

## Government-Community Conflict: the Lithuanian Public Governance Challenge

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**Abstract.** *Over the past decade Lithuanian government has undertaken a series of steps at reforming public administration. Particularly notable are initiatives attempting to increase citizen participation in local policy inspired by the New Public Governance ideology and EU subsidiarity principle. A range of tools have been introduced to aid local community formation and participation. However, both the communities and municipalities (which ended up managing these instruments) transcended the intended roles set out for them by these schemes and have taken a on a life of their own. This often leads to resistance to government policy initiatives rather than participation.*

**Keywords:** *local communities, local self-government, instruments of new public governance, participation of civil society*

**Raktažodžiai:** *vietos bendruomenės, vietos savivalda, naujojo viešojo valdymo priemonės, piliečių dalyvavimas.*

### Introduction

Over the past years Lithuanian government has instituted numerous instruments aimed at attempting to increase citizen participation in public policy formulation and implementation which primarily are concentrated at the municipal level and a specific form of Citizen Associations: local communities. However, there is a perception put forward in the media that the government is not responsive to the demands and/or needs of the citizens or, to that matter, local communities. Various consultation tools are presented as a means of rubber stamping already set policy decisions. While on the other hand civil servants complain of citizen passivity or even irrational resistance to new projects based on no more than ‘not in my back yard’ arguments. Every so often a local community organizes itself in confrontation to one or the other government initiative and then the problems of responsiveness to citizen demands come to the fore.

The purpose of this article is to present analyse government (primarily municipal) and civil society (communities) interaction in Lithuania. In the first part of this article

two cases of local communities are presented. Both communities originated in reaction to municipal policy. This analysis enabled us to see whether the narrative in the media, or the one presented by the government is more plausible regarding citizen participation. The second part of article focuses on the review of the local community self-government program and the development and role of local communities in scientific literature.

### **Two Cases of Local Communities in Action: Successful Confrontation and Failed Cooperation**

According to L. Lobao and D. Kraybill [11], over the past two decades local governments have been assuming greater responsibility for economic development, provision of social programs and public services. In recent years civil society organizations have become increasingly vocal and active in various policy processes. One of their vehicles is media which is usually employed by civil society organizations as a means of pressuring government. Here is a description of two cases where local communities managed to draw the attention of the media in their attempt to influence policy. And in both cases the initial community formation was spurred by what was seen as inept policy making that directly impacted the residents.

The first case relates to the Pilaitė community. Pilaitė is a suburb of Vilnius on its western end with roughly 30,000 residents. It is characterized by a mixture of single family homes and apartment blocks that were mostly built since 1990. The area lies separated by a strip of forest from the rest of the city. It remains one of the main areas of new city developments both in terms of building new apartment blocks and single family homes. Consequently Pilaitė demographics are characterized by a comparatively large proportion of middle-class young families. A local community here formed long before the government schemes for their participation were introduced. And its formation was the reaction of local residents to the idea of developing a nearly 300 acre (120 hectare) golf fields by cutting down the local forest. The story escalated into a public scandal primarily because the municipality took the decision to change the land use without public consultations and prior notice required by law. A small group of residents initiated the registration of local community association (LCA). Its mission statement: “sustainability of relation between nature and humans, life in an ecologically intact environment for all, not just few”(!) [6]. This ecological ideology remains the core part of the identity of the community despite its activities spreading into all fields of local self-governance. The idea to develop golf fields in Vilnius can be traced back to 1998 [10] when the municipality agreed to begin planning of the golf courses in the area. But in 1999 the municipal directorate designated the area to become a park. Nonetheless, in a few years following this decision the new mayor revitalized the idea of the golf fields and in 2001 the municipality declared a public tender to invest into the area. After the tender was complete and the municipality signed the deal with the winner, the procedure ran

into an outstanding legal issue: the land was leased to the city by the state.<sup>1</sup> The decision to lease the forest did not envisage its use as a golf course. Furthermore the detailed area plan agreed between the developer and the municipality included residential buildings which are not allowed to be built neither in forests, nor parks or golf courses.

Before Pilaitė LCA was formed the reassigning land use would've been considered a formality which needed only the national government's decision on changing the provisions of the lease. Pilaitė LCA had its beginnings when one of the residents read in the local newspapers an article about this investment project in Spring, 2002. With the help of local deputy elder<sup>2</sup> some active residents managed to invite the representatives of the city municipality and the tender winning company. The development plan that was produced included cutting down most of the forest and a construction of 100 objects. Both of these were seen as unacceptable to the residents. Pilaitė LCA contacted their member of parliament with a request to collect information whether the investment project is legal. The questions of illegality because the large number of objects that were planned to be constructed were suspected to be private housing, which cannot be built on public land.

Pilaitė LCA hit the ground running and with active help from the national green movement managed to organize multiple protest actions near the municipality (on one occasion a council member brought in placards protesting the pending decision of approving the detailed area development plan), the Government office (protesting the pending decision to change the land lease provisions), Presidential Palace, Ministry of Agriculture (which was tasked to prepare the new lease agreement). The LCA representatives went on to participate in a debate show on national T.V.<sup>3</sup> and got broad coverage in the national media in general. By the end of 2002 the state prosecutor's office indicted the municipality for signing an illegal agreement; the Pilaitė LCA was recognized as a plaintiff. In January 2003 m. the court found the agreement between the municipality and the developer to be invalid in part of the future development that in the area of the leased forest. The developers then revoked their plans altogether. At the time of writing this article the forest was intact, but also unmanaged for recreational use either.

The other illustration comes from Ukmergė, a small town of about 30,000 residents some 45 miles to the north-west of the capital. The economy and the population of the town have been on a sharp decline since mid-1990s. Caused by the fact that the town was highly industrialized during the period of Soviet occupation and

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<sup>1</sup> In Lithuania public land may only be owned by the state and only by lease can it be passed on to be managed by municipalities.

<sup>2</sup> In Lithuania municipalities may be subdivided into elderships, which are territorial offices of municipalities tasked with supervising municipal activities in a given area.

<sup>3</sup> Pilaitė elder, boss of the deputy elder who was an important organizer part in the beginnings of the community opposed the community's views on the grounds that the current forest is not suitable for recreation and will not be late as the municipality does not have the funds to make it into a park.

its companies weren't up to the task in a competitive free market environment after the collapse of communism.

Most Lithuanian cities grew dramatically during the period of Soviet occupation largely caused by rapid industrialization of the country. Most of the housing in the towns are apartment blocks (often referred to as "commie blocks") which in terms of energy inefficiency reach to the extremes.<sup>4</sup> The reason for this was the abundance of oil, coal and gas in the Soviet state and until its collapse there were no regulation for energy efficiency in buildings. In the wake of Lithuanian independence this immediately became a major policy issue and has remains such to this day. Lithuania continues to import oil and gas almost exclusively from Russia, which has made its energy monopoly a tool of foreign policy throughout the Central European region. As a result the heating price increases came as a shock to people living in soviet era buildings.<sup>5</sup> At times households needed to spend the better half of their income just to cover heating costs amid an absence of management regulation of residential buildings and ever increasing energy costs.<sup>6</sup> One of the solutions dictated by the neo-classical economic logic<sup>7</sup> (which was the driving force behind reforms in the 1990s) and in some part the logic of New Public Management was the idea that heating cost increases can somehow be curbed by the privatization of municipal central heating companies. However, this proved to be a misleading line of thought. Privatization of heating infrastructure is impossible under Lithuanian law, because it is seen as crucial infrastructure which can only be state-owned. The solution to this dilemma has been the wide-spread use of the law of concessions. But in early 2000's concession companies had a right to set heating prices without regulatory oversight. As a result heating prices not only did not decrease but were raised far above the prices in the municipalities which did not choose to concede their heating infrastructure. Ukmergė became the most expensive place to have a centrally heated home in the country, which led to mass dissatisfaction by the residents. By 2004 an amendment to the law of local self-governance allowed municipalities to receive commercial information from the concession companies and begin regulating heating prices. This led to an immediate 25% drop in heating prices but also it became apparent that the concession company used the profits to cover loses in a different municipality in which it also had a concession for providing centralized heating and took out loans using the company's

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<sup>4</sup> None of the buildings built between 1950's and 1990's had any insulation, the heating was not managed and it was a common site to see windows fully opened in mid-winter with double digit negative temperature Celsius because the radiators would be close to boiling point.

<sup>5</sup> By varying estimates as over 1/3 of the population lived in buildings built in the Soviet era.

<sup>6</sup> Gas remains a primary means of centralized heating provision in Lithuania. The gas prices began rising rapidly in the 2000s after Russia under President Putin. In 2012 Lithuania paid the highest price for imported gas in the world due to a protracted conflict between the Russian gas export monopolist „Gasprom“ and the Lithuanian government over the 2004 gas import agreement pricing mechanism which was referred by Lithuania to the court of arbitrage.

<sup>7</sup> Lithuania as a newly independent country relied heavily on support and consultations by organizations such as the IMF and the World Bank which lead to Lithuania's whole hearted embrace of these ideas.

equipment as collateral. These illegal activities lead to a public outcry. The municipality sued the company aiming to terminate the concession agreement. This was widely supported by the local community who organized themselves into an LCA and set up pickets outside the company and demonstrated near the courts throughout the procedure. The picketing resulted in scuffles with the company security personnel leading to widespread media coverage. The community and the municipal administration called on national regulator, the Government and prosecutors to intervene. However, all institutions refused to get involved blaming the municipality itself on writing a faulty contract. This meant that the case in court was civil not criminal. The suit was a success and the court has invalidated the concession agreement. This was seen by many as a victory of united action of the local community and municipal administration and led to high approval ratings of the mayor who in turn promised to set-up a participatory governance scheme with regard to central heating management. Yet this promise was ditched as soon as the Ukmergė heating company came under the municipal management. The board of the heating company does not include any representatives of the LCA and later it was discovered that some of its profits were used by the municipal administration for other purposes than centralized heating system management. This caused new conflicts.<sup>8</sup>

In 2009 a mechanism of community representation was regulated for by the parliament. Communities can elect territorial representatives that may form consultative boards at the level of territorial offices of municipalities (elderships). The eldership of the town of Ukmergė (within the Ukmergė district municipality) is subdivided into 13 such units (with a possibility of 13 representatives). However, this regulation did not become a platform of dialogue between the community and municipalities both in this particular case and in general countrywide.

### **Recent Developments of Local Community Self-Government Institutions in Lithuania**

Over the past few years a new mode of interaction between government (primarily municipal) and society (community) has been on policy formulation agenda in Lithuania. A few factors have contributed to its formation. First, the 2003 edition of the Law on Personal Income Tax allows the taxpayer to allocate 2 percent of the tax he pays to a receiver of support (a list which is provided in the Law on Charity and Support and includes associations, which is the legal form in which local communities organize themselves). This is often cited as a major impetus for the proliferation of non-governmental organizations in Lithuania.

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<sup>8</sup> One important aspect to keep in mind about the Lithuanian municipal governance is that party politics hardly exist at the municipal level. Despite ideological conflicts between left and right wing parties in the parliament they're colleagues in municipal councils are often happy to strike coalition deals. Being a multiparty system, Lithuanian municipal councils often do not have a clear majority party and are plagued by unstable coalition. This means that municipal elites in many instances do not manage to represent communities in a consistent manner and this causes communities to seek other means of political action.

LCA's are organized into three umbrella associations: Vilnius and Kaunas (in the two largest cities), and rural. These three associations form an association of "Lithuanian Union of Local Community Organizations" (*lith.* Lietuvos vietos bendruomenių organizacijų sąjunga (LVBOS)). Since 2012 the part of the 2 percent of personal income tax that is not distributed (*this happens when the taxpayer doesn't submit a request to the Tax Inspection about the designation of the 2 percent*) is diverted to a program dedicated to support local community councils<sup>9</sup>. A particular mechanism to use these funds for the purposes of local community councils relies on an initiative that was proposed already in 2006 by the then opposition right-of-center politicians [18]. The period of 2008-2012 saw the institutionalization of the current model of support for local community participation in policy formulation. During that time the right-of-center parties were in power and the minister of Social Welfare was D. Jankauskas, the main proponent of the idea in 2006. Several regulatory changes in 2008, 2010 and 2011 we describe below allowed realizing this mechanism. Prior, the 2 percent that were not allocated by taxpayers used to be assigned to the budget along with the rest of the personal income tax.

On September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2008 (just prior to parliamentary elections) a new edition<sup>10</sup> of Law on Local Self-government was passed by Lithuanian parliament.<sup>11</sup> One of the major features of this edition was a new administrative level – *Seniūnaitija*<sup>12</sup>, that became the smallest type of territorial-administrative division in the country. Defining the boundaries of the 'mini-elderships'<sup>13</sup> is the responsibility and discretion of municipal councils. Residents of these 'mini-elderships' have a right to elect a 'mini-elder' (*lith.* seniūnaitis), who would represent his area with the elder (*lith.* seniūnas) and the council of these 'mini-elderships' would act as an advisory institution with the elder. Also the mini-elder has some non-coercive duties in the territory he represents. Although lacking in many respects, the institution of 'mini-eldership' and their councils are by all means and purposes an attempt at New Public Governance and

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<sup>9</sup> Do not confuse with residents of municipalities which are defined as the local community by the law of local self-government and elect the official governing body the municipal council.

<sup>10</sup> Lithuanian regulation requires to prepare a new edition of a law once the parliament has changed more than half of the provisions of a law, which was the case with Law on Local Self-government.

<sup>11</sup> No. X-1722. Official publication (Valstybės žinios): 2008, No. 113-4290. **Note.** This and other documents cited in the footnotes can be found in the official registry of legal acts at [www.e-tar.lt](http://www.e-tar.lt). Documents are available only in Lithuanian.

<sup>12</sup> Describing *Seniūnaitija* is rather tricky, but linguistically it is a "small" eldership; elderships (*lith.* *Seniūnija*) serve a function of municipal offices in remote areas of municipalities, the elder (*lith.* *seniūnas*) is a civil servant employed by the municipal administration and has no political power; existence of elderships can be explained by the fact that Lithuania has never reformed its territorial division of municipalities in any significant manner since they were setup in the period of Soviet occupation and are rather complex, being of varied sizes with some having a central city, some not and some cities being independent municipalities, furthermore some city municipalities do not have elderships

<sup>13</sup> In terms of its functions an eldership roughly corresponds to ward in some other countries.

direct democracy. The shortcomings of this setup are obvious when taking to account constitutional regulation which only recognizes the representative mandate of municipal councils with regard to local self-government.

In the face of multiple failed attempts at reforming territorial-administrative division of the country and also to solve the unconstitutionality of the Law on Local Self-Government<sup>14</sup> the development of the local community institutions in the past few years seems remarkable. Given that the democratic mandate at the local self-government level constitutionally belongs to the municipal council and that this is unlikely to change<sup>15</sup> in case of conflict between municipal government and the lower level civil-society-based institutions the former will always have the legal leverage to go its own way.

To offset this imbalance at the local self-government level, the Minister of Social Welfare has issued two orders: one in late 2011 and another early in 2012 enacting a program to use the funds of the above mentioned unassigned 2 percent of personal income tax for purposes of strengthening the local civil society organizations.<sup>16</sup> Such ministerial allocation of tax money was made possible by a government regulation in 2010 which has for the first time attempted to specifically define the spheres of ministerial responsibility<sup>17,18</sup>. In 2013 the program was extended until 2015.<sup>19</sup> In this regulation all matters related to charity and support are assigned to the Minister of Social Welfare and consequently the regulation on what to do with the 2 percent of personal income tax which is explicitly designated for uses related to social support became the area of responsibility of this minister.

### **Features of the Local Community Self-Government Program**

In late 2011 the Minister of Social Welfare enacted the Local Community Self-government Program for the Year of 2012. And early in 2012 another ministerial order enacted the guidelines for the implementation of the program. According to this second regulation the financing will only be released if the municipalities organize local community self-government councils. This program was set with the possibility

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<sup>14</sup> In Lithuania mayors' status is that of both the head of the municipal council and administration was ruled unconstitutional in 1998, however on multiple occasions the parliament failed to come to an agreement on the reform of mayors status usually disagreeing on whether the mayor should be the head of the council or he should become the executive institution.

<sup>15</sup> At the moment no major political party articulates any such reform in their election platforms.

<sup>16</sup> No. A1-543. Official publication(Valstybės žinios): 2011, No. 161-7665. No. A1-49. Official publication(Valstybės žinios): 2012, Nr. 15-661.

<sup>17</sup> Individual responsibility of ministers before the Parliament is explicitly formulated in the 96<sup>th</sup> article of the Constitution. Official publication(Valstybės žinios): 1992, No. 33-1014.

<sup>18</sup> The spheres of ministerial responsibility were first outlined in the Government decision No. 330. Official publication (Valstybės žinios): 2010, No, 38-1784

<sup>19</sup> No. A1-71. Official publication (Valstybės žinios): 2013, No. 22-1099. A1-102. Official publication (Valstybės žinios): 2013, No. 1297.

of further extension for a period of 2013-2015 the program for which is now also enacted (*no further regulation is made*). These councils are not part of elderships, rather municipalities are free to set up whatever territorial structure for them, but must invite mini-elders and representatives of all NGO as well as individuals to the council. The only limit of the regulation is that NGO providing services, individuals and municipal company representatives cannot make-up more than 1/3 of the council. Other than this the municipalities are free to setup whatever organizational scheme of these institutions they saw fit.

The program of 2012 had a limit of 8.000.000 litas (or roughly 2.500.000 Euros) which were divided based on the income and resident data provided by the Tax Inspection (*Vilnius could claim almost 2.000.000 litas and Kaunas almost 1.000.000 litas, meaning that the richer municipalities had a possibility to get greater funds for the program*). All of the above described developments have created a vibrant NGO environment which varies from municipality to municipality and from eldership to eldership. However, these local governance schemes despite being in an almost “experimental” state already produce some highly publicized cases of success and also of controversy. Three particular event involving three communities which we will be describing below have drawn our attention to questions whether the socio-demographic makeup of the area represented by the LCA and the municipality it is in has an effect on whether the community will attempt to achieve its goals through cooperation of conflict with authorities (both local and national) and how successful will those efforts be?

### **Discussion: Theorizing the Developing Role of Lithuanian Local Communities**

In the curriculum of Public Administration studies in Lithuania undergraduates are taught that there are three basic ideas of how to conceptualize the role of a government. To convey the three we use perspectives of either administrative values [8] or types of government organization [16]. To convey the ‘values’ perspective can cite Hood, who identifies three groups of administrative values: *Sigma*, *Lambda* and *Theta* [8, p. 11]. *Sigma* values require the government to be “lean and purposeful” and its performance is measured by evaluating cost of outputs in terms of time and money; *Theta* values require the government to be “honest and fair” and its performance is measured by the amount of trust it has and political entitlements it provides to its citizens; *Lambda* values require the government to be “robust and resilient” and its performance is measured by the amount of security it provides and how resilient it is [8]. For Hood bureaucratic government epitomizes *Lambda* values, while he correlates *Sigma* values with New Public Management [8, p. 15].

The ‘types of government’ perspective can be explained citing Rhodes, who identifies three types of collective coordination: markets, hierarchies and networks [16]. Conventional theory in public administration allows us to conclude that when trying to achieve *Sigma* values market mechanisms are most suitable, and *Lambda* values are best achieved in hierarchies, while democratic ideals can best be realized by networks. For Rhodes the state is a function of coordination between social



interactions throughout the society. The model of coordination must follow the logic of markets, networks, or hierarchies. And so we can discern the three normative models in Public Administration: Bureaucratic (also often referred to as Traditional or Weberian), New Public Management and New Public Governance<sup>20</sup>. We believe that the three models broadly speaking describe the popular “imagination” in Lithuania of what public administration/governance is and maybe.

The above normative-theoretical models require detailed empirical testing to see whether government policy of creating one or another governance setup will result in desired outcomes. But we also need to keep in mind another layer of complexity. Subjects of government solutions are societies of human agents who may adopt may varied strategies of resistance depending on the model of policy implementation and lead the process down an unforeseen path [13]. It is intuitively correct to assume that the technique of how something is done affects end results, it is also must be noted that government has limits to its power to achieve its aims no matter the chosen strategy.

The inspiration for the research presented in this paper comes from the works of James C. Scott (primarily his “Seeing like a state”) [17]. Scott’s theory comes in-line more broadly with provision of New Institutionalism which claims that governments intentions to reform or introduce changes to the process of government inevitably leads to conflict with social actors who benefit from *status-quo* and in all social matters this *status-quo* has institutions and norms behind it.

In recent years there have been several major attempts at reforming public governance in Lithuania. But given a closer look they appear to have significant contradictions as they simultaneously attempted to incorporate provisions of all three governance models discussed here. The proliferation of local community organizations has been a part of these reforms. Community organization formation ‘took off’ as a result of European Union initiatives such as LEADER.

Researches of public opinion [4] in 2007 showed, that citizens belief that they are able to affect public decisions making was evaluated only at 2,9 (in a scale where 10 is maximum), but according to data of European Commission [9], between 2008 and 2010 whis has shifted. Intention to vote in a general election, participation in a peaceful protest, collected signatures for petitions and participation in conservation, environment, ecology and animal rights sectors has been increasing. Some researchers believe that meaningful democracy in post-communist countries can primarily be realized through the strengthening of civil society [14, p. 93]. Mainly because ir resists the self serving interests of the public bureaucracies, which have inherited many of the pre-democratization administrative practices [7, p. 425]

Development of organized local community representation is primarily desired by the philosophy of New Public Governance. But the core administrative process in Lithuania remains highly bureaucratic, which means that the government may not be prepared to accept radical policy changes sometimes advocated by local community organizations. The function of active local communities working in unison with local

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<sup>20</sup> In Lithuania due to translation peculiarities referred to as New Public Governance.

government is supposed to not only serve the creation of better policy formulation and implementation, but also gaining greater government legitimacy. But with government unprepared to consider the demands of communities whatever they may be legitimacy is more likely lost than otherwise.

There has been much talk about the decline of the state and its loss of legitimacy [5]. New Public Governance is often seen as a means of returning this legitimacy by embracing more democratic modes of public administration. However, there are those that suggest that democratic deficit is not the root of declining legitimacy; rather the problem is declining state capacity (or public authority). This then leads to a conclusion that more hierarchical mechanisms can end up being both more efficient and legitimate simply by their power of getting things done. If there aren't sufficient bottom-up societal controls over the democratic government democracy may undermine state capacity [2]. We decided to look whether the Lithuanian role of local community organizations maybe described in a manner that would support either of these propositions: i) New Public Governance ideas act as the solution to diminishing state capacity or ii) it is a further factor weakening state capacity.

Resources available to us at this point did not allow conducting a quantitative study which we believe is necessary to gauge whether there is a net positive or a net negative effect of New Public Governance initiatives currently under way in Lithuania. Therefore we've chosen the case study method trying to answer two basic questions: i) do the above described government initiatives aimed at encouraging local activism contribute to the formation of communities or is it merely a platform for already existing social structures and ii) whether existing communities choose particular types of interaction with authorities. Do they cooperate or confront government and do they advance their cause within the government schemes for participation or beyond them (i.e. seeking publicity, defence by ombudsman, or going to courts). We believe that works of James C. Scott allow us to speculate that there is a possibility that all manner of configurations are possible simultaneously (see Table 1). However, what drew our attention were a couple of cases which recently received wide media attention in Lithuania. Both cases can be described as conflictual extra-institutional types of activity. We wanted to see if in terms of the formation and other activities of the communities being analyzed we can trace the role of the state in the formation of these conflicts.

	<i>Cooperative</i>	<i>Conflictual</i>
<i>Government initiated formats dedicated for community participation (Intra-institutional activities)</i>	Communities take part in public decision making and policy implementation within government schemes	Communities take part in public decision making and policy implementation within government participatory schemes, but continuously challenge the government
<i>Extra-institutional activities</i>	Communities support government policy without directly affiliating with public institutions	Communities confront government policy without affiliating with the government participatory schemes

**Table 1. Types of local community interaction with the government**

The two events described above have come to our attention firstly because they resonated through the national media outlets. On the other hand there are precious few positive stories on community participation in the process of public governance despite the policy being at least on the rhetorical level a priority for the government.<sup>21</sup> And as we also saw there are certain tools created for the advancement of community involvement in public governance. But both cases also showed that moving away from the quadrant of conflictual and extra-institutional relations to cooperative quadrants in our cases has not materialized despite the governance tools formally being present. One explanation may be that we looked at resonating cases that may represent a certain type of community. And this is a valid point which has to be followed up by a more quantified study. On the other hand with data available to us from previous studies into Lithuanian public governance we may also theorize that the tools made available by the government for involving communities in public governance are aimed not at achieving material changes in policy or governance, but as a means to give an appearance of democratic legitimacy to an otherwise “top-down” policy process. Communities that find themselves in situations where their interests are directly threatened may then choose the path of the two cases described above.

The post-communist democratization has created a split between the citizens dividing them into ‘winners’ and ‘losers’ of the revolution. The institutionalization of New Public Governance or attempts at creating consensus mostly results in favoring the group of the winners, because the ‘losers’ have a lack of competences of representing their interest in a constructive manner. In this instance, the envisaged solution of New Public Governance is being proactive towards the disempowered social groups. However, post-1990 Lithuanian political reforms have consistently espoused neo-liberal politics [15] which were also legitimized by the media as being ‘desirable’ or ‘unavoidable’ element of Lithuania’s western aspirations. The economic downfall which followed democratic revolutions in the post-communist space in Lithuania has created an odd situation where media had exceptionally high approval ratings [12], while the state despite its democratization remained constructed not as an institution of the people, but rather as the ‘enemy’. The media escalated this image of the government at the same time not constructing any viable social alternatives [1]. As a result of these factors Lithuanian society has become severely anemic without any agenda of social change.

Since late 2000s we see a trend that may allow us to create a quantitative test of see if government actions can reverse this conflictual mindset of local community action and if government schemes actually help local community associations to attain their goals. One major development is that we see a shift of jargon from New Public

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<sup>21</sup> In the 90s the government saw civic participation as a necessary means for the success of the democratic regime. Later on this was coupled with EU regional development and subsidiarity principles. And only recently has it become become contextualized within the public sector reform following the logic of New Public Governance.

Management towards New Public Governance in official documents [3].<sup>22</sup> Second, this shift is accompanied by a set of measures that are aimed at promoting local community association empowerment in public governance.

Lithuania in the context of European Union has a very peculiar system of local self-government. It has never had a territorial-administrative reform to redraw the map of municipalities since the Soviet era, meaning that there are 60 municipalities, having a status of a city, district or municipality. The average size of a municipality is 50.000 people, but the number of residents spans from 3.400 (Neringa) to 540.000 (Vilnius). The municipal structure also has a wide variety of municipal councils: some of the councils are extremely stable, having the same mayors for decades; others have only had unstable coalitions without a single instance of a mayor's full term in office. Since early 2000s the main mechanism of local community association formation was based on confronting government policies and the two cases we describe are within this paradigm. Having already something of a tradition of such conflictual relations drawing in part to the experiences of resistance towards the Soviet system New Public Governance schemes seem at odds with the citizens' attitude. On the other hand beyond rhetoric the government's commitment to New Public Governance is also questionable.

## **Conclusions**

1. One obvious insight from our analysis is that compared to the budgets devoted to policy formulation and implementation using traditional government instruments, the promotion of active local community participation is miniscule.

2. Many of the New Public Governance inspired instruments have been devised by the central government, however their realization is contingent on them being espoused by municipalities and there is little evidence that this process is happening.

3. The relation of local communities to municipal authorities and vice-versa is based more on distrust and the primary local community mobilization factor is resistance to unwanted policies or projects. Formation of civil society on this premise is off course problematic when such organizations and municipalities need to be drawn together. The instruments of promoting participation in this instance ignore the need for trust building among the local communities and local municipalities.

4. The resistance/cooperation model for analyzing the participation of civil society organization in governance we believe can and should be quantified as it is very useful in seeing whether the normative principles of New Public Governance are feasible and adaptable to different countries and policy fields.

## **References**

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<sup>22</sup> This shift remains of some controversy, because although the jargon in the strategic planning has shifted many of the elements to be implemented in the process of developing public administration remain within the sphere of NMP [3].

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### **Valdžios ir bendruomenių konfliktai: iššūkiai Lietuvos viešajame valdyme**

Anotacija

Per pastarąjį dešimtmetį, siekiant reformuoti šalies viešojo administravimo sistemą, Lietuvoje buvo imtasi veiksmų, kuriuos įtakojo ES subsidiarumo principas bei Naujojo viešojo valdymo (New Public Governance) idėjos. Vienu iš išskirtinių žingsnių, siekiant reformų, galime laikyti bandymus įgalinti piliečius ir jų skatinimą dalyvauti viešojoje politikoje. Siekiant skatinti vietos bendruomenių formavimąsi ir jų dalyvavimą politikos procese, buvo sukurtos tam skirtos priemonės, tačiau tiek bendruomenės, tiek savivaldybės, turėjusios naudotis jomis, peržengė modeliuose numatytas ribas ir tai nebuvo tinkamai įgyvendinta. Kaip atskleidžia atlikta atvejų bei mokslinės literatūros šaltinių analizė, tai dažniausiai vedė ne prie bendruomenės dalyvavimo politikos formavime ir įgyvendinime, kaip buvo numatyta, tačiau prie jos pasipriešinimo vykdomai politikai.

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