

# Ethnic Structure, Inequality and Governance of the Public Sector in Lithuania

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## Introduction

The social, political, and economic changes that took place in the 1990s in Lithuania have influenced the strategies of all ethnic groups in the public sphere. These strategies include adaptations to new requirements of citizenship, the need for civic loyalty and knowledge of the state language, and participation in newly formed bodies in the private and non-governmental sector. Individuals actively embraced the changes, adopted a passive posture, or avoided adaptation by emigrating or living in closed communities. The issues of statehood and independence have had an impact on the relatively young history of Lithuania's democracy. Like most countries of Eastern Europe, the ethnic understanding of a nation has deep roots, whereas the civic understanding of the concept is relatively rare or of recent origin. The Soviet period spawned a process of labour migration, especially for specialists and qualified workers, from Russia. During the early years of independence, therefore, there was a tendency for people with higher qualifications to emigrate from Lithuania as the ideology of cultural nationalism took place.

Socio-economic inequalities and differences are not very striking among most ethnic groups, although ethnic Lithuanians' participation in the labour market is better than other groups. Ethnic minorities and ethnic Lithuanians organize themselves separately to influence the composition of the public sector, although they collaborate in the electoral processes and the formation of political bodies and coalitions. Electoral data suggest that most minority MPs are elected on the platforms of the ethnic, Lithuanian-led political parties. However, minority parties are weakly represented in the Seimas

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<sup>1</sup> The article is authored by Natalija Kasatkina (1949–2008), who was the founder of the *Ethnicity Studies* journal and a head of the Centre of Ethnic Studies ([www.ces.lt](http://www.ces.lt)). Republishing of this article in Lithuania is an important contribution to placing ethnic studies in a broader context of public issues – an aspect that was always pursued by N. Kasatkina, and that is no less acute in Lithuania today.

(Parliament). There is, indeed, an unequal distribution of power among ethnic groups in Lithuania's public sector. Minority participation in the higher levels of political and governmental institutions is low. The advantages enjoyed by ethnic Lithuanians in the public sector are related to their numerical superiority and the nation-state project, which tends to treat ethnic Lithuanians as an indigenous group. However, minority parties are better represented in governments of municipal areas, where minority groups constitute a large proportion of the population.

The next section of this chapter discusses the ethnic cleavages in Lithuania. This is followed by an analysis of the legal framework established at independence to protect minority rights. Subsequent sections focus on the dynamics of representation of ethnic groups in key public institutions, including those at the local level of government.

## Ethnic diversity

Lithuania is a multi-ethnic state, with a population of 3.5 million, in which one ethnic group, Lithuanians, accounts for an overwhelming majority. For more than a century, Lithuanians have comprised four-fifths of the population. According to the 2001 Census, whereas 115 nationalities live in Lithuania, only 29 nationalities account for 100 or more people. Lithuanians account for 83.5 per cent of the population, Poles make up 6.7 per cent, Russians 6.3 per cent, Belarusians 1.2 per cent and Ukrainians 0.7 per cent (See Table 1). Jews, Germans, Tatars, Latvians and the Roma people make up 0.2 per cent, while 0.9 per cent of the population did not indicate their nationality. Citizens of the Republic of Lithuania make up 99 per cent of the population, citizens of the Russian Federation account for 0.4 per cent, citizens of other countries constitute 0.2 per cent, those without citizenship 0.3 per cent, and 0.1 per cent of the population did not indicate their citizenship.

The ethnic composition of Lithuania has experienced great changes due to historical developments. Migration has played a large role in the process of formation of ethnic groups and communities. Considerable changes in the population began in 1940 and were related to the population losses of Second World War, the demolition of towns and depopulation. This period included the Holocaust, emigration of the Polish intelligentsia and Soviet deportations, which predominantly affected the majority group (as well as minority groups, such as Russians). All in all, between 1940 and 1958, Lithuania lost about one million people.

The first decades of the Soviet period (1945–79) included the industrialization and centralization of the economy. Due to forced military

and economic migration, groups of labour migrants (mainly the Russian speaking population) migrated to Lithuania until 1988. Between 1979 and 1989, the relative growth of the Russian population in Lithuania was one of the highest in the former Soviet Union (Демографический ежегодник 1990: 580–608). This was related to the construction of the Ignalina nuclear power plant in Visaginas and other industrial enterprises. The migration of the labour force of other nationalities formed an ethnic group of first-generation immigrants. In the Soviet period, about 150,000 Russians and people of Russian-speaking nationalities were moved to, or began to settle in, Lithuania. Since 1990, the process of the restoration of independent states has stimulated emigration (and re-emigration) of the population of non-titular nationalities from the Baltic States.

The process of emigration was critical in 1992 but has ebbed since 1993. The departures increased by approximately 200 per cent during 1989–92 and reached a peak in 1992 (an increase from 15,000–16,000 to 29,000). Russians and other Slavic nations emigrated to the East, and Jews to the West. Between 1989 and 1994, 93 per cent of the emigrants from Lithuania to the republics of the former Soviet Union were non-Lithuanians. Emigration to Western countries was not very extensive, although its share in total emigration has been increasing, especially since May 2004, when Lithuania joined the European Union. In 1990, emigration from Lithuania to the West accounted for 12.3 per cent of total emigration. In 2000 it reached 45.5 per cent. (*Lietuvos demografiniai*, 1995, *Lietuvos gyventojai*, 2002).

The population in rural areas is more homogeneous than in urban areas. In rural areas, Lithuanians comprise 87.7 per cent of the population, and in urban areas 81.4 per cent. The figures for Poles are 6 per cent and 8.4 per cent respectively, and for Russians 8.2 per cent and 2.4 per cent respectively. Due to historical and other causes, certain regions have large ethnic minority groups. Eastern Lithuania is multi-ethnic: half of the population is Lithuanian and one third Polish. One fifth of Lithuania's Belarusians and one tenth of Lithuania's Russians are concentrated in eastern Lithuania. Poles constitute an absolute majority in the region of Šalčininkai (79.5 per cent Poles; 10.4 per cent Lithuanians; 5.0 per cent Russians) and the region of Vilnius (61.3 per cent Poles; 22.4 per cent Lithuanians; 8.4 per cent Russians). Russians live mostly in the Zarasai, Švenčionys and Trakai regions, but do not constitute a majority in any of these regions. Lithuanians are a minority in the regions of Šalčininkai, Vilnius, Švenčionys and the town of Visaginas (where the Russian population comprises 52.4 per cent, Lithuanians 15 per cent, and Poles 8.6 per cent) (See Table 6).

## Legal framework for protecting minority rights

Since the re-establishment of the independent state in 1990, the Republic of Lithuania has pursued a policy of promoting the cultural identity of the ethnic majority group with a special focus on inherited cultural traditions and Lithuanian as a state language. The need to include minority groups into the state-building process has also been recognized. During the first decade of independence, many steps were taken to ensure the civil integration of representatives of Lithuania's ethnic groups. Lithuanian legislation does not contain any definition of the concept of national minority or a group of persons recognized as a national minority. There are no linguistic or ethnic groups that are not considered national minorities.

The 1992 Constitution contains articles that explicitly mention the rights of ethnic minorities and prohibit any discrimination or granting any privileges on the basis of ethnic background, race, sex, language, origin, social status, religion, convictions or opinion. Citizens who belong to ethnic communities shall have the right to foster their language, culture and customs. Ethnic communities of citizens shall independently administer the affairs of their ethnic culture, education, organizations, charity and mutual assistance. The Constitution binds the state to support national minorities. The main laws regulating ethnic minorities' status are the following: the Law on Ethnic Minorities, the Law on the Official Language of the Republic of Lithuania, the Law on Education, the Law on Citizenship, the Law on Non-Governmental Organizations, the Law on Public Information, the Law on Religious Communities and the Law on Political Parties and Organizations. The Law on Migration and the Legal Status of Aliens is also worth mentioning.

One of the important legal documents on the status of minorities is the 1989 Law on Ethnic Minorities of the Republic of Lithuania. This law, and subsequent amendments to it, established a whole system of legal protection of the rights of national minorities and communities. During a twelve-year period it was amended three times. In 2001, the Department of National Minorities and Lithuanians Living Abroad by the Government of Lithuania and the Co-ordination Council prepared a new draft of the Law. It states that a person can freely decide whether s/he wants to be treated as a member of national minority. In 2002, a new working group was formed to draw up amendments and finally approve the previously prepared law. Despite preparations and work on the draft Law on National Minorities since 2000, the Law is yet to be discussed in the Seimas.

The 1989 Law on Citizenship did not set any special prerequisites for acquiring citizenship (the so called 'zero-option'). Almost all permanent residents of the country who sought Lithuanian citizenship would be granted citizens, irrespective of their nationality, duration of residence in the country

or knowledge of the state language. A more stringent Citizenship Law was introduced in 1991, according to which applicants for naturalization must have lived in the country for ten years, must be permanently employed (or have a legal source of income), and must pass an examination on the Lithuanian language and the provisions of the Constitution. At the end of 2002, a draft Law on Citizenship was prepared and passed in the Seimas. It even gave rise to some international repercussions because of its discriminatory provisions in distinguishing between the ethnic origins of two types of citizens – ‘Lithuanians’ and ‘non-Lithuanians’. According to the authors, this provision is related to Lithuanians living abroad and provides them with an opportunity to retain their Lithuanian citizenship. However, the Lithuanian Jewish community and Polish organizations in Lithuania expressed public disquiet.

The emergence of the Law on Citizenship and associated considerations once again confirm that issues of ethnicity and nationality are sensitive, although they are not widely considered in public. Another example was a proposal, prepared by a group of MPs in September 2004, to limit eligibility for the post of prime minister to Lithuanian citizens. The proposal, signed by 37 MPs, proposed a referendum to amend Article 91 of the Constitution, which defines the composition of the government.

While the 1998 Law on Equal Opportunities for Men and Women focused on gender, in order to comply with EU anti-discrimination legislation, the national policy framework has been revised. The revised Law on Equal Opportunities was passed in November 2003 and came into force on 1 January 2005. The competence of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsman, who has the power to investigate complaints made by individuals with regard to discrimination in employment or training, has been expanded to include race, ethnicity, religion, age and sexual orientation. The new law provides a legal definition of direct and indirect discrimination. The new legislation also establishes the principle of ‘public duty’, i.e. an obligation on the state sector to promote equal opportunities (EUMC, 2003).

Lithuania has signed and ratified various international covenants and conventions: the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the UN International Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights; the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities of the United Nations; the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms; and the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. However, the Charter on Regional or Minority Languages has not been yet ratified.

Although legally defined mechanisms are crucial to the development of a civic society, they are not sufficient for social development and social relations. Negative attitudes in ethnic relations have yet to be overcome.

## Socio-economic inequalities

Socio-economic inequalities among ethnic groups in Lithuania are not sharp. However, research indicates that social differences among ethnic groups do exist. Since 2002, Statistics Lithuania has been amassing data on unemployment by ethnicity (Labour Force, 2004). The data for both 2002 and 2003 suggest that unemployment amongst national minorities is significantly higher than the national average. In 2003, while unemployment stood at 11.7 per cent amongst Lithuanians, the level amongst the Russian and Polish minorities was 18.7 per cent and 13.9 per cent respectively. Unemployment among other minorities (e.g. Belarusians, Ukrainians, etc.) was also higher than average (15.3 per cent). Caution should be exercised in making simplistic assertions with respect to disparities between the Lithuanian majority and national minorities *vis à vis* key labour market indicators since explanations are, in reality, complex and multifaceted. In general, one can conclude that Russians, while being a relatively younger and better educated community, face the worst prospects in the labour market. The question remains whether the relatively higher levels of unemployment among minority ethnic groups can be explained by reference to their gender, age, education or geographic characteristics.

Lithuania provides minorities with opportunities to participate in the state educational system. Students of minority status are taught in their native language at secondary level and receive their training largely in the state language at tertiary level. However, the differences in educational attainments among minority groups are evident and are closely related to further outcomes in the labour market. Table 2 shows educational attainment rates and the variance between minorities at various levels.

The 2001 census data indicate that the highest level of education is attained by representatives of statistically smaller minority groups (the Jewish, Armenian and Ukrainians communities); therefore, the figures should be interpreted with caution. The Russian minority has higher educational attainment rates than both the national average and the Lithuanian majority; however, the Russian minority has the highest levels of unemployment.

The Polish minority significantly underperforms with regard to the national average in terms of educational attainment, with only half as many pupils per 1,000 inhabitants completing university level education as the Lithuanian majority. A considerable proportion of the Polish population lives in rural areas where educational attainment rates, particularly at the higher education level, are significantly lower than average compared with urban areas.

The figures also confirm that the Roma minority has the worst performance rate with respect to educational attainment, as on many other indicators. Only 59 out of every 1,000 Roma are educated at further education and/or higher education levels. Researchers, however, express doubt regarding the

accuracy of the statistics with respect to the educational attainment of the Roma minority, since their opinion suggests that the numbers with a higher education are significantly lower than that indicated in the table. Similarly, illiteracy and the proportion of Roma failing to complete basic schooling are much higher than for other national minorities.

Some differences at the level of secondary education in certain ethnic groups, e.g. Jews, can be explained by demographic characteristics. In the case of the Jewish community, which has a high number of older people, the rate of secondary education is lower in comparison with the rate of higher education.

Another issue relating to the participation of ethnic groups in the public sector is the state language, as many employees of the Lithuanian public sector are required by law to have a functional knowledge of the Lithuanian language. Knowledge of the state language became a prerequisite for representatives of national minorities just after independence. This is supported by data of the Department of the State Language of the Teacher Professional Development Centre, which organizes state language examinations according to the state language requirements for job applications. The data show that the main flows of applicants were in 1993–97, and significantly decreased in 2001. According to the 2001 Census data, the majority of non-Lithuanians (62 per cent or 356,000) know the Lithuanian language (among Russians this share comprises 66 per cent; Poles, 62 per cent; Belarusians, 54 per cent; and Ukrainians, 58 per cent). There is no documented evidence of job dismissals based on the language law. Command of the state language is not a problem or an obstacle for ethnic minority employment in the public sector.

In general, the 2001 Census data on employment indicate a concentration of representatives of ethnic groups in different positions within the structure of the employed population. Nearly one tenth of Lithuanians (9 per cent) work in the highest ranks among legislators, senior officers and clerks, while among Poles and Russians this is 5 per cent and 7 per cent respectively. While 16 per cent of Lithuanians work as specialists and 10 per cent as junior specialists, the percentages among Poles are 9 per cent and 7 per cent respectively, and among Russians 14 per cent and 8 per cent respectively. Due to the geographic concentration of the Polish population in rural areas, 10 per cent of Poles are employed in agriculture, whereas among Russians this is just 5 per cent. Poles and Russians outnumber Lithuanians as skilled workers (18, 19 and 13 per cent, respectively) and as unskilled workers (11, 8 and 7 per cent, respectively). While Lithuanians tend to be specialists, Poles and Russians are more often skilled workers. Less significant differences are observed in the services and trade sectors. With regard to junior officers and the armed forces, the numbers by professional categories do not differ among the three ethnic groups (See Table 3).

Sociological research findings suggest that mono-ethnic segments exist in the labour market (specifically in small scale enterprises) (Kasatkina & Leončikas, 2003).<sup>2</sup> This may be indirect evidence of the problems that minorities face in adapting to the labour market. However, when comparing self-assessments of changes in the social status among different ethnic groups, one can say that non-Lithuanians are more likely to assess their social status as getting worse than that Lithuanians (See Table 4). The majority of Lithuanians believe that their personal situation has improved (40 per cent indicate that their status has risen), while 44 per cent of Russians indicate that their social status has worsened. This leads to the conclusion that self-assessment is not related to income level, but rather to social or symbolic differences in the social structure.

An analysis of educational attainment and employment trends enables us to conclude that despite democratic legislation and promotion of equal rights, a correlation between ethnicity and socio-economic outcomes can be observed. Russians and Poles hold similar positions with regard to employment, although their attainments in education are different, as Russians show higher educational levels but are more disadvantaged with regard to both the labour market and the professional categories. The situation of the Russians has also been influenced by the impact of the Soviet period and its effects on subsequent migration, as the tendency of Russians with higher qualifications to emigrate was a feature of the first years of independence.

The above analysis provides a basis for discussing ethnic cleavages in the public sector.

## Political participation

Since the beginning of the restoration of Lithuania's independence, the transition from a one-party communist state to a multi-party system has been an ongoing process. The 1992 Law on the Seimas Elections introduced a mixed majority-proportional electoral system and established that 71 members would be elected in single-mandate constituencies, and 70 seats would be filled on a proportional basis. All parties needed 4 per cent of the total votes to enter the Seimas, except for political organizations representing ethnic minorities. After the amendments to the Law in 1996, the threshold for a single party was increased to 5 per cent and for an inter-party coalition to 7 per cent. The special threshold of 2 per cent for minority ethnic parties was abolished. These changes reflected a desire to tighten electoral competition around a small set of competitors.

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<sup>2</sup> Nearly half of the Russian and the Polish respondents (44–45%) maintain that they work in an ethnically homogeneous environment.

The 1994 Law on Local Elections to the Municipal Councils adopted proportional representation, with parties as the only entities to nominate candidates. A 4 per cent threshold was set for entry to local government bodies. These regulations are favourable to the political parties of national minorities. Municipal elections are held every three years. In 2002, an amendment to the Law on Local Elections was introduced to enfranchise residents of electoral districts who are not citizens of Lithuania. The first political parties and organizations were formed in 1990. Since then many parties have been reorganized. The last political party was registered in October 2003. At the end of 2003, the general list of political parties and organizations included 30 entities, with five bodies representing ethnic minorities. The Polish minority was the first to form an organization, and in 1992 the Polish Union was registered (in the 1990 Seimas, it had eight representatives; in 1992, four representatives). In 1994, it was transformed to the Polish Election Action, which took part in the elections of 1996 and had two representatives in the Seimas. In 2000, it also had two representatives. In 2002, a new Polish party was registered, the Lithuanian Polish People's Party, but it was successful only in municipal elections.

In 1996, the Union of Lithuanian Citizens was registered; subsequently, it was transformed into the Alliance of National Minorities, the candidates of which participated in the elections, although the party had no representatives in the Seimas. This organization was, perhaps, the most multi-ethnic, as it included representatives of the Jewish, Russian and Polish populations as well as those of other nationalities. The Union of Lithuanian Russians was registered in 1995, but it did not have any representatives in the Seimas until 2000. In 2002, a new political party, the Russian Alliance Union, was registered in Klaipėda and took part in the municipal elections. The membership of the ethnic minorities' parties range from 500 to 1,000.

In 2003, among the mainstream political parties, the Lithuanian Social Democratic party and the Homeland Union had more than 12,000 members; the New Union (Social Liberals) and Liberal Democrats had over 4,000 members; and the Liberal and Central Union, and Labour party had over 3,000 members. The level of participation of minorities in these parties is very low.

Since 1990, Lithuania's Seimas (including the Supreme Council of the Republic of Lithuania in 1990–92) has always included representatives of national minorities, although their proportion is nearly two times lower than their relative share of the population. Between the 1990 and 2000 Seimas elections, opportunities for the representatives of national minorities to be elected have decreased. Whereas in the 1990 Seimas representatives of national minorities accounted for 13.5 per cent (19 members) in the 2000–4 Seimas, they accounted for only 9.9 per cent (14 members) (See Table 5).

In 1992 and 1996, Lithuania's Seimas was more ethnically homogeneous. The number of parliamentarians of Polish nationality decreased most significantly in 1996, and 1992 saw a decrease of Russian parliamentarians. The number of Lithuanians slightly increased in 1992 compared to 1990, and remained similar in 1996. In 2000, the number of representatives of national minorities doubled compared to 1996.

In the first official election to the Seimas in 1992, the number of candidates of national minorities was lower. Besides the changing institutional structure of the state, such processes as migration, repatriation or retirement from active participation in politics are important explanations for the decline. In 1992, when the left-wing parties came to power, the majority of the representatives of national minorities were elected through the lists of the Lithuanian Democratic Labour Party and the Lithuanian Social Democratic Party. In 1996, when the Homeland Union (Lithuanian Conservatives) won the majority of the seats in the Seimas, the number of representatives of minority origin decreased. In 2000, the turn-out was slightly higher, and more coalitions and new political parties competed in the elections.

In 1996, when the Homeland Union (Lithuanian Conservatives) won the majority of the seats (70) in the Seimas, two non-Lithuanians were elected on its list. Two other non-Lithuanian members represented the Lithuanian Democratic Labour party (12 seats), and one non-Lithuanian represented the Lithuanian Social Democratic Party (12 seats). In 2000, the turn-out was slightly higher, and more coalitions and new political parties competed in the elections. The majority of minority representatives (7) represented the Social Democratic Coalition (28 seats) and four were elected on the platform of the New Union (Social Liberals with 19 seats).

Some mainstream parties supported by minority groups have representatives of ethnic minorities in their organizational structures, although representatives of minority groups do not hold any posts in the highest governing bodies of such parties. Newly established parties (e.g. the Women's Party, the New Union (Social Liberals)) tend to mobilize social groups that have not yet participated in politics. On the whole, such categories as age, gender and ethnicity are sensitive in the political sphere as these groups tend to be under-represented or even excluded. Although socially vulnerable categories, such as ethnic minority groups, are included in the early formative period of such parties, these young parties tend to exclude them when they become successful. Parties such as the Homeland Union and the Social Democratic Party have made few attempts to include representatives of ethnic minorities.

The electoral data indicate that there is no significant difference between single-member constituencies and proportional representation districts as avenues for electing non-Lithuanian candidates into the Seimas. The left-wing and centrist political parties (e.g. the Lithuanian Social Democratic

Party or the New Union) are relatively favourable towards ethnic minorities, who are included on party lists for elections based on proportional representation. Minorities are also included on the lists of the Lithuanian Liberal Union. The representation of the political parties of minority group in the Seimas is ensured primarily by single-member districts that are densely populated by minority ethnic groups. On the other hand, there are cases of several ‘ethnic Lithuanian’ districts where non-Lithuanians have been elected (in Šiauliai, Kaunas, Kėdainiai),<sup>3</sup> suggesting that these candidates were supported not only by voters of their ethnicity or other minority group, but also by a significant part of the Lithuanian electorate. Such examples transcend ethnicity. The implication is that, in the future, personal characteristics, candidates’ qualifications and organizations could be a more important than ethnicity.

In the broadest sense, the efficiency of political parties in the government can be assessed by analysing their influence in the Seimas. The simplest indicator of a party’s parliamentary influence is the number of seats in the Seimas, formation of factions, their size, etc. Another significant sphere is the makeup of the government, as the appointment of ministers is controlled by the ruling party or the ruling faction in the Seimas. Ministerial posts are divided among the ruling political parties on a ‘proportional’ basis. Usually, ministers are members of political parties or at least significant figures in the structure or governing bodies of the parties. On the basis of our study of the ethnic structures of the governing bodies of political parties, we can conclude that ministers are representatives of political organizations that generally include very few representatives of ethnic minorities. As a rule, minorities do not acquire significant posts in the parties’ structures.

Eleven governments have been formed since independence. The shortest government lasted just three months; the rest varied between six and 18 months. New ministries have been established, and others restructured or abolished. The twelfth government has been in power since 2001. An analysis of all the ministers of all twelve governments indicates that only two ethnic minority representatives have served as ministers (in the Ministry of Management Reforms and Municipal Affairs). In the present cabinet (13 ministries), out of 72 ministers, deputy ministers and state secretaries, there are only two implied non-Lithuanians.

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<sup>3</sup> The most interesting is the case of Mr. V. Uspaskich, who is one of the leading businessmen in Lithuania. He is also perhaps the biggest employer in the Kėdainiai region. Uspaskich stood as an MP himself and received over 60 per cent of votes in the single-mandate district. In 2003 he established a new political party – the Labour Party. In other cases, e.g. Šiauliai, the candidate Mr. V. Simulik represented the newly established political power – the New Union (Social Liberals).

No specific studies have been conducted on the ethnic structure of the public administration; nor are secondary data available. However, interviews, employee lists and observations enable us to conclude that the government bureaucracy is primarily dominated by representatives of the ethnic majority. The key source of information remains the lists of employees in the public bureaucracy. Although they are not sufficiently informative or comprehensive, combined with other materials (e.g. interviews with employees), they do provide useful insights. It should be noted that the majority of the interviews were conducted in the form of informal conversations.

For the purpose of this study we looked at the ethnic structure of the employees of the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Interior. First name and surname were used as the main criteria for the primary analysis. Of course, a person's self-identification and self-affiliation need to be taken into account. In our opinion, first names and surnames are not a reliable measure of the distribution of ethnic groups in the public bureaucracy. Comparison is further complicated by the fact that the structures of the three ministries are totally different: the Ministry of Interior has 31 departments, while the other two have only four departments each.

When analysing the structure of the employees of the ministries, certain issues become apparent. First of all, possible representatives of national minorities are mainly found at the bottom of the list, i.e. as office cleaners, janitors, carpenters, plumbers or electricians. Another peculiarity is that positions taken by representatives of national minorities are usually those of accountants, bookkeepers, etc. Also, secretary or assistant positions are popular among representatives of ethnic minorities working in the bureaucracy. According to the lists of the Ministry of Interior, this ministry is more favourable to non-Lithuanian professionals, including police officers. This ministry has greater ethnic diversity, as in the Soviet period. However, an analysis of the top positions does not indicate any differences as they still reflect the mono-ethnic structure found in other public institutions. Informal research based on observations and conversations with former and present employees of the ministries supports the finding that specialist positions are very rarely held by representatives of ethnic minorities. Public opinion assumes that nearly everyone is Lithuanian and that the ethnicity of co-workers is not relevant. On the other hand, representatives of other nationalities are easily identified. Also, personnel specialists who are responsible for arranging interviews for job vacancies claim that ethnicity plays no role in candidate selection and that the candidate's professional qualifications are the most important criterion. Another popular opinion is that non-Lithuanians do not, or rarely, apply for the posts.

Since the last municipal elections of 2002, the political parties of ethnic minorities have been represented in the governments of localities where

minorities are concentrated. The Polish Election Action (PEA) has a majority in the Vilnius Region and Šalčininkai Region municipalities (16 members, 59 per cent seats; and 17 members, 68 per cent seats, respectively). Also, the PEA has representatives in the councils of Vilnius city (six members), Švenčionys region (four members), Trakai region (six members) and Širvintai region (one member). The Polish People's Party has one seat in the Vilnius region municipality's board. The Union of Lithuanian Russians has representatives in three councils of the municipalities – Vilnius city (six members), Klaipėda city (three members) and Visaginas city (two members). The Political Party of Russian Alliance has two representatives in the Klaipėda city council. It could be noted that in some localities (e.g. Vilnius city and region, Šalčininkai, Visaginas), ethnic minorities also represent other political parties.

The Polish minority is almost exclusively represented by the PEA. Although the lists of other political parties, especially those that run for the mandates in 'Polish' areas, include Polish representatives, local Polish people tend to support the PEA, which is distinct in its pro-Polish rhetoric.

In municipal elections, Lithuanian Russians are represented by two political parties: the Union of Lithuanian Russians and the Alliance of Lithuanian Citizens. In the 2002 municipal elections, these two parties formed a coalition. In comparison with the PEA, these organizations are less popular. Whereas in municipal elections the PEA received 40–50 mandates in total, the two Russian parties received only 10–20. Several explanations can be advanced. On the one hand, Russians are more passive politically and their turn-out in municipal elections, as in other elections, is lower. On the other hand, these two organizations might have failed to define their objectives clearly, or they are not active enough in attracting their potential electorate. Also, the Russian population is geographically more dispersed, with the majority living in urban areas. This may be an important factor as it is more difficult to co-ordinate the choices of voters into a single force. Also, Russians tend to support parties based on their manifestos, among which the left-wing parties dominate.

At the level of the administrative structure of municipalities, the official rules of administrative staff and their recruitment define formal procedures and aspects of staff formation. While comparing the highest-level administrative structure (heads of departments, divisions, sections) of several municipalities in regions in which minority population is concentrated or comprise a majority, several aspects could be mentioned. A bipolar structure obtains in Visaginas (Russians and Lithuanians) and Šalčininkai (Poles and Lithuanians). In Šalčininkai, the Polish ethnic majority strongly dominates in the official structures of the municipality, in both elective and administrative bodies (out of 13 representatives of heads of divisions, all are of implied non-Lithuanian

origin). During the Soviet period, the development of Visaginas' infrastructure was based on a policy that integrated new residents into the social environment of the town. This has worked, and over time has become a conventional model. The structure of the municipal administration represents both ethnic groups (e.g. a Lithuanian mayor and non-Lithuanian director of administration, and nearly equal distribution of the management positions). If the specialists working in the municipality are taken into consideration, it is apparent that this municipality is distinct in its ethnic composition. The situation in the city of Vilnius is quite the opposite, where, despite the multiethnic composition of the population, the staff of the municipality is mono-ethnic. In the case of the Vilnius municipality administration, out of 96 heads, directors of departments, divisions and sections, there are only four implied non-Lithuanians. Some remarks can be made concerning the rest of the staff, i.e. the lower levels of administration. The number of non-Lithuanians is too small to discuss their possible share in the municipality. The majority of non-Lithuanians are, however, concentrated in book-keeping divisions (most usually women), security, as well as housekeeping, caretaker work or other support activities.

The major problems faced by minorities in the public sector relate to their low levels of participation in electoral bodies and the bureaucracy. Special attempts should be made to increase their level of participation in the decision-making process. The quantitative aspect of reforms for participation should lead to an increase in the number of minority representatives in the public sector; and the qualitative aspect should augment the impact of minorities on the work of elected bodies and the bureaucracy.

When Lithuania became independent, minorities had the opportunity to organize themselves as a 'particular' group, to reflect on their own interests through their independent organizations, and to establish political parties based on communal identities. The establishment of the governmental body known as the Department of National Minorities and Lithuanians Living Abroad<sup>4</sup> was a decisive aspect in policy formation. This body is responsible for matters related to ethnic minorities. It serves as a channel for dialogue between governmental authorities and ethnic minorities, and provides support for education and instruction in minority languages, and for mass media in minority languages. Also, the Department is responsible for public relations with civil society organizations and non-governmental organizations. It also provides grants for the various projects of ethnic minorities' NGOs. The state supported minorities' participation in the political arena, as well as in the area of civic society and others, along ethnic lines. At the same time, minorities,

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<sup>4</sup> Established in 1989, reorganised in 1990, was the first structure of its kind in Eastern Europe.

like the majority, lacked the skills and means to create organizations – this was partly the reason for their ineffectiveness and inefficiency. The most important programmes, documents and projects prepared and administered by the Department are the Programme for the Integration of Roma into Lithuanian Society (2000–4), the Conception of Ethnic Policy (2002), and the Programme for National Minority Integration (2005–10).

## Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted differences in the ethnic groups' participation in the political, social and economic spheres of Lithuanian society. However, only detailed representative research could reveal the differences among the ethnic groups on issues relating to social prestige, power and the status in today's Lithuania. Nevertheless, the different capacities and opportunities for ethnic groups to participate in the various societal spheres indicate an imbalance rather than a representative democracy. In addition, the research points the existence of social differences among the ethnic groups.

Analysis of several governmental bodies and institutions confirms the dominant position of the majority ethnic group and the low levels of participation and weak representation of ethnic minorities in the higher levels of political parties and government. Cases in which higher posts are occupied by non-Lithuanians (e.g. ministers, deputy ministers, head of departments) are few and are exceptions. The process of assimilation and symbolic domination of the majority's nationality is expressed through pressures for ethnicity to become invisible in the public sphere. This can be viewed as an internalization of dominant rules and a necessary price to pay for inclusion in the public sphere. However, it is difficult to argue that ethnicity limits career opportunities.

Public policy recommendations, first of all, should be applied in the field of education and civic participation, especially at the municipal level. To create more favourable conditions for the participation of ethnic minorities in the public sector, measures to influence the whole society and social consciousness should be undertaken. Integration, in many respects, depends on a broad understanding of social structure and context, the nature of social relations between different social groups, and people's ideas about these established relations. The traditions and development of Eastern European nationalism, as well as the post-Soviet experience, are key determinants which have influenced the governance of Lithuania's public sector. In a context where the dominant ethnicity is perceived as indigenous, Lithuania's unipolar structure has created a very unequal public sector and seems to undermine the goal of full social and political participation.

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Table 1: Lithuanian Population by Nationality, 1923-2001 (thousand, per cent)

Nationality	1923		1959		1969		1979		1989		2001	
	000s	%										
TOTAL	2,021.8	100	2,711.4	100	3,128.2	100	3,391.5	100	3,674.8	100	3,483.9	100
Lithuanians	1,701.9	84.1	2,150.8	79.3	2,506.8	80.1	2,712.2	80.0	2,924.3	79.6	2,907.3	83.45
Russians	50.5	2.5	231.0	8.5	268.0	8.6	303.5	8.9	344.5	9.4	219.8	6.31
Poles	65.6	3.2	230.1	8.5	240.2	7.7	247.0	7.3	258.0	7.0	234.9	6.74
Belarusians	4.4	0.2	30.3	1.1	45.4	1.5	57.6	1.7	63.2	1.7	42.9	1.23
Ukrainians	0.0	0.0	17.7	0.7	25.1	0.8	32.0	0.9	44.8	1.2	22.5	0.65
Jews	153.7	7.6	24.7	0.9	23.6	0.8	14.7	0.4	12.4	0.3	4.0	0.12
Latvians	14.9	0.6	6.3	0.2	5.1	0.1	4.4	0.1	4.4	0.1	2.9	0.08
Tatars	1.0	0.04	3.0	0.1	3.5	0.1	4.0	0.1	4.4	0.1	3.2	0.09
Roma	0.3	-	1.2	0.1	1.9	0.1	2.3	0.1	2.7	0.1	2.5	0.07
Germans	29.2	1.4	11.7	0.4	1.9	0.1	2.6	0.1	2.1	0.1	3.2	0.09
Armenians	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1.5	0.04
Other	7.5	0.2	16.3	0.2	8.6	0.1	13.8	0.4	16.9	0.4	6.1	0.18
Not indicated	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	32.9	0.94

Source: Data for 1923-1989 from: *Population Censuses in Lithuania.* (1999) Vilnius: Statistics Lithuania. Data for 2001 from: *Population by Sex, Age, Ethnicity and Religion.* (2002) Vilnius: Statistics Lithuania.

*Table 2: Population by Educational Attainment and Ethnicities in 2001 (per 1,000 residents aged 10 years and older)*

Ethnicity	Education					Not finished primary	Literate (no formal schooling) <sup>5</sup>	Illiterate <sup>6</sup>	Not indicated
	Higher	Higher non-university	Secondary	Basic	Primary				
Lithuanian	128	198	257	151	216	39	5	3	3
Pole	63	145	352	161	216	48	8	4	5
Russian	159	189	340	138	140	22	3	3	6
Belarusian	112	198	370	147	138	21	4	3	6
Ukrainian	203	241	342	117	79	8	1	1	7
Jew	385	171	249	85	86	7	2	3	11
German	155	170	256	170	200	34	6	3	6
Tatar	155	210	319	139	132	31	4	3	6
Latvian	134	200	291	164	174	23	7	4	3
Roma	41	18	223	149	310	184	39	31	4
Armenian	271	188	314	98	103	22	-	-	4

*Source: Population by Education, Mother Tongue and Command of Other Languages.* (2002) Vilnius: Statistics Lithuania, p. 73

*Table 3: Employment by Professions and Ethnicity (15 years and above), Comparison among Ethnic Groups (population Census 2001)*

	Lithuanian	Pole	Russian	Other
Legislators, senior officers (servants) and clerks	9	5	7	7
Specialists	16	9	14	13
Junior specialists and technicians	10	7	8	8
Junior officers (servants)	5	5	4	4
Employees of services and trade	11	14	12	11
Skilled workers at marketable agriculture and fishery	11	10	5	4
Skilled workers and craftsmen	13	18	19	19
Operators and assemblers of machines and mechanisms	11	16	12	14
Unskilled workers	7	11	8	9
Armed forces	1	1	1	1
Not indicated	7	6	11	12
Total	100	100	100	100

*Source:* Data provided by the Statistics Department of Lithuania under a request of the Institute for Social Research.

<sup>5</sup> In the questionnaire of the Census 2001, literate is marked for a person who did not attend school, but can read (with understanding) and/or write a simple sentence on topics of everyday-life, half-literate persons – are only able to read or write their name.

<sup>6</sup> Illiterate was marked for a person unable to read (with understanding) or write a simple sentence on topics of everyday-life

*Table 4: Evaluation of Changes in Social Status (per cent)*

*Question: Have you personally risen up or dropped down in the steps [of social hierarchy] in last 10 years*

Ethnicity	Shift in steps			No answer	Total
	Risen	Dropped	Being in the same place as 10 years ago		
Lithuanians	40	27	32	1	100
Russians	30	44	24	3	100
Poles	37	34	27	2	100
Jews	36	32	26	6	100
Tatars	22	47	27	4	100

*Source:* Kasatkina & Leončikas (2003).

*Table 5: Ethnic Composition of the Seimas (numbers)*

	1990-1992	1992-1996	1996-2000	2000-2004
Lithuanians	123	131	127	127
Poles	8	6	3	6
Russians	9	3	2	8
Jews	1	1	1	-
Belarusian	1	-	-	-

*Source:* Lietuvos Respublikos vyriausioji rinkimų komisija, <http://www.is.lt/tmid/anglo/minorities.htm>; [www.vrk.lt](http://www.vrk.lt)

*Table 6: Population by Ethnicity in 2001\* and Ethnic Structure at the Municipal Councils\*\* (per cent)*

Ethnicities	Vilnius city		Vilnius region		Kaunas city		Visaginas city		Salcininkai region	
	Population	Municipal Council	Population	Municipal Council	Population	Municipal Council	Population	Municipal Council	Population	Municipal Council
Lithuanians	57.8	66	22.4	22	92.9	91	15.0	28	10.4	16
Poles	18.7	12	61.3	33	0.4	0	8.6	8	79.5	28
Russians	14	6	8.4	0	4.4	2	52.4	48	5	0
Belarusians	4.0	0	4.4	0	0.3	0	9.7	4	2.9	0
Ukrainians	1.3	0	0.7	0	0.5	0	5.3	8	0.6	0
Other	1.4	2	0.8	0	0.6	0	3.1	4	0.6	4
Not indicated	2.8	14	2	45	0.9	7	5.9	0	1.0	52
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

*Source:* \* Population by Sex, Age, Ethnicity and Religion. Statistics Lithuania, Vilnius 2002.

\*\* Results of Municipal Elections in 2002, data aggregated from the questionnaires submitted by the candidates to the Central Electoral Committee. Data from the Central Electoral Committee, [www.vrk.lt](http://www.vrk.lt).

## Viešojo sektoriaus etninė struktūra, nelygybė ir valdymas Lietuvoje

Natalija Kasatkina<sup>7</sup>, Vida Beresnevičiūtė

TEKSTAS PERSPAUSDINTAS IŠ YUSUF BANGURA (ED.) *ETHNIC INEQUALITIES AND PUBLIC SECTOR GOVERNANCE*, IŠLEISTO 2006, UNRISD.

PERSPAUSDINTA GAVUS PALGRAVE MACMILLAN LEIDYKLOS LEIDIMĄ.

**S A N T R A U K A :** Straipsnis skirtas etninių grupių dalyvavimo Lietuvos visuomenės politinėje, socialinėje ir ekonominėje sferose skirtumams aptarti. Atsižvelgiant į Lietuvos etninės sudėties ypatumus, gyventojų skaičiaus ir sudėties pokyčius, Lietuvos situacija nagrinėjama kaip vienapoliarinė visuomenė, kurioje ryškiai dominuoja viena etninė grupė. Analizuojant ir apibendrinant įvairius užimtumo (pavyzdžiu, nedarbo, pasiskirstymo profesijų grupėse), išsilavinimo ir kitus empirinius duomenis teigiama, kad, nepaisant sukurto lygių prielaidų politiniam dalyvavimui, vienapoliarinėje visuomenėje viešasis sektorius yra linkęs priimti ir taikyti nacionalinės valstybės savybes, užtikrinančias daugumos pranašumą mažumų grupių atžvilgiu. Tai lemia silpnesnę mažumų grupių integraciją į viešajį sektorą. Lyginant skirtinges etnines grupes, pastebima socialinės nelygybės apraiškų, kurias patvirtina etninių grupių socialinė savijauta, t.y. savo padėties pokyčio vertinimas. Apibendrinant sunku vienareikšmiai teigti, kad etniškumas stabdo ar blokuoja karjeros galimybes viešajame sektoriuje, tačiau galima daryti išvadas apie žemesnius mažumų grupių dalyvavimo lygmenis, lyginant su daugumos grupe, politinėse partijose ar valdžios institucijose. Straipsnio pabaigoje akcentuojama, kad vienapoliarinės visuomenės kontekste mažumų teisių apsauga, lygių galimybių užtikrinimas išlieka itin aktualiais klausimais.

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<sup>7</sup> Natalija Kasatkina (1949–2008), viena iš perspausdinamo straipsnio autorių, buvo žurnalo *Etniškumo studijos* įkūrėja ir Etninių tyrimų centro vadovė. Perspausdindami šį straipsnį Lietuvos auditorijai, siekiame atkreipti dėmesį į etninių studijų svarbą platesniame viešosios politikos kontekste – ši etninių studijų aspektą visuomet akcentavo N. Kasatkina, jis išlieka aktualus ir šiandieninėje Lietuvoje.