

ETHNOGRAPHIC PHOTOGRAPHY: VISUAL ANALYSIS METHODS FOR INTERPRETING URBAN SPACES

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Research purpose. To study the public spaces of Kaunas Dainava, Kalniečiai, Eiguliai, Šilainiai microdistricts using visual analysis methods.

Keywords: comparative method, Kaunas, microdistricts, post-Soviet spaces, visual ethnography

Research Methodology. Methods of collecting empirical material: observation, participant observation, photo fixation method. Methods of material analysis: visual analysis, comparison, interpretive method. Ethnographic research was based on the assumption that “the boundaries of ethnography have expanded so much that they are no longer defined by either a scientific or a creative paradigm”, [...] it is a scientific and non-scientific experimental practice that transcends the boundaries of disciplines and genres (Klumbytė, 1999: 89). Based on the perspectives of visual anthropology, this study aims to look at visual material “[...] as anthropology, as an art, as a construct of reflections from social life” (Račiūnaitė-Paužuolienė, 2014: 117).

Results / Findings. Research revealed the ways how the inhabitants are trying to solve every day practical problems and participating in changing the physical environment.

Originality / Practical implications. Kaunas microdistricts that were built during the Soviet era have not yet been sufficiently researched. Critical approaches, scientific methods used in the humanities and social sciences, that are based on visual analysis, allows a new perspective on interpreting these spaces. New methods and new perspectives for exploring urban spaces could help to reveal potential artistic or tourism potential, also involve residents and communities into participating in local activities.