

Name-giving motives in Lithuania and Brazil: a comparative view

Motivações para a escolha de nomes na Lituânia e no Brasil: um estudo comparado

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ABSTRACT: This research aims at analysing and comparing the motives for choosing the first name of a child in Lithuania and Brazil in the years 1958-2016. By combining qualitative and quantitative methods and applying social and cultural approaches, it reveals that different countries and cultures have both similar and divergent trends in name-giving practices. The most remarkable similarity in both countries and cultures is both the predominance of an aesthetic motive and the desire to honour a relative, a friend, or a famous person. These trends are presumably related to universal aspects of naming practices. The aesthetic motive is related to processes of cultural globalization, while the honour-oriented motive points to the significance of traditional naming patterns. The greatest

RESUMO: A pesquisa tem como objetivo analisar e comparar as motivações para a escolha do prenome de indivíduos nascidos nos anos 1958-2016 na Lituânia e no Brasil. Ao empregar uma combinação de métodos qualitativos e quantitativos, bem como a aplicação de abordagens sociais e culturais, o estudo apresentado neste artigo revela que países e culturas diferentes têm tendências semelhantes e divergentes nas práticas de atribuição de nomes. A notável semelhança em ambos os países e culturas é a predominância do motivo estético e a escolha do nome de uma criança com o desejo de homenagear um parente, um amigo ou uma pessoa famosa. Essas tendências estão provavelmente relacionadas a aspectos universais das práticas de nomeação. Enquanto a primeira motivação está

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difference between Lithuanian and Brazilian data is in the frequency of name choices due to patriotism, religion, name uniqueness or naming a child after a fictional character. Such divergent results are explained by different social values in each society and different cultural and historical experiences. In addition, the research proves that the first names do have meaning; however, it is not purely conceptual or lexical, as they rather bear individual connotations.

relacionada a processos de globalização cultural, a segunda evidencia a importância dos padrões tradicionais de nomeação. A maior diferença nos dados lituanos e brasileiros está na frequência de escolhas de nomes devido ao patriotismo, à religião, à univocidade do nome e à nomeação inspirada por personagem ficcional. Estes resultados divergentes são explicados por diferentes valores sociais em cada sociedade e diferentes experiências culturais e históricas. Além disso, a pesquisa mostra que os prenomes têm significado; no entanto, ele não é puramente conceitual ou lexical, mas sim um significado de conotação individual.

KEYWORDS:

Anthroponomastics. First name. Motive. Detraditionalization. Individuation.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE:

Antroponomástica. Prenome. Motivação. Destradicionalização. Individualização.

1 Introduction

The noun as a part of speech is a linguistic universal which exists in all the languages of the world. However, the category is rather heterogeneous, and any contrastive research would establish a significant number of differences, especially if the languages under analysis have different origins. This research deals with personal names, a type of nouns which belongs to the subcategory of proper nouns and which is of particular interest to Anthroponomastics, a branch of Onomastics.

According to Hajdú (2002, p. 22), the perception that personal nouns are different from other nouns dates back to ancient Egyptian times. Nevertheless, Onomastics as a scholarly field emerged in Europe only in the 19th century. At the beginning of that century, the first studies took place in England, Ireland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands, and Italy. Later on, studies of proper names were developed in Switzerland, Slovenia, Croatia, Estonia, and Russia. Finally, by the end

of the same century, Onomastics received attention in other countries, including Portugal, Poland, and Lithuania (HAJDŮ, 2002, p. 22).

In Portugal, anthroponymic research was initiated by Leite de Vasconcelos in 1887 and popularized by Dauzat's publications in France in 1951 (SEABRA; ISQUERDO, 2018, p. 994-995). Studies of these two scholars were followed by Brazilian researchers. In Brazil, Guérios was the first to publish an etymological dictionary of first names and surnames in the 1970s, and its later editions are still used as a national reference. Lithuanian research in Anthroponomastics was started by Būga in 1907, who investigated Lithuanian surnames with the suffixes *-eikia-*, *-ieko-* (MICKIENĖ; BALČIŪNAITĖ-LAUŽINIENĖ, 2013, p. 13).

Proper names can be researched from various perspectives. Traditionally, studies of first names have focused on their etymology or linguistics features, including phonological, morphological or graphical properties. More recent studies treat names not only as linguistic signs but also as socio-cultural phenomena. The central focus is on naming processes which result in the final choice of an official name. Leibring (2016) argues that naming processes vary over the course of time since they are influenced by various factors – historical, social, political and individual (p. 211-212). Ainiala and Östman (2017, p. 4) also agree on the importance of social values that “affect name giving” and mention such factors as “national background, mother tongue, religious convictions, and even social status of the name giver”. Thus, assigning a first name to a child is a result of linguistic, cultural and social processes that vary throughout time and space.

Another point to consider in the study of name-giving and motivation is that the initial process by which first names have been chosen by name-givers cannot be recovered precisely. When data are acquired through surveys, they contain narratives which describe name-giving processes from the respondent's point of view. When name-bearers are surveyed, their narrative features a recollection of what the

respondent's relatives, parents or other persons had told him/her about the process. Consequently, the narratives contain beliefs and knowledge of the respondents.

In addition, when research into personal proper names is conducted considering one or more languages and cultures, it is important to

obtain results not only about the origin and development of languages, but also about their features which might be seen either as universal or as peculiar to each language and culture. In a similar manner, contrasting different social norms concerning people's first names can lead to a better comprehension of common and distinct features of names and their usage across languages and cultures. (SEIDE; PETRULIONĖ, 2018, p. 1203)¹

This study focuses on the Lithuanian language, one of the two survivor Baltic languages, and Brazilian Portuguese, one of the Romance languages. In terms of grammar, the major difference between them is that Lithuanian is a highly inflectional language, while Brazilian Portuguese is more analytic². In terms of vocabulary, the languages do not share much either, except for the words introduced through lexical borrowing. From a cultural perspective, Catholicism as the dominating religion in both countries can be viewed as a common characteristic, but different economic, social and cultural policies suggest that they have different cultural backgrounds.

The aim of this research is to analyse and compare the motives for choosing the first name of a child in Lithuania and Brazil. It reports on a questionnaire-based survey completed by 207 respondents, including 107 community members of *Universidade Estadual do Oeste do Paraná (Unioeste)*³ – *Western Paraná State University* from the

¹ An overview of the field of Comparative Anthroponomastics can be found in Seide 2020.

² A language is considered as highly inflectional when grammar functions are expressed by declension (e.g., Classical Latin), whereas the importance of word order is a feature of a more analytic language (e.g., Spanish and French).

³ Antes do início da geração de dados, o projeto foi enviado ao Comitê de Ética em Pesquisa com Seres Humanos da Universidade Estadual do Oeste do Paraná e aprovado. Esta informação pode ser

campus of Marechal Cândido Rondon, Brazil, and 100 equivalent respondents from *Šiauliai University*, Lithuania⁴.

This study combines qualitative and quantitative methods to test the following hypothesis: there are both similar and divergent motives for choosing a child's name in Lithuania and Brazil from 1958 to 2016. Similar trends would be due to universal aspects of naming processes and/or the process of cultural globalization, including Westernization of both societies, while divergent results could be explained by different social values in each society and different cultural and historical experiences.

The study of motives for anthroponomical choice focuses on the values that emerge from the choice. Discovering and analysing such motives can shed light on the society where the choice is made.

2 Review of the literature

In recent decades, research in the field of Onomastics has shown an increasing interest in different aspects of names and naming practices, including motivation for parents' choice when giving a name. Names, as specific linguistic signs with substantial cultural load, are not only described in terms of linguistic features but are also frequently studied to reveal different cultural processes and cultural change trends.

There has been several different focuses within the research of anthroponyms. First, a number of studies have been carried out in the field of Socio-onomastics, focusing on naming as a form of social positioning and an act of identity. Having researched parents' choices of first names in Sweden, Aldrin (2017, p. 45) claims that

confirmada no site Plataforma Brasil, disponível em: <http://plataformabrasil.saude.gov.br/login.jsf> pelo número de registro do projeto, a saber 84919518.6.0000.0107.

⁴ On January 1, 2021, *Šiauliai University* became a part of *Vilnius University* and was renamed *Vilnius University Šiauliai Academy*.

“Parents, through the choice of first name for a child, engage in a social act, which is very much about expressing their own identity – who they are or who they want to be – and constructing a hoped identity for their child.” Her analysis, including both quantitative and qualitative methods, revealed age and education as factors influencing parents’ choice, while names were studied in the following categories: (1) common – original, (2) pragmatic – aesthetic, (3) traditional – modern, (4) Swedish-oriented – foreign-oriented – international-oriented. Similarly, Lindsay and Dempsey (2017) interviewed parents to study social aspects of naming practices in Australia, which revealed certain class and gender distinctions – e.g., boys were more likely to be given traditional names than girls, whose names were longer, with ‘soft’ endings.

Social aspects of personal name motivation have been also researched on the basis of naming practices in Russia (Magnitogorsk City). Building on questionnaire-based surveys, Kisel et al. (2017) identified three major types of social motivation in name-giving process: national, religious, and ideological. The authors lay emphasis on the social nature of personal names, claiming that they “exist in the society and for the society, which dictates their choice, whatsoever individual it may seem” (KISEL et al., 2017, p. 314-315).

A number of studies dealing with naming practices have reported cultural changes, reflected by the dynamics of name choice and its motivation, which is often linked to the processes of globalization. The overall tendency could be referred to as decreasing traditionalism and increasing individuation, as part of cultural modernization in general. For example, an empirical study of first names by Gerhards and Hackenbroff (2000), based on the analysis of birth registers in Gerolstein (a town in Germany) throughout one hundred years (1894–1994), provides evidence for the following issues of cultural modernization: 1) secularization (decreasing number of Christian origin names), 2) the change of family traditions (decreasing number of children named after their parents), 3) individualization (heterogeneity of names), 4)

globalization (increasing number of names from other cultures, influenced mainly by the development of the media, especially television).

“The detraditionalization of naming practices” has been also confirmed by an exploratory, qualitative study on contemporary naming practices performed by Elchardus and Siongers (2010), who analysed questionnaires completed by 589 first year students at a Belgian university in 2005–2006. It revealed the decreasing role of traditional naming patterns and “the greater role of taste and sensitivity to fashion” (ELCHARDUS; SIONGERS, 2010, p. 405), with aesthetic motives being the way the name sounds, its morphophonological harmony with the family name, and its fashionableness at the time.

Similarly, cultural shifts in name-giving practices have been revealed through the study of naming practices in Turkey, where new trends – “increasing individualism and weakening ties with traditions” have been observed (SAKALLI, 2016). By the same token, “an increasing cultural emphasis on individuation” has been described by Emery (2013), who performed an extensive study of American parents’ choices of name. She explained it as an active effort of parents to find a distinctive name for their child, which would presumably create a more unique (and, therefore, stronger) identity for their child.

In addition to the studies reviewed above, which focus on personal names in one language or culture, the present article also considers previous research involving several anthroponymic systems or their parts, which is the subject of Comparative Anthroponomastics. In general, research in Comparative Linguistics (and Comparative Anthroponomastics as a part of it) entail much variation. For example, the languages and cultures analysed can be close or distant from each other. In addition, the languages involved may or may not be in contact with each other. Language contact may be due to geographical proximity (border countries or those close to each other) or as a result of migratory processes. Besides, the comparison can

be done diachronically, synchronically or panchronically. Data analysis, in turn, can be performed from a strictly linguistic point of view or involve other disciplines such as History, Anthropology, Law, among others.

Due to globalization processes in today's world, linguistic and cultural contacts (including encounters of anthroponymic systems that may undergo changes) are frequently observed and chosen as the subject of research in onomastic studies. As Alhaug and Saarelma (2017, p. 69) contend, "The encounter of two cultures and languages typically causes a number of changes in the anthroponymic systems of the languages in question." This often takes place in the context of immigration, when naming a child takes place together with decisions, whether conscious or not, concerning assimilation into the host society. Naming practices are, therefore, studied to reveal different choices of immigrant parents concerning their assimilation, social identity, and even emotional position in the new society. For example, naming practices of Turkish immigrants in Germany were researched by Becker (2009) as a way to reveal immigrants' emotional identification with the German society. The author found three types of name-giving choices: a Turkish name as an indication of emotional separation, a German name as a sign of emotional assimilation, and a name common in both cultures, revealing emotional integration. The study showed that most of the parents chose a Turkish name for their children, German names were rarely chosen, while names common in both cultures were more frequently given to girls.

Excluding the context of migration and bilingualism, name-giving patterns and their motivation in different cultures have been rarely contrasted. More frequently, comparative research has dealt with anthroponymic systems that come into contact and thus influence each other (or one influences another), as in the case of the encounter between African and European anthroponymic systems among the Ambo People in Namibia, described by Saarelma-Maunumaa (2003). Her dissertation

revealed the following changes in naming practices determined by the Christianization and Europeanization of the traditional Ambo culture: “the adoption of biblical and European names, the practice of giving more than one name for a person, and the adoption of hereditary surnames” (SAARELMA-MAUNUMAA, 2003, p. 5).

Regarding the comparison of independent naming systems that are not in close contact, few studies have addressed specific elements or aspects of anthroponymic systems in different cultures. For example, Shokhenmayer (2016) presented a contrastive study of the 100 most frequent Russian, French, German and British surnames. The author distinguished four types of motivation for surnames—patronymic, topographic, characteristic, occupational – and found that their proportions varied from country to country, depending on local history, culture and name-giving traditions. Gudavičius (2013) studied the natural component in the semantic motivation of Lithuanian names, i.e., names referring to natural phenomena such as the sun, storm, dew, plants, etc., and briefly commented on some differences regarding other cultures (German, Russian, Latvian, Kazakh).

An exploratory comparative study on the usage of Lithuanian and Brazilian male first names has been carried out by Seide and Petrulionė (2018). Based on statistical sources from national institutional websites of Lithuania and Brazil, their findings reveal both similarities and differences in the two naming systems. Even though some popular male names are specific only to the Lithuanian culture, Lithuanians and Brazilians share a lot of Christian names due to Catholicism as the dominant religion in both countries. The authors, however, observe that the motivation for choosing such names is not clear (other factors can be involved, besides religious motives), which requires an additional comparative study based on qualitative methods.

The overall view of previous research in Comparative Anthroponomastics reveals the lack of studies aimed at analysing and comparing naming patterns and motivation for their choice in different cultures with separate anthroponymic systems. This is a research gap that the present study on name-giving motives in Lithuanian and Brazilian cultures is meant to fill. In addition to practical benefits of comparative studies in general, such research into naming systems of different cultures might also have significant theoretical value, giving insights into the universality and variation of socio-cultural factors of language use and development.

3 First name as a linguistic, cultural and social phenomenon

Valentine et al. (1996, p. 5) argue that “The right to a name is one of the most basic rights of human beings.” Even though this right is not included into the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, it is written in a number of other documents adopted by the United Nations, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, and Convention of the Rights of the Child (VALENTINE et al., 1996, p. 5-6). Starting with the premise that the act of naming is a highly significant and multifaceted complex process, it is clear that the research would offer valuable material for a comparative study of naming systems in different parts of the world.

Research in Comparative Anthroponomastics with the focus on the corpora of first names greatly exceeds the boundaries of purely linguistic study. Even though names are linguistic elements and a naming system is viewed as a linguistic system, investigation of naming motives and/or naming practices requires application of social and cultural approaches. In other words, names are a linguistic category that have both social and cultural significance.

The linguistic feature is important in scholarly discussions on whether proper names have meaning or not. In talking about proper names as a category with no

meaning, one naturally begins with the Mill's (1806-1873) theory that proper names are "unmeaning marks" and "not connotative" (MILL, 2009, p. 38, 40). His coeval Lower (1813-1876) views the topic from a different perspective and argues that "ALL NAMES WERE ORIGINALLY SIGNIFICANT; although in the course of ages the meaning of most of them may have lapsed from the memory of mankind" (LOWER, 1849, p. 2) (capitals letters in the original).

Contemporary scholars also express different opinions: some advocate that names have only reference, but no meaning, while others are less categorical. For example, Van Langendonck and Van de Velde (2016, p. 27) claim that proper names do not have "defining sense" or "definitional lexical meaning". However, they distinguish four connotative meanings including the three which are relevant to first names. The first type of connotative meanings is related to names "with transparent etymology", which "can give rise to associative meanings related to the name form. (...) This type of connotative meaning is exploited in personal name-giving in many cultures" (VAN LANGENDONCK; VAN DE VELDE, 2016, p. 31). The second type is related to "connotations that arise via the *denotatum* and can be exploited in discourse to identify or to characterize the name-bearer. No polysemy is involved there" (VAN LANGENDONCK; VAN DE VELDE, 2016, p. 32). Connotative meanings of the third type are "emotive meanings such as augmentative, diminutive and honorific. These can be inherent in certain names (...)" (VAN LANGENDONCK; VAN DE VELDE, 2016, p. 32).

Nystrom (2016) claims that to answer the question whether names are meaningful or meaningless is not easy, but he still advocates that names do have meaning. However, he considers this meaning as "illusionary lexical and etymological" meaning, because the real meaning of the name is actually the person carrying this name (NYSTROM, 2016, p. 39). Moreover, according to Nystrom (2016, p. 40), the identifying or referential function of proper names is of primary importance,

but not the meaning on which they are based. The same opinion albeit with a slightly different wording is expressed by Ainiala and Östman (2017, p. 4), who state that, “When we think of the identifying function of a name, it is irrelevant whether or not the name is transparent or opaque.”

This research draws on the perspective that proper names, particularly first names, do have some meaning. It is not purely conceptual or lexical meaning, but rather individual connotation meaning. Such an approach towards the meaning of names enables us to better analyse the process of name-giving. According to Dick (1992), anthroponyms are motivated because they are conscientiously chosen by name-givers for some reason. No investigation would be required (even though the one that is described in this paper) to show that at least one of the motives why name-givers choose one or another name is its meaning.

The cultural aspect is also important in the name-giving process. Van Langendonck and Van de Velde (2016, p. 33) argue that “The number and types of names that are bestowed on people are highly culture-specific, as are the principles that guide the choice of a name.” To better view the relationship or interdependence of naming and culture, one has to start from defining the latter, which is not an easy task due to the complexity and variability of the phenomenon.

In order to introduce different attitudes in relation to culture, it is worth highlighting its key elements which are incorporated in the approaches described below. Griswold (2013, p. 3) distinguishes five components of culture: norms, values, beliefs, expressive symbols, and practices. She says that “norms are the way people behave in a given society, values are what they hold dear, beliefs are how they think the universe operates, and expressive symbols are representations, often of social norms, values and beliefs themselves”, while practices are “people’s behaviour patterns, not necessarily connected to any particular values or beliefs” (GRISWOLD,

2013, p. 3). These five “pillars” of culture manifest themselves in three different approaches to culture discussed for the purpose of this research.

The most common view towards culture, which can be adopted in various scholarly and everyday practices, is that culture is a way of life of ordinary people, who learn it through socialization within the group and pass it from generation to generation. This approach is well described in one of the oldest definitions of culture dated back to 1871. Tylor in his book *Primitive Cultures* claims that “Culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs, and other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society” (apud SARDAR, 1999, p. 21). This point of view is related to the concept of traditional or national culture, which is obtained by members of a certain nation, ethnical group or community that passes their shared experiences, including norms and values, down the generations.

The other approach towards culture is related to artistic, scientific and other intellectual achievements of a civilized society or something everyone should strive for, but not all can achieve. Such understanding is restricted to “high culture” and is commonly related to the elite in a society. Spencer-Oatey (2012, p. 15) claims that high culture “is often linked with terms and concepts such as *civilised, well educated, refined, cultured*, and is associated with the results of such refinement – a society’s art, literature, music, and so on.”(italics in the original) Freeman (2019, p. 37) relates culture to elite goods and activities such as haute cuisine, high fashion or haute couture, museum-calibre art, and classical music.

Furthermore, so-called “high culture” or “elite culture” can be opposed to “popular culture”, which, according to Storey (2009, p. 5), encompasses everything “that is widely favoured or well-liked by many people”. Storey (2009, p. 6) also adds that popular culture is “the culture that is left over after we have decided what is high culture”. This is mostly related to various cultural creations produced by the media. These cultural phenomena are easily accessed, perceived and consumed, but, as many

other contemporary things, they are also very temporary. The term “popular culture” is used synonymically with the terms “mass culture” and “low culture”, but this research rejects the latter, because not all popular cultural products are less intellectual or artistic than the ones which are assigned to high culture.

No discussion about culture can be further developed without the examination of the phenomenon of language. Several scholars view language as an indispensable part or at least as a feature of culture. For example, Risager (2006, p. 1) attests that “language and culture are inseparable, language and culture are intimately linked, language is culture and culture is language”. In addition to its main function to transmit the message, language also unites the nation (GUDAVIČIUS, 2009, p. 13) as well as protects “national character and even philosophy” (LEWIS, 2006, p. 63). Following Wierzbicka (1997), the vocabulary of a language and the lifestyle of a nation are closely related. Two cultures might speak the same language, but they never speak it in the same way.

In this research, the interrelation or interdependence of culture and language manifest themselves in naming practices. On the one hand, naming is influenced by culture since name-givers as members of a certain cultural group choose names in conformity with the norms and values accepted in their group. Moreover, names are chosen from the repertoire of names or, in Griswold’s (2013) terminology, expressive symbols, which represent norms and values. Influence of culture on naming practices may also be observed when two or more cultures collide. On the other hand, naming practices influence culture itself. This perspective indicates that name-givers are active makers of culture who not only introduce new (or once obliterated) names into an anthroponymic system, but also prompt the society to accept them as a norm. It often happens that a newly coined name sounds strange at first but it might enter into cultural mainstream gradually. In this light, one can talk only about the influence on popular culture, because comparable impact on “high” or “traditional” culture may

be established exclusively by long-term diachronic research. Lastly, name-giving reflects culture. Gudavičius (2009, p. 10) claims that the essence of culture is recognized and understood through the analysis of elements which are registered and encoded in language or, as Alhaug and Saarelma (2017, p. 70) simply put it, names can be seen as a mirror of the culture of the people. It follows that a repertoire of names may serve as a valuable resource for research into culture.

To conclude the discussion on various influences and interrelations of phenomena related to name-giving, one should also consider the socio-cultural function of names. Ainiala and Östman (2017, p. 3-4) state that “names function not only as tools for identification but also as tools for the social classification of an individual. A personal name therefore tells a community who the individual is and, secondly, lets the individual know what his or her place in the community is”. From this perspective, one can claim that a person carrying a certain name undertakes a role and/or behaviour they are expected to have as a member of socio-cultural community. In other words, a name given to a person may somewhat influence their lifestyle or behaviour patterns.

The process of name-giving “is not only an individual isolated act”, but it also involves a certain pattern (SEIDE; PETRULIONĖ, 2018, p. 1212). Aldrin (2017, p. 55) argues that the process of naming should be seen as a complex process in several phases, including searching for inspiration, comparing different names, checking how others react to a certain name or how the name suits the child, making a decision on a name choice, announcing the chosen name, as well as explaining the name choice for family, friends (or a researcher).

4 Motives for selecting a child’s first name

Assigning a first name to a person is a result of linguistic, cultural and social processes that vary in time and space. As pointed out by Leibring (2016, p. 211-212),

“several ways of choosing, selecting, or creating given names can be identified throughout history. These ways are, as the rest of our language usage, dependent on time, social and political situation, as well as on individual preferences”. To illustrate these diverse processes, she cites several motives for choosing a name which have served as a starting point for developing the categories and definitions of motives for this research.

Drawing on Leibring’s framework and on the analysis provided in the previous chapters, 11 categories (with some subcategories) were distinguished. Their definitions are provided below:

1. **Uniqueness.** The selection process is motivated by the fact that the name-giver believes the first name they have chosen or created is a unique name, i.e., one of a kind, extraordinary, rare.

1.1. **Apparent uniqueness.** In this subcategory of names, uniqueness is only an illusion as the name in question already exists and is being used or has been used in the past. It sometimes happens that old names come back into usage or names popular in other regions or countries are selected because they are rare in the locality of name-givers.

1.2 **Neologism.** A name assigned to the category of neologisms is the one coined by name-givers usually with the purpose to be unique.

1.3 **Variation.** The term is borrowed from Leibring (2016, p. 212), who says that one of the ways of creating a given name is “variation by combining name elements”. Such a name is also a neologism and it is coined with the aim to achieve uniqueness. Variations fall into two types: 1) a different suffix or ending is added to an existing name (morphological variation), and 2) unusual spelling is used in the name (graphical variation). This motive can be regarded as a more recent one and related to the individualization of Western culture nowadays. For example, in the Portuguese language, there is the name *Mateus*, but a relative can register the name as *Matheus*

with an “h” to make it different. Another example is to register the female name *Sofia* as *Sophia* or *Sophya*.

2. **Patriotism.** The name-giver chooses such a name to express love for their country or the choice is inspired by such feelings. In most cases, the name-giver selects the first name because it is exclusive to the country, i.e., it does not exist in other countries or languages. These names can be seen as culture-specific items. However, if a man called *Kęstutis* (an exclusively Lithuanian name) says he was named after his mother’s friend, the motive is 3.2 but not 2.

3. **Honour.** A name given in one’s honour is a name of a person who is called after the other person, including relatives, family friends, famous people (celebrities), etc. Leibring’s (2016, p. 212) approach is roughly similar: she mentions “naming after famous persons, real or fictional” as a separate motive and also says that it could be “a way of commemorating deceased ancestors, in combination that his person’s positive characteristics would follow the name”. The main difference between the categories described by Leibring and this research is that the latter distinguishes fictional names as a separate group (see category 10 in the list below) and the names that have been chosen with the aim to transfer positive traits are assigned to category 7. In addition, in the research presented in this article, it is not considered whether the honoured person is alive or deceased.

3.1. **In honour of a relative.**

3.2. **In honour of a friend.**

3.3. **In honour of a famous person.**

4. **Religion.** A religious name is the one given for a religious purpose, usually after a saint, but not necessarily related to the “naming after the Calendar name of the birthday (very common, and indeed at sometimes almost obligatory in the Catholic Church to give the name of the day in the Saint’s Calendar)” as described by Leibring (2016, p. 212). However, first names with potential religious meaning such as *Jesus*,

Maria or *José* do not necessarily have a religious reason. For example, if a person called José says he was named after his father, the motive is 3.1 but not 4.

5. **Chance.** A chance name is the one which is chosen either randomly or without clear motivation.

5.1. **Pure chance.** The term describes the name-giving process characterized by an absence of cause-result relation or motivation (at least the one which can be traced in the narrative).

5.2. **Lottery.** A lottery name is the one which is chosen by drawing lots.

6. **Meaning.** A semantically meaningful name is the one chosen because of its semantic load. This motive also covers the instances when a first name is homonymic to a common noun, and thereby the meaning of the latter can be consciously or unconsciously transferred to the former.

7. **Belief.** In this category, the anthroponymic choice is based on the belief that the name has traits that influence the personality of the named person. In this process, the name-giver believes that the name has good qualities that they wish to be the qualities of the name-bearer. This motive is not directly related to the meaning of the name itself, but rather to how the name-giver evaluates the first name and to their belief in a kind of magical power of the name.

8. **Aesthetic.** An aesthetic name is chosen because the name-giver finds it nice. Leibring called this motive as “choosing a certain name because of its euphony” (LEIBRING, 2016, p. 212). In this research, the category of aesthetic names is not limited to phonetic feature since the name can be liked because of its length (long or short), good match with the surname, attractive graphical form, etc.

9. **Popularity.** A popular name is the one which was popular in the social environment of the name-giver during the period when a child was born (or the period which was significant to the name-giver/s).

10. **Fictional character.** A name given to a child after a character from a piece of literature or music, film, soap opera, and alike.

11. **Resemblance.** A name assigned to this category is the one which resembles or is similar to a family member's name in terms of spelling or pronunciation.

The eleven categories defined above have been developed to assist classification of the data. The following section describes the methodological procedures used in this research.

5 Methodology

This research aims at analysing and comparing the motives for choosing the first name of a child in Lithuania and Brazil in the years 1958-2016. A questionnaire-based survey was carried out to collect data about the process of name-giving and possibly influencing factors. The survey included 107 students and staff members of *Universidade Estadual do Oeste do Paraná (Unioeste)* – *Western Paraná State University* from the campus of Marechal Cândido Rondon, Brazil, and 100 students and staff members of *Šiauliai University*, Lithuania. Since the respondents belong to a comparably narrow social class, namely, a university community, the research results cannot reflect overall cultural tendencies of name-giving in both countries and are, therefore, interpreted in reference to a certain fragment of society only. However, the study has the potential to be expanded in the scope of both the questionnaire and the social groups. It could thus offer broader insights into the naming systems of the cultures under analysis and further contribute to comparative studies in Onomastics.

Data collection and analysis were based on the premise that qualitative and quantitative methods complement each other. This goes in line with the contemporary tendency towards mixed methods research (DÖRNYEI, 2007), seen as a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, meant to support each other and thus contribute to the overall quality of research. Numerical ways of measuring and

generalizing objective reality, on the one hand, and subjective individual interpretations, on the other, may well work together to provide the big picture of a phenomenon – in this case, the parents' motives for selecting a child's name.

The methodological procedures adopted in this study can be described in relation to different stages of data collection and analysis. First, a questionnaire with both closed and open questions was designed, including two sections: Section 1 aimed at collecting factual information about the respondents, their name, time and place of birth, as well as their parents; Section 2 aimed at inquiring about the meaning of the respondents' name and the very process of name-giving, namely who and why this person made the choice. In Lithuania and in Brazil, the questionnaires were completed by a similar number of university students and staff members in July–December 2018. In both countries, there were more respondents born in the 1990s and more female respondents. Comparable databases were constructed to be used in further stages of analysis.

The data processing phase involved thorough readings of questionnaires and making an inventory of the respondents' names and other characteristics and circumstances of their name-giving such as the name-giver(s) and motives for choosing the name. The motives for name-giving were interpreted on the basis of the eleven motive categories presented above, and their distribution was calculated. In addition, excerpts of textual evidence explicating one or another motive for parent's choice were collected and later used to exemplify different motives, as narrated by the respondents.

Statistical data derived from the questionnaires served as the basis for quantitative analysis, presented in Section 6. It provides a detailed picture of the respondents' age, gender, name inventory and the frequency of each name-giving reason. The comparison of statistical data provided both equivalent tendencies and different patterns of name-giving in Lithuania and Brazil. A qualitative analysis based

on textual evidence is discussed in Section 7 to provide a full account of the motives for name-giving in both countries. It reveals exactly what motives motivated the name selection and provide elements for possible historical and cultural explanations to both convergent and divergent trends in name-giving practices in Lithuania and Brazil.

6 Quantitative analysis of Lithuanian and Brazilian data

The quantitative part of the research is based on 207 questionnaires completed by 100 university students and staff in Lithuania and by 107 equivalent respondents in Brazil. As mentioned earlier, the research focuses on various aspects on naming processes in both countries in the years 1958-2016. **Table 1** presents the data on the number of personal names as well as the date of birth and gender of the name-bearers in both countries.

Table 1 – Number of personal names per age group and gender in Lithuania and Brazil.

Name-bearers' date of birth	Male first names (LT)	Female first names (LT)	Male first names (BR)	Female first names (BR)
1958 – 1962	-	2	-	-
1963 – 1967	-	1	1	2
1968 – 1972	-	-	1	2
1973 – 1977	-	3	-	5
1978 – 1982	1	1	-	7
1983 – 1987	-	2	1	6
1988 – 1992	1	2	1	5
1993 – 1997	14	14	5	39
1998 – 2002	23	42	2	39
2003 – 2007	1	-	4	1
2008 – 2012	1	-	1	6
2013 – 2016	1	1	3	2
Total:	42	68	19	113
	110		132	

Source: authors of the article.

Table 1 shows 110 Lithuanian first names (10 are the names of the respondents' children) and 132 Brazilian personal names (23 are their children's names). Although

the range of the birth year is rather broad, most name-bearers were born in the years 1993-2002, i.e., 91 Lithuanian and 85 Brazilian names are from this period.

The results indicate that the girl names outnumber the boy names in both countries. In Lithuania, out of the total of 110 names, 68 are female; in Brazil, out of the total of 132 names, 113 are female.

As for double personal names, the results are quantitatively different. In Brazil, there are 46 compound first names (e.g., *Adriana Paula* or *Daniel Evandro*), whereas in Lithuania there are 22 double names only (*Onutė Elena* and *Darius Jonas*).

Further quantitative analysis of the first names shows that 23 names in Lithuania and 36 names in Brazil are repetitive names, i.e., they are carried by more than one person. This rather convergent result shows the existence of the very similar rate of anthroponomical diversity in both countries. However, the means by which it is reached is different in each context. For example, there are cases when the first name is repeated 5 times (e.g., *Ieva*) or at least 3 times (e.g., *Karolina*) in the Lithuanian data, whereas no name is mentioned more than 2 times in the Brazilian sample.

The comparison of the Lithuanian and Brazilian findings also indicates that the number of the personal names which may be considered equivalents is low. As for the male first names, there is the Lithuanian name *Paulius* and its Brazilian equivalent *Paulo*. As for female first names, there are 2 equivalent names: *Karolina* in the Lithuanian case, and the forms *Caroline* and *Carolina* in the Brazilian sample. In addition, there is one similar or related first name, i.e., the Lithuanian name *Paulina* can be related to the Brazilian first name *Paulina* or to the first name *Paula*, which sounds similar to *Paulina*.

When comparing repertoires of names in different contexts and languages, it is also significant to point out the people who have chosen the children's first names. The quantitative analysis of both Lithuanian and Brazilian data indicates that mothers have been one of the most influential persons in the family in the process of name-giving,

as she have chosen the child's name most often in both countries (37 cases from the total of 110 in Lithuania, and 64 cases from the total of 132 in Brazil). Other people that have had influence on the choice of the first name are the fathers, grandparents, siblings, and godparents.

As mentioned in the theoretical framework and methodology of this research, the core interest of this study lies in analysing the motives for name-giving in Lithuania and Brazil. **Table 2** provides statistical data on the number and percentage of the motives mentioned by the respondents.

Table 2 – Number and percentage of the motivementions in Lithuania and Brazil.

Motives	LT Sample (number of mentions)	BR Sample (number of mentions)
1. Uniqueness		
1.1. Seeming uniqueness	1.6% (2)	4.9% (8)
1.2. Neologism	-	0.6% (1)
1.3. Variation	-	1.8% (3)
2. Patriotism	7.4% (9)	-
3. Honour		
3.1. An honour of a relative	4.1% (5)	9.2% (15)
3.2. An honour of a friend or acquaintance	3.3% (4)	9.8% (16)
3.3. An honour of a famous person	0.8% (1)	4.3% (7)
4. Religion	2.5% (3)	8.6% (14)
5. Chance		
5.1. Pure chance	6.5% (8)	4.9% (8)
5.2. Lottery	0.8% (1)	0.6% (1)
6. Meaning	5.7% (7)	4.3% (7)
7. Belief	4.1% (5)	4.9% (8)
8. Aesthetic	25.4% (31)	27% (44)
9. Popularity	2.5% (3)	0.6% (1)
10. Fictional character		
10.1 Films	2.5% (3)	1.3% (2)
10.2 Soap Opera	-	3.7% (6)
10.3 Literature	0.8% (1)	1.8% (3)
10.4 Name of a musician or name mentioned in the lyrics	-	2.5% (4)
11. Resemblance	4.1% (5)	0.6% (1)

12. Other motives indicated by respondents	0.8% (1)	4.3% (7)
13. Unknown motive	15.6% (19)	1.3% (2)
14. No information on the reason	11.5% (14)	3.0% (5)
Total:	100% (122)	100% (163)

Source: authors of the article.

When comparing the motives for name-giving in Brazil and Lithuania, we may point out the following convergent and divergent results. In both countries and cultures, the aesthetic motive plays the most important role when choosing the first name. It accounts for 25.4% in Lithuania and 27% in Brazil. The greatest difference in both countries and cultures is evident for the following motives: *Uniqueness* (1.6% in Lithuania vs. 7.3% in Brazil), *Patriotism* (7.4% vs. 0%), *Fictional character* (3.3% vs. 9.3%), and *Religion* (2.5% vs. 8.6%). As for the unknown motive and no information categories, the percentage is significantly higher in the Lithuanian case. For example, 15.6% is allocated for the unknown motive in Lithuania and only 1.3% in Brazil. A further qualitative analysis of the data was carried out in order to better understand the motives of such behaviour.

7 Qualitative analysis of Lithuanian and Brazilian data

The qualitative analysis of the Lithuanian and Brazilian data shows that the most common motive to choose a name for a child in both countries is because the name-giver considers it “nice”. The *aesthetic* motive was noted 31 times (25.4%) in Lithuania and 44 times (27%) in Brazil. Even though this category is not limited to the phonetic feature in this research, this is one of the most common motives for the name choice. For example:

LT1. My Mom decided to choose this name because it sounded good. (1998)⁵
 BR2. We tried to imagine how the name would sound at different stages of our children's life, i.e., when they are children, adolescents and adults. (1993, 1999, 2008)

In addition to the phonetic feature, the respondents' personal names were chosen because of the length of the name, good match with the surname or with the first component of a double name, or attractive graphical form. This is evident in the following examples:

LT3. The name sounded nice, and it was short to write. (1999)
 LT4. My grandmother chose the name because she liked the letter "K". (1998)
 BR5. The second name "Caroline" was chosen for aesthetic motives only. My parents thought the name would fit the first name and decided on it. (1999)

The qualitative study of the attribution of a name to a person because of its aesthetic form allows certain conclusions about the nation's culture of that time in general since culture and naming processes are inseparable. The examination of the textual evidence shows that in the late 20th century in Lithuania and Brazil (most respondents of the survey were born at that time) there is a growing tendency towards the so-called detraditionalization of naming practices, which means that people mostly choose names due to taste and fashion rather than to following certain traditions. This point of view can be closely linked to the concept of *popular culture*, a term used by Storey (2009) to refer to everything that is admired by many people. However, such widely favoured cultural phenomena are usually temporary; therefore, the preferences for personal names at the end of the 20th century may not be necessarily the same at another period of time. In fact, the predominance of the aesthetic motive may also be

⁵ The date in parenthesis indicates name-bearer's date of birth.

seen as a consequence of the globalization process, which has influenced both Lithuanian and Brazilian cultures.

Another popular motive for choosing a name for a child in Lithuania and Brazil deals is the wish to honour a relative, a friend or a famous person. As the data shows, this accounts for 8.2% of all motives mentioned in the Lithuanian data and for 23.3% in Brazil. The names of the closest people in the family are the most common choices. For example:

LT6. My mother chose my name to honour her grandmother. (1989)

LT7. My father chose this name as part of an old tradition in my family: someone in the family is to be named Albertas. (1998)

BR8. Sofia. I gave her this name to pay tribute to her maternal great-grandmother. (2007)

These examples indicate that the motive for naming a child after a relative may have to do with the wish to celebrate the deceased ancestors or to honour relatives alive, and that kind of behaviour is influenced by certain behaviour norms and traditions appropriate in a certain society and culture. The analysis of the narratives proves that giving a name to a child is a kind of thing learned within a society and passed from generation to generation. This is outright shown in Example LT7 when the respondent's father chose the name as part of an old tradition in his family.

As for naming a child after a friend, it is a rather widespread phenomenon in both countries, too. The wish to have a child named after a beloved friend in one's lifetime is related to associative meanings that are based on the name-bearers or, in Van Langendonck and Van de Velde's words (2016), associative meanings of personal names, specifically the connotations that arise via the denotatum, are of great importance here. For example:

LT9. My father knew a nice and intelligent woman who was named Aina. (1974)

BR10. My mother had a friend who was a very promising, intelligent woman. My

mother honoured her by choosing her name because she wanted to pass all these qualities on to me (1995).

As for giving a name in honour of a famous person, there is one instance in the Lithuanian case when a child is named after a historical figure *Aleksandr*, while the Brazilian data shows that usually homage is paid to famous international and national actors, sportsmen or poets. For example:

LT11. My mother chose the name Aleksandr because such a name represents many great historic figures. (1995)

BR12. My name is a tribute to the American actress. My mother was inspired by the actress who had been acting for some time in movies and had been appearing on TV. She is the famous “Nicole Mary Kidman”. (1997)

BR13. My mother gave this name to me to honour the poet and singer Vinícius de Moraes whom she loves a lot. (1989)

The national culture, history and values are much more mentioned in the Lithuanian data. Selecting the first name with the aim to express one’s patriotic feelings is the third most mentioned motive in Lithuania (7.4% of all instances), whereas this motive is absent in Brazil. In most Lithuanian cases, the first names can be considered as culture-specific items since the names are exclusively Lithuanian or do not exist in other countries. For example:

LT14. I was named after the Grand Duke Gediminas who ruled Lithuania hundreds of years ago. (1999)

LT15. Margiris is the name of Lithuanian Duke Margiris. (2007)

LT16. Linas is a typical Lithuanian name. (1980)

LT17. I wanted my daughter to have a Lithuanian name Rūta. (1986)

Examples LT14, LT15, LT16 and LT17 assert that the people’s patriotic feelings are deeply rooted in the Lithuanian culture. One’s love, devotion or commitment to Lithuania is usually expressed by the names referring to plants having a symbolic meaning in Lithuanian folklore – e.g., the names Linas (Example LT16) and Rūta

(Example LT17), or calling a child after famous Lithuanian historic personalities as Margiris (Example LT15) and Gediminas (Example LT14). The choice of historic names may also be related to the people's wish to identify themselves with the civilized, well-educated, refined and cultured personalities and, in this way, to believe that they belong to the "elite". This is also often associated with the concept of *high culture* emphasizing artistic, scientific and other intellectual achievements of a civilized society or something everyone should strive for, to cite Spencer-Oatey (2012).

In addition, it is impossible to analyse the relevance of patriotism in the process of giving a name without relating it to history. The motive to be strongly committed to one's country is closely related to the fact that Lithuania was occupied by the Soviet Union after the World War II and regained its independence only in 1990. That period of time influenced people's lives, way of thinking, and feelings. The lack of patriotism as a motive for choosing a name in the Brazilian sample can be related to the fact that the Brazilians did not have to fight for their identity. Bauman (2004) states that the perception of having an identity will not occur if people do not feel their identity is in danger. Besides, the absence of the patriotic motive in the Brazilian sample might not necessarily mean weaker patriotic feelings since there is not always a direct link between motives and feelings (see SEIDE, 2016).

Another way to choose a child's name in Lithuania and Brazil is randomly or by chance. The category *Chance* accounts for 7.3% of all cases in Lithuania and 5.5% in Brazil. It is further subdivided into *Lottery* when the name is chosen drawing lots (Example LT18) and *Pure chance* when there is no cause-result relation or motivation (Example BR19). For example:

LT18. My parents and grandparents simply wrote down the names they liked on pieces of paper, put them in a box and drew them out of the box. The name which they drew out most often was Edita. (1999)

BR19. My father had to make an identification card at the hospital reception. There he saw the nurse's badge with the name Angela. My name was chosen that way. (1995)

The proportion of names chosen by chance is similar in the Lithuanian and Brazilian data. This may be related to anthroponomical practices that tend to see proper personal names as meaningless signs by which people are called.

This research, on the contrary, argues that first names have some meaning and are usually chosen due to its semantic load. To give a child a name because of its meaning was selected by 5.7% of the Lithuanian respondents and by 4.3% of the Brazilian respondents. Their narratives suggest that personal names do have some meaning, although, as Van Langendonck and Van de Velde (2016) state, it is not lexical but rather connotative. For example:

LT20. When I was a baby, he [her father] called me “Auksiukas”. So my parents decided that I had to be *Auksė*, a golden baby. (1999)

BR21. According to a book of names and their meanings that my mother consulted at hospital the day I was born, the name *Dâmaris* meant enlightened and joyful. She liked its meaning and chose it to name me. (1999)

In Example LT20, the Lithuanian name *Auksė*, which is often interchangeably used with its diminutive form *Auksiukas*, makes us think about a very treasured person (Back translation – golden girl/baby). In the Brazilian case (Example BR21), the name *Dâmaris* has been chosen because of its positive meanings on its own.

Data analysis required the inclusion of the motive *Resemblance*. A name assigned to this category is the one similar to the family member’s name. It is a combination of both parents’ names, involving the same inflexions or letters of the parent’s names. The number of such cases totals 4.1% in Lithuania and 0.6% in Brazil. For example:

LT22. My sister’s name is *Živilė*. Both our names have the same ending “vilė”. Our parents chose these names because they wanted them sound similar. (1999)

BR23. The name *Carina* was chosen because my sister was named *Cassiana* and they wanted it to have the same initial letter. (1995)

On the one hand, such naming practices as in Example LT22 and in Example BR23 may be considered as following traditions, passing them down generations, as well as demonstrating that the values and customs of the family are a shared cultural trait in both Lithuanian and Brazilian societies. However, others would argue that this is an opposite phenomenon. Being a combination of someone's name, the name itself becomes somehow unique and rare. Thus, a conclusion can be drawn that people already adopt new tactics of name-giving, which reveals increasing individualism and weaker ties with the customs and traditions.

The number of cases for the motive *Belief* (which suggests that the name chosen will somewhat influence an individual's personality, behaviour patterns or lifestyle) is similar in both countries: 4.1% in Lithuania and 4.9% in Brazil. For example:

LT24. My mom decided to name me Raminta as she expected me to be a calm person (1999).

BR25. There were four German emperors with the same name Otto. I believe it is a powerful name. (2014)

Examples LT24 and BR25 demonstrate that name-givers do not think a great deal about the uniqueness of the name itself. On the contrary, they believe these names have positive qualities which will be transferred to the name-bearer and create a stronger identity for their child.

As for motive *Fictional character*, the Brazilian respondents seem to be more enthusiastic about naming their children after a fictional character. In Lithuania such cases account for 3.3% of the data; in Brazil for 9.3%. The Lithuanians usually mention a film character that has influenced the name choice (Example LT26). The Brazilians indicate that their names have been chosen under the influence of pieces of literature (Example BR27), lyrics (Example BR28), films, and soap operas (Example BR29). For example:

LT26. They chose the name from the movie “Snow queen”. The main characters were Gerda and Kajus. (1999)

BR27. To choose a name for her second daughter, she decided after reading the novel. (1971)

BR28. My name Camila Giovana was chosen because of the song name “Camila, Camila” from the band “Nenhum de Nós”. He [her father] found the name beautiful, too. (1999)

BR29. My first name “Joice” was my mother’s choice who, when she first watched television (she was about 12), watched a soap opera. There was an actress Malu Mader who played the role of a character named “Joice” in that soap opera. (1999)

Such naming practices may be a consequence of “*popular culture*” and, with reference to Gerhards and Hackenbroff (2000), are also linked to the processes of globalization that are usually influenced by the media. The fact that naming a child after a fictional character is much more common in Brazil than in Lithuania also reveals certain behavioural patterns – everyday activities admired by Brazilian people such as watching soap operas and listening to the music on the radio. In addition, as Gerhards and Hackenbroff (2000) point out, naming practices related to globalization and influenced mainly by the development of the habit of watching television may increase the number of names from other cultures, but this is the case neither in the Brazilian nor Lithuanian data under analysis. Although the Lithuanian and Brazilian corpora confirm a certain influence on the process of naming by the media, the participants’ narratives reveal more significant impact of national popular culture rather than foreign cultures⁶.

Further qualitative analysis of motive *Popularity* indicates that selecting a popular and admired name by the time a child was born appears only in a few Lithuanian and Brazilian narratives (2.5% and 0.6%, respectively). For example:

LT30. The name was chosen because it was popular at the time. (1978)

BR31. My mother chose the name “Adriana” because it was famous at the time and

⁶ Different results have been reported on the popularity of foreign names in Brazil, especially in the lower social classes, which are not covered by this research (see FREITAS, 2007).

because she liked the name. (1997)

Rare choices of popular names demonstrate the overall trend of individuation in both countries (EMERY, 2013; GERHARDS; HACKENBROFF, 2000; SAKALLI, 2016). In other words, parents do not wish their children's names to be shared with others but seek to find a special name for their child that would presumably create a more unique identity for them while helping them achieve more in their lives.

Religion is another factor having great impact on the naming practices worldwide. Brazil and Lithuania are Christian countries with a majority of population identifying themselves as Catholics. The data acquired in Lithuania shows that such cases total 2.5% of all examples, whereas in Brazil the number of respondents named after a Saint, to honour a promise or for some other religious purpose is significantly greater – 8.6%⁷. For example:

LT32. The Bible says that Ieva is the name of the first woman on the Earth created by God. (1996)

LT33. Mum knew that this name was holy. (1998)

BR34. "Maria" was chosen by my mother when she had complications of pregnancy. She made a promise to Our Lady Mary that she would name me Maria if I was born healthy. (1993)

BR35. My second name was given because July 24th is Santa Christina's day. (1969)

The share of Catholicism as the national religion in both countries explains the presence of the religious motive in both data. However, the Brazilians mention this motive 3 times more often than the Lithuanians do. This divergent result may be explained historically. In Brazil, Catholicism was the official religion until 1890. At the present time, the State is secular but freedom of religion has always been proclaimed, whereas in Lithuania such freedom hardly existed in the Soviet period. In addition,

⁷ Religious motives should not be considered to be equal to the choice of the name with religious meaning: a religious name can be given for non-religious motives (see SEIDE, 2016).

the low number of name choices for a religious motive in Lithuania may be a consequence of secularization as a part of globalization and cultural modernization processes (see GERHARDS; HACKENBROFF, 2000).

The least number of naming practices in Lithuania corresponded to the category *Uniqueness* (1.6%), which contrasts to 7.3% in Brazil⁸. As for the Lithuanian part, all instances fall under the subcategory *Seeming uniqueness*, which means that the uniqueness is only an illusion since such names already exist (Example LT36). The evaluation of a name as unique, according to the Brazilian data, is motivated by the fact that nobody has such a name in the family, the person that has chosen the name does not know anyone bearing that name, or the chosen name is disregarded for being widely used at the time and changed into another one, more unique (Example BR37). For example:

LT36. <...> Simonas. She wanted a rare name for the boy. (1999)

BR37. My mother said to me that the day I was born she knew three other Andressas had been born at Hospital and decided to change the name. So, I was renamed. (1995)

Furthermore, the examination of the textual data also pointed to several Lithuanian cases with no information on the motives (11.5%) or no knowledge of the motive for their names' choice (15.6%). The percentage of such cases is significantly lower in Brazil, i.e. 3.0% and 1.3%, respectively. The textual evidence of the Brazilian part shows the existence of other motives influencing the name choice such as pragmatic motives, chose of a name seen in dream, easy pronunciation in Brazilian Portuguese and in French, and the supposed ethnic background of the name chosen; however, the analysis of these motives is to be included in future research.

⁸ The tendency to choose or create a unique name is confirmed by other researchers analysing linguistic features of first names in Brazil (FRAI, 2021; PENSIN, 2020; VESCOVI 2021).

8 Conclusions

The findings of this quantitative and qualitative research into name-giving motives in Lithuania and Brazil confirm the hypothesis proposed at the initial stage of this research. The comparison of parental motives for choosing a baby's name in two different countries shows both similar trends and divergent patterns, which is indicative of the universality and variation of anthroponymic systems and socio-cultural factors that affect them.

This comparative research has exceeded the boundaries of purely linguistic study. Although names are linguistic elements and a naming system is viewed as a linguistic system, investigation of naming motives and/or naming practices has required the application of social and cultural approaches. Moreover, a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods has allowed to measure and generalize objective reality as well as to explicate subjective individual interpretations.

The quantitative analysis shows that different cultures with separate anthroponymic systems have more similarities than differences. In both countries, the percentage of repetition of the first name is not great: 23 names in Lithuania and 36 names in Brazil. The very similar rate of anthroponomical diversity in both countries demonstrates the unwillingness to repeat the names, which may be related to an increasing individuation in naming practices and indicative of cultural modernization in general.

As for the repertoires of equivalent names in both cultures, only 3 first names could be considered as equivalents in Lithuania and Brazil: *Paulius* and *Paulo*, *Paulina* and *Paula*, and *Karolina* and *Carolina* or *Caroline*. As for the people who have chosen first names of their children, the mother has been one of the most influential persons in the family in both Lithuania and Brazil (34% and 48%, respectively).

The situation is somewhat different when it comes to double personal names. The number of compound personal names is significantly higher in Brazil than in

Lithuania (46 vs. 2 names, respectively). As the double personal names of the sample are not traditional or conventional combination of first names, the choice of such names can be seen as a way to pursue uniqueness, but further research is necessary to confirm this assumption.

The qualitative analysis also revealed convergent and divergent results. The apparent similarity in both countries and cultures is the predominance of the aesthetic motive for choosing the first name. It accounts for 25.4% in Lithuania and 27% in Brazil. Thus, there is a growing tendency towards the so-called detraditionalization of naming practices in the late 20th century in Lithuania and Brazil when people mostly choose the names due to taste and fashion rather than to following certain traditions. Speaking in broader terms, such naming practices are evident due to universal aspects of naming processes and cultural globalization, including Westernization of both societies.

Another popular motive is the wish to honour a relative, a friend or a famous person. Such cases total 8.2% in Lithuania and 23.3% in Brazil. Unlike the aesthetic motives, the respondents' narratives in this case show that giving a name for a child is still a thing learned within a society and passed from generation to generation. In addition to following the traditions, associative meanings of personal names, specifically the connotations that arise via the denotatum, are of great importance here.

Taking into account specific historical context and cultural factors, the following divergent results in naming patterns have been distinguished in Lithuania and Brazil. The greatest difference in both countries and cultures is evident considering the following motives: *Patriotism* (7.4% in Lithuania vs. 0% in Brazil), *Fictional character* (3.3% vs. 9.3%), *Religion* (2.5% vs. 8.6%), and *Uniqueness* (1.6% vs. 7.3%).

The national culture, history and values are mentioned much more often in the Lithuanian data. Selecting the first name with the aim to express one's patriotic feelings is the third most mentioned motive in Lithuania, but it is absent in Brazil. The

relevance of patriotism in the process of giving a name is impossible to understand without considering the historical context of a country. Unlike Brazil, where people did not have to fight for their identity, Lithuania was oppressed by the Soviet Union regime for several years, which considerably influenced people's lives, way of thinking, and feelings. Thus, it is natural that the Lithuanians are in search of exclusively Lithuanian names to express their love for the country. This is usually achieved by names referring to natural phenomena (e.g., *Rūta*) or famous Lithuanian historic personalities (e.g., *Margiris*).

The decreasing role of traditional naming patterns is also evident when a child is named after a fictional character. However, such naming patterns are much more spread among Brazilian than Lithuanian respondents because of the influence of mass media, especially television, in Brazil. Nevertheless, the Brazilians do not tend to embrace foreign mass cultures, but obviously prefer their national mass culture as there is little homage to international actors, singers or books in the Brazilian sample.

The presence of religious motive in both data was expected since Catholicism is the dominant religion in both countries. However, the Brazilian respondents mentioned it 3 times more often than the Lithuanians did. The smaller number of Christian names in Lithuania might be related to the Soviet occupation when freedom of faith hardly existed, and people avoided choosing names for religious purposes. On the other hand, the so-called secularization is also a consequence of the globalization processes and a part of cultural modernization in general.

As for *Uniqueness*, the results differ considerably in both countries and cultures. All Lithuanian instances fall under the subcategory *Seeming uniqueness*, which means that uniqueness is only an illusion since such names already exist. The narratives of the Brazilian data show that people are much more aware of finding a rare name for their child with the wish to express their own identity and to establish a unique identity for their children.

Finally, the well-established statement that proper names have no meaning is challenged by the present survey narratives. The respondents often claimed that one of the motives why name-givers chose one or another name was its meaning. Although the motive *Meaning* accounts for approximately 5% of the total in both corpora, the meaning of the name is certainly considered within other motives – for example, when the name chosen is expected to influence an individual's personality (the motive *Belief* totals ca. 4% in each culture). It is not purely conceptual or lexical meaning, but rather individual connotation meaning.

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Submission received: 05.15.2020

Submission approved: 12.28.2020