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**FRAGMENTED IDENTITIES AND
SOCIOCULTURAL MINORITIES**

Edited by VYTIS ČIUBRINSKAS and JONAS MARDOSA

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Ethnic Socialisation in the Experiences of Students and Graduates of the Lithuanian Minority in Poland

Katarzyna Wójcikowska

The aim of this article is to present the experience of ethnic socialisation recalled in the narratives of students and graduates of the Lithuanian minority in Poland. The sample of students and graduates grew up in Puńsk-Sejny, a rural and predominantly ethnic Lithuanian region and they later migrated to study in cities of Poland and Lithuania. I analyse the process of ethnic socialisation through the concept of a triple configuration of it: first, the national minority itself; second, the nationalising state; and third, the external homeland introduced by Rogers Brubaker (Brubaker 1996) and how these three dimensions of ethnic socialisation play on an individual level shaping identity of individuals. My analysis of these narratives show that the ethnic socialisation of the young generation of the Lithuanian minority was strong and was primarily associated with such institutions as family, school and cultural organisations and activities connected with them. Though the experiences of the interlocutors varied depending on their age and background, most of them followed similar life-ways regarding their choice of schools, social group and leisure activities.

The article is based on 65 in-depth interviews with students and graduates of the Lithuanian minority in Poland, conducted between 2012 and 2014 in Puńsk, Sejny (Poland) and in Vilnius, Kaunas and Palanga (Lithuania).

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Introduction

The aim of this article is to analyse the experience of ethnic socialisation, as presented in the narratives of the Lithuanian minority in Poland who grew up in the Puńsk or Sejny regions on borderland between Poland and Lithuania and later migrated to study in Polish and Lithuanian cities. I will explore the

mechanisms, elements and values through which the ethnic identity was built and enacted and the meanings which were assigned to these processes of ethnification in retrospect by young Lithuanians who left their home community in the borderland for their urban lives. While dealing with the process of ethnic socialisation, I am particularly interested in the cultural transmissions received from significant others at home and in educational institutions. However, I also take into account informants' personal experiences, which formed the foundation of certain beliefs and approaches.

In accordance with the principles of anthropology, fieldwork experiences, unrestricted by previously adopted theoretical assumptions, were the starting point of my research (Hastrup 1995) which I have been doing for almost three years among the young generation of the Lithuanian minority. The methodological strategy adopted relates to the 'multi-sited ethnography' advocated by Marcus (Marcus 1995). I have carried out in-depth interviews and observations both in Poland (in the Polish-Lithuanian borderland and in Warsaw) and in Lithuania (in Vilnius and Kaunas). I conducted 65 interviews with interlocutors¹ aged 19 to 36. The proportion of men and women in my sample was 22 to 43 respectively. The length of the interviews varied from 75 to 240 minutes. In the borderland I met with my informants mostly in their homes and sometimes at workplaces. Most of them worked in agriculture, tourism or in cultural institutions, while students were usually visiting family homes during holidays. As a result, many were able to meet with me throughout the day and I had the possibility to spend a lot of time with them in their natural environment. During my fieldwork, I stayed in the homes of Lithuanian families in the area, which provided me with deeper insights into everyday life than would have been possible otherwise. A significant number of the informants in the larger cities of Poland and Lithuania had regular jobs or studies, so they were only able to meet me in the evenings. They also preferred meetings in the public sphere – in cafes or restaurants, as many of them shared their flats with other people. In many cases, after the first interview, they invited me for the second meeting at their own home, though this usually required more time and trust and it did not occur as spontaneously as it did during the fieldwork in the rural area of the borderland.

The interlocutors were people from the Lithuanian minority in Poland who had grown up in close-knit Lithuanian-inhabited areas. 48 of them were raised in the municipality of Puńsk – in Puńsk itself or in the neighbouring villages of Krejwiany, Oszkinie, Nowiniki, Ogórki and Buraki, all of which are predominantly Lithuanian. Seventeen interviewees were raised in the municipality of Sejny (most of them in Sejny itself, but also in Burbiszki, Krasnowo), where the ethnic structure was bi-ethnic, with Lithuanians forming the minority.

¹ All names of the informants are changed.

The interviews were semi-structured with some biographical elements. Initially, I intended to conduct biographical interviews but it turned out to be difficult for my interlocutors – especially for those that were younger. I asked quite open and general questions about their childhood, educational decisions, and later, their experiences after migration. I gave my interlocutor significant freedom to choose what they wished to talk about, and I tried to follow their way of thinking. I wanted to get to know not only their biographies, but also their opinions and reflections on their community of origin.

All of the informants had pursued higher education in the major cities of Poland and/or Lithuania. The youngest interlocutors were still studying at universities, whereas those that had already completed their education, had made a variety of different life choices – some had returned to their home community, others had settled in large cities in Lithuania or Poland. Nevertheless the experience of migration was crucial in their narratives about ethnic socialisation as it had allowed them to perceive their place of origin with greater distance and to reflect upon its predominant values, patterns of behaviour and strategies of group identity enactment.

Ethnic Socialisation

I have chosen to define ethnic socialisation in accordance with Jean Phinney and Mary Rotherham's interpretation that it is the 'developmental process by which children acquire the behaviours, perceptions, values, and attitudes of an ethnic group and come to see themselves and others as members of the group' (Phinney, Rotherham 1987: 11).

Through this process, an ethnic identity develops and becomes an integral part of the social identity of young people and a key element of their self-image. Individuals therefore gain a sense of belonging to a group, based on a shared vision of the community – its origin, past and values.

The concept of ethnic socialisation is closely linked to the concept of enculturation widely used in anthropology. In some cases they are even treated as synonymous. The work of Bernal and Knight are an ideal example of this. The authors equate socialisation and enculturation, and define them as 'cultural teaching that parents, families, peers and the rest of the ethnic community provides during the childhood years' (Bernal, Knight 1993: 3).

However, we can often identify a certain distinction in other works, even though it is not explicitly stated. For example, Berry treats socialisation as an effort of parents or local communities, which facilitate enculturation (Berry 2014). From this perspective, socialisation is a conscious process of forming individuals, while enculturation can be both deliberate and spontaneous, for example during direct interactions (cf. Quintana, Vera 1999; Vera, Quintana 2008: 50).

Taking into account a particularity of the Lithuanian minority in Poland, I decided to use the term 'ethnic socialisation', rather than enculturation as the former one is largely institutionalized and deliberate, as I will demonstrate later. Moreover, I am interested in identifying not only the transmission of ethnic culture but also as it is manifested in the patterns of relationship with the dominant society and perceptions of its culture.

An extensive review of studies on ethnic socialisation in different minority groups was conducted by Hughes, Smith, Stevenson, Rodriguez, Johnson, Spicer. These authors distinguish four elements of ethnic socialisation: cultural socialisation, preparation for bias, propagation of mistrust, egalitarianism and silence about race (Hughes, Smith, Stevenson, Rodriguez, Johnson, Spicer 2006). In the context of the debate on national minorities in Poland (cf. Łodziński 2005) I have decided that this classification can be reduced to two main elements – the transmission of one's culture and shaping attitudes to alien groups. This corresponds to the two dimensions of ethnicity – the sense of community and the sense of distinctiveness. Due to the objectives of the article and the specific nature of the researched group, these dimensions can be reduced to two basic aspects. The first is cultural socialisation – the transmission of values, knowledge (regarding, for example, history, traditions and customs) and practices. It is accompanied by building pride of ethnic belonging among children. The second aspect regards the transfer of patterns of interaction with a dominant group. The preparation for potential difficulties young people may experience due to their ethnic origins and the strategies developed for dealing with these experiences are the crucial components here.

The researchers claim that messages addressed to the children about their ethnicity are one of the most important elements of parenting strategies in minority families. There is a significant body of research on this subject, but most of it has been conducted in the US and concerns cases in which ethnic dissimilarity was accompanied by racial differences (Hughes, Smith, Stevenson, Rodriguez, Johnson, Spicer 2006). However, this perspective also seems to be useful when analysing the processes among national minorities in Central and Eastern Europe. Their members don't distinguish themselves physically from the dominant society, but they also gain an awareness of their diversity and the need to preserve it through the educational process at home or at school.

The goal of ethnic socialisation is not only to shape the feeling of distinctiveness, but also to cope with the pressure of the surrounding dominant culture. It is therefore a key element which determines the cultural survival of the group (Bernal, Knight 1993).

The concept of the triple configuration proposed by Rogers Brubaker is another important inspiration in analysing ethnic socialisation (Brubaker 1996).

He emphasises that the problems of national minorities should be considered through the prism of three elements: the minority group itself, its external homeland (often actively supporting their compatriots abroad) and the country of residence (named by the author 'nationalizing state'). This analytical model has a macro-level character and concerns intergroup relations of a political nature. It focuses on the antagonistic nature of three nationalisms and their mutual dynamics – the actions of one collective actor usually triggers the responses and actions of the others. Particularly strong tensions may develop between the aspirations of the country of residence, to which the ethnic minority is linked by citizenship, and the external homeland, which refers to the ethnic bond. Consequently, the national minority seeks its own identity and creates its own nationalism (Brubaker 1996). However, I believe this macro-theory can be applied on an individual level, and I treat the indicated three dimensions as a point of reference in the process of ethnic socialisation. Each dimension is a source of meaning, sometimes contradictory since individuals use to adopt a certain attitude towards them.

So in this paper I will try to answer questions of how Lithuanian minority's attitudes towards their external homeland (Lithuania) and their country of residence (Poland) were formed and also what is the role of cultural transmissions played in connecting these three dimensions in the experiences of the young people.

The Lithuanian Minority in Poland

The history of the Lithuanian minority has been widely described both by Polish and Lithuanian historians (Makowski 1986; Tarka 1998; Stravinskienė 2004), so I will only highlight the most important issues. For centuries the territory of the North-Eastern part of the Suwałki region was part of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth with Lithuanians living in Puńsk-Sejny and other localities. After the partition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth at the end of the 18th century, the area was incorporated into the Russian Empire. The First World War resulted with the independent and separate Polish and Lithuanian states and the Sejny-Puńsk borderline territory came under dispute. In 1919 the Triple Entente attempted to avoid conflict in the area by proposing a demarcation line (known as the Foch Line) which assigned most of the region to Poland and obliged the Lithuanian army to withdraw from the area. Lithuanians left from most areas of the Suwałki Region, but many refused to leave Sejny, as the city was considered crucial to the national history and identity of Lithuania. This triggered an uprising among Polish people who sought to regain the city, with the conflict intensifying in 1920. In the end, Sejny and the surrounding area remained within the Polish state and this part of the Polish-Lithuanian border

has not changed since this time. During the Second World War, in 1941, under the agreement between USRR and Germany, the vast majority of Lithuanians from this area were resettled in Lithuania, though some returned to their homes after 1945. In the period of the Polish People's Republic, the freedom to express ethnicity was rather restricted and despite the physical proximity, contacts with Lithuanian SSR were very limited. However, Lithuanians demonstrated their determination to protect their distinctiveness by organising schools, struggling for religious celebrations in their native language, and developing cultural activities (cf. Tarka 1998; Stravinskienė 2004). The political transformation in Poland in 1989 and the revival of an independent Lithuania in 1990 changed the situation of the group. They gained an 'external homeland' which actively supported them (Żołędowski 2003) and legal protection and guarantees from the Polish state.

Currently, the Lithuanian minority is a small group, and its exact number is difficult to estimate. The last National Census, conducted in 2011 indicated approximately 8,000 individuals who declared their identity as Lithuanian. Estimates which have been made over the last 20 years, based on other sources (data from municipalities, declarations of minority organisations) analysed by Cezary Żołędowski (Żołędowski 2003) and Vitalija Stravinskienė (Stravinskienė 2004) have ranged between 10,000 and 30,000. For example, Żołędowski suggested approximately 10,000 people, whereas Stravinskienė estimated between 15,000 and 16,000. All researchers who have studied this group so far, claim that it has a highly formed identity, closely linked to the external national homeland. Despite this fact, it still functions with an awareness that it is in a steady decline, resulting from emigration of young people from rural areas, and the dominant position of Polish culture in the region (cf. Żołędowski 2003; Stravinskienė 2004; Daukšas 2006). Therefore, it is worth looking at actions that would make it possible for the group to maintain its boundaries and to defend its core values among the younger generation.

Dimension of Minority Group Itself

The accounts of the informants' narratives relating to the period of childhood and adolescence were focused on the minority community life. The family, the local community and its institutions provided the first meanings and constituted a reference point in the process of identity construction.

The Role of the Family Home

The main source of the respondents' identification with Lithuanianness was the family home. Cultural transmission took place within the home, and was

maintained or constructed primarily within the minority group. This was due to the fact that the interlocutors' parents grew up at a time when contacts with Lithuania were very limited.

The most important element of Lithuanian culture passed on at home was the language. According to the experience of the young Lithuanians, it constituted their distinctiveness from Poles, and it was therefore the 'core value' – the most important element of bonding and defining the group's borders² (Barth 1969).

All the respondents learnt their mother tongue at home. Several people from mixed marriages would use two languages on a daily basis, while in other homes only Lithuanian was spoken. For children living in the predominantly Lithuanian municipality of Puńsk, for the first years of their life it often remained the only language available to them. However, they would learn the Dzūkija dialect, which is different than standard Lithuanian. It included also many words of Polish origin, which have been incorporated into the dialect through the processes of linguistic interference. Nevertheless, the respondents, aware of the differences, did not perceive it negatively or as a 'wrong' version of their mother tongue, even in retrospect. In their experiences it remained the 'truly native' language, uniting the group and determining its distinctiveness both from the Poles and from Lithuanians in Lithuania. The dialect was commonly used with private contacts, regardless of the speakers' education or professional status. It made communication easy, becoming the carrier of subtle meanings which defined the closest area of familiarity.

In many homes an emphasis was also placed on access to Lithuanian television, in an attempt to make the Lithuanian language a regular part of reality. Most respondents recalled watching Lithuanian cartoons and bedtime stories. Access to Lithuanian media has been essential in strengthening linguistic competency, as well as providing a sense of immersion in Lithuanian culture. In childhood, it also minimised the awareness of growing up in a foreign country.

Another identity element, passed on in the family and in the community, was building an attachment to the land. Multigenerational rootedness is perceived by the group as a legitimisation of the inhabited territory (Daukšas 2006; Żołędowski 2003). However, the bond with the territory also has an individual dimension and was formed at an early age. This territorial bond was facilitated by extensive, multi-generational family ties and by the acknowledgement of its history. All the respondents were aware that their ancestors had roots in the immediate area. Among the older generations, migration was relatively rare and therefore even distant relatives, with whom the speakers had regular contact,

²For more than 90% of the minority members, Lithuanian remains the primary language of thinking and speaking in family situations (Żołędowski 2003: 154).

usually lived in the same region. The most important social relationships were thus rooted in the territory, which was perceived as their own and inherently intertwined with the history of the family.

A living memory of forced displacement during World War II, sometimes involving considerably risky returns, played an important role in the family histories. The narratives suggest that this motif appeared regularly in the stories of grandparents:

Grandma would always tell stories about the war, at every opportunity, when they were evicted, and then when she wanted to go back, when they risked the return (...) they had nothing there, and here they had left a farmhouse, this was probably what they had pitied (woman, age 30).

The determination to return to the original territories presented here, is a manifestation of meanings traditionally linked with the home, regardless of their administrative and political affiliation.

The Role of Schools with Lithuanian as the Language of Instruction

Apart from the family, another key aspect of socialisation is schooling as it is of particular importance for the development of ethnic bonds. All the interlocutors, at least at one stage of their education, attended schools with Lithuanian language teaching, mostly during middle school and secondary school. This choice was essentially influenced by the parents' and children's ethnic identification and further educational plans. In the case of elementary school, availability played a decisive role. Therefore, the informants' experiences were, at least in some part, determined by their place of origin.

The narratives show that in the municipality of Puńsk, the choice of learning in Lithuanian was considered almost 'obvious'. Children were raised in their mother tongue, and schools with Lithuanian as the language of instruction were close to home. Therefore, the choice was made on both an ethnic and a pragmatic basis. In the municipality of Sejny, access to such education was more limited. In some villages of mixed ethnic composition, schools ran classes with both Lithuanian and Polish as the language of instruction. In the town, however, schools taught exclusively in Polish until 2005. As a result, almost all of the respondents from Sejny began their education in Polish. Lithuanian children were provided with additional native language classes, though the interviews suggest that this was presented as unsystematic and an additional burden. Arūnas's narrative might be an example:

Additional lessons of Lithuanian, 3 times per week and those were the last classes in a day, so the concentration and desire of attending those lessons was rather poor, but it was fun, we had different teachers of Lithuanian and you

know, during those 3 hours – some literature, some grammar, a little history was done and that's all. There was no formal curriculum. The school mark for Lithuanian was somewhere far down on the school certificate, far away like extra-curricular activities. There were also taunts from some peers – all sorts of 'Lithuanians are staying behind in the classroom', and some sort of insults (age 33).

It is worth noting the importance of these classes for the development of ethnic bonds. In the narratives they were presented primarily as an experience that distinguished them from their Polish peers, and not uniting with other Lithuanian children, as was the case of schools with Lithuanian as the language of instruction. The negative attitudes of peers mentioned by Arūnas are confirmed in the narrative of the slightly younger Rita:

I remember when in Polish school, we had Lithuanian language lessons, maybe once a week, maybe twice, after regular school lessons. So when the Lithuanian language teacher came to the class, she said, '[full name of the interviewee] today Lithuanian will not take place', for example, it was such a great shame. I mean everyone knew, of course, tolerated me that I'm a Lithuanian, but for me it was such a shame that in front of everyone she said that I attend Lithuanian classes and that I am alone (age 25).

Participation in these classes was perceived as stigmatising, and it was accompanied by a sense of shame, strengthened by the antagonistic nature of the Polish-Lithuanian relations in Sejny. Childhood and adolescence is characterised by a tendency to emphasise differences between individuals, and consequently it encourages children to strive for conformity to the peer environment (Melchior 1990: 236). This sometimes resulted in the development of a desire for assimilation among the interlocutors attending Polish schools. Contrarily in the case of schools with Lithuanian language teaching – it strengthened the bond with the language and culture of origin fostered at home, and made the minority group the primary reference group.

A crucial stage in the interviewees' biographies was the choice of middle school or secondary school. This was especially true of children who had previously attended Polish schools, meaning that they would have had to make a decision of either a stronger bonding with the Polish group, or with the minority group. Among those who finished Lithuanian elementary schools, the choice of school in Puńsk was seen as a natural continuation of the undertaken path. Most accounts show that the transition to Lithuanian middle school or secondary school was not considered a dilemma. After years of studying in a Lithuanian environment, young people generally placed high value on receiving an education in their native language. Some of them, living in an almost exclusively Lithuanian language environment also feared changing the language of instruction.

Choosing a Lithuanian school provided the means by which to learn the Polish language, while the alternative meant a significant degree of isolation from the mother tongue. The combination of these two elements are well exemplified in Renata's words:

I'm a Lithuanian, my family is Lithuanian, the first language is Lithuanian, so there is the opportunity to learn in the Lithuanian language, and still learn the Polish language, because all the books are in Polish, you need to explain everything. It was important for my family, it was important for me (age 27).

An equally important motivation was a desire to maintain relations with friends, and choosing a Polish school would have meant uprooting the existing environment and building relationships in new, unfamiliar surroundings. The narratives of respondents show that graduates of Lithuanian elementary school chose Polish schools in two situations – when they wanted to learn a profession quickly, or when they had concrete plans for further education and were looking for a secondary school with a high level of teaching for specific subjects. These cases were rare and as one interviewee who made such a decision claimed, they risked being negatively perceived by the minority community.

The youth who finished Polish primary schools were faced with a more difficult decision. The choice of Lithuanian middle school or secondary school meant abandoning the existing environment. This is illustrated by the words of Rita: 'After the Polish elementary school, I just didn't want to part with my Polish friends, I didn't want to go to this Lithuanian school (...) (age 25)'.

While in Puńsk the ethnic bond was strengthened by long lasting private contacts, in Sejny the Lithuanian youth environment remained largely dispersed. The narrative shows that Rita perceived it as foreign; that is, despite her awareness of her origins and the presence of Lithuanian culture at home, she did not really identify with the minority group until she began studying at a Lithuanian school.

The accounts of my respondents indicate that parents' influence often played a decisive role in choosing a school, as they perceived Lithuanianness as a duty which required ethnically oriented action. Some of them went to Polish schools themselves, and as a result never mastered their native language. They were therefore aware that the choice of a Lithuanian school is not only conducive to strengthening ties within the minority group, but it is indispensable for the smooth functioning in the society in Lithuania.

The Lithuanian school constituted a framework for the integration of young people. It also made the ethnic group a primary reference group. Collaborative learning and participating in extracurricular activities reinforced these relationship. Zita's words depict the intensity and intimacy of these contacts:

The school atmosphere, it's like one big family, because it's 100 people, when I was learning it was 150 because it was the four-grade school. We're like one big family, we all know each other, we're all friends (age 28).

Pupils who previously attended Polish schools particularly appreciated the previously unavailable sense of familiarity. The identification with Lithuanian-ness was in fact constructed based on a sense of familiarity and community with the peer group, not a strangeness perceived or attributed to them by the Polish group. This is illustrated by the experience of Rita, who for the first time identified herself with the minority while in Lithuanian school in Puńsk:

My new friends and I felt really so Lithuanian, that I just belong to this community and there everyone speaks Lithuanian, there are already great traditions, very nice, and no one there discriminates against you for sure ... well just like at home (age 25).

The school also got the youth involved in cultural life – it organised a number of extracurricular activities. These created an opportunity to meet and work together for the benefit of the community. The importance of these experiments was emphasised by Alicia:

The fact that you can sing here in a choir, which I did, or you can participate in dances, (...) these are factors that allow you to integrate better with the whole environment and to feel this life here, which is not possible for example for my friends studying in Suwałki or those who left for elsewhere. And I see the difference. I go crazy when I see any announcement that our band has a performance, a concert, a get-together or something, I go for it, and they don't necessarily do that – as if it has already been taken away and I can see it among those people who have not studied here, so they will not necessarily join in the cultural life (age 26).

Through the school patterns and joint actions, the youth identified with the local Lithuanian community and assimilated their values, whereas their compatriots studying in Polish schools found them incomprehensible and alien.

An element which also distinguished the school was the small number of students. Multigenerational rooting resulted in most teachers knowing their pupils and their families very well. The relations arising from the social roles of the teacher-student relationships often overlapped with personal connections. This was conducive to a sense of security and community, as Birutė said:

One of the advantages of this school is that it's not large and it's easier to have contact with the teachers, we all know each other, which can be negative, but it can also be an advantage. And it's through these close relationships that we're able to help one another better and also to keep the whole Lithuanian spirit (age 20).

The school instilled in the young generation a sense of self-esteem and *uniqueness*. The interlocutors were aware that outside of Lithuania there are only two schools of this type, and therefore they shared a unique experience and gained competence in two languages and cultures. According to assumptions in the majority of cases, this led to ethnic affirmation, a sense of pride in belonging to a group.

The Role of Cultural Activities

The ethnicity of the Lithuanian minority is also defined and expressed through cultural activities. The key elements of traditional Lithuanian culture are music and songs, accompanying people at work and at festival celebrations (Żerańska-Kominek 1990). Nowadays these elements still play an important role, although the form through which they are practiced may have changed. For instance, grassroots initiatives have largely been replaced by institutionalised ethno-pedagogical activity conducted by 'culture centers' and supported by Lithuanian associations such as the Association of Lithuanians in Poland, the Lithuanian Community in Poland, the Association of Lithuanian Youth in Poland and the Association of Lithuanian Ethnic Culture in Poland.

The main types of activities relate to traditional Lithuanian culture, although it is not just with reference to the heritage of the region. Cultural leaders have locally introduced motifs and cultural elements from different areas of Lithuania. This process bears the marks of 'inventing' tradition (Żołądowski 2003), which is now presented as a distinguishing element of the Lithuanian community in Poland. The narratives of the respondents indicate that they perceived it as their own, closely related to the inhabited territory, and attempts to challenge it rarely appeared.

Cultural activities constituted an important element of the informants' biographies – the vast majority of them had at least several years of participatory experience in activities associated with Lithuanian culture. It seems that this commitment constituted a certain institutional pattern of conduct, promoted both at home and at school. The parents of a significant number of the respondents used to take part in artistic activities³ themselves, and they encouraged their children to do so as well. The parents' expectations were reinforced by the teachers. One of the interviewees even expressed the belief that 'if one does not participate, it is badly perceived'. Cultural activity has also been strongly linked to educational success:

Some people do not participate, but it is their choice and it is not likely that these are people who spend this time studying. Those who are learning, they are more educated, and usually involved in such activities too (man, age 23).

³Although there are music and theatre groups in the region, which were established by adults, it seems that nowadays this activity is primarily associated with the stage of adolescence.

But it must be kept in mind that the justification of these motivations were made *ex-post* and so were affected by further life choices. This is illustrated by the summary of statements of two people from Puńsk: Zita, who after studying in Kaunas became cultural activists in Puńsk; and Rimas, who studied in Poland and only then settled in Vilnius. Zita presented cultural activity in terms of an obligation to the community, internalised in the process of ethnic socialisation:

I also started at this age [5–7 years – KW]. And then when you're 13, 15, 18 years old you don't think that this is yuck, because just as you go to church, after all – because one is supposed to, because it's obvious that it's sort of a small obligation (woman, age 28).

The interpretation of cultural activity as a commitment to the community, as meeting the need for continuity of the tradition of contact with compatriots, is present in the work of Aušra Zabieliene (Zabieliene 2006: 286). Based on the collected narratives it can be inferred that, to a large extent, these meanings are assigned by the ethnic leaders, and are not always shared by the participants. Rimas explained its popularity completely differently:

Puńsk is so small, it is a village, there really is nothing else for young people to do, so either this, which as it seems to me, facilitates seeing the world a little bit, because there are a few trips in Poland alone, and also to Lithuania. And now it seems to me that all this is more advanced and people go to Mexico (man, age 34).

In the opinion of the interlocutor the popularity of these activities is rather due to the lack of alternative ways of spending time and to the opportunities it creates to explore the world, rather than to a deep fondness for the ethnic culture. In retrospect, the interviewee perceived and reappraised the element of tradition, which may indicate the effectiveness of the model. However, when remembering childhood, the participation of such activities was primarily depicted as a form of integration with one's peers. Good examples are the narratives of Valdas and Ramūnas:

We perceived it as a kind of fun, belonging to any community. In addition to the trips and that it is fun to go on trips, in addition to the fooling around at rehearsals and trying to learn something new, something that is useful later in life (age 23).

I sang, danced. It was really cool. All the guys, most of your colleagues were also doing that, it was fun to meet and learn some new things (age 25).

The experience of preparing performances and travelling, had built relationships and mutual trust. As a result, strengthening relationships within the peer group were able to affect the sense of belonging, also in the ethnic dimension.

Among my respondents, only a few people had not been involved in activities related to Lithuanian culture. However, this was primarily due to a lack of interest or aptitude for artistic activity, rather than a conscious desire to reject traditional patterns. Some boys were strongly involved in playing basketball – which is perceived as a Lithuanian national sport. However, in retrospect, some of them expressed a certain degree of regret that they had not taken advantage of the available opportunities.

Dimension of External Homeland

Diasporas and minority groups often unite around images of the home country. These ideas gain a particular intensity and are passed on from generation to generation (Stefansson 2004; Gupta, Ferguson 1992). In the case of the Lithuanian minority this issue is particularly interesting. For many decades, the geographical proximity of Lithuania as ‘homeland’ did not translate into real contact opportunities. The state border posed as an effective barrier to visiting the ‘home country’, which had been incorporated into the USSR. It was only after the restoration of independence, when the border crossings between Poland and Lithuania were opened, that natural interactions were able to take place. Later, when both countries joined the Schengen area, all restrictions on movement were lifted. As the age of my interlocutors varied, with the difference sometimes close to 20 years, their scope and form of contact with Lithuania also differed.

Two Orientations among Lithuanian Families

The most important sources of ideas about Lithuania for the young members of the minority were the family environment and the Lithuanian school. Though the content that passed through these two channels was usually intertwined and mutually reinforcing, the family should be the first area of analysis. The family constituted the first source of meaning, and in the case of children who started education in Polish schools, for many years it was often the only one.

Based on the accounts of my respondents we can distinguish two models of ‘Lithuanianness’ cultivated among the borderland families – one linked towards the minority community and another oriented towards the external homeland. In the first case, the respondents saw their parents identifying with Lithuanianness primarily in the local dimension. For them the reference group comprised Lithuanians in Poland, and their interests were focused on events directly related to their community. This model was more often present in farmers’ families, although it should not be considered a rule. External factors were also important,

and this pattern was recalled mainly by slightly older interlocutors. Therefore, to some extent this was likely the result of political isolation during the socialist period. The researched members of such families were not able to recall vivid images of the external homeland encountered at home. This is illustrated in the memory of the thirty-year-old Vida: 'No one talked much about Lithuania, only about Puńsk (age 30)'.

Mantas, who is ten years younger and grew up during independence, perceived his parents similarly: 'They are limited only to our village and Sejny. They're more interested in the things that are happening in Poland, and care less about the things in Lithuania I suppose ... (age 19)'.

The interest in local and Polish issues indicated here, probably resulted from the belief that it is those matters that have a real impact on the lives of the family. Renata gives an interpretation:

At home we didn't talk about Lithuania, parents watch these different programs, but they know that they live in Poland and this is their home, there isn't any longing there, because Lithuania is not their homeland, they are Lithuanians, (...) There is no sentiment for Lithuania, because there is nothing to return to, no land which would have been taken away from us. Here is our home, it is where we live (age 27).

The family of the respondent had no real ties with Lithuania. The lack of personal memories or experiences of Lithuania limited the sense of nostalgia, and this topic did not appear in family conversations. Though the children raised in these families identified themselves as Lithuanians, they did not form a clear image of the external homeland.

The second group consisted of respondents whose parents felt strong ties with the external homeland and tried to foster this attitude in their children. They were often local activists, teachers and civil servants, though this attitude was also found among farmers. What they had in common was an interest in history and politics, and sometimes a complicated family history, which meant having relatives living on both sides of the state border. For these parents, though they were usually strongly involved in the life of the minority, the primary point of reference was Lithuania.

Respondents from these homes remembered watching Lithuanian news regularly, and the subsequent discussions. The events in Lithuania were incorporated into the subjective social reality of young people. Some of the older informants who were born in the late 70s and the first half of the 80s, placed special importance upon their memories of when Lithuania regained independence. In some cases the parents of these individuals emigrated to Lithuania so as to show support for the aspirations of their compatriots. This led to young people

attributing their own personal meaning to those events. A good example are the memories of Jūrate:

The whole family was experiencing this emotionally and listening to the Lithuanian radio. Then the Baltic road, it was a big event. I remember as a small child, my parents went somewhere by car, and they rejoiced. Then they bought a badge. (...) My parents were also part of that chain. I think my aunt as well. I remember they were very excited and went there (age 27).

The parents' involvement in a mass protest of the inhabitants of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, against the dependence on the Soviet Union, was interpreted by the woman as an expression of her family's identification with both the native country and compatriots abroad. Thanks to this she was able to perceive herself as part of a community which was wider than the local group. A similar theme was present in the account of a slightly older interviewee, Ramūnas:

There was a lot of talking about regaining independence, that Lithuania found itself involuntarily in the Soviet Union, and now will be able to govern itself. And it was really joyful. This was very good news, father was rejoicing and I also remember that I was very happy that Lithuania regained its independence, and this was practical for a child, it would be easier to go there. Lithuanian language will be used more freely. Then I remember the events of January 1991 when the people fought, people died from the television tower. Parents didn't sleep all night, they tried to call family, friends in Vilnius, it was a traumatic event. (...) We experienced it together, we felt empathy, were looking for a way to help them. (...) It's the time I remember, it was an important moment, an important period in childhood, I understood that important historical things were happening, (...) In my room there has always been a map and I remember when we bought a map where Lithuania was already marked, it was so great to finally see it (man, age 34).

The interviewee portrayed the events in Lithuania in the context of a shared family experience. The parents' commitment and emotions shaped the attitudes of the adolescent, the belief that the unfolding events affected his group directly.

The parents that were oriented towards the external national homeland maintained contacts with relatives in Lithuania and, where possible, tried to visit them. Souvenirs, particularly books in the native language, were of vital importance to the shaping of perceptions of the country, and created an interest in Lithuanian culture among children. It is also characteristic that their homes were filled with Lithuanian national symbolism (flags, figures from Gediminas Hill or the Mountain of the Three Crosses), which under the conditions of limited travel opportunities, acted as a reminder of the cultural and political 'centre'.

The Image of the External Home Country

The transmission of ideas and images of their external home country was influenced by the borderland location. A repeated motif in the narratives of respondents was walking along the border. Aidis's memories are a good example:

I remember my father took me under a hill and there showed me 'look over there, behind those trees is Lithuania'. And you know that you cannot go to this Lithuania, but you know, in your heart a little bit, I will not hide, so good ... (...). They said, you know, 'one day we will go, your homeland is there', in one way or another. (...) They also said that this is Lithuanian land, but Lithuania is now there and that someday we will go (age 22).

The quoted fragment also illustrates the dissonance, also experienced by other respondents, between the geographical proximity and the subjectively perceived distance; the inability to go to the other side. This encouraged the building of nostalgic imagery, sometimes even, as will be shown further, mythologizing the country.

In addition to the family, another source of knowledge about the external homeland were schools with Lithuanian as the language of instruction. Their role in the development of ties with Lithuania were of two dimensions – the transfer of cultural competences and facilitating direct contacts with the country.

School was the primary channel for the transmission of Lithuanian culture, understood as the national cultural centre, and not the one produced in the peripheral minority communities. It provided the teaching of standard Lithuanian language and acquainted students with the Lithuanian national cultural canon. The role of school was emphasised by an interviewee who completed part of his education in the Polish education system. Switching to Lithuanian schools usually inspired reflection on the shortcomings of the knowledge of the ethnic culture and raised awareness of the selectivity of peripheral, domestic accounts. An example is the narrative of Arūnas, who graduated from a Polish elementary school:

I didn't have that since I was little, and I wasn't taught who Maironis was, who Jablonskis was, or Kudirka or Mykolaitis-Putinas, who studied at the seminary in Sejny. This is important because not every parent is capable enough, to teach their child at home what they should know about Lithuania (age 33).

The parents of the respondents were educated people, involved in activities within the Lithuanian community. They paid attention to the preservation of Lithuanian language at home, but as graduates of Polish schools, they did not have enough knowledge themselves to familiarise their children with Lithuanian history or literature.

The narratives of the respondents suggest that before 1990, Lithuanian schools in Poland shaped their image of Lithuania as a country that had been

only slightly affected by the influence of Soviet culture. This was conducive to building identification with both the nation and the Lithuanian state, regardless of the political context. In subsequent decades, the range of subjects related to Lithuanian culture has also gradually expanded, with separate lessons of history and geography of Lithuania having been introduced. Teachers also encouraged the youth to learn about Lithuania by organising competitions on knowledge of the country, bringing books and supplementary materials.

The school also strengthened the national bond by observing Lithuanian holidays, such as anniversaries of historical events or famous people. Lithuanian politicians, social activists and artists were often invited to the ceremonies. The celebration and the involvement in preparing the events gave young people a sense of participation in Lithuanian culture and belonging (both as individuals and as a minority group) to a wider national community.

Visits to Lithuania

In addition to 'mediated content', the most important role in constructing national bonds was fulfilled by visits to the native country. These visits either created a contradictory view to the image that had been created within the local community, or were actually a complementary element.

The experiences of the trips to Lithuania varied, depending on the age and the aforementioned parental attitudes of the respondents. The experiences of the older interlocutors are summed up well by the words of one: 'in the 80s Lithuania was far, actually we didn't know it very well'. For a long time the country had remained in the realm of the imagination. During the socialist period, only some of the respondents went to Lithuania with their parents, and even then, only in later childhood. They mostly recalled a long journey with long hours of waiting at the border. Travel times made the country seem distant and difficult to access:

It was, from what I remember, an absolutely amazing adventure, because (...) for the first time in my life I was going by train, somewhere totally unfamiliar, not just unfamiliar, because it is somewhere far away, to another country (man, age 30).

Lithuania aroused curiosity, it appeared as a completely different world:

Going to Lithuania was very interesting, because it was difficult to understand why the border, which is a few kilometres from our house, why does one need to take a longer way and go around. These questions come naturally to children. But then you cannot understand the answers. This is something I remember very well, during this period. The embarrassment of the child – because it's so unnatural (man, age 34).

Both the quoted man and his sister had very good memories from those trips, as their parents showed them Lithuanian cities and took them to the seaside. However, what remained was a feeling of incomprehension and alienation from reality. It was strengthened by the presence of Russian inscriptions and symbols in the city, as well as the common use of the Russian language in the streets:

I wanted to go to Lithuania so much, because everyone speaks Lithuanian there, and it's much more natural. Although, when we would come to Vilnius, there you could hear more Russian, possibly Polish, not Lithuanian. I was a bit like a child, it was hard for me to understand why it is so (man, age 34).

Direct memories of this period, however, were scarce in the collected narratives. Some informants even gave accounts of trips by other family members. The barriers to visiting the country made Lithuania attractive, and at the same time strengthened the sense of otherness and strangeness of reality across the eastern border.

After Lithuania regained independence, mobility and travel opportunities expanded greatly. The respondents born since the mid-80s generally started crossing the border during their early childhood. However, as I mentioned earlier, it was the school that was primarily responsible for young people's education regarding Lithuania. Working on a farm meant that free time was limited, so if one's parents organised trips at all, it was mainly for shopping in the border towns or to visit family and relatives across the border.

School trips were often subsidised by Lithuanian state funding, which made them accessible to all. These visits ensured that participants travelled to the most important sites related to the history and culture of Lithuania. They provided an opportunity to explore historical heritage, but only to a limited extent was there the possibility to see everyday life in the country and to establish relationships with fellow Lithuanian peers. As a result, none of the informants communicated regularly with young people from Lithuania or with the Lithuanian diaspora in other countries.

There was also a difference in the degree to which interviewees experienced familiarity in their external homeland. Those respondents born since the mid-90s generally perceived Lithuania as a country similar to Poland, with differences primarily related to the economic sphere:

I didn't see a big difference between Lithuania and Poland. The traditions, culture, the language of course were a little different. But economically, really, well ok, maybe in Poland it turned out a little later that it was better (woman, age 27).

Other informants have experienced the trips through the prism of a national bond and emotional involvement. An extreme example of this attitude is the narrative of Zita, who first visited Lithuania as a secondary school student:

I remember very well – we drove through Lithuania and the first thing I saw as I got out, I saw Vilnius at night – it was amazing, I'll never forget it, it was something extremely beautiful and then I felt that yeah, I'm in my capital. Such wow, such a cool thing (age 28).

The respondents born in the 90s travelled freely to Lithuania from an early age. Their aim was not only to explore important historical sites, but also cultural events. It is symptomatic that these trips were not portrayed as relevant biographical experience. In contrast with their older colleagues, they found it difficult to recall their first memories of staying in Lithuania. The external homeland was included within the boundaries of everyday experience, it had become accessible and was often known far better than the major cities of Poland. Some people regularly attended additional extra-curricular classes in the border cities. In the subjective experience of the respondents it was primarily Kaunas and Vilnius which had become the cultural and economic centres. Perceptions of the differences between the two countries appear to have weakened as a result. Therefore, the border ceased to have meaning, and the Lithuanian community in Poland became increasingly involved in a transnational dimension (Hastings, Wilson 1999).

It is worth considering whether the process of socialisation was accompanied by an idealisation of the external homeland, which is relatively common in diasporas. The answer to this question is not clear. The idealisation of Lithuania can be observed quite frequently among the slightly older respondents. It was a reaction to the feeling of being cut off, a construction of the ideal which could integrate the community surrounded by a dominant group. The words of Grażina exemplify this:

It was like an illusion, it was a place of fairy tales, legends, all this was just based on such stories, concerts, because once in a while, Lithuanian folk bands came to Puńsk once a year, Armonika was such a band. And it was all so beautiful. Let's say even when probably a person cannot see something, touch it, then this is overly idealized, beautiful. And Lithuania was like that (age 36).

The younger informants rarely evoked such images, though the image of Lithuania was characterised by positive emotions and meanings. This is clearly illustrated by the accounts of two interlocutors, almost of the same age, who finished secondary school in Puńsk. When asked what images of Lithuania she remembered from childhood, Zita replied:

For me, Lithuania, and in general for most of us, it was, you know, the land of milk and honey, you know that idealized romanticism that Lithuania is the homeland, that it is, you know, something like WOW! But overall, since childhood, everyone associates Lithuania with their homeland, with these songs, these fairy tales, legends. This is the land of fairy tales and legends (age 28).

However, Asta directly contradicted this statement: 'It was not that someone said that Lithuania is a land of milk (age 29)'.

It is also worth noting that both women treated their experience as 'typical' for the whole group. This is demonstrated by use of the pronouns 'we' and 'us'. It seems, however, that while there were shared symbols and a conviction of belonging to the Lithuanian nation among the group of the Lithuanian youth in Poland, the emotional attitude towards the state itself remained varied.

Dimension of the Country of Residence

The third important dimension of ethnic socialisation is the shaping of relations with the majority community and the country of residence. This is connected with preparing for relations with the dominant group and the learning of patterns of interaction. In their narratives the respondents rarely recalled ideas related to Poland and Polish people, which would have been passed on to them directly by their parents or while at school. Yet they often referred to their own experiences, or to the experiences of their kin, which would have influenced their attitudes and strategies just as strongly.

The Interethnic Relationship

It should be emphasised that the ideas and attitudes of young Lithuanians towards Poles and the Polish state that developed, were primarily based on experiences from the peripheral local community. Most interlocutors rarely visited the main Polish cities, and therefore had little idea of the conditions and lifestyles there and did not know Poles outside of the Suwałki region. This is shown in the account of Vilius:

When you live on the outskirts of Poland, in a small town, you don't see it, what it's really like. What you get from the radio, from television, this you see, but as it really is, it's hard to say (age 25).

In the borderland area, Polish-Lithuanian relations have had an antagonistic character for decades (Żołądowski 2003; Stravinskienė 2004). This is reflected in the memories of the respondents, although they differ according to the place of origin. The interlocutors from Puńsk usually had relatively late contact with the language, culture and society of the majority group. People who had Poles within the family or for neighbours would learn Polish alongside Lithuanian from an early age, though the majority of speakers only had their first contact with the country's official language at school. They spent the first years of their lives in a purely Lithuanian environment, often without the awareness of the Polish culture that surrounded them. The memories of Rimas are a good example:

When we were children we were brought up in Lithuanian, we spoke Lithuanian with our siblings, with parents, with absolutely all friends. In nursery it was the same, and only (...) somewhere in the second grade of elementary school, when we had mandatory Polish language classes, only then was the first contact with the language. (...) It seems to me that it was only later, at the age of 8,9,10, let's say in this range, we realized that we don't live in Lithuania, only in Poland. The awareness of the fact what is a national minority and that we're such a minority, it seems to me that this thought appeared even later (age 34).

Similar experiences of many people growing up in the municipality of Puńsk seem to confirm the Żołądowski thesis of isolationist tendencies among ethnic minorities in Poland (Żołądowski 2003). The parents of those interlocutors maintained private contacts primarily within their own ethnic group. While they did not seek to acquaint their children with the Polish language and culture, they also did not attempt to isolate them from it. Their children became aware of these factors only at Lithuanian school during Polish lessons. However, opinions regarding ethnic school policy, such as its priorities and the position of the Polish language and culture, varied according to interlocutors' age. Older individuals, those aged over 30, usually expressed the view that the emphasis at school was mainly placed on language and subjects related to Polish culture. This was likely the result of the tendency to choose studies and work in Poland which was prevalent until the mid-90s. The younger respondents were already inclined to perceive learning Polish and Lithuanian as equally important, since the majority of graduates benefited from scholarships and preferential admissions to universities in Lithuania. However, even though they did not attribute emotional significance to the Polish language and culture (which is characteristic of those that are native) the youth did consider mastering it a civic duty and a means by which to obtain a better education. Neither the teachers nor the community leaders questioned or tried to reduce the number of hours it was taught.

The local school was the main place of contact with Polish peers, though the division into Polish and Lithuanian classes inhibited the development of mutual relations. Almost all of the interviewees from Puńsk indicated that their closest circle of friends contained only Lithuanians. Only a few respondents also maintained regular contact with Poles. In this municipality of Puńsk where Lithuanians constitute more than 80% of the population, young people perceived clear divisions between 'them and us'. This was present during children's games, and Ramūnas described it like this:

Such childish things – there were Polish classes and Lithuanian classes, so we would have snowball fights – Poles vs. Lithuanians, or we played football Polish class vs. Lithuanian class. The competition was bigger, but it didn't stretch beyond any unpleasant borders (age 34).

From a child's point of view, the divisions that were present in their smaller hometowns and villages were not significant enough to trigger painful emotions; in larger cities of the region, such as Sejny and Suwałki, they did however, sometimes have to deal with 'unpleasant situations'.

The first visits to centres dominated by Poles often became the source of a feeling of alienation. Many interlocutors recalled the situations in which, for the first time, they felt that ethnicity may have been a reason for hostility. Zita's memories are symptomatic:

I remember Sejny (...) or Suwałki. In Suwałki this wasn't felt too much, but for example you were reproached in the street for speaking Lithuanian with your mother, or you are going to the bus stop and see 'Lithuanians to the gas chamber' or 'Lithuania go home' – different ones, which were painted there. Or I remember as if it were today, once I was sitting at the doctor's, waiting for my mother, and there was some woman – then comes my brother and we start speaking Lithuanian, and she just looks at me and says, 'Such a pretty girl and a Lithuanian', You remember these... (age 28).

Similarly, Vilius experienced negative reactions during trips to sporting competitions in the region:

You would feel it very often, as I went with the football team, a feeling of disgust was present all the time. From other people, exactly from Poles. Young people all the time, some things, tires punctured on the bus, or spitting on us (man, age 25).

Situations which were incidental in Puńsk, were part of everyday life in Sejny. In Sejny, relations were of an antagonistic character due to the legacy of historical conflicts and issues surrounding their commemoration in public spaces after 1989; issues which sometimes permeated the relations between children. The Lithuanians had contact with Polish neighbours and experienced ethnic divisions from an early age. Alienation had become part of the informants' reality as early as kindergarten or elementary school. When they were identified as Lithuanians in public, it was perceived as stigmatising as Lithuanianness was associated with something lower in the community; inferior and even embarrassing. For many years there was no Lithuanian school in the city, young people had no possibility to create an enclave within their own group and had to encounter their Polish peers. While for girls the conflict manifested itself mainly in the form of malicious jokes or social isolation, boys sometimes experienced acts of physical violence, though the younger interlocutors from Sejny recalled such experiences less often. This change was a result of both the evolution of inter-ethnic relations and the creation of schools with Lithuanian as the language of instruction, which significantly reduced interactions between Polish and Lithuanian youths.

The Patterns of Interactions

Some interlocutors had experienced hatred directed towards them as Lithuanians and as a result they had developed a negative image toward the dominant society. Nevertheless, the interlocutors reported that their parents and teachers tried to uphold a patriotic spirit in them and encouraged them to resist the social pressures placed upon them, presenting Lithuanianness as something to be proud of. A good example may be the teacher's reaction, mentioned by Alicia:

I remember that our main teacher, because we complained with other girls from the class, that they call us names, that we're Lithuanian, and he told us then, 'don't be offended, because you are Lithuanian, be proud of that' (age 26).

Significant others did not encourage confrontation, but rather assigned their own positive significance to ethnic markers and resistance against provocations. They also passed on the memory of the suffering that they had experienced, which had been caused by Poles, and explained Polish behaviour as a manifestation of nationalism, dominance, and often, a lack of conviction about Poland's right to the occupied borderland territory.

The parents of the interlocutors also did not cease speaking in their native language in the public spaces of larger Polish cities, and they openly expressed their nationality. However, they were sad to recall cases of other Lithuanian families, who would switch to Polish language when going to Sejny or Suwałki. It appears, therefore, that among the parents there were two strategies for dealing with discrimination: an open expression of one's ethnicity, often accompanied by a negative evaluation and distrust of Poles, and the division into the private sphere; and the home, dominated by the Lithuanian language, but hiding their ethnicity and feigning assimilation in the public context.

The narratives show that an important model of interaction presented to young people (which also shows the extent of the distance put between themselves and Polish society) was an emphasis on ethnic endogamy. A marriage with a representative of the dominant society was presented to young people as a step on the road to assimilation and the abandonment of ethnic values and language. To a large extent, these concerns also arose from local experiences – due to the negative connotations attributed to Lithuanianness, Polish spouses were often opposed to teaching children the Lithuanian language, especially among the older generations.

Considering these experiences and the sense of pain and distrust of Poles that was present in many families, it seems therefore that we can discuss the transfer of a separation strategy towards the majority society. Here we can see an emphasis on the differences between Poles and Lithuanians in the process of socialisation. This most likely stemmed from a desire to protect children from a

sense of rejection and inferiority, and in the long term, also from the fear of losing group cohesion and, subsequently, assimilation. However, it was accompanied by an emphasis on respect for the state, a stress on civic loyalty, respect for the law and honest work.

The young people's gradual acceptance of a feeling of alienation was the result of group relations. It should be emphasised that they did not feel it in relation to the state or towards Polish culture. Although they distanced themselves from Poles, they perceived the Polish state as their own. Thanks to their participation in the Polish education system, they spoke the official language fluently, they knew and understood both the cultural canon and popular culture which was accessible through the media. They easily read the codes and cultural nuances, and did not perceive Polish values and patterns of behaviour as significantly different from those that they knew from home. Thus, they did not experience conflict, which is characteristic for migrants and ethnic minorities where there is a significant contrast with the majority society. It is symptomatic that when leaving to other Polish cities, they felt comfortable. The feelings towards Poland are summarised by Ramūnas: 'The mentality, the culture seem to me very similar. We live in the same geographical area. The only visible difference for a child was the language (age 34)'.

The importance of contacts with Poles outside of the region should also be noted. Individuals that could establish relationships with them – e.g. through family or visiting tourists – were usually treated with respect and interest. Their image of Poles was more diverse and positive, and the tendency to perceive intergroup differences was lower as a result. However, most minority representatives had no such opportunities or gained them only after having left to study in the main Polish cities.

Conclusions

The empirical materials-narratives used for the analysis show that the ethnic socialisation of the young generation of the Lithuanian minority in Poland was strong and based on participation in a particular group (cf. Schütze 1984) and primarily associated with institutions such as family, school and cultural organisations and activities connected with them. The experiences of the interlocutors varied depending on their age and background, most of them (both boys and girls) followed similar biographical action schemes regarding their choice of schools, social group and leisure activities. The Lithuanian mass culture which reached the Polish-Lithuanian borderlands through the media did not constitute competition for the local heritage. It was perceived as hybrid, and participation in it was of a strictly individualised and passive nature. In contrast to the local

traditional culture, it did not become the basis for joint activism, and therefore its importance in the fostering of bonds within the group was rather insignificant.

It is important to remember that the presented image was created *ex post*, and over the course of time. With greater experience there have also been attempts to discuss or challenge the strategies adopted within the community. However, all of the interviewees demonstrated that the ethnic socialisation process had led to its main objective – the speakers identified themselves as Lithuanians, had a sense of belonging to a national group, and developed bonds with their external homeland. Nonetheless, they assigned various meanings to this and it motivated them to take up ethnically oriented activities to different degrees. Many of them as adults defined themselves more precisely as ‘Lithuanians from Poland’, ‘Lithuanians from Puńsk’ or ‘Lithuanians from the Sejny region’, while still aware of their distinctiveness not only from Poles but also from their fellow compatriots from Lithuania. Therefore, it seems that we are dealing with the formation of a different type of ethnicity, arising from the specific practices and experiences in the minority group and under the impact of content transferred from two nation-states.

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Lietuvių mažumos Lenkijoje studentų ir baigusiujų studijas etninės socializacijos patirtis

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Santrauka

Šio straipsnio tikslas yra išanalizuoti etninės socializacijos patirtį, pagrįstą lietuvių mažumos atstovų Lenkijoje pasakojimais. Etninei socializacijai taikomas Jean Phinney ir Mary Rotherham apibrėžimas – tai procesas, kurio metu vaikai perima tam tikros etninės grupės elgesį, vertybes ir požiūrį ir dėl to kitus ir save ima laikyti šios grupės nariais (Phinney, Rotherham 1987: 11). Ši interpretacija turi dvi dimensijas: pirmoji yra kultūrinė socializacija – etninio paveldo, istorijos, papročių ir tradicijų mokymasis, kuris turi padėti sukurti pasididžiavimo priklausymu šiai etninei grupei jausmą; antroji dimensija apima sąveikos su dominuojančia grupe modelių perdavimą, taip pat pasiruošimą potencialiai diskriminacijai, pagrįstą dviem atraminiais stulpais ir strategijomis. Išskiriami keturi elementai: kultūrinė socializacija, pasiruošimas neigiamai nuostatai, nepasitikėjimo propagavimas, egalitarizmas ir tylėjimas dėl rasės. Diskusijos apie tautines mažumas Lenkijoje kontekste autorė nutarė susiaurinti šią klasifikaciją iki dviejų pagrindinių elementų – savo kultūros perdavimo ir požiūrio į svetimą grupę formavimo. Ši klasifikacija atitinka dvi pagrindines etniškumo dimensijas – bendruomenės jausmą ir išskirtinumo jausmą (Hughes, Smith, Stevenson, Rodriguez, Johnson, Spicer 2006).

Straipsnyje bandoma identifikuoti būdus, kuriais grupė sugeba apginti tiek savo ribas, tiek esmines jaunosios kartos narių vertybes, nepaisant mažėjančio grupės narių skaičiaus ir globalizacijos proceso. Autorė taip pat naudojos Rogerso Brubakerio „trigubos konfigūracijos“ sąvoka (Brubaker 1996), kuri aiškina mažumos situaciją pasitelkdama trijų elementų prizmės metaforą, t. y. per santykius mažumos grupės viduje, su mažumos kilmės tėvyne už gyvenamosios šalies ribų (angl. *external national homeland*) ir su gyvenamąja šalimi. Kita vertus, autorė taiko šią makroteoriją individualiu lygmeniu ir analizuoja, kaip šios skirtingos dimensijos sąveikauja tarpusavyje ir padeda formuoti individo identitetą.

Šis straipsnis yra paremtas tyrimu, kuris trejus metus buvo atliekamas su lietuvių tautinės mažumos jaunosios kartos atstovais. Išanalizuoti 65 interviu su 19–36 metų dalyviais. Interviu buvo atlikti Lenkijos–Lietuvos pasienio ruože, Vilniuje, Kaune ir Varšuvoje. Tiriamieji buvo žmonės, kilę iš lietuvių mažumos Lenkijoje, kurie užaugo pasienio teritorijoje (Punsko ir Seinų parapijose), o vėliau paliko savo bendruomenę ir išvažiavo studijuoti į didesnius Lenkijos ir

Lietuvos miestus. Analizės struktūra apibrėžiama naudojantis trimis minėtomis Brubakerio dimensijomis.

Mažumos grupės dimensija. Šiame skyriuje identifikuojami pagrindiniai socializacijos šaltiniai – perdavimas šeimoje (ypač gimtosios kalbos ir prisirišimo prie teritorijos), perdavimas mokykloje ir veikla, koncentruota į tradicinės lietuvių kultūros stiprinimą. Parodoma, kad edukacinių strategijų skatinimas ir mokyklų, kuriose mokomoji kalba yra lietuvių, švietimo svarbos suvokimas ir yra būdas, kuriuo stiprinami etniniai santykiai. Stiprus priklausymo grupei ir įsitraukimo į etninę veiklą jausmas skatina šį procesą. Dėl šių veiksmų jaunoji karta ima laikyti lietuvių mažumą pagrindine ir patraukliausia saviidentifikacijos grupe.

Kilmės tėvynės už gyvenamosios šalies ribų dimensija. Išskiriami du lietuvių šeimų tipai – tos šeimos, kurios orientuojasi į mažumos grupę, ir tos, kurios orientuojasi į kilmės tėvynę. Parodomi skirtingi būdai, kuriais šios šeimos konstruoja tėvynės įvaizdį vaikų sąmonėje. Analizuojama, kaip jauni žmonės suvokia Lietuvą, svarbiausios jų patirtys šeimoje ir mokykloje, kurios padėjo sukonstruoti šią sampratą. Taip pat aprašomi jų turėti tiesioginės sąveikos su kilmės tėvyne atvejai skirtingais jų gyvenimo etapais.

Gyvenamosios šalies dimensija. Apibūdinamas vaidmuo, kurį vaidina abiejų minėtų tipų perdavimas, gautas iš artimų žmonių, ir asmeninių sąveikų su lenkais patirtys formuojant požiūrį į dominuojančią visuomenę. Fiksuojamas tam tikras svetimumo lenkams iš to paties regiono jausmas, kurį patyrė daugelis apklaustųjų paauglystėje, tačiau jis buvo lydimas gero lenkų kultūros supratimo ir lojalumo lenkų valstybei.

Straipsnyje ypatingas dėmesys skiriamas informantų patirčių įvairovei, priklausomai nuo jų amžiaus ir gyvenamosios vietos, ypač ryškūs skirtumai Punsko savivaldybėje (kurioje lietuviai sudaro daugumą gyventojų) ir Seinų savivaldybėje (kuriai būdinga maišyta etninė sudėtis ir gyva ankstesnių etninių konfliktų istorinė atmintis). Surinkti pasakojimai rodo, kad lietuvių mažumos jaunosios kartos etninė socializacija buvo stipri ir grindžiama tam tikrais institucionalizuotos gyvenimo tėkmės modeliais. Šie modeliai susiję su atskirais gyvenimo etapais ir dalyvavimu specifinėse grupėse (Schütze 1984). Etninė socializacija pirmiausia asocijuojama su tokiais institucijomis kaip šeima, mokykla, kultūrinės organizacijos ir su jomis susieta veikla. Šių modelių nuoseklumą parodo tas faktas, kad nors pašnekovų patirtys labai skyrėsi, priklausomai nuo jų amžiaus ir kilmės vietos, tačiau dauguma jų atkartotojo panašią biografinių veiksmų schemą, įžvelgiamą jiems pasirenkant mokyklą, socialinę grupę ir laisvalaikio veiklą.

Etninė socializacija pasiekė savo pagrindinį tikslą – visi informantai laikė save lietuviais, išreiškė priklausymo tautinei grupei jausmą ir užmezgė ryšius

su savo kilmės tėvyne. Nepaisant to, kad visi jie šiems veiksniams priskyrė skirtingą reikšmę, tai nevienodai motyvavo juos įsitraukti į veiklą, susijusią su etniškumu. Daugelis jų, kaip ir vyresniosios kartos atstovai, identifikavo save kaip „lietuvius iš Lenkijos“, „lietuvius iš Punsko“ arba „lietuvius iš Seinų regiono“, taip suvokdami savo atskirumą ne tik nuo lenkų, bet ir nuo tėvynainių Lietuvoje. Taigi panašu, kad šis tyrimas liudija apie skirtingo tipo etniškumo formavimąsi, kuris kyla iš mažumos grupei būdingų praktikų bei patirčių ir yra veikiamas dviejų tautinių valstybių perduodamo turinio.

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