# Discursive Realities: The Construction of National Identity in the Documents of Lithuanian Cultural Policy

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**ABSTRACT.** In this paper the author has tried to map a possible conceptual approach, which would combine both discourse studies and cultural policy studies and to apply this theoretical framework to the analysis of state policy documents. The paper focuses on the case of Lithuania, an Eastern European country that experienced secessionist nationalistic upheaval in the late 1980s and currently faces the process of European integration. The ongoing debate about Lithuanian cultural policy, which started in the very early 1990s, is an exemplary case of the complex process in which traditional local thinking about nation, culture, and identity clashes, merges, and/or coexists with ideas and norms imported from Western Europe. The author argues that during the whole of the last decade Lithuanian cultural policy maintained its nationalistic character and the ongoing process of European integration is not diminishing the power of ideas characteristic to traditional Lithuanian nationalism.

> *For language is in every case not only communication of the communicable but also, at the same time, a symbol of the noncommunicable. This symbolic side of language is connected to its relation to signs, but extends more widely – for example, in certain respects to name and judgment.* (Walter Benjamin "On Language as Such and on Language of Man" (1916))

In this way, Walter Benjamin says that discourse produces "non-reality" or "silenced reality," where silent respect replaces critical debate. Moreover, he says that the discourse itself is a symbol of silence. The more we talk about words or the textual side of reality, the more probable it is that there is something we want to hide. This is a good starting point to address the question of the power of discourse: This question is crucial in any inquiry into cultural policy, the field where culture meets power. My paper presents the first stage of a wider research project that is dedicated to exploring the development of the ideological mechanisms of cultural policy discourse in the Baltic countries during the 1990s. In this paper I have tried to map a possible conceptual approach that would combine both discourse studies and cultural policy studies and to apply this theoretical framework to the analysis of state policy documents. I also try to demonstrate the basic logic of the functions of "sovereignty," "identity," and "security," the core ideas defining a nation-state, in the state cultural policy discourse.

The paper focuses on the case of Lithuania, an Eastern European country that experienced secessionist nationalistic upheaval in the late 1980s and currently faces the process of European integration. Going from one union to another, though certainly of a totally different kind, has triggered heated debates about the destiny of the sovereignty, authenticity, and identity of Lithuania. The ongoing debate about Lithuanian cultural policy, which started in the very early 1990s, is an exemplary case of the complex process in which traditional local thinking about nation, culture, and identity clashes, merges, and/or coexists with ideas and norms imported from Western Europe.

In this context, I take the official cultural policy discourse as one of the instruments of the construction of Lithuanian national identity. I will show that during the whole of the last decade Lithuanian cultural policy maintained its nationalistic character and the ongoing process of European integration is not diminishing the power of ideas characteristic to traditional Lithuanian nationalism. It is not possible to answer why there is this absence of change due to the space limitations of this paper. Nevertheless, I will argue that the historical legacy of political ideas and pragmatic reasoning of policymakers may explain this phenomenon of stagnation.

National identity is defined as the highest goal of a state's cultural policy. In turn, common past, territory, culture, and authentic national character are emphasised as the main elements that ensure the integrity of the state. The ever-present theme of threat goes hand in hand with a strategy of sameness (protection and preservation) emphasised in all cultural policy documents. This heavily charges the use of "identity" in cultural policy with reactionary overtones.

Cultural policy understood as a general field, in which a state affects culture through intentional and unintentional forms of governing, is not a new political phenomenon. Obviously, most state policy influences culture, and many cultural spheres are politically significant. But the development of cultural policy as a distinctive sphere of governing and administration, with its own personnel, forms of expertise, and administrative apparatus is intimately related to the development of the nation-state. Hence, as Tony Bennett notes, among other processes, the most important are the secularisation of culture and the growing public significance of culture as a part of national patrimonies (Bennett 2001: 14). And even today, despite globalisation and the development of transnational networking among NGOs, cultural policy instruments still belong to the nation-state.

In turn, cultural policy studies is quite a new discipline, one which has partially developed within the framework of public policy and public administration studies. Today cultural policy studies is mostly rationalist-empirical (exploring and evaluating the efficiency of cultural policy instruments) or ethic-normative (seeking to create new definitions of culture and integrate them with other political principles, e.g. tolerance, recognition, decentralisation, and sustainable

development). Such cultural policy aspects as the symbolic mediation of state power, propaganda, and the construction of collective memory have been analysed in history, sociology, cultural studies, and other disciplines. However, it would be difficult to distinguish cultural policy studies as a separate academic discipline[1]. Such normative cultural policy bibles as *Our Creative Diversity* (1995) and *In From the Margins* (1997) do present attempts to re-define the universalistic definition of culture and its relation to state institutions and to present arguments that would be acceptable for diverse governmental systems about its social relevance. However, they hardly touch upon scientific inquiry into the field. State cultural policy, though it has de facto existed for several centuries, roughly since the emergence of the sovereign nation-state, is still in the stage of self-construction and searching for legitimacy as an academic discipline.

Notably, discourse analysis is not very often applied either to cultural policy or to other public policy spheres (Hill 1997). On the other hand, cultural policy is more and more frequently defined as a process of conflicting meanings. Hence the methods of discourse analysis are being employed in order to assess a previously omitted, but crucially important side of public policy. The representatives of social constructivism claim that not only scientific methods of administration, but also categories, rhetorical strategies, and strategic arguments shape the basis of public policy (Stone 1988; Fox and Miller 1995; Fischer and Forester 1993).

## Policy and discourse

The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines policy as "a course of action adopted and pursued by a government, party, ruler, statesman, etc.; any course of action adopted as advantageous or expedient" (OED 2002). Further, policy can be identified as a dual process of decision-making and implementation. Some researchers distinguish politics and policy merely by the scale of action (Roberts and Edwards 1991). Nevertheless, traditionally policy refers to a specific program and less to a general field of conflicting interests and power. According to Hill, it is difficult to define conditions when policy really exists, because, on the one hand, it may manifest itself as a plain action, not legitimised by any decisions taken. On the other hand, policy may refer merely to diverse decision groups or to the inexplicit orientation of an action. Further, policy is a dynamic, ever-changing process, characterised by either top-down or down-top movements (Hill 1997: 6-8).

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[1]  It was only in the middle of the 1990s that cultural studies "discovered" cultural policy as a "neutral" object of analysis, whereas before it was fiercely criticised as one of the strategies of hegemony. See e.g. Bennett, T. (1998) *Culture as a Reformer's Science.* London: Sage; McGuigan, J. (1996) *Culture and the Public Sphere*. London: Routledge.

I limit the scope of my research to the official decision-making level. In this paper, cultural policy discourse includes only official state level documents, such as cultural policy regulations and government programs. Namely, this discourse generates a discursive reality, the most valuable one in a discourse economy, according to David Campbell (1992). The reality effect is created with the help of arguments and rhetorical forms, which are used as if they are self evident and are not critically assessed. Nevertheless, the real effect of rhetoric is always questionable, but I will not try to assess its impact on specific practices in this paper. Thus, my attention is focused not on effect or efficiency, but on the political nature and significance of cultural policy.

I have already mentioned the close relation between nation-state and cultural policy as a specific form of government. Here as a theoretical framework I will use David Campbell's ideas that relate identity and security as constitutive components in a state's foreign policy. According to Campbell, a state does not have any independent ontological status except certain actions that create its reality. For example, its status as a sovereign unit in world politics is produced by means of a primordial and stable identity discourse. In its turn, any state identity is maintained only with the help of constant repetition (Campbell 1992: 9). Further, Campbell says that identity discourse is in principle related to security discourse. The existence of identity is based on a permanent emphasis on threat. Here state identity is produced through a certain "evangelism of fear," which depicts the surrounding world as non-complete and dangerous:

> Foreign policy (conventionally understood as the external orientation of preestablished states with secure identities) is thus to be retheorised as one of the boundary-producing practices central to the production and reproduction of the identity in which name it operates (Campbell 1992: 68).

For our purposes, it is useful to apply Campbell's definition of foreign policy to cultural policy:

"Cultural policy (conventionally understood as a course of state action meant to create conditions for the positive development of pre-existing culture) is thus to be retheorised as one of the boundary-producing practices, central to the production and reproduction of culture and identity in whose name it operates".

The production and constant reproduction of meanings is crucial in contemporary politics. According to Laclau, deconstruction operations, which reveal the power games structuring the meaning of categories, have become an integral part of both theory and political life since political categories have lost the universalist nature they previously possessed (Laclau 1994: 2). National identity can rightly be included in the group of such categories since nation has been declared a historical product of modernisation and constant discursive reconstruction (Anderson 1991; Gellner 1983; Hobsbawm 1990). Moreover, there

is a growing interest in the discursive strategies of the construction of national identity, where discourse is understood not only as a text, but also as a social practice (Fairclough 1995; Wodak, de Cilia et al. 1999), while language is interpreted as a constitutive field of social and political power (Bourdieu 1991).

## The labyrinths of legal discourse: framing Lithuanian cultural policy

Since regaining independence in 1991, the main issue in all discussions about Lithuanian state cultural policy has centred around the creation of state cultural policy regulations that would legally define the state's priorities and responsibilities in the whole field of cultural administration. First of all, why was there a belief in the necessity of such a legal document? Would it not have been enough to have certain legal acts regulating separate fields, like organisation, copyright, etc. laws? To answer this question we can turn to Hill, who says that public policy itself performs a symbolic role, because having a policy renders the actions of a certain group as rational and purposive, enhances visibility and shapes the basis for discussions, and thus provides the possibility for a rational choice (Hill 1997). On the other hand, the acceptance of certain regulations could be interpreted as the empowerment of a certain group, which in turn stimulates the mushrooming of "discourse coalitions" (about discourse coalitions see Hajer 1993). Therefore, so called objective or neutral wordings of regulations are indeed the traces of ideologies of competing groups and a formative source of a hierarchy of subsequent discourses.

In relation to this, we can distinguish two ways of thinking about Lithuanian cultural policy. They are sometimes inconsistent, but do not necessarily contradict each other. Firstly, there is an articulation of cultural policy as based on national interest and national rhetoric. Here the categories of identity and security are dominant and are closely connected to the categories of sovereignty, state, and ethnicity; all of them penetrated with a common denominator of threat. Secondly, the geopolitical context of European integration and the tradition of cultural policy conceptualisation, as developed in the Anglo-Saxon world, are certainly influencing the formulation of Lithuanian cultural policy and function as an a priori higher (but not always understood and used) discourse, reproduced in a Lithuanian context. Hence the categories of sustainable development, cultural democracy, decentralisation, diversity, and transparency are introduced into texts but not fully integrated.

Curiously, there are no wider debates about the definitions and usages of the categories mentioned above. On the contrary, a rather negligent attitude towards the consistency of conceptualisation is characteristic. "We should not mystify words, even those such as 'cultural policy', we should think about what is to be

done instead," stated Mr. V. Sventickas, the head of the Writers' Union, when summing up the discussion "Does Lithuanian Cultural Policy Exist?" (4 May 2000). Therefore, in most cases the discourse is merely reproduced by policymakers, bureaucrats, and clients, who use the discourse to support their pragmatic arguments. This can be interpreted as a symptom of strategic essentialism, which ensures for certain truths (such as tradition, national culture, ethnos) an existence beyond semantic or political analysis, in such a way that it enables discourse coalitions to monopolise the reality discourse (see Herzfeld 1997: 31).

## In what way does culture matter for the Lithuanian state?

Lithuanian nationalism is often included in the group of cultural nationalisms that are characterised by the habit of using culture as a political principle. Hence culture as a matter of politics and as a basis of national identification has been restricted to the Lithuanian language and folklore. The newly created Lithuanian state (1918) did not have its own continuous tradition of political sovereignty. Throughout the preceding centuries it had existed as part of a federation with Poland and then as part of the Russian Empire. Therefore, it is not surprising that the Lithuanian elites followed the path of German and not French nation-builders, in choosing a local culture and not a political system as the source of a national identity.

This tradition of thinking about nationhood as based on and rooted in culture was established during the interwar period (see Rindzeviciute 2003) and was forcefully revived in the beginning of the 1990s. The function of culture in the life of the state was especially politicised during the romantic period of the Sąjūdis movement (1988-1991). For example, the philosopher and political activist Krescencijus Stoškus was completely sure that "one cannot expect substantial changes in politics, law, economics or ecology without reviving an entire culture. Therefore, such policies that are not also cultural policies can be of little help today" (Stoškus 1990: 10). And further:

> The Republic needs a type of cultural policy that will best suit the character of her people and their national mentality, their historical past and preserved values […] A defence of culture has always been the permanent anxiety of the nation, her most coherent policies, which she has fulfilled sometimes through active protest, sometimes through passive disagreement, and with a conservative faith in the customs of ancestors. The survival of Lithuania is in a big part the result of these efforts (Stoškus 1990: 11).

It is not an accident that I am using Stoškus's quotation to illustrate the persistence of the pan-cultural tradition of Lithuanian nationalism. First, this wording continued to be relevant to public debate during the 1990s. As I will

show further, although the rhetoric in the documents of cultural policy changed slightly, the same framing of the state-culture relationship persisted. It is an ethnic culture, which is of importance to the state and is the carrier of a state's identity and sovereignty whilst it faces a constant threat. Culture is conceptualised as a historically legitimate basis of a state whose continuity is constantly threatened. Namely, this function of culture and its relation to the state has been gradually institutionalised in the documents of Lithuanian cultural policy.

Second, I have chosen this quotation because of its author. It is necessary to make constant references to policy-makers while analysing the discourse on Lithuanian cultural policy. Indeed, my hypothesis is that the official discourse on cultural policy is not necessarily the result of the consensus of different societal groups. That is, the ideas and values constructed within this discourse are not necessarily the values dominant in the society but those employed and promoted by interest groups. Hence Stoškus, as an intellectual and political activist in the Sąjūdis movement, can be seen as a representative of one of the interest groups that have been active in shaping the ideology of cultural policy during the 1990s. He has been a leader of the Cultural Congress, an informal organisation established in 1990 and registered as an NGO in 2002, which has sought to become an arms-length body in state cultural policy. This organisation has functioned as a lobby group, and this fact has been well reflected on the level of discourse as well. The ideas promoted by Stoškus's group not only influenced the wording of current Lithuanian cultural policy regulations but even resulted in a separate legal act, the Law on Protection of Living Ethnic Culture, which has no analogies elsewhere in Europe. Going deeper into this case is especially interesting due to the strategic use of national identity ideology.

## To reconstruct and defend: culture in the programs of the government of the Republic of Lithuania

Though cultural issues did not occupy the most important part in the programs of the government, each program devoted a considerable space to mapping the priorities and goals of state action in the field of culture. The first government program (*Market, Democracy, Freedom*, 1991) emphasised the rejection of Soviet ideology and as the basis of state cultural policy listed the "free self-expression of the individual," the "natural development of culture," the "openness of national culture", "democratisation," and "decentralisation" (*LR Vyriausybės…* 1991). The theme of identity sounded much more loudly in the 1993 program of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania. The program defined the "historical continuity of Lithuania's culture" as the main goal of cultural policy, which could only be achieved by "restoring the damaged relation between our

cultural heritage and today's culture," "guarding the Baltic authenticity of Lithuania's culture", and "promoting a creative dialogue of native culture with European and world culture" (*LR Vyriausybės…* 1993).

This element of openness diminished in the following year's program (1994), which introduced an externally directed defensive policy that sought to "protect the spiritual authenticity of Lithuania's culture from the flood of mass culture coming from the West" (*LR Vyriausybės...* 1994) The programs written in the period 1996 – 2000 sustained a strong normative orientation while emphasizing "nationhood," "Balticness," and the "integrity of émigré culture".

## Principles as instruments? The regulations of cultural policy

The voicing of a need to create and approve Lithuanian cultural policy regulations (CPR) was present in all government programs. The first CPR project was drafted during the First Cultural Congress in 1991 and was followed by numerous drafts. The drafts often served as a basis for debates in the Seimas (Lithuanian parliament) and Ministry of Culture, but not all of them were officially registered, and almost none of them were delivered in a published form for public debate. In this context, I will analyse only those projects that were officially registered. In the further discussion of the CPR documents, I will distinguish the principles of identity and nation as being the nodal points in the CPR discourse of culture.

Both projects concerning "The Regulations of the Reforms of Lithuanian Cultural Policy" submitted in 1996 and 1997 distinguish identity as one of the main principles:

> The principle of identity demands that one takes care of the culture of one's own country, its heritage and ethnic culture as a guarantee of the existence of both the nation and the state. It [the principle] protects culture from cosmopolitan homogenisation and the nation – from disappearance (Lietuvos kultūros politikos... 1996).

Further, the regulations set out to "develop and protect culture as a force for the integration and creation of the society and the state, as a basis of the unique identity of the nation and her historical unity and continuity of life" (*Lietuvos kultūros politikos…* 1996). At this point the principle of identity overlaps with that of nation.

These projects (1996, 1997) were prepared by an initiative group, which had a large number of members also active in the Cultural Congress (CC). Therefore they also sought to institutionalise the Cultural Congress as the organisation that would make decisions about state cultural policy. This idea was criti-

cised by the legal department of the parliament, which noted that in this way the CC would perform the function of the Ministry of Culture. This ambition to acquire and to institutionalise power enables us to define the Cultural Congress as a particular discourse coalition, operating with openly politicised categories of identity, culture, and nation.

The CPR projects (1996, 1997) define the nation as "a particular community of people unified by cultural traditions that have developed historically and possessing a self-consciousness, a particular character, and the ability to create culture as conditioned by its character. The culture of a nation is its creation, a form of its life, and a condition of the preservation of its identity". However, this cultural definition of nation is also highly politicised: "the survival of a nation's culture, therefore the survival of the nation itself can be guaranteed only by policies of a government that follow the changes in people's life and culture, quickly react to them, and foresee the perspectives of a life" (*Lietuvos kultūros politikos*… 1996). In turn, ethnic culture is defined as "the traditional culture of Lithuanians and other nations living in Lithuania," and is perceived as the most important source of the "integrity, uniqueness, and stability of national culture". The state must take care of this kind of culture, because it "supports the national identity and the dignity of the nation, strengthens self-consciousness and resists cosmopolitanism, snobbism, and cultural unification" (CPR 1996).

These quotes may be interpreted as a symptom of a lack of trust in civil society, because they assume that only the state can protect the "dignity and identity" of the people. By using medical rhetoric, they imply that "the people" [nation] are a passive and helpless body, needing constant and careful protection and reanimation. On the other hand, there is an obvious incoherence. The CPR states that "only an independent state may guarantee the preservation of the nation's culture," and then has no problem in assuming that the "cultures of other nations," living in Lithuania will be satisfied not being governed by their own independent state.

The Cultural Congress has tried to secure an ideological monopoly in state cultural affairs by employing these ideas. Though this "discourse coalition" proclaims decentralisation and defines itself as a kind of arm's length body, the creators of the projects are heading towards a normatively centralised model of state cultural policy. Their identity argument promotes sameness instead of today's unquestionable diversity, which is readily apparent in their desire to avoid using such words as culture in the plural. On the other hand, the authors of the project far too easily combine the multiple ethnic traditions present in Lithuania into one notion of an all embracing ethnic culture.

Similarly, a strong rhetoric of identity, sovereignty, and security was expressed in the project entitled "A Law on Protection and Promotion of the Culture of the Republic of Lithuania" (1997, not approved). The proposed law opened with a declaration: "The Seimas […], hereby fulfilling the will of the nation to pro-

tect the spirit of the nation, native language, writing, and customs," acknowledges that "the nation can develop an open, just, and harmonious civil society and legal state only while being grounded in its own cultural heritage". The obvious problem is that "own" is always a "conquered own," as all the cultural traditions exist at the crossroads of different states. Therefore, one may say that "own" is always the result of a conflict and therefore bears the sign of a conflict. In this sense, the Hobbesian state of war is also applicable to the domain of culture, tradition, and identity, if they are perceived as being possessed by states, organisations, or individuals. This is particularly true in the context of Lithuania, where talking about traditional culture often involves biased opinions about the contribution of the surrounding countries, such as Poland, Russia, and Belarus. On the other hand, the very principle of "own culture" as the basis of civil society is obviously questionable in itself. This presupposition that "own" is the core quality of social and political coherence implies that such multicultural states as the United States seem to have no chance of ever becoming open civil societies: Who would dare to formulate the "own culture" of the U.S.A that could possibly satisfy all the diverse groups in domestic society?

The problem of the ethnicisation of the notion of culture can be added to this already fairly problematic matter of ownership and cohesion. Culture is defined as a "structure of spiritual and material values" that distinctively belong to the nation, whereas ethnic culture is again based on the "national self-consciousness of the strata of a nation (ethnos)". Thus the notions of nation and ethnos are perceived as being identical and consequently the general definition of culture possesses a strong ethnic character.

These ideas were advanced in "The Law on Fundamentals of State Care of Ethnic Culture of the Republic of Lithuania" (approved, 1999 September 21[2]). This law, as the Lithuanian mass media proudly repeated, had no analogy in Europe. The law was prepared by the Cultural Congress group and was thus saturated with the conservative values that had been promoted by this coalition since the early 1990s. The state was depicted in this law as a supreme diagnostician, who attends to the damages of national cultural health: "different forms of Lithuanian ethnic culture and especially its living tradition are obviously threatened by the danger of decay" ("The Law on Fundamentals of State Care of Ethnic Culture of the Republic of Lithuania", Preamble, 1999). One may also note that, in contrast to former CC documents that had taken the existence of ethnic groups other than Lithuanians into account, this law is explicitly concerned with ethnic culture of Lithuanians only.

Finally, "The Regulations of Lithuanian Cultural Policy" (CPR) were approved on 19 May 2001. This text contains less naturalistic ethno-nationalistic rhetoric than was channelled into the law on the protection of ethnic culture.

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[2] Etninės kultūros valstybinės globos pagrindų įstatymas. 1999. *Valstybės žinios*. Nr. 82-2414.

Nevertheless, identity is still the formative principle around which the norms of cultural policy are set: "Lithuania's culture is an expression of the creativity of the individual and the nation, a guarantee of their identity and survival" (CPR 2001). Even after attributing to culture the power to promote diversity, the CPR (2001) turns back to identity and defines the Lithuanian language, ethnic culture, and heritage as the main objects and priorities of the CPR. In addition to these paradigmatic "bricks," meant for the wall of nationhood, other goals of cultural policy are centred on the category of ethnicity. Even society itself is defined as consisting of individuals and ethnic communities and "Lithuania's culture is an expression of the creativity of the individual and the nation, the guarantee of their identity and survival" (CPR 2001).

## Through the mist of hegemony: Lithuanian cultural policy and international norms of cultural policy

Hence, we can ask if the use of this kind of nationalistic rhetoric in a state's cultural policy is traditionally inevitable. Why else would culture matter for the state, if it did not contribute to social cohesion by acting as a basis for national identity and patriotism? Indeed, the answer depends on the character of the state we are talking about. Various ways to comprehend statehood and the purpose of the state result in different approaches to cultural policy. This becomes particularly clear if we look at the cultural policy norms functioning in Western Europe.

In 1967 during a UNESCO round table discussion, cultural policy was defined purely in a rationalist way as "a whole set of operational principles, administrative and budgetary practices and procedures that form the basis of a State's cultural action" (*Cultural Policy: A Preliminary Study* 1969). According to this document, cultural policy should be related to "personal realisation and social development". On the other hand, a state's right to support cultural development as a basis of nationhood was recognised as being acceptable in "certain developing countries" (ibid.: 8-9).

After World War II nationalism was a threatening word that needed to be avoided and contested by the emerging idea of a united Europe. Consequently, the aspects of a state that were not explicitly related to nation-building were emphasised, such as social welfare, etc. For example, the criticism of Harald Swedner falls within this logic, when he accuses the pan-nationalistic conceptualisation of cultural policy to be "one of seven deadly sins of Swedish cultural policy" (Swedner 1978: 8). In contrast, some years later, *In From the Margins* (1997), initiated by the Council of Europe, emphasised the development of cultural identity as the first goal and the basis of state cultural policy. However, the more detailed discussion of this principle placed national identity last, after a long list of

all other possible forms of collective identification (*In From the Margins* 1997: 45-46). The monolithic principle of national culture is also criticised in *Our Creative Diversity* (1995), which sets out to promote a discourse of diversity. These publications are the cornerstones of the internationally "appropriate" discourse, which doubtlessly matters to Lithuanian cultural policymakers. Nevertheless, as we can see from this analysis, this discourse can hardly be called hegemonic in relation to the local Lithuanian nationalist discourse.

Certainly, the concepts of decentralisation, regionalisation, diversity and others are incorporated in the texts of Lithuanian cultural policy. Nevertheless, these concepts (originally being the expression of a deeper discourse structure) did not succeed in modifying the nationalistic core of Lithuanian cultural policy. Instead, they were inserted rather mechanically, despite their apparent ideological contradiction with local terms. For example, the principle of diversity strongly contradicts the principle of "one common ethnic culture," which fails to embrace diversity on the basis of ideological myths of tolerance. The principle of sustainable development clashes with a principle of "cultural mummification," which can be seen in the reactionary and defensive attitude presented in the CPR and other documents.

The argument commonly used by most Lithuanian cultural policy makers fits into a scheme of reactionary rhetoric mapped by Albert Hirschman (Hirschman 1991). Hirschman's thesis of futility can be seen in the usage of a victimised construct of the historical past, enabling one to render each geopolitical and social change as an actual or potential threat to national identity. Even the earlier ideological construct of the Lithuanian "return to Europe," which had served as one of the strongest arguments underpinning and motivating the secession from the Soviet Union, has become a challenge to the sterilised concept of national identity.

## Conclusion

I have tried to demonstrate the formative function of national identity in the official discourse of Lithuanian cultural policy. Though national identity is defined in a primordial manner as a natural part of objective reality, the documents assume that only the state's cultural policy can ensure its stability and continuity. This assumption has its pragmatic reasoning. In this way, cultural policy discursively positions itself as politically significant by presenting the categories of culture, identity, and sovereignty as being constitutive to one another and maps conservative and defensive strategies in order to maintain the status quo.

The internationally approved rhetoric of cultural policy cannot compete with this discourse, which is so heavily rooted in the nationalistic tradition. The con-

tents of discourses possess their own symbolic capital and are valued differently in various discourse markets. In this way, the concepts that are traditionally connected to the idea of sovereignty are rated highest in nation-state politics. Consequently, the categories of ethnicity, culture, identity, and language are enormously politicised. Their legacy has deep historical roots and they are traditionally constitutive to the Lithuanian idea of political sovereignty. The constitutive role of these ideas in the discourse of cultural policy may be interpreted as one of the means of the institutionalisation of Lithuanian national identity. It is the task of my future research to address the multiple questions connected to the cultural policy discourse's relation and function within social practices, questions which have remained unanswered in this paper.

I hope that the case discussed in this article contributes to an increased understanding of the fact that the construction of national identity takes place not only on the level of cultural policy implementation, but also on the level of cultural policy as a bureaucratic and legal system. The discursive reality discussed here might look rather detached from everyday reality, almost as if it was locked in the corridors and drawers of the ministries. Nevertheless, it is closely related to the social world, as the official discourse maps the categories and normative landmarks that are later reproduced by both organisations and individuals acting in the domain of culture.

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