents per interview and/or questionnaires)		Mass media analysis	Data for a systematic comparative study (No. of respondents)
CASD (Kazan, Russia)				
1. Gangs	e. f.	20 resp. (int.)	+	-
2. Youth nationalist groups / skinheads	e. f.	30 resp. (int.)	+	15
CIVIS (Moldova)				
3. Metropolitan Church of Bessarabia	survey	175 resp. (156 quest. + 20 int.)	+	-
4. Baptist community	survey	168 resp. (148 quest. + 20 int.)	+	-
5. Hare Krishna	survey	48 resp. (40 quest. + 8 int.)		48
Daugavpils University (DU), Latvia				
6. Theosophy	e. f.	72 resp. (37 int. + 35 quest.)	+	-
7. Dievturi / Neo-Pagans	e. f.	44 resp. (30 int. and 32 quest.)	-	27
REGION (Ul'ianovsk, Russia)				
8. Neo-Pagans	e. f.	14 resp. (int.)	+	9
9. Anti-Fa	e. f.	14 resp. (int.)	+	-
10. DIY	e. f.	9 resp. (int.)	+	-
Tallinn University (TLU), Estonia				
11. Cannabis users	e. f.	30 resp. (int.)	+	-
12. Hip-hop	e. f.	16 resp. (int.)	+	-
University of SS. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava (UCM), Slovakia				
13. Hare Krishnas, Yoga in Daily Life, Sahaja Yoga, Shri Chinmoy	e. f.	16 resp. (int.)	+	15
14. Eco-Villagers	e. f.	42 resp. (int.)	+	-
15. Euro-Indians	e. f.	35 resp. (int.)	+	6
16. Muslims	e. f.	32 resp. (int.)	+	-
University of Galati (UGAL), Romania				
17. Hip-hop	e. f.	70 (30 int. + 40 quest.)	+	14
University of Pécs (UofPecs), Hungary				
18. Romani community	survey	415 resp. (15 int. + 400 quest.)	+	-
University of Warwick (UW), UK & Region, Russia				
19. Cossacks	e. f.	26 resp. (int.)	+	-
20. Drug users, Sochi	e. f.	26 resp. (int.)	+	-
21. Drug users, Vorkuta	e. f.	16 resp. (int.)	+	-
22. Skinheads, Vorkuta	e. f.	24 resp. (int.)	+	7
Vytautas Magnus University (VMU), Lithuania				
23. Skinheads	e. f.	39 resp. (24 int. + 20 quest.)	+	30
24. Vissarion	e. f.	20 resp. (quest. + int.)	+	20
25. Anastasia	e. f.	20 resp. (quest. + int.)	+	14
26. Hip-hop	e. f.	12 resp. (quest. + int.)	-	12
27. Neo-Pagans	e. f.	12 resp. (quest. + int.)	-	7
28. Hippies	e. f.	7 resp. (quest. + int.)	+	-
29. Hare Krishna	e. f.	9 resp. (quest. + int.)	+	9
Warsaw Agricultural University (WAU), Poland				
30. Neo-Pagans	e. f.	17 resp. (int.)	+	10
TOTAL **30** cases	**1,478** respondents			**209** respondents

Table 1: Subculture groups investigated, methods used and data amount gathered by partners

4. END RESULTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE STATE OF THE ART

4.1 New information obtained from the fieldwork

Different perspectives and meanings were explored by researchers using interpretative approaches based on the general project objectives. New information will aid better understanding of subjects and the groups which arise and act in post–Soviet countries (*Case studies, Part 2* of Final report).

A brief overview of SAL project case studies is presented here by highlighting the main findings which, in our opinion, help to approach issues on groups' behaviours. Thereby attention is on values / ideologies of groups' members and their modes for generating such ideas internally, the environmental influences on groups' members and, finally, the forms and situations for public ideological expressions and the reactions groups' members experience from the environment (other groups, society-at-large).

SAL research shows that a value orientation (systems of values in general) is the main impetus for forming a subcultural identity. It is sensitive to influences from the meaningful environment, the one subcultural group members communicate with and react to. This results in varying behaviours by similar groups in different societies.

The summary of groups' members value orientations that SAL research discovered are presented below:

- Eastern religious values and identities vs. Western pragmatism;
- Mysticism and esoteric practises;
- Different forms of "ethnic/national revival" relating to culture and religion and, possibly, aggressive nationalism and racism as well;
- Church with entrenched pro-Soviet powers such as the case of the Metropolitan Church of Bessarabia and Metropolitan Church of Moldova;
- Youth anti-fascist movement in Russia signalling emerging fascist ideas in its social environment;
- Youth and their "open doors" spirituality with drugs;
- Adaptation of youth subcultural forms for self realisation via a contrived lifestyle and art;
- Ecological/ nature oriented, 'sustainable lifestyle' versus negative powers of civilisation.

The above mentioned values signal the presence of social and cultural processes which can lead to highly diverse outcomes. Some of them highlight tensions which arise among different groups and those, which can appear between groups and the society-at-large

The SAL project studied groups of different membership sizes. It needs to be emphasized that small groups are equally as important as large ones for researchers. From a theoretical point of view, the processes of growth and decay of small groups can be observed more readily, with a greater possibility of identifying the reasons for the processes. It is also significant to point out that small cultural groups (even in their initial originating stage) can accumulate and transform cultural ideas and values which signal new forces originating in society. Understanding these processes can help to deal with them more easily.

Finally it is significant to note that not all of the mentioned phenomena are accessible to direct research – in some cases field studies could prove dangerous to investigators not only because the group itself may be dangerously aggressive but also because the society as a whole wishes to suppress certain kinds of investigations.

4.1.1 Ethnic revival groups in Lithuania, Latvia, Slovakia, Russia and other post-Soviet countries

<u>Ethnic / cultural revival legitimating the Pagan worldview / religion</u>

Research on neo-Pagan groups in Latvia, Lithuania and Russia and on representative group leaders from other post-Soviet countries show that such groups link to forms for the "reconstruction" / revival of ethnic customs and folklore including religion. These groups' ideological and behavioural orientation is to enhance individual national consciousness.

Internal group activities reveal this ideology via calendar holidays, family and initiation rituals and public gatherings, art festivals and the like. It also manifests during communications between members of one group with another, various social activities and daily, in-person interactions.

Pagan groups oriented to national / ethnic customs and folklore are specific to all post-Soviet countries. Moreover ideological nationalistic expressions characterising these groups tend to relate to the social political contexts of their residence areas. This includes the environment with which they communicate and the societal ideologies present there. Russian social political life, naturally reflected by members of this society, is more conflictual and politicised than life is in Lithuania, Latvia or other post-Soviet countries. Thus research on Russian neo-Pagan groups show nationalistic ideas that link to a racially oriented worldview. Consequently they speak out against immigrants or residents from formerly Soviet Caucasus countries. Whereas, in Latvia, Lithuania and Poland, research show that, despite displays of certain latent forms of radical nationalism, activities of like groups tend to a romantic nationalism revealed via folklore and lifestyle. Late research revealed that these neo-Pagan group members were more likely to engage in political activities than they were in the past.

The research discovered two different processes at the organisational and at the subcultural levels. Organisations established for the religious trend of the movement include the Lithuanian united Romuva communities, Pagan World Congress and others that contribute to institutionalising the movement. Simultaneously the movement tends to individualisation. Individuals seeking different Paganism interpretations split into different subcultural groups. This can be identified as creating various, internal sub-systems of values. Usually new leaders then emerge and unite small circles of Pagan movement followers (*Part 1, Section 1.3; Part 2, Sections 3.1; 4.2; 11* of Final activity report).

<u>Ecologically oriented, 'sustainable way of life' based on values of ancestors</u>

Zajezova' neo–cottagers, an ecologically oriented community, formed in 1991 in Slovakia. Research of the group paid extra attention to "the way of life of group members, community cooperation and cohesion and issues on applying community principles and ideology in real daily life." Neo-cottagers characteristically proclaim "the return to one's own roots, values of ancestors and native environment." Tensions inside the group highlight diverse understandings of life with nature by young cottagers from different backgrounds and adults.

Research on Slovakian neo-cottagers indicated that "new, intentional communities with a short life span are relatively frequently formed" as long-term communities live on simultaneously. (*Part 2, Section 6.3* of Final activity report).

<u>'Reproduction' of North American Indian culture</u>

The Slovak Euro-Indian movement to imitate the North American Indian culture has developed since the 1920's. Its main values relate to harmony with nature, communications within the group and experiences with rituals, lifestyle, worldview and partly religion. Slovak Euro-Indians represent an absolutely apolitical subculture with no ambitions for public self-presentational activities. A main goal is to live in accord with nature; thus this movement has a strong ecological accent. The followers organise camps where they live in tepees, practise Indian customs and rituals and seek harmony with the environment (*Part 2, Section 6.1* of Final activity report).

<u>Ethnic / social and cultural revival via legitimating sub-ethnic authenticity based on social organisation</u>

Ethnic revival movements appeared in formerly Soviet areas some years before the USSR's collapse during the 1980s latter half. These include Cossacks in Russia, Samogitians in Lithuania, Lettigallians in Latvia and others. Cossacks' roots date back to the 14th century and unite members of different ethnicities (Russian, Ukrainian, Kalmuk, Bashkir, Ossetian and others).The SAL project studied Cossack members of this ethnic, social and historical group in Krasnodar, Russia. Research indicate the significance of reviving Cossack "roots" for possible social roles especially, for example, Cossack organisations to maintain social order and "to engage in economic activities linked to the historical reconstruction movement." Thus youth engagements in the Cossack revival movement should be primarily understood "as a means to adopt an active social position and seek control of one's own life." Members belong to officially "registered" Cossack organisations and to informal clubs which are often critical of Cossack officialdom. The clubs closely relate to historical re-enactments (*Part 2, Section 9.1* of Final activity report).

4.1.2. Youth lifestyle subcultures

<u>Anti fascism oriented youth groups in Russia</u>

Saint Petersburg youth groups belong to a so-named, extremely heterogeneous Anti-Fa scene. Thus a network of different subcultural groups based on the value of anti-fascism could be identified. The anti-fascist value emerges in reaction to the appearance of fascist oriented groups in the social environment of these members. This alliance is not institutionalised or organised; its basis is an "unusual subcultural grouping or movement of anti-fascist oriented youth seeking ideological expression via strong subcultural self-expression." The dynamic value system of Anti-Fa includes a set of values contrived from different subcultural groups, "ranging from aggressive Anti-Fa crews to intellectual anarchists, from anti-military activists to aggressive hooligans." All, however, are people with a particular world view who are ideologically grounded to some degree. "The further development of a youth Anti-Fa movement is closely connected to the development of fascistic youth groups and will continue to develop in parallel with them". (*Section p* and *Part 2, Section 4* of Final activity report).

<u>DIY culture in Russia</u>

Research on the DIY (Do it yourself) subculture in Saint Petersburg, Russia "allowed exploration of the diversity of DIY scenes in the city and, thus, discovery of differing DIY culture narratives by member musicians and activists." The main values include "the importance of independent music production, anti-commercialisation, anti-consumerism and creative self-realisation in the scene." This subculture reflects processes of music and culture commercialisation and shows efforts by young people to institutionalise alternative forms of self-realisation by

forming style and movement "laboratories". "These become starting points for groups on the path to wider recognition" (*Part 2, Section 4.1* of Final activity report).

Hip-hop in Estonia and Romania

Research on hip-hop in Rakvere, Estonia and in Galati, Romania support understanding of groups' member behaviours in the context of their close relation to the social environment they reflect. The analysis emphasises authenticity and social criticism. At both sites, "group members construct a collective identity on an abstract level "against tasteless 'others', the mainstream.""

Estonian hip-hop songs tend more to an irony of success-oriented mentality in a transition society rather than to the social criticism of injustices that American hip-hop stresses. Estonian hip-hop composers reflect an environment that includes "hoodlums hanging around, that is, young teenage males looking for fights and doing 'monkey business', people who live monotonous lives and others, the mainstream." Researchers indicate hip-hop as a way to escape the daily monotony of boring life in Rakvere.

Romanian hip-hop seemingly reflects social injustices more than Estonian hip-hop does. Added to irony on the political and cultural mainstream, performers explore social aspects that are usually unnoticed or unresolved placing, under a lens, Romanian society at its worst – unresolved unemployment, poverty, poor living conditions and lack of education.

The hip-hop subculture in Galati and Romania in general faces serious criticism from authorities and the society-at-large who oppose hip-hop. Censorship is being imposed by governmental bodies like the National Council for the Audiovisual and by school boards, employers and parents alike. As a result, hip-hop communities have become quite exclusivist since they are very much aware of the discrimination against them. On the other hand, they have become prejudiced in turn.

Estonian researchers highlight the gender aspect. A *tough guy* attitude prevails with support both locally by behavioural norms in Rakvere and internationally by hip-hop subcultural norms. Female roles most acceptable to both sexes are as babes and girlfriends of rappers. "Women face double standards. They are expected to be feminine and sexy while, by the same, their status lowers in the subculture associated with rappers showing-off a radicalised mentality" (*Part 2, Sections 5.1; 7* of Final activity report).

Cannabis users in Estonia and Russia

The comparative analysis of Estonian and Russian "recreational drug users" explores member values. "It mostly associates as fun for girls but as 'open doors' with more spiritual motives for boys." Cannabis use is considered everyone's free choice. It's seen as a "natural" drug, not as harmful as synthetic drugs. Research in Sochi point out that "drug use appears almost a subcultural prerequisite" for rappers, skateboarders and roller skaters and it's considered necessary for creative people like musicians, artists, graffiti artists and others. Drug use is usually at parties in someone's home or at alternative clubs.

Researchers stress gender inequality in the analysis of communications within groups. In youth cultures, drug use reflects traditional gender roles – women do not have same rights as men; they tend to consume less and are more critical of drug use.

An open drug market does not exist in Estonia and Russia; thus involvement in informal social networks is needed. A key research finding in Vorkuta was that "drug sales are just one component of a wider range of 'hustling' practices, mostly trade in 'acquired' goods and drugs, money-lending and 'sorting out' widespread youth disputes." These practices require extensive networks of friends to enable circulating resources and making profits. As per researchers, "drugs, their use and practices linked to their commercial sale constitute reasons for cultural and even ethnic conflicts."

Research in Sochi show that "drug use practices are almost always linked to group solidarity and practices. If some group members begin drug experimentation then, in time, almost all in the group assimilate this practice. (…) Drug abstention also works this way." This is useful to note in the context of implementing effective anti-drug campaigns.

The public is critical of cannabis users "linking them with addicts". Thus users try to be "invisible".

For youth in Sochi, tourists from Moscow and abroad are points of reference and imitation perceived to symbolise style, innovation and "progressiveness". "Local young people actively assimilate with this important cultural channel and devour information about new, fashionable brands, trends, books, music, modes of moving and dressing, slang and new ideas" (*Part 2, Sections 5; 9.2* of Final activity report).

Skinheads in Tatarstan, Russia (Vorkuta) and Lithuania

"There are an estimated 70,000 skinheads currently active in Russia and more than 70 deaths were attributed to xenophobic attacks in 2007 alone" (Moscow Bureau of Human Rights statistics). Researchers note increasing violence and crimes among skinheads in Russia, especially Tatarstan. In Lithuania it is noticeably less due to less intense societal immigration and criminality processes.

Researchers found various skinhead trends such as, in Kazan, fascist and anti-fascist skinheads who normally oppose one another. As per researchers, "Being a skinhead [in Tatarstan] is largely perceived as a fun game as only a few movement members are aware and in favour of skinhead ideology." In Lithuania clear and well formulated nationalistic values were found among skinheads. Members respond to increased immigration, ideas of multi-culturalism and historical multi-ethnicity. "The skinhead subculture of Kazan is very dependant on a Kazan-type gang inheritance making them criminal, not ideological groups." The skinhead group was investigated in Tatarstan, where the "Kazan phenomenon" of youth organised delinquency originated.

Ethnographic research on Vorkuta skinheads "focused on deeper issues of why skinheads constitute an attractive cultural strategy for young people. Such research is vital to understand motives for joining and leaving such groups. It revealed that today's Russian youth adopt skinheads to generate meaningful solidarities helping them navigate their lives on this society's margins."

Research indicates that skinheads are minded to influence society. As per research in Vorkuta, they are "motivated by a desire to change the world that they articulated verbally by ideological statements and physically by street violence." Lithuanian skinheads consolidate needing to secure national dignity, retain an ethnic and cultural entity and defend their political position against counter subcultures. A specific lifestyle with strong community solidarity and combativeness was selected as a possible solution of contemporary social problems.

In Russia (including Tatarstan) and Lithuania, the mass media characterises the skinhead subculture as purely racist or Nazi by ideology (Lithuania) or as a violent fascist movement (Russia). Thusly the media spreads commonly predominant stereotypes which vitally affect police who especially see skinheads as potential criminals. "Police officers arrest skinheads in the streets and order them to leave public events, even when a skinhead has not broken any law." This, in turn, affects group members' behaviours (*Part 2, Section 9.4; 10.1; 1* of Final activity report*)*.

4.1.3 Ethnic minorities

Muslims in Slovakia

Research on the Afghan minority group representing Slovakia's Muslim subculture was in line with similar Western research that "enlarged research on European Muslim communities to the Slovak scene."

The main aspects of the group under investigation better explain its state of life and behaviour constrained by unfamiliar, culturally different conditions and negative attitudes from the local environment.

The research highlights factors that "cause stability of the values and manifestation of their culture and lifestyle in religion, family relations, language, clothes and such" and "cause their activities and lifestyle as a culture represented by an official organisation."

The research also highlights the main negative experiences of Afghans in communicating with the local society such as "ignorance, pressure and 'diver-types' of open or latent intolerance from the majority they feel in daily situations (contacts on the street, at work and such)." Principally the cultural differences between European (Christian) and Muslim ways of life cause tension. "The attitudes of the majority result from negative stereotypes." Limitations on normalising life for Afghan immigrants come from Slovakian official institutions and the government via complications with processes for acquiring status, conflicts on "Registered Church" status for Islam, delays in building a mosque and others.

Slovakian converts to Islam, who are particularly interested in developing Islamic culture in Slovakia, are presented as cultural mediators.

Researcher recommendations to governmental institutions are to endeavour to protect the rights of Muslim immigrants to work and equal rights to develop their national culture and religion the same as other minority groups do. Another recommendation was to the Ministry of Education to instil multicultural education about minority cultures in Slovakia and Europe (*Part 2, Section 6.2* of Final activity report).

<u>Roma communities in Hungarian society</u>

The multidimensional research on the Roma ethnic minority group in Hungary presents the group as a heterogeneous community with sub-ethnic groups, the "elite" and "ghetto" populations. The research orientation was to analyse the degree of Roma integration into the local Hungarian community and indicate tensions arising between them. Sub-groups were analysed as per place of residence, economic standing and education, efforts by groups' members to preserve the native language and customs and their experiences of local majority attitudes about them.

The *Romungro* (they call themselves Raj-Gypsies or Gentlemen Gypsies) are middle class, as is the majority of the society, and better educated than other groups are. Although proud of their origins, they've lost their language and distanced from other Roma groups. Residence is usually in Budapest or other centres of Hungary. "The poor *Boyash* communities still live in small villages with high unemployment and alcoholism." The *Olah* Gypsies live scattered throughout Hungary. The sub-group which saved its cultural traditions speaks Romani. These members consider themselves the Real Gypsies. The most successful members are mostly entrepreneurs and traders. The Roma / Gypsy community elite are the traditional community leaders (*Voivodas* / Chiefs and their families who are unknown to the dominant society), artists, educated people, others respected in society and politicians "who live away from their own ethnicity". Other distinguished subgroups are Roma living in "ghettos" of Budapest and other areas of the country. There are indications that the "underclass" of the "ghettos" is a niche for criminals. Groups' members had different experiences with the local majority; however, researchers indicated strong prejudices against Roma especially by the mass media with its main discourse being which crimes Gypsy gangs committed.

Researchers suggest that policy makers involve young Roma intellectuals to mediate between minority and dominant society members. Further, researchers see utility for additional research on Roma sub-groups and dissemination of obtained information which can contribute to effectively educating society and minimising social conflicts (*Part 2, Section 8* of Final activity report).

4.1.4 New religious movements (NRM) vs. Western materialism

Vissarion and Anastasia religious groups in Lithuania

The Anastasia and Vissarion religious groups are New religious movement phenomena in Lithuania as well as in Russia, Latvia and other post-Soviet countries. The analysis presented ways these groups' members communicate internally as well as externally with their socio-cultural environment. Vissarion[1] and Anastasia[2] are important symbolic figures influencing these movements. Groups' members devise their own religious value systems, worldviews and understanding of God and develop esoteric and ecological ideas. By organising a lifestyle differing from mainstream society, groups' members challenge traditional Christian religion along with the changes in contemporary post-Soviet society with its Western influences. The negative influences, as per groups' members, are the growing superficiality, indifference, pragmatism and commercialism in post-Soviet society. Members believe they can change their lifestyle in communities to an orientation for ecology and spiritual development while devising their own religious beliefs.

Lithuanian followers of Vissarion maintain close relations with the largest Vissarion community, known as the United Family, in Siberia, Russia. This, so-called "Heaven on Earth", abounds in sacral images and rituals in their daily lives. Similarly the Anastasians devise "Love Spaces" as per their understanding and definition of space, both secular and religious. These are about one hectare family homesteads set up in various places around Lithuania's cities. Members envision them as linking "person, nature and cosmos'.

Anastasia groups are relatively open to outside social influence and evidence significant growth. Meanwhile the Vissarion group is closed and more conservative. Currently (in 2009), in Lithuania, the Vissarion group has 30 adult members (50 with children). Anastasia groups unite over 1,000 members in different organisations including official clubs in the largest cities, nine family homesteads plus independently-based individuals (*Part 2, Section 10* of Final activity report).

Theosophical movement in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia

The social adaptation process of Theosophy was examined via ten theosophical groups in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. There are a total of some 3,000-3,750 active theosophists in these three Baltic countries. Communities of Roerich and Vydunas adherents are mostly middle–aged. Aivars Garda's followers are mainly youth. Females predominate (about 80%) in theosophical groups. Dislocation of groups shows that theosophy is an urban phenomenon in these countries.

As values of the different groups were investigated and compared, different orientations of core values were found evident although the beliefs of each of these groups originate in Roerich's teaching. The comparison of various symbols used by theosophical groups clearly demonstrates that the *mahatmas* symbol, used by the majority of groups' members, is the main, identity-forming axis.

Different levels of social adaptation were identified among various theosophical groups. Research revealed much negativity by NRM groups about each other and traditional churches. Mainstream society also rejects NRMs as "totalitarian sects" and "destructive cults". Misunderstandings, exaggerations and, sometimes, pure disinformation by different parties predominate in public debates on NRMs. Group member contacts clearly pointed to a need for disseminating more in-depth information about NRMs.

Conflicts between NRMs and the rest of society and internal controversies between new religious groups are, as we understand, the result of clashes between different sets of values. To

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[1] Vissarion (prior: Sergey Anatolyevitch Torop (in Russian: *Сергей Анатольевич Тороп*) – its members consider the leader of the Last Testament Church a teacher and reincarnated Jesus Christ bringing new spiritual teaching to the world.
[2] Anastasia, the main hero of Vladimir Megre's anthology, is a forest-based hermit in Siberia, whose teachings relate with naturalism, ecology and spirituality.

avoid such, *researchers recommend* authorities to begin genuine and meaningful dialogues with NRM members and share knowledge about basic values (*Part 2, Section 3* of Final activity report).

India-inspired new religious movements in Slovakia

This subproject examined challenges that India's religious ideas and practices posed to NRMs in post-Communist Slovakia. The aim was to extend information about people claiming that India's religion considerably influenced their lives.

Many ISKCON, Sahaja Yoga, Shree Chinmoy and Swami Maheshvarananda followers emphasised spirituality (argued to be a typically Eastern virtue vs. Western materialism) as the common basis for "real" religious life. The research discusses the most popular, India-inspired NRM concepts in Slovakia – yoga, meditation, bhakti, guru, Vedas, Kundalini and chakras.

In Slovakia, a deluge of new religious concepts activated NRMs after the fall of communism. These were variously perceived causing both positive and negative reactions. Many introduced concepts and related practices can be traced back to the Neo-Hindu movement but, despite ancient antecedents, these are new rather than old due to the modern contexts of their presentations.

These NRMs pose no particular problems in Slovakia. Actually they add variety and offer a much needed alternative to the so-called traditional understanding of religion in what remains a deeply conservative country, many of whose inhabitants look down on anything new and unfamiliar.

Researcher recommends revising the legal policy on registration of religious organisations, supporting diversity and equal opportunities for NRM members, informing the wider society about NRMs as objectively as possible and consulting with academicians who are independent of religious organisations (*Part 2, Section 6* of Final activity report).

4.1.5 Religious confessions

Metropolitan Church of Bessarabia in Moldova

After the communist regime collapsed, Moldova's historical and political background facilitated establishment of two distinct religions – Metropolitan Church of Chisinau and All Moldova (MCM) and Metropolitan Church of Bessarabia (MCB), canonically subordinate, respectively, to the Russian and Romanian Parishes of the Orthodox Church. What makes MCB different from MCM is obedience to different eparchies and differing believer perceptions on history, identity and national values (especially relative to Romanian or Moldovan identities)**.**

The two different church systems with the same religious doctrine define specific, mainly political, relationships between them. Researchers refer to an ongoing conflict between MCB, MCM and the State. Initially it focused on legal recognition of MCB and, later, on its church patrimony which had been nationalised in Soviet times.

The research analysed communications tensions between MCB and MCM believers and, especially, with governmental officials. It was found that 82.7% of MCB members had problems of (a) direct rejection of the group – 77.8%, (b) its denial – 62.9%, (c) discrimination (failure to register MCB parishes, lack of land provisions to build churches) – 60.4%, (d) ignoring the group – 55.6%, (e) its erroneous presentation – 48.1% and (f) physical violence, job loss, threats, trials, obstacles for organising activities, illegal church closures, delays in building a church, slander of priests – 40.7%.

MCB is often presented as disadvantaged compared to the MCM regarding separation of the church and state. Moldova's policies affect dispute resolutions between these two churches (*Part 2, Section 2* of Final activity report).

Evangelical Baptist Community in Moldova

According to the most recent, 2004 Census of Moldova, Baptists represent 1.0% (or 32,754) of believers who reveal religious affiliations. Currently this is the largest minority religion in Moldova of the some 500 established religious groups, 385 of which are officially registered.

Although Baptists experienced positive changes after 1989, some negative trends included material and financial difficulties, discrimination, ignorance and marginalisation of Baptists as compared with Orthodox Church members. Most difficulties involved establishing churches (registration, obtaining building permits and construction) and organising certain public expressions.

Conversion from Orthodoxy to Baptism is usually due to better satisfaction of individual interests and spiritual needs. Baptist evangelical missions play a special role is this context. The Baptist community's image in society is also important – ethical and moral behaviour, decent clothes, caring attitude and the like.

At times disagreements /misunderstandings / tensions arise between evangelical Baptists and other religions (Orthodox, Jehovah's Witnesses) due to different interpretations of religious doctrine and intolerance. SAL research found that 81.1% of Baptists consider Jehovah's Witnesses the least acceptable religious group.

Researchers provided useful information of their research about minority religions to policy makers, the mass media and the public. The hope is that this will help stimulate more dialogues between governmental bodies and minority religions and between minority religions and the dominant churches to avoid / minimise misunderstandings.

The results of individual topics are properly explored by the researchers in their reports (*Part 2, Section 2* of Final activity report).

4.2 Revision of theories

The shift from the CCCS (*Centre* for Contemporary Cultural Studies at the University of *Birmingham)* theory on "youth subculture" and the post-subculture theory was made by adopting the concept of subculture to include a wider range of religious and ethnic groups and different others who create their individual cultural meanings while communicating within the group as well as with their environments. It was also found that the dynamic Systems theory approach is preferable for discovering the variables and associated values which can help to generate functions / causal relations / reasons to explain the behaviours of different groups. Moreover it can also help ethnographers develop a more realistic description of group behaviour.

Prior uses of the Systems theory in a sociological setting have tended to model society ideologically. Moreover the tendency had been to use theoretically obtained sets of variables and values without an endeavour to obtain information from real groups; consequently results were explored on the basis of assumptions alone. When dealing with real groups, as per the intent of the SAL project, the possible values of variables must be obtained from field observations or determined on some other empirical basis.

4.3 Development of methodology for a comparative study

A new methodology for a systematic comparative study and computer tools for structuring materials were developed during the project. It is based on the Systems theory approach. Initially it focused on a systematic structuring of ethnographic materials revealing interactions by group members within the group relevant to creating their "subcultural reality", their agreements / disagreements, the environmental influences on group members and their self-expressions (including demands to influence the environment). The methodology is able to make a well-rounded

comparison of different groups in various socio-cultural environments (*Part 1, Section 1.1; 1.3; 2-4* of Final activity report).

4.4 Modelling the dynamics of groups

By describing the behaviour of individuals using a set of differential equations and postulating that the behaviour depends both upon the individual's internal preferences and on the preferences of individuals with whom he/she interacts, it is possible to describe the behaviour of the whole group (*Part 1, Section 1.2* of Final activity report).

4.5 Examination of power interactions

Standard social theory makes it clear that power interactions are very important in the dynamics of society and groups. It and its theoretical dimensions provide the basis for examining this issue. Research on the groups reveal unsuspected deviations in the understanding about social power interactions. For example research on the 1960s hippies group in Lithuania show that this group, having neither social status nor social power, was able to make a stand against the ideological powers operated by Soviet institutions and against those which came from the "grey society".

4.6 Exploring policy implications at individual, institutional and governmental levels

The SAL project studied over thirty subcultural groups in ten countries and found the relations between different groups and the larger societies to be very heterogeneous with regard to the needs and rights of individuals of varied identities, genders, cultures and value orientations. Thus policy recommendations are, in most cases, country specific. In addition, two more universal features are evident. First, there is a need to improve both the quantity and quality of media coverage of subcultural group issues at all levels, particularly about EC policies and laws concerning human rights and values and to present more factual and balanced reporting of subcultural group activities. Second, there is need for continuing research on group-societal interactions which is systematic and methodologically well-grounded. Such research could serve the informational needs of the media in the short run and also provide factual data and reliable analyses needed in the long range. As discussed in *Part 1, Section 1* of the report ("Systems theory: an aid for policy makers"), successful policy decisions become possible when relevant processes are not only well described but also understood (*Part 3* of Final activity report).

4.7 SAL Electronic archive

The SAL electronic archive was developed over the three years of the project with the aim to stimulate communications between the researchers. It was verified and adopted for the needs of researchers during the project workshops, and materials from the fieldworks were uploaded for sharing information among the SAL project scholars. For a sense of the amount of data involved, the numbers of the particular types of files found in the archive are listed: 124 Audio files (interviews); 1159 Image files (photos from events, photos of the symbols used by the group and others); 41 Video files (videos of events, living conditions and other matters); 661 Text files (interviews, questionnaires and others); 241 Synopses. At any given moment, there are over five gigabytes of such data. (*Part 1, Section 4* of Final activity report).

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

5.1 Subculture concept

The concept of a subcultural group, in the context of this project, refers to groups of different cultural styles, original worldviews and varying religious beliefs. As Fornäs argued, "*Subculture* can be used in the widest possible sense, including all types of collective lifestyles, whether they are consistent, fragmented or even contradictory, conscious or unconscious, deliberate or unintentional, visible or covert, small or large, marginal or central, subordinate or dominant, rebellious or integrated, progressive or regressive, youthful or adult" (J. Fornäs. *Cultural Theory and Late Modernity*, 1995, p.111-112). Consequently this research involves 'Taste' subcultural groups, New religious movement groups and different sub-groups of ethnic minority groups.

5.2 Interdisciplinary approach

The project took advantage of an interdisciplinary approach based on the methodologies of cultural / social anthropology and the natural sciences. Groups of researchers from different fields and different research schools participated in the project. This determined the research approaches as well as the methods used by the partners for achieving research objectives. The project covered subcultural and post-subcultural theories and critiques of these theories, linguistic analysis and the Systems theory approach. Concepts of globalisation, westernisation, identity, gender and others were applied for analysing different aspects of the research.

The project was implemented by means of long-lasting ethnographical studies which focused on in-depth participation by researchers in the groups under investigation. The relevant tools of this project were a quantitative survey with qualitative implementations, qualitative and quantitative content analysis of the mass media and systematic content analysis of texts obtained from the transcribed interviews and questionnaires. The purpose was to reveal and to understand the meanings of the values originating from the groups under investigation which were being disseminated into the society-at-large.

5.3 Fieldwork methodology

From the very start, the main purposes of the research were indicated. Research objectives were correlated with the theoretical framework of subcultural and post-subcultural approaches of different groups as well as the dynamic Systems theory approach, oriented to help researchers purposefully observe cultural phenomena and interpret them in the context of common processes in contemporary society. Purpose-oriented fieldwork was intended to verify hypothetical research questions and to reveal new meanings.

Fieldwork methodology was modelled with reference to Norman K Denzin's (1997) *Interpretative Ethnography. Ethnographic Practices for 21ˢᵗ Age*; Pertti Alasuutari's (1996) *Researching Culture: Qualitative Method and Cultural Studies*; Joseph A. Maxwell's (1996) *Qualitative Research Design*, Roberts Brian's (2007) *Getting the Most out of the Research Experience*, Clifford Geertz's (1973) *The Interpretation of Cultures*; Klaus Krippendorff's (2004) *Content Analysis* and works by other authors.

For the *collection of data*, every partner chose *target groups* related to personal / group research experiences and interests. Initially the research work included selecting target groups in chosen countries and becoming acquainted with the members of a selected community with help from cooperative members in each selected subcultural group. The groups were selected using personal contacts with group members, information from the websites of the chosen communities as well as oral and printed sources. Selection of respondents from groups was made using the "snow ball"

method which, in essence, involves one respondent providing a reference of another group member. Fieldwork 1 included participant observation within a community using the techniques of filming, photography and diary writing along with collecting documents and audio recordings produced by a selected community and semi-structured interviews with community members. The rest of the time was used for description, systematisation, analysis and conceptualisation of data, as well as report writing on the fieldwork. The recommendation was to transcribe, analyse and systematise the data during the entire process of the research.

On the basis of the information gathered from Fieldwork 1, which was discussed and accumulated in the workshops, an open-ended questionnaire was modelled using the Systems theory approach. It was designed to organise different sorts of materials (obtained from Fieldwork 1) into systematic structures of data with the aim of performing comparative analyses of different groups. Consequently it was suggested to the partners to gather additional materials during Fieldwork 2 by administering the questionnaire to the subcultural groups investigated during Fieldwork 1. Fieldwork 2 also included the integration of researchers into new communities for data collection using *fieldwork techniques* coupled with the use of an open-ended q*uestionnaire* targeted to verify the data from the previous research and reveal new problem areas.

5.3.1 Discursive comparative analysis

Different techniques of data analysis were used by partners depending on their research school and traditions. It was suggested to use computer assisted, qualitative data analysis software NVivo7 as a tool for structuring the audio and video materials as well as the field diaries. Content analysis, based on the development of empirical (authentic) and theoretical categories (cods), was applied using different work techniques. These categories were developed in a hierarchical relationship ("tree nodes"). According to researchers from the Warwick and Region teams, "As a general rule, authentic codes were at the bottom of this hierarchy while, further up the tree, theoretically informed codes predominated." During discussions between the researchers working on different case studies, topics for the comparative analyses were determined.

These comparisons were developed using the "multi-sited ethnography" principle to analyse the case studies, at first, holistically using categories emerging from the data of each case study (e.g. "gender and drug use", "neo-Paganism" and "affective communities"). Then comparisons were made between codes / categories that appear from more than one site. Each researcher then pulled key parameters for comparing and contrasting data from each case study then refined and clarified them through discussions.

The same basic principles were used to make transnational comparisons when the data from different cases for comparison were in different languages. This was the reason why the researchers had to determine key topics for comparison based on each researcher's presentation of their data rather than being able to exchange data directly (*Part 2, Section 9* of Final activity report).

5.4 Systems theory approach

5.4.1 Development of methodology for group research and comparative studies

An interdisciplinary research group (including physicists and social anthropologists / ethnologists) from Vytautas Magnus University developed the methodology for the systematic research of groups and for comparative studies of different groups in different environments. Application of the dynamic Systems theory approach to the refinement of anthropological / sociological research contributed to this methodology.

The SAL project needed to characterise and analyse information about varied groups in a multitude of countries. In many cases, formation of the groups had occurred subsequent to the

breakup of the Soviet Union; thus social interactions are still developing and changing more rapidly than they are for similar groups in Western societies. The dynamic Systems theory provides a theoretical framework suitable for such an issue. This approach can handle entities which are time dependent, which interact with each other and which are both influenced by different environments and influence their environments in turn. All such entities were encountered in this research project.

Key to the above approach is identification and evaluation of system variables characterising both the groups themselves and their environments. The variables, in turn, are determined by the elements, being called values, needed to specify them. Prior uses of the Systems theory in a sociological setting have tended to employ ideology based variables, often generating vigorous discussions about unrealistic situations. When dealing with real groups, as per SAL project intent, the possible values of such variables must be obtained from field observations or determined on some other empirical basis. These observations must be extensive enough to reveal the range of values that must be considered, and the values themselves must be distinct and unambiguously characterised. Much of the important information is in the form of texts, and the variables and values are verbal (words or phrases or collections of them). Thus researchers face heavy demands, not only in terms of time required to process such texts but also in terms of interpretative skills.

When empirical information is expressed by grouping variables systematically into group display (y's) and environmental influence (u's) variables, the groups and societies themselves are characterised, and degrees of group-society integration or tension become recognisable. The distribution of values within variables makes it systematically possible to compare different groups or different societies or to search for correlations between societies and the groups immersed in them, without neglecting the inherent heterogeneity or complexity of the social structures being studied. While, at this time, only a modest amount of the information collected during the fieldwork phase of the project has been structured in the manner suggested by the Systems theory approach, it is already clear that this innovation will greatly increase the ability to derive generalisations from the empirical data (*p. 21*, *A concrete comparison example;* and *Part 1, Section 1.1; 1.3* of Final activity report).

5.4.2 Development of methods and computer tools for systematic qualitative data analysis

Along the same line, the method of *systematic data analysis* (compiling structures of texts) based on the Systems theory approach was developed by Vytautas Magnus University researchers. This method allows researchers to explore the structures of meanings which are found in interview and questionnaire texts to make them observable. The frame for the systematic comparison of the groups is presented in Figure 2.
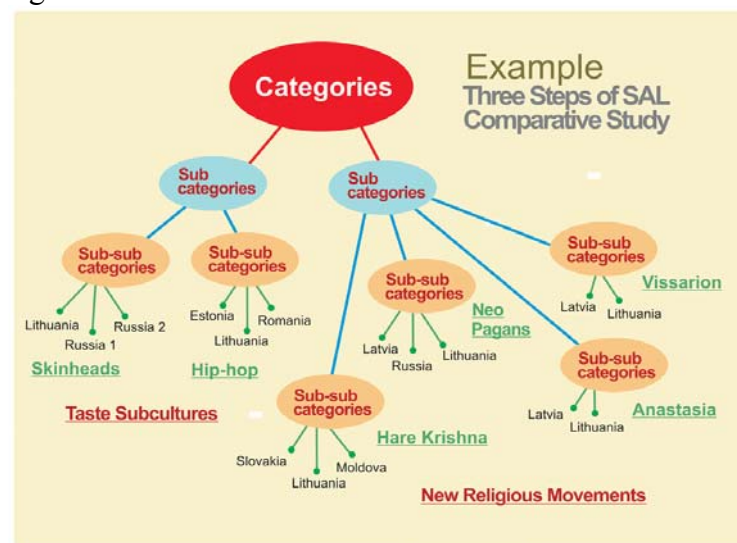

Figure 2: Visual example of the three-step comparison

Step 1 (sub-sub-categories): Comparisons of similar groups in different countries, e.g., a) Neo-Pagans in Latvia with like groups in Lithuania and in Russia, b) Hare Krishna groups in Lithuania with like groups in Moldova and in Slovakia

Step 2 (sub-categories): Comparisons of all religious groups, e.g., Neo-Pagans with Hare Krishna groups from different countries and with the Vissarion and Anastasia groups

Step 3 (categories): Comparisons of New religious movement groups with 'Taste' subcultural groups

The project had an ambitious plan to make comparisons at all levels. However, only the first step of such comparisons was accomplished, because the process of systematic data analysis and the development of the lists of variables and associated values took noticeably more time than originally anticipated. (*Part 1, Section 2,3* of Final report)

5.4.3   *Development of sets of variables and values for systematic comparative analysis*

Due to the efforts of partners, the structures of data (variables and accompanied values) were developed using the Excel on-line format in Google docs. The researchers structured a huge amount of data (from questionnaires and semi-structured interviews) from twelve of the groups under investigation selected for systematic comparison purposes. These groups are Neo-Pagan groups from Latvia, Lithuania and Russia; Skinheads from Russia and Lithuania; Hip-hop groups from Romania and Lithuania; Hare Krishna groups from Moldova and Lithuania and the Anastasia and Vissarion religious communities from Lithuania. The size of the Excel file is 20Mb; the numbers of values are rounded up to the thousands intentionally (412.000). (See *Part 1, Section 3* of Final report for a brief description of the work and the statistical data.)

Activities for such comparative work are very time-consuming; consequently this work should be continued in the framework of future / other projects.

5.4.4 *SAL questionnaire for systematic data collection*

A questionnaire based on experiences in the field and on general presumptions of the Systems theory was composed during the first stage of the project. The questionnaire suggested the following format for research: (1) internal interactions by group members in terms of creating their "subcultural reality" as well as their agreements / disagreements and (2) environmental influences on group members as well as their self-expressions (including demands to influence the environment). During the workshops, the questionnaire was adopted for studying religious and ethnic groups as well as 'Taste' subcultural groups. It was agreed that the questionnaire should be used as a frame / structure for the comparative research which requires the systematic collection of materials (*Appendix 1* of Final report**.** SAL Questionnaire).

5.5 Development of an experimental environment for communications among researchers, subcultural group members and society

The originality of the project involves the field verification focused on forming an experimental socio-cultural environment. This was developed during the project for communications by researchers, subcultural groups and members of society with the aim to enhance tolerance and

facilitate communications among them. Audiovisual exhibitions were held. These included presentations of photos and films shot by the researchers during their fieldworks and at the workshops on their research topics. These exhibitions were held in different social environments such as at festivals of youth alternative music in open areas, clubs, the City library and the yards and lobbies of the University. The experimental environment also included subcultural forums involving discussions with members of different subcultural groups and their presentations of their music, other forms of art, ideologies, actions and similar expressions. (See *Part 1, Section 5* of Final report for a brief description.)

The project additionally involves dissemination of knowledge through joint work by scholars and community members during workshops and the cultural events of subcultural communities.

6. DISSEMINATION AND USE: INFLUENCES ON SOCIAL PROCESSES

6.1 Contributions of methodology and information to the study field

New information was gained about neglected groups for anthropology, sociology and political science. New methods / extensions of methods were developed for studying groups.

The project introduced novel research on groups with different values and religious beliefs in post-Soviet countries, where traditions for this sort of research had never been developed previously.

The project contributed to the growth of a new generation of researchers in the social sciences in post-Soviet countries. This is particularly significant for two reasons: First, because field research is only possible in the applicable national languages, past research on groups in these countries was minimal at best, limited by the lack of linguistic expertise among outside researchers. Second, in the absence of hard empirical information, researchers tended to overgeneralise and grossly underestimate the variety and complexity of social processes occurring in post-Soviet countries.

The interdisciplinary nature of this project contributes to the development of new intellectual traditions. In particular, it opens up broader perspectives on values, meanings and goals that are vital for democratisation.

6.2 Contribution to society

The availability of the research data is expected to enhance the democratisation processes in the countries recently admitted to the EU in several ways. Associated with the research project, there is a long range effect on the mindset of those more directly touched by it, an effect with more immediate consequences depending on the information collected, interpreted and presented. With regard to the latter, the trustworthiness of the results is crucial.

This project contributed to intensifying not only scholarly but also public discussions on the behaviours of the groups and groups' members, topics which had previously been underdeveloped in this region.

Communications between social groups and between social groups and researchers were enhanced during cultural forums that were held within the frame of the project's methodology.

Communications between social groups and institutions were explored in SAL case studies by analysing how society influences the social groups under investigation and how these groups are influenced by each other. (*Part 1, Section 5* of Final activity report).

6.3 Influence on policy makers

Important decisions and important policies are being made by individuals and official institutions right now. The nature of these activities will reduce or enhance tensions and conflicts among people with differing values, attitudes and religions. This will be true both for processes occurring within Eastern Europe and for relations between Eastern Europe and Western Europe. Information and recommendations resulting from the study could contribute to tendencies leading towards the harmonisation of Europe.

6.4 Influences on university communities

The project gave impetus to academic excellence in the field of social sciences across Europe. During the project, at least three full-time research posts have been opened at the University of Central Lancashire, University of Salford and Tallinn University; one MA-level programme was launched; four doctoral and dozen of master students were taught and trained at Vytautas Magnus University and several academics have been promoted, one to the position of a full professor at Tallinn University.

During the project, about 450 articles, conference papers and individual contributions have been disseminated in the nine states directly involved in the project (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Russia, Moldova, Poland, Slovakia, Romania and the UK). Two major conferences were held in Kaunas - 2007 and Manchester - 2008. Additionally a book is ready for publishing and additional publications in national languages are underway.

Moreover findings from the project were presented outside Europe at conferences in Australia, India, South Africa and USA offering opportunities for European researchers to establish academic credentials in their fields globally. An indirect outcome of this project is that individual teams in various constellations are planning a number of follow-up projects to retain momentum and sustain the collective effort which had gone into the SAL project. The full list of dissemination activities showing the extent and depth of the SAL dissemination effort during the years 2006-2008 is provided in a separate report, *Final Plan for Using and Disseminating Knowledge*.

6.5 Publishable results

During the implantation of the project the following publishable results have been achieved:
- A major volume co-edited by G.Mckay, C.Williams, M.Goddard, N.Foxlee and E.Ramanauskaite, entitled *Subcultures and New Religious Movements in Russia and East-Central Europe* was prepared for publication (due to be published by Peter Lang in 2009);
- A volume with case studies from Slovakia in Slovak co-authored by D.Deak, M.Priečko and R.Hlušek (due to be published by University of SS Cyril and Methodius in Trnava in 2009);
- A book proposal entitled *Skinhead Lives* submitted to Cambridge University Press by co-authors H.Pilkington, E.Omelchenko and A.Garifzianova;
- A textbook prepared by K. Forray for the course "Society and Lifestyles – Hungarian Roma and Gypsy Communities" (University of Pecs, 2009);
- A PhD dissertation supervised by A. Salagaev (CASD) completed by A.V.Dushin, entitled "Constructions of Russian nationalism" (Nizhni Novgorod State University, 2009);
- 27 academic articles in the academic journals: *Espace Populations Societes*, *Ethnologia*,

Actualis Slovaca, Antropologischeskii Forum, International Journal of Drug Policy, Contemporary Sociology: New Methodological Approaches, Russian Review, The Anthropology of East Europe Review, International Journal of Policy, Acta Universitatis Latviensis;

- 6 book chapters published in collections of articles published in Germany, the Netherlands, Latvia, Lithuania, Russia and the US.

6.6 Evaluation of dissemination impact

Dissemination played a major role in the SAL project. It had to aims: first, it helped to spread the knowledge about the project among the target audiences such as researchers, non-governmental organizations and decision makers, and, second, it directly supported field research activities by informing the surveyed subcultural groups and individuals about the aims, scope and the planned outcome of the project.

The dissemination activities have been planned and implemented in 12 countries, covering all SAL consortium partner countries, plus the Netherlands, USA, India and Australia.

The main emphasis was on direct dissemination carried out by researchers among their peers (a researcher-to-researcher dissemination) and oriented towards a wider audience (a researcher-to-public dissemination).

6.6.1 Researcher-to-researcher dissemination

Academic dissemination was very successful. SAL project partners were invited to present the project and the project results to a number of high-profile academic conferences around Europe and indeed the world. The following are the major conferences where a researcher-to-researcher dissemination was carried out during the project implementation:

- British Sociological Association Conference, Warwick University
- 8th Conference of the European Association for the Study of Religions, Brno
- European Sociological Association Youth and Generation Mid-Term Network Conference, Estonia
- 3rd Russian Sociological Congress, Moscow
- 4th International Congress of Leiden Institute for the Study of Religions
- Centre for Russian and East European Studies Annual Conference, Birmingham
- British Association for Slavonic and East European Studies Conference, Cambridge
- American Anthropological Association Conference, San Francisco
- American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies, Philadelphia
- The 2008 International Conference Twenty Years and More: Research into Minority Religions, New Religious Movements and 'the New Spirituality', London
- FP7 project "Gender, Migration and Intercultural Relations in the Mediterranean and South East Europe: An Interdisciplinary Perspective" (GEMIC) workshop, Athens

6.6.2 Researcher-to-public dissemination

Public dissemination was equally successful which is proved by the fact that a number of radio and newspaper interviews were taken from the SAL researchers in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, Romania. The following are the major public policy meetings where a researcher-to-public dissemination was carried out during the project implementation:

- European Commission Meeting on Youth Policy, Strasbourg

- British Council 'Intercultural Navigators: Radicalization of youth in Europe' Brainstorming meeting, London

- Milan Šimečka Foundation debate „Slovakia in Afghanistan, Afghanistan in Slovakia", Bratislava

- Lithuanian Youth Council Public Lecture

- Academic Readings and Forum on Subcultures, Kaunas

- Symposium and Workshop New Expressions of Spirituality, Szeged

- 4th Estonian Youth Work Forum.

The dissemination of the SAL results was helped by the dedicated project website hosted at VMU (http://sal.vdu.lt) which received about 10000 visitors during the implementation of the project. The website aimed to provide visitors not only with information about the project but also the audio-visual material from the project events. This material was further cross-posted on the SAL YouTube channel to increase visibility: http://www.youtube.com/user/ProjectSAL. A section on the SAL website was created specially for the press, where all audio-visual and other materials were aggregated, so as to provide journalists with a handy resource for illustrations.

7. SELF-REFLECTIONS

The SAL project investigations could provide Europe Union politicians with information on different (including resistant) groups in the post-Soviet countries of the EU for a better understanding of the problems such groups may pose. We were able to exhibit part of this information relevant to individual liberties to choose one's own worldview, religion or lifestyle. Undoubtedly such issues are very sensitive in post-Soviet countries due to the half century of Communist rule, when society was pressured to live in a common ideology and lifestyle. After the Soviet political superstructure was broken and the society began renewal, it took much time for people to adjust to their new environments. The researchers gathered a huge amount of materials and reflected on the problem areas and sensitive points of social communications relevant to society's moralistic rejection of "differently-minded" individuals.

Understanding of processes within society as a whole will require fuller appreciation of interactions, particularly those involving changes in cultural norms, between individuals and groups and between groups themselves. We expect the systematic comparative research and its methodology developed by researchers during the project to facilitate achieving such long term results in future projects.