

# THE INSIDERS AND THE OUTSIDERS: STANDARDIZATION AND ‘FAILED’ PERSON-MAKING IN A LITHUANIAN MARKET PLACE<sup>1</sup>

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As Lithuania entered the EU in 2004 together with nine other new member countries, agricultural producers met new laws and standards for production. The new standard regime proved to be a particular challenge for small scale farmers who hitherto had derived the main part of their income from the sale of raw milk products, and who now had to submit to a different set of regulations for production. During my fieldwork among small scale farmers in the Southwest of Lithuania, my attention was drawn to a peculiar effect of the new standards regime at the market place, where the women from my field site went every Saturday to sell their dairy products. Many of the women, who previously had enjoyed the privilege of selling inside the market hall among other certificated farmers, lost their right to sell their milk and cheese as they could not fulfil the EU regulations. Because they could not afford to lose the income from the sale of dairy products, they did not withdraw from commercial production as demanded, but instead started selling illegally outside the bounds of the market.<sup>2</sup> In my field notes I

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<sup>1</sup> This article is based on fieldwork carried out in Lithuania in 2006-2007. The research has been financed by the EU through the Marie Curie SocAnth Programme in cooperation with the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology in Halle, Germany.

<sup>2</sup> I carried out fieldwork in the market place in Marijampolė both during my first stay in Lithuania from January to July 2004 and again during my second stay from

referred to the two groups of salespeople at the Lithuanian market place as *the Insiders* and *the Outsiders*. I intended the double meaning. The Insiders were both as a matter of fact placed inside, within the market hall, and they were also legally placed within the realm of EU legal orders. This is in contrast to the Outsiders, who were placed on the other side of the market bounds and sold products outside the realm of EU legal orders.

The manipulation of space as vividly displayed by the Outsiders posed problems at the market place as it invited ridicule of the authorities and displayed the shortcomings of EU law on the local level. It appeared that, although all production now was subject to the new EU-regulations, the actual enforcement of law was only practised within certain spaces which could be controlled, and on producers who from the onset had an interest in being controlled. What intrigued me about the Insider/Outsider situation in the market place was that this was not a case of homemade products versus products from the store, but a case of essentially similar products, which have ended up on both sides of the law, after a process which has resulted in a re-location of people and a re-evaluation of products and producers in the light of the EU-standard regime.

In her research Elizabeth Dunn suggests that a close link is established between the implementation of standards and the ‘making’ of a specific kind of (EU) person (Dunn 2005). In this article I suggest that the shortcomings of law at the Lithuanian market place are closely connected with what I with reference to Dunn refer to as a ‘failed’ person-making. By this it is to be understood that the ‘making’ of such producers is challenged by the local actors’ understanding and negotiations of the rules. Rather than adapting to a rating according to EU standards, they seek to optimize their possibilities either within or outside the boundaries of the law. This is closely connected with a ‘failed’ making of the customer. Indeed, as long as Lithuanians favour the ‘authentic’ Lithuanian product, the EU-standard regime and its measurement of product quality will face intense competition by small scale (illegal) producers.

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October 2006 to October 2007. I am thus able to draw on field data from both periods of research.

## Research and Field Site

This article is based on one and a half years' research, in two parts. My first fieldwork lasted six months and was conducted in a village in the Southwest of Lithuania in the months just before and after the official entry into the EU on 1 May 1, 2004. For the second part I returned in 2006-2007 to conduct a longer research into the impact which EU-membership had had on the Lithuanian agricultural sector. My participant observation took place both among Insiders and Outsiders at the market place, and in the village, where I followed and participated in the production of dairy products, from the milking of the cows up to the point at which the final product was ready to go to the market, whether outside or inside the hall. I furthermore conducted informal interviews with customers at the market place and paid frequent trips to the bigger cities to meet with agricultural experts.

## Enlargement Through Compatibility

The Insider/Outsider conflict is related to the great enlargement of the EU in 2004, when the union grew from 15 to 25 member states, and its total population grew by almost 75 million people to about 450 million. The acceptance of more members into the EU was a challenge for the agricultural sector as the market for agricultural products necessarily changed when 10 new members came onto the stage (Wallace 2000). In order to integrate the agricultural production of the new member states into the overall production of the EU, the new states were required to meet specific standards for food production and food processing as detailed in the *Acquis Communautaire* (the entire body of EU law). This meant that products from the new member states were expected to become the same as those of their Western European counterparts (Bellier and Wilson 2000). This, according to Andrew Barry, concerned the creation of a specific technical form as the trademark of the EU (Barry 2001). The EU requirements are part of the central process of *harmonization* of products within the EU, which implies that products and their manufacture are to be governed by the same legislation in all member countries, according to a 'one size fits all' model. The problem arose in the new member countries that the methods of production of small scale producers was from the onset too different to be encapsulated in the EU-regime of standards and quality, and there was little or no chances of making them compatible with that regime as people lacked the necessary resources and knowledge. The outcome was that, when EU-laws were imposed on small-scale production, much of what hitherto had been occurring inside the boundaries of the law was now classified as illegal (Dunn 2005; Caldwell 2009; Harboe Knudsen 2010).

In Lithuania awareness of the new standards regime was raised through countless agricultural meetings and seminars open to all farmers, by emphasizing the advisory role of the local agricultural consultants, through media, through the distribution of folders and leaflets about EU-requirements, and simply by changes in the laws regulating production. The Lithuanian Farmers' Union (*Lietuvos Ūkininkų Sąjunga*, LŪS) arranged various seminars taught by professors from the Agricultural University in Kaunas, lawyers, and agricultural advisors. The idea behind this was to re-educate those farmers who had the knowledge and resources and were of such an age to be able to change production, and to encourage farmers who could not comply with the new standard regime to withdraw from production altogether.

### About Standards and Persons

Elizabeth Dunn has discussed the effect of standardization policy using the example of a Polish meatpacking company (Dunn 2005). She argues that the implementation of standards leads to a making of persons: workers are transformed into obedient, self-disciplining citizens who internalize the system of EU-values and thereby come to self-control their working process (Dunn 2005; see also: Dunn 2003, 2004). In the farming sector this plays out by the farmers who can comply with EU-standards coming to be included, while those who no longer have permission to produce being forced to withdraw to a socialist mode of production and thereby a socialist personhood as they now engage in sale outside the legal framework (Dunn 2005). Diana Mincyte, in her study of the informal sale of dairy products in Lithuania, evokes a somewhat different argument. Based on her own research she suggests that the women engaged in illegal sale (Outsiders in my vocabulary) create a niche in the EU-regime where they can gain economic and social capital: they claim their own space and engage in informal production as capable and autonomous agents (Mincyte 2009). Based on my ethnographic material I would argue for an understanding which balances the idea of the obedient subject with that of the autonomous agent. Here I draw on Giddens, who emphasizes the duality of structures, meaning by this that structures shape human behaviour and human behaviour also shapes and reproduces structures (Giddens 2003). This approach also leads to a more careful elaboration of the extent to which people can or will act in the face of structures: agency is far from uniform, varying a great deal in both kind and extent (Sewell 1992).

In my approach structure and actors are bound together in an inter-related dynamic of options and limitations by engagement in what I call practical negotiation in

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everyday life within the given structure. Thus a person might find herself in a situation in which she on the one hand is unable to do what is expected of her, but on the other hand needs to maintain everyday life. She cannot, or will not, follow the rules strictly, but neither can she - or maybe will she - avoid the situation altogether. Instead she develops an intermediate strategy in order to keep going. She is then not necessarily resisting these structures, but rather merely trying to find a way in between what is required and what is possible. As a result normative constellations and socio-economic and shifting laws continue to influence people's decisions. This balance between structure and actions should be seen in relation to my conceptualization of law. Law is not limited to formal laws such as state law or EU law, but applies to different constellations of normative orders in society. In this sense, law becomes an umbrella term for different orders and regulations (F. von Benda-Beckmann 1997; F. and K. von Benda-Beckmann 2006). This also complies with the analysis of Moore, who works from the viewpoint which holds that law is not above society. Her viewpoint is close to that of Ehrlich, when she states that law should not be condensed into one term, abstracted from the social context in which it exists (cf. Ehrlich 1936). Law and the social context in which it operates must be examined together.<sup>3</sup> This approach not only takes into consideration 'formal' law, but also aims at understanding how other (unwritten) local norms of behaviour may influence people's decisions and regulate their behaviour, even those normative rules of behaviour which contradict official law. In this regard I propose that, because the Insiders and the Outsiders must continually consider the different constellations of their everyday life - official law, informal normative orders, the economic situation of the family, customers' willingness to buy outside the market hall, the inefficient legal control outside the market bounds, etc. - EU law is but one out of many (legal and normative) factors they must take into consideration.

### The Insiders and the Outsiders

#### *The Market*

The market hall is a quite ugly building made of grey metallic plates, appearing

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<sup>3</sup> Ehrlich drew a distinction between what he called state law, and living law, where state law referred to the rules of society, and living law was the social reality in which the subjects were engaged (Ehrlich 2002).

like a hangar hovering in the centre of the market place. It is located in the centre of the seventh largest city in Lithuania, Marijampolė, which has approximately 50,000 inhabitants. Looking at the market hall from the outside, nothing tells you that this is one of the liveliest markets in Marijampolė. Starting at 7a.m., sellers are at their stalls with a variety of food products. Large numbers of people circulate. Regular customers normally buy from the same person every time, others prefer to go through all the products and visit every stall in order to be sure that they get the best quality at the best price. Seen from the main entrance, the section on the right is mostly for different meat products, such as a wide variety of sausages and smoked or salted pork. The left side is partly for fish sales and partly for processed (as distinct from homemade) food. The stalls in the centre are occupied by farmers selling honey, covering all forms from light green to deep yellow depending on the flowers from which the bees have gathered it. The other stalls in the middle are occupied by farmer-women selling their homemade dairy products. The most popular product in this section is *grietinė*, which is similar to sour cream, but much thicker and sweeter. The women keep it in big buckets, and when customers come the women dip in big spoon, lift it up and let the *grietinė* run down into the bucket again. In this way the customers can see how thick it is. The Lithuanian white compressed egg-shaped cheese (*baltas sūris*) is also a valued product, as is the *varškė*, curd packed in small plastic bags. A few of the women also sell unprocessed milk in two-litre bottles. These bottles are typically used cola, lemonade or beer bottles which the sellers clean and recycle as milk bottles. All products are kept in open cooling boxes in front of the women, securing that they are kept at the right temperature<sup>4</sup>.

The open air market outside is characterized by random sale of non-food and food products (but not dairy products) in what appears as an untidy mixture. Here you can get everything from home-knitted woollen socks to shoes, old books and journals, imported Byelorussian clothes laid out on the ground, vegetables, fruits and berries, technical equipment, big spoons and forks cut from wood, cheap cosmetics and perfumes, small prayer books, painted pictures with romantic and/or religious motifs, used plastic bags from Western European stores, blankets, flower- and vegetable seeds, and many, many other goods.

A third sales space is located beyond the open-air market. Just on the other side of the almost invisible sign marking the boundary of the market is a row of elderly

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<sup>4</sup> The cooling boxes came into the market place after entry into the EU in 2004. Prior to that, the women had simply had their products on a table.

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women. In front of them on the ground are baskets with white cheese and *varškė*, big milk bottles and buckets with *grietinė*, the very same products which are sold inside. The location is cleverly chosen. Being just outside the market bounds, the authorities of the market place cannot claim control over the products nor fees for their sale. Nevertheless, every customer who wishes to enter the market from the main street will pass the row of Outsiders first, which gives everybody an opportunity to buy their dairy products here at a cheaper price.

### *Inside the Market; Rising Expenses, Rising Prices*

The women inside the market hall mostly come from relatively small households with a few cows, often leading a better life than the majority of the villagers and viewing themselves as decent, law-abiding citizens. They have calculated that delivering unprocessed milk to the dairy is unprofitable. Instead they can make money by selling homemade dairy products at the market. In order to fulfil the criteria enforced within the market hall, they need to have a better than average knowledge of milk production and hygiene and be able to invest in equipment which complies with the requirements. It was at this market, inside the market hall, that two of my informants from the village of Straigiai, Asta and Stasė, sold their dairy products. Asta is in her late thirties, and lives with her parents, her husband and their two children in the village where they work on Asta's parents' 11-hectare farm. Stasė is in her mid sixties and also lives in the village together with her husband, and runs a farm of 10 hectares.

Asta's *grietinė* was by far the most popular in the market hall. It was very thick and sweet. Most customers only bought from Stasė or the other women when Asta had sold out. However, Stasė's cheese was more highly valued than Asta's cheese. As all the fat from Asta's milk went into the production of *grietinė*, the remaining milk that she used for cheese was very light. As Stasė did not separate milk from cream so carefully, the milk she used for cheese was fatter. Stasė also took extra time to make the popular sweet white cheese with eggs, sugar, and raisins. This was her little specialty, which enabled her to compensate for her less popular *grietinė*. If the cheese is not fat, the women told me, it does not have any substance, and you have to sell it at a lower price. The women laughed and shook their heads when I told them that in my country people often pay more for low-fat dairy products, because they wanted to stay slim.

The families of Asta and Stasė had, along with the other Insiders, official permission to sell their dairy products. Their animals had been thoroughly checked

by veterinarians, their products were tested and controlled, the production facilities were carefully checked, and the women paid 6 *litas* (1.74 euro) to the market hall administration every Saturday when they came with their produce baskets. Within the hall products were also controlled by a system of random testing. At the market place, a woman with two cows could make about 480 *litas* (139 euro) a month in the winter and up to 580 *litas* (168 euro) in the summer, when the cows give more milk. An average state pension in 2007 was about 600 *litas* (174 euro), so, selling at the market place produced a much-needed extra income. However, as the costs of production grew with the EU, it became quite expensive to sell products at the market. Consequently, the women had to sell their products at higher prices. As prices rose customers grew dissatisfied. People went to the market place expecting to get a good deal, that is, to buy fresh products at low prices. Customers now realized that the price level in the market hall came dangerously close to that in the grocery stores. A cheese which prior to EU entry had cost 3 *litas* (0.87 euro) cost 5 *litas* (1.45 euro) at the time of my fieldwork, *varškė* was being sold for 3.5 *litas* a bag (1 euro) in comparison to the previous 2.5 *litas* (0.72 euro). This price example is valid also for half a litre of *grietinė*. Sometimes there was no longer any difference between prices at the market and in the grocery stores, which affected especially pensioners who had to count every *litas* they had, and who hitherto had saved a great deal of money by buying market products. Many a dissatisfied customer now turned away from the women inside with the remark “it is the same as in the stores” (*tas pats parduotuvėse*), meaning, there was no longer money to be saved by purchasing products in the market hall. Sometimes the Insiders would have to return home with several cheeses and litres of milk that did not sell. The customers they lost were those who could no longer afford to buy inside the market hall. However, those who stayed despite the rising prices were those who valued the fact that the products were controlled. It was not unusual for customers who bought inside to ask about the dairy product, how it was made and if it was safe to eat. “You see” Asta once said to me, after a well dressed woman had inquired about the cheese and the certificate before she had finally bought it, “people do care in here; they want to know what they buy. We can provide that guarantee for them.”<sup>5</sup>

#### *Outside the Market: Enduring the Weather*

Whereas it would be the same people trading inside the market hall every week,

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<sup>5</sup> From my field notes, February 2007.



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the group of Outsiders was not as consistent. Some women were regulars, others only came from time to time. Sometimes there would be few traders outside, other times many, the number ranging from five to 13, whereas there were six Insiders. One sure indicator of the number of Outsiders on a given Saturday would be the weather. Indeed, I found a simple but reliable rule for the market: the worse the weather, the fewer the women trading outside. Trading outside was tough. If it rained they had to protect their products from the weather, if it was freezing, there was the danger that the cheese and *grietinė* would also freeze, which would make them less attractive to customers. In the summer period, however, it was best to sell the products as early in the morning as possible, as it was not advisable to keep the dairy products outside in the hot sun for a long time. The weather conditions were the main challenge the Outsiders faced, and was, indeed, much worse than the rare intervention by a police officer coming and sending them away.

While the weather often turned out to be an obstacle for them, the Outsiders benefited from their location in front of the market and from their low prices. The Outsiders did not have the necessary money to improve their facilities at home, to send products for bacteriological tests, or to pay for a stall inside. Consequently they could not move inside. However, because they had no fees to pay, they could cut their prices and sell their products at prices anywhere between one and three *litas* cheaper than inside. A woman who sold outside explained:

Just as the women inside have their [regular] customers; we have ours [...]. I have people who come to me every time I am here [...], they see that my cheese looks good, they eat it and see that my cheese is tasty, fat, and healthy. So they come back to me next week. Why should they pay twice the price inside?<sup>6</sup>

Two of the women had only joined the Outsiders in 2004 when they lost their permission to sell inside the market. There were others who had lost their permission, too, they said, but had instead chosen to sell to friends and neighbours instead of standing outside the market hall. The women who were selling outside could not freely choose their space; they only had the option of outside sale. Whereas Insiders could become Outsiders, Outsiders never became Insiders.

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<sup>6</sup> Interview, March 2007.

*Changing Spaces, Challenging Laws*

In studies about market places in post-socialist countries, it has been noted how officially approved markets and dubious semi-legal markets are separated from each other through spatial distinctions. What is interesting in this regard is that this distance from one another appears to be significant. Hence, we may have the approved market in the city, and the contested market several kilometres outside the city (Smigielska 1992; Hohnen 2003; Dunn, 2005; Humphrey and Skvirskaja 2009). As Humphrey and Skvirskaja suggest, based on their study of a semi-legal Ukrainian container market, “[...] any city needs (or allows to be created) a notional space of ‘outside’ [...]” (Humphrey and Skvirskaja 2009: 64). In Marijampolė this space of ‘outside’ is created inside the city. The distinctive feature of this market place is thus not the illegal selling in itself, as it takes place in various locations in Lithuania (and in other post-socialist countries), but that the legally approved and legally disapproved markets are just next to one another. The Outsiders use location and space to circumvent rules, as they benefit from the flow of customers who have to pass the Outsiders in order to enter the market inside. This use of space both demonstrates the strength of EU law (ensuring strict enforcement inside) and proves the limitations of EU law (allowing the lack of enforcement of law outside the official territory). An agricultural advisor commented on the situation: “The market is controlled and exclusive for those farmers who produce according to the rules. But then people just sell outside the market. And that is difficult to control, very difficult. Because what are you supposed to do? Go and visit every grandmother in Lithuania and tell her to stop selling milk?”<sup>7</sup>

The competition from outside caused the Insiders distress, especially on the days when they had to return home with unsold dairy products because the customers had bought outside. This led to an ambiguous relationship to the Outsiders, as they were partly looked down upon, partly cursed, partly envied for their go-around-the-rules strategies. Stasė told me:

We were very dissatisfied. The question [of illegal sales] was raised many times. I always asked: “are we a bad kind of people, since we are treated worse than them [the Outsiders]?” We had to meet all requirements, do all the tests, pay for everything, and pay for selling at the market. [...] We also raised the questions at

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<sup>7</sup> Interview, Kaunas municipal administration, November 2006.

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meetings but no one was interested. We called the police. The officers came and told the women to go home. As soon as the officers left, the old *močiutes* (grandmothers, elderly women) came back.<sup>8</sup>

The question of the Outsiders came down to a matter of space and interpretation of space. ‘Inside’ and ‘outside’ were clearly bounded and concrete physical spaces, but they were imbedded with different meanings and subjects for different interpretations of law. The law was negotiated through a clever play with space, which in the end outdid the actual legislation. As F and K von Benda-Beckmann argue, “spatial constructions as embodied in legal categories and regulation provide sets of resources that become part of ‘spatial idiom-shopping’ [...]” (F and K von Benda-Beckmann 2009: 116). What the Outsiders did was to use the options they had within the limitations the law imposed on them. The notions of physical, social, and legal space can be seen as interacting phenomena, such that the bounded space governed by law influences interaction. Likewise do the law and its (spatial) limitations provide resources for people, making them capable of pursuing their own (economic, political) interests within the given space (F and K von Benda-Beckmann 2009).

The Outsiders turned their exclusion from the market into a benefit by creating a ‘non-EU space’. The non-EU space was a normative construction, a circumvention of rules as a response to their exclusion from the market, and was mobilized against the inside market as a way for the Outsiders to meet their economic goals. It was, as I frame it, a practical negotiation of the situation. The fact that the women stood outside the market did not legalize their sale, it only meant that the market administration could not interfere. The only thing the administration could do was to put up notes and posters inside the market hall emphasizing that they had no responsibility for food products sold outside the market. Alternatively, the problem was passed on to the police, who had a legal right to move the women from their spot. However, the calls from the Insiders to the police in the end resulted in relatively few visits by the police officers. Indeed, on the general crime-scale in Marijampole, removing elderly women from the market, just for them to return to it as soon as the officers leave, is not on the top of their list on combating crime. Even *if* the police had been consistent in removing the old women, it would only be the tip of the iceberg since most outsider sales took place in disguise. Products were also sold from cars after dark (referred to as ‘car-boot

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<sup>8</sup> Interview, May 2007.

sales': Pine 2001), or by old women on bicycles. In Marijampolė, the urban yards were divided into different territories shared by a number of Outsiders, who would have their own yards to which they came twice a week with their dairy products. There was also the option of selling products to neighbours and friends, all practices which classify as outsider trade, as the products were not officially approved. Hence, most Outsiders are doing their sales in spaces very distinct from the market place. It appeared that EU product control mainly worked for those who were already imbedded in the system while the controls did not reach the groups of people who, according to the law, were the most obvious targets for legal intervention.

## Senses of Personhood

### *Practical Negotiations Among Insiders*

The new standard regime led to new conceptualizations of both the products and their producers. Insiders reproduced European rhetoric in order to appear economically, socially, and morally superior to the disadvantageous Outsiders. Although there were plenty of privileges obtained through exclusion, the Insiders connected legality with a certain pride. Being inside was thus both the state of being imbedded in the European trading system and a way to receive symbolic capital in terms of recognition and respect. It was also a way to distinguish oneself from the Outsiders and, thus, define oneself as a person in accordance with both the EU and the local environment. This was exemplified in their view of the Outsiders whom they saw as *prasti žmonės* (simple folks, lower class people) with little or no education. Asta, for one example, was the daughter of the previous agronomist of the collective farm in Straigiai, and it was certain that her father would never allow her to change space and stay with the 'dubious' women in front of the market. Likewise Stasė, also coming from one of the richer families, valued her reputation as a law-abiding citizen and an eager and devoted churchgoer. She was often acquiring new leaflets about the EU made it a matter of honour to know about the latest production requirements and options for funding and programme.

However, the longer I stayed with the women in the market hall, the more it seemed to me that the ideas of personhood and the borders between acceptable and non-acceptable actions were under steady negotiation. Whether or not the women subscribed to law was highly dependent on circumstances and possibilities. The women were not only in the market hall as salespeople, but they also bought

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products at the market. These were partly grocery products from the other stalls but also were products sold illegally within the market hall. This was especially true for illegally imported Byelorussian alcohol or cigarettes. This kind of sale contested the claim of the inside market to be legally “pure”. Ragged looking men, dressed in big worn-out coats under which they hid a couple of plastic bags, would approach the Insiders discreetly at their stalls. The mutual understanding of the meeting was clear from this very starting point. The exchange of money and products was surprisingly quick, a nod in the right manner and a bottle and a carton of cigarettes would be in the women’s baskets, where they hid it under a piece of cloth. When asking about the men selling these products, I was never given much of an answer. “Uh, he is such a... he is some bum (*bomžas*) smuggling and selling illegally, we do not talk with him,” Stasė once said after having bought goods from a man.<sup>9</sup> While she distanced herself from the man by considering him as ‘lower class’ (bum), and his actions as ‘bad’ (smuggling and selling illegally), she still bought his products, quickly and in disguise. Hence, she claimed, she had nothing to do with the man as such, and did not wish to either. The ‘bum’ was surrounded by contrasting feelings of disgust and immorality, yet still desire for his products. Whereas I knew the women liked to drink although they would always deny it, the cigarettes puzzled me, as none of them smoked. Stasė had always talked about smoking as being a bad habit of poor people. “Why did you buy cigarettes from him?” I once asked her, “neither you nor your husband smoke.” “Indeed we do not!” Stasė answered, “and we never did!” “But why did you buy them, then?” I asked, insisting on some kind of an answer. Stasė waited a moment and replied: “Well, there is this man living down the street, not far from our house and he sometimes comes and helps a bit at the farm. Then I pay him with cigarettes.”<sup>10</sup>

Indeed, by re-circulating the illegal goods into the familiar sphere of networking, these goods lose their formerly ambiguous status. Other things were also kept behind the counter. The women often brought baskets along from home with food and alcohol, preferably vodka. While selling, the women would offer each other bread with cheese or meat, sweets, and alcohol. They always brought a single shot glass along, which was repeatedly filled with vodka and passed around from the very moment they started to sell to the moment they left for home. Drinking was something they otherwise verbally rejected as the path to all evil, but here it underwent a different discourse. Drinking was a way to keep warm during the cold

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<sup>9</sup> From my field notes, February 2007.

<sup>10</sup> From my field notes, February 2007.

winter days in the market. To return home from the market place tipsy or even drunk was nothing exceptional. Although they distanced themselves from the Outsiders' sales, the Insiders' buying of illegally imported products was understood within a frame of practicalities and re-integrated into an accepted social sphere through common friendly consumption (alcohol) or redistribution in the wider household economy (cigarettes.) The norms they adhered to were not a simplified matter of right or wrong. Rather one model of behaviour would be disregarded in one context and accepted in another. The proclaimed borders between inside and outside the law were not ultimate and permanently fixed all.

This capacity for renegotiating the situation and sense of personhood became clear to me as both Asta and Stasé withdrew from the market hall. The reason for this was that both of their families had applied to take part in the EU's "Early Retirement Programme" which was offered to farmers above 55 (in the case of Asta, the retirement being granted to her father, in the case of Stasé, to her husband.) The aim of the programme was to reduce the number of small scale producers, by paying them to withdraw from production. They were allowed to keep one cow and two hectares of land and produce for their own consumption solely. Accepting this programme also meant that none of the women could keep their position inside the market hall, as this would have been a violation of the rules. Indeed, a few weeks after Stasé had obtained early retirement and was thus prohibited from selling her dairy products, I found her in the row of Outsiders she had previously looked down on. In her new renegotiation of the situation she, like the other Outsiders, turned exclusion into an economic benefit, by profiting from inflation and rising prices within the market hall. Hence, Insiders also had to make a daily living and, when pushed, to renegotiate their legal status. As Stasé explained: "The cow gives too much milk for me and my husband to consume alone, and who am I to waste it? Mind you, my products are still the same quality as before."<sup>11</sup>

As this example shows us: morality is cultivated with pride as long as people literally speaking can afford to have such standards. Asta herself never went outside the market hall to sell her products, and would refer to this as an option only jokingly. This did not mean that she stopped selling dairy products, but the sales were now to neighbours and other villagers, who would come to her house and ask for a cheese or a litre of milk. In principle, in the eyes of the EU this was no different than if she had actually moved outside the market hall. However, for

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<sup>11</sup> Based on my field notes, May 2007.

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Asta the difference was significant. She was not lined up with the Outsiders coming from God-only-knows what kind of farms, but had kept a safe and orderly place for sale: her home.

*Reinventing the Cheese*

Also for the Outsiders the changes brought about new awareness of the production facilities, pasteurization<sup>12</sup>, hygiene, and bacteria. Dairy products produced under different circumstances were, viewed from the angle of the EU, potentially dangerous to consume. This challenged existing assumptions, as cheese that had been considered 'good quality' and 'safe to eat' prior to the entry into the EU was now suddenly viewed as 'low quality' and 'a danger to the health'. The emergence of this discourse does not mean that the Outsiders automatically adapted to it, but that they used it to gain a new understanding of their own products. One time I was having coffee with a few elderly women from the village of my research, the hostess encouraged me to cut a slice of the white cheese on the table and taste it. She carefully watched me while I was eating and now and then looked and nodded to the two neighbour women. As I had swallowed the last bit, she proudly and loudly exclaimed to her neighbours: "Did you see that? Ida eats my cheese! And she is from the EU [from an 'old' member state]. If it is good enough for her, then it is good for all EU-citizens!"<sup>13</sup> I, due to my Danish citizenship, now became a metonym for all consumers in the EU. Indeed, by referring to me as a 'sample' European, she overruled the so-called expert knowledge about cheese. In such ways people operated with ideas of the new standard regime and, in a somewhat counter-hegemonic way, turned perceptions around to the benefit of their own (non-certified) production. Indeed, the Outsiders now promoted their products as authentic and traditional, which in itself became a new agricultural fashion.

In a description of two competing French biscuit companies, Simon Roberts shows how a regional product is evoked by the conscious commercialization building on

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<sup>12</sup> As the idea of pasteurization was introduced, people experimented with small portions, which were quickly heated in their microwaves before they could send them to the lab. There were, however, difficulties, as the glass or cup would burst in the microwave. The more common method was "slow pasteurization" where the milk would be standing in big pots on the stove and slowly reach the required 72-75 degrees Celsius.

<sup>13</sup> Based on my fieldnotes, May 2004.

(constructed) history, and only then becomes a product of heritage and tradition (Roberts 2007). Roberts is interested in the moment when the unspoken and previously taken for granted is made explicit. Thereby the product only gains its originality and heritage when it becomes part of a commercial discourse. Here, its authenticity as a traditional product becomes a prerequisite for its quality, and the present regains new meaning in the light of an idealized past (Roberts 2007). If we relate these thoughts to homemade food products from Lithuania such as the white cheese, we also follow a pattern by way of which it changes from being merely a cheese and becomes a consciously traditional Lithuanian product. The present understanding of the cheese as something distinct, original, and traditional, with an emphasis on the right shape and distinct taste, is created in comparison with ‘synthetic’ products imported from the West. As white cheese has never been imported, it gains specific substance in contrast to the other kinds of cheese, which now emerge at the market: various kinds of yellow cheese, cream cheese, camembert and even pre-sliced cheese, every slice being wrapped in plastic and ready to be put on toast. The synthetic versus the traditional is thus, I argue, related to a more complex understanding that goes far beyond cheese: the negative image of capitalism and a reflection of ambivalence toward the EU, as possibly representing a way to modernity, possibly a threat to the society due to ‘fake’ values. In the words of Roberts: “We are looking [...] at contemporary, self-conscious appeals to tradition in which elements of an exemplary, even idealized Arcadian past are explicitly evoked to form part of the life-world of the present.” (Roberts, 2007: 27). The Lithuanian white cheese gained new ground in the meeting with the new discourse about food safety. It was no longer ‘just’ a cheese, it was, as I call it, the reinvention of the cheese as traditional, natural and distinct by its heritage.

Indeed, for the Outsiders it is also a question of competition with the Insiders, who essentially sell the same products, the difference only being that they are already legitimized as salespeople by the thorough tests of their milk. The evocation of the Outsiders’ cheese as even *more* natural and *more* original than that of the Insiders was mobilized through a conscious mystification of the Insiders’ products in the daily talk outside the market place. That the Insiders’ products were now imbedded in the EU system would suggest that their products had been subjected to other forms for production, and consequently, that they were no longer selling the “original” products. The Outsiders, within their capability, thus furthered their claims to tradition and pure products. Looking at the Insiders’ dairy products the production becomes an issue of control. People have to produce under new circumstances and are made aware of bacteria, hygiene, fat content, storage facilities, and animal nutrition, and the cheese is only accepted after having passed



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through bacteriological control. In this way, the means of production were changed, and the products standardized and 'improved'. Yet this possibly made it a somewhat different cheese than it originally was, not to mention, endowed with a mythical reality of European impact giving body to stories spread by the Outsiders about the possibly damaging Europeanization of production.

### Making the Customer?

#### *Wearing Europe, Ingesting Lithuania*

Frances Pine, in a work about consumerism in Poland, has shown how the understanding of goods imported from the West has changed during the past decades. From being the status symbol of western culture during the socialist regime and thus in opposition to the socialist regime, the disappointments following the break-up of the Soviet Union made Western products the very symbol of betrayed hopes and promises (Pine 2001). The result was a turnaround in consumption, which took the form of the revival of national Polish products. In other words, Polish material culture and food products had a come-back, both as a way of voicing disappointment with the West, but also because many could simply not afford products imported from Western Europe (Pine 2001). In this way, consumption inevitably bears political connotations as an approval, or rejection, of changes and ideologies.

In the case of Lithuania, I found many mechanisms similar to what Pine remarked in her earlier work on Poland. The political, economic, and social ups and downs, however, had not resulted in a rejection of Western society by Lithuanians altogether. Many people in my field site were still fascinated with the west, had hope for increased wealth in the future, and aimed at adopting a modern and Western lifestyle (de Munck 2008). South American soap operas about beautiful and seductive (upper class) women and strong, handsome (and wealthy) men were among the favourite leisure time entertainments in the villages where I conducted research. Visiting the larger cities did not change this impression: going down the main shopping street in Kaunas, *Laisvės Aleja*, your attention is immediately drawn to the Lithuanian women with brightly bleached hair, shiny make-up, short skirts, and high boots, waltzing down the avenue (bound to make me feel hopelessly sloppy and out-of-fashion), mirroring the freedom to dress in what is

considered a hip and modern fashion<sup>14</sup>. The same image of material fascination was conveyed through the many shopping malls which have been mushrooming all over Lithuania. However, the flawless façade could not embrace the many and often contradictory opinions and feelings people had about the changes in society. Co-existing with expectations or hopes for increased wealth was a fear of a moral degradation of Lithuania by the quick modernization of industry with low quality products as a result. And it embodied a set of negative images: ‘fabrication’ of animals and dairy products containing preservatives (Pine 2001; Caldwell 2009). If we relate these thoughts to the idea proposed by Pine, that consumption is an expression of approval or rejection of current politics and ideology, I suggest that the co-existing and contradictory feelings about the West have resulted in both a desire for and rejection of Western products. Indeed, the counter example to the consumption of (modern) Western style (non-food) products is seen at the food market. When people went to buy food here, it was in order *not* to buy imported products. Quite on the contrary, here they wanted what no import could outdo: ‘(home)made in Lithuania’. EU-rope was consumed with fancy ‘outer’ products, Lithuania with digestive ‘inner’ products.

#### *Food Products and Conflicting Perceptions*

In Dunn’s book *Privatizing Poland* she describes a situation where an American company, having bought a Polish baby food enterprise, runs a campaign called: ‘We See a Difference’. On a big board are pictured two identically looking carrots, both of which appear tasty and delicious. But only one of the carrots is certificated by the company, whereas the other could come from just any farm and potentially be dangerous for the child’s health. The real concern of the company was that many Polish women tended to make their own baby food as this was perceived as essential to the role of being a caring mother (Dunn 2004). While Dunn analyzes this case as a means to create a new understanding of products I suggest that such campaigns likewise are aimed at changing an embedded sense of values and perceptions of motherhood among Polish women. Thereby they are creating, or making (to stay faithful to Dunn’s vocabulary) a new customer.

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<sup>14</sup> The function of Laisvės Aleja as a place for women to make an appearance dates back to Soviet times: after work, people would dress up in their best clothes, some of which had been obtained from Western Europe, and promenade up and down the street. At that time it was one of the only places to show (relative) material wealth.

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Likewise is the creation of the new Lithuanian customer a prerequisite for success for standards and measurements. The problem remains for the EU, that just as Insiders may not, and Outsiders do not stay faithful to the standard regime, so do many customers operate with different ideas for what a good product really is. This became more interesting as new criteria were set and posed challenges to previous beliefs, stirred up the waters and impacted on ideas about products. Indeed, there was not (or no longer) a final consensus. The elevation of the national products in contrast to the food safety policy backed by the EU resulted in conflicting opinions in daily life. New understandings of hygiene would often conflict with perceptions of healthy milk straight from the cow. An agricultural advisor argued:

The basic issue is that they [the Outsiders] do not have permission to sell [...] People buy from them because it is cheap. The problem is that [...] you never know what you get. There could be all kinds of bacteria. [...] That is why people need a special permission. And to get permission means that you have to go to many offices and milk institutes, you need a bunch of papers. The milk has to have the right temperature, do not get me started on the requirements for storage. And there should be no residual antibiotics in the milk. It is all very difficult. [...]<sup>15</sup>

Whereas the advisor had imbedded his argumentation in the emerging discourse about food safety and hygiene, talking along the standard- and person-making lines, it was far from all those who had adapted to this way of thinking and instead found inconsistencies in the new regulations.<sup>16</sup> We can take the same logic to the market place: as long as the food products produced by the Outsiders are recognized as belonging to 'our' Lithuanian kitchen and being a part of the traditional food products, they may be excluded in space, but included in society. Furthermore, as long as customers recognize quality as linked with a well-known taste and production, EU warnings about food safety may have little impact on the customers' choice. To sum up: as long as the debate about authenticity and natural products straight from the cow are dominant among people who pursue the products, the Outsiders are still capable of gaining ground and negotiating a new position within (not outside) the EU framework for production. A customer, a man

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<sup>15</sup> Interview, Kaunas municipal administration, November 2006.

<sup>16</sup> For a comparative discussion of the preferences in sausages, see Klumbyte, 2009.

in his early 50s, explained:

I buy outside, and I always did. The reason some people buy inside is because they want to make sure what they get. [...] Let us say that I now go inside to buy. Then next weekend I go visit my mother in the countryside, and she gives me several litres of milk and a cheese to take home with me. Then I should say no to that too? What would the logic be in that? [...] I have eaten [these products] since I was a child. Meanwhile somebody in Brussels got this idea that my mum's milk is bad, because it has not been sent to a laboratory. [...] Then I should stay away from the milk I have been drinking for the past 50 years, because what used to make me healthy is now a danger to my health.<sup>17</sup>

As it is suggested in this quote, the logic behind the standard regime does not appeal to customers who perceive this food as real and nutritious Lithuanian produce, which, due to distant policy-making is all of a sudden embedded in a different category as low-quality. In order to be able to exclude illegal products from the market it is necessary to create a new kind of customer, or consumer, who internalizes the EUropeanized values. The problem emerges that just like the Polish mothers who operate with certain values of motherhood which are connected to their own production of baby food, so do the Lithuanians navigate in the market according to more nuanced internalized values about a healthy product, which likewise is connected with a sense of 'our' and 'home.'

## Conclusion

In this article I have suggested that the links between standards and identity politics are moderated by socio-economic calculations by people subjected to the new standards regime, and by the re-evocation of the traditional products. Whereas the EU-control is pervasive, it is restricted to certain spaces, at certain times, for certain producers. The main reason why the standard policy appears so ineffective, I suggest, is because the EU project of 'making' people (producers and customers) does not work out in practice. The links between standards and the making of persons are influenced both by options and restrictions in the nearby environment, and also by the calculations and practical negotiations of the actors. Although

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<sup>17</sup> From my field notes, January 2007.

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Lithuania formally operates a zero-tolerance policy towards informal production of and sale of dairy products, this is on the practical level not perceived as a serious crime. Indeed, any given police officer could have been brought up on the same kind of cheese which now classified as illegal, and in most cases the police cannot be bothered to go to the market place, even when called up by angry Insiders. While justification through EU blueprinting appears only stimulating for the producers who, from the onset, have the knowledge and capabilities to become EUropean farmers, which is a minority, the EU unintentionally provided the Outsiders with a new frame of understanding for their production. They did not submit to the disqualification of the outside products but operated with a new frame for their milk and cheese products. They, in the midst of the growing importation of E-numbered products from the old member countries, reinvented the wheel. The authentic classic Lithuanian farm products now again appear 'traditional anew'. In such practical negotiations of both Insiders and Outsiders, and the failed person-making of both producers and customers, we find the weakness in the standard regime.

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