Comparing Populist Political Parties in the Baltic States and Western Europe

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ABSTRACT *Paper seeks to answer two questions – which parties in the three Baltic States (Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia) can be classified under label "populism" and do they indicate any similarities with populist parties in Western Europe. Analysis leads to conclusion that there are not only populist parties in the Baltic States, even more – almost every party includes some aspects of populism. There is also a difference within Baltic States, pointing that populism is more widespread in Lithuania than amongst parties in Estonian and Latvian political systems. Secondly, analysis does not indicate on fundamental similarities among populist parties in Baltic countries and Western Europe.*

Introduction

It is a trend to start every introduction on populism related subjects with an emphasis on its complicated nature and problems to come up with a precise definition. Indeed, populism as an analytical tool has been widely used. At the same time there are still many methodological and also theoretical debates unresolved. Most of the concern concentrates around coherent and precise definition and also on characteristics of populism. Topicality of populism has been acknowledged for an objective reason since populism in the rhetorical and programmatic level has become evident mostly in Western Europe and traditionally - Latin America. Yet the last decade has proved that also Central and Eastern European countries can grasp attention from academics. Today range of studies on populism includes analysis of cases like Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, etc. And yet almost nothing is known about populism in the Baltic countries. In order to bridge the gap this paper will focuses on analysis of distribution of populism among political parties in the Baltic States, namely Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. The first chapter gives an overview on populism as a theoretical concept and sets up

indicators, which are used in second part of article to analyse electoral programmes of political parties in Baltic's. Proposed characteristics are perceived as the "lowest common denominator" or the minimal number of characteristics that parties should indicate in order to be classified as populist. It is worth to mention that analysis covers only those parties that were elected in national parliaments of Baltic States during the last parliamentary elections. The third part includes an analysis of main programmatic lines of populist political parties in Western Europe where populism is associated with radical right-wing parties. This part is based on analysis of already conducted research. The last section comes up with a comparison of Baltic's and Western European populist parties.

Conceptualizing the core of populism

In the theoretical literature there are several perceptions on what populism is - specific organizational form (Taggart 1995), political style or communication form (Taguieff 1995; Jagers & Walgrave 2007), political strategy (Weyland 2001) or a thin ideology (Canovan 2002; Mudde 2004; Derks 2006; Stanley 2008). Which of these perceptions one chooses influences his research approach. Looking on populism from an organizational point of view means examining organizational aspects of particular party – how it is established, governed, how the power in party has been exercised etc. Political strategy will probably focus on parties' electoral campaigns and communication with mass media and voters in general. Undeniably, those are aspects that need to be considered. However, if one wants to focus on parties' programmatic aspects, then the thin ideologies approach suits best, especially in cases where we have doubts of whether the party under investigation is populist or not. The idea of populism as a thin ideology means that in reality populism can be found only in combination with full ideologies, such as liberalism, socialism or conservatism. As Ben Stanley (2008) has pointed - thin ideologies are those whose morphological structure is restricted to a set of core concepts.

Hough and Kos (2009) concludes that considering populism as something else than thin ideology can lead to populists being understood predominantly as right-wing political forces stressing the homogeneous national community, the homeland, and emphasizing a rejection of liberal elites and various "others" who betray the popular will. And this is the other aspect that guides us here, meaning that populism in not by definition referable only to radical right-wing political parties. Dissociation of populism from particular ideology is a precondition to offer an unprejudiced analysis.

Kitching (1989) proposed that populism is a reaction to consequences created by industrialization. And this is also from where core concepts of populism have been elaborated, meaning that populism is always a reaction to something. As the historical debates propose, populism includes dissatisfaction with the way development of a particular country and society proceeds. It includes some sort of protest and proposes a distinct pattern of thinking.

Very brief on his definition is Laclau (2005), who has concluded that populism simply is centrality of people. And other scholars seem to agree that central element of all populist parties is appeal to the people, common man. People for populists are monolithic unit of society without internal cleavages (De Raadt et.al. 2004). Antagonism proposed by populists between the people and the elite or establishment is among the core issues emphasized by wide range of scholars (Ionescu and Gellner 1969; Meny and Surel 2002; Derks 2006; Stanley 2008). Ben Stanley (2008) proposes several characteristics of populism which all includes perception of people versus elite. He states that populism is characterized by existence of two homogenous units of analysis, namely, people and elite; antagonistic relations between the two; idea of sovereignty of people and glorification of people in combination with disaffirmation of elite. Also Mudde (2004), by explaining populism, states that it says something about relationships between elite and the people, however, populists are not against democracy per se, what they do want is to change the status of people in it. It is not the essentials of democracy that are under critique, but the organizational aspect of democracy – the way state and society is governed (De Raadt et.al. 2004). In addition it is worth to mention that the attacks directed towards elite can take many different forms, stressing that under attack may be not only political, but also cultural, media, academic or economic elite (De Raadt et.al. 2004; Vossen 2010). Government according to populists is in hands of corrupt politicians and self-seeking millionaires working for international institutions such as International Monetary Fund (Canovan 1999).

The idea of antagonism between people and elite to some extent is guided by sense of conspiracy. Meaning that in the perception of populists, elite has gained its power and uses it not for the sake of people but for the sake of themselves. According to Vossen (2010), populists think that all the problems would be decreased when the government by the people would be set up, combining the practical knowledge of the people and from the other point – would not be bound to endless bureaucratic procedures. Thus the only possible way how to correct inequitable status is by returning the power in hands of the people. Thus, populist parties perceive and position themselves as those "true

people" by presenting themselves as a different kind of political organization. Hans-Georg Betz (1993) has designated understanding of populism describing it as a mobilization of resentment, which can be directed against political parties, minority groups, or political elite in general.

Populists are not satisfied with the way representative democracy operates. Considering that, they require increasing the power of people by widening channels through which they can participate in decision-making processes. Usually they support such direct forms of participation like referendums (Browler et.al. 2003). Desire for direct involvement can also be advocated via the need of increasing the number of officials directly elected by the people, public forums, meetings and even reform of electoral system as such. As for the populists, direct involvement of people is a precondition for effective and fair policy. Also a direct appeal by politicians is a demand for populists.

Thus one can identify three main characteristics in which populism represents itself – centrality of people, anti-establishment rhetoric and support for direct forms of participation. These core concepts have been supported also by De Raadt et.al. (2004) in their study of programmatic character of six European political parties. These characteristics within this paper are denoted as the "lowest common denominator" that party should fulfil in order to be designated as populist. In the next chapter we apply these characteristics in analyzing party programmes of those political parties and party alliances that gained parliamentary representation in the last parliamentary elections in three Baltic states, namely – Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

Identifying the scope of populism in Baltic states

Up till now there has been no research conducted examining which parties in Baltic states can be named as populists or are there any such populist party at all. Using the phrase of Mudde (2007), here we are dealing with no *usual suspects*. In order to bridge the gap on lack of data content analysis of party programmes was conducted. However due to the scope of this paper, only those parties were covered that gained parliamentary seats in the last national elections. Content analysis concentrated on three aforementioned features – centrality of people, anti-establishment rhetoric and desire for direct involvement by the people. Those political parties whose programmes fulfilled all indicators, were classified as populists. However, the identification of populist parties is only one part of the problem. In addition we aim to conclude the general density of populist related rhetoric in party programmes.

Lithuania can be characterized as the most divided party system comparing with rest of the Baltic States. During the last parliamentary elections, which were held on 2008, altogether 15 political forces struggled for electoral votes. In total 10 political parties were able to overcome threshold and were elected in the national parliament - Seima, thus showing that Lithuanian parliament comprises a very wide range of political forces not only in numbers but also in their ideological variation. In the case of Lithuania two parties fulfil all criteria – Order and Justice Party, OJP (Tvarka ir Taisnigumas) and Liberals Movement of the Republic of Lithuania, LMRL (Lietuvos Respublikos Liberalu Sajūdis).

OJP in the last parliamentary elections received 15 out of 141 parliamentary seats thus coming fourth among others. Party was established in 2002 and among its establishers is also former president of Lithuania Roland Paksa (Rolandas Paksas) who became notorious by his impeachment process introduced in 2004 and loss of presidential office. OJP starts its programmatic appeal by presenting a very critical view point about current state of affairs by saying that:

> It is disturbing that thousands of people today did not have opportunities even to satisfy the most important everyday needs. (…) Is it fair that part of the nation is scattered throughout alien countries, part is head over heels in alcohol, that people commit suicide or kill each other? Isn't it a challenge to us? (OJP 2008)

It can be seen that party tries to encourage sentiment by emphasizing the main problems Lithuanian state has been faced with. However, one can see that party is positioning itself with the rest of the electorate by saying that "we are in this position together" and thus pointing on necessity for moral rebirth of the nation. It is also well seen how OJP places the emphasis on conspiracy theory, meaning that political elite functions as a sort of puppet in hands of foreign forces. This notion is included in the following lines:

> No independent foreign politics exist, the State implements obediently the wishes of the powerful world forces, corruption and oligarchic governance flourish in the country, the State is rather judicial than law-abiding, in custody of KGB reservists. (OJP 2008)

The centrality of programme is given to the people. It has been stated as one of the OJP goals, namely:

> (…) to return to the Nation the power of the supreme authority – of the sovereign. (OJP 2008)

OJP programme also signifies the importance that party pays on expanding of direct involvement of people in determining number of political decisions. For instance, party states that the mayors, elders, judges and prosecutors, as well as chiefs of the city and

regional police, shall be elected by the local population itself and not chosen by governing elite. OJP wants to outran that after collecting 100 000 signatures a referendum can be initiated on the issues important for the public as well as the right of citizens to apply directly to the Constitutional Court. However, the very essence of this party definitely is the anti-establishment rhetoric. It is not a coincidence that party programme ends with the statement:

> In our presence Lithuania was seized by the oligarchic clan – the so-called "statesmen", having occupied places in the power and law enforcement structures, related by close economic relations with oligarchic business, seeking goals which do not have anything in common with Lithuania and its people. (OJP 2008)

In addition, party also wants to initiate the removal of number of privileges that parliamentarians are experiencing now. Although it is not in the scope of this paper, it is worth to point that OJP also stands for a bigger role of the president, seeking for him not only to represent state internationally but also to involve more in internal affairs. Party even goes so far as to declare that the current state of affairs in Lithuania cannot be called a democracy. Instead OJP uses a term "chebrocracy" to describe current situation. OJP is an example where anti-establishment rhetoric does not only concerns political and judicial system, but also mass media where the biggest daily newspaper "Lietuvos rytas" is named a loudspeaker of "chebrocracy".

> Having named the situation in our country by this word, we should select: either to keep silent or allow chebrocracy to destroy our country, or to raise our heads, to concentrate and to stop the rave of chebra. (OJP 2008)

The other party that according to aforementioned criteria can be classified as populist is the Liberals Movement of the Republic of Lithuania, LMRL (Lietuvos Respublikos Liberalu Sajūdis). Manifesto of establishment includes direct link with the people included under label "citizens". Party states:

> Let's create the Republic of citizens! (…) We offer to all citizens of Lithuania to create a new republic – the third one. Let's built a modern nation on the foundation of the first interwar and the second restored republic, which would be close and precious to every citizen. (…) Our supreme value is a dignified person – all state system must serve him. (…) We see the third republic where citizens influence responsible and transparent government, where child is taught, and patient is cured, thief is caught. (…) Citizens of Lithuania! If you feel familiar with liberal values and if you want actively participate in alterations, we invite you

together to organize a party and to become the creator of your republic. By joining our forces we will overcome the past and open a new path to the future. (LMRL 2006)

In addition party also sees the necessity for the emancipation of the real sovereign – the people. One of parties' principles implies: "(…) state for the people, not people for the state" (LMRL 2008). However, similarly with the OJP, also LMRL implies strict criticism over political mainstream. The rhetoric that party uses is simplified and direct and even accuses other political forces for being populist. Party indicates:

The political system of Lithuania continues rolling down to the bottom. All our patience and money is being sucked out of us by corruption, narrow sectional interests, government scandals, lie, arrogance and imposing upon people's good nature. Populists artificially rise people's hopes and bring them to ruin. Wheeler-dealers and "subscribers" have cynically refined the old traditions of the nomenclature. (…) Who cares now about law-abidingness and justice in Lithuania? Who cares about Lithuania who rises every morning and goes to work? (LMRL 2006)

It can be concluded that anti-establishment rhetoric is the core programmatic line of both aforementioned political parties with a very strong emphasis on accusing political mainstream of being corrupt and ignorant of people's needs. Although the examples of party programmatic lines indicate particular anti-establishment path, both parties differ in the precise definition of what "the enemies" are. If in case of OJP, it was possible to identify at least three types of elites against whom party speaks – political, judicial and media, the situation of LMRL somehow differs. Here we see the anti-establishment rhetoric, but in a more abstract way without not naming a particular subject against which critique is directed.

LMRL poses favour for more direct involvement of the people. Among others, party promises that municipality majors should be elected directly not chosen among deputies. Within the legal framework, party indicates on a necessity for less regulation and reduction of the number of legal acts. In addition each legal act before validation should be discussed with all involved partners (LMRL 2008).

Thus, according with the conducted analysis, in Lithuania two political forces that did fulfil proposed criteria were identified. However, situation in other Baltic States are somehow different. In short, among those political parties that gained electoral seats during the last parliamentary elections none can fulfil all three proposed criteria. It leads to conclusion that in Estonia's and Latvia's parliaments populist parties are absent.

Electoral competition in Estonia differs form that of Lithuania not only in terms of electoral system but also in total numbers of political parties who entered the race for votes. During the 2011 elections 6 parties were registered as a potential candidates but only 4 were able to gather necessary number of votes and managed to win a seat in national parliament – Riigikogu. Applying the analytical framework to those political parties that gained electoral seats in Estonian national parliament none fulfilled all the criteria. In case of Latvia during the 2010 elections in total 13 political parties and party unions entered in electoral race. In result 5 political forces were elected in national parliament – Saeima. But also in the case of Latvia none of the political parties can fulfil all the criteria in order to qualify as a populist party.

Like stated in the beginning or the article, we aim not only to identify populist parties in the Baltic's but also to frame the general tendencies regarding the widespread of populist related characteristics among party programmes (See Annex 1). Some important conclusions should be stressed. First, almost every political party indicates at least one populist-related characteristic where the most widespread is anti-establishment stance, particularly using the notion of corruption. The antagonism towards political elites is not marginal but systemic. Political parties in Baltic's widely use the notion that mainstream political elite is corrupted and systemic corruption is deep rooted in political system as a whole. Reduction of corruption as one of the objectives is stated in almost all party programmes. Parties aim to "decrease the motivation for corruption" (Saskaņas Centrs (Centre of Harmony) 2010), "to continue the elimination of corruption in state sector and to introduce preventive measures in order to minimize corruption risks" (Vienotība (Unity) 2010), "to fight preconditions for corruption and fraud" (Darbo partija (Labour Party) 2003), "Union stands for purposed action in order to exterminate corruption and bureaucracy. The only successful way how to win the corruption is by limiting state power" (Centro un Liberalu Sajunga (Liberal and Centre Union) 2008) etc. However, none of programs aims to conclude or mention that corruption is derived from people themselves. Instead it is the elite, the people "above" that have to be blamed for using their privileged status. Thus mostly the anti-elite notion is expressed through corruption prism.

Concerning the centrality of people, it becomes rather complicated feature to analyze. In Annex 1 we see that some parties, apart from the identified populists, do indicate the people as their real object of reference but those are mainly national or conservative parties. This is the case for instance with union of national forces "All for Latvia!"-"Fatherland and Freedom"/LNNK where it states, that "respect for our people is appreciable in every our thought" (Visu Latvijai!-Tēvzemei un Brīvībai/LNNK (All for

Latvia!"-"For Fatherland and Freedom"/LNNK) 2010). In the case of other parties two notions dominate – whether parties do not use the term "people" and indicate a precise target groups, for instance, families, pensioners, young people, unemployed or other groups or use more context independent term – man or individuals. This is the case for instance of Vienotība ("Unity") and Par Labu Latviju ("For Good Latvia"). Both parties use the slogan "Man in the first place!" but it rather constitutes an individual as such and not people as a monolithic and plural unity.

Turning to the question of direct democracy, also this shows a rather interesting picture. Almost all political forces in Baltic's stress the necessity to decentralize the state power, but there is a rather different object to which this decentralization is directed. Two groups can be identified – municipalities in general or people in particular. Those political forces that enounced the necessity to deliver more power to local governments were considered to not fulfil the criteria. The essence of populism is that it seeks to encourage returning the power to the people, as much as possible escaping the institutional channels that stands in front. In this sense municipality frames an image of an institution, of a public body with administrative functions. And thus an idea to decentralize power closer to municipalities itself cannot be considered as policy principle associated with populists. This is for instance the case of Tėvynės sąjunga - Lietuvos krikščionys demokratai (Fatherland Union-Lithuanian Christian Democrats), Darbo partija (Labour Party) and Reformierakond (Estonian Reform Party) who considers it necessary to increase the powers and responsibilities of local governments.

Having mapped the situation in Baltic States, we now turn to the second part of this paper, which aims to answer the question whether populist parties in the Baltic States indicate some similarities with their Western counterparts. At first some brief introduction of the main reference points of Western European populist parties is given.

Characteristics of populist parties in Western Europe
Although scholars do not fully agree what exactly characterizes populist parties, they do seem to agree that parties like the Austrian Freedom Party, the French National Front, or the Dutch List Pim Fortuyn are "populist" (Mudde 2004). The list certainly is not limited to the aforementioned examples; however they do form the general framework and are mostly used as a prototype in the research field. Using the denotation of Mudde (2007) they are so called "usual suspects". Another feature of the state of art in the research field is the large proportion of prominent scholars that do indicate that populism today is mainly associated with the radical right-wing parties (Hayward 1996; Taggart 2002; Arditi 2003; Bowler et.al. 2003; Mudde 2004). However, the radical

right is mainly related with the Western European political systems. This "logic" at some point helps to distinguish two research fields – Western and Eastern part of Europe. This division is helpful in terms of mapping the populist phenomenon "there" and "here" and to discover whether populism is homogeneous or manifold. In the previous chapter three main features were distinguished that forms the core of populism within this research, namely centrality of the people, anti-elite attitudes and direct democracy. These features are also relevant in case of Western European populist parties. However, within the research field there are several additional features that scholars have associated with the Western European radical right-wing populist parties.

One, if not the most common and distinct, feature of Western European radical right-wing populist parties are the anti-immigration gospels. Across the research field several studies have even concluded that it is exactly the appeal on the immigration issue that is a uniting feature of all successful radical right parties in Western Europe (see for instance Ivarsflaten 2008). As suggested by Mudde (2007), populist radical right parties can include three special groups of enemies – jews, muslims and roma. The notion against jews takes form of ani-semitism, against muslims – islamophobia and antagonism towards roma – romaphobia. These three groups are then used to formulate the in-group, meaning – who should be included in the state and who should be left outside. This anti-immigrant stance has even served as a basis for some academics to embrace these parties under one common label, namely, anti-immigrant parties (Fennema 1997; Howard 2000; Van Der Brug 2005). Jagers and Walgrave (2007) even distinguish between "old" and "new" extreme right-wing parties, where in the case of former, focus on immigration and law-and-order theme are the most common features. Nevertheless this can also be misleading to name these parties as single-issue, since there are also other characteristics and anti-immigrant attitudes illustrate only one side of the coin.

Populists try to protect the nativist cultural identity by signifying the will to return dominant status to the native people. According to Taggart (2003) there is a strong implied vision of a world as it "was" in the rejection of immigration, the complications of globalization and the encroachment of taxation, and the intrusions of the state and its agents in the form of politicians, intellectuals, bureaucrats and boffins. Taggart uses the term "heartland" which is a construction of an ideal world, but unlike utopian conceptions it is constructed retrospectively from the past – it is in essence a past-derived vision projected onto the present as that which has been lost (Taggart 2003). This combination of nativism and heartland contributes to the overall perception behind

what populists stand, meaning that the "people" is constituted from those who belong to the nation and thus have rights to form the very essence of heartland.

Another feature indicated in literature, is the notion that radical right-wing populist parties in Western Europe possess negative attitudes towards globalization by seeing it as a threat to homogeneous society. This idea is in detail elaborated by Mudde (2007). Globalization is scouted via the anti-immigration prism, meaning that it is the ever globalized world that creates stream of immigrants coming to Western Europe to enjoy the benefits of wealthiest countries in the world. The anti-globalization line can be supplemented with a critique of the way European Union (EU) functions. These attitudes are mostly connected with the view that EU threatens sovereignty of nation states and after all is to be blamed for immigration problems. This idea is grounded also from theoretical point of view, where the phenomenon of euroscepticism is more common among parties on the both ends of political spectre, meaning – radical right or radical left (Taggart 1998). These parties are assumed to use anti-European rhetoric to mobilize the sentiments among potential voters.

The other dominant view is that populist parties in Western Europe embrace the need for law and order. According to Rydgren (2005) the ideological core of right wing populist parties is embedded in a general socio-cultural authoritarianism, stressing themes like law and order and family values. The current state of affairs according with populist radical right can be described as a state governed without law obedience where elites are capable of ignoring the judicial norms. Calling for law enforcement can most directly be seen through the anti-corruption prism, where more drastic laws and the need for rule of law is the necessary precondition in order to fight corruption and permissiveness in state sector.

Finally the last feature to point out here is the importance of (charismatic) leader in radical right-wing populist parties. Contemporary examples like Silvio Berlusconi, Jean-Marie Le Pen or Jorg Haider suggest that often one single person is the driving force of a populist movement (Deiwiks 2009). According to Eatwell (2003; 2004), charismatic leaders are often held responsible for the rise of right wing populism. Eatwell also mentions that populist movements tend to produce charismatic leaders who portray themselves as the embodiment of what people really think. Le Pen, for instance, has claimed that he only says out loud what most French people think in private. Leaders are considered to represent the core idea of populism – to secure direct and as much as possible to escape intermediate way of communicating with people. As Vossen (2010) indicates leader represents some kind of paradox - he is expected to embody the

people and at the same time he immaculate outsider without ambition to get involved in politics. In other words leader perceives himself to embrace all the values of people. This usually is complemented with the rhetoric that leader is a part from the people, as one of "us".

These mentioned features describe the ideal type of Western European radical right-wing populist parties. In the next chapter these features are analyzed in dept within the two identified populist parties in the Baltic States. More holistic strategy is chosen where not only the party programmes but also wider set of documents and public speeches are examined in order to identify the presence of aforementioned features.

Is there a "western" type populism in Baltic States?

Order and Justice party
There are no signals that would serve to prove that OJP would advocate anti-immigrant attitudes (See Annex 2). In its program for parliamentary elections 2008, a rather opposite picture can be captured. Among others, party states that it will strive for "real assurance of equal opportunities on the labour market, independently of the nation, sex, age, property status, and religion convictions. (…) We shall stimulate the national self-consciousness of Lithuanian people, cherish respect and support to national minorities, and encourage openness for other cultures. (…) the culture of national minorities inhabiting Lithuania would be supported and cherished" (OJP 2008). Thus OJP cannot be characterized as exclusionist party, quite the opposite. According to its programmatic lines, it even encourages and stands for respect towards other nations and cultures, guarantees support to national minorities. If we turn to the analysis of possible anti-EU or anti-globalization issues, then in this respect OJP also do not indicate similarities with populists in the West. There are several important references where party manifest obvious support towards EU. In the field of foreign policy party will aim that:

> Lithuania's membership into European Union would further promote the development of national economy, the professional advancement of Lithuanian people, enrichment of their spiritual world, would open the new opportunities for the development of Lithuanian science and culture (OJP 2008).

Concerning the globalization, party only indicates that "in the vortex of world globalization we must retain our own identity" (OJP 2008). However, there are no clear references that would stand the party in opposition to globalization. At the same time several sources indicated a rather blurry comments on some "powerful world forces" (OJP 2008) whose interests the state is implementing. Also in one of his latest

interviews, party's leader Roland Paksa, has claimed that one of the reasons why he was overturned from presidential office was "the foreign intelligences that acted in Lithuania as in their territory" (Roland Paksa 2010). In that respect, it can be concluded, that the party does tray to create some kind of conspiracy theory, however without precise identification of what these foreign actors actually are.

It is possible to argue that OJP does not enounce a nativism. Although party programme is jaded with theses like "Lithuania is our Homeland, our home. Here our forefathers founded the state. Our forefathers and we defended it; therefore Lithuania is and will be not just the word. This is the spirit of our nation." (OJP 2008), party sees the "nation" as a homogeneous unity. There are no comments on what forms the nation, which groups should be included and which should be excluded. In that respect, the policy of OJP can be named as inclusive. The only "not inclusive group of people" in case of OJP is oligarchs, who are blamed for states' pore economic performance and moral degradation of politics. Moreover the vision of future Lithuania is not projected on the basis of past sentiments, meaning that the interwar period does not serve as an ideal-type for the future development.

So far it can be seen that OJP does not fulfil those ideological lines that characterizes populist parties in Western Europe. However, it is different with the last two features. Even for a cursory reader it is well evident that one of the cornerstones of OJP policy platform is enforcement of law and order. It is well seen also in the very title of the party itself. By describing the current state of affairs, party points out:

> Within 17 years, such State governance and legal system was formed that allowed the rapid privatization to be carried out. (…) Such State governance and legal system do not comply with the present-day requirements. (…) the State is rather judicial than law-abiding, in custody of KGB reservists. (OJP 2008)

As the main tool how to fight with oligarchs and self-seeking state officials, is by restricting law enforcement. This idea is also expressed and defended in public speeches by party leader Roland Paksa. In his speech at party annual congress in 2008, he stated:

> Order and Justice are the most important words in the title of our Party, in our programme. All of you know why. Because in Lithuania most of all order is lacking. Justice is lacking. It means that there is no such Lithuania for which we fight. (Roland Paksa 2008)

Roland Paksa has been the chairman of OJP from the moment of its foundation in 2002. A year later he was elected as the president of the state. However he did not last for the all presidency term. He is famously known as the first president in history of this Baltic

state for being removed from the office via the impeachment procedure. In 2003 the State Security Department received information about possibility that some presidential advisers might be connected with international criminal authorities. As a result several presidential advisers were forced to quit their positions. A specially established parliamentary investigation committee concluded in its report that the connections between Roland Paksa and his advisers with dubious persons, renders president amenable thus creating a threats for state security. Consequently four parliamentary fractions decided to start the impeachment procedure. Apart from these events, Roland Paksa is well known for his populist rhetoric. It can be best captured in his public speeches where he never misses to describe the current state of affairs in imaginative manner. Here is an example:

> The Lithuanian political system deserved a clear name to be given – this is the thriving "chebrocracy". A model of that system is the Siemens arena. At the bottom, on hard chairs, thousands of common people who bought tickets to the basket-ball games, and on the top, in the boxes of the "Lietuvos rytas", behind the glass, in the soft arm-chairs with glasses, the Prime Minister, President, the owner of the daily news paper and some trade magnates handling business affairs. Here posts and money are distributed; plans of dealing with opponents are schemed. From that box Lithuania is being governed. (Raland Paksa 2008)

Liberals Movement of the Republic of Lithuania

Similarly with OJP also LMRL does not indicate substantial similarities with populist parties in Western Europe. As the main core message of parties programme, is a call for some sort of new contract among state and citizens to create a "new republic". And this "new republic" is seen in the opposition of current state of affairs. None of the parties' official documents or official statements contains any remarks that would describe their attitudes towards immigration. There are also no reasons to conclude that LMRL would emphasize or name any group that should be excluded from the state or whose privileges should be restricted in the name of majority (native group). Minorities are not even mentioned in parties' policy platform. The only group to whom party refers is the citizens without mentioning who does form the "citizens" and who are those that should be left outside the citizen status. Thus party is not concerned with possible or actual threats that might be caused by immigration, they more emphasize the need to improve situation of those citizens who are living in the foreign countries. Although LMRL does not present exclusionist approach, there is evidence suggesting that nativism could be present in ideology of this party. LMRL proclaims:

> Let's build a modern nation on the foundation of the first interwar and the second restored republic, which would be close and precious to every citizen. This essential move is necessary and enforceable. (LMRL 2006)

Concerning globalization issue, none official document of LMRL corresponds even to mention this term. However, party does mention positively EU. The programmatic lines show that party supports Lithuania's further integration in the EU. Party states that it will support free movement of labour, creation of common rescue service and also reforms of Common Agricultural Policy (LMRL 2008). Thus party only mentions particular EU policies and initiatives, without stating its opposition against the union in general. In respect to law and order, also here party enounces a rather mainstream view pointing out the need to decrease corruption, secure personal data protection, to increase penalties for serious crime or to increase openness of courts. There should be doubts also about the last criteria, meaning – whether party is governed by charismatic leader. Since 2008 chairmen of the party is Eligijus Masiulis. In 2000 in the age of 22 he was elected in Seima and thus became the youngest parliamentarian. He also holds a position of Minister of Transport in the current government. However, he is proved himself as a rather liberal and tolerant public figure without any scandalous announcements or media coverage.

Conclusion

Populism in the political systems of Baltic States can be characterized as systemic if we take the anti-elite and anti-system attitudes. To lesser extent this is evident in Estonia. Critique towards elites are not present only among those political forces that were excluded from the government coalition in the previous elections and thus formed an opposition, but also among the ruling parties which gathered considerable electoral support or formed the government. Thus, populist related discourse in not only a characteristic of opposition forces.

However, in order to identify populist parties, it is not enough to conclude whether it builds its policy platform on criticism of current elites. A more complex framework is needed. Within this article analysis was based on three cornerstones of populism, namely reference to the people, introduction of direct democracy and antagonism towards elite. Consequently two Lithuania's parties fully corresponded regarding all three criteria – Order and Justice party and Liberals Movement of the Republic of Lithuania. This analysis leads to conclusion that Lithuanian political system is more "populist" than in other two neighbour countries. One of the possible explanations is the party competition. It can be well seen that the number of political parties struggling for power in national elections is higher in Lithuania than in Latvia or Estonia. At this point

there are no clear empirical evidence but the competition factor could serve as a catalyst forcing political actors to employ direct and simplified rhetoric in order to gather the necessary attention from potential voters.

The main goal of this paper was to identify populist parties in Baltic countries and compare them with their Western European counterparts. Since populism in the West is mainly associated with the radical right-wing political forces, the following characteristics where identified – anti-immigrant attitudes, nativism, anti-globalization and anti-EU, law and order and presence of a charismatic leader. These features were then analyzed within both identified populist parties in Baltic's. The results indicated a slight difference among Western and Baltic populist parties. If we would like to generalize these results, it might be concluded that Baltic states indicates a rather narrow form of populism, meaning – antagonism towards elites, centrality of the people and direct democracy, however absent from their ideology are such prophets of Western European populist parties as anti-immigrant attitudes, criticism towards globalization and European Union or nativist ideology. As stated before, populism in case of Baltic countries is slightly evident in respect with antagonism towards political elites, but does not indicate on any considerable radical right-wing attitudes that are popular among populist parties in Western Europe.

Characteristics of populism within party programmes

No.	Political party	State	Centrality of the people	Direct democracy	Anti-establishment (anti-elite) statements
1.	Homeland Union/ Conservative Party (Tėvynės sąjunga - Lietuvos krikščionys demokratai)	Lithuania	No	No	No
2.	Social Democratic Party (Lietuvos Socialdemokratu Partija)	Lithuania	No	No	Yes
3.	Rising Nation Party (Tautos Prisikėlimo partija)	Lithuania	Yes	No	Yes
4.	Order and Justice Party (Tvarka ir Teisnigumas)	Lithuania	Yes	Yes	Yes
5.	Liberals Movement of the Republic of Lithuania (Lietuvos Respublikos Liberalu Sajūdis)	Lithuania	Yes	Yes	Yes
6.	Labour Party (Darbo Partija)	Lithuania	Yes	Yes	No
7.	Liberal and Center Union (Liberalu ir Centro Sajunga)	Lithuania	Yes	Yes	No
8.	Lithuanian Peasant Popular Union (Lietuvos valstiečių liaudininkų sąjunga)	Lithuania	No	No	Yes
9.	Electoral Action of Lithuanian Poles (Akcja Wyborcza Polakow Na Litwie)	Lithuania	No	Yes	No
10.	New Union/Social Liberal (Naujoji Sajunga-Socialliberalai)	Lithuania	No	No	Yes
11.	Unity (Vienotība)	Latvia	No	Yes	Yes
12.	Centre of Harmony (Saskaņas Centrs)	Latvia	No	No	Yes
13.	Union of Greens and Farmers (Zaļo un Zemnieku Savienība)	Latvia	No	No	No
14.	All for Latvia!/For Fatherland and Freedom/Latvian National Independence Movement (Visu Latvijai!-Tēvzemei un Brīvībai/LNKK)	Latvia	Yes	No	No
15.	For Good Latvia! (Par Labu Latviju!)	Latvia	No	Yes	Yes
16.	Estonian Reform Party (Eesti Reformierakond)	Estonia	No	No	No
17.	Estonian Centre Party (Eesti Keskerakond)	Estonia	Yes	Yes	No
18.	Union of Pro Patria and Res Publica (Isamaa ja Res Publica Liit)	Estonia	Yes	No	No
19.	Social Democratic Party (Sotsiaaldemokraatlik Erakond)	Estonia	No	No	No

Annex 2

Characteristics of Western European populist political parties applied to populist political parties in the Baltic States

Profile of Western European Parties	Order and Justice Party (OJP)	Liberals Movement of the Republic of Lithuania (LMRL)
Anti-immigrant attitudes	No	No
Anti-globalization or/and Anti-EU	No	No
Nativism	No	Yes
Law and order	Yes	No
Charismatic leader	Yes	No

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