



## **Baltic Biographies at Historical Crossroads (Studies in European Sociology)**

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This book brings together life stories from five generations of Balts, living through the diverse and recurring transformations of the twentieth century: occupations, war, independence, totalitarianism, and democratic rule and market economy. The twentieth century history of the Baltic countries has often been deeply tragic. Lying on the coastline of the Baltic Sea, these rather small but strategically well located territories have historically found themselves in the middle of many power struggles between larger states, empires and other power-holders: the Teutonic Knights, Swedish kings, Tsarist Russia, Nazi Germany, the Soviet Union. Today, they are once again forced to stand up to the Russian Federation.

Biographical interviewing is a field focused on individuals, and on how those individuals choose to re-create and present their lived lives, make meaning of it through the narratives they tell. To interpret the biographical narrations of Lithuanians, Latvians and Estonians, shaped by complex and controversial historical background, the authors use Pierre Bourdieu's concept of social and cultural capitals, the principles of Erving Goffman's framing analysis and Alessandro Portelli's distinction of private and public spheres, Anton Steen's investigations of post-Socialist elites and Piotr Sztompka's theory of cultural trauma, etc. Given analyses of particular biographical narrations are supplemented by brief historical and sociological overviews, which allow the reader to better understand the contexts of lived lives, and the mental atmosphere in which the interviews were conducted.

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