

# Lithuania

(LithuaniaRN1.3)

James D. Fearon

David D. Laitin

Stanford University

This is one of a set of “random narratives” to complement our statistical findings in regard to civil war onsets. This is a draft completed on May 9, 2006; comments welcome.

Since its renewed independence in 1991, Lithuania (by our model) has had a negligible probability of suffering from a civil war – considerably less than the world and regional averages even in the two years it was relatively vulnerable for being a new state, and virtually zero probability afterwards. From our model’s perspective, the low probability is due to Lithuania’s small size (a population less than four million), its lack of mountainous terrain<sup>1</sup> and oil,<sup>2</sup> and its political stability. These factors outweigh the low GDP/cap, at a level (in larger, or more mountainous, or more unstable countries) might be a factor making the country vulnerable to a civil war onset.<sup>3</sup> Consistent with our model’s predictions, there has been no civil war in Lithuania. In this narrative, we address several issues raised by our model in conjunction with the post-Soviet experience of Lithuania. First, we use Lithuania’s modern history as a take-off point to re-address the issue of ancient and modern hatreds – of which there are many in Lithuania -- and their role in precipitating civil war.<sup>4</sup> Second, we discuss the peaceful transition from Soviet rule. Third, we evaluate our measure of political instability as a predictor of civil war onsets. Most expert commentary on Lithuania in the post-Soviet decade has emphasized its political *instability*; our measure, however, sees Lithuania as stable. This suggests that our measure (in seeing instability as a function of rapid and large changes in the Polity

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<sup>1</sup> . Lithuania's terrain is an alternation of moderate lowlands and not very high highlands. The highest elevation is 297 meters above sea level, found in the eastern part of the republic and separated from the uplands of the western region of Zemaiciai.

<sup>2</sup> . Oil was discovered in Lithuania in the 1950s, but only a few wells operate, and all that do are located in the western part of the country...and at most can serve domestic needs of about 20 percent of the population (Library of Congress, Country Study).

<sup>3</sup> . There are nineteen civil war onsets in our dataset in countries with higher GDP/cap. than Lithuania’s in 1995, when that figure bottomed in Lithuania.

<sup>4</sup> . Lithuania’s ethnolinguistic fractionalization is .35, below the world mean (which in 1994 was .39). In 1994, according to official estimates, 81.1 percent of Lithuania's population consisted of ethnic Lithuanians. The remaining 18.9 percent was divided among Russians (8.5 percent), Poles (7.0 percent), Belarusians (1.5 percent), Ukrainians (1.0 percent), and others, including Jews, Latvians, Tatars, Gypsies, Germans, and Estonians (0.9 percent)...The proportion of the ethnic Lithuanian population--more than 90 percent of whom speak Lithuanian--stayed at 80 percent or a fraction higher until 1989, when it dropped slightly below 80 percent. The population of Vilnius in 1989 was 50.5 percent Lithuanian, 20.2 percent Russian, 18.8 percent Polish, and 5.3 percent Belorussian (Library of Congress).

measure of democracy) captures an aspect of political stability (perhaps overlooked by country experts) that ought to be highlighted.

### **I. Ancient and Modern Hatreds and Civil War Onsets**

Lithuanians have an historical burden of active complicity in the holocaust. While there is no longer a significant Jewish population in post World War II Lithuania to sour ethnic relations, it would not be possible to appeal to some cultural propensity towards ethnic toleration and peace.<sup>5</sup> And with the reconquest of Lithuania by the Soviet army in 1944, and amid the subsequent deportation of an estimated 350,000 titulars, Lithuanians organized an insurgency against Soviet power (listed in the dataset as a civil war in the USSR), showing if anything a propensity to violence. Hatred of Jews and possibly Russians as well has been a recurrent theme in modern Lithuanian history.

Indeed, when two sociolinguists conducted a field study of the Vilnius region in 1997, they found all the ingredients to sustain both ancient and modern hatreds. “In multi-ethnic and multilingual Lithuania,” they report, “ethnic identity has been interpreted in accordance with the needs of politicians who have used the concept for their own financial and pretentious political goals.” Indeed, they found, the City of Vilnius has been described in different ways, either as White-Russian, Polish, Lithuanian or ethnically mixed in accordance with the prevailing political winds and political opinions of political authorities. “It is still today a hot-bed of political controversies.” They point out that the state language in Lithuania has changed seven times between 1918 and 1991. None of the governments ruling Lithuania in this century, they argue, tried to give the minorities in Lithuania cultural rights or their parents the right to have their children taught in their language. By enforcing a specific ethnic bias on the inhabitants of this war-infested border area, they argue, each ruling clique has exposed the population to dissent among themselves. The ethnic populations, they report, “have never learnt how to live in inner peace with each other, but have always been forced to develop the psychology of opposition against each other, partly under loyalty to their own assumed origin, partly under the obligation to accept the ever changing state languages of the authorities.” And things haven’t changed. They charge the post-Soviet Lithuanian authorities with “trying continuously to prove that the inhabitants of the District of Vilnius were originally Lithuanians (since the 13th - 15th centuries) and that they have again become Lithuanians, because the Poles and Russians are considered as aggressors - all that has brought about a loss of ethnic identity among the present-day minorities, which has serious consequences...”<sup>6</sup> Just what those consequence are were not elaborated by the authors. However, their image of Lithuania as an ethnic cauldron merits

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<sup>5</sup> . For a recent devastating portrayal of the complicity, see Gross (2001); for a demonstration that this complicity was not a general feature of Lithuanian culture but specific to the particular ethnic social hierarchies that varied across towns, see Petersen (2002).

<sup>6</sup> P. Sture Ureland, Mannheim, and Olga Voronkova, Heidelberg, [www.uniud.it/cip/abstract/U\\_Voronkova.doc](http://www.uniud.it/cip/abstract/U_Voronkova.doc) (downloaded December 15, 2003), “Conflict and identity in multilingual Vilnius, Lithuania”

examination, at least to understand why this cauldron has not (for more than a decade past independence) has not boiled over.<sup>7</sup>

### *The Poles*

Poles, according to the 1989 Soviet census, constituted 258,000 in Lithuania. Current estimates suggest as many as 280,000, or about seven percent of the population. They are concentrated in the Vilnius region and along the Belarusan border, although Polish communities also exist in Kaunas, Trokai, and Klaipeda. Given this concentration, in our MAR coding, the Poles (but not the Russians) are considered to have a regional base in Lithuania. There is between Poles and Lithuanians a long history of conflicts that could easily be fashioned into a justification for ethnic war.

#### Ancient Hatreds and the Poles

The historical sources of Lithuanian grievances against the Poles go back to the 14<sup>th</sup> century. The marriage of the heiress to the Polish throne and the Lithuanian Grand Duke was supposedly entered into to save the Lithuanian empire from conquest by the Teutonic Knights. This marriage today is portrayed in Lithuanian popular culture as source of the Polonization of Lithuanian society. Rather rapidly, many in the formerly pagan elite not only adopted Catholicism but saw themselves as Polish. From the time of the union, the Polish language and Roman Catholic religion were the keys to social and economic status. In 1697, Polish became the official language of the commonwealth's diet as well as the Grand Duchy of Lithuania's chancellery. The Lithuanian language, as a result, became a language of the peasant class. Many noble families, with their impressive estates, and regarded as the upholders of Polish culture under the three partitions of the eighteenth century, were mainly of Lithuanian origin, having re-identified as Polish in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Also, growing commercial ties induced large-scale migration of Slavic speakers into today's Lithuania. Vilnius, Lithuania's capital, was dominated throughout its history by Poles, with substantial minorities of Belarussians and Jews. An attempt by Duke Vytautas in this period to separate Lithuania from Poland failed due to opposition of the Polish nobility in Lithuania (Library of Congress; Renshaw 2002).

Polish identity in Lithuania over the centuries became consolidated in national imaginings. Adam Mickiewicz, Poland's bard, began Poland's great national epic poem, *Pan Tadeusz*, with the line "O Lithuania, my homeland, thou art like health to me!" Many of modern Poland's leading figures grew up in this cosmopolitan region, including Mickiewicz, Jozef Pilsudski, and Nobel laureate Czeslaw Milosz (Radzilowski, n.d.). Modern Lithuanian nationalism was consequently defined in opposition to Poles and the alleged Polonization of Lithuanian society.

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<sup>7</sup> . It might be asked why we focus here on the ethnic cauldron if our model gives no special weight to ethnic arithmetic. Why not a section on potential intra-Lithuanian rebellion? The answer is that when conditions are ripe, we should look for rebellions along the principal lines of cleavage. If there were no ethnic minorities in Lithuania, we would have looked for regional differences, or class differences, or sub-ethnic differences. Our model shows no more likelihood of civil war onset if the country is divided ethnically; but that doesn't mean that if conditions are ripe and ethnicity is a principal line of cleavage, that ethnic war will not be the likely result.

## Modern Hatreds and the Poles

### Structural Grievances

World War I constituted a reversal in historical fortunes for the Poles through most of present-day Lithuania. With the collapse of the two empires--the Russian and the German--Lithuania on February 16, 1918 declared its independence. In the Versailles treaty, Lithuania's independence was recognized, as its promised transfer to Germany in the treaty of Brest-Litovsk was voided. Lithuanian nationalists resented demands by Poles for greater cultural autonomy (similar to that granted to the Jewish minority), holding that most of Lithuania's Poles were really deracinated Lithuanians who merely needed to be re-Lithuanianized. Resentments were exacerbated when Lithuanian Poles expressed a desire to "re-unite" the country with Poland. As a result, the nationalizing Lithuanian state took measures to confiscate Polish owned land. It also restricted Polish religious services, schools, Polish publications, Polish voting rights. Poles were often referred to in the press in this period as the "lice of the nation" (Radzilowski, n.d.).

But Poles had the upper hand in Vilnius. In 1919 the Bolsheviks gave Vilnius to Lithuania to the chagrin of its Polish population. Furthermore, Poland considered a large swath of Lithuania (particularly the corridor running from Suwalki in present-day north-eastern Poland in a north-eastern line encompassing Vilnius) as part of the Polish heartland. Poland seized Vilnius in 1920 through a military coup d'état backed by the Polish Prime Minister, an act that was bitterly resented by Lithuanian nationalists, and this, according to one observer "resulted in the rekindling of long-standing hostilities between the former partners" (Leise 1999). The Soviets helped Lithuania as part of their obligations in the Treaty of Suwalki to regain Vilnius for the Lithuanians, but the Poles retook the city in a counter-attack. The result was Polish rule over this ethnically mixed area until 1939, while a Polish population of around 250,000 remained within Lithuania, constituting about 10 percent of the total population. From 1936 till 1939, 266 Lithuanian schools were closed in the whole territory of the former Vilnius Territory. Activities of almost all Lithuanian cultural organizations were banned there. In the areas controlled by Poland, resentments grew as a new settlement of Polish army veterans with economic ties to Poland brought greater Polonization. There were no diplomatic relations between Poland and Lithuania until 1938 (Radzilowski, n.d., Rohozinska, 1999; Kalnius, n.d.).

The Soviets gained control over Lithuania in 1944. The new Lithuanian SSR included Vilnius and much of the territory seized by Poland in 1920. The Soviet government pursued a divide-and-conquer policy in Lithuania. Poles were a disaffected minority, but the Soviets promoted Polish cultural life within Lithuania. Poles were useful to Soviet authorities – as were minorities in all Union Republics – as tools to counter excessive nationalism by the titular elites. And so, as Lithuanians began demanding independence in 1989, the Gorbachev regime sought help from the Polish minority – one that would presumably be threatened by Lithuanian independence – to rally against it. All this despite the fact that the Polish Solidarity Movement and all Polish democrats strongly supported Lithuanian independence. Opposition to Lithuanian independence was strongest in Vilnius, while rural Polish communities generally favored its independence. Moscow, in Burnant's judgment (n.d.), kept Lithuania's Poles around to remind Lithuanians of the threat from these people and from Poland which might await them should they ever push for independence. Indeed, Moscow used Polish leaders in the

region – promising to protect them against the anti-Polish Lithuanians – to impede Lithuania’s independence drive in 1989-1991.

Following independence in 1990, Polish/Lithuanian ethnic issues arose once again. Lithuanian nationalists sought to restrict the Polish minority and Lithuanize them. Lithuanian nationalists under the leadership of former art historian Vytautas Landsbergis were unsympathetic to Polish demands for autonomy and even for secession and demanded themselves an apology for the Polish seizure of Vilnius in 1920. The extremist Iron Wolf Society launched several physical attacks on Poles. Tensions between the two countries peaked in 1992 and early 1993. Attempts to spell Polish names via Lithuanian orthography in official documents and attempts to restrict education in Polish were especially troublesome. The biggest source of tension concerns the state’s snails pace in resolving Polish property claims for post-Soviet restitution (Radzilowski, n.d.).

#### Evidence of Conflicts in the First Decade After Independence

From the early 1990s, the Union of Poles in Vilnius (among other organizations) leveled significant popular protests against Lithuanian policy, taking the form of demonstrations, rallies, strikes and even several riots.<sup>8</sup> Polish activist groups (that include Union of Lithuanian Poles, Congress of Poles of Lithuania, Lithuanian Polish Minority, The Alliance of Lithuanian Citizens, and The Lithuanian Polish Election Action) complained of discrimination. They asked for, inter alia, reform of administrative and territorial divisions, the reinstatement of property rights on land, cultural recognition (on such things as the spelling of Polish given names and surnames, the establishment of a Polish university, the authorization of school-leaving exams for courses in the Polish language, and the supply of Polish-language textbooks).

A partial retelling of the course of Polish/Lithuanian conflicts reveals many ethnic sparks but no fire. On August 19, 1991, the failed coup attempt against Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev by hardliners gave space to the popular front leaders of the Baltic Republics to declare independence and obtain recognition for it from the world community. In Lithuania, however, Polish groups in the predominantly Polish regions around Vilnius were accused, however, of backing the coup. The Lithuanian government in Vilnius, in response, disbanded the Polish councils in the Vilnius and Soleczniki districts (as well as some Russian ethnic councils), and imposed central rule upon them. That September, Lech Walesa, the charismatic leader of Polish independence, wrote to Lithuanian President, Landsbergis, expressing his concerns for the treatment and status of the Polish minority in Lithuania. Landsbergis blamed the Polish media for exaggerating the plight of Poles in Lithuania. Tensions in that early period remained high. In January 1992, Polish-Lithuanian parliamentary deputies, civic group leaders, and journalists were summoned to the Public Prosecutor's Office for questioning on charges of cooperating with the KGB to destabilize the Lithuanian government (MAR).

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<sup>8</sup> . In the MAR dataset, the coding for protest (prot90X) equaled a level of “3” out of a scale from “1” to “5”, and marked by “Small Demonstrations: A few demonstrations, rallies, strikes, and/or riots, total participation of less than 10,000.”

Tensions did not quickly dissipate. Local government elections were held on November 22, 1992. Members of the Union of Poles in Lithuania and other Polish groups charged that the elections were held in an atmosphere of "moral terror" even though turnout of Polish-Lithuanians in the Polish regions was estimated at 80% (Polish News Bulletin, Nov. 24, 1992). Turnout in 55 of the 76 city council districts in Vilnius and Soleczniki, however, was below the 50 percent level required to be valid. The Lithuanian Parliament quickly dismissed the councils with new elections to be called for those districts, though the new elections in February 1993 eased the tensions. At this time, non-Lithuanians, especially Poles, worried about job discrimination that would result from implementation of the language law. Public sector employees need to develop a functional knowledge of Lithuanian. Language-testing committees began their work in early 1993 – in the first nine months of 1993, about 2,000 persons were tested for their Lithuanian language ability, of whom 1,786 were certified as language qualified. But there may have been more bark than bite in these tests, as there is no documented evidence of dismissals based on this law (US Department of State).

Inter-communal parrying continued at a low but continuous level. In September 1993, the Lithuanian parliament officially criticized the "Macierz," an affiliation of Polish-language teachers for promoting Polish culture to the detriment of Lithuania. In February, 1994, at the conclusion of the Fourth Congress of the Union of Poles in Vilnius, leaders criticized the Lithuanian government for trying to limit access to Polish culture and closing Polish schools. On May 12, 1994, the Lithuanian Parliament ruled that social organizations, such as the Union of Poles, would not be allowed to field candidates in the upcoming local elections in November. In the following month, the Union of Lithuanian Poles along with a host of other social organizations demanded that the government lift that ban, and threatened to call for a boycott of local elections if their demands were not met. In July, Lithuanian authorities declared illegal a proposed the four-day celebration of the 54th anniversary of the Polish Home Army operation called Ostra Brama that had been taking place in Vilnius. Jan Widacki, the Polish ambassador to Lithuania, was summoned to the Lithuanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs for questioning. Widacki allegedly laid a wreath in the Home Army section of the cemetery at the Polish Church of the Holy Spirit. In February 1995, President Algirdas Brazauskas met representatives of public and cultural organizations of the Lithuanian Poles. Representatives of these organizations expressed their dissatisfaction with the state language law which had been adopted that January. This law, according to them, virtually forbade the use of the Polish language in the spheres of state and public life, religious rites and events organized by Polish organizations. The president was asked not to sign the law and to return it to the Seimas for reconsideration. Other topics discussed in the meeting were the setting up of a Polish university in Vilnius, and the unification of all areas densely populated by Poles into a single administrative unit. Brazauskas categorically disapproved of both of these ideas. In September 1996, around 300 Lithuanian Poles protested in Vilnius in front of the office of the Lithuanian president against the curtailment of the rights of national minorities in the run-up to the Seimas elections scheduled for October. The picketers protested against the new division of regions into electoral districts claiming that the new electoral districts had been drawn up in such a way as to make Poles the minority in as many districts as possible. The

picketers also protested the introduction for the first time of an election threshold of five percent for national minority groups as well as other parties.

Polish/Lithuanian conflict continued sporadically in the final three years of the century. In January 1997, the Lithuanian education minister questioned the existence of non-Lithuanian schools in that country. He said that people who did not have sufficient knowledge of the Lithuanian language were not Lithuanian citizens. In February, the Lithuanian Poles Electoral Action responded negatively to the requirement of conducting election campaigns only in Lithuanian as "total nonsense... Such rules of the Supreme Electoral Commission and national television," their statement claimed, "contradict common sense and do not correspond to international documents." In April, the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs submitted to Lithuanian Foreign Minister Algirdas Saudargas a demarche that accuses Lithuania of failing to abide by its interstate agreements with Poland. The issue in question was the spelling of Christian and family names of the Polish national minority in Lithuania. The Polish-Lithuanian treaty on good-neighborly relations and cooperation guaranteed the right for members of the national minority to spell their names in the way they are spelled in their native language. However, the bill, which already had its first reading in the Lithuanian Seimas, permitted only the phonetic spelling. In July, while not supported by the government, the Lithuanian Alliance of National-Socialist Unity [LNSVS] and its leader, Mindaugas Murza, in their publication "Voice of the Nation" openly attacked Jews, Poles and Russians and insisted that unbearable conditions should be created for them in order to force them to leave Lithuania as soon as possible. In August 1998, the local government of the Vilnius District, which was mostly inhabited by Poles, protested against the planned introduction by the Lithuanian authorities of a new territorial division of the state. The draft administrative reform would have abolished the Vilnius District and fragmented the Salcinkai District where the Polish population dominates. The Vilnius District Government feared that the proposed divisions would disintegrate the Polish community, limit Polish influence on decisions about the region's affairs, and breach the provisions of the Polish-Lithuanian treaty. In December 1998, the first district court of Vilnius declared null and void the decisions by the council and board of the Vilnius district municipality aimed at legalizing bilingual administration. The board of the district municipality passed decrees in 1997 and 1998 institutionalizing the use of Polish in the district's administrative organizations. In February 1999, Poles protested against the abolition of the requirement that all students receiving education in Polish schools to learn Polish as well as Lithuanian. They collected 25,000 signatures and presented them to Landsbergis, then the Speaker of the Seimas. The signatories feared that the abolition of the examination will lower the prestige of the Polish language and might later bring about the closure of Polish schools in Lithuania. In April 1999, five Poles who were proponents of autonomy were sentenced for anti-state activities. When the second congress of deputies from all levels of the Vilnius region was held in Eisiskes [southern Lithuania] in October 1990 the five founders declared the establishment of a Polish national territorial district within Lithuania. The founders of the autonomous territory had also declared the restoration of the independent state of Lithuania by the Lithuanian Supreme Council null and void and re-adopted the constitution of the Soviet Union. Following two years of hearings into the case of the organizers of Salcininkai territorial autonomy in Lithuania,

the Vilnius Regional Court handed down sentences ranging from six to eighteen months in prison. Polish senators who observed the trial were angered by the verdict, seeing in it a political rather than a criminal decision. According to Senator Anna Bogucka-Skowronska, it illuminated the hostility of the Lithuanian government towards its Polish minority (Rohozinska 1999). On their last day in power, in May 1999, the Gediminas Vagnorius government decided that seven communes situated near Vilnius would be joined with the Lithuanian capital. As a result, the inhabitants of these communes in which Poles constitute a majority would be subordinated to the local government of Vilnius dominated by Lithuanians. Presidential National Security Office chief Marek Siwiec termed the decision as "incomprehensible and egoistic". Any one of these incidents over the first decade of independence could have served as a "spark" for riots and even an insurgency if conditions were right. It is not for a lack of a spark that no civil war pitting the Poles against the Lithuanian state occurred.

### *The Russians*

In 1795 Poland lost independence after a deal was struck between two Germanic states (Prussia and Austria) and the Russian Empire. Two Polish insurrections (in 1831 and again in 1863) failed, and Russia took advantage of Polish defeat to turn Lithuania into a Russian province. The Russian Empire then eliminated Polish influence on Lithuanians in order to introduce Russian social and political institutions. Under tsarist rule, Lithuanian schools were forbidden, Lithuanian publications in the Latin script were outlawed, and the Roman Catholic Church was severely suppressed.

However, these Russian policies mostly created resentments among Lithuanians. A Lithuanian national awakening in the 1880s, joined by both the secular and clerical elites, led to demands for self-government. In 1905 Lithuania was the first of the Russian provinces to demand autonomy. But independence was not granted; in fact the tsar firmly reestablished his rule in the western borderlands after the Revolution of 1905.

The goal, articulated by the elected Grand Diet of Vilnius amid the first Russian revolution, was not abandoned. In the wake of the second revolution, it was revived. On July 9, 1920, in accord with the Paris peace conference, Lenin signed a peace treaty with Lithuania, "forever" denouncing Russia's claims to the territory and recognizing the Lithuanian state. But Stalin did not respect the treaty. The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact's secret protocol (1939) first assigned Lithuania to the German sphere of influence; later, it was transferred to the Soviet Union. In October 1939, the Soviet's compelled Lithuania into signing a nonaggression pact that permitted 20,000 Soviet troops in Lithuania. But the city of Vilnius was given to Lithuania as *lagniappe*. This was all foreplay, before the big land grab. On June 15, 1940, the Red Army occupied Lithuania. At first a procommunist "people's government" was installed, and an approved list of candidates were listed for elections to a new parliament. The parliament met on July 21, and "joined" the Soviet Union as the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic on August 6, 1940.



The Soviet's instituted radical economic policies, and terror as well. On one night (June 14-15, 1941), some 30,000 residents of Lithuania were deported to Siberia.<sup>9</sup> The following week, Germany attacked the Soviet Union, and enlisted anti-Soviet and anti-Semitic Lithuanians to help rule the country. Soviet armies recaptured Lithuania in the summer of 1944. Antanas Snieckus, Lithuania's Communist Party leader, returned from Moscow with the other officials who had fled during the German assault. The Soviet re-occupation of Lithuania was bloody: from 1944 to 1952 an armed partisan resistance movement suffered 20,000 to 30,000 casualties at the hands of the Soviet security apparatus.

Although the "forest brethren" were defeated, resistance against Soviet and Russian rule never died. In the 1970s, Lithuania had a vibrant underground press. *The Chronicle of the Catholic Church of Lithuania*, for example, had amazing resiliency. The KGB never uncovered its source over a twenty-year period. In 1972 a young student, Romas Kalanta, immolated himself in protest inciting a street rebellion. Army units were called in to cauterize the protests. During the Breznev era, one in which there was a limited space for political activity, but one in which dissidents were still arrested and imprisoned, the Committee for the Defense of Religious Rights and the Helsinki Watch Committee were established in the underground.

Lithuania's ultimate separation from the Soviet Union was unique. It was the only Union Republic whose transition was marked by violence and death in confrontation with Soviet authorities. Moscow did not accept the legality of Lithuania's referendum for independence. In response to it, and as a form of intimidation (and lesson for other republics), the Soviets in April 1990 imposed an economic blockade. It stopped only when the Lithuanian legislature agreed to a six-month moratorium on its independence declaration. But the tide did not turn. On January 13, 1991, the USSR forcibly unseated the Lithuanian government and reestablished Soviet rule. Although this attempted coup ended in the Soviet killing of civilians – thirteen died, and hundreds were wounded – the independence movement remained firm. Vigils followed the violent confrontations that highlighted the willingness of Lithuanians to pay heavy costs to free themselves of Soviet rule.

Immediately in the wake of independence, President Landsbergis demanded the withdrawal of Russian troops, regarded by Lithuanians as an occupying force. The Russian government strongly opposed this demand, claiming that the troops had no barracks waiting for them. The Baltic Military District commander foresaw no serious troop withdrawal for several years. Russian foreign minister, Andrei Kozyrev, suggested a "status of forces" agreement that would legalize the Russian troop presence. In June, 1992, the Baltic Council, a consultative body of Baltic leaders, appealed to western states and their international organizations for relief. A consortium of these states counseled the Russians to set a definite withdrawal date, which Russia did after protracted negotiations.

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<sup>9</sup> From 1945-54, about 300,000 citizens of Lithuanian origin were deported to Siberia, and many of them lost their lives. See Arvydas Juozaitis (1992) "The Lithuanian Independence Movement and National Minorities" (Frankfurt: Peace Research Institute Frankfurt), p. 1.

As with the Poles, deep enmity between the Russians and Lithuanians was contained during a violent transition, but one that did not become a civil war between Lithuanians and Russian settlers. Russian quiescence is not the same as with the case of Poles. Because of a bargain between the Lithuanian communist authorities and the CPSU, Russian immigration was constrained into Lithuania, such that it had the smallest proportion of Russians of any of the western union republics. Furthermore, Russian immigrants were mostly military and blue-collar workers and they settled in urban areas, such that they had no regional base. Finally, the Russian population in Lithuania had a “national homeland” in the Russian Federation, and because of that they knew that Lithuania could not easily renege on commitments to Russian rights without provoking an unwanted response from the Russian Federation. Thus the Russian migrants were weak (small, and without a regional base) yet secure (due to protection from the Russian Federation), and these factors eliminated any incentive for Russians to rebel.

### *The Belarusians*

On 24 February 1992, Belarusian foreign minister Piotr Krauchanka told a stunned European Community delegation in Minsk that his country had designs on border areas with Lithuania, and on Vilnius itself. In the late 1980s and early 1990s many Lithuanian officials expected Poland to make such claims on their country, to regain territory lost in 1939. By contrast Lithuanians paid little attention to what Belarusians were saying about the role of Vilnius in Belarusian history and the national identity of the 258,000 Slavs in the Vilnius region.

Belarusian national activists attempt to establish the “antiquity” of their nation with the use of evidence showing that the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, Rus’, and Samogitia were all part of an ancient Belarusian state. The effort started in the early twentieth century, but some Soviet Belarusian historians picked this up in the 1960s and 1970s. They contended that the Grand Duchy was a Belarusian state because by the fourteenth century its ruling elite spoke only Belarusian, the Grand Duchy’s state language was Belarusian, ethnically Belarusian lands made up the core of the Grand Duchy, and Belarusian law constituted the law of the state.

Belarusian national activists have accepted this line of argument. According to Vitaut Charopka:

Thus Navahradak, as it arose on the lands of Lithuania. ... and Lithuania ... became the nucleus of a new state—the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. [This state] was shaped not on the Lithuanian lands of that time, but on Belarusian lands, and was formed as a state of the Belarusian feudal lords. Navahradak was the first capital of this state, the Belarusian language fulfilled the function of a state language, and the Navahradak coat of arms “Pahonia” became the state coat of arms.

Such ideas have entered the political life of contemporary Belarus: Charopka and others advocate changing the country’s name to “Lithuania-Belarus” or the “Republic of Litbelarus.” These considerations inevitably draw attention to the fate of Vilnius—the Grand Duchy’s capital.

On 29 March 1990, the Belarusian presidium declared that it would demand the return of former Belarusian then in the Lithuanian SSR if Lithuania seceded from the Soviet Union. The presidium cited the USSR Supreme Soviet's condemnation of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and therefore the Belarusian SSR should no longer be bound by the decrees of 1939-1940 which transferred Belarusian territory to Lithuania. The presidium added that, inasmuch as the Belarusian SSR was not a party to the agreements between Moscow and either the interwar Lithuanian republic or the Lithuanian SSR, it would no longer be bound by them.

A declaration of early January 1992 signed by several Belarusian historians, writers, and ethnographers was prompted by the fear that ongoing talks between Vilnius and Minsk to demarcate an agreed-upon border between Lithuania and Belarus would result in a settlement disadvantageous to the latter. These specialists contended that the "most important argument" in favor of Belarusian historic rights to the Vilnius region was the speech of its inhabitants, which they termed "natural Belarusian speech." They also pointed to numerous Belarusian traditions still practiced in Vilnius. If the inhabitants of this region called themselves Poles, the declaration averred, it was mainly a "political choice" prompted by the threats of Lithuanization and Russification, not a metamorphosis of "their ethno-cultural essence."

Had the Belarusian SSR been willing to come to the defense of the inhabitants of the Vilnius region, these Belarusian authors inferred, the inhabitants might have been willing to change their national allegiance. From 1920 to 1939, when Poland controlled the region, according to the Belarusian line of argument, the government pursued policies designed to encourage the spread of Polish identity among people living in the country's Belarusian regions. In 1924 the government suspended publication of Belarusian newspapers. The word "Belarusian" inexplicably disappeared from Polish documents, replaced by the term "Białopolak" (White Pole) for those Belarusians who were Roman Catholic, and by the term "Rusin" (Ruthenian) for those who were Orthodox. In 1937 the regime closed the last Belarusian secondary school. By 1939 no Belarusian-language publication appeared regularly in Poland.

Meanwhile, Polish-language media has mushroomed. *Kurier Wilenski*, the former *Czerwony Sztandar*, has a print-run of 56,000; *Nasza Gazeta*, published by the ZPL, has a print-run of 10,000; and *Znad Wilii*, a private concern, also has a print-run of 10,000. Newspapers from Poland are also readily available. There are Polish-language radio programs that broadcast twelve hours a day, as well as Polish-language television programming. Belarusians living in Lithuania, or so the Belarusian nationalists argued, cannot compete on this level. There is one Belarusian newspaper, *Nasha Niva*, but it appears intermittently and has an uncertain future. There is some Belarusian-language television programming, but the Lithuanian government reduced it in early 1993. Belarusians in Lithuania cannot compete in the organizational sphere either. They have formed two organizations: the Society of Belarusian Culture which seeks to preserve the traditions, customs, and national existence of the Belarusian people in Lithuania; and Siabryna which forms the Lithuanian branch of the International Association of Belarusian Specialists. Both are centered in Vilnius but have failed to forge organizational links to the countryside.

An account of the failure of organization of a Belarusian resistance is different from that of the Russians or Poles. The Belarusians have potentially a regional base and have rural roots. The problem is that the leadership has not successfully delimited a space on the dimension of ethnic identity that is reserved for Belarusians. Individuals who have some claim to being Belarusians condition their behavior on being Lithuanians or Poles, identities that bring greater individual rewards in Lithuania. A prerequisite for organizational strength is to capture space on a dimension of identity such that an in-group can be recognized.

Compounding the organizational difficulty, new Belarusian links to the Russian Federation weaken the Belarusian identity movement in Vilnius. Those Belarusians who seek to bind Belarus's fate to Russia have little interest in Vilnius, the Vilnius region, and Belarus's heritage in the Grand Duchy. Russia had no such links to Lithuania. So recalling Belarusian/Russian ties underlines historical and national differences with Lithuania (Burant, n.d.). While experiencing in Lithuania far greater grievances than the Poles, but without any organizational capacity, Belarusians can hardly mount a political protest in Lithuania.

### *The Jews*

The German occupation of Lithuania in 1941 encouraged the Lithuanian Activist Front, an organization of anti-Soviet resistance groups. Partisans took over the largest cities--Kaunas and Vilnius--and declared Lithuania independent. The Germans replaced the provisional government with a Lithuanian Vertrauensrat (Council of Trustees), which was headed by an ethnic Lithuanian, General Petras Kubiliunas. The German occupation authorities succeeded, in the period 1941-44, in recruiting or capturing tens of thousands of Lithuanians to work in Germany or to serve in the German army. Many perished in prisons or concentration camps. The main victims, however, were Lithuanian Jews. About 185,000 Jews, or 85 percent of the community's population, were massacred by the Nazis, who were helped by Lithuanian collaborators in several of localities (and for reasons explaining variance, see Petersen).<sup>10</sup> Lithuanian Jews of course had the greatest grievances against Lithuania and Lithuanians, but there were too few left in the postwar world for these grievances to be translated into a civil war onset.

### *Why Not Incendiary?*

After listing a litany of grievances perpetrated against Poles, Radzilowski (n.d.) recognizes that by the mid-1990s "Nevertheless, given the past tension evident in relations, the situation of Polish minority has improved." Why should this be the case? Several reasons can be offered.

ELF

One reason is due to the ethnic distribution of populations. There were no Jews. And important also, hardly any Russians. After the Soviet re-occupation of Lithuania, the installed Lithuanian Communist Party chief Antanas Sniečkus (1940-1974) was a buddy

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<sup>10</sup> . Roger D. Petersen (2001) Resistance and Rebellion (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), chapter 5.

of Stalin. In exchange for his brutal oppression of anti-Soviet dissent, he kept Russian immigration down to low levels. This meant that ELF did not change much during the Soviet period, and Lithuania had one of the lowest exogamy rates in the Soviet Union. Post-Stalin many Lithuanians returned from the Gulag, as did ex “forest brethren”, reducing substantially chances for a serious ethnic threat to Lithuanians as titulars in their own republic (Krickus 1997, 293-4). Low numbers does well to account for Jews and Russians, but not Poles.

#### Quasi-assimilation and mixed identities

Nationality in Lithuania historically has revealed mixed populations with complex cultural repertoires that are changing so fast that ethnic entrepreneurs have a hard time in setting boundaries and activating any particular ethnic group. The titular population has been in constant cultural flux since the Second World War. The results of census carried out during the Nazi occupation (1942) indicate that at that time the ethnic processes in Southeast Lithuania took a course rather similar to that observed in the period of Polish occupation and during the first Soviet occupation (1940–1941). The process of Slavicization (Polonization or Belarussification) of ethnic Lithuanians, while slowed, had never stopped. In those years, it was more prestigious to be a Lithuanian by nationality than to speak Lithuanian. On balance, the juxtaposition of interethnic groups involving ethnic Lithuanians and Slavic population shows that Lithuanians outstripped Slavs in terms of nationality of children born to ethnically mixed families. Yet Lithuanians yielded more readily to linguistic assimilation. The number of persons identifying themselves with the Polish or Belarussian language increased steadily. But this had more to do with local incentives than to deep attachment to particular national identities. In the past century 49 percent of offspring produced by mixed Lithuanian-Polish families have declared themselves Lithuanians, while 51 percent of them as Poles. In the past decade, however, of mixed Lithuanian–Polish families, some 80 percent of the children state that they are Lithuanians by nationality, while 20 percent of them state that they are Poles (Kalnius, n.d.).

While Lithuanian identity has been in flux, Russian cultural hegemony has been uneven, and in the later years weakening vis-à-vis Polish. Russian remained the universal means of communication among people who do not know each other in the last generation of Soviet rule. Broad masses of Poles who identified themselves culturally with Belarussians and Russians rushed to the newly transformed schools. Wherever several persons willing to attend a Russian school appeared, such a school was readily opened. Thus Russian schools were attended by one or two ethnic Russians and by crowds of non-Russian children (mostly Poles, Belarussians, Ukrainians, Tatars) and also by some Lithuanians if a Lithuanian school was out of reach. Poles, for the most part, had become determined to seek education in Russian. For example, in Vilnius where in the Soviet years education in Polish was offered by some 13–14 schools, only 25 percent of the children born to monoethnic Polish families attended Polish schools. Fifty percent of them chose Russian schools, and only 10 per cent Lithuanian schools. In the middle of the nineties, inhabitants with Polish ethnic identity underwent a metamorphosis in terms of school choice: crowds of Poles left Russian schools and rushed to Polish, mostly, or to Lithuanian schools. Their turn towards Polish schools is not quite adequate to the efforts made by Lithuanians seeking to have Lithuanian schools reopened. The turn towards

Polish schools was started and supported through the energetic actions of Lithuanian politicians representing the Polish minority. It was encouraged by municipal councils consisting of members with a Polish ethnic background, and by political and cultural organizations uniting Poles residing in Lithuania.

The mid-nineties were a turning point for non-Lithuanians. It marked a change in their attitude to schools offering a course of study in a state language. At that time the number of non-Lithuanian pupils increased greatly in Lithuanian schools. In 1994 the Board of Statistics of the Lithuanian State Department and the Chief Board of Statistics of Poland launched a joint research project. According to the results, 52.2 percent of the Poles living in the eastern districts of Lithuania stated that they wished to send their children to Lithuanian schools, though actually only 12.8 percent of Polish children attended them. In response to this, politicians representing the Polish community sought above all to integrate, through Polish schools, ethnic Belarussians, Russians, Ukrainians and offspring of ethnically mixed families with a Polish spouse into the Polish community and to Polonize them (Kalnius, n.d.).

The Russians themselves have been in cultural flux. Lithuanians frequently claim that their Russian neighbors do not know a “single word” of Lithuanian. But this lumps together four quite distinct strands of Russian migration into Lithuania. First, there were those whose ancestors settled in Lithuania several centuries ago. Second is the technical intelligentsia that came to Lithuania after WWII. These first two groups has integrated moderately well into Lithuanian society. Third, there were those sent to fight the forest brethren in the 1940s and 50s. And finally, there are the post-1965 industrial workers who in the 1990s accounted for an increase of 54,800 “Soviets” and made up twenty percent of the population growth in that decade. These last two groups have been more solidly Russian-speaking (Juozaitis 1992, 15). A survey of Russians by the Center of Sociological Research of the government’s Department for Nationality Affairs reveals these divisions. Some 23 percent of Russians claim to speak Lithuanian fluently, 26 percent well, 35 percent a little, and 14 percent not at all. For reading, nearly 19 percent claim fluency in Lithuanian, 30 percent read well, 32 percent read a little, and 16 percent not at all (Resler, n.d.).

In this cultural *mélange*, new identities form, and then reform. In the early post-Soviet years, persons identifying themselves with the local population – the *Tuteyshi* (a Belarussian word denoting local inhabitants of the region without any connotation of their ethnic character) began to get some prominence, though this identity category did not last very long. But new identities haven’t immediately replaced *Tuteyshi*. There is instead a reluctance to label oneself ethnically. Thus in new Lithuanian passports, an increasing number of non-Lithuanian applicants (especially in the southeast) do not wish to have their nationality inscribed in their passports. (The legislation of the Republic of Lithuania provides a free choice in this respect). Some of them eventually identify themselves with Poles, some with Belarussians, and some with Lithuanians.

But those identities that do form seem to be standard national identities. One of the most important characteristics of ethnic processes occurring in Southeast Lithuania in the nineties, according to Kalnius, is the peculiar Polonization of Poles carried out by

Poles themselves. It represents education of the population with a Polish ethnic background or of the people just formally numbered among Poles. It includes a subsequent processing of such population into “real” Poles having integral ethnic characteristics as opposed to Poles through self-identification and through inscriptions in their personal documents. The categorization also distinguishes Poles able to use standard Polish, those Poles attending Polish schools, and those Poles culturally oriented towards the heritage of Polish culture and to the cultural life of present-day Poland. Up till now, the ethnic landscape from this point of view is too varied for any entrepreneur to polarize the community through ethnic symbols. But the new consolidation of national identities may create such polarizations in the near future. Yet there is no prospect of ethnic war.

#### Cross-cutting cleavages

Closely related to the assimilation argument is the one pointing to cross-cutting ethnic/national cleavages. In 1991 a Western poll found that 69 percent of respondents in Lithuania identified themselves as Roman Catholics (in 1939 the percentage was 85), four percent identified themselves as Orthodox, and one percent professed Evangelical Christian beliefs. The Roman Catholic Church – among the most venerable of Lithuanian institutions – unites Lithuanians and Poles. At first heavily influenced by Polish practices, the church under Bishop Motiejus Valancius in the nineteenth century promoted Lithuanian language and publications. These religious tracts prepared the country for the national awakening of the 1880s. While Poles and Lithuanians may be divided by language and nationality, they have been united against Russians in their Catholic heritage. As such, Catholicism has played a dominant role in the ameliorating of Lithuanian/Polish conflict.

While indeed cross-cutting Poles and Lithuanians, Catholicism has not been a strong social institution in Lithuania. Among historic Catholics is a large category -- 25 percent -- who remain agnostic. Twenty-one out of the 141 new members of parliament elected in 1992 left out "so help me God" from the oath when sworn in as deputies (Library of Congress). So while Lithuanian/Polish ties cross-cut, the Catholic dimension may be insufficiently strong to hold back the militarization of conflict should ethnic violence emerge.

Another element in cross-pressure is the common fear among Poles and Lithuanians of Russian imperial ambitions. In the late 1980s, the Poles and Lithuanians were on the same page in seeing the continued hegemony of the USSR over the region of Eastern Europe as the great common problem. On January 12, 1991, Jan Sienkiewicz, the leader of the Union of Poles, spoke on Lithuanian television appealing to all Poles living in Lithuania to support the Lithuanian government in its struggle for independence against the Soviets.

Russians too have been cross-pressured in Lithuania, between national differences and a common respect for Lithuanian state institutions or at least its reformed communist party. While many Russians were sympathetic to the Soviet-inspired Edinstvo (inter-front) which supported the January 13, 1991 coup in Russia, others, like Nikolai Medvedev, were active in Sajúdis. The old inter-front supporters now vote “left” in Lithuanian elections, a party that represents their interests. Thus even the radicals among the Russians are quiescent politically as they see Labor as representing their interests

along with rural and older Lithuanians. Also many Russians have done as well as the Lithuanians in the new economy, and have a common interest in Lithuania's market reforms.

#### Liberal policies and concessions

Commentators point often to the amelioration of grievances as explanations for the absence of inter-ethnic war. Consider first the issue of citizenship for non-Lithuanians. In 1989 Lithuania passed the "zero option" that freely granted citizenship to nearly all residents of the republic (Krickus, 1999, 319). To be sure, on December 11, 1991 Lithuania passed citizenship laws requiring immigrants since 1940 to meet language requirements in addition to requiring they have been residents for at least ten years and renounce their former citizenship. The effect of this law was minimal due to the earlier July 29, 1991 agreement with Russia, as well as the law granting citizenship to those born in Lithuania (well over 90% of non-Lithuanian ethnics had already been granted citizenship in 1991).

It is not only citizenship that reflects the liberal minority framework. Compared to other Lithuanians, Poles living in Lithuania face only minor discrimination. According to the codings in the MAR dataset, Poles, the most aggrieved of Lithuania's minorities, are not subject to demographic or ecological stress, and the minority policies adopted by the Lithuanian government are generally regarded as among the most liberal in the region.<sup>11</sup>

Minorities in Lithuania have access to primary and secondary education in their own languages. State media include a healthy selection of programs in minority languages. Lithuanian television rebroadcasts programs from two television stations in Russia and one in Poland. Numerous periodicals are available in Russian and Polish. Non-Lithuanian members were permitted to serve on district councils in Vilnius despite the fact that their predecessors on these councils had been charged with upholding Soviet rule during Lithuania's independence struggle (US Department of State).

And therefore civic life is without restriction. In post-Soviet Lithuania, Poles have joined many civic organizations. They have access to more than 125 schools and ten Polish-language periodicals (Radzilowski, n.d.). A Polish University and Polish Cultural Center were opened in Vilnius in 1991, in response to Polish-Lithuanian pressure groups. And although there are Polish organizations that press for greater cultural autonomy, many Poles side with Czesla Okinczyć, who had been a Sajúdis leader, and seek to exploit the democratic institutions through the articulation of moderate cultural demands.

The government is responsive to pressures by ethnic organizations. After the protests blocking Polish social organizations from fielding candidates, President Brazauskas relented. On June 20, 1994, Brazauskas turned down without signing the then recently passed law on local elections, returning it to parliament for further consideration. The president proposed to the Seimas that they pass amendments to the law allowing

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<sup>11</sup> . In the Mar dataset, DEMSTR99 = 0, ECOSTR99= 0, POLDIS00 = 0, ECDIS00 = 1, LangR95x = 0, LangC95x = 0, exdifxn = 0, and Reldis95 = 0, all reflecting the absence of ecological, political, linguistic, religious, or economic grievances.



social organizations to run in municipal elections together with political parties. The president's decision more-or-less satisfied the demands of the Union of Lithuanian Poles.

And when the Lithuanian education minister criticized minority language schools, the Foreign Minister Algirdas Saudargas released a statement the day after. Saudargas stressed that his country's government complies with its international obligations with regard to ethnic minorities. The foreign minister also said that the statement by the education minister was not compatible with the position of the Lithuanian government (MAR).

Even on the symbolic level, the Lithuanian government has been liberal. In 1998 a statue of the Polish poet Adam Mickiewicz by the well-known Lithuanian sculptor Bronius Vishnauskas was unveiled in the center of Soleczniki Salcininkai near Vilnius (MAR).

### Country Wealth

Our interpretation of the GDP/cap variable is that it is a proxy for a strong state. The Lithuanian GDP/cap dropped significantly from close to the world mean to considerably below it after the collapse of the Soviet Union, but there is no indication that groups saw low GDP/cap as a signal revealing state weakness and therefore as an opportunity for rebellion.

### Small Size

Lithuania has a small population, about one-tenth the world mean. This is one of the principal factors giving Lithuania, by our model, a low predicted probability for civil war, lower than the world mean even in the year when it was a new state. One possible mechanism that may translate low population into low probability of civil war onset is the ability leaders have in small states to target resources efficiently to individuals and groups that most threaten it. In Lithuania this group is the Poles. Even without assuming any form of ethnic harmony, the state of Polish-Lithuanian government relations is quite healthy. There are a large number of Polish-Lithuanians in the parliament and local governments, and these representatives have a considerable stake in the success of the present regime. Poles are well-represented in Lithuanian civic life. All this suggests a careful project of co-optation of the groups most likely to rebel. (Presumably the distributions would have to be greater than the expected returns for being in a widened Polish republic). Smallness therefore is a proxy for efficient targeting of government distributions to those most likely to rebel without such distributions.

### Embeddedment in the West

Enmity between Poland and Lithuania could not survive the common mission of joining the West. Once Lithuania got its seat in the UN, President Landsbergis indicated the next priorities of Lithuania's foreign policy – “to join all accessible international organizations, and to legally strengthen the status of the new state” (Library of Congress). Broad Lithuanian desire to rejoin the west is crucial here. NATO was a key goal for both Lithuania and Poland. It was therefore hardly surprising that a joint Lithuanian and Polish peackeeping battalion was created in 1999 with the help of NATO. The Polish defense

minister, Janusz Onyszkiewicz, likened the creation of the joint battalion to the Battle of Gruenwald of 1420, which was important for the histories of both Lithuania and Poland (BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 4/15/99). Under these conditions, while Poles in Lithuania complained about their conditions, as Radzkowski points out, “the Polish government was forced to play a careful mediating role which frequently frustrated the Polish minority” in Lithuania.

As with other narratives (most notably Japan post occupation), our model ignores the external support of states as a factor to increase its power in the eyes of potential challengers. The West played such a role in Lithuania. Not only did they offer rewards to all for accepting the rules of the democratic game, but through Lithuania’s embeddedness in the structure of NATO, potential challengers saw a much stronger state than the figure for GDP would have told them. These potential challengers surely conditioned their behavior on knowledge that Lithuania was a state that had a commitment from the West for its protection.

In a case narrative as the one presented here, it would be methodologically impossible to sort out whether ELF, or cross-cutting cleavages, or assimilation, or wealth, or embeddedness in the West were the crucial factors accounting for ethnic peace. But the point here is that here we have a case of many and deep ethnic hatreds, but no ethnic war. Or in the words of the commentator who pointed to “long-standing hostilities” between Poles and Lithuanians, in the post-Soviet era “ancient hostilities have ceased with the advent of economic prosperity” (Leise, 1999).

## **II. Peaceful Transition from Soviet Rule**

Our model predicts a higher likelihood of civil war in the early moments of independence from 1991-1993. For Lithuania, the probability reached .014 in 1992. Although this is still about a third of the regional average (.04 for 1992 for Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union), it was about five times the probability of an onset for Lithuania in the subsequent years.

To some extent, this was a surprising outcome. On January 13, 1991, the USSR deployed military force to remove the Lithuanian government in Vilnius and to reestablish Soviet rule. This attack is the only example in the entire Soviet Union where bloody conflict took place in state suppression of an independence movement. Yet this did not snowball into a resurgence of a “forest brethren” campaign spilling over into the early independence moments. Sajudis did not use the January 1991 massacres as an excuse to terrorize Russians who were associated with those Russians who had joined the movement Edinstvo to rally against Lithuanian sovereignty in the name of Soviet internationalism, or to terrorize the most recent migrants from Russia. In fact, Sajudis supported and monitored peaceful vigils at the scene of the attacks.

Answers to the question of transitional peace have already been offered – having to do with cross-cutting cleavages and expectations of future wealth and liberalism in part made possible through association with the West. But there is an additional factor, one less easily explained by our models. During the impressive Human Chain organized across the three Baltic States on August 23<sup>rd</sup> 1989, the leadership sought to demonstrate a “Baltic Way” shared by the three Popular Front movements. All three organizations were by ideology peaceful. Mati Hint (a leader in the Estonian Popular Front) spoke in Tallinn

in those uncertain days. His speech was reflective of a coordinated and collectively prepared document of the popular front leaders in all three countries. He emphasized there that “violence is not the way that the Baltic nations have adopted...” (Juozaitis 1992, 7). The political choice by these leaders to abjure violence, a choice that could hardly be challenged by movement radicals due to the lack of weapons in their arsenals, and their commitment to police their own movements against the use of violence, all worked together to have a profound affect on the fears of minorities in light of possible independence.

### **III. Political Stability and Civil War**

Lithuania’s first decade of democracy looked ominous given the vast electoral volatility and the apparent institutional instability. Vytautas Landsbergis won the chairmanship of the presidium of the Supreme Soviet, becoming de facto president in May, 1990. He had been a professor of musicology who had joined the Communist Party of Lithuania. He got two-thirds of the vote in defeating the former communist first secretary Brazauskas.

From the fall of 1991 through summer of 1992, this Sajúdis-led legislature was in near chaos, with Kaunas nationalist radicals (forming the National Progress Faction) standing against a coalition of Vilnius intellectuals and reformed communists. When Prime Minister Prunskiene favored conciliation with the Soviets, she found herself in conflict with Landsbergis and the Seimas (the parliament) voted to unseat her. Albertas Simenas succeeded her, but he temporarily disappeared during the Soviet attack in January 1991. At this troubled moment, Landsbergis’ heroic determination and leadership won him kudos as a forceful national leader. With Simenas lost, Gediminas Vagnorius became Prime Minister, but his failure to smoothly introduce the new currency led to economic chaos. Landsbergis, seeking stability under his leadership, pressed for a referendum for a new constitution with a stronger president. Although the referendum had a majority of voters, it did not pass as the abstention rate was high, showing great popular disenchantment in large part fueled by economic catastrophe. Landsbergis then had to call for a new election in 1992, and the Lithuanian Democratic Labor Party (LDLP) and its satellites won an absolute majority of seventy-three seats (51 percent) (Krickus 1997, 300-01).

In the subsequent direct presidential election of February 14, 1993, the Lithuanian ambassador to the United States, Stasys Lozoraitis (who replaced Landsbergis, who decided not to contest) lost to Brazauskas, who won majorities everywhere except in the urban district of Kaunas. The final vote was 61.1 percent for Brazauskas and 38.2 percent for Lozoraitis. Brazauskas won through support from not only the rural population of Lithuanians, but from urban areas with Polish or Russian majorities. President Brazauskas appointed Raimundas Rajeckas, an economist, as his special counsel and de facto “deputy president”. Rajeckas had been associated with Western universities and had served as Brazauskas's campaign manager.

In this period of the mid-1990s, public opinion revealed a disenchanting electorate. “Over half the ... people indicated that they were skeptical of the country’s political institutions and no more than 30 percent claimed to trust the cabinet of ministers,

parliament, the police, courts, and local governmental jurisdictions.” According to Krickus (1997, 316-17), this was due in large part to massive corruption at the level of the Central Bank and at all other levels. Also, there were rising crime rates in the major cities, with murder rates soaring. In 1993, there were 150 reported bombings in Lithuania, 31 in Vilnius alone.

Thus in the 1997-98 presidential elections, there was a new reversal of fortune, and no political party could muster popular support. Valdas Adamkus (a former EPA officer in the US) with only 27.9 percent of the vote in the first round got 50.4 percent to win in the second round to defeat Arturas Paulauskas, a former Soviet prosecutor, who got 45.3 percent in the first round, and 49.6 percent in the second. Landsbergis got 15.9 percent in the first round. Both of the run-off candidates ran as Independents. Rolandas Paksas’s victory over Adamkus in the next presidential election in January 2003 had elements of farce. Paksas had been Mayor of Vilnius, but in an earlier incarnation, was a Soviet air pilot acrobat. His Liberal Democratic (LD) party is a copy of Vladimir Zhirinovskiy’s party in Russia, with the same name. The symbols used by Paksas’s campaign literature caused great unease – especially their eagle logo, stunningly (and hardly accidentally) similar to the Luftwaffe eagle. The party’s torch-lit rallies where speakers called for an “iron order” were equally worrisome to liberals. His publicity described Adamkus as representing the interests of the West and the rotten political and intellectual elite in Lithuania. The images of fascism were all too evident. Meanwhile, Paksas was mired in scandal. One of his principal campaign contributors was a helicopter sales-and-rental company called Avia Baltika, which Lithuanian law-enforcement agencies had exposed as selling arms illegally to Sudan. After the election, company chief Yuri Borisov applied for Lithuanian citizenship – in addition to his original Russian citizenship – and the President granted it (Donskis 2003).

High electoral volatility, low party institutionalization, and even lower public trust in the governmental institutions are all signs of instability. Yet, this instability was not picked up in our measures of political instability; nor did it invite insurgency. Weak governments, and weak democratic institutions, as our measures suggest, offer quite different signals to potential insurgents than do weak regimes. Thus our interpretation of civil war onset was correct in signaling a distinction between governmental and regime instability. While governmental instability in Lithuania has had (Italian) farcical qualities, there is a common expectation among all political factions that the regime would not be challenged. This is the kind of political instability that deters potential insurgents from organizing a military challenge to the state.

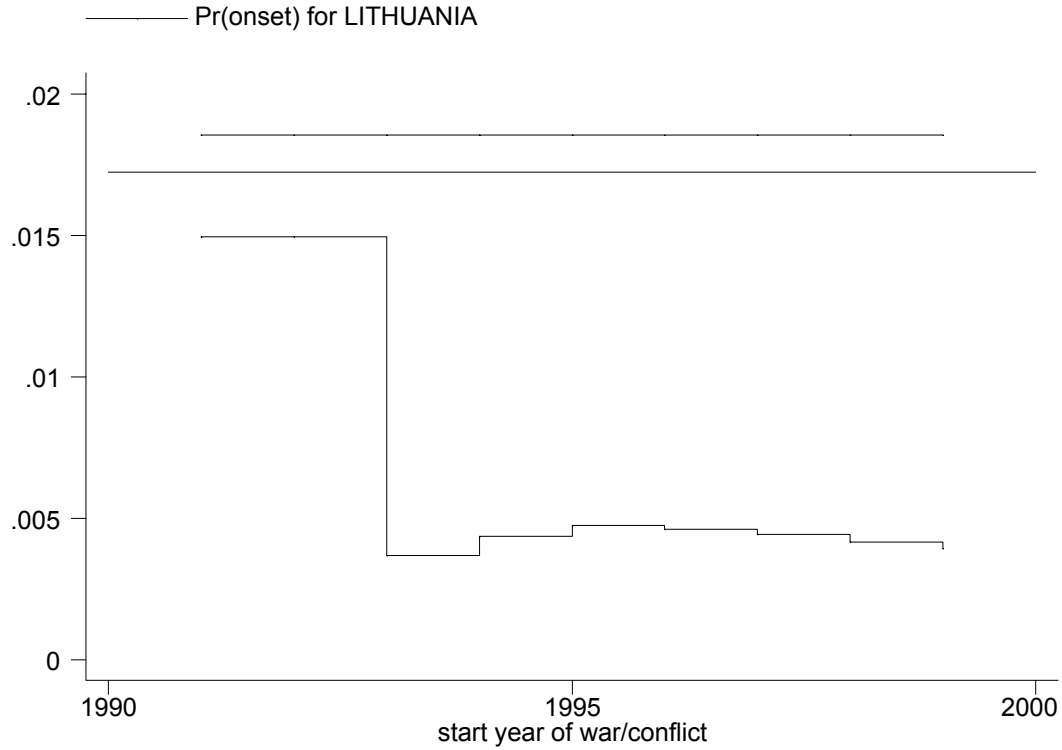
### **III. Conclusion**

Our model correctly assessed the low probability of civil war in Lithuania, so there was no need to explain anomalous outcomes in this narrative. However, the Lithuanian case enabled us to show why other models, focusing on ancient hatreds and grievances do not yield strong results in statistical models. The Poles, the Belarusians, the Russians and the Jews had long-standing grievances against a Lithuanian state. In the first decade of independence, the Poles especially were aggrieved in myriad ways over issues

concerning cultural autonomy and political representation. Many of the resulting incidents would have been excellent material to account for a civil war onset if indeed one occurred. But, as our model makes clear, these ancient hatreds and contemporary grievances are quite common, but have no apparent causal significance in accounting for civil war onsets. That Lithuania is a small state enabled its leaders to manage potential opposition with carefully calibrated co-optation.

The Lithuanian case also helps us understand why our indicator of state stability is a good one – since Lithuania suffered from enormous governmental instability with no apparent signal given to insurgents that this was a propitious time to challenge the state. Of course, this factor is confounded by the commitment Lithuania had from the West, which made the state stronger than the low GDP would have implied. Nonetheless, it is important to see how government instability has different implications than regime instability for purposes of signaling insurgent opportunities.

Our model is somewhat less successful in fully answering the question of why the transition from Soviet rule was so peaceful, in light of the sparks of January 1991. A solidarity pact of Lithuanian (and Baltic) nationalists to abjure from revenge probably played a role in assuring pro-Soviet Russians and Poles that they would have a long term future, with their rights protected, in an independent Lithuania.



cname	year	pr	gdp~1	pop	mtn~t	Oil	ins~b	anocl
LITHUANI	1991	.0139746	4.28	3741	0	0	0	0
LITHUANI	1992	.0139746	4.28	3740	0	0	0	0
LITHUANI	1993	.0036641	3.37	3730	0	0	0	0
LITHUANI	1994	.0043672	2.832	3721	0	0	0	0
LITHUANI	1995	.0047678	2.562	3715	0	0	0	0
LITHUANI	1996	.0046303	2.65	3709	0	0	0	0
LITHUANI	1997	.0044353	2.78	3705.59	0	0	0	0
LITHUANI	1998	.0041462	2.985	3697.37	0	0	0	0
LITHUANI	1999	.0039384	3.14	.	0	0	0	0

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
pr	9	.0064332	.0042888	.0036641	.0139746
gdpenl	9	3.208778	.655	2.562	4.28
pop	8	3719.87	16.06959	3697.37	3741
mtnest	9	0	0	0	0
Oil	9	0	0	0	0

instab	9	0	0	0	0
anocl	9	0	0	0	0

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
pr	593	.0177046	.019674	.0005446	.1834098
gdpenl	595	2.903378	1.910564	.086	10.924
pop	614	31483.59	60021.23	1114	287630
mtnest	646	12.48421	15.53963	0	81
Oil	646	.0804954	.2722694	0	1

instab	646	.1377709	.3449264	0	1
anocl	640	.16875	.3748239	0	1

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
pr	6327	.0167543	.0228494	2.45e-10	.488229

gdpnl		6373	3.651117	4.536645	.048	66.735
pop		6433	31786.92	102560.8	222	1238599
mtnest		6610	18.08833	20.96648	0	94.3
Oil		6610	.1295008	.3357787	0	1
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instab		6596	.1464524	.353586	0	1
anocl		6541	.2256536	.418044	0	1

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