Moore Irina

University of Wolverhampton, U.K.

Linguistic, ethnic and cultural tensions in the sociolinguistic landscape of Vilnius: a diachronic analysis

Using a multimodal diachronic Linguistic Landscape analysis, which advocates a historicised and spatialised approach to the study of the city's socio-political landscape, the article attempts to analyse the dynamics of sociolinguistic changes in Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania, before the establishment of Soviet rule and after its collapse in 1991. Drawing from its socio-cultural geography and urban studies, we analyse how written languages interact with the physical features of the cityscape to construct new memory landscapes and express ethnic tensions and nationalising policies resulting from ideological power change. Such a qualitative approach emphasizes the importance of sociohistorical context and leads to a greater understanding of identity and socio-cultural transformations. Looking at the history of this multicultural city through the lens of Linguistic Landscape analysis, allows us to reach a deeper understanding of its different ethnic narratives and tensions.

Keywords: sociolinguistic landscape; diachronic analysis; Vilnius; Lithuania; ethnic tensions; Russification; Polonisation; Sovietisation; Lithuanisation; nation building

1. Introduction

This article presents an attempt to analyse the post-Soviet processes in Vilnius by looking at Soviet language policy and practices in the city and their reflection in socio-cultural landscapes existing there before the establishment of Soviet rule and after its collapse. Derussification and language shift in post-Soviet space provided opportunity for diachronic analysis and is helpful in investigating the here-and-now LL data in the light of historical developments and the context of earlier language practices. The context of desovetisation in the Baltic States also calls for an interpretation of the LL concept, which takes into account cultural and physical landscape (Czepczyński 2008; Herrschel 2007), including monuments and everyday items and their placement in time and space. Therefore, adopting a diachronic framework for the analysis of "semiotic landscape" data (Jaworski&Thurlow 2010), this article aims to investigate the socio-cultural landscape of Vilnius from two different perspectives. One looks at language practices and historical-cultural heritage from a

diachronic angle, the other examines their current state. These perspectives together shape historical linguistic and cultural ties and expose the roots of modern developments.

The article begins with a brief discussion concerning the processes of Russification and Sovietisation in a Lithuanian context. It looks at how they shaped the development of national resistance and nation building, which led to the declaration of independence in 1991. Strong attachment to the national language and the metaphor of its displacement in Soviet times became key elements in the self-identification and the strict policy of titular monolingualism.

The diachronic analysis of Vilnius LL in section two illustrates that the centrality of language in Lithuanian identity can be traced historically to the anti-Russian Insurrection of 1836. It also argues that the Lithuanian Awakening in the 19th century was further developed by the nationalising strategies of the Lithuanian government in the interwar period. They were shaped by the anti-Polonisation campaign and the "Vilnius Question", which resulted in "thick" (Spolsky 2002) language policies and a forced Lithuanisation of non-Lithuanian names. The sub-section 2.4 of section two focuses on the LL of Vilnius as an element in the discourse of Soviet Lithuanian identity that links the post-war era to the nationalising drive of the inter-war republic and to the Lithuanian nationalist movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It argues that the linguistic and socio-cultural landscape of Soviet Vilnius helps to reveal such hidden continuities. Drawing on recent works by a number of Western and Lithuanian researchers and on the archive and private photographs of the period, it asserts that the imposition of Soviet rule not only crushed Lithuanian sovereignty and repressed political freedoms, but contributed to the demographic and social Lithuanisation of Vilnius (Kotkin 2001; Snyder 2003; Drėmaitė 2010; Davoliūtė 2014).

The transparency of data analysed in this article is ensured by the use of publicly available photo collections from the Lithuanian State Archive, digital private photographic and postcard collections, augmented by my own photographs and consists of 290 pictures. Since all the data in this invistigation are selective and, therefore, limiting, the analysis is also informed by other sources, such as historical monographs, socio-linguistic studies, and memoirs of the city's inhabitants.

1.1. Sovietisation, Russification and collective memory

To understand the post-Soviet language reforms in Lithuania, it is helpful to clarify the term "Russification" and to have a brief overview of language practices in Soviet Lithuania. The term "Russification" generally means the effects of Russian and Soviet language policies on the population of the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union. It was "intended to ensure state control over a diverse population" (Weeks 2010).

As Kappeler notes, with some exceptions, until 1980 there seemed to be a common belief that the process of the centralisation of power in a national government involves the suppression of the majority of the languages spoken in the national territory, and the dominance of a single language. The interwar national historiographies of Lithuania were committed to the notion that a coherent and systematic Russification of the non-Russians had been undertaken in the tsarist empire. "Western specialists on Russian history also followed this pattern with some exceptions" (Kappeler 2004: 291). However, research studies since 1980 (Thaden 1981; Andersen&Silver 1984; Laitin 1998; Altapov 2000; Dowler 2001; Kappeler 2001; Weeks 2010; Pavlenko 2011) show that Russification was not a one way, but a dual course language policy, which maintained titular languages and spread Russian as L2 and the *lingua franca* in the USSR. This resulted in language practices of titular bilingualism and non-titular monolingualism in many republics. Assymmetric bilingualism is often cited in research on Soviet language policies as one of the examples of Russification in Soviet republics (Hogan-Brun&Ramonienė 2004; Riegl&Vaško 2007; Pavlenko 2008; Zabrodskaja 2014). However, the extent of this differed from republic to republic due to historical, political, and socio-cultural circumstances. According to the 1989 Soviet Census, Lithuania had the lowest level of non-titular monolingualism amongst the Baltic Republics with almost equal numbers of titular-Russian (37.6%) and Russian-titular bilingualism (37.5%) (USSR State Statistics Committee 1991). As Wright *et al*. noted, census data are not always entirely trustworthy. In 1989, on the cusp of independence, Lithuanians "may have underrepresented their Russian competence" (2015: 633). Even taking this into account, the 1979 Census shows that 97.7% of the population spoke Lithuanian, indicative of high levels of non-titular bilingualism (Вестник Статистики 1980).

Fierce historical resistance against Polish and Russian domination and the incorporation of a strong element of national Lithuanian identity into Soviet historiography by the national communists prevented the displacement of Lituanian, as illustrated below and in section 2.4.

We argue, that Lithuanian and Russian existed side by side, and, to a certain extent, Sovietisation in Vilnius was accompanied by Lithuanisation of the city rather than Russification, particularly between 1953 and 1988. As Snyder writes, Vilnius was claimed and contested by Polish, Belarusian and Lithuanian communists before being returned by Stalin to the Lithuanian SSR in 1944 (2003: 88-93). As a result, there was a major resettlement of the Polish population from Vilnius. It was increasingly populated by Lithuanians and Lithuanian culture was encouraged. This political process was closely connected to urbanisation. The internal migration of ethnic Lithuanians from the countryside "shot up from an all-time low of 15 percent in 1945 to reach 50 percent in 1970 and a peak of 68.1 percent in 1989" (Davoliūtė 2013: 51). Although Vilnius saw a large external migration of Russian speakers from across the Soviet Union, "the internal migration of ethnic Lithuanians from the country was much higher, and the cities were not extensively Russified as they were in Estonia and Latvia" (ibid). The political process of Sovietisation in Lithuania was also closely related to a cultural-political campaign of indigenisation. Davoliūtė distinguishes two stages. The first, Beria's Indigenisation Policy (1953), was an initiative to allow the Lithuanian leadership to "take the nationalization of politics in their hands" (2013: 89). Declassified MVD reports from that time reveal an expectation that all Russian communists would go back to Russia, with Lithuanians taking their place (ibid). The second stage occurred after Khruschev's Secret Speech, between 1956 and 1959. During this time the new generation of graduates from Lithuanian universities, who represented the newly trained intelligentsia, "were pushed to top posts at the expense of older Lithuanian and non-Lithuanian communists appointed under Stalin" (ibid). This enabled a purge of Russians from their ranks by the enforcement of requirements for titular language knowledge. By 1959, the majority of people in leading posts were Lithuanians (ibid: 90). Elements of national revival "albeit under the oppressive and limiting conditions of Soviet rule, fulfilled the long-held dream of Lithuanian nationalists" (Snyder 2003: 91-93). This is often either forgotten, lost or denied in the face of the radical socio and geo-political changes brought about by Sovietisation. A number of researchers state that since 1940 Russian has replaced Lithuanian as the language of political and economic discourse, that its overall functionality has decreased, and its spheres of use contracted, becoming limited to home and school use (Zinkevičius 1998; Hogan-Brun&Ramonienė 2002; Clarke 2006; Hogan-Brun *et al*. 2008). This interpretation of the Lithuanian language position, in our opinion, arises from merging the notions of Russification and Sovietisatrion into one concept, although a body of work

exists which demonstrates that they are not the same (Zamascikov 2007; Weeks 2010; Remnev 2011; Davoliūtė 2016).

We argue, that the particular socio-historical circumstances did not lead to a language shift and displacemnt of Lithuanian, on the contrary, they facilitated (unusual for a Soviet republic) language practices with high language loyalty amongst the titular population and high titular fluency amongst non-titulars. Evidence gathered from our data supports the somewhat controversial statement made by Snyder that the Lithuanian language "became, for the first time in modern history, a badge of status in Vilnius" (Snyder 2003: 95). This is presented in section 2.4.

The merging of Sovietisation and Russification concepts could be partially explained by the phenomenon of post-Soviet "official policy of collective amnesia" (Czepczyński 2008: 109), which commonly occurs as a central part of the radical social transition and is based on the rejection of many aspects of the 'recent past'. Forgetting and remembering are ways of handling the process of nation-building in the new reality. Following independence, Lithuania went through an intense period of self-identification, which resulted in the creation of a self-image as a nation of "innocent sufferers" (Snyder 1995). As Davoliūtė argued astutely, the "deportation became the key trope for describing all forms of suffering and oppression under Soviet rule, under the Russian empire, and even earlier" (2013: 163). The metaphor of displacement became central in the public discourse and was extended to the key symbols of Lithuanian identity, including language. Davoliūtė explored the role of Soviet Lithuanian intelligentsia in expanding this metaphor synchronically and diachronically, to include both, those who were displaced during Stalinist deportations and those, who accommodated the Soviet. For example, a Lithuanian poet Justinas Marcinkevičius was a leading member of the new Soviet Lithuanian cultural elite, and yet, in a speech delivered at the Supreme Council of the LSSR in November 1988, he made a call to declare Lithuanian the state language: "Our language has experienced much abuse, discrimination and injustice. It is now returning home as if from deportation" (2013: 165). This statement later became the focus of *Sajūdis* rhetoric: "We were deported not only from our homeland but from our language" (ibid). This approach to collective memory and self-identification enabled the nation to see Sovietisation as one with the trauma of deportation and displacement and Russification as part of Soviet cultural processes without "remembering" certain details. It served as a unifying core of the nation. These observations and our analysis of the cultural landscape allow us to use LL as a powerful diagnostic tool to challenge post-Soviet

Lithuanian memory landscapes and see what Sovietisation meant in the Lithuanian context in a different light.

1.2. Post-Soviet landscape sweep

The linguistic landscape "is not a state but a diachronic process and the meaning of the present day's arrangements cannot be fully understod without considering those of the past" (Pavlenko 2010: 133). It identifies the present day conditions and memory landscapes as developmental paths through historic memories, practices, and policies of authorities. In the aftermath of independence, all former Soviet States went through "post-communist landscape cleansing" (Czepczyński 2008: 109). In Lithuania tood many symbols of the Soviet period were either destroyed or dismantled. Monuments were the first to go (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Removal of Lenin's statue in central Vilnius (1991) (Venckus, 2013).

The removal of Lenin's statue (erected in 1952) was one of the first of many "landscape sweeps". In August 1991 it was removed by crane to cheering crowds and became a worldwide symbol of the fall of Soviet Power, when the footage was shown on CNN and reported internationally. The removal of unwanted references contained in Soviet monuments

was the beginning of the post-socialist landscape change. It culminated in the development of a new ideology to support nation-state building efforts, in which language legislation plays an important role. To accomplish the transition to a new ideology and economy, ex-Soviet republics employed a variety of de-Sovietisation policies. In the area of language these aimed at de-Russification and the establishment of titular languages as official state languages (Järve, 2003; Pavlenko 2009). De-Russification is carried out by various nationalising linguistic, cultural and semiotic resources. Pavlenko (2009) highlights five processes which illustrate the change in the functions of languages in multilingual post-Soviet societies: language erasure, language replacement, language upgrading and downgrading, language regulation and the appearance of transgressive signs.

In Lithuania the most prominent of these were language erasure and language downgrading. "During 1990-1993, Russian language commercial and official signs, including road and street signs, were removed as being unnecessary and reminiscent of foreign occupation" (Suziedelis 2011: 167). Figure 2 below is an example of a bottom-up initiative of Russian language erasure, where the offending Cyrillic script was scratched from a Lithuanian-Russian street sign.

Figure 2. A street sign in Vilnius where Russian on the bottom line has been obliterated (1991) (www.etoretro.ru)

The distribution of the languages on the sign before erasure signifies the top-down language hierarchy in Soviet Lithuania. This is a reflection of a dual course language policy in the USSR after the mid-1930s, which supported titular languages and the spread of Russian as L2.

Erasure was a quick and cheap way to implement bottom-up manifestations of new language policy. However, it was a temporary measure, which left material reminders. With time such signs have been removed and replaced with official top-down Lithuanian only signs (Figure 3).

F**igure 3.** Monolingual Lithuanian street signs in central Vilnius, 2016 (author's photograph)

An LL study conducted by Muth in Vilnius in 2008 concludes: "Within 20 years, the Russian language "ceased to exist" in the public sphere, at least in its written form" (2008: 143). This statement is not enterily accurate. Russian is still present in Vilnius public spaces, although it is downgraded through languages ordering position, as illustrated below, where a sign in a café lavatory requests clients not to throw paper into the toilet in three languages: Lithianian, English, and Russian (Figure 4). Russian is a part of this sign, but its bottom position is a feature of language downgrading (Pavlenko 2009). Vsibility of such bottom-up signs in Vilnius is very low, usually inside commerical premises, almost never on their fronts. We must note that in other Lithuanian towns, especially close to the Belorusian border, such as Druskininkai, visibility of Russian is much higher due to commercial and other reasons, which are outside the remits of this paper.

Figure 4. A trilingual sign in a café lavatory in central Vilnius with Russian at the bottom (author's photograph, 2016)

As official public signs, such as street and place names, reflect spatial power relations (Blommaert 2013) and are sanctioned by local authorities, public space is an important political arena for the enforcement of language policies and transformation of language practices and memory landscapes. The virtual dispappearance of bilingual Lithuanian-Russian signs in Vilnius, together with the Russian language downgrading and "monuments sweep" are understandable core elements of nationalising processes, state building, and identity renegotiation. These also contributed to the construction of public memory with the self-image as a nation of "innocent sufferers" who were "deported from their language" by the Soviet (see section 2.4.). The symbolic "re-appropriation" of the cityscape aided this process. The Soviet sculptures were dismantled and later gathered in *Grūto Parkas*, an open air exposition of the instruments of Soviet ideology. As its website sates, it provides an opportunity for Lithuanian people, visitors and future generations "to see the naked Soviet ideology which supressed and hurt the spirit of our nation for many decades" (www.grutoparkas.lt). The former KGB building became a Genocide Victims Museum. However, it is not about the Holocaust, which is barely mentioned in its exhibition, but about

the repression of Lithuanians under Soviet rule. A monument to the Memory of Victims of the Genocide was erected nearby (Figure 5).

Figure 5. (a) A plaque at the base of the monument "*Sovietinės Okupacijos Aukoms Atminti*" ("In memory of victims of Soviet Occupation"; (b) A sign to the entrance of the Genocide victims museum.

To understand why and how in post-Soviet days the Lithuanian language assumed such a strong symbolic function in memory politics and the struggle for independent statehood, we will now turn to the diachronic analysis of the sociolinguistic landscape of Vilnius. Its importance to a variety of cultures and ethnicities is unparalleled. Through centuries it occupied a central place in the national identity of Lithuanians, Poles, Jews, and Russians (Weeks 2015: 1).

2. Sociolinguistic landscape of Vilnius in diachronic perspective

2.1. 1864 – 1917

The diachronic analysis of public spaces in Vilnius combined with the synchronic-descriptive approach yields a more complex socio-political narrative related to the process of

Russification and uncovers the roots of long standing ethnic tensions between Lithuanians, Poles, and Russians, which still are evident today.

Due to its multiethnic and multicultural history, Vilnius has been known under several different names: Vilna, Vilno/Wilno, Vilne, Vilnius. The city was first called Vilna in 1323. It was also in use when Lithuania was a part of the Russian Empire (1795 – 1914) as a result of the partition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in 1793. Socio-political connotations of different names became particularly important in the first half of the 19th century, after two failed insurrections against Russian rule. The name Vilna became associated with Russia after the Insurrection of 1831, which aimed to restore the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the dominance of the Polish elite. Polish was declared the state language from 1698. The city's name during Polish dominance was Wilno (or Vilno). However, another name, Vilne, was used by the second largest ethnic group of the town, Lithianian Jews. Statistics from the Russian Empire estimated Jewish population at 42.3% after the city's incoproration into the empire. "Vilnius in the early nineteenthe centiry was a small, provincial, and proncipally Polish Jewish city" (Weeks 2015: 23).

Insurrection of 1863 sought an independent Lithuanian state and rejected both Polish and Russian power and culture. The name Vilnius became associated with the Lithuanian national reawakening and "occupied a central place in national identity, as the capital of Lithuanian Grand Duchy and the future capital of a Lithuanian nation-state" (Weeks 2015: 2).

The tsarist response to the insurrections was harsh. Vilnius university was closed in 1831, as the centre of Polish culture. The official mention of the words Poland and Lithuania was not allowed after the Insurrection of 1863. This could be considered as the start of consistent Russification reforms. The Lithuanian Press Ban was imposed, which forebade all Lithuanian language publications in the Latin alphabet. It was in force until 1904. All schools with Lithuanian language of instruction were closed (Stražas 1996). Officially, the public speaking of Polish and Lithuanian was forbidden (Figure 6).

Figure 6. A public sign in Russian during the Lithuanian Press Ban "Speaking Lithuanian is strictly forbidden" (Lithuanian Press Ban, 2016)

"Street signs were in Russian and even shops were required to have Russian signs or to have Russian inscriptions at least as large as those in other languages" (Weeks 2004: 3). It is not suprising that our corpus of archive photographs from this period supports the above statement and shows that Russian dominated public signage in Vilnius (Figure 7).

Figure 7. (a) A Russian sign "Military Hospital", 1872; (b) A street with Russian commercial signs, 1870 (www.humus.livejournal.com)

The majority of signs in our corpus are commercial. Figure 6 (b) shows two coffee houses opposite one another (*Kofejnya*) and a bakery (*Bulochnaja*). Picture (a) is a rare example of an official sign depicting a military hospital (*Vojennyi Gospital*). Russian dominates the signs, although there are several signs in Russian and French (e.g. *Coiffeur, Hôtel Italia, Entrée*), which illustrate the francophone tendencies of pre-revolutionary Russia.

The ”Russianness” of the city was also accentuated by the newly erected Russian architectural monuments. One, to count Muravyov, was erected in 1898. He was a Russian imperial statesman, who crushed the Insurrection of 1863. As *Weeks* says, he was cordially detested by Poles, but “was a hero who defended state order with sometimes cruel but necessary measures” (2004: 3). Another major monument, to Catherine II, was erected in the main square adjacent to the city’s main Catholic cathedral in 1904 (Figure 8). It was under her reign that the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was partitioned in the 18th century. Russia acquired the greater part.

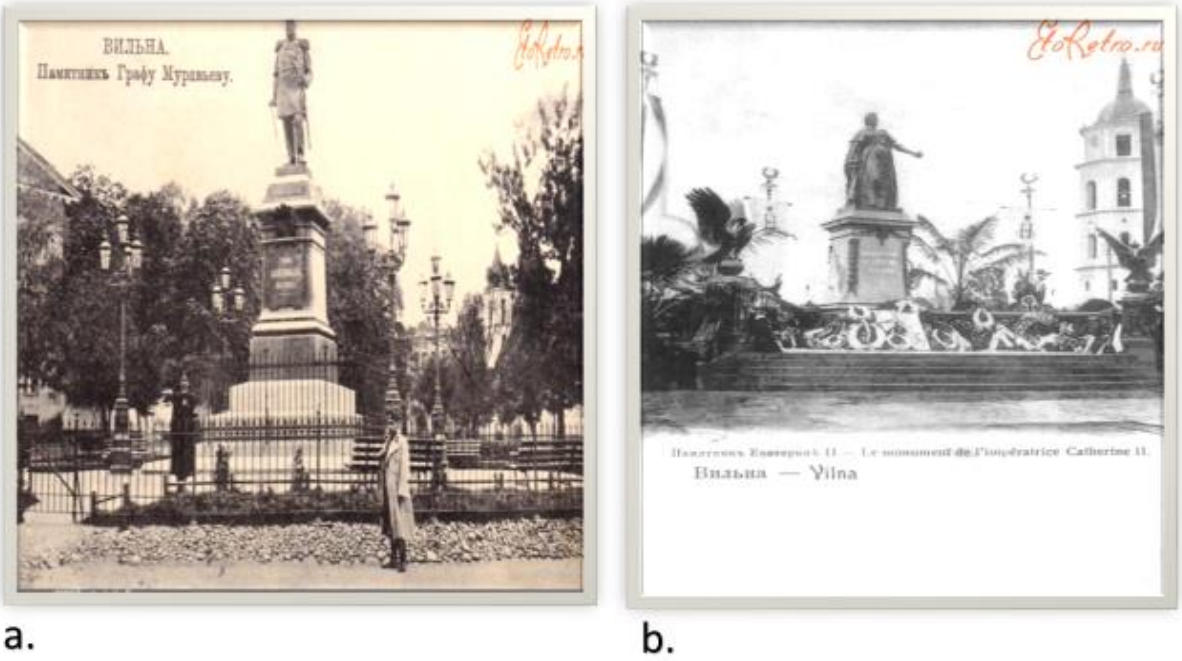


Figure 8. (a) Monument to Muravyov; (b) The unveiling of the monument to Catherine II (www.etoretro.ru)

This “analytic arrangement of space” (Certeau 1985) together with linguistic signage, produced a landscape of power, which now could be analysed as a socio-cultural “artefact” of its time. “Vilna has become a Russian city not only by its geographic location but also by its

internal life" (Dobriansky 1904: 120). However, this hegemonisation through spatialisation produced only "a very thin and fragile Russian veneer" (Weeks 2004: 4), which intensified Russian/Polish/Lithuanian tensions even further. *Weeks* (2004) analyses a number of documents from the Russian State Historical archives, which reported that Poles dominated the organs of urban self-government in Vilna. On the other hand, the Lithuanian Press Ban and the thick policy of linguistic and cultural Russification had a two-fold effect on the comparatively small and politically passive Lithuanian population. During this time a number of illigal Lithuanian-language periodicals emerged urging resistance to Russian assimilation and to reunification with Poland. This helped to identify language as central to the national Lithuanian identity (Clarke 2006).

In response to the defeat of Russia by Japan, the ban on Lithuanian language publications was lifted, as a concession to the local population in an attempt to gain their support. The first Lithuanian daily was published in 1905. The Lithuanian language made an appearance on some public signs, mostly in a bilingual combination with Russian, or with Polish (Figure 9).

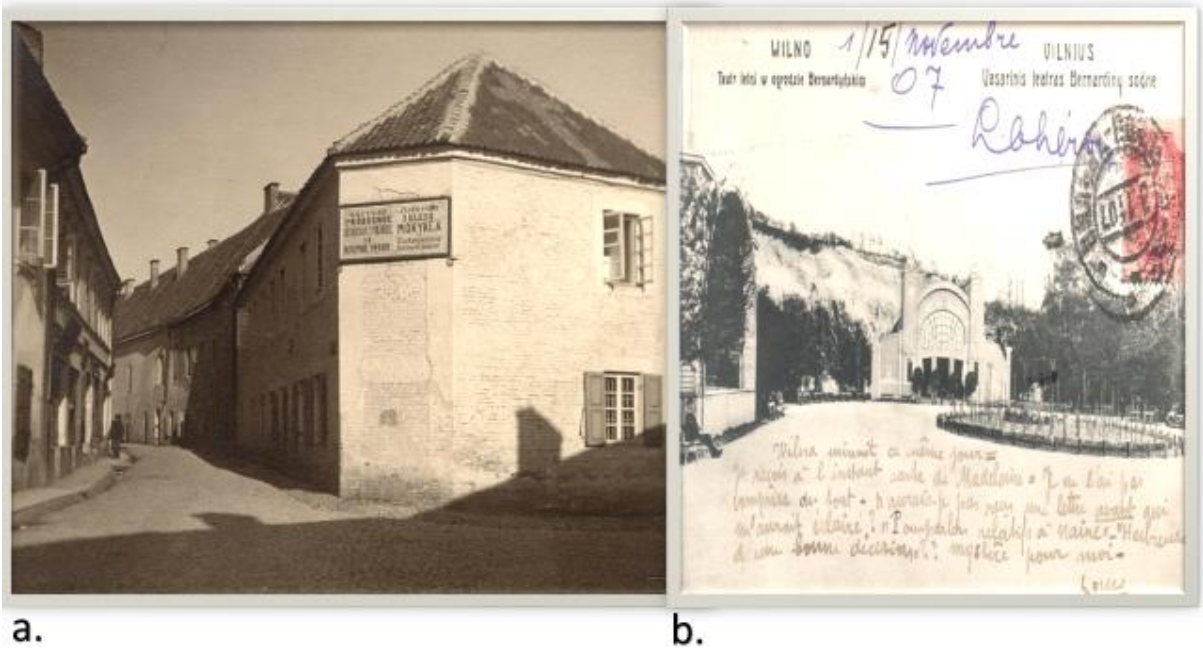


Figure 9. (a) Private Lithuanian school with a Russian-Lithuanian sign, 1912 (www.smolbattle.ru); (b) a Polish-Lithuanian postcard, 1907 (www.mestai.net)

Figure 9 (a) shows a private Lithuanian school with a bilingual Russian-Lithuanian sign "Private Lithuanian two-year school and evening classes ". In Figure 9 (b) the caption at the

top is one of the first signs we managed to find where the name of the city is given with a Lithuanian spelling, Vilnius, on the right. The scene on the card is described in Polish and in Lithuanian – "Summer theatre in the Bernadine garden". The distribution of languages on both pictures indicates the position of Lithuanian (on the right) as the second language.

However, these relaxation measures and the 1905 Revolution in Russia, intensified the demands for ethnic-national rights and led to the major event in the history of the Lithuanian national movement, the Great Conference of Vilnius, which pressed for an autonomous Lithuanian national state with Lithuanian as the only official language. This was achieved on February 16, 1918, when the creation of the Republic of Lithuania was declared, following the collapse of the Russian Empire (Clarke 2006).

Between 1915 and 1918 the city was occupied by the German army, which had defeated the Russian forces. These three years saw a great "landscape sweep" which accompanied the power change. The withdrawing Russian army took with it the symbols of its dominance, the monuments of Catherine II and Muravyov. Many street signs were torn down or defaced, and shop signs painted over or had their Russian components removed (Weeks 2004). The German language replaced Russian as the language of new power and dominance. Photographs from this period show a variety of signs, which make the linguistic landscape of Vilnius resemble a palimpsest, signs being continually changed and overwritten in different languages. The photographs taken in 1915 depict the addition of German to the public signage of the city and they often co-exist with earlier monolingual Russian signs, as illustrated by Figure 9, where an imposing German sign on a hostel for German Soldiers (*Deutsches Soldatenheim*) hangs next to commercial Russian signs. Street names were translated from Russian into German without being renamed. For example, the main street in Vilnius before 1915 was called *Георгиевский проспект* (George Avenue), and this became *Georgstrasse*, as is seen in the caption in the top right corner of Figure 10.

Figure 10. The main street of Vilnius in 1915 with monolingual Russian and German signs (www.etoretro.ru)

The military hospital shown earlier in Figure 7 (a) changed from Russian to German (Figure 11.

Figure 11. A German Military Hospital sign in 1916 (www.mestai.net)

By the end of 1917, Vilnius had lost its Russian veneer and became a German-Polish city. It was a German administrative centre, with German schools and a German daily newspaper. Lithuanian did not feature prominently neither on official, nor private signs. However, some did contain Lithuanian as well as German, Polish, and Yiddish. These signs threatened residents with deportation, confiscation, and even shooting for transgressions against German regulations, which forbade trade in grain in an effort to assure grain supplies for the troops (Weeks 2004).

Population statistics may also explain why Lithuanian was so little used. The 1897 census carried out by the Russian Empire indicated that Lithuanians made up only 2.1% of the city's inhabitants, the German census of 1916/17 confirmed this figure (www.demoscope.ru).

2.2. 1918 – 1939

Although Lithuania declared independence in February 1918, Vilnius continued to be a contested territory between Lithuania, Poland, and Russia. Poles put forward demands for greater cultural autonomy and expressed a desire to re-unite with Poland. As a result, "the nationalizing Lithuanian state restricted Polish religious services, schools, Polish publications, and Polish voting rights" (Fearon&Laitin 2006: 4). Another action of the Lithuanian government aimed at the increased use and visibility of the titular language was a forced Lithuanisation of non-Lithuanian names (Lumans 1993). During 1919 the power in the city changed four times: Lithuanian-Polish-Russian-Polish. Finally, Lithuania and Russia signed a treaty in July 1920, in which Moscow recognised Vilnius as Lithuanian territory occupied by Poland. Lithuania took the city back by military force. By October 1920, Vilnius was under Polish control once again. It was incorporated into Poland in 1922. "Vilna was now officially transformed into Wilno" (Weeks 2004: 19). The city remained under Polish control until 1939.

Lithuanian government moved to a temporay capital in Kaunas and embarked on an explicitly nationalist policy. The first steps in implementing the national cultural policy were very practical, such as establishing Lithuanina schools and introducing compulsory education in Lithuanian. The development of cultural and literary movements was another way of nationalasing the masses. Folk culture became the business card of the nation representing it abroad and memory politics based on the cult of medieval dukes and Middle Ages became

mainstream in the national discourse. These were useful in proving that Lithuania was a "historical" nation and valuable in cultural self-representation (Davoliūtė 2013; Weeks 2015). The Vilnius campaign was an important part of this memory building and nationalasing processes. Kaunas was seen as a city without history and was not considered to be the ture capital. "The Vilnius Question grew into a national obsession and a campaign to retake the city… in tandem with the glorification of Lithuania's medieval past" (Davoliūtė 2013: 27).

Although many Lithuanians had never been to Vilnius, and their claims to it were based on history, not demography, the Union for the Liberation of Vilnius was formed in 1925, which became the most powerful civic organisation in the country (Weeks 2015). Literary and visual representation of the city became the core of the campaign. Numerous poems and postcards representing the key icon of the city, the medieval castle of Gediminas, linked it to the original history of the nation. Symbolic Vilnius Passports were issued to every schoolchild by the the Liberation Union and made it "a symbol of belonging to the nation" (Davoliūtė 2014: 188). The Lithuanian national idea born in the ninteenth has now developed into innovative mass communication tools of nationalising interwar movement.

Meanwhile, the city remained under Polish control (until 1939). Hegemonisation is strongly connected to the process of spatialisation, when space is equivalent to representation of power and the production of ideological closure (Laclau, 1990), particularly in the context of temporal dislocation. The city was constantly "dislocated" by opposing powers during the interwar period and the production of the ideological closure via spatial representation was a way of producing a picture of the dislocated world as somehow coherent and stable (Czepczyński, 2008). It is apparent from the diachronic analysis of socio-cultural landscape in Vilnius during these years that Polish "re-spatialisation" of the city was as important a tool in the consolidation and stabilisation of the Polish rule, as the closure of 266 Lithuanian schools between 1936 and 1939, the ban on activities of Lithuanian cultural organisations (Fearon&Laitin 2006), and the re-opening of a Polish university, which was restored in 1919 with a new name, *Uniwersytet Stefana Batorego.* One of the photographs from our data taken in the 1930's (Figure 12) shows the same building as in Figure 7(a)&10, but by then it had become the University Hospital and the name is in Polish. This is a good illustration that supports our earlier statement, that memory landscapes are developmental paths through historic memories, practices, and policies of authorities.

Figure 12. Vilnius University Hospital in 1930s with a Polish sign (www.mestai.net)

By 1919 a witness account stated that all street signs in Vilna were in Polish, while in Kaunas, the second city of Lithuania, they were multilingual (Lithuanian – Polish – Yiddish) (Weeks, 2004). Many streets were renamed, including the main street, illustrated earlier in Figure 9. The Germans simply translated the earlier Russian name, but the Polish authorities re-named it after the national poet Mickiewicz (Figure 13 (a)).

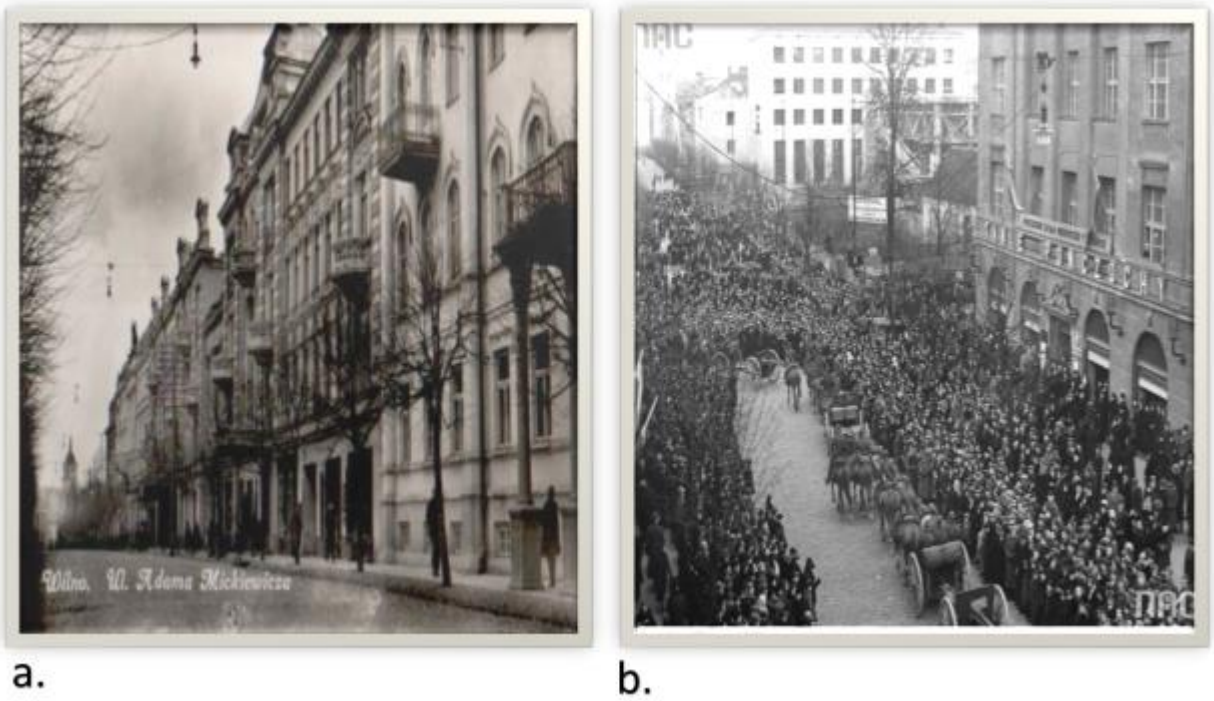


Figure 13. (a) The main street in 1930 with a Polish caption (Adam Mickiewicz St.); (b) a monolingual Polish sign *Tanie Pończochy* in 1938 (Cheap Stockings) (www.mestai.net)

The Polish identity of the city was consolidated further during 1920s and 1930s. Our corpus from this period shows new developments along Mickiewicz St., such as the modern Jabłkowski Brothers department store and various other commercial outlets. Figure 13 (b) shows a monolingual Polish sign along the façade of one of the shops *Tanie Pończochy* (Cheap Stockings). Numerous Polish publications emphasised the Polish nature of the city. New factories were built, and Polish radio had its first broadcast in 1927. Although there were also limited broadcasts in Lithuanian and Belorussian, Polish became the dominant language of the socio-linguistic landscape of Vilnius. The urbanist Kevin Lynch noted that the particular visual quality of the urban landscape plays an important role in the process of representation. People understand their surroundings by forming mental maps with five elements: paths (e.g. streets and transport), edges (walls, buildings), districts, nodes (intersections, focal points) and landmarks (1960). By 1939 these mental maps of the Vilnius inhabitants were firmly associated with the Polish language. For example, the *Jabłkowski* Brothers department store was opened in Vilnius in 1919 and by 1939 had become a well known Vilnius landmark. It was even featured on the cover of a fashion magazine published

in Vilnius (Figure 14 (a)). Another example of Polish cultural landscape at the time was its public transport. The first motorised autobuses were purchased in 1926 and by 1930 ran along three routes (Weeks 2015). All signs indicating bus routes and information at bus stops are in Polish (Figure 14 (b)).

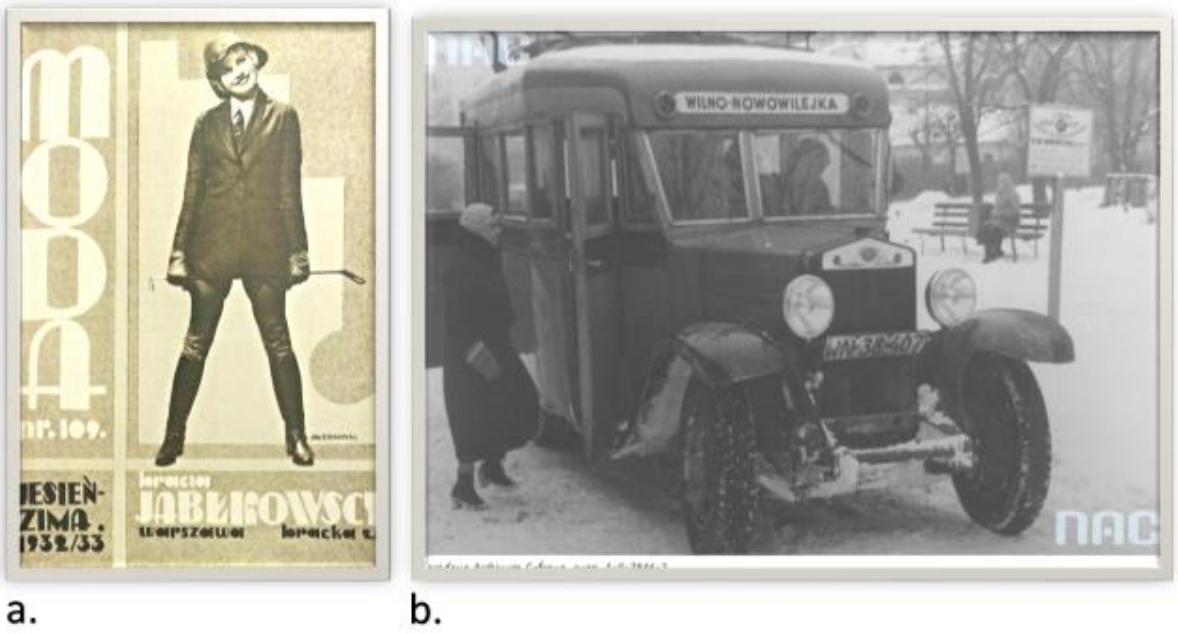


Figure 14. (a) A cover of Moda fashion magazine featuring Jabłkowski Brothers' winter collection (www.en.wikipedia.org); (b) Local bus with a Polish route sign at a bus stop with Polish information in 1937 (www.mestai.net)

Memoirs from this period depict Vilnius as a Polish city, although they aknowledge the Jewish, Russian, and Lithuanian presence (Obiezierska 1995). Our data contains a number of photographs showing Yiddish alongside Polish on shop signs. Taken in the Jewish quarter, they indicate that most Jewish merchants "preferred to use both Yiddish – and, as required, Polish – in their shop signs to underline the Jewish character of their business" (Weeks 2015: 148). The name of the Jewish owner in Figure 15 is in Polish and Yiddish on the sign above the door. Vertical signs between the windows advertise the goods available for sale in Polish at the top of the signs *obuwie* and in Yiddish at the bottom שיך (shoes).

Figure 15. Bilingual Polish-Yiddish signs, 1930 (www.mestai.net)

Demographic data also supports the fact, that for the first time a single ethnic group, Poles, could claim majority in this historically multiethnic city during the 1920's and 30's. *Weeks* gives the followng figures from the Vilnius statistical annual review of 1937: almost 66% of the city's population was Polish, 28% were Jews, less than 5% - Russian or Belorussian, less than 1% - Lithuanian (Weeks 2015: 243).

2.3. 1939 – 1944

The start of WWII brought yet more changes to Vilnius. As a result of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, the Red Army took over the city in September 1939 and it was transferred to Lithuania. In return for this "gift" Lithuania accepted the stationing of Soviet troops on its territory. The Lithuanian Army entered Vilnius displaying a victorious slogan "Vilnius inhabitants welcome Lithuanian army" (Figure 14 (a)). However, "Lithuanian soldiers were astonished that they could not communicate with the local population, and officers were forced to resort to French and German to ask for directions" (Snyder 1996: 47). Despite this, official Lithuanian propaganda spoke of liberating the cityand restoring its Lithuanian identity (ibid). By spring 1940 "a full 490 streets received new names, though the changing of street signs lagged behind" (Weeks 2015: 160).

Poles were dismissed from local government (Snyder 2003; Davoliūtė 2013). Lithuanian made an appearance on shop signs and various private businesses (Figure 16 (b)). Stefan Bathory University was re-opened in 1940 as Vilnius University, with Lithuanian as the language of instruction (Liekis 2010). Other Lituanisation measures included the abolition of the Polish Złoty, removal of Polish books from shops, closure of Polish schools, and organisations (Bauer 1981; Piotrowski 1997).

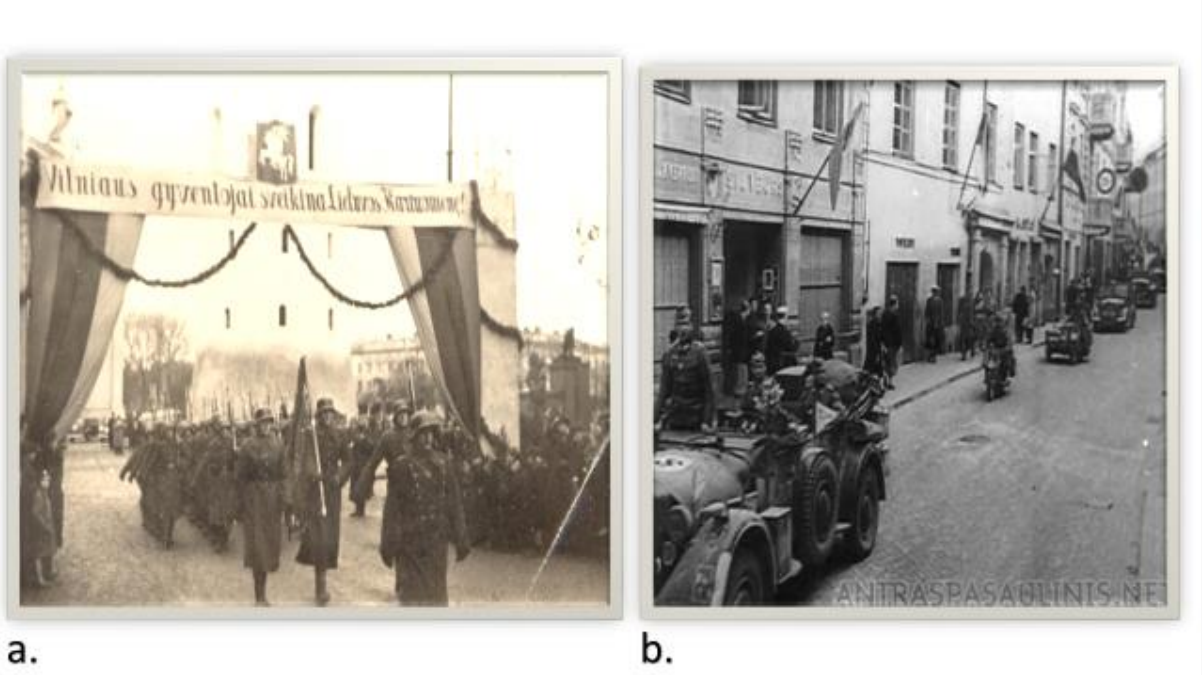
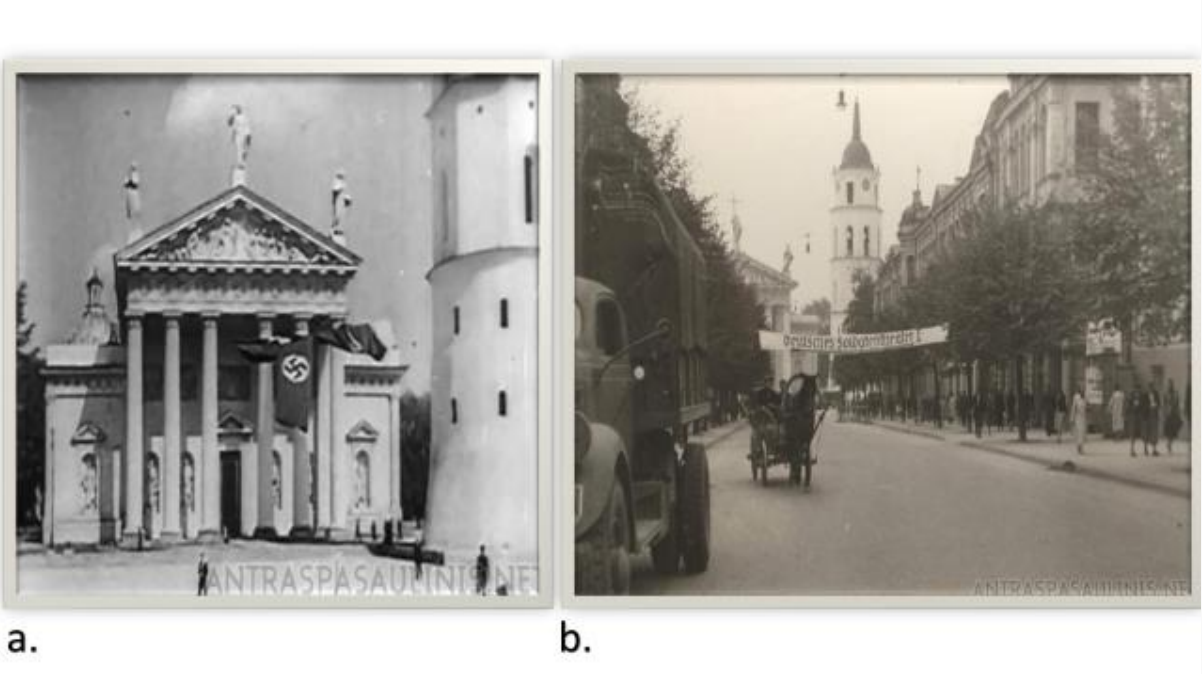


Figure 16. (a) Lithuanian Army enters Vilnius in 1939 with the slogan "*Vilniaus gyventojai sveikina Lietovos Kariuomenę*" ("Vilnius inhabitants welcome Lithuanian Army") (www.en.wikipedia.org); (b) A shop front with a Lithuanian sign "*Siuvejas*" ("Tailor") in 1940 (www.antraspasaulinis.net)

The process of "re-Lithuanisation" lasted until June 1940, when the Soviet Army took over Lithuania. A month later the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic was established. The first year of Soviet rule was accompanied by mass arrests, which spared no nationality. About 19,000 "anti-Soviet socially harmful" individuals were deported during the first month (Grunskis 1996: 23). The targets for deportations were not selected on the basis of ethnicity, as the deportees were roughly representative of the population as a whole – Lithuanians, Poles, Jews, and Russians (Balkelis 2005; Davoliūtė 2013). Weeks notes, that Lithuanian

commentators speak of “genocide” against their nation by the Soviets, but some Polish researchers maintain that NKVD worked with the Lithuanian security forces (*saugumas*) in the deportation of thousands of Poles, Lithuanians, and Jews (Weeks 2015: 164). These repressions were one of the reasons why many Lithuanians welcomed the German invasion. They hoped the Nazis would see them as allies and help to restore independence. This hope was short lived, as the Provisional Government of Lithuania was not recognised by the Nazis. They formed their own civil administration - the *Reichskommissariat Ostland*. Lip service was paid to Lithuanian cultural affairs. Vilnius university continued its work until 1943, the Lithuanian theatre and literature expanded under the German occupation. Newspapers were printed in German and Lithuanian, but not in Polish (Weeks 2015). This provided steady employment for many Lithuanian writers. They formed a platform for a propaganda campaign, emphasising the nationalist sentiment of an idyllic rural life and folk culture, which happened to conform to the image of pastoral utopia promoted by the Nazis. This “pastoral bliss” and idealised vision of Vilnius without Soviet Communists was supposed to emphasise the return of Vilnius to its native culture, although Lithuania’s sovereignty was trampled (Davoliūtė 2013). However, the photographs from this period leave no doubt about the real power landscape of Vilnius under the Nazis. Czepczyński writes that the “capacity of social actors to actively impose and engage their cultural productions and symbolic systems plays an essential role in the reproduction of social structures of domination” (2008: 45). “Symbolic capital” whether it is an image of the dream city as a guarantor of statehood, or a power over the landscape, expressed in the form of Nazi banners, flags, symbols, and German language public notices (Figure 16&17), is a crucial source of power.



a. b.

Figure 17. (a) A Nazi flag on Vilnius cathedral, 1941; (b) A banner across the main street, 1942 "*Deutsches Soldatentheater*" ("Theatre for German soldiers") (www.antrasispasaulinis.net)

The holder of symbolic capital imposes power and creates a socio-political hierarchy. Lithuanians were favoured by Nazi policies as minor allies. Most of the city administration remained Lithuanian and "Lithuanian names and companies dominated a type-written telephone book drawn by the Nazi occupiers" (Weeks 2015: 173). Poles had few rights, Jews had none. In July 1941 an order was issued stating that all Jews must wear a special patch on their back (Figure 18 (a)); subsequently they were ordered to wear the yellow Star of David instead. They were forbidden to walk along the main streets or use telephones and radios. Having incorporated thousands of Lithuanian volunteers into its ranks, the German military rule *Einsatzkommando* began a massive elimination of Jews. This time "the targets were defined explicitly in terms of their ethnic and religious identity" (Davoliūtė 2013: 38). Many Poles suffered the same fate. As they continued underground anti-German resistance, their mass arrests began in 1942. Polish memoirs and literature on the Holocaust in Lithuania stress the cruelty of Lithuanians and their collaboration with the Nazis (Figure 18 (b&c)). Reports from the Lithuanian security police at the time and recent research corroborate this fact (Dawidowicz 1979; Cesarani 1996; Hilberg 2003; Snyder 2003; Weeks 2015).

Figure 18. (a) Jewish women with "J" patches on their backs, 1941; (b) Jews in Vilnius under the escort of a Lithuanian collaborator, 1941; (c). Gates to a ghetto in Vilnius guarded by a Lithuanian and German guards, 1942 (www.de.academic.ru)

The above photographs leave no doubt about power distribution in social discourse and the position of each ethnic group. However, by 1943 nobody was safe. As the Red Army progressed westward, the Nazis began brutal liquidation of the Vilnius ghettos and the slaughter of civilian population. Thousands of Lithuanians and Poles were sent as forced labour to Germany or murdered.

2.4. 1944 – 1991

By the time the Red Army retook the city in 1944 and the Lithuanian SSR was re-established, the city's pre-war population was reduced by 50%, its Jews virtually exterminated (Snyder 2003; Weeks 2015). Although it remained mainly Polish by ethnicity, "Stalin decided that

Vilnius was to be Lithuanian" (Snyder 2003: 88)[1]. First, the name of the city was changed to Wilnius (the transliteration of Lithuanian), then beween 1945-46 "170,000 ethnic Poles were "repatriated" to Poland in the context of the post-war population exchanges negotiated among the Allies' and to the Lithuanian countyside (Davoliūtė 2013: 43). Vilnius became the capital of Soviet Lithuania and would never again be challenged by Poles (Weeks 2015).

The Soviet period in Lithuania has been extensively researched, both in post-Soviet Lithuania and in the West. Two opposing views are evident. On the one hand, recent historico-political and socio-linguistic research evaluates this period as the second Soviet occupation, characterised by cultural Sovietization and linguistic Russification, which "once again presented the Lithuanian nation with a challenge to the survival of its identity" (Clarke 2006: 165). This analysis reflects the fact that Sovietisation was imposed by force and provoked armed resistance, whose centre moved to the countryside. It became known as the "forest brothers" and was crushed by Soviet political repressions and mass deportations, resulting in 5% of the population being sent to the Gulag. "In popular and official Lithuanian memory today, the Soviets were nothing less than agents of genocide" (Davoliūtė 2014: 180). As we discussed in section 1.1., these tragic events became the focus of collective identity and national memory in post-Soviet Lithuania.

On the other hand, a number of researchers recently tried to establish a link between the development of Soviet Lithianian identity and the nationalising drive of the inter-war republic and the early Lithuanian nationalist movement which highlights the national character of Lithuanian Sovietisation (Snyder 2003; Davoliūtė 2013; 2014; 2016; Weeks 2015)[2]. Davoliūtė argues that the problem with the first approach is that it does not explain the "paradoxical" co-existence of national and communist discourses in Soviet Vilnius, that it ignores "any sensibility towards the social and cultural legacy of that period" (2013: 176). As an alternative, she draws "on the "new imperial history" to contextualise Lithuania after World War II as an "imperial situation" – a heterogeneous space of conflicting memories and political, social, and cultural experiences created by forced and momentous geopolitical, demographic, and social changes" (ibid 2013: 177). From this perspective, the Soviet rule in Vilnius could be seen not only as a repressive regime, but also as a catalyst of transnational and transcultural processes which brought demographic and linguistic Lithuanisation.

[1] For reasoning behind this decision see the discussion in Snyder (2003), which argues that Stalin had more to gain by giving the city to the Lithuanians.

[2] For an analysis of recent work by Lithuanian scholars on the topography of Soviet Vilnius see Davoliūtė (2014).

Weeks also maintains that the weakest aspect of studies supporting the first approach, that they almost exclusively portray this period as an era of repression "with very little discussion of the economic growth, cultural development, and major physical changes in Vilnius during these four and a half decades"(Weeks 2015: 233).

In his provocative book "The Reconstruction of Nations", Snyder asks the following question: "How did Wilno, a city with a tiny Lithuanian minority under Polish rule in 1939 became Vilnius, the capital of a Lithuanian nation-state, in 1991?" (2003: 91). He argues that the Soviet policies of Polish resettlement were made by people who understood the history of nationality and opened political and physical space for the re-creation of Vilnius as a Lithuanian city in two ways. It not only changed the demographic balance, but also engineered a major sociological change. "Poles became in Lithuania what they had never been – a peasan nation… Lithuanians had become what they had never been: an urban nation. Their language became, for the first time in modern history, a badge of status in Vilnius" (Snyder 2003: 95).

Weeks supports this discussion also emphasising the population shift as one of the major factors in the post-war developments in Vilnius. He notes, that Nazi and early Soviet repressions during 1939-47 emptied the city of its "original population and repopulated"it mostly with Lithuanians from the countryside (Weeks 2015:239). This, as was mentioned in section 1.1., prevented extensive Russification and allowed the authorities to build a city which "was simultaniosly Soviet-socilist and Lithuanian" (ibid).

In the first decade of Soviet rule, the number of secondary schools quadrupled and a comprehensive Lithuanian-language education system was established. It had more titular language instruction than ever before. The first history of the Lithuanian language was published in English. It was written by a graduate of Soviet-era Vilnius University (ibid). The processes of indigenisation and Khruschev's Thaw discussed in section 1.1.contributed to the success of Lithuanian literature and arts and solidified the Lithuanian identity of Vilnius.

The analysis of our data from this period supports the second view and reveals a picture of Soviet Vilnius, where "language was a mark of distinctiveness for Lithuanians under Soviet rule" (Snyder 2003: 97). The photographs from the late 40s and early 50s contain predominantly Lithuanian signs. Among these are political signs typical of the era, such as election banners displayed at a polling station and banners carried during the Soviet May Day and October Parades (Figure 19), and everyday photographs of streets with various public

buildings, such as Vilnius railway station, the central telegraph and post office (Figure 20).

Figure 19. (a) Lithuanian banner "*TSRS Piliečiai turi tiesę i darba*" (Citizens of LSSR have the right to work) on the left and "*TSRS Piliečiai turi tiesę i poilsi*" (Citizens of LSSR have the right to rest) on the right, 1950 (www.archyvai.lt) (b) Lithuanian banner in the background "*Dėkojame draugui Stalinui už mūsų laimingą vaikystę* " (We thank comrade Stalin for our happy childhood) and on the right "*Tegivuoja 1 Gegužės*" ("Long live May 1st"), 1950's (www.truelithuania.com)

Figure 20. (a) Vilnius railway station, 1950, the words on the building are in Lithuanian "*Geležinkelio Stotis*" ("Railway Station)"; (b) Vilnius Central Post Office, 1958, the words on the front top corner (enlarged on the right) "*Paštas*" ("Post office") (www.archyvai.lt)

These photographs illustrate what Snyder (2003) calls the post-war bow of the Russian to the Lithuanian language. If we compare the socio-lingustic landscape of Vilnius in Imperial Russia with the landscape during Soviet times, our earlier argument, that some post-Soviet researchers tend to equate the concepts of Russification and Sovietisation, becomes clear. Sovietisation is a far more encompassing and complex process than Russification. A number of authors argue that the strength of national communism and a compromise between Lithuanian communists and intelligentsia[3] opened an opportunity to pursue the same nationalising project as the inter-war regime, but with better resources and more elaborately articulated (Davoliūtė 2013; Weeks 2015). The key formula of Soviet nationality policy, to be national in form and socialist in content, was used by them to focus public discourse on a construction of Lithuanian ethnic identity via the restoration of key monuments connected to the medieval past of Lithuania. For example, the restoration of the Castle of Gediminas, an important state and historic symbol of Vilnius built by the grand Duke of Lithuania in 1323, was identified as a national priority as early as 1945. This echoes the representation of the city as the symbol of national history in the interwar period, discussed in section 2.2. Much of the Old Town of Vilnius was also preserved, escaping radical Soviet plans for its reconstruction. It is interesting to note, that Soviet Lithuanian authorities followed the same pattern of neglecting the cultural heritage of the great manors, seen as the remnants of Polish culture, by the interwar authorities.

Lithuanian folk song and sports festivals were also a representation of socialist reconstruction, but they closely resembled the tradition of mass festivals during the interwar period (Figure 21). The first such festival was organised in 1924. Lithuanian and Soviet narratives are tightly intertwined in the messages of these mass cultural events, aiding the formation of a new collective sense of Soviet Lithuanian identity.

[3] See Snyder (2003) and Davoliūtė (2013) for a discussion of the arrangements between Lithuanian communists and intelligentsia to preserve Lithuanian culture.

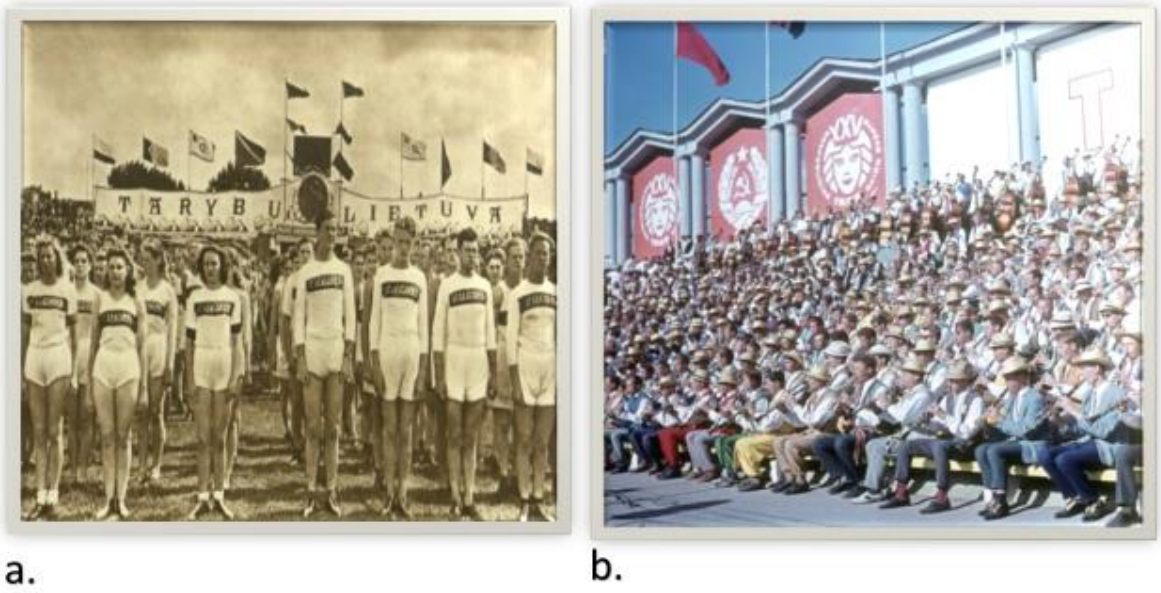


Figure 21. (a) A sports parade, 1950 (www.archyvai.lt); (b) Folk song and dance festival, 1966 (www.strana.lenta.ru/lithuania/lilak/htm)

The sports parade depicted in Figure 21 (a) is a typical example of the cultural events, which emphasised the socialist cultivation of youth as an ideal of a bright Soviet future. The name of a famous Lithuanian basketball club "Žalgiris" is proudly displayed on participants' T-shirts, and the background dominated by a banner with the LTSR coat of arms in the middle and the words "*Tarybų Lietuva*" ("Soviet Lithuania"). However, the prominence of Lithuanian and the absence of Russian, suggests that the titular language was at the same time the main instrument of Sovietisation and promotion of Lithuanian nationalism with an aura of Soviet legitimacy. The same goes for Figure 21 (b) showing a folk song and dance festival where all information is given in Lithuanian, although the LTSR coat of arms has pride of place in the centre. Such festivals started in August 1924 and were restarted in Soviet Lithuania in 1945. "They contained a strong element of staged nationalism and continuity with mass identity politics developed during the interwar period" (Davoliūtė 2013: 68).

The socio-political landscape of Vilnius in the 50s and 60s was dominated by Soviet symbols prominently displayed throughout the city in the form of the new Soviet Lithuanian coat of arms, Soviet Lithuanian flag, Soviet slogans and monuments, which conveyed the Soviet message in Lithuanian. Even non-political labels on goods were in Lithuanian, but also

demonstrated the republic's participation in the process of Soviet economic integration by the inclusion of LTSR – *Lietovos Tarybų Socialistinė Respublika* (Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic) (Figure 22). The only hints of its Soviet character are circled in red: LTSR and a small word in Russian "*ГОСТ",* which refers to the Soviet standardisation system of goods.

Figure 22. (a) A matchbox, 1956 "*Taribų Lietuvos Spartakiada*" ("The Spartakiad of Soviet Lithuania)" (b) A jam label, 1954 "*Obuolių džemas*" ("Apple jam") (www.delcampe.net)

By the late 50s, Vilnius had its share of Soviet monuments, including a statue of Lenin, but many Lithuanian writers, composers, and communists were also commemorated, as *Weeks'* analysis of how Lithuanian communists established Vilnius as the Soviet Lithuanian capital reveals. Many streets were renamed after communist leaders, but an even larger number lost their historical Polish names and assumed Lithuanian ones (Weeks 2008).

By mid 1960s and beyond Moscow authorities often used Lithuania "as a showcase for the achievements of Soviet science, culture and industry, and by implication the Soviet nationalities policy" (Davoliūtė 2013: 108). Khrushchev's Thaw enabled Lithuanian intelligentsia to participate in Soviet cultural exchange trips and travel outside the USSR. This brought new European trends into Lithuanian architecture and reflected in the cityscape. A new distinct Soviet Lithuanian style won international recognition and the first All-Union Lenin prize for architecture in 1974 for the design of a new microdistrict Lazdynai

(Синочкина 2008). Equally, Lithuanian writers, musicians and actors began to enjoy recognition outside their republic and many of them became stars of Soviet cinema and theatre.

The sociocultural landscape of Vilnius continued to be national in its nature, but the official Soviet policy of bilingualism meant that official documents such as birth, marriage, divorce certificates and degree documents, contained Lithuanian and Russian. Street signs and most shop fronts were also in two languages, with the titular language displayed first (Figure 23).

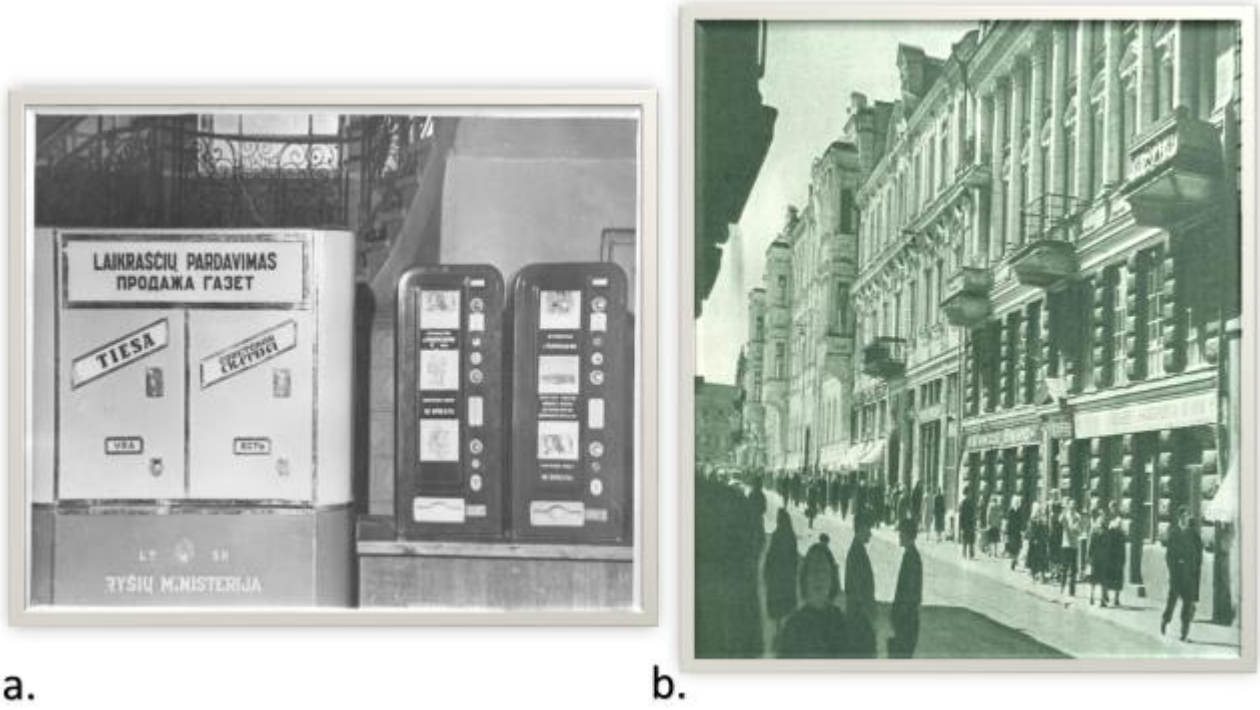


Figure 23. (a) A newspaper and post-card vending machines with bilingual Lithuanian-Russian signs, 1960 (www.miestai.net); (b) A street in central Vilnius with bilingual Lithuanian-Russian shop signs "*Vinas - Вино*" ("Wine") and "*Pieno Kavinė – Молочное Кафе*" ("Milk Bar", 1966 (private archive).

However, the policy was not strictly imposed and many photographs depict Lithuanian signage only (Figure 24).

Figure 24. (a) A trolleybus stop with information in Lithuanian, 1977 (b) A snack bar in central Vilnius with Lithuanian signage, 1970s (www.etoretro.ru)

Hogan-Brun *et al.* state, that the Russification policy of the 50's and 60' did not aim at the rearrangement of the language environment, but from 1978 it was strengthened, and the Russian language and its speakers were favoured in all three Baltic republics. The authors go further and declare that "cultural and educational policies were geared to destroy the native language/medium educational system as the basis of national identity" (Hogan-Brun *et al.* 2008: 68). It is true, that since 1961 the so called "second mother tongue" campaign was gathering strength and resulted, in the late 70s, in increased bilingualism among titular speakers and growing visibility of Russian in sociolinguistic landscapes of Soviet cities. However, as we mentioned earlier, the implementation of central policies had local peculiarities in each republic and such overreaching statements should be issued with caution. In her article Pavlenko gives evidence that counter-argues the above statements. She writes that Russian speakers were not socially privileged and many schools across the republics offered bilingual education – Russian was studied as L2 in titular schools and titular languages were studied as L2 in Russian schools (Pavlenko 2008). The discussions concerning the compromise between Lithuanian communists and intelligentsia, mentioned in section 2.4., also contradicts the above view. It asserts that Lithuanian poetry and prose

enjoyed notable successes, and Vilnius University became a haven of Baltic studies (Snyder 2003; Davoliūtė 2013).

Our data also does not support the thesis of "titular language destruction" in Lithuania. Figure 25 illustrates the continuous "bilingualisation" of public spaces in Vilnius in the 70s and 80s, but detects no increase in their Russification. In fact, the patterns of language positioning and use remain similar to those of the 60s and 70s. In most top-down controlled locations the signs are bilingual, with Lithuanian on top or on the left, and Russian as L2 on the bottom or on the right.

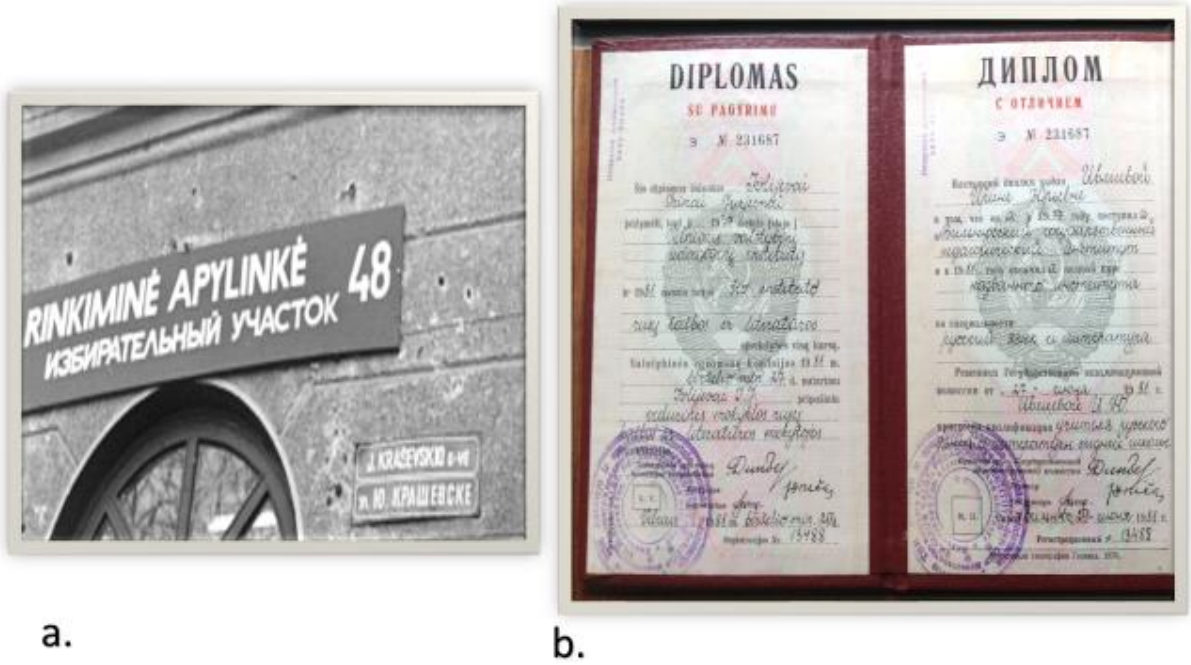


Figure 25. (a) A bilingual street sign and a temporary polling station sign (private archive, 1979) (b) A bilingual degree document (private archive, 1981).

Similarly to the previous decade, there is also evidence of monolingual Lithuanian signs, which indicate that the policy was not strictly followed (Figure 26).

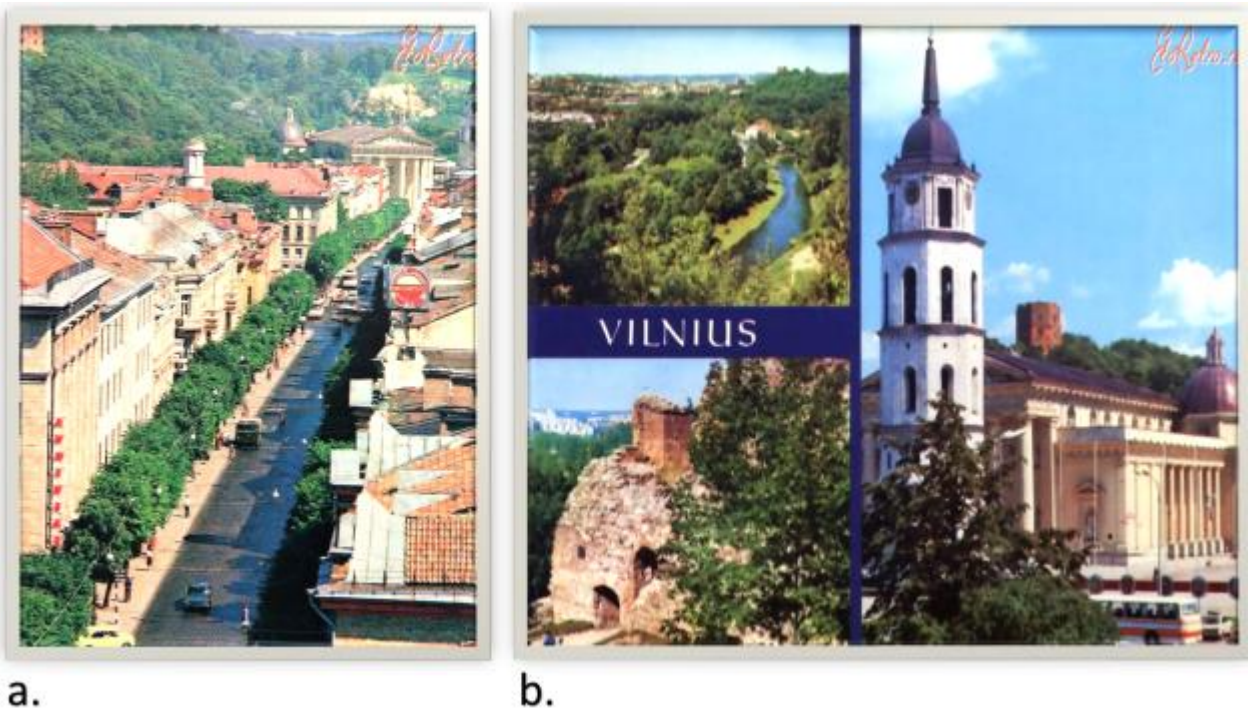


Figure 26. (a) A monolingual shop sign (in red on the left) in Lithuanian "*Audiniai*" ("Fabrics") on the main street of Vilnius, 1981; (b) A postcard with an inscription in Lithuanian only, 1980s (www.etoretro.ru)

Another interesting point made by a number of researchers with regard to late Russification policies is the increasing prestige of Russian in various public domains (Clarke 2006; Hogan-Brun *et al.* 2008). Indeed, by the late 80s Russian became a language of interethnic communication and was widely spoken across the USSR. Its use and knowledge was required in new functional areas of economy and industry in terms of inter-republic cooperation and state planning and control. Nevertheless, its hegemony and use in prestige areas differed from republic to republic. Lithuania was the only republic in the Baltics where the ruling organs of the Communist Party operated in the titular language, not Russian. Hogan-Brun *et al.* acknowledge this fact, but without explaining how this was possible in the light of the "thick" Russification policies they discussed earlier. The only statement they make is that Lithuania was "an exception" (2008: 70).

As we discussed in section 1.1., by 1959 the majority of people in the leading posts of the local Communist Party were Lithuanians and a titular language knowledge requirement for such positions, as well as for various other functionaries and administrators, was in place. Also, the strength and cohesion of national communists was ensured by its leadership. A.

Sniečkus, the First Secretary of the Lithuanian Communist Party since 1927, had considerable authority in Moscow and was trusted by Stalin. He remained unchallenged in Soviet Lithuania until his death in 1972 and "appears to have shielded Lithuania from excessive interference from Moscow" (Davoliūtė 2013: 88). In contrast to communist elites in other republics, the Lithuanian communists "were never purged and maintained an unusual level, by Soviet Standards, of corporate autonomy in their affairs, especially as concerns cultural and economic matters" (ibid: 89).

Our data contain a number of photographs depicting official meetings of the Lithuanian Communist Party. These and other photographs confirm the wide spheres of influence of the Lithuanian language, from shop fronts to the congresses of the Communist Party (Figure 27).

a. b.

Figure 27. (a) An official communist meeting with a partially visible slogan in Lithuanian "*Komunizmo Salygose*" ("In communist conditions"), 1961; (b) 16th Congress of the Lithuanian Communist Party with a Lithuanian banner "*LKP*" ("LCP - Lithuanian communist Party"), 1971 (www.virtualios-parados.archyvai.lt)

As we can see, the city in the 1970s and 1980s was very different from earlier periods analysed in this paper. The diachronic approach to its socio-cultural landscape illustrates that Soviet Vilnius had a mixed identity. It was "primarily Lithuanian and Soviet, but also Russian inasmuch as the Soviet Union presupposed Russian and Lithuanian bilingualism"

(Weeks 2015: 209). The Jewish and Polish identities had virtually disappeared. Out data contain very few images connected with Polish and Yiddish, mostly left on some religious and historical buildings as structural parts of their architectural design. There are also rare reminders of the city's multicultural past in the form of tourist information plaques, such as the one depicted in Figure 28. It is a trilingual sign commemorating the Great Synagogue of Vilna which was damaged during the WW2 and pulled down in 1957.

Figure 28. A rare example of a modern multilingual Lithuanian-English-Russian sign, 2016 (author's photograph).

Soviet and Lithuanian identities coexisted in the form of bilingual cityscape in tandem with selected elements of national culture and history, but the privileged position of the Lithuanian language "was evident at the university, in the academy of sciences, in the majority of research institutes, in the mass press" (Weeks 2015: 191) and even in the local organs of the Communist Party. *Weeks* calls this situation a "bilingual cultural hegemony", which led to the development of a modern nationalising movement through physical reconstruction of the city. It also facilitated the key role of Soviet Lithuanian intelligentsia together with the LCP in shaping

public discourse in Soviet times. This, in its turn, transformed this hegemony into the modern independent Lithuanian state.

Conclusions

The importance of Vilnius to different ethnicities makes it an ideal case study for diachronic analysis of its symbolic and physical appropriation. Linguistic Landscape was used as a polyhedral tool to reveal how Polish, Russian, Soviet, and Lithuanian states implemented their national symbolic politics. As we have seen, landscape revolutions go behind the political transformations, and can be fatal and turbulent, resulting in "soft" (propaganda, culture, education) and "hard" policies (repression, prohibition of certain languages… and genocide" (Weeks 2015: 3). On the one hand, we were able to establish the surface picture of language repositioning and changes in language practices via the synchronic-diagnostic and combined historical diachronic analysis. On the other, extra-linguistic semiotic analysis enabled us to investigate how written languages interact with the physical features of the cityscape to construct new memory landscapes and expose the roots of modern developments. The strict policy of titular monolingualism in modern Lithuania and the displacement metaphor in Soviet times became key elements in the city's national face and ethnic self-representation. The diachronic analysis of Vilnius LL illustrated that the centrality of language in the Lithuanian identity can be traced historically to the Polish and Russian linguistic and cultural domination, and the displacement metaphor to the cultural politics during the interwar period. Displaced from Vilnius to Kaunas, the Lithuanian government focused on the Vilnius Question as the central part of its nationalising campaign.

Analysis of the linguistic and socio-cultural landscape of Soviet Vilnius as an element in the discourse of Soviet Lithuanian identity helped us to reveal the links between the post-war era and the nationalising drive of the inter-war republic. This approach enabled us to challenge the post-Soviet Lithuanian memory landscapes and see what Sovietisation meant in the Lithuanian context in a different light. The decades of Soviet rule are widely regarded as dominated by "the grinding process of Russification, but these generalisations are only partially accurate" (Weeks 2015: 239).

Using LL as a powerful diagnostic tool we illustrated that Sovietisation did not only brutalise the nation and attempt to mould its identiy according to Soviet ideology, but also aided the demographic, linguistic and cultural Lithuanisation of the city. It appears that Sovietisation involved considerably more than the imposition of oppressive external rule. It shaped the development of national resistance and nation building, which allowed the local communists and intelligentsia to facilitate the creation of a Soviet identity with a Lithianian national nuance. They gained an exceptional level of cultural autonomy and followed the intellectual traditions of the interwar period, which later resurfaced in the cultural movement against Soviet rule, *Sajūdis*, and eventually led to the declaration of independence in 1991. These social transformations are often either forgotten or deeply buried in post-Soviet collective memory.

Our diachronic analysis of socio-political, cultural, and memory discourses of Vilnius may be limited and even controversial, but we believe that it has thrown some light on certain blind spots. As Davoliūtė argues, the period between 1940 and 1990 was declared "legally inoperative, politically illegitimate… and culturally inauthentic", therefore, "it says nothing of the role of Lithuanians in the direction and management of the Soviet regime" (2013: 4).

Bibliography:

Altapov, V. (2000). *150 Iazykov i Politika: 1917-2000 (150 Languages and Politics: 1917-2000).* Moscow: KRAFT+IV RAN.

Andersen, B. a. (1984). Eguality, Efficiency, and Politics in Soviet Bilingual Education Policy, 1934-1980. *The American Political Science Review, 78*(4), 1019-1039.

Andrlik, J. (2009). *Ethnic and Language Policy of the Republic of Lithuania: basis and Practice*. Retrieved March 4, 2016, from http;//www.alppi.vedeckecasopisy.cz

Balkelis, T. (2005). Lithuanian Children in the Gulag: Deportations, Ethnicity and Identity Memoirs of Children Deportees, 1941-52. *Lithuanus, 51*(3). Retrieved October 25, 2016, from http://www.lithuanus.org/2005/05_3_2Balkelis.htm

Bauer, Y. (1981). *American Jewury and the Holocaust.* Detroit Michigan: Wayne State University press.

Bengtsson, A. (2010). *A Polish Heart in Lithuania*. Retrieved March 6, 2016, from http://balticworlds.com

Ben-Rafael, E. S.-H. (2006). Linguistic Landscape as Symbolic Construction of the Public Space: the Case of Israel. In D. Gorter (Ed.), *Linguistic Landscape: A New Approach to Multilingualism* (pp. 7-30). Clevedon/Buffalo/Toronto: Multilingual Matters Ltd.

Blommaert, J. (2013). Semiotic and Spatial Scope: Towards a Materialist Semiotics. In N. B. Pacher (Ed.), *Multimodality and Social Semiotics* (pp. 29-38). Oxford/New York: Routledge.

Census 2011. (2011). Retrieved March 5, 2016, from http://www.osp.stat.gov.lt/en/2011

Certeau, M. (1985). Practice of Space. In M. Blonski (Ed.), *On signs* (pp. 122-145). Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Cesarani, D. (1996). *The Holocaust in Lithuania - Dina Porat - The Final Solution - Origins and Implementation.* London: Routledge.

Clarke, T. (2006). *Nationalism in Post-Soviet Lithuania. In: Barrington, L.W. (ed.). After Independence: Making and Protecting the Nation in Postcolonial and Postcommunist States.* Michigan: University of Michigan Press.

Czepczyński, M. A. (2008). *Cultural Landscapes of Post-Socialist Cities: Representation of Power and Needs.* Aldershot: Ashgate.

Davoliūtė, V. (2014). Postwar Reconstruction and the Imperial Sublime in Vilnius during late Stalinism. *Ab Imperio, 1*, 176-203.

Davoliūtė, V. (2013). *The Making and Breaking of Soviet Lithuania.* London&New York: Routledge.

Davoliūtė, V. (2016). The Sovietization of Lithuania after WWII: Modernization, Transculturation, and the Lettered City. *Journal of Baltic Studies, 47*(1), 49-63.

Dawidowicz, L. (1979). *The War Against The Jews.* New York: Bantam Books.

Dobriansky, F. (1904). *Staraya i Novaya Vilna (Old and New Vilna)* (3 ed.). Vilna: Syrkin.

Dowler, W. (2001). *Classroom and Empire: the Politics of Schooling Russia's Eastern Nationalities, 1860-1917.* Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Drėmaite, M. (2010). Naujas Senasis Vilnius: Senamiescio Griovimas ir Atstatyma 1944-1959 metais. In G. Jankeviciute, *Atrasti Viliu: Skiriama Vladuii Dremai* (pp. 183-201). Vilnius.

Fearon, J. L. (2006). *Lithuania Narrative*. Retrieved March 17, 2016, from http://www.stanford.edu

Grunskis, E. (1996). *Lietuvos Gyventoju Tremimai, 1940-1941 ir 1945-53 Metais.* Vilnius: Lietuvos Istorijos Institutas.

Hall, S. (1999). *Concrete Conclusions. The Discreet Charm of the Czech Panelak*. Retrieved March 15, 2016, from http://ce-review.org

Herrschel, T. (2007). *Global Georgaphies of Post-Socialist Transition: Geographies, Societies, Policies.* . London: Routledge.

Hilberg, R. (2003). *The Destruction of the European Jews.* New Haven: Yale University Press.

History of Vilnius. (n.d.). Retrieved September 20, 2016, from http://www.en.wikipedia.org

Hogan-Brun, G. (2002). *Emerging Language and Education Policies in Lithuania*. Retrieved March 3, 2016, from http://www.academia.edu

Hogan-Brun, G. (2008). Language Politics and Practice in the Baltic States. In R. B. Kaplan, *Language Planning and Policy in Europe* (pp. 31-193). Clevedon, UK; Bufallo, NY: Multilingual Matters.

Hogan-Brun, G. (2004). Changing Levels of Bilingualism acros the Baltic. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism, 7*(1), 62-77.

Järve, P. (2003). Language Battles in the Baltic States: 1989-2002. In F. G. Daftary, *Nation-building, Ethnicity and Language Politics in Transition Countries* (pp. 73-106). IGI Books.

Jaworski, A. T. (2010). *Semiotic Landscapes.* London/New York: Continuum.

Kappeler, A. (2001). *The Russian Empire: a Multiethnic History.* Harlow: Longman.

Kappeler, A. (2004). The Ambiguities of Russification. *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, 291-297.

Kotkin, S. (2001). Modern Times: The Soviet Union and the Interwar Conjuncture. *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, *2*(1), 111-164.

Laclau, E. (1990). *New Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time.* London: Verso.

Laitin, D. (1998). *Identity in Formation: the Russian-speaking populations in the Near Abroad.* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Law on Ethnic Minorities of the Republic of Lithuania, Minelres – minority electronic resources. (1989). Retrieved March 4, 2016, from http://www.minelres.lv/NationalLegislation/Lithuania/Lithuania_Minorities_English.htm

Liekis, S. (2010). *1939: the Year that Changed Everything in Lithuanian History.* Amsterdam - New York: Rodopi.

Lithuanian Press Ban. (2016, October 4). Retrieved from Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lithuanian_press_ban

Lumans, V. (1993). *Himmler's Auxiliaries: The Volksdeutsce Mittelstelle and the German National Minoroities of europe, 1993-1945.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Muth, S. (2008). *Multiethnic but multilingual as well? - The Linguistic Landscape of Vilnius.* Retrieved August 25, 2015, from http://www.biecoll.ub.uni-bielefeld.de

Obiezierska, H. (1995). *Jedno zycie prywatne na tle zycia narodupolskiego w wieku XX.* Wilna: Bydgoszcz: Towarzystwo Milosnikow.

Outdoor exposure . (2016, October 25). Retrieved from Sovietiniu Skulpturu Musiejus: http://www.grutoparkas.lt

Pavlenko, A. (2008). Multilingualism in Post-Soviet Countries: Language Revival, Language Removal, and Sociolinguistic Theory. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism, 11*(3&4), 275-313.

Pavlenko, A. (2009). Language Conflict in Post-Soviet Linguistic Landscapes. *Journal of Slavic Linguistics, 17*(1-2), 247-274.

Pavlenko, A. (2010). Linguistic Landscape of Kyiv, Ukraine: A Diachronic Study. In E. B.-R. Shohamy (Ed.), *Linguistic Landscape in the City* (pp. 133-150). Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

Pavlenko, A. (2011). Language Rights versus Speakers' Rights: on the Applicability of Western Language Rights Approaches in Eastern European Contexts. *Language Policy, 10*(1), 37-58.

Pavlenko, A. (2013). Multilingualism in Post-Soviet Successor States. *Language and Linguistic Compass, 7*(4), 262-271.

Photos of old Vilnius. (n.d.). Retrieved October 12, 2016, from http://www.etoretro.ru

Piotrowski, T. (1997). *Poland's Holocaust.* Jefferso, North Carolina, and London: McFarland & Company.

Raos, V. (2015). *Linguistic Landscapes in EU Member States: Politics of Visibility and Presence*. Retrieved March 5, 2016, from http://www.beucitizen.ln

Remnev, A. (2011). Colonisation and "russification" in the imperial geography of Asiatic Russia: from the nineteenth to the early twentieth centuries. In U. Tomohiko (Ed.), *Asiatic Russia: imperial power in regional and international contexts* (pp. 102-128). Abingdon: Routledge.

Riegl, M. V. (2007). Comparison of Language Policies in the Post-Soviet Union Countries on the European Continent. *Annual of Language and Politics of Identity, 2*(1), 33-45.

Snyder, T. (1995). National myths and international relations : Poland and Lithuania, 1989-1994. *East European politics and Societies, 9*(2), 317-343.

Snyder, T. (1996). *Memory of Sovereignty and Sovereignty over memory: Poland. Lithuanian and Ukraine, 1939 - 1999*. Retrieved October 26, 2016, from http://www.chtyvo.org.ua

Snyder, T. (2003). *The Reconstruction of Nations, Poland, Ukraine, Lithuania, Belarus 1569-1999.* New Haven&London: Yale University Press.

Spolsky, B. (2002). Language Policy, Practice and Ideology. In E. Y. Ben-Rafael (Ed.), *Identity, Culture and Globalisation* (pp. 319-325). Paris: The International Institute of Sociology.

Strazas, A. (1996). *Lithuania 1863-1893: Tsarist Russification and the Beginning of the Modern Lithuanian National Movement*. Retrieved October 16, 2016, from http://lithuanus.org

Suziedelis, S. (2011). *Historical Dictionary of Lithuania* (Lanham ed.). Scarecrow Press.

Weeks, T. (2015). *Vilnius between Nations 1795-2000*. Northern Illinois University Press.

Tada ir Dabar. (2003). Retrieved October 26, 2016, from http://antraspasaulinis.net

Tarasiewicz, S. (2014). *Tylko Tam Est Ulica, Gdzie Jest Litewska Tablica (Only Lithuanian Street Signs)*. Retrieved March 10, 2016, from http://www.kurierwilenski.lt

Thaden, E. (1981). *Russification in the Baltic Provinces and Finland, 1855-1914.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Vardis, V. S. (1997). *Lithuania. The Rebel Nation* (2 ed.). Colorado/Oxford: Westview press.

Venckus, D. (2013). *A one way ticket to the revolution*. Retrieved October 11, 2016, from http://www.daivavenckus.com

Vilno in 1870s. (2014). Retrieved October 6, 2016, from http://humus.livejournal.com

Virtual Exhibition Soviet Culture. (n.d.). Retrieved Ocotber 29, 2016, from Office of the Chief Archivist of Lithuania: http://www.archyvai.lt

Weeks, T. (2004). *From "Russian" to "Polish": Vilna-Wilno 1900-1925*. Retrieved October 13, 2016, from http://www.ucis.pitt.edu

Weeks, T. (2006). A Multiethnic City in Transition: Vilnius' Stormy Decade, 1939-49. *Eurasian Geography and Economics, 47*(2), 153-175.

Weeks, T. (2008). Remembering and Forgetting: Creating a Soviet Lithuanian Capital. Vilnius, 1944-49. *Journal of Baltic Studies, 39*(4), 517-133.

Weeks, T. (2010). *Russification/Sovietization*. Retrieved October 2, 2016, from http://www.ieg-ego.en/weeks-2010-en

Weeks, T. (2010, October 2). *Russification/Sovietization*. Retrieved from European History Online: http://www.ieg-ego.eu/en/threads/models-and-stereotypes/russification-sovietization

Wright, E. B. (2015). *The Handbook of Bilingual and Multilingual Education.* Wiley Blackwell.

Zabrodskaja, A. (2014). Tallinn: Monolingual from Above and Multilingual from Below. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*(228), 113-129.

Zamascikov, S. (2007). Soviet Methods and Instrumentalities of Maintaining Control ove the Balts. *Journal of Baltic Studies, 18*(3), 221-234.

Zinkevičius, Z. (1998). *The History of the Lithuanina Language.* Vilnius: Mokslo ir Enciklopediju Leidybos Institutas.

Zweiter Weltkrieg. (n.d.). Retrieved from Deutsch Wikipedia: http://www.de.academic.ru

Вильнюс - путешествие в прошлое (Vilnius - a journey to the past). (n.d.). Retrieved September 20, 2016, from http://www.smolbattle.ru

Демоскоп (Demoscope). (n.d.). Retrieved October 10, 2016, from http://www.demoscope.ru

Синочкина, Б. (2008). *Литва.* Vilnius: Artlora.

СССР, Ц. С. (1980). *Вестник статистики.* Москва: Гостстатиздат.

Комитет по статистике СССР, U. S. (1990). *Население СССР: По данным Всесоюзной переписи населения 1989.* Москва: Финансы и статистика.