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THE ROLE OF POPULIST PARTIES IN THE GEOPOLITICAL DISCOURSE IN
LITHUANIA

Master's thesis

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the geopolitical position of two non-mainstream, populist Lithuanian parties, Labour Party and Order and Justice, in several parliamentary debates dealing with geopolitically important issues. The study is based on electoral cleavage theory with the pro-soviet/anti-soviet cleavage identified as the main cleavage in Lithuania that partly overlaps with the winners/losers of transition and urban/rural cleavages. In the frame of quantitative and qualitative content analysis, several analytical categories are introduced, including topics, ideas and tactics used by the representatives of the parties. The analysis showed that Labour Party hardly displays any characteristics that would qualify them as strikingly pro-Russian, populist or a combination of these two, perhaps due to its ongoing transformation into a mainstream party. In the case of Order and Justice, what differentiates them from other Lithuanian parties and makes it interesting from the point of view of the research are the ideas that can be recognized from their rhetoric: these partly show resemblance with the official rhetoric of the Kremlin and partly mirror common notions about Russia. Populism in the case of these parties seems to mean rather identifying with the mind-set of a significant part of the population. As for the role of the two parties in the geopolitical discourse, the study concludes that they represent a voice in geopolitical matters that is to some extent different from the rhetoric of the mainstream parties, but they are not consequent enough, do not have a coherent set of ideas and lack a firm stance based on it. Their behaviour in geopolitical debates is rather opportunistic. Although they use some ideas that may originate from the Kremlin ('double standards', 'depicting the EU and NATO as colonizers') there is no sufficient evidence to state that they act as agents of Russia. The parties' relative passivity and moderation in these debates can be explained by their lack of interest in geopolitical issues and general ideological emptiness pointed out by analysts as well as their possible fear of ostracism in case of harshly contradicting the mainstream geopolitical discourse and their presence in the government during most of the debates.

Keywords: Lithuania, Russia, geopolitics, populism, cleavages, parliamentary rhetoric

ABBREVIATIONS

HU – Homeland Union

LDDP – Lithuanian Democratic Labour Party

LP - Labour Party

LSDP – Lithuanian Social Democratic Party

OJ – Order and Justice party

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The role of populist parties in the geopolitical discourse in Lithuania

INTRODUCTION

Politics in Lithuania is strongly influenced by Russia both in a direct and indirect way. The identity of different parties is in many cases connected to the way they relate to Russia. Differently from Estonia and Latvia, the Russian minority in Lithuania is not significant, moreover, Lithuania granted citizenship to all of its inhabitants after regaining independence. Therefore Lithuania is less affected by Russian compatriot policy and there is no significant 'ethnic Russian party'. Because of this, Lithuania is often neglected in analysing politics in the Baltic states, at least in studies that deal with Russian-Baltic relations (that make up a large share of the scholarship on the Baltic states). Nonetheless, there are other parties in the country which do not have an ethnic element neither in their name, nor in their constituency, however, their leaders (Viktor Uspaskich and Rolandas Paksas) are considered to be closely connected with Russia, often accused of being pro-Russian and collaborating with the Kremlin.

It has been observed that several far-right and far-left parties throughout Europe have contacts with the Kremlin (Krekó et al., 2014), (Klapsis, 2015). The topic came to the limelight when Hungarian MEP, member of the Jobbik party Béla Kovács was accused of spying for Russia. Kovács was the founder of the *Alliance of European National Movements*, the leaders of which, for example supported Russia's annexation of the Crimea and operations in Donbass¹.

¹ According to Svoboda leader Tiahnybok „made „statements supporting the Russian sponsored separatist forces and support for the Russian Armed Forces occupation of Ukrainian territory”” letter of Oleh

While there is no significant far-right party in Lithuania, it cannot be ruled out that other parties can also have strong ties with Moscow. As S. Saari wrote: “In addition to clearly pro-Russian parties, the goal [of the Kremlin] was to establish close links with a whole spectrum of political actors in the region as to secure Russian influence in all conditions and to create rifts amongst local political actors” (Saari, 2011, p. 5). Although such accusations regarding Lithuania parties are articulated often, there is hardly any attempt to prove them credibly, with factual evidences. Therefore, it would deserve a closer look to examine the how these parties relate to Russia.

The thesis examines the relation of these parties to Russia as a one-way relationship, without examining Russia’s activities as those are much more difficult to explore. The main aim is to find out (1) how the abovementioned parties position themselves between Russia and the West, (2) how do they understand Lithuania’s place in the world and (3) what are the ideas they represent in terms of the Western world (EU) vs Russia? An additional question is (4) whether they are trying to base their argumentation on social and ideational/ideological cleavages?

Geopolitical discussions in Lithuania mainly revolve around the question whether the country should be closely connected to the East (Russia) or West (Western Europe and US). While on the surface it may seem that such discussions are purely about power and strategy, this question is basically about identities: identification with the Western or the Orthodox civilization (in Huntington’s terms). On the other hand, geopolitical discussions are about power and strategy.

In my opinion, such small countries as the Baltic states have to inevitably belong to a great power’s sphere of influence. Which one they choose, is most likely a matter of civilizational preferences or the costs and benefits of one and another option. I think both identity and material-practical aspects play a role in such debates. So in terms of international relations theories both conceptualism and realism could be applicable. However, instead of relying on international relations theories, I based my research on cleavage theory, in other words, I am focusing on the domestic, not the international aspect.

Tiahnybok , chairman of Svoboda to the the Chairman of the Alliance of European National Movements
Bruno Gollnisch <http://en.svoboda.org.ua/news/events/00010596/>

My main argument is that the popularity of these parties is driven by a cleavage between the winners and losers of the regime change (this cleavage also overlaps with the urban-rural cleavage), the longing for a paternalistic state and social justice of the latter that is connected to the so-called ‘Soviet nostalgia’, the idealization of the Soviet period as more just, order-oriented with clearer rules. According to this logic, these are the losers of regime change refusing Western-style democratic institutions as well as the EU who are the most susceptible for the stance represented by these parties.

The parties I mentioned above are neither far-right nor far-left, they are often classified as ‘populist’ or could be perhaps labelled ‘rent-seeking’. They are perceived as non-traditional or ‘new parties’ opposed to the traditional mainstream parties. Theory on populism and electoral cleavages will be used to understand their behaviour. The research attempts to shed light on the nature of these parties not extensively examined so far and would contribute to the scholarship on Russian-Lithuanian relations.

Although the cleavage that mostly separates their voters from those of the mainstream parties, the pro-Soviet/anti-Soviet cleavage was originally between the Democratic Labour Party (the predecessor of the Social Democratic Party) and the conservatives, it has transformed into an opposition of the traditional and newcomer parties with the Social Democratic Party belonging to the “traditional” camp and their electorate being positioned somewhere in the middle in terms of pro-Russian/anti-Russian and pro-Soviet/anti-Soviet views (Ramonaitė, 2007a, p. 101); (Ramonaitė, 2007b, p. 36). Therefore it seemed more practical to leave LSDP aside in this analysis.

The study analyses the parties’ stance on Russia by looking at their rhetoric (whether it correlates with the official rhetoric of the Kremlin) and their policy choices in specific issues (whether those choices are favouring Russia). To examine the parties’ positions on these issues, stenographic records of parliamentary sessions available online are analysed applying content analysis method.

In the first chapter, an overview is given of the theoretical literature concerning the main concepts used in the thesis: populism and electoral cleavages and the chapter tries to establish the connection between populism, electoral cleavages and geopolitical orientation. Chapter 2 introduces the cleavages in Lithuanian society, the phenomenon if

populism in Lithuania, its perception and connection to the Lithuanian party system as well as the profiles of Labour Party and Order and Justice. Chapter 3 presents the material analysed in order to answer the research questions and the method (content analysis) used for carrying out the analysis. Chapter 4 introduces the analysed cases (domestic policy issues from recent years that are connected to Russia or Russian interests, such as energy policy projects, military questions and foreign policy issues) in detail and presents the findings. The last chapter discusses the role the parties in question play in geopolitical discourse and the relationship between populism and foreign policy orientation in Lithuania.

CHAPTER 1: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1.1 Populism

1.2. Electoral Cleavage Theory

1.3 Populists and Cleavages

This chapter gives an overview of the theory on populism, establishes a working definition of populism for the research, introduces electoral cleavage theory and attempts to trace the connection between populism and electoral cleavages and outline how populism and cleavages can be related to geopolitical choices on the theoretical level. Electoral cleavage theory was chosen because populism is closely related to the behaviour of the electorate (it is actually a product of the competition for the favour of the electorate). Approaching the question from the point of view of geopolitics and applying a realist or conceptualist international relations theory was also considered but it would have been difficult to connect it to populism that is generally regarded to be the main characteristic of the parties in question.

1.1 Populism

Populism is a highly debated concept and there are several approaches in the academic literature to define it. For example, Margaret Canovan writes that ‘there is a good deal of agreement on which political phenomena fall into this category but less clarity about what is it that makes them populist’ (Canovan, 1999, p. 3). As de Raadt et al. point out, ‘the fuzziness of the concept, its random use and the pejorative meaning of populism obscure the scientific and public debate.’ (de Raadt et al., 2004, p. 2) Due to the

pejorative evaluation of populism, it is often associated or conflated with demagoguery (Stanley, 2008, p. 101).

Kurt Weyland distinguishes three strategies of conceptualization: cumulative, radial and classical (Weyland, 2001, p. 2). Cumulative means that a phenomenon needs to correspond a set of characteristics in order to be classified as populism (using the logical operator ‘and’); radial concepts operate with the logical operator ‘or’: a phenomenon can be classified as populism if it corresponds one or some characteristics, but not necessarily all; and finally, classical concepts identify the primary element of the concept, thus classical concepts operate with ‘minimal definitions’.

Definitions of populism are usually cumulative, incorporating ideological, economic, technical etc. characteristics. As there are notable differences between Latin American, Western European and Central and Eastern European populism, it would be difficult to arrive to a definition that enumerates all the possible characteristics and applicable to all cases. Therefore I will attempt to arrive to a classical concept where the characteristic traits of populism emanate from one central characteristic, the ‘essence’ of populism.

In the following, I am trying to give an overview of some of the scholarly literature on populism in order to discover its most characteristic traits that can form a base of a working definition for the purpose of this research.

One of the most prominent experts of populism is Margaret Canovan, who dedicated a book to the topic of populism. In her book, Canovan distinguishes seven types of populism and argues that ‘the only common themes across all seven types are a resort to appeals to the people and a distrust of elites (Canovan 1981: 264)’ (cited by (Taggart, 2003, p. 5)).

Canovan interprets populism as the manifestation of one of the two faces of democracy: the redemptive face (the other being the pragmatic face)². The redemptive face is more idealist and is connected to the principle of ‘*vox populi vox Dei*’ (Canovan, 1999, p. 10) and promises to radically improve people’s life (‘the promise of a better

² This distinction is based on the work of Michael Oakeshott’s distinction about the ‘politics of faith’ and the ‘politics of scepticism’. (M. Oakeshott, *The Politics of Faith and the Politics of Scepticism*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1996.)

world through action by the sovereign people' (Canovan, 1999, p. 11)), while the pragmatic face concentrates on sustaining law and order, democratic institutions and the optimal functioning of the state. According to Canovan, it is the 'inescapable tension between them that makes populism a perennial possibility' (Canovan, 1999, p. 1).

She mentions that '(...) populism is often seen as a travesty of democracy, perhaps posing dangers to the whole system', but argues that both faces are essential to democracy, so populism cannot be dismissed as a pathological form, a 'travesty of democracy' (Canovan, 1999, p. 12), as 'its pretensions raise important issues' (Canovan, 1999, p. 1) and 'populism accompanies democracy like a shadow' (Canovan, 1999, p. 16).

According to Canovan, populist movements 'involve some kind of revolt against the established structure of power in the name of the people' (Canovan, 1999, p. 3) and '(...) populism challenges not only established power-holders, but also elite values' (Canovan, 1999, p. 3)

Canovan points out, that it is important to bear in mind, that 'populism understood in this structural sense can have different contents depending on the establishment it is mobilizing against. Where economic policy is concerned, for example, populists in one country with a hegemonic commitment to high taxation to fund a generous welfare state may embrace an agenda of economic liberalism, while other populists elsewhere are reacting against a free market hegemony by demanding protectionism and more state provision' (Canovan, 1999, p. 4).

Paul Taggart (Taggart, 2003) distinguishes six characteristic features of populism (cumulative definition): hostility to representative politics, identification with a 'heartland' (an idealized conception of the community they serve), lack of core values, reaction to the sense of extreme crisis, self-limiting quality, highly chameleonic nature. He also draws attention to the connection of populism and Euroscepticism: 'Euroscepticism has often taken anti-elite form championing the mass demands for more representation and less integration. I take these three political forces [protest over fuel prices, anti-globalization, Euroscepticism] as indicative of populism across Europe and they will serve as examples in the paper of populist potential' (Taggart, 2003, p. 2) The reason for this, he argues, is that '[t]he complexity of the institutional structures and the

fact they do not accord with domestic political institutions makes the architecture of the EU not only a distant one, but also a foreign one for populists' (Taggart, 2003, p. 11).

De Raadt, Hollanders and Krouwel, who conducted a study based on the programmes of 6 Western European (French, German, Dutch, Belgian, Swiss, Austrian) parties (de Raadt et al., 2004) define populism 'as a political ideology critical of representative democracy but not necessarily antidemocratic', claiming that populism is more than mere political tactics or style of political communication that seeks to be popular and appeal to a wide range of people by saying what people want to hear or by simplifying political matters³ (unlike some scholars such as Canovan 1981⁴; Taggart 2000⁵; Jagers and Walgrave 2003).

Populism is operationalised into three core dimensions: 'populists combine an appeal to 'the people' with anti-establishment critique and a call for a more direct link between political leaders and citizens.' (de Raadt et al., 2004, p. 0)

They note that it is in line with the views of Canovan who understands populism 'as an appeal to "the people" against both the established structure of power and the dominant ideas and values of the society' (Canovan 1999: 3 cited by (de Raadt et al., 2004, p. 1)). According to the authors, this appeal to the people is against the establishment and its values and calls for a direct link between the political leadership and the people. It is 'not merely an opportunistic electoral strategy, but part of a wider ideologically founded critique.' (de Raadt et al., 2004, p. 1) In order to identify the parties that are populist (as usually only radical right wing parties are labelled populist), they developed three core dimensions of populism: (appeal to the people, anti-establishment attitude and pro-direct democracy stance)' (de Raadt et al., 2004, p. 1).

Jagers and Walgrave identify the sovereignty of the people as the core element of populism, in the favour of which all the other elements of democracy - the rule of law, the division of power or respect for the rights of minorities – are rejected because they

³ As the authors point out, this understanding could lead to an amorph interpretation of populism, as it 'automatically leads to the conclusion that all political parties are populist as it is one of the crucial functions of political parties to offer straightforward and clear political alternatives to the electorate.' (de Raadt et al., 2004, p. 2)

⁴ Canovan: *Populism*, New York, Harcourt Brace, 1981.

⁵ Taggart, P. (2000) *Populism*, Buckingham: Open University Press.

confine the people's sovereignty.' (Jagers and Walgrave, 2007, p. 337) By emphasizing the direct ties of the populist leader(ship) with the electorate, populist politicians 'reinforce public distrust towards the institutions of representative democracy (parliament, government, political parties, etc.)' (Jagers and Walgrave, 2007, p. 338). It leads to the simplistic understanding of politics, as 'they nurture the idea that all problems would be easily solved if only the political will was present.' (Jagers and Walgrave, 2007, p. 338)

As we can see from the literature outlined above, populism is understood as either an ideology or as a political style/technique of gaining and exercising political power. If interpreted as an ideology, the main element of it is the appeal to the people or an anti-establishment stance. In the same time, it is emphasized that it does not oppose democracy, but rather absolutizes it to the principle of sovereignty of the people as one of the main principles of democracy. For a working definition of populism, the following core elements are chosen: an ideology based on anti-establishment stance in the name of the people within the frames of democracy. A similar ideology that rejects the notion of democracy is closer to authoritarianism.

1.2. Electoral Cleavage Theory

The next concept that has to be examined is the one of political cleavages. I am trying to give an overview of some of the prominent works on cleavage theory and cleavages in the post-communist countries, especially in Lithuania.

There is relatively not much debate about the concept of cleavages: scholars generally understand it as the connection between certain groups of population (based on social position or values) and parties that base their electoral strategy on the division between these different groups. The mechanism of the formation of cleavages is a much more contested issue, with a bottom-up (society-driven) and a top-down (elite/party-driven) approach. Different scholars emphasize different sides of the equation, but it is not disputed that pre-existing societal divisions and conscious party strategy are both indispensable for the 'functioning' of political cleavages.

The study of Seymour Martin Lipset and Stein Rokkan *Cleavage Structures, Party Systems and Voter Alignments. An Introduction* from 1967 can be regarded the founding text of cleavage theory. They were investigating how conflicts are translated into party systems and how parties make the latent contrasts explicit in the existing social structure (Lipset and Rokkan, 1967, p. 5). Parties are perceived as ‘alliances in conflicts over policies and value commitments’ (Lipset and Rokkan, 1967, p. 5).

The four cleavages they describe as critical for European political culture are the centre-periphery, the state-church, the land-industry (urban-rural) and the workers-employers (class) cleavages’ (Lipset and Rokkan, 1967, p. 35).

According to the authors, the cleavages influence the formation of party systems. One of the crucial theses of Lipset and Rokkan is that Western European party system ‘froze’ in around 1920, in the wake of the extension of the suffrage and remained relatively unchanged until the 1960s (Lipset and Rokkan, 1967, p. 50).

Allan Zuckermann in 1975 (Zuckerman, 1975) pointed out the main dilemma of cleavage theory: the conflict of the bottom-up and top-down approaches. (The standpoint represented by Lipset and Rokkan was closer to the top-down approach.) As Zuckerman notes, there is disagreement in the literature concerning the link between social division and political cleavage in the sense of a ‘chicken and egg’ problem: are political parties mapping social division or are they creating them or at least hasten the process of social division? (Zuckerman, 1975, p. 236).

Kevin Deegan-Krause examined not only the abstract concept of cleavage, but also its applicability to post-communist countries. He describes cleavage as follows: ‘[r]esearch on cleavage most often entails the search for self-conscious demographic groups sharing a common mind-set and distinct political organization.’ (Deegan-Krause, 2006, p. 2)

Deegan-Krause lists other proposed categories from the scholarly literature that – besides the four outlined by Lipset and Rokkan – could function as basis of cleavages:

‘generational difference and education level (Inglehart 1997⁶), economic sector (Kriesi 1998⁷) and gender (Brooks 2006⁸).’ (Deegan-Krause, 2006, p. 6)

Summarizing academic discussion on the topic, Deegan-Krause notes that although cleavages in post-communist Europe ‘bear some similarity to those of industrial democracies, they differ in ways that have important theoretical implications. The first challenge is to establish whether any form of cleavage exists in the region.’ (Deegan-Krause, 2006, p. 8), mainly because the existence of large ‘catch-all parties’.

He notes that in several European post-communist societies, the divide over authoritarianism and democracy is also prevalent (Deegan-Krause, 2006, p. 10), and there is generally a wider range of issue divides compared to Western Europe together with a greater diversity of combinations of these issues (Deegan-Krause, 2006, p. 10), that results partly from historical circumstances and partly from the weakness of the structural roots of many divides (Deegan-Krause, 2006, p. 10). He lists typical post-communist cultural issue divides such as ‘the role of the church, abortion, pornography and consumerism, all filtered through a lens of decades of communist restrictions.’ (Deegan-Krause, 2006, p. 9)

Herbert Kitschelt also examined electoral cleavages in post-communist countries. He describes the connection between cleavages and electoral strategies of parties: ‘A political cleavage is characterized by parties that offer competing messages that appeal to electoral constituencies divided by their position in the social structure, their ideological outlook, and their propensities to get involved in political action’ (Kitschelt, 1992, p. 11) Back in 1992, Kitschelt suggested that there would be links between voting patterns and the way how people can adapt to the new circumstances of market economy: ‘Those who expect to become ‘winners’ of the market system are likely to endorse libertarian/pro-market policies and parties, whereas potential ‘losers’ will search for protection from the process of privatization and market dependence’ (Kitschelt, 1992, p. 26). So he suggests

⁶ Inglehart, R. 1977. *The Silent Revolution: Changing Values and Political Styles among Western Publics*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

⁷ Kriesi, H. 1998. *The Transformation of Cleavage Politics*. *European Journal of Political Research* 33: 165-85.

⁸ Brooks, C., Nieuwbeerta, P., and Manza, J. 2006. *Cleavage-Based Voting Behavior in Cross-National Perspective: Evidence from Six Postwar Democracies*. *Social Science Research*, 35: 88-128.

a cleavage characteristic for post-communist countries that is absent in Western European democracies examined by Lipset and Rokkan.

Robert Rohrschneider and Stephen Whitefield summarize the ‘conflicting interpretations regarding the number and character of party cleavages in Central Eastern European states: (a) there are no coherent party cleavages (Elster et al., 1998; White et al., 1997)⁹ or only multiple, country-specific cleavages depending on national contexts (Lawson, Römmele, & Karasimeonov, 1999)¹⁰; (b) there is one single ideological cleavage in the region as a whole over support for, and opposition to, liberal regime change (Kitschelt, 1992; Kitschelt et al., 1999; Marks et al., 2006)¹¹; and (c) there exist a number of common cleavages across the region supplemented by some national specificities (Evans & Whitefield, 1993; W. L. Miller, White, & Heywood, 1998) (Rohrschneider and Whitefield, n.d., p. 282)¹²’.

In their research based on an expert survey of 87 parties in 13 post-communist democracies, Rohrschneider and Whitefield found that (differently from other post-communist countries) the urban-rural cleavage is one of the most important conflict lines in Lithuania (Rohrschneider and Whitefield, n.d., p. 298), together with the welfare and the pro-market/anti market dimension. It can be also concluded, that rural and anti-market and urban and pro-market positions respectively coincide (Rohrschneider and Whitefield, n.d., p. 294). The anti-market and anti-democratic position also coincides with representation of the losers of the new order (Rohrschneider and Whitefield, n.d., p. 285).

Ian McAllister and Stephen White found in their survey on social cleavages in 20 established and emerging democracies, including post-Soviet states¹³ that from the four cleavages identified by Lipset and Rokkan, the centre-periphery and urban-rural divisions are unimportant regarding positioning on the left-right scale (McAllister and White, 2007, p. 207) and conclude that ‘the social cleavages of the emerging democracies appear to have avoided the territorial conflicts based on urban-rural and centre-periphery divisions

⁹ (Elster et al., 1998; White et al., 1997)

¹⁰ (Lawson, Römmele, & Karasimeonov, 1999)

¹¹ (Kitschelt, 1992; Kitschelt et al., 1999; Marks et al., 2006)

¹² (Evans & Whitefield, 1993; W. L. Miller, White, & Heywood, 1998)

¹³ Unfortunately, among other countries, Lithuania was excluded from the analysis due to the lack of some specific data.

which were common in the established democracies in the early part of the twentieth century (McAllister and White, 2007, p. 212). As Lithuania was excluded from the analysis, I cannot consider this view representative for my case.

Evans and Whitefield summarize the different theories about the emergence of political cleavages: top-down (cleavages originate from the elite and political institutions), *mezzo* (organizations of civil society play a key role in the genesis of cleavages) and bottom-up (macro-sociological factors are crucial). As they comment, the first two approaches had been dominating the academic discourse as they offered a more reasonable explanation of the mechanisms of cleavage formation. However they took the third, bottom-up, socio-centric approach (Evans and Whitefield, 2000, p. 46). They offer the following explanation: in the circumstances given in the post-communist countries (abundance of parties and candidates, pre-existing ideological preferences, these preferences associated with different sectors of post-communist societies, lack of social organizational links between parties and voters, low levels of information about particular parties and institutional effects), parties choose strategies based on pre-existing voter preferences and try to present themselves to the electorate in such ways that will resonate with voters' interests (Evans and Whitefield, 2000, pp. 60–61).

Enyedi represents the top-down approach, claiming that 'cleavages would not exist without elites conceptualizing the conflict situation' (Enyedi, 2005, p. 699) and views parties as 'combiners', 'political actors combining interests, values, cultural milieus and social networks' (Enyedi, 2005, p. 699), emphasizing differences or identifying symbols that unite various groups (Enyedi, 2005, p. 700).

Enyedi's model is the following: '(...) the overall cleavage structure of a political society results from the interplay between three factors: political entrepreneurs, the pre-political preferences and structures of a society (the raw material political entrepreneurs work with), and the constraining institutional structure. Political entrepreneurs combine interests, values, formal and informal social structures into political camps. They do so with the dominant aim to gain public office, and therefore they forge alliances that enable them to rise above the threshold of power' (Enyedi, 2005, p. 700). Parties can impact

cleavage structure, but they are also constrained by the pre-existing societal patterns (Enyedi, 2005, p. 717).

Mindaugas Jurkynas defines cleavage as ‘a political division among citizens rooted in the social structure and affecting electoral preferences. Cleavages can trigger political disagreements and become bases for partisan divisions’ (Jurkynas, 2004, p. 281). He adds that ‘cleavages need an agent, often a political organization to become salient’ (Jurkynas, 2004, p. 281), as parties politicize it, translate it into politics. He differentiates ‘cleavage’ from ‘issue divide’: ‘a cleavage must be a permanent and non-contingent societal conflict translated by political agents.

I see the role of pre-existing social divisions in cleavage formation as crucial: those are the prerequisite of party strategies that seek to make political capital out of cleavages. For example, it would be difficult to exploit an ethnicity cleavage in an ethnically homogenous country. It is also important to bear in mind that cleavages in post-communist countries differ from those of Western European democracies, perhaps are more plastic, as a result of the lack of longstanding democratic traditions and historical cleavages that, according to Lipset and Rokkan, ‘froze’ in the beginning of the 20th century and were still prevalent in the sixties. This plasticity of cleavages and the possibility of parties to rearrange existing voting patterns is excellently illustrated by Enyedi’s analysis of the turn of the Hungarian Fidesz from a liberal, anticlerical, leftist to a right-wing, authoritarian, Christian democratic party.

The articles reviewed support my argument about the urban/rural and winners/losers cleavage that is being exploited by populist parties, namely the Labour Party (Viktor Uspaskich) and the Order and Justice (Rolandas Paksas).

1.3 Populists and Cleavages

In this section I am trying to trace the relationship between populism and cleavages, in other words, how populist parties make use of societal cleavages and/or create them for their own purposes.

As outlined in the section about populism, populists represent an anti-establishment and anti-elite stance which, by its nature appeals to those that consider themselves the losers of the current political-economic system. It means that populists' electoral basis includes mainly disadvantaged groups: this is usually the rural and peripheral population regarding the urban/rural and centre/periphery cleavages. It was also mentioned in the section about cleavages that in post-communist countries, winners/losers of regime change is an important cleavage (Kitschelt, 1992) (Rohrschneider and Whitefield, n.d., p. 285). Hans-Georg Betz has mentioned that populist parties often base their strategy on societal cleavages and try to appeal to both of winners/losers by offering something to both groups (Betz, 1993, pp. 419–420). In the specific Lithuanian case, Mindaugas Jurkynas pointed out that disadvantaged groups (rural/periphery/losers) support the populist parties (Jurkynas, 2004, p. 285).

Euroscepticism is often connected to populism as Euroscepticism is also anti-elitist by its nature and criticizes the lack of representation in the EU, as popular representation (direct democracy) is one of the key tenets of populism.

It was noticed in a research by Balcerė et al. that a lot of the parties operate with the concept of 'heartland' (typical populist concept pointed out by Taggart) that can be an idealized picture of the Soviet Union (Balcerė et al., 2012, p. 16).

The losers of the regime change, those that are disappointed not only with the current government but the whole system that followed communism are thus susceptible to Eurosceptic ideas and naturally tend to look back to the communist time, the social equality and security guaranteed (Ramonaitė, 2013, p. 280) by the paternalist state

(compared to the capitalist order when people have to rely on their own initiative that brings with it bigger social inequalities).

Euroscepticism inevitably brings with it some kind of geopolitical reorientation: the geopolitical structure is often perceived as a bipolar one (perhaps as a remnant of the Cold War) and disappointment with the EU and the West and nostalgia for the Soviet Union can manifest in a turn towards today's Russia as a counterpole.

As it has been indicated (Ramonaitė, 2013, p. 265) that pro-Soviet and anti-Soviet positions constitute an important division in post-Soviet societies, it is evident that populist parties try to make use of this cleavage or even promote it. (In the case of Lithuania, Ainė Ramonaitė states that the assessment of the Soviet period is the most important cleavage in society (Ramonaitė, 2007a).) My research is oriented to the activity of the parties, not the attitude of the electorate, so it applies the top-down approach of cleavages: I am going to examine if the parties in question try to capitalize on or enhance this division in their parliamentary speeches and how they tie it to geopolitical alternatives.

CHAPTER 2: THE LITHUANIAN PARTY SYSTEM

2.1. Cleavages in Lithuania

2.2. Populism in Lithuania and the Perception of Populist Parties

2.2.1 Features of the Electoral System Promoting the Spread of Populism

2.2.2 The Perception of Populism in Lithuania

2.3. The Party Profiles of Labour Party and Order and Justice

This chapter introduces electoral cleavages in Lithuania and explain how cleavages (particularly the pro-Soviet/anti-Soviet cleavage) are related to geopolitical preferences in the case of Lithuania. It shall also point out what peculiarities of the party system and electoral behaviour influence the success of populist parties in the country and how these parties are perceived. The last section introduces the party profiles of Labour Party and Order and Justice.

2.1. Cleavages in Lithuanian Society

As mentioned in the previous chapter, electoral cleavages in Eastern Europe are different from those in Western European societies because of the different historical circumstances that were prevalent in the formation period of cleavages. In this section I will introduce the particularities of electoral cleavages in Lithuania.

Algis Krupavičius notes about the situation until 2001 that with the tendency of ideologically similar parties to merge, '[i]n most cases new challengers to the existing parties have had a limited number of options from the ideological perspective. On the one

hand, they could establish themselves by mixing several traditional ideological approaches or accepting extreme ideological positions; on the other hand, they could base themselves on structural cleavages and/or on non-ideological grounds' (Krupavičius, 2005a, p. 193). According to Krupavičius, the major cleavages in Lithuania are the left/right socioeconomic cleavage, the urban/rural and the religious cleavage (Krupavičius, 2005b, p. 124).

Jurkynas observed that with the elections in 2000, the dominant issue divide in Lithuanian politics has transformed from a value-laden to a socioeconomic one (Jurkynas, 2004, p. 279). He lists the following politically salient issue divides in Lithuanian society: transitional issue divide (the Soviet apparatus and the *Sąjūdis*¹⁴ and its successor parties; dominant during 1990-1997), religious, labour/capital and rural/urban; however, according to the author, 'these issue divides still need continuous political institutionalization in order to become cleavages' (Jurkynas, 2004, p. 293). He mentions that the urban/rural and the protectionist/free market divide were politicized by the Liberal Union (former party of Rolandas Paksas, head of the Order and Justice) and the Lithuanian Peasant Party. According to Jurkynas, the urban/rural conflict overlaps with the protectionist/free market division (Jurkynas, 2004, pp. 283–284), as well as the winners/losers, the centre/periphery cleavage (Jurkynas, 2004, p. 285), (this is in accordance with Rohrschneider and Whitefield's view), and these social groups have anti-establishment sentiments and tend to support populist parties¹⁵. The winners/losers of transformation issue divide was manifested in the presidential elections of 2002 and 2004 and the elections to the European Parliament of 2004 where the Labour Party skimmed off 'the cream of socio-economically disadvantaged and anti-establishment votes.' (Jurkynas, 2004, p. 294) Jurkynas prognosticated back in 2004 that EU-related issues can become a divide for politicians to exploit in the future (Jurkynas, 2004, p. 294). He points to the signs of dissatisfaction among the electorate (especially in rural areas) that gives

¹⁴ Sąjūdis: the Lithuanian independence movement in the late 1980s and the early 1990s.

¹⁵'(...) the "losers" of the market reforms – the unemployed, low-salary employees, and the rural population – express their negative political attitudes towards the political elite. Some of them vote for leftist parties while some of them do not vote at all. Yet, support for Paksas in the provinces was clearly convincing (*Prezidento rinkimai* 2003). Thus, the urban/rural issue division is exploited mostly by the LVP [Lithuanian Peasant Party] and LLS [Liberal Union of Lithuania]. The clear social structure and electoral behaviour serve to illustrate the emerging cleavage'. (Jurkynas, 2004, p. 285)

room for populist, anti-establishment parties: ‘The success of Paksas and the fact that a TV comedian came fourth in the presidential election of 2002 revealed an underrepresented societal dissatisfaction. (...) However, continuing high levels of support for the Labour Party and pro-Paksas politicians signals serious discontents among the losers of transition in the countryside, provinces and South-Eastern Lithuania. Dissatisfaction with the current state of political, economic and social affairs leaves the electoral market open for new parties with populist appeal, such as the Liberal Democrats [now called Order and Justice] and the Labour Party. Both are new in the political system and both appeal for support from the dissatisfied.’ (Jurkynas, 2004, p. 292)

According to Tõnis Saarts, in Lithuania the major cleavages are the socio-economic cleavage and the communist/anti-communist cleavage; the urban-rural cleavage and the clerical/anti-clerical have a secondary importance, while the ethnic cleavage and the centre/periphery play a marginal role (Saarts, 2011, p. 97). Saarts also notes that in Lithuania the once essential communist/anti-communist cleavage has been ‘somewhat overshadowed by a socio-economic divide’ (Saarts, 2011, p. 96). Historically, there was ‘a nationalist, anti-communist, market liberal and Catholic camp on the one side (Homeland Union), and a more cosmopolitan, rather anti-clerical camp on the other side, which was also more favourable towards the communist past (Democratic Labour Party – today’s Social Democratic Party). However, the situation changed in the early 2000s when both blocks lost legitimacy and with the emergence of new parties, the socio-economic cleavage was pushed into the centre (Ramonaitė, 2006). (...) An urban-rural cleavage has also played a considerable role in Lithuanian politics, manifested mostly through several populist parties that appeal to rural voters.’ (Saarts, 2011, p. 96)

Ainė Ramonaitė writes that ‘using a methodologically strict definition of political cleavages, the only political division in Lithuania closely resembling a cleavage in the Rokkanian sense of the word, is the communist-anti-communist conflict’ that dates back to the time of the Soviet occupation: those whose family was repressed during the Soviet period tend to vote for the Homeland Union, while those who consider that they used to have a better life under Soviet rule prefer to vote for the Democratic Labour Party or the

Social Democrats.¹⁶ In addition to that, ‘religious, rural-urban and ethnic divisions have some importance in shaping voting behaviour in Lithuania’ (Ramonaitė, 2006, p. 77). She adds that ethnic parties are not significant and that the ethnic cleavage overlaps with the left-right cleavage as ethnic minorities tend to vote for left-wing parties (LDDP and LSDP) (Ramonaitė, 2006, pp. 77–78) The religious cleavage (church attendance) can also be reduced to the left-right dimension (Ramonaitė, 2006, p. 78). About the urban-rural cleavage she writes that it was ‘almost non-existent in Lithuania at the beginning of the party system formation, but its importance has been increasing together with growing differences in the quality of life in the largest cities and in rural areas’ (Ramonaitė, 2006, p. 78). However, already in the first half of the nineties, ‘the leftist rural population was inclined to vote for the Democratic Labour Party rather than the Social Democrats, while the rightist rural electorate preferred the Christian Democratic Party to the Homeland Union’ (Ramonaitė, 2006, p. 79). The Lithuanian Peasants Party was trying to represent the interests of rural voters, but it was not influential at the national level (Ramonaitė, 2006, p. 79). But later the ‘rural voters have switched their support to the Labour Party and the Union of Peasants and New Democracy (‘Vilmorus’ post-election survey 2004 (Ramonaitė, 2006, p. 80)’. According to the data of the 2004 EP elections, the Labour Party was much more popular in the countryside than in the capital (44.1% in the countryside and only 16.3% in Vilnius), while Paksas’s Liberal Democratic Party (the later Order and Justice) had similar results in Vilnius and in the countryside (6.6% in Vilnius and 6.8% overall) (Ramonaitė, 2006, p. 79).

According to Ramonaitė, in the early 1990s the left/right conflict reflected rather the communist/anti-communist cleavage than socioeconomic ideologies, however, the parties later adjusted their economic policies accordingly, and a ‘major shift of the dominant conflict dimension from communist-anti-communist to socioeconomic divides’ (Ramonaitė, 2006, p. 81) was observable. However, differently from Western Europe, the left-right dimension is still rather tied to values and moral questions such as the ‘assessment of the communist regime, church attendance and national pride’ (Ramonaitė, 2006, p. 81). In the same time, there was another shift in the system that was very aptly

¹⁶ M. Degutis, How Lithuanian Voters Decide: Reasons behind the Party Choice. In: A; referred by Ramonaite, A. (2006). The development of the Lithuanian party system: from stability to perturbation, in S. Jungerstam-Mulders (ed.), *Post-communist EU member states: parties and party systems* (69-90). Aldershot; Burlington, VT: Ashgate.

summarized by a young journalist in one of Ramonaitė's interviews: 'Before, there was a contraposition between Labour Democrats and the Homeland Union. They were like opposite poles, plus and minus, and now they agree on the main, most important questions. The differences between the left and the right have vanished. Nowadays there are traditional forces and some kind of adventurers like Paksas, Uspaskichas...'¹⁷. Ramonaitė sees the reason of the transformation of party system in the distrust for political parties and political elite and in the decline of the main, communist/anti-communist cleavage that opened up the electoral market for new parties (Ramonaitė, 2006, p. 84), but also emphasizes the socioeconomic reasons: 'A new split between traditional and new political actors appears to have in part a socioeconomic foundation since the new populist parties attract most of their support from the poor rural population. An emerging division between modern and growing cities and a stagnating countryside partially overlaps with the communist-anti-communist cleavage. To some extent, new parties and political actors such as Paulauskas, Paksas or Uspaskich, are a replacement of the Labour Democrats for those who are disenchanted with the current regime and feel nostalgic about the Soviet past' (Ramonaitė, 2006, p. 85).

The influence of the parties in the polarization along cleavages (top-down approach) also plays its role: as the political elite is less polarized in the communist/anti-communist axis than the population and the influence of value orientation depends on whether the elite manages to actualize the value conflicts in the competition, it decreases the significance of this difference to voter behaviour (Ramonaitė, 2007a, p. 141).

Ramonaitė also devoted an article (Ramonaitė, 2013) to the pro-Soviet/anti-Soviet cleavage where she is trying to establish what factors influence the attitude towards the Soviet past. She mentions that – as it has been observed by several authors¹⁸ – the

¹⁷ In-depth interview with a 27-year-old journalist, Tauragė, July 2004, cited by (Ramonaitė, 2006, p. 81)

¹⁸ Degutis, Mindaugas. 2002. Rinkiminio elgesio dinamika Lietuvoje 1992–2001 m. Daktaro disertacija. Vilnius: Vilniaus universitetas.;

Ramonaitė, Ainė. 2003, "The End of the Left-Right Discourse in Lithuania?" in Algimantas Jankauskas (ed.) Lithuanian Political Science Yearbook 2002. Vilnius: Institute of International Relations and Political Science, Vilnius University

Ramonaitė, Aine. 2007. Posovietinės Lietuvos politinė anatomija. Vilnius: Versus Aureus

Ramonaitė, Ainė; Maliukevičius, Nerijus; Degutis, Mindaugas. 2007. Tarp Rytų ir Vakarų: Lietuvos visuomenės geokultūrinės nuostatos. Vilnius: Versus aureus.

Žiliukaitė, Rūta; Ramonaitė, Ainė. 2009. „Vertybinės nuostatos ir rinkėjų balsavimas“ in Ainė Ramonaitė (sud.). Partinės demokratijos pabaiga? Politinis atstovavimas ir ideologijos. Vilnius: Versus aureus

Soviet/anti-Soviet attitudes allow to predict voting behaviour in Lithuania better than any other socioeconomic or attitudinal factor (Ramonaitė, 2013, p. 265). Ramonaitė tested three hypotheses using the data of the 2012 post-electoral survey: 1) the assessment of the Soviet period is determined by sociodemographic factors: the present social status and its change compared to the Soviet period; 2) it is determined by the social environment; 3) it is decided by value orientation (Ramonaitė, 2013, p. 266). The findings confirm the role of all factors, however, to a differing extent¹⁹.

The assessment of the Soviet period is determined not by the current living conditions or status, but the change of status – the difference between the (subjectively felt) living conditions and the status in the Soviet era and now (Ramonaitė, 2013, p. 271).

The impact of social environment is connected to the fact whether the family of the respondent had suffered from repressions in the Soviet period (Ramonaitė, 2013, p. 273), whether they have participated in Sajūdis (Ramonaitė, 2013, p. 265) and the identity of the parents of the respondent and the political views of the social environment (friends, acquaintances) (Ramonaitė, 2013, p. 278). Value orientation most closely correlates with the assessment of the overall benefit of the Soviet period for Lithuania (it reduces the likelihood of anti-Soviet position about four times) as well as the support for price regulation and the reduction of inequality (Ramonaitė, 2013, p. 281). Other influential factors are nationality – being Lithuanian, compared with Russian ethnicity, increases the likelihood of anti-Soviet views 2.5 times (the Russian minority feels that they have lost the status of the privileged ethnic group) (Ramonaitė, 2013, pp. 272–273) and place of residence – being a city dweller increases the likelihood of being anti-Soviet more than two times compared to rural inhabitants (Ramonaitė, 2013, p. 274). (It again shows that the pro-Soviet/anti-Soviet divide overlaps with the urban-rural divide.)

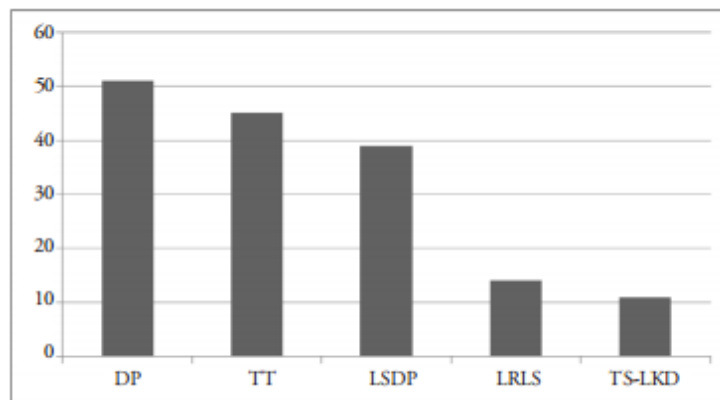
It is interesting that this question only differentiates electoral preferences among the older generation, as young people often do not have an opinion on this question. Ramonaitė explains it with cognitive dissonance: at school and public space a negative

Imbrasaitė, Jūratė; Žilyis, Apolonijus; Bartuškaitė, Miglė. 2001. „Sovietinės sistemos vertinimas ir požiūris į demokratiją Lietuvoje“, *Filosofija, Sociologija* 2 (22): 106–114.

¹⁹ In her earlier book 'Between East and West – foundations of geocultural principles' (2007) Ramonaitė noted that Soviet nostalgia first of all depends on how someone evaluates the Soviet system (economic effectivity and justness) and the perception of job opportunities in the current system is only on the second place. (Ramonaitė, 2007b, p. 21)

assessment of the Soviet period is presented while they may hear different views in their social environment (Ramonaitė, 2013, p. 283)

Seeking to illustrate the significance of the pro-Soviet/anti-Soviet attitude for voting preferences, Ramonaitė examined the electorate of different parties in the light of the question: 'Do you agree that it was better to live during Soviet times?'. The result, as she puts it, mirrors the current party competition: there is a sharp divide between the electorate of the right-wing Homeland Union and Liberal Movement on the one hand and the LSDP and the 'newcomer' Order and Justice and Labour Party (who now form the parliamentary opposition and the governing coalition) on the other:



3 pav. Sutinkančių, kad sovietiniais laikais buvo geriau gyventi, dalis tarp partijos rėmėjų (proc.)

Share of respondents among party supporters who agree that living during Soviet times was better²⁰(DP – Labour Party, TT – Order and Justice, LSDP – Social Democratic Party of Lithuania, TS-LKD: Homeland Union-Christian Democrats) (Ramonaitė, 2013, p. 269)

In an earlier survey Ramonaitė also found that the biggest part (more than one quarter) of those who agree with this statement intended to vote for one of the new parties: Labour Party, Lithuanian Popular Peasants' Union and Order and Justice (Ramonaitė, 2007a, pp. 100–101).

It is also worth to mention that while earlier people of pro-Soviet orientation most frequently voted for the Democratic Labour Party (predecessor of LSDP/Social

Democrats), now the electorate of this party does not stand out with pro-Soviet attitude (there are only 2.6 percentage points more voters of LSDP among the pro-Soviet people than among the anti-Soviet) (Ramonaitė, 2007a, p. 101).

These findings again reinforce my argument that the newcomer parties orient themselves towards those who are disappointed with the current system and feel nostalgia for the Soviet period. Although the leader of Order and Justice claimed that attempts to associate the party with uneducated rural inhabitants who are disappointed with the state power are unfounded (Žiliukaitė and Ramonaitė, 2009, p. 38), there are signs that show the opposite.

It is difficult to find statistics on voting patterns. I analysed the results of the 2012 Seimas elections²¹ according to territorial distribution. There are 71 single-member constituencies in the whole country, 10 of them in Vilnius and 18 in other bigger cities (Kaunas, Klaipėda, Šiauliai, Panevėžys, – over 100 000 inhabitants). So 40% of the electoral districts are in bigger cities, however, out of the 10 mandates gained by the Labour Party in single-member districts, only 2 are in bigger cities (one from Vilnius and one from Klaipėda). Order and Justice did not gain any mandates in bigger cities, all of the 5 mandates are from smaller towns and villages, mainly from the West of the country. It shows that the electorate of the two parties is mainly based in rural and provincial areas.

It is in accordance with the popular notion of ‘two Lithuanias’ that claims that the country is divided to a flourishing centre and an impoverished province (Ramonaitė, 2007a, p. 91). This theory became popular after the 2002-2003 presidential elections that was – unexpectedly for quite a few people – won by R. Paksas. With his pre-election journey across the provinces he wanted to demonstrate that he represents the ‘second Lithuania’, forgotten and not appreciated by the elite. This theory was also used to explain the success of the Labour Party in the 2004 European Parliament and Seimas elections (Ramonaitė, 2007a, p. 90). The analysis conducted by Ramonaitė confirmed that the country is indeed divided into ‘first Lithuania’ that looks into the future and ‘second Lithuania’ that feels nostalgia for the Soviet past. The latter makes up about 40 percent while the former is only about one third. ‘First Lithuania’ votes for rightist parties, mainly

²¹http://www.vrk.lt/statiniai/puslapiai/2012_seimo_rinkimai/output_lt/rinkimu_diena/isrinkti_seimo_nariai_kadencijaia.html

the Homeland Union, while 'Second Lithuania' is disappointed with traditional parties and chooses new political forces or does not intend to vote at all and the Social Democratic Party attracts voters equally from both groups. This cleavage partly overlaps with the socioeconomic dimension (incomes) and also with the geographical distribution (capital city and province), (Ramonaitė, 2007a, p. 102).

However, Ramonaitė notes that the difference between people of pro-Soviet and anti-Soviet orientation overshadows the differences in place of residence and income (Ramonaitė, 2007a, p. 101).

I tend to agree with Ramonaitė that the view of the Soviet past is the most important divide that overlaps with the communist/anti-communist dimension, the socioeconomic dimension (winners and losers of transformation) and (because of the growing differences in the quality of life between urban and rural areas) also with the urban/rural dimension. In this sense, it could be called a 'supercleavage' that is mirrored in the divide between traditional and newcomer (populist) parties that orientate themselves towards the losers of the transformation that are naturally receptive towards the anti-establishment rhetoric that populists represent. Being a loser of democratic transition (subjectively felt deterioration of living conditions) correlates with living in rural areas (because of the division between modernising cities and stagnating countryside) and with nostalgia towards the Soviet past. All of these factors again correlate with distrust towards democratic institutions, anti-establishment and anti-system views (as can be seen from the next section) and as a consequence, support for non-traditional parties, which, being anti-system and anti-elite, try to capitalize on Soviet nostalgia.

It is very important from the point of view of this research that attitude towards the Soviet past is the most important issue divide that separates the electorate of the newcomer, 'populist' parties from that of the traditional parties.

Of course it would be an oversimplification to say that it is synonymous with the attitude towards Russia. According to the survey conducted in 2006²² and analysed by

²² A survey commissioned by the Civil Society Institute (*Pilietinės visuomenės institutas*) and conducted in October 2006 by public opinion and market research centre *Vilmorus*.

Ainè Ramonaitė, 24% of the respondents evaluated the political arrangement of the SSRS positively, however, only 10% of the respondents had a positive opinion about the political arrangement of Russia and Belarus. Still there is some connection between the two things: among those who assessed the Soviet Union negatively, even 72% had the same opinion about Russia and those who assess the Soviet Union positively, tend to evaluate today's Russia's political system as mediocre or good (Ramonaitė, 2007b, p. 22). The same can be said about the negative geopolitical perception of Russia: among those who disagree that it was better to live during the Soviet period, almost 80% identified Russia as Lithuania's enemy, while it was only 56% among those who feel nostalgia for the Soviet times. Ramonaitė explains it with a certain mentality and view of Lithuania's present situation. (Ramonaitė, 2007b, p. 34). (It is also noted that those who suffered from Soviet repression have a more hostile view of Russia and Belarus. (Ramonaitė, 2007b, p. 35)) Another interesting point is that people with lower incomes look at Russia less critically; the author suggests that it may be connected to their negative view of parties and politicians who constantly stress the dangers coming from Russia (Ramonaitė, 2007b, p. 33). Talking specifically about the electorate of different parties, notes that those who are the most sceptical about the West and Lithuania and have the most positive assessment of the regimes of Russia and Belarus are the voters of Labour Party, followed by the supporters of the Popular Peasants' Union and Order and Justice (in other words, the non-traditional parties) (Ramonaitė, 2007b, p. 36). Those who have the least negative attitude towards Russia are the supporters of Order and Justice (Ramonaitė, 2007b, p. 37). The highest share of people who answered that they would not be deterred from voting for a party if it turned out that it was supported by Russia was among the voters of Labour Party and Order and Justice (Ramonaitė, 2007b, p. 39). (Although it has to be noted that even among the voters of Order and Justice and Labour Party there are more people who would rather approve if a party had connections to the US, so it would be inaccurate to say that the supporters of these parties are straight-out pro-Russian (Ramonaitė, 2007b, pp. 40–42)). Also the voters of these two parties were those who sympathized with Russia the most and did not tend to regard it as an enemy (Ramonaitė, 2007b, pp. 43–44) The supporters of the Social Democrats, however, are in between the Homeland Union and the new parties (Ramonaitė, 2007b, p. 36).

Ramonaitė concludes that ‘the civilizational fault line between the pro-Western and pro-Eastern orientations exists within Lithuania itself and this dimension, as noted by the researchers²³ of Lithuania’s party system, is one of the most important dimensions that form the structure of the Lithuanian party system and party preferences’ (Ramonaitė, 2007b, p. 36) and adds that ‘the nostalgia for the Soviet times is alive and, although it cannot be equated with pro-Russian geopolitical orientation, it nevertheless works as a favourable soil for Russia’s cultural expansion and propaganda’ (Ramonaitė, 2007b, p. 84).

But it also has to be stated that for the Lithuanian society, Western European and US economic and political and social system is the preferred one and the Russian and Belarussian systems are regarded as unacceptable for Lithuania (Ramonaitė, 2007b, p. 13). It will explain the relative restraint of the parties known as pro-Russian, as voicing outright pro-Russian opinions is a taboo that might lead to ostracization and alienate voters.

It is also worth attention that the same parties whose supporters are the most nostalgic towards the Soviet past are also accused of representing a pro-Russian position. There are a couple of points that seem to support this assumption.

In the early stage of independence, the pro-Soviet/anti-Soviet or East-West geopolitical cleavage manifested as the controversy between the two main political forces: the Lithuanian Democratic Labour Party and the successors of the Sajūdis; at this time, the ‘pro-Soviet’ orientation consisted of ‘favourable mentions of decreasing military expenditures, positive attitudes towards former communists’ involvement in the transition process and favourable mentions of Russia and the USSR’ (Ramonaitė, 2003, pp. 29–31). It seems that this cleavage has somewhat transformed over time, but it did contain a link to the Russian Federation even in its initial period.

In a study made in 2009 about the value orientation of Lithuanian parties and voters, Ainė Ramonaitė and Rūta Žiliukaitė found that the leadership of Homeland Union considers it the least likely to cooperate with parties that they regard as the ‘projects of Russia’s special services’ while the leader of the Liberal Union ruled out cooperation with the so-called populist parties that are influenced from Russia, such as Order and Justice

²³ Jurkynas, M., 2001. Politinio konflikto kaita ir takoskyros, in: Lietuva Po Seimo Rinkimų 2000. Naujasis lankas, Vilnius, Kaunas. (Ramonaitė, 2007a, pp. 23–33)

and Labour Party (Žiliukaitė and Ramonaitė, 2009, pp. 31–32). This suggests that the pro-Soviet/anti-Soviet cleavage persisted as the controversy between those who support and oppose influence from the Eastern neighbour. In the same time, it has interwoven with the opposition of traditional and populist parties ‘that could be classified as a value-based cleavage if it would become clear that the orientation of the parties associated with Russia is indeed more pro-Russian than that of their opponents’ (Žiliukaitė and Ramonaitė, 2009, p. 32).

The research on the most important values of Lithuanian political parties has confirmed that the politicians of Order and Justice are the most pro-Russian (especially in questions of cooperation with Russia and the question of former KGB collaborators) – although there is high variation of opinions among the party members – followed by the Labour Party (Žiliukaitė and Ramonaitė, 2009, p. 49). The analysis of the principles of party members confirm rather the pro-Russian image of the party than the patriotic social conservative identity formulated by its leader (Žiliukaitė and Ramonaitė, 2009, p. 52).

In accordance with the idea of East-West civilizational fault line within the country that has been raised by Ramonaitė, I propose the following explanation for the link between pro-Soviet and pro-Russian views. Lithuania has always been on the border of Western civilization and Russia that had various political systems in different periods (Russian Empire, Soviet Union, Russian Federation), but from a geopolitical point of view, the situation was similar: either to belong to the West or to the Russian sphere of influence. So a simplified view does not concentrate on the differences between today’s Russia and the Soviet Union. Apart from that, Putin’s Russia sometimes also uses Soviet nostalgia as part of its foreign policy: for example, the use of Saint George ribbons or Putin’s famous quote that the fall of the Soviet Union was a major geopolitical disaster of the 20th century. Furthermore, saying that life was better during the Soviet period presupposes dissatisfaction with the current, Western-style democratic political system and membership in the ‘other Union’, the European Union. Then bearing in mind Lithuania’s special geopolitical situation, it is an obvious attitude for these people to – perhaps sometimes as a protest attitude – prefer that ‘other pole’, the power that is the most easily identifiable with the Soviet Union: Russia. One way of trying to capitalize on Soviet nostalgia could be to promote Eurosceptic, pro-Russian views. As Labour Party and Order and Justice have a pro-Russian reputation, the research will try to clarify

whether the parties indeed use pro-Russian views as part of a populist rhetoric to gain support from this part of the electorate.

2.2. Populism in Lithuania and the Perception of Populist Parties

2.2.1 Features of the electoral system promoting the spread of populism

There are some peculiarities of the Lithuanian party system and voting behaviour that are connected to cleavages and correlate with the success of populist parties.

The population is quite passive politically regarding voting turnout and party membership. This may signal disappointment with politics in general that also manifests in distrust towards democratic institutions and political parties. The latter also manifests in high electoral volatility. High volatility means that voters are constantly dissatisfied and looking for new alternatives, either in terms of new parties or new, attractive elements that entice them to abandon their preferences and vote for another party. This promotes the rise of new parties that have a populist, anti-elite, anti-establishment rhetoric, perhaps linked with irresponsible promises.

After 1992, voter turnout has stabilized at a low level, and at the last three parliamentary elections was fairly low, around 45-50% (2004: 46.1%; 2008:48.59%; 2012: 52.93%)²⁴.

Party membership is at a low level in Lithuania compared with other Central and Eastern European countries (Ramonaitė, 2006, p. 82) However, Krupavičius noted in 2005 that party size and party membership were increasing slowly, and there were some large parties, such as the Homeland Union–Christian Democrats and the Lithuanian Social Democratic Party (Krupavičius, 2005b, p. 131). Tõnis Saarts concluded in 2011

²⁴ Lithuanian Election Committee, <http://www.vrk.lt/pagal-rusi>

that ‘Lithuanian and particularly Latvian party systems were characterised by quite remarkable instability and feeble roots in the societies’ (Saarts, 2011, p. 99)

Voter volatility is at a much higher level than in Western Europe (Krupavičius, 2005b, p. 134). It was already apparent to some extent in the 1990s: ‘After the first multiparty elections in 1992, new protest, populist and single-issue parties tended to enter the political scene very regularly on the eve of every new election and sometimes to disappear almost the next day after the election’ (Krupavičius, 2005a, p. 192). Although in the 1990s the Lithuanian party system was considered more stable than the Latvian and Estonian one, there was still considerable volatility that manifested as the fluctuation of votes between the two major parties: the Homeland Union and the Social Democrats. (Jurkynas, 2004; Krupavičius, 2005a; Novagrockienė 2001; Ramonaite, 2006).’ (Saarts, 2011, p. 88)

However, the rise of volatility was especially apparent after the ‘earthquake elections’ in 2000 when several new parties entered the political scene (Saarts, 2011, p. 88). ‘The volatility rate in Lithuania has increased with every election and in 2004 it was above 50, while the average volatility rate in East Central and Eastern Europe is about 30.’ (Ramonaitė, 2006, p. 83) Ramonaitė also notes that the combined share of seats of the two main parties, the Social Democrats and the Homeland Union has decreased from 72% in 1992 to 32% in 2004 and the number of parties with substantive parliamentary representation has increased from 5 to 7 (Ramonaitė, 2006, p. 84). She sees the reason in the distrust for political parties and political elite and in the decline of the main, communist/anti-communist cleavage that opened up the electoral market for new parties (Ramonaitė, 2006, p. 84). In 2011, Saarts noted that ‘[t]he fragmentation in Lithuania has increased by a large extent since 1992, and the scores reached their maximum level in the last elections’ (Saarts, 2011, p. 90) and concluded that the Lithuanian party system ‘was fairly consolidated in the 1990s, but fell into disarray in the next decade.’ (Saarts, 2011, p. 90) He characterizes it as an ‘extreme multiparty system with one dominant party’ (Saarts, 2011, p. 91).

Low turnout and party membership and high volatility can all be explained by the distrust towards the parties and the general scepticism and lack of trust towards

democratic institutions (Novagrockienė, 2001, pp. 151–152). As Algis Krupavičius notes, political parties are usually among the most distrusted institutions across Baltic countries' (Krupavičius, 2005b, p. 134) About 10 years after the regime change, there was substantial amount of distrust towards the political elite and the multiparty system: according to a poll made in 2001 in European post-communist countries, 44% of respondents in Lithuania would have agreed to close the parliament and ban all political parties, occupying the first place in the region (the values ranged from 12% to 44% with an average 28-29% (Veidas, 11 March 2004:32. , cited by (Palubinskas, 2005)). Between 2004 and 2010, the trust in parties in Lithuania was only 9% on average (Saarts, 2011, p. 92).

The distrust towards parties and democratic institutions is important from our point of view, as being disappointed with the political system increases the likelihood of voting for anti-system, anti-establishment, in other words, populist parties. Being sceptical about Western-style democratic institutions probably correlates with Euroscepticism and can be related to being more pro-Russian (as the choice of geopolitical orientations in the case of Lithuania is quite limited).

It is also important to pay attention how the party system destabilized after the 2000 and especially after the 2004 elections, giving space for several new parties. This process, of course, can also be linked to the general distrust towards traditional parties and anti-elite sentiments. The weakness of the traditional mainstream parties (Homeland Union and Social Democrats) as well as the competition between an increased number of parties could have also contributed to the spread of populist rhetoric (Balcerė, 2011, pp. 15–16). This transformation was connected to the decline of the communist/anti-communist cleavage (Ramonaitė, 2006, p. 84) as the traditional mainstream parties based their popularity on this cleavage.

Ainė Ramonaitė divides the development of Lithuanian party system into two stages: '(1) formation of the party system in 1989-1998, and (2) destabilization of the party system, apparent since 2000'(Ramonaitė, 2006, p. 70).

On the historical level, parties that had some history reaching the pre-Soviet era (the Social Democrats and the Christian Democrats) were more significant in the initial period after the transition, but their political weight and representation decreased after the 2000 Seimas elections (Krupavičius, 2005a, p. 184). (It has to be noted that the LSDP is only ‘half-historical’, as it later merged with the Lithuanian Democratic Labour Party, the successor of the Lithuanian Communist Party.)

Until the 2000 elections, Lithuanian politics was characterised by bipolar fluctuation of the two main left- and right-wing parties, the Lithuanian Democratic Labour Party (parliamentary majority in 1992) and the Homeland Union/Lithuanian Conservatives (parliamentary majority in 1996) (Krupavičius, 2005b, p. 133). Compared with the other two Baltic states, the average share of new parties since the first elections has been lower in Lithuania because of the strength of the two large mainstream parties. However, with the elections in 2000, two new parties (the Liberal Union and the New Union-Social Liberals, the latter later merged with the Labour Party) entered the system²⁵. After the 2000 elections, the Seimas was dominated by a center-left majority, which failed to form a government immediately after the election (Krupavičius, 2005b, p. 133).

The elections in 2000 are regarded as an important watershed in the development of the Lithuanian party system: the established right-wing parties of the Homeland Union/Lithuanian Conservatives, the Christian Democrats and the Lithuanian Centre Union have lost positions (the latter two even failed to cross the threshold) to the newcomer Liberal Union and New Union-Social Liberals who together gained more than 24% of the votes and more than one fifth of the seats (Krupavičius, 2005a, p. 191). According to Algis Krupavičius, it signalled the crisis of the established centre-right parties (Homeland Union/Christian Democrats and Centre Alliance) and was caused by their poor performance at government (Krupavičius, 2005a, p. 191). Ainė Ramonaitė attributes the failure of the earlier governing Homeland Union to the *Mažeikių nafta* privatization fiasco, the economic depression of 1999 and the internal splits within the party (Ramonaitė, 2006, p. 72). On the other hand, she explains the success of the new

²⁵ Actually, The Liberal Union, winning only one seat at the previous elections became the largest party in Seimas with 34 seats.

parties with the popularity of their charismatic leaders, Artūras Paulauskas and Rolandas Paksas (Ramonaitė, 2006, p. 73) (Paulauskas lost the presidential elections of 1997/1998 as a non-party candidate to Valdas Adamkus by only 1%, while Paksas was well known as the former mayor of Vilnius and former prime minister of the Conservative government (Ramonaitė, 2006, p. 73).

However, as Ainė Ramonaitė notes (Ramonaitė, 2006, p. 70), it was only the beginning of the 'decay' of the "traditional parties". At the elections in 2004, three new parties (Labour Party, Order and Justice – Liberal Democratic Party and the Union of Peasants and New Democracy) managed to acquire seats in the parliament winning 46% of the votes and 42% of the seats (Ramonaitė, 2006, p. 74), among them the Labour Party, established only a year before, coming on the first place with 28%. The Labour Party also gained 30% of the Lithuanian votes at the EP elections in June the same year (Ramonaitė, 2006, p. 70). Since then, 'the ex-communist and ex-Sąjūdis parties have lost their dominant positions, party system fragmentation is increasing and electoral volatility is growing with every election' (Ramonaitė, 2006, p. 70). This trend was apparent during the 2008 and 2012 elections with 10 and 8 parties gaining mandates²⁶ and the most successful party (Homeland Union/Christian Democrats and Labour Party respectively) acquiring only 19% of the votes and new parties gaining representation in the Seimas: National Resurrection Party established in 2008 and The Way of Courage established in 2012. The former was headed by Arūnas Valinskas, a performer and producer and there were numerous artists and celebrities among the members that is why it was renowned as a 'clown party' ("Valinskas: pas mus sąrašuose nėra juokdarių ir klounų," 2011). The Way of Courage is a single-issue party concentrated on the fight against paedophilia, inspired by a recent criminal case. The success of these two parties can also be interpreted as a sign of disappointment among the voters and a turn towards non-standard, anti-establishment (perhaps populist) political parties.

From our point of view, it is also worth to mention the geopolitical orientation of the main parties. Basically, being manifestly anti-Western is not an alternative in today's

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http://www.vrk.lt/statiniai/puslapiai/2008_seimo_rinkimai/output_lt/rinkimu_diena/isrinkti_seimo_nariai_kadencijaik.html
http://www.vrk.lt/statiniai/puslapiai/2012_seimo_rinkimai/output_lt/rinkimu_diena/isrinkti_seimo_nariai_kadencijaik.html

politics, so even those parties that are Eurosceptic (like Order and Justice) have to serve it in such a form that is acceptable in the Lithuanian political atmosphere.

The Homeland Union ‘distinguishes itself by its anti-communist and anti-Russian rhetoric’ (Ramonaitė, 2006, p. 75) and resembles Western-style right-wing parties in emphasising such values as nation, family and religion’ (Ramonaitė, 2006, p. 75). The party’s pro-Western position is also important from our point of view, as it was the strongest advocate of NATO and EU accession (Ramonaitė, 2006, p. 75). In the middle of 2000s, the party was seen as ‘one of the most liberal parties in Lithuania in terms of economic policy’ (Ramonaitė, 2006, p. 75). It is a member of the European People’s Party.

The Social Democrats (LSDP) merged with the Democratic Labour Party, the successor of the communist party, but it takes a firm pro-Western and pro-EU stance and is a member of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats.

The Liberal Movement is also firmly pro-Western, member of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe.

2.2.2 The Perception of Populism in Lithuania

In this section I am trying to provide some insight on how populism is perceived in Lithuania, which parties are usually regarded and labelled populist and why they are accused of being pro-Russian.

One interesting take on populism in Lithuania is Rasa Baločkaitė’s attempt (Baločkaitė, 2007) to apply Mircea Eliade’s idea of eternal return and ethnomethodology to understand people’s approach to politics in the country. According to Eliade’s idea, the primitive consciousness does not think in terms of history, but the cyclical return of archetypes to make sense of the world. Baločkaitė argues that in Lithuania the archetype of ‘evil power’ has formed through the centuries: power is always evil and works against the people – hence the distrust towards parties and the parliament. According to this archetypal view, power is strictly separated from the people: power is referred to as ‘they’ and all politicians are thought to be the same (evil), without individual

characteristics. Baločkaitė notes that some politicians make use of this worldview, among them Rolandas Paksas and Viktor Uspaskich (the leaders of Order and Justice and Labour Party). As a president, Paksas tried to picture himself as the 'saviour of the ordinary people' (and the 'victim of the system') and was manipulating with the archetype of the 'evil power'. Uspaskich's party won the elections of 2004 with unrealistic promises to raise salaries and reduce prices for heating; it implies that these things are easy to do and it is only the 'evil power' that prevents people from having a good standard of living.

There is little scholarly literature available on populist parties in Lithuania. In everyday political discourse, it is common to refer to 'populist parties'. However, it is more difficult to establish on the basis of exact criteria which parties can be indeed considered populist.

In her article about populist parties in the Baltic states, Ieva Balcerė notes there that almost all the parties in these three countries include some aspects of populism, and populism is 'especially widespread in Lithuania' (Balcerė, 2011, p. 1): 'almost every political party indicates at least one populist-related characteristic where the most widespread is anti-establishment stance, particularly using the notion of corruption. The antagonism towards political elites is not marginal but systemic. Political parties in the Baltics widely use the notion that mainstream political elite is corrupted and systemic corruption is deep rooted in political system as a whole. Reduction of corruption as one of the objectives is stated in almost all party programmes.' (Balcerė, 2011, p. 8) Balcerė uses characteristics based on the definition of de Raadt et al. (2004) of populism as a 'lowest common denominator' for parties to classify as populist: centrality of people, direct democracy, anti-establishment (anti-elite) stance (Balcerė, 2011, p. 4). Applying these criteria, Balcerė analyses the electoral programmes of parties. According to these criteria, she classifies Order and Justice and the Liberal Movement of Lithuania as populist, while Labour Party does not fulfil the anti-establishment (anti-elite) criteria.

She characterizes the position of Order and Justice as very critical towards the current state of affairs (anti-establishment rhetoric) and identifying itself with the electorate (appeal to the people) as well as using conspiracy theories, 'meaning that political elite functions as a sort of puppet in hands of foreign forces' (anti-elite rhetoric)

(Balcere, 2011, p. 5). The centrality of people is also emphasized in their programme. The party also stresses the involvement of people in political decisions (before leaving the post of the president, in his farewell speech to the people Paksas also expressed his aspiration to achieve that the president, elected by the people had more power and not only a representative function²⁷). When comparing it with Western European populist parties, Balcere notes that Order and Justice does not express an anti-EU stance in its election programme, quite on the contrary (Balcere, 2011, p. 12). The party tries to create some kind of conspiracy theory, but it does not identify clearly foreign actors it mentions (foreign intelligence services, ‘powerful world forces’) (Balcere, 2011, p. 12). The only characteristic of OJ that reminds Western European populist parties is the emphasis on law and order (Balcere, 2011, p. 13) and that Paksas is ‘well known for his populist rhetoric’ (Balcere, 2011, p. 14).

Balcere suggests that the reason why populism is more characteristic for the Lithuanian political scene in general is the fierce competition between a high number of political parties, by competition serving as a catalyst that forces parties ‘to employ direct and simplified rhetoric in order to gather the necessary attention from potential voters’ (Balcere, 2011, pp. 15–16).

As we can see, Balcere concluded that one of the two most prominent parties usually labelled as populist does correspond to all the criteria of populism, while the other does not. However, considering that – according to Balcere – populism is generally prevalent among Lithuanian parties and that Labour Party does correspond to two criteria out of three, moreover, it is widely perceived as populist, it will be labelled a populist party in this research, bearing in mind that as a party that is represented in a governing coalition already for the second time, it may be in a process of transformation and becoming more ‘mainstream’.

In a research report about populism in the Baltic states, the authors also observed populist elements in the manifesto’s of practically all the parties that ran in the 2008 elections, but Order and Justice was characterised as a more radical one among the parliamentary parties (Balcere et al., 2012, p. 41).

²⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1UfP5giygKM> retrieved on 16.04.2016

On the other hand, it is not the populist 'label' that matters from the point of view of this research, but what I would like to explore is whether they base their strategy on societal cleavages and whether advocating pro-Russian/Eurosceptic stance is connected to such cleavages, especially the pro-Soviet/anti-Soviet one. From this aspect, the Labour Party and Order and Justice are probably the most suitable parties to examine, because of their widespread image of being in some ways connected to Russia.

Below I am attempting to illustrate what events could have contributed to these parties being perceived as pro-Russian. (Uspaskich is not the leader of the party any more, but being the founder of Labour Party, his personality is still strongly associated with it.)

Rolandas Paksas became famous as president removed from his post by an impeachment procedure. Already during his electoral campaign, he was suspected to have financial and intellectual support from Russia (Ramonaitė, 2006, p. 74) (through the Russian company Almax) (Norkus, 2011, p. 26). After his victory at the presidential election, in the end of 2003, Paksas was accused of illegally granting citizenship to a Russian businessman who financed his electoral campaign and passing on secret information to him (that the National Security Service was bugging his telephone line) by breaking his presidential oath as well as promoting the financial interests of people close to him by misusing his office. Consequently, he was removed by an impeachment procedure and barred for lifetime from any public office that requires taking an oath according to the Constitutional Court²⁸. However, later Paksas attacked this sentence at the European Court of Human Rights that condemned the action of the Lithuanian state as unproportioned (Urmonaitė, 2011). He was the first president in Europe to be removed by such procedure (Nikitenka, 2004). (After Paksas' appeal to the Lithuanian Supreme

²⁸ 'Paksas wanted to run in the presidential elections to replace himself. Since this defied logic, Parliament amended the election law on May 4, prohibiting an impeached individual from running for the presidency for five years following his removal from office. Paksas supporters in Parliament appealed to the Constitutional Court to rule on the constitutionality of the amendment. The Constitutional Court agreed to take the matter under review. On May 25, the Constitutional Court ruled that the amendment was unconstitutional and stated unequivocally that individuals impeached for gravely breaching Lithuania's constitution or for breaking their oath of office could never again run for the presidency, nor could they hold any other office that required them to swear an oath to the nation since they had already proven incapable of honoring it.' (Palubinskas, 2005)

Court, it ruled that he was not guilty of revealing state secrets to Y. Borisov in the lack of proofs, but the Court of Appeals decided that the acquit was made due to the insufficient linking of separate parts of evidence and concluded that Paksas committed a criminal act (Roudik, 2015.)

The founder and former leader of Labour Party, Viktor Uspaskich is himself of Russian origin, he settled in Lithuania in 1985. After the victory of his party at the 2004 elections, he was appointed minister of economy in the cabinet of Algirdas Brazauskas, but resigned because of the financial scandal in his party. He was accused of faulty bookkeeping (tax evasion), subsequently escaped to Russia and asked for political asylum. In 2007, he organised a press conference in Moscow with the title *Violation of human and civil rights in Europe – attempts to kidnap and kill MP candidate Viktor Uspaskich*, claiming that he is persecuted by the Lithuanian authorities on political grounds and the country is turning into dictatorship (“Виктора Успаских взяли под арест,” 2007). Lithuanian president Valdas Adamkus condemned Uspaskich’s actions and especially the fact that he is using Russia as a safe haven (“Adamkų stebina „darbiečių“ veržimasis pas besislapstantį Uspaskichą,” 2007). There were reports that the State Security Office (VSD) was investigating suspicions that Labour Party is financed from offshore companies, connected to Russian secret services (“Uspaskichas ramus kaip Paksas,” 2008). There were also rumours that Uspaskich participated in a private meeting where the representative of Gazprom in Lithuania agreed on a deal to appoint Gediminas Kirkilas as the next prime minister, instead of another candidate (“Uspaskichas ramus kaip Paksas,” 2008).

2.3. The Party Profiles of Labour Party and Order and Justice

In this section, I am trying to draw the profiles of the two most significant ‘newcomer’ or non-traditional parties represented in the parliament currently, the Labour Party and the Order and Justice party. It should give a general idea of how the two parties are rooted in the Lithuanian party system.

Both parties were regarded as being built upon the popularity of their leaders, Viktor Uspaskich and Rolandas Paksas.

Order and Justice

According to his biography²⁹ published on the website of his party, Rolandas Paksas (1956-) was originally a construction engineer, stunt pilot and businessman. He was member of the Communist Party before 1989 and member of the Democratic Labour Party between 1989 and 1995. In 1997, he became the mayor of Vilnius. In 1999, he was the prime minister of the Conservative government. In the same year, he was elected chairman of the Liberal Union of Lithuania and member of parliament, Meanwhile, he became the mayor of Vilnius again. In 2000 and 2001, for about eight months, he was prime minister again in the coalition government of the Liberal Union and the New Union-Social Liberals. In 2002, he created the Liberal Democratic Party which was in 2006 renamed Order and Justice. In 2014, he was elected to the European parliament where he is the chairman of the Eurosceptic group 'Europe of Freedom and Democracy'.

The former party of Paksas, the Liberal Union was oriented towards liberal ideology while the Liberal Democratic Party 'did not have an explicit ideological orientation and mainly appealed to those dissatisfied with the reforms' (Ramonaitė, 2006, p. 73) and 'mainly attracted the support of an uneducated rural population and ethnic minorities, i.e. the traditional electorate of the Labour Democrats. The Liberal Union, in contrast, drew most of its support from the Homeland Union' (Ramonaitė, 2006, p. 73). The Liberal Union and the New Union formed a government together with the Lithuanian Centre Union and the Modern Christian Democratic Union in 2000 that was after less than one year followed by a government led by the Social Democrat Algirdas Brazauskas. Paksas later seceded from the Liberal Union and in 2002 formed his own party, the Liberal Democratic Party that was later renamed Order and Justice.

Paksas was elected president in 2003. According to Ramonaitė, he 'ran an aggressive and populist electoral campaign with financial and intellectual support from Russia' (Ramonaitė, 2006, p. 74). As Ginta T. Palubinskas notes, 'Paksas campaign made unrealistic promises, such as raising pensions, that won him broad popular support, but

²⁹ <http://www.tvarka.lt/lt/pirmininkas/biografija>

which in reality were impossible to fulfil because they fell outside of the president's constitutional powers' (Palubinskas, 2005). Paksas campaigned vigorously in the countryside, while his opponent's, Adamkus' campaign was concentrated on Vilnius (Palubinskas, 2005). Paksas' election was also important because it revealed the opposition of traditional parties and the challenger of the establishment: in the second round of the presidential election, Adamkus was supported by all traditional parties, including the Social Democrats, differently than in the 1993 and 1998 presidential elections when the competition was between the left and the right candidates (Jankauskas, 2003, p. 22).

According to Saulius Šilias, already at the time of his removal procedure, Paksas was trying to orientate towards people who are dissatisfied with their social status, feel wronged and believe that the system is to blame for all this (Nikitenka, 2004). In the same time, historian and politician Vyantas Vareikis noted that the electorate of Paksas would likely split between him and Viktor Uspaskich, as the voters supporting populists are prone to switch from one candidate to the other (Nikitenka, 2004). Zenonas Norkus also thinks that the votes that were previously cast to Paksas' party were collected by the newcomer Labour Party (Norkus, 2011, pp. 23–24) that was not less suspected with connections with Moscow (Norkus, 2011, pp. 31–32).

According to Zenonas Norkus, Paksas' party represents right-wing populism, while the Labour Party – left-wing populism and his impeachment procedure consolidated the pact of the post-communist and anti-post-communist elites and prevented right-wing populism to gain ground (what happened later in Poland and Hungary in case of the governments of the Kaczyński-brothers and Viktor Orbán) but strengthened left-wing populism (Uspaskich) (Norkus, 2011, pp. 8–9). Norkus writes that all of Paksas' opponents agree that he was a populist whose rhetoric and symbols were much more similar to far-right populists Jörg Haider and Jean-Marie Le Pen than Hugo Chavez, Aleksandr Lukashenko or other left-wing populists (Norkus, 2011, pp. 18–19).

According to Paksas, the most important values for his party are 'the ideal of a strong, independent state, the protection of national values and anti-cosmopolitan orientation' (Žiliukaitė and Ramonaitė, 2009, p. 33). He enumerated the following features of the identity of his party: independence, moral rebirth, national interests, antic cosmopolitanism, strong Church, order, justice, leadership of the state (Žiliukaitė and

Ramonaitė, 2009, p. 35). Žiliukaitė and Ramonaitė also add that 'on the basis of these goals as well as moral rebirth, the emphasis on the strong connection between Church and state, this party corresponds the features of the „Christian-nationalist-authoritarian” camp indicated by Kitschelt (1995) that balances between liberal and populist economic ideas but stands out with its social traditionalism' (Žiliukaitė and Ramonaitė, 2009, p. 34)

The party positions itself as a center-right, but is regarded more right-wing.

During the 2012 elections, the party received 8% of the votes (12 seats). In the governing coalition (Social Democrats, Labour Party, Polish Electoral Action) they received the interior (until 2014) and environmental affairs (from 2014) portfolios.

Labour Party

The former head of the Labour Party, Viktor Uspaskich (1959-)³⁰ is of Russian origin, he was born in the Archangelsk district of the Russian SSR. He arrived for the first time to Lithuania in 1985 where he was working in the provincial town of Kėdainiai as a welder. Later he created several businesses, connected to the food industry. (His best known products are pickled cucumbers, hence his nickname 'Agurkichas'.) In 1991, he gained Lithuanian citizenship. In 1993, he acquired a bachelor degree in economics from the Plekhanov Academy in Moscow (now Plekhanov Russian University of Economics), in 1999 a master's degree from Kaunas Technical University (currently he is allegedly a PhD student at the same university (?)). In 2000, he was elected to the Seimas from the Kėdainiai district and became chairman of the economic committee. He established the Labour Party in 2003 that gained the most mandates in the elections next year. In 2004 he was appointed minister of economy in the cabinet of Algirdas Brazauskas, but resigned because of the financial scandal in his party. Subsequently he fled Russia and was hiding there. He returned to Lithuania in 2007 and was a MEP between 2009 and 2012. In 2012, he was again elected to the Seimas and is currently the leader of the faction of Labour Party. In 2013, he was sentenced to four years of prison (Jančys, 2013) but used his immunity as an MEP to avoid serving the sentence (Rapporteur: Evelyn Regner, 2015); ("Generalinis prokuroras antrą kartą dėl V.Uspaskicho imuniteto nesikreips," 2013). In 2014, being elected to the EP again, he rejected his mandate as a member of Seimas.

³⁰ The source of Uspaskich's biographical data: <http://www.uspaskich.eu/apie-mane/>

The Labour Party is characterised by Ramonaitė as follows: 'The Labour Party was created from scratch on the basis of the popularity of its leader Viktor Uspaskich. It is a populist party without any ideological orientation³¹ rather than the Social Democratic party that the name of the party would suggest. In its manifesto, it presents itself as a party of 'centrist' orientation seeking economic prosperity, effective performance of the government and the development of the middle class. Despite its anti-establishment rhetoric, the party willingly joined a coalition with the Social Democrats after the 2004 elections, retreating from its ambitious socio-economic goals and calls for radical reforms of the governing system' (Ramonaitė, 2006, p. 76).

Uspaskich enumerated the following features of the identity of his party: pragmatism, liber-labor ideology, pragmatic view of the Soviet period and ties to Russia, populism (Žiliukaitė and Ramonaitė, 2009, p. 35). (The leadership did not disclaim being populist.)

It is important to note that while the Labour Party gained the most votes during the 2004 elections, other parties were reluctant to make coalition with them because of the personality of Uspaskich (Ramonaitė, 2006, p. 74), but they eventually formed a government with the Social Democrats, the New Alliance and the Peasants and New Democracy Party Union. The party received the portfolios of economy, interior, justice, culture and healthcare.

The government where the Labour Party was present came to a crisis in 2006 because of the corruption scandal of Viktor Uspaskich. The new government formed in 2006 did not contain the Labour Party, it was formed from LSDP, Liberal and Centre Union, Lithuanian Popular Peasants' Union and the Civic Democratic Party³².

In 2011, the New Alliance led by Artūras Paulauskas joined Labour Party, Paulauskas became vice-president. In 2013, Labour Party fused the centre-right Christian Party³³.

During the 2012 elections, the party received 21% of the votes (29 seats). After the elections, the Social Democrats formed the governing coalition together with the Labour Party, the Order and Justice and the Polish Electoral Action. They received the

³¹ The lack of ideology is consistent with the idea of Stanley (2008) that populism is a 'thin ideology', not an ideology on its own, but something that substitutes an ideology.

³² <http://parties-and-elections.eu/lithuania1.html>

³³ <http://www.darbopartija.lt/naujienos/partijos-naujienos/susijungusi-su-krikscioniu-partija-darbo-partija-tapo-didziausia-politine-jega-lietuvoje/>

portfolios of environment (until 2014), culture, social security and employment, education and science, (from 2014 energy policy) and agriculture.

In 2015, Labour Party had the most members among Lithuanian parties (22 681)³⁴.

Uspaskich was the chairman of Labour Party since 2003 with smaller pauses (2006-2007, 2013-2015). Since May 2015, the head of the party is Valentinas Mazuronis³⁵, who was, interestingly, the chairman of the Liberal Democratic Party between 2003 and 2004 (before and after Paksas).

In 2004, the party joined the pro-European European Democratic Party in the European Parliament and in 2012 they joined the faction of the European Liberal Democrat and Reform Party that has formed a joint group together with EDP.

According to Uspaskich, the party was organized using the structure borrowed from the US Republican Party³⁶. It also has a youth organization called Darbas (Labour)³⁷

One can conclude that both parties have taken firm roots in Lithuanian political life as well as in the European Parliament. While the Labour Party strives to portray itself as a centrist or social democratic party, the Order and Justice is more oriented towards the right but they both lack an explicit ideological orientation. They have gained their populist image from their unrealistic promises made during election campaigns and anti-establishment rhetoric (with Labour Party being now perhaps more consolidated and closer to mainstream). Both parties went through scandals that undermined their reputation and earned them the pro-Russian label.

Both parties base their electoral success on groups that feel positively about the Soviet past and mainly on inhabitants of rural areas. Based on studies on electoral cleavages in Lithuania, it can be concluded that these groups largely overlap with groups that consider themselves the losers of democratic transformation and as such, are naturally receptive to anti-elite, anti-establishment, and, as a consequence, perhaps also to Eurosceptic, anti-Western and pro-Russian rhetoric.

³⁴ <http://www.darbopartija.lt/naujienos/partijos-naujienos/darbo-partija-pagal-nariu-skaiciu-pirmoje-vietoje/>

³⁵ <http://www.darbopartija.lt/naujienos/partijos-naujienos/darbo-partijos-taryba-prieme-v.-mazuroni-i-partija-nutare-del-rinkimu-bei-ministru-darbo/>

³⁶ <http://www.darbopartija.lt/naujienos/partijos-naujienos/pavadinimas-1912/>

³⁷ <http://www.darbopartija.lt/naujienos/partijos-naujienos/pavadinimas-1912/>

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1. Object of Analysis

3.2. Methods of Analysis

3.2.1 Content Analysis

3.2.2 Coding

3.3. Problems and Limitations

This chapter presents the material analysed in order to answer the research questions and the methods used for carrying out the analysis. The first section outlines the goals of the analysis and the corpus of texts that are going to be analysed in the next chapter: on the basis of what criteria the texts were selected and why they are suitable for the analysis. The second section introduces content analysis method and the coding scheme and the categories applied while the last section draws attention to the problems and limitations of the research.

3.1. Object of Analysis

The aim of the research is to explore the role of Labour Party and Order and Justice in the geopolitical discourse in Lithuania.

The research questions that will be asked:

- 1) how Labour Party and Order and Justice position themselves between Russia and the West;
- 2) how do they understand Lithuania's place in the world;
- 3) what are the ideas they represent in terms of the Western world (EU) vs Russia?

4) do they use societal cleavages to support their argumentation and gain support?

To do this, an analysis of official documents of the parties may not be sufficient. Official documents transfer a fixed, clear-out picture that may not always be consistent with the utterances of the politicians. These programmes usually pay too little attention to foreign policy and only contain general phrases instead of specific details. Also, when formulating official documents, parties can choose what topics to comment on and what to neglect. In real-life political discourse, politicians are often forced to take a stance on delicate matters and risk that they may estrange supporters, but they also have the chance to attract new ones. On the other hand, presumably most voters do not read official programmes, they rather concentrate on the stance of parties on specific matters.

Therefore what is needed is a material (collection of texts) that mirrors real life political discourse and that may have an impact on the constituency. Parliamentary debates, in my opinion, fulfil both requirements. Another advantage of the analysis of parliamentary sessions is that – compared with newspaper reports and interviews – they avoid possible distortion by journalists thanks to stenographic recording. The fact that parliamentary debates are usually combined with voting also gives the opportunity to contrast the rhetoric and the actions of the parties.

The analysis is conducted based on case studies from different policy areas from the years 2012-2015 that are connected to Russia or Russian interests, such as

- energy policy projects (construction of Visaginas nuclear power plant 2012³⁸, LNG terminal in Klaipėda³⁹ May-June 2012),
- military issues (reorganization of the structure of the army and increasing its number 2014, laws related to state of war and extraordinary situations, reintroduction of conscription 2015),

³⁸ The Visaginas nuclear power plant was planned to be constructed in order to replace the Ignalina nuclear power plant that used to cover 70% of the country's electrical demand and had to be finally closed in 2009 because of safety reasons on the basis of an agreement with the European Union. The purpose of the Visaginas project was to secure the electric energy missing because the closure of Ignalina and to secure energetic independence from Russia.

³⁹ The Klaipėda liquefied natural gas floating storage and regasification unit terminal (LNG FSRU) started its operation in the end of 2014 and it consists of the vessel *Independence* that is a floating LNG storage terminal combined with a regasification unit. LNG is supplied by Statoil on the basis of a five year agreement. The goal of the project was to break the monopoly of Gazprom as the sole supplier of gas in Lithuania, push down the price of gas by creating competition on the Lithuanian market and to secure energetic independence from Russia by providing an alternative supply opportunity.

- foreign policy (crisis in Ukraine and resolutions supporting Ukraine and condemning Russia 2014-2015⁴⁰ as well as creating a common military unit with Poland and Ukraine; the murder of Boris Nemtsov 2015⁴¹; general discussion on Lithuania's foreign and defence policy questions 2015).

These topics are all related to geopolitical issues, as the parliamentarians themselves emphasize in their discussion about geopolitics that the focus of security has shifted from energy independence to military issues⁴². As it can be seen, cases were selected from recent years because with the change of the geopolitical situation and Russia becoming more assertive there were several cases when Lithuanian domestic issues had a strong geopolitical dimension.

Stenographic records are available from the website of the Lithuanian parliament: http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter/w5_sale.kad_ses . Protocols as well as voice and video recordings are also available, but for the ease of processing, stenographs will be used as the basis of analysis as they need no transcription.

Selection of cases

Some of the debates are centred around laws while some are about the adoption of strategies, resolutions or are just discussions on various topics. Of course, laws have a much greater importance than any other topics as they directly influence the life of people and much more public attention is paid to them, so accordingly these debates are much more intense and parties are much more likely to present their standpoint and confront other opinions because of the weight of the topic. Therefore it needs to be considered that

⁴⁰ In the first resolution, the parliament expressed its sympathy with the protesters in Ukraine and urged the reaction of the EU. The second resolution was supporting the independence and territorial sovereignty of Ukraine and condemned the military aggression by Russia, underlining that Russia's actions pose a threat not only to Ukraine but also to EU and NATO countries, supported the sanctions against Russia, giving Ukraine financial assistance and perspective of membership and re-evaluating the security situation in Europe and putting an end to Russia's aggression against Ukraine.

⁴¹ In this resolution, the Lithuanian parliament expressed its condolences to the relatives and fellows of Boris Nemtsov and called on the international community to exert pressure on the Russia that the murder would be investigated and those responsible for it brought to justice.

⁴² http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter/w5_sale.fakt_pos?p_fakt_pos_id=-500923

the lower activity of some parties does not necessarily mean the lack of interest of the party in that particular topic.

The volume of all the texts of the stenographs comprising the debates in question about 85 000 words (~130 A4 pages).

Of course, the text of related laws, resolutions etc. will be also used to get a proper understanding of the object of the debate. These texts are also available from the webpage of the Lithuanian parliament.

3.2. Methods of Analysis

3.2.1 Content Analysis

The method of content analysis will be used for the purpose of the research. The purpose of content analysis is ‘classifying large amounts of text into an efficient number of categories that represent similar meanings (Weber, 1990)’ that can represent explicit or inferred communication (Hsieh and Shannon, 2007, p. 111). The main goal of content analysis is ‘to provide knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon under study (Downe-Wamboldt, 1992, p. 314)’ (Hsieh and Shannon, 2007, p. 111). As it can be qualitative, quantitative (quantification of the communicative content (Titscher et al., 2000, p. 56): counting the occurrences of specific textual elements), directed or summative (Hsieh and Shannon, 2007), content analysis is rather a research strategy than a single method of text analysis (Titscher et al., 2000, p. 55).

Content analysis seems suitable for analysing the participation of the two parties in the debates, as it will give an idea about their activity, interest in topics having a geopolitical connotation as well as what kind of strategies they use when speaking up in these discussions, e. g. whether they mention Russia, or – as populist parties – rather divert the topic in order to blame the government, or to other issues that people care more about, and most importantly, whether they try to appeal to the pro-Soviet/anti-Soviet cleavage in connection with these issues. Briefly, content analysis should give an overview of how these parties behave in discussions with a geopolitical dimensions.

Content analysis was in its beginning oriented to the impact of content upon audience (Harold D. Lasswell) (Titscher et al., 2000, p. 57). In analysing parliamentary debates, the assessment of the impact is hardly possible, as these speeches are not so much aimed at making an impact but have a declarative nature. However, later the focus shifted from the result of communication process to the identification and classification of the characteristics of the textual material (Titscher et al., 2000, p. 58).

It is emphasized that researchers conducting conventional content analysis should avoid using preconceived categories but should rather allow categories flow from the data (Hsieh and Shannon, 2007, p. 112). In my case, I am using a pre-set definition of populism and assumptions on how populist parties behave based on cleavage theory and the specifics of Lithuanian politics (it hopefully helps to structure the analysis and set the focus), however, I am not using pre-set categories but try to set up the categories paying close attention to the texts.

This method is a mix of quantitative and qualitative content analysis as it does not merely count the voting pattern or occurrences of certain words/phrases but also contains an analysis of underlying ideas and tactics. Discourse analysis did not seem suitable due to the limited length and usual intellectual shallowness of the speeches.

3.2.2 Coding

After the preliminary scanning of the debates, the use of the following categories seemed purposeful:

Categories

- Issues:
 - IS1 – Visaginas nuclear power plant;
 - IS2 – Klaipėda LNG terminal ;
 - IS3 – reorganization of the structure of the army;
 - IS4 – laws related to state of war and extraordinary situations;
 - IS5 – conscription;
 - IS6A – crisis in Ukraine; IS6B – creation of common military unit

- IS7 – murder of Nemtsov;
- IS8 – discussion about geopolitics
- Number of speakers: S Ø/1, 2, 3 ...
- Length of the speech: L1 short (1-2 sentences)/ L2 medium (~ 6-8 sentences)/ L3 long (longer than medium)
- Who is speaking: W (1– important person in the party/ 2 –specialist of the topic)
- Number of speakers NS (1 – one/ 2+ - more than one)
- Do they agree with the proposal A 1/Ø
- Do they mention Russia: R 1/Ø
- What other topics they bring out:
 - failures/faults of the former government/opposition OT1 F
 - social problems OT2 SP
 - burden of the population OT3 BP
 - economic issues OT4 EC
 - emigration OT5 EM
 - other internal problems OT6 IP
 - past issues/history OT7 PH
 - minorities OT8 M
 - human rights OT9 HR
- Proposals:
 - urging for more (international) activity P1 INT
 - cooperation with neighbours P2 N
 - missing EU-engagement P3 EU
- Ideas:
 - mediation between East and West ID1 EW
 - missing better bargaining with Russia ID2 R1B
 - the benefits yielded by Russia (financial, economic, etc.) ID3 R2B
 - drawing attention to (threatening with) Russia’s reaction (‘it’s not worth to mess with the Russian bear’) ID4 R3R

- pointing out that double standards are applied in dealing with Russia ('we criticize the shortcomings of Russian democracy, but do we do the same in cases of other countries?') ID5 R4DS
 - the EU/NATO as a colonizer ID6 EU
 - Soviet nostalgia ID7 SN
- Tactics
- downgrading tactic (e. g. proposing a less sharp formulation of documents) T1 DG
 - 'paying lip service': supporting a project that is not being discussed right now (e. g. supporting nuclear plant when LNG terminal is being discussed) T2 LS
 - 'turning the tables' tactic: accusing the other side of being pro-Russian T3 TT

Most of the categories are self-explanatory. The length of the speech of course has to be assessed having in mind the allocated time for each contribution based on the rules of the Seimas. Although the fact that a party agrees or does not agree with the proposal might seem the most important, from the point of view of this research it is even more interesting how they argument, what kind of ideas, topics they bring out, as it may shed some light on the ideas and strategy of the parties and shows whether their rhetoric has similarities with the official Russian discourse. It may also be telling, what other topics they mention in connection with these issues, if and how they try to divert the discourse. Ideas are the element that may yield the most information of how the parties see Russia and their understanding of Lithuanian-Russian relations. The category of 'tactics' may be somewhat arbitrary, as it is constructed by the analyst on the basis of the contributions and general behaviour of a party in the debate. It means that the parties take actions on the basis of a pre-set plan to achieve goals that are not explicitly stated. The notion of tactics presupposes that the parties have goals that they seek to achieve with covert (not manifest, purposeful) methods. (Although it does not seem far-fetched when thinking of the nature of party politics.)

Occurrences of elements belonging to different categories are counted in order to represent how prominent these elements are in the rhetoric of the party. If one element is mentioned several times by a speaker, it does count as different occurrences, unless it is mentioned more than once in the same utterance.

3.3. Problems and Limitations

First of all, although the title suggests that the research deals with populist parties in Lithuania in general, it has to be noted that only two parties are examined, although there may be more parties that have populist features (The Way of Courage, Liberal Movement etc.). The two parties were chosen as the biggest and most influential Lithuanian parties that are usually labelled ‘populist’.

Secondly, applying the populist label may not be entirely accurate in all aspects. Of course each party and each political system is different, and parties, especially governing parties are in a process of constant transformation: being part of a governing coalition probably causes parties to become ‘more mainstream’; in my opinion, Labour Party is in the process of becoming more mainstream. On the other hand, what matters for my research, is not the label of being populist, but what I would like to explore is whether they base their strategy on societal cleavages and whether advocating pro-Russian/Eurosceptic stance is connected to such cleavages, especially the pro-Soviet/anti-Soviet one.

The evaluation of the speeches is inevitably subjective: for example, in case of objecting a project and proposing modifications, it can be considered either well-founded objection or an attempt to sabotage or postpone the realization of the project (as it is often done by the government/the party that has created the project). An accusation that especially Homeland Union often gets is that if someone opposes their actions or proposals, those immediately get the label ‘pro-Russian’ or ‘Kremlin agents’ from them. If the analyst is looking for signs of pro-Russian behaviour, it is quite easy to see cunning sabotaging tactics even there where we have to do with technical questions or sincere attempts to improve the proposal. Therefore in order to avoid these pitfalls, such ideas have to be evaluated carefully, with paying attention to all the relevant circumstances of

the issue, but the subjectivity of the analyst cannot be excluded completely. It is also important to note that the fact of not agreeing to a project itself is not automatically evaluated in the analysis as pro-Russian behaviour, but attention is paid rather to the argumentation: if it deals with details closely connected to the project, it is regarded as neutral content. The analysis is based on the assumption that there are commonly accepted geopolitical norms that prevent parties from uttering an explicitly pro-Russian rhetoric as it would lead to ostracism; therefore they have to pack their ideas into other issues or apply tactics that can lessen the weight or scope of the projects.

Another aspect that deserves attention is the role of personalities in party factions. The individual attitudes of party members towards Russia and their rhetoric can greatly vary and do not necessarily represent the official stance of the party; on the other hand, although these individual effects cannot be filtered out, it is assumed that speakers generally try to conform with the main direction of their party. Outlier cases are not regarded as fully representative (e. g. one MP declaring himself pro-Russian is not interpreted as the whole party being openly pro-Russian).

CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS OF EMPIRICAL DATA

4.1 Energy Policy Projects

4.2 Military Issues

4.3 Foreign Policy

This chapter contains the analysis of stenographic records of the debates described in the previous chapter. In this chapter, a more detailed description of the debates and the connected documents (bills, modification proposals, resolutions) will be given. After that, results are analysed according to the different categories (topics, ideas, strategies).

4.1 Energy Policy

The two earliest debates (from 2012) deal with energy security issues: the creation of the Klaipėda liquefied natural gas floating storage and regasification unit terminal and the construction of the Visaginas nuclear power plant.

LNG terminal

The Klaipėda liquefied natural gas floating storage and regasification unit terminal (LNG FSRU) started its operation in the end of 2014 and consists of the vessel *Independence* that is a floating LNG storage terminal combined with a regasification unit. LNG is supplied by Statoil on the basis of a five year agreement. The goal of the project was to break the monopoly of Gazprom as the sole supplier of gas in Lithuania, push down the price of gas by creating competition on the Lithuanian market and to secure energetic independence from Russia by providing an alternative supply opportunity.

The law recognizes the terminal as an object of strategic importance for national security. The state should own at least 2/3 of the shares in the implementing company. The law determines that 25% of the gas consumed in Lithuania has to come from the terminal (another 25% should be bought from Gazprom). The cost of the installation and operation of the terminal would be included in the natural gas transmission service price. (Which means that the population would cover a big part of it.)

The project was criticized because its hastiness, high costs and lack of transparency: the ship is registered in an offshore financial centre (Singapore)⁴³.

The debate of the law on the liquefied natural gas terminal took place on 17th of May, 7th of June and 12th of June in 2012.

The amendment was adopted by a great majority: 82 votes for, 1 against and 1 abstained.

The coding tables of the LNG debate (tables Nr. 1-3) can be found in the Appendices.

Both the Labour Party and the Order and Justice were moderately active in the debate with three speakers each, although the latter speaking multiples times. They both agreed that the terminal is necessary, but criticized certain details, especially the financial aspects and the fact that the government made the decision without asking the people and/or the parliament. The MPs did stick to the topic and did not attempt to divert the debate to other issues. The opposition parties (including the two parties in question and the Social Democrats), were missing the cooperation with the other two Baltic states and EU support for the project; it was especially prominent in the rhetoric of the Order and Justice. While other opposition parties were heavily criticizing the lack of transparency of the project, the Order and Justice mainly concentrated on the high price of gas from the terminal and the lack of cooperation with the neighbouring countries and support from the EU.

The Order and Justice also voiced different ideas related to Russia that are interesting from our point of view:

⁴³<https://www.marinetraffic.com/en/ais/details/ships/shipid:726727/mmsi:563614000/vessel:INDEPENDENCE>

- that Lithuania should mediate between the East and the West (‘: ‘we will win politically if we prove that the three Baltic states are not only Russophobes or can not only destroy monuments but they are capable of cooperating for a long time and become mediators between the East and the West’’; ‘we could cooperate with the Latvians in building a terminal and a power plant and be necessary both for the East and for the West’⁴⁴);
- that better bargaining would have been needed with Russia (‘Latvians and Estonians already now receive gas 15-20% cheaper, it shows that it is possible to agree’);
- the benefits yielded by Russia (‘liquefied gas will be at least 3 cents more expensive than the gas provided by Gazprom’);
- that the country should consider the reaction of Russia (Gazprom) (‘what steps does Lithuania plan if in case of the implementation of the terminal, Gazprom decides to close the gas pipe for Lithuania’);
- and pointing to the double standards regarding Russia (what is the difference if Bahrein is a monopolist or Gazprom is a monopolist?’).

Visaginas

The Visaginas nuclear power plant was planned to be constructed in order to replace the outdated Ignalina nuclear power plant that used to cover 70% of the country’s electrical demand and had to be finally closed in 2009 because of safety reasons on the basis of an agreement with the European Union. The purpose of the Visaginas project was to secure the electric energy missing because of the closure of Ignalina and to secure energetic independence from Russia⁴⁵. The Lithuanian state agreed with the Japanese

⁴⁴ Citations from the debates without the name of the speakers are given in a loose translation in order to reproduce the most important ideas of the parties.

⁴⁵ Almost simultaneously with the Visaginas project, Russia and Belarus also began planning the construction of nuclear plants, very close to their borders with Lithuania (in Neman, Kaliningrad oblast and in Ostrovets). The motivation behind these projects was to make up for the energy deficit in the region occurring because of the shutdown of Ignalina. (“Russia plans nuclear project for Kaliningrad,” 2008) The proposed facility in Neman would produce far more electricity than it is used in the Kaliningrad area. The surplus was intended to be exported, or used for industrial purposes. The target of the export was of course, Lithuania and Poland: power from the Kaliningrad region would be cheaper than home-produced. It was clear that three power plants is disproportionate in such a small area, that is why the Russian and Belarussian

company Hitachi about the plans of construction (The same company that together with Toshiba and General Electric was the supplier of Fukushima nuclear power plant.). The end of construction was planned for 2018-2020. The advisory referendum in 2012 rejected the project and the realisation was stopped.

The debate that took place on the 19th of June 2012 is centred around an amendment of the law on nuclear energy. It contains the approval of the parliament to build a nuclear power plant in Visaginas by a company registered in Lithuania. The implementing company can consist of either a national investor and/or a national investor together with a strategic investor (providing at least 20% of necessary investment) and/or strategic partner (a legal person controlled by a state supporting the project). The national investor must have at least 34% of the capital of the implementing company. The implementing company would get tax exemptions. The implementing company would cover 50% of the electric energy tariff for residents of the surrounding areas in a 50 km circle.

One of the Christian Democrat MPs mentioned that the social democrats were very strongly criticising the proposal and calling it a geopolitical project. This MP acknowledged that it is indeed a geopolitical project, as the decision would very strongly influence whether Lithuania remains in the Russian energetic space or creates its own energy policy. He also mentioned the State Security Agency (VSD) said that foreign special services make great efforts to impede the project.⁴⁶ The debate took place not long before the 2012 elections that have probably influenced the rhetoric of the speakers.

The amendment of the law on the nuclear power plant was discussed on 19th June 2012. The amendment was adopted by 56 votes for, 23 against and 30 abstained. Other related amendments were adopted as well.

The debate is described here in more detail than the others because it was the only one of the cases studied when not all the parties agreed to a project.

power plants were seen as counter projects that would make the construction of Visaginas superfluous and this way would chain the Baltic states, especially Lithuania to Russia regarding electric energy, especially because according to data from 2011, the Kaliningrad region was self-sufficient regarding electricity already back then. ("Kaliningrad plan for Baltic States market," 2008) ; ("Russia plans nuclear plant for Kaliningrad exclave," 2008); (Menkiszak, 2013)

⁴⁶ http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter2/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=427705

Members of parliament are allowed to participate in the discussion of bills with speeches that are maximum 5 minutes long, or, if they speak on behalf of the faction – 7 minutes. After the voting, MPs can also comment on the results.

It is interesting that quite a lot of MPs spoke against their faction's position.

The speakers on behalf of Order and Justice and the Labour Party were Valentinas Mazuronis and Kęstutis Daukšys. Mazuronis was the head of the parliamentary faction of OJ at that time while Daukšys was the head of Nuclear Energy Committee.

V. Mazuronis said on behalf of the faction that although they did not oppose the use of nuclear energy, they could not agree with the project because they insisted that it should have the approval of the people (demand of direct democracy). He also reminded the affair of the sale of the *Mažeikių nafta* oil company and drew attention to the lack of information and uncertainties of technical details.

K. Daukšys approved the project in the name of the faction, and also emphasized that the state has to convince the people of the project and a referendum should take place. He pointed out that the main question is whether the country wants to produce its own electric energy or buy it from its neighbours, whether from Poles, Russians, Swedes or someone else. It means the party does not regard energy independence from Russia as principally different from dependence from another country that is a central element of the rhetoric Homeland Union who perceive it as a threat to national security. (Daukšys also said: 'Today, there will always be energy dependence on one or another'.) On the other hand, he said that Lithuania has to be connected to the European electricity grid (ENTSO-E), otherwise 'Lithuania would remain on Russia's side'. The fraction initiated a bill that would oblige the government to ask for the approval of the parliament after the projection stage.

The most active speaker of Order and Justice, Julius Veselka, openly confessed a year ago in a debate about the interpellation of the energy minister A. Sekmokas that he was pro-Russian. ('I am pro-Russian, I confess.')

⁴⁷. Therefore it is not surprising that the ideas that can be classified as pro-Russian all come from him.

⁴⁷ http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=394038 11.03.2011

The coding tables of the Visaginas debate (tables Nr. 4-6) can be found in the Appendices.

In this debate, the Labour Party was very passive (two speakers), while Order and Justice was more active (five speakers), perhaps because they were opposing the project.

Both parties (like other opposition parties) mentioned faults of the conservative government regarding energy policy, with Order and Justice being more active in this than Labour Party (which can be also explained by their higher overall activity).

The Order and Justice again voiced ideas that can provide interesting insights regarding their relation to Russia:

- the benefits yielded by Russia ('now we are lucky only because we import cheap electricity from Russia');
- that the country should consider the reaction of Russia ('Because otherwise it will be like this: those angry little people only know how to demolish monuments, but where it is needed to agree on something for a couple of decades in advance, they fail');
- depicting the EU as a colonizer ('Whenever one empire falls, the territories that become free are occupied by another empire. We would have been admitted to the European Union with all the Ignalina and everything else. (...) When I was once in the European Union and the Committee was negotiating with the experts of nuclear energy, with the Directorate, they openly told me that we demand the closure of the Ignalina nuclear power plant because that it produces too cheap electricity')
- Soviet nostalgia ('we have inherited a golden thing from the Soviet times: the nuclear plant, the replacement value of which together with the infrastructure is about 40 billion litas. It needed particularly bad abilities to turn it to a heap of rubbish')

4.2 Military Issues

There are a couple of laws and law amendments related to military issues (conscription, state of war and emergency) that were discussed during 2014 and 2015.

The law on the principal structure of the army and the number of soldiers is about moderately increasing the number of soldiers serving in the Lithuanian army including professional soldiers, volunteers, reservists and senior officers (generals etc.). The law was discussed on 10th July 2014 and entered into force by 1 January 2015.

The amendment of the same law discussed on 19th of March 2015 restored conscription to the army temporarily, for five years (about 3000-3500 people per year). The argumentation of the defence minister (LSDP) was that because of the geopolitical situation, it is necessary to fill up the reserves of the army but at the moment it would be impossible to do it only with professionals. After five years, however, the creation of an army consisting of entirely professionals would be possible.

The amendment of the same law from 9th June 2015 has again raised the general number of soldiers, including conscripts for 2016.

The amendment of the same law discussed on 23rd of June 2015 cancels the liquidation of the conscript army in 2015 as the initiators of the amendment had acknowledged that further discussion is needed on this question.

Some amendments of the law on compulsory military service concern the status of conscripts and guarantees, benefits and exemptions yielded to them. Another amendment deals with the method of conscription, the selection criteria⁴⁸ (discussed on 9th and 14th of April 2015).

All these laws as well as those concerning the state of war and extraordinary situations (mobilization, how the parliament should work, etc.) were adopted with a great majority (except for the first one). It shows that there is a wide consensus on these matters (or that parties do not dare to voice a different stance on this issues because they fear

⁴⁸ According to the amendment, young men of 19-26 years of age will be conscripted, the list of actual conscripts is determined by using a computer programme. It was criticized that chance plays a big role and thus it is unpredictable whether someone will be conscripted.

ostracism.) Also, the representatives of the parties were less active than in case of the energy policy projects. Therefore I decided to code the debates of all these laws together.

It also has to be taken into consideration that while in 2012, when the energy policy projects were discussed, the Labour Party and Order and Justice were in opposition, in 2014-2015, when all the other issues are discussed, they are in the government, so of course, less eager to oppose the projects presented by the government.

The coding tables of the military issues debate (tables Nr. 7-9) can be found in the Appendices.

The faction of Labour Party was more active (with seven speakers) in this debate than Order and Justice (four speakers).

Order and Justice has reminded several times that former governments have given up and did not restore conscript army and the conservative government had taken loans with unfavourable conditions but did not spend on defence. The speaker of Order and Justice, the controversial P. Gražulis also brought up a historical parallel (connection between the social inequality and military defeat in the 1940s) and mentioned the role of police and army during the gay parades when discussing the restructuring of the army, accusing them with turning against the 'patriotic youth' while protecting the 'colourful ones' (LGBT).

He was also using the 'turning the tables around' tactic saying that while the conservatives (Homeland Union) accuse everyone criticising their projects to be a 'friend of the Russians', in fact it was them who decreased the financing of the army therefore it is them who work for Moscow.

Discussion about foreign and defence policy

This discussion took place on the 18th of June 2015. It was the first time such discussion was held but several MPs expressed their wish that it should become a tradition. The discussion relates to the agreement of parliamentary parties on the strategic guidelines of foreign and security policy for 2014-2020.

In his introductory speech, the head of the state security and defence committee pointed out that the nature of threats has changed: while a couple of years before energy security was emphasized, now threats concerning informational security are more noticeable. The discussion was started by the reports of the defence minister, the head of the State Security Department (VSD) and the head of the Second Operative Department at the Ministry of Defence. All the factions could voice their opinion by one speaker (7 minutes).

The coding tables of the discussion about foreign and security policy (tables Nr. 10-13) can be found in the Appendices.

The most pro-Russian speech was made by the MP of the Way of Courage party but the representative of Order and Justice said that their opinion match to a great extent⁴⁹.

The speaker of Order and Justice, Petras Gražulis again mentioned that the conservative government has decreased the defence budget and failed to restore conscription. He urged cooperation with EU countries so that the EU and NATO would be more unified and strict regarding Russia. And turned the table against the Homeland Union again saying that it is their policy which is constantly escalating war and inciting discord therefore it is needed by Russia.

4.3 Foreign policy: Ukraine and the Murder of Boris Nemtsov

In its resolution adopted on the 23rd of January 2014, the Lithuanian parliament expressed its sympathy with the protesters in Ukraine and urged the reaction of the EU. In its second resolution adopted on 13th of March 2014, the Seimas was supporting the independence and territorial sovereignty of Ukraine and condemned the military aggression by Russia, underlining that Russia's actions pose a threat not only to Ukraine but also to EU and NATO countries; the resolution supports the sanctions against Russia, giving Ukraine financial assistance and perspective of membership, re-evaluating the

⁴⁹ http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter/w5_sale.fakt_pos?p_fakt_pos_id=-500923

security situation in Europe and putting an end to Russia's aggression against Ukraine. It also emphasized NATO's role in ending the conflict and guaranteeing security in Europe, especially in the Baltic states. The resolution contains a recommendation to the government to seek permanent NATO military presence in Lithuania and to strengthen the country's defence capabilities and to increase national defence expenditure.

The law dated 12th of March 2015 ratifies the agreement of the governments of Lithuania, Poland and Ukraine about the creation of a common military unit (one brigade consisting of three battalions). It was planned to serve educational purposes as well as to participate in common military exercises and perhaps UN missions.

In its resolution from 16th of March 2015, the Lithuanian parliament expressed its condolences to the relatives and fellows of Boris Nemtsov and called on the international community to exert pressure on Russia that the murder would be investigated and those responsible for it brought to justice.

As there was not much debate about these projects, so it would not be sufficient material to analyse if they were handled separately, I analyse all these foreign policy debates together because of this technical reason.

The coding tables of the foreign policy debates (tables Nr. 14-17) can be found in the Appendices.

Labour Party and Order and Justice were both moderately active in the debate with three speakers each, mostly specialists of foreign policy topics.

Order and Justice was repeatedly missing cooperation with the neighbouring countries: in case of the resolution about the crisis in Ukraine, the representative of Order and Justice asked if Latvians and Estonians have also accepted a similar documents; in case of the creation of the common Lithuania-Polish-Ukrainian military unit, someone from the party asked whether/why the other two Baltic states do not want to participate in it. These questions suggests as if Lithuania could only do something if the other two countries also do the same or participate in the same project.

In the case of the Ukraine crisis, both parties brought up the 'double standards' idea: the speaker of the Labour Party asked if the resolution of the parliament was not an

interference into the work of Russian law enforcement institutions while it is condemned if it is done within Lithuania; one MP from Order and Justice drew a parallel between referenda in Crimea and Kosovo, Bosnia and Ireland suggesting that these should be judged similarly.

The Labour Party wanted to include in the resolution a passage that the conflict should be settled in a peaceful way; it can be perceived as downgrading tactic as it might have decreased the weight of the document.

Summary

The summarizing codification tables of all the topics (tables Nr. 18-23) can be found in the Appendices.

4.3 Discussion

As it can be seen from the summarizing codification tables in the appendices, both parties supported all the projects/proposals, except for the Visaginas nuclear power plant, which was not supported by the faction of Order and Justice party, however, the representative of the party who was the most active from the faction during the debate, was supporting the project, he even was the one who made the ‘for’ speech before the voting⁵⁰.

The activity of both parties during the discussions was roughly equal, with fifteen speakers each in total. (Those MPs who were speaking as representatives of parliamentary committees or ministries were not counted.) Compared to the two largest parties (Homeland Union and Social Democrats, especially the former), however, they were slightly less active. In my opinion, it can be attributed to the competition of these two main parties: they try to oppose/criticize each other’s proposals, even if they basically agree and use this opportunity to point to the failures of the government led by the other party.

⁵⁰ It is a common practice in the Lithuanian parliament that in the end of the debate, before the voting takes place, one MP speaks for and one against the proposal.

The speakers from both parties were perhaps more often specialists of the topic than leading figures, however, it is sometimes difficult to separate; anyhow, no significant pattern regarding this category was observed.

Further categories were divided to four groups: other topics brought up by the speakers, proposals made by them, and ideas and tactics that can be identified from their speeches. Of course, most of the speeches deal with the specific details of the proposals so they could be called 'objective' contributions. As these do not carry information from my point of view, I disregard them in this analysis and concentrate only on those elements of the contributions that carry some information regarding my research questions.

Other topics

As it is evident, both parties (just like the other parties in the parliament) bring up other topics, most often criticizing the current or the former government. It is a widely known method to use different topics as an opportunity to voice things that the party wants to emphasize and to advance their agenda. It seems that Order and Justice uses this strategy more often. (However, other parties, especially the Social Democrats also apply it frequently, that is part of the 'eternal duel' between them and the Homeland Union.) Apart from bringing up failures of governments, they once brought up a historical parallel (connection between the social inequality and military defeat in the 1940s) and drew attention to other internal issues (P. Gražulis who is famous for his anti-gay actions mentioned the role of police and army during the gay parades when discussing the restructuring of the army), but bringing up other topics or diverting the discussion is not a significant tactic applied by either of the parties.

Proposals

The question of proposals looks more interesting. Proposal means here not only suggestions but also aspects that the parties miss from the projects. For example, if a party supports a project but misses cooperation with the EU or neighbouring countries, it is categorised as a proposal. Both parties have such proposals, but again, Order and Justice was much more active in this respect. Most often it was the participation of the EU and

cooperation with the neighbours in case of the nuclear power plant and especially the LNG terminal that the party was missing. Of course, there is nothing surprising in it, as such large projects are often implemented together with other countries and with EU support, especially in the case of small countries. However, what can make us think is the fact that this element was missed almost exclusively by Order and Justice. Why is cooperation with the neighbours and the EU such a priority for this party? It is purely speculation, but forcing cooperation with the neighbours (and/or the EU) can also be one method to set projects back, because coordination with other countries usually makes everything slower and more complicated (e. g. the case of Rail Baltica) compared to the case if only one government has to make the decision on its own and get approval from the parliament. On the other hand, In the case of the resolution concerning Ukraine and Russia, the question ‘Did Latvians and Estonians do the same?’ implies that Lithuania should only act if its neighbours have the same opinion and do the same which again makes any kind of quick and independent action more difficult. On the other hand, when Order and Justice asks why the EU is not financing the project, it sends the message that the EU does not care about Lithuania and is not willing to help.

Tactics

To some extent these ‘proposals’ can serve the same purpose as the different tactics: to try to impede the projects but in the same time maintain the pretence that they are not pro-Russian and they are not opposing the project. As it was already mentioned in the methodology chapter, tactics is the most arbitrary category of all, because it is not something that is explicitly present in the text, but is constructed by the analyst. In case of the ‘lip service’ tactic, it was actually identified by one of the MPs of Homeland Union, who accused Order and Justice during the debate of the LNG terminal that one of their speakers supports the nuclear power plant when the LNG terminal is discussed, but in reality he does not support any of the projects. Later this statement proved to be wrong, because the representative of OJ in question (J. Veselka) was one of the firmest supporters of the nuclear plant. However, in case of one of his colleagues (E. Klumbys) it was true: he supported the idea of the nuclear plant during the discussion of the LNG terminal, but just one week later, during the debate of the power plant he was against the project. The

fact that it was pointed out by a rival politician can be perceived as decreasing the credibility of the existence of this tactic, but on the other hand, probably the MPs know each other's tactic better than anyone else, so it may be worth to consider such ideas.

The faction of the Order and Justice in two cases turned the accusations of the Homeland Union around and they said that it is not them, but the Homeland Union who are working for Russia, as their decisions harm the country ('turning the tables' tactic). Of course, it can be the subject of debate what serves the interests of the Kremlin. However, it does sound like the party wants to redefine the word 'pro-Russian' and it resembles more of a tactic than an argumentation.

One tactic also applied by Labour Party is downgrading: they agree with the project, but propose such modifications that lower the scope of it: for example, in case of the resolution about Ukraine, MPs of the Labour Party wanted to include a phrase that the conflict should be regulated in a peaceful way (although, as Homeland Union and the Social Democrats have remarked, the text of the resolution was not militarist). Of course, including peaceful regulation sounds like an innocent proposal, but it does decrease the weight of the resolution if any kind of military action is a priori excluded. One manoeuvre in the same debate was a proposal from Order and Justice to modify the text: they would have deleted the sentence where the Lithuanian parliament supports the position of the Ukrainian government that the decision of the Crimean government to call a referendum on the status of Crimea conflicts the constitution of the country – and consequently the results would be illegal and void – and would have inserted that the new Ukrainian government should return to the agreement signed on the 21st of February 2014 between Yanukovich, the opposition and the foreign affairs ministers of France, Germany and Poland and that the investigation of the shootings in Kiev should be started as early as possible with the participation of international observers. The use of downgrading tactic seems reasonable if the main assumption mentioned in the methodology chapter is accepted: the commonly accepted geopolitical norms are so strong that parties avoid voicing explicitly pro-Russian rhetoric as it would lead to ostracism; therefore they have to pack their ideas into other issues or apply tactics that can lessen the weight or scope of the projects.

Ideas

The most interesting group of categories is the ideas: these reveal how the parties relate to Russia, if they echo the same thoughts that are often heard from official Russian sources. Interestingly, such ideas were only present in the rhetoric of the Order and Justice, they are completely missing from the speeches of Labour Party.

The types of ideas illustrated with examples:

- Lithuania should mediate between the East and the West: Lithuania should build an LNG terminal and nuclear plant together with Latvia and with EU support and the Baltic states could become mediators between the East and the West. This is an old idea that is, however, is rarely outlined in detail, what this ‘mediation’ should mean. What is remarkable is that a mediator is not part of any of the parties, so it goes against the idea that Lithuania belongs to the West (and EU and NATO membership).
- missing better bargaining with Russia: if the government would have been better in negotiating and bargaining, Lithuania would have more benefits from deals with Russia, for example, Latvians and Estonians pay less for the gas because they were bargaining better, they think pragmatically and did not spoil their relations with Russia like Lithuania did. It implies that good deals with Russia is only the question of bargaining and it is better to agree with Russia than to look for alternative ways.
- benefits yielded by Russia/Soviet nostalgia⁵¹: the speaker of the Order and Justice, while supporting the nuclear plant project, mentions that ‘now we are lucky only because we import cheap electricity from Russia’. It is a way to emphasize Russia’s positive role while not committing any ‘geopolitical crime’. A similar remark is that the Ignalina nuclear plant was a ‘golden heritage’ from the Soviet times that was turned into ‘a heap of rubbish’. This statement clearly appeals to the Soviet nostalgia.
- drawing attention to Russia’s reaction: ‘we will win politically if we prove that the three Baltic states are not only Russophobes or can not only destroy monuments but they are capable of cooperating for a long time and become mediators between the East and the West’ or ‘if we build the LNG terminal and spoil relations with Russia, we may lose the opportunity to import Russian gas’. On the one hand, it mirrors preoccupation with Russia’s opinion; on the other hand, it appeals to common fears from the big neighbour and implies the notion that it would be better not to provoke Russia.

⁵¹ here discussed together because of the resemblance of the two categories

- the notion of double standards that is voiced very often by the Kremlin (Headley, 2015). ‘what is the difference if Bahrein is a monopolist or Gazprom is a monopolist?’; ‘referendums in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo and Ireland are recognized (...) somehow in one case we recognize, in the other case we do not’; ‘In Lithuania, according to the Constitution, if parliamentarians interfere into the activity of law enforcement institutions, it is a crime. But does this mean that if Lithuanian parliamentarians interfere into the work of the law enforcement authorities of another country, in this case, into the work of the law enforcement institutions of a neighbouring country [Russia], is it not regarded as interference?’
- depicting the EU/NATO as a colonizer and equating the EU with the Soviet Union: ‘Whenever one empire falls, the territories that become free are occupied by another empire. We would have been admitted to the European Union with all the Ignalina and everything else. (...) When I was once in the European Union and the Committee was negotiating with the experts of nuclear energy, with the Directorate, they openly told me that we demand the closure of the Ignalina nuclear power plant because it produces too cheap electricity’; ‘you propose that in the territory of Lithuania would be military bases of other states and certain rockets would be stored here’ [it was about NATO presence in Lithuania]. The first quote shows not only the notion that the EU is a new colonizer that occupies the place of the Soviet Union, but also demonstrates a typical conspiracy theory and appeals to the archetype of evil power used by the primitive consciousness to make sense of politics that was described by R. Baločkaitė as a worldview that populists make use of: the evil power does not want us to have cheap electricity, they do not want that we live well. It also reminds the idea nurtured by populists that all problems would be easily solved if only the political will was present.’ (Jagers and Walgrave, 2007, p. 338)

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS

The preliminary results show that Labour Party hardly displays any characteristics that would qualify them as strikingly pro-Russian, populist or a combination of these two. It may indicate that they are on the way of transforming into a mainstream party. However, it can be also explained by their lack of interest in geopolitical issues and general ideological emptiness that was pointed out by analysts.

Both parties are somewhat passive compared to Homeland Union and the Social Democratic Party. Besides the smaller number of their MPs, it can be explained by their lack of a real geopolitical vision; perhaps they do not really dare to vote against or contradict these major geopolitical projects because of the general consensus on these matters, therefore they do not represent a real counterpole to the mainstream parties, a geopolitical alternative but only use these issues to make the most out of Soviet nostalgia and Euroscepticism. Also when applying the ‘turning the tables’ tactic, geopolitics is often a tool to attack their political enemies. Probably foreign policy is not a priority for the parties either, as is not for the majority of the voters. On the other hand, except from the case of energy policy projects, the parties in question were members of the governing coalition and therefore, of course would not oppose such projects on which they have probably agreed with their coalition partners previously; in case they were in opposition or would govern alone, they could possibly have a very different stance – the position of the parties is influenced by the prevailing power relations.

The classical populist ideas: appeal to the people and anti-elite/anti-establishment stance are not applied by Order and Justice much more prominently than by other parties: critics of the government is a common element of their rhetoric, but so is in the case of other parties. Perhaps a more thorough analysis could reveal some difference, but it is not the topic of this research. However, they appeal to Soviet nostalgia and Eurosceptic sentiments that are based on the pro-Soviet/anti-Soviet cleavage (also indirectly linked to

a more favourable stance towards Russia) that can indirectly be linked to anti-establishment emotions.

As the essence of populism is an anti-establishment stance, populism in the case of Lithuanian foreign policy/geopolitics means scepticism towards the West (EU, US, NATO) and a more favourable than usual position regarding Russia.

What really differentiates Order and Justice from other parties and makes it interesting from the point of view of the research are the ideas that can be recognized from their rhetoric: these partly show resemblance with the official rhetoric of the Kremlin (e.g. double standards) and partly mirror common notions about Russia (concerns about Russia's reaction, Soviet nostalgia). (In fact, most of these ideas probably do not originate in the Kremlin but are rather the products of local consciousness, typical Central Eastern European ones, e. g. the comparison of the EU and the USSR, the bridge position between East and West, the fear of the powerful neighbour). It would mean that populism in the case of Order and Justice also means identifying with the mind-set of a significant part of the population (having in mind mainly the pro-Soviet ones). In the light of the success of the populism in connection with the Brexit-referendum and Donald Trump, it seems that voters appreciate if politicians give voice to certain ideas that the voters perceive that the elite handles as taboo or contradicting the mainstream, although they do not necessarily expect them to act accordingly, the act of voicing itself is important (It is perhaps connected to the redemptive face of democracy mentioned by Canovan (Canovan, 1999, p. 11)). It may be a protest behaviour and related to the phenomenon described by (Ramonaitė, 2007b, p. 33) that disadvantaged social groups are so much fed up with the political elite that they welcome any ideas that are contradicting the elite discourse: if the elite is anti-Russian, voicing pro-Russian ideas is a "trump card", an easy way to achieve some popularity among these people.

The geopolitical ideas that can be read from the rhetoric of Order and Justice are the following. According to these ideas, Lithuania is not an integral part of the West, but is rather positioned between the East and the West and it should function as a mediator and make use of its geopolitical position, instead of being part of Western structures, because – according to another idea voiced by the party – the EU and NATO are the same colonisers as the Soviet Union was. (It resembles the idea voiced by the Kremlin that the Baltic states are a poor and decaying periphery of the EU.) However, the Soviet period is

judged rather positively as it brought benefits for Lithuania. Russia is regarded as a powerful neighbour whose reaction to the actions of Lithuania has to be taken into consideration. However, Russia does not only represent a threat, but an opportunity, because in case of a pragmatic approach and good bargaining, good relations with Russia can bring significant benefits to Lithuania (cheap energy).

As for the role of the two parties in the geopolitical discourse, in my opinion, they represent a voice in geopolitical matters that is to some extent different from the rhetoric of the mainstream parties, but they are not consequent enough, do not have a coherent set of ideas and lack a firm stance based on it. Their behaviour in geopolitical debates is rather opportunistic: it gives the impression that their main aim is not to change the geopolitical course of the country but to score points against their political opponents and to gain popularity. Although they use some ideas that may originate from the Kremlin ('double standards', 'depicting the EU and NATO as colonizers') there is no sufficient evidence to state that they act as agents, the 'outstretched tentacles' of Russia. (The category of 'tactics' has to be handled with condition as it is based on the assumption that the parties have a strong pro-Russian stance/work in favour of Russia and use specific tactics to cover it.)

The volume of the analysed debates and the relatively low activity of the representatives of the two parties did not allow a very detailed analysis and did not provide enough evidence to back up any far-reaching consequences, hence the author had to be careful with the conclusions.

The preliminary results show that further research should be mainly concentrated on ideas and probably a larger body of texts should be included in the analysis in order to obtain more examples of these ideas and make the results more credible and better grounded.

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(the respective debates can be found by clicking on the appropriate date)

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LNG

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APPENDICES

The tables below are based on data (stenographic records) provided on the official website of the Lithuanian parliament (http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter/w5_sale.kad_ses) and were produced applying analysis by the author.

Tables of the LNG terminal debate (tables Nr. 1-3)

table Nr. 1: general characteristics of the debate

	NS	L	W	A	R
LP	3	n/a	n/a	1	Ø
OJ	3	n/a	n/a	1	1

table Nr. 2: category of proposals

	P1 INT	P2 N	P3 EU
LP		1	1
OJ		4	5

table Nr. 3: category of ideas

	ID1	ID2	ID3	ID4	ID5	ID6 EU	ID7 SN
	EW	R1B	R2B	R3R	R4DS		

LP							
OJ	1	2	1	2	1		

Tables of the nuclear plant debate (tables Nr. 4-6)

table Nr. 4: general characteristics of the debate

	NS	L	W	A	R
LP	2	n/a	1	1	I
OJ	5	n/a	2	Ø	III

table Nr. 5: category of topics

	OT1 F	OT2 SP	OT3 BP	OT4 EC	OT5 EM	OT6 IP	OT7 PH	OT8 M
LP	I							
OJ	III							

table Nr. 6: category of ideas

	ID1 EW	ID2 R1B	ID3 R2B	ID4 R3R	ID5 R4DS	ID6 EU	ID7 SN
LP							
OJ			I	I		I	I

Tables of the military issues debates (tables Nr. 7-9)

table Nr. 7: general characteristics of the debate

	NS	L	W	A	R
LP	7	n/a	1, 2	1	1
OJ	4	n/a	n/a	1	1

table Nr. 8: category of topics

	OT1 F	OT2 SP	OT3 BP	OT4 EC	OT5 EM	OT6 IP	OT7 PH	OT8 M
LP	I							
OJ	III					I		

table Nr. 9: category of tactics

	T1 DG	T2 LS	T3 TT
LP			
OJ			I

Tables of the discussion about foreign and security policy (tables Nr. 10-13)

table Nr. 10: general characteristics of the debate

	NS	L	W	A	R
LP	n/a	n/a	2	n/a	n/a
OJ	n/a	n/a	1	n/a	n/a

table Nr. 11: category of topics

	OT1 F	OT2 SP	OT3 BP	OT4 EC	OT5 EM	OT6 IP	OT7 PH	OT8 M
LP								
OJ	I						I	

table Nr. 12: category of proposals

	P1 INT	P2 N	P3 EU
LP			
OJ	I		

table Nr. 13: category of tactics

	T1 DG	T2 LS	T3 TT
LP			
OJ			I

Tables of the foreign policy debates (tables Nr. 14-17)

table Nr. 14: general characteristics of the debate

	NS	L	W	A	R
LP	3	n/a	2	1	n/a
OJ	3	n/a	2	1	n/a

table Nr. 15: category of proposals

	P1 INT	P2 N	P3 EU
LP			
OJ		II	

table Nr. 16: category of ideas

	ID1 EW	ID2 R1B	ID3 R2B	ID4 R3R	ID5 R4DS	ID6 EU	ID7 SN
LP					I	I	
OJ					I		

table Nr. 17: category of tactics

	T1 DG	T2 LS	T3 TT
LP	I		
OJ			

Summarizing tables (Nr. 18-23)

table Nr. 18: overview of topics

	IS1	IS2	IS3	IS4	IS5	IS6	IS7	IS8
LP	1	1	?1	1	1	1	1	n/a
OJ	∅	1	?1	1	1	1	1	n/a

Do they agree?

table Nr. 19: general characteristics of the debate - summary

	NS	L	W	A	OT	P	ID	T
LP	15	n/a	1, 1, 2, 2, 2	1	2	2	2	2
OJ	15	n/a	2, 1, 2	1 (85%)	9	12	12	4

table Nr. 20: category of topics - summary

	OT1 F	OT6 IP	OT7 PH
LP	2		
OJ	7	1	1

table Nr. 21: category of proposals - summary

	P1 INT	P2 N	P3 EU
LP		1	1
OJ	1	6	5

table Nr. 22: category of ideas - summary

	ID1 EW	ID2 R1B	ID3 R2B	ID4 R3R	ID5 R4DS	ID6 EU	ID7 SN
LP					1	1	
OJ	1	2	2	3	2	1	1

table Nr. 23: category of tactics - summary

	T1 DG	T2 LS	T3 TT
LP	1		
OJ	1	1	2