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FROM AUTHORITARIAN TO DEMOCRATIC CULTURAL POLICY: MAKING SENSE OF DE-SOVIETISATION IN LITHUANIA AFTER 1990[1]

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Abstract

The article deals with discourses on governance in cultural policy in a context of radical political change. Drawing on an in-depth analysis of qualitative interviews, it explores how the meaning of "Soviet" cultural policy was retrospectively constructed by Lithuanian cultural operators as they talked about the post-1990 democratisation. The informants mobilised a complex discursive strategy of alienation and defamiliarisation which made sense of Soviet cultural policy and reconciled change with preservation of its elements. Particular attention is paid to the ways in which the informants perceived the changes in the distribution of power in which was associated with decentralisation reforms. The findings suggest that the distinction between authoritarian and democratic cultural policy models to a large extent came to be constructed in rather utilitarian terms and was strongly dependent on the contemporary practical issues. The conclusion therefore suggests we avoid essentialising the categories "authoritarian" and "democratic" in the theoretical construction of state cultural policy models. Instead, it points out that it is vital to examine the components of these categories as a subject of historically situated discursive negotiations.

KEYWORDS: the Soviet Union, Lithuania, Socio-political change, Cultural policy, Neoliberalism, Defamiliarisation, Alienation

1. Introduction

THE SYSTEM OF state cultural policy is arguably one of most contested outcomes of communist rule in the Soviet Union. For at least half a century the Soviet government (1917–1991) has been harshly criticised for its many crimes against culture. The criticisms were directed against severely limited freedom of artistic expression and physical repressions against those few cultural operators who dared to transgress the carefully guarded boundaries of what were considered to be ideologically legitimate sounds, words and images. Furthermore, Western cultural policies were to a

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large extent discursively and institutionally configured to explicitly oppose what was perceived as a Soviet or an authoritarian model of cultural policy. Particularly in the US and Great Britain, the use of terms such as "culture as an instrument of social change", "planning" on the national level and even "state cultural policy" were treated with great caution (Yúdice 2003; Wyszomirski 2004). On the other hand, one can not fail to notice a good deal of respect and sometimes even a straightforward fascination with the Soviet model of arts financing, infrastructure for access and education which was often expressed by Western writers (Miller & Yúdice 2002).

The Soviet cultural policy model therefore combined both pervasive control and strong support for artists and audiences. It was precisely this duality which puzzled the reformers of post-Soviet states. As the Soviet Union collapsed in August 1991, the newly independent states were subjected to wide-ranging, mainly neoliberal forms of democratisation (Harvey 2005). In the sphere of state cultural policy these reforms entailed new cultural and political rationales, revision of hierarchical structures of decision-making and reorganisation of the administrative organisation of the cultural sector (Rindzeviciute 2003; Lubytė 2008). It was more than clear that the Soviet system of control had to go. On the other hand, the reformers were faced with a heavy load of state-run cultural organisations in a sector which employed a substantial share of the population. The cultural sector could hardly rely on markets which were still to be created. It is therefore interesting to ask, how did the post-Soviet cultural actors themselves make sense of the highly complex shift from authoritarian to liberal democratic state cultural policy?

Focusing on the case of Lithuania, the first republic to break away from the Soviet Union (11 March 1990), the article contributes with new empirical data to the growing field of Soviet and post-Soviet cultural policy studies (Fitzpatrick 1970; White 1990; Read 2006; Rindzeviciute 2008). Drawing on specially conducted interviews, it investigates the native cultural operators' perceptions of post-Soviet changes in cultural policy. What, in the opinion of the leaders of Lithuanian cultural organisations, were the most significant changes in state cultural policy after 1990? My analysis reveals that the most salient strategy in reforming state cultural policy was labelled as "de-Sovietisation". But in order to remove "things Soviet", they had to be identified first. The article therefore explores how the meaning of "Soviet" cultural policy was re-invented as a side-effect in cultural operators' accounts of the democratisation of Lithuanian state cultural policy.

The article discerns two discursive strategies, alienation and defamiliarisation, which made sense of and reconciled selective change and preservation of elements of Soviet cultural policy. It appears that the distinction between authoritarian and democratic cultural policy models to a large extent came to be constructed in rather utilitarian terms and was strongly dependent on contemporary practical issues. In other words, the terms "authoritarian" and "democratic" assumed a practical meaning which was dependent on economic context and were selectively applied to the "everyday reality" of Lithuanian state cultural policy.

On method

The study draws on the analysis of fully transcribed semi-structured interviews with eleven distinguished Lithuanian cultural operators, which were conducted during fieldwork in Vilnius between 2004 and 2006.[2] Following the agenda of the anthropology of public policy, which concentrates on studying powerful agents (Wedel, Shore & Feldman 2005), the study focused on cultural elites. In my case the cultural elites consisted of the heads of leading cultural organisations based in the capital. "Leading cultural organisations" refers to the organisations which are associated with the most renowned artists and scholars. These organisations enjoy high status both in Lithuania and abroad and are considered to be some of the best platforms for young artists and cultural managers to start their careers. At the time of interview, some of my informants worked for the government at the Ministry of Culture and the President's Chancellery, while the others were engaged in cultural policy-making at the national level (for example as members of experts' councils and the National Prize committee) at earlier stages in their lives. The selected organisations represent a non-commercial sector which mainly relies on state funding: they include a museum, a philharmonic society, an information centre, an exhibition hall and an institution for higher education. These organisations worked in the sphere of "high culture", such as the fine arts and "serious" music (Williams 1958).

It is important to add that in the past the interviewed leaders worked in both non-governmental and state organisations. I assumed that an informant's experience of moving between state, public and private sectors enabled him or her to view and experience governance from different power positions.[3] The presence of such diverse personal backgrounds thus also influenced my selection. From this purposive sample I singled out seven key informants on the basis of their age and career patterns. Born in the 1960s, they received their university degrees in the 1980s and in the early 1990s congratulated the collapse of communism as young, educated and already quite experienced professionals. Due to their age and career stage they were in a good position to

perceive the collapse of the communist regime (experienced in their younger years) as a unique opening of new opportunities (they were at the start of their careers). Some of them launched their careers in the newly established Open Society Fund Lithuania (1990), financed by the American philanthropist George Soros. Importantly, the informants were neither insignificant cogs in bureaucratic machines nor active political figures. Rather, they came to be "real professionals", flagmen and flag women of contemporary Lithuanian culture since the 1990s.[4] I labelled my informants a "transition generation".[5] This was hinted at by one informant who said that they were "one generation" that shared views as, "we all used to sit there [in the meetings in Soviet institutions – E.R.] dressed in knitted sweaters and take their [senior academic staff – E.R.] discussions with a hidden smile" (Interview with Birutė, 2004). It has to be explained that in the 1980s to wear informal clothes in an academic context was to be part of silent resistance to the communist regime. Finally, all of them being public figures, the informants to some extent knew each other personally and therefore could be regarded as forming a network or a "policy community" (Bevir & Rhodes 2003, p. 50), indeed my informants often referred me to fellow informants for information.

All this said, the respondents do not represent the whole diversity of cultural organisations in Lithuania. My purposive sample does not cover the organisations engaged in popular, amateur and ethnic culture, heritage or libraries. The regional range of the organisations is also limited. My informants were educated and worked in the capital. In sum, my purposive sample concentrated on the views of influential individuals who were in a position of decision-making in the leading cultural organisations and actively involved in the state cultural policy process by debate or direct participation.[6]

I will now go on to describe briefly the key features of Soviet cultural policy in Lithuania and its fate after the collapse of the Soviet Union as a process of subversion. The further parts explain how this subversion was constructed by my informants as desovietisation. Part II highlights some key features of the Soviet cultural administration. Part III demonstrates how the disassembling of Soviet cultural policy was negotiated through two discursive strategies of alienation and defamiliarisation. It will also focus on the case of decentralisation, which is instructive to understand how my informants perceived the changing distribution of power.

II. Subverting Authoritarian Organisations

It has to be stressed that it was the Stalinist version of the Soviet model of state cultural policy which was brought to Lithuania by the Soviet occupation in 1940 and 1944.[7] The Soviet government nationalised all existing cultural organisations and any public exhibitions or performances had to be sanctioned by the state. The year 1944 saw re-establishment of the House of People's Creation of the Soviet Republic of Lithuania (first established in 1941) that was responsible for financing and coordinating amateur art collectives. On 29 January 1945, a branch of the Art Fund of the Soviet Union was founded in Vilnius. The fund overlooked the newly founded cultural enterprises, such as the art trusts, other cultural enterprises and individual creators. On a higher level the administration and production of culture was directly controlled through specially appointed peoples' commissariats.[8] Soviet creative unions (which united Writers, Fine Arts, Composers, Architects, Film, and Theatre) were established throughout the 1940s and their membership was mandatory if one wished to engage professionally with the arts.[9] Shortly after the death of Stalin in March 1953 a new centralised administrative structure for state cultural policy, the All-Union Ministry of Culture, was established. Based in Moscow, the All-Union Ministry was responsible for the cultural organisations in the Russian Federal Republic and the branch ministries in the other Soviet Socialist republics. In Lithuania, seven cultural agencies (Art Affairs, Cinefication, Culture-Enlightenment Enterprises, Publishing Houses and the Printing Industry, Professional Education, Radio Information and the Book Trade, and Supply and Realisation agencies) were united under the Republic Ministry of Culture. Initially, the Ministry's responsibility covered the fine arts, arts education, libraries, museums, cultural education, book publishing, television, radio and cinema (in 1958 public broadcasting was granted its own special administrative bodies).

The Soviet institutional system of cultural policy could well be compared with a Russian nesting doll (*matrioshka*) as the all-union organs encompassed the republican organs, which in turn ecompassed the local authorities. The Soviet Lithuanian Minister of Culture was accountable to the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic (LSSR) Council of Ministers at the Supreme Council and to the All-Union Ministry of Culture in Moscow. The highest power was vested in the LSSR and the All-Union Politburos, the highest echelon of the Communist Party (the Lithuanian Communist Party was subservient to the All-Union Party). The First Party secretary often directly intervened in decisions taken in the Ministry and the Minister of Culture could intervene in any decision taken within cultural organisations, although the Soviet government denied its direct steering of culture. The main pre-and post-production censorship body was Glavlit, the Main Administration for Literary and Publishing Affairs, which was established in Soviet Russia in 1922. In Lithuania

Glavlit was established under the Council of Ministers immediately after the Soviet occupation in 1940 and 1944.[10] The lower tiers of cultural administration consisted of regional and city levels, but there were also administrative units for culture in the industries, such as factories, collective farms and trade unions. In short, even though the Soviet ideologues claimed that cultural organisations enjoyed full autonomy, in reality Soviet cultural administration was embedded in the hierarchical structure of the Party and, being part of national economy, subjected to centralised economic planning.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union and the communist regimes in Eastern Europe, as Valery Bunce has convincingly demonstrated, many Soviet organisational structures did not wither away but were quite successfully subverted.[11] The institutional framework of state cultural policy was no exception here. Some of my informants emphasised that "the giant cultural infrastructure remained exactly the same and nothing had changed" (Interview with Dovilė, 2006). And indeed, only those organisations which were solely involved in ideological control were abolished; in Lithuania Glavlit was closed down in February 1990 (Truska 1997, p. 217).[12] The first cultural organisation to break away from the central All-Union structures was the Lithuanian Artists' Union (11 March 1989), to be followed by the other creative unions (for more see Trilupaitytė 2002). Further democratisation of Lithuanian state cultural policy was continued by ministry reform. In 1990 the Culture and Education ministries were joined into one Ministry of Culture and Education and twenty-eight year-old historian Darius Kuolys was appointed as the minister.

Several key aspects of the post-Soviet transformation of state cultural policy could be distinguished. First, on the ministerial level, decision-making was decentralised. Those organisations which formally remained subordinate to the government, such as museums, gained substantially more autonomy for their actions, especially when it came to the contents of their displays and performances.[13] However, decentralisation of the cultural sector was a complicated matter. Evidently, Lithuanian cultural operators held that it was good to do away with regulation, but not financial commitment. In line with neoliberal policy principles which questioned the viability of direct state intervention in any sphere of the economy, the state funding of culture was reconceptualised and reframed into project and program based funding through an arm's-length body. The decisions on funding were to be taken by councils of independent experts. Therefore one of the first reform decrees issued by the newly independent Lithuanian Ministry of Culture and Education was to create experts councils (19 April 1990).[14] After a few years, the Lithuanian government established additional arm's-length funding bodies such as the Media Support Foundation (1996) and the Foundation for Support of Arts and Sports (1998). Only a limited number of the organisations which had "national" status were further financed directly from the state budget (at the moment of writing there are nine cultural organisations that have national status in Lithuania).[15] In theory, both private and governmental organisations should engage in competition and have an equal chance in attracting financial support from the state. However, in reality the actual finance distribution continued to follow Soviet administrative patterns of funding. The most finance was channeled to the cultural organisations which were located at the top of the hierarchy of the centralised Soviet system (the National Philharmonic Society, the National Museum, the Opera and Ballet Theatre and so on). Furthermore, it has been pointed out in the press and by my informants that the experts' councils came to be dominated by representatives of the ex-Soviet creative unions who successfully lobbied their interests (Interviews with Ramunė and Dovilė; see also Lubytė 2008).

Second, a public right to establish cultural organisations was asserted already in 1986, when the first public organisation, the Soviet Fund of Culture, was established in Moscow with the support of George Soros and Raisa Gorbacheva. The Lithuanian branch of the fund, established by the geography professor Česlovas Kudaba in 1987, was quick to engage in mobilising the general public to support heritage, particularly the countryside landscape. Curiously, after the declaration of independence the heritage department was first located in the Environment Ministry. It has been argued that the cultural sector was an important site for the formation of civic associations, for instance the meetings of Sąjūdis, the nationalist independence movement, held its first meetings on the premises of the Artists' Union. In turn, the Lithuanian Ministry of Culture boasts being the first governmental organisation in Lithuania which started to provide non-governmental organisations (NGOs) with financial support (1995). However, it was arguably the Open Society Fund Lithuania which provided the most substantial support to cultural NGOs, which was vital at that time.[16] In the early 1990s the NGOs found themselves in an economically hostile environment. In 1993–1994 the inflation rates reached 231% in Lithuania, less than in Russia (558%) or Ukraine (2,789%), but much higher than in Hungary (21%). At the same time GDP shrunk to 44% of GDP in 1989. According to the data of the World Bank, the economic decline in Lithuania was more severe than in the United States during the Great Depression (Grennes 1997, p. 10). In spite of the widespread rhetoric of democratisation through strengthening of the non-governmental

cultural sector, the economy of practical survival seemed to dictate the choices of many cultural operators. True, in the conditions of a market economy the state ceased to be the only source of funds, but during the 1990s the availability of public and private funding for culture continued to be quite scarce. This became painfully obvious when the Lithuanian economy was hit by the Russian economic crisis in 1998, which was followed by the closure of culture financing program of the Soros-funded Open Society Fund Lithuania (1990–2000). In the context of economic hardship, the public sector offered security which motivated an intensifying institutional isomorphism (DiMaggio & Powell 1991). The NGOs which worked in the spheres of "high" and ethnic culture actively sought to become "national" or at least to belong to the state sector (Lubytė 2008). For instance the Soros-funded Centre of Information about the Contemporary Arts (est. 1993) was transferred under the Lithuanian Art Museum in 2000. It can be argued that during the 1990s the independent Lithuanian government found itself performing a similar role to the Lithuanian SSR's government as it was the main sponsor of the culture organisations.[17]

Third, symbolic renaming of the Soviet cultural organisations took place. For example, those organisations which previously had the status of "Soviet republic" were translated into "Lithuanian national". In this way the Republic Art Museum was turned into the National Art Museum; the Republic Opera and Ballet House became the National Opera and Ballet House. A more intriguing case of renaming was that of the Revolution Museum, which was turned into the Museum of Genocide (and recently has been refurbished to house the National Gallery of Modern Art). One should not underestimate the importance of renaming. In my view, it should be regarded not as a case of superficial reform but as a very important discursive strategy. It legitimised the inherited Soviet organisational structures, networks and hierarchies and safeguarded their perpetuation. However, this strategy was selectively applied. It is quite interesting that this strategy was not used to preserve one of the most salient components of Soviet cultural policy, houses of culture.[18] Apparently, and as stressed by my informant, the network of Soviet houses of culture was the only form of cultural organisation which completely collapsed during the post-Soviet transformation (Interview with Irena, 2004). The social function of cultural houses was one of the reasons. Houses of culture were engaged less with "high culture" and more with amateur and leisure activities.[19] As pop culture was quick to fill in this niche, the houses' rationale, to provide a Soviet citizen with controlled forms of leisure, had withered away (White 1990). True, some culture houses were reorganised into "culture centres" and in 2009 there were approximately 150 cultural centres in Lithuania. However, this is only a small fraction of the previous population of houses of culture, which amounted to as many as 1,473 houses in 1987.[20]

The demise of the network of houses of culture may well be related to the fact that not all Soviet houses of culture were directly administrated by the Ministry of Culture. Many of them were subordinated to lower level administrations, such as city councils, trade unions or collective farms. As mentioned above, the early 1990s was a time of severe economic decline. The Soviet houses of culture were typically the largest public venues situated on the main square of a provincial town or a village. It is not surprising that the local authorities were quick to gather that Soviet culture houses could be useful cash-cows. The buildings, built in a typical Khrushchevian functionalist style, were sold or rented out to entrepreneurs. Many of them were converted into retail spaces. It can well be argued that those Soviet cultural organisations which belonged to the Ministry have survived best the post-Soviet transformation, meanwhile the provincial organisations faced higher chances of demise. This outcome interestingly corresponds with a hypothesis offerred by David Harvey that neoliberal reforms tend to result in the restoration of central power (Harvey 2005, p. 79).

Finally, I would like to point out that an extraordinarily solid consensus on the treatment of ex-Soviet cultural organisational structures was sustained during the 1990s. In the context of radical political change the system of state cultural organisations was not questioned. Nowhere in public debate in the press was there any suggestion of abandoning the Ministry, creative unions or state-funded specialised art schools.[21] However, this is not to argue that "nothing has changed." Indeed, I suggest that this consensus was enabled by powerful discursive strategies which were mobilised to accommodate the Soviet administration of culture. I will go on now to present a detailed analysis of how this discursive strategy was revealed in the words of the cultural leaders I interviewed.

III. The Meanings of "Desovietisation"

R. *At that time, when Kuolys became the Minister of Culture [between 1990 and 1992, E.R.], everybody knew clearly what was needed.*

E.R. *And what was it?*

R. *Desovietisation. To form a space for a free culture by removing ideological bar riers.* (Interview with Ramunė, 2004.)

According to my informants, "desovietisation" was the prevailing meaning of "change" in the cultural policy of the early 1990s. The term was used by all of my informants when I asked them to explain the main feature of state cultural policy in the 1990s. But what did "desovietisation" mean? Curiously, when asked to specify what they meant by it, informants usually replied, "It is difficult to say." A long pause would follow. Then, a usual turn was saying that to desovietise meant "to get rid of" or "to destroy the old system." Here the meaning of pauses is an important clue: an interrupted speech could be interpreted as an indicator of the complexity of the process of "desovietisation". As a high official of the Ministry of Culture and Education had put it, both the nature and outcomes of "desovietisation" in cultural policy were difficult to evaluate:

> *I would not say that there was a coherent programme of desovietisation of culture. When it came to education – yes. But in culture, those relations were much more complicated.* (Interview with Vytautas, 2004.)

The reason, he continued, was that under the Soviet regime the cultural sphere was considerably less regulated than education. Consequently, in culture desovietisation took place through minor and soft strategies, such as subtle changes of the missions of organisations. Another informant also emphasised a lack of a coherent programme for the transformation of Soviet cultural policy:

> *B. The period before 1997–1998 was more or less a period of chaos. [...]*
> *ER. What do you mean by chaos?*
> *B. In that chaos the structures that functioned until the beginning of 1990 crumbled down.* (Interview with Birutė, 2004.)

Therefore Soviet elements were not easy to identify, their removal was nothing like precise surgery. I think that the post-Soviet changes of cultural policy stand in an interesting relation with the existing literature on democratisation in Eastern Europe. It has been widely argued that neoliberal reforms were accompanied with negative discursive strategies vis-à-vis governance and organisations in Eastern Europe (Lagerspetz 1996; Szacki 1995). Committed to the rhetoric of "change", reformers were more interested in getting rid of the legacy of the past and less so in establishing a positive strategy for the future. However, my case of state cultural policy demonstrates that the negative strategy, expressed by alienation discourse, was not hegemonic. The negative strategy was accompanied with a more positive discourse of defamiliarisation. My informants mobilised the negative discursive strategy only in relation to some aspects of the key categories or nodal points of policy discourse and not others (Laclau & Mouffe 2001, p. 112). In the speech of my informants such a keyword or a nodal point was the category of "system." However, "system" was a polysemic concept. First, through the category of "system" the informants referred to "ideology." Second, "system" referred to the administrative structure of state culture organisations, which, as Hill (1997) has succinctly put it, was "the power itself". Understood in the latter way, the category of "system" referred to the continued presence of former Soviet Party and bureaucratic elites in the independent Lithuanian governmental structures.[22] I will go on now to explain how the strategies of alienation and defamiliarisation were used to frame the changes in the post-Soviet cultural policy as a system.

A) Desovietisation as alienation

Many informants noted that after 1990 the major change both in cultural policy-making and production was the discontinuation of Central Committee (both LSSR and All-Union) interventions. However, the early stage of administrative culture reforms entailed one-sided separation from the centre, Moscow. As of 11 March 1990, the Lithuanian state organisational structures regarded themselves independent. Yet they were not recognised as such either by Moscow or by most Western democratic countries until the Russian coup d'etat in August 1991. One informant, for instance, recalled a flow of letters and faxes with instructions about ideological work which continued coming from Moscow to the newly established independent Ministry of Education and Culture. He was also quick to make the point that these instructions were sent directly to a wastebin. It was also the Ministry's initiative to pass the "depoliticisation law" (1 September 1990) which prohibited political party activities in schools (Interview with Rimas 2004).[23] I suggest that it was in relation to this institutional decoupling from the All-Union structures that the discursive strategy of alienation was developed.

Framing desovietisation as deideologisation was an especially powerful discursive strategy which assisted the subversion of cultural policy structures from Soviet into liberal democratic. Its power lay in the fact that if the entire Soviet legacy was reduced to ideology (understood as a system of ideas), it was rather easy to accomplish the transition to a post-Soviet regime. And indeed, "deideologisation" was understood by my informants as the easiest part of "desovietisation" mainly because the communist ideology was seen as intrinsically alien. It is quite symptomatic that the first edited collection of archive documents that dealt with Soviet cultural governance bears the title *Lithuanian Culture in the Prison of Soviet Ideology* (Bagušauskas & Streikus

2005). The outcome of deideologisation, according to Ramunė, was that "some institutions and bureaucrats lost their cultural capital". Interestingly, it was the contacts with Moscow that underpinned that capital. This was undermined by a declaration of Lithuania's affinity with and orientation to Western Europe, an important aspect of deideologisation. As Ramunė has rightly observed, no single cultural operator who achieved his professional recognition under the Soviet regime was awarded a National Prize after 1990 (Interview, 2004).

To this I would like to add that the discursive formation of "deideologisation" was highly expedient for the traditional Lithuanian nationalist discourse which grounded the meaning of national identity first and foremost in ethnic culture and language (Donskis 1999; Rindzeviciute 2003a). This was clearly demonstrated in the earlier quoted speech of Ramunė, who saw "ideological barriers" as inherently external to "culture" ("Desovietisation: to form a space for a free culture by removing ideological barriers", Interview with Ramunė, 2004). The externally imposed "ideological barriers" could easily be removed *(nuimti)*. It is notable that the word used refers to mechanical removal of something from the top, like taking off a pioneer hat from the head. "Soviet" was defined as "Russian" or "communist" constraints which could be removed without transforming the national culture itself.[24] Thus for example "desovietisation as deideologisation" was expressed in removing the Soviet propaganda material from displays in libraries and museums. In turn, as Ramunė noted, efforts were mobilised to join Lithuanian culture developed by emigrants with that in the kinstate (Interview, 2004). This was expressed in such events as an annual conference Concorde-Light, song festivals and even World Lithuanian olympic games. In this way desovietisation as removal of the Soviet ideology reinforced the notion of an "indigenous" and "authentic" Lithuanian culture.

Furthermore, "deideologisation" relied on a reductive approach to the notion of ideology. In the discourses of state cultural policy reform the meaning of "ideology" was restricted to Marxism-Leninism. Interestingly, for my informants "deideologisation" did not concern the ideology of ethnic nationalism which was manifest in Lithuanian cultural policy discourses at that time (Rindzeviciute 2003). Other potentially ideological aspects of culture such as those related to social differentiation (Bourdieu 1999; Gronow 2003) were disregarded. Finally, aesthetic ideologies such as a doctrine of modernism (Shiner 2001) were not considered. In turn, in the nationalist historiography which emphasised the continuity of Lithuanian statehood and especially culture (defined as language and folk culture), Sovietness was typologically classified as an abnormal phenomenon.[25] It becomes clear that if "the Soviet" core of state cultural policy was defined as the "ideology" of Marxism-Leninism, it could be *alienated* as chronologically belonging to the past.

> *The period of 1989–1990 [could be seen as] a period of desovietisation, deideologisation. We thought that it was important to change "that ideology" and not specific institutions or reality.* (Interview with Ramunė, 2004.)

The informant hints that the Soviet legacy was obviously not limited to "ideology", but also to a vast network of organisations in the cultural sector and governmental apparatus. One could not do away with them in a straightforward way. In Lithuania, "ideology" as a practice performed by the Soviet Russians was rather safely dislocated outside the state borders. But the "Soviet" system of cultural administration persisted, being clearly visible in their materiality (buildings) and habitus (staff, documents, procedures). In order to legitimately survive in the new state which was determined to join NATO and the European Union, they had to be defamiliarised.

B) Desovietisation as defamiliarisation

In the early 1990s the chairman of the parliament Vytautas Landsbergis declared that there were only "ruins of culture" left. This statement stirred an active protest amongst cultural workers, who felt that their hard work was unfairly denigrated (Interview with Rimas, 2004). Since then the strategy of alienation, expressed in this trope "ruins of culture", would recurr rather regularly to describe the devastating effect of the Soviet regime. However, it was systematically contested by the material reality of the museum buildings and displays, restored castles and modern theatre halls, in other words, the reinforced-concrete footprint of Soviet cultural policy. The Soviet model of cultural policy as embodied in the control of styles (socialist realism) and contents (censorship) could be alienated because they were categorised as a "system/ideology". However, if Soviet cultural policy was categorised as a "system/administration" it could only be defamiliarised.

The contribution of the semiotic strategy of defamiliarisation to the rather smooth reception and transmission of the controversial legacy of Soviet cultural policy cannot be overestimated. The linguistic concept of defamiliarisation (or estrangement, in Russian *ostranenie*) was coined by Russian linguist Viktor Shklovsky (1893–1984). Shklovsky used defamiliarisation to describe the production of aesthetical effect in the arts. The main point of defamiliarisation was to essentialise the unique qualities of an object, for example, "the stoneness of a stone". This was achieved by taking the object out from its usual habitual

context and allowing it to be seen in a new light (Shklovsky 1988). Although Shklovsky originally used defamiliarisation to analyse poetic strategies in verbal texts, I argue that it can be applied to understand policy change.

The Soviet cultural administration thus was defamiliarised by emphasising its "core" meaning. Being "Soviet" as "ideological", as argued above, did not constitute a core meaning, but rather a historically contingent form of cultural policy. Instead, the essence of state cultural administration was being an institution, an organisational system, which was defined in politically neutral terms.[26] The ex-Soviet cultural administration thus could be perceived as standing for continuity with the wish to govern in a modern way and not for continuity with the Soviet past. It enabled people to essentialise culture and its organisations – like the nation itself – as timeles units. The perpetuation of the cultural institutions founded under the Soviet regime, such as the Artists' Union, the National Opera and Ballet and the National Museum, was legitimate because they illustrated the idea of the continuity of the Lithuanian nation. Defamiliarisation enabled emphasis of the "institution-ness of an institution". An ambition to govern culture through financial support and legislation was not regarded as an exceptional attribute of communist rule. Quite the opposite, it was perceived as an intrisic feature of the contemporary cultural sphere itself and part of its *reason d'être*. Maintaining the state governance of culture symbolised the viability of the newly established Lithuanian government. However, despite being defamiliarised, this post-Soviet governance had to negotiate the existing networks which supported the centralisation of state power.

"Experts against their own will": the alienation of centralism

Both in my interviews and in literature on the transformation of Lithuanian cultural policy, "decentralisation" was conceived as one of the most important aspects of post-Soviet transformation (Interviews with Rimas 2004; Kęstutis 2006; Valdas 2006). As outlined earlier, the centralisation of governance in the hands of top Party officials was a key feature of the Soviet model of state cultural policy. In this section I will show how centralisation in cultural policy was subjected to discursive alienation.

First of all, my informants systematically framed themselves as alienated from the central apparatus. I found this discursive strategy quite intriguing because, as mentioned earlier, my informants could fairly be regarded as part of the cultural establishment. For example, they worked as experts involved in the allocation of state funding, were advisors at the Ministry or the Government, and were invited as members of juries for public cultural project competitions. Some of them held offices at the Ministry of Culture and the President's Chancellary. Nevertheless, none of these cultural leaders attempted to derive knowledge authority from occupying or having occupied a position in the structures of the state apparatus. They insisted that governmental, cultural policy roles were imposed on them rather than actively sought. As one informant put it, "I am an expert against my own will" (Interview with Ramunė, 2004).

I suggest that by constructing themselves as "experts against their own will" my informants alienated themselves from the centralist model of cultural policy. In this way, centralisation was reified as an essential feature of the "Soviet" model in the self-identification of my informants. This generation often called itself "dissident" and described itself as generally sceptical towards governmental structures. It has to be noted that they did not belong to the organised underground of dissent, such as *samizdat* or the Catholic church chronicles (Vardys 1978). Instead they expressed their anti- or non-communist attitudes in behaviour, looks and career choices. The informants were suspicious of centralised governance. However, I suggest we understand this attitude not as an aversion to politics in general (an often invoked quality of the supposedly passive "homo sovieticus"), but as an expression of a neoliberal take on governance as self-regulation. As an informant put it:

> *Many of the people of my generation were sceptical about the governmental structures. I am one of those who made their debut and professional career in the beginning of the 1980s. And one of those who trust their personal action and their own lively milieus rather than state support. Thus I looked upon the government from a distance. And it often happened so that unless it disturbed you, you would not go deeper into it.* (Interview with Ramunė, 2004.)

And further:

> *And it seemed that if the ideological chains were to crumble, then culture would self-regulate by itself. [...] It seemed, that the body of national culture would self-regulate by itself. Therefore this was both an organic vision and a faith in self-regulation. It was a faith that people acting in culture had only positive incentives. Concerning political affairs, it was assumed that everyone was united by the same goals. [...] everything seemed very clear and there was a perception that any big declarations were unnecessary. We should not also forget how many people from culture were in the first government. And they themselves came from culture and understood that it could self-regulate itself.* (Interview with Ramunė, 2004.)

The informant emphasised that the vision of "self-regulating culture" was embedded in the actual reality of political representation in the early 1990s ("we should not forget how many people from culture were in the government"). On the other hand, the cultural sphere was perceived as a particular area, whose "natural life" preferrably did not need direct state intervention. There the informant spoke in the terms of a classical liberal attitude of a "nightwatch government" and identified "freedom" with "self-regulation". This take is close to a neo-liberal view which emphasises not only negative freedom, but also particular qualities of the subject of freedom (Rose, 2004, p. 16–20). As the informant has put it in the above quote, cultural operators were guided only "by positive incentives." In line with this view direct state intervention in the cultural field would be needed only as a preventive force (in situations of deep conflict, or disaster). From the perspective of an individual this chaos was seen as positive and potentially self-regulating:

> *In the beginning everyone was quite surprised that one could do anything. And that there is no person or institution who could limit your opportunities.* (Interview with Irena, 2004.)[27]

However, other informants regarded the period of chaos in less positive terms:

> *We could not take a German model [of cultural policy] because nothing was stable in Lithuania. The value of education had collapsed [...] another great trauma was desovietisation or the breaking down of the old system. [...] Culture houses either went bankrupt or collective farmers robbed them. [...] Trade unions had rich libraries in cities, but they closed down. Their books were often simply thrown away. And we [the ministry] could not do anything because this was already beyond our control. The sense of insecurity was paramount among people who worked in cultural sector. The people who were used to the stable Soviet cultural system were shocked.* (Interview with Rimas, 2004.)

Because of the separation of local and central powers, the central government institutions could not intervene in developments in towns and counties. Finally, the chronological end of the "chaos" was set just after the mid-1990s. One informant thus called the post-1997 period as a period of structuration:

> *First there were these spontaneous, chaotic developments and then there emerged attempts to react to the formations which emerged out of that chaos. [...] The attempts to structure [the cultural policy field] were expressed in the creation of legislation, documents and programmes which sought to define cultural processes.* (Interview with Birutė, 2004.)

This period of institutionalisation, as I have argued elsewhere, peaked in the formulation of state cultural policy regulations (Rindzeviciute 2003). Now, according to the informant quoted above, culture was supposed to "regulate itself" and not to "regulate someone else," for instance, to mould a patriotic citizen or a conscientious worker. How did that fit with the hegemonic principles of ethnic nationalism, which actively called for the purposive revival of national consciousness to instill patriotism in the newly liberated citizens? Indeed, some of the cultural elites perceived the chaos as threatening and called for continuing intervention of the state in the governance of culture. The supporters of this stance formed a distinctive coalition that originated from the Culture Congress, a meeting rooted in the tradition of the Soviet Republican Congresses of Cultural Workers. Convened in the Sports Palace in Vilnius (18–20 May 1990), the first Culture Congress was attended by approximately three thousand Lithuanian cultural operators. A so-called "Culture Congress Group" was established and coordinated by a philosopher Krescencijus Stoškus and Giedre Kveskienė. The Congress's proceedings were summed up in an eight-hundred-page volume. The volume included a proposal for a "law of culture" (Kveskienė 1991). This proposal was a good example of the nationalist cultural policy discourse which emphasised the supremacy of ethnicity (Rindzeviciute 2003; 2003a; 2005). It has to be emphasised that the public discussions and conferences where the Culture Congress participants debated were sponsored both by the Ministry of Culture and the Open Society Fund Lithuania "for the sake of a democratic debate in which different views could be expressed" (Interviews with experts 2004, 2006). However, the demands of the Congress group did not resonate with the contemporary Ministry's neoliberal attitude to governance. A high official in the Ministry at that time remembered:

> *I treated them [the Culture Congress activists – E.R.] a little bit sceptically. Their contention was that it was possible to govern processes of culture in the state, to set a direction for several years ahead. To mobilise... to set enormous national plans, then to monitor if the plans were implemented and so on. For me, who came from somewhat dissident-anarchistic circles at that time, it seemed to be quite an absurd affair [...] We had conflicts after the congress, because they wanted the Ministry to implement that planned model of organising*

culture. I refused to do that, because I thought that it was not democratic and that relations between the state and culture should be shaped in a different way. One should rather count on spontaneity, initiatives, it suffices to apply procedures and create possibilities for expression, one could not really plan anything in cultural life. (Interview with Rimas, 2004.)

The above quotation could be interpreted as a substantial rolling back of ministerial power by refusing to perform a direct, planning and measurement based governance. The informant made it clear that both planning and detailed accounting were rejected because they were identified with Soviet methods. It is rather ironic that later in the 1990s and especially in the early 2000s evidence-based cultural policy making would again be embraced in Lithuania as a standard neoliberal technique of governance.

I suggest that this analysis casts new light on previous research on the Lithuanian elites' attitudes to governance. In the existing literature enduring political alienation, passive citizenship and lack of self-organisation were often diagnosed by social and political analysts of post-Soviet societies. The phenomenon was usually ascribed to the legacy of *homo sovieticus*, attributed to the "political culture" of the area and nominated as one of the major obstacles to proper functioning of democratic institutions.[28] Clear and strong distancing from the state institutions had been expressed by my informants. However I suggest that distancing oneself from the state apparatuses, often encountered in the cultural sphere, should be understood not only as the legacy of Soviet dissidence or a product of the "dominated" personality, but also as a preference for a particular mode of governance.[29] This argument complements the findings of the survey of the attitudes of Lithuanian elites carried out by Anton Steen about a decade ago. In his comparative study of the three Baltic states, Steen argued that Lithuanian intellectual elites subscribed to "authoritarian attitudes", by which he meant a preference for governance from a strong centre (Steen 1997, p. 77).

However, and I will provide more detail in the next section, my "experts against their own will" could hardly be classified as subscribing to authoritarian attitudes. It struck me that in their interviews my informants hardly ever mentioned cultural governance in the context of Lithuanian nation-building. "Experts against their own will" did not see state cultural policy as a centrally driven ethnic nation-building device, but as a mechanism for enabling self-regulation of a professional cultural field. Indeed, informants tended to talk about the technical governance of organisations and the need to define state policy as a field with transparent rules, a game known to all.

Others, like Stoškus, the organiser of the Culture Congress, adhered to a more patrimonial role for the state. This was clearly expressed in his appointment as cultural advisor to the President Rolandas Paksas (2003–2004). Paksas headed the populist Liberal Democratic party whose hard line election campaign advocated a strong role for government; in 2004 Paksas was impeached for constitutional violations. In sum, I suggest that one should not pool together "intellectual elites" as an undiversified category for a political attitudes survey. "Intellectual elites," as my case of the "transition generation" shows, differ in their views, activities and relations to governance. It is therefore crucial to understand the internal structuration of the elites for a better understanding of post-Soviet governance.

Centralism and self-defamiliarisation

Defamiliarisation of centralism was achieved by rendering power as diffused and relativised. No organisations in the cultural sphere, argued my informants, could hold a power monopoly. The absence and impossibility of centralised control was perceived as an outcome of the nature of administration (collective decision making) and limited sphere of influence (legally defined space of those eligible and the ways of competing for public funds). On the other hand, typically for the Baltic elites, power was treated as belonging rather to individuals than institutions.[30]

A lot depends on an individual person, which is not very usual abroad, I think. Of course, an individual person always matters, but it is rarely so that an individual can so widely spread their own influence and inspire big changes. (Interview with Irena, 2004.)

I call that period [before 1996–1997] a period of individual action. (Interview with Ramunė, 2004.)

Among such institutions which were regarded as being "weaker" than their leaders were the National Opera and Ballet Theatre and the Vilnius Centre of Contemporary Arts. However, the informants admitted that the reach of powerful individuals was quite limited. For example, one informant questioned the view, widespread at that time, that a former minister of culture was still "governing" the ministry:

I think he has some influence, but not totally, because certain spheres always stay outside one's field of action. If X really governs, I do not think that he cares about libraries. [...] otherwise, we are joking that it is best if someone not

from our sphere becomes a minister. Because he is less subjective. (Interview with Ramunė, 2004.)

The main reason mentioned was the heterogeneity of the cultural policy field (museums, libraries, festivals, exhibition halls, information centres). Consequently, one could not be equally biased in all of these spheres:

B. *What can I say… someone has some power, then some others and some others… This means that most of the power belongs to those people who work in the Ministry of Culture and in the highest echelon. Those are the minister, viceminister, secretaries.*
E.R. *How does this power manifest itself?*
B. *Those are the people who make decisions. They make decisions on the document level, and on the level of the structure of the cultural field, and they also solve those "fire conflicts." They both stir the big pot and skim the foam, which appears […] I think that institutions in Lithuania, even those which have local and/or international prestige have less power than individual persons.* (Interview with Birutė, 2004.)

Indeed, the power of organisations, as one expert commented, was strongly dependent on its context:

Therefore, when we say that one organisation is strong, and another one is also strong, it may mean different things. If we make an evaluation in the artistic context, then those creative unions practically do not play any role. If we try to look from a national perspective, then they would have one of the most significant possibilities of influence. Because during these several decades [the Soviet period – E.R.] an attitude has emerged that this is the organisation where professionals work and which has its own criteria. Finally, many of its people [in the creative unions – E.R.] are recipients of National Prizes and are tired of creative work, therefore they prefer to involve themselves in other spheres of influence. Therefore it is very difficult to evaluate influences and powers in the local context. (Interview with Irena, 2004.)

On the one hand, the informant emphasised that an organisation (a creative union) may assume a different power status in different contexts. Thus it would have less influence in professional judgment on the quality of the arts. However, it still enjoys the high symbolic status of a professional union and has exceptional access to state funding (Lubytė 2008).

On the one hand, my informants were univocally against the centralised governance of culture. Conceived as a feature of Soviet cultural policy, centralism was alienated as something inappropriate to the "internal logic" of the cultural field. On the other hand, my informants found it necessary to justify (as "experts against their own will") their own position of being at "the centre". They worked in the leading cultural organisations which were situated in the capital. They knew only too well that it was their organisations which received the lion's share of state funding. Finally, they were quite aware that cultural life and finance was concentrated in Vilnius and a few other larger cities:

Lithuania does not have a programme for the dissemination of culture in its regions. Professional culture is enclosed in the largest cities such as Vilnius and Kaunas; Klaipėda and Šiauliai are weaker centres. (Interview with Kristina, 2006.)

In some way, my informants embodied the idea of centralism, which indeed was acknowledged by some. Ramunė, for example, agreed that there is a lack of representatives from other cities and rural areas among the members of experts' councils (Interview 2004). To negotiate this situation, I suggest, the defamiliarisation strategy was mobilised.

I suggest that defamiliarisation of centralism was implemented by redefining the nature of power. In the interviews, two words that designate power were used. In my questions, I used the Lithuanian word *galia* (which is quite adequately translated by the English word *power*) as it is quite abstract. Interestingly, the informants tended to contest or specify my choice of the word by suggesting *įtaka* (influence). In turn another word *jėga* (force) did not occur in the informants' speech at all. My informants defamiliarised the ways in which the centre operated by reducing the meaning of "power" to "influence", a word which connotes intentionality. Once the intentional influence of the "centre" was conceptually removed, the sustained centralisation was no longer perceived as a problem (or as a Soviet legacy). When asked about power in the sphere of culture, experts commented:

I do not see any levers by which a state institution could influence the private sector. (Interview with Irena, 2004.)

I would not use the word "power" [galia]. The Ministry has the capacity [galimybė] to empower [įgalinti] somebody. Because all it can do is to limit financial things. Then one perhaps will act with the support of other financial sources. (Interview with Ramunė, 2004.)

I can say that the Ministry [of Culture] controls culture financially and makes it very dependent, but does not pose any tasks. In fact, it finances only the very existence. Personally, I consider that this has a strong demoralising effect on the state cultural organisations. (Interview with Kristina, 2006.)

It should be remembered that the interviewed leaders have personally experienced the atmosphere of unbounded infringement of individual rights under the Soviet regime. It is therefore quite striking that in their discourse they did not question the potential of state power to be used in censorship, exclusion or violence. They perceived the power of the Ministry as negative, limited to its ability to withdraw financing. For them, state control of culture could occur only as a refusal to empower.

Besides being harnessed to a highly negative approach to power, centralism was defamiliarised by displacement. Several informants emphasised that "decentralisation" to a large extent "did not really happen". By this they meant not a failure to limit state power (this was achieved through the discursive formation that I have just explained above), but a failure to establish new and diverse centres either outside the governmental sector or outside the capital city. As one informant put it, the regions had been systematically failing to live up to democratic standards because of their own lack of initiative:

Typical of the regions are slothfulness, sluggishness and a belief that the centre will do everything for them... [...] People working in Vilnius can not have good knowledge about the situation in Šiauliai, similarly as they can not know the situation in Paris. Ideally, therefore it is necessary that something would happen from inside, that something would boil, act there. That they would orientate themselves to Vilnius, if that is more convenient for them and if they do not want to do that, then to New York, whatever. And that would be done from the inside. The centralisation is not only a problem of the centre, but also of the periphery. The Ministry has a well funded regions programme. (Interview with Birute, 2004.)

In this quote, I argue, the existing ex-Soviet centre which concentrated the main financial and symbolic power in the previously Soviet administrations, located in the capital city was discursively defamiliarised by downplaying its central role. The informant insisted that the problem is not the inherited centre, but a lack of initiative to establish alternative centres. In other words, the "core quality" of the centre was redefined in terms of plurality and relativity. As she put it:

All cultural fields are so hierarchical and all of us are attracted as flies to the light towards that hierarchy. For example, when the interest is in the West or in China or where the wind generally blows, we are all attracted; this is where everyone orients to. (Interview with Birute, 2004.)

The idea of centres of power that are dispersed internationally and freely chosen completes the discursive subversion of Soviet cultural policy. Both ideology and the power of the centre are thoroughly tamed by alienation and defamiliarisation. The outcome, it can be suggested, is a perception of increased freedom for a cultural operator in an independent Lithuania. At least for one who is located at the centre.

Conclusion

In this article I have outlined how the discursive strategies of alienation and defamiliarisation were used to make sense of the post-Soviet transformation of Lithuanian state cultural policy. I have detailed that the strategy of alienation or removal was applied to the cultural policy sector as a system. When subjected to alienation, the system was conceived either in terms of the ideology of Marxism-Leninism or as a principle of centralism expressed in centralised decision-making. The ideology was removed by abolishment of the Communist Party and revision of propaganda programmes and displays in cultural institutions. The centralised decision-making system was dismantled through separation from the previous centre, Moscow. It was also implemented by institutional design as an arm's length model of the financing of culture through experts' councils was introduced.

Meanwhile some of components of Soviet cultural policy model were alienated, the others, I have argued, were defamiliarised. Such was the case of the cultural policy sector as an organisational system. Defamiliarisation enabled retention of the Soviet cultural organisations by re-assembling their meaning. The Soviet network of cultural organisations was seen as the core of Lithuanian national culture and an expression of its continuity. These organisations therefore were maintained through further financing by the government, either directly or indirectly. Furthermore, I suggested that the institutional and geographical centralisation of the cultural sector in the capital city was defamiliarised by recasting the meaning of "power". Once "power" was conceptualised as dispersed and relational by its nature, the retention of ex-Soviet centres was no more perceived as a political problem. In this way, the Sovietness of Soviet cultural policy was constituted as only the ideology of Marxism-Leninism and politically centralised decision-making. It can be

observed that a strikingly "thin" definition of Soviet cultural policy emerges as an outcome of alienation and defamiliarisation. On the other hand, it can be added that double construction was going on in the conducted interviews. In narrating the desovietisation, my informants had to construct both "Soviet cultural policy" and "democratic cultural policy". Indeed, a similarly "thin" definition of liberal democratic cultural policy was espoused by my informants, because they to a large extent disregarded the positive ways in which state power circulated in the society.

These findings, I argue, should not be understood as a critique of the discourse espoused by my informants. In my view, the discursive strategy of defamiliarisation should not be simplistically treated as an attempt to "mask" a lack of "real" change, that is a genuine democratisation. Nor should it be seen as producing a "distorted" image of the Soviet cultural policy model, which (unconsciously) overlooked some of its key elements. Instead, I argue that the strategy of defamiliarisation was quite necessary in order to receive, accommodate and guarantee the continuity of the Soviet institutional formations which for economic reasons could not be abolished. I used the concept of defamiliarisation not as a critical, but as an analytical device in order to capture the discursive construction of partial and gradual change.

I hope to have shown that the meanings of authoritarian/Soviet and liberal-democratic cultural policy were subject of discursive negotiation. It is rather striking, I think, that the economic impossibility of some reforms stimulated reformulation of the meaning of authoritarian cultural policy. I believe that it is a task for future research to further dissect the ongoing discursive constructions of "authoritarianism" in the context of governance and political change both within and outside of state cultural policy. Finally, I would like to suggest that the focus on discursive strategies of alienation and defamiliarisation can be productively used to study policy change in any type of political regime.

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NOTES

1. An earlier version of this article was presented at the conference "From Orientalism to Postcoloniality" at Södertörn University, Sweden, 27–30 April 2006. My thanks to Greg Feldman, Margrethe Sovik, Irina Sandomirskaja, Lars-Christer Hydén; also Anders Frenander, Geir Vestheim and other researchers from the Centre for Cultural Policy Studies, University of Borås, and an anonymous reviewer for their useful comments. The views and errors are the author's only.
2. The interviews were conducted in Lithuanian, lasted approximately 1–1.5 hours and were recorded on minidisk. All translations are mine.
3. As one informant put it, "During this period I worked in so many organisations that it hardly makes any sense to list them all. The most interesting thing for me was that all these organisations were essentially different and all of them contained endless opportunities which one could not see before. Therefore I would evaluate this period as a period of inexhaustible opportunities, which could be used by anyone who was able and willing to do something" (Interview with Irena, 2004).
4. One Lithuanian art critic referred to one of my informants as a "real professional" and thus, according to her, different from a typical cultural manager who would be more politically or socially biased.
5. The informants themselves described the 1990s as a "transition" (in Lithuanian *pereinamasis laikotarpis*). Therefore by using the term "transition" I draw on the self-categorisation of my informants. There is a scholarly consensus that the "transition" approach which was popular in the first half of the 1990s has failed to capture the uncertain development of post-communist countries and is to be replaced with "transformation" which implies uncertain ends (Carothers 2002; Burawoy and Verdery 1999, p. 16). However, I suggest that as post-communist actors use "transition" the term should not be discarded so easily.
6. Because of their active involvement in current cultural life and policy-making I chose to keep my informants completely anonymous.
7. The first Soviet body for cultural policy-making, the People's Commissariat of Enlightenment (Narkompros) was created in Russia, 1917. Another important organisation, Proletkult or the Proletarian Cultural-Educational Association (1917–1921) was established by the communist revolutioner A.A. Bogdanov (1873–1928). Lenin

however did not support Proletkult and preferred to use the elements of bourgeois culture and education for building communist society. For more on Narkompros and Proletkult, see Fitzpatrick (1970) and Read (2006).

8. For more on Soviet cultural policy after World War II, see Rindzeviciute (2008).

9. The Lithuanian Artists' Union was established before the Soviet occupation in 1939. Note that the All-Union Artists' Union was established only in the 1950s, while Soviet Writers' Union was created in 1935.

10. Although the censorship organisation was called Glavlit, its formal name changed several times: the Chief Agency of the Protection of Military and State Secrets in the Press (1953), the Chief Agency of the State Press Committee under the LSSR Council of Ministers (1963) and the Chief Agency of Protection of State Secrets in the Press (1966). Truska (1997, p. 216).

11. For a comparative analysis of subversion as a typical post-communist take on organisational reform see Bunce (1999).

12. Meanwhile other parts of the Soviet administrative apparatus for culture refashioned themselves in accordance with the new standards. Among those Soviet administrative bodies which were concerned with cultural production were museums, concert halls, libraries, houses of culture and the system of secondary and higher education in the arts.

13. *Lietuvos kultūros politika* (1997). The ministries in general were quite generously endowed with autonomy in decision-making as to their internal structure, management and dependent sector (Nakrošis 2001, p. 175).

14. See The Lithuanian Ministry of Culture and Education, Decree no. 144, 19 April 1990, Vilnius. Lithuanian Archive of Literature and Art (LLM), f.342, a.1, b.3914, l. 237, 239–241.

15. For overviews of Lithuanian cultural policy in the 1990s, see the profile "Lithuania" by Viktoras Liutkus and Ritva Mitchell (2001), as well as *Lietuvos kultūros politika* (1997). For discursive aspects of Lithuanian cultural policy reforms see Rindzeviciute (2005).

16. Alongside the Open Society Fund, a number of foreign institutions supported arts organisations and individual artists in Lithuania. Among the most active ones was the Nordic Council of Ministers which had established its office in Vilnius in 1991.

17. See for example Viktoras Liutkus (1998) and Anelė Dvilinskaitė (2002) for the debates that followed the report on financing culture by Margarita Starkevičiūtė (2000).

18. For more about Soviet culture houses, see White (1990).

19. Already in the early 1920s, Aleksei Gastev's Soviet Taylorism that centered on the idea of rationalized labour process was complemented with attempts to "rationalise leisure" which were advanced by an economist Stanislav Strumilin. A Soviet worker therefore was instructed not only how to work, but also how to rest, so he or she would not waste one's precious potential for "drinking, idling, or performing mindless household chores". As Stephen E. Hanson noted, later Strumilin played central role in designing the first five year plan. For more about Soviet Taylorism and Strumilin see Hanson (1997, p. 123–128). For "productionism" in early Soviet cultural policy, see Read (2006, p. 249–250).

20. Although not all of them were in good shape: in 1980 the Ministry of Culture listed about 254 houses of culture that urgently needed renovation. LLMA, f. 342, a.1, b.3323, l.59.

21. Unlike the case of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences. In 1991 radical steps to decentralise the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences were taken. The research institutes were granted formal autonomy and were expected to join the universities in the future. However, this attempt to disassemble the Soviet organisation of science was not successful; its future is, however, intensively debated. For an overview, see Karazija (2000).

22. For a good discussion of the Soviet elites in transition see Thomas A. Baylis (1994).

23. Teachers could be members of a party, but no party organisations were allowed to be formed in schools.

24. Indeed, it is only during recent years, 2005–2008, that the Soviet contribution to the construction of modern Lithuanian culture and society became an object of academic and public interest. See Rindzeviciute (2008).

25. On alienating the communist past as "abnormal" in the Baltic states, see Lagerspetz (1999, p. 386–7), in Eastern Europe, see Kennedy (2002).

26. I have analysed how the political neutrality of administration was constructed in the Soviet Union in Rindzeviciute (2008).

27. The informant indeed added that "a charismatic personality, who is a professional, is rarely unemployed". None of my informants questioned the limitations of access to professional status.

28. For a recent account in this vein, particularly in the Lithuanian context, see Aida Savicka (2004, p. 62–67).

29. For differences among dissidents' views on governance see Alan Renwick (2006).

30. Steen (1997). In Lithuania, as in other post-communist countries, trust in state institutions is considerably lower than in pre-2004 EU countries (Žiliukaitė 2005, p. 104).

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