Don't care what they say about you in the media - ! or ?

- Perceptions of mediated Lithuanian identity by Lithuanians

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Synopsis

Open country borders in EU and EEA have allowed a free flow of labour migrants between Norway and Lithuania, and recently there has been increased labour migration from Lithuania to Norway, as well as increased criminal activity of Lithuanians in Norway. Media's attention to such events is unanimous, and Lithuanians in Norway are usually portrayed in the public debates as criminals.

This paper examines the Lithuanian minority in Norway and their perception of how media coverage portrays Lithuanian identity, and how they negotiate such understandings in their private and public social lives. The findings indicate a complex identity development, in which strategies of distancing themselves from the media's portrayal are actively employed in everyday lives. As a result of the stereotypical perception of Lithuanian identity, Lithuanians disguise their ethnic character with a phantom identity, making Lithuanians a phantom minority. Disguised as a phantom, Lithuanians are employing their cultural and social capital to not differentiate themselves from the perceived Norwegian majority 'crowd'. In this way they avoid encounters with the popularly mediated stereotypes of Lithuanians in Norway. Secondly, to maintain their phantom character the Lithuanian minority engage in popular discourse, which sees a non-western immigrant as a problem. In this way they mark out their identities as counter to those of non-western minorities.

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CHAPTER 1: Introduction and background

1.1. Choice of the study area

This thesis aims to understand how the Lithuanian immigrants in Norway perceive and relate to the mediated imagery of Lithuanians in Norway. The goal of this study is to see whether the media images of the Lithuanians in Norway are perceived as influential by Lithuanians for their own 'self' perception in Norwegian society and for their identity as social individuals.

The focus of this study balances between media presentations and a study of Lithuanian subjects. The main attention is grounded in the Lithuanian subjects' own perception of media, its representation of Lithuanian identity, and the way informants negotiate this knowledge in their own identity formation project. This is therefore neither only a media study, nor only a subject study; rather, it is a study of the subjects' own dialogical interpretation and negotiation of the perceived media representation in relation to the social sphere.

The choice of the topic is closely related to my personal and professional position in Norway. I am myself a Lithuanian and live in Norway for a number of years. The combination of my personal experience in the social sphere and the academic field reflections made me more aware of the development of Lithuanian identity in Norway in the recent years.

On numerous occasions I have heard how Lithuanians living in Norway expressed their dissatisfaction with the increasing stereotypes about Lithuanians, which often spoke about Lithuanian prostitutes, criminals, and cheap labour providers. This was not a new topic for me personally, because I myself had experienced encounters with such stereotypes. My attention to these problems was attracted by several of the so-called 'effects' caused by these stereotypes.

One of these 'effects' was brought to my attention by one Lithuanian male, whom I met at the Lithuanian students' gathering at the Lithuanian Embassy in Oslo in 2008. According to him, driving a car with Lithuanian number plates often resulted in experiences of violence on the road caused by other drivers, while driving a car with Norwegian number plates was perceived as non problematic. He claimed that the media was to blame for such negative attitudes towards Lithuanians. As the result of such experience, he said, he did not want to drive a car with a Lithuanian number plate.

As another example, I draw attention to the article entitled "Sick of their own"[1] in *Aftenposten* (Holm, 2007). The author of the article focuses on several issues related to Lithuanians: the increased migration from Lithuania; the increased number of Lithuanian inmates in Norwegian prisons, and Lithuanians' own fear for the growing Lithuanian stereotypes. The main topic of the article is that Lithuanians are not happy with the recent criminal development, which, according to them, destroys their reputation in Norway.

These examples do not necessarily represent the social reality of every Lithuanian in Norway, but the common impression signals of the negative stereotypes of Lithuanians and their potential effects for the Lithuanian minority in Norway. The questions then arise – is there any singular Lithuanian identity, and what is Lithuanian identity in Norway? What significance do the media and Lithuanian migrants themselves have in the way identity is understood, negotiated, defined and mediated?

In April 2009, *Dagsavisen* published an interview with Thomas Hylland Eriksen, where attention was drawn to the potential future changes in minority discourses (Langved, 2009). Eriksen pointed out that increasing competition in the labour market, might draw more negative attention to Lithuanians and Poles and, in this way, divert negative attention from the Muslims. It may be said that Eriksen's words are more an intuitive guess than a matter of fact, but the current, negatively focused media attention on Lithuanians, Poles and Eastern Europeans in general, might be the first 'symptoms' of Eriksen's futuristic prognoses.

Following Eriksen's 'diagnosis', it is therefore of high relevance to look at how the research subjects – Lithuanians in Norway, fit into a wider discourse about ethnic minorities and media in Norway.

1.2.   Studies about ethnic minorities and media in Norway

The Statistics Norway (SSB) in 2008 changed the definitions of 'western' and 'non-western background' (often visually distinct) minorities to more world-region-based categories: West-Europe, East-Europe, North America, Oceania, Asia, Africa, South- and Middle America (Daugstad, 2008). However, the debate about minorities in Norway often resides within the two well established defining poles: 'western' and 'non-western' minorities. The last category occupied the attention of most ethnicity, migration, minorities and media researchers in

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[1] Original title: "Lei av sine egne".

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Norway (see for example Alghasi 2009, Eide 2002, Eide & Simonsen 2005, 2007, Fjeldstad & Lindstad 1997, 1999, 2005, Mainsah 2009, Wøbbekind 2006). This dominant focus can be explained by the number of minority citizens with so-called 'non-western' background residing in Norway, which in 2009 was equal to 264,838 people[2] (SSB, 2010c). This, of course, influenced the content of the mainstream discourse about the immigrants which most often focuses on the so-called non-western minorities.

The Lithuanian minority falls under the definition of 'western minorities', both in the academic conceptualization, and the public discourse about minorities. Still, the concept of 'West' is not an unproblematic one in the context of Lithuania's social, political and historical memory. In the global geo-political context Lithuania was understood as a part of Eastern Europe. The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, signed in 1939, further incorporated Lithuania's position in the 'East' block by declaring Lithuania's annexation to the Soviet Union. The changes started occurring after the end of the Cold War era, and gained weight when Lithuania declared its independence in 1990. This noted the beginning of Lithuania's political and cultural interest towards the 'West'. The legitimizing recognition of Lithuania as a part of the 'West' was inaugurated through Lithuania's membership into EU, NATO, and the Schengen zone in 2004. In this perspective Lithuania is geo-politically within the 'Western' fortress, though socio-culturally it is perceived as a country of Eastern Europe, with the potential Cold War 'otherness' connotations. Such political and institutional negotiations can also be seen in the SSB's concept definitions:

> "Sometimes we will distinguish between Western Europe and Eastern Europe, in the way the political divide was before. In this context, the Eastern European countries are: Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Estonia, Belorussia, Croatia, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Ukraine, and Hungary. In the period until 2004, when eight of the Eastern European countries became members of the EU, seen from the migration perspective, this divide was relevant. […] From 2004, in some of the contexts there was a need to look at the EU/EEA countries under one definition, and in other contexts look at 'EU countries in Eastern Europe' and 'Eastern Europe' separately." (ibid. 9).[3]

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[2] This number includes Asia, Africa, South and Middle America and Turkey.
[3] My transilation.

In Norway, as of the year 2010, the most rapidly growing minority groups are Poles, Swedes, Germans and Lithuanians, according to SSB (2010a). However, when it comes to research on 'western minorities', the knowledge sphere is limited. Among these few could be mentioned IMDi's report regarding the labour workers from the Baltic States and Poland (2008) and the Friberg &Tyldum research about Polish labour migrants (2007). Apart from Sverdljuk's (2009) research on Russian migrant women and the stereotypes of the Russian woman in the north of Norway (if it can count as a 'western' minority), there is no research done on 'western' minorities and the media representation's of them in Norway.

The research field of migration, minorities and the media is a new field, but it is also a rapidly growing field in Norway. [4] Most of the media and minority research focuses on the media's representation of ethnic minorities (see for example Eide 2002, Eide & Simonsen 2005, 2007, Fjeldstad & Lindstad 1997, 1999, 2005). Gentikow in 2005 pointed out in her book *How to research media experiences?,*[5] that there is a lack of an academic focus in Norway on how minorities perceive the portrayal of themselves in the media (2005: 183). As of 2010, there has been some research in Norway on the subject of the ethnic minorities' negotiations of their portrayal in media. Among these could be mentioned Mainsah's MA thesis (2005) at the University of Oslo – *Media Use and Changing Identities. The case of Cameroonians in Oslo,* Wøbbekind's MA thesis (2006) at the University of Bergen – *"The Others" identity construction – a qualitative study of immigrants and their experience of media's representation,*[6] Kjelling's MA thesis (2009) at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology – *To negotiate identity – young Muslims about media image of Islam,*[7] Alghasi's PhD dissertation (2009) at the University of Oslo – *Iranians in Norway – Media Consumption and Identity Making.* Of the recent ongoing projects could be mentioned Elisabeth Eide's project *Minority participants and media experiences* (Minoritetsaktører og medieerfaringer) at CULCOM (Cultural complexity in the new Norway). Of her most recent publications is the article called "Strategic Essentialism and Ethnification: Hand in Glove?" (Eide 2010, forthcoming).

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[4] Due to the desire to maintain the context-based analytical focus, the field is narrowed Norway, which is the context of this study.
[5] Original title: *Hvordan utforsker man medieerfaringer?*
[6] Original title: *"De Andres" identitetskonstruksjon – en kvalitativ studie av innvandrere og deres opplevelser av medias representasjoner.*
[7] Original title: *Å forhandle om identitet – unge muslimer om mediebildet av islam.*

The findings presented by Mainsah (2005), Wøbbekind (2006), Kjelling (2009), and Alghasi (2009) speak about the so-called 'non-western' minorities' identities and the media representation. All of the mentioned studies concluded that the perceived media representation is seen as dissatisfying, stereotypical, essentialist and misrepresenting. The element of negotiating the media's representation and one's own identity perception is where the different strategies occur. Another similarity between these researches is that the informants' strategy is to resist the media's imagery by counter-identifying with the media's representation of them. For example, Kjelling wrote that the informants of the study (Muslim students), in their strategy of distancing from the media' representation of them, created an alternative social identity, which gave them an increased feeling of belonging to both Islam and Norway, as well as a stronger consciousness of themselves as Muslims (2009: 79). Alghasi wrote that the Iranian-Norwegians in their negotiations with the misrepresenting media portrayal expressed "a constantly nagging desire to find someone who can identify them differently, position them differently and relate to them differently from the dominant media discourse concerning Iran and Iranianess."(2009: 36). In the course of resistance to the media representations of them, the Iranian-Norwegians created interpretive communities which are not based simply on shared nationality, home and geographical entity, but on "a shared desire to relate towards others in their social world"(ibid. 37).

Another main phase of identification is that of identifying your 'self' based on the socially available options of identification, which are often defined or influenced by the media discourses. Mainsah's conclusion notes that "the relationship between media message, audience and meaning is a complex one, and that we cannot view the media as some simple tool for brainwashing people" (2005: 105); however, in his findings he states that "the way they [the informants] have been represented [in the media], has affected the way they represented themselves. The media thus sets constraints on [the] informants' ability to construct their own identities, and on their freedom of self-invention." (op.cit.). Wøbbekind found out that her informants identified themselves based on the categories of a 'good foreigner' and a 'bad foreigner'. These categories were based on the definitions of the 'good foreigner' – the one who has education, job, Norwegian language and cultural skills, and criticizes own culture, and the 'bad foreigner' – the one who doesn't learn the Norwegian language and culture, has no job (2006: 110-114). Consequently, the first category fits for well integrated/more Norwegian foreigners, while the second category stands for not integrated/less Norwegian foreigners. These identification categories, according to

Wøbbekind, are defined by media discourses, where the differences between the 'successful foreigner' and 'the others' are established. In this way, writes Wøbbekind, an equality is set between the level of integration and Norwegianess (integrated = Norwegian) (ibid. 110). One of her main findings, therefore, concludes that the separation line doesn't necessarily go between the foreigners and Norwegians, but also between the foreigners themselves – where socio-economic capital such as education, social network, knowledge of language and culture are used as the identification variables of a 'good' and a 'bad' foreigner (ibid. 113,114). Based on these differences, foreigners exclude other foreigners who have less capital than themselves, and in this way secure their positions.

The above mentioned research projects show differences in the levels of the active public rejection of the media's (mis)representation among the different immigrant groups that these studies addressed. Wøbbekind (2006) and Kjelling (2009) wrote that the Muslims seemed to excel in being active spokespeople in the public and media debates relating the issues of Islam and immigration. In relation to this Eide (2010, forthcoming) speaks of "collective responsibility", as Muslim informants felt obliged to respond to the "scepticism and the misgivings found in society with regard to Islam"; thus they unwillingly became the spokespeople for cases to which they were not related. Eide further speaks of *strategic essentialism* which entails that "members of groups, while being highly differentiated internally, may engage in an essentializing and to some extent a standardizing of their public image, thus advancing their group identity in a simplified, collectivized way to achieve certain objectives" (ibid.).

To summarize, it could be said that the media's role is found to be influential in that it presents the discourses with which minorities identify or resist identifying. This causes a number of strategies which, in one way or another, must find their roots in the socially available identification options that are again, more or less, influenced by the media discourses. The difference between the above mentioned studies and this study is that I will be addressing the perspective of so-called 'western' minorities. It is therefore interesting to see if Lithuanians' perception of and identification with the perceived media's representation of them differs from earlier research on minorities and their readings of media representations. Are there any potential differences in the identification strategies between the 'western' and 'non-western' minorities?

1.3. Research questions

The study looks at Lithuanians who are living in Norway, are active members of society, speak the Norwegian language, and follow the social discourses. The question addressed is how these people perceive and negotiate the mediated imagery of Lithuanians in Norway. Therefore, the main attention of the research will be focused on how the individuals themselves understand the dominating stereotypes about Lithuanians, and how they negotiate these images while constructing their own identities. Based on this, I am presenting the following research question: *How do Lithuanians in Norway perceive the influence of mediated Lithuanian identity on their own identity formation?*

Many other questions must be asked to be able to answer the above stated research question. Among these are the questions of Lithuanian identity that I already briefly addressed in the discussions on Lithuania's position as a part of the 'West'. I will also look into the media representations of Lithuanian minorities, and into how Lithuanians in Norway perceive the media's representation of them. Do Lithuanians themselves perceive the media's portrayal of Lithuanians as representative and/or influential for the formation of their own 'self' identity? Another question is the one of the connotations of Lithuanian identity in Norway, as perceived by the informants of this study. How does the Lithuanian minority perceive the Lithuanian identity, and do they consciously include/exclude their Lithuanian ethnic background in their social character in Norwegian society? What is the position of Lithuanian minority in the wider discourse concerning ethnic minorities in Norway? Do aspects of visual distinctions, or lack of it, influence how Lithuanians perceive themselves in relation to majority and other ethnic minorities? What significance has the society at large, as well as closer social networks, for the Lithuanians' perception and negotiation of social reality? What significance do media have in Lithuanians' perception and negotiation of a reality? And finally, do the Lithuanians' identification strategies as a 'western' minority differ from the 'non-western' minorities' identification strategies; if so, how do these differences provide insight into the 'western' Lithuanians' position as foreigners in Norway?

1.4. Statistical view

Because of geo-political positioning, the migration from Lithuania and other Schengen countries[8] cannot be viewed in the same way as, for example, the migration from Iran or Pakistan. My argument is based on a statistical insecurity which makes it difficult to grasp the accuracy of the total number of Lithuanian migrants working and residing in Norway. This is due to the high mobility of Lithuanians, open country borders due to the Schengen agreement and changes in a registration of the migration in a current Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (UDI) system; from the 01.01.2010 EU citizens, don't need to apply for a residence visa, making it even more difficult to have a statistical overview.[9]

Prior to this, UDI issued a working visa, for which EU citizens needed to apply only once in five years;[10] this meant that their official (statistical) existence was registered only once in five years. Currently, permanent residence is issued to these EU citizens who have stayed in the country for five years;[11] therefore, the statistics portray only individuals who received a new visa in the year they first apply, excluding those who already have visas from the past five years, or has a permanent visa. Based on such statistics, UDI (2010) shows that there has been a rapid increase in the labour migration from Lithuania since 2004:

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[8] Full members: Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland. Cooperating members: Ireland, United Kingdom.
[9] http://www.udi.no/Norwegian-Directorate-of-Immigration/Central-topics/Work-and-residence/Work-and-residence-EUEEAEFTA-citizens/
[10] http://www.regjeringen.no/nn/dokumentarkiv/Regjeringa-Bondevik-II/krd/Nyheter-og-pressemeldinger/2004/eos-utvidelsen_og_overgangsregler.html?id=251909
[11] http://www.udi.no/Sentrale-tema/Arbeid-og-opphold/Arbeid-og-opphold-i-Norge-EU-EOS-EFTA-borgere/Varig-oppholdsrett-/

Registered employed Lithuanians

■ Registered employed Lithuanians

Year	Value
2000	1564
2001	2318
2002	3693
2003	4564
2004	7320
2005	9005
2006	10711
2007	13774
2008	13697
2009	7385

According to the UDI, there is a reason to believe that some people come to Norway without a legal working permit, and some stay illegally in the country after their working permits expire (UDI, 2008: 5). To illustrate the insecurity of the statistical accuracy, the case of Poles in Norway could be mentioned; Friberg and Tyldum's research report stated that, 44% of Polish workers in Oslo are either working illegally or dwelling in the so-called 'gray zone' of the illegal job market, which is not reported in the statistics (2007: 43-50). This inability to have an overview of the total immigration from Poland and the Baltic countries was also addressed in a FAFO seminar on the EU labour migration (FAFO 2009).

So, how many Lithuanians are there in Norway? Even though the question sounds very clear, to give an answer is not as easy as it might seem. There are two statistical ways to register the number of Lithuanians: one is to use UDI's statistics of working permits given to Lithuanians; another way is to use SSB's statistics of registered residence of Lithuanians citizens. However, none of these numbers will represent the accurate number for several reasons: UDI's new registration rules obscure the numbers, as mentioned earlier, and SSB statistics of registered residence do not capture those Lithuanians who are working in Norway but are not registered residents of Norway, or those who are working illegally or are seasonal workers. An example is statistics from SSB Statistikkbanken, which showed that in 2008, 5582 Lithuanians were in Norway without a registered residence (Næsheim, 2009).

The vague estimate could be that there are over 13,000 legally known Lithuanian workers in Norway. Yet again, this number does not represent the seasonal workers, or the illegal

workers. The Lithuanian Association in Norway (NLB) guestimates that there might be up to 40,000 Lithuanians working legally and illegally in Norway.[12]

1.5. Diaspora overview

The Lithuanian diaspora in Norway is weak and not highly visible in public life. There is a Lithuanian Association in Norway (Norvegijos Lietuvių Bendrija - NLB), initiated in 2001, as well as the Lithuanian Youth in Norway Union (Norvegijos Lietuvių Jaunimo Sąjunga - NLJS), initiated in 2006. The NLB has also initiated the Lithuanian school "Gintaras". The NLB is most active in the Oslo area, with concerts and other seasonal activities, but has only few registered (paying) members (ibid.).

There are no Lithuanian newspapers, radio or TV available in Norway, unless ordered privately via the postal service and the satellite or internet TV. Among the diaspora media, there are four frequently updated internet websites, where information regarding the cultural events, employment possibilities and legal rights in Norway are presented in the Lithuanian language.[13] These websites are a fairly new phenomenon and occurred during the past three to four years. The website of NLB was opened approximately seven years ago, but not until the recent four years has it been actively used and updated. It could be speculated that these recent activities in the only Lithuanian diaspora media in Norway could have been initiated by the increasing migration from Lithuania, as well as more activity in the Lithuanian diaspora in Norway in general.

1.6. Key concepts

As the research question suggests, this study addresses the Lithuanian minority in Norway, their identity construction, and their own perception of media representation of them.

When I refer to the *Lithuanian minority*, I refer to individuals who were born in Lithuania and migrated to Norway. I am aware that immigrants from Lithuania may have had lived most of their lives in Norway and may perceive themselves as Norwegian citizens rather than Lithuanian, and therefore it would be more correct to refer to them as 'Norwegian citizens with Lithuanian background' or 'Norwegian-Lithuanians'. However, the majority of

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[12] NLB email, 04.02.2010.
[13] www.lietuviainorvegijoj.com; www.lietuvis.no; website of NLB - www.bendrija.com; Lithuanian Youth in Norway Union website - www.jaunas.org.

Lithuanians migration to Norway is recent, and most of the Lithuanians came to Norway in the last five years (SSB, 2009). The average stay in Norway of the study informants' is of eight years, and none of them has Norwegian citizenship.[14] Based on the time perspective of the recent migrations and the informants' stay in the country, as well as their Lithuanian citizenship, I therefore chose to refer to the research subjects as *Lithuanian minority in Norway.*

I refer to the Lithuanian minority as an *ethnic minority.* I find this concept useful because it helps me to define the understanding of the ethnic Lithuanian identity as an element of the Lithuanian national discursive space. It is worth noting that my intention is not to refer to *ethnicity* as a national identity, but rather as a type of a cultural purity. By referring to the *ethnicity* of the Lithuanian informants, I am therefore able to observe developments and potential changes in the cultural perception and employment of their ethnic identity.

In the course of the study, I will refer to the concepts such as *majority* and *ethnic Norwegians.* A definition of these concepts is to a degree based on the understanding of the 'majority' and 'Norwegian' that the study informants themselves expressed in the interviews. These concepts are not used with the intention to define social absolutes, but are rather understood as an unidentified normative center (Gullestad 2002: 36). *Norwegianess* is understood as a non-articulate concept, and therefore seen as a social doxa – a common sense which is based on a perception of a homogenous notion of culture, with thick national identity, which is often defined based on anti-foreign cultural values, as Gullestad points out (ibid. 29-36). In this context, the *majority* is the opposite of *minority*, and *ethnic Norwegian* is the opposite of non-Norwegian; as Lindstad and Fjeldstad puts it – 'of foreign decent' (2005), implying the existence of cognitive and visual distinctions between the majority ethnic Norwegians and ethnic minorities. In addition, as Gabriel argues that *whiteness* is "an intrinsically pathological discourse which has been constructed to create the fiction of a unitary and homogeneous culture and people" (2000: 68), it must be also pointed out that as long as this discourse is alive in people's cognition of social reality, it will always be a real concept in the eyes of the perceiver, and therefore important to be recognized as such, and not barely a construct of the researchers. The question of racial vs. cultural aspect I will address later in the study (paragraph 5.4.).

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[14] The choice of the informants I will address later in the study in the paragraph 3.2.

The concept of *identity* in this study is understood as a socially constructed object, created in the dialogical relation between the social individual and society. To understand the construction of *identity,* I will employ the theories of social construction by Berger and Luckmann (1991[1966]). I will elaborate on the concept of identity in Chapter 2, where I will present my theoretical perspective.

When I speak of *mediated images*, I speak of the discourses that are present in the media texts, as well as, the public sphere and in the Lithuanians' own interpreted perceptions of these media texts. In Chapter 4 I present a review of the discourses that are present in the Norwegian media, as well as closer analyses of the four dominant media discourses about Lithuanians. This is presented as background information for the reader. In the course of the research, I will aim at understanding what are the images Lithuanians themselves identify, as they perceive the Norwegian media and society. Since the study focuses on the Lithuanians' own perception and negotiation of their identity, the informants' own interpretations of such discourses of mediated images are more important than the interpretations of the media texts as such.

1.7. Disposition

In this chapter I presented the study theme and the research question. Here I looked at the background of other studies on minorities and media done in Norway, and how the problem addressed in this research might be a contribution to the study field. I also presented a short statistical overview of the Lithuanian diaspora in Norway. Finally, I addressed and explained the main concepts used in this study.

In Chapter two I present the theoretical perspective, which will be used as analytical guidelines when analyzing and presenting the interview data.

Chapter three explains the methodological choices for answering the research question. Here I will present the arguments for why two methods are chosen, and what information I aim at attaining. Here I also present a critical discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of both methods that I encountered in the course of the study.

Chapter four presents the findings from the media content analyses. Here I address the main discourses present in the media representations of Lithuanians. By looking at the discourses, I

will close examine the thematics of each of the discourses, and present most typical media segments for closer analytical examination.

In Chapter five, I present the analyses of the qualitative interviews. In this chapter I address the main patterns which occurred in the data analyses. Here I look at how the members of Lithuanian minority negotiate their identity in the perspective of time and space, and how they perceive the media representation of them. In the course of this chapter, I address the strategies that informants use in their negotiation of social reality, as well as their own identities.

In the last part - Chapter 6, I present the final summarizing discussion of the main study findings and suggest possible future research in the study field.

CHAPTER 2: Theoretical perspective

My Lithuanian background influenced my curiosity about the recent developments in Lithuanian identity representation in Norway. The opinion which is recognized, and often spoken of by the Lithuanian immigrants themselves talkes about a negative image of Lithuanians in Norway. A Lithuanian identity is not something to be proud of in Norway – but why? Who or what is the 'maker' of this identity, and finally – is it only negative? Since media was the most visual provider for the dominating stereotypes of Lithuanians, I wondered if, by studying media texts, it would be possible to find an interlinking effect on audiences' identity development. I soon realized how impossible this was. I understood that research on media effects was vacillating between viewing the media as a strong imposer of opinions on the passive audiences (Adorno 2001), vs. viewing audiences as active users of the media (Madianou 2005). This dichotomous thinking about power division between either (un)autonomous individual or (un)influential media is a well discussed debate (see for example Katz 1980, Morley 1992). Critics claim that the *Media Effects* research undermines the audiences' ability to interpret the media text, while the audience researchers undermine the institutional power structures and give too much power to the agency of the subject (Morley 1992: 51-53).

In my view, the discussion should focus towards dynamic relations between media and media users, rather than effects/uses by one on/of the other. In this perspective, both media and individuals are active reciprocal makers of the meaning. Without going deeper into the issue of media effects/uses, I felt that this theoretical approach could not give me reliable answers regarding the developments of Lithuanian identity. Instead, I decided to look at diaspora analyses in the search of knowledge on how identities are constructed. Not until I started talking to my informants, and getting a closer look at the transcribed material, did I realize how invalid it would be to talk about the Lithuanian diaspora as a type of an ethnic and national unity. My informants insisted on expressing disinterest for such definitions, and kept on naming other variables that they felt influential for their identities. A similar case was observed by Alghasi in his study of the Norwegian-Iranians (2009). In the continuous analyses of collected data and theoretical 'delusions', I came to a theoretical perspective which, in my view, presents a justifiable approach to understanding identity. In the context of this research project, my theoretical perspective was reached and understood inductively. I was constantly alert to what my informants were saying and continuously evaluated

theoretical perspectives that could give the most valuable explanation of data. In the following part of this chapter, I will present and elaborate my understanding of the theoretical framework.

2.1 Social Construction and Subjective Reality – Berger and Luckmann

Since the focus of this research is identity and media, it is of high importance to give an early and clear definition of how the *identity* concept is understood in this research project. To do that, I would like to borrow a definition by Berger and Luckmann: "Identity is formed by social processes [and t]he social processes involved in both the formation and the maintenance of identity are determined by the social structure." (1991[1966]: 194). However, the above quotation presents more of a deterministic perspective than the view which is actually addressed in the book. Therefore, I would like to supplement the definition of identity by adding an important aspect of the agency of the subject. In my view, *identity* is understood as a strategic and positional concept, implying that individuals through their interaction with society are also involved in their own identity making. That is to say that *identity* is a concept which is constructed in reciprocal interactive relations between an individual and society. In the following part I present an introduction to the social processes and structures that Berger and Luckmann identify as influential for identity construction. In the process of doing that, I aim at explaining how this can be helpful for the research project.

Berger and Luckmann talk about a dual process through which individuals become members of society – *primary socialization* and *secondary socialization* (ibid. 149-166). In defining s*ocialization,* Berger and Luckmann speak about three moments of *externalization*, *objectivation* and *internalization*. *Externalization* is a kind of an anthropological necessity, since the "[h]uman being is impossible in a closed sphere of quiescent interiority. The human being must ongoingly externalize itself in activity. " (ibid. 70); in other words – the human being is a product of society, and through constant relation and interactivity with the society, the human being is able to produce and reproduce its' social identity. *Objectivation* is produced in interaction between the human being and his social world (ibid. 78). And the moment of *internalization* is when the human being's consciousness is reaffirmed by objective reality - "the immediate apprehension or interpretation of an objective event as expressing, that is as a manifestation of another's subjective processes which thereby becomes subjectively meaningful to myself" (ibid. 149). In other words, what is meaningful to us is

meaningful because we perceive and interpret it as meaningful to others. Therefore, society at large and, more specifically, people around us play an important role in our understanding of ourselves. The process of *socialization* is dialectical, and all the above mentioned moments interact simultaneously. However, for this study the process of internalization of knowledge is of special importance, since I will aim at understanding of how perception of reality is influencing identity formation.

In both primary and secondary socialization there are important people in our lives, whom Berger and Luckmann call *significant others* (ibid. 149-166). In the case of primary socialization these significant others (let's assume they are parents) are the ones who impose their subjective reality as objectively true. This is the point where we inhabit the *habitus* (Bourdieu 1984) of our significant others and their social positions, predispositions and role-specific vocabularies. Since we perceive this reality as objectively true, we understand it as absolute reality. "The original reality of childhood is 'home'. It posits itself as such, inevitably and, as it were, 'naturally'. By comparison with it, all later realities are 'artificial'", Berger and Luckmann claim (1991[1966]:163). Therefore, primary socialization is the most important part of the socialization processes which individuals undergo in childhood and it functions as a foundation for secondary socialization. This implies that any knowledge of reality that comes after primary socialization is less stable and more floating, because it is constantly tested in relation to the primary objective knowledge of reality.

Having this in mind, we can see how the project of secondary socialization becomes a project of transformation. In this process, the only socially meaningful action (affectively charged) is to aim to resemble a secondary new - 'artificial' world, based on the primary 'home' world. Here, as well as in the primary socialization, people in our lives are the ones that legitimate the affectivity of the new reality for us. Berger and Luckmann explain it this way:

> "[…] secondary socialization becomes affectively charged to the degree to which immersion in and commitment to the new reality are institutionally defined as necessary. The relationship of the individual to the socializing personnel becomes correspondingly charged with 'significance', that is the socializing personnel take on the character of significant others vis-à-vis the individual being socialized" (ibid. 164-165).

I had identified two aspects that are vital for the construction and development of identity. The first aspect is that an individual will understand a new world (secondary socialization)

based on the 'home' world (primary socialization). The second aspect is that in order to succeed in transformation from a primary to a secondary world, an individual needs 'help' from the significant others who are making reality less 'artificial' by providing its meaningful significance. However, this transformation from primary to secondary realities is never fully complete; therefore, identity making is a constantly ongoing process which requires constant maintenance.

In the process of maintenance, a person's subjective reality is constantly reaffirmed in ongoing interaction with others. Berger and Luckmann further identify *significant others* and *less important others* (ibid. 170). The former ones are identified as particularly important elements in identity confirmation, while the latter ones function as a chorus – weaker 'voice', but equally relevant for identity confirmation. The most important aspect of the process of reality maintenance is the fact that it strengthens the significance of subjective reality, which influences the stability of identity. "The more 'artificial' character of secondary socialization makes the subjective reality of its internalization even more vulnerable to challenging definitions of reality […] because their reality is less deeply rooted in consciousness and thus more susceptible to displacement" (ibid. 167) – in other words, the less the individual affectively relates to his social reality, the more easy it is for other 'realities' (opinions, views) to challenge the individual's social character. Based on this perspective, it is therefore of great interest to look at whom and/or what Lithuanians identify to be significant others and 'chorus' of less significant others in their social realities. What significance do these 'others' in their life have for their perception of reality? What are the 'voices' that Lithuanians 'hear' - associate with or stand in opposition to? Do they find media 'voices' important in their perception of reality? What roles do 'significant others' play in their perception and understanding of the social reality and media discourses?

2.2. The relevance of Berger and Luckmann's theory for the study

Having presented the theory of social construction of subjective reality by Berger and Luckmann, I would now like to give a short elaboration of how I view the relevance of this theory for the study of the Lithuanian immigrant's identity.

This research project deals with migrant identities, which often speak of two social realities - that of the home country and that of the host country. Therefore, I would like to extend the

theoretical perspective by claiming that an immigrant's identity is usually based on three phases of subjective reality construction.

The first phase is as identified earlier – primary socialization. When it comes to secondary socialization, I would like to split this phase into two parts, where each part stands for two distinct social realities – that of home country reality and that of host country reality. In this way the immigrant individual is confronted, in my view, with what I call a *dual secondary socialization*. What it means is that a subjective reality is reaffirmed in relation to the two distinct cultures, two distinct societies, two social realities, two geographical locations, and, finally and most importantly, with the two networks of the significant and less important others that are there to reaffirm these social realities. The reason why I decided to split the secondary socialization into two phases is because these phases (in contradiction to the primary socialization) are active at the same time and are reciprocally significant for identity maintenance. This is because of the constant assessment and negotiation of the subjective reality by the individual and his significant others in the respective realities.

In relation to this research project, in my view, it is important to look at how individuals negotiate these two social realities. How do informants view the significance of these social realities? Do experiences from the Lithuanian social context influence perceptions of Norwegian culture, and if so, how? In the Norwegian context, what or who are socializing personnel or factors that are significant for construction of the Lithuanian's subjective reality? It is worth noting that the aim of this thesis is to map the perceived media's significance for the socialization process. But since we base our understanding of reality on a reciprocal relation to 'others', the influence these 'others' have on the informant's negotiations of reality and their own existence within reality, is highly relevant. So, to understand what role the media discourses play in the Lithuanians' identity project, it is important to look at the role played (or not) by the friends, family, colleagues, acquaintances, strangers in the streets, media 'chorus', as well as the 'chorus' of public opinion, in Lithuanians' understanding of these media discourses and of themselves.

2.3. Internalization of socially available identification options – J.P. Sartre

Internalization is an aspect of interest for this study, since I will aim at understanding how the Lithuanian minority internalizes the mediated and social knowledge in their reality

perception. Due to this, I would like to reflect more on the topic of social knowledge internalization.

'I don't care what others think about me' is the sentence anyone might have uttered in one or another situation. Its quintessential meaning is that an individual facing an unacceptable position chooses to emotionally, if not physically, but definitely strategically to create distance from it by declaring that society does not matter. However, at the moment one declares one's position, an individual is confirming society's active existence; this just fossilizes his position as an 'individual because of society', which again negates the former statement. This thought sequence is the one that Sartre addressed in his book *Anti-Semite and Jew* (1965). Of course, the reality of Jews in France after WWII and Lithuania minority's reality in Norway are not compatible ones. However, Sartre's analysis of identity formation process is the one that is of interest here. Sartre illustrates the paralyzing and constraining power that society can have on a perceivably 'different' individual – causing the development of social strategies of either assimilation of 'difference' in the 'melting pot' of sameness, or the choice, as Sartre calls it, of social *martyrdom* – being authentic (ethnic) self, even if it means social rejection from the majority society. As supportive argument to Sartre's theoretical perspective, I would also like to quote Maalouf's remarks on the ambiguity of social relations: "[...] it is often the way we look at other people that imprisons them within their own narrowest allegiances. And it is also the way we look at them that may set them free." (2003: 22). This remark raises the question of internalization of others views and their perception of social reality, with which an individual might potentially be unwilling to identify. Another issue is that social individuals identify (or not) with categories and norms which are already present in society, instead of creating their own new categories, as one might assume. In Sartre's view, an individual's reality is internalized through and by others in the individual's life. In the following quotation he illustrates the power of social 'others' in an individual's life, and how 'others'' views can cause a shift in the individual's subjective perception of his 'self':

> "The Jew, because he knows he is under observation, takes the initiative and attempts to look at himself through the eyes of others. This objectivity toward himself is still another ruse of inauthenticity: while he contemplates himself with the "detachment" of another, he feels himself in effect *detached* from himself; he becomes another person, a

pure witness. However, he knows that this detachment from himself will be effective only if it is ratified by others." (1965: 97, original emphasis).

This brings me to the research object – the Lithuanian minority and their negotiation of perceived media portrayal of them. Here I feel the need to ask how media portrayal, as perceived by Lithuanians themselves, might be influencing their choices of social identification. What are the options that Lithuanians name in their identification strategies? Can it be that Sartre's essentialist, but somehow analytically fair, conclusions about identification are correct; which means that the identification options – either assimilation due to desired (absolute) aim of acceptance, or somewhat stubborn asocial authenticity of the ethnic character which is doomed to social martyrdom – are the only options an ethnic minority individual can 'juggle' in a perceived negatively opinionated environment? Is it possible for an ethnic minority individual to be an authentic individual, with own ethnic character, in a new society which is not necessarily aware of the ambiguous complexity of identifications an 'outsider' is facing. How can a person internalize his character as authentic in a new society, without plunging into social ethnic-self destruction?

2.4. Authentic 'self' in Social Reality – Charles Guignon

Knowing how subjective reality is constantly shaped and reshaped by many less and more significant social variables, as explained by Berger and Luckmann (1991[1966]), turnes identity analyses into a study of what I would call a 'misbalanced chaos'. Here again, I should say that my informants themselves guided me to the choice of the theory which could help to explain the construction of this social 'chaos' called *identity*. In the course of data collection I constantly encountered the reoccurring importance for my informants to "be yourself", "be who you want to be", "be understood", which for me signalled a desire of being authentic. Therefore, in this study I use the concept of *authenticity* as an analytical tool to help me identify the unity of identity as constructed by many social variables. This further could be helpful in answering the question of a mediated discourse's importance for identity construction. Before I proceed, I would like to present the view on which my concept of *authenticity* as understood in this thesis.

There are many ways in which *authenticity* can be understood. But the core project of being authentic speaks of a desire to view and manage your life as meaningful and fulfilling. This is the point where most *authenticity* theorists have varying views. To answer what *authenticity*

is, we need to understand what it is that makes life for an individual meaningful and fulfilling. As the title of this paragraph suggests, I will use the definition of *authenticity* as presented by Guignon. In his book *On Being Authentic* (2004), Charles Guignon reviews a number of different theories, dismantling aspects of authenticity. Most of these theorists, in one way or another, speak of authenticity as a personal virtue, meaning that, in order to become an authentic modern individual, one must look inwards for the 'true' values of one's own 'self'. In his concluding chapter 'Authenticity in Context', Guignon opens a new perspective and aims at understanding *authenticity* as a social virtue:

> "Personal projects such as being authentic or achieving dignity can be undertaken only in a world that recognizes individual talents, respects differences, provides equal opportunity, acknowledges the value of criticism and unpopular ideas, and ensures that there are no obstacles to freedom of expression. […] (2004: 162). … being authentic is not just a matter of concentrating on one's own self, but also involves deliberation about how one's commitments make a contribution to the good of the public world in which one is a participant." (2004: 163)

The above thought sequence speaks of authenticity as a social virtue, inhabited in a personal project, which is possible and successful only in the social reality that is there to recognize it as such. So to be authentic requires personal dedication and responsibility for your own 'self'. But it also speaks of being recognized as a vital part of a certain society – a society of equality and democracy that appreciates individual talents, respects differences, provides equal opportunities, and ability to express freely – to which we are in debt for making the goal of authenticity be (at least distantly) possible (Guignon 2004:163). In order to be authentic in society, an individual must be immersed in the ideological and practical ideals of that society. In this case, a meaningful and fulfilling life means to be appreciated by society as a worthy part of it – an authentic individual. This closely resembles the project of subjective reality as presented by Berger and Luckmann (1991[1966]), since it also speaks about identity construction through and by interaction with society.

Therefore, based on the understanding of authenticity as presented above, I would suggest that, by examining the variables that the informants of this study identified as perceivably significant, less significant or insignificant for the authenticity of their own identity, it would be possible to identify the nuances of one's own identity perception and formation, and their

authenticity in the context of Norwegian social reality. This could further provide an answer about the perceived media image and its importance for identity formations processes.

2.5. Media's role in identity formation process.

Before I proceed, I would like to reflect on the media's position in society and its relation to ethnic minorities in particular. Cottle, in 2000, wrote that findings regarding media's representation of ethnic minorities indicate a "depressing reading", where issues such as under-representation, stereotypical characterization, negative problem oriented portrayal, ignorance of social inequalities and racism experiences were recurring findings in UK and US (2000: 7, 8). The findings from the US and UK also concur with the findings from Norwegian context research, where it is discussed the aspect of the public media significance in the (re)presentation of the distance between 'us' - 'them' (see for example Eide & Simonsen 2005, 2007, Fjeldstad & Lindstad 1997, 1999, 2005), and the ethnic minorities' perception of being misrepresented in the public media (Mainsah 2005, Wøbbekind 2006, Kjelling 2009, Alghasi 2009, Eide 2010 forthcoming), as addressed in paragraph 1.2.

The media is understood as a product of society, as well as a (re)producer of the social doxa (Bourdieu 1998). In the spirit of the social constructionist theories of Berger & Luckmann (1991[1996]), I chose to see and define the media as a part of a larger social process, where mass media is an active element in constructing and maintaining of social meanings and the understandings of 'reality', and thus influencing the distribution of the symbolic power. In this way, media is engaged in producing and re-producing social discourses on minorities, ethnicity, and identities. The media thus assumes a kind of a 'waiter' role, where it serves its audiences an 'À la Carte' of meanings, and the only question remaining is how these meanings are (if at all) being interpreted and understood by their audiences. Two American scholars, Wilson and Gutiérrez, say that "Media have their greatest effect when they are used in a manner that reinforces and channels attitudes and opinions that are consistent with the psychological makeup of the person and the social structure of the groups with which he or she identifies." (1995: 44). In addition to this, they think that mass media production aimed at mass audiences, for a majority of the people, either ignores the cultural, national and ethnic minorities, or portrays them in a way that make them palatable to the majority (ibid. 40, 252). In the context of this, it is therefore important to look at how the Lithuanian minority themselves include/exclude the media's 'voice' in their own perception of social reality. Do

they perceive the media's 'voice' as a significant one for their personal identification in society? And how do they negotiate the perceived media's representation of Lithuanians in their own identity project?

2.6. Summary

In this chapter I presented the theoretical framework, which explains how I understand identity and its construction. I elaborated on how I will use this theoretical framework to understand and analyze the collected data.

In my view, Berger and Luckmann's theory of social construction of subjective reality gives an explanation of *identity* as a social construct, created in the dialogical interaction between the individual and the society. It also provides with a wider macro perspective of social structures that are present in processes of identity construction. According to Berger and Luckmann's theoretical model it is obvious that the media will always have a role in identity construction by representing the 'chorus' voice. The question which remains to be answered is – what kind of a role is it? And to answer that, we need to look at other variables that are influential for our understanding of reality – such as the socializing personnel – be it significant others or less significant chorus.

I also problematize the process of internalization through Sartre's critical discussion, and I question the potential of being authentic when choices of identification rely on society's receptiveness and the individual's internalisation of his present social reality. In this perspective it is therefore interesting to examine whether and how two social realities of 'home' and 'host' countries might be influencing Lithuanian minority identity.

Guignon's concept of *authenticity* enables me to look closer at identity construction by examining the variables that are presented by the informants as significant for their identity. Also, in my view, this micro perspective will help to explain how informants position themselves in society by naming aspects that are significant for them.

CHAPTER 3: Methodology

In this study I use two methodological approaches in order to answer the research question of how Lithuanians in Norway perceive the influence of the mediated Lithuanian identity for their own identity formation. First, I present the reader with media content analyses for the period of one year, in which I look at the dominant discourses present in the public media picture of Lithuanians in Norway. This part of the study is meant to provide the reader with a contextual knowledge of the study object, and, most importantly, to get an overview of the themes that the informants will be reflecting upon. After establishing knowledge regarding the media coverage of Lithuanians, I later in the study reflect on potential coherences or incoherencies between the media's representation and the informants' perception of media representation of Lithuanians. Second, I will look at my qualitative interviews with Lithuanians in Oslo in order to get in-depth information of how they themselves perceive the media image of Lithuanians, and how they negotiate these understandings in their own reality perception and identity project. In the following chapter, I address the methodological choices and the approach to data.

3.1. Media content and discourse analyses

The reason I chose to examine media's portrayal of Lithuanians is based on two objectives. Firstly, my aim is to have a view of the area that the informants are referring to in their perceptions of media portrayals, and see to what degree media images cohere with informants' perceptions of media representation of themselves. Secondly, my aim is to give the reader, who is not familiar with the Lithuanian minority in Norway and the media's portrayal of them, an overview of the problems that the informants will be reflecting upon in their interviews.

Media choices in the study were made prior to the interviews, but the study's main objective is to capture the potential media sources that the informants presumably would/could use. Later in the study, the informants confirmed in the interviews that mainstream media choices that I chose were to a large degree representative of their own media use.

The concept of *discourse* that is applied in this part of the study refers to the understanding which considers the media text as a part of the wider social, historical and political contexts. I base my perception on a view of the discourse as the unity of knowledge statements referring

to a system of knowledge and associated practices – a contextual knowledge, which has its base in social, ideological and political interpretations and practices. Each media text will be seen as a contextual, discursive production, as well as the producer of the discourses. Therefore, the object of the media content study is the context – the discourse, while the subject is the media text itself. By looking at media text, I will aim at identifying and analyzing the dominant contexts – discourses, by which Lithuanians in Norway are being addressed in Norwegian public media. The media content analyses conducted in the study pay attention to what themes and stereotypes are repeated in the texts; what (how many) discourses are present in the texts; in what cases Lithuanians themselves are used as sources (if at all); what is being said and potentially left outside, in the text, and how this might influence the overall meaning in the texts.

3.1.1. Data and critical discussion

The research was based on a keyword search in the Norwegian media database Retriever (A-tekst). I chose to limit the selection to public media that has wide coverage in Norway, including both print media and online based media. The search was limited to national newspapers, with exception of one minority newspaper.[15] I chose to include this minority newspaper, because it is seen as the potential media channel for the Lithuanian minority. The search also included four web based TV channels[16] and ten web newspapers.[17]

It is worth noting that the Retriever (A-tekst) database does not contain all the articles. For example, Lynggard in her master thesis wrote that her A-tekst search showed very few debate and feature articles in the search results (2009: 25). In email contact with Retriever (A-tekst), I was informed that freelance journalists, due to the copyrights, reserved their material from being published in the database. Apart from this, Retriever (A-tekst) reassured me that the database coverage is representative of what is published in the media.[18] Due to this, it is therefore important to say that there might be some marginal discrepancies in the results from the database search. I still argue that the Retriever (A-tekst) database search essentially captured a fundamental overview of the discourses that are present in the media, which is a goal of this study.

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[15] *A-Magasinet, Aftenposten, Dagbladet, Dagsavisen, Klassekampen, Utrop, VG.*
[16] *Aftenposten TV, Dagbladet Web-TV, DN TV, VG TV.*
[17] *Aftenposten, Dagbladet, Dagsavisen, Nettavisen, NRK, NRK Østlandssendingen, TV 2, TVNorge, Utrop.no, VG Nett.*
[18] Retriever (A-tekst) e-mail, 2010.02.19.

For the search of media coverage in the database, I used the key search word 'litau*'. This means that all words that start with -litau- will be included in the search. It could be argued, that potentially other search words or phrases could be more suitable, or could supplement the search for better result. One of such phrases could be 'Eastern Europeans'. Based on the research focus, I decided that any other articles where Lithuanians in Norway are addresses in the context of the 'Eastern Europeans' discourse will be anyway included in the preliminary search with the search word 'litau*'.

The search results posed some difficulties, because the search also included articles that address cases about Lithuanians in Lithuania or international co-operations between the countries. I later chose to exclude these articles, since they do not represent Lithuanians in Norway, which is the focus of this research. It could be argued that articles about Lithuania are also important element for the general 'Lithuanian in Norway' discourse formation. My analytical assumption is that it could be relevant to address the similarities and/or differences of how Lithuania is portrayed in international news, and how Lithuanians in Norway are portrayed in domestic news. The domestic and international media coverage of particular ethnic minorities could be a potential future study. But as mentioned earlier, I chose to exclude such analyses in order to maintain the analytical focus on the articles that concern only Lithuanian citizens in Norway.

I chose to limit the search to an artificially defined timeframe. The search timeframe is one year - from 19.05.2008 to 19.05.2009 (the day of the search). There were no major political changes in this period that could indicate any potential changes in the media coverage of the Lithuanians in Norway. In addition to this, I wanted to look at the most recent media coverage, in relation to the fact that later in the study I will be analyzing Lithuanians' own perceptions of the media coverage. Therefore, media coverage from, for example, the year of 2004 (Lithuania's membership in EU) would be less relevant.

Based on previous media and minority discourse research (Eide 2002, 2007) I deductively defined the following discourse categories: (1) majority as a problem, (2) 'others' as a threat and/or problem, (3) the colourful community, and (4) 'others' as a resource. I also added one more category called (5) 'neutral' that contains miscellaneous news articles or reports which did not fit in the four above mentioned categories.

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The first four discourse categories mentioned above were used in a feature story analyses by Elisabeth Eide (2007: 222). I chose to not base my study on the journalistic news genre. Instead, I chose to look at all feature stories, commentaries, and reports, as well as shorter news items that mention Lithuanians in Norway. The criterion which I used in article selection was that an article contain a reference to Lithuanians in Norway. In my study of discourses, I will, firstly, classify all news items into the above mentioned discourse categories; secondly, I will identify thematic categories in the discourse; finally, I will present a few articles that are typical of the discursive and thematic categorization.

One could also argue for a wider range or different type of discourse categories. However, I insist that these categories do present a consistent discourse overview. In addition, I take a closer look at the themes found in the different discourses. I believe that dissecting categories into smaller segments would not provide any more information that would be found in the above mentioned five categories.

These five discourse categories can be described as follows: the first category – (1) *majority as a problem*, includes articles that portray the 'others' as victims, and majority society as an obstacle. This is expressed in relation to strict immigration policies, racism, discrimination and lack of respect for the cultural values of 'others' (Eide 2007: 177). The second category – (2) *'others' as a threat or/and problem*, includes articles that portray minorities as criminals, damaging, provoking or problematic (ibid. 177). The third category – (3) *the colourful community*, covers the articles that see minorities and majority society as equally enriching social parties (ibid. 177). The fourth category – (4) *'others' as a resource*, includes articles that portray minority individuals or groups as people contributing to society at large - resourceful people (ibid. 177). The fifth category – (5) *neutral*, includes short notes or small articles concerning population growth, or statistical information.

All media texts are translated from the Norwegian by me. The original media text used in the content analyses can be found in appendix 6. In my presentation I chose to refer to the media itself and not to the author of the article (unless it is of significance) in order to indicate a newspaper or a website where article was published. All additional information about the author and the title of the article is presented in the order of its appearance in the text in appendix 6.

The process of defining articles in the above mentioned categories sometimes did result in ambivalent considerations, and I was at times uncertain of where some articles belonged. One example concerns articles where Lithuanians were mentioned in prison related cases. *Klassekampen* wrote, for example: "Last year Dagbladet wrote about a Lithuanian who was serving his «punishment» in Norway. He said «I have never had it better», and the readers were left with the impression that foreign criminals are enjoying themselves in the Norwegian prisons." (*Klassekampen,* 15.07.2008). In this case the 'other' is not portrayed as a threat or a problem, nor is the majority seen as a problem. In such cases I considered conventional cultural norms that see inmates as a problem or a threat to society. Based on this I judged this type of article as belonging to *'others' as a threat or/and problem* category. At times I also encountered ambivalent situations when judging the categories of *the colourful community* and *'others' as a resource'*. In the third category, *the colourful community*, belong articles that view Lithuanian citizens on the basis of mutuality. In this category, Lithuanians are seen as contributors to some cultural public events, or are mentioned as a seemingly natural part of the Norwegian cultural environment. As example can be mentioned *Aftenposten*'s news notice where a Lithuanians musician "born in Lithuania, but resident of Norway, was last week voted to be a winner of the years ConocoPhillips music scholarship" (*Aftenposten*, 13.05.2009). The dilemma, however, occurred when I had to choose the category for the articles where a Lithuanian theatre director's play was discussed in a highly appreciative manner. I viewed these articles as potentially fitting under the category of *'others' as a resource*. I solved the dilemma by closer defining the latter category. Here I decided that only articles that name Lithuanians as a social resource will be part of this category. Therefore, the category of *'others' as a resource* includes articles about labour related cases, where Lithuanians are mentioned as a valuable asset. Of such articles could be mentioned this one from *Klassekampen* were it is written that "Without construction workers from Lithuania and Poland many of the Norwegian construction projects would stop." (*Klassekampen*, 03.07.2008).

3.2. Qualitative research

This study employed a qualitative semi-structured interviewing approach. The aim of the method was to understand the subjects' own perspective as experienced and lived in their daily life. Since the research question asks for informants' perceptions and their own discursive interpretations of media representation of Lithuanians, I see qualitative interviews

as a sound way for obtaining such data. By using semi-structured interviews the interview situation can maintain an open normal conversational style, while using a thematically structured interview guide; as Kvale puts it – "It is neither an open conversation nor a highly structured questionnaire." (1996: 27).

In the following part I will address the strengths and the weaknesses of the qualitative research design, and the critical discussions of the ethical deliberations which I encountered in the course of the study.

3.2.1. Validity, reliability and transferability – in search of the truth

Kvale & Brinkmann means that "validation should not be confined to a separate stage of an interview inquiry, but rather permeate all stages from the first thematization to the final reporting" (2009: 241). This is the ideal of *validity* which I aimed at pursuing throughout all of the stages of this study. My Lithuanian background was in many ways a valuable asset in this study, because I could speak the informants' mother tongue, and because I had a pre-understanding of the historical, social and cultural perceptions of my informants. However, my Lithuanian background required a higher level of objectivity than potential non-Lithuanian researcher would need in the same study. I was alert to the pitfalls of cultural biases, while maintaining an adequate relation to the informants, and reflecting on potential doxic presuppositions which my Lithuanian background could cause. The practical challenges which arose when attempting to assure the validity of the research will be addressed in the following paragraphs.

Reliability brings into question the trustworthiness and consistency of the research results. In order to provide trustworthy information the research must be conducted in a consistent manner throughout the whole study. Kvale (1996) mentions a number of matters that should be avoided in order to secure the trustworthiness of the findings. Firstly, he points out the urgency of avoiding asking leading questions in the interview, since these may influence the outcome of the answers. It is also of high importance to critically reflect on the objectivity of the interviewer, who, through categorization of the findings, might be influencing the results. The main objective of *reliability* is the issue of whether "a finding is reproducible at other times and by other researchers" (Kvale & Brinkman 2009:245). In my analyses, I aimed at presenting a balanced overview of the data, but also excluded some background data which I viewed as irrelevant for the main findings. I also aimed at maintaining objectivity in the

interview situation. The semi-structured interview guide was used as a reference check of the thematic interest, rather than an interview guide as such. This meant that often informants themselves answered the questions which I was planning to ask; in other cases in the course of the interview I asked supplementary questions which initially were not included in the interview guide (see appendix 4). I was aware to avoid leading questions which could influence the outcome of informants' opinions; however, sometimes I did so in order to follow up the original question, or in order to make sure that I understood informants' answers correctly.

The question of *generalisability* stands at the axes of discussion of difference between qualitative and quantitative research. The main criticism of the generalisability of qualitative research findings is its representativity, since qualitative research has too few informants for the findings to be generalizable on the wider scale. Kvale (1996) and Thagaard (2002) argue that instead of demanding *generalisablity* in the qualitative research, the focus should be on to what degree the research findings are transferable to other research, suggesting the use of the concept *transferability.* Thaagard says that "transferability refers to the interpretations that are based on a single study, and may also be applicable in other contexts"[19] (Thagaard 2002: 21). The findings of this study, I believe, can be transferred on the theoretical level to apply to other research contexts.

3.2.2. Choice of Informants
To get in touch with potential informants for the study I used a snowball method. The main criterion which I had for the informants was their Norwegian language proficiency, since the study objective is the informants' perception of the Norwegian media representation. I also aimed at reaching a heterogeneous group of people. Here I focused on getting in touch with people of different educational backgrounds, occupations, gender, age, and length of stay in the country. Since the requirement to vote in local communal elections in Norway is a three year's residence, I presumed that all informants who had stayed longer than three years in Norway might be potential interviewees.

Due to time and economic limitations, I based my search on Lithuanians residing in Oslo city and regions around Oslo. I first contacted my Lithuanian acquaintances, whom I knew have been living in Norway for over three years, and I also asked them to contact their networks.

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[19] My translation.

This way I got in touch with a very homogeneous group of people – highly educated females, mainly from the same circle of acquaintances. I found out that Lithuanians, whom I got in touch with, maintained a very closed and small circle of friends. They knew few other Lithuanians outside their network and were unwilling to either contact them personally, or provide me with the contact details.

I experienced that some of the people whom I contacted reacted skeptically and were unwilling to share their privacy with me. One informant, after the interview, mentioned that he was cautious of me in the beginning, because he didn't know me, and thought that I might be some sort of a type that could cause problems if "truth" were revealed. It seems that the "mind your own business" strategy is present among Lithuanians in the Lithuanian diaspora in Norway. The resulted was that I had to re-evaluate the productivity of the snowball method and find new ways of getting in touch with potential study informants. From this point on, I contacted Lithuanians whom I met randomly in the social sphere, and asked if they themselves were interested or knew others who would potentially be interested in participating in the project.

All in all, I interviewed eighteen people, but chose to use only twelve of the interviews in the study. The profile of the informants can be found in the appendix 5. I chose to exclude six interviewees from the study due to their insufficient knowledge of Norwegian, which was the criteria for this study; another reason why I excluded one of the male interviewees was because he was unwilling to answer the majority of my questions, making the interviewing process impossible. Since the interviews were conducted in the Lithuanian language, I had limited possibilities to evaluate the Norwegian language proficiency in advance. Informants evaluated themselves positively on the matter of their language skills. However, it was not until they themselves addressed the matter of "don't read the Norwegian media because don't understand the language", in the course of the interview, that I was able to judge the suitability of the informant for the study. My earlier presumption that people who have a right to vote in local communal elections will be speaking Norwegian proved to be a total misconception, and I had to exclude interviews with individuals who have lived in Norway for over five years, but could not fulfil the criteria of Norwegian language proficiency. It could be argued that it would still be relevant to research how people who don't speak Norwegian get their information about media coverage of Lithuanians in Norway. However, since the focus of the research question was on Lithuanians' perceptions of media portrayal, I

presumed that information received from Lithuanians who had no knowledge of Norwegian would instead provide me with an insight into the network and opinions of their 'opinion leaders' (Waldahl 2007: 129), and not of the informants themselves. Due to this potential distraction from the research question, I chose to limit the sphere of the informants to those who had Norwegian language knowledge and could themselves consume Norwegian media.

In general, I must add that I had difficulties getting in touch with male informants who had proficiency in Norwegian. Due to this, of twelve informants chosen for this study, there are only four males. I also experienced that people who had high school or lower education did not speak Norwegian, and, as they explained themselves, Lithuanian, Russian and English language skills were sufficient for their occupational and social environments.

The choice of the informants, as I mentioned, is not representative of all persons in the Lithuanian diaspora in Norway, since the biggest migration to Norway has occurred only in the past five years (SSB, 2010a), and my informants had stayed in the country from 5 to 20 years (see profiles in appendix 5). The result of this choice were based on the requirement that potential informants should be able to consume Norwegian media in Norwegian language.

According to the SSB statistics (2010b) the gender distribution is as illustrated in the table below. From this we can see an increase in Lithuanian male migration only during the past three years. In regard to a combination of language skills and time of stay in Norway, the choice of informants' gender wise is representative.
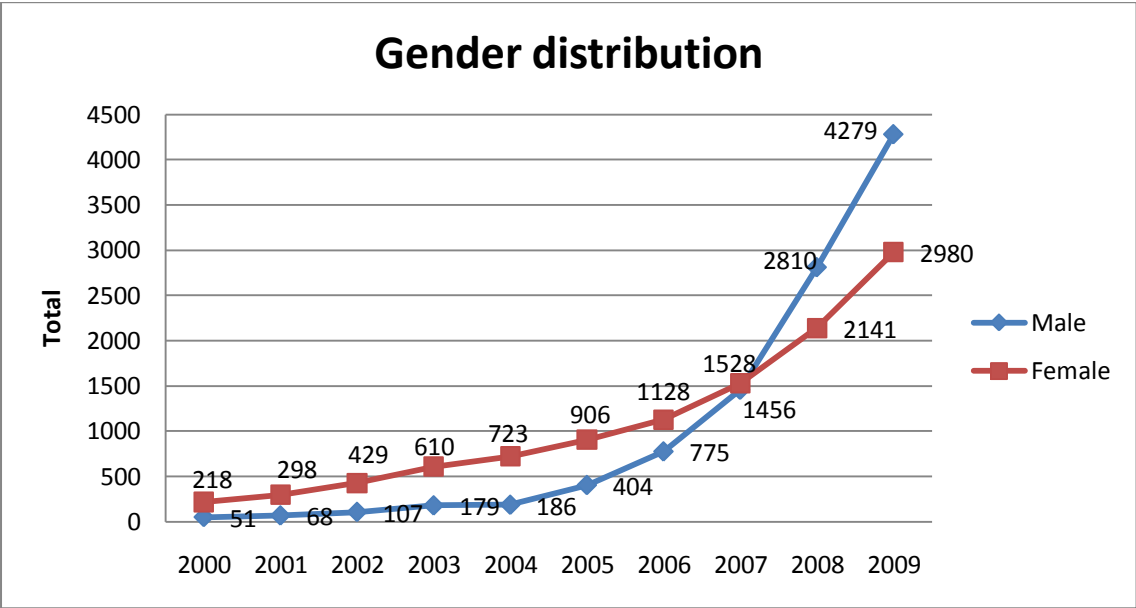
3.2.3. Subjective position, interview situation and ethical challenges

I first conducted two pilot interviews, which I later chose to include in the study. The interviews were conducted in the period from 27.08.2009 to 24.11.2009. I myself conducted the interviews. They lasted from one to four hours (on average two hours), and were recorded with a signed consent between the informants and me (see appendix 3). Prior to the interview, I had explained the study background and their rights to the informants; then I gave them an information letter which presented all the information in writing (see appendix 2).

I conducted interviews mainly in the cafés. One interview was conducted at one of the meeting rooms at the University of Oslo; one was at the informant's home; one interview took place at the café and later at the informant's home; and one interview was conducted in a public park. Informants were given an opportunity to choose the location of the interview themselves.

In the beginning of the interviewing period, I allowed study informants to speak as long as they wanted, and I only asked questions when they finished their thought sequence. I did so in order to give a sufficient time and space for the informant to reflect on the matters in question. Later on I found out that this often resulted in too open and long lasting monologues about 'life', rather than productive research interviews, and informants themselves got tired of long interviews. Therefore, I decided to be more precise in asking questions that directly concerned the study; I only interrupted informants if the talk took directions irrelevant for the study and only in the cases when the talk would last for a longer time. The result was that informants were more focused in their reflections and were not getting tired in the middle of the interview.

My position as researcher was constantly met with contradictory understandings, both by myself and by informants of this study. The conflict often resided between the concepts of 'us' and 'them'. The fact that I am a Lithuanian national granted me the ability to be perceived as one of the 'us' crowd – Lithuanian minority in Norway – by the study informants. This I attempted to cherish by speaking with study informants in Lithuanian and using an informal 'you' form if informants used it themselves. This I believe relieved the distance between me as a stranger and the informant. It also allowed me to gain an access to often sensitive, private and, therefore, difficultly accessible data. A few of my informants after the interview added that they felt very comfortable during the process of the interview.

One informant said that, had it been another person conducting the interviews, such an open story would not have been told. Another informant admitted that during the interview he felt as though he were giving a confession to the priest, which implies that informant was ultimately frank and confident during the interview.

But my position as a researcher seeking objectivity placed me in the situations where I was obliged to look at the same 'us' crowd as 'them' - the study objects. This often meant that when I was faced with the 'in crowd' statements such as - "Oh you know yourself how things are", I had to reject the informants' given trust to me, buy saying – "No, I don't" or "Yes, but please explain it anyway"; I had to disregard any pre-knowledge I potentially had. This sometimes caused distance and awkward, confused looks from the informants.

Another horizon of 'us' and 'them', which I had to reflect upon, is, as I call it, a 'classical' majority and minority 'cultural dyslectics' – seeing 'us' as the majority, ethnic Norwegian crowd, and 'them' as an ethnic minority crowd. I personally and professionally felt foreign to the mentioned categories, and that was the attitude I aimed at remaining throughout the study when reflecting upon the data of the study. I hope my attitude gave justice to the words and concepts that are used in this study but yet again, as Gullestad said, I felt that: "Every time I open my mouth or reached for the pen, I experience every word and every concept as a slow, sticky mass that implicates so much more than what I want to say"[20] (2002: 170). Therefore, at times I used popularly recognizable conceptual categories such as 'Norwegian majority society' and 'Lithuanians' (among many others), in order to present information in a widely understandable doxic form. If the reader might find that this project of objectivity was unsuccessful, then I leave this challenge for future researchers, with hopefully a more objective 'eye' than mine.

Another challenge which I met in the interviews was my position as a female researcher; this was especially evident in the interviews with some of the male informants. I chose not to include these in the study. One male informant insisted on not telling me "the whole story" about Lithuanians in Norway, because he thought that it included too many violent and low cultured elements; these, according to him, were inappropriate to be told to, I quote, "a nice girl like you". The same informant also said that he could not introduce me to other Lithuanians whom he knew, because they were "gangster like"; he said that he would be

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[20] My translation.

impolite to me if he arranged a meeting, because I "would need to listen to all the jargon language and rudeness". He meant that he would feel bad himself if he were responsible for any potential unpleasantness people of "low culture" might cause me because of the meeting arranged by him. Another male informant that refused to answer to any of my questions, mentioned earlier, was more interested in paying me compliments and inviting me to go dancing in the disco. I aimed at maintaining a professional and objective relation to my study informants, but when faced with such suggestions I felt awkward. It was obvious that my potential informant came to the interview meeting with other interests than being interviewed; therefore, I had to interrupt and end the interview.

In the interview situation, it is usually the interviewer that controls the situation by asking the questions and in this way guiding the topics of the interview. This situation can result in a disproportionate power balance, where the researcher may be perceived as having a more powerful position than the informant. This could be an intimidating situation for the informant. I was aware of the potential of such power misbalance. However, I felt that me being younger in comparison to my informants' (see appendix 5), functioned as a variable which helped to relieve the potential of a tension based situation – I was not seen as intimidating.

3.2.4. Analytical approach to data

When analyzing qualitative data it is important to be able to reflect on data in the light of different contexts. In this way theoretical understanding based on concepts, models and patterns is of vital importance. The interpretations of data and explanations of phenomena studied must be well referred to the interview data, and all interpretations by the researcher must be explained in the sequence - in this way providing analytical validity to the findings.

In process of the data gathering and analysis, it is therefore important to maintain high level of reflexivity and objectivity in order to include all data which could contain valuable information. I started this study with a hypothesis that the Lithuanian minority were negatively influenced by the media's representation of Lithuanians. In the course of the study I decided to leave this hypothesis in order to widen my horizon of receptiveness. I experienced that having an open minded approach to data gathering and data analysis relieved me from constantly reflecting on the prejudice based hypothesis. This allowed me to focus my

attention on occurring patters in the interview data and aim at portraying and explaining them coherently in corroboration with the theoretical framework.

The quotes that are selected in this research are based on several variables. I chose quotations that, in my view, provided the most information in a compact sequence of the interview. I also chose to present quotations that presented clear articulations, had best relevance to the themes being addressed, and were typical of to the phenomena of the analyses.

3.3. Summary

In this chapter I explained the methodological choices for this study. I argued that in order to answer the question of how Lithuanian minority individuals in Norway perceive and negotiate their identity understanding, the choice of qualitative interviews would provide a valid data. In addition to this, media content analyses would give a greater in-depth view in the study's field and an ability to observe an informant's identity reflections in relation to the media representations more closely.

The study is based on the semi-structured interviews with twelve informants, who were chosen on criteria of gender, age, education, occupation, length of stay in Norway, as well as Norwegian language proficiency.

CHAPTER 4: Lithuanians in Norwegian media discourse

For the reader who has never encountered the topic of Lithuanians in Norway, it may be difficult to follow such analyses without having any prior knowledge. There has been no research done about the media's representation of Lithuanians in Norway; therefore, I would first like to give an overview of the subject in order to provide a contextual framework for the qualitative part of the study.

As mentioned earlier, due to Lithuanians' high mobility and changed Norwegian registration rules, it is difficult, if not impossible, to obtain reliable figures on the total numbers of Lithuanians in Norway. The guestimate indicates a number between 13,000 to 40,000 (see paragraph 1.4.). However, the visibility of Lithuania and Lithuanians in Norway is increasing in the media. A Retreiver (A-tekst) open (not media defined) search (search word – litau*) for the time period 1999 to 2009,[21] gave a result of 18,497 media segments related to Lithuania or citizens of Lithuania. To indicate the growth we can look at five years intervals, which show a rapid increase of the media segments about both Lithuania and Lithuanian citizens in Norway after Lithuania's EU membership in 2004:
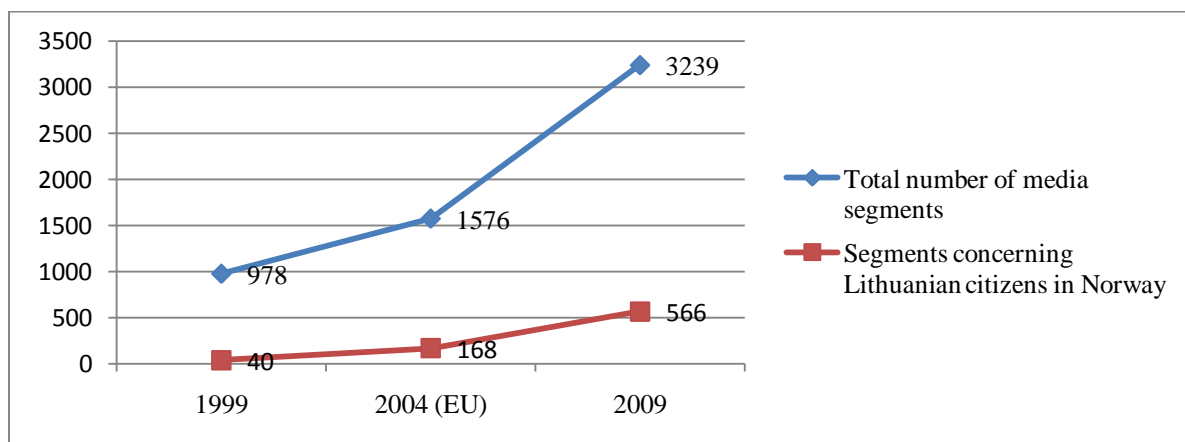
The following content and discourse analysis aims to look at how the Lithuanian minority in Norway is addressed by the Norwegian media. The study attempts to answer the following questions: How many of the articles about Lithuanians address cases related to the Lithuanian minority in Norway or a similar topic? Are there any dominant discourses and images of how Lithuanians in Norway are represented in the media? Are there any key characteristics of Lithuanians in Norway that are present in the media representations?

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[21] Search was conducted on the 17th of February, 2010.

4.1. Result: Media's representation of Lithuanians in Norway

At the time of the Retriever (A-tekst) database search, 1658 articles related to the search word –'litau*' were found. Of these – 443 articles were directly related to topics about Lithuanian immigrants in Norway, or cases in Norway where Lithuanian citizens are involved directly or indirectly. According to the five above mentioned discourses (see paragraph 3.1.1.), the media coverage of Lithuanians in Norway was as follows:

Media discourses (n=443)

- 12 % Majority as a problem
- 66 % Lithuanians as a threat or/and problem
- 9 % The colourful community
- 3 % Lithuanians as a resource
- 10 % Neutral
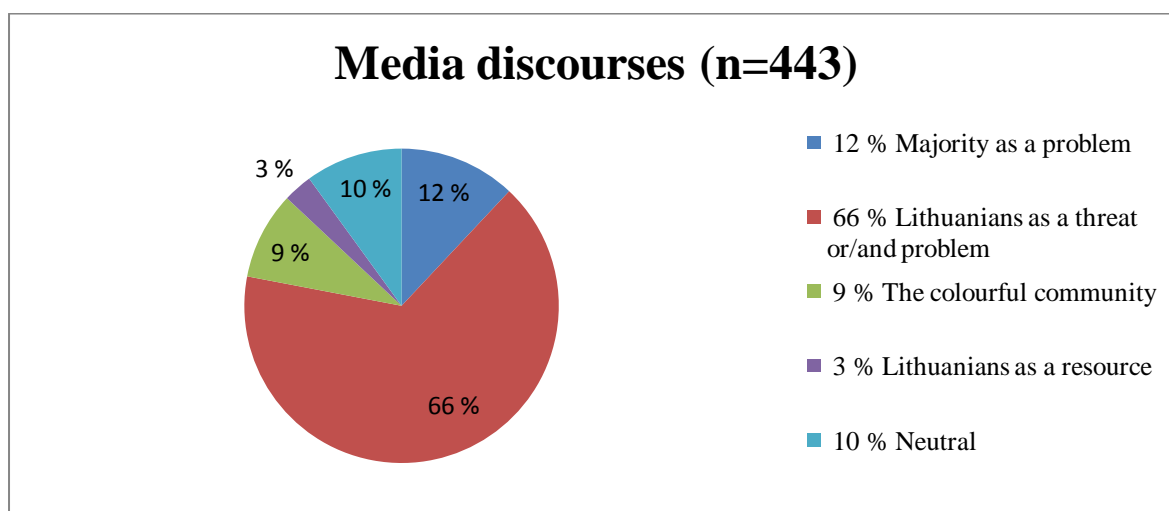
Of the 443 articles, approximately 12% of the articles present the majority as a problem; almost 66% of the articles present Lithuanians in Norway as a threat or/and a problem; in 9% of the articles, Lithuanians are seen as enriching and equal individuals; in 3% of the articles Lithuanians are presented as resourceful individuals.

From that we can see that two categories – of *majority as a problem* and *'others' as a threat or/and problem*, respectively 12% and 66% – are the main discursive categories about Lithuanians in the Norwegian media coverage. Similar findings were presented by previous researches that addressed the topic of the ethnic minorities in the media. Brune, for example, in her analyses of Swedish media coverage of ethnic minorities in the spring of 1993, found that almost one fifth of all the articles related to foreigners and migration matters concerned criminality (1997: 35). Fjeldstad & Lindstad found that "[c]riminality is the theme where foreigners appears most frequently [, and that f]oreigners mostly are portrayed negatively and the dominating perspective is that they are a burden for the Norwegian society" (1997: 5). In their later findings, Fjeldstad & Lindstad concluded that criminality is the dominating theme in media portrayal of foreigners and others with a foreign background (2005: 43). Similar

findings are presented by Eide, where she stated that the study of media discourses, for the period of hundred years (1902-2002), indicated a strong focus on criminality and conflict where the 'other' is seen as a problem (2007: 177).

The rest of media content results show that 10% of news segments are neutral; in these Lithuanians are mentioned in smaller articles or news stories in the context of the Norwegian growing population, or work accidents where Lithuanians died or were injured. The two smallest discourses are *the colourful community* and *Lithuanians as resourceful individuals*, 9% and 3% respectively.

Further, I will analyze more closely the types of issues mentioned in these four dominant discourse categories. I chose to exclude the category of *neutral* due to its short commentaries which do not present any discursive opinion.

4.2.1. 'Majority as a problem' discourse

This discourse was represented in 12 % of the total of 443 articles.

One of the dominating themes in this discourse deals with topics of social dumping. "Require minimum salary. Labour industry wants to reduce social dumping" (*Aftenposten Morgen* 14.05.2009), "Hour salary: 45 kroners" (*Aftenposten Morgen* 11.05.2009), "Workers from Baltic leaves without salary" (*Klassekampen* 05.03.2009) [22]: these are the titles of some of the articles that pose majority as the 'problem'. In a debate article in *Aftenposten Morgen,* three academics write about forthcoming social dumping issues:

> "Social dumping. When the transition arrangements expire, an hourly wage down to fifty kroners will be a reality for many of the labour migrants that are working in the Norwegian agriculture. […] The past year around 30 000 foreign workers came to work in Norwegian agriculture; most of these are from Poland and Lithuania. […] Now many fear that revocation of the transition agreements will cause wage dumping." (*Aftenposten Morgen*, 11.05.2009).[23]

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[22] Orignial titles: "Krever minstelønn. Handlingsnæringen vil motarbeide sosial dumping" (*Aftenposten Morgen* 14.05.2009); "Timeløn: 45 kroner" (*Aftenposten Morgen* 11.05.2009); "Baltiske arbeidarar går utan løn" (*Klassekampen* 05.03.2009)

[23] For all original texts see appendix 6.

The change in the transition agreement which provided the new labour immigrants with a minimum wage guarantee now left the labour immigrants in a fragile position. Lithuanians, alongside the Polish immigrants, are mentioned as victims of such change. Other articles give more personified examples of such 'victimized' minority individuals who have been abused by their employers. From news notice in *Klassekampen*:

> "[…] 15 Lithuanian construction workers had worked for several months without salary at the Ringnes Park project. […] It is starting to be quite usual that the foreign workers appear to be without salary, said Jonas Bals, an ombudsman for the Baltic workers at Oslo Construction Workers Union." (*Klassekampen*, 05.03.2009).

Another topic, which also dominates this discourse, deals with the cases concerning discrimination of Lithuanian individuals in Norway. Pål Hellesnes, in the feature article in *Klassekampen*, wrote about a Lithuanian seasonal worker who died in an industrial accident (Hellesnes 2009). The article portrays the father and sister of the deceased in search of justice in the Norwegian judicial system. Here it is presented a conflict between the Norwegian company and the victimized family of the deceased, who claim that Norwegian police didn't investigate the case thoroughly enough; police concluded that the death was an accident, and the case was closed. The company got a fine of 45,000 kroner and was released from any further responsibility. The focal point of the article is the question raised by the deceased family where they ask: - "Would the reaction have been the same if a Norwegian worker had died?"[24] (19.01.2009). This question indicates an element of discrimination. Previously, regarding the same case, Espen Haavardsholm in his social commentary in *Klassekampen*, compared the above mentioned industrial accident with the first racial homicide in 2001,[25] and expressed criticism regarding Norwegian xenophobia:

> "In 2006, a twenty-three-year-old Lithuanian was on the job in Orkanger, and his Norwegian co-workers refused to show concern for him. He was dragged into the mobile bark-stripping machine and killed. The official explanation was that it was an unfortunate work accident. And now, in the pre-Christmas stress: the common element about these catastrophic fires in the studio apartment building in Drammen, and in the old renovated nun nunnery on Urtegata in Grønland in Oslo, is that these who died in the fire were consistently of non-Norwegian decent. […] What is the pattern in such

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[24] Original sentence: "-Ville reaksjonen vært den samme om en norsk arbeider døde?"
[25] http://www3.nrk.no/magasin/nyheter/innenriks/753482.html

tragedies? Is it too early to incorporate these in the picture formed when the foreign-looking adopted boy was chased into the Sogndalselva and Benjamin Hermansen was stabbed at Holmlia? […] Let us therefore use Christmas to reflect about whether we – where we live and work – in our Scandinavian self-justice are reluctant to see the scope of the Norwegian xenophobia and hatred?" (*Klassekampen*, 20.12.2008)

In this discourse newspaper media takes on the role of the 'watchdog'. Media's job is to be alert and critical to social and political developments. Therefore, media's role is to make sure that social equality is maintained, and they do so by addressing the topics related to social inequality and discrimination. However, the interesting element of this article is that journalists combined the discourse of racism and xenophobia with the discourse of 'Eastern European' foreign workers. The article combines three stories and two discourses into a one racism discourse. The story about the Lithuanian worker who lost his life at work, and that of the Polish workers who died in the two catastrophic fires are explained on the background of a wider discourse on racism in Norway that has long, emotional roots in the Norwegian social cognition. In this way, the discourse of victimized foreign workers becomes a part of a racism discourse.

4.2.2. ''Others' as a threat or/and problem' discourse

The discourse, which views Lithuanians in Norway as a problem, clearly dominates the Norwegian public media, with a total of 66% of the articles directly or indirectly viewing Lithuanians as threatening and/or problematic. The discourse involves several topics. Most popular of these involves the issues related to violence, drugs, theft, prostitution, crime in general, and welfare abuse.

The news stories during the summer of 2008 were dominated by the so called 'Nesodden homicide'. The case is about the murder of a Lithuanian, who was killed by other Lithuanians, while two fellow Lithuanians were injured. The case snowballed into several other discoveries which were covered with alarming titles such as:"Started to cut off the arm" (*Dagbladet* 06.08.2008), "Operated with several identities" (*Dagbladet* 23.07.2008), "Connects the car to three crime cases" (*VG* 23.07.2008), "Attacked each other" (*Dagbladet* 21.07.2008), "Four charged for knife homicide at Nesodden" (*Aftenposten Morgen* 21.07.2008),[26] etc. This case

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[26] Original titles: "Begynte å kutte av arm" (*Dagbladet* 06.08.2008), "Opererte med flere identiteter" (*Dagbladet* 23.07.2008), "Kobler bilen til tre krimsaker" (*VG* 23.07.2008), Angrep hverandre" (*Dagbladet*, 21.07.2008), "Fire siktet for knivdrapet på Nesodden" (*Aftenposten Morgen* 21.07.2008).

received major media attention since it, according to, for example, *Aftenposten*, *Dagbladet* and *VG*, uncovered a network of heavy crime, organized by exiled criminals from Lithuania, who are dealing with the drug trafficking and the Lithuanian prostitution network. The following quotations from the news articles illuminate the aspect of this theme:

"Lithuanian's homicide in Nordre Frogn can be directly linked to the heavy crime environment." (*Dagbladet*, 06.08.2008).

"The released Lithuanian is a part of a drug network in Sørlandet" (*VG*, 16.05.2009).

"Based on what is known to Dagbladet, the cause of the quarrel was due to the Lithuanian prostitution environment […] the goal of the Lithuanian perpetrators was to take over the leadership of Oslo's prostitution environment." (*Dagbladet*, 15.01.2009).

"A Lithuanian was severely beaten a few months ago, before one of his fingers was cut off in an internal settlement in the Lithuanian exile community." (*Aftenposten Morgen*, 15.12.2008).

In the above articles we can see how journalists on several occasions refer to the Lithuanians in Norway with one particular unilateral description. This description defines Lithuanians as unified group of people with a clearly definable community of crime, prostitution and drugs. Further news about Lithuanians in Norway also concerns drugs and other crime related activities. In a two-page news article *VG* identified Lithuanians as criminals who control a big part of the drug traffic in Norway:

"[…] the amphetamine is often produced in the labs in Eastern Europe. Several cases were opened, but the network continues to deliver. […] The police believes Lithuanians controls a large part of the sale chain themselves. They operate as the men behind the scene, first recipients, and sellers. They are big in amphetamine and pills." (*VG*, 03.03.2009).

Another two page news article in *Aftenposten Morgen* identified Lithuanians and Poles as main suppliers of amphetamine:

"Poland and Lithuania are the main providers of amphetamine. […] The police in Sørlandet had uncovered a network that sold big amounts of amphetamine from

Lithuania. A Lithuanian with a registered residence in Norway was a central agent. […] And the networks receive assistance in delivering the products by persons from the same country and the same place, who already are in the country, for example Lithuanians and Poles who already have a work permit. […] Lithuania is, by several, pointed out as the main provider of amphetamine to Norway." (*Aftenposten Morgen*, 14.09.2008).

A *VG* news notice, which is attached to a bigger case concerning a "car tire gang",[27] presents a news article, "Professional multi-criminals",[28] where Lithuanians and Poles are identified:

"Norwegian police are facing a big and increasing element of the foreign and well organized gangs that are engaged in acquisitive crime, human trafficking, drug dealing and document forgery, says police captain Anne Gustafson in Kripos. She is coordinating the Norwegian police's battle against something that is, in the police, called mobile, acquisitive crime. It first occurred after the EU expansion towards the east, in 2004, when more Poles and Lithuanians arrived." (*VG*, 23.10.2008).

The stereotypical descriptions, such as that Lithuanians are big dealers of amphetamine, alongside descriptions of the Lithuanians as mobile criminals, whose 'expertise' area goes all the way from acquisitive crime, human trafficking and drug dealing to document forgery, are to be observed in most of the other articles in this discourse. The journalists often refer to words and phrases such as "from east", "East-Europe" and "network". This hints towards a distinctive descriptive image of the people from the east – "Eastern Europeans", as a one-sided, coherent, organized group of people whose main interest is to commit crime. Since there are no comments from any Lithuanian diaspora representative in the articles, the impression is left that all Lithuanians in the country, alongside other (defined/or not) 'Eastern Europeans', are heavy criminals raging uncontrollably in Norway.

Apart from the criminal aspect of the Lithuanians in Norway, there is also another topic which is very often presented in this discourse of *'others' as a threat or/and problem*. One fourth of the articles within this discourse present the topic related to the Lithuanian guest workers, who are seen as a 'freeloaders' on the Norwegian welfare system - someone who takes an

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[27] Norwegian: "bildekkbande".
[28] Original title: "Proffe multikriminelle".

advantage of the generosity of others. The following quotation sequence from *Aftenposten Morgen* news articles, exemplifies such stereotype:

(1) "The minister of Labour and Social Inclusion, Dag Terje Andersen, wants to get more of the Poles, Lithuanians and other labour migrants to return home instead of living on Norwegian National Insurance. […] 7500 EU citizens have registered themselves as unemployed in Norway in March. Poles are the biggest group of 3651 unemployed. After this, comes Swedish (1178), Germans (709), Lithuanians (521), and Latvians (393)." (*Aftenposten Morgen*, 04.04.2009).

(2) "One of five Poles that had received the unemployment benefits are suspected to have had cheated on their social insurance. In the course of a short period the number of benefit receivers from, among others, Poland and Lithuania has increased five times. NAV is controling Poles and Lithuanians who are receiving the benefits and are checking that they are in fact living in Norway and actively searching for a job." (*Aftenposten Morgen*, 31.03.2009).

(3) "The financial crisis led to the situation where 870 Poles, Lithuanians and other Eastern Europeans with an EU passport are receiving unemployment benefits from NAV. The financial crisis and harder times in the construction industry are leading to the powerful increase in the number of Eastern Europeans who are living on unemployment benefits from the Norwegian state. [...] According to EEA rules, Poles, Lithuanians, Estonians and other Eastern Europeans with an EU passport, who had fulltime jobs and continuously stayed for one year in the country, have a right to receive social insurance benefits in Norway." (*Aftenposten Morgen*, 26.01.2009).

To begin with, I would like to address how the above mentioned quotations illustrate the absence of textual influence on the overall meaning of the text. In the first quotation we see that the text expresses Dag Terje Andersen's desire to "get more Poles, Lithuanians and other labour migrants to return home instead of living on Norwegian National Insurance". The problem which is being addressed is the potential welfare abuse by EU citizens. Later in the article we can see that Poles, Swedes and Germans dominate the unemployment statistics; however, in the introduction Poles and Lithuanians are identified by name as the ones to whom the main attention of "return home" should be addressed. By avoiding naming "other labour migrants" and by naming Poles and Lithuanians, the text indicates that the main

problem of unemployment of EU citizens is due to Poles and Lithuanians, and not the 'invisible' unnamed "other labour migrants". Similar 'word play' is also present in the second quotation where Poles and Lithuanians, "among others", are identified as welfare cheaters. Therefore the text indicates that Poles and Lithuanians should be seen as cheaters on welfare, while the "among others" remain unknown and invisible in the text.

In the third quotation we can see how the journalist is referring to Lithuanians, Poles, Estonians, and Latvians in one distinctive title of 'Eastern Europeans'. This stereotype is also actively used in other topics, not only 'welfare abuse' discussions, related to Lithuanians. In this way Lithuanians in Norway are being included into a wider 'Eastern Europeans' discourse which popularly includes Poles, Bulgarians, Romanians, Russians, Latvians and Estonians.

The third article says that "According to EEA rules, Poles, Lithuanians, Estonians and other Eastern Europeans with an EU passport [...] have a right to receive social insurance benefits in Norway", something these EEA citizens to an increasing degree do. It is worth mentioning that all EU and EEA citizens have the same welfare rights in Norway, but in the text of this article they are not mentioned, creating a context in which only "Lithuanians, Estonians and other Eastern Europeans with an EU passport" are benefiting from the Norwegian state.

In the context of all three above mentioned articles we can see that among the 'welfare receivers', also Germans and Swedes were mentioned as the major groups of people who are not Norwegian nationals but, due to EU regulations, receive unemployment aid. The journalist makes a clear distinction between the people that are EU citizens (e.g. Germans, Swedes) and the Eastern Europeans with an EU-passport (Lithuanians, Poles). It is possible that the journalist's intention was to only show that EU citizens from Eastern Europe are also welfare receivers. However, the knowledge of the definition of Eastern Europe is influenced by the former political divide. This inevitably brings into the text the cognitive background of the Eastern Europe definition based on the potential Cold War 'otherness' connotations, which I addressed earlier in the study (see paragraph 1.2.). Based on this, the journalist, intentionally or not, is identifying the EU citizens from Eastern Europe as a part of the old political discourse of 'other', non-western Europe. This eventually casts light on Eastern Europeans as less legitimate EU citizens. The classification between the two categories of EU citizens therefore defines Lithuanians, alongside Poles and "other Eastern Europeans", as

second/lower rank citizens of the European Union. In this perspective, the EU citizens that receive unemployment aid are not seen as the welfare abusers, while Lithuanians and Poles, or Eastern Europeans are abusers. Therefore, EU citizens from the East are problematic, and other non-East EU citizens are being simply forgotten in the article – ergo non-problematic.

4.2.3. 'Resourceful' members and 'colourful community' discourses

In this paragraph, I will shortly present the smallest discourses of *the colourful community* and *'others' as a resource*, with total of 9% and 3% respectively. The *colourful community* covers the articles, which regard ethnic minorities and the majority society as equally enriching parties. So, for example, the articles about the public events, where Lithuanian citizens were involved as contributors to the event, would be a potential representative choice for the *colourful community* discourse. The discourse of *'others' as a resource* includes the articles that portray ethnic minority individuals or groups as people contributing to the society at large - a resourceful people. So, for example, articles that address social common interests and also portray Lithuanian individuals as the people who contribute to the solution of the issues would be a potential choice for the discourse (e.g. – needed labour force).

The *colourful community* discourse consists mainly of articles about the cultural events in Stavanger, which was named a European Capital of Culture in 2008, where a Lithuanian theatre director presented a play. In these articles, the director Oskaras Korsunovas was referred to as a Lithuanian star director, who created a worthy artistic play for the occasion of Stavanger's celebration. For example, the reportage in *Aftenposten* opens the news with following words:

> "The Lithuanian star director Oskaras Korsunovas accepted because of Jon Fosse. Fosse accepted because of Korsunovas. The result will be an artistic people's party for 21 million kroner." (*Aftenposten*, 22.06.2008).

This quotation clearly illustrates the aspect of mutuality, where the Lithuanian individual is presented as a part of the community, and portrayed as a valuable part of the event. By drawing on the reciprocal exchange agreement, as illustrated in the quotation, the article contributes to defining the Lithuanian citizen as a part of the all-uniting colourful community.

The discourse about Lithuanians as resourceful individuals is dominated by the theme of migrant workers. One of the reader's commentaries is titled "Rescuing angels" (*Aftenposten Morgen*, 06.08.2008). Articles in this discourse usually address the common social issues, and, of secondary importance, it is mentioned that a solution to the issue are foreign workers, and among these are the Lithuanians.

The following commentary article, which was written by one of the readers and published in the youth debate section, illustrates in what context Lithuanians are typically described in this discourse:

> "You have probably seen them. They are everywhere. They are serving our society. Serving our country. They do all the shitty jobs we don't want to do. What would we do without them? You have probably observed all the labour migrants, of whom these past years there are more and more here in the country. [...] These people come mainly from Poland, but among these we find Swedes, Germans and Lithuanians. They come here with a goal to take our shitty jobs and clean after us. [...] almost as on the conveyer, we receive enthusiastically the willing and cheap labour." (*Aftenposten*, 06.08.2008).

In this article Lithuanian labour migrants, alongside Swedish, Germans and Poles are identified as a positive, valuable 'them', who should be appreciated for the good job they do for the common well being of the country. The article also has a critical, almost cynical attitude towards the Norwegian majority who might not be appreciative of the value of the labour workers. The article labels the labour worker almost as a heroic part of the society – a hero of 'our' nation, the valuable 'others' who are here to pamper 'us' by taking 'our' "shitty jobs".

4.2.4. Final remarks and summary

The overall impression of the articles in the dominating media discourse presents Lithuanians as criminals and abusers of the welfare system and the society at large. The media usually represents Lithuanians as people that are involved in the heavy crime environment, in the prostitution environment in Oslo, the drug network, and are exiled criminals. They are often ascribed qualities such as the professional amphetamine producers, the mobile criminals, and abusers of the welfare state who come from Eastern Europe. In many aspects Lithuanians are represented together with Poles and referred to as 'Eastern Europeans', implying that whenever the 'Eastern Europeans' concept is used, it speaks of a group of people of which

Lithuanians are part. In this way, the Lithuanian identity in Norway gains a new identification variable – The Eastern European.

In the discourse with 12% of all the articles that address the issue of the discrimination and abuse of Lithuanians in the labour market, the dominating theme is social dumping of foreign labourers, who are being abused by their employers. Here the main issue is either underpayment or non-payment. Another theme that came in the discourse analyses is the topic of discrimination by the legal system. In relation to this, the case of the death of the Lithuanian labour migrant became a part of a wider racism discourse. Here we can see how the representatives of the Eastern Europeans are assimilated into the racism discourse. In this way, the new perception of the Eastern European economic migrant becomes a cognitive part of the wider socio-historic discourse concerning the ethnic minorities in Norway.

The only minority newspaper, *Utrop,* had two feature articles: in one of them (01.04.2009) Lithuanians as labour migrants are mentioned in a wider debate concerning multicultural society; the other article (01.11.2008) addresses the case of a Lithuanian worker who was not entitled to sick leave money due to legal requirements. Finally, there is one news notice (01.03.2009) about population growth, where Lithuania is mentioned as one of the biggest contributors. Website *utrop.no* mentioned Lithuanians in five of their articles. Of these, four in the short news articles, where Lithuanians are mentioned in relation to growing numbers of labour migrants from Lithuania, and one news article refers to cultural event that was organised by, among others, one Lithuanian. I see it worth mentioning that neither *Utrop,* nor *utrop.no* does even once mention the biggest discourse concerning Lithuanians: criminality or abuse of social welfare.

What is important to note is that Lithuanian individuals seldom occur as sources in any of the articles. The Lithuanians are regarded as a group that the media speaks about, and only rarely are they given an opportunity to voice themselves. Among the articles from the data search there are total of sixteen articles in which either Lithuanian citizens or their lawyers are given a possibility to comment briefly on the case concerned. Six of the articles belong to the *others' as a threat or/and problem* discourse. Among such comments it is usually lawyers of the accused Lithuanian citizens that speak on the behalf of their clients, e.g.: "-There was a short interrogation where my client had explained that he did not participate in the incident that he is accused of [...]" (*Aftenposten*, 21.07.2008). Four articles belong to the *majority as a*

problem discourse. In these cases Lithuanian citizens are given an opportunity to present their concerns regarding their experience of disappointment or abuse their experiences in relation to their jobs in Norway, e.g.: "We had to live in a caravan without water and toilet. When it became cold, it was unbearable there [...]" (*Aftenposten Morgen*, 10.11.2008). Under the discourses of *resourceful members* and *colourful community* there are three articles where Lithuanians are given voice. Here for example, in one of the news article, the leader of Lithuanians' Association in Norway, Miglė Gampėrienė, expresses her joy that Lithuanians finally got a priest who will hold prayers in Lithuanian (*Aftenposten Aften*, 13.06.2008). Other voices fall under the *neutral* category, and here, for example, two Lithuanian tourists are asked how they feel about Norwegian weather (*Aftenposten Morgen*, 22.07.2008).

Appart from Hellesnes's (2009) article, there are neither debate articles, nor bigger news features or reportages that would address in-depth, for example, the topic of the two dominating discourses, and where Lithuanian representatives would be given an opportunity to voice themselves. I did, however, find a commentary article published after the search timeframe (11.08.2009). Here NRK's editor Lithuanian Rasa Žiburkutė addressed the issues of the dominating discourses, as well as the fact that no non-criminal Lithuanians are ever visible in the media:

> "Something positively about Lithuania. It has been a long time since there was anything positive to read about Lithuania. […] So what do we hear? There are many hits online on the «criminal Lithuanians», Romanians and Poles. The new EU citizens, who once were the cheap labour, turned into social welfare problem at the moment the financial crisis hit. The polarizing light from the media places receivers of Norwegian unemployment benefits against the unemployed ones from Eastern Europe in a well known divide-and-conquer tradition. Then we are being stamped as benefit hunters. But has anyone cared to interview those it concerns? […] Stian Bromark[29] warns against defining the whole nation as criminals and talking about the Eastern Europeans as if they are the new Pakistanis. A good point. My first reaction to Aftenposten's headline «Eastern Europeans steal from us» was anger, which became disappointment when nobody form the Lithuanian interest organizations was asked for a comment. When the Norwegian counter-voices came on the scene, I felt like a three-year-old whose parents are fighting over her head. As a part of the Norwegian society, we have in fact a

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[29] http://sbromark.blogspot.com/2009/08/faren-fra-st-europa.html [Read: 29.02.2010]

responsibility to nuance this image ourselves. With this, I would like to challenge my countrymen, who have another story to tell, to show up." (*Aftenposten*, 11.08.2009).

Žiburkutė's commentary illustrates well the position of the Lithuanian who perceives the media's representation of Lithuanians. She stresses the fact that no Lithuanians are interviewed in the media, nor are any of the Lithuanian organizations in Norway requested to voice their opinions directly in the matter concerning the Lithuanian minority in Norway. In the article Žiburkutė also encourages her fellowmen to voice their 'other', non-crime based stories, by which she implies the existence of the misbalanced resonance of the Lithuanianess in the public picture.

Based on the discourse analyses of media's representation of Lithuanians, alongside the problematics addressed by Žiburkutė, I will now look more closely at how the Lithuanian minority perceive the media representation of them, and how they negotiate this perception in their own identity work.

CHAPTER 5: Lithuanians' perception of media representation

In the following chapter I present the data that was collected in qualitative interviews with the twelve informants. In this chapter I present the main findings that the analyses of the data uncovered. I name and analyze the identification strategies that the informants are using when negotiating their perceptions of the media's coverage of the Lithuanian minority with their 'selves' in public life and their social reality. The data is analyzed with regards to the theoretical perspective, which I presented in the second chapter, as well as the background of the media content analyses, which I presented in Chapter 4. In the course of the chapter, I will also present a few concepts which either help to explain the phenomenon of the study, or to identify the study phenomenon. The profile of the informants can be found in appendix 5.

5.1. Shifting image of Lithuanians in Norway

The open national borders due to the Lithuania's EU membership made it easier to migrate between the countries. This ultimately influenced the rapidly increasing mobility between the countries and migration from Lithuania to Norway, as indicated in the introduction.

Half of the research informants have lived less than eight years in Norway.[30] However, those informants who have lived eight to twenty years in the country claim that they see changes in the way Lithuanians are perceived in Norway. Ieva[31] noticed the shift going from very enthusiastic and positive, to very negative:

> In the beginning when we came here, we were like angels for everyone. It would happen like, if you say that you are Lithuanian, then everyone would have open hands. But then somehow this enthusiasm decreased, but... I didn't feel any rejection or hostility. […]Recently, when there's so much negative about Lithuania, then it's often this fear of what they are thinking about me now when I say that I am from Lithuania, and sometimes I joke that maybe I should stop saying that I am from Lithuania. But I have never felt any big hostility. Like at work it would happen…, and there were many bad incidents with the Lithuanians, like you hear from the news that someone killed someone, or robbed someone, I would come to work and say myself to them that I am from the murderers' nations. And they would be like, what are you talking about. They had never had any prejudice.[32]

From this quotation we can see that Ieva, during her thirteen years in Norway, had noticed the changes in the way Lithuanians are perceived in Norwegian society. She states that changes

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[30] Six out of twelve informants.
[31] All informants' names are fictitious.
[32] All citations are translated from Lithuanian by me.

occurred "recently, when there's so much negative about Lithuania". From the conversation it can be understood that she blames media for such recent changes, especially when, in the same thought sequence later in the talk, she added: "like you hear from the news that someone killed someone, or robbed someone, I would come to work and say myself to them that I am from the murderers' nations". At the same time, she pointed out that she had never experienced rejection or hostility from society, but rather that her own understanding of the Lithuanians' position in Norway has changed. According to Ieva, she now feels more insecure about her Lithuanian identity. The insecurity is related to the fear of negative opinions from the other society members, who get their knowledge about Lithuanians through the media. From the quotation we can see that, since Ieva's immediate significant others' didn't respond with prejudice regarding her nationality, she was relieved from needing to deal with the perceived increasingly negative image of Lithuanians image in Norway. However, in relation to recent changes in representation of Lithuanians in the media, as Ieva understands it, she is also implying reconsideration of the way she should present herself in society – by avoiding saying that she is Lithuanian.

In Tomas' opinion, the changes in the perception of Lithuanians in Norway are a result of the political changes in Lithuania, and can be followed accordingly:

> Before, when you would say that you are from Lithuania, you would meet huge, almost tiresome interest. The people wanted to know more and were very benevolent. Very superb welcome in Norway; […] mostly these people that I met then, they truly supported Lithuania. The first two-three years it was something special, I was proud that this nation managed to understand and correctly perceive things. But then the whole shit came along. Not right away, but after the Schengen, after European Union. And when this all started coming, then oh my gosh (laughing). So now about Lithuanians... I mean who is Lithuanian - Lithuanians are burglars, rapists, gruesome and terrible killers, and perpetrators, and main drug merchants.

Tomas came to Norway in 1988, which was the time when political changes started occurring in the Soviet Union, and Lithuania was one of the countries that aimed for independence from the Soviet regime. From this quotation we can see that Tomas experienced great support and sympathy as a national of Lithuania. According to him, it was because Norway supported the anti-communistic political developments in Lithuania. He states that he felt proud of Norway's correct attitudes, which vindicated his personal pride as a Lithuanian in Norway. The changes, according to Tomas, occurred after Lithuania became a member of the EU, and Lithuanians more could easily migrate to Norway. This migration wave brought a wave of

crime - "the whole shit". The qualities of the typical Lithuanian in Norway today, which Tomas identified, denote the popular media discourse about Lithuanians (see 4.2.2.).

When Tomas was talking about the way Lithuanians were perceived in the beginning, he was very serious, personal and nostalgic in his arguments, but when he started talking about recent developments he turned the discussion into a joke object. The mood shift between 'past' and 'now' indicates the distance between the earlier perceived reputation of Lithuanians and the recent changes in Lithuanians' perceived public reputation. Tomas clearly demonstrates his desire to distance himself from the current image of Lithuanians in Norway. Alghasi in his research on Iranian-Norwegians' identity making, also concluded that the past perspective is an important variable when reading and identifying with the understood media's representation (2009: 36). In case of Tomas, he chooses to distance himself from the occurring new image of the Lithuanians in Norway.

In Tomas' narrative we can also see how the dual 'time' contexts are being combined in his perception of reality – involving the historical and political past and present, and the media's present. When talking about the past, Tomas uses his own experience of the way he personally felt and understood Norway and himself in Norway. And the moment when Tomas reflects on the present time and being Lithuanian in Norway, he spouts out a line of identification markers that are widely and almost identically used in the current dominant Norwegian media discourse about Lithuanians (see Chapter 4). Since Tomas is employing media labels of the Lithuanian values, rather than personal experiences when talking about Lithuanians, it can be said that Tomas' perception of the present reality is influenced by his perception of media representation of Lithuanians.

The political changes did not only bring negative consequences. According to Rimantė, EU membership put Lithuania on the map, which makes her feel proud and safer in Norway:

Rimantė: Like in the beginning when I came, I remember I told someone [that I was Lithuanian] and ... and someone started laughing that we were prostitutes. And I felt very insulted; I was no prostitute; I was working in the ***.[…] But now it is quite opposite; now I am proud of Lithuania, and that I am Lithuanian […]If someone asks I always say that I am from Lithuania. I feel much safer now, than many years ago when they didn't know what this Lithuania was.
Interviewer: Why do you feel safer now?
Rimantė: Well, the time had changed; we got into European Union; our Baltic States became very popular, also in the business area for example. Like there are so many Norwegians in Lithuania, I don't get surprised anymore if I hear someone [speak Norwegian] there [in Lithuania]. […] This has a lot to say that we got into the European Union; it's not like before when you would say that you are from Lithuania, the people wouldn't know where it is. Someone maybe would think that it's Russia.

Rimantė feels that open borders increased knowledge about Lithuania and Lithuanians, which makes her feel safer since she does not need to explain any longer what her origins are. In her opinion open country borders helped to 'kill' the stereotypes, which are closely related to Russian women's migration - a stereotype of the Russian prostitute (Sverdljuk 2009). In addition, growing economic ties between the two countries make Rimantė feel proud of her heritage.

In cases of Ieva, Tomas and Rimantė we can clearly see how the aspects of dual secondary socialization are established in their negotiation of themselves in society and their perception of the current social reality. All three informants point out the importance of negotiating 'self' in transnational time and place perspectives, including the social and political changes in their home and host countries. We can see that reflections about historical, social and political changes in the perspectives of Lithuania and Norway function as place markers when understanding their own positions in the current society. For Ieva such changes brought insecurity in her position in the society; for Rimantė these meant that she felt more secure of her Lithuanian identity. For Tomas, the changes provoked an attitude of rejection, where he presents his 'self' at a distance from the current image of Lithuanians. What is important to note is that, the media image of Lithuanians is strongly present in their negotiations of social reality. Therefore, in the following part, I will look closer at how Lithuanians perceive the media image of Lithuanians in Norway.

5.2. Lithuanians and media representation of Lithuanians in Norway

All the informants are aware of the media coverage of Lithuanians. The dominating agreement is that the media present an exceptionally negative image of Lithuanians in

Norway. The categories which informants often named as dominating the media portrayal of Lithuanians in Norway are: construction workers, burglars, prostitutes, killers, robbers, human traffickers, drug traffickers, criminals and mafia. This portrayal coheres with the images which are present in the dominant media discourse about Lithuanians (see Chapter 4). The informants say that the media image of Lithuanians is not representative of all of Lithuanians. This opinion occurs when they are negotiating their own identities in relation to the media image. The informants also agree that Lithuanians have a negative reputation in the Norwegian society, which is, according to them, caused by the media's portrayal of Lithuanians. As an introductory example to the focus of the following paragraph, let's look at Loreta's narrative:

> **Interviewer:** When do you think it became like this?
> **Loreta:** I think since European Union opened up, this opinion didn't turn better, but worse.
> **Interviewer**: Why do you think?
> **Loreta**: Because of the media.[33] I mean they don't write anything; look at it yourself. Like search "Litauer" in Kvasir; search and you will get... as I said this case when they said that [*Aftenposten* wrote that] Lithuanians is a synonym for a burglar. Actually, everytime when I read some crime article, like these continuous house robberies, like I read it with a shaking heart, fearing that they will write that it's Lithuanians again. Really, you are afraid. Or like some drug article; seriously you read and really expect to find it, like at the end of the article to find it. I really don't want it anymore; come on, how long can it last?

From this quotation we can see how Loreta perceives the media's negative portrayal of Lithuanians. In her view, the media's opinion represents the dominant society's opinion about Lithuanians. We can also see that Loreta's perception of the media's image of Lithuanians goes alongside her own personal relation to such an image. Loreta identifies herself as Lithuanian. And therefore, she understands the media representations of Lithuanians as being in conflict with her 'self' apprehension. This makes her feel bad, as we can see from her saying that she reads newspapers "fearing" with a "shaking heart". Her expression of despair, when she says that she "don't want it anymore", indicates that her perception of the media's portrayal of Lithuanians is affecting her personally. Loreta's example indicates how the media is recognized as an important provider of meaning, and is given a role of a less significant 'other' in the social reality. By providing images of the identification options, the media is

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[33] The word 'media' in Lithuanian is translated to 'žiniasklaida', which in popular narratives often refers to newspaper media, but in wider context can be also understood as a referent to all types of public media, including online web sites, radio and TV. Therefore, unless it is specified by the informant, the word 'media' refers to newspaper media.

active in legitimizing the affectivity of the new reality of the social individuals, discussed by Berger and Luckmann (1991[1966]: 164,165). On the other hand, a social individual is a person who is able to actively 'pick and chose' different identification elements in his own identity project. One of the core aspects in the process of Lithuanian minority' identity making is the process of positive- vs. counter-identification with the perceived media's representations. That is where the different identification strategies take place

Loreta's narrative can be seen as an introductory example of the different identification strategies, which I will address more closely in the following sub-paragraphs of 5.2. Here I will present and analyze the different strategies of self-identification and identity negotiation in relation to the perceived media image of the Lithuanian minority in Norway.

I would further like to address one of the dominant consents among all of the informants. As mentioned earlier, all of the informants concluded that the media image of Lithuanians does not represent them, nor is it, as they call it, the 'true image' of Lithuanians in Norway. They do agree that what the media writes is true, but they say that the media's representation, which is focused on crime, shows only a one-sided image of the Lithuanians in Norway. The way informants negotiate and relate to the perceived media images vary (this I will address later). However, a dominating identification strategy may be observed – the dichotomy between 'self' and 'them' – in the informants' own identity negotiation. The category of 'self' indicates the informants' personal position as Lithuanians and as (self-perceived) respected and valued members of the Norwegian society. The category of 'them' represents the Lithuanians that (according to informants) are portrayed in the public media on the daily basis. This category is simply understood as 'Media Lithuanians'.

I mentioned that informants negotiate and relate to the media image of Lithuanians in varying ways. The differences lie in the aspects of how informants choose to negotiate the identification of their 'self' in relation to the 'Media Lithuanians'. In their negotiations, some choose to attempt to relate their 'self' to the perceived media's image of Lithuanians; others categorically reject the media's image as a potential identification marker. In the following sub-paragraphs (5.3.1. & 5.3.2), I will address more closely the aspects of the identification negotiations, alongside the perceived media representation of Lithuanians in Norway.

5.2.1. Attempt to negotiate with media representation

Saulė, like the rest of the informants, in her negotiations of what people think about Lithuanians in Norway, concluded that there are two dominatant public opinions – the good one and the bad one, leaving nothing in between. The 'good' opinion about Lithuanians stems, according to her, from people's personal encounters with Lithuanians who, in her opinion, usually leave a good impression, while the 'bad' opinion is influenced by the media. However, when it comes to negotiating her personal position in relation to these 'good' and 'bad' opinions, the picture denotes identification conflict:

> **Saulė:** Sometimes *I am embarrassed that I am from Lithuania, only because almost every day you can find in the newspaper - Eastern Europeans, "Litauisk" did this or that.* So... I say there are these two opinions, and I try to…, like when somebody asks 'where are you from', I try to ask if it's very important. […]. I mean, I feel like saying it's none of your business. Like, what is good for you to know these things? Well *at the current job, I'm surely proud of it that I am from Lithuania.* […] But it's *because they know me and they know how I am working.*
> **Interviewer:** Is it because it's a closed circle of people that you are working with?
> **Saulė:** Yes. *But in fact it is not like I am very proud that I am from Lithuania*, only because they have done so many bad things. Especially in this country. *But it's usually male, so I don't take it too hard.*
> **Interviewer:** It's usually men who do bad things?
> **Saulė:** Yes, it's mostly men.
> […]
> **Saulė:** Yes, *I don't take it too personally*, but it's *very unpleasant to read* these things. When I see the headline, I try to like... I think maybe I just won't read it. Because what else good can there be, when the headline is screaming this and that did, and other details I don't even want to know.
> **Interviewer:** Why is it unpleasant for you to know it?
> **Saulė:** Why unpleasant? It's because *your natives do bad things*... I don't know. It's just unpleasant and that's it. It is however *the same country where we were all born* and stuff... and this culture again... you know... they are not very cultured, they are Mužikai[34]. They don't have education. *I have this fear, that they will spread this opinion, that we all are bad people and that they shouldn't let us in* or something. (Emphasis added)[35].

From this quotation we can see the contradicting aspects of how Saulė relates to the media opinion about Lithuanians. The conflict occurs in relation to the media representation of Lithuanians, and her own identification of Lithuanianness in relation to it. Saulė says that she feels embarrassed by what is written "every day" about Lithuanians, something she finds

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[34] 'Mužikai' is a word that is borrowed from a Slavic language group, and in the Lithuanian language context it refers to individuals of a lower class and culture.
[35] All these and future quotations with italic-marked text emphasize the analytically important moments in the text.

unpleasant to read and makes her feel not proud of her Lithuanian heritage. She also expresses fear for the consequences of her fellow countrymen's actions.

It is worth noting that Saulė has very homogeneous and small circle of Lithuanian friends, and herself mentioned that she herself has no other knowledge about Lithuanians in Norway. This indicates that Lithuanians to whom she is referring to in her negotiations are the ones she perceives in the media's representations of Lithuanians. One of her identification strategies is to make a distinction between the Lithuanians in the media and her 'self'. From this passage we can see that she has a clear image of the 'other Lithuanians' that the media writes about. These are "men who do bad things", representatives of low culture and no education - Mužikai. In this way Saulė rejects her relation to the media's representation of Lithuanians. To create a dichotomous distance she is using gender and class variables. Saulė feels that it's only males with lower education and the lower class individuals that are represented in the media; these are something she is not. Another variable is her current job, which also allows her to distance herself from the image of 'criminal Lithuanian'. Here she feels that her personal and professional values are recognized and appreciated at work, which makes her feel proud of herself. In addition, it is clear that due to the images of Lithuanians that are perceivably present in the media, Saulė feels the need to hide her Lithuanian identity in order to avoid 'losing face' as a good Lithuanian. It is clear that Saulė's active negotiations, of when to speak or not to speak of her Lithuanian identity, indicate her active choice to distance herself from the stereotypical image of Lithuanians which is often to be observed in the media.

From Saulė's narrative we can see how she is negotiating with the significant others – the co-workers from her current job – and the less significant others – the media's image of Lithuanians and curious strangers – in the establishment of her own identity as a Lithuanian and a member of Norwegian society. In Saulė's negotiations with the mediated image of Lithuanians, she is strategically creating a dichotomous definition of Lithuanians, placing her 'self' and 'other Lithuanians' in different groups, at opposing sides. Saulė's identification balance resides between the media's image of Lithuanians and her own image at work. We can see that Saulė's job represents her 'identity sanctuary'. It is, however, worth noting that Saulė, at the time of the interview, had worked there for only three months. So, by discovering new ways to identify herself in society (through appreciation and acceptance in her professional life), Saulė is able to find an oppositional identification to that of 'criminal

Lithuanian'. However, media has a strong position in defining reality. This aspect Saulė explained later in the interview where she said that: "…if they [Norwegians, media[36]] think that way about other Lithuanians, it can be equal to what they maybe are thinking about me." From this passage we can recognize the stressed importance of 'others' in constructing reality. This corresponds with Berger & Luckmann's views where it is stated that the "secondary socialization becomes affectively charged to the degree to which immersion in and commitment to the new reality are institutionally defined as necessary" (1991[1966]: 164,165) and concluded that it is the significant others in our lives that give significance to our reality.

Since the media's representation of 'criminal Lithuanian' was often seen in Saulė's everyday life, as she explained, Saulė interpreted this image of Lithuanians as a part of reality and included it in her own identity negotiation. However, in Saulė's perspective, the media's image was not representative of her identity. Therefore, when she experienced identification conflict, she strategically chose to use variables from her current reality, which contradicted the perceived media's portrayal.

The same aspect of the 'attempt' to relate to the mediated image of Lithuanians is seen in other informants' narratives. Take for example Sonata:

> **Interviewer:** What do you think people in general think about Lithuanians in Norway?
> **Sonata:** Quite *negatively they are disposed. Because that the Lithuanians have destroyed their reputation*. Not so much Lithuanians but in general... maybe not so much about Lithuanians, but more the whole of this region of Eastern Europe. *All these crimes and robberies, but also the construction workers.* So that is what they [Norwegians] think - *Who is Lithuanian - it is builder, au-pair or criminal.*
> **Interviewer:** Do you think their opinion is right?
> **Sonata:** *No. Of course, their opinion is not right.*
> **Interviewer:** Where do you think people get this opinion?
> **Sonata:** *From media.*[…]And... well actually *I haven't met so many of these Lithuanians,* but... I don't know any Lithuanians that would have high posts in Norway. Maybe it is also bad, that... there is no indication that Lithuanians can also be smart.

As in the case of Saulė, here we can also see that society's opinion and the media's opinion about Lithuanians are seen synonymously. Sonata thinks that they – Norwegians – have their opinion from the media. From this passage we can also see that Sonata's understanding of Lithuanians in Norway is based on the media's image of Lithuanian in Norway. She refers to

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[36] 'They' in this part of the conversation was used synonymously with the society at large and the media's representation.

Lithuanians in the same stereotypes which are present in the dominant media discourse, in addition to this she mentions that she actually hasn't "met so many of these Lithuanians." Sonata has no Lithuanian friends in Norway; she knows only one Lithuanian, whom she clearly identified as an acquaintance, not a friend. In this way, her own sense of the reality about the Lithuanian diaspora is often based on what the media writes about Lithuanians. In this perspective, the media plays an important part in defining the reality about the other Lithuanians in Sonata's perception of social reality.

When it comes to Sonata's 'self' identification in relation to the perceived media image, she is quick to reject the negative image by saying that the people whose opinions are media based are wrong in their views. (Even though, as mentioned earlier, her own opinion about Lithuanians is media based.) This can be seen as the strategic defence mechanism which Sonata is using to distance her 'self' from the stereotypical perception of Lithuanians. Here also, we can see how the dichotomy of 'self' and 'them' is established. After elaborate statements about Lithuanians in Norway, she ends up saying that she doesn't know "these Lithuanians". In this way she is creating a distance between herself and 'these others' – 'Media Lithuanians'. What is not present in this quotation, but comes up later in the interview, is that she is accusing the media of 'grouping' Lithuanians:

> They [media] should look from a bit closer perspective at Lithuanians, an individual Lithuanian, not groups. Because there is a huge attention paid to the Lithuanians as a group. Let's say Lithuanians there, Lithuanians there, and there. But not individuals. […]Well let's say... construction workers...eh, very seldom; actually, I have never seen that it was written – one Lithuanian. It is always Lithuanians in plural.

Sonata points out the need to pay attention to the individual by focusing on the 'wrongness' of the grouping of Lithuanians. This can be seen as her second strategic identification; she is distancing herself from the mediated Lithuanianness by identifying herself as not a part of the group, ergo different than the other Lithuanians. She wants to be seen as an individual.

Negotiating your 'self' position as a Lithuanian and a member of Norwegian society, in relation to the media's images of Lithuanians, often can be a matter of contradictory feelings. Robertas's narrative about how he feels when he reads about Lithuanians in the newspapers illustrates this:

Interviewer: How do you feel when you read some articles about some Lithuanians that did some bad things?

Robertas: (pause) What I feel. *I don't give a shit. I don't mind it; it doesn't touch me, it doesn't touch my friends.* […] Yes I am Lithuanian; well of course about this Lithuania *like before....* like Norwegians *would like look at you twice when you say that you are Lithuanian.* As I mentioned, like asking if it's me who did these things. But I don't really take it in. I mean *there's nothing I myself can do about it.* Things are the way they are. There was, actually not that long time ago, a case where they caught eight people, two Lithuanians, four Latvians and two Norwegians, with 200 kilos of amphetamine drugs. It was like two or three months ago. Lithuanians, Latvians, Eastern Europeans - there you go. (pause). There you go; you get this kind of information.

Interviewer: So it's like as it happens there, not in your life.

Robertas: Well, you know sometimes when you see that – "was raped", I mean, you think like if I would know who did it I would go *beat the hell out of him*, doing just shit here in Norway.

Interviewer: So *you do get pissed about it*?

Robertas: Well *yes, sure you get pissed, but as I said there's nothing you can do about it*. Already now Norwegians' opinion about Lithuanians is not so good. Of course like from the circle of people with whom I am working, I was always telling them that not all Lithuanians are the same, just as Norwegians are not the same.

Interviewer: So you try to tell them that?

Robertas: Yes, I spoke a lot about it, […] Because I *try to defend my interest, this that I am a Lithuanian and there is no need to mix me with these that are walking around and stealing things.* Therefore, *I try to distance myself from all this shit.*

Robertas is aware of the dominating opinion about Lithuanians, which in his opinion is closely related to crime. He states that he receives this information from the media. Robertas' own relation to such media representation of Lithuanians is dual. On one side, he states that this information affects neither him, nor his friends. In this way, he is distancing himself from the negative stereotypes about Lithuanians by indicating that they do not represent his social reality. On the other hand, he feels upset by the way Lithuanians are looked upon in society. From the quotation we can see that Robertas explains how his experience of skepticism in relation to his own Lithuanian identity influenced his decision to demonstrate his distance from the dominating Lithuanian image. To emphasize his distance from the 'Media Lithuanians', he is informing his co-workers of his position as an anti-'Media Lithuanian'. Even though Robertas is clear about his distance to the 'Media Lithuanians', he still feels responsibility for criminal actions done by other Lithuanians, and expresses an anger and desire to solve things himself by beating "the hell out of" bad Lithuanians. However, this emotional 'outburst' is accompanied by disappointment that there is nothing Robertas himself can do. This denotes the magnitude of the effect that the media's representation of Lithuanians has on Lithuanians in Norway. A conflict between the media's representation and

their 'self'-perception often results in different strategies, from 'attempting' to negotiate 'self' with the media's image to rejection and distancing from the inconsistent representations.

I have often indicated that Lithuanians 'attempted' to negotiate with the perceived media representation of the Lithuanians. The reason I set off the word 'attempt' is because I want to emphasize the aspect of approach to 'self' negotiations in relation to this perceived representation. Some of the informants felt the need, as Lithuanians, to attempt to understand themselves in relation to what they understood that the media was writing about Lithuanians. The result was that they found themselves with a conflicting perception of their 'selves' and the media's representation. Therefore, informants developed strategies to distance themselves from the media representation of Lithuanians. The dominant identification strategy was to create a dichotomy between the 'Media Lithuanians' and the 'self'. The 'self' is therefore constructed in opposition to, or distance from, the media's image of Lithuanians; rather, it is focused on the immediate significant social others' reactions towards their position in society.

Similar identification findings were presented in Sverdljuk's research concerning the Russian women's negotiations of the prostitute's stereotype. Here she noted that the common 'self'-identification strategy was to distance themselves from the prostitute stereotype (2009: 145) by creating a socially positive civic profile – "eager to get work and become an 'active' part of the welfare system."(ibid: 146), which eventually resulted in reducing the stigmatizing perception of the Russian women.

5.2.2. Rejection of the media's representation

As I mentioned, there is a dual way of identifying with the perceived media image of Lithuanians in Norway. And this is either to attempt to negotiate the media's representation in relation to the 'self' or to reject the media's image. However, not all of the informants felt the need to attempt to negotiate with the 'Media Lithuanians'. In this part, I will look more closely at the strategies of rejection and how these are employed in the negotiation of 'self'-identity.

Of such narratives we can take as an example the way Vytautas negotiates the media's portrayal of Lithuanians:

Interviewer: What do you think about what media is writing about Lithuanians?
Vytautas: Poor idiots didn't plan their jobs well enough (laughing)*... I don't have this thing that I would feel some shame...* well it is like it is – came, stole, got caught, will be imprisoned and so on.
Interviewer: Do you react personally to it at all?
Vytautas: No. Even when it was this huge scandal that they caught a huge gang of the Lithuanian robbers, and huge police raids, and 'LITAUEN' was written everywhere you looked, and *I was thinking then - will anyone of my friends react to it. No reaction what so ever*; nobody gave a shit. I was *waiting already for some joke so I could play on these stereotypes,* but nobody gave a shit.
Interviewer: So you made up the role for it, and were waiting to play with it?
Vytautas: Yes, *the whole role* was ready in place, *but nobody reacted. So I don't encounter any issue like this.*
[…]
Interviewer: Does what the media write about Lithuanians influence your position in society?
Vytautas: No, in no way. Because *I see everything based on this direct reaction from my surroundings.* When my surroundings does not react to what the media is writing, then I don't need to react to it. Because of *what the media is writing and how my surroundings reacts - it just doesn't communicate.*

In his perception of Lithuanians' representation in the media, Vytautas confirms the qualities of Lithuanians that are present in the dominating media discourse (see Chapter 4). By making fun of the topic of the Lithuanians' criminality, he is creating an emotional distance to it. The dichotomous distance between the 'Media Lithuanians' and himself is created in relation to his social context – "my surroundings". Vytautas claims that he didn't "encounter any issue like this" because his social context, or his significant others, did not create a situation where he needed to react to the image of the mediated Lithuanian. Because of his surroundings' lack of reaction to the media's coverage of Lithuanians, Vytautas was enabled to keep a distance from what is being written about Lithuanians in the media. In this way he kept the dichotomous distance between his 'self' and 'Media Lithuanians'. However, by saying that he didn't encounter the "issue", or naming the aspect of "shame" (which is present in Saulė's negotiations), Vytautas acknowledges the potential for conflict that such encounters with the media's image could have. In relation to a potential confrontation with his surroundings, Vytautas has also developed a strategy of response – "the whole role". The fact that he mentions developing a role indicates his active choice to avoid identification with the mediated image of Lithuanians; he veils the topic with humour, as an instrument of distancing.

For Tomas it is clear that an average image of the Lithuanians is closely related with crime:

> **Tomas:** I mean who is Lithuanian - *Lithuanians are burglars, rapists, gruesome and terrible killers and perpetrators, and main drug merchants.* So that would be the average person's understanding.[…] But you see *I am already an overgrown stub.*
> **Interviewer:** What do you mean by that?
> **Tomas**: I say an overgrown stub because *I don't react to all this shit. It doesn't interest me.*
> **Interviewer:** What shit?
> **Tomas:** Well this whole ... - opinions about Lithuanians. What is the opinion about the Lithuanians – the nation of bandits. That's it. Simple. It's bandits, who came here, and are sucking up this Norwegian welfare.
> **Interviewer:** So it is not interesting for you anymore?
> **Tomas:** Well *you can't ... how would you need to live here then.* But yet again*, I have a lot of ways to protect myself. I can jump into the discussions with their (Norwegians) own language with their own arguments, knowing their codes, their weak spots.* I mean *it's a different case; my way of argumenting is different.* But this, that again and again... come on like, *front pages front pages front pages, again and again....* "Lithuanian burglar gangs", "most horrible", "some murder"... But I look at all this a little bit philosophically and *keep the perspective.* There was a wave of the Poles; there was a wave of the Yugoslavians, and now there is a wave of the Lithuanians, which is currently being expelled by the Romanians and Gypsies. Even though, statistically, we are still winning. Another thing is due to the geo-political situation; this drug traffic will stay for a long time because it's very comfortable... practically, you don't need the passport to come from Lithuania.

From this quotation we can see that Tomas is also acknowledging the dominating stereotypes about the Lithuanians which are often emerging, or as he puts it - "again and again", on the front pages of newspapers. In his negotiations of the media's portrayal of Lithuanians and himself, Tomas had developed several ways of distancing himself from the mediated image of Lithuanian. He chooses to distance himself not only from the media discourse, but from the whole 'opinion about Lithuanians' discourse. His twenty years in Norway provide him with a historical perspective, which allows him to see the current 'front pages' about Lithuanians from a socio-historical distance. He states that this is just a current "wave" which is similar to the previous migrant waves and the issues related to them. In this way, Tomas employs a historical perspective in his understanding of present social reality, which in his opinion is represented in and by the media. I have already addressed the time perspective of Tomas (see paragraph 5.1.).

Another aspect which Tomas employs, if potentially faced with the stereotypes, is his knowledge of the Norwegian language and culture. Because of his proficient language and culture knowledge, Tomas sees himself as a 'different case', not like the other Lithuanians in Norway. This is an element which appears in the moment when Tomas defines his 'self' in a distance from the Lithuanian diaspora in Norway. Tomas expresses his position as an

individual, and not a representative of the Lithuanianness. I will discuss the aspect of belonging later (paragraph 5.5.). So, all in all, in his identity perception Tomas distances himself both from the perceived media stereotypes about Lithuanians and the other Lithuanians in Norway, as well as Lithuanianness as such. In the quotation he clearly stated why he feels the need to develop distancing strategies from the media representation. Tomas acknowledges that media's representation of Lithuanians may potentially have a strong socially 'crippling' effect when he says that – "how would you need to live here then". In Tomas' view, his potential attempt to identify with the media's representation of the Lithuanians would cause an emotionally disturbing and conflicting social reality. This perspective of either an assimilation or social martyrdom, I addressed in Sartre's question of internalization in society (see paragraph 2.3.). From Tomas' example we can see that his way of internalizing the knowledge of the perceived media representation of Lithuanians, and 'a wave' of the negative reputation of Lithuanians in Norway, was to distance his 'self' from the whole Lithuanianness discourse, by employing his social and cultural capital. Ultimately, we can say that Tomas' defensive distancing strategy made possible his assimilation into Norwegian society, and his strategy granted him a more conflict-free social reality.

The most important element of Vytautas' 'self' negotiation in relation to the media presentation of Lithuanians is the importance of his significant others' reactions, or lack of such. The perception of reality as reflected by significant others are of vital importance for the individual's own perception of his reality. In the case of Vytautas, the significant others understood and portrayed reality as opposing to the media's representation of reality. This indicates that the more present and accommodating significant others are in an individual's life, the less significant is the chorus of media opinion. From Tomas' narrative we can see that his longer social experience in Norway allowed him to distance himself from the media's representation of Lithuanians. It was possible for him to do so, because he had seen the longitudinal shift in the opinion about the Lithuanians; he also had the cultural and social capital which enabled him to state clearly his position in society and, in his case, to distance himself from anything having to do with Lithuanianness.

The key element for both Vytautas and Tomas, the reason they rejected the media's image of Lithuanians as irrelevant for their own 'selves', was because they felt strongly about their

position in society. They both felt that their identity was not questioned by anyone in society; they perceived themselves as authentic individuals, and they had strategies to defend their authenticity in society, if potential insecurities occurred. These strategies were humour and a strong social network in the case of Vytautas, and the knowledge of language and culture in the case of Tomas. Recognition by social 'others' seems to be a very important aspect for how Lithuanians feel about themselves.

Before continuing, I would like to reflect on the recurring gender differences in the informants' quotations. Among the female informants, different attempts to negotiate and cope with the perceived 'media Lithuanians' label were often observed, while three out of four male informants aimed at rejecting any potential reason to negotiate the perceived media representations in their own identity understanding. The women often were more emotionally aware of existence of a 'Media Lithuanians' category, while three out of four males acknowledged its existence, but rejected it as a potential identification category. It could be argued that the male informants felt a greater need to activate their defence strategies against the perceived negative and usually male dominated image of criminal. However, the study findings do not indicate such conclusions. After a closer analysis of the data, it can be seen that a social position in society is the most important variable which distinguishes the differences among both male and the female informants in their negotiations and understandings of perceived media representation. The combination of a strong and close circle of significant others, and a job where informants felt appreciated contributed to make the 'voice' of the less significant others – media – less relevant, or/and subject to rejection and oppositional readings. Therefore, a presumable difference between gender-biased perceptions in this study is false. The variable that is causing difference in the opinions is social position. Due to this, I will further address the aspect of importance of significant others.

5.2.3. Why 'social others' matter in the media's image negotiations

In discussing theory I noted that immigrant minorities are simultaneously engaged in a dual secondary socialization. This means that they negotiate their social realities in relation to two distinct localities of social and cultural knowledge, in this case Lithuanian and Norwegian. The informants' social character were firstly socialized in the Lithuanian social context, and, then, secondarily socialized in the Norwegian social context. Therefore, in attempts to

understand the Norwegian social reality, informants are using the social and cultural codes of their previous social reality in Lithuania.

As I illustrated in paragraph 5.2., a conflict of identity occurred when the informants were faced with a contradictory representation of their social 'selves': Saulė didn't agree to be portrayed as a criminal; Sonata didn't agree to be seen as a representative of a group. All these stereotypes that the informants reject are perceived to be media representations of the Lithuanians in Norway. The rejection of the media representation (which is consistent among all informants) is enabled by the significant others in their lives, who have opposing perceptions of reality. Berger & Luckmann say that "[t]he more 'artificial' character of secondary socialization makes the subjective reality of its internalization even more vulnerable to challenging definitions of reality […] because their reality is less deeply rooted in consciousness and thus more susceptible to displacement"(ibid. 167).

In the case of the informants, their perception of the media's representation of Lithuanians is influenced by their social network. The stronger the supportive network of significant others, the less susceptible are Lithuanians to the perceived media representation. In fact, the recognition and the appreciation which the informants felt in Norwegian society enabled them to distance themselves from these ill-matched representations. The society matters for the individuals' perception of the media's representation, because it provides its new members with social and cultural capital, which helps them to understand their new social reality. For this reason, it is important to understand how Lithuanians see themselves in Norwegian society, and what social variables they name as influential in their lives in Norway. To begin with, I will first look at how the informants deal with the encounters of the mediated Lithuanian stereotypes in their lives.

5.3. Masterminding the stereotype

In the course of the interviews, the informants named the two main ways in which they are being met in society. I chose to identify these in the two following categories: the *first encounter* and the encounter of the *functionality*. The encounter of functionality refers to how Lithuanians say they are being met in society as persons who are performing a certain function (I will look at the aspect of *functionality* in paragraph 5.5.). The informants identified this type of encounter with society as the most meaningful and important for them. But first encounter was also important in how informants felt in society. The informants referred to

first encounter situations as the first physical meetings with previously unknown individuals or groups. In the following paragraph, I will look at first encounter situations and see how the informants negotiate these situations in their 'self' understanding.

Apart from the rare cases when the informants thought that first encounters are sometimes positive, the majority of the informants thought that the first encounter is usually influenced by negative prejudice, which presumably is based on the media stereotypes of Lithuanians. Therefore in this part, I will look closer at how Lithuanians are managing their encounters with the media stereotypes in society.

To begin with, I would like to use a quotation from Rimas to illustrate how the media is perceived to be the stereotype producer:

> **Rimas:** […] There is... after all I think about that… I don't read the newspapers alone but ten *thousands of Norwegians read this newspaper as well. If you will repeat for the whole year that Lithuanians are bad, Lithuanians are bad, then there will be this pressure from the society that Lithuanians are bad*, Lithuanians are bad. *And when there is this pressure...* but *these Lithuanians that are working, have normal jobs, they are well appreciated.*
> **Interviewer:** Have you ever felt this pressure from the society that Lithuanians are bad?
> **Rimas:** No... Because... eh... *I know my value, I meet these people that know my value*.

From this quotation we can see how Rimas perceives the media's negative focus on Lithuanians to be causing the negative attitudes towards the Lithuanians in society. According to him, the media's representation develops the social pressure which sees Lithuanians as bad.

Rimas' way to deal with a stereotype is to state his position in the society which, according to him, is defined by the significant others in his life – the people that know his value. This strategy is similar to those of Saulė and Vytautas, which I addressed earlier in this chapter. This is the element of the 'functionality in society' that is used as a defence strategy against the stereotypical perception. The definition given by Rimas' significant others is the opposite of the stereotypical perception of Lithuanians. Therefore, Rimas is able to negotiate his 'self' based on the available identifications – in this case an opposite of the stereotypical image. Rimas' job defines his function in society and provides him with the social capital which enables him to distance his 'self' from the stereotypical understanding. I previously addressed the aspect of capital employment in identification strategies when discussing the cases of Tomas and Vytautas.

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The importance of the significant others is also present in other informants' negotiations. Take for example Vytautas, who clearly expresses that it's only his social environment's perception of his 'self' that matters:

> **Interviewer:** So you are not afraid to say that you are from Lithuania?
> **Vytautas***: No. In my context never. But it depends where... well... I say 'Lithuania', and they don't know what to say, you know... well what can they say? I mean look I am buying this and this and this, I have money, I pay taxes, I am speaking Norwegian with you, what is the problem. If there is any problem then he is a Nazi, that's it. And if he is a Nazi then there is no need to speak.*

Vytautas states that in his social environment, or as he calls it – his context, he feels comfortable with his Lithuanian identity. In other contexts, he sees no relevance for how his non-Norwegian identity could have any importance. Here again, the 'functionality in society' – buying, paying taxes, having money, speaking Norwegian, is a more relevant identification factor than the ethnic background. The potential stereotypical encounters he dismisses as non-legitimate, since they are based on discrimination, to which he refuses to relate.

However, the Lithuanians cannot always 'hide' in the 'comfort' of the significant others. In encounters with the less known others in society, who are not familiar with their 'function' in society, there is always a potential for the stereotypical perception of Lithuanians' 'function'. For example, Rimantė felt herself perceived as a threat because other Lithuanians' committed crimes in the neighbourhood:

> **Interviewer:** Do you feel the difference when you drive a car with Lithuanian numbers and a car with Norwegian numbers?
> **Rimantė:** Well these that know, they don't mind, because they know... but in general... I don't know... well I see the looks, but what they are thinking I don't know.
> **Interviewer:** What looks?
> **Rimantė:** Well if someone drives by, or walks by... they look at these Lithuanian numbers... I don't know what they are thinking.
> **Interviewer:** Do they look negatively or just see that there are different numbers?
> **Rimantė:** Well I don't know... well *after this accident when one Lithuanian was stabbed with the knife* ... so I know that the morning after this, I was in the gasoline station and then I experienced a very angry looks. *All the people at the gasoline station, when I parked the car, all started looking at me with scared and angry looks.*

Rimantė in this quotation is referring to a widely covered case in the media of the so-called 'Nesodden homicide' (see 4.2.2.). After this happened, Rimantė felt a negative stereotypical

reaction from the people who didn't know her. The most important reason for this stereotypical reaction was because she was identified as a Lithuanian – a person who belonged to a group of people who committed a gruesome crime, ergo also a potential criminal. This stereotypical encounter was perceived as unpleasant by Rimantė, indicating that total strangers, or less significant others, have a significant influence on how a person perceives his social reality and his 'self' in it. In Rimantė's case, she had to acknowledge the existence of the negatively charged stereotype of Lithuanians when she was met with stereotypical reactions.

She was recognized by the coincidence that she drove a car with Lithuanian plate numbers. I call it a 'coincidence' in order to draw attention to how small visual signifiers of the Lithuanian identity are. Visually, Lithuanians do not differ from the ethnic 'white' Norwegians.

The aspect of the 'visual similarity' or the 'whiteness', does have an influence on Lithuanians' strategies in the negatively charged stereotypical environment. One of such strategies is to pretend that you are not Lithuanian:

> **Interviewer:** What are people's reactions when you say that you are a Lithuanian?
> **Tomas:** Well... how shall I put it... there are always circumstances. It depends in what setting you tell it. If you tell it in the setting of the intellectuals then there is one reaction. If you say it somewhere in the bar while you are trying to flirt with someone, then the reactions are again different. *The reaction in general I would say is negative. I mean, you lose a lot of points if you say that you are Lithuanian*. Because I *could by now pretend to be someone else... even though sometimes I actually do that.*
> **Interviewer:** Pretend?
> **Tomas***: Yes, I pretend*. But it's because currently you lose a lot of points if you say that you are from Lithuania.

Tomas has been living in Norway for twenty years. As he puts it, "by now" he is able to pretend that he is not Lithuanian. By saying "by now" he implies that he fully manages an aspect that could potentially reveal his Lithuanian identity, which is the Norwegian language skill. The language skills are the most important factor, (alongside the few other signifiers as seen in the Rimantė's narrative), that signify Lithuanian identity, or, more precisely, the Lithuanians' non-Norwegianess, which provokes the stereotype. The whiteness, therefore, is seen as an asset, something that is valuable. The value of the 'whiteness' can be observed in the following passage by Edita:

> […]Maybe *now I could pretend that I am not what I am*. But like let's say *before. I look like a Norwegian, and the people start looking with respect at me*, and, *at the moment I start talking, the people would ask right away where I am from*. I think if the person is intelligent enough it won't be important for him where I am from; it is important who I am, what kind of a person I am, what I do, what is my personality, and not where I am from, *not thinking that if it's Lithuanian then it's only the crime there.*

In the Norwegian culture it is very common to ask people where they are from. However, from this passage we can see how Edita perceives such situations as potential platforms for an exchange of negative stereotypical opinions. She recognizes that her looking "like a Norwegian" gives her respect in society, which is again lost when her Norwegian 'cover' is unveiled and her non-Norwegian identity is signified by her accent-based Norwegian. As an identification strategy, Edita chooses to object to stereotypical understanding by proposing that she should be perceived in accordance to her functionality – "who I am", "what I do".

It is worth noting that the majority of my informants (eight out of twelve) did use the possibility to pretend to be either Norwegian, not-Lithuanian, or not-foreigner in one way or another. Some of the informants saw a clear cause-effect relation between their whiteness and the reactions in society, as seen in the quotations above. The others did recognize that the whiteness makes life easier, but could not name any examples of how it helped them. Even though I say that 'most of the informants' or 'eight out of twelve' informants were the case, I don't intend to generalize these finding to apply to all of the Lithuanians in Norway. My aim is to present an aspect of the repetition which I could often recognize during the interviews. And this aspect, in my view, speaks of the fact that Lithuanians' 'similarities' to the ethnic Norwegians allow them to develop identification strategies when dealing with stereotypical Lithuanian identity encounters. Later in the chapter, I will address how Lithuanians negotiate the possibility of invisibility in their social lives due to their whiteness.

The stereotypical perception of Lithuanians is not only external – that Norwegians are meeting Lithuanians with prejudice-based opinions and reactions. Some of the informants acknowledged that they also form their own opinions about Lithuanians in accordance with such stereotypes. In paragraph 5.3.1., I indicated how some informants formed their views about Lithuanians based on the perceived media presentation of Lithuanians.

Robertas says that if he doesn't know some Lithuanians, he automatically follows the stereotypical opinion of Lithuanians, assuming that the unknown person is a burglar:

> **Interviewer:** So people believe what is written in the newspapers?
> **Robertas:** *But it is true. I feel it myself; it's like if I don't know that person I think automatically that he is a burglar.* That's why I say that *I try to not associate with other Lithuanians that I don't know.* Like if it's a friend of a friend, then it's OK, because your friend knows him. I mean you talk once, twice and you see, I mean you make your first opinion. If he seems suspicious, then you don't talk with him anymore.

From this quotation we can see how Robertas acknowledges that because of the media's coverage of Lithuanians, he feels increased skepticism to the Lithuanians whom he does not know. Because of that, he distances himself from encounters with Lithuanians outside the circle of his immediate friends, which in his case, consists of only Lithuanians.

Similar views can be seen in Loreta's statement that, because of the media's representation of Lithuanians she developed a stereotypical way of perceiving Lithuanian men:

> **Interviewer:** What do you think about media coverage of Lithuanians in Norway?
> **Loreta:** If I agree with it? ... Well things are like that. Maybe they could not exaggerate some aspects, but... Like *I myself I keep the distance from these Lithuanian men because of the same media.* Also from the personal experience, but also from the media. It's very seldom that you can see that the Lithuanian woman did something; usually its men.
> **Interviewer:** *So you understand what the media is writing and avoid Lithuanians a bit?*
> **Loreta:** *Yes.*

The Lithuanians' own stereotypical perceptions of the other Lithuanians might be the potential reason why most of the informants had small, closed, homogeneous circles of Lithuanian friends, with exceptions of the few non-Lithuanian or ethnic Norwegian friends. Also, two of the informants had no Lithuanians friends at all. One of these exceptions was Vytautas. The reason was that he didn't meet any in his "contextual bubble", as he called it:

> […]I don't meet them [Lithuanians] in this [own] context, and the people that are living and working in the different contexts... somehow our roads don't cross, and until these roads cross, I don't meet them.

The distance from the Lithuanian diaspora was also noticed by the informants themselves. Jurgita thinks that the attitudes between Lithuanians themselves also changed for the worse. According to her, Lithuanians were friendlier before, but not as much now:

Interviewer: Would you like to have more Lithuanian friends?
Jurgita: As in? - more than these that I have now? ... I think *I would like that these Lithuanians would be warmer with each other.* Somehow… Maybe this, that not all do like to socialize with each other. Like, for example, in *the beginning when I came, like five years ago, I think people then were more friendly.*

Giedrė acknowledged that due to the stereotypes of the robbers and criminals, the Lithuanians feel embarrassment about their Lithuanian identity:

Interviewer: Have you felt among Lithuanians here, that they are actually avoiding their Lithuanianness?
Giedrė: Mhm, yes. It is actually very strange for me, if we look at the people that are from Iraq or Iran, where it is much worse. And they come here, and they say that they come from the war where it's horrible, and just want to stay here calmly, and nicely live their lives; but ask if any of them denounces their nationality, or their culture. No. Never. Something that is very embarrassing for us. We are like... *we want that they don't recognize us in the streets* (laughing).
Interviewer: Why do you think the Lithuanians don't want to be recognized in the streets?
Giedrė: I don't really know that... *Maybe we don't want because we feel this attached label that we are like Gypsies. That we are the robbers and criminals.*

From the quotation above we can see that Giedrė suggests the existence of the stereotypes about Lithuanians to be a cause of why Lithuanians are avoiding other Lithuanians. She also stated that Lithuanians don't want to be recognized in the streets, because of the label which corresponds with the dominant media discourse of the criminal Lithuanian (see Chapter 4). Sartre explains how society's way of viewing an individual in a stereotypical light can influence social strategies of an individual: "[...] it is because he is never accepted as *a* man, but always and everywhere as *the* Jew that the Jew is unassimilated. [...] the Jew, even if he were the only Israelite in a non-Jewish company, would force himself not to feel that he was a Jew. When there is another Jew with him, he feels himself endangered before the others [...]" (1965: 100, 103, original emphasis). This passage could be a potential explanation why Lithuanians, as addressed by Giedrė and Jurgita, keep a distance from the Lithuanian diaspora.

Raija Kangassalo, in her research about Sweden's Finnish minority, concluded that negativity towards the Finnish language and the Finnishness was partially the reason for which the Finns had developed a pattern of denial of the Finnish identity in Sweden (2003: 59). This aspect can be also seen in the informants' negotiation of their Lithuanianness in relation to the stereotypical perceptions of Lithuanians; the result is that the informants don't want to reveal

their ethnic identity in order to avoid the prejudice of majority, and the potentially unpleasant encounters with other Lithuanians in Norway.

5.4. Phantom minority

Further, I will look more closely at the strategy of 'look alike the Norwegians', or 'whiteness', in order to examine how Lithuanians perceive and employ their 'invisibility' in society, and what eventual consequences it has for their own 'self' understanding. Before I go further, I would like to define what I mean when I refer to Lithuanians as a *phantom minority*.

The growing number of Lithuanian migrants in Norway makes them more visibly present in the public sphere. This we can see in media discourses about Lithuanians. Still, they are not as physically visible as so-called 'non-western background' minorities. Let's take, for example, Somalis' accounts of their experiences of racism due to their difference, which is based on the skin colour. In the narratives of Fangen's informants', it is clearly expressed how the Somalis' visual distinctiveness from 'the rest' caused many encounters of racially charged stereotypical comments, and, at times, aggressive physical encounters in Norway (Fangen 2008: 85-91). van Dijk points out to the rise of race based chauvinism in Europe, which sees cultural difference as a "threat to white, Western norms and values."(1993: 1). He also expands the definition of *racism* to *ethnicism*, which according to him is "a system of ethnic group dominance based on cultural criteria of categorization, differentiation, and exclusion, such as those of language, religion, customs, or worldviews."(ibid. 5). In this perspective, the root meaning of *racism* is not that of racial discrimination but that of cultural discrimination. In other words, the sign might be visual difference, but the significance of such difference is not based so much on physical visuality but rather on a cultural difference. In this essentialist view, culture is, therefore, seen as thick, homogenous, fixed and not shifting. Eide, writing about discrimination, discuss that culturalization "may be said to replace a more outright racial discrimination" (2010 - forthcoming). It is hard to say what concept is best to describe such cultural differentiation and discrimination, but in this study I choose to refer to it as a *culture based racism* where *racism* is meant to connote the aspect of discrimination based on the perceived difference. The knowledge of what is different is based on the normative understanding of an assumingly fixed and homogenous 'majority' culture – a culture *par excellence*; the value of the 'other' cultures is defined, and accordingly degraded, by comparison with the majority culture.

As for the media's position, Wilson and Gutiérrez in their book *Race, Multiculturalism, and the Media* say that media's one-sided, or stereotyped, portrayals and news coverage reinforce the racist attitudes in those members of the audience who do have them (1995: 45 - 57). When reflecting on van Dijk's warnings about rising racialised cultural chauvinism and Wilson & Gutiérrez's attention to media's potential to reinforce a certain pattern of opinions in society, it is important to look at the elements of ethnic cultural racism and the media's potential role in constructing a certain social reality. In relation to this, some questions arise: Does the fact that ethnic minorities look like the majority have an influence for their life quality? To which degree are the aspects of racial discrimination, as suggested by van Dijk, present in Lithuanians' lives? How do Lithuanians perceive their position as an ethnic minority? Does Lithuanians' 'whiteness' influences the way they themselves understand and negotiate with the mediated stereotypes about Lithuanians?

I perceive Lithuanians as part of the *phantom minority*, since they are not strongly visually signified as a minority. The phantom minorities have a minority background, but usually have never experienced a racial distinctiveness; they perceive themselves as sharing similar or the same cultural codes with the majority. My aim here is not to indicate that 'whiteness' in general generates cultural unity, but to indicate a more precise definition of a phantom minority – minority who has tendencies to perceive themselves as culturally similar to majority. These minorities are visually undistinguishable from the 'crowd' and can move unnoticed, like phantoms. The phantom minorities can visually melt into the 'crowds', and in that way avoid or mingle between the negative attitudes and opinions that are closely related to ethnic minority status. It is likely that being visually similar to the majority enables the phantom minority identity to remain disguised, until it is revealed by some particular action, mainly through interaction. We saw earlier, in paragraph 5.3., how Lithuanians used their 'invisibility' to mastermind the stereotypical encounters. Worth noting is that concept of the *phantom minority* may apply only in societies that have a perceived homogenous ethnic character based on a thick understanding of nationalism. The key aspect of being a phantom is that it is possible for the phantom minorities to re-enact two social categories – minority and majority. This possibility functions as a kind of an ontological 'liberty' – a freedom to negotiate the 'self' in the two social categories, providing the minority individuals with an identification balance. This balance for the Lithuanians in Norway resides between 'looking' Norwegian/Lithuanian and 'being' Norwegian/Lithuanian. The main characteristic of a

phantom is its' physical invisibility; however, other capital forms, such as language and culture knowledge, can substitute invisibilities in a phantom identity.

In the following part, I will illustrate how Lithuanians are employing their *phantom* identity when negotiating their position in society.

5.4.1. Being similar - is it race or is it culture?

The aspect of beging similar is perceived as advantageous. Rimas stated that looking like everyone else (majority others), might be helpful in avoiding the negatively charged stereotypical encounters:

> **Interviewer:** Do you think it has any influence for your life in Norway, the fact that you are white?
> **Rimas:** That I am white - yes. It has.
> **Interviewer:** In what aspect?
> **Rimas:** After all there is... there, where it dominates some...future racists or not racists... *the Albinos are always noticed. Someone different*, animal, plant... - *it is being noticed.* And it is being somehow either signified and so on... *if you are similar among the similars, then you don't fall out from the society, you don't feel the pressure.*

From this passage we can see how Rimas identifies the aspect of 'looking like the majority' as a valuable asset. According to him, being similar is advantageous in terms of fitting into the society, because you avoid meeting rejection based on your difference from the 'rest'.

The aspect of 'being similar', in the case of Lithuanians, is often equated with 'being white'. Sonata claims that being a white woman is easier than being a black woman:

> **Interviewer:** Could you say that your life is easier because you are white?
> **Sonata:** Yes, yes absolutely.
> **Interviewer:** In which way?
> **Sonata***: I can pretend that I am a Norwegian. The black woman could never pretend that. Even if she is a Norwegian, and grew up in Norway, she will always have problems just because that she looks different.* Well, maybe not forever; maybe after ten years everything will change.

From this passage we can see how Sonata perceives her 'whiteness' to be advantageous. According to her, the Norwegian woman who has dark skin will "always have problems". From Sonata's narrative we can see how the matter of race is connected to a certain aspect of social reality – a problematic reality. However, it is important to make it clear that the aspect of difference is cultural and not race based. Therefore, the culture based racism, in my view, is a result of a normative cultural understanding, where people are differentiated and

discriminated, because their 'different' appearance is also believed to be an indication of their 'different' ethnicity, religion, cultural and political beliefs. This is usually based on the popular discourses of the ethnic majority group.

In my view, the aspect of culture based racism, which is present in the Sonata's narrative, has a close correlation with the dominating minority discourse in Norway, which sees the 'non-western' minorities as problematic in Norwegian society (see for example Eide 2005, 2007, Fjeldstad & Lindstad 1997, 1999, 2005, Gullestad 2006). On this account, Gullestad asks if the "reinforced ethnification of majority nationalism is the main foundation of contemporary forms of racialization in Europe?" (2006: 190) – something her study of Norwegian conventional wisdom of 'us' and 'them' does indicate.

The problematic aspect of the 'non-white' race is perceived in relation to the encounters with society. As mentioned previously, the Lithuanian minority encountered prejudice only when their Lithuanian identity was revealed, and their invisibility, due to their whiteness, helped them to avoid these potentially prejudicial situations. In this perspective, the non-white (often referred to as 'non-western') minorities, due to their colour difference from the dominantly white majority, would experience a type of the pre-first encounter situations, where they might be met with the prejudicial judgments prior to the actual physical encounter. Therefore, being white is advantageous when encountering a homogenous, white society. In this way the phantom minority – in this case Lithuanians, together with other minorities that are physically indistinguishable from the homogenous majorities – is different from the other non-western, non-white ethnic minorities in Norway.

Let's take for example Ieva, who expresses how her 'whiteness' helps her in social encounters:

> Like, if I would have a different last name, *I could slip everywhere easier, and nobody could raise any questions.* Because when they see me, they [Norwegians] *don't raise this barrier for themselves, that there is someone different* that came here. And this first impression means a lot. I notice that from them, and I am asking myself also - how would I react? *If we are different, then this distance automatically appears.* But when they see me and *don't understand right away that I am a foreigner*, then the links are connecting easier.

From the above quotation we can see that being 'invisible' allows Lithuanians to come closer to the Norwegian society. The reason that Ieva states is that the protective barriers, associated

with the foreigners in the society, are not raised, since no difference is perceived. In this relation, we see how the phantom identity is advantageous in 'first impression' situations, because it allows an easier initial connection with the receiving party – the Norwegian society.

Robertas says that a combination of the Lithuanians' stereotypical reputation and a darker skin colour could lead to a more negative reception:

> **Interviewer:** This that we are white, would you think there is any difference?
> **Robertas:** Yes. And a big difference. *If we were darker… and with this reputation, I think... we would need to walk on our knees around the Ullevål Stadium to get a job.* Forget it! Forget it if you have darker skin. *Nobody likes them.* I mean, I don't mean that darker people are worse people, but nobody likes them. Norwegians are racists.

Because of the negatively charged discourses about foreigners and the negatively charged Lithuanians discourses about Lithuanians, in relation to the Lithuanians' ability to function as a phantom minority, resulted in that Lithuanians did not want in any way to mark out their difference from the 'rest', and rather identify themselves with the majority population. This was also the case of Finnish minority in Sweden, as mentioned in the paragraph 5.3. (Kangassalo, 2003: 59).

As an illustration of such 'self-censorship' we can look at Loreta's narrative:

> **Interviewer:** Is there any difference for us that we look alike?
> **Loreta:** It helps. As long as you don't speak (laughing). In these situations, when you are at the stores, and walk around, and pay with cards, then they understand you as a Norwegian.
> **Interviewer:** As in - not being judged all the time?
> **Loreta:** Not so much judgment. *I think we ourselves have this image of a foreigner and we ourselves are afraid to be seen like this.* I don't think that Norwegians constantly, like, go thinking something about the foreigners.

In relation to identification with the majority population, rather than the minority population, Lithuanians seem to have created certain strategies. Firstly, they look for ways to see themselves as being parallel to the majority population and, secondly, to see themselves as distanced from the discourse concerning foreigners, which is often perceived by informants as racially charged.

5.4.2. Our values are similar to the Norwegians' - away from 'foreigners' discourse

In the following paragraph, I will look closer at the above mentioned strategies of identifying with the perceived majority identity and not ethnic minority identity. The latter, as I mentioned, informants perceive as racially charged and negative.

In such negotiations the aspect of culture based racism is central.

Edita in her views of how the Lithuanians are similar to the Norwegians, identified the markers of race, religion and culture:

> **Interviewer:** Is it easier to be from Lithuania in Norway, in comparison with other foreigners in Norway?
> **Edita:** Yes. Well, let's say from other countries, *like Norwegians don't like dark people too much.* They are more prejudiced about them. *Like we look like Norwegians. We are white, of the same race as Norwegians. I would think it's harder when you are Muslim, or from other countries where religion is more different, and their culture is more different.* They... need much more understanding from the Norwegians, than we do. It is easier for us to get integrated, *it is easier for us to adapt to them* [Norwegians].

From the above quotation we can see how race is assigned with cultural values. Being dark in Norway is understood as being someone who has more difficulty adapting to the Norwegian society, because their religion and culture are different from those of the majority population. Skin colour and Islam have nothing in common, but based on the dominating minority discourse in Norway, the perception of 'problematic' is often associated with the labels such as 'Muslim' and 'darker'. Lithuanians do not identify themselves with these labels and place their identity markers of 'we look like Norwegians' and 'similar cultures' closer to those of the majority population.

Similar observations concerning the Lithuanians' identification with the Norwegian population are seen in Rimantė's narrative:

> **Interviewer:** Is it difficult to be Lithuanian here in comparison with other foreigners?
> **Rimantė:** If you compare with other foreigners then I don't think so, because *our skin colour helps us a lot.*
> **Interviewer:** How come?
> **Rimantė:** Well let's say, if you are looking for job, if you look at our names, well *our names still are more European* than let's say some Mohammed, or some ahtalabahar. If the employer will look at this CV, he will put it aside. Or let's say when you walk in the streets or somewhere else... or... I still think, me personally, I think that *since we have the same skin colour, then I think it is easier for us, than to be black.* Because all these... *all these happenings with these Muslims, all these terrorisms,* I think maybe scared the people a bit.

In Rimantė's narrative we can see how the markers of 'skin colour' and 'Islam' are again blurred as correlating values. Another marker, which was not present in Edita's narrative, but is identified by Rimantė, is 'terrorism'. 'Terrorism' is also placed in equal relation to the markers of 'Muslim' and 'black'. According to Rimantė, Lithuanians' relation to Norwegians is through their European identity, saying that Lithuanians' names are more European.

As a result of the Lithuanian minority' identification of their 'self' as opposite to the 'other darker' minorities, I noticed how Lithuanians see other minorities as different from their Selves. To mark this difference they employ popularly available stereotypical narratives to describe the 'others'. An example can be seen in Saulė's narrative:

Interviewer: Is there any difference between being from Lithuania in Norway, in comparison with other minorities in Norway?

Saulė: I think it is better for us, than let's say Africans. Because, I think *it helps also that we are white. That we can easier identify ourselves with our looks with Norwegians.*

Interviewer: How come?

Saulė: Well hair style, clothes, way to dress. *After all, we are Europeans, and Europeans have some sort of common features, that are similar.* I don't say that we have to integrate ourselves so that we would not differ at all, not show that we are not from Norway. But somehow *I think that the Norwegians, they accept Europeans*, not necessarily Lithuanians - Germans, French, English. *They look differently at them than the Arabs or these nig... I mean these with the darker skin.*

Interviewer: How differently?

Saulė: *If you see an Arab, or a nigger, you think automatically that he came here to abuse the Norwegian welfare state - the asylum seeker.* Let's say. *Abuse our goodness, our richness.* But when you *see the European, you think that he is working or studying,* most likely working and studying. And he is *benefiting our country,* and that this is OK. I think there is this opinion. I mean, I have this opinion myself, to be frank .

Interviewer: Mhm.

Saulė: I view the Arabs and Africans the same way as I just described. Because especially at work you see many things. For example, there comes *a nigger woman with fifteen children, with the hijab and all*. And she is like… not working, and her husband is not working, and you have already made so many children. It's not like fifteen, but like six children, seven or even three.

In Saulė's narrative we can see how the narrative of the 'asylum seekers as welfare abusers' is employed in the definition of reality. In opposition to that, Saulė identifies the Europeans as similar to the Norwegians; ergo, her 'self' is more Norwegian than non-Norwegian. By identifying with the majority population, Lithuanians perceive themselves as more authentic members of society. This can be seen when Saulė says that the ethnic minorities "abuse our goodness, our richness" and the European (herself) is "benefiting our country". By identifying Norway as 'our', she places hers markers of belonging; she is inside the Norwegian society and looks outwards on the 'others' – the non-Norwegian, non-European, non-western, and non-white ethnic minorities.

I would like to remark, that such' identifications by Lithuanians are closely related to their environment's perception of reality. In other words, the way their significant others and less significant others signify social reality, is also the way Lithuanians understand it – and develop the different strategies to relate to it. Saulė's perception is somewhat more racialised than the mainstream media portrayal of ethnic minorities (e.g. Eide 2007, Lindstad & Fjeldstad 1997, 1999). In fact, her opinion reflects a view which is to be found in web discussions, and in daily social contacts with significant or less significant others at work or

among friends. Saulė confirms this by saying "I think there is this opinion", and also the way how she exaggerates her description of reality by stating first that the women in her story had fifteen children and then reducing the number to three, implying that she is in fact expressing a non-factual opinion. Saulė's example illustrates the great importance of the opinions of significant others, as well as less significant others, in defining a normative understanding of what social values should be. Therefore, in Saulė's case the opinions of significant others' (potentially co-workers, friends) on social matters are more important than her own experience.

The voice of less significant others has an important influence on the opinion formation of significant others', who in turn, influences the understanding of the individuals being socialized. To illustrate how significant others influence the Lithuanians' reality perception and their 'self' perception, we can look at Robertas' narrative:

> **Interviewer:** Have you heard that your co-workers were talking about the colour difference?
> **Robertas:** A lot. There is a common word – 'Pakistaner'. If one is coloured then its 'Pakistaner'. *They say "Jeg hater pakistaner, ja jeg også", and I also add that – "ja, jeg også".*[37]
> **Interviewer:** You too? Why do you say so? Do you also "hater Pakistaner"?
> **Robertas:** No, well I actually got a very bad impression about them. I don't know, (1) *I don't like them like people,* (2) *I don't think they are bad people...* but... like look at *social welfare... how many of these coloured are sitting with the children there just to get the social support.*
> **Interviewer:** Well you yourself got social welfare.
> **Robertas:** Wait a minute. *I worked for three years to get this welfare. And I am continuing to work, and not making babies.*

From the quotation we can see how Robertas learned to relate to the 'Pakistaner' discourse through his co-workers. His contradicting statements of: (1) him not liking "them like people", but at the same time thinking that (2) they are not "bad people", indicates the insecurity of his own personal opinion in the matter. His normative judgment is based on his being different from 'them' in a way that 'they' abuse social welfare, while he does not. Robertas' prejudice is based on the idea that, as he calls it, "coloured" people don't have jobs, live on welfare, and are "making babies". He identifies himself as being in opposition to such definitions because he 'deserved' welfare support since he had a job, he has a job now, and isn't "making babies".

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[37] Translation: They say "I hate Pakistanis", and I also add that – "Yes, I hate me too".

The fact that Robertas' ethnic Norwegian co-workers share their racially biased and minority critical views with him indicates that he is not being perceived as 'the other' in his social environment allowing him to assimilate further into the majority culture and become a member of the phantom minority. Another example is found in Edita's narrative:

> **Edita:** […] So like *one colleague of mine told me that he is not getting off at Jernbanetorget because there are only foreigners there*, that he can't stand to be there. That it's only foreigners there. […] when there was this cultural festival [Mela], from the different countries, I saw only the foreigners. Only one or two Norwegians.
> **Interviewer:** Why do you think it was so?
> **Edita:** I don't know, maybe they are keeping the distance, maybe they are not interested. And also at work *when I mentioned that I was in this event, they were like why did you go there.* As in, what is there to go there for? I don't know, maybe *they are a bit against these Pakistani, Iranians, Iraqis... maybe they don't have anything in common in their culture, and they are avoiding it.* Like sometimes I would ask them regarding buying an apartment, and they would be like *warning me to not buy somewhere where neighbours are like Pakistanis or Indians.* And I would ask why. And they would be like, oh, like they have all these families, all these children... all these bad smells, they are using all these spices a lot. I felt this...

From the above quotation we can see how Edita's, as a co-worker, is not perceived as a foreigner/ethnic minority. Edita's co-workers acknowledges her position as one of 'us' and not 'them' by expressing their personal 'frustrations' and distance to the minority cultures and people to her. Edita perceives that the co-workers distance from the minority people is due to the different cultures, which indicates that her cultural understanding is perceived by her co-workers as similar to their own. In this way, Edita's ethnic identity takes on a phantom character – she is not perceived as different from the 'rest'.

From the above quotations we can observe how opinions expressed by the significant others' about the 'others' are often racially charged. However, the significant others do not perceive Lithuanians as representatives of the ethnic minority discourse, due to the fact that they visually don't display values, such as race and culture, that differentiate them from the majority. The phantom identity in the case of the Lithuanians is enhanced, not only through racial similarity, but also through cultural similarity to the majority. This you can see in the previous quotations, such as Edita's, Rimantė's and Saulė's, where they perceive the race difference and the cultural difference as correlative values.

However, race is not always seen as the influential factor for how Lithuanians perceive themselves in society. Vytautas in his narrative examines how the Lithuanians' cultural similarity to the Norwegians might be more relevant than the aspect of race:

> **Interviewer:** Did it have any influence for your life that you are white?
> **Vytautas:** I don't know. I would think some... I wonder what functions... let's say I was from the Middle East... then I would have it harder… Because the *Lithuanians are Europeans, we are similar. Even if there's less of it, but these western values there are.* These western values, like *we read the same books, saw the same movies, same Jesus Christ,* from this religion, I mean more or less. Well *there are these different codes, but they are common codes...*
> **Interviewer:** So maybe it's more the cultural aspects, not the racial?
> **Vytautas:** Yes... and racial... I have never had... *I can't find any example...* yes all are white [his friends]. There is one from Thailand, but he was adopted when he was a kid. Some others…, but *they had never complained, never encountered such a situation.*

Vytautas, negotiating his identity in Norwegian society, concluded that the cultural values, such as a pop culture and religion, are the important identification variables. In his perception of social reality, the race aspect is understood as irrelevant, due to the fact that he had no reference to such racial experience in his social context. Vytautas' narrative indicates the importance of our significant social others in forming our reality perception, as well as our 'self' perception in the new reality.

The fact, that Lithuanians are perceived in the society as 'similar' to majority enables them to employ a phantom minority identity. Disguised with the phantom identity, Lithuanians are more easily able to avoid the negatively charged media discourse about the Lithuanians. The informants' perceived 'similarity' in society also positions Lithuanians as the ones who do not belong to the 'foreigners' discourse. On the other hand, 'similarity' is enabled by the significant others, who in their definition of 'otherness' often position Lithuanians as part of the 'us' crowd. It seems that the 'us' crowd is created in a common Lithuanian's and Norwegian's counter-identification with the non-western, racially visual ethnic minorities.

Because of their phantom identity, Lithuanians are less liable to be perceived as ethnic minorities than those who are visually different. Informants' perceived 'less-minority' liability has an influence on how they perceive their civic authenticity in the society. And, as I indicated previously, the result is that Lithuanians identify more closely with the Norwegians, than with other non-western minorities. Based on this, we can see that Lithuanians' phantom

identity, which is based on physical invisibility and cultural similarity, and as an identification as 'Europeans', allows Lithuanians to be perceived in the Norwegian social reality as authentic members of society. This further influences the stability of their social identity and enhances their 'privileged' position in Norwegian society. At this point, the referent of a 'Lithuanian identity' seemingly loses its reference, since the informants perceive their Lithuanianess as a variable that should not define their identities or social positions. The identification variable which Lithuanians identify as their identity markers is that of their social functionality. As I indicated earlier, Lithuanians perceive that they are seen and require to be seen as authentic members of Norwegian society.

Further, I will look closer at how Lithuanians negotiate their functionality in the society, and how they see it to be an important and authentic identity marker.

5.5. Negotiating authentic 'self' – functionality in society

In paragraph 5.3., I introduced that the concept of *authenticity*, that will be understood in this study as a social virtue, meaning that to be authentic requires recognition from the society one lives in. Guignon writes: "… being authentic is not just a matter of concentrating on one's own self, but also involves deliberation about how one's commitments make a contribution to the good of the public world in which one is a participant."(2004: 163). I previously identified the aspect of a contribution to society as the individuals' functionality in a society. As I also stated before, functionality is an important identification variable which the study informants perceived as counteracting the media's image of Lithuanians. Jari Kuosmanen in his study of Finnish men's identity work in Sweden also mentioned that a job had an important identity-building and status-enhancing importance (2001: 83). In the following paragraph, I will look at how Lithuanians negotiate their identity in relation to their functionality and how this further influences their stand in relation to the perceived stereotypical image of Lithuanians.

Guignon in his definition of authenticity identified variables such as the individuals' talents, equality, freedom of expression, and personal contribution to a society, as the elements of what it means to be an authentic individual in a society (2004: 162, 163). The perceived media representation of Lithuanians was met as contradictory to the way Lithuanians understood themselves.

Maalouf says that: "The identity a person lays claim to is often based, in reverse, on that of his enemy."(2003: 14). As I illustrated earlier, most of the informants perceived the media's portrayal of Lithuanians as problematic and conflicting with their own notion of Lithuanian identity. Therefore, the media was seen as a hostile force – perhaps not personally influential for them, but definitely not the source of a 'true' representation of them. With this perception of the media as a hostile force, as it is presented in the informants' statements, it is easy to understand the media as an enemy – a representative of a false reality, something the individuals should resist in their 'self' negotiations. As a form of such resistance, Ieva for example, claimed that the media's negative portrayal of Lithuanians could have an opposite effect for the Lithuanians' position in society:

> **Interviewer:** Do you think Norwegians' opinions about the Lithuanians change because of what the media writes about Lithuanians?
> **Ieva:** It would be my presumption. But *maybe it causes faster integration here* [in Norway]. It's not some facts that I see, but maybe how I would think the people would act, when they see what is written and spoken about them. Of course, the others maybe start being afraid, let's say when the radio announces that "be afraid of Lithuanians", then some try to not say that they are Lithuanians; the others try to hide in one or other way, *not to show themselves*. I would think it influences us in this way.

The Lithuanians' privileged phantom identity enables them to apply an option of invisibility which, as seen from Ieva's quotation, could be used as a strategy for assimilation –'melting in the crowd'. In this way, 'invisibility' is used as a strategy when looking for identification opposite to that of the 'media Lithuanians' – an identity which would be recognized by the society at large as authentic and could contradict the negative perception of the Lithuanians.

When referring to their realities, the informants often referred to their jobs, to what they did, as their identity signifiers. Among the informants the ability to do 'what you want' was seen as the most influential variable for people's dignity and well-being in the society. In accordance to their jobs, they found their lives in Norway meaningful and fulfilling. Through their jobs, the informants felt they could create socially recognized and authentic 'selves'.

Many of the informants demanded and desired to be received and treated as equals. The degree of equality was defined in accordance with the Norwegianess. An example is Loreta's narrative, where she says that due to the media's portrayal she didn't feel as equal in Norwegian society: "But maybe because of this media coverage, of all these negative image of Lithuanian I feel sometimes myself that I am ... I mean, lower than this Norwegian. […]".

The feeling of inequality as illustrated above indicated the individual's insecurity in a society which is often related to the person's role or function in a society. The informants, who had a clear understanding of their functionality in society, felt themselves to be appreciated and valued members of the society. Let's take, for example, Edita's narrative. Her new employment position made her feel appreciated and equal, which gave meaning in her life:

> **Interviewer:** Happy with your job now?
> **Edita:** Yes, *now I feel in my own role;* now I feel that I am living in Norway. Because.... you can put it like this, it took me five years until I could stand on my own. Just so *to reach what I really want, that I would feel equal with Norwegians, that I wouldn't feel... I would feel sometimes... like I felt that I myself... you start appreciating yourself.* When you do only these basic works, and everyone is looking at you as if you don't manage anything, just to wash dishes... people are saying to you how nice you clean their houses, how well you iron their clothes and so on. I was always thinking that *I can do much more, that I am worth much more* than only this.

From this quotation we can see that, for Edita to clean houses and iron clothes was not seen as a worthy and fulfilling job. She did not feel that her qualities were fully employed, and therefore she didn't feel she was appreciated, nor equal with the rest of society. However, her new position, which can be categorized as an 'office job', made her feel better about herself. Edita feel equal with the Norwegians, as she puts it. Her desire to feel equal with the Norwegians and the need for appreciation of her qualities, speak about her desire to belong to Norwegian society. And the belonging to the society was perceived as an ultimate identity goal.

Tomas thought that the reciprocity in the relation between individual and society was an important aspect for feeling authentic in society: "I think you need to find your space, that you feel yourself well here, and that you would understand that this is both useful for you and for them, not to be only taking." The aspect of reciprocity is often explained through the individual's functionality in society, as illustrated in Edita's narrative above. The working environment became a place where the significant others, in their socialization with the Lithuanians, provided a Lithuanians with the new identity narrative. Take, for example, Robertas to whom a new job meant increased 'self' dignity:

> **Robertas:** […] *And they accepted me, the only foreigner there.* I am the only foreigner in that company. I mean I don't count Swedes as foreigners. But yes, I am the only foreigner; there is nobody else.
> **Interviewer:** How do you feel when you are the only foreigner there?
> **Robertas:** *I feel uplifted.... Really uplifted, because it means that somebody does recognize you.* And I really mean*, I feel like, when I need to say it to somebody, I feel like I am bragging.*

From this quotation we can see that getting the new job position for Robertas' meant that he was finally recognized as an important and worthy part of society. In addition to that, he felt special and unique because he is the only foreigner in the company. Robertas's desire to be recognized by his co-workers speaks about his desire to belong in society, and he succeeded by getting "accepted" as a part of the co-workers' team.

I would like to direct attention to Robertas's definition of the Swedes as not being foreigners, while perceiving himself as one. His surprise and gratitude at being accepted as the only foreigner speaks of a perceived normative understanding where foreigners usually are not or/and should not be accepted. The distinction of who is the foreigner clearly doesn't follow the national borders, but has a different definition, since the Lithuanians are understood as foreigners, while the Swedes are not. The similarity of the Swedish language to the Norwegian could be a definable variable for Robertas' perception that Swedes are unconditionally accepted as not foreigners. However, I must point out that Robertas' perception of a 'foreigner' resembles that of the media's: the classification of problematic vs. non-problematic EU citizens as discussed in paragraph 4.2.2.. In the analysis of the *'others' as threat or/and a problem* discourse, I pointed out that the media is classifying Lithuanians and Poles as Eastern Europeans with EU-passport, while Swedes and Germans are EU citizens. This implies that Lithuanians are to be understood as a lesser or non-legitimate EU citizens and as problematic. Based on this similarity of the media's representation of Lithuanians and Robertas' own perception of his identity as being potentially 'not so easy to accept', it can be implied that media may have influenced Robertas' perception of his position in the Norwegian society – causing him to think that the acceptance of a Lithuanian in the society is something unique and extraordinary.

Having a job where you feel appreciated and valued is definitely an important aspect in the lives of the Lithuanian minority. From the above quotations we could see that the option to

have a sound economy, and whichever job a person would like, also plays a role in defining the individuals' position in society. The appreciation and recognition which the informants felt they receive at their working place, signifies their integration into the institutional and social system. They felt and understood themselves as authentic citizens of Norwegian society. The possibility to have a job where one feels appreciated provides not only economic security, but also social belonging – ergo, stability in society. It is obvious that, for this study's informants is important of how they are perceived in the society, especially by their immediate social circles. On the other hand, the normative perception of the non-respectable, non-authentic, bad Lithuanian is understood to belong to '*Others' as a threat or/and a problem* media discourse (see paragraph 4.2.2.), and is referred to as a 'Media Lithuanians' in the informants' narratives.

The Lithuanians' functionality in Norwegian society ultimately became their identity signifier. In the context of interaction in the society, some of my informants stated clearly that their Lithuanianess was a less relevant, or irrelevant, identification variable for them. Instead, their functionality in society was seen as the aspect that should be perceived as their identity defining marker. For example, Vytautas insisted that it is not his Lithuanian identity that people see, but his functionality in the society:

> […]here [in Oslo] they are more interested in *what you are doing and not where you are from, like what is your profession, are you painting houses or are you some doctor*. This is important because then people get contact. Like OK, someone asks you where you are from, and you say you are from Guatemala, so and... I mean they don't really care where you are from. *They are interested in what you are doing, so that they can somehow relate.*

Tomas also had the same opinion:

> *The people don't welcome me as a Lithuanian; they welcome me as a Translator, or a Newspaperman or a Dishwasher, or a Postman, they welcome me in accordance to my function.* They are not welcoming me... like first encounter... of course they have these prejudices... but *I don't put on some identity clothes and walk around, as in now I will wash your floor as a Lithuanian.*

What is interesting to see in the above quotations from Vytautas and Tomas is that they both define themselves as those that 'other people see' – their functionality, and not their Lithuanian identity. Their insistence on being identified based on their functionality rather than their nationality speaks of a moment of comfort, where functionality is somewhat a

'more real' identity than the Lithuanian identity. This moment reflects Sartre's thoughts that individual is this, what he is seen to be by the others (1965: 97).

In Rimas' narrative we can also see that through his functionality he felt belonging in the society:

> **Interviewer:** Do you see yourself as a foreigner in this country?
> **Rimas:** As a foreigner...hm... what does it mean foreigner? I am a person that came to live and work in this country. […]But... *work is the same for everyone*. Number two is also number two in China.
> **Interviewer:** So you don't feel as a foreigner here?
> **Rimas:** I came… but... physically yes, maybe... how should I say it... if you need to wash... you know how I'll say it... it's from some book – *"ha ha ha, laughed the king in French". If you had washed the floor well, then you won't be able to say if it was a French, a Rumanian,* or… or if it's a foreigner, or a Norwegian. *Job is done*. […]

The aspect of the functionality in the society is obviously important when negotiating your identity. The informants refer to their work function as the indicator of their identity and position in the society. From Vytautas', Tomas' and Rimas' narratives we can see how emphasising the importance of functionality as an identity marker, makes the aspect of ethnic identity irrelevant.

The variable of functionality functions as a polarising unity which is able to integrate the character of Lithuanian, as well as Norwegian reality, without rejecting either of them. In this way Lithuanians can view themselves and be perceived by others in their social sphere as authentic individuals. The perceived cultural similarity between the two - 'host' and 'home' countries is also of vital importance in internalisation of social knowledge. And, finally, the informants' functionality-based authentic character is the main identification variable they use when negotiating their relation to the perceived image of 'Media Lithuanians'.

5.6. Summary

The aim of this chapter was to present and analyze the Lithuanian minority in Norway and their perception of the media representation of Lithuanianness. The data was viewed, understood and analyzed in the light of the theoretical perspective chosen for this study. In the

following paragraph, I will summarize the main findings of this study and present a short contextual discussion.

At the beginning of the chapter, I presented an aspect of Lithuanians' identity shift, as seen by the informants who had had lived in Norway for a longer period of time (eight to twenty years). The perceived identity shift presented several aspects. Apart from one informant, who felt safer with her Lithuanian identity now that people knew what and where Lithuania was, the main opinion was that the current perception of Lithuanian identity in Norway has increasingly negative connotations, and that, in their view, these changes occurred recently. At present these negative perceptions, as identified by the informants, are influenced by the media's exceptionally negative representation of Lithuanians in Norway.

Later in the analyses I showed that, there was agreement among all of the study informants: first, they thought that media's representations were mostly negatively charged, and, secondly, that media's representation of Lithuanians was not representative of them, or what they identified as the 'true image' of Lithuanians in Norway. As a result of the negative images, the study informants, in one way or another, found identification strategies which created a dichotomous distance between their 'Selves' and the 'Media Lithuanians'.

Two distinct ways of relating to the category of 'Media Lithuanians' could be observed in the identification strategies chosen by the informants. Some felt the need to somehow understand and include the media's portrayal of Lithuanians in their perceptions of their own Lithuanian identity. This often resulted in identity conflict, since the Lithuanian identity which they perceived, based on their socialization in Lithuania, did not match the identification of the Lithuanianess they were facing in Norway. The other informants completely rejected the 'Media Lithuanians' as any potential identification category.

As the study identified, the reason for such different identification approaches is due to the different aspects of the informants' social networks and the presence of significant others' in the informants' social life. The media was viewed as a vital provider of meaning. However, the stronger the presence and influence of the significant others in the informants' life were, the weaker was the media 'voice' in the informants' perception of social reality. Another interesting aspect which came up in the analyses is that the informants whose social network was of homogenously Lithuanian character were most likely to view the media's 'voice' as synonymous with society's opinion. The other informants, whose social network consisted of

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either heterogeneous or homogenously Norwegian character, saw media's 'voice' as not representative of the Norwegian society's opinion.

As a final observation, it should be said that the recognition and appreciation that the study informants felt in the Norwegian society enabled them to distance themselves from perceived ill-matched media representation of the Lithuanians in Norway. The result of the distancing from 'Media Lithuanians', as mentioned earlier, was variable due to the strength of the significant other's position in the informants' perception and negotiation of social reality.

The study further analyzed the social identification strategies which the study informants used in their everyday lives. Here it seemed that the result of variable strategizing in the society was strongly influenced by the dominant stereotypical prejudice perceptions of Lithuanian identity that the informants encountered in their social realities. These stereotypes, worth noting, were highly synonymous with the labelling that is dominant in the *'Others' as a threat or/and problem'* discourse, as presented in chapter four (paragraph 4.2.2.). In addition to this, informants themselves thought that the prejudice they encountered was due to the media's stereotypical portrayal of Lithuanians in Norway. The prejudice against the so-called 'Media Lithuanians', however, was felt by the informants only in first encounters with previously unknown individuals or groups. And people who knew informants previously did not receive them prejudicially, but rather in accordance with their functionality in the society – their jobs.

The study had showed that, in order to avoid the potentially negatively charged situations in the society, Lithuanians created an identification strategy which views the Lithuanian minority in Norway as a phantom minority. The elements of this particular strategy are based on dual identification approaches. The first one is that the informants were more eager to identify with categories that resembled or stood closer to the perceived majority identification; secondly, informants identified themselves outside the wider 'ethnic minorities' discourse. Here in particular, based on the perception of reality provided by the informants' significant others', the study informants identified categories as 'Muslim', 'Islam', 'dark skin', 'non-European', 'non-western', 'terrorism' as oppositional categories to their own identification of 'selves'. With this, informants identified their 'looking similar like Norwegian', 'whiteness' and the 'European identity', 'similar European culture' as suitable identification categories. In this way, they placed their position of identification closer to the

perceived majority's position, and further from the 'ethnic minorities' discourse, which is viewed by them as racially charged and problematic discourse.

The study also showed that, due to the Lithuanian phantom identity, the significant others in informants' life (often identified as co-workers), also had tendencies to view the study informants as not being representatives of the 'ethnic minorities' discourse. This influenced informants' view on how the category 'us' is defined and understood. In their view, the 'us' crowd is understood as the perceived majority, and Lithuanians as a minority, whose definition is close to that of the majority. The 'members' of the 'us' category seemingly found their common identification in opposition to the category of 'non-western', and often visually different, ethnic minorities. Due to such common identification, Lithuanians were perceived as less artificial and rather more authentic members of the society.

Finally in the study, I addressed how informants of the study used their functionality in society as an identification strategy – how they could distance themselves from the ethnic Lithuanian identity, and in this way change their potential need to relate to the 'Media Lithuanians' category in their daily lives. The analyses of the data showed that the informants' functionality in society was seen by informants themselves, as well as by their significant others, as a more valuable identification category than that of the 'ethnic Lithuanian'. However, as I pointed out in the study, such distancing from the Lithuanian identity is caused by the negatively perceived Lithuanians identity in Norway, as presented by the public media in Norway, rather than by the informants' intentional desire to denounce their Lithuanianess.

To summarise the discussion, it could be said that the phantom identity, which study informants, in one way or another, used in their reality negotiations, made informants' life easier on several aspects. First, due to their physical invisibility, informants could avoid stereotypical and prejudice encounters in the society. Secondly, due to the phantom identity, Lithuanians were perceived as a part of the in-crowd – the 'us', by their significant others. This made it easier for Lithuanians to see themselves as belonging to the new society and living meaningful and fulfilling social lives. Because of their stable social position, the Lithuanian identity, which informants perceived to be stereotypical and based on media representations, became less relevant for their identity identification.

The illustration bellow visualises the allegiances that Lithuanians relate to in their social realities and are influential in their identity projects. From this we can see how these study informants counter-identify with 'Media Lithuanians' and non-western minorities, as well as keep the distance from the Lithuanian diaspora in Norway. When negotiating their identities they reciprocally include interpretations of the social sphere from their home country to apply the Norwegian social context.
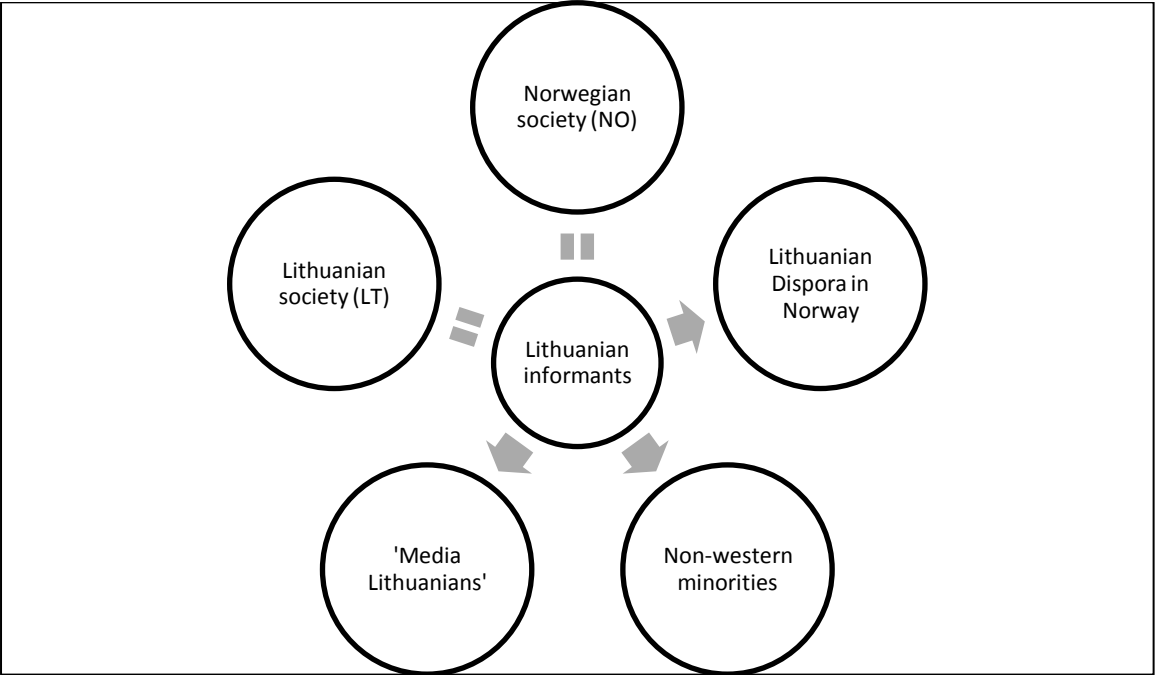
CHAPTER 6: Conclusion

6.1. The question of Lithuanian identity and media

Gullestad once wrote that, "One way to be powerless is to be missing both control over own life and confirmation of own dignity. The fight against the powerlessness can be a struggle to be seen and recognized, and to be an acting subject. Another way to be powerless, which is often intertwined with the first one, is to lack the concepts and models to understand the social world, that one is both related to and a part of. The fight against the powerlessness is a struggle to achieve the kind of knowledge that makes it possible to take in the new subject positions and go from the inability to act, to the act. None the less, it is about ones ability to tell and conceptualize own experiences."[38] (2002: 143).

The informant's identity strategies revealed in this study can in many ways be seen as a battle against the disempowerment that the discourse of 'Media Lithuanians' obscured. All the identification strategies, addressed and analyzed in Chapter 5, present in detail the complexity of the process of identity maintenance.

The study was started with the premise that identity is created in the dialogical relation between the social individual and society, where both parties are influencing each other. I supported my view with the social constructionist theories of Berger & Luckmann (1991[1966]), Sartre's (1965) contemplations on internalization, as well as Guignon's (2004) view of authenticity as a social virtue. In this picture, the media role as constructor of reality and maintenance is inevitable since, through its daily mediations of reality, the media helps to construct and maintain the pool of meanings which are being recycled in society. In this perspective, the question of Lithuanians' perception of the media's influence for their identity project has a positive conclusion.

The study showed that the perception and definition of Lithuanian identity is in the 'eye of the beholder' – the parties involved in the interpretation and negotiation of it. In informants' own interpretations of media representations, Lithuanian identity in the media is portrayed as consisting of criminals, robbers, bandits, murderers, prostitutes, and occasionally cheap labour providers. This view, as I indicated in the study, almost synonymously coheres with the dominant media discourse about Lithuanians, which views Lithuanian citizens in Norway as

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[38] My translation.

criminals and abusers of the welfare system, and of the society at large. On the other hand, the informants' personal negotiations of their social identities are often defined in oppositional relation to the perceived media representations of Lithuanians.

The process of socialization is dialectical, and all elements of externalization, objectivation and internalization interact simultaneously. Internalization of knowledge and social positioning is created through social interaction with the social context and different discourses involved in it. In the negotiation of Lithuanian minority' identity in Norwegian society, two main discourses influenced the outcome.

Firstly, in relation to popularly known images of Lithuanians in Norway, as perceived by the informants, Lithuanians cannot avoid creating identification strategies which in one way or another negotiate the existence of 'Media Lithuanians' in their social reality. The result, as this study showed, is that the informants developed counter-identification strategies. In their own negotiations of media perception, Lithuanians created a dichotomous relationship between themselves and the 'Media Lithuanians', indicating that these categories are distinctly different and should not be perceived similarly.

Secondly, Lithuanians' identity and position were influenced by the general 'ethnic minorities' discourse. When it came to Lithuanians' further identification in society, informants perceived that first encounters usually resulted in experiences of negatively-charged prejudice from individuals that perceived them as representatives of 'Media Lithuanians'. In these situations, the study informants usually employed their social and cultural capital as the tools of defence against being compared with the 'Media Lithuanians'. One such cultural tool was their phantom identity. The Lithuanian minority employed their visual and cultural similarities to the perceived majority position as a strategy of defence against the stereotypical encounters and perceptions, and also as a strategy of inclusion into the majority 'crowd'. In doing this, informants used the 'ethnic minority' discourse in their arguments for why they should not be perceived as the rest of the ethnic minorities in Norway, which in their view is understood as cultural and social 'problem'. Here in particular, the labels of 'European', 'western', and 'whiteness' were used in order to portray their own identity and position as being closer to the majority's.

In conclusion, it should be said that this particular group of Lithuanians, through active counter-identification with the 'Media Lithuanians' discourse and the 'non-western

minorities' discourse, created identification strategies designed to assimilate their ethnic character into the perceived majority character. In this process, the informants employed their phantom identity, based on physical invisibility and cultural similarity, as well as their social functionality, as the variable defining their identity.

6.2. Methodological contemplations and future study suggestions

In this study, I both examined the media coverage of the Lithuanian minority in Norway and conducted qualitative research investigating the informants' own perceptions of, and reactions to media portrayal of Lithuanians in Norway.

The reason I chose to examine the media coverage prior to presenting the interview analyses is because I felt it necessary to make available knowledge of the phenomena that the study informants were reflecting upon. The data collected in the media content analyses allowed me to reflect on the similarities and discrepancies in the informants' perceptions of media portrayal as well as on the actual media coverage of Lithuanians in Norway. Of such similarities could be mentioned the dominant consensus among the informants that the Norwegian media portrays Lithuanians as criminals. However, the other discourses which media content analyses portrayed, such as *resourceful members* and *colourful community* discourses, were invisible in the informants' negotiations of media's portrayal of Lithuanians in Norway.

However, in the course of the study I feel that the research lacked a perspective which ethnographic fieldwork could have provided. Often during the interviews with the informants, as well as in the actual analyses of the collected qualitative data, I felt the lack of information concerning informants' actual use of the media. I did address the media uses in the interviews, however, the informants answers were inconsistent to be able to make any analytical assumptions. The general view showed that most of informants were using public media inconsistently and passively. The qualitative data that I collected did not provide enough information on what media informants primarily used, and how often, why they chose this media, how they used it and how often, and in which contexts media were used. I believe that closer analyses of the actual media usage could have provided this study with greater insight in how the informants actually gained their information about the media coverage of Lithuanians, and to which degree their social interactions with networks of significant others had an influence in their reality perception. I view the qualitative data collected for this study

as valid and reliable data. However, sometimes I felt the lack of variations to counter analyse and test the collected data. Due to the lack of actual observations of the informants' everyday practice, which ethnographic fieldwork could have provided, I was not able to test their reliability of the utterances against their actual social practices. This could be potentially addressed in future studies regarding ethnic minorities' perceptions and negotiations of media representation of them.

The area which this study does not include, but which was to a limited degree captured by the data, is the existing and reoccurring social class structures in the Lithuanian diaspora in Norway. Some informants viewed that their social status increased by gaining an academic degree from Norwegian education institutions; others explained that they had solid social positions in Lithuania and lost these when they came to Norway. However, there was a dominant consensus among the informants that they felt 'class free' in the Norwegian social democracy, something they highly valued. According to them, the freedom they felt in Norway was not primarily due to increased economic stability, but to the cultural and social freedom – a possibility to study what you want, possibility to have a job you want, and expression of social freedom which is unlimited by the cultural dogmas. An example of such freedom are Sonata's contemplations on her being a foreigner in Norway: "[...] but I think sometimes that I actually like being a foreigner. Because I am not assigned this... I can always refresh myself, and I am allowed to do so, according to the socially set norms. I can afford much more than, let's say, a Norwegian in Norway or a Lithuanian in Lithuania." My suggestion for the future studies would be to look closer into the Lithuanians' class 'movement', or class 'freedom', and potential hierarchy systems between the Lithuanians who stayed longer and shorter periods of time in Norway. The area which can be interesting to study here is the difference between the arguments why Lithuanians chose to migrate from Lithuania to Norway, and arguments why Lithuanians decide to stay in Norway. My hypothesis would be that people who do not see the value of cultural and social freedom chose to not stay in Norway.

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APPENDIX 1: Norwegian Social Science Data Service - NSD.

Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste AS
NORWEGIAN SOCIAL SCIENCE DATA SERVICES

Ragnar Waldahl
Institutt for medier og kommunikasjon
Universitetet i Oslo
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nsd@nsd.uib.no
www.nsd.uib.no
Org.nr. 985 321 884

Vår dato: 07.08.2009	Vår ref: 22351 / 2 / RKH	Deres dato:	Deres ref:

TILRÅDING AV BEHANDLING AV PERSONOPPLYSNINGER

Vi viser til melding om behandling av personopplysninger, mottatt 27.07.2009. Meldingen gjelder prosjektet:

22351	*Don't care what others think of you. Perception of mediated Lithuanian identity by Lithuanian minorities in Norway*
Behandlingsansvarlig	*Universitetet i Oslo, ved institusjonens øverste leder*
Daglig ansvarlig	*Ragnar Waldahl*
Student	*Vita Melinauskaite*

Personvernombudet har vurdert prosjektet, og finner at behandlingen av personopplysninger vil være regulert av § 7-27 i personopplysningsforskriften. Personvernombudet tilrår at prosjektet gjennomføres.
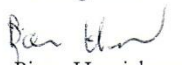
Personvernombudets tilråding forutsetter at prosjektet gjennomføres i tråd med opplysningene gitt i meldeskjemaet, korrespondanse med ombudet, eventuelle kommentarer samt personopplysningsloven/-helseregisterloven med forskrifter. Behandlingen av personopplysninger kan settes i gang.

Det gjøres oppmerksom på at det skal gis ny melding dersom behandlingen endres i forhold til de opplysninger som ligger til grunn for personvernombudets vurdering. Endringsmeldinger gis via et eget skjema, http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvern/forsk_stud/skjema.html. Det skal også gis melding etter tre år dersom prosjektet fortsatt pågår. Meldinger skal skje skriftlig til ombudet.

Personvernombudet har lagt ut opplysninger om prosjektet i en offentlig database, http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvern/prosjektoversikt.jsp.

Personvernombudet vil ved prosjektets avslutning, 31.08.2010, rette en henvendelse angående status for behandlingen av personopplysninger.

Vennlig hilsen

Bjørn Henrichsen   Ragnhild Kise Haugland

Kontaktperson:Ragnhild Kise Haugland tlf: 55 58 83 34
Vedlegg: Prosjektvurdering
Kopi: Vita Melinauskaite, Trimveien 6 - H0117, 0372 OSLO

APPENDIX 2: Information letter

Dear Participant,
My name is Vita Melinauskaite . I'm a student at the Institute for Media and Communication at the University of Oslo - where now I'm writing my master thesis, which has the title: **"Don't care what others think of you. Perception of mediated Lithuanian identity by Lithuanian minority in Norway."**

I have been living in Norway for over 8 years, and I have personally experiences variation of reactions because of my Lithuanian heritage, and on many occasions was a witness to other Lithuanians' stories regarding their experiences in Norway. This has inspired me to further examine the development of Lithuanian identity here in Norway.

The overall aim of this research project is to examine Lithuanian minority in Norway and their perception of 'self'-identity. I would like to look into how Lithuanians perceive themselves in Norway; how they think that Norwegian media and others in Norwegian society perceive them. What experiences do Lithuanians have of such understanding. Do we think that the image of Lithuanians that is present in the public life in Norway is representative or not, and in which way.

I hope that my master thesis may lead to a better understanding of Lithuanian minority everyday life and challenges in host country. I hope that you will be able to provide your opinion and experience regarding your private experience of 'Lithuanianess' in Norway and public debate of Lithuanian ethnic identity.

Research study will include private professional interviews lasting for one to three hours. The location for the interviews can be freely chosen by you.

It's voluntary to take part in the project and you can stop participating at any stage if you wish.

All the information I get will be treated confidentially. The research is approved by Personvernombudet for research at the Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD). All the recordings of the interviews will be destroyed after the project is completed. The project is planned to be completed by August 2010. I have professional secrecy and all the information I get during my project will be treated according to it.

The supervisor for my master project is Professor Elisabeth Eide at CULCOM - Cultural complexity in the new Norway, Oslo University. She can be contacted by email *****.

If you have any questions regarding this project, please take contact with me or my supervisor. I'm available by telephone *****, or by email ***** .

I would like to thank you in advance for helping me with this project.
Best regards,
Vita Melinauskaite

APPENDIX 3: Informed consent

Informed consent given by the participant for the interview.

I am willing to participate in the interview conducted by Vita Melinauskaite.

The interview is conducted in relation to research project named "Don't care what others think of you. Perception of mediated Lithuanian identity by Lithuanian minority in Norway."

I have been informed that participation in this project is voluntary, and that I can stop participating at any stage**.**

I hereby permit this interview.

Participant's name:

………………………………………………………………………………..

Date………………………….Signature…………………………………..

Interviewer's name:

Vita Melinauskaite

Date………………………….Signature…………………………………..

APPENDIX 4: Interview guide

1. **Home and host country trajectories**

   1.1. How long have you been living here?

   1.2. How old are you?

   1.3. Where from Lithuania are you?

   1.4. What is your education from Lithuanian?

   1.5. What was your job in Lithuania?

   1.6. When and why did you come to Norway?

   1.7. How did you learn Norwegian language? Did you take language exam?

   1.8. Do you have Norwegian nationality? Why? Would you like to get Norwegian nationality? Why?

   1.9. Did you study anything in Norway? What? Why?

   1.10. Do you have job? What do you do? How long?

   1.11. Do you have family members in Norway?

   1.12. Have you considered possibility to stay in Norway for good?

2. **Interpretive community/culture**

   2.1. What nationalities have your immediate circle of friends? Why are they your friends?

   2.2. Would you like to have more Lithuanian friends? Why?

   2.3. Would you like to have more Norwegian friends? Why?

   2.4. Are you member of any Lithuanians' in Norway unions or other types of organizations? If so, where and why? If not, why?

   2.5. Do you participate in activities organized by Lithuanians associations in Norway? Why? (What do you get of it?)

   2.6. Are you interested in Lithuanian politics? Did you vote in elections?

   2.7. Are you interested in Lithuanian politics?

3. **Social uses of media**

   3.1. What kind of media do you usually use in your everyday practices?

   3.2. What do you like to watch on TV here in Norway? Why?

   3.3. Do you watch any Lithuanian TV? Where/How do you access? Why do you watch/not? What do you watch/not?

   3.4. Do you discuss the news with friends, family, and acquaintances? What do you discuss/not?

   3.5. What interest you more – domestic or international news? Why?

   3.6. What internet websites do you usually visit?(Norwegian/Lithuanian)

   3.7. Do you read Lithuanian/Norwegian newspapers? How and where do you get it? What interest you?

   3.8. Do you miss Lithuanian media? Why?

4. **Opinions**

   4.1. What do you think is general opinion about Lithuanians in Norway?

   4.2. How would you describe Lithuanian in Norway?

4.3. Is it important for you personally what other people think about Lithuanians in Norway? Why?

4.4. Did it ever happen that you didn't want to say that you were from Lithuania?

4.5. What are the most common reactions of people, when they get to know that you are from Lithuania?

4.6. Have you ever experienced that people reacted negatively to you because you are Lithuanian?

4.7. Have you heard from other Lithuanians that they encountered negative reactions because they were Lithuanians?

4.8. What would you say is the most common misunderstanding regarding Lithuanians in Norway? Why?

4.9. Would you like to do something so to influence opinion about Lithuanians?

5. Media representation

5.1. What do you think about what Norwegian media is writing about Lithuanians?

5.2. Could you mention recent articles you saw in the media about Lithuanians in Norway?

5.3. What do you think about media coverage of Lithuanians in Norway?

5.4. Does this, what media write about Lithuanian, influence your position in society?

5.5. How do you think media should represent Lithuanians in Norway?

5.6. Are there other factors than media that are influencing negative reaction about Lithuanians?

6. Being Lithuanian in Norway - minority label

6.1. How would you describe your national belonging? Are you more Lithuanian or Norwegian?

6.2. How would you describe Norwegians and Norwegian culture?

6.3. Do you feel integrated into Norwegian society? How? Why?

6.4. What does it mean to be integrated?

6.5. Is it important for you to feel integrated in Norwegian society?

6.6. What do you think is general opinion about foreigners in this country?

6.7. Do you see yourself as foreigner in comparison to other foreigners?

6.8. Have you ever wanted to pretend that you are not a foreigner but Norwegian? Why?

6.9. Does it have influence for your life in Norway that you are white?

7. Last but not least

7.1. What do you think will be Lithuanian's future in Norway?

7.2. How do you see your future in this country?

APPENDIX 5: The profile of the informants

Informant 1 (female): Saulė is 30 years old. She has been living in Norway for 6 years. She came to Norway to work as an Au-pair with the further goal to study in the country. She has two BA degrees, one from Lithuania and one from Norway. When I met her she had a temporary position for one year in the public sector.

Informant 2 (female): Sonata is 32 years old. She has been living in Norway for 8 years. She came as a tourist, but stayed because she met many people with common interests. She has a BA degree from Lithuania. She lives with her Norwegian boyfriend. When I met her she had a part time job related to her profession.

Informant 3 (female): Giedrė is 29 years old. She has been living in Norway for 7 years. She came to Norway to work as an Au-pair with the further goal to study in the country. She has two BA degrees, one from Lithuania and one from Norway. She is a MA student at the University of Oslo.

Informant 4 (female): Loreta is 29 years old. She has been living in Norway for 7 years. She came to Norway to work as an Au-pair. She has a BA degree from Lithuania. She is a BA student at University of Oslo.

Informant 5 (female): Jurgita is 36 years old. She has been living in Norway for 5 years. She is an economic migrant. She has a high school diploma from Lithuania. She is employed as a cook in the private sector.

Informant 6 (female): Edita is 28 years old. She has been living in Norway for 8 years. She came to Norway to work as an Au-pair with the goal to earn money so to be able to continue with her studies in Lithuania. She has a BA degree from Lithuania, and an accountant course certificate from Norway. She is employed as an accountant in a private sector.

Informant 7 (female): Ieva is 37 years old. She has been living in Norway for 13 years. She came to Norway as an exchange student first and then as a full time student. She has a BA degree from Lithuania and a MA degree from Norway. She is married to a Lithuanian and has three children. At the time I met her, she was working on her PhD project.

Informant 8 (female): Rimantė is 32 years old. She has been living in Norway for 8 years. She came to Norway as an economic migrant. She has a diploma from vocational school in Lithuania. She is taking a BA degree and has a part time job as a native (Lithuanian) language teacher.

Informant 9 (male): Robertas is 25 years old. He has been living in Norway for 5 years. He came to Norway as an economic migrant. He has a high school diploma from Lithuania, and finished vocational school in Norway. He lives with his Lithuanian girlfriend. He is employed as a trainee constructor in the private sector.

Informant 10 (male): Tomas is 46 years old. He has been living in Norway for 20 years. He came to Norway in relation to his job in Lithuania, and stayed. He has two BA degrees, one from Lithuania and one from Norway. He works as freelance in relation to his education.

Informant 11 (male): Vytautas is 30 years old. He has been living in Norway for 8 years. He came to Norway first as a tourist, and stayed here as a student. He has a BA degree from Norway. He lives with his Norwegian wife, and has one child. At the time I met him he was finishing MA studies and working freelance in relation to his education.

Informant 12 (male): Rimas is 38 years old. He has been living in Norway for 5 years. He came to Norway as an economic migrant. He has BA degree from Lithuania. He has one child from a previous marriage, who lives in Lithuania. He is employed as a caretaker in the private sector.

APPENDIX 6: Original media texts used in media content analyses

Klassekampen, (2008). "Tung soning". *Klassakampen,* **15 July 2008.**

"I fjor slo Dagbladet stort opp om en litauer som soner «straff» i Norge. «Jeg har aldri hatt det bedre,» kunne han fortelle, og avisa lar leserne sitte igjen med inntrykket av utenladske kjeltringer stortrives i norske fengsler."

Aftenposten Morgen, (2009). "Ung hornist vant 100 000". *Aftenposten Morgen***, 13 May 2009.**

"[…] født i Litauen, men bosatt i Norge siden 2005, ble i forrige uke kåret til vinner av årets ConocoPhillips musikkstipend […]"

Klassekampen, (2008). "Næringslivet trenger". *Klassekampen***, 03 July 2008.**

"Uten bygningsarbeidere fra Litauen og Polen ville mange norske byggeprosjekter stoppe opp."

Jostein, V., Rye, J.F. & Reidar Almås, (2009). "Timeløn:45 kroner". *Aftenposten Morgen,* **11 May 2009.**

"Sosial dumping. Når overgangsordningane nå har gått ut, kan timelønningar ned mot femtilappen bli ein realitet for mange arbeidsinnvandrare som arbeider i det norske landbruket[…] Det siste året kom mot 30 000 utanlandske arbeidarar til det norske landsbruket, dei fleste frå Polen og Litauen.[…]No fryktar mange at opphevinga av overgangsordningane vil føre til lønnsdumping."

Vestbø, H.S., (2009). "Baltiske arbeidarar går utan løn". *Klassekampen,* **05 March 2009.**

"[…]15 litauiske bygningsarbeidarar hadde arbeidd fleire månader utan løn på prosjektet Ringnes Park. […]Det byrjar å bli ganske vanleg at utalandske arbeidarar utan løn dukkar opp, seier Jonas Bals, ombod for baltiske arbeidarar i Oslo Bygningsarbeiderforening."

Haavardsholm, E. (2008). "Indisier". *Klassekampen,* **20 December 2008.**

"I 2006 ble en tjuetre år gammel litauer i Orkanger, på en jobb som hans norske arbeidskamerater nektet å befatte seg med, trukket inn i en mobil barkemaskin og drept. En beklagelig arbeidsulykke, var den offisielle forklaringen. Og nå I førjulsstria: Felles for de katastrofebrannene I hybelbygget i Drammen og i det gamle ombygde nonneklosteret i Urtegata på Grønland i Oslo, er at de som brant inne gjennomgående var ikke-norske av opprinnelse. [...]Hva er mønsteret i sånne tragedier? Er det for tidlig å innlemme dem I det bildet som kom til syne da den utenlandsk utseende adoptivgutten ble jaget i Sogndalselva og Benjamin Hermansen ble stukket ned på Holmlia? [...]La oss derfor bruke jula til å tenke gjennom om vi – der vi bor og jobber – i vår skandinaviske sjølrettferdighet kvier oss for å se omfanget av norsk fremmedfrykt og hat?"

Hultgreen, G., (2008). "Begynte å kutte av arm". *Dagbladet,* **06 August 2008**

"litauer-drapet i Nordre Frogn kan knyttes direkte til en tungt belastet kriminelt miljø."

Nygaard, F., (2009). "Narkolanger fri etter politi-tabbe – Årets jule-gave". *VG,* **16 May 2009**

"Den løslatte litaueren skal være en del av et narkotikanettverk på Sørlandet."

Tangnes, R.M.J., (2009). "Kamp på liv og død om prostitusjonsmiljøet". *Dagbladet,* **15 January 2009.**

"Etter hva Dagbladet kjenner til skyldes oppgjøret idet litauiske prostitusjonsmiljøet [...] Målet til de litauiske gjerningsmennene skal ha vært å ta over og styre prostitusjonsmiljøet i Oslo."

NTB, (2008). "Banken opp og dratt inn i bil". *Aftenposten Morgen***, 15 December 2008.**

"For få måneder siden ble en litauer kraftig banket opp før han fikk klippet av en finger i et internt oppgjør i det litauiske eksilmiljøet."

VG (2009). "Dop flommen". *VG,* **03 March 2009.**

"[…]amfetamin ofte produsert i laboratorier i Øst-Europa. Flere saker har vært rullet opp, men nettverkene lever videre. […]Litauere kontrollerer store deler av salgskjeden selv, tror politiet. De opererer som bakmenn, førstemottagere og selger ut. Store på amfetamin og piller."

Foss, A., & Tone Tveøy Strøm-Gundersen, (2008). "Omsetter narkotika for milliarder i Norge". *Aftenposten Morgen,* **14 September 2008.**

"Polen og Litauen hovedleverandører av amfetamin. […]Politiet på Sørlandet har avdekket et nettverk som omsatte store mengder amfetamin fra Litauen. En litauer bosatt i Norge var sentralt agent.[…]Og nettverkene får god hjelp til å spre varene av personer fra samme land og samme sted som alt er i Norge, for eksempel polakker og litauere som har arbeidsopphold. […]Litauen pekes av flere ut som hovedleverandør av amfetamin til Norge."

VG, (2008). "Proffe multikriminelle". *VG,* **23 October 2008.**

"Norsk politi står overfor et stort og økende innslag av utenlandske og godt organiserte bander som driver med vinningskriminalitet, menneskehandel, narkotikaomsetning og dokumentforfalskning. Dette sier politioverbetetjent Anne Gustafson i Kripos. Hun koordinerer norsk politis kamp mot det som i politiet kalles mobil vinningskriminalitet. – Det oppsto først etter EU-utvidelse i 2004 mot øst, da fikk vi et innslag av polakker og litauere som kom."

Johansen, P.A. & Emma Tollersrud, (2009). "Polakkene skal fristes hjem – Gunstige ordninger på vei". *Aftenposten Morgen,* **04 April 2009.**

"Arbeids- og inkluderingsminister Dag Terje Andersen vil få flere polakker, litauere og andre arbeidsinnvandrere til å vende hjem, i stedet for å bli gående på norsk trygd. […] 7500 EU-borgere, har meldt seg som arbeidsledige i Norge i mars. Polakkene er største gruppe med 3651 ledige. Deretter kommer svensker (1178), tyskere (709), litauere (521), og latviere (393)."

Johansen, P.A., (2009). "Skjerper kontroll med polakker". *Aftenposten Morgen,* **31 March 2009.**

"En av fem polakker som mottok dagpenger er mistenkt for trygdejuks. 15 risikerer nå politi-anmeldelse. I løpet av kort tid er antallet dagpengemottagere fra blant annet Polen og Litauen femdoblet. Nå skjerper Nav kontrollen av polakker og litauere som mottar ytelsene og sjekker at de faktisk bor i Norge og er på aktiv leting etter arbeid."

Johansen, P.A., (2009). "Utlendinger på dagpenger – 1400 polakker er registrert som ledige hos Nav". *Aftenposten Morgen,* **26 January 2009.**

"Finanskrisen fører til at 870 polakker, litauere og andre østeuropeere med EU-pass går nå på arbeidsledighetstrygd fra Nav. Finanskrisen og dårlige tider i byggebransjen fører nå til en kraftig økning i antall østeuropeere som lever på dagpenger fra den norske stat. […] Ifølge EØS-reglene har polakkene, litauerne, esterne og andre østeuropeere med EU-pass krav på trygd i Norge dersom de har vært i full, sammenhengende jobb i ett år her i landet."

Christiansen, A., (2008). "Eventyr på nesen i naturen regi". *Aftenposten Morgen,* **22 Juni 2008.**

"Den litauiske sjerne-regissøren Oskaras Korsunovas takket ja på grunn av Jon Fosse. Fosse takket ja på grunn av Korsunovas. Resultatet blir en kunstnerisk folkefest til 21 millioner kroner."

Reistad, P., (2008). "Reddende engler". *Aftenposten Morgen,* **06 August 2008.**

"Du har nok sett dem. De er overalt. De tjener vårt samfunn. Tjener vårt land. De gjør alle skittjobber vi ikke vil gjøre. Hva skulle vi gjort uten dem? Du har sikkert observert alle arbeidsinnvandrere som de siste årene det bare er blitt flere og flere her til lands. […] Disse menneskene kommer i stor grad fra Polen, men blant dem finner vi også svensker, tyskere og litauere. De drar hit med ett formål, å ta våre skittjobber, oppvasken vår. […] nærmest på samlebånd mottar vi entusiastisk, villig og billig arbeidskraft."

Valvik, M. E. & Larsen Marius Mørch (2008). "Ble oppsagt og sendt hjem. – Utenlandske arbeidstagere rammes først." *Aftenposten Morgen,* **10.11.2008.**

"Vi måtte bo i en campingvogn uten vann og toalett. Når det ble kaldt, var det ulevelig der […]"

NTB, (2008). "Nekter straffskyld for drap på litauer". *Aftenposten Morgen,* **21.07.2008.**

"-Det var et kort avhør, hvor min klient har forklart at han ikke var delaktig i de handlingene han er siktet for […]"

Ziburkute, R., (2009). "En litauisk stemme". *Aftenposten Morgen*, **11 August 2009.**

"Positivt om Litauen. Det er lenge siden det sto å lese noe positivt om Litauen. […] Så hva får vi høre? Det er mange treff på «kriminelle litauere», rumenere og polakker. De nye EU-borgerne som var billig arbeidskraft, forvandler seg til et velferdproblem idet finanskrisen inntreffer. Det polariserende lyset fra mediene setter norske trygdemottagere opp mot østeuropeiske arbeidsledige i en velkjent splitt-og-hersk tradisjon. Da stemples vi som trygdejegere. Men har noen brydd seg om å dybdeintervjue dem det gjelder? […] Stian Bromark advarer mot å definere hele nasjonen som kriminelle og spissformulere seg om østeuropeerne som de nye pakistanere. Et godt poeng. Min første reaksjon på Aftenpostens overskrift «Østeuropeere rundstjeler oss» var harme, som gikk over i skuffelse da ingen av de litauiske interesseorganisasjoner ble bedt om en reaksjon. Da de norske motstemmene kom på banen, følte jeg meg som en treåring som foreldre krangler over hodet på. Som en del av det norske samfunnet har vi faktisk et ansvar for å nyansere dette bildet selv. Med dette utfordrer jeg mine landsmenn, som har en annen historie å fortelle, til å gi seg til kjenne."