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## Ethnic Topics and Intolerance in Lithuanian Media: Analysis of Daily Newspapers

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**SUMMARY.** This article focuses on an analysis of the representation of ethnic minorities, refugees, immigrants, and other groups, as well as other ethnic topics, in the Lithuanian press. It aims to disclose the dominant characteristics ascribed to these groups. The analysis is based on a classification of the manifestations of ethnic intolerance in the mass media, which ranges from open, aggressive and recognisable forms to subtle, implicitly rendered forms of intolerance. The article presents the general results of monitoring carried out by the Centre of Ethnic Studies of ethnic topics in the Lithuanian press. It includes examples of ethnic intolerance and xenophobia in the Lithuanian press. The analysis is based on data from 2005.

The results of the analysis demonstrate a significantly growing amount of information on ethnic issues, but the content of the information is exclusively negative. The ethnic or religious groups mentioned most often in the Lithuanian press occur in the following sequence according to fre-

quency: Russians, Jews, Roma, Muslims, and immigrants. These groups are ascribed strongly negative characteristics, while little attention is paid to their real problems. The information also remains one-sided, without including the opinion of minorities or allowing them to participate in a dialogue. Each group is related to a specific topic in the press: in the case of Russians, political issues dominate; in the case of Jews, the issues are centred around the restitution of real estate; in the case of Roma, the focus is on criminal news (especially drug dealing) and an exhaustive description of everyday life and living conditions; and in the case of Muslims and immigrants, the spotlight is on ascribed cultural characteristics. In most cases, ethnic intolerance is constructed through relatively „weaker“ forms of ethnic intolerance in the press (e.g. creating a negative image of the ethnic group while using a certain „tone“ in a text or mentioning an ethnic or religious group within a humiliating context, etc.) and is closely related to the strengthening of negative attitudes among the public and tendencies of ethnic intolerance towards certain ethnic groups.

The Lithuanian press tends to repeat the opinions dominating in the European media, which emphasise cultural differences rather than the social problems that are faced by groups such as refugees, immigrants, or Chechens. While confronting new immigrant groups, the Lithuanian press emphasises threatening aspects by focusing on conflict in refugee reception centres, illegal activities, etc. and in that way inciting xenophobic attitudes. This discourse has been stable during the past several years; the discrimination faced by non-Lithuanians and immigrants, facilitation of their integration, and reasons for asylum seeking are still rare topics of discussion. Comparative studies of the European Union member states confirm that once established the negative discourse regarding migrants or ethnic minority groups tends to dominate. It also becomes a „fixed“ menu in which the description of an event occurs in an iterative sequence of statements, actions and conclusions. Small communities, however, have limited opportunities to influence the informational background and context.

It is worth noticing that increased attention to different ethnic groups in the Lithuanian press corresponds to the data of public opinion polls that indicate stronger negative attitudes towards certain ethnic groups. According to the results of the polls, the ethnic intolerance towards the Roma is the highest. The intolerance of Lithuanian people towards Muslims and immigrant groups is also increasing together with growing attention in the media. The assumption that information about ethnic groups in the media may constitute a significant factor in the changes in public opinion should therefore not be rejected.

## Ethnic Intolerance in the Lithuanian Internet Media: Comments on the Internet

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**SUMMARY.** In a democratic society, freedom of speech and freedom of the press are directly associated with social responsibility, social integration, and tolerance. Still, cases of discrimination or ethnic intolerance in the media and questions of preventing racism, xenophobia, and other forms of ethnic intolerance are of extreme importance for the society's discussions. National and international laws and professional regulations define media practices. The case of internet media and especially the case of comments on news portals give a possibility to take a new look at public discourse. In this case, interactive, free internet media is a specific, intolerance-sensitive space. The subject of this research is the phenomenon of ethnic intolerance. It is still a sensitive theme in society. Only recently have cases of intolerance in the comments sections of news portals gained more attention in society and the media. This case study of comments in the internet media turns our attention to the spreading of overt ethnic intolerance in the media.

## How do Lithuanians Comment Articles on Ethnic Topics? Insights from Internet Comments

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**SUMMARY.** While analysing the comments on internet portals, the author aims at disclosing an invisible public discourse. Along with politics and basketball, ethnic topics are distinct in attracting the attention of commentators. This article is based on a detailed analysis of the comments about ethnic topics on the internet news portal DELFI in March 2005. Even though the specific content of the articles about ethnic topics changed over time, in the period of just one month the same categories and stereotypes could be recognised in the discussions of the commentators. The paper is based on the assumption that an author of a comment translates and reproduces ideas that exist in the social environment. While providing an analysis of the comments on the articles related to Jews and Roma and issues connected with the relations between Russia and Lithuania, the author of the paper maintains that there are few ideas related to ethnic topics. The latter disclose old stereotypes in the comments and provide no reference to social engagement. The second part of the article presents recommendational guidelines concerning the prevention of ethnic intolerance on the internet in Lithuania.

Pabrėžtina, kad Lietuvoje periodiškai pasitaiko rasistinio pobūdžio nusikaltimų, kurie pagal pobūdį skirstytini į keturias kategorijas: smurtiniai nusikaltimai, išpuoliai žiniasklaidoje, viešos demonstracijos ir vandalizmo aktai. Panašiams nusikaltimams dažniausiai būdingas antisemitizmo atspalvis, pasireiškiantis tiek įvairių ekstremistinių veikėjų ar organizacijų propagandinėmis akcijomis, tiek žydams svarbių vietų (kapinių ar holokausto memorialų) išniekinimu. Rasistinio pobūdžio smurtinių nusikaltimų pagrindiniu objektu tampa į Lietuvą atvykę kitų tautybių ir rasių užsienio valstybių piliečiai.

Kita vertus, šiuo metu greičiausiai nevertėtų suabsoliutinti dešiniojo ekstremizmo vaidmens Lietuvos visuomeniniame gyvenime. Neabejotina, kad ekstremizmas egzistuoja valstybėje kaip reiškinys, tačiau dėl pernelyg menko masto jis iš esmės lieka nepastebėtas didesnės visuomenės dalies. Dauguma šiame straipsnyje aptartų faktų nėra plačiau nušviesti nacionalinėje žiniasklaidoje, todėl faktiškai žinomi tik siauram, specialiai šia sritimi besidominčių žmonių ratui. Neatmestina prielaida, kad dėl panašios informacijos stokos Lietuvos visuomenėje vyrauja atsinaus požiūrio į dešinįjį ekstremizmą tendencija.

## Right-wing Extremism in Lithuania

*Giedrius Kiaulakis*

THE HOUSE OF MEMORY, STUDIES AND COMMEMORATION OF THE HOLOCAUST AND JEWISH HERITAGE IN LITHUANIA

**SUMMARY.** The article focuses on the manifestations of right-wing extremism in Lithuania over the past several years. Information for this paper was collected from currently valid legislation of Lithuania, newspapers and leaflets disseminated by individuals and organisations that promote ideas of extremism, the independent mass media, information agencies, and the internet and during public events. The first part of the article discloses the beginnings of extremist organisations, the peculiarities of their structures and strategies, and the content of their ideological attitudes. A thorough analysis of the information enables the author to identify similarities in the activities of Lithuanian political parties that have a legal status and of informal groups. These organisations are therefore identified as the main research objects. The second part of the article deals with the role of the representatives of right-wing extremists in crimes bearing a racist nature. The latter are analysed on the basis of the following classification: racist violence, hate speech in the media, public demonstrations, and acts of vandalism. The analysis also identifies the most vulnerable groups in terms of the different kinds of racist violence. It also discusses the motives for the aforementioned crimes and the legal responsibility applied to offenders. One of the main focuses of the research is the dissemination of racist propaganda in the Lithuanian media. This analysis of the phenomena of right-wing extremism in Lithuania points out that anti-Semitism is one of the main objects related to racist crimes and is one of the main aspects of the activities of extremist organisations. The article concludes that although right-wing extremism is not very influential in Lithuania, one can find signs of its manifestation both in politics and everyday life. Right-wing extremism most often manifests itself in anti-Semitic campaigns and xenophobic rhetoric against foreigners.

## Challenges for Roma Education

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**SUMMARY.** This article by and large relies on a 2004 study about Roma in the public educational system in Lithuania that was initiated by the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC). The paper also presents data on Roma age structure and considers the problems identified by recent non-governmental initiatives. The marginalised social situation of Roma in Lithuania, which is a factor that complicates their inclusion into the educational system, has not really improved since 2004.

The article focuses on various aspects related to Roma education such as educational attainment, illiteracy, and knowledge of the Lithuanian language and introduces a range of data on Roma pupils. Through analysis of educational policy context and policy practices, challenges to Roma education are identified. A review of good practices is used to complement the picture of Roma-oriented educational initiatives. Problems of low attendance and dropping out are related to the fact that many Roma children start school at an older age than other children. Although high drop-out rates amongst Roma are commonly considered to be one of the main problems in the Roma educational process, the timely inclusion of new school entrants into the school system should be strongly emphasised as a critical step to help break the vicious circle. There is a certain degree of disproportional concentration of Roma pupils in special schools because they provide better social assistance. At the same time social assistance needs of the Roma are not being met by the general education system. Pre-school education and systematic assistance from social workers and special educators proved to be a successful policy leading to improved school attendance and better performance. There are grounds to believe that acknowledging and working with the specific social and educational needs of the Roma will strengthen their position in mainstream education. The way to avoid a discriminatory effect and segregation is an emphasis on individual needs assessment rather than on treating the Roma as a group. The challenge for the education system is to provide training and support to those teachers who take on extra work with such pupils. The public educational system has so far made little effort to benefit from the experience of non-governmental actors or the experience of other public institutions that work with the Roma. Systematic and continuous change can only be achieved with a clear governmental perspective on Roma educational issues.

# Common Values and Social Cohesion in Ethnically Divided Societies

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**ABSTRACT.** This paper raises the question, „What keeps human collectivities from disintegrating in ethnically divided societies?“ By providing a review of the main western sociological theories that investigate the role ascribed to values in multiethnic societies in particular, the authors provide an overview of value-based nation-building in Russia. Data from the empirical investigation of value cohesion and common identity in Russia’s six regions tests President Putin’s nation-building program and attitudes towards a common state and common nationhood. The study tends to confirm the existence of a common pool of „Rossiiskie“ values.

**Key words:** VALUES, COHESION, IDENTITY, ETHNICALLY DIVIDED SOCIETIES, RUSSIA.

Much social science literature is based on the implicit assumption that a broad agreement of values in the population is a prerequisite for social cohesion and for the development of a unified national identity. Taras Kuzio, for one, asserts that „a cohesive society cannot be constructed without a minimum body of common values, encoded in legislation and constitution. These values cannot be wholly morally neutral as they inevitably endorse one type of behaviour and set of values.“ (Kuzio 2001: 147). In a book published in 2000, one of the authors of this article expressed similar thoughts himself. On the dust cover of *Political Construction Sites. Nation-building in Russia and the Post-Soviet States*, Pål Kolstø maintained that

In order to survive in the long run, modern states normally must have a population that possesses some sense of unity. Its citizens must adhere to some common values and common allegiance toward the same state institutions and symbols. This does not mean that all inhabitants must necessarily share the same culture, but they should at least regard themselves as members of the same nation. (Kolstø 2000)

However, later on some of the presuppositions raised doubts, in particular: is it really the case that all or most citizens of a state must adhere to some common values in order to secure the state’s survival? And if that is really the case, why is it so? Which common values are we then talking about?