

**Imagining Ethnic Democracy:
Polish Minority's Response to the Governance of the Lithuanian
State**

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Submitted to
Central European University
Nationalism Studies Program

In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

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Budapest, Hungary

2016

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There is a number of people without whose help this thesis would not have seen the light of day. Therefore, these few humble lines of gratitude are dedicated to:

András Kovács and Luca Váradi – my two supervisors – for their numerous comments, remarks, advises, suggestions and support.

Sanjay Kumar – for his numerous help in language issues and friendship.

My friends and family in Lithuania, whom I have left for these two years of studies abroad.

My girlfriend Csilla – for patience and love.

My friends from CEU – I have learned from you a lot.

Special thanks also go to:

My aunt and her family – for accepting me in her house for a month-long stay during my fieldwork in Vilnius.

Andrzej Pukszo - my former teacher at Vytautas Magnus University – for his assistance and help in writing this thesis.

Lithuanian Armed Forces – for helping to organise interviews with soldiers of Polish origins.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to all of my interviewees, who kindly agreed to participate in this study.

ABSTRACT

This thesis analyses the governance of national minorities in Lithuania and asks how members of Lithuanian Polish minority go about living in an ethno-democratic Lithuanian state. In Lithuania tensions between dominant and minority ethnic groups are caused not by what the state does, but rather by what it doesn't. Solutions for the minority rights related problems have been delayed for years. This poses the questions – how the conflict between Lithuanian ethnic majority and Polish ethnic minority is managed and prevented from turning into its hot stage and how the stability of the state's ethno-democratic regime is sustained? Based on an ethnographic field research with a combination of participant observations and interviews conducted with members of Polish minority in several Lithuanian towns and Vilnius during the period of January and later in March and May 2016, this thesis finds that the ambiguity of Lithuanian ethno-democratic regime is reflected in the lives of the members of Polish minority. The thesis also shows that although members of the minority explain this ambiguity in a different way and therefore undertake different strategies for the improvement of minority situation, they identify themselves with the Lithuanian state. The thesis provides a ground for the further argument that perceived common threats are used to negotiate the state's ambiguous posture *vis a vis* its national minorities and to persuade the state to take a more active and effective stance in terms of the protection of minority rights.

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ABBREVIATIONS

APL – Association of Poles in Lithuania

EAPL – Electoral Alliance of Poles in Lithuania

EU – European Union

NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Organization

PDC – Polish Discussion Club

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. The Lithuanian State and its Polish Minority

Lithuania is a young state. Its young age allows one to study how the state develops. Such development can be measured from various perspectives, i.e. in terms of its political or cultural achievements. The relation ethnic minorities have created for themselves through various encounters with their home state can also be among the possible perspectives studying this development. From the first sight, relations between Lithuanians and Lithuanian Poles seem to be of a typical kind in case of a post-totalitarian, democratising, Central and Eastern European nation-state – an ethnic majority attempts to dominate over an ethnic minority. Tensions between the majority and minority groups are mostly generated by political actors from both sides: 'Electoral Action of Poles in Lithuania' (EAPL) – an ethnic party representing the Lithuanian Poles – and its supporters, are accused of being disloyal to the state, while EAPL's accusations mostly relate to the state's assimilationist policies. Unlike other political parties in Lithuania, EAPL is openly Euro-sceptic and... pro-Russian, which adds fuel to the fire and sparkles discussions about the minority's loyalty to the state. The party has been governing (on the level of self-government) the country's south-eastern region for years and has established itself as the main political force representing Poles in Lithuania. The political, social and economic domination of EAPL in the region is assumed to be the consequence brought about by the absence of the state's governance in the region. This leads to a question – under what circumstances EAPL has acquired its dominant position in the region? The emphasis in this question should be put not on EAPL's domination, which is likely to be a consequence rather than a cause, but rather on broader, structural settings characteristic to the

state. In other words, the question should be about the state and the quality of its functions, i.e. governance.

In the case of Lithuania and its Polish minority one can see a nationalism-related problem of atypical origins. Tensions between dominant and minority ethnic groups are caused not by the state's active discrimination of the minority, but rather by the political elite's passivity and neglect of the minority's problems. In other words, ethnicity-related problems are created not by what the state does, but rather by what it doesn't, thus allowing EAPL to capitalise on these unsolved problems.

There is a set of examples of this inaction of the state authorities when it comes to solving certain problems repeatedly raised by Lithuanian Poles. The cluster of constantly re-emerging problems consists of such issues as: a) closing down Polish schools, unification of the matura exam in the Lithuanian language for all the pupils irrespective whether they attend Lithuanian or minority school, and the increased number of subjects taught in Lithuanian language at minority schools; b) the possibility to write one's name and surname in Polish in passports or a question of bilingual street signs in the territories where Poles make the majority. The issue over the right to write one's name in his native language in passports is debated for years in the Parliament. The same can be said about the bilingual street signs, which as well as names and surnames written in Polish in Lithuanian passports, are forbidden by the Law on the State (Lithuanian) Language. Linguistic problems are related to the absent Law on Ethnic Minorities which has been defunct since 2010. Due to endless discussions in the parliament the new law has not yet been adopted. Therefore the legal vacuum in Lithuania's ethnic minority rights protection continues.¹ In order to solve these problems raised by minorities in numerous strikes and demonstrations, nothing else but the political will

1 Hanna Vasilevich, *Lithuania's Minority-related Legislation: is There a Legal Vacuum?* (ECMI-European Centre for Minority Issues, 2013).

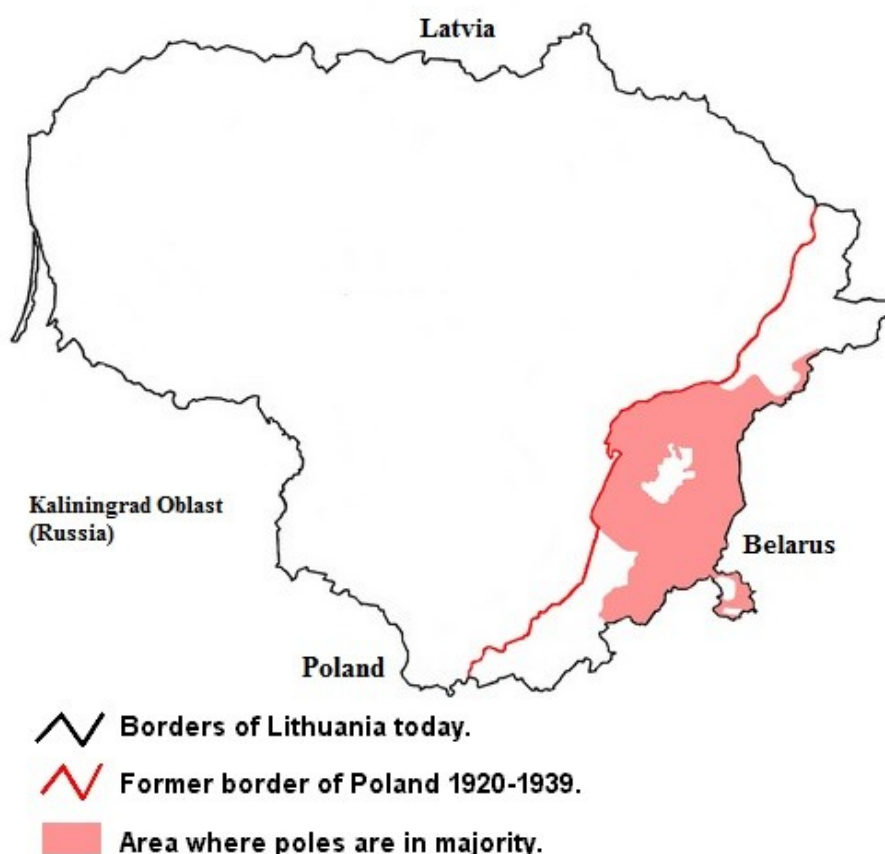
is needed. This lack became especially evident after Lithuania entered the European Union and NATO and when these international organisations have lost their leverage of influence over the country.

The last and probably most important example is the political elite's ignorant attitude toward Polish voters. None of the major Lithuanian political parties have attempted to attract Polish minority voters, i.e. conducting electoral campaigns in the minority's language, designing a special program for the region inhabited by Poles, etc. In the country's two predominately Polish regions – Šalčininkai and Vilnius – EAPL has dominant positions, which makes it hard for any Lithuanian party to compete over Polish votes. The only exception – the country's major liberal party, which has made some steps to attract minority voters. However, the party is responsible for the education reform, which lead to the increase of subject though in Lithuanian language at minority schools, thus its role in terms of minority rights protections is ambiguous.

Therefore, these practices of non-decision making pose the following question – despite the constantly delayed problem solving and continuing discontent among the Poles, how the minority is governed and how the regime's stability is sustained? Or, to put it other way around, how the conflict between Lithuanian ethnic majority and Polish ethnic minority, although not solved fully, is managed and prevented from turning into its hot stage.

1.2. Vilnija/Wilenszczyzna Region: Historical Background and the Region's People

Poles are the biggest ethnic minority in Lithuania, located mostly in the south-eastern part of the country, historically known as Vilnija or Wilenszczyzna (in Polish), around the capital Vilnius, at the border with Belarus (Map 1).



Map 1: Polish minority in Lithuania, source: Wikipedia

According to the latest census (2011), Poles constitute 6.6% of the total population of Lithuania.² The minority is located mostly in few municipalities of the region: in the municipality of Vilnius city they constitute 16,50 % of the total population, and in the municipalities of Vilnius and Šalčininkai districts they constitute 52.07 % and 77.75 % of the local populations respectively.³ Unlike the Russian minority (5.8% of the total population of Lithuania)⁴, Poles are autochthons and unlike the state's borders, have almost never changed

2 Statistics Lithuania, "Lithuanian 2011 Population Census I N Brief," accessed April 18, 2016, http://osp.stat.gov.lt/documents/10180/217110/Lietuvos_gyventojai_2011.pdf/8321a3c1-c8b9-4468-825c-52a7b753f281.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

their location. During the *inter bellum* period the region was annexed by Poland and was an object of a territorial dispute between Lithuania and Poland. After Lithuania was occupied by Soviets the region was returned to Lithuania and became a part of the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic. During the period between 1988 and 1991 (August) some of the politicians from the Polish minority, supported by Moscow, attempted to establish an autonomous Polish region.⁵ However, the attempt was unsuccessful. Despite of this in 1991 (December) Lithuania, unlike other Baltic states, granted its citizenship to all its minorities, including the Poles, that at the time resided in the country. Therefore, today every person, irrespective of his ethnic background, is recognized as a citizen of Lithuania. Yet, the attempt to establish Polish autonomy is still remembered among Lithuanian nationalists and serves as a proof that 'one can not trust the Poles'. The autonomy issue came back after Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014.

The region is composed of Vilnius and Šalčininkai districts and Šalčininkai is the region's biggest town with Poles comprising 70 percent of the local population. Being the most ethnically mixed it is also the last among other Lithuanian regions in terms of a socio-economic development. Despite of its favourable geographic position of being located next to the state's capital, the region has neither big industry nor developed service economy. The local administration, dominated by people from EAPL, has achieved little in developing the region. Although, EAPL has no political rivals, there are some non-political alternatives within the field of Polish minority, that have been established during the last few years. One of such alternatives is Polish Discussion Club (PDC), organizing discussions on various issues concerning the Polish minority. The founders of the club often are liberal-minded and belong

5 Winston A. Van Horne, *Global Convulsions: Race, Ethnicity, and Nationalism at the End of the Twentieth Century* (SUNY Press, 1997), 253–54.

mostly to the middle class of the Polish minority. To sum up, the Poles are not homogeneous group in terms of political orientations.

After the World War II the upper layers of the Polish society were deported to Poland and poorer Polish peasantry stayed. The place left by the deported Poles were taken by the Poles who came from what is today Belarus. However, before the War these places belonged to the same country – Poland. Therefore, the idea that Poles 'immigrated' to Vilnius region must be taken with great reservation. During the Soviet period substantial part of the Lithuanian Polish population was Russified⁶ and today many Poles speak fluent both – Polish and Russian. This I have experienced myself when few years ago, riding the trolley bus in Vilnius, I overheard a conversation of three workers, probably going home after work. They were talking in Russian and discussing their identities. Suddenly one of them said “I speak Russian, but I consider myself to be Pole”. However, the Polish spoken in the region differs from the Polish spoken in Poland. Therefore, sometimes local Poles are being mocked by Lithuanians as being 'fake' Poles. Some of the people living in the region identify themselves as 'tutejszy' meaning 'locals' or people 'from here' and speak 'po prostu' - a type of uncoded and undescribed Byelorussian vernacular⁷ diluted with other Slavic languages. This term denotes poorer and less educated people coming from rural eastern territories and lacking a modern, or in other words, national identity and therefore sometimes can carry derogative connotations.

6 “Vitalija STRAVINSKIENĖ. Tarpetniniai Lenkų Ir Lietuvių Santykiai Rytų Ir Pietryčių Lietuvoje 1953-1959 M.,” accessed June 5, 2016, http://www.istorijoszurnalas.lt/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=233&Itemid=64.

7 Kurt Braunmüller and Gisella Ferraresi, *Aspects of Multilingualism in European Language History* (John Benjamins Publishing, 2003), 107.

1.3. Approach and Structure

This thesis takes an anthropological approach to the Lithuanian nation-state and examines it through the state-minority relations, seen from the Polish minority's perspective. The research is based on such methods as participant observation and semi-structured and unstructured interviews. By using the concept of governmentality⁸ I bring into question techniques and rationales behind the governance of Polish minority and ask how these techniques and rationales help to sustain the stability of Lithuania's ethno-democratic regime. In this analytics of government the state is seen as an effect rather than a real thing in the world. I ask about the state-effect resulting from Lithuania's governance of its Polish minority, or in other words, I ask how the Poles imagine the Lithuanian state and, based on the images they have, how they go about living in an ethno-democratic Lithuanian state.

Chapter 2 presents the theoretical framework of the state-minority relations in Central and Eastern Europe and discusses two separate concepts that can be applied for describing and studying the political regimes in ethnically divided post-communist societies: first, I introduce the concept of ethnic democracy which conceptualises existing contradiction between multicultural and nationalising policies in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. Secondly, rather than discussing whether ethnic democracy is a distinctive type of democracy I introduce the foucauldian term of governmentality and Bachrach and Baratz's term non-decision⁹ to unravel techniques and rationales helping to install and maintain the ethno-democratic form of a political regime. Thirdly, I argue that because of the power's elusive and banal character such categories as 'state' should be studied not through their

8 Michel Foucault, "Governmentality," in *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*, ed. Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, and Peter Miller (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 318.

9 Peter Bachrach and Morton S. Baratz, "Two Faces of Power," *The American Political Science Review* 56, no. 4 (1962): 947–52.

institutional or ideological, but rather through their cognitive manifestation emanating from minority members' experiences of being governed. I argue for an anthropological approach in pursuit of this type of study. Finally, I discuss cases of ethnographic accounts on state-citizen relations that could inform this thesis and that examine minority governance in different nation-states with a particular focus on the countries of Baltic region.

In chapter 3, I introduce the context of state-minority relations in the case of Lithuania and its Polish minority in a more detailed way. After the overview of major trends and shifts in Lithuania's national minority policy, I define the absence of the state in minority governance in a more detailed way, showing the ethnic character of this absence and of the minority problems. This is done by conducting an overview of major legal documents and processes of legislation related to minority policies. I describe how this absence results in a legal/institutional sphere. Together with theoretical approaches outlined in chapter 2 the context chapter forms presumptions and research questions of this study.

Chapter 4 describes the methodology applied, both during the fieldwork and in the analysis of the collected data.

Chapter 5 describes the finding of my fieldwork and relates it with my findings of the analysis provided in chapter 3. Here I move away from a descriptive to a more analytical approach, and examine the findings of my fieldwork from different perspectives. Three broad blocks of categories are used for the data analysis: minority's perception of the state's policies, individual and group self-perception in terms of strategies for the improvement of community's position *vis a vis* the state and the perception of the threat to the community's existence. I analyse and define each of these categories in several ways. First I look 'inside' of each category and try to define it through commonalities in the category-related answers of my interviewees. Then I conduct a meta analysis, by treating these three perceptions as inter-

related: the way minority members see the state's actions allows one to analyse the way these members see themselves, other Poles and their collective future *vis a vis* the state; this, as well as the perceived threats to the community (either Lithuanization or Russification), informs strategies for an improvement of minority's position.

Chapter 6 discusses findings of the data analysis.

Chapter 7 summarises findings of the research and provides an outline for further researches on the topic.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Minorities' Governance in CEE: Multiculturalism v. Nationalising Nationalism

The question of minority rights relates to the broader issue of multiculturalism – rationale behind state-minority relations, which stands for the accommodation of religious and cultural diversity. There are two ways the idea of collective rights within liberal democracies is advocated. Proponents of the first idea disagree that the individual is prior to the society and argue that social goods – i.e. diverse cultural identities and languages – are “irreducibly social” and therefore these goods should be granted equal recognition.¹⁰¹¹ The second justification comes from within the liberal camp and suggests multiculturalism should be seen as an extension of human rights.¹² Irrespective of the way multiculturalism is advocated, it still remains a direction or perspective to undertake. Post-communist states embraced it as a rationale of governance due to the pressure of the international community, however, not to a full extent.¹³ Therefore, what we normally have is a combination of two contradictory approaches – multiculturalism and nationalising policies.

Rogers Brubaker has spoken of the second type of rationale defining the state's relation to its minorities. He has proposed a threefold definition of nationalism in post-communist Eastern Europe, consisting of interlocking and interactive nationalisms:

10 Charles Taylor, “Irreducibly Social Goods,” in *Philosophical Arguments* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 336.

11 Charles Taylor, *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition*, ed. Amy Gutmann, Expanded Paperback edition (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994).

12 Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship : A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*, Oxford Political Theory (Oxford : Clarendon Press, c1995, n.d.).

13 Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Odysseys : Navigating the New International Politics of Diversity* (Oxford : Oxford University Press, c2007, n.d.).

nationalism of national minority, nationalism of nationalising state and nationalism of external homeland.¹⁴ The second type of these nationalisms is state-oriented: the state here is conceived to be “*of and for the core nation.*”¹⁵ Such exceptional ownership of the state is justified with remedial arguments – the nation had been discriminated before it attained the independence, therefore the state power now is necessary to improve the nation's positions.¹⁶ Yet, a developed and well-functioning state, as argued by R. Brubaker, “is still very much on the agenda in eastern Europe.”¹⁷

Summing up, post-communist states claim to be liberal democracies respecting and assuring their minorities' collective rights. However, the norms of participation in political life are often defined by the dominant ethnic group. Therefore, the fact that states often present themselves as liberal, though pursue nationalising policies suggests we need a more complex and handy tool to conceptualize the state-minority relations in CEE.

2.2. The Model of Ethnic Democracy

This contradiction between nationalising and multicultural policies of post-communist countries leads to the prolonged debates on ethnic democracy¹⁸¹⁹²⁰ – a concept that seeks to reconcile the two contradictory types of rationales mentioned.

14 Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe* (Cambridge University Press, 1996), 4.

15 Ibid., 5.

16 Ibid.

17 Rogers Brubaker, “Ethnicity in Post-Cold War Europe, East and West,” in *Ethnic Europe Mobility, Identity, and Conflict in a Globalized World*, ed. Roland Hsu (Stanford University Press, 2010), 368.

18 Oren Yiftachel, *Ethnocracy: Land and Identity Politics in Israel/Palestine* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006).

Developed by Sammy Smooha, it was meant to serve as an analytical tool to analyse political systems in ethnically divided post-communist societies. Smooha has outlined a fivefold typology of democratic political regimes, that would contribute to the field of comparative politics and comparative ethnicity.²¹ According to him, the western model of a democratic nation-state often appears in two variants: individual-liberal and republican-liberal. Both of these models are grounded exceptionally on individual rights. In some cases it also appears in a form of consociational democracy, based on a recognition of national communities and their collective rights. However, after World War II alternative types of democracy have emerged, i.e. multicultural democracy and ethnic democracy.²² Israel stands as a paradigmatic case illustrating ethnic democracy – specific type of democratic regime, which is not liberal but ethnic.²³ The model was tested on a group of post-communist, ethnically divided and democratising states of Estonia, Latvia, Georgia, Macedonia, Serbia, Kosovo and Bosnia-Herzegovina, which lead to some revisions of the model.²⁴ Therefore, the newer version of the model is used in this work.

In Smooha's own words, “[i]t can be said, with some simplification, that while liberal democracy conforms to the idea of ‘equal and not separate’, multicultural democracy concurs with the vision of ‘equal but not so separate’ and consociational democracy corresponds to the

19 Sammy Smooha, “Types of Democracy and Modes of Conflict Management in Ethnically Divided Societies,” *Nations and Nationalism* 8, no. s4 (October 2002): 423–31, doi:10.1111/1469-8219.00059.

20 Yoav Peled, “Ethnic Democracy and the Legal Construction of Citizenship: Arab Citizens of the Jewish State,” *The American Political Science Review* 86, no. 2 (June 1, 1992): 432–43.

21 Smooha, “Types of Democracy and Modes of Conflict Management in Ethnically Divided Societies.”

22 Ibid.

23 Sammy Smooha, “The Model of Ethnic Democracy: Israel as a Jewish and Democratic State,” *Nations and Nationalism* 8, no. 4 (October 1, 2002): 475–503, doi:10.1111/1469-8219.00062.

24 Sammy Smooha and Priit Järve, *The Fate of Ethnic Democracy in Post-Communist Europe*, LGI/ECMI Series on Ethnopolitics and Minority Issues (Budapest : Open Society Institute, 2005, n.d.).

concept of ‘separate but equal’, ethnic democracy fits the pattern of ‘separate but not so equal’²⁵ (Table 1).

Table 1.1
Comparison between Types of Democracy

	Individual Liberal Democracy	Republican Liberal Democracy	Multicultural Democracy	Consociational Democracy	Ethnic Democracy
Procedural Minimum Definition of Democracy	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
State's Character	Collection of citizens	Civic nation-state	Multicultural state	Binational or multi-national state	Ethnic nation-state
Equality of Individual Rights	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	To a large extent
Collective Rights	None	None	Yes, but not legislated	Legislated	Legislated
Equality of Collective Rights	Not applicable	Not applicable	Yes	Yes	No
State's Neutrality	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Assimilation Policy	No	Yes	No	No	No
Assimilation Rate	High	High	Medium	Nil	Varies
Mechanisms of Integration and Conflict-Management	Equality of individual rights and opportunities, constitutional patriotism, assimilation	Equality of individual rights and opportunities, formation of a nation-state with cultural homogeneity and value consensus, assimilation	Equality of individual rights and opportunities, formation of a common super-community with recognition and cultivation of group cultural differences, some degree of assimilation	Equality of individual rights and opportunities, agreement over a binational or multi-national state, proportional distribution of resources, extended autonomy, power-sharing, veto power, politics of compromise and consent	Gradual decrease of inequality of individual rights and opportunities, broadening of collective rights, power and resoluteness of the majority, protest and struggle of the minority, control and deterrence of the state

Table 1: Comparison between types of democracy²⁶

By this last type of an ethnic democracy he means a form of political regime where a structured ethnic dominance matches with democratic rights for all,²⁷ for “[t]he founding rule of this regime is an inherent contradiction between two principles – civil and political rights for all and structural subordination of the minority to the majority.”²⁸ In such system the

²⁵ Ibid., 23.

²⁶ Ibid., 24.

²⁷ Ibid., 7.

²⁸ Ibid., 21–22.

democratic principles ensure equality between the citizens, while the ethnic principle establishes inequality among different ethnic groups:

The organization of the state on the basis of this structural incompatibility constantly generates ambiguities, contradictions, tensions and conflicts, but not necessarily ethnic and political instability. [...] The minority encounters the hard problem of potential disloyalty to the state because it can neither be fully equal in nor fully identified with the state. Yet the democratic framework is real, not a façade. [...] The state imposes various controls and restrictions on the minority in order to prevent subversion, disorder and instability. As a result, the status quo is preserved, but over time the minority experiences a partial betterment of its status.²⁹

To sum up, the ambivalence emanating from multicultural and nationalising policies of the state is the core feature, characterising the governance of national minorities in this type of democracy.

Considering this ambivalence, it is not surprising that the model has received broad criticism. Discussing the case of Israel – a case, paradigmatic to the model – some authors suggested that what it represents is either republic or ethnocracy. Oren Yiftachel argued that this type of political regime allows the dominant ethnic group to have control over the contested territories and an expansion into it (when discussing the Israeli case). Yiftachel's argued that the ethnocratic nature of Israel's political regime have been shaped by the pursuit of nationalising project of the Jewish state, as well as the Palestinian resistance to this project.³⁰ Yoav Peled's position on Israel in this case stands somewhere between Smootha and Yiftachel. He argued that in the case of Israel the amalgamation of republicanism and ethno-nationalism with liberalism has resulted in republican form of citizenship for Jews and liberal citizenship for Arabs.³¹ The Israeli Arabs can enjoy civil and political rights but are prevented

29 Ibid., 22.

30 Yiftachel, *Ethnocracy*.

31 Peled, "Ethnic Democracy and the Legal Construction of Citizenship."

from attending and defining to the common good. However, they have sufficient amount of rights and privileges to be able to exercise their struggle within the constitutional framework of the state. This kind of *status quo* between the Israeli Jewish and Arab citizens is what lead Peled to conclude that Israel is a republic.

However, although the model emerged from a need for a clearer and more nuanced typology of democratic regimes the model's real test, according to Smooha, lies “in its utility for a critical analysis of regimes in divided societies, and not in whether the different regimes fit the model.”³² Instead of used merely for typologising different democratic regimes, “the model proves to be a sensitizing tool, at the hands of the investigator, for unravelling the desires, ideas, measures, constraints and institutional arrangements that install ethnic dominance and privilege into a democracy or into a democratizing regime.”³³ I follow this suggestion by Smooha, and use the model not for typologising, but rather for analysing Lithuania's ethno-democratic political regime. In the following section I argue that such analysis can be facilitated by the foucauldian concept of governmentality.

2. 3. Analytics of Ethno-democratic Governance

If, as described by Smooha, an ethnic democracy is a political system combining “the extension of political and civil rights to minorities with institutionalized dominance over the state by one of the ethnic groups,”³⁴ then the task for the researcher is to analyse the mechanisms allowing this institutional dominance and ensuring the viability of the ethno-

32 Smooha and Järve, *The Fate of Ethnic Democracy in Post-Communist Europe*, 253–54.

33 Ibid., 254.

34 Ibid., 391.

democratic regime, which, as it has been shown, is deeply ambivalent. Such aim leads to what Michel Foucault called 'governmentality' - the ways governance is practised and rationalized. The concept refers to a particular "way of administering populations in modern European history within the context of the rise of the idea of the State" and encompasses "the techniques and procedures which are designed to govern the conduct of both individuals and populations at every level not just the administrative or political level."³⁵ Therefore, to find out how the majority group manages to preserve ethnic *status quo*, I ask what kind of rationality, intrinsic to the art of government, helps to secure the existence of the Lithuanian nation state. In other words, bringing into question the governance of Lithuanian Poles, I am questioning "the nature of the practice of the government (who can govern; what governing is; what or who is governed)."³⁶

Smootha argued that in ethnic democracies the government produces and operates through an ethnic stratification of citizenship: "[m]embers of the core ethnic nation are first-class-citizens, and only they have the option to define and contribute to the common good."³⁷ Some members of the minority group can make an exceptional effort and contributions, which would then allow them to become 'good citizens'. However their individual success stories do not change the structural position of the minority group in general. On the other hand, it is hard for non-core members to qualify as 'good citizens' in the eyes of a dominant group because minorities don't have a right "to take part in determining the common good (national goals and policies)."³⁸

As it was mentioned, governmentality means that certain techniques of governances

35 Clare O'Farrell, *O'farrell: Michel Foucault (Paper)* (SAGE, 2005), 138.

36 Gordon Colin, "Governmental Rationality: An Introduction.," in *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*, ed. Graham Burchell and Peter Miller (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 3,

37 Smootha and Järve, *The Fate of Ethnic Democracy in Post-Communist Europe*, 26.

38 Ibid.

always have certain rationales explaining or informing these techniques. Distinction between first class and second class citizens can, for example, be rationalized with the idea of merits and contribution to the common good. Anthropologist Brackette F. Williams defined the process of nation-building in terms of race and competition.³⁹ National culture is a source of a symbolic capital and minority's contribution to this culture is often forgotten or suppressed or just left at the margins of the national narrative. The dominant group defines whose contribution is to be recognised and rewarded, while at the same time the non-dominant group needs to struggle for having their merits and contributions to the common good recognised. Therefore, the idea of meritocracy-based stratification of citizenship could explain the function of an ethnic democracy. Yet, the question is how this rationale of meritocracy functions or what are the techniques through which it operates.

In their famous article called “Two Faces of Power” political scientists Peter Bachrach and Morton Baratz suggested that the functioning and the essence of power can not be understood fully, unless the decisions that are not made – non-decisions – are taken into account seriously. As described by Bachrach and Baratz:

power is exercised when A participates in the making of decisions that affect B. But power is also exercised when A devotes his energies to creating or reinforcing social and political values and institutional practices that limit the scope of the political process to public consideration of only those issues which are comparatively innocuous to A. To the extent that A succeeds in doing this, B is prevented, for all practical purposes, from bringing to the fore any issues that might in their resolution be seriously detrimental to A's set of preferences.⁴⁰

In short, non-decision making means the ability to operate in a way, that the issues threatening the *status quo* of power relations would be prevented from entering the sphere of decision

39 Brackette F. Williams, “A Class Act: Anthropology and the Race to Nation Across Ethnic Terrain,” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 18 (January 1, 1989): 401–44.

40 Bachrach and Baratz, “Two Faces of Power,” 948..

making, i.e. designing policies. This means power functions indirectly, often through mobilization of bias – a dominant set of beliefs, values, institutional processes and procedures privileging some groups over others. Another form of non-decision making is “the use of the “rule of anticipated reactions”: “[a]nticipated reactions result from situations where *B*, who has relatively less power than *A*, decides not to make a demand upon *A* in an effort to avoid confrontation, or out of the fear that such behaviour would result in *A*’s invoking sanctions against him or her.”⁴¹ However, the main problem with the concept of non-decision making is that it's hard to observe the manifestations of this second type of power. Yet, the idea of non-decision making (as well as decision-making) leads us to the question of who is the power holder, capable of non-decision making.

But the elusive and banal character of these techniques poses some methodological questions – how to study these techniques and rationales of (non)governance? Political scientists usually talk about the normative side of the political processes. They sometimes talk about political culture defining the cultural content of the institution of particular regimes or the cultural habits of the participants of the political regimes. However, while it normally deals with the functioning of political institutions, the anthropological perspective suggests a prospective approach in terms of studying the subtle ways power functions and affects people in their daily lives. This is because anthropology tries to understand how people perceive themselves and how they behave in everyday life. If the state is to be understood as a phenomenon, emanating from people's everyday perception and imagination rather than constructed from above, then it should be looked for among the people the state is supposed to govern. In other words, the state understood as a category of cognition should be grasped as an effect, produced on the people and experienced by them. Therefore, in the case of this

41 “Nondecision-Making Facts, Information, Pictures | Encyclopedia.com Articles about Nondecision-Making,” accessed June 6, 2016, <http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/Nondecision-Making.aspx>.

study, anthropology seems to offer a useful conceptualisation of a state as well as the way this conceptualisation could be put into practice – grasping the state through Polish minority’s everyday experiences and perceptions of the state.

2.4 The State as an Analytical Concept

If non-decision making means subtle practice of power, then we need to look at who is practising the power. British social anthropologist Alfred Radcliffe-Brown suggested to eliminate the category of state from social sciences. According to him, the state as a sovereign body, separated from the society composed of individuals, does not exist in the phenomenal world and is only a philosophical fiction. Instead, he proposed to use more concrete concepts such as government and politics.⁴²

Supporting this proposition Philip Abrams argued that the state is a thing hard to grasp in social sciences, because it is an ideology-based project aimed at legitimising given social order and justifying particular governance.⁴³ According to him, the mystery of the state lays in its absence. Therefore, he argued that the state should not be studied as a real thing in the world standing behind the mask of political practice. The state for him was a mask itself, preventing us from seeing the reality, that is to say the political practises of domination. What is real is a state-system – a nexus of practices and institutional structures located in government and a state-idea, which is projected, purveyed and believed in different societies at different times. The nature of the state lies in a structuration within political practice: at the

42 Alfred Radcliffe-Brown, “Preface,” in *African Political Systems*, ed. Alfred Fortes (London; New York: Hesperides Press, 2006).

43 Philip Abrams, “Notes on the Difficulty of Studying the State (1977),” *Journal of Historical Sociology* 1, no. 1 (1988): 58–89.

beginning the state is an implicit construct, which later is reified and becomes the *res publica* – symbolic reality which appears as something separated from the practices of governance.⁴⁴

Finally, another anthropologist, Timothy Mitchell criticised the idea of overcoming elusiveness of the state boundaries either through rejecting it at all and instead talking about the state-system or through 'bringing it back' and idealising it by assuming the state is an autonomous entity. Mitchell proposed the idea that elusiveness of the state is a key clue to its nature and suggested it should be studied as a structural effect.⁴⁵ The effect would mean that the state is perceived as an autonomous reality, existing besides the society and governing it. In case this distinction is accepted as a self-evident thing, i.e. by willingly paying taxes, going to public hospitals in case of a need and expecting them to be there when necessary, or showing respect to the court, etc. and is not questioned, i.e. why to pay taxes?, why to visit public and not private clinic?, why to respect the court or to serve in the army?, etc., the state functions smoothly. Yet it can quickly become visible when it stops functioning, that is to say when functions normally performed by the state come to be performed by other social actors, i.e. when Mafia starts providing security services, or when media is used to ensure justice.⁴⁶ The state can become visible when it is not able or not willing to govern its subjects or, to put it in other words, it can be grasped easier through its negative effect or through its absence in cases when its existence is expected. However, the smooth functioning of the state does not entirely depend on what the state actually does, but rather on whether people believe it does what they think it is supposed to do and what the state obliges to do.

44 Ibid., 58.

45 Timothy Mitchell, "The Limits of the State: Beyond Statist Approaches and Their Critics," *The American Political Science Review* 85, no. 1 (March 1991): 77.

46 Ieva Jusionyte, "For Social Emergencies 'We Are 9-1-1': How Journalists Perform the State in an Argentine Border Town," *Anthropological Quarterly* 87, no. 1 (2014): 151–181.

To sum up, similarly to ethnicity,⁴⁷ the state in this work is treated as a cognitive category, grounded in people's everyday experiences. Applying anthropological perspective for studying the state, understood as an effect and not only as government or ideology, could help in what seemed to be a hard task for political scientists, that is in researching the processes of non-decision making. The (state) effect is produced on and felt by the subjects and it is exactly these ordinary people, or better to say their perception of the state or a lack of it, where one can grasp the state and the way the state manifests itself in the phenomenal world.

2.5 The Nation-State as an Object of Ethnographic Inquiry

There have been several studies made on the governance of ethnic minorities in Lithuania⁴⁸ or on the strategies the state's minorities use to adopt.⁴⁹ However, the novelty of this research lies in its anthropological approach. Micro-level studies of everyday ethnicity,⁵⁰ banal nationalism⁵¹ and identity/identification are rather common in the field of nationalism studies. There are some examples of anthropological studies of established nation-states,⁵² however such studies are rather scarce. Relations between Central and Eastern European

47 Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed*.

48 Natalija Kasatkina and Vida Beresnevičiūtė, "Ethnic Structure, Inequality and Governance of the Public Sector in Lithuania," *ETHNICITY* 1 (2010): 2.

49 Natalija Kasatkina and Tadas. Leončikas, "Lietuvos etninių grupių adaptacija," 2003.

50 Rogers Brubaker et al., *Nationalist Politics and Everyday Ethnicity in a Transylvanian Town* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008).

51 J. E. Fox and C. Miller-Idriss, "Everyday Nationhood," *Ethnicities* 8, no. 4 (December 1, 2008): 536–63.

52 Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (SAGE, 1995).

53 Michael Skey, "The National in Everyday Life: A Critical Engagement with Michael Billig's Thesis of Banal Nationalism," *The Sociological Review* 57, no. 2 (2009): 331–346.

states and their ethnic minorities are rarely researched from the bottom-up perspective. Although there are some exceptions.⁵⁶⁵⁷⁵⁸ In Lithuania several studies on Lithuanian Polish identity,⁵⁹⁶⁰ everyday ethnicity,⁶¹⁶² and citizenship, in terms of an ethnic exclusion/inclusion⁶³ and historical memory,⁶⁴ have been conducted so far. Anthropological studies of Lithuania as a nation state are scarce,⁶⁵ although there have been made some similar researches, i.e.

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- 54 Michael Herzfeld, *Cultural Intimacy: Social Poetics in the Nation-State*, 2 edition (New York & London: Routledge, 2004).
- 55 Thomas Hylland Eriksen, *Common Denominators: Ethnicity, Nation-Building and Compromise in Mauritius*, First Edition edition (Oxford ; New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 1998).
- 56 Gregory Feldman, “‘Many Nice People’: The Nation-state, post-Fordism, and the Policy Norm of Flexible Ethnic Relations in Estonia,” *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 16, no. 2 (May 2010): 138–58,
- 57 Timofey Agarin, “Civil Society versus Nationalizing State? Advocacy of Minority Rights in the Post-Socialist Baltic States,” *Nationalities Papers* 39, no. 2 (March 2011): 181–203,
- 58 Katherine Verdery, *What Was Socialism, and What Comes Next?* (Princeton University Press, 1996).
- 59 Gediminas Kazėnas et al., *Lietuvos Lenkų Tautinės Mažumos Identiteto Tyrimas / Badania Dot. Tożsamości Polskiej Mniejszości Narodowej Na Litwie*, 2014, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/266200071_Lietuvos_lenku_tautines_mazumos_identiteto_tyrimas_Badania_dot_tozsamosci_polskiej_mniejszosci_narodowej_na_Litwie.
- 60 Darius Daukšas, “Lietuvos Lenkai: Etninio Ir Pilietinio Identiteto Konstravimas Ribinėse Zonose,” *Lietuvos Etnologija* 12(21) (2012): 167–93.
- 61 Katarzyna Korzeniewska, “„Vietinis “(tutejszy), Lenkas, Katalikas: Pietryčių Lietuvos Gyventojų Religinė-Etninė Tapatybė (Tyrimas Dieveniškėse, Kernavėje Ir Turgeliuose),” *EtHniCity*, 2013, 2.
- 62 Kristina Sliavaitė, “Kalba, Tapatumas Ir Tarptautiniai Santykiai Pietryčių Lietuvoje: Daugiakultūriškumo Patirtys Ir Iššūkiai Kasdieniuose Kontekstuose,” *Language, Identity and Inter-Ethnic Relations in Southeastern Lithuania: Experiences and Challenges of Multiculturalism in Everyday Contexts.*, no. 15 (October 2015): 27–51.
- 63 Darius Daukšas, “Defining Belonging: Citizenship as a Form of Ethnic Inclusion and Exclusion. The Case from Post-Soviet Lithuania,” 2008 2006.
- 64 Jurga Jonutytė and Vytauto Didžiojo universitetas, *Lietuvos pasienio miestelių atmintis ir tapatybė : Valkininkai, Vilkyškiai, Žeimelis : monografija*. (Vilnius: Baltijos kopija, 2013).
- 65 Darius Daukšas, “Valstybės Teritorialumas Ir Tautinės Mažumos: Lenko Kortos Atvejis,” *State Territoriality and Ethnic Minorities: The Case of the Polish Card.*, no. 15 (October 2015): 53–68.

studies examining the impact Lithuania's EU membership has had upon the country's ageing small-scale farmers.⁶⁶

This research found an inspiration in several anthropological researches of state. Anthropologist Klāvs Sedlenieks explored relationships between the citizens and the Montenegrin state.⁶⁷ Sedlenieks asked how Montenegrins go about their lives in the presence of bureaucracy-based, post-socialist and transitory nation-state. He argued that the interaction between the Montenegrin state and its citizens is largely influenced by division of the world into two cognitive spheres – allegedly the stable and familiar (i.e. kin and fictive kin networks, friendships and institutions related to these phenomena) and the seemingly unstable and constantly changing (the state, business world as well as contemporary non-governmental organisations) areas.⁶⁸ Such a cognitive distinction allows individuals to adapt to critical and frequent changes at the level of the state, as it is often the case in Central, Eastern and South-eastern Europe. In his study Sedlenieks treats the state as a cognitive category. The intended study follows this approach and treats the state in a similar vein. Sedlenieks' study also provides an example of an anthropological inquiry into the relations between the post-socialist state and its citizens

Timofey Agarin has investigated the role played by civil society actors in terms of minority policy-making in nationalising states. Based on the data drawn from 77 semi-structured interviews with the CSOs working with Russian and Polish minorities in the Baltic states between 2006 and 2009, Agarin argued that the role civil society organizations have in

66 Ida Harboe Knudsen, *New Lithuania in Old Hands: Effects and Outcomes of Europeanization in Rural Lithuania* (Anthem Press, 2012).

67 Klavs Sedlenieks, *And Burn Today Whom Yesterday They Fed": Citizens and State in Montenegro* (Tallinn. Tallinn University, 2013).

68 Ibid., 13.

advocating minority rights in the Baltic states and in policy-making is limited.⁶⁹ Criticism from CSOs is either ignored by the policy makers or neutralised by funding those CSO that shores up the state agenda, delegate responsibilities to them, and then claim that the state policies are supported by the civil society actors.

These studies differ in terms of perspectives – bottom up and top-down – they have undertaken. Yet, they form a theory that shapes expectations of this study. However, more than concrete examples of various ways the state tries to preserve the *status quo* of existing ethnic relations, I am interested in the ways these relations are negotiated, resisted and possibly transformed. In other words, I ask and expect to find out how the state is imagined among Lithuanian Poles and how they go about their lives in the presence of the ethno-democratic Lithuanian political regime.

69 Agarín, “Civil Society versus Nationalizing State?”

3. CONTEXT

3.1. Deconstructing the Governance of Poles in Lithuania

The following chapter is a cross-section of the history of the governance of Polish minority in Lithuania. The chapter describes the main features of the history of governance of this minority. The literature on Polish (minority) – Lithuanian relations, divides this history into four periods: a period of an early independence, pre-EU, post-EU and the post-Maidan (Ukraine) period. I discuss the governmentality of Polish minority in Lithuania using cases of the main problems characterising relations of the two – majority and minority – ethnic groups. In other words, I seek to unravel rationales and techniques of the basis of the ethno-democratic governance of the Polish Minority.

3.2. Re-establishing Independence of the Lithuanian Nation State

The state's independence in 1991 was not simply declared; according to the official discourse, it was restored. In the Act of the re-establishment of the state's independence, it is proclaimed that the Acts declaring the state's independence during the inter-war period “never lost their legal effect and comprise the constitutional foundation of the State of Lithuania.”⁷⁰ This suggests the following: a) Lithuania was re-established as a pre-world-war-II-period nation-state and b) the period of Soviet occupation, among Lithuanian political elite, was seen as an unnatural rupture in the nation's 'organic' history. It was thought that assimilationist policies

70 *Act on the Re-Establishment of the State of Lithuania*, 1991, accessed 6 June, 2016, http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter2/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=50850.

of the Soviet regime had 'weakened' the Lithuanian culture. Therefore, the re-established independence and an independent state came to be seen as tool to remedy the harm caused by the occupant. In other words, that was the beginning of Lithuanian state-oriented nationalising nationalism considering the state as a home created of and for the nation.

In 1918 for the first time Lithuania created a truly national state and it was this state that served as a goal and model in 1991. As soon as independence was achieved, the state's national character was enshrined in the constitution; in its preamble proclaiming that “[t]he State of Lithuania shall be created by the [Lithuanian] Nation.”⁷¹ Quickly the privileged character of the majority's culture became institutionalised. An instance of a similar preferential treatment can be also found in The State Commission on Lithuanian Language – an official institution created to protect the Lithuanian language. On the Commission's web-page, a short summary of the history and current status of the Lithuanian language as the official state language can be found:

After the restoration of Lithuanian independence in 1918, the Lithuanian language became official thus penetrating every field of public life and shortly developing scientific, administrative (clerical) and publicist styles. The years of Soviet occupation (1940-1990) saw the propagation of bilingualism with the Lithuanian language being forced from public life by the Russian tongue. The status of Lithuanian as an official language was partially restored in 1989 by virtue of the Decree passed by the Praesidium of the Supreme Council (the Restoration Seimas) "Concerning the Usage of the State Language". Restoration of the Lithuanian independence in 1990 lead to the development of a consistent policy for state language primarily focused on the integration of non-Lithuanian speakers into public life. In 1995, the Law on State Language of the Republic of Lithuania was adopted. The State Commission on the Lithuanian Language is in charge of the implementation of the law.⁷²

71 “LIETUVOS RESPUBLIKOS KONSTITUCIJA,” accessed June 6, 2016, <http://www3.lrs.lt/home/Konstitucija/Constitution.htm>.

72 “Official Status - Valstybinė Lietuvių Kalbos Komisija,” accessed June 6, 2016, <http://www.vlkk.lt/en/lithuanian-language/official-status>.

It is apparent from the above citation that the description does not only tell the history of the language and its status, but also the history of modern Lithuanian state illustrating the link between statehood and language.

The nation-state was not the only aspiration of the newly established country's elites. The wish for security and prosperity as well as the desire to get rid of everything that was perceived as Soviet and therefore polluting the national culture; drove the ruling elites – both reformists and former communists – to join such international organisations as the EU and the NATO. These interests were not post-modern, i.e. to create a unified Europe, but rather national in its essence. The desire to become a part of the EU and the NATO required a tempering of the nationalistic aspirations. Therefore, the state showed some sympathy to its national minorities and started to implement multicultural policies, as a part of its transition from post-communist to a democratic regime. However, from what has been said about the re-establishment of the state's independence, the conclusion can be made that despite its democratic orientation, the state was built as a supreme institution of and for the Lithuanian nation. Such ethnic prioritization naturally shaped the governance of the state's national minorities. In the following sections of this chapter I provide a brief outline of the history of the Polish minority governance. I narrate this history through an example of the development of the Law on Ethnic Minorities,⁷³ as well as through a few other examples mostly related to linguistic and educational issues to demonstrate that the two aspects – the legal and linguistic/educational issues – are intertwined. The undefined legal situation affects minorities' linguistic rights, and the aspirations of minorities for more linguistic and educational rights result in their undefined legal status.

73 In the Lithuanian version of the title of the law, the word 'etninių' – in English 'ethnic' - is used. Therefore, I decided to translate the title in a way, which would allow to stay closer to its original version. However, for the sake of consistency, I use the term 'national minority' when talking about Poles in Lithuania. The word 'ethnic' is used only in the translation of the title of the law.

Marijusz Antonowicz, the Lithuanian Polish political scientist has distinguished three stages of the changing attitude of Lithuanian politicians' toward the state's national minorities.⁷⁴ According to Antonowicz, during the first stage – from 1988 till 1996 – the elite's approach toward the minority could be called as pacification. During this stage, the elites tried to pacify minorities and to win their support for the state's independence. The second stage was that of co-optation and lasted from 1998 till 2004. At this stage minority rights were addressed with careful attention, for the state wanted to conform to the norms and standards of EU and NATO – two international institutions it wanted to become a part of. After Lithuania became a member of the two organizations minority problems started receiving less and less attention and was often ignored. Therefore, the third stage is characterised by disregard. However, the state's political elite re-discovered national minorities after 2014, when Russia seized Crimea, justifying its actions through the need to protect Russian kinsmen from the so called Ukrainian 'fascist junta'. In the following parts of this chapter I will pay a closer attention to these four stages.

3. 3. 1st Period – “For Sacred Peace's Sake”. The Law On Ethnic Minorities v. the Law on State Language

The first period lasted from the beginning of the Reform Movement of Lithuanian, known as *Sąjūdis*, in 1988 up until 1996 and was marked by some challenges met by the Movement's leaders, of which one of the biggest was a Soviet-backed attempt to form an autonomous Polish region in the south-eastern part of the country, on the 6th of September in 1990. In

⁷⁴ Mariusz Antonowicz, “Quo Vadis Wileńszczyzna?,” *Naujasis Židinys-Aidai* 5 (2015), <http://slaptas.nzidiny.lt/a/2015/08/19/marijusz-antonowicz-quo-vadis-wilenszczyzna-nza-2015-nr-5/>.

response, the Lithuanian Parliament declared such attempts unconstitutional and suspended democratically elected secessionist councils of Vilnius, Šalčininkai, and Sniečkus (now Visaginas) counties, bringing them under the direct governance in 3 September 1991. The Poles were not united concerning the question of the restoration of independence. It was not clear what benefits this independence could have brought to them. Therefore, in 1990 during the voting on the restoration of independence only 2 Polish deputies out of an eight-member-large Polish fraction of the Supreme Council – Restoration Seimas voted for it, while others refrained. This illustrates the difficulties Lithuanian political elites met when trying to pacify Poles. Reservations from the Polish side came despite the efforts Lithuanian politicians put to win minorities' support for their political project of an independent state. In 1989, four months before the restoration of the state's independence (11 March 1990), the Law on Citizenship was passed, stating that all people, at that time living in the territory of the Lithuanian Socialist Republic, were granted the country's citizenship. The time was given for people to decide whether they would like to become citizens or not and, as claimed by Egidijus Kūris – a former President of the state's Lithuanian Constitutional Court - “the community of citizens was established not ‘from above’ by means of the centralised granting of citizenship to residents but ‘from below’ by means of the free decisions of individuals.”⁷⁵ Further he added that the state's “territory in 1990 was not the same as it had been in 1939” and that “[t]hese territorial changes raised additional questions, especially concerning the citizenship of the indigenous population of Eastern Lithuania. However, the sharpness of these questions was mitigated by the zero option [of the citizenship law].”⁷⁶ The argument that the community of citizens was established “from below” can be met with reservation, however, the idea that

75 Egidijus Kūris, “EUDO Citizenship Observatory Country Report: Lithuania” (European University Institute, Florence, 2010), <http://eudo-citizenship.eu/docs/CountryReports/Lithuania.pdf>.

76 Ibid.

there had been such genuine intentions seems plausible. Moreover, in 24 November, 1989 at that time already democratically oriented Supreme Soviet of the Lithuanian SSR passed the Law on Ethnic minorities – at that time unique in the whole Central and Eastern Europe. However, these measures, as voting for the independence showed, were not convincing and appealing enough to guarantee Poles' support for the independence project.

On 29 January 1991 the Supreme Council – Restoration Seimas amended the Law on Ethnic Minorities along the recommendations made by the members of the Polish fraction. The amended version of the law now proclaimed that “[i]n offices and organisations located in areas serving substantial numbers of a minority with a different language” minority language “shall be used in addition to the Lithuanian language”, and that public “[s]igns used in the areas indicated [...] may be in the Lithuanian language and in the language used by that minority”. According to the law the state guaranteed minorities “the right [...] to have schooling in one's native language” at all levels of education (preschool, elementary, secondary) “as well as provision for groups, faculties and departments at institutions of higher learning to train teachers and other specialists needed by ethnic minorities”.⁷⁷

However, the law remained declarative due to lacking substatutory legal acts, that would have made the law less abstract and thus more applicable. Enactment of the law was performed from the bottom and it was done individually and not systematically, i.e. on Vilnius and Šalčininkai municipality buildings, as well as on the other buildings of the two counties' elder-ships, information plates in Polish appeared next to those written in Lithuanian.

However, the situation got even more complicated when in 1995 the Parliament passed the language law, which did not envisage opportunity to use languages other than the state language in public spheres, except for the private or the religious sphere or events

⁷⁷ “The Law on Ethnic Minorities” (Supreme Soviet of the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic, November 23, 1989), accessed 6 June, 2016, http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=21840.

organised by minorities. Naturally, this caused discontent among the Poles. However, their deputies did not veto the language law during the voting for it. During that day three out of four members of the Association of Poles in Lithuania (APL) – a social-political organization at the time representing Lithuanian Poles in the Parliament – participated in voting. Polish deputies tried to argue against some of the provisions of the law, that could have affected the usage of minority languages. However, the answer to these objections was that the law did not consider minorities' linguistic rights and that these rights were addressed by the Law on Ethnic Minorities, which, as it was explained during the plenary session, could have been amended after the state language law would have been passed. Further I am going to rely on an article called “The Law on National Minorities: Of What Kind and When?” written by Zbigniew Balcewicz – one of the two Lithuanian Polish signatories of the Act of the Re-Establishment of the State of Lithuania, and, at the moment a journalist, in which the author provides important quotes of some prominent political figures, and quotes authentic documents of that time, related to the deliberation of the minority law and the law on state language. As witnessed by Balcewicz:

Speaker of the Parliament Č. Juršėnas 'for goodness sake' guaranteed, that after the Law on the State language would be passed, already next day the Board of Seimas would create a working group to examine the suggestions on the amendments of the Law of Ethnic Minorities. Such guarantees seemed sufficient for the members of Polish deputies and they [the members] abstained during the voting on the law on language.⁷⁸

However, the promise was not firm, for soon after the enactment of the language law various state institutions started implementing of the provisions of the newly passed Law on the State language. This, according to Balcewicz, was done “because they [the institutions] held the law was more important than the Law on Ethnic Minorities, which had been passed earlier” and

78 Zbigniew Balcewicz, “Tautinių Mažumų Įstatymas – Koks Ir Kada?,” *http://lietuvosdiena.lrytas.lt*, March 1, 2014, *http://lietuvosdiena.lrytas.lt/aktualijos/tautiniu-mazumu-istatymas-koks-ir-kada.htm*.

“[t]he legal proceedings related to Polish information plates and other things related to the violations of the newly enacted law starter. The courts' verdicts were in favour of the law, which had been enacted later [in comparison the new minority law].”⁷⁹

The proper translation of the phrase 'for goodness sake', used by the speaker of the parliament in his discussions with the Polish deputies, should in fact be - 'for sacred peace's sake'. This 'sacred peace', for which minorities were asked not to cause troubles and trust the majority's word of honour could be a good illustration of the first stage of pacification attitude Lithuanian politicians held towards the minorities during the period between 1988 and 1996, as described by Marijusz Antonowicz.

To sum up, besides the fundamental bias of the state, re-established by and for the Lithuanian nation, the pacifying nature of the minority's governance in this period (1988 – 1996) is defined by the following rationales and techniques, complimentary to each other: the liberal and inclusive law on citizenship, and also by the at that time progressive Law on Ethnic Minorities. The main rationale behind these pacification-oriented techniques here was the state's independence. The state was attentive, i.e. the amendments of the minorities' law were done with respect to recommendations from the Polish minority. Poles had a majority in counties of Vilnius and Šalčininkai and Sniečkus. However, temporal direct governance was initiated after some parts of the minority initiated an autonomy movement in the three counties. The dual ethno-democratic character of the newly re-established state's political regime did not take long to appear: although the Law on Ethnic Minorities had been passed, due to the lack of substatutory acts its functioning was not clear. Furthermore there were some contradictions between the minority law and the Law on State Language, because the first law ensured some of the minority's linguistic rights, while the second law clearly prioritised the usage of Lithuanian language in public. This juridical contradiction had not been eliminated

⁷⁹ Ibid.

up until 2010, when the Law of Ethnic Minorities expired.⁸⁰ The story of how the law on language was passed illustrates another technique of minority governance – politician’s false promises to solve minorities’ problems later.

3.4. Second stage. Co-optation and European Norms

Then comes the second stage of co-optation. The state's independence had been re-established successfully and democratization processes continued, having its expression in the process of the state's integration into major western institutions – EU and NATO. However, the process of building the nation-state did not stop. In 1998 the Parliament prepared an amendment of the above-cited Law on Ethnic Minorities. The new version of the law still proclaimed that “every person belonging to an ethnic minority has a right to use his minority's language in private and in public”, yet now it said that “[t]his right can be used if not violating provision of the law, regulating the usage of state language in public sphere in Lithuania.” Further it said that in the minority lived territories the state and municipality officers can use other than state language, if requested. Yet, the law also said that “[t]he heads of these institutions [...] ensure that residents would be served in state language. The heads of the state and municipality institutions [...] for people who do not know the state language create proper conditions to prepare written applications in state language.”⁸¹ Thus, if these amendments would have been made, *de jure* Poles would have retained the right to use their language. Yet,

80 The law was passed before the declaration of the state's independence (March 11, 1999). The validity of the law has been extended several times after the independence. This was done by the means of other legal acts (For example: “X-1383 Lietuvos Respublikos Teritorijoje Galiojančių Įstatymų, Priimtų Iki 1990 M. Kovo 11 D., Galiojimo...,” accessed June 6, 2016, <https://www.e-tar.lt/portal/lt/legalAct/TAR.40FC2AFC6F0B>). However, in 2010 the law expired and its validity was not extended.

81 Balcewicz, “Tautinių Mažumų Įstatymas – Koks Ir Kada?”

de facto Lithuanian would have been established as the main language used in public life in the minority inhabited territories.

Poles met these planned amendments with objections. Petition signed by fifteen thousand Polish residents of the Vilnius region was sent to the speaker of the Parliament asking to cancel these planned changes in the law. The letter also contained a note stating that such amendments would take away the right from Poles to use their native language in territories traditionally inhabited by them. The letter expressed a belief that Lithuania – at that time a candidate country for EU accession – should not have been reconsidering existing legal norms in relation to ethnic minorities and changing it in a way that minority rights would be restricted.

On the contrary, Lithuanian Republic should supplement and upgrade the legal norms, so that it would meet Lithuania's and Poland's bilateral agreements as well as European standards. After Vilnius region was returned to Lithuania, Polish became regional language in the region, which along the state language should be further used in education, at different governmental levels, in means of mass information, as well as in cultural life. We encourage the Parliament [...] to recognise existing situation and legalise Polish as a regional language in Vilnius region, protect and support this language, because to do so requires [...] European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.⁸²

The answer to this appeal stated that the amendment aimed at eliminating the contradiction between the two laws – the law on the state language and the law on ethnic minorities – “leading to discrepant interpretations and speculations and potentially provoking irresponsible and incompetent administrative decisions.” Further it added that the project of the amendment contradicted neither international nor bilateral agreements signed by the state to protect the rights of its national minorities. The reply also stated that the state “takes care of the interests and needs of all its ethnic minorities. As shown by researches on the languages widespread in

82 Ibid.

the Vilnius region [...] Polish and Byelorussian (*po prostu*) are spread almost equally. Therefore, granting Polish the status of the regional language would discriminate other minorities living in the region.” The authors of the reply also stated “that in the project of the law on ethnic minorities in the Republic of Poland ethnic minority languages are provided only the state auxiliary language status.” Finally, the letter refuted claims that the amendment “intend to take away the right from Poles traditionally living in the region to use native Polish language besides the state language in the local offices and organizations...“, because the project's aim is to clarify the rules of the usage of the ethnic minorities (local) language.”

In short, this quite formal reply rejected the minority's fears over the amendments of minority law as unfounded. Yet, the amendment was not passed at the end. This fact shows that the minority's objections were taken into consideration. Latter attempts to amend the law failed as well, because Poles felt that these amendments would reduce their rights. However, this response to the address made by Polish petitioners illustrates how european standards for the protection of national minority rights became a rationale used by both – Poles and Lithuanian government – in pursuit of goals of each side. However, both sides used these instruments in a different manner – for Poles it provided a standard of how things should be, while for Lithuania it served as a marker and measurement of boundaries that shouldn't be crossed when pursuing nationalising policies. However, although Lithuania became a member of the EU and the NATO, the legal chaos emanating from the two contradictory laws persisted and lasted for 15 years, till the Law on Ethnic minorities finally expired in 2010. Since then the new law has not been passed yet. During this second stage of Polish – Lithuanian relations Lithuania signed and ratified such international agreements on protecting minority rights as Council's of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (ratified in 2000). The need to ensure minority rights was a part of the Copenhagen criteria applicant

countries needed to meet in order to become members of the European Union. Implementation of these agreements and therefore of minority rights, as illustrated by the contradiction between the minority law and the law on state language, remained limited and some of these agreements have never been signed and ratified at all, i.e. the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.⁸³

Summing up, the second period of co-optation (1998 – 2004) was marked by such rationales like 'European norms and practices'. Both – the minority and the majority – used it, although for different purposes: for the minority it was something that guaranteed their rights, while for the majority these norms were kind of a marker showing where nationalistic aspirations in minority policies should be tempered (policy X does not contradict European standard Y). However, this does not mean that the rationales from the previous period had vanished. The idea to fix the legal contradiction between the minority and the language laws, in favour of the second law and the Lithuanian language, persisted. However, this time, unlike during the period of pacification, the decision to amend the minority law was made unilaterally. The amendments were not discussed with the Polish communities. Yet, it was not passed due to the minority's active pressure (the fifteen-thousand-large petition). The minority governance in this period was mediated by European norms: the minority as such was largely ignored in the process of minority law legislation, and it seems the main 'counterpart' in discussing and deciding about minorities' problems was not the minority itself, but the European regulations, norms and standards. However, in the third period, when the state entered the EU and the NATO, these norms were started to be ignored as well.

83 “European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (Full List),” *Treaty Office*, accessed June 6, 2016, <http://www.coe.int/web/conventions/full-list>.

3. 5. The Third Stage. Ignoring

During the third stage the Law on Ethnic Minorities expired (2010) and since then it has remained absent. Moreover, in 2010 the Department of National Minorities and Émigrés under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was dissolved. This was done as a part of austerity policies when the state's bureaucratic apparatus was reduced in order to cut state expenses and to fight the economic crisis which hit the country in 2008-2009. The decision suggests that the opportunity to save some money was seen at the expense of a non-priority issue of national minorities. The department's competences were then prescribed to a few other ministries, first and foremost to the Ministry of Culture and Ministry of Education and Science. The department was re-established in 2015. This suggests that for some time minorities' governance was defined not only by legal but also by an institutional vacuum.

However, some important developments and shifts within Polish minority happened during this period. First and foremost – the rise of Polish minority party EAPL. The party was established in 1994 when the Lithuanian Parliament passed the law on social organisations stating that these needed to transform into political parties or simply remain social organisations. At that time the main organisation representing Lithuanian Poles was the Association of Poles in Lithuania (APL) - a public-political organisation, acting as both social and political actor. As the new law demanded these two functions to be separated, the Polish community decided to transform the APL into a social organisation responsible for the defence of civil rights for the Polish minority and for the pursuit of educational, cultural and economic activities. At the same time it was decided to establish a political party named the Electoral Action of Poles in Lithuania. In 1999 Valdemar Tomaszewski became the chairman of the party and has been re-elected ever since. The arrival of the new chairman marked

political consolidation of the Polish community which resulted in growing support for the party among Poles. The uncertainty surrounding the status of the minority's rights in the country as well as continuously failed promises Lithuanian politicians made to eliminate these uncertainties resulted in the rise of EAPL. This success was sometimes also built with the hands of nationalistic politicians from the Lithuanian side.

Before dwelling deeper into the history of this problem-rich and rather problematic period (2004 – 2014) of the governance of the Polish minority, I want to stress that by the majority's disregard and ignoring of the minority I mean not only majority's passivity, when it comes to solving the minority's ingrained problems, taking a form of non-decisions made, but also the majority's decisions about the minority made unilaterally, without discussing it with the minority. So not only minority's non-governance but also its mis-governance. This third period of the governance, marked by the majority's disregard of Poles' problems, created a certain political environment. EAPL consolidated its power and acquired monopoly in political representation of Lithuanian Poles. In the following section I am going to take a closer look at major external causes (both – those relating to mis-governance and non-governance) of the rise of EAPL. That is to say I am going to review quickly the major (non)decisions and actions of the Lithuanian political establishment, which EAPL capitalised on trying to strengthen its political position in the region.

3. 5. 1 Minority's Linguistic Rights

As shown in the previous sections of this chapter the issue of minority's linguistic rights has been a part of minority rights agenda since the re-establishment of the state's independence.

This is indeed one of the oldest unsolved issues concerning the Poles living in Lithuania. In particular these issues relates to the topic of usage of the minority language in public administration: according to Lithuanian law, official documents, i.e. passports and birth certificates, are written only in the Lithuanian alphabet. Sometimes the dispute is referred to as the row over the letter 'W', which in the Lithuanian alphabet, unlike in Polish, is lacking. To sum up, the whole issue is about whether in the passport the surname of a Polish person will be written Komorowski or Komorovski. The usage of Polish in street signs is a part of this dispute too. These issues continue to cause tensions between the two ethnic groups.

However, to call Lithuania's behaviour with its Polish minority hegemonic or dominant would not mean that the Lithuanian state consciously discriminates its national minorities in linguistic terms. Yet, it can be said that the state exercises power over its minorities and that the language is used as a tool. The roots of this paradox lies within the idea that power does not have to be subjective/personal. As argued by Michael Foucault, power relations can be intentional and at the same time non-subjective.⁸⁴ It is a result of a series of aims, objectives, and calculations, rather than of the decision of a free agent.⁸⁵ But the absence of the tangible agent does not imply the absence of the object that is dominated.

In the official self-representations of the state, the Lithuanian language is given a special treatment. As mentioned earlier it is presented as the state's *conditio sine qua non*. Such a strong emphasis put on the national language suggests that this is not an issue to be treated neutrally as it is done in liberal democracies,⁸⁶ which Lithuania claims to be. Participation in the Lithuanian political community is based on mastering the Lithuanian

84 Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 2: The Use of Pleasure*, trans. Robert Hurley, Reissue edition (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), 94.

85 Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*, ed. Colin Gordon, 1st American Ed edition (New York: Vintage, 1980), 101.

86 Ronald Dworkin, *Taking Rights Seriously*, Fifth Printing edition (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1978).

language. A possible objection to this argument could be that every state needs a language to organize its activities. However, my argument here does not relate to one or another kind of bilingualism in Lithuania, but about certain linguistic rights that minorities want to have. In fact, they have a right to have these rights, however, it remains unimplemented.

3. 5. 2 Minority's Education

Another example of biased decision-making, when it comes to the implementation of rights of national minorities, could be education. On the 17th of March, 2011, Lithuanian Parliament changed the state's Law on Education. The amendments have limited national minorities' rights to be educated in their native languages. Under the new law several subjects – Lithuanian history, geography and the Lithuanian language – came to be taught in Lithuanian at schools, where the Lithuanian is not the language of instruction. The education reform also foresaw that minority schools, where the number of pupils was insufficient, would be closed and the pupils would be transferred to the Lithuanian schools.⁸⁷ Yet, the most important amendment was an introduction of a unified Lithuanian language exam for both national majority and national minority pupils irrespective of the schools – Lithuanian or minority – they attend. Soon after the Lithuanian Parliament adopted the above-mentioned amendments, on the 1st of July the state's minister on education passed a decree, proclaiming that a unified Lithuanian language exam was obligatory to all pupils, who had finished the Lithuanian language and literature course. The new order was meant to come into effect in two years, that is to say, starting from 2013. All the differences between the exams are to be eliminated by

87 “XI-1281 Law Amending the Law on Education,” accessed June 6, 2016, <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/TAIS.407836?jfwid=q86m1vwzk>.

2019.

These changes were made by the 15th Lithuanian government (in office from 4th December, 2008 till 12th December, 2012), led by the conservative-liberal coalition. Gintaras Steponavičius – the minister of education, who made these amendments – was from the liberal party. By the end of 2012 a new coalition government consisting of Social Democrats, a Polish minority party,⁸⁸ and a few populist parties came to power. The new minister of education Dainius Pavalkis was appointed by one of these populist parties. Changes in the law triggered protests among Poles and almost sixty thousand signatures were collected to sign a petition, against to these amendments. Minority organizations, including the Polish minority party, made some suggestions as to mitigating the situation. These proposals, however, were not taken into account.

On the 20th of February, 2013, the minister D. Pavalkis made some exemptions for pupils coming from minority schools. For example, pupils were allowed to write shorter reasoning essays as part of their Lithuanian language matura exam. These exemptions were allowed since students in minority schools had received fewer learning-hours in the Lithuanian language than the pupils from Lithuanian schools. Thus, minority pupils were disadvantaged from the start with regards to the exam. These exemptions were welcomed by the Polish minority party, which at that time, still worked in the coalition.

Yet, these exemptions received a cold reception among politicians from the former government. Some members stated that such exemptions might discriminate pupils from Lithuanian schools. Later the Supreme Administrative Court of Lithuania found that the exemptions made by the minister indeed did violate the principle of equality that was enshrined in the Constitution. According to the court, exemptions like those implemented by D. Pavalkis, can only be sanctioned if justified objectively. That pupils from minority schools

⁸⁸ Left the coalition at August, in 2014.

had 800 fewer Lithuanian language hours than pupils from Lithuanian schools was, according to the court, not sufficient grounds for justifying the exemptions. Such an argument simply implied that the ministry had not ensured equal language training for pupils of both minority and Lithuanian schools.

However, the court declared its decision just before the exam, leaving little time to effectively amend it. The implementation of the court's decision, therefore, could not be achieved right away. Instead, the unified Lithuanian language exam retained the above-mentioned exemptions for national minorities. Later that year, on the 28th of October, the state's minister of education, eliminated all exemptions for minority school pupils following the court's earlier decision. In 2014 all pupils took the same Lithuanian language exam without any exemptions for pupils from minority schools. Only few small exam facilitations made by the liberal minister remained. Thus, all the previously adopted amendments – namely the number of subjects to be taught in Lithuanian in ethnic minority schools and the introduction of a unified Lithuanian language exam for both native speakers and national minorities – remained unchanged. Today the goal of having a completely unified Lithuanian language exam by 2019 remains unchallenged.

Few more things need to be said in order to explain the former government's initiative on these amendments. Unlike the Polish minority, the Lithuanian government was convinced that these measures would help integrate national minorities into Lithuanian society. After the amendments were passed the state's Prime Minister Andrius Kubilius said “the law stipulates a simple thing – to improve the conditions for children to acquire more knowledge and learn more languages. Speaking more languages is an asset, an improvement, not deterioration, therefore, talking about worse relations is entirely incomprehensible.” Yet, Jacek Komar, a former Polish journalist who has been living in Vilnius for the last 18 years said that “[i]f the

Poles send their children to Lithuanian primary and secondary schools and then to university in Vilnius, these young people will become completely Lithuanized. [...] When the act comes into force, the Lithuanization of young Poles will be a matter of one generation.“ But the Minister of Education G. Steponavičius had a different opinion. “Changes in the law,” he exclaimed, “will facilitate better integration of minorities.”⁸⁹

The amendments can be seen as an attempt to universalize the teaching of the Lithuanian language. The rhetorical use of concepts such as “equality” and “integration” suggests mobilization of bias about the minority's possible unequal position in the society, problems of integration (because of not speaking Lithuanian well enough). These biases serve as rationale for the justification of the state's assimilationist policies. Bachrach and Baratz argued that non-decisions are made through mobilization of bias – a dominant set of beliefs, values, institutional processes and procedures privileging some groups over others. In the case of amendments of the education law, it seems that such mobilization can also serve for (assimilationist) decision making.

3.5.3 Techniques. Governing Indirectly

What else is characteristic to the governance of Polish minority in Lithuania? So far, I have touched mostly upon rationales (state language, minority's better integration and its well-being) guiding this governance, and Lithuanian language as state-constitutive idea as the most visible case of such rationales. Now I am going to discuss how the process of (non) governance or the process of non-decision making is carried out. I argue that the minority is

89 “New Education Law; Poles Feel Threatened, Lithuanians in Favour,” *The Lithuania Tribune*, accessed June 6, 2016, <http://www.lithuaniantribune.com/5926/new-education-law-poles-feel-threatened-lithuanians-in-favour-20115926/>.

governed indirectly and to support my argument I will use an example of the right to have one's name and surname written in Polish in passports. In 1999 the Constitution Court of the Republic of Lithuania ruled that in passport persons' name and surname should be written in the state language. Otherwise constitutional status of the language would be violated. During the parliamentary elections in 2012 Lithuanian social-democrats promised to solve the issue of writing names and surnames, if elected. The next elections will take place in 2016 and the project of the law that would regulate these language issues is still being discussed in the Parliament. In 2013 the Lithuanian government passed a decree suggesting The State Commission of the Lithuanian Language⁹⁰ would decide upon the issue of writing names and surnames, that are of not Lithuanian origins, in the official documents. The government's argument was that since it is a state institution, accountable for the parliament and responsible for the implementation of the state language policy, in terms of the protection of the official language, therefore it was the commission's prerogative to decide how Polish surnames should be written in their passports.

However, the Commission's answer was that it was not able to prepare the legislation, which would contradict the ruling of the Constitutional Court. Then the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Lithuania addressed the Court asking whether the Commission has a right to initiate amendments of the current law, which would declare that a person's name and surname in passport is written in the Lithuanian alphabet and according to the Lithuanian pronunciation.

It would be possible to continue the story, but what is visible from things stated above is the government's wish to transfer the responsibility of decision-making to other institutions

90 According to the law, the commission decides "issues concerning the implementation of the Law on the State Language, establishes the directions of regulating the Lithuanian language, decides the issues of standardisation and codification of Lithuanian language; appraises and approves the most important standardising language works." More on: <http://www.vlkk.lt/en/commission/commission-2>, accessed April 29, 2016.

(the Commission or the Court). The idea of delegating the Commission the right to solve these matters reveals the government's wish to solve essentially political problems with the help of experts. In other words, it seeks to depoliticise the issue. However, the language-problem would remain political even if it would appear to be at the hands of the Commission, because at the end the whole issue is not about the Poles having the right to write their personal names in Polish, but about preserving the Lithuanian language and not violating its official status. The case illustrates how an ethnic democracy works: the Lithuanian language has a priority in the public sphere and thus all the decisions about using other languages in public are made on the basis of Lithuanian language's dominant position. Trying to portray these questions as technical in their nature only masks this structural discrimination.

3. 5. 4 Technique/rationale – *Argumentum ad Sovieticum*

Another important technique is the *argumentum ad sovieticum* – false argument used to reduce the opponent to its single quality – his Soviet background, – to stigmatise him and to pull the issue, the way it was framed by the opponent, out of the discussion space. This argument is sometimes used to criticise politicians from EAPL. During deliberations of the new version of the Law on Ethnic Minorities politicians from EAPL prepared a bill suggesting to return to that version of the law, passed in 1989 by the Supreme Soviet of the Lithuanian SSR, which although still formally Soviet was elected already democratically. This suggestion was met with firm objections. The state's president for example stated that

As far as I understand, it would be the law existed before the acceptance of Lithuanian Constitution. To comment the details would be too early yet, however, if it is true that there is an attempt to return to the period, when these kind of questions were regulated with the help of various post-Soviet regulations, [passed] before the Lithuanian

Constitution, I think this would be an unprecedented step, direct violation of the Constitution and an attempt to come back to the post-Soviet space.⁹¹

Besides being post-Soviet other versions of this bill proposed by the representatives from the Polish party in mainstream Lithuanian media were labelled as unconstitutional, 'archival' and 'legitimizing multilingualism'.⁹² The law is delayed mostly because the Lithuanian majority and the representatives of the Polish minority party haven't reached the agreement over the issues concerning minorities' linguistic rights.

Summing up the third period of the Polish – Lithuanian relations, the following rationales and techniques can be distinguished: in terms of minorities' linguistic rights the reason for not implementing these rights was the constitutional status of the Lithuanian language. Language is one of the most important features characterising the nation, which in turn defines the nature of the state. Undermining the constitutional character of the Lithuanian language thus was portrayed as a threat to the state. This protection is institutionalised and ensured by such institutions as the State's Commission on Language.

Language was one of the arguments for the changes in the Law on Education, which for Polish pupils attending Polish schools meant more subjects taught in Lithuanian and a unified Lithuanian language matura exam. These changes were reasoned with the need for minorities to know the state language, suggesting that their knowledge of Lithuanian is unsatisfactory. The government provided no proof that would have been able to support this biased argument. The Law on Education was amended unilaterally without discussing it with

91 “D. Grybauskaitė Apie Iniciatyvą Gražinti Senąjį Tautinių Mažumų Įstatymą: Tai Tiesioginis Konstitucijos Pažeidimas,” *DELFI*, accessed April 29, 2016, <http://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/lithuania/d-grybauskaite-apie-iniciatyva-grazinti-senaji-tautiniu-mazumu-istatyma-tai-tiesioginis-konstitucijos-pazeidimas.d?id=63578426>.

92 Justina Ilkevičiūtė, “The Representation of Ethnic Minorities in the Internet Media during the Considerations of the Law on National Minorities,” *Journalism Research* 9 (2015): 48–73.

members of the minority and without paying attention to the discontent from the minority's side. Moreover, it was implemented hastily, especially when it came to the decision to unify Lithuanian matura exams without leaving pupils with transitory period long enough to adopt to the new regulations. The implementation of the law should be seen as a continuous process: it was passed, then it was amended (exemptions were made), then amendments were called off by the Constitutional Court, etc. These fluctuations are less important than the effect they have finally produced – the amendments remain uncalled.

Few other examples, such as the already mentioned issues concerning minorities' linguistic rights, suggest the hasty nature of minority governance. Discussions on the minority right to have Polish names written in their original (Polish) form in passports show how the government tried to transfer some of its competences to other state institutions (language commission) or even to the branches of government (the Constitutional Court) asking them to decide on a question which is the government's competence. *Argumentum ad sovieticum* deserves special mentioning because it can be seen as both – rationale and technique – which prevents the implementation of certain decisions by marginalising the topic and thereby removing it from the political agenda. This is a good example of non-decision making through mobilization of bias. It's enough to call the draft of a certain legislation, i.e. the Law on Ethnic Minorities, Soviet and it automatically appears at the margins of the political discourse. Such marginalization, as well as aforementioned attempts to transfer competences or unilateral decisions concerning, for example, the minority's schooling characterise the period of disregard in majority-minority relations and show *how* the minority issues are disregarded. However, in 2014 the state's political establishment noticed minorities again.

3. 6 The Fourth Stage. The Post-Maidan Period, Securitization and a Shift Towards a Civic Definition of the State

The relations between majority – minority ethnic groups entered the new – fourth – phase, when in 2014 Russia annexed Crimea, justifying its moves with the duty to protect its kinsmen mistreated by Ukrainian 'fascist junta' that came to govern the country after the Euromaidan revolution. As a response to changes in the geopolitical environment of the Baltic region, in 2015 Lithuania changed its security policy radically. The state's Parliament made a decision to re-introduce conscriptions.⁹³ That was the response to the possible external threats, first and foremost associated with Russia. In terms of internal security, the question of ethnic minorities' – first Russians and then Polish – loyalty to the state arose soon. It was feared that Russia could attempt destabilizing the society through the hybrid war involving such means as propaganda, cyber attacks or even military intervention intended to protect Russian-speaking minorities (primarily Russians, but also Poles) in the country. These fears got even stronger after political leaders of the EAPL expressed their critical opinion about the Maidan revolution⁹⁴ and sympathies for Russia (Picture 2). Another reasons for this concern appeared when it became known that Lithuanian minorities, including Poles, receive information mostly from the Russian TV channels.⁹⁵ Thus it was feared that these minorities could become a target of Russian propaganda.

93 Gerda Jakštaitė, "Lithuania's Reintroduction of Conscription Is a Clear Response to the Threat Posed by Russia in the Baltics," *EUROPP*, March 9, 2015, <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/europpblog/2015/03/09/lithuanias-reintroduction-of-conscription-is-a-clear-response-to-the-threat-posed-by-russia-in-the-baltics/>.

94 "V. Tomaševskis Kritikuoja Vakarų Remiamą Ukrainos Vyriausybę," *Kauno Diena*, accessed June 5, 2016, <http://kauno.diena.lt/naujienos/lietuva/politika/v-tomasevskis-kritikuoja-vakaru-remiama-ukrainos-vyriausybe-618568>.

95 "Większość Osób Mniejszości Narodowych O Ukrainie Dowiaduje Się Z Rosyjskiej Telewizji - PL.DELFI," accessed June 6, 2016, <http://pl.delfi.lt/aktualia/litwa/wiekszosc-osob-mniejszosci-narodowych-o-ukrainie-dowiaduje-sie-z-rosyjskiej-telewizji.d?id=66838524>.

In order to avoid possible attempts of such 'protection' from abroad, the state's president Dalia Grybauskaitė decided to set the agenda first. She started visiting the country's south-eastern province, mostly inhabited by Lithuanian Polish minority, more often. In her speeches she started to refer to Polish and Russian minorities as 'our Poles', 'our Russians' or 'Lithuanian/Lithuania's Poles/Russians'. This 'our' or 'Lithuanian/Lithuania's' first and foremost should have meant 'not Russia's'.



Picture 1. Waldemar Tomaszewski, the leader of the Electoral Action of Poles in Lithuania, at the parade of the Victory Day (May 9), in Vilnius, 2014⁹⁶

96 “V. Tomaševskis Buvo Sukritikuotas Lenkijoje – DELFI,” accessed June 5, 2016, <http://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/lithuania/v-tomasevskis-buvo-sukritikuotas-lenkijoje.d?id=65197831>. In this picture W. Tomaszewski can be seen wearing the Ribbon of Saint George (black-orange-black) – a military and patriotic symbol in Russia, which after 2014 in countries like Ukraine and the Baltic states came to be associated with Russian nationalism and pro-Russia separatists in Ukraine – on his jacket during the parade to celebrate the Victory Day (May 9) – a day marking the capitulation of Nazi Germany to the Soviet Union at the end of Second World War. Unlike Russia Lithuania celebrates the defeat of Nazism on the 8th of May. The Lithuanian president has rejected several invitations from Moscow to celebrate this day in Russia, claiming that for Lithuania the Second World War ended only after the Cold War. Thus this picture of W. Tomaszewski represents everything that is opposite to the Lithuanian political establishment. The second ribbon (red and white) probably stands for Polish flag, of the same - white and red colours.

During one of her visits in Šalčininkai – the biggest town in the province she stated that she: “equally loves all people of *our Lithuania*, they all are citizens of Lithuania. [...] there's *one Lithuania*, and Lithuania is a homeland of these people as well.”⁹⁷ During her next visit in Šalčininkai, where she visited a summer school organized by The Lithuanian Riflemen's Union - a militarised non-profit organisation supported by the State – she stated that:

Lithuania is loved and, in case of a need, would be protected by all the Lithuanian citizens of different nationalities. This is proven by the fact that this camp, as well as the activities of the Riflemen's Union in general, is attended by the Lithuanians, Poles, Russians and people of other nationalities, who want to learn how to protect their country. When united, *we are* an invincible force.⁹⁸

It needs to be mentioned that among the participants of this summer school were not only minority members but also some youngsters coming from Ukraine. Thus, her appearance in this youth camp had a symbolic message – Lithuania and its minorities stand together with Ukraine *ergo* against Russia. During her stay in Šalčininkai, the president also gave an interview to a Polish minority newspaper 'Kurier Wilenski', in which she stated that “tensions between Lithuania's Polish and Lithuanian citizens are created artificially, seeking certain political goals.”⁹⁹ To sum up the changes in the rhetoric of the state's president, who started appealing to national minorities more often, illustrates several things: the bias of potential disloyalty of minorities, the increase of the preoccupation about their loyalty and the need to do something this loyalty would be ensured.

The aim of this patriotic discourse was to integrate people into a category of 'we'. This

97 “D. Grybauskaitė: „Aš Vienodai Myliu Visus Lietuvos Žmones“,” accessed December 13, 2015, <http://lietuvsdiena.lrytas.lt/aktualijos/d-grybauskaite-as-vienodai-myliu-visus-lietuvos-zmones.htm>.

98 “Prezidentė Šalčininkuose Lankėsi Šaulių Stovykloje,” *Kauno Diena*, accessed December 13, 2015, <http://kauno.diena.lt/naujienos/lietuva/politika/prezidente-salcininkuose-lankesi-sauliu-stovykloje-705235>.

99 Ibid.

civic discourse was not entirely new, but after the crisis in Ukraine it got stronger. However, this integration in turn is linked not to such questions as consolidation of democracy or assurance of minority rights in the country given, but rather to the state's security. The honesty of such intentions then is doubtful because this symbolic policy was started after Russia's annexation of Crimea and therefore could be seen as politics of convenience, seeking to de-problematise the state's ethnic minorities, to ensure the current *status quo* of the majority-minority relations and to prevent possible social unrest.

Yet, EAPL leaders' pro-Russian stance during the Maidan events were judged negatively not only by the Lithuanian majority, but also among some Poles too, who saw this stance as opposing the interest of the Polish minority. Tomaszewski's appearance with Saint Georges' Ribbon and his support for Russia during the events of Maidan were met with huge disappointment among some Poles. One relatively well known Polish person representing this minority within the minority wrote a public letter to her kinsmen, which was called 'Open letter to fellow Polish kinsmen: I am ashamed', where she wrote:

I clenched my teeth strongly and I felt the taste of blood in my mouth. I felt sick after imagining for a second the taste in the mouth felt by those, for whom it was their last [taste] in their lives. Then, in the spring of 1940, in Katyn. First, images from the movie "Katyn", which I watched during the evening on the LRT [Lithuanian Radio and Television – a. n.] (thanks to the LRT for the solidarity) came to my mind, then the images from Ukraine. Polish kinsmen which one of you would be able to attach the ribbon to himself without having his hands shaking? And to do this next the ribbon coloured in the colours of the Polish flag? What does this symbol mean to you?¹⁰⁰

To sum up, the fourth period of Polish – Lithuanian relations is defined by such rationales and techniques as: 'one Lithuania', concerns over potential Russian threat

100 Renata Underis, "Atviras Laiškas Tautiečiams Lenkams: „Man Gėda“,” accessed April 29, 2016, <http://bendraukime.lrytas.lt/isklausykite/atviras-laiskas-tautieciams-lenkams-man-geda.htm>.

(illustrated by the support Polish minority's political leadership demonstrated to Russia during the events in Ukraine) to the national security. Due to this threat a new political discourse of civic nationhood was initiated by the country's political elite, with the state's president ahead. In her speeches and official visit of the territories inhabited mostly by the minorities she started embracing the country's multicultural nature. However, perpetual and slightly exaggerated emphasis on the state's civic nature reveals some sort of anxiety and suggests that the real aim behind this civic rhetoric is to kill two birds with one stone – to appease minorities and to preserve the regime's ethnic nature.

3. 6. Structural v. Direct Discrimination and Research Questions

Instead of summarizing the four historical phases of the governance of the Polish minority I want to discuss briefly the problems concerning the operationalization of the theory of the non-decision making developed by Bachrach and Barataz. These problems became visible when I tried to apply the theory for the analysis of the minority's (non)governance. Non-decision has an agent and a subject, for every non-decision bears a conscious element, which is a part of decision not to decide. Ethnic democracy to repeat Smootha's words, is built on the structural subordination: “[t]he founding rule of this regime is an inherent contradiction between two principles – civil and political rights for all and structural subordination of the minority to the majority.”¹⁰¹ To this point it seems that the foucauldian theory of governmentality fits better to the analysis of ethno-democratic regimes It seems that there are two, or even three, categories of non-decisions to distinguish: decisions that are simply not made, intended non-decisions and non-decisions brought about by structural causes. From the

101 Smootha and Järve, *The Fate of Ethnic Democracy in Post-Communist Europe*, 21–22.

historical examples presented in this chapter it is visible that sometimes the lack of a decision does not necessarily mean non-decision making and *vice versa*. The education reform, for example, reminds more of a case of assimilationist policy than that of non-governance. Yet, the process of legislation on Polish names and surnames, exemplifying the indirect form of governance (Chapter's 3 section 3.5.3) reminds of structural discrimination and of ethnic democracy. So seems that there is a mismatch between Smooha's model of ethnic democracy, implying structural discrimination, and Bachrach and Baratz theory of non-decision making, implying 'active' discrimination. Although it bears in mind the mismatch, this thesis does not focus on what forms of discrimination lays beneath ethnic democracy. Instead it focuses on the state-effect or perceptions of the state, resulting among members of the Polish minority in Lithuania as a response to the state's made or not made decisions. My presumption here is that in their everyday life people do not analyse states policies. By analysis here I mean that they do not necessarily differentiate between structural and direct discrimination. I assume that often the instances of the state's actions outlined in the context chapter are seen as non-decisions.

This thesis seeks to map different perceptions of the state among Poles in Lithuania. I return to the history of the minority governance in chapter 5, for it provides the frame for my fieldwork and the analysis of its results. My presumption is that the state's ambiguous minority (non)governance, outlined in the context chapter, is reflected and recognised among members of Polish minority. I also assume that in response to this ambiguity of ethno-democratic governance minority members use different strategies and ways of connecting, contesting and negotiating their individual and collective position. Thus, I ask what impact this variety of the state perceptions and responses to its absence has on the prevention of an ethnic conflict between Lithuanian ethnic majority and Polish ethnic minority, and thus on the

preservation of ambiguous – ethnic and democratic at the same time – character of the state's political regime.

4. METHODOLOGY

The (nation) state in this research is seen as a phenomenon and as a cognitive construct, emanating from and through negotiations between the Lithuanians majority, seeing the state as of ethnic origin, and the Polish minority, which does not necessarily see the state as ethnic. I choose an anthropological perspective for my work, for anthropology, and specifically anthropology of the state, is interested in “the cultural constitution of the state – that is, how people perceive the state, how their understandings are shaped by their particular locations and intimate and embodied encounters with state processes and officials, and how the state manifests itself in their lives (Sharma and Gupta: 2009, 11).” If undertaken, this position could help in: a) avoiding methodological nationalism, that is to say to treat (nation) state as a really existing and natural thing; b) to unveil and to map the variety of possible mechanisms through which power is exercised and through which the *status quo* of ethnic relations in the established nation-state is maintained (chapter's 2 section 2.3); c) to critically apply S. Smootha's model of ethnic democracy (chapter's 2 section 2.2).

Several methods were used when entering and staying in the field. Historical context analysis reconstructed the history of Polish-Lithuanian relations and the Polish minority's governance in an independent Lithuanian state (chapter 3). This overview forms the basis of the fieldwork data analysis (chapter 5). I used semi-structured and unstructured interviews. They started with descriptive questions – to identify main terms the phenomena of the research is defined by my informants, then they continued with structural questions – to reveal the hierarchy of the terms and to examine how strict the boundaries between these terms are. Finally, I asked the “last question”, i.e. “is there anything you'd like to ask me?” to get an

insight into the interviewees' own point of view and thereby to reveal new, unnoticed aspects of the issue under inquiry. I also used participant observation method to analyse the nation state from the minority's point of view. During the participant observation I took descriptive fieldnotes and wrote a diary, which involved an account on my own feelings, experiences, impressions, assumptions and thoughts, while staying in the field. These fieldnotes later were used as part of my data.

The fieldwork took place on two occasions. First in 2016 on the 6th of January, in a town of Eišiškės (south-east of Lithuania). During this fieldwork I made 5 interviews (Table 1). 4 semi-structured interviews with the elder of the town, the director of the Polish cultural house, the director of the town's Lithuanian school, a teacher of the Lithuanian school, and one unstructured interview with a young local I met accidentally. In Eišiškės I was accompanied by a local girl, who helped me in finding, contacting and interviewing the above-mentioned persons, the majority of whom she knew personally. The rest of the fieldwork lasted from 31st of March 2016 till 5th May 2016 (Table 1). The participant observation was carried out on 5 occasions – at 4 events organised by the Polish Discussion Club and the public celebration of the Polish Diaspora and Poles Abroad Day (March 30th) in Vilnius (Table 3). The Polish Discussion Club is a non-political alternative to the Polish minority party. It presents itself as a platform for an exchange of ideas and discussions for a Polish and a Lithuanian audience.¹⁰² The Polish Diaspora and Poles Abroad Day took place in Vilnius and was organized by the biggest Polish NGO – the Association of Poles in Lithuania. The celebration marked “the 225th anniversary of the 3rd May Constitution declaration, and the 1050th anniversary of the Baptism of Poland”.¹⁰³ During this part of the fieldwork 24

102 “Polski Klub Dyskusyjny - Lenkų Diskusijų Klubas,” accessed June 6, 2016, https://www.facebook.com/pages/Polski-Klub-Dyskusyjny-Lenk%C5%B3-Diskusij%C5%B3Klubas/359810477515105?sk=info&tab=page_info.

103 “Grand Celebration of Polish Diaspora and Poles Abroad Day in Vilnius - Media.efhr.eu,” accessed June 6, 2016, <http://media.efhr.eu/2016/05/02/grand-celebration-polish-diaspora-poles-abroad-day-vilnius/>.

semi-structured recorded and 2 unstructured and unrecorded interviews were made in total, of which there were 15 interviews with Polish soldiers (Table 3); 2 interviews/conversations with 3 “ordinary” Poles (unstructured and unrecorded), 9 interviews with Lithuanian Polish politicians, experts, members of paramilitary and cultural organisations, a businessman and a journalist. The paramilitary organisation, whose Polish members I have interviewed is called The Lithuanian Riflemen's Union. It is a militarised non-profit organisation supported by the state.

With whom?	Code	Recorded or not/duration	When
The elder of a predominantly Polish Eišiškės	The elder	Recorded / 29 min.	6 th January, 2016
Director of Polish cultural house in Eišiškės	Director cultural house	Recorded / 28 min.	6 th January, 2016
Director of Lithuanian school in Eišiškės	Director of Lithuanian school	Recorded / 49 min.	6 th January, 2016
Teacher at the Lithuanian school in Eišiškės	Teacher at the Lithuanian school	Recorded / 17 min.	6 th January, 2016
Student (originally from Eišiškės)	Student	No/ approx. 1 hour	6 th January, 2016
Liberal politician, right hand of the first politician	Polish liberal politician 2	Recorded / 40 min.	6 th March, 2016
Liberal politician from Šalčininkai	Polish liberal politician 1	Recorded / 38 min.	6 th March, 2016
Blogger, member of Polish Discussion Club	The blogger	Recorded / 1 hour 48 min.	6 th March, 2016
Principal of a Polish gymnasium	The principal	Recorded / 1 hour 21 min	8 th March, 2016
Member of the Lithuanian Rifleman Union	The Rifleman	Recorded / 1 hour 05 min.	8 th March, 2016
Director of Trakai Palace of Culture and of one Polish theatre in Vilnius	Cultural worker	Recorded / 1 hour 36 min.	15 th March, 2016
Businessman from Šalčininkai	Businessman	Recorded / 59 min.	21 st March, 2016
Journalist from Vilnius	Journalist	Recorded / 1 hour 47 min.	23 rd March, 2016
Politician from EAPL, vice president of APL, former vice minister of culture	Former vice minister of culture	Recorded / 1 hour 10 min.	5 th May, 2016
Two youngsters from Eišiškės	A brother and sister	No	21 st March, 2016
A pensioner	A pensioner	No	2 nd May, 2016

Table 2: Short description of interviews made during the fieldwork.

Event/topic	When happened?	Where happened?	Co-organisers	Guests	Parts attended
1. PDC's discussion with Darius Pocevičius on his new book about the forgotten history of Vilnius city.	31 st March, 2016	The House of Polish Culture in Vilnius, Naugarduko str. 76	-	Darius Pocevičius – famous Lithuanian anarchist, activist and self-taught historian.	Main and unofficial part
2. PDC's discussion with members of the Lithuanian liberal political party – Liberals' Movement of the Republic of Lithuania.	12 th March, 2016	The House of Polish Culture in Vilnius, Naugarduko str. 76	-	Members of the liberal party: Eligijus Masiulis – the chairman of the party; Vytautas Mitalas – member of the Vilnius City Council and a Chairman of the Council's Committee on Culture, Education and Sports.	Main and unofficial part
3. Presentation and discussion on a newly translated (into Lithuanian) book written by a famous Polish writer Jozef Mackiewicz.	7 th April, 2016	Church Heritage Museum, Šv. Mykolo St. 9	Editorial Board of "Naujas Židinys – Aidai" ("New Fire-Echoes") - an illustrated monthly, writing on religious, cultural and social issues.	Historian, editor in chief of the journal <i>Naujas Židinys-Aidai</i> (<i>New Fireplace – Echoes</i>); Assoc. prof. N. Šepetys (Vilnius University); <i>Art critic, prof. dr. Giedrė Jankevičiūtė</i> (Vilnius Academy of Arts); <i>Politologist</i> Mariusz Antonowicz (Vilnius university)	Main part
4. Discussion on Polish-Lithuanian cooperation in terms of regional security.	2 nd May, 2016	Institute of International Relations and Political Science (IIRPS), Vilnius University, Vokiečių str. 10	Institute of International Relations and Political Science (IIRPS), Vilnius University.	Managing editor at Energetyka24.com (Warsaw, Poland) Piotr Maciążek; Military expert, dr. Deividas Šlekys (Vilnius university); Journalist and a dean of Faculty of Politics and Management at Mykolas Romeris university dr. Virgis Valentiničius.	Main part After the event I talked with one participant of the event though.
5. Polish Diaspora and Poles Abroad Day, organised by the Association of Poles in Lithuania.	2 nd May, 2016	Vilnius city centre	-	Politicians from Poland and leaders of other Polish organizations abroad.	Some parts

Table 3: Events attended during participant observation.

Codes	Volunteer or a conscript?	Place of origin (municipality)	School	Main language(s) spoken at home*	Further plans (army)	Remarks on ethnicity (army experience, Polish identity, remarks of Polish issues)
S.0	Conscript and then a volunteer	Vilnius city	Polish	Polish	Does not stay	Some negative experience in the army. Lithuanian citizen of Polish origins
S.1	Volunteer	Vilnius d. m.	Lithuanian	Lithuanian	-	- Polish identity is vague.
S.2	Volunteer	Vilnius city	Lithuanian	Russian	Does not stay. Wanted to. Didn't like it.	Some negative experience in the army. Lithuanian citizen of Polish origins. Had some general remarks.
S.3	Volunteer (rifleman)	Vilnius d. m.	Lithuanian	Lithuanian	Does not stay	No negative experience. Polish identity is vague. Had some negative remarks on Poles.
S.4	Volunteer	Vilnius d. m.	Polish	Polish	Stays. Didn't plan.	No negative experience. Lithuanian citizen of Polish origins. Had some general remarks.
S.5	Volunteer	Vilnius city	Lithuanian	Russian and Lithuanian	-	No negative experience. Polish identity is vague.
S.6	Conscript and then a volunteer	Švenčionys d. m.	Lithuanian	Polish (<i>po prostu</i>)	Does not stay.	No negative experience. Polish identity is vague.
S.7	Volunteer	Elektrėnai city	Lithuanian	Polish	-	No negative experience. Polish identity is vague.
S.8	Conscript (full)	Švenčionys d. m.	Polish	Russian and Polish (<i>po prostu</i>)	Does not stay. Didn't like it.	No negative experience. Polish identity is vague.
S.9	Volunteer	Vilnius city	Russian	Russian	stays	No negative experience. Polish identity is vague.
S.10	Volunteer	Trakai d. m.	Lithuanian	Polish and Lithuanian	Does not stay. Wanted to. Didn't like it.	No negative experience. Polish identity is vague. Had some negative remarks on Poles.
S.11	Volunteer	Šalčininkai d. m.	Lithuanian	Russian and Polish	stays	No negative experience. Polish identity is somehow expressed. Had some remarks on the Lithuanian government.
S.12	Volunteer (rifleman)	Vilnius city	Lithuanian	Lithuanian, Russian and Polish	stays	No negative experience. Polish identity is vague. Very patriotic.
S.13	Volunteer	Vilnius city	Polish	Russian	Stays. Liked it, but not everything.	Some negative experience in the army. Polish identity is vague. Had some general remarks
S.14	Volunteer	Vilnius city	Lithuanian	Russian	Does not stay.	No negative experience. Vague Polish and stronger Russian identity. Had some general remarks.

Table 4: Interviewed Polish soldiers

The interviews were mostly made in cafés and pubs. The interviews with Polish soldiers – volunteers and conscripts – took place in a town called Rukla (central part of Lithuania), where soldiers do their military service.

Most of my interviewees, not counting Polish soldiers, were recruited with the help of

members of the PDC (snow-balling strategy). Others were recruited with the help of some of my acquaintances, or acquaintances of their acquaintances. There were few informants I have met by accident. After one of the PDC's event I met a woman, with whom we started talking about the Poles in Lithuania and Lithuania's relations with Poland. During the fieldwork I hitch-hiked to Šalčininkai – the biggest Polish town in Vilnija region – to recruit interviewees this way. Two young Poles from Eišiškės picked me from Šalčininkai while going to a job in Vilnius.

After the history of the minority's governance in an independent Lithuanian state was reconstructed, the interview guides were organised around three main thematic blocks: 1) questions related to personal and symbolic issues, i.e. Lithuanization of one's name, negative experiences due to discrimination on ethnic terms; 2) institutional issues, i.e. those relating to Polish schools, conscriptions; 3) changes in state-minority relations through different periods, i.e. the minority situation during the Soviet regime and afterwards, during the independence, the minority situation before and after the EU membership, situation of minority education before and after the education reform in Lithuania.

The data analysis started with transcription of the interviews and identification of the main categories related to the research questions. After this, statements and opinions related to these categories were coded according to their relation to the given topic. After the first reading of my data three broad blocks of categories were identified for the data analysis: the minority's perception of the state's policies; individual and group self-perception in terms of strategies for the improvement of the community's position *vis a vis* the state; and perceived threats to the community. I analysed these categories in few ways. First I looked 'inside' of each category and tried to define it through commonalities in category-related answers of my interviewees. Then I conducted a meta-analysis, treating these three

perceptions as inter-related: the way minority members see the state's actions allows one to analyse the way these members see themselves, their peers and their collective future vis a vis the state; this, as well as the perceived threats to the community, informs strategies for an improvement of the minority's position.

However, few limitations of the intended analysis must be mentioned here. First, the categories of the analysis can be applied only to those interviewees who expressed an interest in matters of the Polish community. There were few interviewees who called themselves Poles, but later told they were not very interested in Polish matters. This was the case with the majority of the Polish soldiers interviewed for this research. Another important reservation is the homogeneity of the sample – most of my interviewees knew each other through the membership or participation in the activities organised by the PDC. None of my informants minded to be recorded. However, some refused to answer questions related to political issues. During the two fieldworks I have unsuccessfully attempted to interview several directors of Polish schools (in Eišiškės, Šalčininkai, Pabradė and in two Polish schools of Vilnius) the director of Šalčininkai town's hospital, and one Polish conscript. The director of the Polish school in Eišiškės first required to see the interview questions. However, after she received the questions, they appeared offensive to her and she refused to talk. The rest simply did not reply to my e-mails. Polish schools are often affiliated with the Polish minority party. Therefore, the other side – supporters of the EAPL and representatives of minority schools – remains under-represented in this analysis.

The study was conducted in accordance with principles of ethical research. Before interviewees were informed about the research and its purpose. Each participant was agreed to be interviewed and recorded voluntarily. Participants' names were changed so their anonymity is guaranteed.

5. DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

The present chapter is composed of 3 sections, each dealing with 3 different perceptions held by the members of the Polish minority interviewed for this study: 1. the minority's perception of the state's minority policies and minority-related activities; 2. individual and group self-perception in terms of strategies for the improvement of the community's position; 3. and perception of possible threats to the community's survival as well as strategies for responding to such threats. The third chapter presented a short history of the governance of Poles in Lithuania and analysed Lithuania's ethno-democratic governmentality (rationales and techniques of the minority's governance). If chapter 3 described and analysed what the state does (or does not do) to the minority, then the following chapter takes a bottom-up position and examines what Poles “do” with the state (category).

5.2 Perceiving the Ethno-democratic (Ambiguous) Governance

In the following section I examine how an ambiguity ingrained in the Lithuanian ethno-democratic political regime is reflected in my interviewees' answers to questions about minority education, linguistic rights, enactment of the Law on Ethnic minorities and re-establishment of the Department of National Minorities. These topics have been presented in greater detail in chapter 3. They were also touched upon during my interviews. In this section I look at how the state's actions related to these issues are seen among and rationalised by my Polish respondents.

5.2.1 The State-effect in Minority Education

I start the discussion by looking at how members of the Polish minority perceive the state's policies related to the changes in the law of education (see chapter's 3 section 3.5.3). During the fieldwork I interviewed a principal of one Polish gymnasium in Vilnius. I asked him to describe the state's education policy in general and minority education policy in particular. His first remark was “there is no [education] policy in Lithuania”. Yet, he quickly specified that the state's education policy has been undergoing reforms for several years already and that this reform is inconsistent. He gave an example that, according to the reform, primary and secondary schools should have been replaced with gymnasiums and pro-gymnasiums. Yet, in Vilnius some schools managed to avoid these changes through protection of some influential politicians. From the state's education policy in general we slowly moved to the topic of minority education. The principle first said that due to its specific nature minorities' education requires specific attention and more resources. Therefore, minorities' education in Lithuania is often perceived as an unwanted burden: “From one side there is an attention, when we talk that national minorities are our fortune, however the real policy, throughout the period of different governments since the state's independence, [laughing] has been that it would be better there would be no minorities in the country. [...] This makes us sad as Poles and as pedagogues” he added. The principal provided a few examples of how the state attempts to shake this burden off:

For example, if we would look at the preparation of textbooks... the government washes its hands of it. It adds some money to the school voucher, 20 percent more approximately, yet a textbook sometimes costs 3-5 times more. [...] In the case of primary and lower secondary school these textbooks are still provided. In secondary school – not anymore, which means that the state has put off this duty from itself and the last textbook was prepared, perhaps... in nineteen ninety something.

Yet, textbooks seemed to be only a detail of a broader concern expressed by the principal. He regretted that though the state guarantees and finances education in the minority's mother tongue, later it pays no attention to the results of this education. “For twelve years it [the state] finances teaching of this thing, yet after it shows no interests in results of this education“, - the principal said. Moreover, he explained that according to the new version of the Law on Education, changed in 2011, the mother tongue exam became optional. Yet after protests against these amendments changes were made, saying that the exam becomes compulsory if it is decided by the minority's school council. I had a feeling that the principal expressed his regret over these issues not only as a Pole, but also as a pedagogue, seeing how others don't care about what is precious for him. Some of my interviewees, i.e. the first politician and the journalist – graduates of Polish schools – said they didn't want to take the Polish language exam, because it required time for preparation, yet, their teachers had made them to take it. This illustrates the principal's implicit argument that minorities' education in their mother tongue is left to their own responsibility.

However, my discussion of how Poles see the state's policy on minority education remains limited because it is mostly based on an opinion of one expert, that is – the principal. The principal advised me and I tried to interview principals of some other minority schools from Vilnius and from Vilnija region in general, however, my attempts were unsuccessful. Yet I met some representatives of Polish schools, mostly members of an NGO uniting parent of Polish schools, during one of the PDC's events – a discussion with the leaders of the Lithuanian liberal party. During the discussion Poles, affiliated with the aforementioned NGO and with the EAPL, accused liberals of making empty promises before the elections. They also reminded the audience that this unilateral reform, done by the liberal minister, caused huge damage to Polish education. The principal and the EAPL-affiliated

representatives of Polish schools thus could be seen as examples of two different opinions over the state's position towards minority education: the principal regrets the state does not do enough for the minority education, while the other side thinks the state does too much harm to it. Since I haven't interviewed members of the second side I can only assume, based on what I have heard them saying during the discussion, that in their eyes the state's actions *vis a vis* minority's education would seem less ambiguous and probably more ill-disposed.

The core idea behind the changes in the Law on Education, for which in the above-mentioned discussion some Poles were blaming that evening's liberal guests, was the standardisation of teaching and examining in Lithuanian language for both – minority and majority – pupils. In practice these changes meant that minority pupils would need to have more subject taught in Lithuanian, therefore for Poles that I have encountered in the aforementioned discussion, these reforms could have seemed as an attempt of assimilation. The principal was also critical about this decision to strengthen minority's education in Lithuanian and referred to this decision in the following vein: “the government tries to make us happy against our own will”. I got an impression that for him even in the case of the state's initiative to standardise exams, the state's actions remained ambiguous and incoherent. The principal explained that responsible institutions haven't prepared methodology on how to teach Poles Lithuanian, without worsening the conditions of the education in their mother tongue.

In many cases, a child from a Polish or Russian family does not have basic knowledge of Lithuanian [...] no one talks about the methodology how to teach this minority child Lithuanian. [...] Yet, in order for this programme to be realized, you need to take these hours from someone. [...] So at whose expense should it be done? Polish language again? Well, that would not be good because [...] we have a Russification problem, because Russian culture penetrated Poles deep, because there was no intelligentsia. Moreover, the two languages are very similar. On the other hand we do nothing to reduce the amount of Russian propaganda...

The principal's quote points to several things. First, it points to the state's ambiguity, finding an expression in its decisions made without having a clearer strategy. Secondly it shows that the principal linked the minority's education and security issues (propaganda). This remark anticipates the topic of negotiating the minority's position in the state, suggesting that Polish pupils' poor knowledge of their mother tongue leaves the minority vulnerable to Russia's propaganda. I will discuss this argument in a more detailed way in section 5.4. At this moment of the analysis such a remark could be seen as an expression of a common concern over Russia's influence through propaganda, which in Lithuania is seen as a threat not only among the Polish minority but among Lithuanians as well. Paraphrasing the principal's remark, we could say that strengthening minority's education in Lithuanian at the expense of education in Polish, would weaken the minority's knowledge of Polish, and would facilitate the minority's Russification. Strengthening of the minority's education in Lithuanian as such didn't seem to be a problem for him. The problem is that there is no methodology how to strengthen it without causing a harm to the minority's education in Polish.

Further, I focus on how the nature of education policy is explained among my other informants. My second expert interviewee – a Polish blogger, writing on various issues related to the minority's life, and one of the founders of PDC, said that there are several possible reasons behind the decision to standardise the Lithuanian matura exam. Nationalistic 'allergy' for the Polish language could have been one of them. Yet, being a lawyer, he said that the way this decision was implemented shows the lack of legal culture in the state. According to him, if a proper transitory period, i.e. 8 years, would have been made, the majority of Poles would not have minded these reforms. However, he added that the major problem here was not the length of the transitory period. He told that “in fact even this two-year period was unlawful”, for it was an arbitrary decision made by the education minister, when after the

changes in the law of education, the minister himself saw that one year was simply not enough to prepare for the new order. He pondered that these arbitrary and thus unlawful decisions could be explained by politicians' wish to demonstrate quick results and that perhaps that was the style of the state's previous conservative-liberal government's work. The blogger remembered that discussions on the education reform had been going on for quite a long time but then reforms were made all of a sudden, ignoring all the alternative suggestions made by the position of social-democrats and the EAPL. "To do first and then to look what comes after" - that was the guiding principle behind the reform-oriented decisions, according to the blogger. He said that there could have been some bad will from certain nationalistic politicians. "However, I think that the majority genuinely believed that they were doing a good thing", he said. Thus the blogger's reflections upon the changes in minority education show an attempt to rationalise the state's actions seeing it in the context of the state's larger problems, i.e. lack of a legal culture, meaning that minority problems are not necessarily seen as specific.

However, my other interviewees were less empathic when trying to explain the state's educational policies. Even those interviewees (the journalist and the second politician) who didn't mind the idea of exam standardisation, said it was done with a reckless haste and that a longer transitory period should have been provided. During my interview with the second politician, she described conditions of the minority education as "good". However, at the end of the interview, when I asked if there was anything else she might have suggested to talk about in terms of the situation of Poles in Lithuania, she quickly mentioned the issue of the exam standardisation and said she would have become furious if someone would have told her to take standardised Lithuanian language exam in her 12th class. The Šalčininkai-based businessman pondered during our conversation that these decisions spring perhaps from

certain politicians' antipathy to Poles. He recalled the time at school during the Soviet times, and said they had no obstacles with learning in Polish. He added that the situation in schools is not the same as it was 25 years ago, and that more has been destroyed than built. "If they wanted to do it [standardisation], why haven't they done it earlier, at the beginning of independence?" - he said.

Summing up what has been said so far, the state's policy on minority education among the interviewed Poles is seen as lacking coherence, strategic planning, interest, often based on *ad hoc* decisions and sometimes hypocritical or ill-disposed. In the case of some interviewees these problems were seen as part of the state's larger problems related to planning and implementing various, i.e. educational, policies. In the following section I examine how members of the minority see and rationalise the state's actions in terms of enactment of minority rights. I look at whether in the case of these problems the state's governance is still perceived in the same way.

5. 2. 2 The State-effect in the Enactment of Minority Rights

Many of those whom I had a chance to interview, during our interviews brought up such topics as a right to Polish street names and personal names in passports, re-establishment of the Department of National Minorities and the broader topic of the state's support for minority culture. Yet, they had different opinions about these issues and often prioritised them differently. For example the Polish journalist said she does not support the idea of bilingual street names, however she supported the right to write one's name and surname in her passport in Polish, because name and surname is a part of one's own identity. The rifleman as well as few volunteers serving at the Lithuanian army held a similar opinion. One soldier (S. 4), when

asked for his opinion on names and street names, told me he would not change his surname, because that's something he had inherited from his ancestors. As for the street names, it would do good for, say, tourists. Plates with street names in both – Lithuanian and Polish – are hanging in his home-town and because of this nothing bad happened, he said. The elder of one predominantly Polish town was ironic about it, for while Poles are not allowed to write their surnames in Polish, public institutions, i.e. those belonging to the Lithuanian Post, have English names. Yet, I had a feeling that for the majority this question seemed to be trivial. I have already mentioned the discussion PDC has organised with the leaders of Lithuanian liberal politicians. Although the event was marked with heated debates, these linguistic issues received little attention from the audience. To my surprise, the issue seemed to be of little importance for the Poles, while the guests of the event – liberal politicians – kept emphasising this issue constantly and promised a solution to it.

Yet, although for most of my interviewees these issues were not that important personally, some of them emphasised the political importance of having these issues solved in the minority's favour. During the discussion PDC organized on the issues of international security, one Lithuanian political scientist and a former adviser of the state's former Prime Minister A. Kubilius told the audience why the issue of names and surnames had not been solved yet. He said that the conservative government wanted to solve the issue, however, the initiative was sabotaged by a former minister for foreign affairs, delegated by conservatives, who did this out of convenience, minding his own popularity. Later both – the guest and the organisers of the event regretted that certain politician's ambitions impede attempts to solve linguistic problems, because it does not help to improve relations between Poland and Lithuania – two strategic partners in terms of regional security.

Another example of a decision important to national minorities and not yet made

relates to the already mentioned defunct Law on Ethnic Minorities. My expert interviewees were aware of the absence of the law and had different opinions about why the law is still defunct. During my second field trip I had an interview with the third expert, a politician from a Polish party and a vice president of the biggest Polish NGO, the Association of Poles in Lithuania (LLA). While EAPL was still working in the state's 15th government, this politician was the state's vice minister of culture. At that time the ministry was the main institution implementing the state's national minority policy.¹⁰⁴ When he became a vice minister, he took a lead to prepare the new minority law. He explained, that the project of the bill was prepared together with other relevant ministries and in accordance to all the standards of legislative procedures. The finished project was sent to the government, expecting that it would send the project further to the Parliament. Yet, the bill has been stuck in the government, and as suggested by the vice minister, it has not been passed solely because of the lack of political will. A clarification needs to be made here. At the beginning of this chapter it was stated that further I will look at the minority issues “from below”. Yet now it may seem that two perspectives – political and that of 'ordinary Poles' are being mixed up. Yet, the interviewed politician is a member of both – major minority party and the biggest Polish NGO. The fact that these two institutions often work hand in hand and as it was explained earlier (chapter's 3 section 3.5) the two institutions have common roots, make these two perspectives inter-related and hard to separate. During the interview he used expressions as 'in my opinion', 'personally I think', which in his case only makes it harder to separate top down and bottom-up perspectives.

Coming back to my interview with the former vice minister, I asked what, according to him, is the biggest obstacle for passing the Law on Ethnic minorities today? His answer

104 The Department of National Minorities and Lithuanians Living Abroad had been reorganized in 2010 and part of its competences concerning national minorities had been prescribed to the Ministry of Culture.

was – discord over the linguistic issues. Therefore, it seems that the real reason this rather trivial but at the same time internationally important issue has not been solved yet is rather banal. The will to protect the minority's linguistic rights is limited by another will – to protect the official position of the Lithuanian language. Thus, as it has been shown previously (chapter's 3 section 3.3. 1), the nature of the problem has not changed since the re-establishment of the state's independence.

The principal of the school was more suspicious, when talking about the reasons the minority law has not been passed yet:

Who knows when the Law on Ethnic Minorities will be passed by our politicians. [...] there is some kind of not normal contraposition, for, as it is commonly said, Poles can not be called a “national minority”, and only can be referred to as a “community”. For if we apply the term 'national minority' then there is the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and other international documents... but if we acknowledge that we don't have national minorities, then we don't have to implement this convention...

So in this case the state's actions are seen as intentional, calculated and detrimental, for the state is seen as not passing the minority law on purpose.

Having said that the reason why the minority law has not yet been passed is either the politicians' lack of will or a will not to pass it on purpose, the ambiguity surrounding the absence of the minority law looks even stranger in the light of some concrete steps the state has actually made to improve the minority's situation. An example of such a step is the re-establishment of the Department of National Minorities (described in detail in chapter's 3 section 3.5). The principal of the Polish school called it a “department of air” for without the minority law, the department does not possess tools necessary for protecting minority rights. I asked the vice-minister for his opinion about the re-establishment of the department. He was sceptical about it and said the department has only a demonstrative value – the government

just wanted to show that it does something for the minorities. Moreover, as he explained, the department functions separately from the Ministry of Culture – the main institution responsible for the implementation of the minority policy. Such a situation then suggests a lack of consistency within the institutional framework of the minority rights protection and provides yet another example of the state's ambiguous stance *vis a vis* its minorities. Summing up it can be said that both of my interviewees felt that on the one hand the state wants to demonstrate its concern for minority interests, yet on the other hand the interest it shows seems to be unsound.

I have already mentioned that linguistic problems and the state's ambiguous posture *vis a vis* this problem is an old issue. According to the Polish blogger, the problem of another related linguistic issue – Polish street names - is 6-7 years old. Yet, the situation became hot unintentionally and it was a product of specific circumstances:

There was the Law of Ethnic Minorities which kind of allowed [writing street names in Polish] kind of didn't, there was a space for one interpretation, but in 2010 it ceased functioning. The new law was not passed and since then all the problems have started... because since then it became clear that they [Polish street names] became illegal, right? Because till then [...] the state institutions looked at these issues indulgently. When these problems appeared, confrontation increased...because I wouldn't say that till then there had been any serious confrontation between Poles and Lithuanians, because the problems were not solved, but on the other hand there had been no interference into [minority's] internal affairs.... the regions were left to be ruled by Tomaszewski [...] the education reform had been constantly postponed... the plates were hanging... legal or not – there had been some sluggish discussions on that, however, no one was doing anything, till this wave of activities has started – reforms in education started, the minority law expired and so forth – and thus suddenly all the problems have accumulated.

The quote actually summarises 4 periods of the majority-minority relations defined in the previous chapter (Chapter 3) and sheds a light on the way the stability of an ethno-democratic regime is ensured. It seems that ambiguity defining the state-minority relations is at the core

of this stability. During the mentioned interviews I got an impression that in terms of the state's ambiguous attitude towards its national minorities none of my respondents saw the minority situation in the country as satisfactory. So far the data analysis showed that people I spoke with have different perspectives toward the state. Does that mean that the Polish minority sees inconsistency in the state's actions towards them? Or to put it in other words – is there, speaking in terms of T. Mitchell, a state-effect – a perception that the state implements minority policies and guarantees minority rights? To this point I think the answer is no, for the state's performance is seen as ineffective, or the effect is not satisfactory. Minority schooling is financed, yet the state is not interested in the results of this schooling. Reforms, i.e. education, are made, but hastily, without discussing it with interested parties and without clear strategy on how to achieve the goals of these reforms. Linguistic issues – seemingly the easiest problem to solve – seem trivial, yet the state hasn't managed to solve it yet. Finally, the minority law has not been passed yet, because it got trapped in discussions over these trivial linguistic issues and there is a lack of political will to pass the legislation. Yet, although the law is still defunct, the Department of National Minorities has been re-established already. My interviewees explained these inconsistencies differently – some saw bad faith in the state's actions, some explained it as a part of larger problems of the state, i.e. lack of legal culture, some simply did not understand why certain decisions have been made. The chapter's next two sections continue tackling these perceptions, yet in a more elaborate way.

Having described how certain minority-related activities of the state appear to be seen among my Polish interviewees and having defined how they explain the nature of such activities, I now move further and examine what has been promised in the title of my thesis – the Polish minority's response to the governance of the Lithuanian state. In the chapter's next two sections I ask: a) why the interviewed Poles explain the nature of this ambiguity in such a

different way and how these Poles see the situation of the Polish minority in Lithuania, focusing on the threats to the minority's existence, assuming that there is a relation between the state's perception and their self and group perception; b) having examined their self-identification and their considerations on the perspectives and possible threats to the Polish community in Lithuania, I return to the issue of the state's ambiguity and look at the ways and reasons this ambiguity is negotiated, concerning the community threats named by my interviewees.

5. 3 Responses to the Ethno-democratic Ambiguity

The first thing to mention here is that instead of a response we need to talk about many different responses, for different Poles saw themselves, other Poles and their community's future differently. The task therefore is to classify these perceptions and responses. During my fieldwork in a small Polish town of Eišiškės a few Polish youngsters told me that Poles tend to Lithuanise their names and surnames 'just to avoid problems' or in order to get a desired job, as in case of one Polish soldier (S.2), who wants to join the Military Police, but, as he told me, for this he would need to Lithuanise his name. Such acts, even if only intended, shows the importance of the question of names and surnames, and illustrates the low level of tolerance to linguistically "others" in the Lithuanian society. There is also the question of internalization of the majority's gaze upon the Polish minority as a troublemaker. When I asked one Polish soldier, in fact a volunteer (S. 3) and a long-term rifleman, my final question "what would you ask me if we'd switch the roles?", he suggested to ask other Poles about "Polish movements," probably referring to EAPL. "Due to their standing out the nationality

'Pole' becomes like a swearword. They put themselves to the front lines and then complain. One should first think what he does", - he said. He pondered that there are no Lithuanian street names in places inhabited by Lithuanians abroad.¹⁰⁵ This soldier, was a rare exception among my other Polish soldier interviewees, for many of the soldiers interviewed did not care about Polish minority either at all, or cared very little. However, not everyone is opting out. High number of participants marching proudly at the streets of Vilnius during the parade of the Polish Diaspora and Poles Abroad Day, which I was able observe in May during my field-trip, proves that Poles constitute a viable and visible community.

The few interviewees mentioned here, together with an example of Polish soldiers were often indifferent to their Polish background and were not that interested in the minority's issues. Among those who were interested and who take an active stance in minority's matters are those who support EAPL and those who do not. In this research the first group is represented by the following interviewees: the elder of Eiškės, the director of a cultural centre, the businessman from Šalčininkai, the rifleman, the former vice minister of culture and some people that I was able to observe during the PDC's discussion hosting liberal politicians. The second group, characterised by its members' dissatisfaction with the EAPL's strategies when representing the minority's interests domestically and internationally, is represented by the two politicians, the journalists, the blogger, the principal, the rifleman (partly) and other members of the PDC. Although having different goals, yet the two groups sometimes overlap in case of their members, ideas, strategies and goals. As mentioned in the methodology chapter, the first group of Poles, that is those who seek minority rights protection within the framework of the Polish minority party remains under-represented in this research. Because of this limitation, further I will focus my attention to those interviewees who oppose to the

¹⁰⁵ However, this is not true. This is a normal practice in Poland and the author of this thesis has witnessed it himself several times, when visiting regions in Poland that are inhabited by the Lithuanian minority.

EAPL.

Most of my participant observations were done during the events organised by the PDC, a loose organisation uniting Poles that do not support activities carried out by the minority party. During our conversation I asked the blogger about the PDC's origins and its further plans. He said that the idea to establish such a club had been raised earlier, however only few years ago he and his other Polish friends finally decided to establish the club. The blogger also explained that the club was established as an open and apolitical organisation on purpose. Had it been established as another minority party, they would be labelled as selfish and ruining political unity achieved by the EAPL. Yet, it seems that dissatisfaction with the EAPL's performance was the main reason to establish the club:

But the main idea was to show that there are differently thinking people among Lithuanian Poles, to start the dialogue first among the Poles themselves, so that they would start to communicate and to look for possibilities to achieve their aims, [...] and first and foremost to bring up new leaders... that is to say opinion leaders... because well.. the situation in the whole community is being associated with a single man, with Tomaszewski is... incorrect and bad in the sense that... of course he has support, huge support, but it is far from one hundred percent.. well in fact..maybe his support reaches fifty-sixty percent...

The quote does not tell why it is bad that the whole community is associated with one man, the party's leader. Yet, it can be guessed that those who associate the Polish minority with its political leaders is the Lithuanian majority. Tomaszewski is one of the least liked politicians in the country, especially after his pro-Russian stance during the crisis in Ukraine. Thus the blogger, as well as other members of PDC seek in the eyes of the Lithuanian majority to dissociate the Polish minority from its political leadership. That would explain the expressed need for opinion leaders or opinion makers. The club thus would be an alternative for those Poles who do not support Tomaszewski, but do not see an alternative for the EAPL, and those who do not want the Lithuanian majority to judge them according to the deeds of the EAPL's

leaders. In other words, the club was created as a mean for an escape from the trap between Lithuanian majority and so to say the majority of the Polish minority. The blogger also told me that the percentage of Poles who vote for EAPL is higher, compared to the percentage of Poles who support EAPL's leaders. This adds to the earlier observation that pro-EAPL and contra-EAPL sometimes overlap. And considering the mentioned voters there is a reason to think this overlap is constituted by those who do not support EAPL, yet who either think that there is no other alternative to EAPL or who do not want to undermine the minority's unity, which this party has achieved.

I asked the blogger about the future plans of the club. Since it is based in Vilnius, maybe they had been planning to organize their club's activities in the periphery? He said that they tried to organize a few discussions in a few Polish towns – Nemenčinė and Šalčininkai – however, suddenly all the doors appeared to be closed for them (because of EAPL). Now everyone understands that discussions alone are not enough. This is not that effective anymore. Discussions helped to build a community, “to pull out everyone from their kitchens”, as the blogger told me, and to create a community. Now there are many different ideas what to do next: to create a think-tank, to strengthen the Polish media, or to engage in cultural activities. However, once again he emphasised that political activities are not considered.

Yet, not all of my interviewees affiliated with the PDC decided to stay aside from politics. The two Polish politicians from the Lithuanian liberal party had different motivations for participating in the party's activities: the first politician decided to start her political career out of vocation, while for the second politician, her colleague and a helping hand, it was more like a job. Their identification with the Polish minority also differed: the second politician told me she comes from an old Polish-Lithuanian noble family, whose genealogy dates back to the

16th century. While the second politician, at the end of our interview, when the microphone was turned down, said “What kind of Pole am I. Even, the tongue I speak is not Polish but *po prostu*”. Yet both seemed to be dissatisfied with EAPL's performance and said that there is a need for change in terms of representation of the minority's interests. To my question what exactly brought the first politician into politics she answered it was EAPL's detrimental dominance, which became possible because the Lithuanian political parties decided to withdrew from Vilnija region. She said that for seven years she has been working actively as a volunteer in Šalčininkai, mostly with various EU funded youth exchange projects. However, when Šalčininkai municipality rejected her voluntary initiatives and refused to host few of her organised events and when the town's mayor, delegated by the EAPL party, explained to her that she should have graduated from a Polish school, and that her parents made a wrong decision by sending her to the Lithuanian school, this, as she told, encouraged her to start participating actively in politics. She also explained that being a long time volunteer taught her how to survive on tough conditions and her volunteer background makes her a fully independent and fearless politician. I asked her how she expects to fight the dominant position of EAPL it has in representing the interests of the Polish minority? Moreover, if, as she has told me earlier, the main Lithuanian parties “left the region [Vilnija region] to be ruled by Tomaszewski”? It would require a long-term strategy, she said, working primarily with Lithuanian voters and other Lithuanian politicians, i.e. the liberal party, trying to convince them not to abandon the region, and to show that there are “other Poles“, “who do not support Tomaszewski“.

My other interviewees had different self-perceptions and strategies for the improvement of the minority's situation. The principal said the state should apply the means of positive discrimination to strengthen the education of Poles in their mother tongue. This

would strengthen the Polish culture *vis a vis* Russian culture and would also correspond to such European initiatives as the promotion of multilingualism. He said that fears about minority schools growing disloyal citizens is a nuisance and was sure his school educates Polish-speaking Lithuanian patriots. The director of a cultural house of one ethnically mixed Lithuanian town and also a director of one Polish theatre said that he and his centre is trying to “bring culture to the masses“. The two interviewees together with the blogger and the former vice minister of culture expressed the need to support and strengthen Polish culture in Lithuania.

In fact one of the PDC's events I attended during my field trip was dedicated precisely to this aim. It was a presentation of a newly translated (into Lithuanian) book written by a famous Polish writer Jozef Mackiewicz, who was born in the Vilnius region. The importance of this author lies in his sympathies for *krajowcy* – a group of 20 century, pre-war Polish speaking intelligentsia, who identified themselves with the political tradition of Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. His figure provides a historical example of an identity allowing one at the same time to be both – a Pole and a Lithuanian citizen. Another important characteristic of this author was his anticommunism and his fierce critique of Polish and Lithuanian nationalism, which prevented the two countries from cooperating against the Soviet threat and was harmful not only to the Lithuanian and Polish states but also to the Polish community in Vilnius region (mass migration, Sovietization and Russification). This instance shows that in case of some Poles common Lithuanian-Polish history and common historical threats become an important source for projecting the minority's future relations with the state.

To sum up, most of those Poles that affiliate with the club, see themselves as Lithuanian citizens of Polish origins. The blogger for example was concerned about the

negative public image of Poles in Lithuania. The two politicians, trying to implement minority agenda within the framework of Lithuanian political parties, expressed an idea that the fight against EAPL and the improvement of the minority's position should be done together with the Lithuanian majority. The principal of the Polish school emphasised that his school is bringing up Lithuanian citizens, who speak Polish. Finally, the PDC's activities indicate an attempt of cooperation and dialogue with Lithuanian majority. The event organized for the presentation on J. Mackiewicz's book shows that there is an attempt to ground this intended cooperation on the common history when both nations lived together in one state. Another commonality of these interviewees is their antipathy to EAPL. Yet, despite these commonalities it remains unclear why they have reflected on the state's ambiguous governance towards them so differently? This requires deeper analysis and more data, yet for now one thing seems to be clear – it would be a mistake to reduce these interviewees to their nationality. Their interpretations of the minority-related state policies were shaped not only by their ethnic but also by their social identity: as the previous chapter showed they interpreted these policies not only as Poles, but also as pedagogues, lawyers, politicians, concerned citizens, or just people who happened to be Poles. Also some interviewees tried to explain minority problems as a part of the state's bigger problems, for they related to these bigger problems on the basis of their professional experience in the related fields: the pedagogue explained that the minority's problems reflect general problems of education in the country, the first politician believed that minority problems are caused not only by EAPL's non productive activities, but also by withdrawal of Lithuanian parties from the region. The question then is what do these interpretations mean in terms of the state's ambiguous governance of the minority?

5.4 Negotiating the State's Ambiguous Governance

The first thing I noticed during some of my interviews was people's dissatisfaction with uncertainty concerning the state's attitude towards the minority. A good illustration for this was the principal's complaint about the state, which finances the minority education, but does not pay attention to the results of this education. The blogger told me that one of the main problems in the state's relation to its national minorities is a lack of a clear idea of what it wants to do with minorities:

The state, first should know, what it wants from national minorities. To assimilate them? To have loyal citizens, a multicultural society or to turn ethnic identity into one's own private business? There are many possible options here, yet till now there has been no decision which one to take.

Contrary to the state's undefined position, some of my interviewees had a clearer idea of what role the state should undertake *vis a vis* its minorities. The Polish rifleman said that if it happened that Vilnija region now belongs to the Lithuanian state, then it should act as a proper host of this territory. His claim could be interpreted as a reference to the conventional image of the state, as a supreme governing force. This conventional image is used against the state itself to substantiate the validity of his claim.

The former vice minister of culture made similar claims on behalf of the state. When I told him that the new bill of the minority law was criticised for being too similar to the first minority law, legislated during the last days of Lithuanian SSR (*ergo* too 'Sovietic'), he referred to the existing norms of the lawmaking in Lithuania and said that in that sense the bill was prepared correctly. Later on during the conversation he said that lawyers working in the

government had nothing against the draft and the only thing that stands in the bill's way is the lack of political will to pass the law. In other words, he used existing legal standards to refute criticism for his work as a vice minister, expressed by some of the state's politicians. To sum up, these 3 interviewees made an implicit argument that the state should have an interest in the minority's matters, follow its own legal norms and procedures and finally have policies based on a strategy and vision. In other words, they made a claim that the state should govern. Such image refers to the definition of the state proposed by T. Mitchell – the state as a structuring effect finding its expression in the perceived distinction between the governor and the governed.

Yet, the question then is why this governance is needed? What minority interests are at stake and in the name of what should the governor govern? I have already mentioned that many of my informants were preoccupied with the weak position of Polish culture among the members of the Lithuanian Polish minority. During one of the previous PDC discussions, which I didn't have a chance to attend, the director of one Polish radio said that there are few thousand Poles, actively participating and consuming Polish culture.¹⁰⁶ The rest is either indifferent to it, or consume mostly Russian culture. The principal and the blogger told me that this is a legacy of the Soviet regime, when the higher strata of the Polish minority left the region and moved to Poland. Since then Polish minority haven't brought up a new elite for themselves and that's why Russian culture has penetrated the minority so much. I have witnessed this once again during my interviews with Polish soldiers, when out of 15 interviewees 4 admitted that one of the languages spoken at their home is Russian. Moreover, the director of the Polish theatre during our conversation used many phrases, expressions and quotes in Russian.

106 “Naujasis Židinys-Aidai : Naujienos : Šiandiena : Ar Užtektinai Lietuvoje Yra Lenkiškos Kultūros?,” *Naujasis Židinys-Aidai*, accessed June 5, 2016, <http://www.nzidiny.lt/946441/naujienos/siandiena/ar-uztektinai-lietuvoje-yra-lenkiskos-kulturos>.

It was perhaps because of this the weak position of the Polish culture among Poles that I felt my interviewees' preoccupation with Polish culture. During my first participant observation, I attended an event dedicated to the presentation of a book on the forgotten history of Vilnius, written by the self-taught and independent, as he presented himself to the audience, famous Lithuanian anarchist Darius Pocevičius. During that event he suggested that a “developed and high-quality Polish culture” is a necessary condition for the improvement of Polish-Lithuanian relations. According to him Poles need a new Miłosz and Ruszczyc,¹⁰⁷ then their community will have a greater cultural weight, providing more symbolical capital to its members. After the event, when I joined the organisers and the guest in the unofficial part of the event at a local pub, I've heard a few Poles repeating this advice and discussing it further. I have already mentioned another PDC's event organised for the presentation of J. Mackiewicz's book. These two events shows that members of the club are concerned about the cultural life of the Polish community.

My other interviewees also expressed the need to strengthen Polish culture and expressed the belief that this should be an interest not only of Poles, but of the state as well. And the argument when negotiating for the state's interest in maintaining Polish culture among Poles, was one of the most interesting finding during the fieldwork. When I talked to the principal of the Polish gymnasium he said the state's greater support for the minority's education in their mother tongue, i.e. by applying means of positive discrimination for Polish-speaking minority students who want to study at the university, would correspond to the EU's agenda of the spread of multilingualism. Yet, it would also help to prevent further Russification of Poles in Lithuania. The director of a cultural house and a Polish theatre expressed a wish the the state would give more support for Polish culture. He was also

107 Czesław Miłosz (1911 – 2004) and Ferdinand Ruszczyc (1870 – 1936) – a famous Polish writer and a painter from Lithuania.

dissatisfied with the low level of Polish culture and convinced that people should be provided with high-quality culture. Otherwise, they will further consume “cheap things”, by which he meant low-quality Russian culture, which is attractive and available to Poles because they know Russian well.

When I talked to the blogger, we tackled topics of Lithuanisation and Russification of a Polish community. More than Lithuanisation he emphasised something he named “secondary Russification”. According to him, Lithuanisation is a natural process because, Poles live and plan their life in Lithuania. It happens even in such countries as Finland, where, as he said, national minorities have ideal conditions for preserving their culture. What surprises him is this “secondary Russification,” which started in 1994, when the re-broadcasting of Polish TV channels in Lithuania was stopped. Mixed – Russian and Polish – families was another factor facilitating this secondary Russification. Finally, older generations still spoke Russian, which they easily learned during the Soviet time because of the similarity between the two Slavic languages. Therefore, when Polish channels disappeared, Poles turned back to the Russian media and Russian culture again. And now, according to the blogger, because of EAPL's alliance with politicians from the Russian minority, no one from EAPL's dares to talk about Russification of Poles.

Dissatisfaction with the influence of Russian culture over Polish minority results in sometimes antagonistic relations between Poles who support EAPL and those who don't. One of the reasons of this discord is the EAPL's cooperation with Lithuanian Russian political parties as well as W. Tomaszewski's pro-Russian stance during the crisis in Ukraine (Picture 1). In the chapter's 3 section 3.6 I have already quoted one Lithuanian Pole, saying that true Poles remember the Katyn massacre, when 40, 000 of Poles were brutally murdered by the Soviet regime. Therefore, today a Pole would never wear the Ribbon of Saint George – a

symbol of pro-Russian fighters in Ukraine. I have also mentioned the first politicians's disappointment of EAPL's governance of the Polish municipalities. She too evaluated EAPL leaders' pro-Russian stance as a threat to the national security. It seems that W. Tomaszewski's public demonstration of pro-Russian views has only deepened ideological division within the Polish community. EAPL leadership's pro-Russianness was evaluated negatively among the members of the PDC too.

In other parts of my thesis (chapter 3, section 3. 6) I have already mentioned that after the crisis in Ukraine, Lithuanian politicians became concerned not only about external, but also about internal threats, which related mostly to the loyalty of the state's national minority. Rhetorics of the state's official became more civic, emphasising the state as a home for all its inhabitants. I have noticed a similar rhetoric among both types of my interviewees – among those who oppose EAPL and among those who seek to defend the minority rights working within the EAPL. The vice minister argued that if the state would express at least a small act of benevolence to its minorities, this then could have a huge positive effect. Then “our eastern neighbour”, as he said, would have less opportunities to “help” and influence the state's minorities.

Some of those Poles that could be affiliated to PDC held, that if Lithuania would finally solve the ongoing issues of Polish names and surnames, that would open space for improving Lithuania's relations with Poland. This was emphasised during another PDC's event, called 'From the Constitution of May 3 to the Warsaw NATO Summit 2016' and organized together with the Institute of International Relations and Political Science (Vilnius university), and hosting a group of Lithuanian, Polish and Lithuanian Polish intellectuals. The participants stressed that the state's inaction in solving minority problems violates it's own security interests. This as well as other mentioned events organised by the PDC also illustrates

an attempt to establish cooperation and connections with Lithuanian politicians, public figures, cultural and academic elite sympathetic to Polish matters.

Other Poles, who are less connected to PDC's activities had similar, yet more individual strategies for the improvement of the minority's position through cooperation between the Lithuanian majority and the Polish minority. The rifleman told me that the reason he decided to he join the Rifleman Union was twofold: first he did it because of his fear of Russia and secondly – because of his fear of Lithuanian nationalists. He told me, he had encountered some nationalists who don't like Poles from the Vilnius region, because they think Poles are pro-Russian and not loyal to the state, so in case of a conflict with Russia they may support Russia. Therefore, he decided that the 'safest' place is this paramilitary organization, which to his mind could serve as a platform for a closer cooperation between Lithuanians and Lithuanian Poles. He defined the Rifleman union as a depoliticised organization providing a possibility to create new meaning:

Politics is forbidden at the Rifleman Union. But what is politics? Sometimes, in certain situations even drinking a tea together in the morning is politics. In in this situation I think it is good that there's no politics or at least there is little of it. Because this creates an opportunity to establish a new organization, new meaning. Because if politics would step in, then today the easiest way would be to re-establish it ... because there is a whole base for it, I mean ideological and that of prevailing stereotypes.. so to re-establish the Union as a nationalistic paramilitary organization. Therefore, I think that commanders' position, to keep it apolitical is very good.

The quote needs a short explanation. The Rifleman Union was established during the inter-war period and there was a time in its history when it was a nationalistic organization. As I was explained by my interviewee, the organization acquired a rather notorious reputation after Vilnius was returned to Lithuania. The state's government started Lithuanization of the Vilnija region and some of the riflemen played an active role in this process. Therefore, his words

about the new organization and new meaning can be interpreted as a hope not only for the new Rifleman Union, but also for the new type of state. During our interview several times he mentioned that Lithuania should remember its common past with Poland when the two nations coexisted together in one state. He also expressed his support for a *krajowcy* type of Lithuanian identity, represented by the writer J. Mackiewicz.

However, this is not the only reason why this rifleman is worth mentioning in this study. I was surprised when he admitted his support for the Polish minority party. Yet, he quickly explained that he votes for it not because he supports the party, but because this is a way to manifest his Polish identity and to show the existence of Poles in the region. Therefore, he could be seen not only as a person somewhere in between Poles and Lithuanians but also in between the two different groups of Polish minority – somewhere between liberal Poles and those who support EAPL. Yet I had no doubts about his Polish identity, for his decision to support EAPL as well as the reasons he made such decision proves he is a Pole. However, he emphasised that he is a citizen of the state. Taken together these statements and his participation in the Rifleman Union as a mean to create “a new organization and meaning” could be seen as an individual attempt to negotiate the minority's structural position in the state as well as the state's ethnic character.

Some of my other interviewees had similar strategies. The businessman from Šalčininkai said he wants to change the majority's negative opinion about the minority. When I asked how he thinks this could be achieved, he said that firstly through showing an example yourself. His own success as a businessman could prove that Poles are not oppressed, uneducated and backward. The Polish journalist said something similar. As she put it, the best way for Poles to integrate is to study and work hard. She said she learned Lithuanian perfectly because she was working hard instead of going to the protests organized by EAPL and

complaining how everyone mistreats her because she is a Pole. The former vice minister also emphasised the need to work on a positive image of Poles in Lithuania. Before my interview with the former vice minister of culture, I had read an interview with him in which he stated that when working in the Ministry one of his main priorities and tasks among many others “was a wish to demonstrate that national minorities' participation in the governmental apparatus is a normal thing, which should not cause a surprise”¹⁰⁸. I returned to this statement of his and asked him to elaborate more on this. Here is what he said:

The idea behind was simple – some people, at the beginning of the cadence of our government, might have been surprised – [with a different voice and parodying] 'What? Poles will govern? The end'. [...] And through something positive to show, that... well, irrespective of our nationality, we are citizens of Lithuanian, and we can show, that we care, that we are not unconcerned, that we are able to contribute to the management of the state, because it has been entrusted to us. And through positive acts, and positive results of these acts, to show this. By smaller or bigger steps, but to show the positive, that no – there's more than only problems, as some say 'they make too many demands'. No, we act, we do common job, common to our state, that was the meaning of my words.

In other words, success at working in the government, or success in doing business is seen as a way to establish a more positive picture of Poles in Lithuania.

Yet, despite whether my Polish interviewees had individual or collective strategies for cooperation between the Lithuanian majority and the Polish minority, the argument for such a cooperation was similar – in all cases it was related to a Russian threat. Such threat would have many different expressions: either “second Russification” of Poles in Lithuania (the blogger), pro-Russian stance of the EAPL's political leadership (the first politician and the vice minister), threat of Russian propaganda spread through Russian media popular among

108 “Kultūros Viceministras Įvardijo Savo Užduotis: Įteisinti Užrašus Dviem Kalbomis Ir Nelietuvišką Pavardžių Rašymą – DELFI,” accessed June 5, 2016, <http://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/lithuania/kulturos-viceministras-ivardijo-savo-uzduotis-iteisinti-uzrasus-dviem-kalbomis-ir-nelietuvisku-pavardziu-rasyma.d?id=60447929>.

Lithuanian Poles (the principal and the director of cultural house) or even fear of Russia's possible military intervention in Lithuania and in Vilnius region (the rifleman and the event on the NATO's summit and international security). Many times, when my interviewees were reflecting the state's ambiguous stance towards the minority problems, I felt there was an implicit argument made that the state should be concerned about these problems more, because, if left alone, Poles could become a target of Russian influence in the country. Thus, Russia's was perceived as a common threat and in such case both sides should stand together and support each other.

5. 5 Discussion

The context part of this thesis ended with the fourth stage of the relations between the Lithuanian majority and the Polish minority. The governmentality of the minority in this period was defined through such rationales and techniques as building a new civic discourse of 'one Lithuania', started by some of the state's politicians, i.e. the president. The discourse had a function of securitization, for after Russia's annexation of Crimea and especially after the Polish minority's political leadership expressed its support for Russia, concerns over Russia's influence over the state's national minorities, including Poles, has increased in the country. It was feared that Russia could manipulate through means of propaganda the minorities and thus attempt to destabilise the state. This implies the majority's biased (possible threat) attitude towards the minority.

My one-month long fieldwork took place during this fourth, post-Maidan stage of Polish-Lithuanian relations outlined in the fourth chapter. My intention was to get a better

understanding of this relation. Therefore, I decided to rely on a bottom-up (anthropological) perspective, with the help of which I intended to look at the state through the eyes of its minority. My intention in this qualitative research was twofold. First, to map ways how Lithuanian Poles go about their lives in the presence of Lithuanian ethno-democratic state. Then to use findings of my fieldwork for the critical analysis of a Lithuanian ethno-democratic regime.

I used S. Smooha's concept of ethnic democracy as a tool for 'for unravelling the desires, ideas, measures, constraints and institutional arrangements that install ethnic dominance and privilege into a democracy'. Through the example of my interviewees, I intended to achieve a better understanding of how the regime of the Lithuanian ethnic democracy is sustained. That is to say, instead of typologising Lithuania's political regime, I sought to analyse it critically. From the definition of an ethnic democracy we know that it is built on explicit and implicit governance. From the normative point of view everyone is a citizen in this type of regime. However, at the regime's core there is a desire to have the state "of and for" the titular nation. This leads to a situation where citizens of different nationalities, using Smooha's expression, are 'separate but not so equal', which means that although officially the state guarantees the rights of its national minorities, yet minority members struggle having their rights to be ensured and practised. This is the case in Lithuania i.e. the state has implemented '0 option' citizenship law at the begging of the independence, and ratified main international treaties ensuring protection of minority rights. However, often the state fails meeting its commitments. Sometimes intentionally, when certain minority-related legislations get stuck in the parliament, sometimes unintentionally. In this research this failure to meet minority expectations was called (non)governance. Yet, more than the nature of this (non)governance I was interested in the state-effect the ethno-democratic governance

produces among my Polish interviewees.

In this thesis my starting presumption was that people use this normative idea of a democratic state (the democratic part of an 'ethnic democracy'), yet I expected that their strategies and ways of connecting, contesting and negotiating their individual and collective position (if they are aware of and care about such) within the state would vary. I was hypothesising that this variety of individual and collective strategies for the improvement of the minority's situation prevents the ethnic conflict and sustains this ambiguous – ethnic and democratic at the same time – regime. Yet, my assumptions were proven only partially.

As demonstrated in the analysis chapter, none of my Polish respondents saw the minority situation in the country as satisfactory. Therefore, following T. Mitchell and speaking about the state as an effect of governance, it could be said that among my interviewees the state's effect appeared to be limited or that the state seemed ineffective. Yet, this inefficiency was explained differently: some saw bad faith in the state's actions, some explained it as a part of larger problems of the state, i.e. lack of legal culture, while some were simply not able to explain it and was rather confused about it.

The data analysis also showed that not only did my interviewees have different explanations of the state's ambiguous governance, but they also used different strategies to negotiate their minority position: some did this through membership in a paramilitary organization, participation in politics with Lithuanian political parties, while others sought professional success with an aim to change the majority's biased view of the minority (for example that all Poles are like Tomaszewski), or they attempted to establish connections with like-minded Lithuanian scholars and public figures, while others were to a large extent indifferent. Therefore, to this point my starting assumption about group diversity in terms of variety of individual and collective strategies for the improvement of minority's situation

seems to be valid. And in the light of the state's ambiguous governance, I believe that this diversity prevents conflict between the majority and minority and sustains the Lithuanian ethno-democratic regime. The fact that many of the minority problems listed and described in this work remain unsolved supports this premise. However, the reasons why my interviewees' interpretations of the state were so different to this point remains unclear and under-researched. Yet there is a reason to believe their interpretations of the state were shaped by their ethnic but also by their social identities. Also, I think that further researches on the minority's diverse perception and response to the state's ambiguous ethno-democratic governance should include such aspects as class issues. Perhaps this could explain the variety of state perceptions, responses to its ineffective governance and strategies for the assurance of the minority's interests.

Yet, what holders of these different explanations and strategies had in common was their self-perception – my interviewees saw themselves as Lithuanian citizens of Polish origins. Another commonality, although noticeable among fewer respondents, were negative attitudes towards the Polish minority party, as failing to protect the minority's interests.

Despite of their different interpretations of the state as well as their individual or collective strategies for the improvement of the minority's position, the expressed wish for the cooperation between the Lithuanian majority and Polish minority was based on a similar argument – it was based on the perception of a common Russian threat and implied that the state should be more concerned and efficient in terms of solving minority rights problems because both – Lithuanians and Poles are facing Russia's threat. So, although I knew that the current situation of Polish-Lithuanian relations are marked by the securitization discourse, I did not expect this security argument would be so commonly used among my interviewees. I expected them to use a normative idea of a democratic state, perhaps together with a reference

to international norms of minority rights protections, when arguing for having their rights ensured.

7. CONCLUSION

Yet, coming back to the concept of ethnic democracy used as a tool for critical analysis of political regimes in ethnically divided societies, what does it mean that the group of Lithuanian citizens still need to expect the state to show a greater concern over their issues? What does it tell us about the young Lithuanian state and about its post-communist development? As it was mentioned in the theoretical chapter of this thesis techniques of ethno-democratic governmentality can be rationalized with an idea of merits and contribution to the common good. And if, as defined by Brackette F. Williams, the process of nation-building resembles race or competition, meaning that the minority's contribution to the common culture is often forgotten or suppressed, and they need to struggle to have these contributions to be recognized by the dominant group, then I think this theory explains, at least partially, the case of ethno-democratic governance of Polish minority in Lithuania. The fact that there is a group of people who *de jure* have their group rights, yet *de facto* can not use them proves there is implicit stratification of Lithuanian citizens on ethnic terms (or bias). Therefore, although person X *is* a Lithuanian citizen, he is seen as a Lithuanian Polish citizen. Such categorization implies another category – Lithuanian Lithuanian citizen, where ethnicity and citizenship merges into one category – simply a citizen. Yet, only in the case of members of Lithuanian ethnic majority. For in case of Poles the amalgamation of the two categories does not produce a citizen, but only a citizen of a Polish origin, *ergo* a less citizen. This biased treatment finds an expression in the state's non-decisions concerning the minorities – problems of (Lithuanian) citizens come first, while solving problems of Lithuanian Polish citizens (without brackets, for Poles are first identified as Poles and only later as citizens) can be delayed. This biased separation guides the process of governance or in other words –

processes of non-decision making defined by Bachrach and Baratz. Yet, the fact that they expect these decisions from the state (or they expect the state to be effective in minority governance), and the fact that they expect the state to treat them as equals (but not necessarily as not separate, because they feel themselves Polish) or as citizens means that they acknowledge the state. This helps to ensure the stability of the regime. Yet the access to this common good – the state – is guarded by the Lithuanian majority who decides when and on what terms these citizens can enjoy the common good.

However, from theory we know that the need to protect minority rights is often argued on the bases of democracy and human rights. In the case of this study the argument for equal treatment is based on perceived common threat (Russification or Russian propaganda). This argument originates from the Poles' peculiar situation in the Lithuanian state – on the one hand they are ethnically subordinated by the Lithuanian majority. Yet, besides the threat of Lithuanisation, they also encounter the threat of Russification. Moreover, their political leadership is pro-Russian. Therefore, there is enough of evidence to think that the threat of Russification, undermining the Polish minority's culture, as well as some of the Poles' dissatisfaction with Tomaszewski's pro-Russianness pushes them closer towards the Lithuanian majority, which after Russia's annexation of Crimea encounters similar threat. Yet, this thesis has only tackled these issues briefly. Therefore, further research would be needed to examine a new hypothesis – does the factor of perceived common threat ensure the stability of an ethnic democracy?

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APPENDIX 1

Questionnaires used during the fieldwork

Questions for Polish Conscripts

1. Were you called or did you decide to serve as a volunteer? What were your first thoughts after receiving the call/what was your motivation for joining the army?
2. How were you received at the army and what were your relations with the fellow soldiers and officials in the beginning of your service like? Have these relations changed through the time of your service?
3. Could you tell briefly what school did you attend, what language you spoke at your home, where did you grow up and where do you come from?
4. Were there any situations when your Polish background somehow came out or was mentioned during your service?
5. Did anyone talk to you or explained you the reasons the decision to re-introduce conscriptions was made? What is your opinion about this decision?
6. How would you describe the service? Is there anything you would change or suggest to improve in it?

Questions for the Principal of a Polish School

1. What is the mission of Polish schools in Lithuania? To bring up citizens or to ensure the preservation of Polish culture?
2. Could you briefly define the state's current policy on education in general and minority education in particular?
3. Polish minority party was a part of a ruling coalition the City Council of Vilnius. Have they managed to improve the situation of Polish schools in the region? If yes/no, what helped them to make it / hindered them in / making it?
4. Has the situation of minority education in Lithuania improved since the collapse of communism or declined? What help would the minority schools need from the state?
5. What is your opinion on the state's policy on teaching pupils more subjects in Lithuanian language and unifying the matura exams?

7. Do Polish schools have a prestige among Lithuanian Poles? Do people from Polish minority wish their children to attend Polish schools? What helps to maintain/ what reduces this prestige?

Questions for a Chairman of a Polish Cultural House

1. Please describe the aims and goals of the organization?
2. Does the state provide a help to the organization? How does the process look like?
3. Does the organization cooperate with other governmental or non-governmental, transnational or foreign organizations? Are there any preferences among these for the cooperation?
4. Would you say that Polish culture needs special attention in Lithuania? If yes, what kind of attention it should be?
5. Is there something the state could do to help you in your activities? If yes, what?
6. Have you ever experienced discrimination from the state's side, i.e. when allocating financial resources?

Question for a Polish politician from the Lithuanian liberal party

1. How you decided to participate in politics?
2. Why did you choose the Lithuanian liberal Party?
3. In our previous conversation you've that "the state does not care about its minorities". Can you elaborate on this?
4. What is your agenda for improving Polish minority's situation in Lithuania?

Questions for Polish blogger

1. Please describe the situation of Polish minority in Lithuania after the state re-established its independence in 1991.
2. How was the Polish minority party established and how it acquired its dominant position in the region?
3. How was the Polish Discussion Club established?
4. From my other interviewees I have heard about the problem of "russification" of Poles in Lithuania. Can you explain this problem a little bit?

5. Can you briefly define the state's national minority policy?