NATIONAL IDENTITY AND THE TEACHING OF HISTORY:

THE REFLECTION OF LITHUANIA'S 16TH-18TH CENTURIES COMMONWEALTH WITH POLAND IN LITHUANIAN SCHOOLS

By

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Abstract

This thesis focuses on how history is taught and learnt in contemporary Lithuania. It is written from the constructivist approach. Lithuanian national history teaching is analyzed dividing it in three periods: the interwar period (Lithuanian independence); 1945-1990 (the Soviet period) and contemporary (post 1990) Lithuania. Data on the first two periods is premised on an analysis of textbooks, while for contemporary Lithuania textbook analysis is complemented by interviews with history teachers and observations in classrooms. This thesis particularly focuses on the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth period, which was difficult to fit elegantly in the national history because of its multinational character. Thus it was either dismissed or portrayed negatively in Lithuanian curricula. Witnessing some attempts to revise the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth period in the last decade, it is interesting to analyze if the recent textbooks also include different accounts and if teachers are following the changes.

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Introduction

The disintegration of multiethnic states that formerly belonged to the Soviet bloc triggered a revival of nationalism in Central and Eastern Europe that attracts considerable interest of academics from a variety of disciplines (Brubaker, 1996:2). Since the fall of communism there is a tendency in these countries to see national movements as "return of the repressed". Informed by a primordial view of nationalism, new nations see their emerging states as embodiments of national awakenings to ancient, now rekindled destinies (Budrytė, 2005:22). As New States turn to the past to justify their claims for self-determination, academics produce historical narratives that reflect the nation's ideology and identity. These newly emerged national historiographies tend to embed "actors and events in the history of the nation whether or not they had any conception of that nation" (Calhoun, 1997:51).

This thesis, which focuses on how history is taught and learnt in contemporary Lithuania, is written from a point of view that views nationalism in general and nation-building in post-Soviet countries in particular more critically. Nations are imagined (Anderson), invented (Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1983), taught, learned (Gellner, 1996) and narrated (Bhabha, 1990) rather than simply emerge from a dormant past.

The emergence of the nation-states coincided with the constitution of national history as a separate discipline. Wallerstein (1972) and Wolf (1982) were among the first ones to criticize this interrelation. Their works inspired Western scholars, who found history teaching and learning a rich research arena (see Berghahm and Schissler, 1987). By the time newly established states were about to rewrite their national histories, critical research on national history teaching constituted a field of research in its own right, as is evident for example in studies that focus on the Balkans (Koulouri, 2001, 2002).

Informed by this new tendency, this thesis looks at the transmission of the national history in Lithuania. Focusing on ways in which teachers accept, negotiate or modify official

versions of history, my main preoccupation here is with the representation, in curricula and in the classroom, of periods not easily reconcilable with contemporary narrations of the nation.

Lithuanian history goes back to 1009. The earliest mentions of the country in written sources suggest a set of duchies which by the mid-13th century became amalgamated in the so-called Grand Duchy of Lithuania. The Grand Duchy expanded territoriality towards the East and South, and accepted Catholicism in the late 14th century, through a Union with the Kingdom of Poland after the signing of the Treaty of Krewo. This was followed in 1569 by an even stronger bond – the merging of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Kingdom of Poland, signed in the treaty of Lublin. The new unit, now labeled the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (full name: Kingdom of Poland and Grand Duchy of Lithuania, herewith the Commonwealth), is in the epicenter of my thesis (see Maps of the Commonwealth in Appendices 1 and 2).

The Commonwealth lasted 226 years, ceasing to exist only in 1795, when territories within it were divided between the Russian Empire, the Kingdom of Prussia and Habsburgian Empire. The main part of the former Grand Duchy of Lithuania was incorporated in the Russian empire, remaining under Russian jurisdiction until 1918. The interwar period saw a first attempt at modern nation and state building in Lithuania, facilitated partly by an authoritarian regime headed by the Nationalist Party in 1926. In 1940 Lithuania was incorporated into the Soviet Union, remaining under Communist rule (interrupted by German occupation 1941-1944) for almost fifty years. The collapse of the Soviet block and Lithuanian independence in 1990 saw a new attempt to rebuild the country according to contemporary models of statehood, with a clear tendency to redirect orientation towards Western integration. In 2004 Lithuania joined the European Union.

These changes were seminal to the writing and teaching of Lithuanian history. The first attempts to write Lithuanian national history, which appeared in the late 19th and the early 20th centuries, turned back to remote historical past of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in order to justify the legitimation of Lithuanians' right to self-determination. Later Lithuanian elites

included the so-called heroic past in the school curricula, using the education system as one of the main means to raise the national consciousness and homogenize the population. Lithuanian history was presented as a continuous struggle for the statehood (and against the Kingdom of Poland). Union of Krewo and Union of Lublin became symbols of Polish aspirations to make the Grand Duchy of Lithuania only a province of the Kingdom of Poland (Nikžentaitis, 2002:7-8). The writing and teaching of Lithuanian history temporary stopped after the incorporation of Lithuania in the Soviet Union: Lithuanian history was rewritten according to Marxist-Leninst lines only in late 1950s; and the first textbooks appeared only at this time. The proclamation of the Independence in 1990 brought back the pre-war era: history was mainly taught using the material from interwar period or new editions of the textbooks from 1930s. However not long after the first new textbooks appeared and in the early 21th century one can even talk about revisionist attempts in history teaching (Nikžentaitis, 2002). Witnessing some attempts to revise the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth period by such scholars as Raila (2007) and Kuolys (2009) in the last decade, it is interesting to analyze if the recent textbooks also include different accounts and if teachers are following the changes.

As indicated, my main preoccupation is with the portrayal of the Commonwealth in Lithuanian history writing and teaching. Although Lithuania and Poland were ostensibly equal, the Kingdom of Poland played the dominant role. And while the unequal nature of the union is not easily with the nationalist version of history, 20th century attempts to narrate the nationalist past had to somehow do it. My argument in this respect is two pronged: (1) there is a tendency to see the nation as a constant unit of observation though all historical transformations, and (2) the overriding strategy adopted by those in charge of writing and teaching history in Lithuania is to neglect the Commonwealth.

I analyze Lithuanian national history teaching in three periods: the interwar period (Lithuanian independence); 1945-1990 (the Soviet period) and contemporary (post 1990)

Lithuania. Data on the first two periods is premised on an analysis of textbooks, while for contemporary Lithuania textbook analysis is complemented by interviews with history teachers.

Literature Review

There is a large theoretical body of literature on nations and nationalism and emerging field of sociological studies of history teaching. After giving a brief account of the main approaches to nations and nationalism and naming important studies on history teaching, I will proceed to a discussion of the works on Lithuanian nationalism by Lithuanian and foreign authors, outlining the main perspectives from which it was analyzed till nowadays. In addition, I will give a brief account of the works on history teaching in Lithuania written by historians (most of whom have specialized in history didactics) and sociologists.

Literature on Nations and Nationalism

The theoretical literature on nations and nationalism is complex and includes many contradictions. Scholars constantly have disagreed on several points such as the nature and origin of, the antiquity or modernity of, and the role of nations and nationalisms. Therefore even the key terms themselves – *nation* and *nationalism* – are defined in different ways. The major debates on nations and nationalism can be reflected comparing four major paradigms – *primordialist*, *perennialist*, *modernist*, and *ethnosymbolist* – which emerged opposing or improving their predecessors (Smith, 2000:3).

Modernists situated themselves in opposition to primordalist and perennialist approaches: primordialists perceived ethnicity as a fundamental element in national identity formation; meanwhile perennialists insisted that at least some of the nations and their nationalisms are perennial, has continuity in time.[1] Accusing these approaches for being

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[1] A detailed account of the main arguments of primordialists and perenialists and the critique was provided by Smith (2000:5-52). Also see Statkus (2004), Szakacs (2005).

'expressions of nationalism itself' and not tools to explore nationalism, modernists perceived nations as constructs of historical, industrial, and communicative developments such as the invention of printing, mass media and the spread of ideas and argued that nations and nationalisms appeared only in the 18th – 20th centuries (Budrytė, 2005:16-17). Contrary to primordialist and perrenialist paradigms, in which human intervention played limited role, modernists paid a particular attention to the ways nationalism is articulated by its agents (see Gellner, 1983).

For my research some modernists' ideas are of particular interest, because they argued that nationalism and the state come before the nation, not the other way around, and they studied nation as an historical construct. Gellner argued that the emergence of nationalism and nations is directly related with the industrialization, which also encouraged the development of the mass schooling. He stressed that in an industrial society it becomes crucial "to turn out worthy, loyal and competent members of the total society whose occupancy of posts within it will not be hampered by factional loyalties to sub-groups within the total community" (Gellner, 1983:63-64). In other words, the educational system plays an important role in the creation of the nation-state and maintenance of the national identity: it stimulates cultural and linguistic homogenization, which is necessary in order to make the nation and the state to coincide (this coincidence was a must in Gellner's understanding).

Later the modernist approach was developed by such scholars as Benedict Anderson and Eric Hobsbawm. Like Gellner, Hobsbawm defined nationalism as a political doctrine, which expresses the need of the coincidence of the political and national boundaries, and emphasized the role of the elites in creating nations within the states. Hobsbawm's and Ranger's work on "invention of tradition" (1983) is particularly interesting for this study. While emphasizing the importance of traditions, symbols, myths and mythologized national history in 'nation-building', they argued that secular education system served as tool for the spreading of these invented traditions and transforming the old symbols and sentiments of the political nation (of nobility)

into the mass patriotism. The nationalist history, mythology and symbols are created or invented in order to meet the needs of the modern capitalism. The importance of capitalism, to be more precise – "printed capitalism", was also emphasized by Anderson. He argued that capitalism, printing and linguistic diversity had a direct influence to the emergence of nations – "imagined communities" (Anderson, [1983]1999:21). This take on nations and nationalism is known as constructivist, because it perceived nations as socially constructed cultural artifacts. Arguing that by 'rediscovering' the events individuals reconstruct a new historical narrative and imagined geographies, constructivists attributed an important role to elites in the invention of tradition, putting it Hobsbawm's terms (1983) or building the nation (Gellner, 1983), using a common set of values and symbols. By doing so, they opened a different perspective towards national histories, because the transmission of the common past was one of the major tasks of secular education systems.

Modernist approach was criticized for rationalism and (in many cases) instrumentalism. Among the critics were the scholars earlier defined as primordialists. The critical stance also led to the emergence of new paradigm – ethnosymbolism.[2] Criticizing the modernists for giving too much weight to the differences between the traditional and modern societies, ethnosymbolists argued that modernity did not break all the ties with the previous era and that one should look for the roots of the nationalism before the 18th century. Ethnosymbolists pointed to ways in which identities from pre-modern epochs were related to modern nations, whole "allowing for historical discontinuities between them and for the possibility of novel combinations of ethnic categories and communities in the marketing of recent nations" (Smith, 2000:76). Even though representatives of this approach expressed critical remarks towards modernists, these two approaches are compatible, rather than opposing. As it was stated by ethnosymbolists themselves, they only put the accents on the different elements (Smith, 2000).[3]

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[2] Sometimes they refer to themselves as neo-perennialists (see Smith, 2000).
[3] Ethnosimbolists claimed to represent the middle way between modernism (constructivism) and primordialism (see Smith, 2000).

Relying on the modernists' emphasis on the political instrumentalisation, I also agree with the importance of the cultural articulation of the previously existing symbols and myths which is stressed by ethnosymbolists. Perceiving the national identities as constructs, I attribute an important role to education in general and history teaching in particular as legitimating instruments in the construction of the nation. The particular relationship between the nation-building and history will be addressed more directly in the following section, discussing the emerging field of sociological studies of history teaching.

National History Teaching in Theories and Case Studies

The creation of the nation-state went along with inscribing (national) history as academic discipline. The intimate and complex relationship between nationalism and history was reflected by Renan in his famous text "What is a nation?"([1882]2000): "Forgetting, I would even go so far as to say historical error, is a crucial factor in the creation of a nation, which is why progress in historical studies often constitutes a danger for [the principle of] nationality".[4] From Renan's perspective, nations, seeking to have a coherent narrative, are obliged to "forget" things and "get history wrong". The national history writing or "narration of the nation", putting it in Bhabha's words (1990), becomes a matter of forgetfulness: a matter of erasing divisions that are unnerving, in which the aspect of forgetting is of tremendous importance (Calhoun, 1997:52); and creation of narratives-part history that provides nations and nationalist projects with coherence and purpose (Hearn, 2002:745).

The institutionalization of the nation-state as the dominant model of political organization was one of the reasons why through the 20th century national histories were mostly "taken for granted, without problematizing them or making them an object of an analysis in its own right" (Wimmer and Glick Schiller, 2002:303-304). Among the first ones to question it was Immanuel Wallerstein (1972), emphasized that societies and cultures as not isolated unities, but

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[4] Quoted from Bhabha (2000).

belonging to a wider context and argued for world-systems analysis. His works were later incorporated by Eric Wolf (1982), who opened the floor for "nations without histories". In the second half of the 20th century one can see not only the historical accounts of nations which were previously denied the right to have a historical though (Price, 2002; Swedenburg, 2003); there are also an increasing number of the studies on history teaching in Western countries (Berghahn and Schissler, 1987; Schissler and Soysal, 2005).

In the late 20th century historical accounts went beyond the national narrative in most of the Western countries" and the school textbook research was a constituted as a separate discipline (Schissler, 2005:2). By this time the newly created nation-states were only about to rewrite their history textbooks according to the nationalist framework. The national history continues to be "history by default" in most of these countries even two decades later, but the attempts to go beyond nation-centered narrative are also visible. A particularly rich area of research flourished in the Balkans; the number of the studies on the europeanisation of national histories increased gradually (Koulouri, 2001, 2002; Todorova, 2004; Richardson, 2004).

Literature on Lithuanian Nationalism and Nation-building

In the late 20th and the early 21st centuries Lithuanian nationalism and nation-building is analyzed from two perspectives - *primordialism* and *constructivism*. They evolved from two different traditions of Lithuanian academic thought of pre-1990 period. The first one was referred to as *reproductive-nationalistic*; the second was defined as *constructionist-critical* (Rindzevičiūtė, 2003:74).

The so-called nationalistic take on nations and nationalism, dominant in Lithuania during the interwar period, was influenced by the German and romantic nationalist ideas in the first place and later shaped by the Polish romantics. The first studies on Lithuanian nationalist movement were written by amateur historians, who perceived it as an expression of constant struggle for Lithuanian statehood. Nationalist perspective was developed further by exile historians and philologists. Taking into account that from 1940 till 1990 the intellectual

production in Lithuania was confined to Marxist-Leninist approaches, they attributed themselves a role of the "last bastion of Lithuanian identity" (Rindzevičiūtė, 2003:76-81). In the exile also emerged the first academic criticism of primordial understanding. Similarly to the Western intellectuals of that time, Lithuanian dissidents associated negative connotations to the terms nation and nationalism and argued for the demystification of national history. However this perspective did not gain popularity in Lithuania, because the emergence of the nationalist movement in Lithuania in the 1980s brought back the *primordialist* approach to nation and nationalism in intellectual circles. For example, Seen (1990) argued that the sense of nationhood was reawakened after the restrictions of the Soviet times, giving people the access to the 'true' history. A similar view was shared by the authors of the series of articles published from 1992 in the *Journal of Baltic Studies*, who portrayed Lithuanian nationalism as "return of the repressed" (Budrytė, 2005:22). This perspective remained predominant in the beginning of the 1990s and in the following years started to coexist with constructivist approach, as there were more and more scholars agreeing that numerous aspects of the Lithuanian national identity were constituted during the Soviet times. However, most of them focused either on the late 19th and the early 20th century Lithuanian nationalism or on the Lithuanian nationalist movement in the late 20th century. For example, relying on the constructivist approach, Valantiejus (2002) explored the early Lithuanian nationalism by applying Gellner's theory; both Balkelis (2009) and Janužytė (2005) explored the role of the Lithuanian intelligentsia in the spreading of the Lithuanian national sentiment, with particular focus on the historians in the case of the latter; in her analysis of the late 20th century nationalist movement Budrytė argued that the idea of a nation as "fighting, creating, and suffering hero […] was revived during the nationalist movements of 1980" and took root in Baltic states (2005:48). In search of the new approach several authors even questioned the possibility to apply the postcolonial perspective (see Kelertas, 2004, 2006; Račevskis, 2002). Concerning the negotiation of uneasy historical periods in particular, the recent works on Lithuanian case are not numerous. Most of them are devoted to the Soviet period

(Budrytė, 2003; Čepaitienė, 2007; Šutinienė, 2003). There is also a separate field dealing with memories of the Holocaust in Lithuania (see Vaintraubas, 2000; Berenis, 2000; Šutinienė, 2006). Situating between the constructivist scholars, this work also inscribes in the emerging field of the scholarly interest in Lithuania – negotiation of uneasy periods. The particular focus on the teaching of the Commonwealth period will extend this field of inquiry.

Works on Education and History Teaching in Lithuania

Such topics as the education system in general and the history teaching in particular are covered in Lithuania to a certain extent; however, the attention to different periods is not equal. The history didactics in the 18th and the 19th centuries was analyzed by Lukšienė (1985); the education system of the interwar period was analyzed by Kaubrys (2000), and Šetkus (2000); meanwhile the history teaching was addressed by Stašaitis (2004) and Šetkus (2008). The interwar period remains the most covered one so far, as opposed the Soviet one. Meanwhile the debates on history teaching in post-1990 period are addressed in several publications in pedagogical journals, such as *Mokykla* [*The School*] and *Dialogas* [*The Dialogue*]. Most of them discuss the content of newly issued history manuals (Bakonis, 1996; Šetkus, 1996, 2006) and the relationship between history as academic discipline and history didactics (Bumblauskas, 1996) etc.

There are also few studies on history textbooks focused on the 20th century. Among the most relevant is Vyšniauskas's (2002) study of the image of Russia in history textbooks, as well as his (2004) article on the conflict over Vilnius. Meanwhile history teaching from sociological approach was analyzed exclusively by Šutinienė (see 1994, 1996, and 1997). The most relevant for this study is the quantitative data on the students' perceptions of the different periods of Lithuanian history (Šetkus, 2004). According to results of Šetkus research, only 5 percent of pupils mentioned this period as their favorite (for comparison, the Ground Duchy of Lithuania and the 20th century were liked by more than 35 percent of students each). However, Šetkus does not explain these findings.

To conclude this discussion of the main works on the education in general and history teaching in particular, one can say that until now it was mainly analyzed by the specialists of history didactics and historians; those few sociological articles were based on quantitative data. In addition, the previously discussed body of literature on history teaching either focused on images of the particular nations (Russian) or events from the 20th century (such as conflict over Vilnius). This research will not only widen the scope of the topics, but also contribute by applying the qualitative methods for history teaching analysis in Lithuania.

Methodology

The purpose of the analysis of the history teaching in Lithuania is twofold: to explore (1) the ways the Lithuanian nation is narrated and (2) the Commonwealth period is portrayed. Intending to explore the official version of the national history and how much it is appropriated or contested by history teachers, I have chosen to rely on two major sources – history textbooks and interviews with history teachers.

I have chosen 8 history textbooks (1 from 1918-1940, 2 from 1940 – 1990 and 5 from post-1990 periods) for content analysis.[5] The choice of the textbooks from the interwar period was limited by both number of textbooks and accessibility. Only Daugirdaitės-Sruogienės' *Lithuanian history* ([1935]1938), which is chosen for analysis, and Šapokos' *Lithuanian history* (1935) were recognized as solid history manuals in the interwar period (Šetkus, 2004:100).[6] From the Soviet period I have chosen to analyze the textbooks written by two leading historians – Jurginis (1957) and Žiugžda (1962). Taking into account that the textbooks from the first two periods were devoted for the 5th-6th grades and included the entire history of Lithuania, I have chosen to analyze the textbooks for the 5th grade from the post-1990 period. This choice can be justified by the fact that only the 5th grade is dedicated to the Lithuanian history, while the 6th grade is

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[5] I also will use Šmulkštys's *Lithuanian history* (1910) for the comparative purposes. The information about this textbook was taken from the secondary source Stašaitis (2004), who used it as a primary source in his research.

[6] Daugirdaitė-Sruogienė's *Lithuanian history* was republished several times in exile (3-7th editions) and in independent Lithuania (8th edition appeared in 1990).

devoted for world history. In the 7th, 8th, 9th and 10th grades students have only several chapters on Lithuanian history[7]; and the 11th and the 12th grades are designed for the preparation for the exam, with less emphasis on textbooks.[8] Presuming that since 1990 there might have been significant changes, I took at least one textbook from each stage of the secondary education reform (1 from 1992-1997, 2 from 1998-2003, and 2 from post-2004).[9]

The content analysis of the textbooks is both quantitative and qualitative. The former was useful in order to demonstrate the level and quality of attention given to the Commonwealth period, as compared with the other periods. The latter was applied while analyzing the interpretations of various events and processes of this period (see Textbook analysis guideline in Appendix 3).

A second main source is information collected during the 19 interviews with history teachers from various Lithuanian schools. I will refer to my interviewees using their first names. Respecting the wish of some of the teachers to remain anonymous, pseudonyms will be occasionally used (see list of interviewees in Appendix 4). In terms of socio-demographic characteristics teachers interviewed were mainly in their 40's (10 of 19) with more women than men (13 of 19) (see Appendix 5).

This distribution represents the general tendencies in the teaching, as it was stated by some of my interviewees (see interviews with Jurgita, Dalia) and as it can be supported by statistical data. According to the information published in 2008 by the Ministry of Education, almost half of the teachers (45.6 %) in secondary schools are older than 45, meanwhile the teachers in their 20's clearly are a minority (12.2 %). In addition, the schools are suffering from constant lack of teachers. According to the data collected in 2007 by the Office of the Unemployment, there were 953 positions available and only 737 persons willing to take the

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[7] In the 7th, 8th, 9th and 10th grades students learn the world history and the Lithuanian history consecutively; that is the chapters on Lithuanian history follow the chapters on 19th century world history etc.

[8] From 1990 till 2008 there were more than 40 history textbooks published, not counting the history textbooks published in other languages (Polish, Russian); more than dozen for the 5th grade.

[9] There were three reforms of secondary education: in 1992, in 1998, and in 2003.

pedagogic work (ŠMM, 2008:1). This situation changed in the last two years: because of the increasing unemployment rate there were more persons looking for the positions in schools, but the general prestige of the profession remains quite low. Among the reasons why the younger people do not come to work in schools, some my interviewees mentioned the low prestige, the low payment, and the emotional difficulties. In addition, it is important to mention that Vilnius Pedagogic University, which prepares the majority of the teachers, remains one of the least popular universities in Lithuania (Medalinskas, 2010).

It is important to note that some of the teachers I interviewed attended university during the Soviet period and had teaching experience before the pre-1990 period and others did not, so there might be significant differences between them. Only less than a half of my interviewees experienced both – education and teaching – during the Soviet period and only 3 of my interviewees (all in their 30's) are "pure products" of the education system of independent Lithuania (see Appendix 6). The others spend all (or at least few) their university years in Soviet period (see age groups 30-39 and 40-49). This variety allowed me (1) to complete my analysis of history teaching in Soviet period and (2) to compare the differences between the teachers' attitudes towards Lithuanian history.

Interviews were made in two periods. 4 unstructured pilot interviews were made in December 2009 in Vilnius (2), Vilnius region (1) and Kaunas (1).[10] These interviewees were contacted through their former students that I know in person. For the interviewees I presented myself as a student who is writing an MA thesis on national history teaching in Lithuanian and I did not reveal my main interest in one particular period in order to understand the main concerns of the history teachers. The general discussion on history teaching in general and Lithuanian history in particular allowed me to notice that the Commonwealth is not a topic that is often touched upon and willingly discussed. They were talking about the changes from the Soviet system and its impacts on the history teaching, the particular situation of the teachers in

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[10] Until the Second World War, Vilnius was a multinational and multi-linguistic city, where the majority of the population was constituted by other ethnic groups than Lithuanians.

nowadays, etc. When asked about the teaching of the different periods of Lithuanian history, they mostly talked about the events of the 20th century.

During the month of April 2010, I conducted additional 15 semi-structured interviews[11] in Vilnius, Vilnius region, Kaunas, Plunge, Kretinga and Rietavas (see Map in Appendix 7). Some of the previously interviewed teachers directed me to these interviewees; others from Vilnius and Kaunas were contacted using the information given by their former students. It should be noted that the names of their former students served as openers of the discussion, because in most cases they asked my relationship with them or asked details about the lives of these students. Some of the teachers in Plunge, Kretinga and Rietavas (which are part of the region called Samogitia) were contacted using my personal relationships with them (in case of 2 teachers form my former high school in Rietavas), their personal contacts and through the teachers of other disciplines. Contacting teachers in this way I directly gained more trust and avoided negative responses which are common while trying to contact them through the administrative bodies of the school[12].

On the basis of acquired information during the unstructured interviews in December, I prepared an interview guideline. The questions (or topics) were divided in 3 sections. The first one concerned the teachers' education (high school and university), their teaching experiences during Soviet period (if any). The second concerned the general attitudes of the history teachers towards national history, their evaluation of the different historical periods (likes and dislikes) and their perception of the students' attitudes towards different periods. The last, and the most important, part was devoted to exploring their perception of the Commonwealth period: their evaluation of the period, of different events and processes that happened during this time (see Interview guideline in Appendix 8). Taking into account the general lack of interest towards this

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[11] As noted by Richardson (2004:110), semi-structured interviews are the most successful way to disclose the ways in which teachers engage with the new knowledge.
[12] In some cases the administrative personal refused to give the contact information even for the former students of the schools. In addition, the teachers agreed to be interviewed only in the cases when I contacted them by phone. I also sent several electronic letters, presenting myself on behalf of their former students, but none of them replied.

particular period, I often had to ask additional questions in order to get insights about their perception.[13]

The place attributed to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the narration of Lithuanian nation

1. Legitimizing the Lithuanian Nation-building Project in the Early 20th Century

The early 20th century can be marked as the beginning of Lithuanian history teaching. During those years first Lithuanian national schools appeared. However, the way it was taught cannot be analyzed without the outline of events and changes preceding it. First, I will discuss the context in which the formation of Lithuanian national school and its institutionalization after 1918 took place. Second, I will focus on the role attributed to Lithuanian history teaching and the official version of history in Lithuanian schools during the interwar period. This discussion is crucial because the legacy of the national history teaching in between the wars can be still detected nowadays.

1.1. History Teaching in the Emerging Lithuanian National Schools

The first idea of Lithuanian national school was raised by Bishop Motiejus Valančius in 1864. This initiative was refused by Tsarist authorities, but later it grew into a secret network of schools.[14] Significant changes started after the abolishment of the press ban in 1904, which was introduced in 1864. During the Great Seimas *[Parliament]* of Vilnius[15] in 1905, the idea of the national school was already articulated. As noted by Stašaitis (2004:53) from 1905 till 1914 Lithuanian intelligentsia managed to introduce the Lithuanian language and country's history in

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[13] The analysis of textbooks and interviews was complemented by 3 observations, which are not included in the main discussion.

[14] According to Stašaitis (2004:40), the number of such secret teachers is unknown, but taking into account that there were about 130 secret teachers caught by the authorities of Russian Empire between 1883-1904 in Vilnius and Kaunas administrative units, their should have been significant in number.

[15] The Great Seimas of Vilnius was the first Lithuanian assembly.

the primary schools[16], as well as to publish the first textbooks of Lithuanian history. This period can be defined as the formation of Lithuanian national school: the rise of the national consciousness was not only a matter of illegal periodicals, which were read by a small number of the population, but much more systemized and wider in scope, because of education in schools.

When Lithuanian language and Lithuanian history entered the schools for the first time (preceding the creation of Lithuanian nation-state), the teaching was based on the material produced by the first generation of the secular intelligentsia (amateur historians and linguists). Their romanticized historical accounts, which were presented as proofs of the existence of the distant historical past were supposed to legitimize Lithuania's right to self-determination, at first were introduced in the schools through the Lithuanian language classes. Teaching materials[17] included the detailed images of the dukes (who were simply referred as Lithuanians), their battles and their victories. They often included some mythical figures and can be defined as a mixture of fantasy and reality. Similar descriptions remained characteristic of the first Lithuanian history textbooks. The great attention given to the Grand Duchy of Lithuania is visible in Figure 1, which represents the place attributed to the different historical periods in the Lithuanian history textbook, written by Šmulkštys in 1910.[18] This textbook included all the periods till the early 20th century, contrary to the earlier ones which often stopped with the signing of the Union of Lublin in 1569 (Stašaitis, 2004:51). It started with the discussion of the medieval past and ended-up with presentation of the leaders of the so-called national revival. It is noteworthy that the period of Commonwealth was discussed only in few pages.

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[16] Stašaitis (2004:51) emphasized that in the primary schools Lithuanian history started to be taught from the 4th grade (based on teaching programmes). However the changes touched only some primary schools, especially newly established ones; gymnasiums remained under jurisdiction of the authorities of the Russian.

[17] It was called Pradžiamokslis [Primers].

[18] The table of contents of Šmulkštys's Lithuanian History was takken from Stašaitis (2004). This textbook (as well as the other early history textbooks) was accused for story-telling by their contemporaries. For example, Kymantaitė-Čiurlionienė (1907) underlined that children should not only know their heroes, but they should be taught to feel the spiritual unity with them. As can be seen, the critique was highly influenced by nationalist framework.

**Figure 1: Historical Periods and the Space Attributed to them in
Šmulkštys's *Lithuanian History* (1910)**
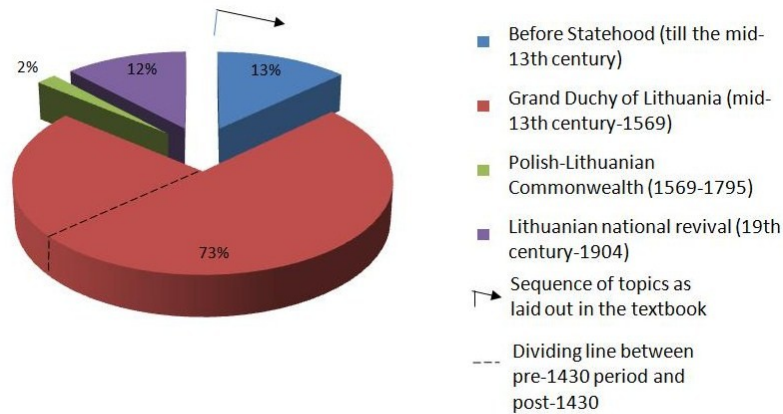
As can be seen, Grand Duchy of Lithuania gained considerably more attention than all the periods succeeding it taken together - it was discussed in about three fourths of the textbook. In addition, more than two thirds of the description of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (in textbook referred as Lithuania) was devoted to pre-1430 period. This date was significant for Lithuanian historians, because it marked the death of the Grand Duke Vytautas and the increasing power of Jogailaičiai *[Jagiellon]* dynasty (and the Kingdom of Poland) over Grand Duchy, which later led to the merging of the two political units by the Treaty of Liublin in 1569.[19] The emphasis on the connections between the medieval Grand Duchy and the Lithuanian nation in the 19th century, and not with the Commonwealth which was apparently closer in time, represented a rupture with common heritage of the Commonwealth. It was difficult to incorporate to the nationalist framework because the Commonwealth was a mixture of the features that now are attributed to federation, electoral monarchy and democracy: it was formed from two political unities, which kept separate laws, Armies and Treasuries; it had a common Parliament (Sejm) and Senat; and, finally, it was ruled by the same elected king[20], which

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[19] Lithuanian amateur historians looking for Lithuanians in history based their story on the opposition between the duke Vytautas and the duke Jogaila (who after Union of Krewo in 1385 became the king of Poland). This opposition was crucial point for both Polish and (emerging) Lithuanian historiographies, especially after the Independence of Lithuania and it will later be discussed more in depth.

[20] The king started to be elected from 1572 after the death of the last king from Jogailaičiai *[Jagiellon]* dynasty.

was also the Grand Duke of Lithuania. However it was not the only reason, why the common Polish-Lithuanian past was rejected. The determination to cut the ties with the common past grew gradually among the secular Lithuanian intelligentsia (peasants by origin). They started to look negatively at so-called Polonized Lithuanian nobility and to portray negatively the unions which fused Grand Duchy of Lithuania and Kingdom of Poland.[21] This shows that according to the new understanding of what the Lithuanian nation was, there was no more space left for significant part of the population – Polish speaking noblemen. They were looked upon with dislike and distrust by emerging national intelligentsia, "composed of social outsiders seeking democratic social reforms and equality" (Aleksandravičius and Kulakauskas, 1996:229).[22] Consequently in the early 20th century noblemen, who referred to themselves using Latin formula *gente Lithuanus natione Polonus* and perceived themselves as direct successors of the Commonwealth, were left between the two newly constructed identities – Polish and Lithuanian national identities.

In this context the vision of the two distinct nations (Polish and Lithuanian) gradually emerged, and two distinct national histories[23], which dealt differently with their common past, were formed. Lithuanian historians described the close ties with Kingdom of Poland as historical mistake, which led to the decline of the great medieval Lithuanian state and Polish domination; the latter described the period as successful alliance with the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. As stated by Nikžentaitis (2002:10), in the 1910s – 1920s the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was a main focus of historical studies; until the 1930s the period after the death of duke Vytautas in 1430 was intentionally neglected and not considered as a part of Lithuanian history. The duke

[21] There was a significant shift in their identification, because I it has been showed by Balkelis (2009), they were using Polish language to keep their diaries and adhered the Polish student societies in imperial universities in Moscow or Saint Petersburg.

[22] The beginning of the Lithuanian national reawakening in the late 19th century basically resulted from few important changes in Russian Empire. First of all, the abolition of serfdom was first possible activator of lower classes. The abolition of serfdom was followed by social and educational reforms gave new freedoms and opportunities for a significant proportion of Lithuanian-speaking lower classes. Many experienced rapid upward social mobility, entering the ranks of the professions and educated elite (Clark, 2006:163). Unlike the Lithuanian nobility and gentry they rejected dominant cultures: Polish and Russia.

[23] In Lithuanian historiography the Union with Poland started belatedly, in as opposed to Polish and Russian historiographies.

Vytautas in early historiography became one of the central figures in opposition to duke Jogaila [Jogiello], who became the king of Poland. The former was mainly presented as defender of national interests; the latter was portrayed as traitor.[24] This is a good example, showing how the figures which had no conception of the Lithuanian nation become the defenders or traitors of it. Lithuanian amateur historians defined Polish element as alien to Lithuanian nation: there was no place for it either in Lithuanian historiography which was about to form, or in Lithuanian schools, which gradually increased in number from the 1904 and in 1916 reached about 1000.[25]

By the year 1910 there was already at least a partially consensual understanding of what the Lithuanian nation was. The right to self-rule was defined by shared culture, territory, common ancestry, language, religion, and customs; and, as quoted by Janužytė (2005:68), a common past and common consciousness. In the early 20th century pupils started to be taught to become patriots of their nation – Lithuania - not of the Commonwealth, contrary to their predecessors in the 18th century; and not Russian, as it was the case in the 19th century. The first attempts to write and teach Lithuanian national history, which preceded the creation of the Lithuanian nation-state, were institutionalized only after the proclamation of Independence.

1.2. History Teaching in the Newly Institutionalized Lithuanian National Schools

Lithuanian intelligentsia developed plans for the teaching in general and history teaching in particular before creation of the state and started their implementation in the late 1910s. Emphasizing that education is one of the main priorities of the newly created nation-state, they argued for the re-establishment of Vilnius University and for the creation of new educational programs (Janužytė, 2005:17). There was a particular emphasis on Lithuanian history teaching and the teaching of the standardized version of Lithuanian language. In addition, the names of

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[24] As it was stated by Nikžientaitis (2002:11), there were some exceptions in both – Polish and Lithuanian – historiographies. He distinguished the works of Henryk Lowmianski and Zenonas Ivinskis among the others. But as he noted afterwards, these works were not the ones that formed public opinion.

[25] In 1916 there were about 1000 Lithuanian primary schools, and under the German occupation during the First World War the first Lithuanian pro-gymnasiums and gymnasiums were established, new textbooks published.

the dukes as well as the names of the leaders of Lithuanian national rebirth were used for naming the streets; there were also various monuments built and among the most popular figures was the duke Vytautas (Krapauskas, 2000:196). The national past was already "found" and needed to be commemorated. Again, there was no place for the political figures from the Commonwealth period.

The relationship between Lithuanian historiography and Lithuanian national history teaching in schools was quite straightforward. Thus history teaching at the school level inherited the tensions created by disagreement between Lithuanian and Polish historiographies, discussed above. In addition, these tensions were particularly intensified by political actualities of the late 1910s.

In the aftermath of the First World War, Vilnius region (including Vilnius, the actual capital of Lithuania and so-called historical capital of Lithuania) was kept under control of the Polish troops since 1919. Taking into account that Lithuanian troops at the same time were also fighting with the army of Soviet Russia, this Polish control over territory, considered as part of historical Lithuania, was not immediately perceived as hostility. Even though there was an attempt to regulate the situation by signing the treaty of Suwalki, in the end of year 1920, Polish troops seized Vilnius which was later incorporated in Poland and remained under its jurisdiction till 1938. This conflict over Vilnius increased negative representation of the common past in Lithuanian historiography: in the textbooks, published during that period, Poles (Poland was often reduced to Poles) were portrayed as predatory, seeking to dominate over Lithuania.

Institutionalization of Lithuanian national schools and Lithuanian national history teaching as separate subject were enacted in the context of these political events. In Lithuanian national schools an important place was attributed to Lithuanian national history teaching. The teaching of history and geography (which were taught together) was introduced in the 4th grade and preceded by the introductory courses such as homeland studies and country studies (see Appendix 9). There were no major shifts concerning the teaching hours after the power was

seized by Tautininkai *[Nationalist Party]* in 1926. However, history starts to be taught as a separate discipline after 1935 (see Appendix 10 and Appendix 11).

It is worth emphasizing that the distinction of the history as separate discipline coincided with the shift in Lithuanian historiography. As noted by Nikžentaitis (2002:10), in the 1930s Lithuanian historians started to discuss the post-1430 period in their works. The textbook that was chosen for the analysis should be explored taking these particularities of the interwar period into account.

Contrary to the Šmulkštys's history textbook (1910), in Daugirdaitė-Sruogienė's *Lithuanian History* ([1935]1938) the attention given to the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the other periods is not so strikingly different (see Figure 2; for comparison see Figure 1).[26] This can be explained by the general shift in the historiography: there was more attention attributed to the post-1430 period.

Figure 2: Historical Periods and the Space Attributed to them in Daugirdaitė-Sruogienė's *Lithuanian History* ([1935]1938)
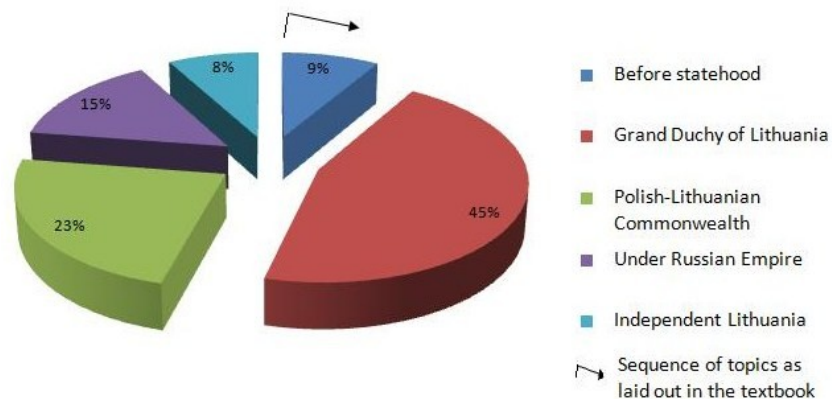
The differences between the meanings attributed to these two periods – the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Commonwealth – is already visible in the table of contents (see Appendix 12). The transition from the Grand Duchy of Lithuania to the Polish-Lithuanian

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[26] Daugirdaitė-Sruogienė was Lithuanian historian. She also spent a significant period working in schools.

Commonwealth (a term not used in the textbook) is defined as "attempts to save Lithuanian independence", which is succeeded by the decline of Lithuania. There is a visible attempt to present the history as a continuous development of Lithuania through the centuries, interrupted by the Russian Empire, which ended in Lithuania's rebirth in 1918. However, somewhere in the middle of the table of content the term Lithuanian-Polish state appears (the author uses this term while discussing the partitions of the Commonwealth). It is not as evidently alien as the Russian Empire (rule of the aliens), but it does not fit elegantly in the story of the Lithuanian nation.

One more particularity of Daugirdaitė-Sruogienė's textbook is its focus on the political figures. The periods are personalized in the rulers themselves. Not counting the Grand Duke Vytautas, whose name is used to define the few decades of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, each chapter is sub-divided by ruler. The author includes not only pictures of all the dukes from the mid-13th century till the 1569 and some later rulers of the Commonwealth, but also provides detailed descriptions of their physical features and their personal characteristics.

To give an example, it is worth looking closer to the rule of the Grand Duke Vytautas.[27] The sub-chapter devoted to the Duke starts as following: "Vytautas was one of the most remarkable rulers not only in Lithuanian history, but also in the history of the entire world" (Daugirdaitė-Sruogienė, [1935]1938:94). Later Daugirdaitė-Sruogienė proceeds to the descriptions of his physical features which are directly related to the personal ones: "Vytautas was not tall, but remarkably dynamic, lively and full of greatness […] his wide wise eyes indicated his strong will and strength". The description of Duke Vytautas is accompanied by his portrait, although the remains of the Duke Vytautas were never found and there is no image of his left. All the changes in the Grand Lithuanian Duchy she attributes to this figure: for example, he wins battles, he obliterates Germans (meaning the Teutonic Knights) in 1410, and he brings the Christianity to the Samogitia (96-105). Vytautas was a particularly useful figure to incarnate the

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[27] The process of how this duke started to be referred to as Vytautas the Great was discussed by Nikžientaitis (2002).

Lithuanian struggle against the Polish, because his attempts to become the King of Lithuania and minimize the influence of Kingdom of Poland over the Grand Duchy of Lithuania could be easily portrayed as an attempt to seek the complete independence for the Lithuanian state. The section devoted to this duke ends with the following sentence: "After a short illness, on 27 October 1430, being 80 years old, Vytautas died. He did not manage to reach the main goal of his life: to bring back the full independence to Lithuania" (105). Interestingly, the pupils are provided not only with the exact date of his death, but with the hidden message – the most important thing is to fight for the independence (and against Poland).

To summarize the presentation of the period of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the following emphasis should be made: the Union of Krewo (1385) was the first sign of future problems that the strong Lithuanian state would encounter[28]. After the death of Grand Duke Vytautas, there were several attempts to get rid of the influence of the Kingdom of Poland; however, gradually Lithuanian power diminished and Lithuanian dukes got involved in difficult wars with surrounding countries.

With this in mind, it is not surprising that the following centuries (until 1795) are presented as a gradual decline of the Lithuania (meaning the Grand Duchy of Lithuania). The meaning attributed to the Union of Lublin can be illustrated by the words of Lithuanian grandee, as quoted in Daugirdaitė-Sruogienė's textbook: "Terrible is the sword of our enemy hanging above our heads, but even more terrible are the eternal shackles of slavery, into which Poles are willing to put us" (141). It is remarkable that the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Kingdom of Poland become reduced to Lithuanian and Poland, or (even more often) to Lithuanians and Poles. There are only two figures that represent the Kingdom of Poland – Poles and Poland. Lithuanians and Lithuania are represented as innocent, seeking help in the difficult situation; while Poles and Poland are portrayed as seeking profit and having bad intensions and

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[28] Polish historians denied that Lithuania remained independent after the Union of Lublin and presented it as incorporation of Lithuania. Lithuanian historians argued that Lithuanian remained independent only after 1385, but also after the Union of Lublin in 1569 (Ritter, 2003).

expansionist aims ("they are not able to fit in their own state"). In addition, the textbook informs that after the Union of Lublin they started to invade Lithuania and Polonize it (143). This is the way Daugirdaitė-Sruogienė portrays the institutionalization of the Polish language as an official language of the Commonwealth in the 17th century, which signified the social position, aristocratic roots and better education/manners (Spires, 2001:55).[29]

In the following twenty pages Daugirdaitė-Sruogienė lists the rulers of the Commonwealth, describing their personal characteristics, their main battles and their black deeds. In between these descriptions, the author also briefly mentions the cultural achievements, arguing that Lithuania became one of the important centers of education in Europe (147) and it was equal to the most culturally developed European countries (148). At this point, however, the cultural achievements are presented as purely Lithuanian ones.

An important aspect of the period of the Commonwealth was its attempts to reform itself. The changes in the language of instruction during the education reform were described as following: "In these schools subjects were no longer taught in Latin, only Polish […] although the language of instruction was not Lithuanian, this education brought many people devoted to their country and fighting for its freedom" (179). Meanwhile the Constitution of 3 May 1791 was evaluated exclusively negatively: "Lithuania, which had its laws, rights, government, army, separate name, was about to become only a part of Poland" (179). However this account is less dramatic as the one given by Jonas Šliūpas in 1909: "The Constitution demonstrates the selfishness of the nobility. Because the authors of the constitution were afraid that by being careful about peasants they will make the nobility angry and will start a rebellion! The laws of the 3rd of May, which were supposed to become the fundament of the country, became its gravestone".[30] The closing remark of the chapter on the Commonwealth provides a good account of the interpretation:

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[29] It changed from old Belarusian which had been used as the court language of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania since the early 14th century.
[30] Quoted from Raila (2007:9).

> The faster Polish influence increased in Lithuania, the sooner Lithuania approached self-destruction. It was weakened, rundown, with its ungovernable nobility. Poland fell under the rule of aliens and it pulled down its ally – Lithuania as well. As if they felt the misfortune approaching, Lithuanian men of state tried to use every single occasion to get rid of the Union. Unfortunately they did not succeed to reach the full independence – they did not succeed to save Lithuania from destruction.

This quote demonstrates how the alliances were shifting. On the one hand the enemies were Poles, and on the other hand Russian Empire was too.

To summarize, I want to underline that the proclamation of Independence in 1918 signified the end of the first period of the formation of Lithuanian national school (1905-1918), beginnings of which should be traced as early as the 19ᵗʰ century. That was the first time Lithuanian history was used for the development of Lithuanian consciousness. During this period the main attention was given to the heroic past (the Grand Duchy of Lithuania) while the Commonwealth period was neglected. This neglect was related to the fact that Lithuanian nationalist figures positioned themselves not only against the rule of Russian empire, but also against Polish cultural heritage.

The teaching of Lithuanian national history during the interwar period mirrored the interpretations given in the national historiography, which took the Lithuanian nation-state as a unit of analysis. It was also influenced by ongoing conflict between Poland and Lithuania over the Vilnius region. Lithuanian historians used the common Polish-Lithuanian past in order to explain the contemporary events, not only to provide both historical and theoretical grounds for justifying the historical right of self-determination, as it was before (Janužytė, 2005:63). From the 1930s the Commonwealth period was included in the historiographies, and in the school textbooks portraying it as a constant struggle for Lithuanian statehood against Poland.

2. Rewriting Lithuanian History According to Marxist-Leninist Principles

It is important to analyze how Lithuanian history was taught during the Soviet period, because most of the teachers in contemporary Lithuanian schools are more than 45. Thus most of them attended schools and universities before 1990; the older ones also taught during that period. First, I will focus on teachers' memories about their schooling. Second, I will discuss more in detail the historical narrative they were taught.

2.1. Learning and Teaching Soviet Lithuanian History

Generally teachers emphasized that they knew Russian history very well and confessed that they had minimal knowledge of Lithuanian history before 1990. This was due to minimal attention attributed to Lithuanian history in schools and universities. In some cases Lithuanian history was taught only in optional history classes. For example, Dalia remembered that these additional classes started one hour before the official time of school hours, so those few pupils, who came, were too sleepy to memorize anything. When asked about the history textbooks used in the classes, most of the teachers recollected "a small thin book". They could not remember either the grade in which they were taught from this textbook or the author(s) of the textbook. Some of the teachers emphasized that in school the main accent was put on the history of post-1917 period and Lithuanian history appeared only in rare cases (Interview with Irena, 2010).

Those, who argued that Lithuanian history was never a secret to them, indicated that parents, books, and in rare cases teachers were their sources of Lithuanian history. It seemed a natural thing that the "real history" was supposed to be taught by parents, because in school there were only fragments discussed (Interview with Vaidas, 2010). However, not all family members shared their experiences; Dalia revealed memories about her father who did not talk about the forced exile in Siberia: "it was not an issue to talk about". For Zita Lithuanian history "was never a secret" because her parents kept Šapoka's book from interwar period in their

libraries.[31] The same book was also illegally used by the history students and teachers. For example, Nijolė remembered that her teacher was in charge of the optional course called *The Friendship of the Republics*. As Nijolė recollected, teacher wrote the official title on the board and then talked about Lithuanian history with Šapoka's book on her knees; before doing that she always warned her students that if someone will come, she will continue talking about the friendship of the republics. Other interviewee, Emilija, who worked during the Soviet period alleged that sometimes she asked students to read some chapters of the official textbook by themselves, because for her "it was too much to talk about the 'fair' elections in the Soviet Union" (Interview with Emilija, 2009). The rest of interviewees were not able to give such examples, but they mentioned that teachers often raised rhetorical questions, which "allowed students to understand that something is hidden" (Interview with Laima, 2010). This illustrates the so-called teacher's dilemma described by Maeir (2005:142) as "daily maneuvering at work between giving the students the incentive to think on the one hand and disguising one's own, secret protest to a certain degree on the other". Most of the interviewees mentioned that they witnessed similar maneuverings after entering the higher education. According to teacher Vaidas, some of the professors praised the Communist Party; others used "Aesop language" (talked in metaphors) in order to give the necessary information about the "true history".[32]

The examples of the resistance from the pupils' side were also mentioned during the interviews. One of them was given by Vaidas: "I remember when teacher Kiškienė was talking about Stalin's repressions, Narmontas, son of the sacristan, proposed to organize an armed rebellion in the class". The fact that Vaidas later mentions some details of the event (from the 1970s) and remembers the names shows that it had a particular meaning to the interviewee. Another example (more recent) was given by Rima. She told that some pupils raised Lithuanian

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[31] Šapoka was a prominent Lithuanian historian during the interwar period. Šapoka's *Lithuanian History* was published in 1936. During the Soviet period it was secretly used for Lithuanian history teaching. In late 1980s it was republished and "it was a must to have this book in Lithuanian's house" (Interview with Emilija, 2010).

[32] Taking into account that Lithuanian history was taught not more than one year, more often – not more than one semester, there was not many occasions to do that.

national flag in 1987 or 1988 on the roof of the school building; she added that their teacher was almost fired. However, most of the interviewees confessed that they had "no understanding of what is right and wrong" and no patriotic education (Interview with Irena, 2010); that "no one from their parents kept the flag under the table" (Interview with Nijolė, 2010); that they had no clue about Lithuanian history (Interview with Dalia, 2010); only the feeling that something is hidden (Interview with Elena, 2010) and they would not call themselves dissidents.

From the discussion above I would like to emphasize that during the Soviet period Lithuanian history was generally neglected, especially the history before 1917. Most of my interviewees confessed that they had almost no other interpretations available than the ones provided by the state; and attempts to resist the dominant framework were rather an exception than a rule. Thus the analysis of the Soviet history textbooks can help to imagine what version was dominant when most of the teachers were studying in schools and universities.

2.2. Official Version of Lithuanian History

The textbooks of Lithuanian history appeared only in the late 1950s, because of the belated publication of the Soviet version of history of Lithuania and long lasting procedure of censorship (Vyšniauskas, 2004:83). The first two textbooks, published in 1957, were written by two prominent Soviet Lithuanian historians – Juozas Žiugžda and Juozas Jurginis. According to contemporary Lithuanian historian Aurimas Švedas, these two historians were unofficially known as the *White chronicler* and the *Black chronicler* (Čekutis and Žygelis, 2009). Žiugžda was referred to as the *Black chronicler* because of the black cover of the book he wrote and his loyalty to Marxist-Leninist approach; Jurginis was called the *White chronicler* because of his public declarations that one should find a middle way between political and economic history and his attempts to construct a logical alternative to the Marxist version of the history embedded in Žiugžda's works. Consequently the content of these two textbooks differs remarkably, even

though both of them were entitled *History of Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic*. Jurginis's textbook represents a transition from the nationalist history version embedded in Daugirdaitė-Sruogienė's *History of Lithuania* ([1935]1938) and Šapoka's *Lithuanian history* (1938); Žiugžda's textbook, and especially its subsequent edition (1962), is a remarkable example of the Marxist version of Lithuanian history. Interestingly, Jurginis's textbook circulated for several years and even was published 5 times until the central governing body of the Communist Party passed resolutions concerning the ideological errors in Jurginis's publications in 1961 and his textbooks were withdrawn from circulation. Žiugžda's version of Lithuanian history remained dominant in the school curricula from 1962 till 1985 when new textbooks were about to be published.

The only alternative, as it was mentioned before, was Jurginis textbook (1957). The periodisation of Lithuanian history in it, however, resembled more Daugirdaitė-Sruogienė's *History of Lithuania* ([1935]1938). Jurginis divided Lithuanian history according to the political changes (see Appendix 12). His description of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania is less detailed and less focused on political elite. As noted by Jučas (2007:226), the existence of the independent and powerful Grand Duchy of Lithuania caused problems for Soviet historians. Official policy required to present Lithuania as week and depended on the others, so Soviet Russia could be portrayed as its saviour. The emphasis is no longer put on the constant struggle for independence, but on the Polish domination over Lithuania. The Union of Lublin became a dividing line between the periods preceding and following it for the first time. The Union with Poland served as a manifestation of betrayal of Lithuanian national interests. Contrary to Daugirdaitė-Sruogienė's textbook, where the partitions were portrayed negatively as leading to the domination of alien power (Russian empire), in Jurginis's textbook the Russian Empire became the saviour from Polish expansionism. The emphasis on the Polish domination represents the consolidated agreement between the Soviet historians that the Union of Lublin

stopped the natural development of that state and subordinated it to the Polish political, cultural and religious interests (Jučas, 2007:231).[33]

Žiugžda provided a completely revised version of Lithuanian national history: the age of feudalism is followed by the age of capitalism until the age of socialism comes (see Appendix 12). From the opening pages the reader is introduced to the fact that their ancestors lived in the territory of Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic (Jurginis called this chapter *The first inhabitants in Lithuanian territory*). In Žiugžda's textbook the attention given to the periods before inclusion into the Russian empire decreases significantly. As Figure 3 illustrates, he clearly focuses on the building of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Lithuania.

Figure 3: Historical Periods and the Space Attributed to them in Two History Textbooks

Jurginis
Lithuanian SSR History
1957

Žiugžda
Lithuanian SSR History
1962

- Before statehood
- Grand Duchy of Lithuania
- Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth
- Under Russian Empire
- Independent Lithuania
- Soviet Lithuania
- Sequence of topics as laid out in the textbook

As demonstrated above, the space attributed to the Commonwealth changes significantly. In those few pages devoted to this period, Žiugžda discusses the socio-economic development. He portrays the Union as a main reason of the economic decline and the consolidation of serfdom (1962:22). The attention attributed to the main events and processes differs as well. The Union of Lublin, which was discussed before in separate chapter (Daugirdaitė-Sruogienė,

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[33] Lithuanian historiography was directly subordinated to the Russian historiography, which appropriated Lithuanian state to Soviet one.

[1935]1938:140-144) and in separate section (Jurginis, 1957:41-43), is reduced to 3 paragraphs by Žiugžda (1962:22).

Despite these differences, the Union of Lublin is portrayed negatively in both – Žiugžda's (1962) and Jurginis's (1957) – textbooks. The former presents it as the "beginning of the economic and political decline" (1962:22); while the latter depicts it as "disastrous to Lithuanian people" and "as the burial of the Lithuanian state" (1957:43). In both cases it is emphasized that this Union consolidated the privileges of the nobility and stopped the social advancement of the country. A significant change is also evident when comparing the descriptions of the main actors in the signing of the Union of Lublin. Both Jurginis (1957) and Žiugžda (1962) no longer refers to them as Lithuanians and Poles, but exclusively replace them by such categories as Lithuanian feudals/noblemen and Polish feudals/noblemen. "Polonized Lithuanians" become "polonized Lithuanian feudals" – thus the anti-Polish dimension is complemented by class struggle. In both textbooks the partitions of the Commonwealth are represented as liberation from Polish domination, rather than the elimination of the remaining Lithuanian autonomy. Both authors conclude emphasizing that partitions leading to the incorporation to Russian empire saved Lithuania from Polish domination and extinction in general.

In between the signing of the Union of Lublin and the partitions of the Commonwealth both authors discuss the socio-economic development. They both attribute an important role to peasants and counter-position them to feudals; they argue that peasants always were consciously Lithuanian and they saved Lithuanian national identity and culture. Žiugžda praises the folk culture of Lithuanian people arguing that it "sneered the clergy and always mocked the noblemen and presented them as money-grubbing, arrogant and stupid"; this is why, he proceeds, "feudals and church always stigmatized and persecuted the folk culture" (1962:32). Meanwhile Jurginis perceives the Union with Poland as one of the reasons why Lithuanian culture started to decline. He argues that "from the 17th century in printed books Lithuanian

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language was polluted by barbarisms and the grammatical rules were not followed", neglecting the fact that Lithuanian language was not codified until the early 20th century. Žiugžda presents the emerging Lithuanian literature as a result of spreading revolutionary ideas from Russia (1962:34).

Similarly, there is less attention given to the reforms which were implemented before the partitions of the Commonwealth. Both Žiugžda and Jurginis presented the Constitution of 3 May in one paragraph and rather negatively. The main accent is put on the fact that in the Constitution Lithuania is not mentioned as separate unit of the Commonwealth. They emphasized that "Lithuania was an integral part of Poland and even its name was not mentioned in the constitution" (Jurginis, 1957:56; Žiugžda, 1962:26).[34]

From the comparison of the two textbooks from the Soviet period, several implications can be drawn. First, there is a general tendency to neglect Lithuanian history and follow the Marxist-Leninist framework. Second, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth period gets less attention than the other ones and when it does, it is portrayed in negative terms. The Commonwealth period was used to present Poles as Lithuanian enemies and in this light to present Russian Empire as its saviour. So the collapse of the Commonwealth and its inclusion into Russian empire is presented as exclusively positive: it stopped Polonization and cultural assimilation. Finally, it is visible that Lithuanians are presented as a linguistic and cultural community rather than political one. Taking into account that majority of the teachers were educated during the Soviet period and most of them had no access to the alternative versions of history, it is possible that soviet representations are still extant in their interpretations.

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[34] None of them included the amendments adjusted in October 1791, where the equal representation of the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in governing bodies is underlined.

3. The Legacy of Previous Periods and the First Attempts to Renegotiate the Commonwealth Period

In this section I will focus on the ways Lithuanian national history is taught and learned in contemporary Lithuania. First, I will discuss the changes in educational system (including the transition period), as well as changes in Lithuanian historiography and political sphere. Second, I will analyze how they were reflected in the official curricula. Finally, I will demonstrate the ways in which teachers, accept, negotiate or modify official version of Lithuanian national history nowadays, with a particular focus on the Commonwealth period.

3.1. Changes in the Lithuanian Educational System

The shift of teachers' affiliations during transition period can be illustrated by Jurgita's words, who graduated already in the independent Lithuania:

> In the Soviet period my history teacher used to paint the back wall of the class in read and kept the portraits of the Communist party leaders on it. When Lithuania became independent, she repainted the wall in the colors of Lithuanian national flag: yellow-green-red. Pity, she mixed up the order of colors (Interview with Jurgita, 2009).

The repainting of "red walls" was not an easy task for history teachers. Due to the ongoing nationalist demonstrations and the formation of the Reform Movement of Lithuania in the 1980s, the Soviet authorities intensified surveillance in the schools to ensure that teachers provide a good communist schooling. The real changes did not start until 1988, when restrictions were finally abolished and the space for creative teaching was opened (Interview with Vaidas, 2010).

By the late 1980s Lithuanian national history "came in fashion" and it was no longer appropriate to use Soviet teaching materials (Interview with Vilija, 2010). Elena, who started to work as a teacher in 1988, said that once she gave Lenin's writings to her students in order to illustrate what historical sources are. Students refused to open it pretending that their parents told them not to use "Russian books". At this moment the old history textbooks were replaced

by articles from newspapers, notes from universities, newly re-published history books written by Vijūkas-Kojelavičius ([1656]1988), Šapoka ([1936]1989), Daugirdaitė-Sruogienė ([1935]1991). Old professors were dismissed together with the old textbooks and Lenin's writings: Vaidas remembered that students stopped coming to the classes given by professor Žiugžda, who was famous for blindly following instructions of the Communist Party.

In 1988 several members of the Reform Movement of Lithuania proposed a model of national school as an alternative to the Soviet schooling. In the beginning they aimed to gain sovereignty in educational matters and achieve cultural autonomy (Bruzgelevičienė, 2007:93). Meilė Lukšienė, the leading figure of the group, attributed the main role to the national culture. She claimed that "if we want to survive, we are supposed to legitimize and consolidate the presence of the national culture in schools – we have our language, but our culture remains on the margins. One thing is clear – the school has to be national" (Lukšienė, [1988]2000). The members of the group also emphasized the need to "bring back history into schools", because of its importance in sustaining the cultural memory.

During the first years of independence the same intellectuals became the key-figures of the education reform in Lithuania, and claimed that they were "about to create a new state and new society" (Lukšienė, 2000:171). In 1991 the education law was passed and one year later a new strategy of Lithuanian education and new teaching programs were approved. The authors of the new education strategy distinguished humanism, democracy, nationalism and revival as the main principles of Lithuanian education. In addition, they articulated two aims: to educate an open-minded person, and to encourage loyalty to family, nation, society, and Lithuanian state (Jackūnas, 1993). For this purpose the number of history classes was increased significantly. As Vilija noted, there were five Lithuanian national history and two world history classes per week. However, as Vaidas notices, teachers had no methodical material and no clear guidelines for the future history exams.[35] Thus the way pupils were taught exclusively depended on the teacher.

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[35] The exam was oral and it was organized in local level, not national until 1996.

The second educational reform (1997) already emphasized the importance of the civic nation. The main accents of the reform can be illustrated by Jackūnas's words:

> Now when Lithuania is independent again and starts to be consolidated as a state, we feel the need to complement the concept of cultural nation. […] The new program clearly indicates that all the citizens of Lithuanian state independently of their ethnic origins and cultural-linguistic orientation belong to Lithuanian nation (Jackūnas 1998:3).

This clearly articulated need to include all citizens independently of their ethnic and linguistic identification went hand in hand with the encouragement to develop competences of students rather than give them pure historical facts. According to Bruzgelevičienė (2007:103) this shows that Lithuanian school system was re-structured according to the requirements of the European Union.

The new program of education also included reorganized exam system. As underlined by Vyšniauskas (2000:319), from 1992 the history exam became a national quiz. This change had a significant impact on history teaching, because it standardized the requirements for passing the exam. The exam program, by some of my interviewees referred to as the "teachers Bible", became the main guideline for teachers (Interview with Jūratė, 2009). In parallel, the attention to Lithuanian history significantly decreased and Lithuanian national history was incorporated into world history, with an exception of the 5th grade programs (Interview with Vilija, 2010).[36]

3.2. Revision of Lithuanian Historiography and Regulation of Polish-Lithuanian Diplomatic Relationships in the Early 1990s

The need to revise the interpretations of Polish-Lithuanian common past was articulated already in the late 1980s by Lithuanian dissident Tomas Venclova. He encouraged liquidating the negative stereotypes about the role of Polish civilization in Lithuanian history. Venclova's revisionist ideas were echoed in the works of Lithuanian historian Edvardas Gudavičius. He

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[36] For detailed explanation see *Methodology*.

portrayed the Union with Poland as an ultimate chance given to Lithuania to survive and to enter into the arena of European civilization. The revision of common past coincided with important political changes. In 1994 Poland and Lithuania signed the agreements of friendly relations, cooperation and good neighborhood. In 1997 both countries signed the agreement of bilateral cooperation: Poland renounced all the territorial claims and Lithuanian politicians started to portray Poland as the main strategic partner of Lithuania.

Lithuanian and Polish historians also opened a new page in their relationships and rehabilitated the Polish-Lithuanian common past. It was recognized that the Grand Duchy of Lithuania remained autonomous after its incorporation in the Commonwealth. In addition, the the Constitution of 3 May 1791 was no longer presented as only a Polish phenomenon, but as a Lithuanian one as well. In the Lithuanian historiography the common heritage was no longer dismissed and Polish culture and language were portrayed as a window of opportunity to enter into the Western civilization (see Raila, 2007; Kuolys, 2009). Moreover, in 2007 the Constitution day – 3 May – and the day of its amendments – 20 October – were included in the list of commemorative days in Lithuania. In the official speech, given during the commemoration of 20 October, former Minister of the Foreign Affairs Petras Vaitiekūnas emphasized that this Constitution represents a remarkably progressive ideas for the 18th century Europe. According the minister, it laid the foundations for the formation of modern Lithuania and modern Poland and the membership of both countries in the European Union prolonged this federalist tradition (Vaitiekūnas, 2008). With this in mind integration to the European Union should be also considered as a factor which encouraged the revision of the common past. These changes in the Lithuanian historioprahy and diplomatic sphere had an impact on official curricula. As it will be demonstrated, they gave an important impulse for the reinterpretation of the Commonwealth period.

3.3. The impact of the Political and Educational changes on the official history curricula

The history textbooks published during the first years of independence gave high priority to Lithuanian national history. Moreover, some of them were exclusively devoted to the period before the incorporation into Russian empire in 1795. *History of Lithuania: from ancient times to the 18th century*, written by historian Adomas Butrimas (1993), clearly illustrates this tendency. As Figure 4 shows, Butrimas gives more attention to the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, similarly to the interwar period. This can be explained by both the aim to restore the history which was forgotten during the Soviet period and the need to create a feeling of national pride.

Figure 4: Historical Periods and the Space Attributed to them in the history textbook written by Butrimas (1993)
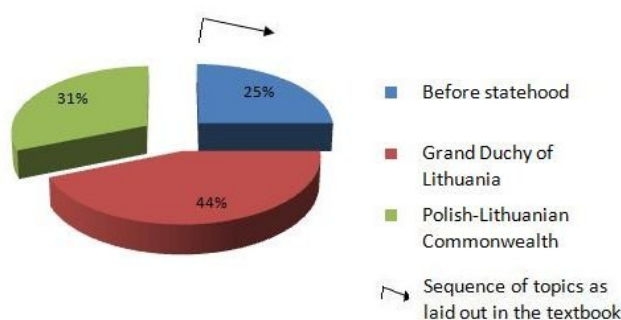
The similarity with interwar textbooks is also visible in the way Butrimas structures the periods. He subdivides each of them according to the rulers and gives priority to political history in order to prove that Lithuanian state continues in time (see Appendix 13).

Butrimas clearly revises the interpretations which were dominant in the beginning of the 20th century. He no longer refers to the subordination of Lithuania to Poland. He defines the Commonwealth as hybrid: "it was no more Lithuanian state and no more Polish state; it was a new form of state, which has not exited before" (1993:210). Butrimas does not present the
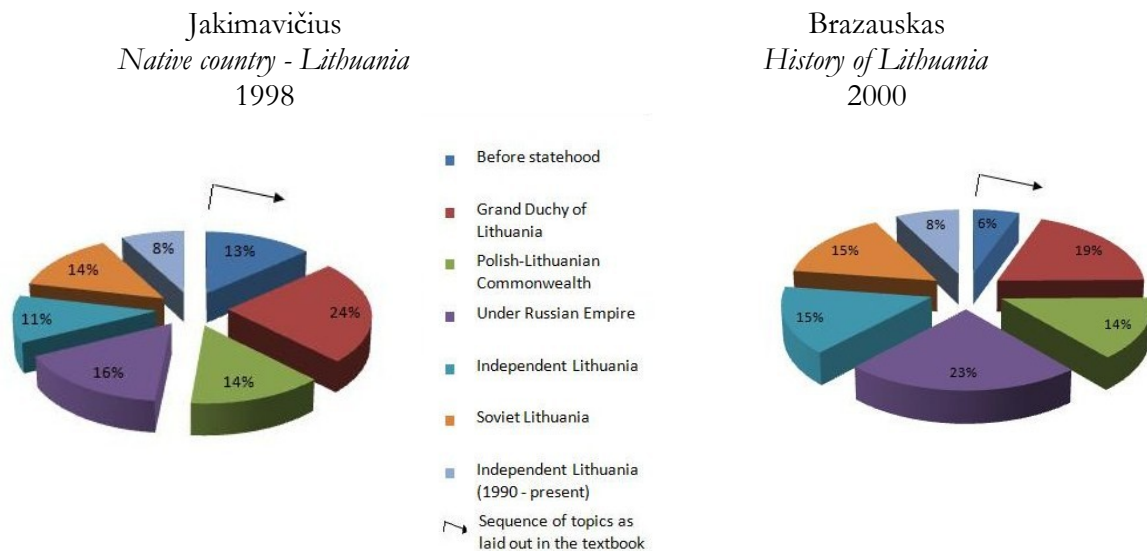
Union of Lublin as exclusively forced upon Lithuanian nobility (1993:213) and no longer portrays the close ties between Lithuanians and Poles as exclusively negative (1993:214). However, the negative characteristics attributed to Poles are still visible. For example, Poles are even called colonizers of Lithuania who sought land, "brought their language and religion" (1993:220). The image of Lithuanian nobility is more balanced. On the one hand, Butrimas emphasizes the internal fights between different groups of noblemen (210-211) and their loyalty to other states (207). On the other hand he underlines, that some Lithuanian noblemen "sacrificed themselves for their homeland and people" (175). Butrimas states that the Commonwealth collapsed because of the intervention of foreign powers, thus the clearly articulated enemy – Russia – appears. Butrimas devotes an entire section to outline that Lithuanians and Russians were enemies for centuries (1993:190-193). In this light Poles are portrayed as Lithuanian allies.

Butrimas also highlights that Lithuania was part of Europe (1993:195). The emphasis on the cultural proximity to Europe is even more visible in the textbooks published after 1997. For example, *Native country – Lithuania* (1997)*,* written by history teacher Viktoras Jakimavičius, praises the common heritage with Poland because it "brought the culture from the West" (1998:99). For Jakimavičius, Polish language and culture were not forced upon Lithuanian – they were appropriated by Lithuanian nobility. Another history teacher – Juozas Brazauskas, who published history textbook (2000) two years later – remains more reserved and does not portray Poland as a bearer of the Western culture. He stresses that the nobility needed to be ashamed for not using Lithuanian language, because language is the main attribute of the nation (2000:64).

As Figure 5 presents, both Brazauskas and Jakimavičius attribute the same amount of space to the Commonwealth in their textbooks, even though they focus on the different periods (Jakimavičius on the Grand Duchy of Lithuania; Brazauskas on the 19th century). In both textbooks the Commonwealth is presented as a period of independence and as new form of state. For the first time in the textbooks the Union is presented as reinforcing and not as

weakening Lithuania: Jakimavičius argues that Union helped both states to resist Russia for more than 200 years (1998:99); while Brazauskas notes that both states fought their enemies together (2000:58).

Figure 5: Historical Periods and the Space Attributed to them in Two History Textbooks

Jakimavičius
Native country - Lithuania
1998

Brazauskas
History of Lithuania
2000

- Before statehood
- Grand Duchy of Lithuania
- Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth
- Under Russian Empire
- Independent Lithuania
- Soviet Lithuania
- Independent Lithuania (1990 - present)
- Sequence of topics as laid out in the textbook

Jakimavičius: 13%, 24%, 14%, 16%, 11%, 14%, 8%

Brazauskas: 6%, 19%, 14%, 23%, 15%, 15%, 8%

The attempts to revise the old representations of the Commonwealth are even more evident in the textbooks published after the last educational reform and Lithuania's entrance to European Union: Jūratė Litvinaitė's *Lithuanian History* (2007) and Laužikas et al. *The Path* (2008). Both textbooks are used by pupils in Lithuanian schools nowadays. It is noteworthy that the differences between them are significant. Contrary to Laužikas et al. (2008), who use similar periodisation as the previous authors, Litvinaitė structures *Lithuanian History* (2007) according different themes (see Appendix 14).

Litvinaitė uses the nation as main unit of analysis, however, she clearly recognizes that "Lithuanian nation emerged only in the 19th century" (2007:23). Moreover she devotes an entire section "Lithuania: the Second Homeland" to the national minorities (2007:26). She mainly focuses on the 20th century and only briefly outlines the events preceding it. Consequently Litvinaitė attributes only few paragraphs to the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the

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Commonwealth[37]. Nevertheless she explicitly names Lithuanian friends such as Poland together with Latvia and Estonia ("Baltic sisters") and Western countries (distinguishes USA and Great Britain); Russia is the only one clear named as an enemy (2007:44). Thus Poland and Poles start to be portrayed as "friends forever". According to Litvinaitė, they disagreed with Lithuanians only once in the early 20th century (because of Vilnius); but after 1990 both nations already forgot old disputes (1998:47). While talking about the cultural impact after the Union with Kingdom of Poland, Litvinaitė does not use the term Polonization: "Polish language, customs, clothes came into fashion" (2007:24).

The publication of the textbook *The Path* (2008) succeeded Litvinaitė's *Lithuanian History* (2007), but it remained faithful to the chronological structuralizing, as can be seen in Figure 6.

Figure 6: Historical Periods and the Space Attributed to them in Laužikas et al. *The Path* (2008)
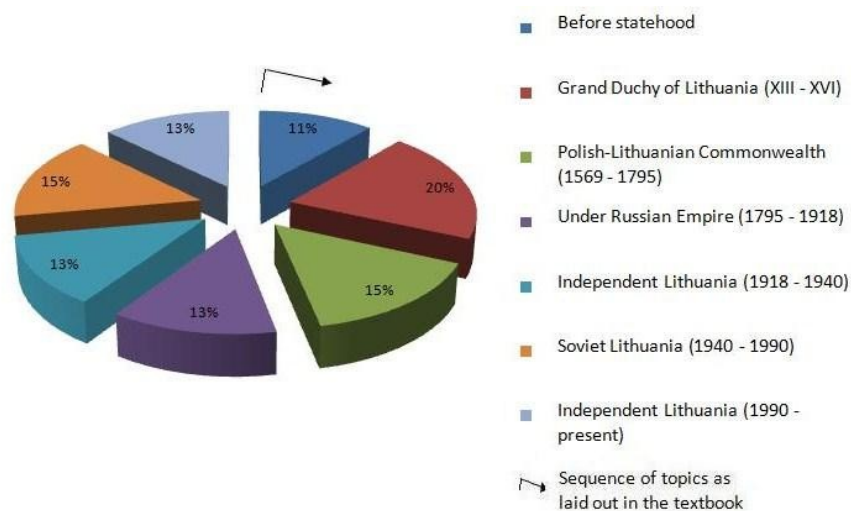
It clearly focuses on the so-called "times of national heroes"; the authors emphasize that "Lithuania was the biggest state in Europe" and that it united territories "from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea" (2007:31).

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[37] The Union of Lublin and the partitions are discussed one paragraph each.

The authors of the textbook do not deny the close relationship with Poland and recognizes that it was republic of two nations (2008:62); that in the Commonwealth culture prospered (2008:64-65). Laužikas et al. also mention that this period is known as period of Polonization (66), but does not portray it as forced process. According to him, nobles lacked patriotic feelings, imitated Polish customs and spoke Polish (80) and dedicated themselves to Poland (70). This textbook is particular for one more reason: it is one of the first ones to underline that the Constitution of the 3 May 1791 was the first written constitution in Europe. This emphasis shows the impact of the revisionist Lithuanian historiography of the 1990s.

3.4. Teaching Lithuanian national history in the post-1990 schools

The majority of my interviewees emphasized that the attention given to the national history is not sufficient. Vilija's argument echoes general opinion: "Lithuanian students should not spend so much time discussing the French revolution, because French students do not even know the major revolts, which happened in Lithuania". When asked, which periods in Lithuanian history do not get sufficient attention, none of interviewees named the Commonwealth period, they mentioned the interwar period, occupations (Soviet, Nazi and Soviet) and armed resistance (Dalia, Darius, Laima). However, this does not prove that the attention is given to the Commonwealth period is sufficient. It is quite the opposite. The reasons why none of them distinguished this period as insufficiently covered became more visible while discussing their favorite historical periods from Lithuanian history. Interviewees mentioned exclusively two of them – the period of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the 20th century. The latter is mostly liked because of its proximity (Interview with Gediminas, 2010) and importance (Interview with Laima, 2010); while the former, "it was the most important and the most significant period" (Interview with Laima, 2010). As Vaidas expresses, "everything was clearer". Darius contributes adding that "this period is closer to me, because I knew Lithuanian Dukes

already in the kindergarten" (Interview with Darius, 2010). Only one teacher labeled the period of Commonwealth as his favorite. However, he specified that he likes only the cultural history of this period (Interview with Vaidas, 2010). Consequently the Commonwealth period was definitely the most disliked and the reasons explaining this were numerous: "it was a period of failures" (Interview with Vacys, 2010), "I just do not think it is so important" (Interview with Elena, 2010), "a difficult period of wars" (Interview with Vytautas, 2010), "that was period of Polonization" (Interview with Irena, 2010), "it was Polish, not Lithuanian period" (Interview with Vacys).

It is noteworthy that the interpretations of the Commonwealth period in particular often varied according to teacher's age and geographical location. Concerning the age, the older the teacher, the more negative features he/she attributed to this period. The oldest interviewee – Vacys – had the most negative perception of the Commonwealth:

> The Union of Lublin should be evaluated exclusively negatively, because our state started to lose its power. It was all because of our noblemen were affiliated with foreign powers and lacked patriotism […] There were no such patriots as Duke Vytautas, Duke Kęstutis; if they were there, we would have never signed such Union with Poles (Interview with Vacys, 2010).

He defined it as "decadence", "non-Lithuanian" and accused the Polish speaking nobility for not having patriotic feelings. For him, the Union of Krewo was "the first sign that Poles will never leave us in peace". Taking into account that teacher confessed that he prefers not to use the textbooks, because he provides students with all the necessary information, one can imagine how the Commonwealth is portrayed during his classes. Following the Soviet interpretations, he called this period Age of feudalism and attributed significant amount of time to discuss the flourishing of the serfdom. He emphasized the lawlessness of the nobility, the disorder in the country and expressed friendliness towards peasants: "we do not show that Lithuanian peasant was the one who worked for the welfare of the noblemen" (Interview with Vacys, 2010). He also

underlined the lack of patriotic education in contemporary schools and expressed an admiration towards the ways Lithuanian pupils were educated during the interwar period. Another teacher – Zita – who worked more than 30 years in the school, only recently came in contact with the attempts to revise Lithuanian history. During the interview she recollected that few days ago she read an article about Duke Vytautas, in which he was strongly criticized. Teacher confessed that her first reaction was repulsive: "how someone dears to write such things?". However during the interview she added that after she thought about this for couple of days now she can at least agree that Duke Vytautas also did some bad things: "the serfdom was legalized during his rule". Even though it is difficult to generalize from these two examples, but one can predict that most of the other teachers who worked more than 30 years in schools have similar problems coping with the new interpretations.

Legacy of the Soviet period was also visible from the interviews with the teachers in their 40's and 50's. For example, Vytautas emphasized that he is often referring to Jurginis textbook (1957) arguing that "we lack such prominent historians in our days". Teachers' interpretations are more resistant to changes. As Laima mentioned, all her interpretations were already formed in the Soviet period and she is still trying to turn everything upside down. It is also worth mentioning that some of these teachers took a deep breath after heard that I am particularly interested in Commonwealth period (particularly, Emilija, Vytautas, Rima); they also made pauses before answering (Nijolė) or repeated my question once more thinking what to say (Rasa, Laima in particular). This shows that teachers fell while talking about this period and they lack of competences. When asked to evaluate this period, Elena confessed that she can barely name the rulers of the Commonwealth, Laima mixed-up the chronological order of the rulers, and Rima confused the dates indicating the Commonwealth existence. Both Laima and Elena also confessed that they have not read interesting studies about this period; while Rasa mentioned that even in the university professors did not pay much attention to it.

When asked, how then they teach it themselves and what things they emphasize in class, teachers tended to focus exclusively on the Union of Lublin and the partitions. Commonly, they just listed different factors that influenced both, the formation and the collapse of the Commonwealth. Evaluating the Union of Lublin, which lead to the creation of the Commonwealth, the majority perceived the Union as inevitable, but some argued that Lithuanians could have left the Union earlier (Interview with Dalia, 2010; Interview with Rima, 2010). Most of the teachers barely recognized the hybrid character of the Commonwealth: they often referred to the Commonwealth as "Polish, not Lithuanian"; only few noted that it was different form of state, which cannot be called "neither Lithuanian nor Polish" (Interview with Nijolė, 2010). Similarly, teachers referred to Polish speaking noblemen as Poles (Emilija, Vytautas, Elena), emphasized that they lacked patriotic feelings (Dalia, Vilija), or defined them as the ones who "have not known who they were" (Laima, Rasa). As noted by Aleksandravičius (2009), the tendency to demonstrate the Polish speaking nobility as undecided and loyal to Poland shows the need to invent the special category to refer to the Polish speaking Lithuanian noblemen. Defining Lithuanians as linguistic community, the leaders of the Lithuanian national movement excluded this category, and most of the teachers continue to do so. The stress upon the national culture often went hand in hand with the negative attitude towards so-called polonisation. Some of the teachers equated it with russification or some of them argued that it was Polish language and not the Russian which have made Lithuanians to forget who they were (Interview with Vytautas, 2010). Interestingly, when asked about Polish cultural influence, the same teachers evaluated it positively. And only Vaidas brought this topic himself; and only Nijolė emphasized that it opened the gates for the spread of the European culture in Lithuania.

Another particularly useful example to reveal teachers' attitudes was the discussion about the Constitution of 3 May 1791. There is a tendency to be proud of having the first written constitution in Europe. However, it is followed by the conviction that this day should not be commemorated it Lithuania. The majority of the interviewees expressed that Lithuanians have

too many days to commemorate already to include this one; others emphasized that it was not purely Lithuanian Constitution, thus one is not supposed to celebrate it. The argumentation explaining why it is not worth commemorating shows that teachers have difficulties to think beyond the national framework. There are some teachers who argue that this constitution is appropriated by Poles, denying that it is Lithuanian (Laima, Nijolė). When asked, what do they think about the attempts to revise national history teachers replied that this period is not worth it and they do not think that it should get more attention (Interview with Emilija, 2010). Vacys even accused the revisionist figures as being faithful to Poland and betraying national interests.

Interestingly, not all the teachers of younger generation were aware of the revisionist attempts and even fewer supported it. Only Gediminas acknowledged the hybrid nature of the Commonwealth and discussed it in positive terms. He was the only one who knew that the date of signing the Constitution of 3 May is already proclaimed as an official day of commemoration. Similarly to Nijolė, who was the most critical towards nationalist romantic portrayal of the Lithuanian history, he criticized the praising of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Meanwhile, other teachers in their 20's have shared similar opinions as the older ones. For example, Darius referred to the Commonwealth as "Polish state, not Lithuanian" and claimed that Lithuanians have nothing to do with the Constitution of 3 of May. Consequently, he defined Polish speaking nobility as undecided and lacking patriotism. Meanwhile, Rasa expressed her admiration for the 19th century and romantic version of national history.

Concerning the regional differences, teachers from Samogitia region and from Kaunas underlined that it is probably more problematic to teach the common Polish-Lithuanian past in Vilnius and Vilnius region, because "this region was under Polish occupation during the interwar period" and its inhabitants have more stereotypes about Poles. Meanwhile, teachers who work in capital always emphasized that they are not from Vilnius and do not have bad feelings towards Poles. In addition, teachers in Samogitia emphasized the role of their region in Lithuanian history. They underlined that in Middle Ages Samogitia fought the Teutonic Order and all other

foreign powers that tried to invade it; that in the 19th century the first leaders of the national revival originated from Samogitia and that Lithuania would have been completely polonized if its inhabitants have not saved Lithuanian language and culture.

To summarize, not counting few exceptions, teachers were incapable to go beyond the nationalist framework. Most of them remained faithful to the understanding of Lithuania as linguistic and cultural community. In addition, concerning the regional differences, the teachers from Samogitia tend to present the inhabitants of this region as the best protectors of Lithuanian culture and language.

Conclusions

The significance of this research is twofold. First, it demonstrates the close relationship between Lithuanian national history teaching and Lithuanian nation-state building. Lithuanian national revival, which started in the second half of the 19ᵗʰ century, was directed against polonization and defined Lithuanian nation exclusively as linguistic community. Thus in the early 20ᵗʰ century when Lithuanian nation-state was created there was no place left for old Polish speaking Lithuanian elite in the political life, and no place for the common Polish-Lithuanian past in the Lithuanian historiography and Lithuanian national schools. After the First World War the conflict over Vilnius, which was incorporated into Poland, strengthened the disagreement between two sides. Thus the antagonistic relationships between Lithuanians and Poles were strengthened by inclusion of the Commonwealth period into Lithuanian national history teaching, however, it served as a proof that Polish always sought to dominate Lithuanians and had expansionist aims. The tendency to portray Poland as an eternal enemy also remained during the Soviet period. It allowed Soviet Lithuanian historians to present Russian Empire as the saviour from the domination of the Polish feudals. After the re-establishment of the independence in the early 1990s historians and history textbook authors turned back to the so-called times of the national heroes and presented the Commonwealth in negative terms. The consolidation of Lithuanian nation state, the improving relationships between Poland and Lithuania, "Westernisation" of the educational system and Lithuania's accession to the European Union formed a basis for the revision of Lithuanian national history in general, and the Commonwealth period in particular. In the official curricula it is recognized that Lithuanian nation emerged only in the 19ᵗʰ century and the role of the other ethnic groups in Lithuanian history is recognized. In addition, the Commonwealth is presented positively and the role of the Polish speaking nobility is recognized. What is more the Constitution of 3 May 1791 serves as a

proof of the progressive European ideas. The revised version of the common Polish-Lithuanian past started to be incorporated in the official curricula and contemporary Lithuanian pupils officially should be taught that Poland was a bearer of the Western culture, that Lithuanians and Poles fought together common Russian enemy and were always allies. The revision of the Commonwealth period allowed to perceive the Polish speaking elite as integral part of the Lithuanian nation and to encouraged the national pride based on the political and cultural achievements during this period.

Second, the results of this research prove that there is a significant gap between the official curricula and the teachers' interpretations. Thus, the official curriculum is not always transmitted directly to pupils. Even though they are already using the textbooks with the revised version of Lithuanian national history (with the Commonwealth presented in the positive terms), their teachers' interpretations are a mixture of several versions of Lithuanian national history. Teachers' evaluation of the Commonwealth period illustrates that not all of them are catching up with the latest interpretations or are not willing to do so. First, there is a persistent identification with the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the narrative which originates the late 19th – early 20th centuries. Second, there is a propensity to portray the Commonwealth as a time of decadence (this tendency started in the interwar period and was strengthened during the Soviet rule). The fact, that the legacy of the interwar and Soviet period is visible even in the interpretations of the younger teachers shows the persistence of the old interpretations. In addition, the regional differences between teachers' interpretations show that the nation-state did not succeed in unifying the historical interpretations and did not create one pattern of thinking and teaching.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, 1569

Appendix 2: Eastern Europe, 1999

Source: Snyder (2003).

Appendix 3: Textbook analysis guideline

The attention was attributed to both the space attributed to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the textbooks and the evaluation of the period, of particular events and processes.[38]

1. Space allotted per period: number of pages.

2. Table of contents: periodisation, titles

3. Chapter devoted to the Commonwealth period:

   a. General evaluation: positive/negative/neutral

   b. Main actors, their characteristics (positive, negative, neutral)

   c. The signing of the Union of Lublin: reasons, actors, outcomes

   d. The partitions of the Commonwealth: reasons, actors, outcomes

   e. Cultural sphere: actors, achievements

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[38] The guideline was prepared relying on Pingel's *Guidebook on Research and Textbook Revision* (1999).

f. Polonization: forced/appropriated

g. Polish speaking Lithuanian nobility: Poles/Lithuanians/neither Poles nor Lithuanians

Appendix 4: List of Interviewees

Nr	Interviewee	School	City	Gender	Age	Studying period	Started working	Institution of education
1.	Emilija*	Secondary school	Vilnius district	Female	52	1973 – 1978	1990	Vilnius University (herewith, VU)
2.	Virga*	Secondary school	Kaunas	Female	38	Graduated in early 1990's	-	VU
3.	Linas*	Secondary school	Kaunas	Male	50	Graduated in mid-1980's	-	VU
4.	Jūratė*	Secondary school	Vilnius	Female	42	Graduated in early 1990's	-	Vilnius Pedagogic University (herewith, VPU)
5.	Juratė*	Gymnasium	Vilnius	Female	40	Graduated in early 1990's	-	VPU
6.	Emilija*	Secondary school	Vilnius district	Female	52	1973 – 1978	1990	VU
7.	Vilija *	Gymnasium	Rietavas	Female	42	1983 - 1988	1988	VPU
8.	Dalia	Secondary school	Kretinga	Female	43	1988 - 1993	1993	VU
9.	Irena*	Gymnasium	Rietavas	Female	43	1984 - 1989	1989	VPU
10.	Rima*	Gymnasium	Rietavas	Female	42	1996 - 2000	1996	VPU
11.	Vaidas	Gymnasium	Plungė	Male	47	1981 - 1986	1986	VU
12.	Gediminas*	Secondary school	Vilnius	Male	27	2002 - 2008	2008	VU
13.	Zita*	Secondary school	Kaunas	Female	62	1969 – 1975	1980	VPU
14.	Nijolė*	Gymnasium	Vilnius	Female	45	1983 – 1988	1990	VPU
15.	Rasa*	Secondary school	Vilnius district	Female	29	2000 – 2006	2006	VPU
16.	Darius*	Secondary school**	Vilnius	Male	25	2004 – 2008	2009	VPU
17.	Laima*	Gymnasium	Vilnius	Female	39	1989 – 1995	1988	VPU
18.	Vacys*	Technology school	Plungė	Male	63	1966 – 1971	1971	VPU
19.	Elena*	Secondary school	Plungė	Female	45	1983 – 1988	1988	VPU
20.	Vytautas*	Secondary school	Plungė	Male	47	1981 – 1986	1986	VPU

* Pseudonyms are used.

Appendix 5: Socio-demographic characteristics of the interviewees (age)

Age group (years)	Number of interviewees		
	Men	Women	Total
20 – 29	2	1	3
30 – 39	0	2	2
40 – 49	2	8	10
50 – 59	1	1	2
60 – 69[39]	1	1	2
Total:	**6**	**13**	**19**

Appendix 6: Socio-demographic characteristics of the interviewees (education)

Age group	Number of interviewees	Attended school before 1990	Attended university before 1990	Worked in school before 1990
20 – 29	3	0	0	0
30 – 39	2	2	1	0
40 – 49	10	10	9	4
50 – 59	2	2	2	2
60 – 69	2	2	2	2
Total:	**19**	**16**	**14**	**8**

Appendix 7: Geographical distribution of the interviewees

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[39] The teachers who belong to this age group are pensioners according Lithuanian laws: women are considered pensioners from 60 years, men – from 62.5.

Appendix 8: Interview guideline

Part 1: Teachers' education (high school and university), their teaching experiences during Soviet period (if any).

- What is your age?

- What drew you to history teaching? (The subject matter, particular teachers, or something else)

- Which University you did graduated and when?

- When did you start teaching? What are the places you have taught?

- How has teaching requirements changed over your career?

These questions refer to the teacher's background: these are good initial questions; they can be connected to the transition from Soviet to independent Lithuania times.

Part 2: The general attitudes of the history teachers towards national history, their evaluation of the different historical periods (likes and dislikes) and their perception of the students' attitudes towards different periods.

- How did the amount of the attention given to Lithuanian history and world history changed over time during the Independence period in the history curricula and the exam questions?

- How to you find these changes? Positive/neutral/negative?

- How did the amount of the attention given to different periods of Lithuanian history changed over time the history curricula and the exam questions? (Grand Duchy, Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, Russian empire, 1st Independence etc.).

- How do you think, that some of the periods get too much/not enough attention?

- Which periods did you like most (while you were a student, while being a teacher)? Why?

- What interest students most in your classes? What periods they like/dislike? Why do you think they like/dislike those particular ones?

These questions allow me to learn about teachers' perception of the place of Lithuanian national history in context of the world history and his/hers evaluation of the current changes in national history teaching.

Part 3: The perception of the Commonwealth period: their evaluation of the period, of different events and processes that happened during this time

I state that I am particularly interested in the **Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth** period.

- What is the importance of this period to Lithuania?

- What do you emphasize while teaching this period?

- How do you evaluate the cultural achievements of this period?

- Does this period get enough attention in the school curricula?

- What do you emphasize while presenting in the class such events as the Union of Lublin (1569), the Constitution of May 3 (1791) and the three partitions of the Commonwealth to Lithuanian history?

- How would you evaluate the importance of these events?

- What are the main reasons, which encouraged this Union and what were the main reasons of the failure of the Commonwealth?

- What do you emphasize while presenting in the class the Constitution of 3 May?

- Is enough importance given to the Constitution of 3 May in nowadays curricula?

- Is this day worth to be commemorated in Lithuania?

- Why do you think it is celebrated in Poland?

These questions allow me to learn about teachers' perception of the Commonwealth period and his/hers evaluation of it.

Appendix 9: The number of the classes attributed to the different disciplines in Lithuanian and non-Lithuanian primary schools

Disciplines	1st grade		2nd grade		3rd grade		4th grade	
	Lit.	Non-Lit.	Lit.	Non-Lit.	Lit.	Non-Lit.	Lit.	Non-Lit.
Religion	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Mother tongue	10	10	9	7	6	6	4	4
Homeland studies	-	-	5	4	-	-	-	-
Country studies	-		-		4	4	3	3
Nature studies	-		-		4	3	3	3
Geography and history	-	-	-	-	-	-	**4**	**4**
Arithmetics	6	6	6	4	6	4	6	4
Graphics and calligraphy	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	4
Songs, psalms	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Needlework/work craft	-		2	2	2	2	2	2
Gymnastics	During the breaks							

| Lithuanian language | - | | | 6 | | 6 | | 6 |
| Total: | 24 | 24 | 30 | 30 | 30 | 33 | 30 | 34 |

Source: Šetkus (2000:25).

Appendix 10: The number of the classes attributed to the different disciplines in Lithuanian and non-Lithuanian primary schools (1925)

Disciplines	The number of classes during the week							
	Lithuanian schools				Non-Lithuanian schools			
	1st grade	2nd grade	3rd grade	4th grade	1st grade	2nd grade	3rd grade	4th grade
Homeland studies	-	-	4	3	-	-	4	3
History and geography	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	4
Nature sciences	-	-	4	4	-	-	4	4

Source: Stašaitis (2004:62).

Appendix 11: The number of the classes attributed to the different disciplines in Lithuanian and non-Lithuanian primary schools (1935)

Disciplines	The number of classes during the week											
	Lithuanian schools						Non-Lithuanian schools					
	1st grade	2nd grade	3rd grade	4th grade	5th grade	6th grade	1st grade	2nd grade	3rd grade	4th grade	5th grade	6th grade
Homeland studies	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	-
History	-	-	-	3	3	3	-	-	-	3	3	3
Geography	-	-	-	2	2	2	-	-	-	2	2	2
Nature sciences (city)	-	-	3	3	3	3	-	-	3	3	3	3
Nature sciences (countryside)	-	-	3	3	5	5	-	-	3	3	5	5

Source: Stašaitis (2004:63).

Appendix 12: The Periodisation of Lithuanian National History in Three History Textbooks

	Daugirdaitė-Sruogienė *History of Lithuania* [1935]1938	Jurginis *History of Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic* 1957	Žiugžda *History of Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic* 1962
Before statehood Before the 13th century	The first inhabitants in Lithuanian territory	The first inhabitants in Lithuanian territory	Primitive communal system in the territory of the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic
Grand Duchy of Lithuania Mid-13th century – 1569	Creation of Lithuanian state Mid-13th century	The formation of Lithuanian state, and its existence before bunching with Poland Mid-13th century – 1569	The Age of Feudalism Min-13th century – 1863
	Increasing power of Lithuania Late 13th – late 14th centuries		
	Epoch of Vytautas the Great Late 14th century – 1440		
	Attempts to save Lithuanian Independence 1440 – 1586	Lithuania in one state with Poland 1569-1795	
Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth 1569 – 1795	Decline of Lithuania 1587 – 1763		
	Collapse of Lithuanian-Polish State 1764-1795		
Under Russian Empire 1795 – 1918	Lithuania ruled by aliens 1795-1918	Lithuania in Russian Empire 1795-1918	The Age of Capitalism 1863-1918
		October Revolution and the Lithuanian working people fighting for a socialist state	October Revolution and the Lithuanian working people fighting for a socialist state 1917-1940
Independent Lithuania 1918 – 1940	Reborn independent Lithuania 1918-1926	Lithuania ruled by bourgeois 1918-1940	
Soviet Lithuania 1940-1990		Lithuania – Soviet Socialist Republic 1940-1956	Age of Socialism 1940-1961

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Appendix 13: The Periodisation of Lithuanian National History in Butrimas's history textbook (1993)

Before statehood Before the 13th century	Antiquity
Grand Duchy of Lithuania Mid-13th century – 1569	Early Middle Ages (Late 13th – late 14th centuries)
	Middle Ages (Late 14th century – 1430)
	The Grand Duchy of Lithuania (1430 – 1569)
Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth 1569 – 1795	Lithuania during the rule of nobility (1572-1795)

Appendix 14: The Periodisation of Lithuanian National History in Two History Textbooks

	Jakimavičius *Native country - Lithuania* 1998	Brazauskas *History of Lithuania* 2000
Before statehood Before mid-13th century	Pre-historical times (of Lithuania)	Pre-historical times and antiquity (of Lithuania)
Grand Duchy of Lithuania Mid-13th century – 1569	Creation of the Lithuanian state Late 13th – early 14th centuries	Lithuanian state: from creation to collapse (Mid-13th century-1795)
	The Grand Duchy of Lithuania Early 14th century – 1569	
Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth 1569-1795	The Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (1569-1795)	
Under Russian Empire 1795-1918	Lithuania in the 19th century	Loss of sovereignty (1795-1918)
Independent Lithuania 1918-1940	Lithuania in the 20th century	Independent Lithuania (1918-1940)
Soviet Lithuania 1940-1990		Decades of occupations and re-establishment of independence
Independent Lithuania 1990-present		

Appendix 15: Chapters in Litvinaitė's history textbook (2007)

Lithuania, Lithuanians...
II: Lithuania and neighbors
III: Works in Lithuania
IV: Everyday life in Lithuania
V: Culture and science in Lithuania
VI: For spirit and body...

Appendix 16: The Periodisation of Lithuanian National History in Laužikas et al. *The Path* (2008)

Before statehood Before mid-13th century	When there was no literacy…
Grand Duchy of Lithuania Mid-13th century – 1569	Kingdom of Lithuania and the Grand Duchy Mid-13th century – 1569
Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth 1569-1795	Together with Poland 1569-1795
Under Russian Empire 1795-1918	A periphery of big state 1795-1918
Independent Lithuania 1918-1940	In between two wars: years of creativity and loss 1918-1940
Soviet Lithuania 1940-1990	Period of occupations 1940-1990
Independent Lithuania 1990-present	The path to the independence 1990-present

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