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The Other Side of Consumption

Sorting, Storing and Discarding in Vilnius Domestic Life

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Abstract

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This thesis provides an overview of Vilnius citizens' practices of sorting, storing and disposal. Comparative perspectives from different settings: Vilnius, Copenhagen and Jeddah will highlight that waste is contextual – heavily influenced by cultural norms and habits. A historical perspective is incorporated to understand how different generations have developed routines and norms, and to what extent these cultural practices have been taken over by the youth. My approach in explaining the varying practices is based upon cultural analysis. There is a strong focus on how people learn to categorize and label stuff, redefining them as waste or something to save or not yet get rid of.

Keywords: waste management; storing; sorting; recycling; discarding; Vilnius; Copenhagen.

Contents

1. Introduction	4
Methodology and materials	5
Ethics	5
The outline of the thesis	6
Theoretical Inspiration and Earlier Research	7
2. Copenhagen Study	11
Approaching Vilnius	14
3. The Setting of Vilnius	15
Generational Changes in Waste Management	15
4. Kitchen Stories	20
Bread	20
5. Clothes.....	24
Fast/Slow Fashion	28
Cycles of Clothes	29
6. Second Burial	32
Old Media and Stuff which is Hardly Ever Disposed of.....	33
Toys.....	35
7. Reasons Which Influence Sorting and Discarding.....	37
Philanthropy	37
Economic Motivations	38
The Soviet legacy	40
Social pressure.....	41
8. A Different Setting: The Saudi Arabia Experience.....	46
9. Conclusion.....	49
References.....	52
List of Personal Communication	57

1. Introduction

Waste management is a huge challenge for every community and nation. It is an increasing problem due to the seemingly ever-increasing world population, production and consumption. It is a problem which receives a lot of public and media attention. The need for and the benefits of waste sorting have been discussed from the pages of popular magazines to academic journals. Many strategies have been suggested and many agreements about how to reduce the amount of waste have been signed all over the world.

All this communication is mostly happening at organizational levels: government – municipalities – waste management companies. The individual citizen's role is often invisible. In this thesis I will look at how ordinary citizens participate in waste management and what kind of perception they have about it. Another issue is that waste management – the ways in which people choose to discard food and domestic objects – is often seen in a rather narrow frame. In the following study I place the strategies of sorting, discarding and storing in a wider domestic context looking at the contemporary cultural values, and also how historical traditions influence people's behaviour today.

The aim of this thesis is to understand how people develop habits and attitudes in regard to handling objects by sorting, storing or discarding. When I embarked on this project my aim was to identify, understand and explain the circumstances which influence people's behaviour towards waste sorting. My idea was to analyze attitudes towards waste sorting per se, but during the interviews the action or the meaning of discarding and sorting were often interwoven. It turned out to be difficult to separate them and I found it more analytically rewarding to broaden the scope of the research. Sorting and ridding not only go together, but they also complement each other.

My main research questions concern, firstly, what kind of cultural categories people create of domestic objects and how they handle and perceive the life cycles of their stuff. Secondly, how this process results in patterns of defining and handling waste, and thirdly, what kind of moral/social ideas these practices carry with them.

The idea for my thesis came during my internship in 2012 at a tiny niche consultancy working on sustainability projects in Copenhagen. One of the projects I worked on was about waste management and it inspired me to go deeper into this topic. Hence, I decided to do my own research in my hometown of Vilnius. Furthermore, I thought it would be interesting to make some comparison between the waste sorting situation in Vilnius and in Copenhagen. Both cities are the capitals of their comparatively small countries in Northern Europe and are

surrounded by larger neighbours. However, the history of both countries is very different as is their development of waste sorting: Copenhageners already have a long experience in this area, while the citizens of Vilnius are still in a learning process. It is worth comparing both examples to see what could be done to improve the situation of waste sorting in Vilnius and other places where this practice does not have a long tradition. I will also briefly include examples from Saudi Arabia as a setting with very different attitudes towards the handling of waste.

Methodology and materials

The study is grounded in applied cultural analysis. The methodology used was mainly qualitative through the conducting of interviews, observations and other ethnographic approaches. To explore my research questions I used two local cases, one based on my internship in Copenhagen, and the other on the later study in Vilnius. The research in Vilnius was based primarily on 10 semi-structured interviews with respondents of different generations which lasted from 45 minutes to 1 hour 30 minutes; a 1 hour long focus group with 6 participants and 4 conversations with acquaintances in situations which naturally flowed about obsolescence items management. In addition, I had access to the discarding behaviour of a young family which I shared a house over a period of a few months. A disposal diary was produced by the family who were moving to a new place. The material from Copenhagen consists of my participation in the project mentioned earlier, with observations of the analytical process, interviews and the client's reaction (limited by 3 weeks fieldwork and language boundaries). During a shorter visit to Jeddah, I used this setting as a contrast to the Western experience.

Academic literature which deals specifically with looking at sorting and disposal from a cultural perspective was used to strengthen the theoretical framework. The historical literature helped me to understand the reasons which had shaped different generations way of ridding, sorting and discarding. The statistics provided me with the data of the consumption situation expressed in real numbers. I also found internet forums useful in getting an overview of citizens' perception of particular situations. Blog material provided me with participants' discussion about the ways old clothes are disposed of.

Ethics

My research is based on voluntarily given interviews. All the participants were informed about the research details: what the research is about, why it is being conducted,

and how it will be disseminated. All the names of the participants' have been changed into pseudonyms to ensure their confidentiality, even though none of the participants particularly expressed their wish to be anonymous. Since the research topic is not sensitive I have left personal narratives unchanged, as they complemented the overall view of the situation and I couldn't imagine how it might negatively affect the participants if they were recognized. Since pro-environmental behaviour is promoted by the media, I tried to avoid tendentious questions about sorting; instead I guided the interviews into action orientated discussions. Some of questions I asked a few times from different angles to ensure I got objective data, instead of a popular widely-held approach to the subject matter.

The outline of the thesis

My choices of topics emerged from the empirical material. There were strongly expressed patterns of stuff discarding in the interviews, which were easily grouped and transformed into chapters. My comparative angle helped me to notice how culturally coloured the ways people handle waste were and enabled me to show that I had used different theoretical inspirations during the writing.

In the second chapter I describe my internship experience which inspired me to go deeper into the analysis of people's behaviour towards the topic of waste and to explore this research in a different environment – in Vilnius.

The geographical, political and social setting of Vilnius is presented in the third chapter. An overview will lead the reader to a better understanding of the chosen city's background and situation. Here, changes in waste management during the last century up to a presentation of the current public waste sorting system is discussed as well as the differences between generations' waste sorting behaviour.

In the fourth chapter I talk about kitchen waste with a particular focus on the perception of, and habits towards bread. Having been valued and respected for centuries in Lithuania the sacred meaning of bread influenced customs, habits and folklore; furthermore, it is still surrounded by respect in modern kitchens.

Clothes and the ideas of second-hand stuff are discussed in the fifth chapter and I define what is understood as second-hand in the Vilnius setting. Furthermore, I describe the practice of choosing and buying new clothes and the patterns which influence decision making: the economic situation, the Soviet legacy, fast or slow fashion as opposed to natural

wear and tear... Furthermore, this chapter deals with the respondents' experience of how the hierarchies and cycles of clothes are created.

Chapter sixth uses the concept of second burials of objects by looking at collective gardens as a unique practice of the post-soviet time and its influence upon the accumulating of obsolete items is discussed together with the connection between glass jars and summer houses. The perspective is widened to a discussion on the reasons which stop people from throwing old media items and children's toys away – here the focus is on the emotionality of objects.

The seventh chapter starts a more general discussion on the reasons for sorting, storing and discarding. How do the ideas of philanthropy and moral critique of consumerism influence decisions to discard or give things away? What economic incentives may influence people's habits and does social pressure influence behaviour or not?

The eighth chapter briefly introduces a strong cultural contrast to Vilnius or Copenhagen. Here I use my Saudi Arabian experience to think about waste from a different angle and to take into consideration the importance of history, cultural norms and habits.

In the conclusion I summarize my results and the uses of cultural analysis combined with a comparative and historical perspective on waste management, sorting, storing and discarding. I also discuss the applied dimension and the issues which could be useful for waste management institutions and policy-makers.

Theoretical Inspiration and Earlier Research

There is a rich and interdisciplinary source of literature dealing with both domestic waste management and the practices of sorting, storing and discarding – using different analytical perspectives. Waste handling is a process influenced by many interconnected practices and established habits, cultural values and traditions, which at first glance do not seem to have any connection to waste handling. According to the British scholar Hetherington (2004) “it is far too simplistic to equate disposal with waste per se, the issue of how we get rid of what is unwanted still has to be addressed” (p. 160). As Åkesson (2006) points out “We are constantly “sorting things out”, redefining some objects, activities, people as waste or just wasted”. (p. 39). These constant circulations between centre and periphery could be viewed through *Actor Network Theory* (“Actor Network Theory”, 2005) which discusses relational effects within a broad network which connects both people and objects as co-actors. *ANT* inspired me to think about waste handling as a whole, not as separated practices. Furthermore, waste management could be approached through Bourdieu's concept

of *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1977) as it refers to lifestyles, habits and embodied practices in everyday life. For me the concept of habitus was a help in focusing on how early acquired habits have a staying power in people's lives. Anthony Giddens' (1984) way for addressing the relationship between social structure (traditions, institutions, moral codes, and established paths of doing things) and the potentiality that these can be changed when the public start to ignore them, change them, or reproduce them differently, has also been helpful. I also found it fruitful to discuss waste recycling through Peirce's (Singer, 1984) trichotomy of iconic, indexical and symbolic signs – especially in relation to the tendency that to be environmentally conscious has turned into something trendy.

I have also been intrigued by previous researches on waste management and disposal. The study of waste management in Malmö, Sweden (Henriksson, G., Börjesson Rivera, M., Åkesson, L., 2012) highlighted the concern of the respondents that their privacy is not ensured because of “the fact that waste can be tracked back to its producer”. Is there an afterhistory of disposal? The clash of my own and others perception of waste handling brought me to the realization of how cultural the process of disposal is. The article on domesticated media (2009) brought into light my own treasures from the back of my drawers – it really inspired me to think about why I have kept these things and why others do the same.

In the following section I will mention some of my other main analytical inspirations under the different themes of my study.

Bread and Fossilization

While talking about bread I chose not to approach it through a perspective on magic, despite the fact that this angle would work well especially with the habits and traditions which were used back in the days. I concentrated instead on understanding current ideas as the relics of archaic practice. Here the term social-fossilization (Shove & Pantzar, 2006) came in. It was the right word to describe what I was looking for. The thing about bread is exactly the case of how old habits and beliefs live on in a totally new context – they start to vanish if they lose the idea or practice which make them meaningful.

Clothes as a setting, a memory device, a circulation

The chapter about clothes was inspired by several theoretical approaches. I open the discussion about clothes with the anthropologist Miller's (2010) book *Stuff* following his suggestion to see clothes as parts of a social setting instead of as objects per se as it deepens the understanding of consumption and consumer culture. The idea of the life cycle of clothes

was elaborated in Gregson's (2011) discussion on how clothes have a capacity to hold memories and express our social identity. Here I also found Thompson's book *Rubbish Theory* (1979) important. He analyzes the circulation of objects and how the value appears through our approach of seeing and situating items as we are creating the conditions for value to emerge, and explores how material and cultural wear and tear are seldom synchronized.

Second burial of inanimate objects

I became inspired by Hetherington's (2004) description of the two phases of disposal of a valued item as a first and second burial, a process through which an object may pass before turning into rubbish. An item can be placed in storage until its value decreases and the owner then does not have a guilty consciousness over discarding it. The empirical data brought forward the ways in which objects are treated according to their present or future exchange or emotional value.

Panopticism and social pressure

Questions of social control became an important issue – on different levels. One of the respondents when talking about the possible positive effect of economic incentives described how it would work in an apartment building in very similar terms to Foucault's (1977) idea of panopticism. A different source of inspiration came from several case studies trying to explain the role of social pressure in waste management, often from a psychological point of view. For example, both sides of the concept of social pressure are discussed in the context of encouraging sorting behaviour: as the behaviourist psychologist Geller (1989) discusses, negative reinforcement could be perceived as a danger to individual freedom, while incentives might diminish the importance of expected behaviour as such. Nevertheless, knowing that others are performing expected pro-environmental behaviour might allow the belief that it is more likely to make a difference, as well as encouraging such behaviour due to a desire for social approval. (Burn, n.d.)

Waste is contextual

Mary Douglas' classic work on cultural categorization *Purity and Danger* (2002) was important throughout my study as it built the foundation for the discussion of dirt and pollution with the ideas that waste is contextual and not absolute. This made me bring in Jeddah to show how strong ideas of cleanliness and purity may produce very different attitudes to the handling of waste.

Looking back at the literature there are some uniting themes in most of it: a cultural perspective, an interest in the trajectories or the life cycle of objects, looking at the stages of ageing or recycling, the need to analyze the close interaction between objects and people – these are the basic themes I will explore in my thesis.

2. Copenhagen Study

As I already mentioned, the topic of my thesis developed during my internship in “Social Action” in Copenhagen and in the next few paragraphs I will introduce you to my experience during the internship.

Social Action might be deemed a concept design consultancy. Many companies searching for help from consultants tend to focus on the “how?”: How to develop a new product? How should it be designed? How should it be marketed, and how should the company be organized to achieve the best solution? (Rodsted, 2007, p. 26). Companies wanting answers about “how?” can ask their engineers and designers, they can use advertising or management agencies, but when a company seeks answers to the questions of what the company should produce or innovate there is no obvious place to ask. In the search for such an answer all previously mentioned constituent parts could be involved. Therefore, a new paradigm of concept design could be helpful. Usually concept design requires at least 3 different competences: from business experience and design practice to social science perspectives. Social Action often collaborates with other professionals in joint projects. They cover the social science competences and they locate partners from fields in which they lack certain competences. The goal of the company is to make the world a better place to live in: by making companies and citizens act in more environmentally friendly ways. Hence, it mostly develops environmental projects with a social-scientific focus. Furthermore, the success of new initiatives is “to make every positive environmental action an economic advantage” (Social Action, n.d).

The biggest project which Social Action worked on during my internship was studying user behaviour in waste sorting in three municipalities of Denmark. The waste managing company wanted to research user behaviour towards their waste managing system three times in a nine month period. The first round of interviews analyzed the perception of the current waste sorting system, then 3 months and 6 months later, after some changes in the organization of sorting containers, interviews were repeated to gain an insight into how respondents perceive changes, whether they liked them or not. This project was a great opportunity for me to participate from A to Z, because it was started and completed while I was an intern. Hence, I observed the preparation and analysis; I passively participated in a few of the interviews (because of my lack of Danish) and I had an opportunity to observe how the Social Action researchers conducted the analysis of the user behaviour information on waste sorting. In a two weeks term, audio, video and visual material from 3 municipalities

of Copenhagen were conducted. In each of municipalities, families with children, couples without children and a single person over the age of fifty were interviewed. In total 24 interviews were conducted. All the interviews were audio recorded and some of the answers were also video recorded. The first cycle of interviews focused on the topics of waste perception in general, the users own characteristic of current waste management and the expectations for the new sorting system. The analysis stage took two days in which the team went through the material and picked up some stories, insights and quotes. Due to the tight schedule the interviews were not transcribed, hence mostly field notes were used for analysis and some parts of the interviews were listened to in order to get more details. In these few days of analysis many of the quotes and insights were written down on a board to get an overview. From this filtered data, a presentation and a short movie about the inhabitants' attitudes and behaviour towards waste sorting were made. Numerous quotes were presented to the client to illustrate a variety of attitudes towards waste sorting in these three communities of Copenhagen.

“Waste is really just fucking annoying.” “With small items we choose the fastest solutions.” “So, if you are faced with 10 batteries you throw them in the recycling, but such a simple little one, I must admit that I might throw it out with the kitchen waste.” “Why do it at work, when you don't do it at home?” “I do not have any opinion. It has just always been this way.” “I wouldn't say that we are either good or bad at sorting. We're probably somewhere in between – mostly we do it.” “I feel guilty when I am compelled to throw something that isn't supposed to be in the domestic waste.” “We are open to new experiments, but we are unsure about how much work lies in it.” “I will not be fooled.” “I'm not good at new things.” “It's not really that difficult. It should just be an ingrained habit.” “I can see the common sense in it... Now there are the small stores nearby and I can always throw it all out directly. The deposits will probably not disappear anyway.”

The researchers came up with three citizens' categories according to their perception upon waste sorting: the sceptic, the ambivalent and the optimist. The sceptic was described as a person who does not want to change his habits, who sees environmental concerns as a topic trend in society, however he fully understands the principle of waste sorting, nevertheless he does not have enough “energy”, “time”, “profit” or “desire” to change his habits, sometimes he explains his behaviour by insouciance. He feels under informed about the coming testing of the new sorting containers and one of the main concerns is about the space: both in terms of the need for more bins indoor and more space outside. Some of the interviewed sceptics believed that the new containers would be almost like a fence in front of the building and

would make it more difficult to go in and out of the house, and because of the size they would need to keep them further from the house and that would be inconvenient. Despite the hesitation towards waste sorting the sceptic did not say “certainly not” and might even have compost in the garden for biodegradable waste, albeit without highlighting it as something special.

The ambivalent person is not particularly concerned about the new waste sorting system nor does he have many ideas about the current one. He avoids commenting on the soon-to-come system before he has used it. Most perceive their own sorting habits (more or less) based on common sense, in that they sort to the extent made possible by the equipment provided by the municipality. The ambivalent would use a bulky waste system for that waste which goes beyond existing everyday service. He recognizes that waste sorting requires extra effort and it is the issue of habits which needs to be changed. Whether one leans towards a positive or a sceptical acceptance of the new experiments is expressed differently, with statements à la ‘we have to look after the environment’, ‘never mind’, ‘we take it as it comes’, and ‘it is excellent’.

The optimistic people’s attitudes are spread across households with a very different degree of sorting. They highlight waste as a task of general utility and for some even a public necessity, like the allusion to “it is one’s duty to aim to leave a good environment for the grandchildren”. And then there is a group that is environmentally aware and emphasizes that they sort above average. Sorting above average means that respondents endeavour to sort plastic and metal from the domestic waste. It usually means composting biodegradable waste and using an outbuilding/shed to sort other waste (in bags and cardboard boxes), further to what is provided by the municipalities sorting facilities. The outbuilding/shed therefore has a prominent role for them which emphasizes that they are already making an effort, and the new containers are seen as an opportunity to create more space and order. The optimists perceive the experiment as a good initiative to raise the bar for the sorting habits of others. Those who sort more than average are usually families with two or more children who also see the new bins as a good opportunity to educate their children in sorting behaviour and what happens to things when they are discarded through wear and tear.

The differences between the way the citizens of Copenhagen and Vilnius handle waste appeared obvious to me. The described sorting behaviour of the ambivalent was equal or even higher than a Vilnius citizen who would describe himself as an optimist, sorting above average. I became interested in what shapes these different habits, how people learn to handle waste in one way or another, and what influences the learning process.

Approaching Vilnius

During the Copenhagen study I got the idea that it would be interesting to go deeper into the analysis of people's behaviour towards the topic of waste and to explore this research in a different environment – in Vilnius. I wanted to deepen the research by bringing some literature and theory into it in order to explain repetitive patterns from a more academic point of view not only from a few researchers' personal discussion, as Davies argues, it is essential to “provide knowledge through theoretical inference” to avoid “sinking into a self-absorption that negates the possibility of any knowledge other than self-knowledge” (Davies, 2008, p. 238). *By bringing Vilnius in I am not trying to do a formal comparative study, but attempting to widen the analytical perspective on waste handling by using another cultural context and asking different questions.*

Throughout the research in Copenhagen none of the target households said that they did not sort waste at all. Some had a more serious attitude than others, but all the households to some extent sorted waste. Naturally, thoughts about the waste management situation in Vilnius came to my mind; especially that waste sorting is still relatively new there. I could wish for a more serious attitude towards waste management among citizens than is the case in Copenhagen, but my preconception was that this would not be the case. Moreover, the Copenhagen experience had inspired me to continue, I had become interested in exploring how habits and ways of ridding may change due to the different cultural setting. To analyze, as Åkesson (2006) points out “What kind of culturally based decisions are we making as we stand in a moment of hesitation before we slip an object or an idea into the waste-bin or dump it on the refuse tip?” (p. 44)

3. The Setting of Vilnius

Vilnius is the capital and largest city of Lithuania and has a population of just over 500,000. Lithuania is the largest of the three Baltic States. It is situated along the south eastern shore of the Baltic Sea, to the east of Sweden and Denmark. It borders Latvia to the north, Belarus to the east and south, Poland to the south, and Kaliningrad, Russian Federation to the southwest. A brief overview of the main historical facts about Lithuania and Vilnius can add to a deeper understanding of the current situation. During World War I, Vilnius and the rest of Lithuania was occupied by the German Army from 1915 until 1918. Lithuania declared independence in 1918, however a few years later the entire county of Vilnius was annexed by Poland. During War World II the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact was signed between Germany and the Soviet Union, hence Lithuania and Vilnius County were annexed by the USSR in 1940 (Lithuania was then invaded by Nazi Germany in 1941, and was reoccupied by the USSR in 1944). Lithuanian independence was re-established on March 11, 1990. Furthermore, under these dry facts were hidden many tragic battles, wars, fires, resistance, Lithuanians mass deportation to Siberia and other remote parts of the Soviet Union, and other terrible events. (Manelis & Račis, 2011)

Since the re-established independence many changes in the cultural and economic life of Lithuanians have taken place. Nevertheless, almost 50 years of occupation by the Soviet Union has strongly influenced even nowadays practices. After the re-established independence in 1990 the municipality-organized glass and paper collecting disappeared from everyday practices. A new recycling system started after Lithuania joined the European Union in 2004. The practice is thus less than 10 years old; the infrastructure to manage waste recycling is still in the creating-realizing process and at the present time there is still no system for biodegradable waste. Furthermore, only 25% of domestic waste was recycled last year, with the other part ending up in dumps (Bricaitė, 2013), facts like these highlight the importance and relevance of the topic. Pro-environmental conscious behaviour has been discussed since the 1970s in Copenhagen ("Copenhagen Cleantech Cluster - Waste Report 2012", n.d., p. 9), and therefore citizens have had time to accept the way waste is sorted for recycling and establish their own waste handling habits.

Generational Changes in Waste Management

During the last half of the century habits of consumption and ridding have changed dramatically. Many factors, especially the political and economic situation, have influenced

these changes, which, in turn, have drastically impacted on the habits of citizens. This change appears in the interviews with respondents from different generations.

In less than 100 years Lithuania's economy has changed radically, the majority of people have moved from farming in the countryside to urban jobs. This migration was speeded up not only by industrialization, but also by the USSR's seizure of private land. This rapid change means that many youths of today do not have any understanding about the kind of lifestyle their grandparents used to have. Hence, some clashes between generations appear in waste managing behaviour.

In the conversations with elderly respondents these changes became evident. A couple in their late seventies, where both wife and husband had grown up in small villages in peasants' families but spent all their adult life in a city reflected upon food waste in their childhood: "There was no food waste back in those days. Everything that was left, all the left-overs, all peelings and even the water used for dishwashing became feed for domestic animals. It was an extremely difficult time for people in Lithuania: wars and the post-war period. There was not enough food not to mention other goods. Food was much more valued than it is nowadays". (Jonas)*. While talking about clothes waste – I received a short didactic lecture about back in the days when it was an absolutely different situation and people did not have so much stuff as they do now. Basically, there were no clothes wastes either. All clothing that had been outgrown was handed down to the younger members of the family and those which were unsuitable were used as cloths for cleaning or as patching material. Actually, the respondents mentioned that they continued to have the same attitude during the Soviet regime and also even now.

Another respondent who was in their seventies told me a similar story, that in her childhood in the village there was almost no waste at all – everything that burned was burnt, all the food waste became feed for domestic animals or it was composted. After moving to the cities the order of waste sorting changed. Almost all types of waste went into the same bin. Only bottles and paper were returned to recycle stations, to get a deposit back in some way: either monetary or in way of some other goods like jar lids or toilet paper. After independence was re-established, a small amount of money could be had for returned bottles, hence it was an economic motivation only for people who received very low incomes. And only in the past decade was information about environmental friendly behaviour and waste sorting disseminated to the wider public.

* The list of the personal communications is on page 57.

Nowadays there is a situation in which three generations have an absolutely different understanding of waste recycling: grandparents used to keep stuff and reused as much as possible, parents' generation used to throw all waste into the same bin and the youth have been introduced again to the sorting of waste. As you can see there is no tradition behind waste sorting – every generation has its own way of doing it.

I got a great example of the different attitudes that exist between generations when I interviewed Ona and Tadas, a couple in their sixties, who were living in a private house with a small garden, and a few weeks later I had a conversation with Ona's mother. Both women gave each other as examples of the behaviour displayed by the older/younger generation. The mother in her nineties, who was born in a peasant's family but had lived in a one bedroom apartment for more than half of her life, told me that her daughter's family did not care about sorting and they used a universal bin for everything and did not try to reuse kitchen waste (like peelings) despite the fact that they had a garden. Additionally, the lady explained to me that it is very beneficial to use kitchen waste for plants in the garden and how she collected eggshells as fertilizer for her daughter's fruit trees in her garden. The lady complained that her daughter often threw the eggshells away when she came to help her tidy up the apartment. (Kazimiera).

During the interview with the daughter, she explained how her mother kept everything; sometimes she gave her a bin full of peelings to fertilize the garden. "What should I do with these peelings in winter? Drive all the way to my house and throw on the snow? Usually, I take it downstairs and throw them into the garbage container." (Ona).

Another example illustrates the different attitudes between parents and their teenage children on the need and value of stuff. The couple in question, who live in a nice cottage in a suburb of Vilnius and could be described as an upper middle class family with two teenage children, the wife in her late thirties and the husband in his mid-forties, both discussed the impact of consumerism on their children's desires during the interview. They had noticed the differences towards buying and ridding of stuff that existed between generations. They lamented that their kids are so much affected by all this consumerist way of life that they do not value things. The wife gave an example that when she was a child she had a good pair of gloves and she looked after them because she knew that she would not get a new pair easily, while her children do not care so much and have lost their gloves a few times during the cold season. They cited two reasons to explain these changes: it was difficult times when their parents grew up and life wasn't too easy in their childhood during Soviet times, therefore they learnt to use stuff sparingly and rationally. However, it is difficult to share these same

values with their children who are growing up in an environment full of advertisements to buy, use, buy, use. They said that they do have a lot of arguments over the children wanting new things almost every day; nothing is ever enough for them. (Emilija & Vaidas)

Consumerism is encouraged these days “Shopping and spending have, in many circumstances, become ends in themselves” (Asgary & Walle, p. 62). As Appadurai (1996) writes “Like breathing, consumption is a self-effacing habit that becomes noticeable only when contextually ostentatious” (p. 66). If consumption is deemed self-effacing, then discarding, which is inherent part of consumption, is usually taken for granted. Moreover, discarding is intensively influenced by the globalization process as well. The more people consume – the more they dispose, and vice versa. Therefore, it might be useful for a better understanding of consumption to analyze the other side of it – sorting, storing and discarding, as it provides a fuller picture of material practices.

Twenty years ago, instead of the current stationary waste disposal units that are present all the time, a truck came every other day to the street. The practice of the disposing of trash was different – it required planning and a conscious effort. One had to be at home at a certain time in order to take the trash out, otherwise you were stuck with a smelly and overflowing bucket for another two days.

This is how one of the main waste companies explains the recycling situation in Vilnius and their implementation of it: “the company pays special attention to waste sorting; therefore recycle waste containers are built in convenient locations for the residents of Vilnius. The collected material is distributed for recycling. However, currently the majority of recyclable waste ends up not in special sorting containers, but in the common ones for non-recyclable waste. The initial sorting of waste mainly depends on the goodwill of all of us, the desire to change our habits and awareness.” (VSA, n.d.).

The current waste sorting system in Vilnius, more precisely the part of it which is created for citizens’ use, consists of a 3 container set: for paper, glass and plastic/metal (see Figure 1). There are 252 sets of containers for recyclable waste in Vilnius; hence it is clear that containers are not found in front of every building of the 500,000 residents of Vilnius. These sets are placed all over the city in public areas close to apartment buildings. It is also clear from the proportion between inhabitants and bins that they are not easily accessible; it requires a special trip just to take your trash out. Furthermore, from my own experience and some of the respondents’ reflections – the sorting bins’ design is inconvenient; it is not easy to put waste in them, they are often too full, and the trip to them takes too long.

Residents do not have any responsibility to use them except their good will and their social responsibility. Furthermore, the decision to sort or not to sort waste does not have any influence on residents' bills for waste management.



Figure 1. The set of sorting containers.

In the next chapter I turn my attention to litter that is produced in the kitchen, as this category is the most commonly disposed of domestic waste by households. I present a short overview of where food packages, leftovers and peelings are thrown. Furthermore, I broadly focus on bread disposal since it really captured my attention as a unique practice of Lithuanians, and I have not noticed anything similar whilst abroad.

4. Kitchen Stories

There is a movie from 2003 (*Kitchen Stories*) about post-war Swedish efficiency researchers going to Norway to study Norwegian men, with the aim of understanding how to optimize the men's use of the kitchen. One of the researchers was sitting on an umpire's chair in the corner of the kitchen and was not allowed to have a conversation with the one being observed. Of course, I did not sit on an umpire's chair, but nevertheless, many interesting stories were told in the kitchen setting during my fieldwork.

Bags of food are brought most days, thus casual domestic waste basically consists of food packaging and kitchen waste. There is no recycling system in place for organic waste in Vilnius, so recycling organic waste is left to the rare initiative of those who have a garden. Therefore, there is no broad discussion about food waste, it goes with non-recyclable waste and nobody cares too much about it. However, some interesting patterns were repeated while talking about food waste – the disposal of bread.

Bread

Bread is valued in many agriculturists' cultures as a sign of food and a symbol of life and it is also very important in Lithuanian folklore and tradition. Lithuanians, as did other peasant societies, worked hard and with poor implements to make bread, hence it was very important and respected and many tales and traditions were created around it.

According to the Lithuanian ethnographer Dundulienė (1989) bread as an everyday food was known to Lithuanians since ancient times. Its very old origin has been shown in archaeological excavations as well as linguistic data. The names of "javas" (corn) and "rugys" (rye) are of Indo-European origin. Other bread customs appeared later on. Over thousands of years the ancestors of today's Lithuanians created many harvest deities like corn spirits which, it was hoped, could affect crop yields. Farmers created original art, mythology and rituals and later bread patterns appeared in the works of poets and writers.

Bread gained an additional meaning in Lithuania after the country had converted to Christianity in the 14th century. Christians used to respect bread due to it symbolizing the body of Christ. It was a common tradition to mark a cross on a homemade loaf before baking, resulting in those eating it to feel blessed. (Šeputytė-Vaitulevičienė, 2009)

Altogether, bread was both an everyday food and a symbol of life, a symbol of fertility in festivals like weddings, births, the sowing of the crop or harvest, and later Christmas Eve and Easter. However, nowadays people are not aware of how valuable bread

was for their forefathers as bread has lost its sacral meaning. The supermarkets are full of bread; it has stopped being associated with hard work. Respectful behaviour towards bread has gone out of the window. It is rare that a fallen slice is picked up and used again, people without remorse dispose of old bread directly into the garbage. Nevertheless, some respect towards bread is still alive in current practice.

The majority of respondents indicated that they do treat bread waste in general differently from other food waste. I was surprised that respect for bread is still alive in today's kitchens. There is no need for a one year cycle of work to have bread on your table; nevertheless, the elder generation remembers what it means to have their own bread. My grandparents ate homemade bread baked by their mothers as children before they moved to the cities. There is a saying in Lithuanian: "The third generation away from ploughshare" (trečia karta nuo žagrės) – this means that there have already been three generations who have made their living without farming. My generation is the third one who can buy bread in a grocery shop, furthermore, the difference between generations in bread consumption and disposal is obvious: elderly people have a more sacred view of it; while this respect decreases in the younger age groups (the youth has only a small reflection on the importance of bread for their forefathers; they no longer know where it comes from).

Rita, a woman in her seventies, shared her attitudes and behaviour with bread: "In the summer time, old bread was accumulated and given to the relatives' chickens. If the bread fell – it was picked up, dusted off and eaten. If after the fall it was too dirty to eat, it was crossed (the Sign of the Cross was made) and thrown away – this habit came from childhood and it was based on both respect for food and religious respect for bread as the flesh of God." (Rita). Another respondent in her late seventies told me "We were taught as kids if a piece of bread fell – we were supposed to pick it up, kiss it and eat" (Laima). She added that it breaks her heart to see disrespectful behaviour towards bread. As an example she told me about a situation in a canteen during the Soviet times in which someone placed a slice of bread under the table leg to make table more stable. It would never happen in this respondent's family.

On the other hand, Ona and Tadas, a couple in their sixties, reflected on their families' relations to bread without mentioning its sacred aspect, as the previous respondents had done, but highlighted the bread's material value and usage. They never dispose of bread (unless it becomes mouldy). If white bread gets old – they use it for making meatballs; otherwise they sprinkle it as birdseed in the backyard. I felt that they remembered the understanding that one is not allowed to dispose of bread which had come from their childhood. Back in the days the respondent's mother made kvass or beer from old dried bread. A few decades ago there were

no waste disposal unit so the rubbish truck came at a certain time and had a bin fixed to its side for parings, peelings and old bread (presumably the drivers had some domestic animals). When the waste containers did appear, it was common practice to leave a bag with dried bread out (for those who have farms and animals). (Ona & Tadas).

The younger the respondents were, the less attention they paid to their behaviour connected with bread. As Emilija and Vaidas told me it is very rare for them to have too much bread, but if they do – they freeze it in the freezer, if it gets stale – they feed it to the birds; but they never throw it out into the bin. Then I asked from where this respect came, Vaidas said that he had been scolded by his grandmother a few times because he put the bread upside down; while Emilija said that she did not remember being taught to respect bread, but had known that you are not supposed to eat bread from the plate with cutlery – bread should be eaten with hands. (Emilija & Vaidas).

Focus group participants (21-28 years old) did not have any superstitions or special respect for bread. However, after I had introduced it, some of the participants remembered that their grandparents had told them something about it, for instance, that the “face” of the bread (the slit loaf) should not look directly to the corner of the room, the bread should not be placed upside-down and it is not allowed to eat bread with cutlery – only with hands. (Focus group).

The youngest couple with which I talked was in their early twenties and claimed that they did not have any sentiments towards bread, so if it gets old or mouldy, they just throw it in the rubbish bin. (Laura & Rokas).

At the end of my internship in Copenhagen, I was cleaning my rented apartment before my trip home the next day and realized that I had bread left – it would have been sacrilegious to throw it the bin, hence I gave the bread to my Danish colleague. From the strange look he gave to the bread I understood that a short explanation was needed to clarify my desire not to feel guilty about wasting bread. When my colleague explained that there is no magic left in bread in Danish habits, I understood how unique this tradition is.

Even if the respect for bread is still alive in the minds of current Lithuanian citizens, the weakening of the understanding of it between the generations is obvious. The transition from a living practice to a part of folklore or history has already started and from its pace the honouring of bread can be expected to disappear from everyday customs with the next generation.

Shove and Pantzar (2006) discuss social-fossilization – the ways in which objects become obsolete – as a process of breaking connection ideas, know-how and practices. The

authors make the point that “the practice is held in place not by the object, the know-how, or the idea but the active integration of all three. When one link fails, the entire system begins to crumble” and objects become fossils (p. 60). Although bread is widely consumed in kitchens, and in some cases still homemade, it is rare that the whole bread production cycle from sowing to baking in a furnace is practiced. The know-how is lacking in the process of bread production. Theoretically people know how bread is made, however very few have really experienced what a difficult process it is to produce. Hence, the understanding of bread as a symbol of hard work is redundant. Furthermore, the sacral meaning of bread is vanishing in this fossilization process. Farming as a way of life and the habits tied to it are disappearing. It might be a good example of how old habits and beliefs live on in a totally new context – they start to vanish if they lose the idea or practice which make them meaningful.

In the next chapter I turn my discussion from food to clothing waste, as it is the next big part of all household waste. Clothes like food are essential for individuals, but unlike food they can last decades. However, due to age, body, employment and fashion changes, the obsolescence of clothes is not synchronized with its physical ageing.

5. Clothes

Clothes play an important role both in society and within one's wardrobe. Clothes are significant and valued by their owners, they help to present oneself to the outside world, however, it is insufficient to describe clothes as only a sign or a symbol – they are much more than that. As Miller (2010) argues, “material objects are a setting.” (p. 50). Objects are important because they are barely seen, they are often left unspoken and taken for granted, and unless we are conscious of them, they can frequently influence our expectations by creating the setting and restricting the appropriate behaviour. The importance of material culture is that it highlights that our surroundings make us who we are. As Miller (2010) explains Levi-Straus, the central idea in structuralism is “that we should not regard entities in isolation: a desk, a table, a dining table, a kitchen table. Rather we should start from the relationship between things.” (p. 51). The practices in connection with clothes show us more about the setting than the discussion about clothes as a sign or just isolated objects.

There are many interesting angles to focus on with clothes. How do they enter our lives, how do we perceive them, how are these items disposed of when they are no longer needed and how (if) do they continue to be used by someone else after this? Some of the clothes have quite a long and interesting life circuit which consists of different cycles and often unseen relationships that people have with stuff. In Vilnius clothes have relatively long life cycles, quite often the cycle lasts more than a few years and the primary purpose changes with the same clothing adopting a second-hand label.

Worn-out and tattered or otherwise unwanted clothes is a relevant topic as today's society is overflowed by all kinds of material that needs to be sorted, stored or disposed of. Waste handling is more than a tiring activity, it is an everyday cultural practice in which an understanding and categorization of what's disposable is strongly influenced by social and historical setting.

According to Åkesson (2012), from a historical perspective reuse of materials has perennially been a common practice. Things have been reused by transforming, altering such as fixing materials and so on. Changes in consumption and discarding influence the way we value and treat our clothes as well. Older respondents remembered that they did not have any problems in how to discard their used clothes – they used them until they became rags and even these rags had some value, for instance, as an old textile, cleaning or insulation material. Furthermore, one of the elderly respondents remembered that in her childhood her mother

collected duds into bags and sold them for something (money or things) to a rag man – who visited their village once in a while with a horse-drawn carriage. Later rags were bought in the USSR for some small deficit items like bottle or jar lids. (Rita). Back in the Soviet times there was always a lack of something, like bed lining, coffee, oranges, mayonnaise, cosmetics and so on. Lids were also difficult to get, so it was worth bringing your rags to exchange.

Gregson (2007) illustrates how clothes that are unwanted are handled in different ways: some of them are inherited within the family, some are thrown away, some are donated, others are sold, etc. Through this the second-hand culture emerged. Gregson's observations of UK households' behaviour towards second-hand clothes can be applied in Lithuania as well. Interestingly, Lithuanians understand second-hand slightly differently, however the practices of utilizing it are the same. Basically, second-hand stuff was usually understood as second-hand clothes by the respondents in Vilnius. If I asked their opinion about second-hand objects, they usually started to talk about clothes. Furthermore, other commodities, even if they are bought already used, are often not referred to as second-hand. For instance, it is more common to buy a used car than a new one. If something is bought from an advert for money, it will not be called a second-hand item, such as bicycles, phones, prams, etc. Even a used item or clothes which were received from friends or relatives will not be deemed second-hand. So what is considered a second-hand commodity? Basically, only clothes from special second-hand/charity shops. I guess some further explanation is needed here: a vintage boutique or flea market it is not the same as second-hand shop. Looking for things in these places is kind of trendy, while a second-hand shop is dubbed such names as charity or rag store (skudurynas).

Although there is another aspect of a quite distanced attitude towards wearing second-hand clothes, what I have noticed through my own experience is that Lithuanians really care about what others think about them. Hence, wearing more than one second-hand item creates the risk of being evaluated as a person who cannot afford new clothes. Of course, this type of attitude varies a lot depending on a social status, age, workplace and so on.

The respondents I interviewed, in general, had a positive opinion upon the usage of second-hand clothes; shopping for second-hand objects also has an economic advantage, it allows one to save money as the items purchased are comparatively inexpensive. Creative transformations of old clothes are a cheap way to make something new and unique. In addition, second-hand shopping is better than purchasing brand new clothes from an environmental point of view. All the respondents said that they do not have anything against second-hand clothes; however they had only a few or none at all. Some of the respondents

searched for uniqueness, a civil servant in her late thirties and a young psychology student told me that they bought second-hand clothes when there was a need for something unique for some special occasion like a costume party. (Lukas; Emilija). Rokas, a young IT specialist, reflected “I prefer to sell my old stuff instead of buying used from the beginning. I like adapt things and make stuff familiar for myself.” (Rokas). A first year architecture student said that it took too much time and effort to find something good in a second-hand shop. (Ieva). Erika, a human resource specialist in her late twenties, did not like the *smell* of second-hand clothes; she said that it stays even after few washes. (Erika). It also appears that the second-hand culture consists of many different practices and has quite strict limitations or even taboos: clothes with a smell or clothes which are worn very close to the body (like underwear) are purchased less or not at all.

So far I encountered positive attitudes towards the usual recycling of packages and then the usage of second-hand clothes. However, a positive attitude did not mean that the people behaved in a way they thought of as good. There is a difference between what people say and what they do. I got a great opportunity during my fieldwork to observe for few months the domestic behaviour towards waste of a young married couple with a small child. Furthermore, during these few months they were preparing for and eventually moved from a cottage with a lot of spare domestic storages such as extra rooms, a basement and an attic to a one bedroom apartment. Due to this change of accommodation they were forced to throw away much of their stuff, which they had accumulated in the few years living in the cottage. I had had conversations about their attitude towards waste continuously before, during and after moving. I asked the couple to write down the things they threw away in a diary during their moving period. I discussed with the wife her diary which provided data and what actually encouraged her to find a way to continue the life of their still-good but unwanted commodities. Firstly, according to the wife, there was a need or a wish to let no longer needed stuff go which was usually connected to the limited storage possibilities. Secondly, there was a sense of guilt for discarding the still-good and wearable stuff. By giving it to someone who would continue to use it, thereby supporting someone who is lacking, liberated her guilty conscious. On a similar track were the items which they decided to sell. They listed six different groups of their discarded items in which three groups were clothes. One group was called “kid’s ‘inherited’ clothes” which they had got from their relatives – this group of clothes was returned back to the donators. The second category of clothes was called “obsolete, worn-out, unsuitable to give away clothes/shoes” and it was discarded into a non-recyclable waste container. While the third group – “second-hand clothes” ended up in a

charity box which had been placed in their child's day care centre. I asked them to explain what separated these two last groups and how they had decided what clothes were going to be donated and what were to be discarded. The answer was that it depended on the quality and visual appearance: some of the clothes had already been through many levels in the wardrobe, from a going out outfit into gardening clothes and now looked just miserable. Others had gone out of fashion or had become too small/big, but despite the fact that they were unwanted – they were still in a good shape. Hence, those which were in bad shape were simply disposed of in a waste container because they were not worth the effort of packing, searching for a charity organization, calling them, coordinating and so on and then transporting. She said that they were happy that there was a charity box; otherwise they were not so sure if they would have had enough initiative to organize the donation by themselves. However, as I was living with this couple I observed that their behaviour was not as “good” as they tried to make out. There were various small inadequacies, but one really captured my attention. There were two prams which their child did not need anymore, due to lack of time/energy/motivation or other reasons they ended up in the waste container. Furthermore, this particular disposal was not included into the disposal diary. It might have been that they had felt that this was not the right thing to do. I will discuss more about social pressure in the sixth chapter.

Some of the respondents explained their keeping of clothes was down to economic reasons. An elderly woman in her seventies told me that she could not throw away clothes, even though she wore some of them very rarely or not at all. As a reason for this she indicated her economic situation: she was not able to buy new clothes anymore because her income was only enough to cover her apartment and living costs. Furthermore, she regretted that she had not cared about this situation when she was young and earned more. (Rita)

Ona, on the other hand, had a totally different opinion, she shared her reflections on her mother's habit of keeping her old clothes; it was difficult for her to throw away old clothes because of the sentiments and memories those clothes held for her. She gave the example of a blouse her mother had knitted for her from the wool her grandmother had woven. Even though the blouse is too small for her now and her daughter would never wear it, she cannot let it go. Furthermore, she has more clothes which she finds difficult to throw away because of the memories they hold for her. In her opinion, these kinds of sentiments are the reason why older people such as her mother keep so much clothes and other stuff they will never use again. (Ona). Gregson (2011) discusses a thing's capacity to hold memories “Their keeping works to connote a sense of who we are, of our social identities, but works

too as a memory device, constituting a past in things for an imagined future, ours and that significant others who will live on with our absent presence encoded in these things.” (p. 162).

As can be seen from the examples in the previous paragraph – an attachment to clothes might be very strong. The waste is not constant just like with other things. It might change its value from worthless to valuable and then again to worthless. Furthermore, often the value is not measured in money; other values such as sentiments emerge in an individual’s relation to the discarded object. (Åkesson, 2006)

Fast/Slow Fashion

In contemporary western society people often face the situation of where and how to discard their unwanted clothes. The fashion industry creates new trends every season and via promotional campaigns in the media it encourages updating your wardrobe with some new items from the “must have” list. As Elizabeth L. Cline pointed out in an interview about her book “Overdressed: The Shockingly High Cost of Cheap Fashion” the fast fashion industry has “changed our consumption patterns so dramatically from a seasonal fashion cycle to an almost weekly or monthly fashion cycle where we’re treating clothing as a disposable good” (Chua, 2012).

As Thompson (2003) wrote “objects, once produced, have only two possible destinations—the museum or the rubbish dump” (p. 319) – I have not encountered a museum case during my fieldwork, hence I stick with the way to the rubbish dump in my thesis. This cheap fashion encouraged way of consumption basically involves consumers in a quick waste-creating cycle. Often released new, fashion and trendy items accelerate the obsolescence of last season’s stuff – material and cultural wear and tear are seldom synchronized (Thompson, 1979).

While discussing fast fashion’s influence upon consumer behaviour in Vilnius it is important to have in mind that cheap fashion chain stores are still relatively new there. There are many other cheap fashion stores, but as an example I could mention some internationally -known brands – the first Zara store opened in 2004 and H&M has not entered the Lithuanian trade market yet. Clothing purchases began to be more and more fashion-following impulse shopping only in a past decade.

However, it might be said that Lithuanians prefer slow fashion possibly due to the older generation’s Soviet experience and youth’s acceptance of Western sustainability ideas that affect current society perception about consumption. The habit of hunting for the new

season's trend is increasing mostly only among teenagers and the youth; one of the explanations put forward is that people born and raised in Soviet Lithuania have gained a more practical and moderate attitude towards purchasing. They usually choose better quality, long-lasting items and pay more attention to the price than whether it is fashionable. Furthermore, in the past decade the need for sustainable consciousness, ethical consumerism and so on has been discussed worldwide. Ethical fashion, eco-fashion and sustainable fashion – these terms have become familiar in Western society within the media. As the name suggests, slow fashion refers more to a philosophic attitude to consumerism than to a period of time. (Pookulangara & Shephard, 2013). The slow fashion concept is based on sustainability within the fashion industry and design incorporating high quality, small lines, regional productions, and fair labour conditions. (Slow Fashion Award, 2010). However, it is complicated to apprehend which tendency influence consumers the most: slow fashion ideology, the USSR legacy or the economic situation.

As I see the situation, it is not only ideological reasons which influence Lithuanian's attitudes towards consuming and shopping. It is more likely that the economic aspect limits the ability to afford shopping as a leisure activity, according to the Lithuanian Department of Statistics the average consumer spent 82.3 Lt (approx. 23 Euros) per month on clothing and footwear in major cities and 55.3 Lt (approx. 16 Euros) in villages in 2008. (Statistics Lithuania, n.d.). The annual expenditure on clothing and footwear averaged EUR 800 per person in the EU in 2006 (approx. 67 Euros per month) (Statistical Office of the European Communities, & European Commission, 2009, p. 181). This data comparison explains Vilnius citizens' prudent shopping, valuing and saving their own garments – it is their way to adapt to their difficult economic situation.

Cycles of Clothes

During the fieldwork I found out that it is not only my wardrobe in which clothes have a hierarchy and during rotation change their levels, respondents told me that they too have a few different types of clothes: for going out, for wearing at work/home/while gardening etc. It is quite often the case that the same clothing changes its level from wearing at parties to wearing at home over time. Furthermore, only the lowest level of clothing (after wearing it for gardening or construction works) is disposed of. However, some of the cloths leave wardrobes without changing any levels. Both ways create circumstances to dispose of no longer used items.

To discuss the movement, flow and circulation of items fits in well with Thompsons' *Rubbish Theory* (1979). According to the British scholar Parson, the theory posits that value appears through our approach of seeing and situating items. The theory concentrates attention away from the purchasing act, but to “the ways in which objects are absorbed into our lives through cycles of (re)use. It also highlights the creativity of social actors in creating the conditions for value to emerge.” (p. 390). *Rubbish theory* can be understood in connection with the categories of transient and durable. These categories represent visible and valued objects versus invisible and unwanted – rubbish. Thompson explains that a transient object little by little decreases its value and becomes rubbish, where it can be rediscovered and resurrected to a new life. Figure 2 illustrates the probable journey an object may make. Items of rubbish remain invisible in our everyday lives in the back of the drawers, corners of the garage or in the garden. However, these objects might be discovered by others and start a new cycle of life. (Parson, p. 392).

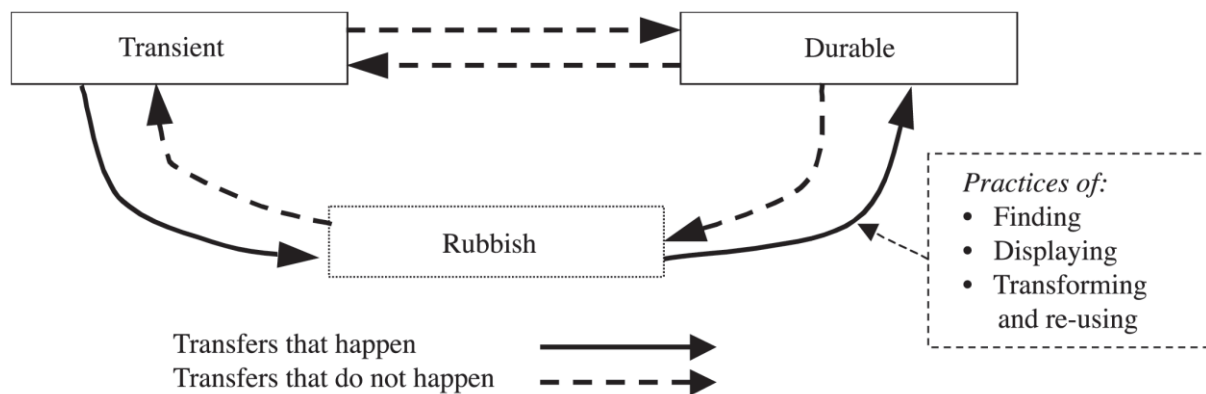


Figure 2. The model of Thompson's Rubbish Theory

As Gregson (2007) pointed out, regarding the ways in which children's clothes are handed down to younger siblings and cousins, it was common among the respondents of my study to pass their used clothes among known circuits. There was even recirculation within the family recycling, which is a common form of reusing old clothes, where elder children's garments are passed onto younger ones: first the closest ones and then, if they do not fit, they are passed to the extended family such as cousins, in-laws, and friends. There are notable patterns in the domestic recycle circuit between social connections and statuses inherent in the process of passing on garments. This activity maintains and renews relationships; it might strengthen the position as a friend by passing valuable clothes one to the other. Especially the circulation of children clothes, because keeping clothes (wealth) in a close network a person

is expecting to have them back with some additional clothes if there is a newborn or some of the small children have grown and can now wear these clothes. Moreover, Thompson's model explains children clothes circulation: a family does not need some children clothes anymore as they are too small for their children, so the clothes lose their value and become unwanted = rubbish, while the relatives' family with smaller kids will find them useful and appreciate the donation.

All in all, elderly customers, due to the difficult historical setting and Soviet political ideology, were raised as very rational consumers, while the younger generation's attitudes towards shopping and spending have already been influenced by the consumerism wind from the West. However, Lithuania's still complicated economic situation stops the youth from fulfilling the imagined consumer's model. Furthermore, as already discussed other circumstances such as sentiments and fashion affect the cycles of clothes.

The respondents' attitudes and behaviour towards clothes illustrates the life cycles of objects from the getting it to the ridding of it and the ways to extend their usefulness through donating or selling. Furthermore, the insights shared by the respondents show the ways in which people create categories and hierarchies of clothes due to their shape, fashion and other re-evaluations. As Thompson discusses, the value is not a constant substance, it appears through the user's approach to seeing and placing the object.

Some of the respondents shared with me that the lowest level of their clothes (in bad condition) were used for gardening. An interesting fact to emerge was that many of the respondents were living in apartments. The transition between old clothes and gardening is a common practice as many Lithuanians have a collective garden. These summer houses are the places where many worn items go for some final wear and tear. Hence, the next chapter is about collective gardens and other stuff which make ridding practices conspicuous.

6. Second Burial

In many cases obsolete stuff goes over a kind of stepping stone in its transformation between something useful and something that is thrown out. If it is clothing, it might spend a few seasons in the attic before the owner is convinced that it will not be used in the future and it is time to let it go. A similar situation exists with old media and electronic equipment – it stays somewhere invisible in drawers or cupboards until one day it is recognized as being outdated.

Second burial is the term Hetherington (2004) uses in his discussion about the double-take in the disposal of objects one has bought. Hetherington was inspired by Hertz's (1960) comparative study of funeral rites and translated this practice of first and second burial to the disposal of inanimate objects. By its disposing an item's value is also disposed. Therefore, quite often disposal goes through a 'holding' process before it becomes waste. The drawer, the bookcase, the attic or the garden often become a place of the first burial. An object is held there for some time until its usage (sentimental or exchange value) decreases and it can be buried a second time by disposing into landfill or somewhere else. Furthermore, Hetherington argues that "We are not just 'what we buy' but also 'what we do not throw out' – at least not until a respectable interval has passed for any residual value to be passed on – and also 'what we value'". (p. 170)

In Vilnius it is common to take old stuff to summer houses which are placed in collective gardens (land plots) for some final wear and tear. A young constructor engineer, Marius, told me that in his parents' family all the old clothes and shoes go to their collective garden and are used while gardening or picking berries and mushrooms in the forest. The same applies to other stuff which has become not good enough to be used at home like old dishes, blankets, etc. (Marius).

A short comment about so-called "collective gardens" is needed, because it was and still is a common practice, a heritage of the late Soviet period: urban dwellers were allowed certain plots of suburban land to farm. This once popular pastime (and a source for additional income in a society where personal revenues were under a tight state control) has been slowly moving into obscurity since the restitution of independence.

These collective gardens became a transition place for obsolete stuff that was brought from home with the intention that it might still be useful there. Some of it just lies in corners for decades until some changes due to younger generations arrive. As I remember, when my grandmother decided to sell her collective garden with a summer house in it, because it had

become to exhausting for her to take care of the garden and the ageing building, it took almost a week to evict all the possessions and to empty the house. A lot of stuff was found: children clothes of people who were already in their late thirties or even clothes of already dead relatives, a lot of furniture, toys, books, Soviet magazines and newspapers. There was a huge pile which was burnt and a full car of stuff which my grandmother could not let go and stored some in the garage or in the basement. The most fascinating thing is that it is not only my grandmother's and her summer house story – it is common practice in many collective gardens. I have visited many of my friend's summer places for a barbeque during the summer and all these small dwellings store the obsolete material memories of three generations of the family at least.

Another aspect of the collective gardens was that they were the main vegetable source for a family during the Soviet times: potatoes, tomatoes, pumpkins, cucumbers, etc. were grown in summer time and preserved for the winter season in many ways. Nowadays, it is not so essential to preserve as much food, however it is still common practice among those who have they own gardens or farms and grow vegetables there. This vegetable preservation for the winter time connects collective gardens with the reusing of glass production, mostly glass jars. The significance of the glass container was highlighted in some interviews: an elderly lady mentioned that she once left a bag with many cleaned jars close to the glass recycle bins and after a while someone took it. (Laima) Furthermore, glass jars are valued among young respondents as well: “None of the jars end up in the rubbish bin. We (her family) reused them all.” (Ieva) or “All the jars are reused for jam”. (Lukas).

Old Media and Stuff which is Hardly Ever Disposed of

The emotional connection with stuff has already been discussed in the chapter on clothes; however, this connection is not nearly as pronounced as the relation with old media. Domestic media such as pictures, music records, books, etc. is probably found in every household and it is ageing just like everything else in our life. The ageing of media is happening in two ways; first of all, the material side of media stuff is ageing very quickly. As an example music records have changed many times during the last two generations of music lovers. My parents used to play music from vinyl in their adolescence, while I, in my teenage years, already had a portable CD player, which is already an outdated technology. Now it is enough to have a matchbox player or just a cell phone in order to be surrounded by one's favourite music. That means that all this equipment has found a place to hide at home if nobody has discarded it yet. Some old technologies manage to keep up an aura of creativity,

like an old battered typewriter, while ageing computer keyboards usually lack the same aesthetic appeal.” (Löfgren, 2009, p. 12). Media technology does not hold views or sounds as photos or music records, but it keeps some charm by reminding us of the different, more difficult procedures that were involved in taking a photo or playing a vinyl on a gramophone. While the other side of this strong attachment could be the primary exchange value of particular technology – many of us have heard how older relatives say “I bought this camera with my entire half-year savings”. It does not matter that this camera is worthless in today’s market – it cost a lot of money to the original owner.

Another way of media ageing is influenced by the owner’s life cycles. The childhood or school years pictures of a middle-aged person or a picture from a grandparents’ wedding day are considered as historic material which is potent with memories. All the respondents said the same – that they do not throw away any photographs or books. Old photographs especially accumulate a lot of emotional attachments. Basically, the main reason is that most pictures are only a few generations old, hence all the people are known. It is reminiscent of a legacy, memories and sentiments that have been woven together. As one interviewed women in her sixties noted about old family photos: “I know and remember all these people in the pictures, how I can throw them away? Maybe my children can, because they haven’t met them, but I cannot.” (Ona) However, her twenty-year-old daughter contradicted her saying that she would never rid of them because of their family history.

As Löfgren (2009) has pointed out in his article about dead media “media stuff is difficult to get rid of. What is the feeling of tightening your grip or just throwing an object away? There is often a tension there between anxiety, guilt and relief.” (p. 17). There are many paper materials without pictures that take up a lot of domestic space, like old postcards, letters, personal calendars, notebooks, diaries, compendiums from school or university times and so on. The level of importance varies from item to item and what kind of story is embodied within it. Going through old photos or holding records from your adolescence “may feel like a time machine, creating memories through different senses.”(p. 18) Audio records have the power to arouse very strong attachments to them and it is not necessary to actually play them, it is enough to remember someone playing them. “We don’t have any means of playing old vinyl records, but how can I throw them away? I still remember how my father used to play them. There are too many memories.” (Ona)

The value of the media items is expressed not in currency, but in the sentiments we hold for them. Hence, the normal way of discarding does not work; the process is much more

complicated. The casual tidying usually skips the bottom of the drawers or the hidden line of the top bookshelves.

Toys

Another category with strong emotional charges is toys. They are kept, even if nobody plays with them anymore. Similar to the previously discussed connections with clothes, elder respondents are more attached to toys. Kapur (2005) discusses the changing socialization and historically constructed children's relationship to toys in his article *Obsolescence and Other Playroom Anxieties: Childhood in the Shadows of Late Capital*. Nowadays, children care and value their toys less than children did a few decades ago, as this situation from a popular cartoon "Toys Story" illustrates the current situation on a playroom shelves: "The toys fear not only competition from the newer, more mechanically sophisticated toys, but being thrown into the trash or sold at the garage sale that follows every birthday and Christmas. To make matters even worse is the increased mobility of late capitalism." (p. 241). I have noticed this difference in the perception of toys when comparing myself with my brother who is ten years younger than I: while I still keep my beloved toys in the wardrobe and in the attic, he does not feel any anxiety about letting them go. Furthermore, elderly respondents express even stronger attachments to toys if not their own then their children's: "All the corners are full of old toys in our summer house. I just can't throw them away. Someone gave them as a gift to my kids, put some idea or a nice meaning into the present, how could I get rid of it now? (Ona) The most important thing is that the kids played with them. (Tadas)." (Ona & Tadas).

It is tough for anyone to get rid of their kids' toys – there being many sentiments; however, to give them to someone else it is much easier as previously discussed in the chapter about clothes – donating eases the guilty feelings.

Children toys tend to be accumulated and strewn around people's homes. There are many occasions during the year when the collection of kids' stuff dramatically increases due to gift market in toys (especially due to birthday and Christmas presents). However, their expulsion is very infrequent. While the owners of the pile of toys are still children, they rarely agree to let their toys be got rid of, hence to throw out toys is very difficult, precisely because both children and parents establish strong emotional connection with the toys: for the kids it is a part of their identity, for the adults – a sign of their parental love. However, it is much easier to part with baby things for mothers. It is common between mothers to keep a few favourite toys and some garments as memories of their children being babies. "the toys,

things which for all parents' ambivalence about them, are held over, accommodated for love in back-zone storage spaces like garages and lofts, until they can safely be got rid of, when we are sure that their presence is no longer required to narrate a self or a life. Enduringness, transience and holding are, however, themselves accommodations of temporalities through spatialities." (Gregson, 2007, p. 125). All in all, this managing of children's toys is a constant redistribution and re-evaluation before it comes to the real ridding. As mentioned earlier, a respectable interval should pass between the first and second burial in order for any residual value to be gone (Hetherington, 2004).

There are other categories of stuff which have something special about their disposal, but due to limited fieldwork time I didn't have the opportunity to research them. Domestic tools are kept in the garage even though some of them will probably not be used ever again. Or there is something intimate about lingerie disposal: mostly people do not donate used lingerie. I have even met a woman who used to burn her old underwear. She explained her behaviour saying she wants to be sure that her underwear will be disposed of and that there will not be a possibility that any homeless person would wear it. Furniture, especially furniture which was expensive and beloved, is emotionally difficult to part with for a person and some people feel particularly attached to their houseplants. In general different people are attached to different things and there are many undiscovered patterns.

The discussion about the reasons and circumstances which influence the decision to get rid of one or another item and the way in which it is done follows in a next chapter.

7. Reasons Which Influence Sorting and Discarding

As could be seen from the chapter on clothes, there are many aspects which influence the decision to keep or to get rid of an object and in which way to do so. Second burial helps to postpone the decision-making regarding emotionally attached items. Nowadays, people encounter a huge circulation of objects. Only some objects live with us for years while others need to be discarded in one way or another. At this juncture both moral and economic arguments influence our choices. One of the most basic reasons for discarding stuff is, of course, lack of storage space in a life with the rapid influx of new objects. The book *Second-Hand Cultures* (Gregson & Crewe, 2003, p. 119) discusses three disposition strategies (as a way into tracking where commodities are cast out to) that were uncovered in their study about practices and customs of those in the UK. These were philanthropy, economic/political critique and money-making. I discuss philanthropy in my paper because it appears to be relevant for my empirical data. While the other two strategies were not so relevant: I have not encountered the practice of using only second-hand clothes as a protest against consumerism or as a sign of political critique and money-making was not a widely spread practice either. My research found the most encouraging reason to handle waste appeared to be for economic profit and the most significant reason negatively affecting the waste managing process was distrust of authorities. Social pressure as a possibility to discipline citizens to behave in an environmental beneficial way is discussed in this chapter broadly as it may also have both positive and negative affects towards citizens' sorting attitudes.

Philanthropy

Gregson and Crewe talk about “doing good through disposal” (Gregson & Crewe, p. 123). Philanthropy as a disposition strategy in the Vilnius setting might be defined as donating unwanted stuff to those who are lacking. I asked my respondents about their philanthropic disposal.

One upper middle class couple I interviewed said that they do not throw away clothes because they know that there are people who are in need of them. They used to take clothes to an old lady who lived in a small village and also offer the clothes to other poor families. However, the old lady does not live there anymore, so they take their used clothes to the hospital, where the wife's sister works, to be given to homeless people. Interestingly, the better items the wife usually gives to her friends and relatives, as there is still some value left in them which she would prefer to share with others close to her rather than with strangers.

Interestingly, there are only a few charity organizations in Lithuania which accept used clothes donations and they do not have a broad network. Thus, it is left to the individual initiative to find ways of discarding old clothes. I got the impression from the interviews that there is little evidence of the philanthropic ideal; people are more concerned about getting rid of their old clothes easily rather than giving them a new life. Only some want to find out how and where to donate their stuff. Nevertheless, clothes are valued and therefore there are some guilty feelings about just throwing them into the rubbish bin. There is an interesting practice in Lithuania of leaving still usable stuff around the garbage containers and this is almost universal: the majority of the respondents told me that they had left a bag with clothes in front of disposal unit for poor people at least once (the age group of the respondents had no bearing). While I was searching on the internet for networks of facilities for old clothes disposal in Vilnius, I found that this issue had been discussed in some of the online mothers' forums. Here people had suggested leaving old clothes close to the waste container. Furthermore, on another day, while was stuck in a traffic jam, I accidentally had an opportunity to observe how a middle-aged man who was passing some waste containers on a public street and saw a pair of shoes left in a transparent plastic bag on a side. He took them from the bag and held them for a second while, I guess, evaluating them and subsequently took the pair of shoes with him. It seems that this practice is not going to be forgotten at least until a better network for clothes redistribution is established. Furthermore, this practice seems different from the one in Scandinavia; there, as Åkesson (2006) recalled "Domestic waste is private and belongs to the personal sphere." (p. 43). While in Vilnius waste is perceived as not belonging to anyone, hence it is common to see homeless people checking the containers and, as can be seen from the example above, both sides are supporting this practice.

Economic Motivations

While talking about paper, glass and plastic waste sorting respondents shared their perception towards this practice. From all the interviews I got the impression that there is a common attitude that it is a positive thing to sort waste. It might be as a result of media campaigns that people talk about recycling in positive terms; this does not mean, however, that this positive perception actually makes people sort waste. In response to the question "do you sort waste?" many of the respondents answered 'negative' with a slight guilt in their voices and without being prompted gave a series of excuses as to why they were not doing so. Furthermore, the respondents were very enthusiastic to share their thoughts and suggestions

on how to make sorting more convenient, and how to encourage others to sort waste. Moral reasons are not enough to motivate citizens to sort waste, thus economic instruments are needed was a common observation.

The most universal reason for not sorting was that the waste sorting system is not developed enough, or more precisely the special containers are inconveniently located. One interviewee Gabrielius, a PhD student, had spent six months living in Sweden as part of his studies. His reflections on waste sorting encompassed a comparative angle. He claimed that the current practice in Vilnius is inconvenient, as he knows that this type of system was rejected 10 years ago everywhere else as ineffective because the containers are too far from the apartment's buildings. The tenants of the buildings are not responsible for how the waste is sorted and they do not care about it too much. While in Western Europe every building usually has 2 types (or more) of containers: one for sorted and one for unsorted waste. Furthermore, if you fail to sort in the correct way, you can get a fine. There is no such practice in Vilnius. Another suggestion from Gabrielius was to motivate people by making a price difference for sorted and unsorted waste's containers discarding. (Gabrielius). His wife added that despite the fact that they are living in the city centre, if they want to discard some sorted waste they need to use their car, which is not only inconvenient, it consumes time and money for fuel.

Another respondent Mantas, a middle-aged environmental law specialist, thought that it is enough to tell people they need to sort waste because it is good to do so, for 20% of the population, while others need economic instruments. (Mantas). While Vaidas, a middle-aged father living in a suburb of Vilnius and working for a large supermarket chain, brought some comparison about rules regarding waste management between physical and juridical persons: "I believe that there is only one possible way to motivate people to sort waste – to promote it by giving some benefits, for example, a smaller fee for participating in sorted waste disposal or by giving fines for not sorting – as it is done for companies in Lithuania." (Vaidas)

A similar point of view, that of economic encouragement can stimulate positive behaviour, was made during my internship, Social Action is convinced that the success of new initiatives is "to make every positive environmental action an economic advantage" (Social Action, n.d.). This was key to all the projects in *Social Action*; the founder claimed that it is the only way to make widespread environmentally beneficial solutions in modern society.

Furthermore, economic reasons work on another level: as a money-making strategy. During the previous discussion about second-hand stuff, the respondents Rokas and Laura

(the young married couple) said that they usually sell their used stuff if they can get any money for it. This is very much connected to their financial situation. It takes time to sell used items, so if the money did not matter so much, they would be happy to give some stuff (like children's buggies, clothes, shoes, etc.) to their friends. However, despite the fact that buying second-hand items would allow them to save some money, they only had a few things from the second-hand shop. The wife said that she did not have anything against second-hand things, but for her it was very difficult to find something good and her size. While the husband agreed that he preferred to use new stuff, new clothes and then sell them, as opposed to buying used stuff from the beginning, he emphasized the importance of familiarizing himself with his new stuff. This follows the *warming* approach, postulated by the researcher Ger (2006), which labels the need and process of familiarizing new stuff. As she points out "Warming makes material culture humane" (p. 19) and as this case of buying new items instead of used ones shows, it is important to some people that they are the first who warm them up and this familiarization is prioritized against any opportunity to save money by buying used stuff.

There were no respondents who expressed their behaviour in terms of their political or economic critique, either as a critique of wasteful consumerism or a critique of consumerism as such by using only or mainly second-hand stuff. Frequently, it was more related to the economic situation of the household than its political beliefs. Therefore, economic incentives might work to encourage citizens towards environmentally beneficial behaviour.

The Soviet legacy

To my surprise, I learnt from my fieldwork that the Soviet legacy in today's Vilnius' citizens' mentality has an influence on waste sorting behaviour.

Mantas highlighted the problem of negativism towards authorities, which entails distance, irony and passive resistance towards the state. "Everything is needed {to motivate people to sort waste}. There are people who are looking for the guilty ones or doing everything in the opposite way. There is a lot of negativism; people do not trust the authorities." (Mantas).

As the Lithuanian anthropologist Klumbytė (2006) in her research on post-socialism pointed out, the residents of Lithuania "will express his/her cynicism by criticizing the state officials as self-interested, immoral, unjust, thus, not to be trusted, and by articulating the 'state' as a polluting and malevolent realm of power." (Klumbytė, p. 44).

Mantas was very passionate about environmental issues; hence he was the most talkative and had a lot of reflections and suggestions towards the waste management situation in Vilnius. He shared his thoughts on the way waste could be used: a huge amount of waste is burnt and during this process the warmth generated is used for heating in Scandinavia. This practice has already started in Lithuania as well; however, there is significant public opposition. This opposition could be described by “OK, but not in my backyard”. Lithuanian society does not trust the authorities, quite a common concern of people protesting against waste incineration plant is – “if an accident happens, nobody will inform us. The waste could be poorly sorted and there will be nobody to check and they will just burn everything, even the things which are not supposed to be burnt”. (Mantas). According to Rose (1994) “Distrust is a pervasive legacy of communist rule” (p. 3), and further he points out that citizens ignore leaders or systems which they distrust, thus making them ineffective. Some aspects of this view could be applied in the waste sorting case in Vilnius. Citizens might ignore any changes in waste management because they do not trust the authorities in general or the waste sorting system in particular. Another sign of distrust is the widely spread story of how the same rubbish truck comes to collect sorted waste, so everything is mixed together again. Therefore, people are demotivated to sort because they feel that it is a waste of time and energy.

Distrust of authorities is prevalent in Lithuania and this distrust slows down the process of waste sorting becoming an everyday practice for the majority of the citizens.

Social pressure

Social pressure on individuals to encourage the desired recycling behaviour has already attracted social scientists’ attention. In this section I will discuss the respondents’ reflection on how economic reasons might result in the appearance of a favourable social pressure environment. Further, a number of behaviourist’s studies about social pressure’s positive and negative sides will be presented.

There is lack of personal responsibility for waste handling in Vilnius. Mantas and Gabrielius both reflected on the fact that defined personal and shared responsibility could make positive changes in sorted domestic waste: if buildings had their own sorting containers and were responsible for them, it would be possible to impose a fine for badly sorted waste, which all the neighbours would have to pay. Mantas started to imagine that one day an old lady having observed a person throw badly sorted or not sorted waste into the container, would take the bag out and shake out all the waste on the guilty neighbour’s entrance carpet. Next time maybe that neighbour would sort his waste better. He added that for instance, in

Germany people feel this type of control, that's why they sort their waste in a more responsible way. The control from the closest circle is more effective than any other. (Mantas)

This concurs with Foucault's (1977) idea about controlling form *panopticism* in his work "Discipline and Punishment" as a perfect discipline-mechanism to restrict the inhabitants only by letting them know that they are being observed. Bentham's *Panopticon* is an architectural figure based on the principle: "at the periphery, an annular building; at the centre, a tower; this tower is pierced with wide windows that open onto the inner side of the ring; the periphery building is divided into cells, each of which extends the whole width of the building [...]" (Foucault, p. 200). The guard is in the tower and can observe all the cells from it, however from the cell due to the effect of backlighting it is impossible to see if there is someone in the tower "and this invisibility is a guarantee of order" (p. 200), "the inmate must never know whether he is being looked at any one moment; but he must be sure that he may always be so" (p. 201). This *panopticism* can work not only for a building structure such as a prison, but as a discipline method for society. Furthermore, Mantas' thoughts about neighbours observing each other's waste sorting habit is an adapted version of *Panopticon*: a high apartment building with waste containers in front of it – nobody knows if any of the neighbours are watching through one of the many windows.

However, as the waste management system is now in Vilnius, there is still a missing element – there is nothing to encourage neighbours to pay attention to other's behaviour. Unfortunately, public spirit doesn't work for everyone; therefore, economic incentives might improve the situation and encourage people to behave in a more socially responsible way.

As the evolutionary psychologist Shackelford explained it is typical for human beings to be conscious of social pressure in adjusting to the values, approach or behaviours of others; and this human trait can be used to incentivize individual participation (as cited in Pratarelli, 2010, p. 1). Others argue that social pressure works well only with small group sizes of 50–150, whereas nowadays modern world's communities are measured in their millions. Furthermore, individual sorting usually happens inside the home, hence only a few minutes are visible in public while people are throwing their waste into the container.

According to Shackelford, one of the factors which makes it difficult to sustain long-term recycling practice is that human beings focus better on short-term goals, hence people encounter problems when participating in activities over the longer period. Therefore, recycling behaviour is not necessarily a natural process, since it needs long-term planning, whereas humans have a propensity to concentrate more on near future aims. Nevertheless, the

social pressure of being valued by others as well as institutional mechanisms could prove useful in encouraging mass durable recycling behaviour. Another argument put forward by another behaviourist Stern is that recycling as pro-environmental behaviour is mostly implemented by personal values and beliefs, hence social pressure is not that powerful (as cited in Pratarelli, 2010, p. 2). This uncertainty of the effect of social pressure questions the efficiency of relying on it.

The discussion on social loafing by Latane, Williams & Harkins (1979) raises one more concern about the effectiveness of social pressure. *Social loafing* posits that an individual's effort to contribute to a group project is much lower compared to if they work alone. Waste recycling is an individual or household's behaviour in which a person is working independently; however, one usually sees one's effort in a broader context as part of a larger group or community. Social loafing theory puts forward that individuals take more responsibility for their task when they are working alone as opposed to working in a group. This mechanism explains an individual's perception of participation in recycling activity. Despite the fact that people sort waste out of the group setting, they perceive it in the broader context that recycling is working only if the whole community contributes to a common goal. Of course, some of the individuals have a stronger initiative to cooperate than others; however, it is difficult to answer how social loafing works in a big public account, but it might reduce sorting results.

Another theoretical consideration is in relation to *self-deception* in pro-environmental behaviour. Some studies have indirectly indicated that self-deception might influence the values and attitudes of people. In this manner, people might avoid the importance of recycling or call themselves environmentalist while their pro-environmental behaviour is minimal. As Pratarelli (2010) discusses, there is a gap between general ideas and actual practices. Symbolic beliefs are abstract and do not necessarily result in any particular behaviour, while "in contrast instrumental beliefs lead to practical behaviours and actions like recycling" (p. 5). Furthermore, symbolic beliefs are easily shaped or discarded, while instrumental beliefs are more sustainable. At this point we encounter a possible situation where individuals have conflict between their beliefs and actions. This situation, i.e. what people say is not the same as what they do, is widely discussed in cultural analysis.

Some psychological research of recycling behaviour has highlighted the use of positive support. The behaviourist psychologist Geller talks about the idea that punishment and negative reinforcement are not the best ways to encourage any wanted behaviour, since people might perceive them as a danger to individual freedom, and this may cause a refusal

or the opposite behaviour than the one hoped for (as cited in Burn, n.d.). For other individuals, external awards diminish the importance of their behaviour, because they might start to think that the reason why they are performing recycling behaviour is for the extrinsic benefit. Unfortunately, positive material reinforcement has a negative side too, because as soon as it is taken away the motivation for recycling behaviour is gone too. The most sustained behaviour is based upon inner motivation and beliefs; hence, mostly ecologically responsible behaviour is encouraged through educational campaigns. Although, it is noticed that attitudes and behaviour might be different from each other.

In his article, the behaviourist Burn (n.d.) presents a field experiment which was designed to increase participation in a citywide, kerbside recycling programme. There were three groups in the experiment: two had treatment conditions and a control group receiving no treatment. One treatment group consisted of neighbourhood block leaders who delivered persuasive communications and recycling bags to non-recycling neighbours. The other treatment group comprised of non-recycling households who had convincing communications and recycling bags left at their doors. A significant difference between the results of the two which were part of the treatment group and one which was not indicated the importance of extra efforts not only institutional commitment. Furthermore, the group with the block leader's results were significantly higher than the one's with no neighbour interaction; this also highlighted the effectiveness of social pressure. This example illustrates how the closest circle of people like neighbours can influence pro-environmental behaviour. As other respondents had expressed previously, the awareness that others perform sorting behaviour might encourage others to do so too.

To sum up the social pressure issue, it is too courageous to state that it influences radical changes in citizens' recycling behaviour. Nevertheless, to encourage people to start and sustain pro-environmental actions, something more than institutional commitment to support public information and education might be needed and that something could be social pressure from the community or valued others, since knowing that others are performing recycling activity may lead to the belief that it is more likely to make a difference, and may encourage recycling due to the desire for social approval.

Coming back to the Vilnius setting, to receive benefit from social pressure an individual or communal responsibility for waste handling should be approved. Later, economic incentives for those who sort or fines for those who do not should be established by policy makers. Furthermore, there are other concerns like the Soviet legacy, public

knowledge, and the infrastructure of the sorting facilities – how are factors such as citizens' convenience, people's individualistic nature and self-deception taken into consideration.

8. A Different Setting: The Saudi Arabia Experience

In my comparison of the ways in which history, cultural norms and established habits influence waste sorting I have used Copenhagen and Vilnius as examples, let me briefly introduce a third case from a cultural setting with a radically different perception of waste.

During the thesis writing period I had an opportunity to spend a month in Saudi Arabia. I arrived in this country surrounded with all my thesis-related thoughts. The new setting encouraged me to see questions about waste management from a different cultural angle.

Saudis everyday life is regulated according to strict religious rules. These regulations make an impact on almost all parts of life such as behaviour, dress code, dietary requirements, etc. There are many patterns which highlight the importance of purity in Saudi culture. Islamic dietary laws are enforced: pork is not consumed and other animals are slaughtered in accordance with halal (Halal foods are foods that Muslims are allowed to eat under Islamic dietary guidelines.). The left hand is used for hygienic tasks; hence the right is the clean one and is used for everything else.

Surprisingly, this emphasized modesty and purity is interpreted leaving some behaviour unsaid. I had briefly talked about this purity issue with one Pakistani acquaintance who told me that even in the Quran it is written that cleanliness is a half of your faith. (Alli). Hence, my own interpretation of the situation is that Saudis have a different approach towards waste and they do not notice waste in the same way as we do in Europe. As Douglas (2002) discusses, cleanliness and moral principles of behaviour are not necessarily the same thing. "It is true that pollution rules do not correspond closely to moral rules. Some kind of behaviour may be judged wrong and yet not provoke pollution beliefs, while others not thought very reprehensible are held to be polluting and dangerous. Here and there we find that what is wrong is also polluting. Pollution rules only highlight a small aspect of morally disapproved behaviour. But we still need to ask whether pollution touches on morals in an arbitrary fashion or not." (Douglas, p. 160). In terms of the Saudi Arabia experience it could be discussed broader that cleanliness and purity are not the same either. Waste is contextual, if it is in a proper place it is not pollution, but outside its proper place it is. It becomes a question of where things belong or are tolerated and where they are not. Waste depends on context, cultural system, placing and as Douglas puts it: dirt is not absolute.



Figure 3. Wild Jeddah's beach full of waste.

It is difficult to observe citizens' behaviour towards waste management in the city centre, because there is an army of street cleaners, who tidy up public spaces. However, after going to the outskirts the situation becomes clearer – there is waste everywhere. I visited a few wild beaches almost a hundred kilometres away from the city, which were popular as weekend picnic destinations. However, nobody took care of them (see Figure 3). Surprisingly, the locals did not care about waste at all, it seems, that they did not notice it.

While driving back from kite surfing on a wild beach and eating snacks, a French companion noticed the differences of culture: “if I were local, I would throw this plastic bag through the window (with all the day's packages from snacks and empty water bottles). It's really common here, they throw not only separate items of rubbish, but even a whole bag of it! The other day I saw how a really huge McDonald's bag was thrown through the window and all the garbage inside exploded on the street.” (Olivier)

One Bulgarian woman who I met in Jeddah said that people are still sceptical about waste sorting in Bulgaria; however “the situation here is a disaster! I was shocked – everything goes into the same bin.” (Anna). To continue this theme figure 4 shows the number of plastic bags used for one grocery shopping expedition for a family of four people. At the end of the cashier desk two men stand and pack everything for you. They packed almost everything separately: you can find a toothbrush and a piece of soap packed together in a separate bag.



Figure 4. A pile of plastic bags after grocery shopping.

Pro-environmentally conscious behaviour is mainly based on knowledge of the consequences for nature than on responsible behaviour. When faced with a markedly different perception of waste we are encouraged to broaden the understanding of how huge and relevant the problem is worldwide. Douglas (2002) pointed out that different cultural systems define boundaries and problems differently. As any culture is a continuity of concerned structures which comprise social forms, values, the knowledge of their own society, hence it is unrealistic to expect the same understanding at the same time worldwide.

9. Conclusion

An analytical comparative perspective was used in order to understand how established habits, cultural values and traditions shape people's behaviour. It is interesting and useful to observe the tendencies of waste sorting behaviour implemented by the residents of Vilnius and Copenhagen: one city is still in the process of societal education, while the other has already acquired waste sorting traditions. Nevertheless, it is certainly surprising that the citizens of Vilnius shared a very positive attitude towards waste sorting, but these shared attitudes did not necessarily result in actual changes in behaviour. The three described categories of Copenhageners' attitudes towards waste sorting: sceptic, ambivalent and optimistic – were noticed in Vilnius too. However, the definitions of behaviour of those categories are not the same. The described sceptic behaviour in Copenhagen would be called ambivalent or even optimistic in Vilnius.

I was lucky to visit Copenhagen in a hot summer week and due to the beautiful weather I spent a lot of time picnicking in the parks or by the water. I had an opportunity to observe how people behave with waste which is produced during a picnic. Usually, they take any waste home with them, but it is common that glass and plastic bottles as well as cans to be collected by itinerant walkers, who collect recyclable waste with a purpose of getting deposit money for it by bringing it to recycle machines in the supermarkets. Similarly there are people who collect bottles and cans for the same purpose in Vilnius' public open spaces during the summer season. This practice shows that recyclable waste in respect to a bottle's value is created in both cities recycle systems. However, I did not observe anything similar in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. All three settings have strong ideas about order and cleanliness (Douglas, 2002) but they exhibit very different attitudes and habits of waste handling.

Cultural analysis was relevant because the practices which were discussed were intensely cultural. These captured summer moments brought me to the realization that waste has value and its value might influence how it is discarded. Moreover, it works not only in the case of summer open air places, but in discarding practices in general. Bottles and cans are collected for their deposits; old clothes, books and toys are donated or sold – in this way their existence is continued, helping the owners escape from a bad or guilty conscious by discarding valuable stuff. Or they are kept on hold and wait until their value decreases and then the time for a second burial comes. (Hetherington, 2004). People learn to categorize and label stuff, emerge it into the cycles and circulation between categories of transient and durable (Thompson, 1979). An example of how people in Vilnius categorize stuff is that only

a narrow category of items are labelled second-hand – clothes that are bought in a charity shop, while all other items, even if they are used items, are not referred to as second-hand. In amongst this is the fact that some objects like bread carry strong symbolic charges.

Furthermore, the thesis attempted to illustrate how the historical experience, in terms of the politics and ideologies, of a nation or society shape attitudes to waste handling. The need for a historical perspective is important in understanding the ways in which different generations have developed both routines and norms about ridding and storing and to what extent these cultural practices are taken over or not by younger generations. Interestingly, a person's perception of authorities proved to be important in the discussion of waste handling in Vilnius. It was here the biggest difference between Copenhageners and Vilnius citizens appeared. During the research the Copenhagen citizens' attitudes to government were not expressed, whereas in Vilnius negativism towards authorities was highlighted. The Soviet legacy is still alive in the perceptions of Lithuanians. The study found that there is an ongoing discussion over the distrust of authorities which has slowed down many new initiatives, as well as raising doubts as to the benefits of waste sorting and system transparency. Moreover, the influence of the past is significant not only in the attitudes towards government, but in the habits and perceptions of consumption. This deficit is encountered in many situations if one looks back at Lithuania's history: wars, post-war periods, the USSR occupation and so on. These times of everyday scarcity created a dream of a future Western way of life full of possibilities and choices, where a pair of jeans and chewing gum are everyday commodities, not a desire. Never-ending queues were the usual experience in getting the most basic resources tied to the balance between state and black markets. Nevertheless, even though many individuals dreamed about Western mass consumption, the socialist education of being rational consumers is embodied in the attitudes and behaviour of the citizens who were raised during the time of the USSR. The overflow of commodities, information and choices in the last few decades has been significant. However, many elderly people have kept their attitudes of consumption unchanged. A very rational (with the main criteria for the purchase being: good quality, long-lasting and universal) and deliberate shopping practice still influence nowadays consumers' habits. *The slow pace of change in the residents' approach highlights the importance of the youth pro-environmental education, as it is more likely to nurture a new environmentally conscious generation than change the approach of the old one.* Economic instruments, social pressure, and pro-environmental education used together will influence positive changes in Vilnius citizens' attitudes towards waste sorting. However, the most important factor is to develop the waste sorting facilities system into a level which is

convenient for the residents, because it is difficult to educate people to behave in some way if they do not have the necessary conditions for facilitating such behaviour.

Some of the issues which appeared during the research could be studied further, like the gender aspect, i.e. who makes the decisions in households when it comes to saving or disposing. An interesting tendency was observed during the fieldwork. After I had asked about the ways in which old clothes were discarded all eyes were turned to the lady of the house. Often it is the women who make the decision about useless pieces, they undertake the control of domestic storages and the sorting of items which are no longer wanted and decide where the stuff will be given. In general, this tendency proved almost to be rule – the man takes care and the decisions about “manly” tools such as screwdrivers, hammer or with car related items like oil, tyres, etc. and some of his most wearable clothes. While all other items in the household are sorted, stored and discarded by the female in the relationship.

To conclude, it is important that a dialogue is kept up continually between waste management organizers and citizens. It is essential to measure not only attitudes, but actual behaviour (as has been illustrated in the thesis there is a difference between attitudes and performed actions) and to be aware of those domestic habits of sorting, storing and disposing may be continually changing in different groups. I would suggest care is taken when implying other countries experiences of the reform of waste management systems. Even though it is beneficial to learn from other people’s mistakes as well as from your own, it has been found in the thesis that Vilnius’ cultural and historical settings are unique. Thus, it is important to take into consideration that the strategies produced by other cities might not suit a corresponding place without adaptations being implemented. The most essential constituent is to produce one’s own knowledge about waste handling traditions and today’s actual behaviour.

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List of Personal Communication

Marius, personal communication, December 3, 2012

Ona, Tadas & Ieva, personal communication, December 16, 2012

Kazimiera, personal communication, January 12, 2013

Rita, personal communication, December 15, 2012

Laima & Jonas, personal communication, December 6, 2012

Emilija & Vaidas, personal communication, December 12, 2012

Focus group: Lukas, Gebrielius, Erika, Ignè, Kipras, Goda, personal communication, December 15, 2012

Rokas & Laura, personal communication, December 18, 2012

Laura, personal communication, January 30, 2013

Laura, personal communication, April 5, 2013

Mantas, personal communication, December 17, 2012

Olivier, personal communication, February 28, 2013

Anna, personal communication, March 3, 1013

Alli, personal communication, February 21, 2013