

## Narrative and symbolic construction of *nation* in Lithuania in 1988-1991

### Santrauka

*Šio straipsnio tikslas - išnagrinėti 1988-1991-ųjų metų tautinio sąjūdžio naratyvus ir simbolius. Aptariamuoju laikotarpiu pagrindinis "tautos" ("nation") simbolis buvo įvairiai siejamas su kitais simboliais ("Vakarų", "Rytų", "demokratijos", "piliietinės visuomenės" ir kt.) Naratyvai, perteikiantys istorinius ir atminties diskursus apie "tautą", ir simboliai buvo tam tikri tautinio sąjūdžio veiksniai, kurie pateikė ir įteisino tautinę ideologiją bei tautinius kultūros modelius. Jie buvo svarbūs mobilizuojant tautą, kuriant tautinio identiteto formas, įteisinant tautinę politiką ir politinę bei socialinę kaitą. Retorikos, naratyvų ir simbolių analizė leidžia kalbėti apie socializmo ideologinius modelius, išlikusius tautinio sąjūdžio laikotarpiu, bei palyginti tautinį sąjūdį Lietuvoje su kitais aptariamojo laikotarpio tautiniais sąjūdžiais.*

### I. Introduction

In Lithuania the fall of socialism started in the late 1980's and was epitomised in the Sąjūdis movement together with the proclamation of independence in 1990. This article inquires into narrative and symbolic constructions of "nation" during that period (particularly 1988-1991). "Nation" was the master symbol at that time; it was produced in relation to other symbols like "the West", "the East", "democracy", "civil society", etc. "Nation" was the ultimate value to be achieved and had a moral significance; it was also a political symbol. While other symbols were subordinated to national rhetoric, they were highly relevant in communicating with European countries and in constitution of Lithuanian nationalism as opposed to the Soviet one.

The work illustrates how the mentioned notions of "nation", "West", "East", "socialism", "democracy", "civil society" were deployed in the movement for independence in 1988-1991 in Lithuania. The notions are considered the rhetorical tools in legitimisation and justification politics as well as constitutive categories of social actions. Based on these categories the new significant nationalist ideologies as well as paradigms and models of social orientation for individual actors were produced in Lithuania.

My theoretical argument is that narratives together with symbols were a primary mechanism by which ideologies and cultural stances were shaped and maintained during the 1988-1991 period. Narratives reflected the social world as well as

constructed it. Narratives and symbols were very significant in mobilising nation, producing national identities, constituting and legitimating nationalist politics in Lithuania. They were relevant in transforming and maintaining political and social order at the time under consideration.

The definitions relevant in the article are the following. By “nationalism” is meant the invocation toward political ends of putative cultural sameness and the sentiment that responds to such invocation (Verdery 1996:84). “Nation” refers to a relation known as ethnicity, in which the nation comprises all those supposedly common language, history or broader “cultural” identity. It is also a political entity because of its relation to “state”. During the movement in 1988-1991 in Lithuania the meaning of “nation” was invented anew and was opposed to the soviet nation.

The presentation starts from the discussion of narratives of “nation” restoration through history and memory. It proceeds to an inquiry of constructing of “nation” in position to the symbol of “the West” (as well as other symbols associated with “the West” like “democracy”, “civil rights”, etc.) and in opposition to the notion of “the East” (together with “soviets”, “communism”, etc.). Some other narratives like transition narrative, rebirth of “nation” narrative and others will be talked about as well. The discussion of legitimization of “nation”, justification of resistance and other ideological strategies that were constitutive elements of national movement in Lithuania continue the study. In that context Sajudis is considered as the main actor on the scene that produced and mobilized nation and that had the monopoly of the symbols and narratives under consideration. Further, some aspects of Lithuanian movement for independence in 1988-1991 will be compared to the nationalist movement in Russia (Perestroika). Cultural significance of narratives and symbols as well as unintended consequences produced by them will conclude the discussion.

The representation is interpretation of narratives and discourses of the leading newspapers of that time: *Komjaunimo Tiesa*, *Atgimimas*, *Lietuvos Rytas*, *Respublika* as well as my own experience. The work is a possible interpretation of that period. The theory of anthropology of transition (the main works used include N.Ries, J.Kubik, K.Verdery and M.Herzfeld) will provide the framework for the study.

## **II. Symbolic and narrative construction of “nation”**

### ***Restoration of “nation” through memory and history***

The narrative of the restoration of “nation” was predominant in 1988-1991. Fifty years of the soviet rule were conceptualised as occupation. In the narratives the “nation” was oppressed, humiliated, demoralised, etc., but it was alive. It had to be revived from memories and history.

Memory of the years of independence, of oppression and resistance, of genocide during the soviet times became a significant part of “nation” restoration narratives. Memories by those who were formerly silenced were accepted with symbolic importance. Usually these were people who suffered from soviet genocide or were famous national figures during the years of independence. They became the symbols of martyrdom and devotion. New issues of books, constant citation of their memoirs, letters, etc. in media contributed to reinvigoration of the recent history of the soviet occupation. Personal experience in the narratives mentioned was given national relevance. A number of books spoke for everyone who suffered in Siberia, were displaced or had to leave the country. Suffering was conceived as suffering for the nation, resistance was in the name of the nation as well.

The narratives of personal memoirs, letters, etc. became the symbols of soviet power exercise, of the nation’s suffering and its resistance.

They contributed to understanding of the years of soviet rule as oppression and trial; the Party, the state, soviets as “the others,” who became opposed to Lithuanians.

Historical narratives constructed at the time of consideration highlight some points of the past and omit others. The history of Lithuania in popular narratives usually is started to tell from the times of Mindaugas, the only king of Lithuania, who ruled in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Then the Grand Duchy of Lithuania it is remembered, which was, according to the official history, one of the greatest states in East Europe. Lithuanian and Polish Commonwealth (1569, Liublinas union) and the history of the 18<sup>th</sup> century when Lithuania became a part of the Russian Empire are not evoked very often. Those years are skipped or remembered as the ones of resistance and revolts.

Some other important points of reference constantly evoked in 1988-1991 are related to the active resistance to the Russian Empire in the 19<sup>th</sup> century that resulted in the establishment of independence in 1918 as well as the independence tradition of Lithuania in 1918-1940. The history was being retold as continuous, representing the national and independence tradition.

Glorious history, national tradition (independence tradition), resistance, suffering and martyrdom are the most popular themes in historical narratives. These narratives in 1988-1991 mobilised national feelings and legitimated the existence of “nation”. They contributed to finding the guilty “others” for the unjust history. Memories were live history that corresponded to the most themes of the more distant times (like suffering and resistance). Both history and memory contributed to the restoration of “nation” and “national identity” by defining points of reference and self-perception. History and memories communicated to people, what “nation” and “national identity” is; retelling them, people communicated to others, who they are or want to be.

***Constructing “national identity” and “nation” in relation to the symbols “the East” and “the West”***

The symbols of “national identity” and “nation” were constructed in opposition to “soviet identity” and “soviet state”. “Soviet identity” and “soviet state” were related to the notion of “the East”. On the other hand, “national identity” and “nation” were thought of in association with “the West”.

“Nation” in its historical devotion to Western tradition and contemporary attempts to position itself within “the West” as well as the symbols of “the West” or “Europe” themselves were represented by the similar rhetoric, that of democracy, Christian values, humanness, etc. (e.g., “Komjaunimo tiesa”, R.Pavilionis, 1989.12.09. Nr.234). The rhetoric of “the soviet state” and “soviets” was opposed to the “nation” and “the West” rhetoric. In almost all cases it was negative. Even the same categories that were thought to be properties of “the West” and “the soviet state” like “bureaucracy” were seen differently. Soviet bureaucracy was ideological, unqualified, undeveloped, and brutal, while Western bureaucracy was civilized; it was progressive, qualified, and effective (“Komjaunimo tiesa”, A. Juozaitis, 1989.12.06. Nr.231).

“The East”, “soviet times”, “soviet state” were associated with a high variety of negative metaphors and symbols. “Soviet state” was narrated as an evil, totalitarian, uncivilised, immoral and inhuman empire (e.g., “Komjaunimo tiesa”, A. Juozaitis, 1989.12.19. Nr.240). The attribute of “soviet” was also associated with unjustness, demoralisation, dehumanisation, conformity, disorder, toadyism, bureaucracy, lying, hatred, power, violence, vandalism, coercion, misinformation, provocation, brutality, and insidiousness (e.g., “Respublika”, 1991.01.11. Nr.7, 1991.01.13). “Soviets” and “soviet state” became “others” who exercised illegitimate authority and power, damaging national consciousness, destroying the nation in economical, political, cultural and spiritual sense

(e.g., “Lietuvos Rytas”, J.Tunaitis, 1991.01.23.Nr.1., “Atgimimas”, J.Urbsys, 1990.03.14-21, Nr.11).

Rhetoric of “national identity” and “nation” was inseparable from the notion of “the West”. In its history and in its contemporary attempts, Lithuania was associated with Christian values, civilization, European tradition (e.g., “Komjaunimo tiesa”, A. Juozaitis, 1989.12.19. Nr.240). It was considered to have been a European state, a part of Western civilization. According to the popular narratives of that time, the history of Lithuanian economical and political development would have paralleled Scandinavian countries if not the Soviet annexation.

“The West” and “Europe” was associated with democracy, freedom, publicity, civilization, morality and spirituality, legitimacy, Christianity, humanness, and truth (e.g., “Atgimimas”, 1988.11.04. Nr.5). “Europe” and “the West” was something to be achieved. For example, it was claimed that Lithuanians have to “develop understanding that Lithuania is a European state and Lithuanians are Europeans” (“Komjaunimo Tiesa”, R.Pavilionis, 1989.12.09. Nr.234). On the other hand, many discourses included Lithuania into Europe. For example, the comparison of Lithuania with Athens (there was a newspaper titled “Northern Athens”), looking for the centre of Europe in Lithuanian geography could be considered as the strategies that defined Lithuania as a European state. In the newspapers studied, most themes are discussed in the context of West experience and practice. Such evaluative statements as “This is usual in all civilized countries” (“Respublika”, S.Marciulionis, 1990.03.07. Nr.51.) were common at the time under consideration.

### ***Transition narratives***

Most Lithuanian narratives presented the period of 1988-1991 as the state of transition. The

prevailing discourses on transition corresponded to conventional transitology paradigms (see Bura-woy, Verdery 1998) which saw transition as passing from one stage to another. In Lithuanian case, it was the passing from the soviet system to the Western or European one, from totalitarianism to democracy, from despotism to civilization, etc. The new stage was thought of as a new epoch, the transition itself was seen as the way (the hard way, the way to freedom, to Europe). People tended to see soviet times as a historical parenthesis, i.e., a deviation from the normal historical period as revealed, for example, by the rhetoric of “lost years”. In 1990, V.Kubilius, the well-known intellectual, stated that “it must be remembered that in Lithuania there was no political life for 50 years” (“Atgimimas”, V.Kubilius, 1990.02.21-28. Nr.8).

In the narratives transition must be followed by the rebirth and liberation from the soviet heritage. The rebirth of the nation should be the moral and spiritual revival. It should go along with economic, political and cultural reorganisation of the state that should follow Western ideals (e.g., constitutional democracy, civil society, Christian values, etc). “Soviets” had to be changed by good and fair people, the true Lithuanians (many Lithuanians, usually those who were party-members, were thought of as predators, murderers, communists, etc.).

### **III. Interpretation of nationalist discourse. Ideology of narratives and symbols**

History and memories helped to communicate the possible patterns of identification. Constructing history around the symbols of “suffering”, “martyrdom”, “resistance” and “sacrifice” mobilized individual sentiments and communicated the present as the continuous stage of such history which had to be gone through. Thus, “suffering”, “martyrdom”, “resistance” and “sacrifice” were the categories equally describing the past as well as the present. Histo-

rical continuity became a rhetorical tool to justify resistance and the rights to independence. Resistance was enforced associating all misfortunes with communists, soviet system and the soviet state. Establishment of the state, as well as acting for independence were viewed as the only possible ways out of such history and contemporary problems.

Historical and other narratives and symbols were the main mechanisms that legitimated power and authority of new groups while these groups had no political agenda or other means to claim them. Sajudis, like Solidarity movement in Poland, was a peaceful movement. It was a political movement in a sense that it had political aims. However, Sajudis was not a part of government structures and was unrelated to the state apparatus in its first stages. Thus, public opinion was the main resource in the struggle for power and legitimacy. Its content had to be invented, mobilized, and constantly transmitted to the people. This was achieved by narratives and symbols.

Nationalist narratives and symbols not only communicated to the people and were recast by them, the communication was also directed toward "the West" itself. Positive association of "nation" with "the West" discussed earlier anticipated positive response from the side of Western countries as well as their support in the nationalist agenda. The rhetoric of nation's firm resolution, strong will, commitment, unity and solidarity, spirituality and morality (see "Respublika", 1990.02.16. Nr.36) bound to the ultimate goal - the establishment (or reestablishment as expressed in most nationalist discourses) of the independent state from the Soviet Union was significant in communication with the West as well.

### ***Ideology of the symbols of "national identity" and "nation"***

Narratives and symbols helped to imagine the new community ("the nation", Lithuania)

and to construct national identity in opposition to "others". They produced significant ideological paradigms and models of social orientation. As it was mentioned, "soviets" were shown as "occupiers", guilty for suffering and misfortunes of Lithuanians, they were associated with "the soviet state" that implied totalitarianism, imperialism, evil, etc. Such constructions may have influenced creation of fields of identification and belonging oriented toward the West as well as produced national identity along the categories of Catholicism (as opposed to Russian Orthodox religion), Lithuanian language (many laws constraining the use of Russian and defending the rights of the speakers of Lithuanian were issued in the early 90 s) and national values like industriousness (opposed to Russian laziness). Common descent and culture were also relevant (the years of socialist tradition, for example, were excluded from history and were narrated as occupation, but not a part of national history). A Lithuanian was the one who was a Catholic\*, who spoke Lithuanian language, and was of the common Lithuanian descent and culture.

The national identity constructed in opposition to the soviet one (which often was referred as Russian, only later the differences between the soviet identity and Russian started to be drawn) produced stereotypes (see Herzfeld 1992) that determined particular actions while it included prejudices and exclusions. Actions against Russians were justified because they were "the evil others". Much of practice was conveyed by rhetoric of "re-establishment of historical justice", "securing of Lithuanian rights". It declared the moral sanctity, integrity, and innocence of particular collectives and individuals as well as asserted the power of the powerless to mediate social concerns. For example, legislation of some laws (e.g., the language law) in early 90's excluded concerns of national minorities. Most failures of the national politics after the establishment of the independence were seen as due to "soviet consciousness", "the

damaging impact of soviet rule” and impossible to be transcended in less than ten years until the new generation will come (such narrative strategies may be considered as constraining change and reforms as proposed by N.Ries (Ries 1997)).

The master-symbol “nation” with its nationalist implications limited the appropriation of the symbols “civil society”, “democracy”, and “Europe” itself. On the narrative level, the incongruity of some aspects of national rhetoric and the rhetoric related to the West were not made explicit. The new “nation” advertised that it is going to establish a new political object: a democratic society of a European form. However, some national ideals like the ones producing negative stereotypes of Russians conflicted with the aims to construct the new European state and society. At this point it is possible to conclude that the symbols of “democracy”, “civil society”, etc. were appropriated as a symbolic capital that had special currency in Europe and were powerful in building political capital of the actors who wielded them.

#### IV. Sajudis

The main actor on the scene that produced and mobilized “nation” was Sajudis. Sajudis had the monopoly of the symbols and narratives under consideration. It introduced new symbols (e.g., many monuments symbolizing the nation suffering, resistance, etc. were founded), the old ones redefined (e.g., the traditional roadside poles with a statuette of a saint and crosses were redefined as having national and Catholic meaning), and monopolized their definitions. Sajudis acted “for the people” and “in their name” expressing the “will of the people”<sup>1</sup>. Such rhetoric legitimated Sajudis’ actions, helped to build its authority. Furthermore, it mobilized people’s support as well.

Among other aspects the credibility of Sajudis authority was grounded in the rhetoric of morality. Actions of Sajudis representatives were the

moral ones in defence of a nation as a moral community. The rhetoric of sacred and moral obligations to resist occupiers and to work for the nation was popular at the time. The nation as a moral community was communicated by the rhetoric of nation spirituality, sacred resistance, and devotion. Suffering was also a moral action, because it was committed for the nation.

In agreement with Herzfeld it may be stated that the language of national identity was inseparable from morality (Herzfeld 1997). It produced moral “us” and immoral “them”. “Others” were thought of in association with tyranny and uncivilized actions that did not manifest Christian moral or human values.

People who resisted Communist tyranny and suffered for it gained visibility, respect and renown. To show that one had suffered under the Communists became a major claim, entitling one to the right to be heard in the political sphere. These people were invested with the moral capital. Verdery assumes that this kind of moral capital<sup>2</sup> had special currency in all Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. The importance of the moral capital may be discussed as a legacy of socialism as well. Communist Party leaders’ important concern was to establish a monopoly on the definition of virtue, of purity, of social entitlement and obligation (Verdery 1996). Thus, Sajudis established its credibility on grounds already set by the past and by the Party rule itself: morality.

Sajudis united those who were not party members. Their “moral purity” was essential to the effectiveness introducing alternative vision of social life. This legitimated their actions and gave them authority to construct new social paradigms of action and identification. Those paradigms excluded not only “Russians” and “soviets” and justified “Westerners”, but also privileged “pure Lithuanians”, i.e., Lithuanians who had no relations with Communists over the others who did. The outcome of such discourse was the continuous dia-

logue about individuals' relations with the Communist party carried out even in late 90 s. Often the rhetoric of belonging and conformity to the Communist party was relevant in political confrontations. At the time of consideration (1988-1991) this rhetoric legitimated Sajudis' members over the representatives of Lithuanian Communist party (LCP) who were also opposed to the soviet state and insisted on national politics independent from the U.S. but without political independence. While politicians often were forced to become party members in order to be a part of state or government structures, the legitimate Lithuanians of Sajudis were not politicians but writers, artists, philosophers, etc. The lack of political experience of Sajudis members, on the other hand, was common in discourses of LCP. These discourses were directed against Sajudis' and constituted a part in rhetorical struggle for political power in early 90s. Having this in mind it may be stated that rhetoric of morality was very supportive in consolidating resources and opinions for Sajudis movement as well as legitimating Sajudis' members actions and ideals. However, indirectly, it was counterproductive in later political struggle for actual power in independent Lithuania. In this context narratives including morality produced the unintended consequences, first of all, reinforcing the belief that there are important social dichotomies among Lithuanians and justifying social divisions along these lines. In the newspapers, pictures of traitors, Stalinists, KGB (soviet National Security Committee) agents were illustrative of social concerns.

## **V. Reproducing socialist nationalism. Legacies of socialism**

Nationalism in Lithuania had much in common with nationalism in other socialist countries at that period. One of the basis of similarities was the socialism itself that was reproduced into post-socialist nationalism. According to Verdery,

socialism enshrined national sentiments that overwhelmed federal politics. Federal politics reinforced ethnic difference and it was the proximate cause of the dissolution of the Soviet federation (Verdery 1996:86). Among the legacies of socialism was the constitution of "others" that followed socialist dichotomization between "enemies" and "selves". National "selves" and other "others" (i.e., communists, etc.) were produced following the socialist dichotomization patterns (see Verdery 1996).

Victimization narratives popular in Lithuania and all across the Eastern Europe may be considered as the legacies of socialism as well. Poland appears in Polish historical works as the "Christ of nations", whom the nations around it unjustly crucified; generations of Czechs have been raised with the image of their nation as martyr. Hungary's and Romania's historians have presented their nations as suffering for the salvation of Western civilization (see Verdery 1996). This experience of self as both national and victim of self victimized by history disposes many in former East European countries to accept nationalist demagoguery (see Verdery 1996).

### ***Sajudis and Perestroika***

Lithuanian narratives communicating powerlessness, poverty, suffering, hopelessness, etc. relate to the Russian narratives studied by N. Ries in the late years of Perestroika. The difference I see is the lack of absurdity, cataclysm, despair, tragic, etc. - metaphors that constructed Russian situation as grounded in irresolvable contradictions and tensions (Ries 1997). Lithuanians at the narrative level had solutions to their problems and these were based on the imagining transformation of the society from the socialist to the Western one. While in Russia "others" were looked for within the state and misfortunes searched for in Russian history and social life evoking even metaphysical

explanations (Ries 1997), in Lithuania “others” were defined mainly outside “nation”. Having the West as the orientation and the East as the opposition, Lithuanians were in a more benevolent position to anticipate social change and reforms, i.e., Lithuanian narratives were less restricting than Russian ones. Taking into account Lithuanian narratives as discussed in this article and Ries’ discussion of Russian narratives the answer to the question “Why is everything so bad with us?” in Lithuanian case would be: “because of soviets, we have to be reborn and become Western”; in Russian case it would be like: “because of fate, life, the ineluctable Russian situation, Stalin, etc., and only miracle could help” (Ries 1997:88, 116). While the answers were different the questions posed in many cases were similar.

The symbols of victims and sufferers were common to Lithuanian and Russian narratives during the years of Sajudis and Perestroika as well. According to Ries, litanies expressed the cultural stance of a victim and a sufferer (Ries 1997:89). They asserted the innocence of the relatively powerless which was, paradoxically, a form of moral power (Ries 1997:89). Moral superiority correlated to a degree of suffering and victimization (Ries 1997:111). Through litanies people perceived and promoted themselves as “good people”, living the life of relative poverty was bound to honesty and morality (Ries 1997:112). Similar interpretation could be applicable to Lithuanian narratives. Victims and sufferers were also innocent. Moreover, their suffering and martyrdom was bound to the rhetoric of “sacredness”. Those who survived were attributed spiritual superiority and had moral authority. Honesty, morality and spirituality were culturally significant mobilizing public opinion and communicating “nation” to people.

Ries asserts that there is a complex continuity among traditional Russian laments and the contemporary litany of suffering (Ries 1997:125).

Lithuanian narratives, which include suffering may also have traditional basis. In either case, I think, they are influenced by Russian tradition as well. Suffering and victimization narratives may be interpreted as a part of soviet heritage Lithuanians claimed to resist.

## **VI. Cultural significance of narratives.** ***Personal identity and cultural intimacy***

The discussion of nationalism in Lithuania does not imply that nationalism existed only at the level of rhetoric, narratives, interest groups, and constitutionalism. It was a basic element of people’s self-conception as well. Social actors, elites and others were active participants in identity creation and perpetuation. They participated in narrative construction and influenced their public evolution. Narratives were produced and reproduced or simply appropriated at the personal level. Through them people conveyed social concerns and political perspectives. They communicated a range of subtle messages about identity and worldview, personal aspirations and social expectations as well as reaffirmed and reproduced certain dispositions of cultural logic (Ries 1997).

“Nation” and “national identity” were communicated through the symbols related to kinship terms (e.g., “family”, “blood”, etc.) which helped to introduce national discourses in the more familiar terms of local experience and forced one to act in defence of what is familiar and natural (see Herzfeld 1997). The symbols of nation spirit, wealth, blood of Lithuania, sons of Lithuania, even the lips of Lithuania are very common in newspapers studied. For example, it is claimed that “Lithuania is not going to forget its sons” (“Atgimimas”, 1991. Nr.2), that soviets know “the taste of the blood of Lithuania” (“Lietuvoš Rytas”, 1991. 01.17. Nr.8). Many discourses referring to “nation” or “Lithuania” attribu-

te human qualities to them. For example, N. Michailovas writes: “personally, I have never seen Lithuania such calm, healthy, persistent and resolute in its attempts to achieve its aims” (“Komjaunimo Tiesa”, N. Michailovas, 1989.09.12. Nr.175.).

### *Unintended consequences*

Narratives also produced the unintended consequences. It was mentioned that narratives about morality limited the membership in Sąjūdis by excluding politicians and many others who were associated with state party structures. This resulted in political incompetence of Sąjūdis' representatives after the institutionalisation of the movement in early 90s. Also narratives constructed victims and villains, innocents and guilty or good selves and evil others. Such acquisitions reinforced social and political dichotomies, justified social disintegration and confrontations. Also by constantly affirming the powerlessness of the self and the collectivity, narratives reinforced a sense of hopelessness and futility. The common metaphors of such narratives in addition to the mentioned ones about damaged consciousness, moral disintegration, etc. were the ones constantly evoking Lithuania as a small nation, the powerless nation, the nation that was a subject to other power politics throughout the history as well as the one at a crossroad of battles and interests. Followingly, it was assumed that the nation was powerful in its spirituality and national consciousness- the main narrative that was the weapon during the years of occupation. These symbols privileged passivity. It may be stated that invocation of them in national discourse in the period under consideration may have justified passivity as a form of resistance as well. The narratives reinforcing hopelessness and futility may have caused the imagination of the nation only within larger European structures. It may be conc-

luded that from this point of view narratives constrained national politics independent from “the West”. In general, the narratives about victims, villains, damaged consciousness, small nation, powerlessness, etc. undermined attempts to imagine or invent solutions to local problems after the achievement of independence (see also Ries 1997).

Moreover, the national story of victims, villains, etc. may be considered to be a discursive mechanism that facilitated socialist social relations. Narratives did not express expectations of a sudden change or favourable results of reforms. The way out of the situation was related to the new generations or the help from the West. It may be stated that social relations were essentialized. The hierarchy of social categories (e.g., powerless, powerful, victims, etc.) was made natural and inevitable. By essentializing powerlessness, history of constant suffering and trial narratives had the unintended consequence to reproduce them into the present. The present was associated with suffering as well. The difference from the socialist period was that the future was seen as free from it. Like in the socialist period suffering was carried out for the nation blaming “soviets” who were responsible for it. The stance of power was free to be filled by those who spoke the language of power (in Lithuanian case it may be “the West” who filled it). In this case it may be said that narratives reproduced situations and structures they bemoaned (see Ries 1997).

The narratives communicating powerlessness persisted as it was mentioned in Sąjūdis' discourses as well as they resulted in defining nation in relation to the other hierarchy, the Western one. In this context of reasoning it may be claimed that what was changed in nationalism in general, was the actor of the game, not the game itself. Nationalism in Lithuania was redefined in the context of Western tradition.

## VII. Conclusions

1. Narrative and symbolic constructions of “nation” were the primary mediums of cultural transmission and national interrelation in Lithuania in 1988-1991.
2. “Nation” was the master symbol in Lithuanian nationalist narratives in the period 1988-1991. It helped to mobilize people, to legitimate the movement for independence, to justify new powers and authorities and to provide models for social actions. Around the symbol “nation” there were produced the new community to be imagined together with identities and priorities to be followed.
3. In Lithuania the most relevant ways of reinvention of the “nation” were history and memory narratives legitimating the existence of the nation and its resistance at present as well as symbols of “the East” and “the West” that provided models and patterns for identity and actions.
4. “Nation” was redefined from the socialist frame to the Western one. Actually, socialist nationalism was reproduced into the present, and left many legacies in the period discussed as seen from the comparison of Sajudis and Perestroika movements. The rhetoric of Western nationalism often served ideological purposes trying to communicate with European countries and to distance itself from the former S.U.
5. Sajudis was the most important power in the independence movement in 1988-1991. It had the monopoly of symbolic and narrative production of “nation”. Its credibility, among other things, rested on the moral capital, the legacy of socialism and the distinctive aspect of the most post-socialist movements in the Eastern Europe and the former S.U. Sajudis developed and publicly disseminated a counter-hegemonic discourse that allowed the people to challenge and ultimately reject the regime’s claims to legitimacy. Nation’s identity was defined independently of the official, “Communist/socialist” idiom and redefined following Western nationalism standards.
6. Narratives and symbols were instrumental, i.e., they were constitutive elements of social actions, as well as expressive, i.e., they communicated social concerns and perspectives. They existed at the group and individual level. They had intended as well as unintended consequences which reinforced or constrained social actions in particular ways.

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11. *Atgimimas* 1988-1991.
12. *Lietuvos Rytas* 1990-1991.
13. *Respublika* 1990-1991.

\* According to the survey data in 1994 (*Studies in Public Policy* 222, 1994: R.Rose and W.Maley *Nationalities in the Baltic States: A Survey Study* and *Studies in Public Policy* 284) 75% of Lithuanians declared themselves "Catholic" (there are 79.6% of Lithuanians in the country) while only 10% stated that they attend the Church nearly every week as the Catholic dogma requi-

res. The difference may be interpreted as showing incongruity between identification on the narrative level and practice.

<sup>1</sup> Even the main aim of Sajudis was declared as "the expression of the will of people".

<sup>2</sup> "moral capital- a capital rooted in defining certain values as correct and upholding them" (Verdery 1996:106).