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Vilnius University, 2015. Photo by Almantas Samalavičius.

In Quest of Lithuanian Higher Education

ALMANTAS SAMALAVIČIUS

This issue of the journal is designed to map out and hopefully to discuss as thoroughly and adequately as possible some of the most urgent problems facing Lithuania's system of higher education and the present state of its institutions, i.e. the more than two dozen state and private universities. For a number of years these topics have been some of the "hottest" focal points in public discussions that are going on in Lithuania and that sometimes reach beyond its borders because of the globalization and internationalization of higher education and related fields, especially in recent times. One can hardly disagree with critics who suggest that the future prospects of Lithuania's system of higher education are very closely related to questions of how the universities perform in society today: do they meet the expectations of society; what are the most urgent issues they address or need to address in the near future; and how successfully are these old institutions dealing with the challenges of contemporary global developments.

Those who have been following recent developments in Lithuania have had occasion to notice that in public discussions universities are regularly under attack. One could even claim that they are the "usual suspects" and are blamed (whether with some justification or not) for a large number of society's social and cultural flaws. Moreover, critics of universities often rightly argue that institutional changes have been either too slow or insignificant. Their opponents, however, re-

ply that Lithuanian universities lately have become far more visible on an international scale and are quite positively represented in some of the latest global university rankings.

Needless to say, opinions about universities and about the system of higher education in general are often manipulated by the mass media. In their current shape, universities are an easy target for politicians as well as for society at large, whose views are fed by rumor and fact alike. Anyone who claims to be a taxpayer, concerned that his or her money be used for "the public good", is prone to criticize universities or to speak on behalf of their potential "clients" by claiming that sometimes the universities are dysfunctional or at least in need of revision and restructuring. There is perhaps an urgent need to distinguish between the mythologies inherent in some of the popular criticism and political rhetoric and the real problems universities are facing in the country.

For years, I have been arguing for an open, critical discourse on higher education in Lithuania and for debates involving academics and politicians, as well as larger segments of society. Unfortunately, this kind of discourse is still in the making. Ongoing critical discussion is illusory. In reality, it is nothing more than a spectacle triggered by rival political interests rather than by a serious interest in reforming the present institutional system. Disastrous images of Lithuania's system of higher education perhaps take over the local imagination too often. Observers from the outside usually see things as problematic, yet not so apocalyptic.

And yet, it would be a mistake to argue that Lithuanian universities as well as the county's system of higher education are like Caesar's wife - "beyond suspicion", as the old Latin proverb puts it. It would be simply wrong to pretend that things are not "falling apart". Things still do fall apart and for a number of reasons. Some of these reasons are Lithuania's centuries-long development under conditions of colonization, and its lack of ability to rethink this legacy and to deal with it in adequate ways.

Local university reforms often call to mind the story once told by renowned physicist and public intellectual, Richard Feynman, in his essay on cargo-cult science. In this famous essay, Feynman compared real science to one that pretends to be a science. One could apply some of his insights to the current state of Lithuania's system of higher education. Some institutions of higher education look like they are universities; however, they are not. Some higher education reform policies look like remedies; however, they not. Without any exaggeration, one could claim that some of the most widely applied remedies of higher education reform have turned out to be its poison. Some of the most popular themes in recent political rhetoric are the urgent need to reduce the number of the universities, to "optimize" their structure, to assure a high level of "quality of studies" (as a matter of fact this is done just by introducing a more burdensome bureaucracy into each university), to work out ways to "meet the demands of the market" (as if the market were some sort of eternal and almost God-provided entity), to establish bonds between business structures and universities (without seriously estimating the profits as well as the dangers coming out of this liaison, as was recently critically discussed by such internationally renowned voices in higher education as Derek Bok)...

The number of poisons offered as remedies is growing. Meanwhile the authors of the articles presented in this issue argue for critical assessment of the state of affairs not only within the system of higher education but also in state policy that still allows "cargo-cult science" to be a metaphor applicable to the Lithuanian university system. The authors of this issue are not eager to offer remedies. However, what they offer is sound and thoughtful reflection that may help the country to rethink its quarter-of-a-century-long policies of higher education, and to have the courage to face challenges that are real and not imaginary.

The Mythology of Higher Education and its Regional Context

RIMANTAS ŽELVYS

Introduction

The expanding global economy at the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century has inevitably inspired globalization processes in other areas of social life. Education is one of the areas clearly affected by globalization. It may be too early to talk about a global system of education, but many elements of formal education are becoming norms which are generally accepted. The UNESCO-initiated Dakar action plan "Education for All" can stand as an example of such universal educational goals. Global organizations like the World Bank and OECD (The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) also support many of the goals outlined in the action plan. The goal of the latter organizations is the expansion of the world's economy and finances, but they also support educational initiatives, basing their support on the assumption that education should help create the work force needed in a global economy.

Regional tendencies supplement global ones, since every region of the world has its own specific characteristics. Europe has its own specific characteristics as well, and it can be divided into sub-regions. One possible division, although not the only

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one, is a division based on the economic and historical development of its countries. Based on this principle, one of the regions is Western Europe. It consists of old-time members of the European Union and some countries which do not belong to the Union, such as Switzerland, Norway, Iceland, Lichtenstein (the so-called EFTA – European Free Trade Association – countries). A second region consists of new members of the European Union which are geographically part of Central and Eastern Europe and which earlier had belonged to the socialist bloc. The third region consists of those countries with a socialist past which are not members of the European Union. They are part of Eastern Europe (Russia, Byelorussia, Ukraine, Moldova, the Caucasus countries) and Southeastern Europe (Albania, Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo). With some reservations, the former socialist republics of Central Asia can also be included in this group because those countries belonged to the Eurasian region when they were part of the Soviet Union.

All of these countries are affected by global tendencies, but at the same time they display regional peculiarities. A common socialist past is a particularly important peculiarity of the countries in the second and third groups. It continues to affect the future development of these countries and apparently will keep doing so for a long time. The Polish educational sociologist Marek Kwiek noted this peculiarity when he spoke of the development of higher education (2001):

> In our region, higher education is experiencing a two-fold effect at the present time: it is affected by regional transformations which have occurred after 1989 and by deeper and long-term global transformations. To ignore either one of these two parts of the analytical equation would be to fail to understand the reasons why attempts to reform higher education in the last decades have been unsuccessful.[1]

[1] Kwiek, "Transformations," 1.

The countries of the second group, even before they joined the European Union, felt constant pressure to adopt the "rules of the game" in force in Western Europe, and once they became members of the European Union, they felt the need initially to implement the educational goals set out in the Lisbon strategic plan and now to implement the aspirations of the "Europe 2020" strategic plan. These strategic plans are not a matter of free choice – they include criteria for successful compliance and provide for periodic evaluation, and so the engine driving not only economic convergence but also educational convergence are being engaged in full force. The countries in the third group do not feel this kind of pressure, and for this reason they choose the direction and tempo of Europeanization freely, or they may choose to reject it altogether. Russia is a typical example of a country which has chosen that kind of alternative – most recently it has expressed doubts about whether it is truly a part of European civilization, and it has started to seek its own unique purpose and mission. Thus the processes of convergence between the countries belonging to the first and the second groups are more rapid and intense than those between those belonging to the first and third groups, even though, due to globalization tendencies, regional convergence cannot be totally avoided.

Of all the structures of education affected by the processes of globalization, the one most affected is higher education. That is natural and understandable, since higher education from its inception has been international, and given a global division of labor, it simply could not prepare highly qualified specialists and scientists if it oriented itself solely towards an internal work force and relied only on national criteria of educational achievement.

Thus higher education in Lithuania is undergoing transformations on several levels – global and regional (initially inspired by the educational politics of the European Union), and at the same time it is being affected by particular characteristics which stem from a socialist legacy and from national culture. According

to Zenonas Norkus (2008), "post-communist capitalism inevitably is being built not on the ruins of socialism but with the ruins of socialism."[2] Remembering the famous assertion from socialist times that the culture of Soviet Lithuania is socialist in its content and national in its form, we could say that currently Lithuanian education is post-socialist in its content and becoming global in its form, while still retaining specific national elements.

The status of higher education is a constant subject of discussion. The general public pays much less attention to vocational training and general education. In addition, when one speaks in general about higher education, it is usually higher education at the university level that is meant, and not colleges, which make up the non-university sector of higher education. Is this only because higher education at the university level is the sector most affected by processes of globalization? Global tendencies affect other areas of education. Lithuania takes part in international comparative studies of student achievement levels, such as ICCS (International Civic and Citizenship Education Study), PIRLS (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study), TIMSS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study) and PISA (Program for International Study Assessment). The results of all these studies show Lithuania's students to be just average, but this has not resonated with the general public in any significant way. Manifestations of integration in professional training include the European vision for vocational education and training in 2020, the creation of a common European qualifications framework, and others. Even though comparisons of the countries of the European Union in the area of professional training show that Lithuania does not have an effective orientation system for the professions[3] the status of professional training has not brought forth any great concern from the general public.

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[2] Norkus, *Kokia demokratija*, 568.

[3] European Commission, 2011.

One can assume that the special attention being paid to higher education is one of the legacies of socialism, because an elitist system of higher learning existed then (even though, of course, it was officially declared that higher education is available to everyone), and professors in institutions of higher learning and scholars enjoyed the particular attention of the government at that time. Can the particular attention which the general public now pays to higher education be explained by the fact that an exclusive attention to higher education once existed, even though it has disappeared now that higher education has been opened up to the masses? One can speculate that this is the case, just as one can surmise that the more attention the general public pays to higher education, the more likely it will be that this segment of the educational system will become mythologized.

Each society and each generation has its own mythological heritage. Ancient Greece gave us Greek mythology. The Soviet Union created and actively promoted its own mythological system. The networking society generates new myths, in which contemporary generations believe. Thus the phenomenon of myths covers all areas of social life.

Researchers have noted for quite a while that education is being mythologized. One can simply note the classic works of Henry Tudor and Arthur V. Combs. According to the formulation of Henry Tudor (1973), a myth is an interpretation of what the myth-maker (rightly or wrongly) takes to be a hard fact. According to the famous American psychologist and educator Arthur W. Combs (1979), myths have the following characteristics:

They are generally held.

They are often expressed as dichotomies.

They sometimes hold a germ of truth.

They justify behavior.

They often become institutionalized.

According to social scientists, our age is the age of the information society. It is probably more accurate to call it that than to call it the news society or the knowledge society, because there is not much news and even less knowledge in the stream of information which inundates us daily. Castells (2001) calls contemporary society the network society. The possibilities for proliferation of myths have increased significantly with the appearance of the internet and other information-communication technologies. Internet authors cite each other and themselves, and often it is unclear where the first source of information appeared originally or whether such a source even exists.

As Raoul Girardet (1990) asserts, political science contains four "great mythological systems": The System of Conspiracy, The System of the Golden Age, The System of the Savior, and The System of Unity. Analogously, we can specify four areas of mythology in contemporary higher education which are in part global, but apparently are determined to a large extent by the Soviet experiences of contemporary society. These are the manifestation of the mythology of structure, the mythology of quantity, the mythology of quality, and the mythology of the power of will in higher education.

The Mythology of Structure

There is a widely-held view that the structure of an educational system which corresponds to the demands of the job market, takes the form of a pyramid – the largest number of students are in the professional schools, a smaller number in colleges, an even smaller number in master's degree programs, and finally, the top of the pyramid should be crowned with doctoral studies. Various authors, who are troubled by the great popularity of higher education at the university level in Lithuania, criticize its structure of education, which according to them has taken on the form of an inverted pyramid:

> The educational system of Lithuania is reminiscent of an inverted pyramid. Very few people attend professional schools, and the level and prestige of these schools has fallen completely. In our country everyone is pushed towards studying in schools of higher learning. And schools of higher learning have to lower standards to accommodate individuals of very different talents and inclinations. "The quality of study is growing worse dramatically" – asserted Rimantas Rudzkis, the principle analyst at DnB NORD Bank, in the publication "Verslo žinios".[4]

Professors Vytautas Daujotis and Arvydas Janulaitis, representatives of the academic world, make the same point:

> In the world, the pyramid principle is applied to higher education. Universities are at the very top. Colleges are in the middle. Professional schools make up the foundation. In Lithuania, this pyramid is inverted, because higher education is available not only to those who study well, but also to those who pay well.[5]

And the Minister of Education and Science for the Republic of Lithuania asserts:

> Everyone says that we have an 'inverted pyramid' – the greatest number of high school graduates go on to universities to continue their studies, while the ones who go on to prepare for a profession are a smaller group. Meanwhile, in the normal world, with which we aspire to achieve a level of equality – such as in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Scandinavia, about 70 to 80 % or more of young people finish their general education and obtain a professional diploma at the same time.[6]

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4 "Krizė apėmė visą šalies švietimo sistemą", January 22, 2008.

5 Daškevičiūtė, "Profesoriai Vytautas Daujotis ir Arvydas Janulaitis", November 20, 2012.

6 Pavalkis, "Sovietinių laikų požiūris," November 19, 2014.

These comments by economists, academics and politicians undoubtedly reflect the opinion of a certain segment of society, but if one analyzes educational statistics more closely, it does not appear that we have an inverted pyramid. The figure is more like a Christmas tree. At the university level we do in fact have a pyramid – most of the students are seeking bachelor's degrees, fewer – master's degrees, and doctoral students are the smallest group. The non-university sector of higher learning is clearly smaller. The most recent data from OECD shows that 39 percent of today's young people from OECD countries are likely to graduate from schools of higher learning which are universities, while 11 percent -- from non-university schools. It is often hard to determine the percentage of those graduating from professional schools because some of the OECD countries have integrated programs of general education and professional training, but it will undoubtedly be less than 50 percent of all students in the educational system. If half or 70–80 percent of them were to choose the path of professional training, as the Minister asserted, we would still end up with a Christmas tree where the branches would symbolize baccalaureate, master's and doctoral studies, the trunk – college studies, and the base – professional studies.

It is both impossible and unnecessary to turn the Christmas tree upside down. The image of an educational pyramid has come to us from 20th century industrial society. In a post-industrial society, the need for highly qualified workers increases, while the need for workers with low qualifications decreases, and so the base of the Christmas tree will depend on the level of economic development in the country. If Lithuania's level of eco-

nomic development increases, then the country will need more and more qualified specialists, and so returning to a twentieth century industrial educational model would not make sense. Statistics from European Union countries and Lithuania regarding the level of unemployment show that workers with a higher level of education have better prospects in the work market than those who do not have such a level of education. According to the Center for the Observation and Analysis of Learning and Study, "In 2013 the unemployment level for graduates of schools of higher learning was 2.8 times smaller than for those with a lower level of training – whether it be a high school level, a professional, or some other post-high school, non-university level of training."[7] The number of college graduates in Lithuania's employment market, compared with all students, is 1.75 times larger than the number of university graduates. In this regard Lithuania differs from other European Union countries: "The level of employment of Lithuania's residents with advanced training is one of the highest of the countries in the European Union. The employment level differences between those with advanced training and those with other post-high school level training is also one of the highest in Europe (the employment level of individuals with advanced training reaches 88 percent, while for those without such training it is 64 percent.)"[8] In addition, according to the Center for the Observation and Analysis of Learning and Study, there are noticeably large salary differences between individuals with a university, college, and other post-high school background. Since members of society do not know these figures while politicians either do not know or do not want to know them, we continue to witness calls to change the structure of education and to diminish the university sector of higher education while at the same time expanding the non-university and professional training sectors.

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[7] MOSTA, *Lietuvos studijų būklės apžvalga*, 123.

[8] Ibid.

The Mythology of Quantity

This myth finds expression in the conviction of a certain segment of society that there are too many universities in Lithuania and too many students attend them. Even well-known representatives of the academic world publicly express this opinion.

"Common sense tells us that there are too many universities in Lithuania – this does not require any deep analysis," professor L. Donskis asserts.[9]

B. Burgis, the former principal of Kaunas Technological University High School agrees with the professor: "I dare to say that the university market in Lithuania is not attractive to those seeking higher education and it will not become attractive until we decrease the number of universities,".[10]

"The Western world does not understand how there can be so many students in a small country like Lithuania, and how even salespersons are required to have university training," says Arūnas Teišerskis, who has a doctorate in the natural sciences and who emigrated to Ireland from Lithuania more than ten years ago and is now working at the University of Dublin.[11]

In actuality, a shift from an elitist system of higher learning to a system open to the masses occurred in the country at the intersection of the 20th and the 21st centuries. During the 1994-1995 school year there were 51,000 students in schools of higher education in Lithuania, but during the 2008–2009 school year we experienced the largest number of students – 210,000.[12] In fourteen years, the number of students increased more than fourfold. This undoubtedly is an essential change and an increase of previously unseen proportions. It has placed a heavy burden on Lithuania's schools of higher learn-

[9] Jackevičius, "Donskis prisipažįsta klydęs," September 20, 2011.
[10] Burgis, "Universitetų rinka nebus patraukli," August 31, 2011.
[11] "Kodėl mokslo vaisiai kartūs," January 15, 2015.
[12] The Department of Statistics, 2010.

ing, which have a relatively weak infrastructure and limited potential for growth in regards to academic personnel. The problem of the quality of education inevitably had to arise and, of course, it did. However, can we turn back the clocks and return to an elitist system of higher education instead of one geared to the masses, a return which summons feelings of nostalgia not only from a general public critically disposed towards higher education but also from a large segment of the academic community? Of course, the government, if it wished to do so, could limit the number of government-subsidized openings for potential students in schools of higher learning. It could do this, but it is not eager to do so because it would be politically unpopular. But could the government stem the tide of those wishing to study at the university level even if it wanted to do so? According to the decision of the Constitutional Court, the government no longer has the right to use financial resources to regulate the number of students who wish to pursue university level studies. If the government decreased the number of government-subsidized openings for potential students, this would mean that the number of students who would have to pay the entire cost of their education would be greater. Even if a mechanism to limit the number of students paying full tuition in state schools of higher education were found, private schools of higher education would absorb those students who were not admitted into the state schools. If restrictions are placed on private non-state-supported schools, those who are unable to attend schools of higher education in Lithuania would always be able to choose to study abroad. Thus, it appears that the only way to return to an elitist system of education instead of one geared to the masses would be to introduce a totalitarian system of government and to close the borders.

Another general proposal to solve this problem is the proposal to consolidate schools of higher education. But is the ex-

pansion of the size of universities and an increase in the relative number of students in each school of higher education, an adequate response to the challenges posed by higher education geared to the masses? If we rely on data from the Department of Statistics, during the 1990-1991 school year there were 12 schools of higher learning in Lithuania, and 67,000 students attended them. Thus, on the average, each school of higher education had 5,500 students, but at that time no one thought that our schools of higher education were too small and should be enlarged. During the 2008-2009 school year, as mentioned above, when Lithuania's student population reached a record high, there were 49 schools of higher education with an average of 4,300 students in each school. Theoretically, it looks like there was a decrease in the size of schools of higher learning. However, it should be remembered that 27 of them are colleges, which in 2000 were restructured en masse from schools of higher education without much critical analysis. In fact, there is almost no discussion of the need to consolidate colleges – the main topic of discussion is the consolidation of schools of higher education. 22 universities had 149,000 students. However 7 of them were non-state schools. The government cannot consolidate or reorganize non-state schools. Thus there remain 15 university-level schools of higher education which have a total of 141,000 students – on the average 9,400 students for each school. In the same 2008–2009 school year, six universities in Lithuania had more than 10,000 students, and the largest of them, the Vilnius University, had 24,500 students. The number of students has decreased somewhat over the last five years. In the 2013–2014 school year there were five universities which had 10,000 students or more, and the number of students at the Vilnius University decreased to 20,500.[13] Is that a large or a small number? Let us take a look at how many students the twelve best universities in the world

[13] Department of Statistics, 2014.

have, according to the ranking of world universities as reported in *Times Higher Education* (2015):

California Institute of Technology – 2,200 students.
Harvard University – 21,000 students.
University of Oxford – 22,000 students.
Stanford University – 8,000 students.
University of Cambridge – 19,000 students.
Massachusetts Institute of Technology – 11,000 students.
Princeton University – 7,800 students.
University of California, Berkeley – 36,000 students.
Imperial College London – 15,000 students.
Yale University – 12,000 students.
University of Chicago – 15,000 students.
University of California, Los Angeles – 42,000 students.

As we see from this first group of twelve, only Berkeley and UCLA stand out in size. The others are similar in size to the universities in Lithuania, but this does not stop them from being leaders in university ratings. Evidently, not size but other factors are determinative. Which ones? Most likely it is the quality of resources – both material and human.

Another myth connected with quantity, which is used to argue that we have too many schools of higher learning, goes as follows: "Normal countries have one university for every million inhabitants."

B. Juodka the former rector of the Vilnius University, asserts:

> When we speak of reforms, we should either act or keep silent. There are 50 schools of higher learning in Lithuania and 35 institutes of science. This does not happen anywhere else in the world: in Europe normally there is one university for every one million inhabitants.[14]

[14] Juodka, "Į universitetus įstoja „dundukai," September 9, 2008.

Is this really the case? It is not hard to find statistics about this on the internet. In the United Kingdom, there are 123 universities (65 million inhabitants), in the Netherlands there are 37 universities (17 million inhabitants), in Austria there are 36 universities (17 million inhabitants), in Sweden there are 17 universities (9.8 million inhabitants), in Norway there are 17 universities (5.2 million inhabitants), in Finland there are 16 universities (5.5 million inhabitants). Those are the number of universities, excluding colleges and schools of applied sciences as well as teachers' colleges. Thus in these countries there is one university for every half million or one third of a million inhabitants. It is therefore fully appropriate for Lithuania, which has a population of almost three million, to have nine universities, and if one excludes university level military academies and art, music and theater academies, that is almost how many we do in fact have.

Finally, we should understand that increasing the size of universities is a means, not an end. The consolidation of universities should have a synergetic effect. Will we achieve such an effect, if we consolidate two universities which are having financial difficulties (for example, the University of Šauliai and the University of Klaipėda)? The joinder of two impoverished entities will not produce a prosperous one, but will result in one larger impoverished entity. Consolidation makes sense in order to avoid courses of study which duplicate each other, but most of the universities in Lithuania are specialized universities. Undoubtedly there are some courses of study which duplicate each other (among them, business administration or teacher preparation programs are often mentioned as examples), but their number is relatively small. In addition, the problem of duplication can be solved in other ways, not necessarily by consolidating universities.

The Mythology of Quality

The quality of higher education is undoubtedly one of the most mythologized spheres. Many who speak and write about this question intuitively feel that there is something not quite right with the quality of higher education, but it is hard to explain how this intuition arises. The assertion heard most often is that "the quality of higher education in Lithuania is poor, while that abroad is better, and that is why increasingly more students are leaving to study abroad." Here is a typical example of how the quality of higher education is judged:

> "This year a record number of high school graduates from the Baltic countries have chosen to study abroad. It is the quality of higher education in their native countries that is chasing them out of their own countries. The Bloomberg News Agency reports that most of them are not likely to return to their homelands once they complete their studies abroad. Last year, Edgaras Predkelis, like most high school graduates in Lithuania, planned on attending the Vilnius University. However, he was also accepted by the University of Amsterdam, and he chose to go there. "In Holland, you can get a much better education for the same amount of money," nineteen-year-old Edgaras believes. In speaking of the Vilnius University, he thinks that he will not receive a quality education, will not have access to needed educational materials, and will not receive appropriate attention from instructors."[15]

Of course, in discussions with future students, we could inquire whether, for example, London Metropolitan University, which is in last place, number 123, in the ratings of universities in the United Kingdom, is of higher quality than, let us say, the Vilnius University, but such a theoretical discussion would be senseless because recent critics of the quality of higher education are

[15] Ranonytė, "Bloomberg," August 26, 2008.

not likely to have any information about this university, nor about many actual universities in Lithuania or abroad. Hence, discussions of the quality of education, at least in the public domain, often are based on expectations formed by an applicable mythology. So what is the reality?

The work of Harvey and Green (1993) about the quality of higher education, which is often quoted and has already become a classic, lists five characteristizations of quality:

Exclusivity. Examples of exclusivity are the universities of Oxford and Cambridge. However, the authors note, such a definition of quality is not likely to be a sensible one because then all the other universities in the United Kingdom would have to be considered lacking in quality, as would the universities of other countries (with the possible exception of the United States).

Conformance to standards. This characterization permits all schools of higher education to seek quality, but in this case it is hard to have a consensus. Standards may appear too high to some evaluators, too low to others. According to this characterization, all the schools of higher education in Lithuania meet quality standards because they offer only accredited programs of study, i.e. programs of study that meet appropriate standards, and non-accredited programs of study are terminated.

Fitness for purpose. In this case everything depends on what the purpose of higher education is understood to be. If the purpose is to prepare highly qualified specialists for the job market, then the evaluation of quality can be of one type (employers in Lithuania generally are not prone to think that graduates are well-prepared to enter the job market). In this case, a school of higher education is treated like a professional school. If the purpose is to foster the creation of a scientific, artistic, and technological elite in the country, then the evaluation can be of another type. In this case a school of higher education is treated as the source of national culture (under this treatment, giving the role of schools of higher education a negative evaluation becomes

a complicated matter because these schools are the only places where such a national elite is fostered).

Effectiveness in achieving institutional goals. According to this characterization, the most important criteria becomes the rational use of resources. The institution which succeeds in preparing highly qualified specialists at the lowest cost would be considered qualified. If we apply this criterion, we would have to acknowledge that all of the schools of higher education in Lithuania operate productively. Z. Norkus, for example, holds this view:

> From a purely economic standpoint, the system of higher education in Lithuania is miraculously effective. Higher education in Lithuania is the most effective in the European Union – a specialist is prepared using the smallest amount of resources allotted to each individual.[16]

Doubters can easily try to calculate what it costs to prepare engineers or doctors in "Western countries" and in Lithuania.

Meeting customers' stated or implied needs. The authors point out that in this case it is hard to answer the question of who are the clients of schools of higher education – students, employers, or the state? If we hold the clients to be students and/or employers, then according to this formulation the schools of higher learning in Lithuania will never be of high quality. Many comparative studies show that the inhabitants of Lithuania have a very critical and pessimistic view of various social institutions, including the system of education, for various historical, psychological, social and other reasons.

Thus, according to two of the five given characterizations of quality, the functioning of schools of higher learning in Lithuania, in fact, is not one of quality. These schools are not exceptional in the world, and they do not satisfy the declared or imagined needs of their clients sufficiently. In that case, one can hypothesize

[16] Norkus, *"Aplinkos veiksnių įtaka,"* 99-100.

that perhaps the needs of the clients are much too ambitious. The schools of higher education in Lithuania are of high quality if one adopts rational criteria for the use of resources.

The Mythology of the Power of Will

A segment of Lithuanian society has inherited from its Soviet past the conviction that our achievements are determined not by objective economic laws, but by the power of will. The voluntaristic view of social progress which reflects such a conviction asserts that social welfare is the result of shared social efforts of will. In other words, all you have to do is to have the desire, and you will be able to scale the greatest heights in all areas, including education. And if we do not reach those heights, it must be due to the fact that we have not demonstrated sufficient efforts of will. Or those efforts were sabotaged by contrary forces. At this point we might recall one of the most popular political myths, which Raoul Girardet (1990) mentions – the conspiracy myth. The voluntaristic tradition was especially vibrant in socialist society. The Soviet ideologues of education asserted that schools are required to create a new man – a communist type of man – and that if this has not yet been achieved, it must be the fault of teachers who are not trying hard enough. Once the socialist system collapsed, voluntaristic ideas died down in many areas of social life. It became evident that you cannot change the economy simply through strength of will or dedication, because the economic laws which operate in a global economy are relatively strict. In sports, talent and strength of will likewise do not suffice – state of the art swimming pools and stadiums are needed. Lithuanian society and even politicians do not complain that the Lithuanian chain of department stores "Maxima" does not come anywhere near to the scale of "Tesco" or "Carrefour", or that the soccer players on the Vilnius "Žalgiris" team are not an equal match to "Manchester United"

or "Barcelona", but they demand in all seriousness that at least one of the universities in Lithuania be on the list of the hundred best universities in the world. Even though they understand that in sports, results on the international level cannot be achieved without investments in the millions, they apparently believe that even in our time education still operates by leaning over parchment with a quill pen. In actuality, scientific research in the natural and physical sciences requires expensive equipment. We must finally acknowledge that scholars, like sports figures, have their price. One can expect that a talented scholar will choose to conduct his scholarly work in a place with better work conditions and more attractive compensation. How attractive is the position of professor at the Vilnius University, with a monthly gross salary of 1,001 euros (as of January 1, 2015), in an international context? Let us come back to the previously mentioned rankings of universities. The British *Times Higher Education* World University Rankings is one of most well-known ratings of universities used in the world. For the years 2014–2015 the universities in the first group of twelve have declared the following expenses in their budgets (in another popular world university rating – QS – the first twelve universities are the same, but ranked in different order):

California Institute of Technology – 2 billion USD
Harvard University – 4.2 billion USD
University of Oxford – 1.15 billion pounds sterling
Stanford University – 5.1 billion USD
University of Cambridge – 1.51 billion pounds sterling
Massachusetts Institute of Technology – 2.9 billion USD
Princeton University – 1.5 billion USD
University of California, Berkeley – 2.2 billion USD
Imperial College of London – 800 million pounds sterling
Yale University – 2.8 billion USD
University of Chicago – 3.5 billion USD
University of California, Los Angeles – 2.3 billion USD

For purposes of an adequate comparison, it may be useful to look at the budgetary expenses of the University of Helsinki, one of the closest neighbors of Lithuania, which is not included in the list of the hundred best universities in the world according to the ratings given by *Times Higher Education*, but is close to it at number 103. In 2013, those expenses reached 670 million euros.[17] In the same year the budgetary expenses of the Vilnius University, the ratings leader for universities in Lithuania, were 108 million euros.[18] According to the myth of the power of will, we should be able to multiply the effects of such financial means by seven or ten times through our own willful efforts and so get on the list of the world's 100 best universities, as national politicians would so much like to see.

Concluding Remarks

As A. W. Combs (1979) said, myths are generally accepted and are used to justify the behavior of those who make decisions. On the other hand, however, sometimes they contain a grain of truth. Such a grain of truth can be found in all of the myths we have discussed. The structure of education in Lithuania is far from perfect. For example, it has been noted for quite some time that the relative number of doctoral candidates is too small in comparison with master's degree candidates. It is doubtful that colleges actually meet the requirements of the job market adequately or that college admissions should be expanded at the expense of university admissions when now more than a third of college students are in business administration programs.[19] Quantity problems should be worked out without grandiose plans to consolidate universities. The time will come when schools of higher education which do not at-

[17] University of Helsinki, 2013.
[18] Vilnius University, 2013.
[19] Department of Statistics, 2014.

tract enough students will have to decide whether to close or to be annexed to a stronger university. Likewise, the problem of the quality of education is not an imaginary fiction. As Z. Norkus (2011) correctly observes, we are not taking advantage of the opportunity to create a diversified system of higher education by separating research universities from the general structure of higher education and thereby creating at least a conditional separation which satisfies one of the characteristics of quality propounded by Harvey and Grenn (1993). However, it is never too late to do that. Finally, even the myth of the power of will has a grain of truth. People who have been toughened by the Soviet epoch, in fact, are able to reach maximum results with minimal resources, and the example of higher education in Lithuania confirms this once again.

Translated by RIMAS ČERNIUS

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Lithuanian Universities: Threshold of Change, or Decline?

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AUŠRA TURČINSKAITĖ-BALČIŪNIENĖ

In Lithuania, almost everyone who finishes a general education school goes on to enroll in an institution of higher education. Half study at the expense of the state, the other half pay for their education themselves. Higher education has become an extension of a general education. Payment for studies is not excessive; most students get by without borrowing to pay for their studies. Parents are frequently able to pay for their child's education.

Almost all the students are from the same city or surrounding county where their higher education institution is located. Competition between universities and colleges is on the level of the city, not the country. A higher education is within reach of everyone who wants to study; however, their selection of a desired program of study is limited due to the regulation of voucher counts for the study areas of those seeking funded studies. A free education is an important influence on the selection of a program of study, as a large part of the students select

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a free education rather than a preferred program. Those who have not received state funding mostly select social sciences.

The number of students has declined, although not by a large amount: it does not exceed demographic and emigration indexes. The number of students has mostly been reduced due to the decline of continuing education students. The number of full-time students has not fallen as markedly. Continuing education is mostly selected by working people; due to emigration, the number of working people has fallen, and so the overall count of students has fallen. The number of undergraduates is influenced by demographic factors. The number of all students has fallen most at the expense of separate regional higher education schools and traditionally non-prestigious universities.

The area of study does not have a strong influence on employment, as students frequently find work outside of their area of training. A general education is sufficient for most work positions. A higher education narrows the gaps in a general education. The need for specialists is dependent on the growth or slowing of the economy. Higher education's effect on the economic structure independently of specialists' training and number is minimal. Many working-age people have emigrated. The economic sector does not generate a sufficient number of jobs, so advanced study, although it confers an advantage in looking for work, does not guarantee a job that matches a job-seeker's training. The economic sector cannot offer enough jobs; it is small and fragmented. There is no possibility of preparing specialists for smaller sectors.

In reforming higher education, the flow of students through separate study programs was regulated, along with changes in the model for payment and its cost. The alteration of parameters created conditions that lowered the quality requirements for students studying at their own expense. A large number of students who were not capable of carrying the load of studies ended up in the universities, anyway. Studying be-

came an alternative to unemployment; outside of studying, there essentially is no alternative in Lithuania for people of that age. In addition, unlike in other countries, state institutions of higher education unequivocally dominate, and the state sector is traditionally inflexible. For this reason, change comes slowly to institutions of higher learning and they tend to stagnate. For another, the need for specialists does not depend on the universities. A well-trained, expensive specialist does not create additional value. Better a more poorly paid, but less qualified worker. There is no need for qualified workers. Half of all employees work in the public sector, where general qualifications suffice. Reform of the university sector cannot give tangible results because the problem arises from the general economic situation and the structure of business. The state university sector is ineffectively governed, like all public sector institutions.

Several Observations About the Soviet Period

In order to understand the changes in higher education in Lithuania, a brief review of the changes that occurred over the last twenty-five years is in order. In Soviet times, a graduate of the required general education school could continue at a trade school to acquire training for a manual profession. This educational course was not considered prestigious. It was designed for those who could not enter the higher level track, called the technical schools. In 2000, the technical schools were reorganized into colleges and given the status of higher education. Only a few of the very best students could enter Vilnius University – the only university in Lithuania – or other higher education schools that were called institutes. Those who wanted to enter an establishment of higher education had to pass an entrance examination for a concrete institution. If they did not pass, entrance at another or the same school was possible only the next year. Frequently those wanting to study, attempted to enter the same uni-

versity or institute several years in a row. Usually, the number of those wanting to study was several times larger than the number of places set by the government. The entrance competition was fierce. For some universities, more than ten students competed for a single spot. Corruption was frequently involved in accepting students to the university. The offspring of Party nomenclature had a markedly better chance because acceptance was based on more than exam results; it included qualities such as the recommendations of the local party committee and various government structures. Study was unpaid everywhere. There were no detractors as to the quality of higher education in the public sphere. Upon graduation, specialists were often required to work a certain number of years at an assigned place. They were sent to smaller towns and villages, as there was a shortage of workers there. The preparation of specialists was oriented towards satisfying local demands. Not many wanted to leave to work in other republics. Lithuanian institutions did not prepare specialists for whom demand was limited; these specialists came to Lithuania from other republics. When building the nuclear power plant at Ignalina, an entire city of specialists from the Soviet Union appeared. Specialists frequently arrived at the new construction for factories from various parts of the union.

Overview of the 25-year Period of Independence

A transition period from socialism to capitalism began when independence was regained. Higher education's desovietization began with disassociation from Soviet ideology. Soviet ideology's regulations disappeared by degrees from the entire Soviet educational program. The content of social sciences study programs changed dramatically. Rejecting Soviet ideology was easily achieved; even lecturers who were the most aggressive propagators of Soviet ideology reoriented themselves to teaching the opposing doctrine of capitalism. An am-

nesty occurred, and all educational degrees were recognized, even those scholarly degrees in social sciences that depended on publicly condemned content. Neither administrators nor their administration changed, and the universities continued to function according to their customary rules and behavior. The same entrance requirements and government control remained. Education continued to be unpaid and the number of students wanting an education exceeded the number of places.

The mass privatization of state assets that began in 1991 did not affect education and institutions of higher learning; only state assets with an economic purpose were transferred into private hands. Higher education did not seem appealing. A number of students and lecturers took up commercial activities. Work at the universities was poorly paid, so everyone who could do so engaged in a wide variety of commercial activities.

After privatization, large government sector businesses often went bankrupt. Small private businesses began to decline. According to registration center data, eleven thousand new businesses were established in 1990; thirty-four thousand in 1992; and twenty-five thousand in 1993. The majority of new businesses engaged in retail and wholesale trade. The country's economy went through a difficult and changeable period. In 1995–1996, there was a wave of commercial bank failures, and the effects of the 1998 Soviet crises were dire. In 2001, unemployment reached a record high of 15.3 percent. After the Russian crises, Lithuania's economy recovered only in 2003, when the GDP grew nine percent. The turning point was Lithuania's membership in the European Union and NATO in 2004.

Entrance into the EU, had a great influence on higher education. Although entrance into the EU was followed by the economic and financial crises of 2004–2008, higher education became a component part of the EU's educational system and irretrievably entered into the general sphere of the EU. Entrance into the EU had a considerable influence on the quality of Lithuanian higher

education. As connections were formed with foreign universities, the possibility of equating the specifics and quality of foreign scholarship and studies arose, and at the same time systematic criticism of Lithuanian higher education and urgent attempts to raise its level to that of foreign higher education began.

The 41st article of the new Constitution adopted in 1992 guaranteed a free higher education to the best students. The question was, who are those best students and how many of them were needed. Economic difficulties forced a re-thinking of how many higher education schools were needed and whether they were preparing the specialists required. There was a great deal of discussion, but the system basically remained unchanged; only integration into the EU and world structures yielded incremental changes.

In an attempt to evaluate students' achievements on a national scale, the National Exam Center (NEC) was founded in 1998, and in 1999 universally developed exams were introduced. The possibility arose of evaluating student achievement based upon uniform problems given to all. This innovation created the conditions to make essential changes to the procedure for acceptance into advanced schools. If earlier, students used to apply to only a single institution, now they could apply to twenty different study programs at once. Vilnius University and the Kaunas Technological University were the first to utilize this innovation. In 2000, the new Higher Education Law was adopted; from that time the former technical schools given the status of higher education. By 2001, all of the country's institutions of higher learning joined the Lithuanian Association for Organizing General Admission (LAMA BPO). Now all universities and colleges participate in this system. The general admission system creates the conditions for the application of a voucher system in Lithuania, and the regulation of the numbers of students whose studies are paid for by the state. The same system is used for admitting students who pay for their own studies. When the general student

admission for higher education began to work, the regulation of the flow of students and financing of higher education through this system's scales was attempted. Up until 2015, altering the general admission's parameters and rules and regulations was the basic focus of all higher education reform.

Preparation for the Voucher Reforms

Probably the 2009 introduction of the so-called voucher reform in higher education generated the most discussion and conflicting evaluations. Ever since the restoration of independence, educational reform and reorganization has constantly occurred, and continues to occur, without particular success. The Ministry of Education and Science approved the 2006–2010 plan for expanding the higher education system.[1] The plan was approved, taking the statutes of the 2003–2012 state education strategy. The plan's organizers evaluated the current state of higher education. It was determined that students lacked enough lectures to acquire professional knowledge and preparation for competing in the job market. The structure for qualifications began to fail to meet the needs of the job market—there was a shortage of qualified and technical workers, while in some areas there was a surplus of specialists with higher education. Higher education schools were failing to match the study programs with the job market, so a number of graduates got jobs that did not match their profession or educational level. Because of poor connections with public partners, the results of the scholarly, technical, and experimental expansion were poorly exploited by the business sector. Scholarly research trends were poorly connected to the trends in business expansion and its needs, and consequently business failed to invest in the expansion of these areas and was not encouraged to do so. Institu-

[1] Plėtros planas, 2006.

tions of higher learning and scholarly research hardly encouraged the creation of new innovative enterprises.[2]

> For a long time, the higher education sector was extensively developed: the number of students grew very quickly, and the funds spent on this increased much more slowly... according to the funds for a single student, we are more than three times behind the EU median.[3]

According to the Lithuanian Department of Statistics, in recent years around seventy percent of the students finishing general education in a given year seek admission to an institute of higher education. The competition for admission is not onerous. According to the Lithuanian Association for Organizing General Admission's 2004 data, the average competition for a single spot at a university is only 1.32 (LAMA BPO, 2004).[4] Practically everyone who wants a higher education is admitted.

In the 2004–2005 school year, there were 108,500 full-time students (57 percent of all students) and 82,200 part-time evening and remote students (43 percent). Most of the students in the evening and remote studies program were working. The overall number of students was 190,700.

The Education and Science Department of the Lithuanian Republic's government was disbanded in 1991. That same year, the Information, Education and Science department was founded in the Lithuanian Republic's government office structure. In 1992, the Government Education, Science and Technology Office was founded, whose basic task was to form and execute government education and academic policy, but it was disbanded in 1994 and its functions transferred to the Education and Science Ministry. In 1998, the Education and Science department of the ministry was formed; in 2002 it was reor-

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[2] Ibid.

[3] Žalys, "2. Aukštojo mokslo finansavimo reforma,"

[4] LAMA BPO, 2004.

ganized into a subdivision of the Ministry's structure. Expert and advisory institutions (Lithuania's Education Office, Lithuania's Education Academy, the Center for Evaluating Academic Quality, Office of Higher Education Academics, Lithuania's University Rector's Conference) as well as public partners, took an active role in forming academic and educational policies. In the Lithuanian Republic's Higher Education Act and the Lithuanian Republic's Education and Science Law, the regulation that the Education and Science Ministry confirmed, was that when making important academic decisions these institutions' opinions[5] must be considered.

Lithuania's network of higher education has expanded considerably: there are fifteen state and six private universities (in 2004–2005, they enrolled about 139,000 students, 4,300 of them in private institutions) and sixteen state and twelve private colleges (in 2004–2005, they enrolled 52,000 students, 10,000 of those in private colleges). The specialists prepared in universities and non-university schools of higher education do not correspond to their demand in the job market.[6]

The 2006 plan confirmed the regulation that the state support students studying in state schools of higher education by financing a part of their educational expenses—not more than 220 credit hours; expenses for studies exceeding this limit are paid for by the student.[7] Another important preparation for the 2009 reform and its substantiation stage, was the parliamentary parties' June 14, 2007 agreement about the reform of higher education.[8] The agreement described the principles of reorganization. "With this agreement, the parties strive for quality changes in Lithuanian higher education and scholarly research. The agreement's principles open the door

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[5] Planas, 2006.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Partijų susitarimas, 2007.

for beginning of work of executing reforms," according to Education and Science Minister Roma Žakaitienė.[9]

The education and science system must be reorganized according to principles of the concentration of resources and its effective utilization, autonomy, responsibility and accountability, the rationality and effectiveness of state regulation, free competition, personal interest, and the improvement of the educational and academic network.[10]

The basic landmark of the agreement describes the principles of financing higher education. The financing is made up of the government's compensation and the student's personal contribution. With the first stage of reform (2008–2009), the part financed by the government was directly assigned to higher education institutions as the basis of financing according to a contract establishing the minimum number of students the school is committed to educate. According to an experimental procedure, certain particularly popular study areas were financed via the principle of government funds moving along with the student (the study voucher). In further stages of the reform (up until 2013), this principle was consequently introduced into all study areas. The government fixed the compensated part of the cost of study in four to five groups of study directions and the maximal number of partly compensated study spots (study vouchers) in every group of study directions; however, these spots were not assigned to concrete higher education institutions. The party agreement formed the basis for the higher education financing model via the voucher principle, the question of higher education's autonomy, and the role of the councils of higher education.

In 2008, the Lithuanian Seimas debated the project for Education and Science Law. Education Minister Roma

[9] Ibid.
[10] Ibid.

Žakaitienė[11] and Seimas members Gintaras Steponavičius and Andrius Kubilius[12] offered proposals to accomplish the 2007 party agreement.

The foundation of financing was to be an effective loan system. The government had the potential to regulate the number of students paying for their studies through the offered loans. However, students chose to pay for their studies directly, without using loans, so the government lost its ability to regulate the number of students. The payment for schooling was merely a matter of agreement between the student and the institution of higher learning. Offering loans through banks, the government would take on the responsibility of the bank on account of the student.

To the student, it was more convenient to deal directly with the school, while the school acquired the right to take in as many students as it wanted. This was particularly important when the number of students declined. Seeking to attract them, the required qualifications and the cost were constantly reduced. Conditions for study were created for those who had finished their general education with poor marks. At the same time that students numbers were said to be too large, the increase became even more uncontrollable.

The introduction of the voucher system occurred during a period when there was an excess of students, so those who wanted to study but did not receive a voucher chose to pay for their studies. The cost of education allowed working parents to pay for their child's studies. Higher education became an extension of general education, particularly under the conditions of the recession when there was no possibility of finding employment. This could explain the popularity of the humanities as a study choice. Loans for study were not popular, as the loan mechanism with interest was not attractive and the cost of

[11] Žakaitienė, "LR Seimas," 2008.
[12] Steponavičius, "LR Seimas," 2008.

study was not high. For comparison, a private preschool costs 1200 Litas a month, or 7200 Litas for a half-year, while a semester at a university starts at 2500 Litas. The cost for keeping a child at a private nursery school nearly equaled the cost of training an airplane pilot (before introduction of euro).

After 2009, when the number of students began to fall, and later in the shortage period, the number of vouchers continued to fall. The number of admissions of those paying their own way also fell. In a five-year period, the number of students at all universities fell dramatically. Less popular study areas fell by more than half. At this time, the hard-sciences and technical study areas lost the most students. The university administrative structure remained unchanged.

The Situation of Higher Education in 2015

An evaluation of the condition of higher education today was completed using two new official sources, "Lietuvos švietimas skaičiais, 2014 Studijos" (Study of Lithuanian education numbers, 2014) and "Lietuvos studijų būklės apžvalga" (Overview of the state of Lithuanian academics). Both sources offer a great deal of information, but few information summaries or conclusions. The material offered and the statistical data allow drawing conclusions about the state of higher education and the predominating tendencies.

Several Observations About the Changing Number of Students

Student numbers at universities and colleges grew from 2004–2005 to the 2007–2008 school year. The highest number, 204,432, was in 2007–2008. The numbers began to fall in 2008–2009. In that period, the total number of students fell to 200,400, even though a record number of students (72,504) were admitted that year. The reductions began before the voucher reform in higher

education was introduced. The fall in the number of students was connected to the beginning of the economic recession; working students who lost their jobs were forced to drop their studies and became unemployed or were forced to emigrate. When the reform began in the 2009–2010 school year, the number of admissions dropped significantly: 56,510 students were admitted, 15,994 less than had been admitted the previous year. The fall in numbers can only be partly explained by the introduction of the voucher system; when the basket system was introduced, students who did not get government financing were forced to pay the full cost of their studies, which was significantly larger than the earlier fee. That same year the economic crises began and a number of working-age people emigrated, so from 2009 on, a continuous drop in the number of students was observed. In 2009, the evening and remote classes were dropped; in its place there was extended and full-time studies. The evening and distance studies was most often used by working students. With the economic crises, as joblessness increased, the wave of emigration began, so the overall number of students decreased at the cost of the remote students. In 2009–2010, there were 89,172 full-time students and 55,129 part-time studies students. In 2013–2014, there were 82,036 full-time and 23,133 part-time studies students. The full-time students decreased by 7,136, the extended by 31,996. 190,701 students studied at universities and colleges in 2004–2005; 52,185 of them at colleges and 138,516 at universities. In the 2013–2014 school year, the overall number of students fell to 148,471; 43,500 at colleges and 104,923 at universities. The reduction in the number of part-time studies students had the largest impact on the fall in numbers.

Universities and Colleges

The government priority was and remains the expansion of colleges, but more students wish to study at a university rather than a college. The students' priority is a government-financed

spot at a university. Up until independence, the colleges were technical schools, which were a lower grade than a higher education. Students who did not have the possibility of studying at a university attended them. Later the technical schools were raised to the level of higher education schools and became colleges, which made them more attractive, but they did not equal the status and prestige of a university. In 2000, the first colleges appeared from the reorganized technical schools. Up until that year, the number of students at technical schools was nearly the same as those at universities. As the MOSTA research has shown, seventy-nine percent of pupils intend to go on to higher education and only eleven percent to a professional school. Of those wanting to continue to an institution of higher learning, sixty-one percent plan to study at a university and only thirty percent at a college. Those planning to study at a university include those questioned who indicated that they did well in school, who had at least one parent who had a higher education, and those living in a city. Those planning to study at a college, include those who indicated they were doing fairly well at school, more professional school pupils, and those from a village background. Based on the 2012 MOSTA survey of students, the most important factor in choosing a study area is the possibility of employment and a getting government-financed spot. An analysis of the data according to where students finished their general schooling and their chosen location for higher education, shows that the dominant tendency is to select an institution closest to their residence. Ninety-one percent of students studying in Vilnius are from the Vilnius district and more than half the students from the neighboring districts. More than eighty percent of the students at Kaunas universities are from the Kaunas district and more than half from the neighboring districts. The regionalism among college students is even greater. The competition between universities does not occur on a national scale, but on the scale of the local city or county.

Paid and Tuition Free Higher Education

Entrance into the system of higher education is based on the assignment of student spots and filling them according to study areas. The possibility to study has a direct connection to the possibility of paying for it, rather than the student's accomplishments. Students who have good entrance grades but do not get government financing and cannot afford to pay for their education give up their place to inferior students. This aspect is not very important, as nearly everyone who wishes is admitted. Education loans are amortized unequally and the loan system is not attractive and only a small part of students use it. The number of students studying with state funding is nearly the same as those paying for their own education. The government allots funds for only half the students, so it cannot control their offerings of specialists for the job market, as students select an area that seems attractive to them and what they can afford in the area where they live. For this reason the voucher system does not fulfill its function of regulating the demand for specialists. The number of students by study area is nearly proportional to the numbers offered according to study areas, so it can be asserted that the entering students simply fill the offered study programs.

University Administration

The nomenclature left over from Soviet times continue to administer universities. The rector and his immediate inferiors make up the foundation of the administration. All levels of universities' administration structures are interconnected and influenced by interests. The same person can be a senate president, a department dean, and a member of a commission. Or a council member, a lecturer, a dean, a commission member. With this structure, the top administration is tightly connected and inter-dependent. Bureau-

cratic incest has become firmly established. Frequently, people administer an area without having any competency in that area, but they are loyal to interested parties or individuals. The universities have become enclosed in structures oriented towards themselves. The academic community has little influence on university administration. Authoritarianism and autonomy from government influence or pressure from the academic community are characteristic of university administrations. Government influence is limited to allotting financing and changing student admission numbers and conditions. The new role of university councils has not improved administration; frequently it has worsened things. The election of councils has become first of all a battlefield for the rectors' election. At the stronger and more prestigious universities, where there were more independent centers of power, the election of a council created conditions for dividing power, which did not create conditions for quality improvements. At the weaker universities, the council elections markedly worsened the situation, because the current administration strengthened their situation and solidified their rule through the councils. At these institutions, rectors were most often re-elected, and ultimately eliminated any opposition. All forms of management were concentrated in a few people's hands. Through the councils, the university administration's responsibility was weakened. The council formally decides but does not do; while the rectors do but do not decide. There is no one to accept responsibility.

Government institutions of higher learning dominate in the country. Government offices are seen as a source of profit and employment for oneself and one's family. This tendency is particularly obvious in the work of political parties. Influence is divided according to the party principle. Influence becomes a source of profit. This tendency dominates in higher education. The administration is concerned above all with personal welfare of their own millieu. Those who administer universities and their immediate surroundings are from the academic class. They do not have administra-

tive experience. The actions of the administration has practically no effect on the development of the university. The ensconced order decides the direction of work. Graduates are admitted into higher education schools, the government allots the vouchers, the students study on their own funds. The number of students wanting to study is sufficient to support the universities financially. The prestige of a university degree is supported by tradition. Those who finish a general education school have no alternative other than to continue their studies as they have only a slight chance of finding even a poorly paid job without qualifications.

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Vilnius University, 2015. Photo by Almantas Samalavičius.

Liberalisation and Establishment of Disciplinary Policies in Lithuania's Higher Education

GIEDRIUS VILIŪNAS

In 1999, Kornelijus Platelis, Lithuania's Minister of Education, signed the Bologna Declaration – Europe's higher education ministers' manifesto, which brought about the beginnings of modernization of higher education on the European continent and which today is perceived as a sort of challenge to the global higher education hegemony held by the United States.[1] As accounts of the implementation of the Bologna Declaration indicate,[2] Lithuania today has put into practice almost all of the United Europe's higher education program regulations: there now exist in Lithuania the European higher education credit system with a three cycle higher education structure; the national qualification framework is coordinated with the European; a European diploma supplement is granted; Pan-European higher education quality assurance system exists; etc.

However, other international monitoring sources indicate that modernization of Lithuania's higher education during the

[1] Gaston, *Challenge of Bologna*.

[2] Žr. Eurydice, 2012. Such accounts subsidized by European Commission funds are issued every 3 years.

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last decades has been uneven.[3] Today Lithuania has one of the highest indicators of accessibility to higher education, but also some of the lowest indicators of per capita public investment for students seeking higher education. Regarding administrative autonomy, Lithuania's higher education is on the average liberal, but regarding academic autonomy, it is one of the most restricted. On the international academic competition index, the higher education indicator is highest in 12 of the assessed areas, but according to citations of scientific publications and patent application indexes, the nation falls into a much lower category. This paper will attempt to show that one of the reasons for this discrepancy may be the contradictory higher education policies where liberal reforms are constantly being neutralized by controls and disciplinary elements.

The Cost of Greater Higher Education

Lithuania's present day higher education politics are marked by tensions which arise from the 1990 Constitution of the newly restored Republic of Lithuania. On the one hand, the Constitution states that "culture, education and research as well as instruction are free," and "higher education institutions are granted autonomy". On the other hand, it also states that "higher education is accessible to all according to the person's talents," and that "to the citizens who are good students access to public higher education shall be free."[4] Being unable to guarantee universal free higher public education which is in the Constitution, Lithuania's government has been forced to

[3] Eurostat 2013: Eurydice 2012, 104, 25; Eurydice 2011, 47; Estermann et al. 2011, 53, 62; World Economic Forum 2014; SCImago Journal & country Rank, 2012.

[4] Lietuvos Respublikos Konstitucija, 42, 40, 41 straipsniai.

limit the development of institutions of higher education, and thus equal accessibility to education.

During the first years of independence, this struggle between academic freedom and accessibility was controlled by the state. The Ministry of Education, in appropriating public funds, set the tuition costs, the number of incoming students, and lecturer salaries. The academic self-governing body expressed the right to choose the administration of the already functioning schools and to establish new schools of higher learning. During the first few years of independence, the number of state universities rose to 15 – too many for a country of 3 million people whose population could be compared to that of a larger US or European city. Moreover, the number of incoming students until the middle of the tenth decade actually decreased.

As could be expected, the right of the higher education institutions to determine the number of incoming students was soon contested, and on January 14, 2002, the Constitutional Court firmly determined that it was illegal to prevent qualified students who are able to pay for their studies from entering state institutions of higher learning. The country's government also was convinced that the existing state sponsored student body is not large enough to provide the country with the sufficiently educated human capital. Therefore, towards the end of the first decade of independence, several resolutions were adopted including one to accept paying students and another to establish private institutions of higher learning. So from 1998 until 2005, the number of university students doubled – from 70,000 to 140,000. About half of them paid for their own education.

These steps toward mass higher education caused a social wedge of inequality to form between the state sponsored students and those paying for their education. Since the universities had the right to freely dispose of the funds collected

from the paying students, there now arose a power struggle between the commercially more attractive and less attractive disciplines. In trying to balance the changes, the state started granting preferential loans to the paying students and keeping the education free in the less commercially attractive areas of study. However, loans were granted for tuition purposes only, therefore, for the socially vulnerable students who were unable to pay for their living expenses, higher education remained difficult to acquire. Moreover, the redistribution of the state financed places enlarged the financial system's digression from the egalitarian principle of "free higher education to good students". Besides, in trying to avoid an increasing inflation of higher education degrees, the country in 1994 established a higher education quality oversight agency, which was to evaluate the existing as well as newly forming education programs. Thus, another element of higher education external control appeared.

Maneuver of Professionalism

During the 2000–2001 years, with the help of financial experts from the European Union, a prepared higher education reform took place in Lithuania whose aim was to decrease the sector's mismatch with the demands of economy.[5] The government did not attempt to reform the universities whose autonomy was guaranteed by the Constitution, but instead formed a professional higher education sector, the so-called colleges of higher education, which were formed by consolidating the previously existing higher level professional schools. The college councils, as opposed to those of the universities, were granted the right to appoint their own head, making the interactions among these higher institutions and their internal management

[5] *Lietuvos aukštasis mokslas. Baltoji knyga, Aukštojo mokslo įstatymas.*

effectiveness much greater. In addition, the right to establish a college remained with the Government, which is why their network was more easily adjustable to uniformly cover the entire country; whereas the majority of the universities were established in the country's two largest cities. In fact the number of the initial 15 colleges was soon enlarged by the addition of 9 private ones and eventually bringing the total number of the nation's tertiary schools up to 35. Having established the college system, the country saw its student number increase by another third. After the year 2000, most of the increase in the student count came from part-time students[6], which indicated that higher education was becoming more accessible to those working and to thus more mature persons.

With the introduction of the new higher education system, its funding model was also adjusted. An equitable tuition cost was set for all full-time students attending state-run higher education institutions who did not have any academic debt. In keeping with the imperative indicated in the Constitution, a set percentage of highly performing students, as determined by the ministry, was exempt from paying the tuition cost. Tuition was to be charged for part-time studies regardless of test results. It is not hard to guess, that neither social equity, nor compliance with the Constitution were settled by these changes. An annual full-time student rotation system was also instituted, by which students who did well on their examinations pushed out the less-well performing students from the state financed positions. This rotation resulted in negatively affecting the collegiate feelings among the students and raised the danger of influencing the objectivity of examination evaluations.

The Higher Education Act adopted during the reform period and in the legislation that followed led to an especially detailed regulation of studies. This included a list of required

[6] *Mokslo ir studijų būklės apžvalga*, 2009.

subjects for every field of study and distribution of contact hours in each curriculum, requirements for academic personnel, and the required periodic external accreditation for each program of study. The intent of these regulations was to ensure equal higher education standards, but at the same time the regulations also leveled the profiles of the higher education institutions, limited innovations and transferred the responsibility for higher academic standards from the institutions themselves to bureaucratic state structures. In the reform documents there were identified some fundamental problems related to the administration, network consolidation, need for increased funding autonomy, and the strengthening of academic potential. However, the process of solving these problems was postponed to the future, with the intent of preparing a nation-wide Higher Education Expansion plan.

Dancing Around the Free Market

Due to the interference by various interest groups, the preparation for the Higher Education Development Plan took until 2006 and then failed to please any of the parties. The universities and colleges expressed their dissatisfaction with the public education funding systems, which because of the failings in the admission system which had evolved due to the increased number of subsidized education places, did not reach even 50 percent of the tuition costs set by the state. Students were angered by the segregation into groups of those that have free tuition, those that pay a partial tuition, and those that pay full tuition, as well as by inadequate subsidies to the needy students.

Employers complained that the institutions did not prepare enough professionals needed by the industries, and that the level of preparation did not meet the demands of that particular industry. Therefore around 2005–6, there developed a

new reform concept for higher education which was spread by the conservative and liberal political parties that were at the time in opposition to the ruling social-democratic majority. After the parliamentary majority changed in 2008, this new concept was implemented.[7]

The most important innovation arising from this higher education reform was that "money follows the student" principle. The state financed incoming student places were converted to student vouchers which when obtained by a student could be used to study without cost in any of country's higher institutions, whether state-run or private. The vouchers were competitively obtained by candidates with the highest grades earned in the secondary schools. Through this measure, the reformers aimed to fulfill the constitutional promise of free higher education. The vouchers were meant to be rotated after two years based on the students' academic achievements. The individuals who did not receive vouchers were permitted to study by using their own funds. They were offered state guaranteed private bank loans, which could be used to also cover living expenses. The small percentage of students who covered their own expenses and who completed their education with the highest grades were to be compensated for their expenses.

This system was in effect only during the first evaluation stage, while during the second stage, the state financed places continued to be awarded to higher education institutions using the attainments of their faculty as indicators. The movement of the vouchers among the various fields of study also did not remain entirely unobstructed. The various disciplines were divided into eight groups, each to be awarded a certain

[7] *Mokslo ir studijų įstatymas*, 2009.

amount, which became larger or smaller depending on the subject choice of the incoming students.

As expected, the reforms increased competition among the higher institutions and, at least during the beginning reform stages, among the various disciplines. The government financed places of study, totally paid for from the country's budge – moved to the higher education institutions having greater prestige (among them even to several private schools). As a result institutions with lower prestige lost places financed by the government. The example of state financed students was followed by those paying their own tuition, since there no longer remained any outward restrictions on the number of students entering an institution. The more provincial schools of higher learning found themselves on the losing side, as did institutions of higher learning in larger cities that were not able to compete successfully, such as schools of education and agriculture. The more attractive disciplines, such as medicine, took away financial support from the less attractive areas of study such as veterinarian studies.

Such somewhat unexpected reform outcomes required new regulations. After a few years, the number of groups of various disciplines which were receiving state support approached 20. State directive was reinstated for some of these disciplines – that is, the targeted funding of the most capable students for the bypassed programs in the institutions of higher learning. The most problematic regulatory intervention impinged on the so-called "labor market needs." In accordance with an assumption difficult to justify empirically, that engineers, computer science, life science, and technical science specialists are more necessary to the economy of the state than persons who obtained their education in social sciences or the humanities, the areas of study financed by the state were con-

centrated in the areas indicated in the first grouping. After the reforms, almost all the students in engineering or life sciences received state financed vouchers. Medical students received about half of the previous allotment and social sciences and humanitarian students received only about 25 percent. The choices of incoming students were also skewed by the state mandated tuition costs which students in areas not financed by the state had to pay, and ranged by as much as fivefold from areas such as medicine to areas such as art or social studies. It seems obvious that this sort of politics had nothing in common with the constitutionally guaranteed accessibility to higher education or the principle of free higher education to the best performing students, nor with the free market concept.

Another important area of the 2009 reforms was the administration and autonomy of tertiary education. Following the principles of the new public administration, the reform architects changed the principles of the university council formation by including partners not selected by institutions of higher learning, and granted the councils the right to appoint rectors. The legal status of the higher institutions was changed from that of government institutions to public institutions, granting them finance and property rights similar to those of private companies. After the changes took place involving the governing bodies and leadership, some institutions started internal changes, directed toward the optimization of structure, leadership effectiveness, profile clarification, and closer interactions with the stakeholders of the area or region. However, the representatives of the academic oligarchy and their lobbyists, dissatisfied with the reforms, soon started a legal process challenging the university leadership reforms, charging that they were in violation of constitutional academic autonomy. The challengers won their case in 2011, and the management power of the university was returned at least in part to the school's internal

academic councils. In addition, the government is still delaying the transfer of higher education managed assets to them through the right of ownership law, while the use of public funds is still being restricted due to the accounting inherited from the budgetary agencies, which is why the anticipated reforms regarding administrative autonomy of higher education institutions are still not wholly implemented.

In the year 2012, the social-democrats once more returned as the ruling majority in parliament. The government that they formed together with their coalition partners intended to reject "the method of awarding student vouchers based on free market principles," replacing it with state ordered and "special projects planning". It was intended to eliminate the categories of those students who pay tuition and those that study for free, introducing an equal tuition for all, from which good students would be exempted. It was also intended to review the existing programs of study in the tertiary schools to eliminate any duplication and to strive toward the goal that they would conform to "the job market and the future professional requirements of the students"; to reject the possibility of financing with public funds the studies in private higher institutions; and to grant student loans only through the National Education Fund. By the end of 2014, only a small portion of this higher education reform program has been implemented – the possibility of public funds to be used in private institutions has been eliminated, public funding for technology and biological studies has been increased, and the practice of obtaining student loans from commercial banks has been rejected.

Structural Investments

The reforms started in 2009 in the second plan, occurred with less public awareness; however, they were significant de-

velopment projects financed by monies from structural funds of the European Union. These funds, which became available to Lithuania after it became a member of the European Union in 2004, were meant to finance reforms in the less development member countries by aiming to improve economic competitiveness and to increase social cohesiveness. While following the joint EU economic competiveness program directions, known as the Lisbon strategies, and the Bologna guidelines, Lithuania directed about 2 billion Litas (around 0.7 billion US dollars) toward higher education and scientific research and development sectors, and in this manner essentially doubled its budget. By utilizing these funds, many study programs were updated in the higher education studies area, especially stressing the adaptation of the studies into the English language and formulating joint studies programs together with other European universities. Also updated were the teaching and learning concepts, the higher education internal quality system, and modernization and some easement of the regulation of studies. The greatest portion of the invested monies went to finance a new infrastructure for scientific research which had been concentrated within the five so-called "science, education and commerce valleys", and also for innovative scientific research programs whose financial scope for the first time exceeded the state budgeted institutional subsidies that were designated directly to universities and scientific research facilities. At the end of 2014, a European academic cooperative association found that according to the offered study programs in the English language, Lithuania along with the other Baltic countries had caught up with the Scandinavian countries, the Netherlands and Switzerland, while on Europe's Innovation Union Scoreboard, Lithuania established itself among the moderate innovators demonstrating the fastest growth.[8]

[8] *English-Taught Programmes in European Higher Education*, 2014; *Innovation Union Scoreboard*, 2014.

Overview and Prognosis

Formulated at the dawn of regained independence, the vision of an autonomic, equally accessible and free (for the well-performing students) higher education, today seems further from being realized than in the past, even though some European countries are returning to similar ideas.[9] Lacking a financial and political basis, and due to the conflict among the various interest groups, this vision overgrown with a thick layer of constitutional doctrine during the past 25 years – rather paradoxically – became Lithuania's obstacle to progress in the area of higher education.[10] While reacting to the challenges of global higher education's massive enlargement, professionalization, commodification, and other challenges, Lithuania's government more often acted opportunistically rather than strategically. The amount of investment in higher education based on the gross domestic product remains huge, especially keeping in mind Lithuania's not very high GDP level. Thus Lithuania is not falling behind the European average, in contrast with the leading Scandinavian, Western European or OECD club Non-European members. In addition, even under conditions of economic expansion, the extensive development of higher education was conducted under the regular domestic economy account.[11] Around the year 2000, the government decidedly and effectively formed the professional higher education sector, but was unable to control the irrational expansion of the state university network. Instead of installing a university ad-

[9] Euridyce, 2014. For a critical assesment of higher education from the point of view of social equity see, Orr & Szabo 2014.

[10] Martinaitis, "Kai reformos susitinka institucijas," 107-133.

[11] Between 2000 and 2008, the part of the gross domestic product allocated to Lithuania's higher education did not change, but the government contribution to it fell from 1.3 to 1.0 percent, while the domestic economy contribution respectively grew. See, *European Commission*, 2011, 43.

ministration model that is accountable to society, the Lithuanian government is still trying to ensure the accountability of universities and link to economic demands through administrative control and state planning methods. Within the nation's higher education market, competitive conditions have existed for only a short time between private tertiary schools and the state run institutions, and equal accessibility to higher education has been limited by the unfair public-support allocating procedures.

Even though Lithuania's higher education policy was positively influenced by the Bologna and Lisbon strategies, it was obvious that a long-term national vision and instruments for its implementation were lacking. Lithuania's higher education's white book prepared around the year 2000 by a small group of experts eventually failed to get updated, and the next decade's Research and Development strategies did not include the higher education sector.[12] It is symptomatic that even in Lithuania's national advancement strategies "Lithuania 2030" (2012), the main structural points are "intelligent society", "intelligent economy" and "intelligent governance", and the unifying link – "open, creative and responsible person", but there are no clearer developmental guidelines in it for higher education.[13]

The country's further higher education development opportunities are most closely attributable to activities designed during the 2006–2007 period, which were directed towards consolidation of scientific research systems. During the 2007–2013 time period, structural investments into education, study, and commerce valleys clearly prioritized four universi-

[12] *Lietuvos mokslo ir technologijų baltoji knyga, Ilgalaikė mokslinių tyrimų ir eksperimentinės plėtros strategija.*

[13] *Lietuvos pažangos strategija,* "Lietuva 2030."

ties in the country's two largest cities – Vilnius and Kaunas, and to a smaller extent, another city which is third in size – the port of Klaipėda. Based on the foundation of these higher education centers, one can expect that there will arise in the country larger and stronger centers of learning. Perhaps they will become strong enough to cross over into the ranks of the great international universities, on which local government disciplinary actions have less effect.

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The Rise and Legacy of the Dual-Fee-Track System: A Case Study of the 2009 Higher Education Reforms in Lithuania

VYTAUTAS DAUJOTIS

Introduction

In many post-communist countries, state reforms of universities have often been performed under ostensible prescriptions to marketise higher education and to tie it to agendas for the entire restructuring of the public sector.

While neoliberalism constitutes the present hegemonic discourse of Western nation countries, the discourse of post-communist countries is still to a great extent guided by their totalitarian past. The course of reform of Lithuanian higher education, which is considered in this paper, is typical for a post-communist country with a weak government. The reform is guided by a tangle of conflicting interests of different societal groups and comprises ideas and means ranging from those rooted in the communist past through self-interest, to more modern ones. As such, it is quite independent of political reasoning and resembles spontaneously emerging new orders, illustrating Hayek's arguments that social institutions arise as a result of human actions but not human design[1]. The

[1] Hayek, *Studies*, 96–107.

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kind of order that emerged in Lithuanian higher education is a "dual-fee-track system"[2] or "two-tier system"[3], which, as in all post-communist countries with such a system (Russia, Ukraine, Romania, Hungary, Poland, Latvia, and other), lacks a commitment to observing equity. This "spontaneous order" tends toward equilibrium and calls for "human design" much greater than needed not to get into such equilibrium. (dangles and no clarity) The rise of a dual-fee-track tuition cannot be understood without reference to other post-communist phenomena of social life, particularly the judiciary system. The purpose of the present paper is to describe and to understand the emerging new order in Lithuanian higher education, not "from the standpoint of a spectator who watches a spectacle," but "in terms of the actor and the agent".[4]

History: From Fee-Free Higher Education to a Dual-Fee-Track System

In the period after gaining independence, the underfunded Lithuanian state HEIs (Higher Education Institutions) were steadily increasing in admission of students, and started charging tuition for those students whose academic performance was lower than arbitrarily established benchmarks. For several years, these tuition fees were not substantiated by a clear legal basis except for the general provision in the Constitution of Lithuania, Article 41, which states the following:

> Higher education shall be accessible to everyone according to his individual abilities. Citizens who are good at their studies shall be guaranteed education at State schools of higher education free of charge.

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[2] Canning et al., *Higher Education Financing*, 12–17.

[3] Farrington, "A study of student-institution relationships," 99–120.

[4] Arendt, *On Revolution*, 52.

It is clear that it is impossible to interpret that provision as a quantitative criterion for drawing clear boundaries between the advanced and the less advanced students. For this reason, state HEIs have started charging tuition fees for an arbitrary percentage of students with lower academic achievements. The rotation of students between fee-free and fee-paying places has been permitted every semester according to the students' academic achievements. The Law on Higher Education adopted in 2000 banned tuition fees in state higher education institutions, but in 2002 the amendment to the law allowed the imposition of fees for part-time students.

After 2000, state HEIs, hoping for better subsidies from the state budget, continued to increase admission. The government did not interfere with such a policy, and the budget allocations for higher education remained at the same level. In 2007, the Lithuanian Free Market Institute (a lobbying organization) organized the preparation of an appeal, arguing that the provisions of the then existing Law on Higher Education were in conflict with the Constitution. A group of Lithuanian Parliament members then brought this appeal to the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Lithuania (CCRL). The CCRL, composed essentially of academics from law schools of universities, granted all claims presented in the appeal.[5] The main decisions were the following:

> The Constitution guarantees higher education covered by state funds not to all citizens who are good at their studies in state schools of higher education, but only to those citizens who are good at their studies in state schools of higher education and who are prepared to meet the demand of specialists of corresponding areas (trends) established by the state;
>
> The Constitution does not permit the establishment of any such legal regulation whereby a state school of higher education is obstructed or even prohibited from admitting persons who seek

[5] CCRL, *On number of students*, 25-40.

to acquire higher education not at the expense of the state but at their own expense;

Article 40 of the Constitution (Schools of higher education shall be granted autonomy) provides against the power of government to establish a cap on tuition fees in state schools of higher education: "it is state schools of higher education (whose autonomy is guaranteed by the Constitution) which have the powers to establish the realistic and rational price of studies." The same article also provides against the power of government to establish caps on admissions to study-programs of state schools of higher education.

In the same ruling, it was recognized that "the Constitution does not define *expressis verbis* as to which citizens are to be regarded as those who are good at their studies". Nevertheless, the CCRL claimed that the "constitutional concept of good learning" was already stated by the CCRL in 2002: "in the official constitutional doctrine: a citizen, who is good at his studies, is to be regarded as the one who 'is good at his studies, i.e. his learning meets the established criteria of learning well' "[6]. Later, the CCRL laid down the law that "one period of academic learning (as a rule, a semester) must be used in order to establish whether the student continues to meet the criteria of good learning so that his studies could further be funded by the state".[7]

The CCRL rulings affect many aspects of university life. The above-mentioned present only decisions on financial issues. Among the others, the most important have to do with the CCRL eliminating the decisive role of public representatives over university internal governance matters; in governing bodies of universities, the representatives of the university must be in the majority.[8]

The above CCRL rulings, which created a legal framework for the dual-fee-track system and deprived external members

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[6] *Ibid., 19.*

[7] CCRL, *On the Law on Science*, 183–184.

[8] Ibid., 177–182.

of a decisive role in university governing bodies and higher education voucher programs comprising both public and private higher education, became legal provisions for funding public higher education in the new Law on Higher Education and Research adopted in 2009. The elements of a voucher program for funding higher education were as follows:

Public higher education institutions are not funded directly from the state budget;

The students who are given vouchers can spend them on higher education wherever they want, but inside of one of six study field groups: arts, humanities, social sciences, physical sciences, biomedical sciences, and technological sciences;

In every group, the number of vouchers is determined by the government;

The eligibility for vouchers is decided on candidates' grades, which are obtained during final state-wide exams held at the end of the general secondary (upper) education period.

The results of 2009 admissions to state HEIs were the first to show the effect of the new provisions in the Law on Higher Education and Research. Pianists or opera students had to compete with architecture students for the same vouchers in arts. In biomedical sciences, the agriculture (agronomy, veterinary, etc.) students consistently lost out to medical students. The result was a dramatic decrease in funding for schools of veterinary science, music, agronomy, and technology; whereas, schools of law, business management, and political sciences were overflowing. The fee-paying track also contributed to these changes. Tuition fees in Lithuania vary by university and by study programs. The cheapest study programs were in social sciences and the most expensive study programs were in odontology and the arts. Due to such differentiation of fees, many students hesitate to choose the field for which they are best suited because the fees are high.

Dual-Fee-Track System – Dead-End Policy?

The main reason for introducing the fee-paying track was, of course, to increase funding of HEIs. Apart from this, the reformers of Lithuanian higher education have declared that the reform has been based on free market principles: the choice of the customers of higher education will determine the future of the providers of higher education services. Those of low quality will go bankrupt as the customers won't buy low quality services. Other arguments used are the following:

> Competition for funded student places has become more intense and thus places are offered to the most capable. The perception that the current system is fair enough is strong as it gives access to state funded, "free" study places based on merit.[9]
>
> The possibility of improving "discipline" in study and encouraging students to graduate within a set time limit. [...], stronger competition between TEIs, and increasing demands of students, which would improve the quality of teaching.[10]
>
> The increased funding diversification [introduction of the fee-paying track] (despite little income from industry/business contracts) has meant more power to those in charge of university management as well as a stronger voice for students, who "vote" with their feet. Thus, altogether, a slow move from state-control to market-oriented model can be observed in Lithuanian HE in the 2000s.[11]

The above arguments for the dual-track tuition policy which affirm that fees for studies increase students' motivation, show that tuition is imposed as a punishment to students for not performing well scholastically. It could be argued that the threat of such a monetary penalty, forces the student to be better at his

[9] EMER, *Country Background Report*, 69–70.

[10] Dąbrowa-Szefler and Jabłecka-Prysłopska, *Country Background Report*, 61.

[11] Dobbins and Leišyte, "Analysing the transformation," 987–1010.

studies; and the penalties are seen as justified when they encourage scholastic improvement. However, in the case of fee-paying students, the principle of equity is violated. In comparison with fee-free students, fee-paying students have less time and energy left for studies as they usually have to work to pay tuition.

The dual-fee-track system was severely criticized as unfair and inefficient by many experts and international organizations such as OECD, the Council of Europe, and the World Bank. OECD reviewers described as discriminatory Estonian and Polish tuition fee policy[12] whereby a proportion of students pay full tuition while others pay no tuition fees:[13]

> In the current system, [...] the burden of private contributions is borne by a subsection of the student population rather than shared by all. The Review Team considers that a more equitable and efficient arrangement would involve all students contributing towards the costs of their tuition and most (if not all) students receiving some public subsidy.
>
> The rationale for the provision of public support is that there is some societal or external benefit attached to higher education which is not captured by the individual graduate. The scale and distribution of such benefits is notoriously difficult to estimate. However, it is hard to argue that there are no externalities accruing from the education of the 50 percent of students who currently receive no public support for their tuition.
>
> The Review Team was struck by the extremely high proportion of the students with whom they spoke who were working full-time or close to full-time while at the same time undertaking full-time study loads. The burden that this places on students and the effects that it is likely to have on students' capacity to learn effectively is likely to be considerable.[14]

[12] Huisman et al., 2007; Fulton et al., 2007.
[13] Huisman et al., *Estonia*, 113; Fulton et al., *Poland*, 152.
[14] Huisman et al., *Estonia*, 113.

An anomaly associated with the dual-fee-track system is that it tends to penalize students from disadvantaged families. Those who obtain fee-free, state-subsidized places are disproportionately from privileged backgrounds (which have contributed to their academic success); poorer students, who are less successful in entrance examinations and cannot afford the alternative fee-paying track, are excluded from higher education[15].

After OECD reviews, Hungary and Estonia labored to make their tuition fee policy more equitable but only Estonia succeeded in this matter. The bill of amendments to the Universities Act, the Institutions of Professional Higher Education Act, was adopted in 2012. According to this bill, full-time students in an Estonian-language curriculum can be asked to pay tuition only if they have not cumulatively completed the amount of required credit hours by the beginning of the semester.[16] Heretofore, only communist China rejected a dual-fee-track policy in 1997.

The dual-fee-track system is usually viewed as originating from the communist past:

> Before the 1990's many Central and Eastern European countries prided themselves on free (i.e. non-paying) access and provision of state stipends to higher education students. [...] Now, there is tension between free access, (as explained above a constitutional right in some countries) and budgetary provision, generally inadequate to sustain the old support system at the same level in real cash terms. A typical solution has been to take one step further the idea of "fees-only" student places in addition to those subsidized by the state, but at the same level as tuition fee. The result is a two-tier system in which students compete for an arguably inadequate number of state-subsidized free places and, failing to secure one of those, can then compete for entry

[15] Canning et al., *Higher Education Financing*, 32.
[16] Parliament of Estonia, *Universities Act*, 36.

at market-level fees to an additional quota of places which the institution is licensed to offer.[17]

Actually, the impact of the totalitarian past on the present state of higher education is much greater, as shown below. Here it seems worth noting that in a system where education is legally declared as free of charge but at the same time charges tuition fees for students with lower academic performance, the fee-paying track is nothing but a penitentiary subsystem. Such an education system cannot survive without income from this penitentiary subsystem. Similarly, the Gulag was an essential part of the totalitarian communist regime, which could not survive without revenue generated by slave work.

Post-Communist *Realpolitik*

Although the discriminatory nature of the dual-fee-track system was well-known from the experiences of other post-communist countries that had implemented this system earlier, Lithuanian policy-makers followed the same path. Why is this path so tempting? Earlier published works assume that the dual-track tuition policy of the post-communist countries originates from the tension between free access as a cherished constitutional right from the Communist past and budgetary provisions which are inadequate to ensure equitable access.[18] That is true, but this explanation is too generalized and doesn't answer many questions like indifferent attitudes towards equity issues that are supposed to be enshrined and protected by the same constitutions.

Similarities to the dual-track tuition policy can be found in almost all social policies used in many former Communist countries. Different explanatory frameworks have been applied to the interpretation of transformative processes in post-communism.

[17] Farrington, "A study of student-institution relationships," 99–120.
[18] Ibid.; Marcucci et al., "Higher educational cost-sharing," 101–116.

It is frequently asserted that these processes in East European polities and societies are dominated by neoliberalism, and socioeconomic change is best explained in terms of the impact of a set of ideas disseminated by international financial institutions and implemented by local elites[19]. However, it is also argued that "such ideational analytical accounts rest on simplistic assumptions about elite behavior, demonstrably inaccurate depictions of the actual course of events in various East European countries, and acontextual forms of theorizing".[20] Ganev parallels this theorizing with Hegel's zeitgeist-centered interpretation of the French Revolution and invokes Hannah Arendt, who insists that the fallacy of such an approach "consists in describing and understanding the whole realm of human action, not in terms of the actor and the agent, but from the standpoint of a spectator who watches a spectacle".[21]

Is the Lithuanian Higher Education Institutions Oriented to Market?

Post-communist politics can be described but not explained within the framework of neoliberalism. This contradiction in terms is easily resolved. The real-life difficulties of post-communist transformation forces local political elites into taking positions, which leaves too little time for learning and implementing well-balanced political measures. For this reason, post-communist politics is usually based on a country's current pressing needs rather than on long-term ideas about what is morally right and wrong. This kind of politics is well-known as *realpolitik*. As the post-communist *realpolitik* is born from insufficient knowledge and experience, this *realpolitik* looks for something that can quickly solve problems without substantial mental and

[19] Przeworski, "The Neoliberal Fallacy," 45–59.
[20] Ganev, "The "Triumph of Neoliberalism" reconsidered," 343–378.
[21] Arendt, *On Revolution*, 52.

organizational efforts – most preferably, automatically. The invisible hand of the market appeared to be the most suitable for post-communist *realpolitik* when solving real-life problems.

Although neoliberal ideology is a product of Western thought, the post-communist soil has appeared to be rather fertile for perverted forms of neoliberalism. One can notice a historical parallel with Marxist ideas that became decisive ideology not in Western Europe but in Bolshevik Russia. Under communist rule, the idea of social justice comprised what later determined the miserable position of social justice among the priorities in post-communist neoliberalism. That is one of the largest differences from neoliberalism, which constitutes the present hegemonic discourse of Western nations. First, let's take a more detailed look at why post-communist countries are usually attracted to such ideas.

The most exhaustive explanation can be drawn from Arendt's "The Origins of Totalitarianism". Arendt distinguishes a totalitarian state of mind as one dominated by logical processes that derive conclusions from otherworld abstractions. This is opposed to a state of mind engaged in practical assessments, political judgments, and social understanding, all very much grounded in the world of human affairs:

> But it [totalitarian rule] operates neither without guidance of law nor is it arbitrary, for it claims to obey strictly and unequivocally those laws of Nature [Nazism] or of History [Communism] from which all positive laws always have been supposed to spring [...]. Totalitarian lawfulness, defying legality and pretending to establish the direct reign of justice on earth, executes the law of History or of Nature without translating it into standards of right and wrong for individual behavior. It applies the law directly to mankind without bothering with the behavior of men.[22]

[22] Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 461–462.

The logic of crude neoliberalism is exactly the same. The same general principle of an ideal and logical totality such as Nature or History can be seen to equally apply to the neoliberal ideal totality ("invisible hand") of the Market.[23] John Paul II notes that "insofar as it [free-market society] denies an autonomous existence and value to morality – law, culture and religion – it agrees with Marxism in the sense that it totally reduces man to the sphere of economics and the satisfaction of material needs".[24]

> According to Arendt,
> the ideal subject of totalitarian rule is not the convinced Nazi or the convinced Communist, but people for whom the distinction between fact and fiction (*i.e.*, the reality of experience) and the distinction between true and false (*i.e.*, the standards of thought) no longer exist.[25]

Neoliberal rule is perfected by multiculturalism and postmodernism, which blur the distinction between true and false. The first can be defined as the politicization of the humanities – all knowledge is political and furthers the interests of individuals or groups, and the second (epistemological relativism) – the notion that judgments and values cannot be objective or universal, and that ideals like "disinterestedness", "reason", "truth" are unsupportable abstractions which should be abandoned in favor of more relational and historicist terms like "perspective", "understanding", and "interpretation".[26] Neoliberal rule strengthens its positions and executes the law of Market by translating controversial multicultural and postmodernistic issues

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[23] Hayden, *Political Evil*, 112–121.
[24] John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus*, 16.
[25] Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 474.
[26] Menand, "The limits of academic freedom," 4.

and values – hate speech,[27] gender neutrality, redefined marriage and family, human beings transformed into a flexible labor force to be freely bought and sold on the market, etc. – into superhuman legal standards of right and wrong for individual behavior.

Actually, many of these inventions are not new. Springing directly from the law of History, they were first announced as positive laws (and some of them were soon reinstated or defied during the "moral revolution" at the beginning of Soviet communism.[28] Another outburst occurred after World War II, due to the increased authority of the Soviet Union.[29]

The above explains the ease with which neoliberal ideas have infiltrated into post-communist politics. The logic of neoliberalism has the appeal of the magic of *déjà vu*, which in this particular case indicates the occurrence of cryptomne-

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[27] Ronald Dworkin, the defender of free speech and strong opponent of hate speech laws, argues that "The dominant opinions and prejudices of any society will always be hurtful to some of its members. [...] Think of the writers who would have to be censored if there really were a right not to be insulted by other people's opinion: they include Rabelais, Voltaire, Rushdie, Galileo, Darwin, Wilde, and Mencken. People of a thousand different convictions or shapes or tastes are ridiculed or insulted by every level of speech and publication in every decent democracy in the world." Dworkin, "We need a new interpretation," 193–197.

[28] Goldman, *Women, the State*, 368.

[29] Modern international and domestic legislations against hate speech originate from Soviet ideology. During preparation of the UN Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, the Soviet Union ineffectively tried to insert additional paragraphs with the purpose of prohibiting expressions of "intolerance". Success came in 1966. In the adoption of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Western nations were willing to accept only a prohibition of "incitement of violence," but the Soviet Union wanted more than that. Western countries were outvoted in their support of free speech – the free speech Article 19 was followed by an obligation to prohibit hate speech in Article 20.

zia[30]; the same principle of an ideal and logical totality such as History, which has been the main governing principle in communism, can be seen to equally apply to the neoliberal ideal totality ("invisible hand") of the Market. Another peculiarity of the post-communist "free market" is that this term is often used not in the sense of a set of ideas that actually mold the behavior of strategically located groups and individuals, but to conceal corruption – most of the biggest winners in post-communist free market competition are those who have been allowed to be winners by the political strata of society.

The 2009 higher education reforms in Lithuania appear to be a good example for understanding post-communist *realpolitik*. This reform was a move neither to a free nor to a quasi-market. The term free-market hardly describes a market where half of the customers are getting services for free while the other half is obliged to pay for them. This market also cannot be termed a quasi-market because this term denotes a market that retains the equity benefits of traditional systems of public administration and financing. Equity issues are inconsistent with a dual-fee-track system. Nevertheless, in Lithuania this reform has been advocated as a British-style higher education reform.[31] That is far from reality, although Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher asserted the primacy of market solutions for every problem and the preference for private gains over public goods. She oversaw the introduction of fees for international students in higher education, a prelude to the introduction of top-up fees for home undergraduates. After the reform, British higher education retained the equity benefits and was characterized as a "quasi-market"

[30] In psychology, cryptomnesia is a term that refers to the memory that has been forgotten and then returns without being recognized as such by the subject, who believes it is something new and original.

[31] Krupavičus, "Lithuania," 1058–1075.

form of public service delivery. The term "quasi-market" has been coined especially for such situations and refers to markets where the provision of a service is undertaken by competitive providers as in pure markets, but where the purchasers of the service are financed from resources provided by the state instead of from their own private resources.[32]

Equity does not feature among the priorities of higher education policy in Lithuania, whereas in the United Kingdom the issues of equity are prominent in policy making. UK public bodies promote fair access to higher education and provide student loans to pay tuition fees, which are repaid under the income-contingent repayment scheme. This scheme was proposed long ago by free market economist Milton Friedman, who showed that when private lenders alone provide student loans, this results in overly high costs of administering them. He suggested that a governmental body could help finance the training of any individual and the income-contingent repayment could easily be combined with payment of income tax and so involve a minimum of additional administrative expense.[33]

It follows from the British income-contingent loan repayment scheme, that the larger repayments would be made by borrowers who have had higher academic achievements because their chances to get a better paying job are higher. The Lithuanian dual-fee-track system works the opposite way – the burden of private financing of public higher education is put on the students with lower academic achievements, i.e. on the persons for whom the benefits of higher education in the form of more lifetime income are expected to be lower. Lithuanian students can get loans but only from private banks, and the repayments aren't income-contingent.

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[32] Le Grand and Bartlett, "The theory of quasi-markets," 12–134.
[33] Friedman, "The role of government in education," 123–144.

Constitutional Judges as Higher Education Law-makers

The 2009 higher education reforms have also highlighted the growing imbalance between the government branches of Lithuania. The decline of parliamentary supremacy in Lithuania is occurring due to the growing intervention of the Constitutional Court into legislative processes. Article 102 of the Constitution states the following: "The Constitutional Court shall decide whether the laws and other acts of the Seimas [Parliament] are not in conflict with the Constitution and whether the acts of the President of the Republic and the Government are not in conflict with the Constitution or laws", i.e., the CCRL can only perform the role of negative legislator. In reality, the CCRL drafts the precise terms of legislation. Higher education legislation is a clear example of such activity. Since 1994, the CCRL, comprised of academics from university law schools, has heavily supplemented the Constitution with a corpus of more than ten rulings, decisions, and commentaries on higher education policy. The CCRL refers to this corpus as the constitutional doctrine of higher education policy elevated in its status to the level of the Constitution. Egidijus Kūris, who was the President (2002–2008) of the CCRL, plainly admits:

> In Lithuania, the Constitutional Court has naturally self-assumed the function of formulation of the official constitutional doctrine [...], the official constitutional doctrine does prescribe certain guidelines (which also means limits) for the law-makers' discretion in their future law-making. [...] If this is not *de facto* law-making, so what is it?[34]

At the beginning of this paper, it was shown what that (be specific about "that") means for funding and governing higher education. Due to the judicial finality of the CCRL decisions,

[34] Kūris, "Constitutional law," 1–5.

now there is very little space left for the Lithuanian parliament to make any substantial changes in the legislation of higher education and to restore equity. It should be relevant for parliament to ponder Thomas Paine's reply to Burke:

> Every age and generation must be free to act for itself, in all cases, as the ages and generations which preceded it. The vanity and presumption of governing beyond the grave, is the most ridiculous and insolent of all tyrannies. Man has no property in man; neither has any generation a property in the generations which are to follow.[35]

Although there is no further appeal against the decisions made by the Constitutional Court, a rule which says that a decision of the Court cannot be challenged is separate from the question of whether or not that decision is lawful. By contrast, in the case of parliament, if parliament – where the "nation shall execute its supreme sovereign power either directly or through its representatives" (Article 4 of the Constitution of Lithuania) – is sovereign, it is nonsensical to say that its decision can be unlawful. It should be in the power of parliament to change the situation, but for many reasons it is not possible, as it is not possible in Western nations with constitutional courts. Focusing on the topic of European constitutional courts, Alec Stone Sweet traces the enormous and expanding impact of these courts on both legislative and judicial processes and outcomes:

> Parliamentary supremacy, understood by most politics to be a constitutive principle of European politics, has lost its vitality. After a polite, nostalgic nod across the Channel to Westminster, we can declare it dead. [...] In short, the process of constitutionalizing European law has not only begun, it is irreversible.[36]

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[35] Paine, *The Rights of Man*, 3.

[36] Stone Sweet, *Governing with Judges*, 1.

Lithuanian social scientists avoid concerning themselves with the fact that the constitutional politics of the Lithuanian Constitutional Court have undermined the separation of powers doctrines. There is no social science research on this subject produced in Lithuania. Modern European traditions provide little hope for any change: "In Europe, political scientists leave research on law and courts to law professors, while legal scholars [...] manifest a common resistance to perspectives 'external' to the law".[37]

Constitutional democracy in the West has been growing from at least the time of the Magna Charta in 1215. While countries with the oldest democratic traditions, such as the United States, Britain and some Commonwealth nations, nurtured constitutional democracy through participation of the people, nations of post-World War II continental Europe entrusted specially created institutions – constitutional courts – with a monopoly of constitutional wisdom and authority to invalidate the acts of government considered unconstitutional. This monopoly is a form of modern totalitarianism, which, John Paul II warns, maintains that some people, by virtue of a deeper knowledge of the laws of the development of society, or through membership of a particular class or through contact with the deeper sources of the collective consciousness, are exempt from error and can therefore arrogate to themselves the exercise of absolute power.[38]

During the transition, countries in Central and Eastern Europe felt uncomfortable with the vacancies, earlier occupied by paternalistic institutions like the communist politbureau, which cared about "feeding the people" and whose decisions were final. That can explain why these countries so quickly conceived a paternalistic view (judges know better)

[37] Stone Sweet, *Governing with Judges*, 2.
[38] John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus*, 35.

about the privileged insight of constitutional judges into the true meaning of constitutional rules, and filled these vacancies with constitutional courts. But this came at a price. Lacking democratic traditions, countries in Central and Eastern Europe, at least Lithuania, are moving from parliamentary supremacy towards "governing with judges" faster than their Western counterparts.

The Legacy of Higher Education Reform

The consequences of the dual-fee-track system introduced in Lithuania go far beyond the financial aspects of higher education. Apart from being inequitable, the dual-fee-track system, where less advanced students are on a fee-paying track, not only does not foster the quality of studies but worsens it. The fee-paying track makes sense only when the revenue generated by this track constitutes an appreciable part of the total school income. Thus, the sustainability of "not good learning" is inherent in the dual system; the more of poorly-performing and thus fee-paying students, the better the financial situation of the HEI. In other words, the dual-fee-track system works against the improvement of higher education standards.

The Lithuanian dual-fee-track system is safeguarded against *the vicissitudes of fate not only by the* constitutional provision that guarantees that "citizens who are good at their studies shall be guaranteed education at State schools of higher education free of charge," but also by the CCRL reading that "less advanced students must pay tuition fees". The boundary between the advanced and the less advanced students is rather slippery. In case of need, the only fee-paying students are the so-called advanced students, but they have a constitutional right to higher education free of charge. The way out was found by CCRL, which provided an appropriate reading of the Constitution: fee-free higher education at state schools

is guaranteed not to all citizens who are good at their studies, but only to those "who are prepared in order to meet the demand of specialists of corresponding areas (trends), which are established by the state".[39] This means that the number of fee-paying students can always be increased by decreasing "state orders for specialists."

The 2009 higher education reforms have had one clearly visible result – the sharp increase in the flow of students from Lithuania. Students seeking cross-border education migrate to countries with more equitable higher education systems than Lithuania's. Many graduates of Lithuanian secondary schools, hesitating over their chances to gain admission to fee-free higher education, apply for admission both to home and to foreign universities. If both admissions are approved, they usually prefer cross-border education. The British Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) data resources illustrate the dramatic increase in the number of acceptances from Lithuania (year – number of acceptances): 2006 – 480, 2007 – 570, 2008 – 680, 2009 – 895, 2010 – 1525, and 2011 – 1885.[40] Studying abroad will always be beneficial to the student. Will it be beneficial to their home country, which has denied equity to them and treated them as surplus people not qualified for the "state orders for specialists"?

To recover ground lost in the totalitarian past, Lithuania needs John Henry Newman's university, which is not content "with forming the critic or the experimentalist, the economist or the engineer, though such too it includes within its scope," but "aims at raising the intellectual tone of society, at cultivating the public mind, at purifying the national taste, at supplying true principles to popular enthusiasm and fixed aims to popular aspiration".[41]

[39] CCRL, *On number of students*, 25.
[40] UCAS, "Annual data files," 5.
[41] Newman, *The Idea of a University*, 178.

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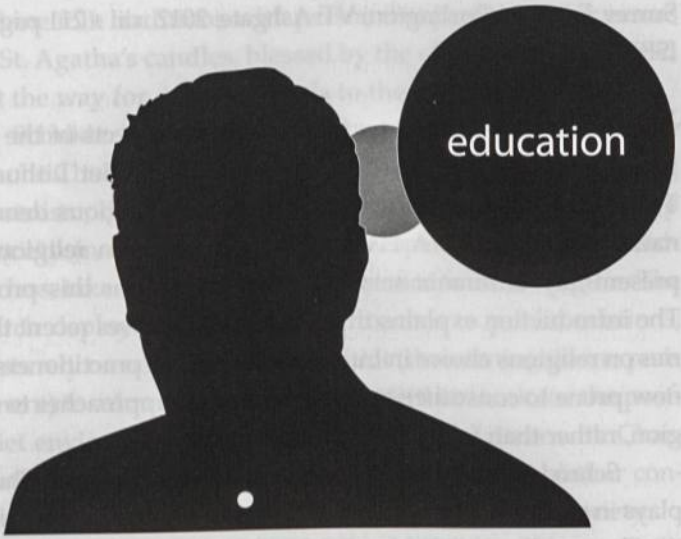
education

BOOK REVIEWS

Milda Ališauskienė and Ingo W. Schröder, ed. ***Religious Diversity in Post-Soviet Society: Ethnographies of Catholic Hegemony and the New Pluralism in Lithuania.***

Surrey, England/Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012. xiii + 211 pages. ISBN: 978-1409409120.

Nine essays by different scholars address aspects of the religious diversity that has developed in post-Soviet Lithuania. They focus on interactions with the largest religious denomination, Catholicism. A 2009–2010 colloquium on religions in present-day Lithuania served as the genesis for this project. The introduction explains that the book addresses recent theories on religious choice in Lithuania. Religious practitioners are now prone to consumerist or cafeteria-style approaches to religion, rather than following a religious authority.

Schröder's chapter explores the role the Catholic Church plays in various societies, where it is the leading religious institution. It provides models for a dominant religion's interactions with minority religions, but it does not specifically address Lithuania.

Arūnas Streikus reviews the history of religions in Lithuania over the past two centuries. He outlines the development of a Lithuanian identity within Catholicism from a Polonized church in the 19th century. Inter-war independence contributed to a complex national church identity. Lithuanian Catholicism became a spiritual stalwart against Soviet repressions. He briefly sketches the minority denominations and their ethnic associations: Lutherans, Reformers, Russian Orthodox, and Old Believers. For example, the Lutheran Church had many German and Latvian adherents in the inter-war period, while

Soviet-era migrations resulted in the loss of both congregants and pastors. He mentions Islam and Judaism in passing. His focus largely remains on the Catholic Church and its interactions with the various governments.

Lina Pranaitytė-Wegrin uses a localized ethnographic case study to examine the interaction between folk beliefs and Catholicism. Her focus is death, the soul, and the afterlife. Catholicism provides a form for beliefs, while the beliefs largely combine folk traditions with personal experiences. For example, St. Agatha's candles, blessed by the church on February 2, light the way for deceased souls to the afterlife.

Schröder's second chapter examines the status of the Catholic Church in post-Soviet Lithuania. The church relies on ecumenism, doctrine, and politics to pursue moral leadership in society. In contrast, the populace, especially the urban middle class, takes a largely pluralistic stance toward religion. The Church deploys conservative approaches to public relations; priests rely on negative reinforcement (threatening divine punishment) to admonish congregants. Neither work for the post-Soviet environment. The Church especially falters with Charismatic Evangelical Christianity in Lithuania. The author concludes that Lithuania has become a secular Catholic society.

Gediminas Lankauskas examines interactions between Catholics and Charismatic Evangelicals from a sociological perspective. The collaboration of the Catholic Church with the Soviet authorities has led many Lithuanians to discredit its authority. The ensuing religious/spiritual vacuum gave rise to various non-denominational Evangelical groups. Congregations across the country have banded together as the "Word of Faith." The dominant and emergent churches use divergent languages and styles, leading to confrontation and sometimes toleration, but not cooperation.

Michael Strimska offers a detailed history of the Lithuanian Pagan movement Romuva. Unfortunately, he does not address interaction with the Roman Catholic Church.

Ališauskienė studies New Age developments within or on the periphery of Catholicism. The term "New Age" is difficult to define. Lithuania blurs definitions by conflating Western with Eastern notions; the Eastern ones come mitigated by Russian culture. The Church ignored the New Age until the impeached president Rolandas Pakas used a medium to help him with state affairs. The Church branded all such activity as satanic cults. Yet, much New Age phenomena in Lithuania use Catholic vocabulary and mimic Catholic practices. For example, the glass energy Pyramid of Merkinė in Dzūkija National Park presents itself as a Catholic shrine and pilgrimage destination.

Egdūnas Račius explores the Muslim minority of Lithuania. Indigenous Tartar Muslims are a "separate but equal" religious and ethnic group. As secular Muslims with *status quo*, they have friendly, formal relations with Catholicism. In contrast, Muslim immigrants and converts to Islam demand Muslim religious classes in schools and halal food at restaurants. The vociferous converts deeply distrust Catholicism. They have, after all, rejected the Church.

Donatas Glodenis explores the Neo-Buddhist White Lotus movement. It is an amalgamation of Tibetan Buddhism, space alien mythologies, martial arts, and Russian Orthodox nobility. The group presents itself as a Kung Fu school. It then guides participants to quasi-Buddhist meditation and onto various esoteric hierarchies. A Russian from the Ukraine, Vladimir Ivanovich Skubajev is the founder. He claims to be the regent of the King of the Ukraine and an Orthodox bishop (of no known Orthodox Church). Of all the groups in the book, this one alone has been rightfully studied as a potential cult.

Schröder writes the conclusion to the book. Most Lithuanians maintain their institutional religious identity in the Catholic Church; conversions are rare. They enhance their religiosity with beliefs and practices from various sources. Post-Soviet secularism

is clearly making its mark on Lithuania. Lithuanian trends follow Western European declines in religious commitment.

VILIUS RUDRA DUNDZILA

Zenonas Norkus, *On Baltic Slovenia and Adriatic Lithuania: A Qualitative Comparative Analysis of Patterns in Post-Communist Transformation.*

Vilnius: Apostrofa, 2012. 375 pages, figures, tables.
ISBN 978-615-5053-50-4.

This is not a book for the casual reader – and that's a good thing. This volume by Zenonas Norkus, a sociology professor at Vilnius University, is intended for those with a proclivity for rigorous methodological discipline and impeccable research design. This is a book for a graduate student or academic in economics, sociology, or political science. This kind of volume goes beyond the standard journalistic treatments of post-communist Lithuania to provide a level of sophistication that one rarely sees. This is why its lack of casual armchair opining is a good thing, not only for Lithuanian scholarship, but for Lithuanians, as well, as they try to understand the last quarter-century.

The Soviet occupation of Lithuania represented not just the loss of political independence, but tremendous social and economic dislocation and change. The author provides a comparative causal analysis of the aftermath during the first decade of the post-communist transition. Despite the book's title, it covers 29 European and Asian countries.

The analytical framework applied by the author is qualitative-comparative, not quantitative, utilizing multi-value Comparative Qualitative Analysis (mvQCA) powered by TOSMANA software.

A specific post-communist transformation pathway is defined by a certain post-communist transformation orientation – a specific mode of economic and political exit from communism – *and* by the specific outcome. Whether such a combined orientation – economic and political exit modes – preserves explanatory power also for longer (p. 20, 30,…) time periods, is a separate research problem which this book does not deal with. I will limit the scope of my analysis to [five] explanatory problems: (1) liberal democratic capitalism, (2) rational entrepreneurial capitalism (REC), (3) political oligarchic capitalism (POC), (4) state capitalism, and (5) liberal democracy (p. 140–141).

QCA allows both insight into specific cases and comparative generalization. This is what the first part of the volume focuses on, with the second being an in-depth analysis of Lithuania as a case study of the conclusions in the first part. The 29 cases are analyzed through a set of questions covering the economic and political aspects of the post-communist transformation:

Sufficient conditions for rapid transition from communism to various forms of capitalism (rational entrepreneurial/ Wagner-Schumpeterian capitalism, political oligarchic capitalism, and state capitalism);

Causes for failure of rapid transition to various forms of capitalism;

Sufficient conditions for rapid transformation from communist authoritarianism to liberal democracy; and

Obstacles hindering transformation from communist authoritarianism to liberal democracy.

When transitioning from communism, different innovations were expected by both anti-communist rebels in most countries as well as Western intellectuals. They believed that by leaving communism behind, a new kind of creativity would be established allowing for new creations rather than the late arrival of now old inventions from the Western world. The idea was to one day create their own institutions and innovations which would give them

uniqueness. This was different in the Baltic States and some Central European countries due to their unique history.

In the Baltic States, there was a time when a plurality of people considered the interwar time 1918–1940 as a "golden age." The interwar period was greatly idealized here, because for some of the indigene ethnic groups (e.g. Estonians and Latvians), it was the first time in their history that they had had their own nation state. So, in the Baltics the re-establishing of independent states was the paramount goal of the exit from communism. The idea of restitution was the rationale behind the decision of the Estonian and Latvian governments to grant citizenship rights only to persons who, or whose descendants, were citizens of these Baltic States before June 1940 (p. 69).

The author further notes that these revolutionaries were in favor of immediate capitalism, while gradualists advocated a slower paced and step-by-step framework. The gradualists focused more on regulating multiple institutions as they believed that without them, a successful transition to capitalism would be impossible. As such, they focused on the creation of markets. Revolutionaries on the other hand rather believed that markets would eventually emerge and thus were not a matter of great concern.

At the beginning of the market transformation, supporters and observers divided into two camps: the revolutionaries or radicals ("shock therapy" supporters) and gradualists. The former prevailed in Western financial institutions, overseeing the implementation of market reforms. Unlike neoliberal doctors of shock therapy, who were committed to the ideal liberal market economy, many gradualists were of social-democratic persuasion. Their political economic ideal was a social market economy or social capitalism which is a version of REC, characteristic of many European countries (p. 77).

The ideals of these revolutionaries were eventually applied in each of the Baltic States, the most successful being Es-

tonia which focused on stabilization. Lithuania, on the other hand, emphasized privatization over stabilization.

The level of the three Baltic countries' social-economic development was in constant flux during the Soviet occupation. Lithuania managed to become industrial by bringing rural inhabitants to the cities, while Estonia and Latvia had to rely on immigration from other parts of the Soviet Union, thus diluting their own ethnic composition within their borders. As such, Lithuania's ethnic diversity was less pronounced than either Estonia's or Latvia's. Even though a great number of people immigrated to Lithuania from other Soviet republics, ethnic Lithuanians were still the majority.

Lithuania also possessed a savvy communist leadership which was able to maintain a high degree of autonomy.

The Lithuanian communist elite displayed remarkable cohesion, cemented by the cult of Antanas Sniečkus (1903–1974). In due time (December 1989), the nationalist Communist leadership of the Lithuanian Communist party dissociated the local Communist party from the CPSU (Communist Party of the Soviet Union) and managed to consolidate its reputation as a political power that was both leftist and national at the same time (p. 219).

While it may not have been his intention, in this reviewer's mind, the author's most interesting contribution to his analysis is the role of religious orientation in how post-communist transformation was implemented in different countries. Specifically, he contrasts predominantly Catholic Lithuanians in their more personalized, authoritarian tradition eschewing capitalist ideas of property and distribution to the more secularized Estonians, possessing a Protestant ethic, and who "conceive family roles in a less traditional way and display the individualistic, autonomous, and achievement-oriented understanding of their role in the society [...]. They provide more support for capitalist ideas of management and differentiation" (p. 225). The author adds that Latvians fall between those two positions. Norkus concludes that this re-

ligious foundation is an important element in the gap in economic development between the Baltic North and South.

Not one to mince words, the author adds:

> Lithuania has inherited a lot of monasteries, pompous church buildings, the sentimental cult of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and a lot of shrines serving up to now numerous religious feasts. The taste for ceremonies and rituals, pomp, ornament and tasteless luxury can also, be considered inherited from the time of the Catholic counter-reformation. All these belong to the distinctive features of Lithuanian culture and public life, distinguishing it from the more no-nonsense and sober Latvian and Estonian style [...] derivative from the spirit of Lutheran Pietism that shaped national character during the 18th-19th centuries (p. 230).

Norkus concludes his study:

I had two goals: (1) to outline a grounded general theory of post-communist transformation, using analytical techniques of qualitative comparative analysis as a framework for the construction of this theory; (2) to advance political economic understanding of a particular case – the Republic of Lithuania. This is the reason for the book's division into two parts. The general theory describes and explains the variation in the outcomes of post-communist transformation after its first decade. The restriction of the temporal scope is not an arbitrary decision, but rather it is grounded in the general argument: as time goes by, the power of the variables describing difference in the initial conditions of post-communist transformation to explain the variegation in its outcomes, decreases (p. 335).

Most studies pay lip service to replicability and the ability for other scholars to build upon the current work. Norkus actually walks the walk, provides not just the methodology, but a detailed application of it to 29 countries. This provides researchers with ample opportunity to build theory and apply it in a broad, comparative perspective.

ROBERT A. VITAS

ABSTRACTS

The Mythology of Higher Education and its Regional Context

RIMANTAS ŽELVYS

Education is one of the areas affected by economic globalization. Regional tendencies complement global ones as every region in the world exhibits its own specific characteristics. Europe exhibits specific characteristics, and it can be divided into sub-regions: old-time members of the European Union, new members of the European Union who were earlier part of the socialist bloc, and countries in Eastern and Southeastern Europe which do not belong to the European Union. Higher learning in Lithuania is experiencing transformation on several levels – global and regional (first of all inspired by the educational politics of the European Union) and at the same time it is affected by a socialist legacy and by the particularities of national culture. The socialist context undoubtedly influences the mythology of education. By following the analogy of the analysis of political mythology, we can delineate four areas of mythology in current higher learning, which in part are global, but in large part are apparently determined by the Soviet experience of present-day society. These are the manifestations of the mythology of the structure of education, the mythology of quantity, the mythology of quality, and the mythology of the power of will. The article discusses myths that are widely held

in society and calls them into question while providing factual data about the status of higher learning.

Lithuanian Universities: Threshold of Change, or Decline?
JONAS BALČIŪNAS
AUŠRA TURČINSKAITĖ-BALČIŪNIENĖ

Government institutions of higher learning dominate in the country. Government offices are seen as a source of profit and employment for oneself and one's family. This tendency is particularly obvious in the work of political parties. Influence is divided according to the party principle. Influence becomes a source of profit. This tendency dominates in higher education.

Liberalisation and Establishment of Disciplinary Policies in Lithuania's Higher Education
GIEDRIUS VILIŪNAS

Today, Lithuania's higher education, which is totally integrated into the European Higher Education Area, is considered as one of the most innovative branches of the national economy. However, the more detailed characteristics such as availability, financing, autonomy, scientific output, and other factors tend to point to the contrary. This article analyzes the development of Lithuania's higher education during the 1990–2014 time period and argues that its uneven development is connected with the inconsistent higher education policies in which strategic perspective is not always maintained and where more liberal reforms are constantly being neutralized by evidence of control and discipline.

The Rise and Legacy of the Dual-Fee-Track System: A Case Study of the 2009 Higher Education Reforms in Lithuania

VYTAUTAS DAUJOTIS

Analysis of the transformative processes in higher education in Lithuania supports the view that the socioeconomic changes in post-communism cannot be explained in terms of neoliberalism. The present state of Lithuanian higher education is defined by a tangle of conflicting interests of different societal groups and, noticeably, by the country's totalitarian past. The driving force of the higher education reforms of 2009 has been to increase their funding. As in many post-communist countries with constitutional rights to higher education free of charge at state HEIs, the fees in state HEIs were introduced for students not qualified for the "state orders for specialists". The reform has been strongly influenced by the Lithuanian Constitutional Court, which has provided the appropriate readings of the Constitution and drafted the precise and irrevocable terms for higher education legislation. The legacy of higher education reform includes the negative effect of the dual-fee-track system on educational standards, growth of inequity, and a further decline from parliamentary supremacy towards "governing with judges".

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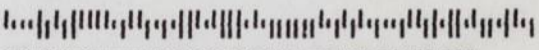

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