

# Constructing Soviet Cultural Policy

Cybernetics and Governance in Lithuania  
after World War II

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**Linköping University**  
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At the Faculty of Arts and Science at Linköpings universitet, research and doctoral studies are carried out within broad problem areas. Research is organized in interdisciplinary research environments and doctoral studies mainly in graduate schools. Jointly, they publish the series Linköping Studies in Arts and Science. This thesis comes from the Department of Culture Studies (Tema kultur och samhälle, Tema Q) at the Department for Studies of Social Change and Culture (ISAK).

At the Department of Culture Studies (Tema kultur och samhälle, Tema Q), culture is studied as a dynamic field of practices, including agency as well as structure, and cultural products as well as the way they are produced, consumed, communicated and used. Tema Q is part of the larger Department for Studies of Social Change and Culture (ISAK).

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In the memory of my grandparents  
Marcelis, Vytautas, Konstancija and  
Sofija

To my parents Nijolė and Ramutis



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## A Note on Transliteration

In transcribing Russian the Congress Library transliteration table was followed without using the diacritic signs. Exceptions were made for traditional uses of famous names, for example Trotsky. The original transliteration was retained in texts quoted in English. Lithuanian is used in the original spelling, except when the names are better known in their anglicised versions, like Shtromas and Misiunas. When considered important, translations of the titles were provided. All translations from Russian and Lithuanian are the author’s unless otherwise indicated.

# Abbreviations and Acronyms

Agitprop	Department for Agitation and Propaganda
AMS	Automated management system
CC	Central Committee
CM	Council of Ministers
CPSU	The Communist Party of the Soviet Union
ESM	Electronic calculation machine
Glavlit	The Main Administration for Literary and Publishing Affairs
Gosplan	State Planning Committee
Gosteleradio	State Committee of Radio and Television
GST	General Systems Theory
Gulag	Main Administration of Labour Camps
KB	<i>Kultūros barai</i>
KGB	State Security Committee ( <i>Komitet gosudarstvennoi bezopastnosti</i> )
KPI	Kaunas Polytechnics Institute
LAS	The Academy of Sciences of Lithuanian
LCP	Lithuanian Communist Party
LLMA	Lithuanian Archives of Art and Literature
LSSR	Lithuanian SSR
LYA	Lithuanian Special Archives
NEP	New Economic Policy
NKVD	People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs
NOT	Scientific management of labour ( <i>nauchnoe upravlenie trudom</i> )
SS	Supreme Council
SSR	Soviet Socialist Republic
STP	Scientific-technical progress
STR	Scientific-technical revolution
STS	Science and technology studies
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
VU	Vilnius University

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# I. Prologue: A Journey into the Soviet Governance of Culture

On one of the many afternoons I spent at the Lithuanian Archives of Art and Literature, I was carefully examining a list of spheres of responsibility of the Soviet Ministry of Culture. The list contained entries on music and fine arts, libraries and houses of culture,<sup>1</sup> theatre and sculpture, and specialised and higher education in the arts, but none on cinema, radio, television or publishing. Reading this list, I was somehow reminded of the famous nomenclature described by Jorge Luis Borges, quoting a Chinese encyclopaedia, *Heavenly Emporium of Benevolent Knowledge*, which divided all existing animals into “(a) those that belong to the Emperor; (b) embalmed ones; (c) those that are trained; (d) suckling pigs; (e) mermaids; (f) fabulous ones; (g) stray dogs; (h) those that are included in this classification; (i) those that tremble as if they were mad; (j) innumerable ones; (k) those drawn with a very fine camel’s hair brush; (l) et cetera; (m) those that have just broken the flower vase; (n) those that at a distance resemble flies”.<sup>2</sup> What is striking about both lists is that they are strangely incomplete and their classificatory schemes appear alien or even arbitrary. The way in which the ministry list included and excluded particular categories of culture in its list resembled the obscure conceptual premises of Borges’s list of animals. The ministry’s list could be understood in a Borgesian spirit as a typical classification, which is inevitably arbitrary or speculative, but yet not dysfunctional: such lists exercise a power of selection and are held together by the power of a classifier.<sup>3</sup>

More than 40 years ago, Foucault acknowledged that this elaborate text of Borges inspired him to write a book about ordering in science.<sup>4</sup> To put it simply, Foucault argued that in order to understand any list as an indicator of reality, one must look more widely and reconstruct a certain regime of knowledge, which would often be generated and supported by (state) institutions.<sup>5</sup> Drawing

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<sup>1</sup> A similar institution to the French *maison de la culture*. See Ann White, *De-Stalinization and the House of Culture: Declining State Control over Leisure in the USSR, Poland, Hungary, 1953-1989* (London and New York, Routledge, 1990).

<sup>2</sup> Jorge Luis Borges, “John Wilkins’s Analytical Language” (1942), in *Selected Non-Fictions*, ed. E. Weinberger (Penguin, New York, 1999), 231.

<sup>3</sup> Borges, 231.

<sup>4</sup> Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things. An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Vintage Books, 1973), xv.

<sup>5</sup> Since then both Foucault and Borges have been widely referred to by various scholars who have encountered a list of some kind. A relevant example is a recent essay about Soviet telephone

on this Foucaultian approach, I began my journey into ordering in cultural policy. Why were some objects listed as governable by the Ministry of Culture and others not? How could such different objects possibly be labelled with one term (“culture”) and accommodated in one administrative structure? What kind of governmental rationales and techniques made that list possible? Indeed, the fact that I ended up sitting with this list was a consequence of one question: *What does it mean to govern and what makes culture governable?*

That question underlies this study, which deals with the construction of state cultural policy in Lithuania as just such a project of governance and knowledge. Today, one would struggle to find a state that does not engage in the systematic financing of arts and other practices labelled as “cultural” and does not feature administrative apparatus specifically designed to govern cultural matters. When I began my academic career as an art historian and curator of contemporary art in Lithuania, I was rather taken aback by how easy it was for young creators to receive financial and institutional support from state institutions in order to implement their ideas. The government’s list of cultural practices was clearly quite flexible. For example, I was quite fascinated that they would allocate taxpayers’ money for someone to install a cage with a live rooster in an art gallery. A state-subsidised cultural newspaper would then pay an art critic to go to that gallery and describe his or her impressions of this rooster. On the one hand, I found it incredibly stimulating that individual creative ideas could be implemented.<sup>6</sup> On the other, I started to wonder: where did this framework of support for individual creativity come from? How was it possible to fund a rooster installation with taxpayers’ money? Why should culture, in its most diverse guises, matter not only to private connoisseurs but also to the state? It was from this personal practical experience that I became interested in state cultural policy.

The chronological orientation of this study is the result of another sideways manoeuvre. During the early stages of my research, my initial idea was to explore the post-Soviet transformation of state cultural policy in the transition from authoritarian to liberal democratic policy in Lithuania. The 1990s were a time of energetic economic transformation in the post-Soviet countries, and state administration of culture was no exception in this process. During my pilot fieldwork, I encountered an interesting phenomenon. As I mentioned, in the Lithuania of 1999 it was possible to get state funding to exhibit a rooster in a gallery: this means that unusual ideas were supported. There were organs, appointed by the state government (the Ministry of Culture, departments for cul-

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directories by Lars Kleberg, “K semiotike telefona,” in *Varietas et Concordia. Essays in Honour of Pekka Pesonen*, eds. B. Hellman, T. Huttufnen, G. Obatning (Helsinki: Helsinki University, 2007), 366. For a good discussion of the history of a list-making and its analytical consequences for organising, see Geoffrey C. Bowker and Susan Leigh Star, *Sorting Things Out: Classification and Its Consequences* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2000), 137-9.

<sup>6</sup> I refer to Jonas Zagorskas’s installation “A Chicken Eating a Roasted Chicken” in the Akademija gallery, a part of Student Art Days 1999, curated by Agnė Gintalaitė and Eglė Rindzevičiūtė, in Vilnius, Lithuania.

ture in the municipalities), which financed a great variety of organisations, issued legislation concerning various aspects of “culture” and published their programmatic statements and reports. This means that administration and legislation were developed in relation to state intervention in cultural practices. Yet many Lithuanian cultural operators<sup>7</sup> argued that there was “no such thing as a state cultural policy in Lithuania”.<sup>8</sup> Apparently, the mere fact of having actual financial support and organisational structures was not enough to constitute a “state cultural policy”. This was a puzzle, leading me to wonder: what does it mean to have a state cultural policy? What does it mean for an administrative body to govern something so broadly defined as culture? At this point, I started to inquire into the construction of “state cultural policy” as meaning-making.

I began my pilot fieldwork by examining cultural policy documents written during the 13 post-Soviet years (1990-2003), and I was quite struck by a peculiar discourse. In the documents, “culture” was listed as a heterogeneous sphere, which involved, among other things, the contemporary arts and heritage, libraries and ethnic minorities’ culture. Then “culture” was described as a whole, which consisted of different parts and yet was more than their sum. Both as a whole and parts, it had “states” that were measurable. However, the precision of currently available measurements was doubtful, and calls for “better knowledge” based on a better “diagnosis” were voiced. On the basis of “diagnosis” or at least “familiarisation with the current state”, the ministry was envisioned as being endowed with the ability to act upon “culture”, as it possessed many “instruments” for doing so. And it did have to act because something was happening to “culture” all the time: it was changing continuously, being influenced from outside and within; moreover, it was endangered. The notion of “identity” rarely occurred without accompanying descriptive phrases, such as “being on the verge of extinction” in the policy documents; the notion of “culture” was coupled with “risks”. A discourse on securitisation was mobilised to describe those “current states” as endangered and to underline the pressing need for a state policy.<sup>9</sup> In other words, I saw a very particular model of action (feedback-based steering, the need to rely on systematic measurements and predictions) crystallising out of the particular contents of state cultural policy docu-

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<sup>7</sup> From now on I will use the term “cultural operator” to refer to the agents who fall within the sphere of formal cultural policy. The category includes cultural intellectuals, policy-makers, artists, and other employees of cultural sector. The term was coined in Western thought about cultural policy and was not used in the Soviet Union (“cultural worker” was a more narrow term, which referred to the employees of the sector under the Ministry of Culture, but not for example, creative artists or intellectuals). I find “cultural operators” useful because it does not discriminate between these agents, all of whom participated in the discourses analysed here.

<sup>8</sup> “Ar yra Lietuvoje kultūros politika?” A verbatim of roundtable discussion at the Writers’ Union, Vilnius, Lithuania (4 May 2000).

<sup>9</sup> This is a summary of what I have analysed in detail in Egle Rindzeviciute, “Discursive Realities: The Construction of National Identity in the Documents of Lithuanian Cultural Policy,” in *Contemporary Change in Lithuania*, ed. E. Rindzeviciute (Huddinge: Baltic and East European Graduate School, 2003).

ments. Intuitively, I thought that probably it was this model of governance that functioned as a meaning-giving framework, which otherwise integrated the very heterogeneous sphere of culture and the actions of state administration into something called “policy”. From where did the policy document writers draw this vocabulary? How did this imagination of governance come into being?

This dissertation explores the historical creation of this discourse of the steering of culture, the construction of state cultural policy as a special mode of governance, based on measurement and calculation and assisted by scientific knowledge and technologies. It suggests that this creation started neither with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, nor with the Soviet occupation of Lithuania in 1940. A crucial date was 1948, the year that the American mathematician Norbert Wiener published *Cybernetics: Or Control and Communication in the Animal and the Machine*. It appeared exactly 100 years after *The Communist Manifesto* by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, the little book that gave birth to the language and imagination and went on to inspire many scientists, cultural intellectuals and managers and to change their understanding of governance.<sup>10</sup> Thus, my study of state cultural policy discourse found itself situated in a broader field of scholarship about the natural sciences in governance, the history of which could be traced back at least a few centuries.

The development of state cultural policy, as the British sociologist Jim McGuigan has noted, could be seen as part of the larger ambition of the modern state to regulate wide spheres of life: production, trade, society, nature.<sup>11</sup> Consequently, I was eager to delve more deeply into the origins of the cybernetic discourse of cultural policy because I found the way in which the history of cybernetics was interwoven with issues of politics, science and administration quite extraordinary. Both in the democratic West and the Soviet Union, the development of cybernetics was strongly affected by Cold War polarisation.<sup>12</sup> The Soviets banned cybernetics in the early 1950s; however, after the death of Stalin it was rehabilitated and even widely propagated as *the science for governance of man-made and natural systems*. The rise of cybernetics coincided with Soviet rule in Lithuania; thus, my study turned back to the pre-1990 period, and my reconstruction found itself embedded in the narrative of the demise and fall of the Soviet Union.<sup>13</sup> The book that resulted from this journey deals with two stories.

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<sup>10</sup> It also became a bestseller, just like his later *The Human Use of Human Beings: Cybernetics and Society* (1950), Freeman Dyson, “The Tragic Tale of a Genius,” *The New York Review* 14 July (2005), 10.

<sup>11</sup> Jim McGuigan, *Rethinking Cultural Policy* (Maidenhead: Open University Press, 2004), 36.

<sup>12</sup> Peter Galison, “The Ontology of the Enemy: Norbert Wiener and the Cybernetic Vision,” *Critical Inquiry* 21, no.1 (1994), 228-266.

<sup>13</sup> Titles indicating the life cycle of the Soviet Union are abundant, but see particularly John B. Dunlop, *The Rise of Russia and the Fall of the Soviet Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993); Raymond Pearson, *The Rise and Fall of the Soviet Empire* (London: Macmillan, 1998/2002); and the collection of documents, Richard Sakwa, *The Rise and Fall of the Soviet Union, 1917-1991* (London: Routledge, 1999). The Baltic states happened to play an active role

The first story is that of the birth of modern state cultural policy in Lithuania and the Soviet Union. It examines the continuities and disruptions of this modern state cultural policy under changing political regimes. The adjective “modern” is added to specify that “cultural policy” refers to a formal programme and/or course of action discerned by dedicated public or state organisations. In Lithuania, such a modern state cultural policy was first formulated when the nation-state was established in 1918 (and lasted for about 22 years, until it was Sovietised). Modern Soviet cultural policy was the product of the 1917 Russian Revolution. The Soviet Union developed its own particular version of illiberal Marxist-Leninist cultural policy, which was imposed on Lithuania and the other occupied Baltic countries. Sheila Fitzpatrick demonstrated that the formulation of early Soviet cultural policy was marked by struggles and fierce disagreements among leaders and artists, which took place in the context of social and economic changes in Russia between 1917 and World War II.<sup>14</sup> However, by 1940, when the Soviet Union occupied the Baltic States, the administrative and ideological model of Soviet cultural policy had already been consolidated. Nevertheless, it experienced further changes during de-Stalinisation (post-1956), many of which were associated with a scientific-technological leap after World War II.

The second story is about the translation of cybernetic techno-sciences into instruments for the governance of culture (from now on, I will use the term “techno-sciences” interchangeably with “science and technology”). Why focus on cybernetics? A wide range of contemporary scholars from various disciplines, such as Katherine Hayles, Bosse Holmqvist and David Noble drew attention to the impact of cybernetics on contemporary notions of control and governance in the (neo) liberal democratic West.<sup>15</sup> Cybernetics was included in the anthology of the most influential intellectual concepts.<sup>16</sup> But even more important (and ambivalent) was cybernetics’ role in the Soviet Union. Loren Graham and Slava Gerovitch, historians of Soviet science, and political scientists David Holloway, Mark Beissinger and Ilmari Susiluoto, to name just a few, noted that, in addition to its applications in military technology, biology and

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in this cycle, hence Kristian Gerner and Stefan Hedlund, *The Baltic States and the End of the Soviet Empire* (London, New York: Routledge, 2003).

<sup>14</sup> The most important change was replacing the rather democratic and innovative arts-oriented cultural policy of the New Economic Policy period with rigid Stalinist control. Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Commissariat of Enlightenment. Soviet Organization of Education and the Arts under Lunacharsky October 1917–1921* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970).

<sup>15</sup> Katherine N. Hayles, *How We Became Post-Human. Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1999); Bosse Holmqvist, “*Individens åldern är förbi*”. *Några nedslag i femtotalets människosyn*, (Stockholm: Brutus Östlings bokförlag, 2004); David F. Noble, *Forces of Production: A Social History of Industrial Automation* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986). For a French account on intellectual influences of cybernetics, see Céline Lafontaine, *L’Empire cybernétique. Des machines à penser à la pensée machine* (Paris: Seuil, 2004).

<sup>16</sup> John Lechte, *Key Contemporary Concepts: From Abject to Zeno’s Paradox* (London: Routledge, 2003), 48-50.

linguistics, cybernetic theory contributed greatly to the revamping of Soviet “scientific governance”.<sup>17</sup> Others could not help but notice that in terms of techno-science Soviet governance came to be configured in ways that often were not unlike those used in the liberal democratic West.<sup>18</sup> Thus, to analyse the translation of cybernetics into state governance is to question the existing definitions of authoritarian and liberal governance, probably some of the most important notions for state cultural policy studies.

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<sup>17</sup> David Holloway, “The Political Uses of Scientific Models: The Cybernetic Model of Government in Soviet Social Science,” in *The Use of Models in the Social Sciences*, ed. L. Collins (Boulder: Westview Press, 1976); Loren Graham, *Science, Philosophy, and Human Behaviour in the Soviet Union* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987); Slava Gerovitch, *From Newspeak to Cyberspeak: A History of Soviet Cybernetics* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002); Mark R. Beissinger, *Scientific Management, Socialist Discipline, and Soviet Power* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1988); Ilmari Susiluoto, *The Origins and Development of Systems Thinking in the Soviet Union: Political and Philosophical Controversies from Bogdanov and Bukharin to Present-Day Re-Evaluation* (Helsinki: Suomalainen tiedeakatemia, 1982).

<sup>18</sup> William E. Halal, “Convergence of a ‘New Capitalism’ and a ‘New Socialism’: Economic Systems in an Information Age,” *Cybernetics and Systems: An International Journal* 19, no.6 (1988), 561. Whilst this view was rather popular in the West, the Soviet Union officially fostered strongly negative attitude. The literature is abundant, but for an early account see Andrew L. Feenberg, “Transition or Convergence: Communism and the Paradox of Development,” in *Technology and Communist Culture: The Socio-Cultural Impact of Technology under Socialism*, ed. F. J. Fleron Jr. (New York, London: Praeger, 1977).

## II. Introduction: Theoretical Framework and Method

In 1989, a journalist from the magazine *Domains of Culture* visited the town of Visaginas (Sniečkus). This town was the home of the Ignalina nuclear plant, which featured the RBMK reactors, the same type that had exploded in Chernobyl three years before. However, the reason for the journalist's visit was not a concern about environmental disaster but the fact that Visaginas, a typical Soviet mono-industry, purpose-built settlement, did not have any churches. The year 1989 was a time of national upheaval, anti-Soviet sentiments and a Catholic religious revival in Lithuania.<sup>1</sup> Thus, he asked a senior citizen what it was like to live in a town that never had a place for religious congregation. In reply, the local pointed towards the Ignalina nuclear plant, whose two red and white-striped towers loomed on the horizon and said, "Here is our church; there is no need of a better one!"<sup>2</sup>

This Lithuanian pensioner was not alone in his views. As the British cultural historian Orlando Figes put it, the entire Soviet regime could be defined by its belief in science and technology.<sup>3</sup> Since the very inception of the Soviet Union, the belief in industrialisation based on scientific discoveries and technological innovations was propagated by its first leader, Vladimir Il'ich Lenin. In Lenin's words, "the war taught us [...] that those who have the best technology, organisation, discipline and the best machines emerge on top".<sup>4</sup> In both its early and later stages, Soviet techno-scientific modernisation was fuelled by external and internal conflict. During his massive industrialisation campaign for the entire country, Joseph Stalin relentlessly purged the scientists and engineers who did not agree with his view, calling them "enemies" and "saboteurs".<sup>5</sup> World

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<sup>1</sup> For Soviet repression of the Catholic Church and its importance for the construction of Lithuanian national identity, see Stanley V. Vardys, *The Catholic Church, Dissent and Nationality in Soviet Lithuania* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978).

<sup>2</sup> Rūta Marcinkevičienė, "Miestas be bažnyčių," *Kultūros Barai* 1 (1989), 46. Hereafter, *Kultūros barai* is abbreviated into KB.

<sup>3</sup> Orlando Figes, *Natasha's Dance: A Cultural History of Russia* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2002), 512-13.

<sup>4</sup> Vladimir Il'ich Lenin, *Pol'noe sobranie Vol.26* (Moscow: Gossudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1967-70), 116, cf Rudra Sil, *Managing Modernity: Work, Community and Authority in Late-Industrializing Japan and Russia* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2002), 222.

<sup>5</sup> Loren Graham, *The Ghost of Executed Engineer: Technology and the Collapse of the Soviet Union* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1993).

War II and the Cold War reinforced the further securitisation of Soviet techno-sciences, but also brought with them increased civil applications of these techno-sciences. Already under Lenin, but especially after the death of Stalin, some techno-scientific innovations spilled over into governance of the state, its industries and society. Beginning in the late 1950s, the Soviet leaders Nikita Khrushchev and later Leonid Brezhnev proudly proclaimed the exercise of a particular mode of rule known as “scientific governance”.<sup>6</sup> This governance drew strongly on the principles and technologies of Wiener’s cybernetics: since the 1960s, scholars noted that the prevailing Soviet metaphor of economy and society was no longer a mechanical machine but an electronic cybernetic one.<sup>7</sup>

### *Previous Research and Problem Areas*

It is in this context of techno-scientific modernisation that I studied the construction of Soviet state cultural policy. In short, the dissertation examines how “Soviet state cultural policy” was assembled as an intellectual and material machinery of governance through an interaction between the techno-scientific, political and cultural fields. My general research question, “What does it mean to govern and what makes culture governable?” was narrowed down to three sub-questions. The study asks under what economic and administrative conditions did cybernetics (and systems theory) as scientific knowledge and technology contribute to making “culture” governable in Soviet Lithuania after World War II? How was the relation between cybernetic techno-science, culture and governance constructed by Soviet Lithuanian scientists, humanities intellectuals and policy makers? Did their approaches differ? And finally, did the meanings of state governance of culture change for Soviet Lithuanian cultural policy officials and intellectuals from the late 1940s to 1980s and if yes, how? Guided by these questions, my analysis sought to reconstruct and explore the historical development of a particular discourse of governance, which used the components of techno-science and was applied to culture. Located within the rather open field of culture studies,<sup>8</sup> the dissertation is based on interdisciplinary re-

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<sup>6</sup> On Soviet Taylorism and particularly Aleksei Gastev see Beissinger. On Soviet management see Jeremy R. Azrael, *Managerial Power and Soviet Politics* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1966), 12-27; on pre-Soviet management in Russia, see Don K. Rowney, *Transition to Technocracy: The Structural Origins of the Soviet Administrative State* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1989).

<sup>7</sup> Robert F. Miller, “The Scientific-Technical Revolution and the Soviet Administrative Debate,” in *The Dynamics of Soviet Politics*, eds. P. Cocks, R. V. Daniels, N. Whittier Heer (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1976), 153. It is appropriate to note that the Fordist assembly line came to prevail in Soviet industry only in the late 1950s.

<sup>8</sup> I approach “culture studies” in a way similar to Tony Bennett who has recently charted a distinction between the “sociology of culture” and “culture studies” comparable to that of the “sociology of science” and “science studies”. The essence of Bennett’s approach is that the “cultural” is neither to be explained by external “social relations” as their “representation,” nor collated with “social”. Instead, he suggested focusing on the “work of culture” or the ways it is worked upon

search. In the following sections, I will position my research in relation to existing studies of the history of science and technology and cultural policy.

### a) *Cybernetic Techno-science*

First and foremost, the story of cybernetics has been an object of study for historians of science. For example, Otto Mayr and Stuart Bennett, meticulously trace the history of feedback control in engineering, locating its origins in previous centuries.<sup>9</sup> However, Western scholars from a broad range of disciplines have been engaged in exploring the widely dispersed effects of cybernetics for two decades.<sup>10</sup> Historical studies of cybernetics have also come to be closely related to issues of political history, being addresses in relation to the Cold War in urban studies and science and technology studies (STS).<sup>11</sup> My inspiration for focusing on cybernetics in the study of the Soviet governance of culture came from reading Slava Gerovitch's book *From Newspeak to Cyberspeak: A History of Soviet Cybernetics* (2002). In his detailed study, Gerovitch argues that it was partially due to its Western origin that cybernetics was initially banned and later attributed with an exceptionally high status by Soviet scientists. The popularity of cybernetics, apparently without parallel in any other science in the Soviet Union after World War II, produced ambivalent side effects: it was officially propagated as a universal science of governance, the foremost science of control to be used not only in electronic engineering, but also for steering the state and

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and mobilised to work on something else. Tony Bennett, "The Work of Culture," *Cultural Sociology* 1, no. 1 (2007), 31-47.

<sup>9</sup> Otto Mayr, *The Origins of Feedback Control* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1970); Stuart Bennett, *A History of Control Engineering 1800-1930* (Stevenage: Peregrinus, 1979). The development of automation (cybernetic technologies) also attracted Marxist criticism. Noble, 39, 57-66.

<sup>10</sup> For a great overview of control techniques in engineering and Fordism and Taylorism see James R. Beniger, *The Control Revolution. Technological and Economic Origins of the Information Society* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1986), 294-301; but also David A. Mindell, *Between Human and Machine: Feedback, Control and Computing before Cybernetics* (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 2002); David Mindell, Jérôme Segal and Slava Gerovitch, "From Communications Engineering to Communications Science: Cybernetics and Information Theory in the United States, France and the Soviet Union," in *Science and Ideology. A Comparative History*, ed. M. Walker (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), 72.

<sup>11</sup> Cold War logics permeated both technological strategies and discourses. See Jennifer S. Light, *From Warfare to Welfare: Defense Intellectuals and Urban Problems in Cold War America* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), also Paul N. Edwards, *The Closed World: Computers and the Politics of Discourse in Cold War America* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1996). Indeed one of the first Russian versions of operational systems that enabled the Internet, developed in the Kurchatov Institute of Atomic Energy, was called UNAS as opposed to the American UNIX ("u nas" in Russian means "here with us" while "u nikh" refers to "there with them"). Julian Cooper, "The Internet as an Agent of Socio-Economic Modernization of the Russian Federation," in *Modernisation in Russia since 1900*, eds. M. Kan-gaspuro and J. Smith (Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society, 2006), 286.

society. This is why the history of Soviet cybernetics, for Gerovitch, was a history of the degradation of scientific terminology into a language of the ideology of the ruling Party, empty cyberspeak, comparable to George Orwell's newspeak. As Gerovitch noted, a similar transformation of cybernetics (from a scientific theory to a language of governance) also took place in the West.

Besides Cold War polarisation, there was another aspect to the intertwining of the political and techno-scientific dimensions in the history of cybernetics. Recently a number of historians of science and technology have studied how scientific theories and engineered machines were used to re-conceptualise societies and states. Among the most distinctive contributions is the study by the German historian Otto Mayr who argues that James Watt's steam regulator represented a key technological and conceptual breakthrough for the Industrial Revolution.<sup>12</sup> Mayr argues that the automatic control enabled by a steam regulator was used as a metaphor to describe the mechanism of liberalism, especially the self-regulation of economy.<sup>13</sup> Working in a similar spirit to Mayr, the historian Jon Agar has published a splendid study on how the computer emerged as a machine of governance.<sup>14</sup> Similarly, David Mindell has published extensively on the intellectual impact of systems theory, which stretched beyond engineering into organisational science.<sup>15</sup> Finally, historians of ideas have charted how operations research, systems theory and cybernetics influenced organisational science, whilst others have studied its implications for literature and the social sciences.<sup>16</sup> The history of cybernetics has thus been addressed as an international phenomenon and as a necessarily interdisciplinary subject, but also as a case of an especially productive relationship between techno-science and governance of the state. My study builds on both approaches (Cold War securitisa-

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<sup>12</sup> Otto Mayr, *Authority, Liberty and Automatic Machinery in Early Modern Europe* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986). It is a popular cliché in the history of science and technology to label centuries according to their "key machine": thus the 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> centuries would be seen as the age of clocks, the later 18<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries the age of steam engines, while the 20<sup>th</sup> century, according to Wiener, was the age of communication and control. Norbert Wiener, *Cybernetics, or Control and Communication in the Animal and in the Machine* (Cambridge: The Technology Press of MIT, 1965), 39. See also Andrew Barry, *Political Machines: Governing a Technological Society* (London: Athlone, 2001).

<sup>13</sup> Mayr, *Authority, Liberty and Automatic Machinery*, 127-9; Bennett, *A History of Control Engineering*, 1-5.

<sup>14</sup> The early impact of the computer on governing in the USA and Britain is thoroughly analysed in Jon Agar, *The Government Machine. A Revolutionary History of the Computer* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2003).

<sup>15</sup> David A. Mindell, "Bodies, Ideas, and Dynamics: Historical Perspectives on Systems Thinking in Engineering." In *MIT Working Paper Series*, ESD-WP-2003-01.23, 23 January 2003, <<http://esd.mit.edu/wps/2003.htm>> (5 May 2008).

<sup>16</sup> Holmqvist. See also an informative edited collection, Agatha C. Hughes and Thomas P. Hughes, *Systems, Experts, and Computers. The Systems Approach in Management and Engineering, World War II and After* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2000); Hayles; Reinhold Martin, *The Organizational Complex: Architecture, Media and Corporate Space* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2003).

tion and conceptual search for a model of governance) and extends them into the social and political effects of cybernetic techno-science in the Soviet Union.

It is important to add that the history of cybernetics occupied a special place in Soviet historiography: it was paramount in the techno-scientifically oriented “modernisation” approach to Soviet history. As opposed to the totalitarian and revisionist schools,<sup>17</sup> the representatives of the modernisation approach considered that to describe Party governance as a one-way flow of decisions from the centralised administrative hierarchy, enabling a total control of population, was incorrect. Although it was heavily centralised, Party rule would be better characterised not by domination, but by ongoing negotiation with institutions and individuals. For instance, Gerovitch and Nikolai Krementsov rejected this central governance-focused approach by showing that the internal personal and institutional contests among scientists contributed towards making Soviet science and technology.<sup>18</sup>

Besides rejecting the idea of central domination, the modernisation approach suggested that Soviet history should be interpreted as a part of broader Western history. They saw Soviet developments as being open to external influences, especially the international transfer of knowledge. This was especially evident in the history of sciences and technologies. After World War II, Western technology evolved towards sophisticated intelligent machinery, which demanded the free flow of information and corresponding administrative structures, all of which were expected to transform society by making individuals more egalitarian and mobile. In the process of transferring new technologies from the West, the Soviet Union also imported a particular “technical rationality”.<sup>19</sup> The studies published in the 1960s and the 1970s argued that imported Western technology would transform the Soviet regime from within, and because of technological isomorphism, the communist and capitalist systems would eventually converge (the convergence theory was eagerly rejected by Soviet scientists).<sup>20</sup> The symbiosis between Marxism and cybernetics was ex-

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<sup>17</sup> The totalitarian school was strongly influenced by the ideas of Hannah Arendt and regarded the Soviet system as centrally dominated. These studies focused on the central organs of government and *Realpolitik* conducted by individuals and studied how the centralised control succeeded or failed to repress the lower levels. The revisionist school explained the various Soviet developments as a result of lower level politics, especially internal institutional struggles, which often undermined the centrally set policies. The recent and growing studies of Soviet everyday life also belong to the revisionist approach. See Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: A Harvest Book, 1994).

<sup>18</sup> Gerovitch, *From Newspeak to Cyberspeak*; Nikolai Krementsov, *Stalinist Science* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997).

<sup>19</sup> See Frederic J. Fleron Jr., “Introduction,” in *Technology and Communist Culture: The Socio-Cultural Impact of Technology under Socialism*, ed. F. J. Fleron Jr (New York, London: Praeger, 1977), 3.

<sup>20</sup> This is largely the argument underlying the conference proceedings edited by Fleron, *Technology and Communist Culture*; also Scott Shane, *Dismantling Utopia: How Information Ended the Soviet Union* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1994). Yet Erik Hoffmann quite correctly pointed out that the introduction of computers in decision-making will not vest more political power in computer

pected to modify the hegemonic Marxist-Leninist ideology.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, the outcomes of Soviet techno-scientific transfer were considered in light of Western debates about technocracy and democracy. Curiously, whilst technocracy was seen as a threat to Western democratic processes, especially participation, some saw it as a potentially democratising force in the Soviet regime, as the growing power of experts was expected to limit the power of the Party.<sup>22</sup> It must be noted that a different view was proposed by later scholars, such as Rudra Sil, who argued that the Soviet regime was prone to adjust the elements of Western rationalisation of management borrowed from the West, especially sciences and technologies, to their local norms and institutions.<sup>23</sup>

After 1991, the modernisation school, especially techno-science studies, fell victim to the revised political context of academic research. To my knowledge, the excellent, stimulating studies, such as those by Erik Hoffmann, William Conyngham and Mark Beissinger, are hardly used now for understanding the post-Soviet transformation.<sup>24</sup> It appears that during the Cold War, the techno-scientific development of the Soviet Union was of strategic importance to the West, but after the collapse of the Soviet Union interest in the scientific-technological aspect of Soviet governance declined (which may well have to do with the fact that during the 1990s Russia ceased to be a military threat and appeared to be incapable of producing major techno-scientific innovations; though recent years have demonstrated the efforts of the Russian government to reverse this trend). Instead, it seems that ethnicity and nationalism were considered to have had the most important role in the demise and doom of the Soviet Union.

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technicians (thus there would not be a computer-technocracy), Erik P. Hoffmann, "Technology, Values, and Political Power in the Soviet Union: Do Computers Matter?" in *Technology and Communist Culture*, 401-407.

<sup>21</sup> Silviu Brucan, *The Dissolution of Power: A Sociology of International Relations and Politics* (New York: Knopf, 1971), xii, cf Frederic J. Fleron Jr., "Introduction," in *Technology and Communist Culture*, 53. As Halal has put it, "systems of political economy tend to gradually incorporate both democratic and free enterprise principles so as to converge toward the democratic free enterprise mode". Halal, 553-572.

<sup>22</sup> Soviet developments were connected to the Western debates about technocracy and democracy. See for example Leon Smolinski, *Technocratic Elements in Soviet Socialism* (Hamilton: McMaster University, 1970); Frank Fischer, *Technocracy and the Politics of Expertise* (Newbury Park: Sage, 1990). Curiously, whilst technocracy was seen as a threat to Western democratic processes, especially participation, some saw it as a potentially democratising force in the Soviet regime, as it would limit the power of the Party. See Zbigniew K. Brzezinski, *Ideology and Power in Soviet Politics* (New York, Washington: Praeger Publishers, 1967).

<sup>23</sup> Sil.

<sup>24</sup> Interestingly, although the famous historian of the Soviet Union Fitzpatrick drew attention to the modernisation approach in Soviet studies which was formulated in the 1960s-1970s and currently tends to be forgotten in the distinction between totalitarian school and revisionists, yet she did not mention Soviet science and technology studies as relevant to Soviet political history. Sheila Fitzpatrick, "Politics as Practice. Thoughts on a New Soviet Political History," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 5, no.1 (2004), 27-54.

This current lack of appreciation for the achievements of the modernisation school is particularly true for the history of Lithuania (as well as the other two Soviet Baltic republics, Estonia and Latvia). In their historiographies, nationalism studies had a particular impetus, because Baltic nationalist movements played a crucial role in breaking away from the Soviet Union. However, Western scholarship about Soviet Baltic/Lithuanian techno-science and governance is also very scarce when compared with Soviet Russian or Western scholarship. At the time of writing, there is no single professional historian or sociologist of science and technology in Lithuanian academic institutes. Normally, technology and sciences have been only briefly touched upon in general histories of the country,<sup>25</sup> described either by natural scientists, such as Laimutis Telksnys and Jonas Kubilius,<sup>26</sup> or by dedicated amateur historians, such as Jonas Rudokas.<sup>27</sup> It is little wonder then that Soviet attempts at cybernetically-equipped “scientific governance” are in the recent, but somewhat forgotten past.

My dissertation seeks to bridge this gap in empirical knowledge, re-actualise the modernisation approach in Soviet studies and contribute to the general historiography of science and technologies with a new, interdisciplinary study. Equally, my work is distinctive because the above-mentioned studies concentrated either on the politics of science and technology conducted at the highest echelons of the Central Committee and the Academy of Sciences<sup>28</sup> or analysed strategically important sectors, such as the military or large-scale heavy industrial management.<sup>29</sup> In this context, my study of cultural policy, a

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<sup>25</sup> Romuald Misiunas and Rein Taagepera, *Baltic States: The Years of Dependence* (London: Hurst & Company, 2006).

<sup>26</sup> Laimutis Telksnys and Antanas Zilinskas, “Computers in Lithuania,” *IEEE Annals* 3 (1999), 31-37; Jonas Kubilius, “Kibernetikos pradžia Lietuvoje,” *Mokslas ir gyvenimas* 6 (1999).

<sup>27</sup> The only monograph about the history of Lithuanian science and technology in 1957-1965 was written by an engineer. This study focused on the period of Khrushchev’s economic councils’ (*sovnarkhoz*) reform, which entailed a decentralisation of the economy and coincided with the scientific and industrial boom in Lithuania. The Lithuanian SSR was subsequently entitled to more autonomous decision-making in many areas of industry. The book sought to rehabilitate the Soviet period by focusing on the “positive” story of the development of “un-ideologised machinery” and progressive high-tech industries. The author re-enacted a typical Soviet strategy of the neutralisation of technologies which justified borrowing from the West. He also expressed a nationalistic pro-Lithuanian stance regarding the policies of scientific and industrial managers, mostly expressed in recruiting local, ethnic Lithuanian or at least non-Russian, staff both in academic institutes and factories, hence its title *The History We Can be Proud of*. Jonas Rudokas, *Istorija, kuria galime didžiulis* (Vilnius: Gairės, 2002).

<sup>28</sup> Alexander Vucinich, *Empire of Knowledge: The Academy of Sciences of the USSR (1917–1970)* (London: University of California Press, 1984); Loren Graham, *Science in Russia and the Soviet Union: A Short History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

<sup>29</sup> Azrael; Beissinger; William J. Conyngham, *Industrial Management in the Soviet Union. The Role of CPSU in Industrial Decision-making, 1917-1970* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1973); William J. Conyngham, *The Modernization of Soviet Industrial Management, Socioeconomic Development and the Search for Viability* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982); Michael E. Urban, *The Ideology of Administration. American and Soviet Cases* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1982).

field that, unlike economic planning, heavy industries or military defence did not obviously demand techno-scientific governance, is particularly instructive because it clearly shows how broadly some of the ideas and techniques of governance have been disseminated and appropriated in the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, the foremost task of my research was to provide a new understanding of the history of Soviet state cultural policy itself as a field of interdisciplinary interactions. Soviet cybernetics, the object of transfer from the West, was instrumental to knowledge production and the calculation-based governance of culture. I will now explain how I constituted state cultural policy as my research subject in greater detail.

### *b) Cultural Policy*

Policy, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary* is “a course of action adopted and pursued by government, party, ruler, statesman, etc; any course of action adopted as advantageous or expedient”.<sup>30</sup> The term was similarly defined in *New Keywords*, as it was seen to contain “plans, programs, principles” or “the course of action of some kind of actor”.<sup>31</sup> In this sense, the term “policy” refers to purposive action of both an individual and an organisation, though in the scholarship “policy” is traditionally attributed to organisational bodies rather than to human beings.<sup>32</sup> To study cultural policy, as Tony Bennett noted, is to address “relations of culture and governance, which take a more specific form; it is to speak of the ways in which, through a variety of means (legal, administrative, and economic), governments seek (through a range of specially constructed entities: ministries of culture, departments of heritage, arts councils) to provide, regulate and manage cultural resources and the uses to which they are put”.<sup>33</sup>

Modern state cultural policy is a historical phenomenon. Generally, there was a trend for states to take up the sponsorship of fine arts, institutionalise the sponsoring bodies and eventually re-define those activities as a state cultural policy. However, historically, definitions of “state cultural policy” have differed.<sup>34</sup> The meaning of “state” depended on the type of political regime and its organisation. State cultural policy organs could be those of the central govern-

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<sup>30</sup> *Oxford English Dictionary*, <<http://www.oed.com>> (7 November 2007).

<sup>31</sup> Tony Bennett, Lawrence Grossberg and Meaghan Morris, *New Keywords: A Revised Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 258.

<sup>32</sup> There can be important individuals and entire policies can be named after them, like the famous French Minister of Culture André Malraux. However those individuals are usually enabled to act by their institutional positions, like minister of culture or prime minister, president and so on.

<sup>33</sup> Tony Bennett, “Cultural Policy – Issues of Culture and Governance,” Folke Snickars, ed., *Culture, Society and Market. The Swedish Research Seminar Held at Sigtuna, January 24-25, 2000* (Trelleborg: Riksbankens Jubileumsfond, 2001), 13.

<sup>34</sup> For one of the earliest overviews of different models of state cultural policy see Milton C. Cummings, Jr. and J. Mark Davidson Schuster, *Who's to Pay for the Arts? The International Search for Models of Arts Support* (New York: ACA Books, 1989), also Toby Miller and George Yúdice, *Cultural Policy* (London: Sage Publications, 2002).

ment, of municipalities or “at arm’s length”, such as councils or other entitled non-governmental organisations. In turn, “culture” could be defined both in a narrow sense (fine arts, heritage) or a broad sense (anthropological, as a way of life, subcultures). The word “policy” could then refer to a written programme or legislation; however, it could also mean non-formalised actions or the side-effects of state regulations and actions.<sup>35</sup> The rationales for “state cultural policies” encompassed a broad area, from nation-building to the social welfare of artists, from the enlightenment of the population to ethnic management and gender equality, to mention just a few. In the West, the notion of culture as a policy object changed from being reserved primarily for the fine arts (“high culture”) to an “entire way of life”.<sup>36</sup> Leftist thinkers, first and foremost, the British scholar Raymond Williams, were among the first to argue for expanding the definition and re-formulating state priorities from supporting “the arts for their own sake” to mobilising cultural policies for various social, and later, economic objectives.<sup>37</sup> Such an “utilitarisation” of cultural policy was both welcomed and doubted.<sup>38</sup> In the Soviet Union, culture was defined in policy discourses both as “a way of life” (expressed in the Russian catch-word *kul’turnost’* or cultured-ness) and high culture. However, one should not look for a particular coherence in cultural policy concepts: I will show that the concept of “culture” in Soviet policy-making was loosely defined and mainly anchored in administrative divisions.<sup>39</sup>

In this study, I will use the terms “cultural policy” and “governance of culture” interchangeably, even though I am aware that the notion of governance is somewhat broader (a formal state policy could be understood as one among many forms or arts of governance, but I will discuss these issues in the next section). For the Soviet state to govern culture, it had to have, first and fore-

<sup>35</sup> Michael Hill, *The Policy Process in the Modern State* (London: Prentice Hall/Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1997); Deborah Stone, *Policy Paradox and Political Reason* (Glenview, IL: Scott Foresman/Little, Brown, 1988). Among the state policy instruments the most visible are legislation, financing and organisation-building.

<sup>36</sup> In Sweden this process was studied by Sven Nilsson, *Kulturens vägar: Kultur och kulturpolitik i Sverige* (Malmö: Polyvalent, 1999); Anders Frenander, *Kulturen som kulturpolitikens stora problem: Diskussionen om svensk kulturpolitik under 1900-talet* (Hedemora: Gidlund, 2005); Tobias Harding, *Nationalising Culture* (Linköping: Linköping University Press, 2007).

<sup>37</sup> For discussion of Williams’s theory of culture, Tony Bennett, *Culture: A Reformer’s Science* (London: Sage Publications, 1998), 93-97; also see John Eldridge and Lizzie Eldridge, *Raymond Williams. Making Connections* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994); for his policy implications see *In From the Margins: A Contribution to the Debate on Culture and Development in Europe* (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 1997), 27-30, 33-37.

<sup>38</sup> Many scholars pointed out that such objective-setting contributed to seeing state cultural policy as constantly failing in the tasks of increasing social cohesion or economic growth. For the most representative view see Geir Vestheim, “Instrumental Cultural Policy in Scandinavian Countries: A Critical Historical Perspective,” *The International Journal of Cultural Policy* 1, no. 1 (1994), 57-71; but also Oliver Bennett, “Cultural Policy, Cultural Pessimism and Postmodernity,” *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 4, no.1 (1997), 67-84.

<sup>39</sup> For a useful overview of Marxist, Leninist and Stalinist notions of “culture,” as well as “cultured-ness” (*kul’turnost’*) see White, 17-20.

most, a formal state policy. In my study, I focus on a particular organisation, namely, the Soviet Ministry of Culture, which is part of the central state apparatus. Hereafter I will use “state cultural policy” or “state governance of culture” to designate a course of action upon culture that is brought about by the Ministry of Culture.

It would not be an overstatement to note that scholarly cultural policy studies exploded in the 1990s and well into the new century.<sup>40</sup> Various aspects of state cultural policy were explored by sociologists (Tony Bennett, Jim McGuigan), historians (Anders Frenander), political scientists (Kim Eling) and arts management scholars (Ruth Bereson) to name just a few.<sup>41</sup> Inevitably, the agenda of state cultural policy studies has been defined in different ways. Some sought to criticise existing state mechanisms for governing culture. Others tried to conceptualise different analytical relations between scholarly analysis and its object, policy-making. My dissertation relates to the second effort. As Bennett put it, one agenda for cultural studies would be the study of “the ways in which critical discourses are translated into the policy process and its bureaucratic mechanisms”.<sup>42</sup> Building on this idea, my study emphasises that the relationship between the two is mutual: I will demonstrate how the policy process and bureaucratic mechanism were mediated by techno-sciences and served as resources for critical discourse even in an authoritarian regime.

One of the tasks of cultural policy studies has been to elucidate and explore the textual and administrative actions of the state and other organisations on culture.<sup>43</sup> Such studies are usually interested in what was conceptualised and

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<sup>40</sup> By which I mean academic research, whilst more applied cultural policy studies date back to the 1970s. Alongside numerous research institutes and study programmes in cultural policy, international and national scholarly journals and an international bi-annual conference were launched. Cultural policy studies sought to differentiate themselves from the earlier studies on “politics of/by culture,” but the boundary between the two was often blurred, as for instance in Miller and Yúdice, 29-33.

<sup>41</sup> The scholarship was concerned with a variety of issues. The uses of “culture” to influence social change were discussed in Bennett, *Culture: A Reformer’s Science*. The changing conceptualisation of “culture” in Swedish cultural policy was studied by Frenander. Cultural policy towards opera was studied as a production of statehood itself by Ruth Bereson, *The Operatic State: Cultural Policy and the Opera House* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002). State cultural policy studies as a leftist critical project was defended in McGuigan. There was a search for the “real” agent behind cultural policy decision-making in France in Kim Eling, *The Politics of Cultural Policy in France* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 1999). Notably, no similar study of Soviet state cultural policy has been done so far. On the other hand, I have not encountered any study of Western state cultural policy from the perspective of techno-scientific governance.

<sup>42</sup> Bennett, *Culture: A Reformer’s Science*, 4.

<sup>43</sup> They also may or may not be involved in studying “cultural politics” or “politics by culture”. The latter focus is placed on the power struggles which use or reflect on cultural policy (as documents or an administrative system). Currently the “cultural politics” studies of the Soviet Union prevail: like Fitzpatrick, Brudny and others, they rather focus on the power struggles of individuals or their groups and less on the administration and definition of culture. For example Brudny in his chapter about “politics by culture” did not define either culture or politics. Yitzhak M.

materially constructed as “culture” by state policy.<sup>44</sup> In contrast, my concern is about what was meant by “policy” or “governance”. I ask how governance as such (of culture) was conceptualised and materially constructed. As explained in the prologue, my interest in Soviet cultural policy originated from an inquiry into the transformation of post-Soviet state cultural policy in Lithuania. In my pilot study I encountered the question: what was the departure point for this transformation (liberalisation, democratisation)? Just as with techno-science, I encountered an incredible lack of published research about state cultural policy in the post-World War II Soviet Union; the Lithuanian SSR had received even less attention from researchers.<sup>45</sup> It seemed that current cultural policy literature mainly used a model of communist cultural policy that was shaped in the 1920s and 1930s.<sup>46</sup> As the American historian of Soviet media, Kristin Ey-Roth pointed out, this lack of interest in Soviet cultural policy in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was probably rooted in a perception that Soviet cultural policy had not changed much since its Stalinist inception.<sup>47</sup> Another reason could be a particular trend in Soviet historiography. The ongoing revisionist turn in Soviet studies did not favour central governance-oriented studies. Instead, revisionist studies called for re-examining post-Stalinism from the perspective of the ordinary person and focused on everyday life. These studies attempted to counteract the prevailing centralised “censorship and control”-focused research used by representatives of the totalitarian school. Because I focus on central institutions whilst aiming to transcend the simplistic domination paradigm, my study of Soviet cultural policy also falls within the agenda of the modernisation school.

Certainly, some aspects of Soviet state cultural policy were addressed in studies of “Soviet culture”, especially the arts. Although they recently came to include design, visual and public culture, not to mention quickly growing field of Soviet film studies, Soviet cultural studies were traditionally rather elitist and

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Brudny, *Reinventing Russia: Russian Nationalism and the Soviet State, 1953-1991* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1998), 28-56;

<sup>44</sup> Frenander.

<sup>45</sup> For Soviet Lithuanian cultural policy as an ideological control of art styles and artists, see Juozapas Romualdas Bagušauskas and Arūnas Streikus, eds., *Lietuvos kultūra sovietinės ideologijos nelaisvėje. 1940-1990 dokumentų rinkinys* (Vilnius: Lietuvos gyventojų genocido ir rezistencijos tyrimo centras, 2005); Danutė Blažytė-Baužienė, “Kultūrinė autonomija sovietinėje Lietuvoje: realybė ar regimybė?” *Metai* 8/9 (2002), 131-146; Vidmantas Jankauskas, “Dailininkų pedagogų persekiojimas pokario metais.” *XIX-XX a. Lietuvos dailė. Edukacinis aspektas* (Vilnius: Vilniaus dailės akademijos leidykla, 2000); Stephen P. Dunn, *Cultural Processes in the Baltic Area under Soviet Rule* (Berkeley: University of California, 1966); Albertas Zalatorius, “The Condition of Culture and the Situation of the Artist,” *Lituanus* 38, no.4 (1992), <[http://www.lituanus.org/1992\\_4/92\\_4\\_03.htm](http://www.lituanus.org/1992_4/92_4_03.htm)> (5 May 2008).

<sup>46</sup> A good example is Miller and Yúdice, who derive a model of “command culture” of state cultural policy relying solely on pre-World War II studies of Russia and Fascist regimes. Note that they did not consider either the administrative structure or principles of management of Soviet cultural policy at all. Miller and Yúdice, 107-115.

<sup>47</sup> Kristin Joy Roth-Ey, *Mass Media and the Remaking of Soviet Culture, 1950s-1960s* (Unpublished dissertation, Princeton University, 2003), 29.

oriented towards the individual, focusing on how the Soviet regime treated artists (mainly the leading ones) and controlled art styles.<sup>48</sup> This approach was especially evident in studies of cultural diplomacy.<sup>49</sup> However, Soviet state cultural policy was not only a policy of fine arts consisting of the control of movement and expression of artists. It involved the administration of a very large body of “cultural workers”, who mainly ran clubs and culture houses. Being in charge of the population’s leisure time and combining entertainment and enlightenment, these “cultural workers” constituted a majority of the employees in the cultural sector. Only a few studies have dealt with this aspect in a more systematic way; the most important one is White’s study of cultural enlightenment after World War II.<sup>50</sup>

My dissertation aims to fill in this gap in Soviet Lithuanian cultural policy studies by presenting new historical data and offering a different approach to Soviet governance of culture. It demonstrates how the ministry’s administration of culture was shaped by a broader modern mentality regarding techno-scientifically assisted governance. Thus, my study looks at state cultural policy at large and not at its special sectors. It investigates the very intention to *govern* such a large, loosely defined, heterogeneous field. It shows that, to a large extent, cybernetic language contributed to the rationalisation of culture as governable. Finally, I argue that this techno-scientific language and these models contributed to making obvious the failure of the communist regime and served as a vehicle for criticising the very Soviet ambition to govern at that scale, by those means, and for those purposes.

This not only opens a wide vista for my research but also sets limits. I focus on a republic ministry and not an all-union one (notably, there was no separate Russian Ministry of Culture, Russia being administered directly by the all-union ministry). The primary reason for this focus is to contribute to Lithuanian (and in general Baltic) scholarship by casting light on a field and period which remains to be systematically explored. Being one of the first books about Soviet cultural policy that would focus on other countries than Russia, it also contributes to Soviet cultural studies. While the Baltic countries were only occupied by the Soviets in 1940, they were the first to break away from the Soviet Union in 1990. Hence, Lithuanian history provides my study of techno-scientific governance of culture with a context of radical political change.

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<sup>48</sup> See for example Jeffrey Brooks, *Thank You, Comrade Stalin! Soviet Public Culture from Revolution to Cold War* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2000); Susan E. Reid and David Crowley, eds., *Style and Socialism: Modernity and Material Culture in Post-War Eastern Europe* (Oxford: Berg, 2000); also John B. Dunlop, “Soviet Cultural Politics,” *Problems of Communism* November-December (1987), 34-56.

<sup>49</sup> Rana Mitter and Patrick Major, eds., *Across the Blocs: Cold War Cultural and Social History* (London, Portland: Frank Cass, 2004); David Caute, *The Dancer Defects: The Struggle for Cultural Supremacy during the Cold War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

<sup>50</sup> White.

## *Theoretical Framework: Governmentality*

If my focus on cybernetics was inspired by Gerovitch, my investigation of the meaning of governance was inspired by Foucault's ideas about governmentality. Recently a Foucaultian framework for studies of knowledge and governance regimes was advocated by Bennett for cultural policy studies;<sup>51</sup> their application for the studies of modern governance was developed by British sociologists Nikolas Rose and Peter Miller during the 1990s.<sup>52</sup> I will now briefly discuss this theoretical perspective and explain how it was used in my research.

The governmentality perspective was famously outlined by Foucault in his lecture "Gouvernementalité" at the Collège de France in February 1978. Foucault coined the term "governmentality" to "distinguish particular mentalities or ways of thinking about government and administration".<sup>53</sup> In its most general sense, the Foucaultian governmentality perspective was a part of the broader intellectual mission to study "governance without government".<sup>54</sup> A typical governmentality study focused not on the central apparatuses of the state but on "a rationality of government [...] a way or system of thinking about the nature and practice of government". Governance (note that many governmentality scholars use "governance" and "government" synonymously whilst I do not) is defined in a broad way as the "conduct of conduct", [...] a form of activity aiming to shape, guide or affect the conduct of some persons or person".<sup>55</sup> Foucault originally distinguished the "governmentalisation of the state" as a particular historical phenomenon, during which the central state government delegated regulative powers to non-state organisations. Yet I do not seek to identify "governmentality" as a particular mode of Soviet governance of culture.<sup>56</sup> Rather, I use

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<sup>51</sup> Tony Bennett, "Culture and Governmentality," in *Foucault, Cultural Studies and Governmentality*, eds. J. Z. Bratich, J. Packer, C. McCarthy (Albany: State University of New York, 2003); Bennett, *Culture. A Reformer's Science*; Tony Bennett, *The Birth of Museum. History, Theory, Politics* (London: Routledge, 2002).

<sup>52</sup> Nikolas Rose and Peter Miller, "Political Power beyond the State: Problematics of Government," *The British Journal of Sociology* 43, no.2 (1992), 173-205.

<sup>53</sup> Mitchell Dean, *Governmentality* (London: Sage, 1999), 2.

<sup>54</sup> For a brief overview of the scholarship, see Marie-Laure Djelic and Kerstin Sahlin-Andersson, "Introduction: A World of Governance: The Rise of Transnational Regulation," in *Transnational Governance: Institutional Dynamics of Regulation*, eds. M.L. Djelic and K. Sahlin-Andersson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 7-13.

<sup>55</sup> Colin Gordon, "Governmental Rationality. An Introduction," in *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*, eds. G. Burchell, C. Gordon and P. Miller (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991), 2, 3.

<sup>56</sup> For example, Miller and Yúdice conceptualise the relation between culture and governance as anthropological (differences between populations) and aesthetic (differences between tastes) and take Foucault's concept of governmentality as a description of an historical period, during which cultural policy emerged. Miller and Yúdice, 3-7. Meanwhile I am trying to clarify the mechanisms which enabled a meaningful governance of culture as a broader mentality of modern governance, which could be seen as only relatively limited to a particular period (modern) and definitely not restricted to population or political regimes.

the ideas about knowledge, state and governance developed within this conceptual approach to study the relationship between cybernetics and cultural policy.

In recent decades, many studies that distinguish “governance” as a special mode of rule have been published.<sup>57</sup> Some emphasise that “governance” operates with indirect and voluntary means, such as rules and regulations.<sup>58</sup> As Rose concisely put it, governing is a particular mode of exercising power, which could be defined as being different from domination:

To dominate is to ignore or to attempt to crush the capacity of action of the dominated. But to govern is to recognise that capacity of action and to adjust oneself to it. To govern is to act upon action. This entails trying to *understand what mobilises the domains or entities to be governed*: to govern one must act upon these forces, instrumentalise them in order to shape actions, processes and outcomes in desired directions. Hence, when it comes to governing human beings, to govern is to presuppose the freedom of the governed. [The italics are mine – E.R.]<sup>59</sup>

Is it possible then to use such an approach to governance for understanding the Soviet regime, which was notoriously illiberal? I would like to suggest that governance defined in opposition to domination is quite applicable to the Soviet regime and has important implications for advancing our understanding of it. The distinction between “governance” and the state “government” (which refers to the central state institutions and key politicians) enables a different, less centralised approach to the role of techno-science. From Foucault’s perspective of a “mentality” or “rationality” of governance, governance has a lot to do with meaning-making activities, such as defining, knowing, and describing. In turn, the production and use of knowledge, argued Foucault, was perceived as an essential condition for conducting modern governance. Thus, meaning-making is not something “secondary” or additional to governance. As Rose and Miller put it so succinctly,

The mentalities and machinations of government [...] are not merely traces, signs, causes or effects of “real” transformations in social relations. The terrain they constitute has a density and a significance of its

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<sup>57</sup> Paul du Gay, “A Common Power to Keep Them All In Awe: A Comment on Governance,” *Cultural Values* 6, no.1 (2002), 11. Du Gay argued that this notion of governance typical of neo-liberalism combined both the elements of bureaucracy and action-at-a-distance enabled by networks. A more radicalised view according to which network governance eroded traditional government was put forward by R. Rhodes, “The New Governance: Governing Without Government,” *Political Studies* XLIV (1996), 652-67.

<sup>58</sup> See the edited collection by Marie-Laure Djelic and Kerstin Sahlin-Andersson, eds., *Transnational Governance: Institutional Dynamics of Regulation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

<sup>59</sup> Nikolas Rose, *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 4.

own. Government is the historically constituted matrix within which are articulated all those dreams, schemes, strategies and manoeuvres of authorities that seek to shape the beliefs and conduct of others in desired directions by acting upon their will, their circumstances or their environment.<sup>60</sup>

Approached from this perspective, Soviet techno-scientific governance could be analysed not simply as the repression of many by a few<sup>61</sup> but as a complex process of knowledge production guided by a wish “to understand what mobilises the domains or entities to be governed”. It could be understood as being formed by administrative structures and managerial techniques, which were configured through a particular discourse on the cybernetic governance of culture. In my analysis, I will use the notions of the Soviet discourse on cybernetic governance, as well as that of mentality. By mentality I do not mean a phenomenon, transcendent to a discourse. Indeed, the two concepts are used rather synonymously, mentality as a way of thinking is inseparable from its materialisation in a discourse, organizations and practices. My choice to use the term “mentality” is motivated primarily by a wish to stress the inter-textual, inter-institutional, enduring character of cybernetic governance. It has to be noted, that I use the notion of “techno-scientific governance” in a relatively general sense, which only partially refers to historical Taylorism or the Soviet Russian term *nauchnoe upravlenie*. Rather, in line with Beissinger, I treat techno-scientific governance as “an intellectually complex set of techniques for coordinating human behavior in organizations or for providing organizational members with the skills and knowledge to do so”.<sup>62</sup>

As mentioned earlier, the formation of the Soviet cybernetic discourse of governance tended to be regarded as an indicator of the ideologisation of science. For instance, Gerovitch argued that cybernetic terminology was reduced to a meaningless language or “cyberspeak” and thus degraded from being a language of a “serious science” into an official and ideologised language of politics and administration.<sup>63</sup> It seems that Gerovitch has indirectly built his argument on the perspective of the Frankfurt School and in particular that of Jürgen Habermas on science and technology. While Habermas was worried that science and technology were about to become a prevailing “ideology” in the West, Gerovitch argued that cybernetics was subverted by the hegemonic com-

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<sup>60</sup> Rose and Miller, 175.

<sup>61</sup> Benjamin J.P. Peters, “Betrothal and Betrayal: The Soviet Translation of Norbert Wiener’s Early Cybernetics,” *International Journal of Communication* 2 (2008), 66-80.

<sup>62</sup> Beissinger, 4.

<sup>63</sup> Gerovitch defined cyberspeak as a Soviet political discourse that operated with concepts of *homeostasis* and *reflex* (physiology), *behaviour* and *goal* (psychology), *control* and *feedback* (control engineering), *entropy* and *order* (thermodynamics) and *information*, *signal* and *noise* (communications engineering). Gerovitch, *From Newspeak to Cyberspeak*, 2.

munist discourse.<sup>64</sup> Such a narrative implicates that there once was a “pure” cybernetics, clean of political relations, but later it was degraded by the political exploitation of its language. Gerovitch’s study of Soviet cybernetics was part of a long tradition of Western criticism of Soviet sciences, in which the uses of science and technology by the Soviet government have been widely criticised as “degrading”, “vulgarising” and “violating the autonomy” of science. As mentioned earlier, it has been traditional to conceptually separate science and technology and politics into two different if not conflicting spheres.<sup>65</sup> However, it was not always the communist officials who oppressed the scientists. Albert Parry, for example, argued that Soviet scientists and engineers managed to establish a considerable degree of autonomy in their field and even “subjugated” politicians with their professional jargon.<sup>66</sup> Regardless of who was seen as superior to whom, the spheres of Soviet politics and techno-sciences were presented as clearly distinguished from and engaged in a struggle with each other. I am convinced that such a separation had a very political message because Western scholars were critical of the harsh control exerted by Soviet government officials on their scientists and engineers.

The governmentality approach enabled me to bridge this gap between Party ideology and science.<sup>67</sup> From a Foucaultian discourse perspective, both could be regarded as particular “regimes of truth”, that is, constituted by rules according to which a statement could be accepted as a valid one, which defined what could be known and done.<sup>68</sup> This stance has important consequences for my analysis of the relationship between techno-science, governance and culture. It makes it possible to capture and describe a non-causal and multi-directional relationship between Soviet science and governance. I will study how the two were engaged in a relationship of the production of knowledgeability and governability and how they ultimately co-constructed each other. I approach cybernetics and related sciences and technologies as what Rose and Miller called an intellectual but also material machinery of governing.<sup>69</sup> This process of construction took place in language and public discourses and will be analysed with the help of a concept of translation.

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<sup>64</sup>Jürgen Habermas, *Towards a Rational Society* (London: Heinemann, 1971), Gerovitch, however, did not refer either to Habermas or Adorno and Horkheimer.

<sup>65</sup> This attitude shaped Vucinich’s history of the Soviet Academy of Sciences and Paul Josephson’s study about Akademgorodok, the city of science in Novosibirsk. See Alexander Vucinich, *Empire of Knowledge: The Academy of Sciences of the USSR (1917–1970)* (London: University of California Press, 1984); Graham, *Science in Russia and the Soviet Union*; Paul R. Josephson, *New Atlantis Revisited: Akademgorodok, the Siberian City of Science* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997).

<sup>66</sup> Albert Parry, *The New Class Divided: Science and Technology Versus Communism* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1966).

<sup>67</sup> See Bennett, *Culture: A Reformer’s Science*, 63.

<sup>68</sup> Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), 27.

<sup>69</sup> Its goal being to render “the world thinkable, taming its intractable reality by subjecting it to the disciplined analyses of thought,” Rose and Miller, 182.

## *Method*

As described in the Prologue, this study resulted from working backwards, and thus my analysis shares some features with the programme of archaeology conceptualised by Foucault. In line with the agenda of the archaeology of discourse defined by Foucault, I sought to reconstruct the techno-scientific discourse of the governance of culture in Soviet Lithuania out of the remaining fragments. Reconstruction is a key word here because this discourse had never been articulated by writing it down as a whole.<sup>70</sup> Further, Foucault emphasised that a discourse should not be considered as a coherent system, but rather one that was shaped by conflicting rules and marked by contradictions. To describe these conflicts and contradictions was precisely a task for archaeological analysis. Thus, I will show how conflict, incoherence and tension formed important parts of the very work of a cybernetic techno-scientific discourse on the governance of culture.<sup>71</sup>

Studying a broad range of texts, I attempted to untangle the public cultural policy discourses and trace their techno-scientific components. My definition of “discourse” builds on Foucault’s ideas. By discourse I refer to a particular assemblage of statements that explicitly concern the object of my interest, namely, state cultural policy and cybernetic techno-science. Drawing on Foucault, I conceive of discourse as a broad array of textual and institutional practices: hence I did not stop with an analysis of verbal texts but also inquired into institution-building and other practices as they were described in published texts and interviews. I worked from the assumption that discourse on the techno-scientific governance of culture could be reconstructed on the basis of several types of material: statements that occurred in official documents, public debates and retrospective accounts. In other words, the techno-scientific governance of culture was assembled as a particular discourse. The very point of this archaeological analysis is to demonstrate the heterogeneous composition of a Soviet discourse on cultural policy and therefore to suggest that it could be treated as part of a broader modern mentality of state governance, which would not be limited to a particular political regime.

The contents of utterances made in public were limited by censorship, both internal and external; it was held to be particularly difficult to distinguish lip service to the official propaganda from an individual’s own views. However, my goal was not to check the analysed texts against “reality” (a usual research practice in the totalitarian school is to compare what the agents said and what “actually happened”). In my case, what had actually happened was an act of speaking, that is, the production of a discourse on governance. Thus, the “said” or “written” was a reality, a manifestation of Soviet mentality of governance. I refused to take the texts as a “distorted”, ideological discourse, which at best could give “a lead”, but rarely “a fact”. Instead of looking for representations

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<sup>70</sup> Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, 138-139.

<sup>71</sup> Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, 151.

that would disguise (or reveal) power relations, I searched for “translations” or modes of stabilising and activating certain relations.

### *a) Translation*

To analyse the formation of the techno-scientific discourse on state cultural policy, I will use the concept of translation as defined by Bruno Latour and Michel Serres. Translation is a notoriously difficult literary notion, which was appropriated by science and technology studies to describe the complex nature of transfer (of knowledge, language, materials) from one sphere to another. Serres, for instance, defined translation as a broad conceptual process of “making connections, of forging a passage between two domains”.<sup>72</sup> In this way, translation could be seen as a particular act of linking spheres which had traditionally been constituted as different. The act of linking, however, involved the production of difference. Latour, for instance, emphasised that to translate meant to forge new associations out of previously existing components and therefore suggested that any translation (and innovation) inevitably was a bricolage.<sup>73</sup> Latour contrasted this act of translation, which bricolages and transforms, with that of “purification”, which not only enabled to coin a notion of a “pure fact”, but also to separate the entire domains of science, politics and aesthetics. Our thinking that these spheres were separated, argued Latour, was enabled only by disregarding that actually politics, science and arts were interlinked with multiple networks.<sup>74</sup>

Translation was also important for me because it indicates a post-positivist approach. It discards a search for determinist causal models that would test, for example, whether politics (or science, or economy) influenced that particular configuration of state cultural policy. Latour thus specified that the notion of translation referred to a “relation that does not transport causality but induces two mediators into coexisting”.<sup>75</sup> It is on this basis that I found the concept of translation to be especially fit to describe the non-determining role of Soviet techno-sciences: the use of the same governing technologies as in the West did not directly result in modifications of the Soviet political regime. Instead, translation guides the researcher’s attention to the act of spotting durabilities, for example, expressed in language or materials.<sup>76</sup> Thus, my study of the translation of techno-sciences into the governance of culture does not mean that I look at how “well” the original theories were retold or explained in other discourses. Instead, I look at how these theories and technologies – such as names, princi-

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<sup>72</sup> Steve Brown, “Michel Serres: Science, Translation and the Logic of the Parasite,” *Theory, Culture and Society* 19, no.1 (2002), 5.

<sup>73</sup> Bruno Latour, *Science in Action: How to Follow Scientists and Engineers through Society* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1987), 108-121.

<sup>74</sup> Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern* (London: Prentice Hall, 1993), 3.

<sup>75</sup> Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social. An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 108.

<sup>76</sup> Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, 10-11.

ples, vocabularies, models, machines – appeared in a variety of guises in public discourses on the governance of culture and what they did there. Finally, as Hayles emphasised, cybernetic steering underwent such a vast number of translations in various fields that it would be particularly difficult to establish a genealogical relationship.<sup>77</sup> Thus, like Hayles, I will focus on typological similarities and not the genealogical roots of translations; however, my analysis aims to be not only a synchronic snapshot, but also an inquiry into a history of the construction of a discursive assemblage of the system-cybernetic steering of culture.<sup>78</sup>

### *b) Materials and Sources*

Most of my Lithuanian archival and published sources have not been systematically studied either in Lithuanian or English scholarship; therefore, it may be useful to briefly describe them. My major sources consisted of archival documents, published texts, and fully transcribed semi-structured interviews.

First and foremost, I had to reconstruct Soviet cultural policy-making as a special, calculation-based mode of governance. Thus, I inquired into both the institutional history of Soviet cultural policy and its relation to the broader system of centrally commanded and administratively directed economic planning. In this part, besides secondary literature, I relied heavily on the previously unstudied documents, which are housed in the archives of the Ministry of Culture of the Soviet Republic of Lithuania (1953 to 1990) at the Archives of Lithuanian Art and Literature. Documents concerning state security surveillance and files on Party officials were found at the Lithuanian Special Archives. I used materials from the Lithuanian Communist Party archives for obtaining information about the ministers of culture and the State Security Committee (KGB) archives for the use of computer technologies in the intelligence services (all of them located in Vilnius, Lithuania).

The study of things Soviet always implies additional issues of data reliability. It is a complicated problem primarily because there is no consensus on the extent to which one can rely on Soviet data; scholars of the Soviet economy do not agree among themselves on how to interpret Soviet statistics. Some argue that the data represented in internal reports was generally reliable because it was for internal use. Further, after the fall of the Soviet Union, archival research proved that the earlier calculations of Soviet economy done by the United States

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<sup>77</sup> Hayles.

<sup>78</sup> My cybernetic keywords are slightly differently defined than the ones used by Gerovitch. In his analysis of scientific “cyberspeak” discourse, Gerovitch distinguished *information*, *feedback* and *control* as the main components of cybernetic steering. It is not my goal to offer better keywords for the analysis of cybernetic discourse; even more options have been already suggested by Gerovitch. As he put it, information, feedback and control came to describe “living organisms, control and communication devices, and human society”. Based on Wiener, Gerovitch provided 33 further translations of keywords from man to cybernetic system and machine. Gerovitch, *From Newspeak to Cyberspeak*, 53, 88.

Central Intelligence Agency were relatively correct. The public Soviet statistics also proved to be quite adequate.<sup>79</sup> However, there is no question that internationally oriented statistical data was heavily manipulated in order to create more positive images of the republic (which itself is an eloquent hint at a particular role of numbers).<sup>80</sup>

To reconstruct the official discourse on the governance of culture I used 57 speeches and the manuscripts of articles<sup>81</sup> written by Lithuanian ministers and vice-ministers<sup>82</sup> of culture over a period of approximately 35 years (1955-1990).<sup>83</sup> In Soviet Lithuania, publicly delivered speeches underwent a complicated process of editing. A minister's speech had to be edited and approved by the ideological functionaries at the Central Committee. Only speeches to be presented internally, for example, at a meeting of the Collegium of the ministry did not have to undergo examination by the highly placed censor.<sup>84</sup> This probably explains the relatively small number of manuscripts found in the archives. Because of the editing process, their contents were rather depersonalised and thoroughly adjusted to the political climate of the moment. Curiously, the earliest archived speeches were dated two years after the foundation of the LSSR Ministry of Culture in 1953.<sup>85</sup> In addition to the unpublished speeches, the archival folders included the manuscripts of articles, signed mainly by highly placed ministry officials and intended either for the all-union Russian press or

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<sup>79</sup> Philip Hanson, *The Rise and Fall of the Soviet Economy: An Economic History of the USSR after 1945* (Harlow: Longman, 2003), 2-3.

<sup>80</sup> When I asked to what extent the statistical archival data from the Soviet period was reliable, the high official of the Institute of the State Planning Committee said that as much as one would choose to rely on the contemporary statistics. Paraphrasing the British politician and intellectual Benjamin Disraeli (1804-1881), he pointed out that "there are lies and big lies and then there are statistics," meaning that both Soviet and contemporary official statistical data should be taken with a grain of salt. Interview with a mathematician, Tomas, Vilnius, December 2005. (When only the first name is used it means that the name has been changed).

<sup>81</sup> The archived speeches' manuscripts were not particularly numerous (5-10 per year, sometimes none, as in 1953-1956). The first speech found was dated 1955 and dealt with "cultural construction".

<sup>82</sup> It was not always easy to identify authorship or date. The majority of speeches were signed and an author, an occasion, a place and a date were indicated. I assumed that unsigned speeches belonged to the minister or vice minister, whereas the year could be quite certainly guessed (documents were chronologically arranged in annual folders). But in such cases I indicated authorship and year with question marks.

<sup>83</sup> I chose to analyse only archived speeches and not the published ones. The published speeches are in principle more accessible, other researchers may want to look at them and possibly on the basis of those findings to correct my argument, whilst the archived speeches present a unique source as they exhibited an editorial process that is usually invisible in published material.

<sup>84</sup> Based on a private communication with the Lithuanian historian Kąstytis Antanaitis, Kaunas, 2007.

<sup>85</sup> It took about five months to complete the organisation of the Ministry. Liudvika Lisenkaitė, *Aleksandras Gudaitis Guzevičius* (Vilnius: Vaga, 1980), 200. Moreover, I was quite taken aback that the establishment of the ministry was not commented on either by the key cultural newspaper at the time, *Literature and Art* or *Tiesa*, the main newspaper (the Lithuanian counterpart of *Pravda*).

Lithuanian newspapers in minority languages, such as Russian (*Sovetskaia Litva*) and Polish (*Czerwony standar*), as well as interviews with the Lithuanian press. Some manuscripts were prepared for broadcasting on Lithuanian radio. The manuscripts were predominantly written in Lithuanian; only a handful were translated into Russian and no texts in Polish were found. The speeches analysed were delivered on various occasions, such as at the LSSR People's Deputies sessions, the Central Committee and Supreme Council (LCP), large congresses of cultural workers, openings of important exhibitions, and Komsomol congresses.

In contrast to speeches, I treated the articles published in the Soviet Lithuanian press as a *public discourse*, which could be but was not necessarily an official discourse. The Soviet press, as Thomas C. Wolfe had sharply pointed out, should not be treated as merely a channel of the Party's "ideological doctrine". Instead, and drawing on Thomas Lahusen, the Soviet press could be approached as a "site for consolidation and evolution of cultural imaginary [...] that involved the public construction of subjectivities through a whole range of organisations, practices and habits".<sup>86</sup> While the texts written by the Party ideological instructors could also be regarded as an official discourse, other texts authored by journalists, intellectuals, artists, and other cultural operators constitute a *public discourse*. Censored only internally at the editorial boards, they did have to comply with some official norms. However, as I will show shortly, even the texts approved by editorial censors often failed to comply. Even if an editor or an author had to face sanctions from the CC ideological committee, the article would remain in print. Therefore, there was a space for some individual manoeuvring in the press.

My analysis relies on a close reading of the LSSR Ministry of Culture's monthly magazine *Domains of Culture* (1965-) and the weekly newspaper of the LSSR Writers' Union, *Literature and Art* (*Literatūra ir menas*, 1944-). But debates about governance, culture and technology were not limited only to the cultural press. Since the late 1950s, various Soviet Lithuanian magazines and newspapers featured such discussions.<sup>87</sup> For example, a specialised magazine *Science and Technique* (*Mokslas ir technika*, 1961-) published texts written by (predominantly, but not only) natural scientists and engineers, who discussed the relevance of their spheres to culture and society. The main agent in this respect was a "public" organization *Žinija* (the Soviet Lithuanian branch of the All-Union association *Znanie*), which organised an astonishing number of lec-

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<sup>86</sup> Thomas C. Wolfe, *Governing Soviet Journalism: The Press and the Socialist Person after Stalin* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005), 30.

<sup>87</sup> Indeed, the public press was not particularly numerous in Soviet Lithuania. While for example, in 1937 some 157 periodicals were published in Lithuania, the number shrank during the Soviet regime, when it amounted to 33. Misiunas and Taagepera, 37; Thomas Lane, "Lithuania: Stepping Westward," in *The Baltic States: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania*, eds. D. J. Smith, A. Pabriks, A. Pūrs and T. Lane (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 18.

tures<sup>88</sup> and published numerous brochures popularising science as part of atheist propaganda.<sup>89</sup> Book publishing, daily newspapers, radio and television broadcasts formed another vast source of information.<sup>90</sup>

The reason I chose the Ministry of Culture's monthly *Domains of Culture* and the Writers' Union's weekly *Literature and Art* was that both represented important administrative bodies and were also widely read by the Lithuanian cultural intelligentsia.<sup>91</sup> They catered to the intellectual communities and educated public of the capital and larger towns.<sup>92</sup> Further, the texts published the positions and concerns voiced by not only the official organs but also those of certain groups of intellectuals who gathered around their editorial boards. Limiting my analysis to these two publications also ensured an easily manageable corpus, which enabled the detection of both thematic and chronological patterns. A few words are needed about the publications, as they may be rather unknown to foreign readers. An earlier source, the weekly newspaper *Literature and Art*,<sup>93</sup> covered the period before the establishment of *Domains of Culture* (1965).<sup>94</sup> All of the republican Writers' Unions had their respective newspapers, such as *Literatūra un Māksla* in Latvian SSR, for example, or *Literaturnaiia gazeta* in the Russian SFSR. I closely analysed *Literature and Art* from 1946 to approximately 1970; however, its material was only used for contextualising the data obtained from the analysis of *Domains of Culture*. I focused on *Domains of Culture* because of its uniqueness in the context of other Soviet publications.

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<sup>88</sup> For example, the archive materials tells us that in 1979 there were 1,470 lecturers on atheism in Lithuanian SSR who read over 13,000 lectures about atheism every year. *Lietuva 1940-1990*, 576.

<sup>89</sup> For a recent historical study of *Znanie*, see the doctoral dissertation by Michael Froggatt, *Science in Propaganda and Popular Culture in the USSR under Khrushchev (1953-1964)* (D.Phil diss., University of Oxford, 2006).

<sup>91</sup> According to a Lithuanian historian, establishing *Domains of Culture* was a part of the ongoing relative liberalization of press. About the same time several popular magazines were established, like youth culture magazine *Nemunas* (1967), popular philosophy magazine *Problemos* (1968). Bronius Genzelis, *Imperijai griūvant: žmonės, įvykiai, procesai* (Vilnius: Lietuvos gyventojų genocido ir rezistencijos centras, 2006), 181.

<sup>92</sup> As the former editor of *Domains of Culture* Aleksas Baltrūnas recalled, "we decided that the magazine should be dedicated to a man with secondary education and a cultural enlightenment worker. Therefore – without academic tone, to be simpler, understandable; better a portrait and not a review; to speak about culture as a part of life; to let in philosophy, sociology and so on". Vytautas Jakelaitis, *Saulei leidžiantis – toks buvimas drauge. Vol. II* (Vilnius: Alka, 2002), 207. It has to be added that *Domains of Culture* published a good deal of reviews, but reviewing was not its main purpose.

<sup>93</sup> It was published from 1942 as a weekly supplement to the daily *Soviet Lithuania* (Tarybų Lietuva) and from 1946 as an independent newspaper of the Lithuanian Writers' Union.

<sup>94</sup> *Domains of Culture* had a predecessor: the bulletin *Amateur Art* (Liaudies kūryba, 1955–1964). The editorial team of *Amateur Art*, based at the Republican House of People's Creation (Respublikiniai liaudies kūrybos namai), initiated the founding of *Domains of Culture*. However, I chose not to use *Amateur Art* because the bulletin focused on club enterprises, was more of a practical manual and did not feature more general debates on cultural policy.

The establishment of *Domains of Culture* was a local initiative. It was made possible by a decree that granted the republican Central Committees the right to found a public press publication. The First Secretary (LCP) Antanas Sniečkus approved the publication with this warning: “There should not be any art for art’s sake, and issues of the village should be addressed; you see, vigilance is needed”.<sup>95</sup> The title of the magazine (*Kultūros barai*) recalled an inter-war publication *Domains of Music* (*Muzikos barai*).<sup>96</sup> In this way, the title communicated a particular perspective from which “culture” was envisioned as an *area to be worked, acted upon*; various areas of life could also be acted upon with the aid of “culture”. The first issue of *Domains* was criticised for its lack of a “special profile” or an “ideological-thematic core” by the main Party newspaper *Tiesa*. The editors were advised to “occupy a more precise position in shaping a reader’s ideological-aesthetical principles by reflecting the process of enriching our socialist culture”.<sup>97</sup> Despite this cold reception at the start, the editorial board and authors sought to create an interesting, professional magazine, which would by-pass the Soviet ideological limitations as far as was possible under those conditions. In a way, it provided the highly placed Soviet officials with some “real” feedback about the population. As the LSSR Minister of Culture Lionginas Šepetys recalled, *Domains* was always on his desk.<sup>98</sup> Beginning in 1985, the magazine was at the forefront in welcoming and promoting the ideas of perestroika. Many of the intellectuals from its editorial circles were directly involved in founding Sajūdis, the national liberation movement. *Domains of Culture* survived the hard early days of post-Soviet transformation and maintained and developed its intellectual capital, and today it remains one of the most important popular intellectual magazines in Lithuania and is a member of Eurozine. Thus, to read *Domains of Culture* was to follow the development of an important Lithuanian cultural institution that, arguably, generated one of the widespread, core public discourses on culture.

As an organ of the ministry, *Domains of Culture* was always engaged in daily policy issues. However, it should not be regarded as the ministry’s loud-speaker, which only reported its deeds and views. The magazine’s mission was broader than that, it aimed to question the important issues of the day. In its 100 pages, which also featured many illustrations, *Domains of Culture* resembled a “thick journal” (*tolsty zhurnal*), a famous Soviet type of cultural publication.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Jakelaitis.

<sup>96</sup> The former editor recalled that the title was appreciated by the Minister Banaitis since he was the author of music textbooks. Jakelaitis, 204.

<sup>97</sup> “Kaukė yra. O veidas?” *Tiesa*, 17 February 1965, 2.

<sup>98</sup> Lionginas Šepetys, *Neprarastoji karta. Siluetai ir spalvos* (Vilnius: Lietuvos rašytojų sąjungos leidykla, 2005).

<sup>99</sup> The “thick journal” was a book-resembling monthly that published polemics, interviews, reviews, but also original and translated academic and literary texts. *Domains of Culture* like Russian “thick journals” was initiated and cultivated by a circle of intellectuals, though the intellectual role of the chief editor was not as important as, for example, Aleksandr Tvardovsky’s at *Novyi mir*. For Russian “thick journals” see Brudny, 31-33.

The magazine was initiated by a group of intellectuals and cultural administrators associated with the People's House of Creation.<sup>100</sup> Although, as Baltrūnas remembered, “nearly every” issue was criticised at the Central Committee ideological committee, eventually the circulation grew to 24,000. However, by the mid-1970s, the circulation had dropped, and by the mid-1980s, it was only 12,500.<sup>101</sup> *Domains of Culture* was widely read by the Lithuanian cultural intelligentsia and as it was available by subscription from abroad, the magazine indirectly targeted exile Lithuanian communities in the West.

Other published sources included histories and memoirs. The late 1990s and early 2000s saw quite a boom in memoirs from former members of the state cultural administration and cultural workers. Numerous memoirs about the post-World War II period by famous theatre and cinema actors appeared. I used the memoirs as sources for “facts” only if it was possible to cross-check them with other sources. Otherwise, I looked for hints on cultural events that were politicised, controversial, or in other ways important. As sources, the memoirs of a vice-minister (1958-1973) and minister of culture (1964-1974) were much more useful.<sup>102</sup> These books contained interesting descriptions of everyday ministerial work. Besides being informative about ministerial life, they revealed personal perceptions on what was important and worth describing for the writer himself. The memoirs written by third persons about the former Party leaders (LCP) were rich in “popular legends” about the protagonists, which conveyed the spirit of the times. I read these memoirs in search of their perceptions in relation to Moscow superiors and also in order to get a feel for how the authors – usually their contemporaries – made sense of Soviet political power. However, it was not memoirs but interviews that formed my key source for personal, retrospective accounts about the Soviet past.

Both data collection and analysis were significantly informed by interviews with Soviet and post-Soviet agents. During six field trips, I conducted 26 semi-structured interviews with Lithuanian cultural policy makers, cultural op-

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<sup>100</sup> Among whom were Vice Minister of Culture Vytautas Jakelaitis (b.1928), Algimantas Čižauskas, writer Antanas Vengris (b.1912), editor for art Algis Patašius, philosophers like the magazine's responsible secretary Romualdas Ozolas (b. 1939) and Krescensijus Stoškus (b. 1938). The editorial board also included important representatives of heritage restoration Jonas Glemža and Pranas Gudynas, music critic Vytautas Landzbergis, Raimundas Jakučionis, literary critic Vytautas Kubilius, later poet Marcelijus Martinaitis. The first editor was E. Kulakauskienė, but she was dismissed after the second issue was criticised at the Collegium of the Ministry of Culture (9 February 1965). The new editor appointed was a prose writer, Aleksas Baltrūnas (1925-2001), who in the course of tightening ideological control was dismissed in 1972. The other editors were M. Marcalis (1972-1978), V. Vizgirda, A. Zdanavičius and Vilhelmas Chadzevičius.

<sup>101</sup> *Lithuanian Soviet Encyclopaedia* indicated that in 1980 *Domains of Culture* had a circulation of 16,000 copies. In 1987 *Domains* started publishing excerpts of *The History of Lithuania* by Adolfas Šapoka (1936), the circulation grew to 25,000 and reached its maximum at 60,000 in 1989. Jakelaitis, 201-212. Alfred E. Senn, *Lithuania Awakening* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 52-53.

<sup>102</sup> Jakelaitis; Šepetys.

erators, intellectuals and scientists (mathematicians, physicists, economists), who, to varying degrees, were linked to the development of cybernetics. During the interviews I took detailed notes and all but three (due to the failure of recording equipment) of the interviews were fully transcribed. The ones conducted at an early stage were used for developing the research design of my study; together with later ones, they informed my analysis of the archives and published data.<sup>103</sup> Thus, interviews were used as a complementary source. Among the most important contributions of the interviews was the acquisition of some sense of how the different (political, academic and cultural) communities distanced themselves from and related to each other. In addition, I found it very stimulating to discover the informants' attitudes towards my subject of study, as they retrospectively assessed the influence of techno-science on the Soviet governance of culture.

Trust and credibility were the most important issues in gaining access and conducting the interviews. My informants occupied positions which were much superior to that of my own. As they were senior natural scientists, often pioneers in their fields and leaders of major organisations, leaders of cultural organisations, holders of high governmental positions under the super-hierarchical Soviet regime, or distinguished creators – in other words, the key agents of the period of my study – they energetically tested me in all possible ways.<sup>104</sup> I was interrogated about my working hypothesis in order to establish my credibility as a scholar. Those who had never met me before wished to know more about my affiliation and educational background in order to determine my “trustworthiness” by seeing if they could detect possible academic-political alliances. Luckily, I was considered “safe” because of my position as a doctoral candidate in a university college in Huddinge, Sweden; it became clear that I was not involved in local academic struggles. My undergraduate education in art history at the Vilnius Academy of Fine Arts also put me somewhat outside of the immediate world of academic intrigues in the natural sciences; however, I was also considered an insider (this was reinforced by my postgraduate studies in Moscow). Otherwise, trust was rather easily established when I was introduced by informants' colleagues, family friends or “brothers-in-arms” – other intellectuals who previously were either dissenters or at least clearly anti-Soviet.

To some extent, I did not strive to encourage my informants to take an interest in my study because I wanted to find out how *they* defined the field of

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<sup>103</sup> The pilot fieldwork was on 26 September – 4 October (2004), followed with further fieldwork in April 2-12 (2005), 6-25 August (2005), December (2005), 31 March – 20 April (2006), and 30 October – 13 November (2007).

<sup>104</sup> I interviewed thirteen individuals from both natural and social sciences. The most important scholars who were both pioneering scientists and founders of the main academic institutions in mathematics, physics and cybernetics were selected. The interviews took place in their offices, cafeterias and sometimes homes and usually lasted about two hours, but sometimes longer and were recorded on minidisk and later transcribed. My questions were centred both on gaining information about the biographies and historical events and finding out their individual attitudes to the issues of Soviet governance, culture and cybernetics. See Appendix.

cybernetics. I tried to talk as little as possible and not to give definitions; I also tried to suggest that I would discuss my attitude at the end of our conversation. On the other hand, I doubt whether my hypothesis and reasoning could have had a bigger impact on them. I was “me”: a young female (the majority of the informants were males) and, obviously, “not a very scientific” (culture studies!) investigator. Nevertheless, by the end of the interviews I tried to provoke their reactions by recapitulating certain narratives by leading Soviet historians (particularly that of Gerovitch). Whilst they either agreed or disagreed with Gerovitch, all of them stressed that they had not read him and, moreover, were not going to! They explained their lack of interest in reading histories of science with a lack of time, as they were busy being scientists (thus, being “true subjects” of such histories).

I think that they cast me in the role of a “chronicle writer”, which had certain consequences on my field work. It was a good thing, as I was probably the first person in Lithuania to begin looking into Soviet cybernetics; the informants were generous with their time, documents, advice, contacts, and even more advice. However, what I wrote was not a “chronicle” or a list of facts but an interpretative account of the events of the past.<sup>105</sup> The problem of names was soon to emerge. I told the informants that I would record and fully transcribe the interviews and promised to keep the personalities of my informants as anonymous as possible. Most of them wanted to have their names included in the story because they saw my work as “a history that would recount what really happened”. On the other hand, some of them probably did not think that they had told me anything that could be used against them or they imagined that they were strong enough to cope with any consequences that might arise from their interviews with me.

Indeed, up to now it has been usual to publish the names of interviewed individuals in histories of Soviet science and technology. I myself have wondered whether the works of Western historians of Soviet science had any impact on Soviet scientists.<sup>106</sup> However, my study is more sociological in nature; it deals even more with interpretation and relies on oral history. My informants, however powerful they may be, are not protected from wider audiences by the Iron Curtain. Keeping in mind that the relationship between the Soviet past and the post-Soviet Lithuanian present is highly problematic, I decided not to use

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<sup>105</sup> Not to mention that a chronicle list is also based on interpretative selection. Hayden White, *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987).

<sup>106</sup> I could think only of one example of feedback received by a historian of science from his source, which was given by Loren Graham in his memoir, where he described meeting Trofim Lysenko, already rejected by the Soviet scientific establishment, who was familiar with Graham’s research. Notably, if it is possible to rely on Graham’s account, Lysenko was not too bothered with criticisms by his Western historiographers. Loren Graham, *Moscow Stories* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006). Otherwise Graham noted that his books were available for Russian readers only in specialised libraries.

the names of my informants (except when they provided me with specific technical information).

### *c) Periodisation*

The periodisation of Soviet Lithuanian history offered by Romuald Misiunas and Rein Taagepera has proven to be largely functional in my case. According to their classical study, it does not make much sense to divide Lithuanian history into Stalinist, Khrushchevian and Brezhnevian periods. With the exception of Antanas Sniečkus, the change in local first Party secretaries (Petras Griškevičius, Rimantas Songaila and Algirdas Brazauskas) was not particularly significant.<sup>107</sup> It is important to remember that de-Stalinisation was launched by the 20<sup>th</sup> Party Congress in the Soviet Union in 1956 and entailed the revision of both the governmental structure of the Communist Party and the recent past.<sup>108</sup> In Lithuania, this coincided with pacification, as the armed resistance to the Soviet occupation was eventually put down. And yet both foreign and Lithuanian historians argued that the removal of Khrushchev in 1964 was the beginning rather than the end of the Thaw or cultural liberalisation in the Lithuanian SSR. Rather, it is argued by Misiunas and Taagepera that the Thaw withered away in relation to the Prague Spring (1968), while Russification intensified after the death of Antanas Sniečkus in 1974. More broadly, I did not observe the periodisation of the Cold War as being significant for LSSR cultural policy, except during its early stage in 1946, when Andrei Zhdanov launched an anti-Western campaign in literature and the theatre. Doubtless, a very important date was the beginning of the reformist course of *perestroika* or restructuring, announced in 1986. My study also operated with a complementary periodisation based on techno-scientific development. Here the crucial dates were the birth (1948), prohibition (the early 1950s) and rehabilitation (the late 1950s) of cybernetics, the foundation of its key institutes, the establishment of computer industries, translations of Wiener's works into Russian and the publication of influential Soviet books on the subject in the first half of the 1960s. It is in relation to this history of cybernetic techno-sciences that I will interpret Soviet Lithuanian state cultural policy.

### *Disposition*

The dissertation consists of six empirical chapters, which unfold the narrative of the emergence, development and withering away of the Soviet state's ambition to exercise a calculation-based, techno-scientific governance of culture. As an interdisciplinary study, the dissertation deals with the historical development of

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<sup>107</sup> Misiunas and Taagepera, xiii-xiv.

<sup>108</sup> See for example Polly Jones, ed., *The Dilemmas of De-Stalinization: Negotiating Cultural and Social Change in the Khrushchev Era* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006). Neither Baltic countries, nor the administration of culture were addressed in this collection.

cultural policies in both Lithuania and the Soviet Union. Besides providing some background information, Chapter III maps continuities and disruptions in the development of Lithuanian cultural policy. Mainly relying on published studies, this chapter argues that both the Soviet and independent Lithuanian governments saw the organisationalisation of the cultural sector as a positive thing. Both governments found themselves as major financers of culture, but for different reasons. Yet their views as to the centralised state administration of culture differed radically.

Economic rationales were of the utmost significance in shaping the relationship between cultural policy and the techno-sciences. Chapter IV shows how culture was constituted as a governable sphere by the centrally planned and administratively commanded Soviet economic system. The economic rationalisation of culture, it argues, created important preconditions for the further translation of cultural policy in cybernetic terms. On the other hand, the economic rationalisation gave culture a low priority because it produced non-material values, which obstructed its material supply, especially computerisation.

The translation of cybernetics into the governance of culture took place as part of a very broad post-Stalinist discursive transformation in the Soviet Union. This is demonstrated in Chapter V, which shows how the language of governance (or rather management) was both politically charged and neutralised in the Soviet Union and the Lithuanian SSR. This chapter points out the limitations of the actual computerisation of Soviet management and an ambivalent relation to this by scientists themselves. The aim of the chapter is to highlight the general features of Soviet cybernetic governance discourse as it negotiated between Party ideology, Western organisation and management theories, cybernetic principles, and the costs of technology.

Chapter VI demonstrates how cybernetics was received by Lithuanian intellectuals and cultural operators. Whilst the analysis of Lithuanian management textbooks showed that cybernetics was very smoothly translated into the discourse of industrial management, it was met with more resistance in cultural discourses. Moreover, the attitudes of Lithuanian intellectuals to cybernetics changed from being positive to vaguely negative, as the Party started issuing directives to “widely” implement cybernetic methods of governance.

Cybernetics was perceived as an important part of the modernisation of the Soviet Union; its role was to improve the economy by making administration effective. Whilst Chapter VI focuses on how cybernetic control principles were translated into cultural policy, Chapter VII broadens the view and considers the role of “the scientific-technical revolution” (STR) in cultural policy discourses. It argues that the discourses on Soviet governance of culture gradually evolved from optimistic hopefulness, guided by a belief in techno-sciences, to increasing disillusionment, especially because of the growing awareness of the environmental hazards. This chapter explicates the productive nature of the translation of techno-science into culture: it shows how STR expanded the notion of culture as an object of state governance.

Did the modern ambition to centrally and techno-scientifically govern culture fail in the Soviet Union? The final chapter, Chapter VIII shows that many Soviet Lithuanian agents thought so. The chapter discusses in detail how both highly placed officials and lowly cultural operators doubted the usefulness of a calculation-based governance of culture. Thus, Chapter VIII shows that the reliability of Soviet statistical calculations and the economic rationalisation of culture were called into question much earlier than political censorship could be addressed. The liberalisation at the end of the 1980s saw direct, harsh criticism of the Soviet regime not only for its centralisation, censorship and ethnic domination, but also for its ambition to govern at such a scale and by those methods. Nevertheless, the chapter points out that the attitudes of the critics were ambivalent towards the techno-sciences.



### III. Historical Background

This chapter discusses the development of the state administrative bodies for cultural policy-making and their relation to major cultural organisations in pre-Soviet and Sovietised Lithuania. Its purpose is to show how the ambition of the government to administratively govern “culture” evolved in parallel with a young modern nation-state (Lithuania) and the first communist country (Russia). It highlights differences and similarities between these two trajectories. In interwar Lithuania (1918-1940), the government was not particularly eager to devise a special administrative apparatus for the cultural sphere. However, to a larger or smaller extent, it supported the foundation and maintenance of cultural organisations (the fine and performing arts and museums, for example). These organisations built upon and disseminated a notion of national culture (*tautinė kultūra*, predominantly understood as the Lithuanian language and folk art), conceived as an important vehicle of national sovereignty. However, I will argue that nation-building by cultural means, which was widely advocated by both the independent Lithuanian government and cultural operators, did not automatically entail using the central state administrative apparatus.

Meanwhile, in Soviet Russia and then the Soviet Union, the state cultural policy was conceived as a centralised administrative machine almost from its inception. The guiding rationale of the early Soviet cultural policy was to build a new Soviet society by giving the working class something to which they did not have access before: literacy, political enlightenment, civilised leisure. The goals of Soviet cultural policy were not only civilising but also political (the inculcation of the population’s loyalty to the Communist Party) and economic (motivating workers to work harder). I suggest that both the Lithuanian and Soviet cases could be understood as a state’s expanding ambition to govern; however, they envisioned different means of such governance.

The chapter begins with a panoramic overview of the development of major cultural organisations and their relationship to the state government in Lithuania. Inevitably sketchy and simplified, this overview is necessary in order to understand how, on the one hand, the Soviet occupation of Lithuania in 1940 brought about totally new methods of cultural policy-making, but on the other, resembled the centuries-old Tsarist repressions. I will then map the main Soviet administrative bodies and cultural policy rationales as they were introduced in Lithuania. In contrast to previous studies, I concentrate less on the repression of individuals and more on the structure of the new, Soviet state cultural policy. This choice makes it possible to discern different approaches to the state gov-

ernance of culture. The occupation brought a shift from a loosely organized, barely bureaucratically structured state cultural policy in Lithuania to a highly organised, centralised one. The specificity of Soviet state cultural policy is further detailed through (1) a discussion of its administrative structure and major rationales and (2) a description of its leaders, the ministers of culture. What were the main governing bodies for culture and what notion of culture did they encapsulate and disseminate? What features characterised a leader of Soviet cultural administration, a minister? Thus, the chapter provides the reader with a systematised overview of the (Sovietisation of) state cultural policy in Lithuania, one that aims to facilitate the reading of the analysis of cultural policy as techno-scientific governance in the chapters that follow.

### *Lithuanian State Cultural Policy before the Soviet Occupation*

The following discussion relies heavily on a recent work about Lithuanian artists and the state in the interwar period by Lithuanian historians Giedrė Jankevičiūtė, Jolita Mulevičiūtė and Dangiras Mačiulis.<sup>1</sup> Their studies were published in the post-1990 period and deal primarily with the issues of cultural policy institution building and national identity (Mačiulis, Jankevičiūtė) and the relationship between Western modernism and Lithuanian traditionalism in art (Jankevičiūtė, Mulevičiūtė). Mačiulis's study focused explicitly on "Lithuanian cultural policy"; however, he did not specify what he meant by "cultural policy". Though Mačiulis attempted to evaluate the development of a relationship between cultural operators and government officials as more or less authoritarian, neither he nor Jankevičiūtė and Mulevičiūtė problematised state cultural policy as a mode of governance. They did not deal with the impact of managerial and organisational sciences on state policies and non-state cultural organisations; rather, they described the way "cultural policy" looked from below: mainly power struggles among different artists' groups and their relations with changing governments. Thus, no straightforward comparison between the following reconstruction and my later analysis of Soviet state cultural policy as techno-scientific governance can be made at the moment. However, a rather solid empirical body produced by the aforementioned historians makes it possible to discern a typologically different relationship between Lithuanian and Soviet state cultural policies prior to World War II.

However, before I begin my analysis, I must make a brief historical detour in order to reveal the complex issues of ethnicity and a state regime in relation to our theme. It has to be emphasised that during the last few centuries, the eth-

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<sup>1</sup> Giedrė Jankevičiūtė, *Dailė ir valstybė. Dailės gyvenimas Lietuvos Respublikoje 1918-1940* (Kaunas: Kultūros, filosofijos ir meno institutas, 2003); Dangiras Mačiulis, *Valstybės kultūros politika Lietuvoje 1927-1940 metais* (Vilnius: Lietuvos istorijos institutas, 2005); Jolita Mulevičiūtė, *Modernizmo link. Dailės gyvenimas Lietuvos Respublikoje 1918-1940* (Kaunas: Kultūros ir meno institutas, 2001).

nic Lithuanians only briefly exercised sovereign rule over the country's territory. Indeed, Lithuania historically featured a profoundly multicultural society and a variety of forms of statehood. The Grand Duchy of Lithuania consisted of what are now Lithuanian, Belarusian, Russian, Polish and Ukrainian lands, and its official language was Ruthenian, that is, old Belarusian. It had a significant population of Jews and Tatars. Beginning in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century, when the Grand Duchy became a part of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (1596-1795), its governing elites and gentry spoke Polish. The Commonwealth survived for only two centuries. Despite the fact that, in 1772, the French Republicanist Jean Jacques Rousseau produced elaborate suggestions as to how to rejuvenate and consolidate democracy in the Commonwealth (he wrote "Poland"), the country grew steadily weaker and eventually split among the Russian Empire, the Habsburg Monarchy and the Kingdom of Prussia. After the third partition of the Commonwealth in 1795, most of the Grand Duchy's lands became a province of the Russian Empire. Despite repeated revolts, only the dissolution of the Russian and German empires during World War I enabled both Poland and Lithuania to establish their own nation-states. However, after enjoying only about twenty years of independence (1918-1940), Lithuania was forcefully annexed to the Soviet Union.

Thus, it should come as no surprise that my quest for a "Lithuanian" state administration of culture in the past is itself a product of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and rooted in the present reality of the independent Lithuanian nation-state. The use of the term "Lithuanian" in relation to cultural organisations prior to the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century is also problematic because at that time, the idea of Lithuanian-ness was quite different from that of today. Scholars have argued that in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, the meaning of the term "Lithuanian" signified a local identity of nobles and gentry (*szlachta*), who identified with both Polish and Lithuanian (*gente Lituanus, natione Polonus*). On the other hand, the term "Lithuanian" referred to a language spoken by peasants. It was the latter meaning of "Lithuanian-ness" that was selected as the foundation for establishing a nation by a group of Lithuanian nation-builders in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The linguistic category was translated into ethnicity and applied to some of the inhabitants of a territory roughly similar in size to that of present-day Lithuania (notably, the majority of the city dwellers were Jewish).<sup>2</sup> Since I am more interested in the organisation and governance of the cultural sector, I will abstain from the ethnic meaning of the terms and use Lithuanian in its (contemporary) territorial meaning.

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<sup>2</sup> For more about the community of nobles in the Grand Duchy and the multiple meanings of "Polish" and "Lithuanian" in the seventeenth century, see Artūras Tereškinas, *Imperfect Communities: Identity, Discourse and Nation in the Seventeenth-Century Grand Duchy of Lithuania* (Vilnius: Lietuvių literatūros ir tautosakos institutas, 2005), 36-37, 46-51. Ethnic cartography produced by the Russian empire was used to negotiate both the territory and ethnicity of Lithuanians. See Vytautas Petronis, *Constructing Lithuania: Ethnic Mapping in Tsarist Russia, ca.1800-1914* (Stockholm: Stockholm University, 2007).

The changing state regimes have proven to exert a great influence on the development of Lithuanian cultural organisations. As the Dutch art historian Robert W. Scheller argues, beginning in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, a rather close relationship existed between a mode of governance and the emergence of state art institutions in Western and Eastern Europe. For example, monarchies featured central collections of art, which would become the basis for the country's first public galleries, like the Louvre (1792) or the State Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg (1764).<sup>3</sup> However, from 1572 onward, the regime of elective monarchy in Poland-Lithuania began to entail the vesting of sovereignty into many different families and individuals, not just a single monarch. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, when the Polish-Lithuanian "republic of nobles" gained notoriety for being run in a democratic, but infamously anarchic manner,<sup>4</sup> it is not surprising, argues Scheller, that the Commonwealth did not see the emergence of centralised arts organisations.<sup>5</sup> In addition, the situation was different in the case of education. Indeed, as Ann White has noted, the first Polish-Lithuanian public cultural organisation was inspired by the ideas of the French Enlightenment. In the 1760s, the aristocrat and social reformer Paweł K. Brzostowski (1739-1827) founded his "peasants' republic" in the Vilnius region. In order to provide the peasants with education, he established a "community house", which contained a reading room and a school.<sup>6</sup> In addition, it was the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, which had founded the Education Commission, a governmental body that was active from 1774 to 1794 and was the first of the kind in Europe. On the other hand, a similar development in the fine arts was considerably slower in coming. It was only at the very end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century that the first professional artists' educational centre was established. The Vilnius Arts School was founded in 1797 as part of the older Vilnius University (1579). The first public museum in Lithuania was founded under Imperial Russian rule by the Lithuanian lawyer Dionizas Poška (1760-1830) in 1812.<sup>7</sup> However, whereas the 19<sup>th</sup> century saw a

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<sup>3</sup> Robert W. Scheller, "Art of the State: Forms of Government and Their Effect on the Collecting of Art 1550-1800," *Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art* 24, no.2-3 (1996). See also Nick Prior, *Museums and Modernity: Art Galleries and the Making of Modern Culture* (Oxford: Berg, 2002), 15-20, 31-36.

<sup>4</sup> For a brief overview of the "ethos" of the republic of nobles, see Norman Davies, *Heart of Europe: The Past in Poland's Present* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 290-294.

<sup>5</sup> In this the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth resembled other aristocratic republics like the Netherlands, Switzerland and the Republic of Venice. However, Scheller noted the attempt of the last elected king Stanislas Poniatowski to create a national collection to be named *Musaeum Polonicum*. But the idea was not implemented because of the partition of the Commonwealth. Parts of his collection ended up in Dulwich College, London. Scheller, 278-279, 285. For more on the collections of Lithuanian magnates, see Nastazija Keršytė, *Lietuvos muziejai iki 1940 metų: Lietuvos muziejų raida XVI-XX amžiaus ketvirtajame dešimtmetyje* (Vilnius: Lietuvos nacionalinis muziejus, 2003), 19-35.

<sup>6</sup> This project was within the spirit of Enlightenment: peasants were granted some rules of self-governance and access to education. White, *De-Stalinization and the House of Culture*, 45.

<sup>7</sup> The Baublys Museum, with a small library, ancient artefacts and a print collection, was erected in a pavilion in a park. The pavilion itself was rather original in a European context as it was

wave of new museums and art academies all over Western Europe,<sup>8</sup> the devolution of these institutions took place in Lithuania. This did not occur because the country was too provincial. Indeed, before the commercial rise of Riga, Vilnius<sup>9</sup> was the third largest city in the Russian Empire and home to the oldest university in the area. Rather, the Russian authorities saw Lithuania as a province too disloyal to be allowed to organise on its own terms. Following the Polish-Lithuanian resurgence against Tsarist rule in 1830, the possessions of 400 rebels' palaces were confiscated.<sup>10</sup> Vilnius University, with its architecture (1793), drawing and painting (1797), sculpture (1803) and graphic arts (1805) departments, was closed after the uprising in November 1832.<sup>11</sup> The Imperial Academy of Arts (1764) in Saint Petersburg replaced the Vilnius Art School as Lithuania's arts and education centre.<sup>12</sup> True, the first large public museum, the Vilnius Museum of Antiquities, was established by the Lithuanian Science Society in 1855, but its displays were censored.<sup>13</sup> The museum stayed open for eight years until the Tsarist authorities closed it down after another Polish-Lithuanian uprising in 1863. Further, the Russian authorities banned Lithuanian script in Latin (only Cyrillic characters could be used from 1864 to 1904), whilst the official language was Russian (Lithuanian was only taught in primary schools). Restrictions imposed on public gatherings and the right of association lasted until 1907.<sup>14</sup> Thus, Russian Imperial politics heavily suppressed the development of public cultural organisations in 19<sup>th</sup> century Lithuania.

As a result, the tight prohibitions gave rise to resistance and counter-actions. Informal schools, which taught in Lithuanian, were organised in the countryside; Lithuanian books published in Latin print were smuggled from Prussia (Königsberg). Further, the first ethnographic studies of folk songs, traditions and art inspired by Johan Hottfried von Herder's work in Riga (in the 1760s) were carried out, while the ethnic maps of the country were produced by the Russian Imperial cartographers.<sup>15</sup> The intelligentsia fostered increasingly anti-

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installed in the trunk of an ancient oak tree covered by a roof. Clearly, within the context of neo-classicist architecture, the Baublys made a statement about local Lithuanian identity. Thus, Lithuania's first public museum was not modelled on the stylistic grounds of a Greek temple, but used the natural form of an oak tree, which occupied an important place in pagan mythology.

Keršytė, 52.

<sup>8</sup> Prior, 38-49.

<sup>9</sup> I use the contemporary Lithuanian name (Vilnius) though historically the city was also known under the names of Vil'na and Wilno among others.

<sup>10</sup> Keršytė, 59.

<sup>11</sup> Vilnius University was re-opened in 1919; the Art School was established in Kaunas in 1922.

<sup>12</sup> For more about the role of St. Petersburg in the regional history of art, see Jeremy Howard, *East European Art, 1650-1950* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

<sup>13</sup> In 1865 the Museum was reorganised, transferred to the control of Vilnius Library and Russified. Later public museums included the Museum of Murav'ev in Vilnius (1898-1914) and Kaunas City Museum (1896, renamed the Museum of Industry and Science in 1905); Keršytė, 72, 78, 87.

<sup>14</sup> Lane, xxxiii.

<sup>15</sup> Petronis, 111-115.

Russian and anti-Polish sentiments and eventually formulated the idea of an independent Lithuanian nation, which demanded a state separate from Poland and the Russian Empire.<sup>16</sup> Such a state was established on the basis of Woodrow Wilson's national self-determination principle in 1918. However shaky its geopolitical grounds had been, it formed the basis for consistent, official Lithuanian governmental action on the cultural sphere.

For the historical reasons noted above, upon its birth, the young Lithuanian government did not have a central arts collection, a museum or a higher education centre: Vilnius University and the Vilnius Arts School had been closed for 86 years. On the other hand, during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, vast new resources were actualised: a folk culture and the Lithuanian language. These two were chosen as the basis for a "national culture". The significance of folk art was motivated by a political need to establish and argue the historical continuity of ethnic Lithuania.<sup>17</sup> Eager to transform its citizens into conscious "Lithuanians", the government prioritised the 19<sup>th</sup> century's model of folk culture: language, handicrafts and music. In line with the famous theoretician of nationalism, Ernest Gellner, it has to be emphasised that the Lithuanian folk culture was professionally assembled.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, some Lithuanian international displays were criticised because rather than feature the households of early 20<sup>th</sup> century Lithuania, the "typical examples" were drawn from the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries.

The notion of national culture based on folk art and the Lithuanian language was disseminated both within the country and abroad. Following a Western trend to "peacefully" compete in "the progress" of industry and culture (and later, thanks to Pierre de Coubertin's idea, in sports), set by the Great Exhibition of London in the Crystal Palace (1851), cultural artefacts were used as part of Lithuanian foreign policy and as an argument for sovereignty. Even in 1900, at the International Exhibition in Paris, Lithuania participated separately from the Russian Empire. The prohibited Lithuanian press examples were exhibited alongside folk art. After 1918, Lithuania was represented at several international art exhibitions, including the International Exhibition of Decorative Arts in Monza, 1925, and in 1927 at the Museum of Applied Arts in Paris. Five art exhibitions toured Scandinavia (Sweden, Norway and Denmark) in 1931. Finally, the country was represented at the World's Fair in Paris (1937), where Lithuania shared a pavilion with Latvia and Estonia, and at the World's Fair in New York (1939). Everywhere, even at the International Exhibition of Hygiene

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<sup>16</sup> Darius Staliūnas, "Did the Government Seek to Russify Lithuanians and Poles in the Northwest Region after the Uprising of 1863–64?" *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 5, no.2 (Spring 2004), 273–289.

<sup>17</sup> These conceptions reflected the geopolitical situation of the country at that time. But in Vilnius both the Polish nobility and representatives of other ethnic groups such as Jews or Tatars ran their own cultural organisations, some of which founded collections later to be included in the state museums. For more, see Alma Lapinskienė, ed., *Vilniaus kultūrinis gyvenimas 1900-1940* (Vilnius: Lietuvių literatūros ir tautosakos institutas, 1998).

<sup>18</sup> Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1983).

in Dresden (1930) and the World's Fair in Paris (1937), dedicated to "Art and Technology in the Modern World", Lithuania was represented by folk art artefacts (and in the 1930s, by folk art -inspired art deco works by modern artists).<sup>19</sup>

The first administrative state body created specifically for "cultural" matters was formed at a very early stage of Lithuanian statehood. In 1918, the provisional Lithuanian government established the Art Department, which was headed by a national-romantic painter Antanas Žmuidzinaičius. However, the work of the department was soon disrupted by geopolitical events: in 1919, Poland occupied the city of Vilnius and its region, and the Lithuanian government moved out to Kaunas (Vilnius changed hands and was finally annexed to Poland in 1922). Consequently, the most important organisations were moved to the provisional capital (Vilnius University, renamed as Stephan Batory University, remained in Vilnius). The major goals of post-1918 governments were to educate the illiterate sector of the population and disseminate the idea of a national Lithuanian culture, as distinguished from Russian and Polish cultures. As to the first goal, about 30 percent of the Lithuanian population was illiterate in 1923 (illiteracy dropped to 5.9 percent in 1941).<sup>20</sup> As to the second one, the development of professional national culture both at home and abroad was emphasised. The poets Maironis and Antanas Baranauskas (who were also Catholic priests) and the composer and painter Mikalojus K. Čiurlionis, to mention just a few, were promoted as the most important creators of "national culture".<sup>21</sup> For young creators, a state scholarship scheme enabled young, talented artists to study at the famous academies and artists' studios in Paris.<sup>22</sup>

Interwar Lithuania was a new, small and very impoverished country: in the 1920s, during his visit to Lithuania, the British consul complained about poor infrastructure and antiquated agriculture.<sup>23</sup> True, the economic situation im-

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<sup>19</sup> On the international exhibitions, see Giedrė Jankevičiūtė, "Dailė kaip politikos kalba. Lietuva 1918-1940," *Menotyra* 2 (2002), 46-55; Dangiras Mačiulis, "Kultūros paveldo apsauga nepriklausomoje Lietuvoje (1918-1940)," *Lituanistica* 4 (2003), 18-39.

<sup>20</sup> Data from *Lietuva 1940-1990*, 25. In comparison, according to 1897 census, about 70 percent of the Russian population was illiterate (the highest rates of literacy were in Estonia and Latvia where they approached 100 percent).

<sup>21</sup> Typically for romantic nationalism, national history was written selectively and seen as being materialised in the folklore. As mentioned above, crosses and woven pleats were the objects which symbolised the spirit of the nation and dominated the displays in international exhibitions. Monuments were erected to Lithuanian medieval dukes as the symbols of sovereignty. Memorial sites were constructed for unknown soldiers and liberation fighters. The state was concerned with establishing public sites of experience and memory, thus encouraging the creation of rituals of memorialisation, collection of folklore and preservation of heritage (although no heritage preservation legislation was passed, see Mačiulis, "Kultūros paveldo apsauga"; Jankevičiūtė, *Dailė ir valstybė*; Giedrius Vilūnas, "Vytauto Didžiojo kultas tarpukario Lietuvoje," *Lietuvių atgimimo studijos 17 (Lietuva ir Lenkija XIX-XX a.)* (Vilnius: Lietuvos istorijos instituto leidykla, 2001).

<sup>22</sup> Giedrė Jankevičiūtė, "Dailės mokymas Lietuvos Respublikoje 1918-40," *XIX-XX a. Lietuvos dailė. Edukacinis aspektas* (Vilnius: Vilniaus dailės akademijos leidykla, 2000).

<sup>23</sup> Lane, 9.

proved towards the end of the 1930s (an considerable achievement in the context of the global recession of Western economies at that time) but, in comparison with Western Europe, the young republic did not boast a great variety of cultural organisations. Whilst an art college was opened in Kaunas, the country had only a few art galleries.<sup>24</sup> It is true that the M.K. Čiurlionis's Gallery (1925) hosted major exhibitions, but these were based in a provisional venue with very limited space.<sup>25</sup> A Lithuanian art historian noted that it was primarily because the majority of society was either not rich enough or did not possess the aristocratic habit of collecting that the state emerged as the major collector of art works.<sup>26</sup>

Whilst theatres were arguably the most thriving cultural sector in the interwar period,<sup>27</sup> the situation was also better for public museums: quite a few opened in the major cities. The first decade of independent statehood saw the foundation of the Kaunas Museum of Zoology and the Kaunas City Museum, which featured archaeological collections (both opened in 1919). The Museum of Pedagogy established in 1922, was devoted to the development of Lithuanian national schools. In 1923, the Museum of "Aušra" (*The Dawn* was a periodical published by the national liberation movement in 1883-1887) was established in Šiauliai, a small town in western Lithuania. The same year, the Literature Museum (*Rašliavos muziejus*) at the Faculty of Humanities, Vytautas Magnus University, dedicated to archiving literary manuscripts, opened. The 1930s saw the foundation of memorial museums dedicated to the authors Baranauskas, Maironis (1936) and the Catholic priest and writer Juozas Tumas-Vaižgantas. In 1939, the Religious Art Museum was established under the Arts Institute in Vilnius. Smaller museums of regional studies, often administratively linked to high schools, were rapidly spreading across the country. Though some museums were established under city municipalities, most of them were founded with civic initiative. These museums were dedicated to assembling and displaying the key ideological components of Lithuanian culture as a basis of sovereign statehood. For example, the Museum of Pedagogy was important, since it testified to Lithuanian resistance to Imperial Russian rule, and a period during which Lithuanian was taught in secret from 1864 to 1904.

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<sup>24</sup> There were not very many private artistic organisations. For example, the first private art gallery was opened by a Jewish collector in Kaunas in 1932.

<sup>25</sup> Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis (1875-1911) was canonised as the most prominent national painter and composer (and also nominated as the founder of professional national music). His work was influenced by Symbolism and Romanticism. The gallery, dedicated to his paintings, but also a collection of folk art and modern and historic fine art, was established in 1921 and converted into the Vytautas the Great Museum of Culture in 1936. Ironically, in the West Čiurlionis was known as a Russian artist. George Kennaway, "Lithuanian Art and Music Abroad: English Reception of the Work of M.K. Čiurlionis, 1912-39," *Slavonic and East European Review* 83, no.2 (2005).

<sup>26</sup> Jankevičiūtė, *Dailė ir valstybė*, 20.

<sup>27</sup> According to the minister of finance, salaries made up about 83 percent of state subsidies for theatre in the 1920s-1930s. Actors were the best paid public servants. Mačiulis, *Valstybės kultūros politika*, 56-58.

It is worth noting that the Lithuanian public cultural organisations did not have a strong association with the aristocracy for two reasons. Just like the state itself, the founding of the first independent Lithuanian artistic institutions was driven mainly by the local intellectual elite, the nation-builders rooted in the thin Polish-Lithuanian middle class.<sup>28</sup> Indeed, the first temporary government of independent Lithuania included a number of intellectuals and artists, many of whom were members of the Lithuanian Science Society (1907).<sup>29</sup> Second, aristocratic culture was so closely identified with Polish strata that it did not agree with the need for distinctiveness, which was required by the nationalist intellectuals. Poland threatened to incorporate the territories of the newly, nationally aware Lithuanians, so it is no wonder, some scholars argue, that the high culture propagated by aristocrats was associated with the Polish nobility, and that this line of the country heritage was suppressed in the official ideology of national culture.<sup>30</sup> Ironically, it was the Soviet government that re-discovered and actualised the heritage of estate houses in Lithuania.<sup>31</sup>

In the scholarship, the 1920s and 1930s have generally been considered as the time of the birth of modern state cultural policy institutions worldwide.<sup>32</sup> However, more fully-fledged organisations were typical of exceptionally authoritarian states – the Soviet Russia (with *Narkompros*, a governmental agency for education and arts set up by Lunacharsky in 1917) and Mussolini's Italy and Hitler's Germany, which both developed state administrative bodies that made cultural policy.<sup>33</sup> Nevertheless, some initiatives, such as the Federal Art Project, part of Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal policy of 1935, and private philanthropic

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<sup>28</sup> That the majority of East Central European nation-builders came from the middle class was revealed in a detailed biographical study by the Czech historian Miroslav Hroch. Hroch, however, did not problematise the “cultural aspects” of the notion of class which he defined on the basis of property and profession. Miroslav Hroch, *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe: A Comparative Analysis of the Social Composition of Patriotic Groups among the Smaller European Nations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000).

<sup>29</sup> The Society was the major force behind the establishment of independence: 18 of the 20 signatories of the Independence Act on 18 February 1918 were members of the Society for Science.

<sup>30</sup> Some historians argue that the anti-Polish sentiments were partially a result of the Russification policy in the nineteenth century. After their studies in St. Petersburg, many Lithuanian nationalists came back with opinions about the evil influence of the Poles. See for example the case of Maironis, the Catholic priest and canonised national poet, in Alvydas Nikžentaitis, “Jogailos įvaizdis lietuvių visuomenėje,” *Lietuvių atgimimo istorijos studijos (Nacionalizmas ir emocijos (Lietuva ir Lenkija XIX-XX a.))* (Vilnius: Lietuvos istorijos instituto leidykla, 2001), 61. On the other hand the rather poor state of many Lithuanian estate houses and palaces, whose owners fled the country during the wars, could also be explained by the government's low prioritisation of fine arts and heritage in general. Mulevičiūtė, *Modernizmo link*, 35-36.

<sup>31</sup> Mačiulis, *Valstybės kultūros politika*, 149, 165-170.

<sup>32</sup> Bennett, *Culture. A Reformer's Science*.

<sup>33</sup> Goebbels's Ministry of Enlightenment and Propaganda was created in 1933. On Italian cultural government see Marla Susan Stone, *The Patron State: Culture and Policy in Fascist Italy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998).

organisations, which had geopolitical aspirations, like the Fulbright and Guggenheim Foundations, also took hold in the United States.<sup>34</sup> By contrast, in France despite lively leftist debate and action, which focused on the idea of “culture for the people”, cultural investment was regarded as a predominantly private affair and was explicitly opposed in authoritarian regimes.<sup>35</sup> In a way, like in France in the 1920s and 1930s, though for different reasons, the Lithuanian government was not particularly active in establishing a central administration that would use culture and assist cultural operators.

Between 1918 and 1940, cultural life in Lithuania was driven mainly by various civic societies (*draugijos*), a type of association rooted in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. These societies became major agents for organising exhibitions and establishing museums and other cultural organisations. They sought to unite interested individuals who wanted to develop their private interests but also to engage in public action. Societies arranged discussion clubs, established public reading rooms, initiated studies and publications, organised exhibitions and other arts events, and established other organisations (often related to the arts and education). They also acted as lobbying groups when trying to promote one or another idea about cultural organisation to the government. As they were also gathering points for informal communication and entertainment, the societies facilitated contacts among artists, politicians, businessmen and intellectuals, as their members came from different spheres.<sup>36</sup> Moreover, the societies also represented different political and aesthetic ideologies, such as conservative, liberal and avant-garde, which often resulted in debates in the press.<sup>37</sup>

Among the most prominent were the Lithuanian Science Society (1907), the Society of Creators of Lithuanian Art (1920) and the Independent Artists Society (1930).<sup>38</sup> The Society of Creators was established by the artists representing different branches of the fine arts. The society founded some key cultural organisations, such as drawing courses, the Čiurlionis collection (on whose basis a gallery was later established), opera, dramatic theatre, drama courses and a music school. However, the society was unable to maintain these organisations financially and thus tried to attract government support in various ways. For example, it organised a major exhibition *Overview of Lithuanian Art* (1 May 1920), and the president, the prime minister, other members of the gov-

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<sup>34</sup> For early US cultural diplomacy see Frank A. Ninkovich, *The Diplomacy of Ideas: U.S. Foreign Policy and Cultural Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

<sup>35</sup> See the formation of L'Association des Écrivains et Artistes Révolutionnaires (1932), later transformed into l'Association des Maisons de la Culture et des Cercles Culturels in 1935. Vincent Dubois, *La politique culturelle: genèse d'une catégorie d'intervention publique* (Paris: Belin, 1999), 114, 119–120.

<sup>36</sup> Mulevičiūtė, *Modernizmo link*.

<sup>37</sup> Especially active were modernist artists group *Ars* (1932) and an avant-garde writers group, influenced by the futurists and the Russian poet Mayakovsky *Keturi vėjai* (Four winds, 1924–28).

<sup>38</sup> The Society for Science founded a public library and an historical museum in Vilnius (1907 and 1908). It was active both in politics and (particularly philological) scholarship.

ernment and prominent representatives of the Catholic Church were invited to attend the opening. Despite this attention, the exhibition suffered a financial loss. Consequently, closer cooperation with the government was sought.<sup>39</sup> However, there was a discrepancy between heated rhetoric, which affirmed the importance of art for the young nation and the fact that the government did not provide any help in the acquisition of permanent facilities for similar exhibitions.<sup>40</sup>

It was Lithuania's cultural creators themselves who demanded a special governmental body dedicated exclusively to culture. As early as 1922, ideas about bringing civil organisations closer to state authority circulated in the press. Artistic and other "cultural" affairs were managed by the Department of General Matters at the Ministry of Education. Cultural operators repeatedly expressed their dissatisfaction with the work of this department. After four years, the Arts Department, under the Ministry of Education, was established (1926). The department was headed by Justinas Vienožinskis a painter and head of the Kaunas Art School. A special Council of Artists was added to the department as a result of further demands from artists.<sup>41</sup> Ironically, the department was short-lived. On 17 December 1926, a *coup d'état* brought the Tautininkai Party (Nationalists) and the president Antanas Smetona (1874 – 1944) to power. This was the beginning of what was known as a "soft authoritarian" regime: the parliament was dispersed in 1927, and no elections took place until 1936. The 1938 Constitution established almost absolute presidential power.<sup>42</sup> Cultural administration also experienced further changes. The Arts Department and the Council were immediately abolished, and cultural matters were transferred back to the Department of General Matters; in 1931, this department was abolished.

Interestingly, this devolution of state administration stimulated civic self-organisation. The Society of Creators of Lithuanian Art was recreated and became the major agent in supporting cultural life and representing Lithuania abroad for the remaining few years of independence. From 1926 to 1928, it managed a public cultural centre, with a small library and exhibition space.<sup>43</sup> It must be noted that the society was also financially supported by the state; yet it maintained its non-governmental profile. In 1930, the Independent Artists Society was established as an alternative to the more conservative Society of Creators. The Independent Artists Society cooperated closely with a relatively liberal cultural magazine *Naujoji Romuva* (New Romuva, 1931-1940) edited by Juozas Keliuotis, Lithuania's first professional journalist. Between 1932 and 1933, the society organised a *Naujoji Romuva* discussion club located first on the maga-

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<sup>39</sup> Jankevičiūtė, *Dailė ir valstybė*, 18.

<sup>40</sup> See Mulevičiūtė, *Modernizmo link*, 19, 24. The government generously supported opera, ballet and dramatic theatre.

<sup>41</sup> Jankevičiūtė, *Dailė ir valstybė*, 19.

<sup>42</sup> *Lietuva 1940-1990*, 2005, 28-29. For a history of liberal and anti-liberal political movements in Lithuania, see Vincentas Lukoševičius, *Liberalizmo raida Lietuvoje. XIX a. pab. – 1940 m.* (Vilnius: Valstybinis leidybos centras, 1995).

<sup>43</sup> Mulevičiūtė, *Modernizmo link*, 49.

zine's premises and later in a movie theatre. The club's events were attended by artists, scholars, and government, church and military representatives. Though it was never formally registered, the club was active until 1940. It served as an important, informal meeting place for the cultural intelligentsia, politicians and businessmen.<sup>44</sup>

It seems somewhat peculiar that the introduction of an authoritarian regime implied the devolution of cultural administration. Just as before, cultural operators continued demanding that the governmental department for culture be reinstated. These demands led to the creation of the Department for Cultural Matters in 1934, in the context of the imminent opening of the Vytautas Magnus Museum. The department had direct authority over a broad range of organisations, including Vytautas Magnus University, the editorial board of the dictionary of the Lithuanian language, the archaeology commission, the central state archives, the state drama theatre, the M.K. Čiurlionis Gallery, the Kaunas Art School, religious affairs, the state radio and even the meteorology bureau among others.<sup>45</sup> As I will shortly demonstrate, initially, the Soviet state administration of culture also featured a rather eclectic assemblage of sectors. Under the department, in 1935, a specialised commission for art under the Ministry of Education, chaired by art historian Paulius Galaunė, director of the Čiurlionis Gallery, (from 1936, the Vytautas Magnus Culture Museum), was created, but it was soon disbanded after the establishment of the Lithuanian Artists Union (1935).

On the one hand, this devolution may be understood as a sign of a positive attitude towards a decentralised, public organisation of cultural administration in Lithuania. The idea was that the Ministry of Education would use the union as an advisory, counselling organ; thus, art matters would be administrated as a governmental and public partnership.<sup>46</sup> The union membership would be based on professional qualifications, not on affiliation to certain social circles or political views, as was the case of some other societies.<sup>47</sup> Yet the income of the Artists' Union was derived primarily from government subsidies and membership fees.<sup>48</sup> On the other hand, according to Mačiulis, this policy-making role of the union remained on paper and in reality did not have any perceivable influence on the decisions made in the Ministry's department of culture.<sup>49</sup>

Alongside the comings and goings of the governmental arts department, the idea of a culture fund (a funding body) and culture palace (a planning, pol-

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<sup>44</sup> Mulevičiūtė, *Modernizmo link*, 49-50.

<sup>45</sup> Mačiulis, *Valstybės kultūros politika*, 34.

<sup>46</sup> The Writers' Union was founded in 1932. Mačiulis, *Valstybės kultūros politika*, 19, 22.

<sup>47</sup> For example, the *Naujoji Romuva* club attracted those intellectuals who were more liberally oriented Westernisers, while the Creators of Art Society united more traditional, conservative artists of an older generation.

<sup>48</sup> At the end of the 1930s the Union attracted some more substantial corporate support from private businesses. Jankevičiūtė, *Dailė ir valstybė*, 34.

<sup>49</sup> Mačiulis, *Valstybės kultūros politika*, 23-25.

icy body) was widely discussed in the press between 1926 and 1939. The public culture fund was envisaged as being similar to the ones in Latvia, Estonia and Iceland, as a public alternative to governmental and private sponsorship, to be funded with an excise tax on alcohol and luxury goods and from revenues from the penalties collected for public misconduct.<sup>50</sup> A Lithuanian art historian noted that the structure envisioned for the culture palace resembled the *Kulturkammer* system of Goebbels's propaganda ministry because it was thought to combine different functions (coordinating display, research, education and creation) and different arts and intellectual activities.<sup>51</sup> However the foundation was not established either. It must be stressed that the influential Lithuanian cultural operators did not sympathise with the authoritarian model of state cultural policy. For example, in December 1938, the editor of *New Romuva* stated that a state cultural policy should involve "only a system of material, legislative and public affairs, whilst the goals and directions of culture should remain within the competence of cultural creators themselves". According to the editor, if the state or society determine the goals of culture, this would "damage all cultural life and halt its progress", as had been proved by the fascist Italian and Soviet Russian experiences.<sup>52</sup>

Thus, the interwar state administration for culture featured mainly short-lived organisational bodies. However, from the 1920s to 1930s, a trajectory for strengthening the Lithuanian government's control over cultural organisations could be discerned. After the *coup* in 1926, the government became more actively engaged in controlling freedom of speech. The calls for the state to engage in popularising high culture intensified in the second half of the 1930s. For example, in 1935, Antanas Juška, the director of the Department of General Matters (for art and culture) in the Ministry of Education stated: "Some propose that the state should require obligatory attendance at theatrical performances, concerts and exhibitions... Not everybody wants to study, but the state obliges everybody to attend at least primary school. If art is also a good thing, why shouldn't it also be obligatory? Art is very expensive, so broad access to it must be organised in order that more people can benefit from it. First, people should be compelled to take part in artistic activities and maybe then society will strive for cultural process".<sup>53</sup> But it was only later – in 1938 – that the Agency for Public Works, dedicated to national culture and propaganda, was established under the prime minister. The organisation was headed by professor of philosophy and Catholic priest Izidorius Tamošaitis (1889-1943), an active member of the ruling nationalist party. The agency's primary concern was the censorship of

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<sup>50</sup> Mačiulis, *Valstybės kultūros politika*, 89-111; Olafur Rastrick, "The Emergence of 'Icelandic Culture' in the Interwar Period," a paper presented at CRESC Inaugural Conference "Culture and Social Change: Disciplinary Exchanges," 11- 13 July 2005, The University of Manchester.

<sup>51</sup> Jankevičiūtė, *Dailė ir valstybė*, 22, 35.

<sup>52</sup> "Kultūros politika," *Naujoji Romuva* 1 (1939), 2, cf Mačiulis, *Valstybės kultūros politika*, 38.

<sup>53</sup> Jolita Mulevičiūtė, "Dailė ir visuomenė tarpukario Lietuvoje," *Menotyra* 1 (1996), 43-44.

the mass media.<sup>54</sup> Further, as Mačiulis noted, the late legislation issued by the Ministry of Education strengthened state control over certain cultural organisations. For example, the Theatre Law (1939) stated that both state and private theatres could only be established with the permission of the minister; the minister was also entitled to close any theatre.<sup>55</sup> However, in the opinion of the British historian Lane, as long as “a basic pluralism of social and civic organisations was permitted”, the Lithuanian nationalist censorship should be regarded as qualitatively different from that imposed in Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany.<sup>56</sup> The main reason for this view was that the principles of state censorship were applied only to the organisations within the state sector, whereas the organisations within the private sector enjoyed relative freedom of speech. For example, while state schools were not allowed to purchase some magazines or books, such as pro-western *Naujoji Romuva*, the magazine could be distributed elsewhere.

To summarize, in interwar Lithuania, most important cultural organisations and cultural initiatives were generated by private individuals and public associations and not by the government. Frequently, the government even had to be persuaded to support its cultural representation abroad. The fact that the main responsibility was within society was often articulated: “the role of the government in culture is completely insignificant compared with the role of society”; its function is to encourage initiatives while “the biggest job should be done by society itself”.<sup>57</sup> Whilst interwar Lithuanian state cultural policy was organised around the idea of establishing, disseminating and maintaining national culture as a basis of sovereignty, this task was delegated to public associations and not central administrative bodies. As Mačiulis observed, the authoritarian Lithuanian government did seek to influence public associations, but it did not try to replace them with state organisations.<sup>58</sup> Moreover, the government looked positively on civil self-organisation. Arguably, organisation itself was regarded by the government as a positive feature of society, as it held that “a unified nation is an organised nation”.<sup>59</sup> This, argued Mačiulis, was part of the broader belief in a corporate society. In the late 1930s, in particular, the government increasingly expressed its support of the emergence of larger, integrated organisations of cultural operators. The “mildly” authoritarian Lithuanian government, so to speak, preferred to govern “culture” as an organisation. More importantly, how-

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<sup>54</sup> Jankevičiūtė, *Dailė ir valstybė*, 22.

<sup>55</sup> Mačiulis, *Valstybės kultūros politika...*, 35.

<sup>56</sup> Lane, 26. Considerably more strict control was applied to certain political movements, such as the prohibited Communist Party.

<sup>57</sup> “Kultūros šventė,” *Lietuva*, 5 August 1926, cf Mačiulis, *Valstybės kultūros politika*, 42.

<sup>58</sup> Mačiulis, *Valstybės kultūros politika*.

<sup>59</sup> S. Dominas, “Organizacijų reikalai,” *Vairas* 13 (1939), 252, cf Mačiulis, *Valstybės kultūros politika*, 20.

ever, the arts were not seen as a sphere that demanded either the control or direct administration of the state. This was to change in June 1940.

### *The Soviet Occupation*

The short period of Lithuania's independent statehood ended between 15 and 17 June, 1940 when, following the secret Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact (signed on 28 September 1938), the Soviet Army entered the territory of three Baltic states.<sup>60</sup> At the beginning of July, with the help of arranged elections, the minority communist parties of occupied Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania "won" by respectively 92.8 percent, 97.19 percent and 99.19 percent of the votes in "spontaneous" elections. The provisional People's governments were formed and immediately applied to join the Soviet Union. Vladimir Dekanozov (deputy chief of the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs), Andrei Vishinsky (organiser of Stalin's show trials in the 1930s and later the Soviet procurator at the Nuremberg trial), and the Leningrad Communist Party leader Andrei Zhdanov (who, in the late 1940s, would initiate repressive anti-Western and anti-Semitic purges in literature and art) were appointed as the supreme emissaries of Socialist Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, respectively. Both Russians and leftist Lithuanians shared positions in the new government.<sup>61</sup> Initially, the Soviet Lithuanian government was not entirely negatively received, as few expected the Soviet coup to result in a loss of sovereignty. Tolerance for the regime change was reinforced by a negative attitude on the part of many Lithuanians towards the former authoritarian regime under Smetona.<sup>62</sup> But as historian Alfred E. Senn depicted in great detail, even the newly installed communist government was genuinely surprised by the extent of intervention and control that Moscow began to exert immediately.<sup>63</sup> The non-communist cultural operators were even less prepared to face the Soviet methods of governing culture, as they were or-

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<sup>60</sup> Notably in late 1953 Dekanozov was tried and executed together with Lavrentii Beria. Like Zhdanov in 1948, Vishinsky died a natural death in 1954. For an informative account of the communist elite, see Evan Mawdsley and Stephen White, *The Soviet Elite from Lenin to Gorbachev* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 97.

<sup>61</sup> Collaboration was expressed through negotiation of small local freedoms and loyalty to the overarching CPSU. As Lithuanian historian Tininis argues, Lithuanian collaborators were loyal to the Soviet Union. By official and unofficial means they sought cultural and partially economic autonomy for Lithuania. Thus they insisted on using two official languages (Lithuanian and Russian), modified the national education system and supported ethnically Lithuanian cadres. Vytautas Tininis, "Kolaboravimo sąvoka Lietuvos istorijos kontekste," *Genocidas ir rezistencija 1* (2005), <<http://www.genocid.lt/Leidyba/9/vytautas.htm>> (8 April 2008).

<sup>62</sup> The anti-Soviet resistance started only in the autumn, 1940. *Lietuva 1940-1990*, 69, 155.

<sup>63</sup> Alfred E. Senn, *Lithuania 1940: Revolution from Above* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007). The Soviet Lithuanian government consisted of loyal Lithuanian communists, most of whom were born or based in Russia, but also included quite a few local cultural intellectuals of leftist views, such as the writer Vincas Mickevičius-Krėvė.

dered to explicitly declare political loyalty, while rigid limits were set for both the content and form of expression.

Unlike the interwar government, the Soviet regime operated with a large bureaucracy, whose aim was to implement centrally defined rationales of state cultural policy. Whilst the nationalisation of cultural organisations<sup>64</sup> was probably not regarded as the worst outcome of the Soviet regime (remember the previously described interwar artists' efforts to become more firmly anchored in the state apparatus), the sudden centralisation overwhelmed Lithuanian cultural operators. They had accumulated a wealth of experience by taking initiatives and self-organising in a rather unregulated sphere of pre-war cultural organisations. Obviously, they would soon clearly understand the new limits and revise and adjust their habitual behaviour, a process that was extremely painful and demoralising to many.<sup>65</sup> For example, the purge of staff took place alongside with the purge of museum exhibits and library funds.<sup>66</sup> The employees at the interwar organisations, especially museums and libraries, were initially retained but soon many were gradually replaced with far less qualified individuals who "politically deserved" a salaried position. It was often the case that the head of a library would be replaced with a nearly illiterate communist.<sup>67</sup>

It has to be stressed that at the time of the occupation, there was no such central agency as a Soviet Ministry of Culture. Instead, several governmental agencies took care of various aspects of "culture". From 1920 to 1953, propaganda affairs in Soviet Russia and its occupied republics were coordinated by

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<sup>64</sup> All cultural organisations were nationalised both in the Baltic and the satellite Eastern European countries. Only the official associations sanctioned by the state had a right to organise exhibitions or arrange performances. Ivan T. Berend, *Central and Eastern Europe, 1944–1993. Detour from the Periphery to Periphery* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 90.

<sup>65</sup> Consider the case of the Vilnius Jewish Ghetto Museum. The museum was established by a group of enthusiasts who gathered objects from the ghetto and prison astonishingly quickly after the end of the war (12 May 1945). The ghetto library was used as a storage room and temporary premises for exhibitions about life in the ghetto and the holocaust. An official letter was sent to Moscow, asking for a permission to register the museum, proposing an opening exhibition devoted to Sholom Aleikhem, an acknowledged Jewish classic writer in the Soviet Union. Yet this attempt failed: the museum was ordered to close down immediately. The objects were distributed to various institutions (the State Revolution Museum, the Agency for Art Affairs and the Book Palace). This example illustrates both the degree of self-organisation and falseness of the Soviet "promotion" of grass-root activities. Esfir Alperniene, "Vilniaus žydų kultūrinis gyvenimas 1939–1945 m.," in *Vilniaus kultūrinis gyvenimas 1939–1945*, ed. A. Lapinskienė (Vilnius: Lietuvių literatūros ir tautosakos institutas, 1999), 28–29.

<sup>66</sup> According to the data published by *Beacon for Freedom of Expression*, by June 1941 Glavlit withdrew 1,118,542 books and 42,515 kg of publications were destroyed. Between 1944 and 1956 a further 7,343,683 copies of publications were withdrawn. Sources Klemensas Sinkevičius, *Uždrausti autoriai ir leidiniai: pirmieji sovietinės okupacijos metai, 1940.06.15–1941.06.21* (Vilnius: Lietuvos nacionalinė biblioteka, 1994); Valerija Vilnonytė, "Knygų naikinimas Lietuvoje 1944–1956 metais," in *Lietuvos bibliotekų fondų istorija XX amžiuje*, ed. K. Sinkevičius (Vilnius: Lietuvos nacionalinė biblioteka, 1994).

<sup>67</sup> Vyngintas Pšibilskis, "Kultūrinio švietimo įstaigos 1940 – 1941 metų ir pokario ideologinėje situacijoje," in *Mintys apie Lietuvos komunistų kelią* (Vilnius: Mintis, 1989), 203–205.

Glavpolitprosvet (Head Government for Political-Enlightenment Work). The Main Administration for Literary and Publishing Affairs (Glavlit), a large organisational body established in 1922, was in charge of censorship.<sup>68</sup> In 1936, the All-Union Committee on Artistic Affairs was established at the All-Union government. The Soviet Artists' Union was established in 1939, much later than the Artists' Union in Lithuania (1935). As a reminder, the Soviet Writers' Union and the Writers' Union in Lithuania were established in the same year, 1932.

The first act of the Soviet Lithuanian government was to establish the People's Culture Fund in 1940. This action was rather mysterious. One can speculate that, from Moscow's perspective, the establishment of the fund was perfectly rational and was perhaps regarded as an extension of another new All-Union institution, the Art Fund. However, Lithuanian historians have argued that the People's Culture Fund was promoted locally as a special effort and achievement of the otherwise puppet government; thus, it took on the aspect of a populist gesture, whose objective was to win the friendship of Lithuanian artists (remember the calls for establishing a public culture fund in Lithuania during the 1930s, which never materialised). Lithuanian historians were probably right, because the People's Culture Fund was quickly disbanded.<sup>69</sup> The All-Union Arts Fund, however, continued to exist and even expanded in 1953 by absorbing the Artists' Cooperatives (established in Russia in 1936).<sup>70</sup>

Otherwise, in occupied Lithuania, cultural matters remained under the Ministry of Education (replaced with the People's Commissariat of Enlightenment after 27 August 1940). The centralisation of cultural matters under education was explained by both the lack of qualified staff and "the need to ensure the political direction of the development of culture".<sup>71</sup> The Ministry hosted the Agency for Art Affairs, which, by the end of 1940, was moved to the LSSR Council of People's Commissariats. The Political Education Agency was established at the Commissariat of Enlightenment at the beginning of 1941. Further Sovietisation of the Lithuanian cultural sector was interrupted by World War II.

### *The Nazi Occupation*

The period of Nazi occupation in Lithuania, especially in relation to cultural policy, has still not been studied in depth.<sup>72</sup> The advance of the Nazis clearly revealed the dissatisfaction of Lithuanians with the new Soviet regime. With

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<sup>68</sup> It was subsequently renamed the Main Board for the Protection of Military and State Secrets in the Press, but the acronym *Glavlit* remained in use.

<sup>69</sup> Mačiulis, *Valstybės kultūros politika*, 111-112.

<sup>70</sup> Galina Yankovskaya, "The Economic Dimensions of Art in the Stalinist Era: Artists' Cooperatives in the Grip of Ideology and the Plan," *Slavic Review* 65, no.4 (Winter 2006), 783.

<sup>71</sup> Leokadija Diržinskaitė, *Kultūra ir valstybė* (Vilnius: Mintis, 1985), 87.

<sup>72</sup> For example, the new general history book used a Soviet source published in 1969 to describe Nazi cultural policy. *Lietuva 1940-1990*, 183-184.

Germany's attack on the Soviet Union on 22 June 1941, a Lithuanian revolt against the Soviet regime broke out immediately. Within one week, the Soviet army was pushed out of Lithuania. The front line moved rapidly through Lithuanian territory with the active support of an anti-Soviet uprising, which caused some but no devastating casualties or destruction.<sup>73</sup> The Lithuanians were quick to form a provisional government and army, but it was soon made clear that their independence was not part of Germany's plans. For example, the companies nationalised by the Soviets were not restored to their owners but taken over by the Nazis instead.<sup>74</sup> The provisional Lithuanian government discontinued its activities on 5 August 1941. Civil governance was exercised by the Reich commissariat, which had a department for culture and science.

Arguably, the one year of Soviet rule (1940) saw much more vigorous organisational action in the sphere of culture than during the almost three years of German occupation (1941-1943). Generally, the Nazi occupation was more repressive than productive. The universities in Kaunas and Vilnius were shut down in early 1943. Anti-Russian and anti-Jewish propaganda was actively pursued in the press and other public media.<sup>75</sup> Lithuanians were exposed to the most horrendous experiences of the Holocaust. Further, as current research has shown, the Nazi German plans were to cleanse the Lithuanian territories of the majority of its population; thus, it could hardly be bothered with cultural policy during the course of the ongoing war.<sup>76</sup>

If an important part of Sovietisation was the ideological indoctrination of Lithuanians, Germanisation meant first and furthest the settlement of Germans in the country.<sup>77</sup> In 1942, the Germans conducted anthropological studies in the Baltic states that, on the basis of physical criteria, aimed to select the locals who would be suitable for Germanisation (more were found in Estonia than in Lithuania). Further, a directive was issued (17 March 1943), according to which Lithuanians could be Germanised only in Germany. Thus, there was no need for an active policy of "linguistic and cultural assimilation" in the coun-

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<sup>73</sup> Misiunas and Taagepera, 45-46. On the first day of bombing about 4,000 civilians were killed. However, many Lithuanian troops in the Soviet army refused either to fight or move further to Russia and some of them organised and revolted against their communist superiors. The anti-Soviet partisans took control of Kaunas and Vilnius and handed them to the Nazis. Yet many civilians, partisans and army soldiers were immediately executed by the Germans. *Lietuva 1940-1990*, 162-167.

<sup>74</sup> For the German administration of the area, see Misiunas and Taagepera, 50-55.

<sup>75</sup> Meanwhile in Latvia the Academy of Art remained open. As a Latvian historian noted, the Nazi regime did not impose any stronger restrictions on the arts as they continued to evolve in a manner similar to before the Soviet occupation. Notably, expressionism, condemned as "degenerate art" was not widespread either in Latvia or Lithuania. For more see Jānis Kalnačs, "Some Aspects of Art in Latvia during the Nazi Occupation 1941-1945," in *The Baltic Countries under Occupation: Soviet and Nazi Rule, 1939-1991*, ed. A. M. Kōll (Stockholm: Stockholm University, 2003).

<sup>76</sup> Two-thirds of the Lithuanian population were to be expelled and the remainder fused with the German population. About 520,000 Germans were expected to settle in the area over the 25 years following the war. Misiunas and Taagepera, 49, 54.

<sup>77</sup> *Lietuva 1940-1990*, 199, 200, 201.

try.<sup>78</sup> The ongoing terrorisation of the population was soon to be continued by another regime.

### *Soviet Re-occupation*<sup>79</sup>

In early July of 1944, the Red Army re-entered Lithuanian territory. The Soviet governmental bodies resumed their activity between August and October 1944. Yet the Germans only took the last city, Klaipėda, in late January of 1945. Both the Red Army and the native population suffered heavy casualties in battle, while the major Lithuanian cities were badly damaged by bombings and street combat.<sup>80</sup> Unlike the situation in 1940, the Lithuanian armed resistance to the Soviet occupation was launched immediately.<sup>81</sup> Lithuanians entertained hopes that the West would help in their fight for independence. These hopes were in vain: after World War II, the Soviet Union emerged victorious as a great power on the world stage, and although Lithuania's annexation was never recognised by some of the Western states, such as the United States, the country, along with the other two Baltic states, was reclaimed by the Soviets.

The years 1944-1945 saw the greatest terror exerted by the secret police (NKVD). The Soviet Union was eager to seek revenge on the Baltic states for their "treacherous" cooperation with Hitler's regime. In addition to purges and repression, the work of Sovietisation started practically from scratch. Though they had to deal with a heavy shortage of loyal, qualified staff, a collapsed economy and the resistance of population, the Soviet authorities quickly reinstalled their administrative structures of culture. The Agency for Art Affairs, together with the Agency for Cinematography, was already reinstated in January 1944. The agency consisted of the following departments: the republican agency for the supply of theatres, the Republican House of People's Creation, agencies for personnel, theatre, music, school, fine arts, and repertory companies, and departments for purely practical matters (planning and finance, accounting, economical-administrative and construction works). The agency also controlled both the Composers' and the Artists' Unions.<sup>82</sup> The Committee for Cultural Enlightenment Enterprises was established under the Supreme Soviet (14 September 1945). Culture enlightenment commissions at the regional ex-

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<sup>78</sup> *Lietuva 1940-1990*, 242. Lithuanian historians identified many non-violent forms of anti-Nazi resistance, among which was "a peaceful fight for preserving Lithuanian organisations for culture and education". In their view, the main achievement was preventing the formation of a Lithuanian SS legion.

<sup>79</sup> I limit my discussion only to the most general features that concerned the sphere of cultural policy. For more on Sovietisation under Stalin see Misiunas and Taagepera, 76-130; and *Lietuva 1940-1990*.

<sup>80</sup> *Lietuva 1940-1990*, 263-270, 275.

<sup>81</sup> *Lietuva 1940-1990*, 316.

<sup>82</sup> LLMA, f. 289, a. 1, b. 2, l. 5.

ecutive committee level were also established. The commissions consisted of five or six persons and were entitled to advise the executive committees and disseminate propaganda. However, Soviet historiography itself puts into doubt the effectiveness of their effect on the population.<sup>83</sup>

Ironically, the Soviet occupation brought to the Lithuanian cultural operators something that they had wanted for two decades: governmental bodies specially dedicated to cultural affairs and a commitment to finance cultural activities. However, this “package” included something that they had not anticipated: many more control instruments of cultural governance. In the remaining part of this chapter, I will describe the Soviet administration for culture in greater detail.

### *Soviet Cultural Policy*

In the young Soviet Union, the governance of culture and the means by which it would be accomplished became an enormous organisational project that, since the late 1920s, had been part of the broader logic of central planning and directing. In the historiography, the descriptions of Soviet cultural policy usually begin with the intention of the communist revolution government to transform Russian society by erasing class differences. A new Soviet society was envisioned as egalitarian, undivided by class or ethnicity. According to Marxist theory, the oppressed working class, the producer of real economic value, was especially important.<sup>84</sup> The empowerment of the working class was a cultural project.<sup>85</sup> Deprived workers were to be educated, enlightened about their historical mission and granted access to the standards of life and culture that previously had been reserved for the bourgeoisie and the elite. Society would be organised around secular, ideological principles of communism and effectively ruled by one Party.

Thus, the communist political change was seen as a social and cultural revolution. Cultural revolution, first and foremost, did not mean the creation of an entirely new culture (this was suggested by some and resisted by Lenin), but rather the subverting of an existing one, that is, transforming culture (both as art and a way of life) from “an instrument of capitalism into an instrument of so-

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<sup>83</sup> Diržinskaitė, 96.

<sup>84</sup> As opposed to exchange value. Karl Marx, *Capital. Volume I* (Cambridge: Elecbook, 2001), chapter I.

<sup>85</sup> For a brief overview, see Christopher Read, “Krupskaya, Proletkul’t and the Origins of Soviet Cultural Policy,” *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 12, no.3 (2006), 245-255. Moreover, in Russia, the workers themselves had to be created. For example, peasants were to be transformed into workers of industrialised agriculture. See Lewis H. Siegelbaum and Ronald Grigor Suny, eds., *Making Workers Soviet: Power, Class and Identity* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1995).

cialism”.<sup>86</sup> This was achieved by replacing “bourgeois ideology” with “socialist ideology”.<sup>87</sup> Socialist ideology primarily meant the democratisation of culture (as arts and education) by expanding access, but also the political loyalty of cultural operators. As the Lithuanian Minister of Culture later put it, “it does not matter how high the level of culture is, it is not real culture if it is not accessible to all”.<sup>88</sup> For the purposes of democratisation, extensive organisational networks were established, which in turn also ensured the channelling of propaganda.

Other important objectives of Soviet cultural policy were social, economical and political: it sought to tackle the overwhelming illiteracy problem, temper alcohol consumption and gain the trust of the workers for the Party.<sup>89</sup> In many ways, it was similar to a Western project aimed at civilising the poor: since the 18<sup>th</sup> century similar efforts had been made by enlightened industrialists and land owners. Russification, an understated goal of Soviet cultural policy in ethnically non-Russian territories, was comparable to colonial projects in the West. Thus, the model of Soviet cultural policy combined important features of European modernity. What made Soviet cultural policy special was the creation of strongly centralised governing bodies, which spanned enormous organisational networks to achieve their goals.<sup>90</sup>

Soviet cultural policy also had a famous artistic mission. Initially, this communist project engaged Russian avant-garde artists, whose goal was to revolutionise the arts within their own fields. Lenin’s deputy of enlightenment and supervisor of the arts, Anatolii Lunacharsky (1918-1929), supported that particular artistic experiment and the individual freedom of artists.<sup>91</sup> After Lenin’s death, the Soviet government instituted stricter measures to control the form and content of art. The experimental style of modern art was too similar to that of the “enemy” capitalist world. Stalin clearly delineated what had to be changed: Socialist realism, based on the formal qualities of 19<sup>th</sup> century neo-

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<sup>86</sup> V.I.Lenin, *Polnye sobrannye sochinenie. T.36*, p.382, cf M.P.Kim, “O sushchnosti kul’turnoi revoliutsii i etapakh ee osushchestvleniia v SSSR,” in *Kul’turnaia revoliutsiia v SSSR.1917-1965* (Moscow: Nauka, 1967), 15.

<sup>87</sup> Kim, 17.

<sup>88</sup> LLMA, f. 342, ap.1, b.1604, l. 141.

<sup>89</sup> Major means were introduced to decrease illiteracy and introduce “norms of civilised behaviour”: for this purpose the People’s Commissariat of Enlightenment (*Narkompros*, 1917–1929) was created. During the time of *Narkompros* and Lunacharsky, the ideas of cultural enlightenment and the ideology of industrialisation in some ways coincided with the modernist ideology of Russian constructivists. This artistic and intellectual trend was banned after the New Economic Policy (NEP, 1921–1928) failed in the late 1920s.

<sup>90</sup> For a detailed and insightful description of Soviet economic and ideological institutionalisation of fine arts before World War II, see Yankovskaya, 769-791.

<sup>91</sup> In the 1970s, Lunacharsky was “often pictured as the artist’s friend in the regime – a talented, liberal administrator who advocated artistic freedom and demonstrated that whenever possible he preferred to judge a work of art on its own terms rather than on purely political ones.” Howard R. Holter, “The Legacy of Lunacharsky and Artistic Freedom in the USSR,” *Slavic Review* 29, no.2 (June 1970), 266.

classical and academic styles, was to replace modern art.<sup>92</sup> The contents were purged, and in Lithuania, folk crosses were saved by arguing that they were art objects and not related to a religious cult.

It is important to note that artists were defined as workers of cultural enlightenment, employees of the state. In my opinion, this was a clear sign that culture was about to be rationalised as a domain governed by economic logic and run in accordance with scientific rationality. The state, ruled by the Communist Party, was postulated as the only patron of the arts; it was responsible for providing artists and other cultural workers with salaries, workplaces and homes, and was eager to engage them in its plans to transform society. Meanwhile, the interwar Lithuanian government just “happened to be” the major patron (in terms of art collecting), but this role was not self-consciously assumed; rather, it was a result of the generally weak economic situation. However, some Lithuanian cultural operators were already demanding a higher professional status in society. As one painter put it in 1935, an artist should no longer be “a scruffy and hungry individual who lives in an attic, but a clean, cultural worker, who has his own rights and responsibilities”.<sup>93</sup>

However, it would be wrong to think that Soviet cultural policy was an effective action characterised by a well-defined system of organisations, all of which succumbed to central control.<sup>94</sup> Indeed, the Soviet governance of culture was far from being a well-planned, smoothly executed action. In many ways, it resembled both Stalin’s hasty industrialisation project and Khrushchev’s “hair-brain” schemes. For example, Cocks noted that the Soviet administrative structure “had, in many ways, been a disorganised and disorganising process. Little thought or analysis was given to organisational design and developments. [...] For the most part, organisations simply ‘evolved’, largely in an unplanned and unsystematic fashion”.<sup>95</sup> Similarly, a Soviet Lithuanian historian complained that very often, Soviet cultural enterprises were “founded without a clear system, and were not where they were needed but where there was room”.<sup>96</sup> I will now describe the making of the most important body of Soviet cultural policy-making, the Soviet Ministry of Culture.

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<sup>92</sup> For Stalin, language as a form of expression should be transparent and effectively carry the sender’s message. Socialist Realism was promoted as the state policy with Stalin’s decree “On the Reconstruction of Literary and Art Organisations” (1932) and especially after establishing the Soviet Writers’ Union (1934). For socialist realism see Boris Groys, “Stalinism as Aesthetic Phenomenon,” in *Tekstura. Russian Essays on Visual Culture*, eds. A. Efimova and L. Manovich (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1993); for socialist realism in different media in the Soviet Union and abroad, see Thomas Lahusen and Evgeny Dobrenko, eds., *Socialist Realism Without Shores* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1997).

<sup>93</sup> R. Kalpokas, “Skatinanti atmosfera meniniam veikimui pagyvinti,” *Lietuvos aidas*, 1 July 1935, cf Mačiulis, *Valstybės kultūros politika*, 61.

<sup>94</sup> For a detailed historical account of the foundational period, see Fitzpatrick, 1970.

<sup>95</sup> Paul Cocks, “Rethinking the Organizational Weapon: The Soviet System in a Systems Age,” *World Politics* 32, no.2 (1980), 232.

<sup>96</sup> Pšibilskis, 206.

## *The Ministry*

The establishment of the Soviet Ministry of Culture coincided with Stalin's death (March 1953).<sup>97</sup> Curiously, during the same year, one of the first Soviet digital computers, the *BESM-I*, was built. Thus, the year 1953 saw the emergence of the key aspects of my study: a major, centralised state organisation for culture, the materialisation of cybernetic techno-science via a computer, and the beginning of the transition from terror to more peaceful, administrative governance. It was at about this time that the actions of a highly organised guerrilla war against the LSSR government were eventually put down. This pacification was, in literal terms, extremely important for the cultural sector. According to Pšibilskis, in the period 1945-1951, about 100 employees of cultural clubs were executed by the partisans as collaborators.<sup>98</sup> Indeed, even as late as 1961, the First Secretary (LCP) admitted that communist control in Lithuania was rather arbitrary and had to rely on force and terror.<sup>99</sup>

The establishment of the Ministry of Culture was part of a larger ministerial devolution designed to consolidate similar ministries. In his speeches, Malenkov stated that this plan had been put into place while Stalin was still in power.<sup>100</sup> The decision to found the All-Union Ministry of Culture was passed on 15 March 1953, and on 17 and 23 March 1953 the LSSR Ministry of Culture was established.<sup>101</sup> It was created by joining seven cultural agencies (*valdybos, upravalenie*): Art Affairs, Cinefication, Culture-Enlightenment Enterprises, Publishing Houses and the Printing Industry, Professional Education, Radio Information and the Book Trade, and Supply and Realisation.<sup>102</sup> In addition, the ministry had the following staff training and administrative departments: the Agency for General Matters, the Department for Planning-Finance, the Major Construction Department, the Schools Staff Department, and Central Account-

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<sup>97</sup> In comparison the Arts Council of Great Britain was founded in 1946; the Ministry of Culture in Poland was established in 1947, as a successor to the Ministry of Propaganda and Information (1945); the Ministry of Culture in France was established in 1959; The National Endowment for Arts in the USA in 1965; the Swedish National Council for Culture in 1974.

<sup>98</sup> Pšibilskis, 210.

<sup>99</sup> Antanas Sniečkus, *Tiesa*, 24 October 1961, cf. Misiunas and Taagepera, 2006, 78. On armed resistance, see Misiunas and Taagepera, 83-94.

<sup>100</sup> "Įstatymas dėl TSRS ministerijų pertvarkymo," *Tiesa*, 16 March 1953, 2. By the same decree Gossnab was merged with Gosprodsnab and Gosplan.

<sup>101</sup> See a decree No. 433, LSSR Council of Ministers (17 June 1953), "Dėl Kultūros ministerijos struktūros ir etatų". The decision was followed by separate decisions on the regulations for former autonomous agencies, and then the departments of the ministry. On 18 July the regulations of the Agency for Arts Affairs within the Ministry were approved, on 21 July regulations for the Agency for Cultural-Educational Organisations, and so on. The same summer, many regulations for republican and district agencies of "cinefication," radio and other organisations were passed.

<sup>102</sup> The composition of the All-Union Ministry of Culture was, however, somewhat different, as it was created by joining the All-Union Ministries of Higher Education and Cinematography, the Committee of Art Affairs, the Committee of Radio and Information, the Main Agency for Print, Publishing and Book Trade and the Ministry of Labour Reserve. *Tiesa*, 16 March 1953, 2.

ing. The Ministry was responsible for the fine arts, arts education, libraries, museums, cultural education, book publishing, television, radio and cinema; however, in 1958, public broadcasting was removed from its control.

The regulations of the republic-Ministry of Culture stated that the ministry was under the authority of the LSSR Ministers Council and the All-Union Ministry of Culture. Note that the decisive role of the CC was not officially recognised: it was declared that the most important role belonged to the Council of Ministers (CM). The CM was entitled to plan the “development of the base of culture, organise the preparation and distribution of cadres”, and “sanction and control” the work of the ministry and other agencies. The council also established work regulations, analysed the execution of plans and identified and awarded the winners of socialist competitions. It also “assigned the tasks for developing cultural enterprises”, decide on the number of students in higher and other educational institutions, determine the amount of printed press and state subsidies, and establish plan indicators.<sup>103</sup> However, Soviet historiography points out that the Ministers’ Council was less significant than the Presidium (Political Bureau, Politburo) of the Central Committee. All the main decisions were made in the Politburo, to which the ministers of culture were not normally admitted (information from the Politburo was not even circulated in the CC).

The Soviet organisation for governing culture was hierarchical, with the special governing organs at the top (which “did not directly create cultural values”) and specially sanctioned public organisations in the middle (which could affect only their members). The lowest rung of this hierarchy consisted of the “producers of culture”: creative artists and cultural workers and their organisations. The term “governing” (*valdymas*) meant “the actions of all state apparatuses (all state organs and organisations) in the culture sphere”.<sup>104</sup> According to the Soviet Union’s constitution (1977), All-Union organs “establish general principles of governing culture”, and union-republics exert operative management and solve related problems at the local level.<sup>105</sup> The centralisation was expected to enable the creation of a “unitary socialist culture”, one that was national in form and socialist in content.<sup>106</sup>

What was the formal role of the Soviet Ministry of Culture? According to its regulations, the ministry was the middle tier in the outlined hierarchy of rule. It managed the work of cultural organisations in the territory of the republic. In relation to the ministry, the local Soviet councils established the departments of culture and education at the councils in six cities and 87 districts. These departments typically had two officers, a manager and an inspector.<sup>107</sup> The ministry

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<sup>103</sup> Diržinskaitė, 84-85.

<sup>104</sup> Diržinskaitė, 25, 37; Mawdsley and White, 235-236. In the districts and cities most important were the Soviets of People’s Deputies and their executive committees (*vykdomieji komitetai*).

<sup>105</sup> Diržinskaitė, 30.

<sup>106</sup> For a detailed discussion about constructions of nationality and ethnicity in official Soviet definitions of culture see Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Revenge of the Past: Nationalism, Revolution and the Collapse of the Soviet Union* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993).

<sup>107</sup> Diržinskaitė, 70.

“directly governed” republican cultural organisations, “drove the activity” of creative unions, and carried out a “repertory policy” in concert organisations, making sure that only “full-value” works were produced.<sup>108</sup> The actions listed for the ministry were those of management, supervision and control.

What did the ministry actually do? The answer would require a separate study. I will only note that during its early stage, the ministry essentially continued the Stalinist post-war cultural policies, which were concerned in particular with the situation in the Lithuanian countryside; the latter was riddled with armed resistance and unwilling to accept collectivisation. Indeed, the establishment of the ministry did not entail significant changes in the work of previously existing governmental agencies. It seems as if the ministry was expected to make the work of separate agencies more efficient and effective. Archival documents and the press reveal several major tasks of post-war Soviet cultural policy in Lithuania.

Cultural organisations were ordered to work towards establishing the legitimacy of communist rule; this proved to be difficult task. The Soviet government was arguably perceived as illegitimate by the majority of the Lithuanian population, especially its intelligentsia. Soviet reforms, in particular collectivisation, were resisted. The archives contain many documents that demonstrate how explicitly cultural intelligentsia criticised the Soviet regime and forecast its rapid decline.<sup>109</sup> First, in order to propagate communist ideas, the Soviet government actively engaged in establishing broad organisations and their networks of clubs, cinemas, libraries and smaller “cottage reading rooms” (*pirkia-skaitykla*) in the countryside.<sup>110</sup> However, the reading rooms were generally crammed, scarce and poorly equipped; film distribution was often limited to films in Russian, a language that the majority of the population did not understand. Second, the Soviet government repressed collective memory institutions: it denied access to archives, shut down museums and purged libraries of material it deemed unsuitable. In the beginning, the Sovietisation of museums proceeded slowly, as it took some time to come up with a “correct” version of Lithuania’s past. Indeed, by the end of the first decade of Soviet cultural policy in Lithuania, the policy was criticised because it was centred around libraries and disregarded the need to re-open the main museums. In 1954, *Tiesa* published a suggestion by the Lithuanian historian of architecture for the establishment of “a central national museum of culture”.<sup>111</sup> Such a museum was never established, but new museums, which constructed and displayed a version of

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<sup>108</sup> For the formal organisation of Soviet creative unions, see *Tvorcheskie soiuzy v SSSR. Organizatsionno-pravovye voprosy* (Moscow: Iuridicheskaja literatura, 1970).

<sup>109</sup> Bagušauskas and Streikus.

<sup>110</sup> Cinefication, a special Russian policy-word (*kinofikatsiia*), aimed at creating an all-Union standardised and widespread network of cinemas and film-making studios. For an overview of cinefication in Russia, see Jamie Miller, “Soviet Cinema, 1929-41: The Development of Industry and Infrastructure,” *Europe-Asia Studies* 58, no.1 (2006), 103-124.

<sup>111</sup> Tadas Adomonis, “Kultūrinės statybos klausimu,” *Tiesa*, 2 April 1954, 3.

Lithuania's past and present adjusted to Soviet ideology, were eventually organised. The work of museums was highly regulated. The archive of the Lithuanian Soviet Ministry of Culture contains an abundance of regulations and directives for existing and new museums, often translated from Russian "thematic plans".<sup>112</sup> In line with Foucault's ideas of the regimes of truth it can be contended that the primary concern of the Soviet regime was to make cultural organisations function according to its disciplinary needs. In this regard, the establishment of its regime of truth through broadcasting, the cinema, libraries and museums was especially important.

Despite all these measures, during the first years of its work, the LSSR Ministry was repeatedly criticised for not producing results. Thus, in December 1953, at the republic meeting of cultural workers, it was stated that the ministry "did not sufficiently direct the cultural organisations in locality" (*vietose, na mestakh*); instead it only formally "directed them from the offices" and was not "deeply" interested in the actual success of their work. The ministry did not do enough to provide its staff with housing, instructions and technical equipment. Some complained that the "achievements of the Soviet system" were under-represented in local museums. Moreover, *Tiesa* criticised the very meeting for an "insufficiently pointed question about the communist upbringing of working people and giving an insufficient foundation to the contents of cultural organisations' work".<sup>113</sup>

A year or so later, the situation was not much better. Following the CPSU Plenums in 1954, the Central Committee (LCP) issued a decree for improving the "mass-political" and "cultural enlightenment work" in the countryside. The Ministry of Culture was criticised for failing to increase "the ideological-political level" of the libraries, reading cottages, clubs and culture houses in the countryside. It was accused of failing to ensure proper "normal financing" and of preventing changes in personnel. The criticism was harsh: the ministry was accused of failing to distribute films and to provide high-quality, political, and especially, anti-religious propaganda lectures. These failures were presented as the causes for the economic under-achievement of some districts. To counteract the criticism, the CC (LCP) instructed the ministry to improve the book trade and amateur arts in the countryside and to commission new plays and songs and

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<sup>112</sup> Some of the plans were prepared both by the LSSR History and Law Institute, headed by a hard-core communist Juozas Žiugžda, and by Soviet Russian experts. A typical feature of the thematic plan was to define both the historical content and the material organisation of the exhibition. For example, one of the earliest of such thematic plans of this kind dealt with Kaunas Military-Historical Museum (formerly Vytautas the Great Museum). The document provided a detailed list of the means of display to be used in the museum: 1) picture, 2) diagram, 3) dummy (e.g. a silage tower, a combine harvester), 4) model (e.g. turbines, 'Pergalė' factory), 5) moulage (a vegetable, a horse), 6) samples of mineral excavations and wood, 7) samples of raw materials and production, made in the LSSR. See *Tematicheskii plan. Otdel sovetskogo perioda* (24 January 1952), LLMA, f. 342, a.1, b. 107, l. 49.

<sup>113</sup> "Kelti kultūros įstaigų darba į naujų uždavinių lygį," *Tiesa*, 18 December 1953, 2.

send them to amateur collectives.<sup>114</sup> The expected results were political loyalty and increased output of production. The servicing of villages would persist as one of the most problematic areas of the ministry's work.

The ministry's administrative structure, with some minor changes, persisted for about 37 years. For example, the cinema, radio and television, and the press were separated from "culture" because "the purpose of these enterprises is not only to develop culture, but also to satisfy other needs of the society". In 1958, these spheres had their own governing organs reinstated: the State Cinematography Committee (Goskino) for film and the All-Union State Committee for Television and Radio (Gosteleradio) for the supervision of radio and television. As Ganley noted, both the structure and operation of Gosteleradio were deeply held secrets until the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Gosteleradio, with the assistance of the KGB, controlled all Soviet broadcasting.<sup>115</sup> A separate state committee for publishing houses and the print and book trade affairs, as well as for the agencies and departments of local councils, were established.<sup>116</sup> There were also other administrative reforms of the cultural sector, such as the centralisation of libraries and houses of culture in the 1960s and 1970s and the creation of sports and cultural complexes in the 1980s. However, these reforms involved merely an administrative regrouping of existing organisations and did not change the structures of decision-making. The ministry itself faced more extensive reorganisation in 1988, but again, this involved merging several departments, thus reducing their number.<sup>117</sup>

A look at the administrative structure of the ministry provides insight into the wide scope of Soviet cultural policy. As Leokadija Diržinskaitė put it, "the social and cultural" activity of the state could be distinguished in the following "branches of governance": people's education, science, culture, physical culture, health care, and social welfare. These branches could be further divided. The culture branch was defined either through its "particular elements", like fine arts or literature, or "the entire system of cultural enterprises". In the latter case, "governance of culture" meant acting upon enterprises, such as clubs,

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<sup>114</sup> "The mass-political and cultural educational work should be organised in such a way, that it would give palpable results in strengthening work discipline, increasing work efficacy, rising the political consciousness and cultural level of collective farmers and MTS workers". "Lietuvos KP Centro Komiteto V Plenumo 1954 m. lapkričio 27 d. nutarimas dėl masinio-politinio ir kultūros-švietimo darbo kaime būklės ir priemonių jam pagerinti," *Tiesa*, 4 December 1954, 3.

<sup>115</sup> Gladys D. Ganley, *Unglued Empire: The Soviet Experience with Communications Technologies* (Norwood, New Jersey: Ablex Publishing Corporation, 1996), 5.

<sup>116</sup> Diržinskaitė, 19-20, 83.

<sup>117</sup> On 15 July 1988, the central apparatus of the LSSR Ministry of Culture was reorganised by merging the Agency of Art Affairs with the Agency of Music Affairs into the Agency of Art Affairs, an Agency of Culture Enterprises founded on the basis of the agencies of Cultural-Enlightenment Enterprises, Libraries' Affairs, Museums and Cultural Monument Protection. The Agency of Constructions, Protection and Restoration of Cultural Monuments was established on the basis of the agencies of Restoration and Construction of Cultural Monuments and Museums and Protection of Cultural Monuments. Also an Agency of Cinema and Video Services was established. "Nauja Lietuvos TSR kultūros ministerijos struktūra," KB 9 (1988).

museums, theatres, libraries, cinemas, film studios, television and radio studios and publishing houses. However, in strictly administrative terms, “governance of culture” (*kultūros valdymas*) meant “the influence on only those art and culture education enterprises that are under the responsibility of the Soviet Union and the all-union and republic ministries of culture and their local organs”.<sup>118</sup>

The Soviet agents themselves emphasised that their administrative divisions of culture were arbitrary. For example, the all-union classifier of the national economy distinguished “culture” and “art” as separate branches with their own organisations.<sup>119</sup> It was acknowledged that the grounds for classifying theatres as “art” and exhibitions as “culture” were unclear.

Table 1. “Culture” and “Art” in the Classifier of National Economy

Culture	Libraries, film and audio libraries, museums, exhibitions, club enterprises, extra-school education, people’s universities, culture and rehabilitation parks, botanical gardens and zoos, television and radio editorials, books’ palaces
Art	Theatres, cinemas, concert agencies and collectives, circuses, art studios, organisations for the economic management of art

Interestingly, the administrative division was accepted as such; there was no perceived need to “motivate” it with social, cultural or economic reasons. Consequently, Diržinskaitė argued that, on the one hand, the arbitrary classification was appropriate because “culture” was “only a relatively autonomous phenomenon in a society”. On the other, she suggested viewing “the sphere of governance of culture” as consisting of both “a special purposive action of the state” and an indirect, “general action of the state”, which influences culture.<sup>120</sup> In the view of state policy, the line between broader “culture” and narrower “art” was particularly blurred in the sphere of education.

The following “forms of governing culture” were delineated: *economic* (“financing, creating a material base”), *social-political* (“regulating the state and public activities of culture enterprises”), *ideological* (mass information and propaganda), *administrative-organisational* (which aimed to create a system of cultural services for inhabitants and to select and distribute cadres).<sup>121</sup> Another way to distinguish levels of governing, according to Diržinskaitė, was to specify

<sup>118</sup> Diržinskaitė, 19.

<sup>119</sup> Diržinskaitė, 20.

<sup>120</sup> Diržinskaitė, 21.

<sup>121</sup> This division was based on V. Ostriakov, “Upravlenie dukhovnoi kul’turoi v sotsialisticheskom obshchestve,” in *Upravlenie sotsialnymi processami v sotsialisticheskom obshchestve* (Moscow, 1978), 113, cf Diržinskaitė, 26.

the level of influence: directive orders (*nurodymas*) and regulatory levers, indirect regulation of cultural processes.<sup>122</sup>

### *The Rationales of Soviet Cultural Policy*

Determining the Soviet rationales of cultural policy is not as straightforward a task as it might seem. A rather counterintuitive feature of Soviet cultural policy was that despite being an over-regulated sphere, it did not have a special corpus of “foundational documents”, namely, regulations, guidelines and long-term programmes. This sounds somewhat paradoxical because Soviet juridical and other normative acts on culture were numerous.<sup>123</sup> The Soviet governance of culture featured billions of directives, special decrees and detailed instructions. Collected from postulates of Marxism-Leninism,<sup>124</sup> cultural policy priorities were scattered amongst many documents, since they were announced in the State Plan, Party programmes and Party congress materials. It was only in the 1980s that a suggestion to pass a “Law of Culture” in Lithuanian SSR was made, but such a law never came to fruition.<sup>125</sup>

Further, published Soviet reflections on cultural policy as a whole were also quite rare, especially in its early period; more generalised descriptions usually dated to the late 1970s and 1980s. This in itself suggests a consolidation of an official mentality of governance of culture. A good example is a book by a highly placed Soviet Lithuanian official Leokadija Diržinskaitė-Piliušenko, published in Vilnius, 1985. Diržinskaitė was the deputy secretary for culture on the LCP Central Committee (1960-1976) and vice-chairperson of the LSSR Presidium (1976-1985). The model of Soviet cultural policy described in her book provides a good account of the official version of “mature” or “developed” socialist cultural policy. While it expressed the 1980s cultural policy model, I suggest that, based on what I gleaned from archival research, it also reflected

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<sup>122</sup> Diržinskaitė, 26.

<sup>123</sup> For example, although in 1940 July the LSSR People’s Government has passed the “Law on protection of cultural monuments and public museums of culture,” the project of which was initiated before the Soviet occupation, the All-Union “Law on protection of history and culture monuments” was passed only on 22 December 1977. However, there were separate decrees, the first “On the means of improving the protection of cultural monuments” was passed in 1949. Its foremost goal was to stimulate the inventorisation of the monuments, the process which went painfully slowly. See Diržinskaitė, 105-107; Pšibilskis, 198.

<sup>124</sup> As Kremmentsov pointedly observed, Marxism-Leninism and its synonym dialectical materialism were “neither dialectical nor materialism, but a collection of nomadic quotations used to identify ‘ours’ in public discussions”. Kremmentsov, 294.

<sup>125</sup> Diržinskaitė, 45. In comparison, the first policy statement on culture was made in Sweden in 1974, when the National Council for Cultural Affairs was established. The Soviet “Law of Culture” was most probably echoed in the later suggestions of the Culture Congress to pass such a law in 1990. For more, see Egle Rindzeviciute, “Framing Lithuanian Cultural Policy in the 1990s,” in *Changes, Challenges and Chances. Conclusions and Perspectives of Baltic Sea Area Studies*, ed. B. Henningsen (Berlin: Berliner Wissenschafts Verlag, 2005).

basic, post-1953 administrative features rather well. Whilst the rationales and conditions of Soviet cultural policy-making changed over the years, its administrative definitions did not change substantially.

The role of the Communist Party (the Party) was central in both defining the goals for the state cultural policy and ensuring their implementation: “the Communist Party influences all spheres of state and societal life; culture and its governance, in particular, are acted on with intensity and purpose”.<sup>126</sup> The Leninist-Marxist principle of *partiinnost’* (party mindedness) meant “servitude to the CPSU’s goals” and imposed various strict limitations on cultural practices.<sup>127</sup> This action counted on the “educational” or “enlightening” effect of culture, which was held to be “the most important goal of the socialist culture – to educate a man and to create conditions that would permit him to express his creative abilities”.<sup>128</sup> It is hardly necessary to add that, in reality, this goal of Soviet cultural policy was so subsumed to *partiinnost’* that it defined many “expressions of creative abilities” as intolerable, if not punishable. Third, the policy was to ensure accessibility for people, which was expressed in the principle of *narodnost’* (translated roughly as “of the people”). The dimension of ethnicity was related to this principle, outlined by Stalin in 1925, according to which Soviet culture had to be made “national in form, socialist in content”.<sup>129</sup>

After the Bolshevik Revolution, the major concern of Soviet cultural policy was mass education and propaganda, which remained salient until the 1990s. The emphasis on education was exemplified in *kul’turno-prosvetitel’naia rabota* (cultural enlightenment work), promoted and coordinated by a variety of organisations.<sup>130</sup> It is important to note that “cultural enlightenment work” was restricted to the use of specifically “cultural means”, which, by definition, were located outside of educational organisations.<sup>131</sup> Thus, in 1945 the Committee for Cultural-Educational Work was created at the Coun-

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<sup>126</sup> Diržinskaitė, 28.

<sup>127</sup> Michiel Elst, *Copyright, Freedom of Speech, and Cultural Policy in the Russian Federation* (Leiden and Boston: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2005), 11.

<sup>128</sup> Diržinskaitė, 33.

<sup>129</sup> To note this was a relative relaxation of Soviet ethnic policies, as the policies of Narkompros of the 1920s did not tolerate any manifestations of linguistic diversity among Soviet ethnicities. Meanwhile in the 1950s Stalin declared in his theoretical treatise that language was immune to ideology as it was a tool of communication and not production. Michael G. Smith, *Language and Power in the Creation of the USSR* (Berlin, New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1998), 45, 54.

<sup>130</sup> As White noted, the notion of “cultural enlightenment” is little known to those outside Soviet studies. In many English texts the Russian word for “enlightenment” (*prosvetlenie*) is translated into “education”. The difference between the two is subtle, in the contemporary Russian “enlightenment” retains a stronger connotation to the eighteenth century project. However, in Lithuanian both “enlightenment” and “education” are translated into one word *švietimas*, which complicates the translation task for me. In my text, I will translate *švietimas* as enlightenment when it is obviously used in that sense (usually coupled with “cultural” or *kultūrinis*). For more on the uses of Russian “cultural enlightenment” in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe see White, *De-Stalinization and the House of Culture*, 4-6, 26-29.

<sup>131</sup> *Bol’shaia Sovetskaia Entsiklopediia* (3<sup>rd</sup> edition, 1975).

cil of Ministers and functioned until 1953, when it was integrated into the Ministry of Culture. However, in the post-World War II Baltic states the populations were already literate. Thus cultural enlightenment in occupied Lithuania was mobilised to disseminate political propaganda in order to inculcate the population's loyalty in the new government. For example, the first, more comprehensive decision enlisted the forms of governing culture; it was entitled "About Cultural Enlightenment Work in the Republic" and was passed on 26 December 1951. The decision dealt primarily with propaganda, as it called for "explaining the party politics to more people", "educating people in the spirit of Soviet patriotism and peoples' friendship" and "fighting bourgeois ideology".<sup>132</sup> However, Soviet cultural policy was very much oriented towards economic goals via the proxy of political ideology, as it was assumed that an ideologically enlightened worker would be motivated to produce the largest possible output.<sup>133</sup>

Thus, I suggest that from 1945 to the late 1950s another major task involved educating and agitating the worker. As White noted, "The effectiveness of cultural enlightenment in the countryside can be measured in tonnes of grain and cotton and centners of meat and milk".<sup>134</sup> The agitation was conducted mainly through "mobilisation campaigns", organised by the staff of clubs and houses of culture. The word "mobilisation" was often used in cultural policy discourses and deserves an additional comment. Mobilisation, a military metaphor, first appeared in the Soviet Russian press in 1928 and by the end of the 1930s, was used primarily to denote a way of solving economic problems.<sup>135</sup> In culture, "mobilisation" also referred to a kind of Soviet *ad hoc* or *avral* management, which, in my view, had a lasting legacy.<sup>136</sup> But entirely campaign-ridden cultural activities were perceived negatively as early as 1953, while in the early 1960s, the "mobilisation campaign" approach would be criticised and replaced with the ideal of systematic, coherently planned work.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> Diržinskaitė, 67.

<sup>133</sup> Interestingly, the roots of Soviet houses of culture were found in the organised cultural activities for workers provided by Russian industrialists in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. They were called "people's houses" and the first were established in Tver', Jaroslavl' and Perm' in Russia in the 1880s. White, *De-Stalinization and the House of Culture*, 32.

<sup>134</sup> *Klub 5* (1962), 1, cf White, *De-Stalinization and the House of Culture*, 131.

<sup>135</sup> Ludmila Pöppel, *The Rhetoric of Pravda Editorials: A Diachronic Study of Political Genres* (Stockholm: Stockholm University, 2007), 115.

<sup>136</sup> While studying management in Moscow (1999-2000), I could not help noticing that lecturers often drew a distinction between a coordinated and well-planned ideal and the prevailing reality of "avral style" of project management. *Avral* is a Russian word for a naval management practice derived from the English "over all," which means that on crucial occasions the work on the boat is performed by all and everyone at the same time. As *Bol'shaia Sovetskaia Entsiklopediia* (3<sup>rd</sup> edition, 1975) noted in the early 1970s, due to "mechanisation the onboard commands of avral are increasingly less used". I wonder if a similar statement could be made in relation to the computerisation of management in other organisations. Interestingly, the Lithuanian metaphor for the same phenomenon is *gaisrų gesinimas*, that is, putting down fires.

<sup>137</sup> "LTSR Kultūros darbuotojų respublikinio pasitarimo (1953 gruodis 10-12) protokolas," LLMA, f. 342, ap.1, b. 9, l.26., LLMA, f. 342, ap.1, b.1164, l. 13.

After Stalin's death in 1953 and especially during the de-Stalinisation of post-1956, Soviet cultural policy in Lithuania came to be gradually reformulated as a means of improving the everyday life of the citizens.<sup>138</sup> A biographer of Juozas Banaitis, the third Lithuanian Minister of Culture, quoted his speech at the 10<sup>th</sup> congress of Lithuanian Communist Part (LCP) in February 1958:

You know how culture in the countryside is changing. Spectators sit in a hall, without coats; it is warm, and everybody is nicely dressed. It is not like it was before, when everyone was freezing and wearing coats, while smoke kept coming from the entrance hallway. We are already moving forward.<sup>139</sup>

This signified a turn from fighting the class struggle to a more peaceful management of the population in Soviet governance. In 1966, the 23<sup>rd</sup> Party Congress coined the slogan: "everything in the name of a man, everything for a man's welfare".<sup>140</sup> Recently, it has been argued that that the Khrushchev Thaw entailed a greater concern for the welfare of the people at the expense of military economy. This concern led to such an improvement of living standards that some scholars heralded the birth of the Soviet consumer society.<sup>141</sup> I will return to this process, which took place alongside "the scientific-technical revolution", in Chapter VII and show how it influenced the scope of Soviet cultural policy rationales and techniques.

In his model of biopolitics, Foucault described a transition to population as the means and ends of state governance.<sup>142</sup> The post-Stalinist development of cultural policy could well be interpreted as a transformation in line with Foucault's thinking. The foundation and development of the ministry coincided with pacification in Lithuania. As the American Sovietologist Beissinger put it so succinctly, "terror is based on the assumption that resistance [...] is rooted in the character of people, not in the character of organisations".<sup>143</sup> According to Misiunas and Taagepera, by 1953, the Baltic people came to realise that the Soviet regime was there to stay and that it would be better to accept the imposed rules than to constantly challenge them. The end of the mass deportations and arbitrary terror of the NKVD also contributed towards an acceptance of harsh but predictable rules.<sup>144</sup> To paraphrase Beissinger, it was perceived that the

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<sup>138</sup> Especially after the 22<sup>nd</sup> Congress in October 1961, in which Khrushchev announced the task of constructing communism.

<sup>139</sup> Vytautas Jakelaitis, *Juozas Banaitis* (Vilnius: Vaga, 1986), 133.

<sup>140</sup> LLMA, f.342, ap.1, b.1494, l.71.

<sup>141</sup> Vladimir Shlapentokh, *A Normal Totalitarian Society* (Armonk, New York: M.E.Sharpe, 2001), for life standards before Khrushchev, see Jukka Gronow, *Caviar with Champagne: Common Luxury and the Ideals of Good Life in Stalin's Russia* (Oxford: Berg, 2003).

<sup>142</sup> Foucault, "Governmentality."

<sup>143</sup> Beissinger, 130-131.

<sup>144</sup> Misiunas and Taagepera, 128-129.

“character of the people” had changed. Thus, bureaucratic administration and managerial sciences came to the forefront (though they did not entirely replace the secret police). The career backgrounds of the first union-republic and all-union ministers of culture indicate that securitisation was of the utmost importance when it came to cultural policy-making.

### *The Ministers of Culture*

Finally, I will discuss the biographies of LSSR ministers of culture, which will illustrate how the Soviet attitude regarding an appropriate leader for governance of culture had evolved. The career paths of the Soviet (all-union and LSSR) ministers of culture demonstrate that understanding good governance of culture required special professional expertise. This section suggests, therefore, that state cultural administration underwent a certain degree of autonomisation. To describe the LSSR ministers of culture, archived Party (LCP) reference letters were used. These provide a unique glimpse of the internal Party evaluations of the ministers.

The first All-Union Minister of Culture was *Panteleimon K. Ponomarenko* (1902-1984). Ponomarenko previously served as the First Secretary of the Belarus CP (1938-47) and the general lieutenant and leader of the Belarusian partisan resistance during World War II. It appears that his function was to ensure the establishment of the institution: after less than one year – in February 1954 – he received a much more significant appointment, that of First Secretary of the Kazakhstan Communist Party.<sup>145</sup> Keeping in mind Ponomarenko’s background and later career, his appointment to consolidate the Ministry of Culture testifies to the Soviet view that it takes a very strong leader with a military background to create a government apparatus.

In 1954, Ponomarenko was replaced by Malenkov’s team member *Georgii F. Aleksandrov* (1908-1961), former head of the Propaganda and Agitation Department at the Central Committee. Aleksandrov’s appointment was interpreted by historians as a clear symbol of de-Stalinisation, since he had been out of favour since 1947 when, in the course of Zhdanov’s campaign, his *History of*

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<sup>145</sup> 1954 was an important date for Kazakhstan. It saw the start of the implementation of Khrushchev’s Virgin Lands campaign which aimed to transform deserts into arable land; within this campaign about two million Russians moved into the country. In the same year the construction of Baikonur cosmodrome started, from where the Soviet Union launched its space programme. After that Ponomarenko served as an ambassador to Poland (1955-57) and probably participated in suppressing the Polish workers’ uprising in October 1956. His dispatch to India and Nepal (1957-59) coincided with the Eisenhower’s doctrine according to which the USA was to prevent communist influence in Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan. He was made ambassador to the Netherlands (1959-62), also being a representative of the Soviet Union at the International Agency for Nuclear Energy in Vienna (1961-62). Ponomarenko retired in 1962.

*Western European Philosophy* was denounced for “ideological errors”. However, only a year later he was “dismissed in disgrace”.<sup>146</sup>

The minister’s chair was then given to former ambassador to Poland *N.A. Mikhailov* who served, according to Slusser, with “great organising ability and energy, combined with uncompromising party orthodoxy”.<sup>147</sup> After four years, Mikhailov was replaced by the powerful *Ekaterina A. Furtseva*. The legendary Furtseva was often called “Catherine the Third” because of her regal manners.<sup>148</sup> Indeed, besides occupying leading posts in the Moscow City executive committee, she was the first woman to be admitted to the Politburo. In the context of her successful political career, her appointment as the Minister of Culture was a punishment because Furtseva was accused of disloyalty to Khrushchev and removed from the Politburo in 1960. By then she had already attempted suicide, and after 14 years as the All-Union Minister of Culture, her second attempt was successful.<sup>149</sup>

In 1974, the empty chair was filled by a candidate Politburo member *Piotr N. Demichev*, who had been the secretary of the Moscow Obkom beginning in 1956 and the first secretary beginning in 1959. In July 1960, he was elected First Secretary of the Moscow City Executive Committee, which represented an important milestone for this aspiring *apparatchik*. Among other things, he had also been a member of the board of Agitprop and had served as member of the Central Committee’s Bureau (RSFSR) since July 1959; he became a member of

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<sup>146</sup> Robert M. Slusser, “Soviet Music Since the Death of Stalin,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 303 (January 1956), 117, 121, 123. I did not manage to find out exactly what had happened, but the disgrace involved a clash with Khrushchev after which Aleksandrov was sent to the Belarusian Academy of Sciences in Minsk where he was in charge of the dialectics and historical materialism section.

<sup>147</sup> Slusser, 123.

<sup>148</sup> As Mawdsley and White put it, Ekaterina Furtseva (1910-74) “had risen from the shop floor in a provincial textile factory via a factory school and the Komsomol”. Educated at the Moscow Institute of Fibre Chemical Technology (1941), she continued her studies at the Higher Party School (1948) and became the second secretary of Moscow City (the first secretary in 1954-57), a member of the CC since 1952 and the Politburo from 1957 to 1961. She was the All-Union Minister of Culture between 1960 and 1974). Mawdsley and White, 117, 172.

<sup>149</sup> Admittedly, Furtseva was accused of using the government’s budget for building too large a summer house in a Moscow suburb (she withdrew about 60,000 roubles, equalling almost 40 years’ salary of an average Soviet worker). Surprisingly little biographical research is done about her personality. At the moment of writing only one heavily fictionalised account had been published in Russian. At the same time oral history and memoir literature preserves her image in countless “true stories” and anecdotes. Intriguingly, Furtseva’s persona in the novel is constructed as a strong and independent woman with sophisticated Western taste and habits (like jogging and drinking fresh juice), which leads to the thought that it is a case of projecting contemporary upper class Russian women’s identity back onto the ill-fated All-Union ministry. Tatiana Mirskaia, *Malvina v poiskakh svobody: Khronika chastnoi zhizny Ekateriny Furtsevoi* (Moscow: Octopus, 2006). On Furtseva and corruption see John M. Kramer, “Political Corruption in the U.S.S.R.,” *The Western Political Quarterly* 30, no.2 (1977), 214-215.

the Politburo CC in 1964.<sup>150</sup> In 1985, while preparing for his restructuring programme, Gorbachev replaced the hardliner Demichev with *Vasilii G. Zakharov*, previously the first deputy head of the Department for Agitation and Propaganda (Agitprop) at the Central Committee and, before that, the head of the propaganda department at the Leningrad Party committee.<sup>151</sup>

This brief overview indicates that the Soviet administration of culture's notion of a minister of culture evolved from an early post-Stalinist militarised approach to one that accepted that the position could be appropriated by a political careerist, especially one from the ideological propaganda sector. Only in a later period did the idea emerge that an "insider" or an "expert" cultural practitioner should be in charge of the state administration for culture.

This trajectory was also visible in the case of Lithuanian SSR, but with some important modifications. Ponomarenko's counterpart was the first LSSR minister of culture, *Aleksandras Gudaitis-Guzevičius* (born in Moscow 1908, died in Vilnius 1969), who held the position from 1953 to 1955. Guzevičius was appointed as an NKVD major in 1944, but was removed from his post in 1945. The archives reveal that the reason for his dismissal was his failure to put down the Lithuanian armed resistance to the Soviet occupation.<sup>152</sup> His subsequent appointment as the head of the Committee of Cultural-Educational Enterprises in 1945-1947 was strategic because those enterprises were envisioned as key support for local election districts and were utilised for the collectivisation campaign. Thus, a later minister's speech stated that "in the course of a bloody class struggle, when everyone had to choose their own way and make up their own mind, a modest, cottage reading room with a small amateurs circle and a narrow shelf of books constituted both a field and the means for an ideological struggle".<sup>153</sup> However, in 1947, Guzevičius was once again criticised by Party members for not being able to properly organise their work, as "the cultural enlightenment work in the Republic remained at a very low level". Guzevičius, in fact, was more inclined to "literary work".<sup>154</sup> Hence, he was made the head of the publishing house for belle-lettres (1947-50). The author of several novels, he even received the Stalin Prize for his book, *The Truth of Blacksmith Ignotas* (vols. I-II, 1948-49).<sup>155</sup> Having resigned from the minister's post in 1955 due to

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<sup>150</sup> "The New Secretariat," 13 November 1961, Radio Free Munich, 3, Open Society Archives, 8 December 2007, <<http://archivum.ws/files/holdings/300/8/3/text/59-3-168.shtml>> (6 May 2008); Ned Temko, "Soviet Insiders: How Power Flows in Moscow," in *The Soviet Polity in the Modern Era*, eds. E. P. Hoffmann, R. F. Laird (New York: Aldine Publishing Company, 1984), 163.

<sup>151</sup> Birgit Beumers, "Commercial Enterprise on the Stage: Changes in Russian Theatre Management between 1986 and 1996," *Europe-Asia Studies* 48, no.8 (1996).

<sup>152</sup> The document said that Guzevičius "did not manage to organise the effective suppression and timely extinguishing leaders and members of the organised Lithuanian nationalist underground and its armed bandit groups". LYA, f.1771, ap.227, b.2585, l. 14, 15.

<sup>153</sup> LLMA, f.342, ap.1, b. 1856, l. 45. Also pointed out in Lisenkaitė, 183.

<sup>154</sup> LYA, f. 1771, ap.227, b. 2585, l. 20.

<sup>155</sup> Lisenkaitė, 183.

poor health,<sup>156</sup> Guzevičius did not advance in his political career as did Ponomarenko, but remained confined to the cultural sector, namely publishing.

Guzevičius's successor was a Lithuanian party careerist *Jonas Smilgevičius* (b.1924), who occupied the minister's chair for three years (1955-58). Smilgevičius grew up in a village in western Lithuania. After having completed six years in secondary school, he was trained as carpenter and worked in Kaunas. During World War II, Smilgevičius retreated to Russia, where he worked as a *komsomol* instructor in the Tula *oblast*. Beginning in 1943, he headed the accounting and statistics department at the LSSR *komsomol*. In 1948 he finished attending the Party school and joined the newspaper *Komjaunimo tiesa* (Lithuanian *Komsomolskaia pravda*) as a literary assistant. From 1949 to 1952, Smilgevičius worked with propaganda and agitation matters at CC (LCP), and in 1953 he became the head of the department for propaganda and agitation at the CC (LCP). For unknown reasons, he was transferred from his post of LSSR Minister of Culture and made a deputy secretary of the executive council of Vilnius council, where he worked until 1971. According to the last record in his Party biography, Smilgevičius had to leave his position because of health problems; he then accepted a position as an assistant to the director of production of chemical goods at *Litbytkhim* factory in Vilnius.<sup>157</sup> Smilgevičius is the only LSSR Minister of Culture who does not have an entry in the *Lithuanian Soviet Encyclopaedia*, and I was unable to find out much about his role as the Minister of Culture.

He was succeeded by a more distinguished persona, *Juozas Banaitis* (1908-1967), who became the minister in the period of liberalisation or Thaw (1958-1967). Banaitis had been a CPSU member since 1933. When the Soviet Union occupied Lithuania, he was appointed the chair of the radio committee, and in 1943, he was made the head of the Arts Agency. Initially, his role was highly regarded by the government. For example, in 1944, Banaitis was praised by the first Party secretary (LCP) Sniečkus for persuading “the old intelligentsia” to take up institutional positions.<sup>158</sup> Yet in 1947, a party reference letter<sup>159</sup> stated that he “had not managed to use the administrative apparatus efficiently”, especially when it came to the control of provincial areas.<sup>160</sup> In 1953, Banaitis was also harshly criticised by *Tiesa* for a “lack of precise planning” and “systematised control of implementation” in the work of the agency.<sup>161</sup> Banaitis was appointed as a vice-minister under both Guzevičius and Smilgevičius (1953-58).

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<sup>156</sup> Lisenkaitė.

<sup>157</sup> LYA, f. 177, ap. 227, b. 3891, l. 1, 3, 5, 13.

<sup>158</sup> LYA, f. 1771, ap. 227, b. 2047, l. 14.

<sup>159</sup> Such reference letters (*charakteristika*) were written by highly positioned Party members, archived in the personal file of the nomenclature member and probably were used when a member was considered for a promotion.

<sup>160</sup> LYA, f. 1771, ap.227, b. 2047, l. 19.

<sup>161</sup> “Meno reikalų valdybos darba – į naujų uždavinių lygį,” *Tiesa*, 3 February 1953. Note that the excerpt from the newspaper was included in Banaitis's personal Party file. The article was also used in Banaitis's characteristic letter in 1954. LYA, f. 1771, ap.227, b. 2047, l. 30.

In retrospect, these appointments were perceived as being quite unfair by many intellectuals as he was regarded to be professionally superior to both ministers.<sup>162</sup> Indeed, Banaitis was remembered as a “minister of good taste”,<sup>163</sup> “Lithuania’s Lunacharsky”, who received a sophisticated pre-war education in Western Europe and was knowledgeable about and active in culture, especially music.<sup>164</sup> In November 1957, a Party reference positively declared that Banaitis “enjoyed an authority among the Lithuanian cultural intelligentsia”.<sup>165</sup> Thus, while Banaitis was seen as a failure as regards the implementation of Stalinist cultural policy, he was lauded for being more successful in introducing Khrushchev’s de-Stalinisation.

Following Banaitis’s sudden death from a stroke, *Lionginas Šepetys* was given the ministerial appointment.<sup>166</sup> Somewhat like Furtseva, but for different reasons, he had to step down from the Party hierarchy. He received a degree in architecture engineering from Kaunas Polytechnics Institute (1953), where he taught and participated in local party activities until 1957. He continued to combine both a Party and an academic career. Šepetys received his PhD in applied art from the School of Societal Sciences in Moscow, which prepared “sophisticated Party cadres” (1963). He became the head of the Culture, Science and Education Department at CC (LCP) in 1964-1967, and was an associate professor (*docentas*) at the Vilnius Fine Arts Institute (1963-1968). In 1967, he became the Minister of Culture and was the only LSSR minister of culture to be a member of the Presidium (LCP). From 1976 to 1989 he was the secretary of CC (LCP). Author of several books on applied and fine art, Šepetys was a signatory of the Independence Act of 1990.

During the Soviet period, Šepetys had a reputation as a cunning politician and influential member of CC (LCP). Not surprisingly, his Party references were thoroughly positive and described him as an “efficient”, “principled”, “morally consistent” and “thoughtful” leader, who enjoyed authority among *Komsomol* and Party apparatus members. A telling detail: after the death of Sniečkus, the most influential First Secretary of CC (LCP), Šepetys moved into his house (Sniečkus’s widow had to move out).<sup>167</sup> Just as in this case, many of Šepetys’s activities were considered controversial by the Lithuanian cultural community. For example, the authorship of one of his books has been openly contested since 1990. Yet it was widely acknowledged that Šepetys had “good taste” and a tolerance for modern and other “a-Soviet” art forms. His inclination to “scientific-research work” was noted in the Party references.<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>162</sup> See the memoir by Jakelaitis, *Saulei leidžiantis*.

<sup>163</sup> Šepetys, 2005.

<sup>164</sup> Jakelaitis, *Juozas Banaitis*, 147.

<sup>165</sup> LYA, f. 1771, ap.227, b. 2047, l. 42.

<sup>166</sup> Lionginas Šepetys was born in Kazliškiiai village in East Northern Lithuania, in 1927 and currently lives in Vilnius.

<sup>167</sup> Vytautas Tininis, *Sniečkus. 33 metai valdžioje* (Vilnius: Karminas, 2000).

<sup>168</sup> LYA, f. 1771, ap. 274, b. 1899, l. 13

Šepetys was succeeded by a somewhat less colourful but no less controversial persona, *Jonas Bielinis* (b.1933), who was probably the least liked Soviet Lithuanian minister of culture after 1990. He started his political career as the deputy secretary and the secretary of the Party organisation at Vilnius University (1958-59) and actively contributed to the purges of the Lithuanian Philology Department at Vilnius University in 1958.<sup>169</sup> His role in the purge was very positively highlighted in his Party references as he was praised for “significantly increasing the influence of the Party organisation to all the scientific-

*Table 2. The All-Union and Lithuanian SSR Ministers of Culture, 1953-1990*

All-Union		Lithuanian SSR	
1953-54	<i>Panteleimon Ponomarenko</i>	1953-55	<i>Aleksandras Gudaitis Guzevičius</i>
1954-55	<i>Georgii Aleksandrov</i>	1955-58	<i>Jonas Smilgevičius</i>
1955-59	<i>N. A. Mikhailov</i>	1958-67	<i>Juozas Banaitis</i>
1960-74	<i>Ekaterina Furtseva</i>	1967-76	<i>Lionginas Šepetys</i>
1974-85	<i>Piotr Demichev</i>	1976-88	<i>Jonas Bielinis</i>
1985-89*	<i>Vasilii Zakharov</i>	1988-90	<i>Dainius Trinkūnas</i>
1989	<i>N. N. Gubenko</i>		

\* During most of 1989, the position of All-Union Minister of Culture was vacant

educational work” of the university. As a leader, Bielinis was characterised as an “accurate, honest executive”, and later as both “a modest” and “determined communist” (*nastoichivii*).<sup>170</sup> In addition to teaching history at Vilnius University (1958-1961), Bielinis was the first secretary at Lenin’s district committee (*raikom*) and the head of the educational department at Vilnius city committee (*gorkom*) in 1961-1964. From 1964 to 1967, he studied at the Academy of Societal Sciences in Moscow and received the degree of Candidate of Philological Sciences. Bielinis became a deputy head of the culture department at the CC (LCP) (1967-73), then head of the science and education department (1973-1976), and the minister of culture (1976-1988).

The last Soviet Lithuanian minister of culture was a composer *Dainius Trinkūnas* (1931-1996). Previously the director of the Lithuanian Philharmonic Society (1970-1973), Trinkūnas served as a vice-minister under both Šepetys and Bielinis (1973-1988) and became a minister in 1988, the year that the collapse of communist system began. After the declaration of independence on 11 March 1990, the Ministry of Culture ended its relationship with the All-Union

<sup>169</sup> Interview with an historian, Vytautas, Vilnius, December 2005; and a mathematician, Saulius, Vilnius, December 2005. Also see Meilė Lukšienė, *Jungtys* (Vilnius: Alma Littera, 2000).

<sup>170</sup> LYA, f. 1771, ap. 274, b. 207, l. 11, 12, 32, 33.

Ministry and merged with the Ministry of Education. A young literary historian Darius Kuolys was appointed as the first minister of culture and education (Trinkūnas was briefly reinstated to the minister's post, 1992-1994).

Notably, all LSSR ministers were of Lithuanian ethnicity (though Gudaitis-Guzevičius was born into a working-class family in Russia) and all the All-Union ministers were Russians. Unlike the All-Union ministers of culture, several Lithuanian ministers had received educations in the arts or humanities: Banaitis specialised in music pedagogy, Šepetyš had a degree in architecture, Bielinis studied Lithuanian philology and Trinkūnas was a composer. Gudaitis-Guzevičius invested a lot of time and effort into becoming a fiction writer (despite the rather harsh criticism that his talents received from other Soviet Lithuanian writers, he was awarded the Stalin Prize, and his works were included in school reading lists).

Meanwhile the Russian ministers had predominantly technical educations: Ponomarenko graduated from the Moscow Institute for Engineers of Transport (1932), and Demichev, who specialised in toxic chemicals, graduated from a corresponding department at the Military Academy of Chemical Protection (VAKhZ) of the Soviet Army, Moscow Chemical-Technological Institute of D.I. Mendeleev (1954).<sup>171</sup> Furtseva began her (for a woman) phenomenal career path<sup>172</sup> as a worker at a textile factory and later graduated from the Institute of Chemistry Technology (1941). Only Aleksandrov, who occupied the minister's position for a very brief period, was educated in the humanities, as he graduated from the Moscow Institute of History and Philosophy (1932), and later became a professor at the Institute and its director.<sup>173</sup> The post-perestroika exception was the 48-years old actor at the experimental Taganka theatre in Moscow, *Nikolai N. Gubenko*, who was appointed minister in 1990.<sup>174</sup> Notably, only two of seven All-Union ministers of culture, Demichev and Zakharov, had previously occupied leading posts in propaganda departments. None had worked at the Ministry of Culture before their appointments. Meanwhile, three of the six Lithuanian ministers, Smilgevičius, Banaitis, Trinkūnas, had previously served as vice-ministers and thus followed an institutional career track. This suggests that there was greater intra-organisational continuity in the work of the LSSR Ministry of Culture, which was reflected in its official discourses on governance

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<sup>171</sup> Lev A. Federov, "Chemical Weapons in Russia: History, Ecology, Politics," 17 July 1994, <[http://www.fas.org/nuke/guide/russia/cbw/jptac008\\_194001.htm](http://www.fas.org/nuke/guide/russia/cbw/jptac008_194001.htm)> (8 December 2008).

<sup>172</sup> For the limitations of women's political careers, see Carol Nechemias, "Women and Politics in the Soviet Russia," in *Women in the Politics of Post-Communist Eastern Europe. Revised and Expanded Edition*, ed. Marilyn Rueschemeyer (Armonk, New York: M.E.Sharpe, 1998).

<sup>173</sup> As he was a close friend of Georgii Malenkov (an advisor to Stalin), Aleksandrov's book about Western philosophy was denounced in the course of Zhdanov's anti-Western and anti-Jewish campaigns (Aleksandrov lost his position at Agitprop but was reinstated as the minister of culture after Malenkov's return to power). Slusser, 117-123.

<sup>174</sup> Gubenko left the post after *coup d'état* in August 1991, to return to it only for a very short time as the All-Union institutions were abolished in December 1991. Riita H. Pitman, "Writers and Politics in the Gorbachev Era," *Soviet Studies* 44, no.4 (1992), 665.

(of which more will be discussed in later chapters). The contrast between the Soviet Lithuanian and All-Union ministers of culture was even greater when compared with highly placed cultural officials of the interwar period: they were either practicing artists or Catholic priests. Two famous painters, Antanas Žmuidzinavičius and Justinas Vienožinskis, and a scientist, the astronomer Antanas Juška headed the Arts Department, while a philosopher and priest, Izidorius Tamošaitis, headed the censorship agency.

### *Conclusion*

The historical trajectory of public cultural organisations and state administration for culture in Lithuania witnessed striking disruptions as well as continuities. The disruptions had mainly to do with the ethnic management of the population: in the aftermath of World War II, Lithuania had lost about 30 percent of its population. Nearly all of its Jewish population was exterminated, while many Lithuanians fled to the West or were deported. However, I hope I have demonstrated that some elements of the organisational mentality of the governance of culture were shared by both the Lithuanian “soft” and Soviet “hard” authoritarian regimes.

Unfortunately, studies of how the statesmen of the independent Lithuania regarded their Imperial Russian administrative legacy are lacking at this time. However, there was a clear tendency in the interwar period to abstain from a special central governmental body for culture. As the Soviet occupation introduced the Soviet model of cultural policy into Lithuania, many of the interwar cultural organisations and creative unions were subverted for the purposes of Soviet administration. The Sovietisation of Lithuanian cultural organisations, therefore, was a combination of continuity and change, both of which were marked by a good deal of tension and insecurity. The next chapter analyses further this pacification of Soviet governance and focuses on its economic aspects.

## IV. The Economic Configuration of Soviet Cultural Policy

Once the communist regime seized power in Russia, reforming and improving the country's economy were among its most important and difficult tasks. The Soviet occupation of Lithuania also entailed major economic restructuring. Both Lenin's Russia and Stalin's Lithuania were dominated by agricultural production. This situation had to change for a number of reasons. While the fact that heavy industries generated more profit and ensured the self-sufficiency of the Soviet Union, surrounded by "capitalist enemies", the Party ideology relied on the "progressive" proletariat class and not "backward" peasants. Thus, after 1940 and especially after 1945, Lithuania was drawn into the Soviet project of industrialisation, the country's agricultural sector was collectivised, and new industries were established and integrated into the all-Union economy.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to massive industrialisation, the Soviet economy was characterised by a particular mode of organisation known as central planning. It has often been noted that building a Soviet state was a special economic project, which entailed the unprecedented centralisation of the state organisations that governed various spheres of life. Centralisation, it was assumed, would enhance efficiency. Material and financial flows were directed top-down with respect to future goals. As the Soviet economy was barter-based, the allocation of resources was executed by ministries, which oversaw their enterprises.<sup>2</sup> The highest decision-making power belonged to the All-Union First Secretary and the members of the Political Bureau (Politburo) at the Central Committee of CPSU.<sup>3</sup> This chapter explores how "culture" came to be rationalised in accordance with this broader Soviet economic system.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See *Lietuva 1940-1990*.

<sup>2</sup> The term "administrative command economy" was first used by Mikhail Gorbachev in the 1980s. Paul R. Gregory and Robert C. Stuart, *Russian and Soviet Economic Performance and Structure* (Boston: Adison Wesley, 2001), 6, 8, 16. On the genealogy of the belief in market forces as a regulative mechanism and the historical constitution of the sphere of the economy in the West, see Gordon, 14-27.

<sup>3</sup> Urban, 1982. The history of the Politburo is quite complicated. It was established in 1919 and consisted of 5 members and from 1930 had 10 members. Initially, it was intended to be the Party's executive body, an additional organ within the CC. Gradually, it took over the legislative function that formally belonged to the Party Congresses of people's deputies, which under Stalin, especially after 1934, were convened irregularly and rarely. In 1952 it was renamed the Presidium

Up to now, a good deal of the Western scholarship on state cultural policy has discerned a particularly normative approach to the economic rationalisation of culture. On the one hand, the Soviet ambition to devise a state-wide administrative network for culture and commit to its financing was more or less openly admired.<sup>5</sup> On the other, however, some scholars held that any state cultural policy, be it authoritarian or democratic, necessarily impoverished cultural practices because it was guided by “economic reason”.<sup>6</sup> It is from this vantage point that Soviet cultural policy has been described as the ultimate negative example of an “instrumentalised” state cultural policy. While this chapter deals with both sides of Soviet cultural policy, I prefer not to abide by either of the normative judgments. Instead of juxtaposing the “evil economic” goals against the admitted “good cultural” ones, this chapter attempts to draw an analytical scheme to demonstrate how the sphere of culture was assembled under the broader ambition to define and steer the Soviet Union’s national economy.

I argue that centralised, calculation-based governance,<sup>7</sup> formulated within and for the economic sphere, was an important force, which influenced the configuration of Soviet culture as a techno-scientific policy area. I will show how it was both productive and counterproductive. Soviet economic logic produced culture as a calculable sphere, describable and manageable through an extensive system of indicators and statistics. However, Soviet economic logic also considered culture to be a low priority. Consequently, the cultural sector was prone to a high degree of poverty, which was a general feature of the Soviet shortage-ridden economy.

It is not my ambition to offer an exhaustive analysis of all aspects of economic planning having to do with culture. Nor will I provide a fully-fledged historical overview of the development of economic indicators, statistics and financing of the cultural sector. Instead, I will use several typical examples to highlight the key features of the economic mode of ordering the Soviet cultural sector. This analytical scheme will serve as an important explanatory frame-

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and extended to 36 members, but after the death of Stalin returned to 10 members. It functioned under the name of the Presidium until 1966, and was again renamed the Politburo.

<sup>4</sup> Rationalisation of policy-making in the Soviet Union has been studied predominantly by economic historians, such as Erik P. Hoffmann and Robin F. Laird, *The Politics of Economic Modernization in the Soviet Union* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1982); and Erik P. Hoffmann and Robin F. Laird, *Technocratic Socialism: The Soviet Union as a Post-Industrial State* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1985); Donald R. Kelley, *The Politics of Developed Socialism: The Soviet Union in the Advanced Industrial Era* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1986).

<sup>5</sup> Miller and Yúdice; Elst, 42. This is not to neglect abundant criticisms of Soviet ideological control of individual expression by the elites. For a typical example of such criticism, see Leonard Schapiro, *The Communist Party of the Soviet Union* (New York: Vintage Press, 1971).

<sup>6</sup> Vestheim; McGuigan.

<sup>7</sup> For modern attempts at rational, calculation-based policies, see a wonderful study James Scott, *Seeing Like a State. How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Failed* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998).

work for the analysis of the cybernetic language of cultural policy in future chapters. It is important to note that the suggested analytical scheme can be relevant beyond the Lithuanian case. The scale of Soviet centralisation even led some scholars to argue that the entire Soviet Union was *de facto* run as a giant corporation. Though it consisted of fifteen union republics,<sup>8</sup> the Soviet Union was run as one state, vertically integrated along industry branches (enterprises and ministries) and political administration (party and planning organs);<sup>9</sup> thus, the Union-Republic governments served more of an executive function. As they were in charge of some branches of industry, they were legally restricted by centrally devised economic plans.<sup>10</sup> For these reasons, the chapter's analytical implications could well be applicable to other union republics.

### *Some Features of the Soviet Economic System*

To begin with, I would like to briefly point out two important aspects of the Soviet economic system – first, the ideological importance of centralised planning and, second, the significance of formal organisation. Both aspects were crucial to the further configuration of Soviet cultural policy. The management of the Soviet economy was designed in ideological opposition to capitalist free-market regulation and was based on central planning and administrative control. It was expected that the rational, scientifically grounded planning and distribution of resources would escape the duplications, mistakes and slack attributed by Communists to a market economy.<sup>11</sup> As the editor of *Pravda* put it, in the Soviet Union an “elemental force of market, anarchy and competition was replaced with governance [*upravlenie*] that was conscious, *scientific* and *organ-*

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<sup>8</sup> There were also autonomous socialist republics, the number of which had varied, for example in the Russian SFSR and Ukrainian SSR.

<sup>9</sup> While there are many definitions of state socialism, I agree with Aleksandras Shtromas that they “boil down to the institution of public ownership of the means of production and, consequently, to central planning”. Aleksandras Shtromas, “The Inevitable Collapse of Socialism,” in *Totalitarianism and the Prospects for World Order: Closing the Door on the Twentieth Century*, eds. R. Faulkner and D. J. Mahoney (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2003), 100.

<sup>10</sup> For a clear description of the economic functions of the Council of Ministers, Gosplan, Gosstat, the State Bank, branch ministries and other bodies see Conyngham, *The Modernisation of Soviet Industrial Management*, 3-11.

<sup>11</sup> To quote an authoritative philosopher of management and editor of *Pravda*, “the bourgeoisie is able effectively, in a model way to manage (*rukovodit'*) enterprises or their trusts and even separate branches of the economy on the scale of a country or a group of countries, yet it is not able to govern (*upravliat'*) purposively, in a planned way, consciously, an industry as a whole, or social and economic processes on the scale of an entire society. The reason is the prevailing system of private property, elemental forces of the market, laws of anarchy and competition [...]. The governing force of “anarchic capitalist society,” wrote Lenin, “is market expansion by elemental force”. Viktor G. Afanas'ev, “O soderzhanii (osnovnykh funktsiiakh) upravleniia sotsialisticheskim obshchestvom,” in *Nauchnoe upravlenie obshchestvom*, ed. V. G. Afanas'ev (Moscow: Mysl', 1967), 4. Note that Afanas'ev used *rukovodstvo* (leadership) and *upravlenie* (governance) as synonyms.

ised by a plan".<sup>12</sup> Of course, state economic planning was not a particularly Soviet feature. A technique to cope with the uncertainty of the future, it emerged in and was shared by a number of modern states in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>13</sup>

The Soviet Union, however, was unique in the degree and scope of its centralised planning. Beginning in 1928, Soviet economic policy-making was cyclic. It was based on five-year plans (further divided into annual and quarterly plans), which specified priorities and targets to be achieved.<sup>14</sup> The plans, approved by the First Secretary (CPSU) and, after the death of Stalin, by the Party Congresses, had the status of law. Thus, organisations were required to meet the set plan indicators, and the centralised, long-term planned economy eventually came to be identified with a state socialist system and "Soviet-ness" itself. I will shortly describe the consequences of Soviet economic planning on the formulation of Soviet cultural policy.

In terms of the types of Soviet organisations, Ivan T. Berend noted that the Soviet regime's view of culture implied a ban on any public cultural activities that were not sanctioned by the state.<sup>15</sup> Therefore, in order to engage in the fine arts and other cultural pursuits, individuals had to belong to an organisational body approved by the state. For ideological, as well as economic reasons, in the Soviet Union, officially defined culture was produced mainly by formal organisations. Two types of organisations prevailed: *khozraschetnye* and *biudzhetnye*. The former was managed according to the principles of *khozraschet*, which implied that an organisation possessed some autonomy, but it also had to fulfil the centrally laid-out plan, and it was economically accountable to the respective agencies.<sup>16</sup> The latter, *biudzhetnye* or the organisations directly subsidised by the state, did not have to either generate profits or balance their expenses with income. Cultural organisations belonged primarily to the latter type. This implied that should losses incur, they would be compensated from governmental or municipal budgets. Of course, the intentional misuse or squandering of funds was a penal activity, but if a theatre was unable to attract enough audience members, its losses would be compensated. Further, the costs of cultural endeavours, like most of the prices of consumer goods, were subsidised by the

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<sup>12</sup> Afanas'ev, 5.

<sup>13</sup> See Jenny Andersson, "Choosing Futures: Alva Myrdal and the Construction of Swedish Future Studies, 1967-1972," *International Review of Social History* 51 (2006), 277-295.

<sup>14</sup> The first five-year plan was launched by Stalin on 1 October 1928.

<sup>15</sup> Berend.

<sup>16</sup> The notion of *khozraschet* was introduced in the 1920s and meant that the enterprise was a distinct entity that "carried out its activities with respect for the following principles: the enterprise had to be self-sufficient (*samookupaemost'*), in other words all expenses had to be covered by the enterprise's income; it had, moreover, to generate surplus, although with little incentive, since any profit which appeared in the balance submitted annually to the state treasury had to be transferred to the state budget; it had to pay for everything it was given and had to be paid for everything it produced," O.S. Ioffe, "Khozraschet," in *Encyclopaedia of Soviet Law*, eds. F.J.M. Feedbrugge and G. van den Berg (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1985), 414-417, cf Elst, 23.

state. In the central planning of culture and ministerial administration of formal organisations, a system of economic indicators was of utmost importance. I suggest that these components could be seen as the building blocks of the Soviet calculation-based governance.

### *Economic Indicators of the Cultural Sector*

In order to make plans and issue edicts, the Soviet authorities had to deal with an incredible amount of information. It is important to note that price as a informative unit about cost, demand and supply was absent in Soviet economy. The prices were set centrally by the State Planning Committee. Thus, in order to assist the centralised decision-making process, a vast system of economic indicators was developed. A statistical system of measurement via indicators was a Western European invention, not a Russian one,<sup>17</sup> and such a system, consisting of indicators or categories for statistical calculations, was developed for every branch of Soviet industry and eventually put in place in the late 1920s.<sup>18</sup>

The problem of acquiring and processing information for centralised decision-making was as pressing in cultural policy as it was in any other sphere of planning. For the Soviet government, the formulation of cultural policy and the control of its implementation meant having to deal with a very large sector (notoriously, being “big” was a good thing in the minds of the Soviets). As one Soviet scholar pointed out, in 1981, the “art” sphere alone (as defined in the national economy classifier, see Table 1) consisted of about 275,000 enterprises in the Soviet Union. This implied that, in terms of the number of organisations, only trade was ahead of culture in the Soviet national economy.<sup>19</sup> Of course, in “real terms” of profitability, the cultural sector was far less important than trade. Yet “culture” featured cash flows, staffs, various materials, accounting forms, principles of management, and more, most of which were the concern of planners.

Post-World War II Soviet cultural policy-making was a sphere largely defined and guided by various indicators, which provided the information about the sector’s performance. Whilst the hierarchies and contents of the indicators in strategic branches (raw materials, technologies) were an object of negotiation among top managers, the republics’ planners and the CC Planning Committee, indicators for culture were mostly channelled top-down.<sup>20</sup> The plan indicators for the development of culture were formulated, distributed and processed at the

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<sup>17</sup> The concept of an economic indicator was developed in applied statistics. See Ian Hacking, *The Taming of Chance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

<sup>18</sup> The Soviet Union experienced an overflow of indicators that resulted in an unmanageable mass of quantitative data.

<sup>19</sup> E. Renov, “Konstitutsionnye principy upravleniia kul’turoi,” in *Konstitutsionnye osnovy gosudarstvennogo stroitel’stva* (Sverdlovsk, 1981), 42, cf Diržinskaitė, 27.

<sup>20</sup> Interview with an economist, Aleksandras Vasiliauskas, Vilnius, December 2005.

State Plan Committee (Gosplan).<sup>21</sup> Special guidelines for the classification were prepared by the All-Union and Union-Republic State Planning Committees, which had small departments for culture.<sup>22</sup> These departments communicated with the Finance-Planning Departments at the respective Ministries of Culture.

The archives of the LSSR Ministry of Culture contain a wealth of documents regarding the “main economic indicators” for culture provided by Gosplan. While space is limited for a more in-depth discussion of the production, contents and historical development of these indicators, I would like to point out their rather limited and apparently arbitrary nature. The main economic indicators for culture did not seek to encapsulate all the diversity of the Ministry’s sector. Instead, they either concerned the largest organisational sectors or were added in relation to the prioritised economic strategy that prevailed at the time. Two excellent examples illustrate this phenomenon. In 1955, the state plan contained the following “main economic indicators” for culture: *libraries* (number, fees for borrowing books, staff education level), *club enterprises* (the number of study circles, absorption of allocated finance, staff education level), *cinematization* (the growth of the network, the number of seats and visitors) and *theatres* (the number of organisations, performances, visitors, income, tours, loss/subsidy).<sup>23</sup> Thus, the indicators did not cover some other types of organisations, for example, creative unions and amusement parks. Nor did they include more specific types of cultural production, such as art exhibitions and music performances.

Other lists of indicators from the Ministry of Culture also exhibited rather arbitrary logic in making “internal choices”, as well as the invasion of urgent “external” economic priorities. While the following example is drawn from 1983, the structure of the internal ministry’s indicators had not change substantially over the years. The economic indicators used internally concerned 1) the maximum number of employees and the salary fund, 2) the library network, 3) club enterprises 4) music organisations, 5) culture and recreation parks, 6) cadre preparation 7) qualification enhancement courses 8) the introduction of works of scientific research and scientific-technological achievements into the national economy 9) construction works and 10) the rational utilisation and protection of water resources.<sup>24</sup> This classification clearly reveals that an economic definition of culture closely followed administrative lines. Publishing, recording and

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<sup>21</sup> The Committees were restructured into the republican branches after 1965, Diržinskaitė, 1985, 51. In the Lithuanian SSR, the state planning committee and ministries were responsible for about 60 percent of all industry, while 28 percent were directly supervised from Moscow, Misiunas and Taagepera, 188.

<sup>22</sup> When asked about the importance of planning in culture, the head of the Lithuanian State Planning Committee smiled and said that it was perhaps the least important, very small and insignificant in relation to other sectors. Interview with an economist, Aleksandras Vasiliauskas, Vilnius, December 2005.

<sup>23</sup> LLMA, f. 342, a. 1, b. 264.

<sup>24</sup> Decree no. 504 by the Lithuanian SSR Ministry of Culture Nr.504 (2 December 1983) “On confirming the indicators for the Plan of State and Social Development (1984) for the organisations of the Ministry of Culture,” LLMA, f. 342, a. 1, b. 3574, l. 15.

broadcasting were the responsibility of other governmental agencies and therefore not a part of the economic nomenclature of “culture”. However, environmental concerns (“water”) seemed more able to cut across departmental divisions (I will return to the nature-culture rapprochement in Chapter VII).

The plan indicators had to be fulfilled and, if possible, exceeded. The achievement and underachievement of plan indicators were widely and publicly disseminated: they were highlighted in the press, especially in public speeches by the Ministers of Culture, as well as in numerous brochures and other publications about cultural policy.<sup>25</sup> In the absence of free market competition, the public use of statistical figures aimed to encourage competition among districts, republics and sectors; they were also used to shame and praise. (It has to be noted that the figures were often faked at many different levels; this will be discussed in greater depth in Chapter VIII). The figures were also used to show off Soviet cultural progress abroad. The Soviet Union and Lithuanian SSR actively and systematically used the figures for cultural statistics to represent their positive images abroad, especially in relation to the position of culture in their bourgeois past.

### *Commensurability: Calculable Culture on Display*

That the Soviet Union used cultural statistics to communicate its progress abroad and to mark its efforts to “catch up and surpass the West” was not a new thing in itself. As noted by Hacking, the issue of international commensurability was contemporaneous with the emergence of national statistics and played an important role beginning in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>26</sup> In this respect, Soviet cultural statistics were no exemption; they were meant to communicate to the West the full-fledged progress that Soviet society was reportedly making. Drawing mainly on the first Soviet cultural policy report, I will briefly consider the representation of Soviet cultural policy abroad. This should not be confused with “cultural” representation of the Soviet Union abroad. The former aimed at representing the state cultural policy, its means and achievements. The latter aimed at representing the state by “cultural means”, such as the visual or performing arts, for example. Whilst the latter has already been addressed in numerous studies, such as those by Cate, Saunders and Richmond, to mention just a few, the representative power of the former has thus far been ignored.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> This is especially valid for the numerous overviews of the culture of the Lithuanian SSR concocted by LCP ideological secretaries. See, for example, Antanas Barkauskas, *Kaimas, kultūra, buitė* (Vilnius: Mintis, 1967); Antanas Barkauskas *Kultūra ir visuomenė* (Vilnius: Mokslas, 1975); Diržinskaitė.

<sup>26</sup> Hacking. It is important to note that the first public economic statistics was published during de-Stalinisation, in 1956. Hanson, 67.

<sup>27</sup> Cate; Giles Scott-Smith and Hans Krabbendam, eds., *The Cultural Cold War in Western Europe 1945-1960* (London, Portland: Frank Cass, 2003); Rana Mitter and Patrick Major, eds., *Across the Blocs: Cold War Cultural and Social History* (London, Portland: Frank Cass, 2004);

After World War II, one of the most important arenas for pulling “a numbers’ tug of war” was a new international body for cultural policy-making, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). Founded in 1945, UNESCO became an agency of the United Nations (UN) in 1946 and was entitled to implement the UN’s cultural policy on a global level and promote multilateral relations. This was done primarily by issuing conventions (often criticised for their vague formulations) and sponsoring various international studies, conferences and projects.<sup>28</sup> The Soviet Union joined UNESCO in 1954.<sup>29</sup> Eventually, the organisation came to function as an important tool in the Soviet Union’s efforts to flex its statistical muscle, both in reports and votes.<sup>30</sup> For my purposes, the series of *Studies and Documents on Cultural Policies*, commissioned by UNESCO in 1969, are particularly important in this regard. The resulting reports were published in the series, which enabled one to imagine “state cultural policy” as a simultaneous process, going on all over the world. One could shelve the reports together and compare the cultural policy of Ukraine with that of Togo. Yet structurally, the reports varied – they ranged in style from loose essayistic accounts to highly structured, statistically saturated panoramas.<sup>31</sup>

In 1970, the UNESCO series published a report about the Soviet Union’s cultural policy, written by A. A. Zvorykin, professor at the Institute for Applied Social Studies (the Soviet Academy of Sciences) with the help of N. I. Golubtsova and E. I. Rabinovich.<sup>32</sup> The 68-page report described the major organisations in the educational, scientific and cultural sectors (the sectors were chosen according to the budget structure and the system of classification of the state plan). That the Soviets used statistical prediction methods in cultural policy-making was especially evident in this report: a separate chapter was dedi-

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also Frances Stonor Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War: The CIA and the World of Arts and Letters* (New York: The New Press, 2000). Studies of Cold War “cultural” representations and exchanges were also guided by scholars’ own ideas as to what constituted “culture”. Some, for example, approached science and higher education as such an exchange. See Yale Richmond, *Cultural Exchange and the Cold War: Raising the Iron Curtain* (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003).

<sup>28</sup> Miller and Yúdice, 169-172.

<sup>29</sup> Socialist East European countries joined UNESCO earlier: Czechoslovakia (founding member state, 1946), Poland (1946), Hungary (1948) and Yugoslavia (1950). The Soviet Union was followed by Romania and Bulgaria (1956).

<sup>30</sup> In this the Soviet Union was backed by the Third World countries which “outnumbered” the Western capitalist members on the UNESCO board. Because of these reasons, the US left UNESCO in 1984, to be followed by the UK in 1985 (the UK rejoined in 1997 and the US in 2003). S.E. Graham, “The (Real)politics of Culture: U.S. Cultural Diplomacy in UNESCO, 1946–1954,” *Diplomatic History* 30, no.2 (2006), 231–251.

<sup>31</sup> Since then international cultural policy comparison has become highly evolved: for example, the *EricArts Compendium* enables comparisons between European countries online. See their website, <<http://www.culturalpolicies.net/web/index.php>>.

<sup>32</sup> A.A. Zvorykin, *Cultural Policy in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics* (Paris: UNESCO, 1970).

cated to “Evaluation of Cultural Needs and the Forecasting of Cultural Development”. As Zvorykin thought it necessary to describe the statistical process in detail, his account deserves a longer quote:

For the purpose of forecasting the development of culture and working out a long-term cultural policy, increasing use is now being made of the methods of structural and system analysis. By these means, it is possible to make forecasts by smoothing the statistical curve obtained by the observation of recent processes, expressing it in analytical terms and then extrapolating to the future. [...] The first question of interest [...] was how the ratio between scientific and artistic culture in the U.S.S.R. is changing. We compared the numbers of scientists – doctors and masters [*kandidaty*] of science – with the number of members in the main unions of creative artists... We took the statistical data for the period 1950-1967, worked out the extrapolation formulae by smoothing the statistical curve obtained and then, using these formulae, calculated the number of scientific workers and creative artists for the years 1970, 1980, 1990 and 2000. As a check, the corresponding figures for 1950 and 1960 were also calculated by the same method. Comparison of the actual and calculated figures for 1950 and 1960 indicated that our method of forecasting was sufficiently accurate.<sup>33</sup>

Thus, on the basis of statistical time series, Zvorykin forecasted that the membership of unions of creative artists would increase by ca. 400 percent and by 2000 would reach a total of 128,600. Meanwhile, the number of scientists would increase by about 600 percent to 383,100. In terms of percentages, the number of artists in relation to the number of scientists would decrease from 30.4 percent in 1950 to 25.1 percent in 2000. Hence, the proportion of scientists would continue to grow.<sup>34</sup> The subsequent pages provided further optimistic estimates of increases in various artistic and cultural sub-professions; oddly enough, there were no figures to indicate possible future decreases in any of these professions. The only anticipated decrease, according to the forecasting of Soviet cultural statistics, concerned cinema-goers, who were assumed to be watching television at home. However, despite the general increase of all the numbers, Zvorykin was worried that, proportionally, the artistic sector would diminish. He considered this a “warning, since the first result of spiritual impoverishment is to upset the harmonious development of man”.<sup>35</sup> Apparently, he was suggesting that the harmoniousness of the “human spirit” was statistically describable.

In a somewhat similar way, the transformation of quantitative growth into a qualitative one was forecast to take place in the cultural sphere. Zvorykin de-

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<sup>33</sup> Zvorykin, 32.

<sup>34</sup> Zvorykin, 32.

<sup>35</sup> Zvorykin, 35.

scribed Soviet cultural development in economic terms of “intensive” and “extensive” development:

[...] for there is, in addition to the intensive aspect of cultural development (creation of cultural values) also the extensive aspect, i.e., the extension of culture and cultural activities to the broad masses. This “extensive” development of culture is of decisive significance for progress, since it is in these conditions that culture becomes a powerful instrument of human activity. At the same time, the “extensive” development of culture lays the foundations for more rapid “intensive”, i.e., qualitative development.<sup>36</sup>

As of the 1960s, the “intensive” development, which increased production by demanding less material investments, was a guiding strategic objective of national and republican economies.<sup>37</sup> Zvorykin’s report, of course, is but one example of many. However, it provided a concentrated sample of the discourse, which used economics to rationalise culture along several lines: administrative (the Ministry of Culture and Education), economic (the state plan) and technological (statistical calculations). This rationalisation of culture was seen as an appropriate thing to do, both internally in the Soviet Union and externally, in its representations abroad. Thus, I suggest that these rationalisations are the manifestation of a broader Soviet mentality of governance of culture by calculation.

Thus far I have argued that Soviet cultural policy was quantitatively constituted by an economic indicator system and statistical prediction, as it had to match the economic logic of centralised planning and accounting. The very existence of the extensive administration of the cultural sector, with its appropriate governmental agencies, testified to the fact that culture was important for the Soviet state. Nevertheless, many people have pointed out that the Soviet state encountered enormous difficulties in its efforts to provide its citizens with even life’s most basic needs.<sup>38</sup> Thus, how was the cultural sector positioned in the structure of priorities of the Soviet economic system? In later chapters I will show that the translation of quantitative development of culture into qualitative development increasingly posed a problem for Soviet cultural policy-makers and operators. The following sub-chapter clarifies the position that cultural organisations

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<sup>36</sup> Zvorykin, 11.

<sup>37</sup> As J. Wilczynski pointed out, “extensive growth is based on the quantitative extension of labour, capital and land engaged in production”. Meanwhile intensive growth “consists in overall increases of productivity, and consequently it depends on technological progress in its broadest sense”. J. Wilczynski, *Technology in Comecon: Acceleration of Technological Progress through Economic Planning and the Market* (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1974), 9. The Lithuanian SSR, for example, achieved intensive production of dairy products and agriculture (generating high productivity from smaller land plots).

<sup>38</sup> János Kornai, *The Socialist System. The Political Economy of Communism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000).

and thus cultural policy occupied in the “priority landscapes” of Soviet planning.<sup>39</sup>

### *Culture as a Service Sector*

As the distinguished Hungarian economist János Kornai has persuasively suggested, the Soviet economy could be characterised by endemic shortages at all levels;<sup>40</sup> however, shortages were greater in some areas than in others. The severity of constraints depended on both official political priorities and unofficial procedural rules. I will go on to show that despite its ideological significance, culture was given a low economic priority, which resulted in under-financing and, in particular, a paucity of sophisticated tools to assist administration.<sup>41</sup>

It has been argued that the needs of the military complex underpinned the structure of Soviet industries.<sup>42</sup> The Cold War followed World War II, and military defence remained the top priority.<sup>43</sup> In turn, the military-industrial complex was first and foremost serviced by heavy industries (“the production of the means of production”), and scientific research, especially the natural sciences, tapped into these top-priority spheres. This type of industry was classified as “Group A”, while the goods for consumer use was known as “Group B”.<sup>44</sup> The Twentieth Party Congress stressed the welfare of the people, but it did not challenge the existing priority system: “Without the prioritised growth of the heavy industry, we cannot assure extensive reproduction in all branches of the national

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<sup>39</sup> I was inspired by the analyses of urban planning from the perspective of the priority system in the Soviet shortage economy, see Michael Gentile and Örjan Sjöberg, “Intra-urban Landscapes of Priority: The Soviet Legacy,” *Europe-Asia Studies* 58, no.5 (July 2006), 701-729.

<sup>40</sup> I refer to shortage economy as defined in János Kornai, *Economics of Shortage, Vol. A-B*. (Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing Company, 1980), 25-29.

<sup>41</sup> On how the Soviet shortage economy contributed towards the ideologisation of the arts, see W. D. Kay, “Toward a Theory of Cultural Policy in Non-Market, Ideological Societies,” *Journal of Cultural Economics* 7, no.2 (December 1983), 1-24, 4. As Kay noted, “faced with the task of balancing off the several high-priority items on their policy agendas, socialist decision-makers are now required to state precisely the nature of the social good that their cultural policy seeks to maximize,” Kay, 1983, 5. A similar argument has been advanced more recently by Yankovskaya, 769-791.

<sup>42</sup> David Holloway, “War, Militarism and the Soviet State,” in *The Soviet Polity in the Modern Era*, eds. E. P. Hoffmann and R. Laird (New York: Aldine Publishing Company, 1984).

<sup>43</sup> Hanson, 30-31. The military production priority, according to Holloway, was embedded in central decisions, the structure of industry and even the attitudes of workers and managers. Thus the same enterprise would be producing much higher quality machinery dedicated to the military alongside its usual rather low-quality production. See Holloway, “War, Militarism and...,” 373; David Holloway, “State, Society, and the Military under Gorbachev,” *International Security* 14, no.3 (Winter 1989-1990), 8-13. My Lithuanian scientist-informants, however, argued that it was easy to establish high-tech industry plants in Lithuania because the work ethic was perceived to be greater than in Russia. Interviews with mathematicians, Tomas and Pranas, December 2005, Vilnius.

<sup>44</sup> See Hanson, 27.

economy; without continuous technical progress, the upward line of the development of productive forces and unswerving growth and labour efficacy, we cannot ensure the invincible productive power of our country and cannot increase the welfare of the people”.<sup>45</sup> As the fields of mathematics, physics (and later cybernetics) became famous for developing technologies that contributed to making the Soviet Union a global superpower,<sup>46</sup> other disciplines sought to affiliate with them. Among the most important reasons for this rapprochement were the relative freedom from ideology and softer resource constraints.<sup>47</sup> A relevant – and witty – point was made by the American scholar Parry, who pointed out that the reason why Soviet physicians were paid much less than engineers was that machines were more valuable than men; hence, the care of machines was better financed.<sup>48</sup>

It must be pointed out that there has never been any officially declared pyramid of Soviet priorities. Therefore, the priority system should be seen as a matter of reconstruction, expressed in terms of financial flows and the perceptions of the agents. In this regard, it was claimed that military defence influenced both Soviet policy language and other systems of representation. The rhetorical militarisation of Soviet public discourses has been studied quite extensively.<sup>49</sup> In Chapter III, I addressed the rhetoric of mobilisation that pervaded the post-World War II Stalinist cultural policy. Here, I would like to point out that military metaphors survived in culture, since they were reinforced by the Cold War. For example, in October 1970, an internal discussion between the LSSR Artists’ Union and the Collegium (*Kolegija*) of the Ministry of Culture about the all-union exhibition “On Leninist Way” took place. In following up critical reviews in the Russian press about the Lithuanian exhibition in Moscow, the LSSR Minister of Culture emphasised the importance of painting, as it was “heavy artillery and determines the level of both national art and each exhibition”.<sup>50</sup> Heavy artillery or not, I argue that, economically, the arts could not be any further away from the military complex because they were economically classified as “service”.

In both Soviet policy discourses and economic structure, “culture” was formulated as “service”. “Culture” was directed to the service of industrial pro-

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<sup>45</sup> See “Apie XX Partijos suvažiavimo išvadas” (1956), LLMA, f. 342, a. 1, b. 6, l. 292. Kazimieras Meškauskas, *Lietuvos ūkis 1940-1990* (Vilnius: 1994), 90.

<sup>46</sup> On Soviet “cult of science” see Paul R. Josephson, “Rockets, Reactors, and Soviet Culture,” in *Science and the Soviet Social Order*, ed. L. R. Graham (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990).

<sup>47</sup> It must be added that after World War II there was nothing comparable with Stalin’s “scientific prisons” under NKVD control.

<sup>48</sup> Parry, 104.

<sup>49</sup> Peter Kenez, *The Birth of the Propaganda State: Soviet Methods of Mass Mobilization, 1917-1929* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

<sup>50</sup> “Lietuvos TSR Dailininkų sąjungos valdybos ir Lietuvos TSR Kultūros ministerijos kolegijos jungtinio posėdžio, įvykusio 1970 m. spalio 6 d. protokolas Nr. 12,” LLMA, f. 342, ap. 1, b. 1984, l. 31.

gress, the ideological advancement of communism and the welfare of the people.<sup>51</sup> The historian Kay argued that the service-oriented notion of culture was rooted in the Leninist interpretation of Marx. According to her, Lunacharsky drew upon Marx's vague idea that artistic production was a part of the general "means of production" and therefore rightly belonged to the "masses". This right of the masses had to be ensured by the state by supporting diverse arts and providing broad access to them, whereas, Kay argued that, according to Socialist Realism, the artwork itself "was the 'property' of the proletariat. Under this scheme, the social responsibility of the artist lies in 'satisfying the owners', that is, producing works that can be immediately accepted by the masses".<sup>52</sup> Here "one of the main factors that contributes to the advancement of artistic creation in a socialist society is a will to meet the growing needs of society in the field of art; this is what artists often call the 'feeling of being useful'."<sup>53</sup> Furthermore, to serve an existing need was not a matter of choice but the duty of a Soviet artist. As a Russian art critic noted in 1979, "Soviet society takes upon itself to care for the material side of artists' lives. In return, artists feel a dual responsibility for the quality of their work: to themselves and to their society".<sup>54</sup>

While the cultural policy discourse of need and service was formulated in Soviet Russia in the 1920s and 1930s, in Lithuania it was introduced together with Stalinist cultural policies and further reinforced by de-Stalinisation in the late 1950s. For example, in the Republic meeting of cultural workers (19-21 August 1954), the cultural workers in the countryside were instructed to "establish close relations with the heads of MTS [machine-tractor stations], find out about the *cultural needs* and demands of MTS workers and employ all possible means to satisfy them".<sup>55</sup> In 1955, the Lithuanian Minister of Culture referred to the republic's cinema theatres as "improved *cultural servicing* of working people" since "during the second five-year period, they ... had 3,000 more screenings than they did during the 1946-1950 period and *serviced* over 4 million spectators".<sup>56</sup> The definition of a village house of culture was that of a service provider: "it is a state enterprise of social purpose, which is entitled to execute the cultural servicing of people who live within the boundaries of a given collective farm" [The italics are mine – E.R.].<sup>57</sup> Following the Twentieth Party

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<sup>51</sup> Apparently, nothing that was "good" could be left unemployed in service of the Soviet Union. For example, one of the earliest books propagating cybernetics stressed in its title that it was "at the service of communism". Aksel' I. Berg, ed., *Cybernetics at the Service of Communism. USSR. Vol.1* (Washington D.C., 1962).

<sup>52</sup> Kay, 9.

<sup>53</sup> Hans Koch, *Cultural Policy in the German Democratic Republic* (Paris: UNESCO Press, 1975), 35 cf Kay, 9. For the articulation of "needs discourse" in fine arts in the 1930s, see also Yankovskaya, 777.

<sup>54</sup> M. Lazarev, "The Organization of Artists' Work in the U.S.S.R.," *Leonardo* 12 (1979), 107-109, 107.

<sup>55</sup> "Respublikinis kultūros darbuotojų pasitarimas," *Tiesa*, 26 August 1954, 2.

<sup>56</sup> "Į naujus laimėjimus kultūrinėje statyboje" (1955), LLMA, f. 342, ap. 1, b. 6, l. 38.

<sup>57</sup> LLMA, f. 342, ap. 1, b. 3645, l. 61.

Congress in 1956, it was officially declared that the basis of the legitimacy of the socialist state was to satisfy the needs of the people: “As Comrade Khrushchev emphasised in his report, we have to guide ourselves not only by comparisons with the last year, but and most importantly, by the continuously growing material and cultural needs”.<sup>58</sup> In the 1970s, a Lithuanian philosopher argued that:

For example, if aesthetic, artistic creativity demands exist in society, it is self-evident that the state has to satisfy them. And not like some kind of a client, but as a mouthpiece of society’s interests. Both the socialist state *and* the artist are subjects of art politics [*politika*]. Therefore, the artist has to feel like an owner, like a conscious mouthpiece of society’s interests, and foster its goals and expectations.<sup>59</sup>

Thus, the state cultural policy was officially formulated neither as an egoistic caprice of the state (not the state but the population was “a client”) nor as an enterprise that would unselectively satisfy any folly. The Soviet government claimed that it had a very clear idea about the good and the bad needs of its population. Stimulating “good cultural needs”, such as socialising with work collectives and folk dancing (but not drinking) or attending the theatre during leisure time, was a way of governing the behaviour of the population.

However, it would be erroneous to think that the Soviet discourse of “culture that satisfies needs” was inflexible. The growth of cultural needs was perceived as an inevitable side effect of better standards of living. It was thus acknowledged that as needs changed, cultural policy had to change too. Not everything was instilled from the top of the cultural administration down to the cultural consumer. Soviet cultural policy makers slowly, but surely responded to some of the changing cultural preferences of the population (to be sure, there were also negative responses). A good example of how difficult it was for Soviet policy-makers to incorporate new, widespread cultural practices into the official discourse of “needs” were the debates about “light music” (pop, jazz, and disco as opposed to other genres, which included among others, “serious” contemporary music or patriotic and folk songs). In his speech at the First Republic’s Congress of Cultural Workers in 1969, the Lithuanian Minister of Culture Šepetys observed that

Light music is not someone’s folly (though this happens sometimes), but first and foremost *a need of our times*; we will not escape it and should not be trying to do so. The time has come to essentially *regulate and satisfy this need* – we must create our own pop music, educate new pop singers and help existing ones. In this respect, the competition *Towers of Vilnius* is positive. Just before the congress, together with the Ministry of Industry

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<sup>58</sup> “Apie XX Partijos suvažiavimo išvadas” (1956), LLMA, f. 342, ap. 1, b. 6, l. 298.

<sup>59</sup> E. Meškauskas, “Menininkas ir valstybė,” *Literatūra ir menas*, 7 October 1978, 4.

and the Union of Lithuanian Consumer Cooperatives [Lietkoopsajunga], which is responsible for many pop and jazz orchestras, we began to search for ways of establishing an organisational economic unit, which would take care of the ideological-artistic level of those collectives.<sup>60</sup> [The italics are mine – E.R.]

This quotation is an excellent illustration of Soviet governmental logic: first, an existing “good need” was identified in the society, in this case “light music”. Then an administrative body that was formally accountable to the existing economic system (“an organisational economic unit”) was to be established. This body would translate “need” into a formal organisation and control it according to predefined artistic and ideological criteria. The cultural process – creating light music – could not be left unsupervised. There was a risk that existing “good” cultural needs, especially those of “light music”, would become “bad” and get out of the hands of the administrators. About twenty years later, another Minister of Culture, Jonas Bielinis, complained:

In recent years, the activity of amateur rock and pop groups has become much more vigorous. [...] We have to soberly and self-critically evaluate this controversial phenomenon. First of all, we must bravely and in a principled way, as is proper for Communists, acknowledge that we have never experienced such a tragically heavy and long-term spiritual loss. It is a result of a neglected aesthetic education. [...] At first glance, it seems that everything is going well: only Lithuanian music is played at rock and pop concerts. Thousands of young people solve the problem of leisure time by learning to play the guitar, keyboard or percussion instruments. Thus, the tens of thousands of teenagers who listen to them are occupied in the evening – hence, no problems. And yet the limiting adoration and interest to only this music genre impoverishes the spiritual world of young people, and eventually they become alienated from real cultural values.<sup>61</sup>

This notion of culture as a service to the population was indelibly inscribed in the Soviet economic priority system. In the Soviet economic model, culture was attributed to a “non-productive” sphere of economics and thus perceived as a sphere for “expenditure” and not “investment”.<sup>62</sup> Despite the declared on-going scientific-technical revolution (which I will address in more detail later) and, with computerisation, a Soviet post-industrialisation,<sup>63</sup> Soviet economists rec-

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<sup>60</sup> Lioginas Šepetyš, report at the First Congress of Republic’s Cultural Workers (2 June 1969) “Už tolimesnį lietuvių tarybinės kultūros suklestėjimą!” LLMA, f. 342, ap.1, b. 1856, l. 43.

<sup>61</sup> Jonas Bielinis, “Saviveiklinė meno kūryba” (1988), LLMA, f. 342, ap. 1, b. 3826, l. 22,23.

<sup>62</sup> Zvorykin.

<sup>63</sup> See Daniel Bell, *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society: A Venture in Social Forecasting* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), on the service economy, Peter F. Drucker, *Post-Capitalist Society*

ognised only material goods as a result of production and subsequently, as an investment.<sup>64</sup>

Thus, culture, attributed to the non-productive sector of service, was a low priority.<sup>65</sup> Quite a few scholars noted signs of this attitude. For example, the issues of culture were rarely addressed in plenums of the CPSU Central Committee. As Mawdsley and White put it, Konstantin Chernenko's 1983 speech about culture and ideology was the first to address these subjects on such a high level in twenty years. The inferiority of culture as "consumption" in relation to industries of "production", as noticed by Thomas F. Remington, was also reflected in the hierarchical valuations of news in Soviet broadcasting and the press.<sup>66</sup>

If culture belonged to a low priority sphere then, according to Kornai, it could not help but face the rather severe restraints of shortage economy.<sup>67</sup> And indeed, I found some evidence to suggest that the economic situation of culture was stable but not particularly good in the Soviet Union. Figure 1 demonstrates that the financing of "cultural and social undertakings" was relatively stable after World War II. Dedicated budget expenditures grew by 10 percent from 1940 to 1960 and then remained at that level. Yet because economic growth in the Soviet Union was steadily declining from 1960 to the late 1980s, in real terms the financing of culture and the social sector was decreasing as well.<sup>68</sup> Only in 1984 was *The Program of Development of Paid Services* passed; this introduced the monetarisation of transactions. For the first time, the returns of the cultural sector to the national budget were studied; the study found that the culture sphere largely paid for itself.<sup>69</sup> These results, however, should be taken with a grain of salt for a number of reasons: because such returns are generally difficult to count, Soviet cultural statistics were far from reliable; this was further complicated by Soviet prices that were generally uninformative, as they were still centrally set by the government in 1984.<sup>70</sup>

Despite the existence of many cultural organisations, the "non-productive" cultural sector did not employ a large share of Lithuania's population. Again, the numbers should be viewed with some scepticism. It is difficult to make more exact estimates because the published statistical data typically pooled together the health sector, social welfare, education and culture. However, it can

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(Oxford: Butterworth Heinemann, 1994). Notably, Drucker debated the definitions of technical progress with Zvorykin. See *Technology and Culture* 2, no.3 (1961), 249-254.

<sup>64</sup> Meškauskas, *Lietuvos ūkis*, 260.

<sup>65</sup> Mawdsley and White, 193.

<sup>66</sup> Thomas Remington, *The Truth of Authority: Ideology and Communication in the Soviet Union* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1988), 120.

<sup>67</sup> Kornai, *Economics of Shortage*.

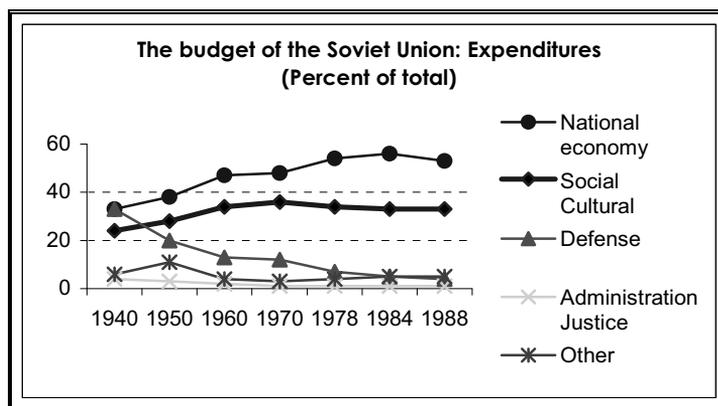
<sup>68</sup> *Lietuvos kultūros politika. Apžvalga* (Vilnius, 1997). For economic decline, see Gregory and Stuart, 208-209; Hanson, 4-5.

<sup>69</sup> *Lietuvos kultūros politika. Apžvalga*.

<sup>70</sup> Soviet prices did not reflect either cost or demand. See Kornai, *The Socialist System*; Hanson, 16-21, 78-9.

be noted that although employment in the cultural sector had grown since 1960, it still made up a rather small part of the national economy (See Figure 2). Many

*Figure 1. The Budget of the Soviet Union: Expenditures*<sup>71</sup>



cultural organisations were fairly small: it was not uncommon for a village club or house of culture to have only two employees. The cultural sector was not a particularly attractive sphere for persons seeking employment. In 1989, the average salary of a cultural worker was 111 to 113 roubles.<sup>72</sup> According to the Lithuanian historian Kąstytis Antanaitis, the salary of those employed in cultural administration and education were 25 to 30 percent lower than the average salary in the country.<sup>73</sup> It must be remembered that the average standard of living in the Soviet Union was quite modest, to put it mildly. Is it any wonder that the LSSR ministers of culture often complained that the students sought employment elsewhere after receiving their degrees in cultural work.<sup>74</sup> In 1985, for example, about 60 percent of the employees in provincial culture houses were under 30 years of age, while almost half of all the employees (43.7 percent) had worked in their workplaces for only three years. The cultural workers often left

<sup>71</sup> The source Gregory and Stuart, 104. The graph represents official data and thus expenditure on defence is grossly misrepresented, see also alternative calculations by Hanson, 32-34. Note that no consensus has yet been achieved on to what extent Soviet economic statistics reflected real growth and whether Soviet economists were aware of their own economic situation. For a brief critical overview of different approaches, see Steven Rosefielde, "The Riddle of Post-war Russian Economic Growth: Statistics Lied and Were Misconstrued," *Europe-Asia Studies* 55, no.3 (2003), 469-481.

<sup>72</sup> "Kada kultūra atgaus prestižą?" *KB* 12 (1989), 4.

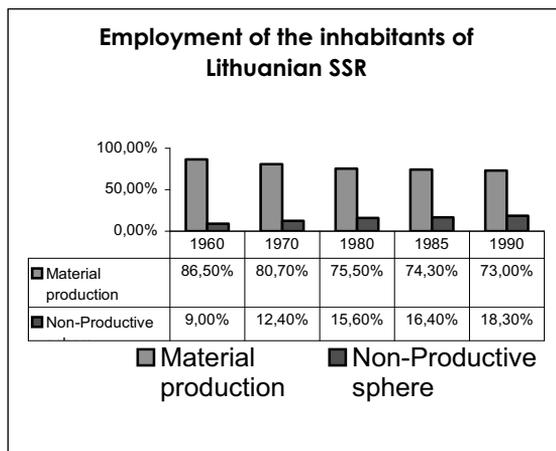
<sup>73</sup> Kąstytis Antanaitis, *Lietuviškoji sovietinė nomenklatūra* (Kaunas: VDU leidykla, 1998), 45. For how Soviet salary policy discriminated against educated professional work, see also Vladimir Shlapentokh, *Soviet Intellectuals and Political Power: The Post-Stalin Era* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990).

<sup>74</sup> A speech (1955), LLMA, f. 342, ap. 1, b. 6, l. 46; a speech (1969), LLMA, f. 342, ap. 1, b. 1856, l. 55-56.

cultural centres to work in trade union clubs (which reportedly involved fewer responsibilities) and industrial enterprises.<sup>75</sup>

Of course, the Soviet cultural operators had their own elite, who enjoyed better working and living conditions. Top artists and most members of creative unions based in cities enjoyed comparatively high standards of living. The standards differed depending on the individual's occupation, position in the Party hierarchy, and profession. On the one hand, the leaders of major cultural

Figure 2. Employment of the Inhabitants of Lithuanian SSR<sup>76</sup>



organisations and creative unions were included in Party nomenklatura, the privileged political class in the Soviet Union, which enjoyed superior standards of living.<sup>77</sup> On the other, the top Party nomenklatura included very few academicians or cultural operators.<sup>78</sup> To achieve the rank of a “professional” cultural intellectual or artist, a person had to be investigated on many levels.<sup>79</sup> However,

<sup>75</sup> A speech (1985), LLMA, f. 342, ap. 1, b. 3645, l. 79-80.

<sup>76</sup> The percent refers to the total of the population. “Non-productive sphere” includes the health sector, social welfare, education and culture. Source: Meškauskas, *Lietuvos ūkis*, 260.

<sup>77</sup> For the Lithuanian nomenklatura, see Antanaitis, 63-65; for the Russian nomenklatura see Mawdsley and White, 256-258, 262-264. Among other facilities, the nomenklatura members had their own cemeteries. In Vilnius one such was Antakalnis cemetery, where many distinguished artists and intellectuals were buried.

<sup>78</sup> The media, science and arts representatives at the CC CPSU made 4 percent in 1939, 11 percent in 1952, 9 percent in 1956, 4 percent in 1966, 7 percent in 1976 and 6 percent in 1986, increasing up to 14 percent in 1990 after Gorbachev's reforms in the Central Committee. Mawdsley and White, 98-99, 171, 205.

<sup>79</sup> As Miller and Yúdice noted, Soviet cultural policy intensively worked towards encouraging professionalism, which became a kind of hegemony. Miller and Yúdice, 110.

even ordinary members of creative unions had a job guaranteed by the state, and were provided facilities for work and leisure and given state commissions.<sup>80</sup>

The situation was different for more “mundane” cultural workers, who were employed in the administration of cultural organisations, especially libraries and houses of culture. There was little chance that ordinary cultural workers would get on the list of the top *nomenklatura* (membership in the local *nomenklatura* was easier to attain but it brought fewer benefits). While they would be excluded from the privileged ranks, the nature of their jobs (the administration of poorly funded organisations) would also prevent them from making more money (whereas artists could earn extra income by selling their works privately, a musician could give part-time private tutorials and so on).<sup>81</sup> For example, in 1989 a choreographer complained that he was promised a dormitory room near his workplace. However, he had to live with his parents, because the room was never allocated. A music teacher from a village school painfully observed that “a cultural worker is a second-rate man, a piece of rubbish that would be kicked and even spat on by passers-by. I expected that I would raise the level of culture in the district and help it grow. I invested a great deal of effort in it, until I understood that in this sphere the quality of your work has no relationship whatsoever to social prestige. An agronomist receives everything once he completes his education: a house, a good salary, a car, everyone’s respect”. According to the musician, poor working and living conditions even lead to alcoholism or suicide among the cultural workers in the province.<sup>82</sup>

The shortages and centralised barter economy gave rise to widespread informality in the Soviet Union.<sup>83</sup> However, the issues related to an informal economy in the Soviet cultural sector have still not become the subject of very much research. To mention just one example, the private collecting, buying and selling of works of art and antiques was quite widespread. The phenomenon was judged in the harshest terms by the Soviet officials, not only because of the financial profit from this illegal trade, but also of the “privatisation” of culture, which went against the ideological principle of *narodnost*’ or “access to the people”. For instance, in 1987, the LSSR Minister of Culture complained that many of the “works of art were hidden from society in ‘home museums’ and, unfortunately, often turned into objects of commerce, sources of income that were not derived from work”.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> For a detailed account about the formation of artists’ employment in pre-World War II Soviet Russia, see Yankovskaya, 769-791.

<sup>81</sup> I base my interpretation of the position of cultural workers in Soviet party nomenclature on the only Lithuanian study of LCP nomenclature on Antanaitis.

<sup>82</sup> Asta Andrikonytė, “Nieko naujo,” KB 9 (1989), 44.

<sup>83</sup> Kornai, *The Socialist System*, 85-86; Alena V. Ledeneva, *How Russia Really Works: The Informal Practices That Shaped Post-Soviet Politics and Business* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2006).

<sup>84</sup> Jonas Bielinis (3 April 1978), LLMA, f. 342, ap. 1, b. 3771, l. 15.

## *The Material Base of Culture*

Finally, I would like to consider another important indicator of culture's position in the economic priority scheme, namely, the contents of the widely used notion known as "a material base of culture". Throughout my study of this period, I have encountered endless calls for "improving a material base of culture" in the ministers' speeches and articles in the press. Now, in Soviet policy terminology, "material base" could mean virtually anything that had to be "externally" provided for cultural operators (except for financing). Thus, a material base of culture was the primary concern of Gosplan's planning. The archived documents of the LSSR Ministry of Culture provide a wealth of material about the codifications of the "material base" of culture from the 1960s to the 1980s.

Significantly, I discovered that the contents of such codifications did not change much during that period. A typical project, submitted to the All-Union Council of Ministers in 1965, states that the notion of a "material base" included, first and foremost, buildings. The construction of buildings was grouped in accounting forms under "capital investment" and was one of the most pressing tasks of the Ministry. Staff positions were also part of the material base and were codified as "cadres". Curiously, "organisation" itself was conceptualised as material: the base included "a network of organisations"; its "denseness and evenness" was particularly important. Consequently, other issues were also associated with the material base: in the case of buildings – "maintenance and renovation"; in the case of cadres – "the welfare of staff", particularly housing, while organisations were to be provided with "technical equipment", such as libraries on the wheels, furniture, machines for amusement parks, equipment for performances, and music instruments.<sup>85</sup>

Thus, the notion of "a material base" also included non-material objects, such as administration ("the network of organisations") and work positions ("cadres"). While many of the cultural organisations' buildings lacked adequate furniture, administration was even more neglected when it came to the latest technology. Even in the plans, computer or general information technology never made their way to the notion of "a material base of culture". I believe that this can be regarded as another eloquent indication of the low priority given to cultural policy, as well as of the general limitations of Soviet post-industrialisation. Only in the 1990s, after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, did the public libraries see the materialisation of "informatisation", "cybernetisation" and "computerisation" campaigns. (However, it is important to note that the scientific libraries, with restricted access, were better equipped.)

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<sup>85</sup> The All-Union Ministers Council (project) "On the means of assistance for widening and strengthening the material-technical basis of culture's enterprises," LLMA, f. 342, ap. 1, b. 1432, l. 90-93. Notably, communication and computer technologies were not included in the list.

## Conclusion

This chapter argued that Soviet culture was economically rationalised as a calculable sphere of services. It was seen as consisting of organisations, objects and practices, all of which could be counted and had to be accounted for. The central planning organs needed a lot of information, which was codified with economic indicators of culture. Cultural policy was intended to serve the needs of the population, but the needs to be serviced were selectively chosen and often insufficiently addressed. It is true that the Soviet government established a very extensive administrative network of cultural organisations, but they could hardly be seen as thriving in the context of the shortage-ridden economy and the low priority given to the cultural sector. Though the work of cultural organisations was officially appraised, statistically codified and internationally displayed as proof of Soviet progress, in reality, cultural workers had to cope with their lower than average salaries and chronically insufficient provisions with a material base.

Many scholars have noted that the Soviet ambition to centrally plan and administer the entire economy posed nearly insurmountable problems. One of the major problems had to do with information about the demand, in market economies, obtained from prices. Soviet economic planning has been much criticised as crude and insufficient, unassisted by the latest technology, executed with little regard for local conditions, and ultimately jeopardised by the lack of incentives.<sup>86</sup> The economic decline that began in the late 1960s and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 were presented as the ultimate proof of the fallacies in this approach.<sup>87</sup> Soviet agents themselves acknowledged the problems and attempted to solve them with the help of new science and technology, as well as new modes of management. Yet to limit the ambition of governing at that scale, including culture, to leave, as one minister of culture put it, cultural development to “elemental, self-driving” forces,<sup>88</sup> was nearly unthinkable.

Better governance and better machines were considered important elements in the Soviet Union’s quest for progress. With de-Stalinisation, good management, assisted by new technology, came to be perceived as the tools for rejuvenating the Soviet economy. As Brezhnev put it in 1970, “the science of victory [in building socialism] is, in essence, the science of management”.<sup>89</sup> This language of economic rationalisation of the cultural sector facilitated, and

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<sup>86</sup> It was argued that “Gosplan officials” could not “make 1% of the calculations needed to balance the plan,” Michael Ellman, *Soviet Planning Today* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 68 cf Conyngham, *The Modernisation of Soviet Industrial Management*, 26; see also John P. Hardt, Marvin Hoffenberg, Norman Kaplan, Herbert S. Levine, eds., *Mathematics and Computers in Soviet Economic Planning* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1967); Hanson; Misiunas and Taagepera, 188.

<sup>87</sup> Stephen Kotkin, *Armagedon Averted: The Soviet Collapse 1970-2000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), Andres Aslund, *Struggle for Economic Reform* (Ithaca, NY.: Cornell University Press, 1991); Hanson; Rosefield.

<sup>88</sup> The speech of LSSR minister of culture (1969), LLMA, f. 342, ap. 1, b. 1856, l. 49.

<sup>89</sup> *Pravda*, 13 June 1970, cf Cocks, 229.

moreover called for, its translation into the new cybernetic terms of technoscientifically assisted governance. In 1967, the LSSR State Plan stated that “a more perfect system of norms, mathematical methods and electronic computing technology should be introduced into the management and planning of production as quickly as possible”.<sup>90</sup> The next chapter examines how this process of calculation and circulation became an object of management theories, underpinned by a “system-cybernetic approach” and assisted by computer technology.

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<sup>90</sup> LTSR MT nutarimas N. 433 (5 October 1967), LLMA, f. 342, ap.1, b. 1736, l. 4.

## V. Cybernetic Management: Setting the Preconditions for the Scientific Governance of Culture

In January 1990, the first officially declared intention to establish an automated management system (AMS) for LSSR Ministry of Culture appeared in the Ministry's internal plan. Ironically, the suggestion for the ministry occurred barely three months before Lithuania's government declared the country's independence from the Soviet Union.<sup>1</sup> The late date of the suggestion testifies to the low priority given to the cultural sector in the Soviet hierarchy of distributing "the material base". As I showed in the previous chapter, culture was not highly prioritised by the Soviet economic planners. Sophisticated computer technology, not to mention computers, was expensive and reserved only for the most prioritised spheres. The Ministry of Culture did not even have appropriate copying technology.<sup>2</sup>

The plan approved in 1990, however, does not provide sufficient grounds for speculating about the purpose of the ministry's AMS. However, it gives us a significant hint that the ministry *wanted* to have an AMS. On the one hand, this suggestion for an AMS was clearly a part of a chain of decisions to computerise the cultural sector with an automated system for cultural monuments and automated workplaces).<sup>3</sup> On the other, the suggested AMS indicated a broader mentality of governance. I will now show how this mentality was formulated in relation to industrial management and then later extended to the governance of society and culture.

This chapter reconstructs the way in which Soviet cybernetic management was assembled as intellectual and material machinery of governance. I have

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<sup>1</sup> An appendix to the decision N.3 by the Collegium of the LSSR Ministry of Culture, "Lietuvos TSR kultūros ministerijos 1990 metų pagrindinių darbų planas" (4 January 1990), LLMA, f. 342, ap. 1, b. 3915, l. 13.

<sup>2</sup> One archive employee recalled that in order to make a copy for an archive it was necessary to travel to the National Library, which was located a couple of kilometres from the Ministry's building. Unrecorded conversation, Vilnius, December 2007.

<sup>3</sup> The archive contained documents which revealed another suggestion to design "automated systems for cultural monuments" (Decree 29, 26 January 1989). In September of the same year introducing computer technology into governmental organisations was for the first time included as in the state plan. The plan indicators contained "automated systems" and "automated workplaces". LLMA, f. 342, ap.1, b. 3882, l. 41; LSSR State Plan Committee, "Raštas su pridėtais rodikliais Nr. 1/9-3105" (8 September 1989), LLMA, f. 342, ap. 1, b. 3891, l. 5.

already shown how the occupational regime introduced an extensive, centralised state administration of culture in Lithuania. Further, in the previous chapter, I demonstrated that, in the eyes of the Soviet state, “culture” was formulated as an economic sphere. Subsumed to the logic of economy (and chronic economising), Soviet cultural policy-making was an inherent part of calculation-based governance. In this chapter, I will explicate in greater detail how calculation-based governance was upgraded with the new cybernetic machinery, both as a thought and as a technique.

The process of techno-scientific innovation in governance will be conceptualised as translation: the chapter explores how the principles of cybernetic control were *translated* in management theory in Soviet Lithuania. The concept of translation is used to emphasise that neither cybernetic principles nor vocabulary was taken in a straightforward manner from the context of origin and transported to other discourses and organisational practices. The transfer of cybernetic theory and technologies (predominantly computers) featured multiple and mutual adjustments, during the course of which new meanings were produced. This is precisely why I use the term “translation” and not simply “influence” or “transfer” to capture the complexity of this process.

This chapter also addresses the consequences of this translation to the Soviet political regime, while other chapters will consider its cultural consequences. Consideration of the influence of cybernetics and systems theory on management in the context of transforming Soviet authoritarianism is already part of tradition. Since the 1970s, the influence of systems theory and cybernetics on Soviet managerial thought has been investigated by quite a few Western scholars, including Conyngham, Holloway, Hoffmann, Beissinger and Vidmer.<sup>4</sup> Acknowledging that an enormous discursive shift towards cybernetics and systems theory took place in Soviet managerial thought in the early 1960s, these researchers wondered whether this new techno-scientific development would entail a deeper transformation of the Soviet administration and even politics. The expected transformations ranged from improved economic performance and military strength, achieved by better and faster calculations, to the de-ideologisation of the very process of governance, as the information would circulate back and forth more freely and on a horizontal level. Yet it was con-

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<sup>4</sup> Cocks; David Holloway, “The Political Use of Scientific Models: The Cybernetic Model of Government in Soviet Social Science,” in *The Use of Models in the Social Sciences*, ed. Lyndhurst Collins (Boulder: Westview Press, 1976); Erik P. Hoffmann, “The ‘Scientific Management’ of Soviet Society,” *Problems of Communism* (May-June 1977); William J. Conyngham, “Technology and Decision Making: Some Aspects of the Development of OGAS,” *Slavic Review* 39, no.3 (1980); Richard F. Vidmer, “Soviet Studies of Organization and Management: A ‘Jungle’ of Competing Views,” *Slavic Review* 40, no.3 (1981); Erik P. Hoffmann, “Soviet Perspectives on Leadership and Administration,” in *The Soviet Polity in the Modern Era*, eds. E. P. Hoffmann and R. F. Laird (New York: Aldine Publishing Company, 1984); Hoffmann and Laird, *Technocratic Socialism*; Beissinger; Gerovitch, *From Newspeak to Cyberspeak*. See also Graham, *Science, Philosophy, and ...*; D.A. Pospelov and Ya.I. Fet, eds., *Ocherki istorii informatiki v Rossii* (Novosibirsk: Nauchno-izdatelskii tsentr OIGGM SO RAN, 1998).

cluded that the concrete applications of a system-cybernetic approach were only successful in the Soviet military sector. In practice, they largely failed to reconfigure the economic and political spheres.<sup>5</sup>

This chapter contributes to this argument by specifying how the system-cybernetic approach adjusted to both theory and practice of management in Lithuanian SSR. I will show that the Soviet translations of management into the terms of systems theory and cybernetics featured securitisation with regard to the external environment. Cybernetic emphasis on self-regulation was combined with an authoritarian emphasis on coercion. I found that the process of translating a system-cybernetic approach into Soviet management theory went rather smoothly. The potential “liberalising” qualities of techno-science were neutralised and adjusted to the needs of the centralised authoritarian Soviet government. However, I will also show that, in practice, the technical cybernetic applications (AMS) worked as critical devices, since they exposed the officially suppressed informality of the Soviet economy.

I will begin with a brief outline of the main ideas of Wiener’s cybernetics. I will then present an overview of the institutionalisation of cybernetics and management science in Soviet Lithuania. This will be followed by a discussion of how cybernetic control and computers came to figure in management theory, which also revealed a strong Russian legacy in the Lithuanian context. The analysis will be complemented with examples of concrete projects, which involved the installation of automated control or management systems (AMS). This will allow me to evaluate the practical implementation of the principles of cybernetic control. This discussion is necessary in order to appreciate the complexity of the cultural debates that will be addressed in the following chapters.

### *Cybernetics*

This section briefly outlines the principles of cybernetics and presents its introduction into the Soviet Union and Lithuanian SSR. My thesis is less concerned with the development of cybernetics as a scientific discipline than with the ways in which cybernetic ideas and machinery contributed to formulating an understanding of knowability and governability. Therefore, this sub-chapter is limited to some background historical data about the pioneering scholars and the first institutions that engaged in cybernetics and related disciplines; unfortunately, it cannot do justice to the complexity of the history of Lithuanian cybernetics.

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<sup>5</sup> But not only the Soviet political regime was expected react to the techno-scientific innovations. Fischer has argued that similar expectations were also posed towards system-cybernetic steering in Western democracies. Technical rationality and especially its emphasis on self-regulation was contrasted to irrational personal violence, arbitrary coercion of the state, and the uncontrollability of war. Fischer.

a) A Note on “*upravlenie*” and “*valdymas*”

Before I proceed any further, I must clarify the linguistic translation of some key terms. This chapter deals with a subject area that usually operates with English terms, such as management, governance and control. My sources featured many linguistic translations: from one scientific domain to another, from English to Russian and Lithuanian. In turn, my own writing involves translating back to English. In Soviet scholarly and public discourses, Wiener’s “control” was translated as *upravlenie* (Russian) or *valdymas* (Lithuanian).<sup>6</sup> To translate these words back into English is a complicated task because in their original languages, both *upravlenie* and *valdymas* mean management or governance. In fact, a more precise translation of “control” in both languages would be *kontrol’* (Russian) and *kontrolė* (Lithuanian), but this did not occur. As Gerovitch convincingly argued, the choice to translate “control” into *upravlenie* already expressed a particular interpretation of the science of cybernetics itself: as broadly defined governance.<sup>7</sup>

Notably, there was consistency between the Russian word *upravlenie*, which could be quite adequately translated into the Lithuanian word *valdymas*, even though the etymology of the words is different. The root of *upravlenie* refers to *prav,o* which means both “a right” and “a law”. *Pravo* is also related to *pravil’no* or “correct” or “truthful”. The words *pravit* or *upravliat* suggest an act of correction, which brings us back to truthfulness. The meaning of the Russian *upravlenie* does imply a regulation that aims at correction on the basis of preset “truth measures”. This is why it is a rather good translation of Wiener’s concept of feedback-based control, whilst it transgresses the more narrow meaning of the English word “control”. Unlike *upravlenie*, the Lithuanian *valdymas* does not imply an act of correction or control by supervision.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, in the Soviet Union, both *upravlenie* and *valdymas* were used to translate the Western term “management”. However, in the Lithuania of the 1920s and 1930s, an American-Lithuanian theoretician Graicunas suggested the Lithuanian word *vadyba* as a translation of “management”. The word *vadyba* was derived from the word *vadas* or a leader and meant “leadership”. Thus, Graicunas’s term reflected his own understanding of management: he specialised in human relations and leadership in organisations. *Vadyba* was not used during the Soviet period, but was revived after 1990. At the same time, in Russia, “management”

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<sup>6</sup> Wiener’s *Cybernetics: Or Control and Communication in the Animal and the Machine* was translated in Russian as *Kibernetika, ili upravlenie i sviaz’ v zhitovnom i mashine* (Moscow, Nauka, 1983).

<sup>7</sup> Slava Gerovitch, “Striving for ‘Optimal Control’: Soviet Cybernetics as a ‘Science of Government’,” in *Cultures of Control*, ed. M. R. Levin (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic, 2000).

<sup>8</sup> In the respective languages, both words differently relate to the word “a state”. The Lithuanian word for “governance” (*valdymas*) is directly related to “a state” (*valstybė*) and “a government” (*valdžia*). In other words, in Lithuanian “a state” is something which is “governed”, when both are related to “a will”. Whilst in the Russian language “governance” (*upravlenie*) is related to “a government” (*pravitel’sтво*), but not “a state” (*gosudarstvo*).

came to be transcribed as *menedzhment*, whereas *upravlenie* remained in use and denoted the governance of larger sectors or policy-making. A similar distinction could be traced in Lithuanian (*vadyba* as management and *valdymas* as governance).

To conclude, there is no straightforward way to translate either the Soviet Russian word *upravlenie* or the Lithuanian word *valdymas* into English. These words were translated as “control” in technical texts, especially those related to computers, but as “management” or “governance” in texts that dealt with politics and economics.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, I will use control, management and governance depending on the contexts. In order to make my choice more visible, I will indicate the original word in brackets.

### b) From American to Soviet Cybernetics

Founded in the American military sector during World War II and dedicated to the improvement of machines for extermination, cybernetics, the science of communication and control, was extended to civil applications, attributed with liberal humanist values, and used by various academic disciplines. The term “cybernetics” was coined by the American mathematician Norbert Wiener (1894-1964) in his *Cybernetics: Or Control and Communication in the Animal and the Machine* (1948).<sup>10</sup> The term was derived from the Greek word *kubernētēs* or “steersman”. The choice of the word was not accidental.<sup>11</sup> It referred to the control of an object that was self-regulating and whose behaviour was not limited to causal determination.

Cybernetics as a science of control developed out of efforts to improve the servo-mechanisms<sup>12</sup> of anti-aircraft defence. The task was to calculate and predict the future position of a plane, target it and launch a missile. The speed of a

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<sup>9</sup> For example, in an official translation done in Moscow, 1974, as it stated that: “Cybernetics affords a striking example of links between many sciences. It deals with the theory of *management* in various fields [...] science is penetrating every field of government and economic *management*. The Communist Party, the leading force in the state and society, puts the *management* of social processes on a sound scientific foundation” [The italics are mine – E.R.]. *USSR. Scientific and Technical Revolution* (Moscow: Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, 1973), 10.

<sup>10</sup> The life and work of Wiener had been depicted in two main biographies. See a more journalistic account Flo Conway and Jim Siegelman, *Dark Hero of the Information Age: In Search of Norbert Wiener, The Father of Cybernetics* (New York: Basic Books, 2005); and the more academically focused Rustom P. Masani, *Norbert Wiener 1894-1964* (Basel, Boston, Berlin: Birkhäuser Verlag, 1990).

<sup>11</sup> French cybernetician George Guilbaud pointed out that the term *kybernētikē*, the art of steersmanship was used by Plato in the *Gorgias* and André-Marie Ampère who, in the *Essay on the Philosophy of the Sciences* (1834) translated *kybernētikē* into *cybernétique*, designating the means of civil government. The term was recognised by Larousse but not used until Wiener’s publication in French (1948). George T. Guilbaud, *What Is Cybernetics?* (New York: Grove Press Inc., 1960), 2.

<sup>12</sup> A servomechanism is “an electric or hydraulic motor that, with the addition of a feedback loop, is able to precisely hold and control its position”. Mindell, Segal, Gerovitch, 69.

plane and the range of its manoeuvres implied that these actions could not be performed by a human being. These technological challenges were met by creating servo-mechanisms, which were complex automatic electromechanical machines that interacted with the environment. The trajectories were predicted by rapid calculations and the action was steered by transmitting electronic signals. These were automatic, self-steering machines, which guided their actions on the basis of information feedback loops. In order to take in the information, these “cybernetic machines” were equipped with sensors (radar).<sup>13</sup>

The design and construction of war machines led to a rethinking of the nature of control on other systems besides electronic ones. At the Josiah Macy Foundation’s interdisciplinary conferences in New York in the 1940s,<sup>14</sup> the influence of cybernetics theory expanded beyond military engineering.<sup>15</sup> In the Macy meetings, cybernetics was discussed among leading American social and natural scientists, such as W. Ross Ashby, Roman Jacobsson, Charles Morris, Gregory Bateson, Paul Lazarsfeld, Talcott Parsons and Margaret Mead. It had important ramifications in the social, economic and political sciences,<sup>16</sup> since the principles of the theory made sense even if the mathematical expression was bypassed.<sup>17</sup> Along with information theory (Claude Shannon) and General Systems Theory (Ludwig von Bertalanffy), cybernetics provided important conceptual tools for social science, for example, feedback, information, codes and

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<sup>13</sup> Wiener listed the following sensors: photoelectric cells and other receptors for light, radar systems receiving Hertzian waves, hydrogenion-potential recorders (for “tasting”), thermometers, pressure gauges and microphones. The sensors send the information to receptors, which further issue a command to effectors. The received information may be delayed for a time; such delayed information constitutes memory. Norbert Wiener, *Cybernetics: or Control and Communication in the Animal and the Machine* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1965), 42, 43.

<sup>14</sup> Steve Joshua Heims, *The Cybernetics Group* (Cambridge and London: The MIT Press, 1991); Steve Joshua Heims, *John von Neumann and Norbert Wiener: From Mathematics to the Technologies of Life and Death* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1980); Conway and Siegelman.

<sup>15</sup> Hayles; Mindell, Segal, Gerovitch, 67.

<sup>16</sup> Most famously, Karl W. Deutsch, *The Nerves of Government. Models of Political Communication and Control* (New York: Free Press, 1966). Speaking of art, the culmination was a large exhibition *Cybernetic Serendipity* at the Institute for Contemporary Art, London, 1968. The exhibition involved 325 participants and attracted about 60,000 visitors. Focused on art and creativity as cybernetically defined processes, it laid the ground for the concept of an interactive museum. Jasia Reichardt, “Cybernetics, Art and Ideas,” in *Cybernetic Serendipity*, ed. J. Reichardt (London: Studio Vista, 1971); Barry, 136-137.

<sup>17</sup> Mainly in the 1960s, many popular introductions to cybernetics were published, though most often by specialist presses. See, for example, Ross W. Ashby, *An Introduction to Cybernetics* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1956); F. H. George, *Automation, Cybernetics and Society* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1959); George T. Guilbaud, *What Is Cybernetics?* (New York: Grove Press Inc., 1960); Gordon Pask, *An Approach to Cybernetics* (London: A Radius Book/Hatchinson, 1961); D.A. Bell, *Intelligent Machines. An Introduction to Cybernetics* (London: Sir Isaac Pitman and Sons Ltd., 1962); Ralph Parkman, *The Cybernetic Society* (New York: Pergamon Press Inc., 1972); A. F.G. Hanken, *Cybernetics and Society: An Analysis of Social Systems* (Kent: Abacus Press, 1981); even translated from Russian, Viktor M. Glushkov, *Introduction to Cybernetics* (New York and London: Academic Press, 1966).

communication.<sup>18</sup> It is important to note that cybernetics was not alone in developing these concepts. As Mindell pointed out, beginning in the 1950s, several disciplines (cybernetics, operations research, general systems theory, systems analysis and systems dynamics) shared the world view of flows, feedback and interactions.<sup>19</sup>

Wiener worked closely with biologists (Arturo Rosenblueth) and physicists (Julian Bigelow). They produced a theory of the workings of the brain as a circular process and coined the concept of purposeful or “teleological behaviour”. Teleological behaviour was defined as feedback-controlled, goal-seeking behaviour. It must be emphasised that causal determinism is largely irrelevant for constructing or understanding such behaviour: it was seen as being less determined by causes and more guided by predictions.<sup>20</sup> Wiener also advanced the development of statistics by introducing calculations to smooth the time series, which made it possible to predict future behaviour on the basis of statistical accounts of its past. Though Wiener himself was quite sceptical about the quality of social statistics, his discovery was instrumental for the forecasting of social and political trends, as well as risk management.<sup>21</sup> In this way the calculations made possible by electronic engineering made feedback applicable to wider governance or policy-making.<sup>22</sup>

Even more influential were the conceptual principles of cybernetics, which concerned the notions of order and the transmission of information. Wiener defined information as a “content” of exchanged messages, the goal of which was to increase order. He argued that “the amount of information in a system is the measure of its degree of organisation”.<sup>23</sup> In Wiener’s cybernetics informa-

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<sup>18</sup> Charles R. Dechert, “The Development of Cybernetics,” in *The Social Impact of Cybernetics*, ed. Ch. R. Dechert (Notre Dame and London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1966), 34; Rose, 1974, 78; Armand Mattelart and Michèle Mattelart, *Theories of Communication. A Short Introduction* (London: Sage, 1998). Lash, however, defined cybernetic information systems as external to humans, or “forms of life at a distance”. Scott Lash, *Critique of Information* (London: Sage, 2002), 15-16.

<sup>19</sup> David A. Mindell, “Bodies, Ideas, and Dynamics: Historical Perspectives on Systems Thinking in Engineering.” In *MIT Working Paper Series*, ESD-WP-2003-01.23, 23 January 2003, <<http://esd.mit.edu/wps/2003.htm>> (5 May 2008), 17.

<sup>20</sup> Arturo N. Rosenblueth, Norbert Wiener and Julian Bigelow, “Behavior, Purpose, and Teleology,” *Philosophy of Science* 10 (1943), 23, 24.

<sup>21</sup> He argued that for a “good statistics of society” long runs were needed “under essentially constant conditions,” which is hard to achieve. On the other hand comparing the statistics of society with that of gas, he insisted on the need to know “the main elements of the dynamics of the situation” in order to define a smaller sample. Wiener, *Cybernetics*, 25.

<sup>22</sup> As Wiener put it, “such a policy-feedback may ... appear to be what we know under one aspect as a conditioned reflex, and under another as learning,” Norbert Wiener, *The Human Use of Human Beings: Cybernetics and Society* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1954), 33, 38. This idea was more developed by Ashby who conceptualised a random formation of order and its stabilisation on the ground of learning. This influenced development of the ideas of “learning organisation” and entire societies.

<sup>23</sup> Wiener, *Cybernetics*, 11.

tion was the opposite of noise. Further, cybernetics would acquire a nearly philosophical status and mission, since Wiener saw it as

[The] theory of the message among men, machines, and in society as a sequence of events in time, which [...] strives to hold back nature's tendency towards disorder by adjusting its parts to various purposive needs.<sup>24</sup>

The control processes based on the transmission of information, Wiener argued, were featured in machines, organisms and human beings, as long as they were seen as purposively behaving systems.<sup>25</sup> Together with the centrality of feedback, Wiener's theory contributed to seeing control as dialogue or the exchange between the external environment and several levels of feedback mechanisms. Openness, free flows of information were necessary for the proper functioning of such machines (or systems). Drawing on that, Wiener argued that cybernetic technology is particularly suited to a "liberal humanist subject".<sup>26</sup> Whilst Wiener acknowledged that large, complex communities, for example, ants and human beings, had the potential for self-regulation through feedback, he warned that social self-regulation did not necessarily result in homeostasis or a state of equilibrium. Quite the opposite – he argued that societal self-regulation tended to result in non-desired states, which essentially lack equilibrium, such as the tendency to shape monopolies in the market. However, this is the case of large-scale societies. Wiener held that very small communities were more likely to have "a very considerable measure of homeostasis".<sup>27</sup>

Thus, according to Wiener, scale had an important effect on a type of control. As he argued, in astronomy the observer is rather alienated from the observed, because human beings and their instruments have very little energy to influence the planets. Meanwhile, physics has to deal with very small particles, and there the observer's influence on the observed is unavoidable. The biggest problem for this type of influence emerges in the social sciences, when an observer and an observed are of a very similar scale. Ultimately, Wiener believed more in the value of "the narrative method of the professional historian" than in

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<sup>24</sup> Wiener, *The Human Use...*, 27.

<sup>25</sup> It has to be noted that Wiener did not identify language with the transmission of information. Wiener understood language as a field of order confronted with nature defined in Einsteinian terms, but also as a game in public debate: "language may strive simply against nature's tendency to confuse it or against wilful human attempts to subvert its meaning. Normal communicative discourse, whose major opponent is the entropic tendency of nature itself, is not confronted by an active enemy, conscious of its own purposes. Forensic discourse... encounters a much more formidable opposition, whose conscious aim is to qualify and even to destroy its meaning". Wiener, *The Human Use...*, 93.

<sup>26</sup> Wiener was reserved about using cybernetic control for governing society. See Wiener *The Human Use...*, 15-16. For Wiener's "reconciling cybernetics with a liberal humanist subject" see Hayles, 92.

<sup>27</sup> Wiener, *Cybernetics*, 158-160.

predictive social science based on “short statistical runs”.<sup>28</sup> It is simply curious that the history of Soviet cybernetics featured such a dramatic narrative.

Whilst cybernetics was greeted as a scientific breakthrough in both the United States and Western Europe in the early 1950s, in the Soviet Union, cybernetics was criticised and prohibited as a “reactionary bourgeois” “pseudo-science”.<sup>29</sup> Why did the Soviet authorities refuse to appreciate the new science of communication and control? Many reasons lie behind this lack of appreciation; some were ideological, since Wiener defined “information” neither as matter nor energy, which contradicted Marxism-Leninism, whilst other were geopolitical, as the Cold War intensified since 1948.<sup>30</sup> Revisionist historiography convincingly pointed out that the banishment of cybernetics was a result not only of central organs, but also of internal institutional competition among Soviet scientists.<sup>31</sup> Particularly damaging to cybernetics was its intellectual affiliation with genetics. In the Soviet Union, genetics was attacked as “unscientific, idealistic, metaphysical, reactionary, scholastic, feeble and sterile” by Trofim Lysenko, with the editorial support of Stalin (July 1948). Similarly, relativity theory, quantum mechanics and other theories from Western social and natural science, for example, structuralism and comparative historical linguistics, were declared to be erroneous and not to be applied in Soviet scholarship.<sup>32</sup>

It took a good deal of effort on the part of Soviet Russian mathematicians and physicists, mainly those employed in the military sector, to reinstate the scientific status of cybernetics.<sup>33</sup> The Western debates about the political implications of a “system cybernetic approach” were of little help here. For example, in spite of its assumed neutrality, the systems theory was hailed in the West as a harbinger of “the death of ideology”.<sup>34</sup> However, this is why it was initially received with scepticism in the Soviet Russia.<sup>35</sup> The rehabilitation of cybernet-

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<sup>28</sup> Wiener, *Cybernetics*, 162-164.

<sup>29</sup> The first public criticism of Wiener appeared in the Soviet press in May 1950. In 1953 an article by Materialist in *Issues of Philosophy* (Voprosy filosofii) criticised cybernetics on theoretical Marxist-Leninist grounds. In 1954 cybernetics was called a “reactionary pseudo-science” in the *Short Philosophical Dictionary*, an important ideological reference book. See Materialist, “Komu sluzhit kibernetika” (1953), in *Ocherki istorii informatiki v Rossii*, eds. D.A. Pospelov and Ya.I. Fet (Novosibirsk: Nauchno-izdatel'skii tsentr OIGGM SO RAN, 1998). Gerovitch related the flow of the attacks to Soviet foreign policy in response to the formation of NATO in 1949. Gerovitch, *From Newspeak to Cyberspeak*, 118-119, 125.

<sup>30</sup> Wiener stated that “information is information, not matter or energy. No materialism which does not admit this can survive at the present day”. Wiener, *Cybernetics*, 132.

<sup>31</sup> Gerovitch, *From Newspeak to Cyberspeak*.

<sup>32</sup> Gerovitch, *From Newspeak to Cyberspeak*, 17, 19, 40. Even sociology was considered to be dangerous. Elizabeth Weinberg, *The Development of Sociology in the Soviet Union* (London and Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974).

<sup>33</sup> This process started in 1954-1955. The main initiators were mathematician Aleksei Liapunov (1911-1933), the chief mathematician of the Soviet atomic project Sergei Sobolev (1908-1989) and the deputy head of Computation Centre 1 of the Ministry of Defence Anatolii Kitov. Gerovitch, *From Newspeak to Cyberspeak*, 167, 174, 175, 176.

<sup>34</sup> Fischer; also Holmqvist.

<sup>35</sup> Susiluoto.

ics began well after Stalin's death in 1955 and was reinforced by the construction of the first computer in the Soviet Union.<sup>36</sup> The year 1958 saw the appearance of the term "cybernetics" in *Bol'shaia Sovetskaia Entsiklopedia*, as well as of the Russian translation of Norbert Wiener's *The Human Use of Human Beings*.<sup>37</sup> It was almost symbolic that the rehabilitation of cybernetics, a science of communication and control, coincided with de-Stalinisation. Moreover, it seemed that the Soviets invested much more hope in this new science of communication and control than did their Western counterparts.<sup>38</sup> It came to be seen as a panacea for the economic and social problems of governance.

In *The Communist Manifesto*, Marx and Engels wrote that a "bourgeois culture" did nothing but mould working people to "act as a machine", a cog in industrial production.<sup>39</sup> Wiener's cybernetics made it possible to create both a new type of machine and to re-think a relationship between human beings and culture as a nexus of control and communication in a new way.<sup>40</sup> The rehabilitation of cybernetics in the Soviet Union was a step towards a more complex approach to the relationship among state governance, human beings, machines and, in my case, culture. I will now briefly present the development of cybernetics in Lithuania.

### c) *From Moscow to Vilnius: The Beginnings of Soviet Lithuanian Cybernetics*

The route that cybernetics took into Lithuania was rooted in the Soviet academic centres in Moscow, Leningrad and Kiev. With its notorious prohibition in 1948 and its enthusiastic rehabilitation in 1955, reinforced with condemnation

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<sup>36</sup> During the "anti-cybernetic" period 1951-52, the Russian scientist Sergei A. Lebedev (1902-1974) constructed the first digital computer *MESM* (*malaiia elektronnaia schetnaia mashina* or "Small Electronic Calculating Machine") in Kiev, Ukraine. His next computer *BESM* (*bol'shaia elektronnaia schetnaia mashina* or "Big Electronic Calculating Machine"), very powerful for that time, was designed in 1953. The serial production of the computer (under the name of *BESM-2*) started in Kazan', Russia in 1959. Gregory D. Crowe and Seymour E. Goodman, "S.A. Lebedev and the Birth of Soviet Computing," *Annals of the History of Computing IEEE* 16, no.1 (1994), 5-6.

<sup>37</sup> The translation was published under the title *Cybernetics and Society*, Norbert Wiener, *Kibernetika i obshchestvo* (Moskva: Izdatel'stvo inostrannoi literatury, 1958). Wiener's *Cybernetics* was translated into Russian only a decade later. See Norbert Wiener, *Kibernetika ili upravlenie i sviaz' v zhivotnom i mashine* (Moscow: Sovetskoe radio, 1968, the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition was published by Nauka, 1983).

<sup>38</sup> Aksel' I. Berg, "Nauka velichaischikh vozmozhnostei (1962)," in *Ocherki istorii informatiki v Rossii*, eds. D.A. Pospelov and Ya.I. Fet (Novosibirsk: Nauchno-izdatel'skii tsentr OIGGM SO RAN, 1998).

<sup>39</sup> Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, <<http://www.marxists.org>> (3 March 2008).

<sup>40</sup> Wiener anticipated the human costs of technological progress as computers would devalue the "simple work of the brain" and cause lay offs of less skilled workers, which would not be emancipation, but personal economic disaster. Similarly to Marx and Engels, he argued thus that the society possessing the new advanced technology should organise itself around values other than economics, to be based on "human values other than buying or selling," Wiener, *Cybernetics*, 28.

by the Stalinist terror in 1956, Soviet cybernetics captured many young minds as a science that was new and different, with a strong, lasting anti-soviet after-taste. Spectacular scientific inventions of that era, such as the nuclear and hydrogen bombs (1949 and 1953), the launch of the first unmanned space flight (1957) and the first manned ones (1961) promised an exciting field for a future scholar in physics, mathematics and other sciences.

However, against this backdrop, early post-war academic conditions in Lithuania were more miserable than exciting. As discussed earlier, the years 1944-1953 saw the height of Stalinist terror in the Baltic states and other newly occupied territories. Like their Russian colleagues in the late 1920s and 1930s, many Lithuanian academics and engineers disappeared from the country, as they fled to the West or were killed or deported to Siberia.<sup>41</sup> The post-war situation regarding education in the natural sciences was very bad. Not only was there an enormous shortage of academics qualified to teach mathematics, physics and related disciplines because they fled after the war,<sup>42</sup> but schooling dramatically declined: in 1955-1956, only 18.3 percent of mathematics teachers in schools had received a higher education and 43.5 percent did not even have degrees in mathematics.<sup>43</sup> Thus, the disciplines that should have formed the environment necessary for the new science of cybernetics were in a very sad state.<sup>44</sup> It should not come as any surprise that the introduction of cybernetics and computer technologies into Lithuania was associated with only a few names. In the second half of the 1950s, several individuals came to occupy important positions in academic institutes, university faculties, advisory committees and computer industries. Among those talented scholars were Jonas Kubilius (number and probability theory), Laimutis Telksnys (identification of stochastic processes), Antanas Nemeikšis (automatics and telemechanics), Vytau-

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<sup>41</sup> As, for example, in the cases of culture historian Levas Karsavinas, philosopher Vosylius Sezemanas, mathematician Antanas Žvironas or the pioneer management theoretician Vytautas Andrius Graičiūnas, who were deported to Siberia and died in the 1950s. See Rudokas; Povilas Zakarevičius, *Vadyba. Genezė, dabartis, tendencijos* (Kaunas: VDU leidykla, 1998); *Lietuva 1940-1990*, 291) or survived, as economists D.Cesevičius and P. Šalčius, and an architect S. Stulginskis. Nearly half of those holding a higher education degree left from the occupied Baltic states. Tininis, *Sovietinė Lietuva...*, 66; Misiunas and Taagepera, 113.

<sup>42</sup> The Physics, Mathematics and Astronomy sub-section in the Institute of Physics and Technology (LAS) consisted of the director, physicist Adolfas Jucys, several other physicists and only one mathematician Jonas Kubilius. Vilius Stakėnas, *Lietuviški metai. Profesoriaus Jono Kubiliaus gyvenimo trajektorija* (Vilnius: Margi raštai, 2001), 186.

<sup>43</sup> Stakėnas, 193. The demographic problem of the lack of an educated strata, especially youth, was faced by the entire Soviet Union, as Jeremy Smith noted, Smith.

<sup>44</sup> Vytautas Statulevičius (The Institute of Mathematics and Cybernetics) and Antanas Nemeikšis (The Vilnius Computer Factory), or leading scholars in the field who occupied very high and influential positions as in the cases of Laimutis Telksnys (The Special Computer Design Bureau) and Vytautas Kubilius (rector of the Vilnius University). Certainly, a tight connection between a person and a leading post was a typical Soviet feature. But most important is that those leaders belonged to the same generation. Generational proximity and similar educational background facilitated not only communication between their institutions, but also with Moscow or Leningrad.

tas Statulevičius (probability theory and stochastic processes), and later, Mifodijus Sapagovas (non-linear equations), Henrikas Vaitkevičius (biocybernetics) in Vilnius, Jonas Mockus (optimisation) and Antanas Nemura (system modelling) in Kaunas.

As I pointed out earlier, cybernetics was used and associated with the development of electronic technology, particularly servo-mechanisms and later, computer industries. In Lithuania, the establishment of the Institute of Physics and Mathematics at the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences (IPM LAS) in 1956 represented an important step.<sup>45</sup> A few years later, in 1959, the Vilnius Computer Plant<sup>46</sup> and the Special Computer Design Bureau<sup>47</sup> were established in Vilnius.<sup>48</sup> It took several years for the first computer to be installed in Lithuania: LAS acquired their first *BESM-2M* in 1961 and it was put into operation in 1962<sup>49</sup> – three years later than in Moscow.<sup>50</sup> In 1962, the scientific council Cybernetics and Computing Technology was established at the Lithuanian Republican Committee for Coordinating Scientific Research and headed by the mathematician Kubilius.<sup>51</sup> In 1966, the 23<sup>rd</sup> Party Congress declared that the five-year plan would make considerable use of the methods of scientific organisation of labour.<sup>52</sup> In 1967, the Centre of Computation opened at the IPM LAS,

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<sup>45</sup> In 1977, the Institute was divided into separate Physics and Mathematics and Cybernetics institutes. In 1990, the Mathematics and Cybernetics Institute was renamed the Mathematics and Informatics Institute.

<sup>46</sup> The computer factory was established on the basis of the cash register manufacturing facility (built in 1957). As Telksnys and Žilinskas noted, “the Lithuanian computer industry passed all typical stages of design, technology and production: from electromechanical card punchers and computers based on vacuum tubes to LSI technology and distributed systems of data processing,” Laimutis Telksnys and Antanas Žilinskas, “Computers in Lithuania,” *IEEE Annals of the History of Computing* 21, no.3 (1999), 33.

<sup>47</sup> The Bureau was established on the initiative of Antanas Nemeikšis, who headed it until 1988. It is noteworthy that the Bureau started to function only when Nemeikšis came back after completing his dissertation in automatics and telemechanics in Moscow. Rudokas, 260-1.

<sup>48</sup> In comparison, the Moscow Plant of Calculating-Analytical Machines was founded on the basis of a workshop that repaired foreign-made calculators (1923) and after World War II started producing mechanical arithmometers *Felix* (1946) and typing machines. As of 1959, the plant serially produced computers M-20. Crowe and Goodman, 20. While the Lithuanian Vilnius Computer Plant went bankrupt and was dismantled, the Moscow plant is currently working in partnership with Siemens.

<sup>49</sup> The date of the acquisition is based on an interview with a mathematician, Mifodijus Sapagovas, Vilnius, December 2005. BESM-2M was followed with a more powerful and reliable BESM-4 in 1968, while Vilnius University received a less powerful computer Minsk-14 (which was mostly used for economic calculations) in 1963. Lithuania lagged behind Russia: LAS acquired BESM-6 only in 1972, despite the machine being designed in the early 1960s. Telksnys and Žilinskas, 31; Crowe and Goodman, 20.

<sup>50</sup> The first *BESM-2* at the All Union Academy of Sciences was installed in spring 1959 but was not operating at least since June of the same year. It took more than one year for the Moldavian Academy of Sciences just to unpack a delivered computer. Crowe and Goodman, 19; Parry, 62.

<sup>51</sup> Rudokas, 260.

<sup>52</sup> Afanas’ev, “O soderzhanii...,” 27.

with Mifodijus Sapagovas, the twenty-seven year old graduate in mathematics (a student of Viktor Glushkov), as director and deputy director.

By the end of the 1960s, computer-related research was already quite well-developed in Lithuania. The professional community grew: in 1967, the scientific council Cybernetics and Computing Technology had 40 members, and the Special Computer Design Bureau had 653 employees.<sup>53</sup> The productivity of the Computer Factory and Design Bureau was quite high, at least in the 1960s. During that period, Lithuania created and produced several computers of its own, starting with the *EASP-S* in 1962, the *EVT 80-2 Rūta* in 1963 and the *Rūta 110* in 1969. The bureau, under the leadership of Laimutis Telksnys, initiated several important innovations, such as an optical character reading device *Rūta 701* in the early 1960s (the first in Europe) and a removable disk drive *R401* (the first in the Soviet Union). Another significant contribution was the creation and development of devices for the identification of stochastic processes, which were used to detect the first nuclear tests in China.<sup>54</sup> However, between 1968 and 1969, a decision was made at higher levels to stop developing Soviet original computers and to copy the *IBM S/360* series instead.<sup>55</sup>

It can thus be argued that Lithuanian scientists and engineers made good use of the possibilities offered by the creative period in the Soviet computer industry. Between 1955 and 1969, Lithuania built a fully-fledged infrastructure almost from scratch: academic institutes for computer and cybernetic research, councils in governmental structures, academic forums, and higher education programmes at universities, design bureaus and factories.<sup>56</sup> The development of the cybernetic sector was a part of the general recovery of the sciences.<sup>57</sup> The number of researchers grew from 2,700 in 1960 to 10,800 in 1973. The funding

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<sup>53</sup> Kubilius, “Kibernetikos pradžia Lietuvoje,” 5; Rudokas, 261.

<sup>54</sup> Telksnys and Žilinskas, 33-4; Interview with a physicist, Laimutis Telksnys, Vilnius, 2005. As Telksnys and Žilinskas note, the increase of computer production motivated the creation of large and complex organisational solutions, such as the organisation *Sigma*, established in 1965. Telksnys and Žilinskas, 34. *Sigma* (“a sum” in Latin) was one of the largest factories in Lithuania that came to employ over 18,000 workers, among which were 6,000 engineers by the end of the 1980s. Rudokas, 105.

<sup>55</sup> William K. McHenry and Seymour E. Goodman, “MIS in Soviet Industrial Enterprises: The Limits of Reform from Above,” *Communication of the ACM* 29, no.11 (November 1986), 1036.

<sup>56</sup> Much computer related technical research was also done in the bureaus attached to so-called “post-code” factories, such as *Venta* (Vilnius Bureau of Construction, that manufactured integral schemes), *Vilma* (that produced magnetic records), *Nuklonas* (microscheme factory in Šiauliai) and some others. See Rudokas.

<sup>57</sup> The beginning of the 1960s saw the opening of numerous technical institutes in Lithuania: faculties of Radioelectronics, Automatics and Engineered Economics were founded at the Antanas Sniečkus Polytechnic Institute in Kaunas. Branches were established in other towns, like Vilnius and Klaipėda. In addition, institutes in probability theory, galvanotechnics, biochemistry, semiconductor physics, precision vibrotechnics, ultrasound; also the Laser Research Centre at Vilnius State University and others were created.

for science in the Republic's budget also grew more than twofold, from 6 million roubles in 1960 to 16 million in 1972.<sup>58</sup>

The recovering Lithuania experienced not only material but also intellectual ramifications of cybernetics and new computing technologies. In the 1960s, the computer was eventually conceived as both a model and an instrument of governance. In all likelihood, the first public lecture on cybernetics in Lithuania was given by the distinguished mathematician, and later the rector of Vilnius University, Jonas Kubilius.<sup>59</sup> The lecture, entitled *What is Cybernetics? About Machines Which Substitute Some Work of the Brain* (1957), was published by the Association for the Distribution of Political and Scientific Knowledge and circulated in six hundred copies.<sup>60</sup> Significantly, the lecture appeared a year before Norbert Wiener's *Cybernetics* was translated into Russian (1958).<sup>61</sup> As this was the first address on cybernetics by a leading Lithuanian scholar to a larger sector of society, it deserves a closer look.

I would like to distinguish two major ideas in Kubilius's speech. First, he emphasised that the major innovation and use of an electronic calculating machine was the ability to speed up calculations, a type of work that was particular to the human brain. For Kubilius, a computer was essentially a machine that could perform very fast calculations. Faster calculations resulted in economic benefits and thus were directly relevant to the Soviet economy. Hence, the computer was able to facilitate the management of this economy. Second, computer enabled a new type of control. Kubilius discussed the use of the computer for modelling processes and argued that the computer could "control and govern other machines".<sup>62</sup> Thus, a computer could emancipate workers, transforming them from "cogs" into "controllers of controls":

A machine performs the same work as the staff, which services a process. Some of the members of the staff observe the process that takes place in different domains of production and work performed by different aggregates. The staff analyses and compares the results of observations. If the process deviates from a norm, the staff regulates it.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Barkauskas, *Kultūra ir visuomenė*, 210-11.

<sup>59</sup> The distinguished Lithuanian mathematician Jonas Kubilius returned from his postgraduate studies in Moscow and became actively involved in propagating both mathematics and computer science in Lithuania. According to himself, Kubilius found out about computers from the Russian mathematician Boris Delaunay in Moscow, 1951.

<sup>60</sup> Kubilius, "Kibernetikos pradžia Lietuvoje," 3.

<sup>61</sup> Norbert Wiener has not been translated into either Lithuanian or Latvian. However, his *Cybernetics* and *The Human Use of Human Beings* have been translated into Estonian respectively in 1961 and 1969.

<sup>62</sup> Jonas Kubilius, *Kas yra kibernetika? Apie mašinas, kurios pavaduoja kai kurį smegenų darbą* (Vilnius: Draugija, 1957), 20.

<sup>63</sup> Kubilius, *Kas yra kibernetika? ...*, 22.

Note that Kubilius explained the work of the computer-enabled cybernetic control with an example of management in an organisation. He was well tuned into his time; by the late 1950s, organisation management had been translated into computer metaphors and cybernetic models, most famously by Stafford Beer and Herbert Simon.<sup>64</sup> Just as Marshall McLuhan would later write about “cybernation” (1966),<sup>65</sup> Kubilius argued that computers could replace not only workers, but also managers and hence liberate human beings from performing dull, repetitive tasks. At the very end of the lecture, Kubilius discussed the definition and etymological origin of cybernetics. He defined cybernetics as a “science of processes of governance” (*valdymas*), whereas governance was based on information flows.<sup>66</sup> Here he used the broader term of “governance” (in Russian *upravlenie*) and not “control”.

The young mathematician’s efforts to demonstrate the role of mathematics in computer-making and to draw attention to diverse and interesting applications of computers represented a real novelty in those days. His lecture could be treated as quite symptomatic of a prevailing attitude in Soviet Lithuanian scientific circles: “first mathematics, second computers, then call it cybernetics if you like”. From this perspective and typically for Soviets, a computer was understood primarily as a “fast calculator”, and other functions, especially communication, were seen as secondary. Further, there was also a tendency to label computer technology as “cybernetic”, identifying cybernetics with computer science. As Conyngham noted, beginning in the mid-1960s the competition for scarce computing equipment dramatically increased.<sup>67</sup> Thus, academics who wanted to receive new computers and other advanced technology from Gosplan had to claim that they were doing “cybernetic research”. However, “cybernetics” also provided a home for anything new, non-mainstream, unusual. As the director of the Institute of Mathematics and Cybernetics (LAS) noted, cybernetics was used as a wide umbrella for very diverse scientific problems, which were not easily accommodated in traditional scientific disciplines.<sup>68</sup> Thus, not only intellectual but also pragmatic reasons escalated the hybridity of Soviet cybernetics in even its early stages.

### *From Scientific Management to Cybernetic Management*

Like cybernetics, management science was borrowed from the West, later banned and then rehabilitated in post-Stalinist Soviet Union and, just like cybernetics, scientific management was looked on with favour and turned into official dogma by the Soviet authorities. According to Vidmer, in the developed

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<sup>64</sup> Holmqvist, 168-176.

<sup>65</sup> Marshall McLuhan, “Cybernation and Culture,” in *The Social Impact of Cybernetics*, ed. C. R. Dechert (Notre Dame and London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1966).

<sup>66</sup> Kubilius, *Kas yra kibernetika? ...*, 31-2.

<sup>67</sup> Conyngham, “Technology and Decision Making...,” 439.

<sup>68</sup> Interview with a mathematician, Mifodijus Sapagovas, Vilnius, December 2005.

socialism of the 1960s and 1970s, management (*upravlenie*) was viewed “not only as an instrument for improving organisational performance, but as a general philosophy of social life”. The Soviet theorist Afanas’ev, for example, regarded management as a “binding, cementing link” which ensured the functioning of society.<sup>69</sup>

While the pioneering systematic attempts to use science in governing the state emerged in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries,<sup>70</sup> the very notion of “scientific management” was coined by the American consultant Frederik Winslow Taylor in 1911. Like Henry Ford, who invented the division of labour along an assembly line, Taylor was concerned about improving manual work and held that governance of a worker or management could be based on “its own science”, known as “time-and-motion study”. Taylor formulated a particular type of management, which was based on a behaviourist science and aimed at increasing the efficiency of all work processes by splitting them into small functions and optimising each of them. In the 1930s, Taylor’s scientific management was confronted by the human relations approach first promoted by Elton Mayo. The human relations approach emphasised the psychological and social factors in work and in turn, made use of psychology and sociology. Taylor’s notion of scientific management referred predominantly to a private industrial firm. However, the application of its principles was broad and soon included state governance.<sup>71</sup>

Taylorism reached Europe in 1914, and Lenin welcomed its adoption in the Soviet Union immediately after the revolution, in 1918. The intellectual elaboration and industrial implementation of the scientific governance of labour was advanced primarily by the efforts of Aleksei Gastev (1882-1939), the founder of the movement NOT (*nauchnoe upravlenie trudom*) in 1920.<sup>72</sup> The first conference dedicated to these issues was convened by Trotsky before the end of the Russian civil war in 1921.<sup>73</sup> While there is not enough space to expand on the activities of NOT, it should be noted that Gastev’s followers emerged all over the Soviet Union. However, when Stalin acceded to power, NOT was eventually eliminated altogether, along with many other movements in favour of the rationalisation of governance. Stalin’s first Five-Year Plan, which was announced in 1928, had little to do with NOT, Taylorism or Elton Mayo’s hu-

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<sup>69</sup> Vidmer, 405.

<sup>70</sup> Anna Millán Gasca, “Organization and Mathematics: A Look into the Prehistory of Industrial Engineering,” in *Technological Concepts and Mathematical Models in the Evolution of Modern Engineering Systems. Controlling, Managing, Organizing*, eds. M. Lucertini, A. Millán Gasca, F. Nicoló (Basel, Boston, Berlin: Birkhäuser Verlag, 2004), 21-51.

<sup>71</sup> For example in Soviet scholarship “scientific management” was rather broadly defined. See Beissinger, 4-5.

<sup>72</sup> A great organiser and theorist, Gastev also was active as a poet. He was killed in Moscow in 1939. For a great account of the Soviet version of scientific management see Beissinger, 20-27, 34-35, 37.

<sup>73</sup> Zenovia A. Sochor, “Soviet Taylorism Revisited,” *Soviet Studies* 2 (1981), 249. See Sochor also for an analysis of diverging Soviet views over Taylorism, which were discerned by Gastev’s Central Institute of Labour (1921) and the League of Time (*Liga Vremia* 1923).

man relations. As Beissinger noted, in the 1930s, rationalisation was replaced by coercion and with the achievement of goals at any human costs as the guiding principle of Soviet industrial governance. The decade marked the apex of terror, the eventual extinction of NOT, and the repression and even execution of many engineers, scientists and cultural intellectuals.<sup>74</sup> In 1935 Stalin replaced the famous Party slogan “technology decides everything” with “cadres decide everything”. From a Stalinist point of view, it was not rational calculations, but the character and political loyalty of the people that counted when it came to making progress.

Scientific management as a discipline was revived in the early 1960s, a few years later than cybernetics. Just as in the case of cybernetics, the second wave of Soviet scientific management was largely shaped by an intellectual import from the West. The first translation of Sir Stafford Beer’s book on cybernetic management was published in 1963 and reprinted in 1965 (*Kibernetika i upravlenie proizvodstvom*).<sup>75</sup> This transfer, as well as Western development, has been addressed in a number of studies on various aspects of how the General Systems Theory, operational research and especially cybernetics influenced the notions of management and governance after World War II.<sup>76</sup> The rehabilitation also featured attempts to reconnect to the recent Soviet Russian past, especially the 1920s and 1930s. The parallels between cybernetics and systems theory and Bogdanov’s tectology were drawn. The work of Aleksei Gastev and the achievements of the NOT movement were revived in the discussions about new, cybernetic management.<sup>77</sup> In cultural policy, the ideas of Lunacharsky were revived, and a thoroughly planned, scientifically grounded administration was opposed to the short-sighted campaigns (*vajai*), rooted in the Stalinist methods of pre-war and war-time mobilisation campaigns in production.

It is important to note that the rehabilitation of cybernetics and management was strongly influenced by the polarisation of the Cold War. Both systems theory and cybernetics were originally formulated in the United States, which put the Soviet Union in a rather embarrassing position. It had either to accept being at the receiving end of a transfer from the West or to rehabilitate its own thinkers, who were condemned and executed by Stalin.<sup>78</sup> As Susiluoto noted, an

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<sup>74</sup> Beissinger, 94-103.

<sup>75</sup> The second edition of the Russian translation of Stafford Beer (*Kibernetika i menedzhment*) has recently been published in 2006. Note that in 2006 the word “management” was not translated into “upravlenie”.

<sup>76</sup> Holmqvist.

<sup>77</sup> NOT was reconstructed as a Russian scientific tradition, its key texts were reprinted, but the reasons and process of its purges were not publicised. See for example, *Nauchnaia organizatsiia truda dvadtsatykh godov. Sbornik dokumentov i materialov* (Kazan’, 1965). Note the place of publishing: in Kazan’ there was one of the main Soviet computer plants which had an institute dedicated to AMS.

<sup>78</sup> Gastev was repressed and the date of his death is still unknown, meanwhile Bogdanov died in 1928 while experimenting with blood transfusion. He founded the Institute of Haematology and Blood Transfusion in Leningrad, 1925-26.

embarrassing borrower's status stimulated some efforts to rehabilitate tectology, a "general theory of organisations" of Aleksandr Bogdanov (1873-1928).<sup>79</sup> The problem was Bogdanov's dissidence within the Party: his book *Empiriomonism* was criticised by Lenin for "subjective idealism" in 1909. Furthermore, Bogdanov was politically allied with Nikolai Bukharin (1888-1938), whose name was still taboo at the time of the rehabilitation of cybernetics and the NOT.<sup>80</sup> Since there was little chance that Bukharin would be rehabilitated, the 1960s and 1970s witnessed only a few unsuccessful attempts at reintroducing Bogdanov's tectology.<sup>81</sup> However, the writings of Gastev were published in 1966. It can thus be argued that beginning in the late 1950s and early 1960s, Soviet management was reinstated and institutionalised as a scientific discipline by reconnecting with the recent past and selectively adopting Western thought.

However, only the intellectual tradition of the titular Soviet nation, Russia, was allowed. No reconnection with the interwar Lithuanian managerial thought was permitted. One must remember that in 1928, the Lithuanian Scientific Management Society was founded in Kaunas and its first chairman and the inventor of the word *vadyba* was Vytautas Andrius Graicunas (Graičiūnas). Graicunas worked as a consultant at a number of large industrial enterprises in Lithuania, the United States, France, Switzerland, Germany and the Netherlands. In today's Lithuanian textbooks on management, Graicunas is heralded as the pioneer of managerial thought in Lithuania. His essay on leadership "Relationship in Organization" (1933) has been called a "classic". There is almost no information available on what Graicunas did during World War II (he held the rank of Major in the United States Air Force), but he perished in the Soviet NKVD prison after being captured in 1947 in Moscow.<sup>82</sup>

One cannot overstate the importance of the connection between the rehabilitation of management and cybernetics. The first civil applications of cybernetics in the Soviet Union occurred in economic planning and industrial management. After experiencing growth in the 1950s and early 1960s, the Soviet

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<sup>79</sup> For an exhaustive analysis of the influence of Bogdanov's and Bukharin's ideas in Soviet Russia, see Susiluoto. Just how wide was the range of issues related to Bogdanov is revealed by John Biggart, Peter Dudley and Francis King, eds., *Alexander Bogdanov and the Origins of Systems Thinking in Russia* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998).

<sup>80</sup> Bukharin opposed Stalin's collectivisation programme and was expelled from the Communist Party as a "Trotskyite" in 1937, executed in 1938.

<sup>81</sup> In 1967 Afanas'ev called Bogdanov a "subjective idealist," because in his proposed system of "things, people and ideas" he ignored "the most important part," the relations of production. Further, he rejected Bogdanov's ambition to formulate a general theory of organisation not because this task itself would be implausible, but because such a theory already existed – it was "dialectic and historical materialism". Afanas'ev, "O soderzhanii...", 51, 57.

<sup>82</sup> Knowledge about Graicunas is limited to scarce facts published in general encyclopaedias and biographical notes. Born in 1898 in Chicago, the United States, Graicunas acquired a degree in accounting at the University of Chicago, completed War Aviation School (1917), and was further educated at the University of Grenoble in France and the Armour Institute of Technology in Illinois, the US. Arthur G. Bedecian, "Vytautas Andrius Graicunas: A Biographical Note," *The Academy of Management Journal* 17, no. 2 (1974), 347-348.

economy came to a halt and began to decline.<sup>83</sup> As Wiener put it, “to live effectively is to live with adequate information”.<sup>84</sup> In the spirit of Wiener, Soviet economists and computer scientists acknowledged that inadequate information was a grave problem in Soviet economic planning. The hope that the mathematization and computerisation of economic planning and management would give new impetus to Soviet economy drove the establishment of new institutions. The first institution of this kind was a laboratory for “economic-mathematic” research, established by V. Nemchinov at the Soviet Academy of Sciences in 1958-1959. The laboratory served as a basis for creating the Central Institute of Economics and Mathematics (1963), which was developing automated systems of plan calculations for the All-Union State Plan Committee as early as 1967. Alongside with the plan calculation systems, prognostic models were launched, and systems for classifying and coding various enterprises were developed.

Lithuanian SSR soon responded to Nemchinov’s initiative. In 1960, Jonas Kubilius, with the Russian mathematician Efrem Maiminas, established the Central Scientific Laboratory for Economic Research at Vilnius University (VU).<sup>85</sup> Headed by Maiminas, it was initially attached to the National Economy Council (*sovnarkhoz*), still located at VU.<sup>86</sup> It is rather telling that after the abolishment of the *sovnarkhoz* system, the laboratory was moved to the Bureau of Designing and Constructing Automated Management Systems at the *Sigma* industrial association (1965). VU developed a specialised department and began educating specialists in economic cybernetics in 1966.<sup>87</sup> The first group of students graduated in 1971, and about 25 to 50 graduated every year thereafter.<sup>88</sup> In the second half of the 1960s, the Department for Applied Economic-Mathematic Methods and Electronic Calculation Technology at the Soviet Lithuanian State Plan Commission was established (1967). The department formed the basis for the Institute of Planning of National Economy and Scientific Economic Research.<sup>89</sup>

According to Thrift, throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, higher education and practical training in management had been a major vehicle for distributing new global modes of thinking about governability.<sup>90</sup> Whilst in the 1960s, capitalist

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<sup>83</sup> For calculations of economic decline, see Hanson, 75-75, 132-140.

<sup>84</sup> Wiener, *The Human Use...*, 18.

<sup>85</sup> Jonas Kubilius, “Kibernetikos pradžia Lietuvoje,” *Mokslas ir gyvenimas* 6 (1999), 5.

<sup>86</sup> Interview with a mathematician, Jonas Kubilius, Vilnius, December 2005.

<sup>87</sup> For the early development of econometrics in the Soviet Union see the old, but useful collection by Hardt, Hoffenberg, Kaplan, and Levine.

<sup>88</sup> In the rest of the Soviet Union, key cybernetic institutes for economic planning were established between 1960-1965: the Central Economic Mathematical Institute of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, the Central Research Institute of Management (Minsk), the Institute of Cybernetics (Ukrainian Academy of Sciences), the Institute of the Economics and Organisation of Industrial Production of the Siberian Division of the Soviet Academy of Sciences. Holloway, “The Political Uses of Scientific Models...,” 114.

<sup>89</sup> Raimundas Rajeckas, “Ekonominė kibernetika Lietuvoje,” *Lietuvos TSR Mokslų Akademija ir taikomieji mokslai respublikoje 1941-85* (Vilnius: LTSR MA, Istorijos institutas, 1985), 229-230.

<sup>90</sup> Nigel Thrift, *Knowing Capitalism* (London: Sage Publications, 2006), 84-90.

countries saw a boom in business schools, the Soviet Union was creating its own educational networks for distributing new ideas about management.<sup>91</sup> In line with the revisionists of totalitarian accounts of the Soviet Union, I would like to stress that as of the 1960s there was no unified stream of managerial thought; as Conyngham noted, Soviet theory of management was quite heterogeneous.<sup>92</sup> Soviet management was however, predominantly oriented towards industrial production. In Lithuanian SSR, higher education in management was provided by the faculties of Industrial Economics (VU) of Engineer Economics at Kaunas Polytechnics Institute (KPI). In 1969, the KPI's branch in Vilnius also established the Laboratory of Research of Management Systems, under the direction of K. Antanavičius. The laboratory specialised in decision-making and long-term planning. Among other important institutions were the Department of Management and Planning of National Economy at the Institute of Economics (LAS), the Department of Sociological Problems of Management at the Institute of Philosophy, Sociology and Law (LAS), and the Department of Management at the Lithuanian Institute of Scientific-Technical Information.<sup>93</sup> Management of organisations was included in the research agenda of the Institute of Economics (LAS), which was later headed by one of the first graduates in the field of economic cybernetics Eduardas Vilkas. Related applied research was also carried out at the Institute of State Planning Committee, headed by Aleksandras Vasiliauskas. Even the Institute of Mathematics and Cybernetics (LAS) was engaged in applied research, as its scholars were commissioned to develop theoretical and technical applications of computer systems for the economic planning of the republic's economy and individual organisations.<sup>94</sup> In this way, the 1960s saw the growth of both research and education institutions of management in Soviet Lithuania. I will now go into greater detail about how the translation of cybernetics into Soviet management took place as an intellectual and material project.

#### *a) Writing Cybernetic Management*

As discussed in the previous chapter, officially, the main objective of Soviet enterprises was to implement the state plan. However, many management theoreticians sought to distance themselves from planning by formulating different interest agenda and relying on different techniques and ideas. Eventually, as Vidmer observed, “governance” (*upravlenie*) came to be perceived as a wider

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<sup>91</sup> In the USA the number of business schools grew from 163 in 1956 to 1,100 in 1979. Beissinger, 160.

<sup>92</sup> Conyngham, *The Modernization of Soviet Industrial Management*, 46.

<sup>93</sup> See Zakarevičius, *Vadyba*, 185-189. Among other institutions were the Department of the Management of Agricultural Production at the Lithuanian Academy of Agriculture, the Department of Management at the Institute of Professional Training of the Specialists of National Economy (Vilnius and Kaunas branches).

<sup>94</sup> Antanas Baskas, “Apie tris perversmus valdyme,” *Mokslas ir technika* 3 (1984), 21-22. Interview with a mathematician, Mifodijus Sapagovas, Vilnius, December 2005.

notion than “planning” (*planirovanie*).<sup>95</sup> If cybernetisation of planning meant speeding up calculations with the help of computer, cybernetisation of governance implied a redefinition of a governor, an act of steering, and an object of governance. Let us look at how the Soviet “system-cybernetic approach” to management produced both its subjects and its objects.

It has been widely acknowledged that the most distinguished Soviet public thinkers and propagators of the system-cybernetic approach were the Russians Dzhermen Gvishiani and Viktor G. Afanas’ev.<sup>96</sup> Gvishiani (1928-2003), a KGB officer of Georgian origin, married Prime Minister Aleksey Kosygin’s daughter. From 1965 to 1985, he served as the deputy director of the State Committee of Science and Technology under the Council of Ministers (CPSU).<sup>97</sup> A Doctor of Science (he defended a doctoral dissertation entitled “About American Theories of the Governance of Organisations” in 1969), and, since 1970 a member of the All-Union Academy of Sciences and a family member of the highest-ranking Soviet economic elite, Gvishiani was well positioned to advocate the wide use of systems analysis and computer technologies. Concerned with the long-term planning of both industries, along with the environment, he was unusual for his time and, in spite of the fact that he was a Soviet official, he was aware of global interdependence: it has recently been argued that one cannot overestimate his role in opening up Soviet foreign policy to global responsibility.<sup>98</sup> Perhaps his most important achievement was the launch of an international project (1967), which paved the way for the International Institute of Applied Systems Analysis in Vienna, Austria.<sup>99</sup> Among other things, the institute was an important channel, which facilitated the introduction of systems theory to Soviet organisational analysis. A decade later, the All-Union Scientific Research Institute of Systems Analysis was established under the All-Union Academy of Sciences and the State Committee of Science and Technology (1976). As one of the initiators of the Club of Rome, Gvishiani had been praised for investing a substantial effort in steering Soviet foreign policy to address the issues of the

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<sup>95</sup> As pointed out by Vidmer, Russian theorists saw twenty-one disciplines related to management. See Vidmer, 415.

<sup>96</sup> For a concise summary and critical assessment of their early managerial thought, see Hoffmann, “The ‘Scientific Management’ of Soviet Society....”.

<sup>97</sup> The name “Dzhermen” was a made up of Dzerzhinsky and Menzhinsky. His father was the head of the Far East NKVD. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Gvishiani founded the Moscow Institute of Politics, Economics and Law to become its rector.

<sup>98</sup> Especially notable was his initiative to organise an international symposium on global environmental problems in Tallinn, Estonia, 8-12 January 1979. Walter C. Clemens, *Can Russia Change? The USSR Confronts Global Interdependence*. (London: Routledge, 1990), 147-150.

<sup>99</sup> The Soviet Union was a major co-financer (together with the US) of the International Institute of Applied Systems Analysis in Vienna, Austria. The Institute was founded in 1972 and was intended to provide a platform where Soviets and Americans could work together towards solving environmental and health issues. Vidmer, 1981,409. Note that in the discussions about the name of the institute, its East European partners suggested “cybernetics”. “How IIASA Began,” 21 October 2003, <<http://www.iiasa.ac.at/docs/history.html?sb=3>> (5 May 2008).

environment (I will return to environmental issues later).<sup>100</sup> In management theory, his most visible legacy was probably the notion of “complex approach” (*kompleksnyi podkhod*). The term was coined in 1966 and became one of the key elements of Soviet policy discourse.<sup>101</sup> Basically, it referred to a relational approach to solving a specific task. A complex approach was embedded in “systems thinking”, defined by Mindell as a way of “treating technologies as aggregates of interconnected components as opposed to focusing on individual machines”. Those components, according to Mindell, also involved organisations and human beings.<sup>102</sup> Gvishiani’s books and articles on management were standard references and course materials in Soviet Lithuania.

Another important figure, the social theorist Afanas’ev (1922-1994) was less visible on the international scene but very significant Union-wide as the editor-in-chief of *Pravda* (1976-1989). *Pravda*, founded by Lenin and edited by him from 1912 to 1914, was the organ of the CC (CPSU). Thus, Afanas’ev was both the public and official voice that promoted cybernetics and computer technologies. He had been widely disseminating cybernetic ideas about scientific governance of society since the mid-1960s. It seems that Afanas’ev sought to popularise cybernetics as a source of innovative ideas in most spheres of human life, none the least of which was the regulation of society. This even led the American scholar Schwartz to argue that Afanas’ev’s cybernetic take on governance (*upravlenie*) was unusually democratic, since it resembled Karl Deutsch’s ideas of “self-steering politics” and Amitai Etzioni’s “active society.”<sup>103</sup>

Afnas’ev drew on Wiener to argue that cybernetic control could be used to conceptualise social order. According to Wiener, “in control and communication we are always fighting nature’s tendency to degrade the organised and destroy the meaningful; the tendency... for entropy to increase”.<sup>104</sup> Drawing on Aksel’ Berg’s introduction to the Russian translation of Stafford Beer’s *Cybernetics and Management*, Afanas’ev maintained that “cybernetics, and partially computing technology and automatics, are powerful means for regulating societal systems and ‘diminishing entropy’.”<sup>105</sup> According to Afanas’ev, the principal object and objective of governance (*ob’ekt upravleniia*) was an orderly Soviet society, “a complex social organism, which consists of many different components”. Among its components were “economy”, “people”, united into classes and social groups, work and other collectives; economic, class and ethi-

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<sup>100</sup> Rachel Douglas, “Andropov’s Blunder Still Haunts the Earth,” *Executive Intelligence Review* 34, no. 7, 16 February 2007, <[http://www.larouchepub.com/eirtoc/2007/eirtoc\\_3407.html](http://www.larouchepub.com/eirtoc/2007/eirtoc_3407.html)> (8 March 2008).

<sup>101</sup> Beissinger, 179.

<sup>102</sup> Mindell, “Bodies, Ideas, and Dynamics...,” 3.

<sup>103</sup> Viktor G. Afanas’ev, *Nauchnoe upravleniie obshchestvom* (Moskva: Politizdat, 1968), 24; cf Donald Schwartz, “Recent Soviet Adaptations of Systems Theory to Administrative Theory,” *Journal of Comparative Administration* 5, no.2 (1973), 234.

<sup>104</sup> Wiener, *The Human Use...*, 17.

<sup>105</sup> Afanas’ev, “O sodержanii...,” 33.

cal relations among people, and finally “a spiritual life of society in all of its manifestations”.<sup>106</sup> For Afanas’ev, a governing subject was “a system of state and non-state organisations and organisations, led by the Communist Party”. Essentially, “scientific governance” consisted of “conscious, purposive actions upon a societal system and its transformation in order to ensure an optimal flow of societal processes”.<sup>107</sup> Conscious, purpose-directed cybernetic governance coincided well with a historical mission of communists – to transform society in accordance with predefined goals. In line with Foucault, Afanas’ev’s cybernetic model of the governance of society could be interpreted as a typical example of the modern governance of a population, which constructs its governed object with the help of aggregate notions. Statistical accounting, especially when it was assisted by cybernetic technologies, was seen as essential to governance:

Without statistical data, without processing it scientifically, it is impossible to have reliable information about the state of both a controlling and controlled system [*upravlenie*] and, consequently, to organise effective governance.<sup>108</sup>

Even though Wiener’s calculations were embedded in relativity theory, statistical calculation-based governance was reconciled with Soviet tradition to define science essentially in positivist terms. Thus, the cybernetic regulation of society was conceived as based on “objective laws”, seeking to match “subjective actions of people with objective laws”.<sup>109</sup> In his discussion of “social planning”, Afanas’ev argued that mathematical methods were not sufficiently used in governing “social relations” and “spiritual life”. This is where cybernetics would compensate the straightforwardness of economic, mathematical methods:

The language of contemporary mathematics, partially of deductive mathematic theories, is not able to reflect the most complicated processes of the accumulation, processing and transmission of information related to the governance [*upravlenie*] of societal processes. This limitation of mathematics in the study and organisation of processes of governance may be transgressed by the methods of heuristic programming, which are becoming more prevalent in cybernetics.<sup>110</sup>

In addition to positivism, cybernetic management had to be adjusted to changing Soviet political realities. Afanas’ev invested a good deal of effort in ensuring that cybernetic steering could be consolidated with Brezhnev’s idea of “mature socialism”: “since cybernetics assumes an already organised and ordered

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<sup>106</sup> Afanas’ev, “O sodержanii...,” 5-6.

<sup>107</sup> Afanas’ev, “O sodержanii...,” 6.

<sup>108</sup> Afanas’ev, “O sodержanii...,” 43.

<sup>109</sup> Afanas’ev, “O sodержanii...,” 7.

<sup>110</sup> Afanas’ev, “O sodержanii...,” 19.

system, a function of governance is reduced to such an action upon a system that ensures the maintenance of order and resists disorganising forces, which appear from within and without”.<sup>111</sup> However, Afanas’ev acknowledged that even a Brezhnevite society should be seen not as a completed, but ever transforming and evolving system. It should be noted that Wiener’s cybernetics did not emphasise the historicity of systems; a self-generated change of a system was conceptualised by scientists who came later. In turn, the Soviet system-cybernetic discourse in the late 1970s and 1980s used the notions of self-generating and self-transforming systems to describe society. Afanas’ev referred to Lenin’s statement, which asserted that the main task of control (*kontrol’*) was not to “catch” or “denounce”, but to “correct”.<sup>112</sup> According to him, control as Russian *kontrol’* acquired very specific political tones:

To check the actual state of affairs in all the parts of a societal system, to check deeply, scrupulously, seeking to achieve an implementation of decisions made, carrying on the merciless fight against the theft of socialist property, bureaucratism, attaining *slazhennost’* of the governing apparatus – these are the most important tasks of control.<sup>113</sup>

All of these examples demonstrate that Afanas’ev’s model of the cyber-socialist steering of society combined the Leninist principles of the supremacy of the Party, the Stalinist emphasis on planning, and the ambition to control all aspects of life and production. The control was embedded in the active organisational transformation and maintenance of the achieved workers’ society. It is important to note the word *slazhennost’*, which indicated special ideological qualities of governmental work. As a noun it is a rough derivative of “smooth” and “cohesive”, but in the Soviet discourse, *slazhennost’* was closely related to “collective work”. Thus, it denoted the smooth, cohesive work of a collective towards an agreed-upon purpose, comparable with that of a machine.<sup>114</sup>

It is obvious that Afanas’ev carefully tailored his cybernetic approach to fit the Marxist-Leninist conceptualisation of society as consisting of “classes”, defined by the modes of production and ownership. And yet its innovativeness should not be underestimated. The system-cybernetic approach equipped scholars, policy-makers and managers with a completely new vocabulary, which they could use to talk about the objects of their concern and about themselves. Increasingly, the new Soviet man of the 1960s was attaining the role of an expert, a controller of controls, who legitimised his own actions with the authority of

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<sup>111</sup> Afanas’ev, “O sodержanii...,” 22.

<sup>112</sup> Afanas’ev, “O sodержanii...,” 47. This reminded me of a banner inside the Solovki labour camp, where thousands of inmates died in the most inhuman conditions. Many of them were not criminals at all. The banner said: “The Soviet government does not punish, it corrects” (*ne karaet a ispravliaet*).

<sup>113</sup> Afanas’ev, “O sodержanii...,” 46.

<sup>114</sup> I am indebt to Aleksei Semenko for this insight.

scientific, calculation-based governance. In future chapters, I will demonstrate how this had important consequences on cultural policy.

The Lithuanian SSR could not boast of public management theorists such as Gvishiani and Afanas'ev. Notably, the most distinguished Lithuanian economists, such as Raimundas Rajeckas (1937-1997)<sup>115</sup> and Eduardas Vilkas (1935-2008),<sup>116</sup> were committed to strictly scientific and high-level consulting activities. Unlike Gvishiani and Afanas'ev, neither of them wrote any textbooks or popular texts about management. In general, writings which would seek to communicate management theory to a wider public were scarce in Lithuania. As a rule, the authors of such works were neither leading scientists nor eminent public figures, but pedagogues or various specialists in the methods of teaching, who often gave public lectures at *Žinija* (*Znanie* in Russian).<sup>117</sup> My further analysis, grounded on this type of publications, revealed that whilst Russian publications on cybernetic management appeared in the 1960s, the Lithuanian versions only appeared a decade later, in the 1970s.

Lithuanian writing on management drew heavily on the Russian theorists described above and exhibited a strong adjustment of cybernetic translations to the official ideology of the Party rule. Probably because the authors were not as famous, they had less freedom to rewrite the Soviet regime in cybernetic terms. Rather, Lithuanian writers did the opposite: they wrote Soviet ideology over cybernetic management. One of the earliest Lithuanian books on the subject, written by the management pedagogue Algimantas Indriūnas, was entitled *Technique of Leadership* (1971) and relied strongly on Afanas'ev's ideas.

Indriūnas's text testified to two important aspects of the Soviet translation of cybernetics to management: the justification of centralisation and coercion and the securitisation of the external environment. Keeping in mind how eagerly

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<sup>115</sup> Rajeckas graduated from Kaunas Institute of Technology in 1959 to later study at Harvard University (1967-1968). All my informants referred to him as a foremost proponent of "economic cybernetics". Economic cybernetics, according to Conyngham, "dominated management research, education and rationalisation" Conyngham, *The Modernization of Soviet Industrial Management*, 48. Attributed by Vidmer to the "planning" school of management, he followed in the footsteps of Leonid Kantorovich and was preoccupied first and foremost with linear programming and optimal planning. For this Kantorovich received the Nobel prize in 1975, which he shared with Tjalling Koopmans, which was considered by some as "an indirect avowal" that cybernetics had helped to shape similar approaches to the economy in the East and West. Philip Mirowski, "Review of Slava Gerovitch, *From Newspeak to Cyberspeak: The History of Soviet Cybernetics*," *Journal of Economic Literature* 42, no.1 (2004), 215.

<sup>116</sup> Vilkas was educated as a mathematician and particularly active in developing game theory. Retrospectively Vilkas was rather sceptical about the universalist claims of the cybernetic approach. In interview, he stated that each managerial problem should seek its own solution instead of relying on one general theory. Interview with an economist, Eduardas Vilkas, Vilnius, November 2007. It has to be added that both Rajeckas and Vilkas played a central role in designing reforms for the transition to a market economy in Lithuania.

<sup>117</sup> In the Soviet Union scientific research was notoriously separated from teaching. On *Znanie* in Russia, see Froggatt.

both Soviet and Western theoreticians praised and criticised the “neutrality” of the systems approach, I found it quite striking that coercion was rather smoothly translated into the terms of systems thinking. Much more than Afanas’ev, Indriūnas insisted that even a violent political change, such as, for example, a revolution, could easily be described in system-cybernetic terms. A relational system approach was, according to Indriūnas, exceptionally suited to describe the Party political administration. As complex systems were seen as hierarchically organised, the systems approach could not contradict “democratic centralism”, which allowed lower levels of governance to interpret and enact locally the decisions that were made centrally:<sup>118</sup>

[...] the most effective is that system, all of whose components are directed towards implementing its main function [...] which is seeking its centrally established goal. Centralisation is understood as taking certain parts away from freedom and subjugating them to the general goals of the system.<sup>119</sup>

Thus, systems theory in Indriūnas interpretation was something that legitimised the coercive discipline imposed by “democratic centralism”. He also argued that “system’s components resist the loss of freedom”, thus implying that not only coercion, but also resistance was a built-in capacity of the system. To counteract this resistance, some “external forces” were necessary to make the unruly “components” submissive. From this point of view, a social system, with its self-organisation, was only a relative exception compared with any other system:

[...] exceptions are some social systems in which people gather and create an organisation or a collective themselves. But even in those cases, not everyone submits to the majority’s opinion, and therefore coercion [*prievarata*] is required.<sup>120</sup>

Later on, Soviet theorists put a lot of effort into reconciling system-cybernetic management theory with the polarising logic of the Cold War. Cold War securitisation and containment discourses marked the Soviet translation of system-cybernetic theory into management. The distinguished Cold War historian John Lewis Gaddis has convincingly suggested that the post-World War II Soviet regime had no choice but to treat the surrounding world as hostile. As George Kennan’s “long telegram” stated, the construction of external hostility was an important excuse “for the dictatorship without which they [Soviets] did not know how to rule”.<sup>121</sup> Thus understood, securitisation refers to a discursive

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<sup>118</sup> Allowing no legitimate opposition, “democratic centralism” was adopted as their organisational principle by the Russian Social Democratic Workers’ Party in 1906. Mawdsley and White, 242.

<sup>119</sup> Algimantas Indriūnas, *Vadovavimo technika* (Vilnius: Mintis, 1971), 57.

<sup>120</sup> Indriūnas, 60.

<sup>121</sup> John Lewis Gaddis, *The Cold War: A New History* (New York: Penguin Books, 2005), 29.

construction of objects as hostile and threatening. This securitisation took place as rewriting or rethinking scientific theories and electronic technologies in relation to inside and outside, subject and object of governance. For example, Indriūnas wrote that “systems that are able to survive and protect themselves from outside influences are characterised by governance. Such systems are called self-governing (in Lithuanian)”.<sup>122</sup> As this example illustrates, the system vocabulary came in very handy for establishing a discourse of governance oriented against external threats. That Indriūnas saw control as an essential condition for system’s survival in a threatening environment was less an outcome of the systems theory and more a result of the viable Stalin metaphor of the Soviet Union encircled by “hostile aliens”.

In Lithuanian writing on management of the late 1970s, the notion of negative feedback transmitted by a signal became synonymous with the control of an organisation or the general economy. It is quite striking that the management of economy has been described in exceptionally cybernetic terms. In his *The Issues of Management of Republics’ National Economy* (1979) Algirdas Maniušis claimed that

A task of control [*valdymas*] is to discover deviations on the basis of comparing received factual data with specified criteria and to give signals of de-alignment. [...] Control is a basis that enables a managing system to analyse and prepare managing influences, which would return a managed system’s parameters to the sphere of allowed meanings.<sup>123</sup>

It seems that by the late 1970s, cybernetic control became a prevailing metaphor for managerial action.<sup>124</sup> This hegemony was noted and criticised. In the same year (1979), another textbook insisted on the need to expand the meaning of management beyond that of cybernetic control. The author argued that it was “impossible to perfectly govern production by relying only on the laws of cybernetics. Today, a leader has to understand all methods of governance”.<sup>125</sup> However, he pointed out that the most important task was to “automate governance”.

The 1980s saw the adoption of post-Wiener cybernetics (or second-order and third-order cybernetics) in Lithuanian managerial thought.<sup>126</sup> A good example of this was a book about “the features of cybernetic systems”, written by the

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<sup>122</sup> Indriūnas, 61.

<sup>123</sup> Algirdas Maniušis, *Respublikos liaudies ūkio valdymo problemas* (Vilnius: Mintis, 1979), 76-77.

<sup>124</sup> Juozas Zujus, *Vadovas ir informacija* (Vilnius: Mintis, 1976).

<sup>125</sup> Ksaveras Bieliūnas, *Vadovo darbo stilius* (Vilnius: LTSR aukštojo ir specialiojo vidurinio mokslo ministerija, 1979), 10.

<sup>126</sup> This was advocated by early cyberneticians, but most developed by Heinz von Foerster and radicalised into the idea of poesis or self-creation by Fransisco Varela and Humberto Maturana, see Hayles, 10-11. Heinz von Foerster, *Observing Systems* (Seaside, Cal.: Intersystems Publications, 1984).

Lithuanian engineer, Romualdas Pladis. In 1984, Pladis used the notion of feedback-based control to describe the essence of management. Indeed, he saw information and control as identical: “information is data used for governance [*valdymas*]. [...] Governance – informational influences on a system when its behaviour is desired to be kept or changed [...] Regulation – eliminating deviations from the regulating norm”.<sup>127</sup> Cybernetic control as an informational loop brought the idea that a governor was inseparable from a governed into management discourses. Pladis acknowledged that “cybernetic systems can be projected (elicited from the surrounding world) by the subject of governance (observer)”.<sup>128</sup> Logically then, if cybernetic systems were defined as a result of active creation they could not possibly be seen as part of a positivist objectively existing reality. That this cybernetic contention was at odds with Soviet positivism was probably the reason why the approach was not pursued more deeply, especially when applied to society and economy. The communist ideology could not possibly view classes as an observer’s projection; such a view was criticised by Lenin in his classic *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*. Classes defined according to types of labour and ownership were understood as being part of objective reality, rooted in “objective” relations of production.

The task of cybernetic control was to optimise a system. Optimisation was a term related to Pareto’s equilibrium and Ashby’s mechanism of homeostasis. Take Pladis’s application of this technical term to social-planning, for example. For him, the purpose of governance was “to decrease diversity, shape states of a system in only an optimal way in relation to an established goal”.<sup>129</sup> Unlike Wiener, Pladis did not regard “difference” as an essential condition of ordering. To briefly recapitulate his argument, Wiener held that difference was a basis of order, while entropy was a chaos of sameness.<sup>130</sup> In turn, Pladis emphasised that a structure (a basis of system) was “a whole of those stable relations of object or system, which ensure coherence and identity”.<sup>131</sup> This definition of structure could, in principle, be regarded in Saussure’s terms, according to which both “coherence” and “identity” were essentially produced by relational difference. However, Pladis did not emphasise this quality of differentiation. I suggest that Pladis’s position could be explained by the ideological implausibility of admitting that governance of a socialist society aimed to produce an internal difference.

It was precisely this type of selective translation of cybernetics to management that attracted criticism from Sovietologists. On the other hand, the American political scientist Hoffmann argued that systems theory (systems analysis) was attractive to CPSU leaders because of its neutrality, a “*lack of*

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<sup>127</sup> Romualdas Pladis, *Kibernetinių sistemų savybės* (Vilnius: Valstybinis V. Kapsuko universitetas, 1984).

<sup>128</sup> Pladis, 6.

<sup>129</sup> Pladis, 85.

<sup>130</sup> Hayles.

<sup>131</sup> Pladis, 45.

emphasis on purposes and motivations other than those prescribed by the central political authorities". According to Hoffmann, Soviet officials understood the system approach as first and foremost "a useful means of increasing the consistency and clarity of central directives and/or promoting national support for *their* policy preferences".<sup>132</sup> It seems that Hoffmann, like the Soviet policy-makers before him, considered the system-cybernetic machinery to be neutral and devoid of meaning. In this way, another fundamental principle of cybernetics was ignored, namely, that of the non-neutrality of the instrument of observation in relation to the process observed. As Wiener pointed out, information always comes at a certain cost of energy. However, my purpose is not to check whether Wiener's cybernetic principles were "correctly translated" into the Soviet language of management. Instead, I would like to stress that in order to translate cybernetics into the Soviet ideological language of politics and society, some conditions had to be met. It seemed that Lithuanian writers on management were much more restricted translators of cybernetics than were their Russian colleagues.

Cybernetic control was a constitutive part of a particular discourse and technology of governance that, in the scholarship, was often attributed to "developed" socialism.<sup>133</sup> Thus far I have charted the key features of the method for introducing cybernetic control into Soviet management discourses. Now, it is time to explore how cybernetic technologies, or computers and computer systems, were introduced into management practices. Odd Arne Westad, for example, insisted that the most significant outcome of the Cold War was the development of electronic communication technologies, particularly the computer, which assisted rather than hindered information transmission.<sup>134</sup> In the next section, I will show that machinery and the philosophy of cybernetic steering was not neutral with regard to its object, society and organisations (and in the next chapter, culture).

### *b) Cybernetic Machines of Management*

In 2003, Agar metaphorically called the computer a "government machine".<sup>135</sup> Intriguingly, in the 1970s, a computer as a "government machine" was not a metaphor but a fixed technical term for a Soviet management theoretician. Take as an example the slim volume entitled *Theory and Use of Government Ma-*

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<sup>132</sup> Hoffmann, "Soviet Perspectives...", 123.

<sup>133</sup> On leadership under "developed socialism" see Jeremi Suri, "The Promise and Failure of 'Developed Socialism': The Soviet 'Thaw' and the Crucible of the Prague Spring, 1964-1972," *Contemporary European History* 15, no.2 (2006), 135-136. Attributing "cybernetic management" to the Thaw, Suri rather focused on the continuation of the centralised Party leadership style as opposed to hopes for reforms. But his focus on foreign policy and top leadership prevented him from noticing how wide-spread cybernetic discourse was.

<sup>134</sup> See for example, Odd Arne Westad, "The New International History of the Cold War: Three (Possible) Paradigms," *Diplomatic History* 24, no.4 (2000), 558-561.

<sup>135</sup> Agar.

*chines*, published in Kaunas, Lithuania in 1976. According to the author of the technical manual, a “machine of governance” was any “digital device in a centralised governance and control system”.<sup>136</sup> It is important to note that the Soviet Lithuanian engineer determined that a “digital machine of governance” could work only as part of a centralised system of governance and control (*valdymo ir kontrolės*).<sup>137</sup>

As was argued in the previous section, governance of both organisations and entire sectors was translated into cybernetic steering of systems in managerial theory. Similarly, the administrative actions of accounting and calculation had to be translated and entered into “machines of governance”. Cybernetic control was technically embodied in computers and embedded in other technological and social networks.<sup>138</sup> In the Soviet Union, such networks were usually called *automated management systems* (AMS). As Vidmer noted, AMS was “the most significant practical thrust of the cybernetic school” in Soviet management.<sup>139</sup> Indeed, these systems were sometimes called “cybernetic management systems”.<sup>140</sup>

In Soviet texts, automated management systems were defined in both broad and narrow terms. A broad definition was offered in a monograph about AMS published in Lithuanian SSR (1980). It defined an “automated management system” as both material and intellectual machinery, which involved

A whole series of economic-mathematical methods, computing technologies, automatics and means of communications of governance, which enables the governing apparatus of an organisation (an enterprise, a ministry, an agency) to more efficiently govern an object.<sup>141</sup>

A more narrow definition designated AMS as a computer-based set of programmes for accounting and other data processing to be used for governing purposes. However, as Conyngham noted, the Soviet AMS was formulated as “a man-machine decision-making system, in which some previously human decisions are transferred to the machine and in which all planning and opera-

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<sup>136</sup> J. Punys, *Valdymo mašinų teorija ir panaudojimas* (Kaunas: KPI, 1976), 3.

<sup>137</sup> Punys, 3.

<sup>138</sup> Edwards; Agar.

<sup>139</sup> Vidmer, 420.

<sup>140</sup> My translation of AMS (AVS in Lithuanian, ASU in Russian) is based on the translation as in Paul R. Josephson, *New Atlantis Revisited: Akademgorodok, the Siberian City of Science* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997). While Josephson and others used the Russian ASU in their English texts, I will use the English abbreviation AMS. There have been some other translations. For example, an “automated system of administration” was used in Conyngham, “Technology and Decision Making...,” 428. The translations “automated information system,” “automated control system” and “automated governance system” also occurred. In Lithuanian texts they have been abbreviated to AVS (*automatinės valdymo sistemos*).

<sup>141</sup> Antanas Čepelė, *Automatizuotos valdymo sistemos ir skaičiavimo technika Tarybų Lietuvoje (patirtis ir perspektyvos)* (Vilnius: Mintis, 1980), 8-9.

tional management processes are optimised”.<sup>142</sup> That such a definition was rooted in military control engineering had been pointed out quite early.<sup>143</sup> Since the texts I analysed dealt primarily with the management of larger sectors, beyond the management of industrial enterprises, the broad definition was usually assumed.

As outlined in the previous section, management was redefined as a practice that, to a large extent, had to deal with increasing flows of information. In his influential *Introduction to AMS* (1972), the Russian computer scientist and mathematician Viktor M. Glushkov argued that the contemporary economy faced a problem of an “informational barrier” that obstructed the decision-making process. Overcoming the “informational barrier” involved improving a wide range of actions, such as methods of gathering and processing information, procedures for regulating supply and demand, and ways of preparing and making decisions.<sup>144</sup> It was the task of AMS to assist heterogeneous management by facilitating information flows.

In a way, Glushkov saw computer systems as viable substitutes for a regulatory market mechanism and, hence, the best fit, politically, for a state socialist system.<sup>145</sup> Therefore, for Glushkov the computer was a political machine, a life-support system for the Soviet economy. There were, of course, limits. According to Glushkov, “even if one had a powerful electronic computing machine (EVM), it would be meaningless to pack the entire economy into it”. Instead, he argued, “an effective man-machine system should be created in which the creative potential of people would be most fully used and which would become an organic part of an entire complex mechanism of regulation, which is the process of governing economy”.<sup>146</sup> As noted by Vidmer, Glushkov did not foresee a greater transformative power for cybernetic technologies in Soviet governance. The very definition of cybernetics in the Kyiv school was limited to the transfer of information without transforming existing organisations. For example, the Kyiv edition of the encyclopaedia of cybernetics claimed that “cybernetics is a science about general laws of receiving, storing, transmitting and transforming information in complex systems of governance. ... Here the systems of governance refer not only to technical, but also biological, administrative and social systems. The examples of very complex systems of governance are the systems of live organisms, especially the human organism, and also the apparatuses for governing human society”.<sup>147</sup> Thus, like Kubilius Glushkov saw computers as a

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<sup>142</sup> Conyngham, *The Modernization of Soviet Industrial Management*, 103.

<sup>143</sup> Robert W. Campbell, “Management Spillovers from Soviet Space and Military Programmes,” *Soviet Studies* 23, 4 (1972), 587.

<sup>144</sup> Viktor M. Glushkov, *Vvedeniie v ASU* (Kiyv: Tekhnika, 1972), 11.

<sup>145</sup> Glushkov, 11, 12.

<sup>146</sup> Glushkov, 14.

<sup>147</sup> *Entsiklopediia kibernetiki. Vol.I.* (Kiyv: Glavnaiia redaktsiia ukraiinskoi sovetskoi entsiklopedii, 1974), 440.

tool that would ensure faster and more efficient processing of information in existing administrative structures.<sup>148</sup>

According to McHenry and Goodman, the pilot project of designing such computer applications attached to the State Network of Computer Centres dated to 1963. Transport was the first sphere to see civic applications of AMS, as they were designed for scheduling truck routes (by the way, NOT's first applications were for the railroads in 1920).<sup>149</sup> In Lithuania, the first AMS were put in use in 1969.<sup>150</sup> In the Soviet Union, from 1965 to 1985, about 7,500 automated management systems for enterprises, accompanied by several hundred ministry-level systems, were created. These approximate numbers implied that only 7.5 percent of organisations had such automated management systems.<sup>151</sup> Data published later show further increases.

*Table 3. New AMS in the Soviet Union, 1966-89*<sup>152</sup>

	1966-70	1971-75	1976-78	1981-89
AMS-enterprises	151	838	210	2,474
AMS-technological processes	170	564	590	3,548
AMS-territorial organs	61	631	180	1,081
AMS-ministries and departments	19	168	45	545
ASOI (Information processing systems)	13	108	55	2,165
TOTAL AMS	414	2,309	1,080	15, 580

Table 3 demonstrates that the number of newly created AMS increased from 1978 to 1989. After a decline in the second half of the 1970s, AMS experienced a kind of boom in the 1980s, especially in the ministries. However, the useful-

<sup>148</sup> In Lithuania, on using Minsk-32 computers for assisting the processes of administrative documentation in the State Plan Committee, the Council of Ministers and the Vilnius City Executive Committee, see Almantas Butkus, Algimantas Stasys Kupčinskas, *Ministerijų ir žinybų direktivinių potvarkių vykdymo automatizuotos kontrolės sistemos naudojimo patirtis. Analitinė apžvalga* (Vilnius: LIMTI, 1978); Juozas Zujus, *Vadovas ir informacija* (Vilnius: Mintis, 1976), 11-18.

<sup>149</sup> For NOT in railroads, see Beissinger, 35-36.

<sup>150</sup> Julija Birbilienė, "AVS kūrimo tendencijos ir tikslingumas," *Mokslas ir technika* 1 (1984), 32.

<sup>151</sup> McHenry and Goodman, 1034.

<sup>152</sup> Source: *SSSR v tsifrah v 1978 godu* (Moscow, 1976), 76 cf Conyngham, "Technology and Decision Making...", 430; *SSSR v tsifrah v 1985 godu*; *SSSR v tsifrah v 1990 godu* (Moscow: Goskomstat SSSR, 1991), 186. Please note that the total number of AMS includes more types of AMS than represented in Table 3.

ness of AMS was already being contested by their contemporaries. An analysis by a Lithuanian economist revealed that from 1970 to 1980, about 57 percent of AMS in Lithuanian enterprises did not cut down on expenses as had been expected.<sup>153</sup>

AMS was superimposed onto the Soviet politico-administrative system. Five hierarchical levels were distinguished. First, directive organs of governance (CC (LCP), LSSR SS Presidium, LSSR CM) were to use automated systems for information processing. Second, AMS were to be used by inter-branch governing organs (State Planning Committee, Central Statistical Agency, the Ministry of Finance, State and Construction Bank, State Work Committee among others). Further, separate AMS were to be devised for branch ministries and agencies, territorial organs of governance, enterprises and trusts. By the late 1970s, AMS were used for calculating statistics in the planning sector; these statistics would cover culture and science as well. Culture and education were included in “the complex of branch governing”; this is why, in 1990, AMS would be designed for the Ministry of Culture.<sup>154</sup> An integrated data basis was perceived as being a pressing necessity; yet the author noted that by the late 1970s it was still only a theoretical experiment.

In summary, this section argued that AMS were the most visible materialisation but also the discursive embodiment of cybernetic governance. In the next section, I will show that, in reality, economic relations in the Soviet Union were not entirely structured according to the centralised system of control. Amazing as it might seem, this lack of centralisation and ordering of the Soviet economy was revealed by concrete applications of AMS. Though intended to assist the assumed centralisation and *slazhennost*, the real outcome of the application of cybernetic technology was the unmasking of informal Soviet organisational practices.

### *c) Limitations of Industrial AMS*

Calls for the wide application of “cybernetic management” mushroomed in official discourses. By the 1970s, special design bureaus were established and AMS proliferated. The technical possibilities of AMS induced a new way of thinking about governability. This, for example, was clearly expressed by the LCP Central Committee secretary for ideology:

Contemporary enterprises often resemble laboratories of scientific research; production processes are “scientificised”, partially liberated from previously hard physical labour. There is a new type of worker, one who is more educated, professionally trained, and better qualified. This is why it is said that science, which has always played quite an important role in soci-

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<sup>153</sup> Birbilienė, 32.

<sup>154</sup> Čepelė, 83-84, 87.

ety, is now becoming a real productive force [...] Scientific and technical revolutions demand an all-encompassing perfection of governance [*valdy-mas*]. *Governance becomes science*. This means that it is vital to create and widely apply automated planning and control systems first and foremost in separate departments, territorial organisations, industrial associations, and enterprises, so that in the future, a general automated system of information processing and collecting can be made, one that would serve the accounting, planning and governing of the national economy, and would be based on the state computing centres and automated connections... [The italics are mine – E.R.].<sup>155</sup>

It can be argued that designing and installing AMS was the new form of Soviet scientific management. But did the possibility become a material reality? Both Soviet and Western scholars noted that AMS largely failed to restructure existing organisational forms. Hoffmann and Conyngham pointed out that although some projects of AMS did strive to restructure management and organisations, most of them were superimposed on existing routine practices and hierarchical relations.<sup>156</sup> One of the reasons for this was that the foremost goal of AMS was to improve centralised control.<sup>157</sup> On the other hand, as Hoffmann argued elsewhere, scientific and technological resources were in no way the most important resources that enabled the Soviet leaders to maintain their control.<sup>158</sup> Retrospectively, a Lithuanian mathematician considered that the AMS boom should be taken with a grain of salt:

[...] Hundreds of thousands of *AMS* were created in the Soviet Union, and in Lithuania, at least forty. Thus, our joke, perhaps not without a sound basis, was that they were “absolutely not automatic, they did not control and they were not systems at all”.<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> Barkauskas, *Kultūra ir visuomenė*, 211.

<sup>156</sup> Soviet theoreticians sought to “improve the procedures” rather than to set new goals. See the book review by Hoffmann, “The ‘Scientific Management’ of Soviet Society,” 60; Conyngham, “Technology and Decision Making...,” 442.

<sup>157</sup> As McHenry and Goodman pointed out, the ultimate ambition for computerised centralisation was the OGAS project, the Statewide Automated System for the Collection and Processing of Data for Accounting, Planning and Managing of the National Economy. Ironically, the deadline for the system was 1990. McHenry and Goodman, 1036; Erik P. Hoffmann, “Soviet Views of ‘The Scientific-Technical Revolution’,” *World Politics* (1978), 615-644; Conyngham, “Technology and Decision Making...”.

<sup>158</sup> As he put it, “a computerised informational system will probably only be as important as the Soviet leaders desire it to be or can induce middle- and lower-level officials to make or let it be. This is not to deny that computerisation will have some important effects of its own, but rather to suggest that the central Party elite may have ample resources (nontechnical and technical) to control its uses and to cope with its unintended consequences,” Hoffmann, “Technology, Values and Political Power,” 412.

<sup>159</sup> Interview with a mathematician, Tomas, Vilnius, December 2005.

However, in historiography, AMS were described as a source of Baltic pride. For example, the historians Taagepera and Misiunas pointed out that AMS were “actively” developed in the Baltic republics and in Estonia, in particular, served as “laboratories” for the Soviet Union.<sup>160</sup> Indeed, as of the mid-1960s, automated management systems were being designed in Akademgorodok, Novosibirsk, Russia,<sup>161</sup> the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences (1967) and the Estonian Academy of Sciences (1969).<sup>162</sup> In both Lithuania and Estonia, the first AMS sought to rationalise cargo transport routes, which were considered to be particularly ineffective. However, the scientists interviewed recalled that particular project with a good deal of irony. In an interview, the Lithuanian mathematician told me about the first AMS, which was designed in cooperation with the Mathematics and Cybernetics Institute and the LSSR Ministry of Transport. It was the “first attempt to use computers, not for calculation, but for solving control problems in Lithuania”:

But I will tell you the solution! [...] There were no computers that were suitable for transmitting information. Available options were to use the telephone or take the information to another location by car. There was also a more rational version: to manually put down the information, print it on punch-tapes and transmit them via the telephone network. This way was rather unreliable, but worked with some duplication. So the data was sent to the Computation Centre [at the Academy of Sciences]; we would enter the data from the punch-tape into a *BESM II* computer and then do our calculations with a specially created programme, transfer the calculations back onto the punch-tape and then send them to the respective offices so that they could print out the routes.

There you go. One would not call this an automated control system. “Automated” – perhaps when the participation of a man is less important, but here everything is done by a man.<sup>163</sup>

This quote reveals that technical reasons prevented putting automated management systems into practice. Like Castells, my informants pointed out that the biggest problem was a lack of communication technology. In the first half of the 1980s, the Soviet Union had nearly six times fewer telephones than the United States, while the density of Soviet telephone lines made up only a quarter of the average in Western Europe.<sup>164</sup> Further, in line with Western science historians,

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<sup>160</sup> Misiunas and Taagepera, 234. I am against such use of the “laboratory” notion, which otherwise is quite popular among political scientists. A country cannot be seen as a laboratory for the simple reason that is not transportable: it cannot be duplicated and assembled elsewhere.

<sup>161</sup> Josephson, *New Atlantis Revisited*, 150-153.

<sup>162</sup> Akademgorodok date is based on Josephson, *New Atlantis Revisited*, Estonian date on Misiunas and Taagepera, 234; and Lithuanian date on the author’s communication with Sapagovas.

<sup>163</sup> Interview with a mathematician, Tomas, Vilnius, December 2005.

<sup>164</sup> Ganley, 17-18.

the Soviet Lithuanian scientists who were my interviewees for this study noted an important problem, namely, that the computer was treated first and foremost as a “super-calculator” and not as a communication device.<sup>165</sup>

Centralisation of the centres of calculation was also a serious problem. For instance, in order to obtain the necessary calculations, an enterprise had to turn to the Academy of Sciences or a few other institutions. In 1968, there were only nine electronic calculating machines in Lithuania, the most powerful of which, the *BESM-4M* was about 40 times slower than the newest Soviet computer, the *BESM-6M*, and probably a hundred times slower than the most advanced Western computers at that time.<sup>166</sup> Beginning in the 1970s, the situation improved. For example, in 1972, 18 computation centres and 29 other agencies that had computers (mainly *BESM*, *Minsk* and *Rūta-110*) were operating in the republic. The services of the centres were used by more than 400 enterprises, and they employed about 1,800 technical staff. However, the computers were underused: in the second half of 1971, the machines were used, on average, 6.9 hours per day despite their capacity to operate for no fewer than 18 hours. Various reasons were cited to explain this situation: the computers were incompatible (in 1972 there were 11 types of ESM operating in Lithuania), the information transmission and storing technology was undersupplied, and maintenance was bad.<sup>167</sup>

A lack of incentives from the users’ side also played an important role. Many Soviet managers, as the historians of Soviet economy have pointed out, did not always need efficient solutions. In their own different ways, planners, administrators and managers were focused on surviving under the conditions of a permanent deficit.<sup>168</sup> For example, take an illustrative story about testing AMS at the enterprise management level, created by the Bureau for Design and Construction of Automated Control Systems:

Once, the Bureau created a programme for managing trade flows for the Vilnius Department Store. Well, it turned out that they had to test it somewhere. But to have precise accounting would have been idiotic in those

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<sup>165</sup> See Graham, *Science in Russia...*; Manuel Castells and Emma Kiselyova, *The Collapse of Soviet Communism: A View from the Information Society* (Berkeley: University of California, 1995). Rudokas described an attempt to create “an electronic computing complex for governance of a middle size firm.” The device was called *Rūta-110* and included a central processor that was connected to the terminals for information transfer from individual work-places as well as an optical reading device *R-701*, earlier created by Laimutis Telksnys. However, production and realisation of the machine were slow, and subsequently the focus returned to smaller devices (*M5000*, *M5010*, *M5100*), dedicated to statistical calculations of mostly economic data. Rudokas, 109.

<sup>166</sup> Mifodijus Sapagovas, “ESM ir mokslas,” *Mokslas ir technika* 10 (1968), 11.

<sup>167</sup> Jonas Černikovas, “Efektyviau naudoti ESM,” *Mokslas ir technika* 4 (1972), 2, 3.

<sup>168</sup> As V. Girdzijauskas, the historian of the Computer Factory wrote about the first production of cash registers in 1957, “there are so many problems with the new production. No one wants to buy”. The complaint was commented on by Rudokas: the reason was that “wooden abacus calculators were more convenient for salesmen in many ways,” Rudokas, 162.

times! Because one had to trade everything unofficially [*šmugeliuoti*], to bribe, beginning with the smallest store in the hierarchy and continuing to the top level; you know, everything was acquired through *blat*.<sup>169</sup> And when they had to test the programme for accounting for flows of goods, they chose a warehouse in which unsellable goods were stored. And to everyone's surprise, it appeared that there were a large number of unsold sheepskin coats. In those days, to get such a coat was a privilege reserved for only very highly placed ladies. No one could believe this was possible. And it appeared that the programme worked very well indeed because the coats received never reached the store. Instead they were put aside with the unsellable goods... There were lots of similar examples.<sup>170</sup>

The success of the AMS applications for planning at the level of union-republics and ministerial branches was bounded by the arbitrary nature of the all-Union resource distribution:

For example, Latvians created a system that was based on the number of cars and depreciation norms, and then with its help, they ordered a certain number of tires from the centre. In Moscow, they looked at the order and simply halved the requested amount and that was that. Meanwhile, Lithuanians travelled to Moscow with approximate numbers in mind, intuitively guessing how much they would be cut down and then received the needed amount. Precise accounting made no sense!<sup>171</sup>

In this chapter I argued that cybernetic control provided Soviet managerial thought with both a vocabulary and a model of governance. These were disseminated through educational institutions and materialised in techno-scientific administrative machinery, namely, automated management systems. However, the distribution of cybernetic steering under the name of AMS was limited, both materially and intellectually. For example, in 1984, some complained that no one had written a doctoral dissertation on AMS. The training of AMS specialists was also criticised as being insufficient.<sup>172</sup> Thus, the Soviet translation of cybernetics to governance was complex. In order to provide the reader with a more nuanced picture, I will conclude with an analysis of the retrospective accounts of the Lithuanian scientists I interviewed.

d) *“Viskas buvo visai kitaip”*

As mentioned in the introduction, I was quite struck to have recognised a cybernetic model in the cultural policy discourses. My interest was further reinforced

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<sup>169</sup> For more about *blat* as an alternative, informal economy in Russia, see Ledeneva.

<sup>170</sup> Interview with a physicist, Pranas, Vilnius, December 2005.

<sup>171</sup> Interview with a physicist, Pranas, Vilnius, December 2005.

<sup>172</sup> Baskas, 22.

by existing Western scholarship on the subject, which emphasised the overwhelming significance and span of influence of cybernetics in the Soviet Union. However, the Soviet Lithuanian scientists I interviewed appeared to be rather sceptical about my intention to search for cybernetics under Soviet rule. As one informant put it (after I had explained my interest in the role of cybernetics in formulating Soviet governance), “everything was completely different” (*viskas buvo visai kitaip*).<sup>173</sup> He may have been the most straightforward, but he was not alone in his attitude. Quite a few scholars stressed that, “in reality”, cybernetic theory and technologies were rather marginal in Soviet governance, mainly because, as they put it, “everything was much more primitive”, “brutal” or “personal”. I believe this deserves more thought. In the language of my informants, “technology” was constructed as something “non-primitive”, sophisticated, requiring explanation and expertise. It was “the social” which was seen as “primitive” and “brutal”. In other words, Soviet governance was seen as an exceptionally “social” sphere by the Soviet scientists: a brutal world populated only by human beings, their groups and struggles of these groups. According to my informants, in this world, even bureaucratic hierarchies were perceived as secondary to particular individuals and their groups. Even more telling, they doubted the quest for a cybernetic cultural policy (mainly for the economic reasons outlined in the previous chapter). Their scepticism also boiled down to doubts as to the “rationality” of the Soviet regime: they rendered Soviet politics and governance as largely absurd, faulty, laughable or frightening.

They looked back on Soviet governance as anything but rational. Therefore, the informants insisted, the Soviet regime was not capable of being rationalised, and this is why scientific technologies did not play a bigger role in governance. One of them classified my interest in the extra-scientific role of “cybernetics” as “purely academic”.<sup>174</sup> On the basis that the Soviet attempts at “cybernetic governance” failed due to the lack of rationality and science in executing governance, the informants stated that “scientific governance” was carried out in a way that was not “scientific/cybernetic”, and therefore, governance was not “scientific/cybernetic either”.

All of these distinctions, which my informants pointed out in their speeches, were indeed very important and productive in the development of a Soviet cybernetic discourse of governance. The following chapters will show how both hybridisation and purification strategies were mobilised in describing culture, techno-science and governance. Latour noted that no science was carried out in a purely “scientific” way, but rather was conducted via very heterogeneous practices.<sup>175</sup> The same can be said about “scientific governance”: as I have demonstrated, its scientific components were a subject of translation, which involved many adjustments.

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<sup>173</sup> Interview with a cultural operator, Viktoras, Vilnius, April 2006.

<sup>174</sup> Interview with a cultural operator, Viktoras, Vilnius, April 2006.

<sup>175</sup> Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*.

## Conclusion

Despite being retrospectively devalued by the Soviet Lithuanian scientists, the principles of systems and cybernetic control arguably became important components of Soviet managerial discourse.<sup>176</sup> In the Soviet management texts, the system-cybernetic theories were rewritten in accordance with the administrative structures (hierarchical centralised administration) and along political lines (an emphasis on the necessity of coercion and defence from the outside). Most importantly, cybernetic governance discourse significantly reformulated the old discourse of planning. As of the 1960s, in the Soviet mentality of governance, “planning” simply became part of broader, more advanced cybernetic governance (*valdymas, upravlienie*).

During de-Stalinisation, and especially in the post-Khrushchev period, scientifically grounded and technically empowered administration, in keeping with the objectives set by the Party, was officially presented as the key instrument in ensuring social order (Afanas’ev). Thus, the Soviet discourses of management by default were not confined to the management of organisations, but were extended and applied to society and culture. Systems theory and cybernetic control was translated into a language of societal management with certain modifications. From an ideological standpoint, it was necessary to omit the projected, constructed nature of the systems because this idea clashed with the Marxist-Leninist notion of “objective” natural law, such as class divisions, which were based on production. Second, an important cybernetic postulate, which states that no technology of measurement and control is neutral towards its object and subject and is indeed productive towards both of them, was disregarded. The idea of the neutrality of science and technology was officially escalated, as it was used to justify the techno-scientific transfer from the West to the Soviet Union.

As the analysis of the management textbooks has shown, cybernetic steering became an integral part in theorising the management of organisations. My impression is that the translation from cybernetic science to management theory transpired rather smoothly, facing little resistance. Cybernetic theory and technologies were rather easily accommodated into the broader Soviet socialist mindset, which was concerned with large-scale planning and territorial integration through a centralised hierarchy. This mindset required an operation with extremely large quantities of data, to which computers were immediately applicable (Glushkov). Yet it is striking that the applications of cybernetic technologies to economic management were counter-productive, since they disagreed with the pervasive informality of the economic sector.

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<sup>176</sup> A proof is that the contemporary Lithuanian management textbooks still refer to cybernetics and GST as “the science of governance”. See Fabijonas Saulius Butkus, *Organizacijos ir vadyba* (Vilnius: Alma littera, 1996); Povilas Zakarevičius, *Vadybos arimuose* (Kaunas: Vytauto Didžiojo universitetas, 2005); Zakarevičius, *Vadyba*.

Yet historically, culture, especially the arts and humanities, have had their own rationales. The Soviet government and the Communist Party were self-proclaimed patrons of the arts and the (economic and ideological) providers of cultural operators. Once at work, the cybernetic mentality of large-scale control could not help but enter the sphere of cultural administration and policy. As demonstrated in this chapter, material cybernetic machinery exposed a discrepancy between official ideal management and actual practices. But what were the consequences of cybernetic governance as intellectual machinery? The following chapter discusses the discursive aspects of Soviet cultural policy and demonstrates that the translation from cybernetic theory and technology to governance/management of culture was not a smooth undertaking. I will now proceed to elucidate the way in which the postulate of a neutral, universal system-cybernetic approach was adopted, but also contested and criticised by Lithuanian intellectuals and cultural operators.

## VI. Cybernetic Rationalisation of Culture: From Knowledge to Steering

In 1962, *Pravda* announced that “modern cybernetics – the science of the rational, optimal control of complex processes and operations – could be looked upon in the USSR as the successor and heir to the scientific organisation of labour”.<sup>1</sup> This quote said several things. First, it revealed that both previously banned disciplines – cybernetics and NOT (the “scientific organisation of labour”) of the 1920s – were proclaimed to be fully legitimate sciences. Second, it redefined the traditional object of Party control, the basis of society (“labour”), as consisting of “complex processes and operations”. In the Soviet Union, the changing notion of labour could not leave the notion of culture unaffected: in Marxism-Leninism, culture, defined as a “superstructure”, depended on production relations. If cybernetics was the science of labour management, it was also the science of “culture” and its governance. In the previous chapter I demonstrated that cybernetics and systems theory provided the Soviet governor with tools for knowing and controlling an object and process of governance. How were cybernetic knowledgability and the governability of culture formulated by Lithuanian cultural intellectuals and policy makers?

This chapter, which deals mainly with the Lithuania of the 1960s and 1970s, analyses how cybernetic control was translated in the public Soviet Lithuanian cultural policy discourses – in the cultural press and speeches made by highly placed officials. It must be remembered that de-Stalinisation in Lithuanian SSR coincided with the internal pacification achieved by the successful repression of the armed resistance. The cultural sector recovered during this period. In 1956, the classicist 18<sup>th</sup> century Vilnius Cathedral was reopened as a picture gallery under the State Vilnius Art Museum. By the 1960s, the collectivisation of the countryside was largely completed, and the ambitious projects of industrialisation were under way. The urban population grew rapidly.<sup>2</sup> At the same time that the Vilnius Computer Factory was built and operational and the Institute of Physics and Mathematics was developing automated management systems, architectural heritage had been restored or reconstructed, as in the case of the Vilnius Castle Museum, which opened in 1960. Despite Khrushchev’s criticism in 1961, the insular, medieval Trakai Castle was eventually

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<sup>1</sup> *Pravda*, 24 October 1962, cf Samuel Lieberstein, “Technology, Work, and Sociology in the USSR: The NOT Movement,” *Technology and Culture* 16, no.1 (1975), 62.

<sup>2</sup> *Lietuva 1940-1990*.

rebuilt (1962), whilst the folk culture heritage was institutionalised in the Rumšiškės Open-Air Museum (1966).<sup>3</sup> Various museums were consolidated into the Lithuanian Art Museum in 1966. Further, the Museum of Lithuanian History and Ethnography was established in 1960 and opened in 1968; the Palanga Museum of Amber (1963) and the Art Exhibition Hall in Vilnius (1968) also opened. At that time, a new, less restricted cultural press emerged, with the appearance of the LSSR Ministry of Culture's magazine, *Domains of Culture* (1965, and the publication of the LSSR Writers' Union *Nemunas* (1967), which was dedicated to youth culture. Thus, the 1960s appear to have been a time of consolidation of the republic-wide institutional network of organisations for heritage, folk and professional high culture. After 1990, all of them would become "national" organisations, symbols of the sovereign Lithuanian nation. It seemed that the harsh experience of 15 post-war years receded into the background: the Lithuanian past was thoroughly Sovietised in history textbooks and museum displays. The 1960s could best be described as a period of organisational explosion in the cultural sphere in Lithuanian SSR.

As described earlier, the early 1960s were also the period of Soviet economic upheaval and achievements in space technologies. It is against this backdrop of enthusiasm and belief in the power of science and technologies that the ambition to scientifically (cybernetically) govern the organisationally consolidated sector of culture must be understood. The text of the 1963 speech, "What Is and Will Be New in Cultural Construction?", which was broadcast on Lithuanian radio, includes the following statement:

If, only recently we used to talk about communism as a theoretically grounded idea about the future of humanity, then last year the people of our country started to put the programme of building communism on the basis of concrete plans and scientifically grounded calculations into practice.<sup>4</sup>

The scientific-technical progress of the 1960s was publicly framed as proof of the success of the Soviet regime in Lithuania. Eager to demean the period of independence, in 1965, *Tiesa* claimed:

If the bourgeois Lithuanian industries could only provide such "very complicated" production, such as locks and axes, then today the republic's scientists and designers could create electronic computing machines, radio

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<sup>3</sup> As he put it, "The Lithuanian government started to reconstruct from ruins the palaces and castles of feudal rulers, many of which did not have historical value. Whereas there is not enough finance allocated for some other essential needs of the workers". For similar "wasting of national funds" Khrushchev criticised the construction of stadiums in Tbilisi and Kiyv. "Rech tovarishcha Khrushcheva," *Pravda*, 22 January 1961, 4.

<sup>4</sup> M.Požarskas speech on radio "Kas yra ir bus naujo kultūrinėje statyboje?" (17 January 1963), LLMA, f.342, ap.1, b.1164, l. 10.

and television equipment, and high-precision and other welding machines, which would raise their standing on the world market.<sup>5</sup>

In a way, the 1960s in Lithuanian SSR could be seen as an entirely new historical period, which eagerly sought to distance itself from both the interwar state and the recent Stalinist past.

This chapter is organised both chronologically and thematically. Based on an analysis of articles published in a monthly magazine *Domains of Culture*, it opens with an overview of a discussion between two exceptionally bright young Lithuanian intellectuals, which took place in the mid-1960s at the time of the Thaw in Lithuania. I argue that their debate concerned the purposefulness of translation from cybernetic science to cultural discourses. Why translate cybernetics to culture? Was it even possible to do so? After the events in Czechoslovakia in 1968, Lithuania saw the hardening of political control. At the same time, however, I will show that the cybernetic discourse spread and became a hegemonic language of cultural policy. I will then outline how the cybernetic model of the governance of culture manifested itself in the texts published by Soviet officials. Thus, this chapter delves into how the cybernetic mentality or way of thinking about governance was assembled in Soviet economic rationality-driven, calculation-based, cultural policy-making.

### *Why Bring Together Cybernetics and Culture? (1965-68)*

As discussed in the previous chapter, the intellectual agenda of cybernetics quickly expanded beyond electronic engineering. In the Soviet Union, the newly rehabilitated science attracted interest from individuals trained in various academic disciplines. Writers, linguists and philosophers delved into systems theory and cybernetics, seeing them as resources for new tools, which could make sense of their traditional spheres of inquiry.<sup>6</sup> However, combining culture and cybernetics did not turn out to be a straightforward task. In the Soviet policy discourses, culture and techno-science were mobilised to shape a Soviet society, but the roles and means envisaged for them were quite different. Thus, translation from sciences and technologies to culture was not a self-evident undertaking. Let me illustrate this with an example taken from the weekly *Literature and Art* (1958), published by the LSSR Writers' Union. The article, which was published the same year as Wiener's *The Human Use of Human Beings*, was translated into Russian. It described the special role of a writer in the context of industrialisation and scientific progress:

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<sup>5</sup> "Nuo spynos iki elektroninės skaičiavimo mašinos," *Tiesa*, 4 June 1965, 3.

<sup>6</sup> See L.B. Pereverzev, *Iskusstvo i kibernetika* (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1966); Yurii Lotman and V. Petrov, eds., *Semiotics and Art-metrics: Contemporary Foreign Research* (Moscow, 1972); B. V. Biriukov, E.S. Geller, *Kibernetika v gumanitarnykh naukakh* (Moscow: Nauka, 1973).

[...] along with automatons, management of complex machines assisted by television technologies, computing machines do not only analyse and generalise elements of the production process, but also directly lead production...And here, more is needed than only a scientist's inventiveness or the shrewdness of an engineer or a worker; what is also required is a writer's passion, which would help to wipe away everything that is backward off the road.<sup>7</sup>

This quote implied that creativeness in science was of great importance because it produced the advanced "computing machines", which "lead the production process". Whereas the arts were associated with "passion" because they affected the emotions, the arts had to exercise a critical power in channelling innovation ("to wipe away everything that is backward"). The author, an economist, suggests that in the course of scientific-technological progress (STP), literature's role was to cultivate emotions rather than intellect. As I will demonstrate in greater detail, in the Soviet mentality regarding governance, creativity was identified with intellect and expressed, first and foremost, in the natural sciences. Indeed, this suggests that by 1958, creativity, associated with the natural sciences, was positioned beyond ideology. Because culture, especially the fine arts, was always seen by communists as an important tool for disseminating ideology,<sup>8</sup> literature in STP was supposed to perform a supportive, auxiliary role, not a leading one. As one Lithuanian instructor of ideology put it, "an intensive integration of material and spiritual culture takes place, an active process, in which science increasingly becomes a basis of production and politics, morality – a factor that cements all of society and art – an organiser of man's joy, an especially important precondition for his meaningful life and happiness".<sup>9</sup> At about the same time, a Russian literary scholar argued that "the artistic process is first of all, a progressive development of man's emotional-spiritual sphere, whereas art improves all spiritual capabilities through sensation".<sup>10</sup>

I think that it is precisely this approach to the role of the arts (and culture in general) in Soviet progress that, on the one hand, facilitated, but on the other, complicated translations of cybernetic principles into cultural policy. The theory of cybernetic control and its terms originated in spheres that were far removed from those of Soviet cultural policy (the arts, education, everyday culture). There was a strong perception that both the theory and the terms were alien to culture. The first protagonists in the culture/cybernetics debate were literary

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<sup>7</sup> J. Mairūnas, "Ekonomisto pastabos. Skaičiai, žmonės, ateitis," *Literatūra ir menas* 50 (1958), 1.

<sup>8</sup> As it was put by one Lithuanian philosopher, "ideology is impossible without knowledge, information, the means of influencing people's mind and feelings," Jonas Minkevičius, *Mokslo ir technikos revoliucija: procesas ir problemos* (Vilnius: Žinija, 1979), 65.

<sup>9</sup> Justinas Lazauskas, "Socialistinės kultūros samprata," *KB* 9 (1976), 19.

<sup>10</sup> A.G.Egorov, "Nauchno-tekhnicheskaja revoliutsiia i iskusstvo," in *Kontekst. Literaturno-teoreticheskie issledovaniia. 1973* (Moscow: Nauka, 1974), 77.

scholar Tomas Venclova and linguist Jonas Trinkūnas. Interestingly, their life stories were interwoven with the history of cybernetics.

Venclova was born in Klaipėda in 1937, the son of the writer and first Soviet Minister of Education Antanas Venclova. Brought up in a privileged *no-menklatura* family in Vilnius, Venclova studied Lithuanian philology at Vilnius University (VU). After graduation, he received a lecturer's position at VU, where he wrote his doctoral dissertation (*kandidat nauk*) under the supervision of the famous Russian semiotician Yurii Lotman, who was based at Tartu University, Estonia. Venclova was closely associated with the leading non-mainstream Russian poets and writers, especially Joseph Brodsky, and was later involved with Moscow dissidents, such as Alexander Ginsburg and others.

The other debater, Trinkūnas, was also born in Klaipėda (in 1939), but he grew up in Kaunas. As his talent for exact sciences already revealed itself in secondary school, he was admitted to the prestigious telemechanics faculty of the Moscow Energetics Institute in 1957. However, after 18 months in Moscow, young Trinkūnas decided that the technical sciences did not suit him, and he returned to Lithuania. After working for a year in the radio plant, he entered VU in 1960 to study the same subject as Venclova, Lithuanian philology. However, their paths did not cross for a few years.<sup>11</sup> Whilst studying Lithuanian, Trinkūnas chose a natural-scientific stream. Under the supervision of Zakarian, a scholar of Armenian origin, he specialised in machine translation. Zakarian's group maintained close contact with individuals who were conducting similar research at Leningrad University.

After receiving a degree in mathematical linguistics in 1965, Trinkūnas accepted a position at the Institute of Physics and Mathematics (LAS). He recalled that he did not foresee immediate success in machine translation, especially voice recognition, as it was not conceptually and technologically advanced at that stage (indeed, better results were achieved only about forty years later in Japan). Moreover, there were no positions available for this kind of research in Lithuania. Instead, he worked as a receptionist at the institute's computing centre.<sup>12</sup> Meanwhile, Venclova received a degree in Lithuanian literature and became a lecturer and research associate in VU's Lithuanian philology department. To jump ahead, Trinkūnas's debate with Venclova attracted the attention of the head of the philosophy department, the unorthodox Marxist Eugenijus Meškauskas, who hired Trinkūnas as a philosophy lecturer at VU in 1970.

Thus, the discussion that took place in 1965-66 between Venclova and Trinkūnas was a debate between two young, ambitious graduates: Trinkūnas and Venclova were 27 and 29 years old, respectively. It was also an interdisciplinary debate: both were trained in philology but interested in exact sciences. Venclova was arguably the first Lithuanian representative of humanities to publicly promote cybernetics. With a stronger background in cybernetic sciences, Trinkūnas took the opposite stance and harshly criticised the cybernetic vogue.

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<sup>11</sup> Interview with Jonas Trinkūnas, Vilnius, November 2007.

<sup>12</sup> Interview with Jonas Trinkūnas, Vilnius, November 2007.

He was sceptical about a belief in the omnipotent powers of artificial intelligence and computers and later got involved in reviving ethnic culture and pagan religion. I will now analyse the debate, as it was, in my view, largely about the very possibility of translating cybernetic control to culture and its management. I will show that, unlike Soviet management theorists, both Venclova and Trinkūnas understood and questioned cybernetics as an instrument for producing knowledge about culture and not the instruments of its control. Thus, a dissociation took place in their debate: they attempted to locate knowledge production outside of political control.

#### a) *Venclova versus Trinkūnas*

Up until now, the significance of Venclova's contribution to Lithuanian cultural discourses on techno-sciences has gone unnoticed, and quite unfairly so. It is important to note that Wiener's writings have never been translated into Lithuanian. To my knowledge, except for the translations into Russian (1958 and 1968), Wiener appeared only in Estonian (*Cybernetics* in 1961, *The Human Use of Human Beings* in 1969) in the Soviet Union. Venclova was one of the few humanistic intellectuals who popularised Wiener's ideas in Lithuanian. Furthermore, Venclova's book, *Golem or an Artificial Man: Conversations about Cybernetics* (Vilnius: Vaga, 1965), was probably the first non-specialist introduction, in Lithuanian, of cybernetics targeted at wider, particularly cultured audiences. True, there were other Lithuanian books that dealt with new techno-sciences and especially computers. Yet, *The Machines of Today and Future* (1964), for example, a book written by the Lithuanian theoretician of management and circulated in 8,000 copies, did not stir a wider intellectual debate.<sup>13</sup>

In both the Soviet Union and Lithuanian contexts, Venclova's books were timely.<sup>14</sup> The first, *Rockets, Planets and Us* (published in Vilnius by the State Publishing House of Belle-Lettres, 1962) dealt with the space sciences and was intended for younger audiences. It was warmly received.<sup>15</sup> But more impor-

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<sup>13</sup> See Algimantas Indriūnas, *Dabarties ir ateities mašinos* (Vilnius: Valstybinė politinės ir mokslinės literatūros leidykla, 1964).

<sup>14</sup> Around that time were published such books as Mikhail I. Levin, *Kibernetika vkhodit v zhizn': beseda o knigakh* (Leningrad, 1962), eds. V.A. Il'in, V.N. Kolbanovskii, E. Kol'man *Filosofskie voprosy kibernetiki* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo sotsial'no-ekonomicheskoi literatury, 1961). Besides Venclova's *Golem*, popular publications in Lithuanian about cybernetics were mostly translations from Russian, such as Levas Teplovas, *Kibernetika ir žmonija* (Vilnius: Mintis, 1965), Viktoras Pekelis, *Įvairenybės apie kibernetiką* (Vilnius, 1973). It is important to note, that unlike in the West, the Soviet books popularising cybernetics were published by major printing houses.

<sup>15</sup> A positive review by astronomer A. Juška was published in the LSSR Writers' Union's weekly newspaper *Literature and Art*. The reviewer congratulated Venclova's ability to describe scientific matters in language easily understandable "for anyone with eight years education". Though sceptical about the book's modernist design by Antanas Tarabilda which "would not be appreciated by natural scientists," Juška humorously noted that the book was of interest to all "kids up to seventy-years old". A. Juška, "Raketos, planetos ir mes..." *Literatūra ir menas* 4 (1963), 5. The reviewer emphasised that Lithuanian rocket science stretched back to the nineteenth century, when

tantly, it was his next book, *Golem or an Artificial Man*, which addressed a more mature readership, as it connected cybernetic control and computer technologies with biology, linguistics and literary theory, for example. Venclova acknowledges that he was, to use his own words, “modestly motivated” to write the books for financial reasons. In retrospect, Venclova did not consider those publications to be a distinctive professional achievement. In particular, he regretted his unsuccessful attempts to avoid mandatory quotes by Marx and Lenin in both books, but he had no choice but to insert them in the final stage of editing.<sup>16</sup> However, the books were professionally written, and their arguments contained very sophisticated reasoning regarding the influence of new science and technology on society, the arts and social and humanities scholarship. *Golem or an Artificial Man*, which stirred a public debate in the cultural press and inspired a special edition of *Domains of Culture*, was particularly popular.

Why did a young literary scholar become interested in cybernetics? When interviewed, Venclova attributed his interest in cybernetics to general curiosity about something “new” and “non-communist”, something that cut across traditional disciplinary boundaries.<sup>17</sup> His close relationship with his childhood friend, Ramūnas Katilius, who later became one of Lithuania’s leading semiconductor physicists, may well have had an important influence on him.<sup>18</sup> During his literary studies at VU, Venclova attended courses on logics and probability theory.<sup>19</sup>

In *Golem*, Venclova described cybernetics as a “science, maybe even an art of brave analogies” or a “style of thinking”.<sup>20</sup> In line with official Soviet discourse, Venclova translated Wiener’s “control” into *valdymas*, which he defined as the “transformation of knowledge received into signals, which steer [vairuoja] a machine (body). According to Venclova, to “regulate” means to receive and use information about the outcomes of one’s work”.<sup>21</sup> It is notable that Venclova translated “communication” into the Lithuanian *ryšys*, which in turn translates into the Russian *sviaz’*. Both *sviaz’* and *ryšys* have rather technical and material connotations, like the English “connection” (“communication” in a more general sense, just as in “mass communication” or “interaction” would be translated into the Lithuanian *komunikacija*). In turn, “feedback” was translated as *grįžtamasis ryšys* or *obratnaia sviaz’*.

Like Wiener, Venclova saw cybernetics as a science able to connect (and probably control) most diverse disciplines, including language. He argued that,

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the noble K. Semenavičius wrote a theoretical treatise on rockets that was translated into English, German and French.

<sup>16</sup> Unrecorded interview with Tomas Venclova, Vilnius, August 2005.

<sup>17</sup> Unrecorded interview with Tomas Venclova, Vilnius, August 2005.

<sup>18</sup> Interview with a physicist, Ramūnas Katilius, Vilnius, August 2005.

<sup>19</sup> According to contemporaries, though Kubilius was actively involved in popularising hard sciences among the humanities, the university study programme was never especially targeted at multi- or inter-disciplinarity. Interview with a cultural operator, Viktoras, Vilnius, April 2006.

<sup>20</sup> Tomas Venclova, *Golemas arba dirbtinis žmogus* (Vilnius: Vaga, 1965), 14, 124.

<sup>21</sup> Venclova, 14.

were we to understand communication (*ryšys*) as a process of receiving, storing and transmitting information, then the notion of societal communication would include languages and “artistic communication”. Venclova viewed his fascination with cybernetics as a “style of thinking”, and he saw computer technologies as a rich resource for humanities scholars and artists. Drawing on the famous Russian mathematician Andrei Kolmogorov, Venclova promoted “art-metrics” (*menometrija*), a new science that “measured the amount of information in art”. He argued that:

In general, cybernetic terms could be applied to art history and theory [*menotyra*]: there is an author-reader communication [*ryšys*] over several centuries and there is governance [*valdymas*] because a book educates us, and feedback because in a process of creation, images influence one another.<sup>22</sup>

Art-metrics was presented as an indisputably progressive development in the humanities. According to Venclova, mathematical methods would perform a controlling role if applied to cultural production:

Art-metrics wipes away a lot of garbage that has accumulated in art theory; criticism is no longer that uncertain and shaky deck on which only a great talent could remain on their feet. Mathematics regulates deceptive personal taste and preferences. Terms are made more precise.<sup>23</sup>

Thus, Venclova wanted to bring the natural sciences, particularly cybernetics, and the humanities closer together. However, the book was not only about bringing scholarly disciplines together. It proposed the redefinition of an entire world view, which embraced human beings, machines, texts and societies as flows, codes and feedbacks. Unlike Wiener’s *The Human Use of Human Beings*, it did not contain philosophical thrusts and social critique. Whilst the book’s title was most probably inspired by Norbert Wiener’s *God and Golem* (1963), Venclova did not engage more deeply in a discussion of the implications of cybernetics and religion, which was the focus of Wiener’s book. Under the conditions of Soviet censorship, public consideration of religion instantly implied paying lip service to the official ideology. This was especially true, since communists used science as the major foundation of atheism.<sup>24</sup> For example, the widespread museums of atheism actually displayed the history of modern science. In Vilnius, quite a few of these museums were located in churches, including the Vilnius University Museum of Science, located in the university chapel, and the Museum of Atheism in the Church of St.Kasimir – these are

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<sup>22</sup> Venclova, 102.

<sup>23</sup> Venclova, 102.

<sup>24</sup> Michael Froggatt, “Putting Science into Scientific Atheism,” a paper presented at BASEES conference, Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge, 31 March – 2 April, 2007.

perfect illustrations of Latour's argument that modern science is as equally grounded on a belief as is religion.

Venclova's second book was welcomed as being particularly timely by its reviewers, the Lithuanian physicist V. Lujanas and the literary scholar Algis Samulionis, as they noted a growing general interest in new sciences:

Today, people who were never interested in technology [*technika*] have become interested in what is going on in scientific laboratories, and they wish to orientate themselves in a flow of amazing new technical inventions and to understand their essence. There is no shortage of examples. Nowadays, it is more difficult to obtain tickets to lectures – even about the above-mentioned cybernetics – at the Moscow Museum of Polytechnics than to performances at the best theatres in the capital. In Kharkiv, a lecture about “thinking machines” was moved to a larger hall because the club that was hosting the event could not accommodate several hundred visitors. In Vilnius, the Actors' House opened a new season with a story about the principles of electronic machines.<sup>25</sup>

As mentioned earlier, Venclova was enthusiastic about cybernetics and mathematical methods in general, as he saw them as an instrument capable of making more precise cultural analyses and critical judgments. Ironically, his reviewers complained about the lack of precision in Venclova's use of cybernetic terms. Although they evaluated Venclova's book as “sufficiently qualified and reasonable”, they were especially sceptical about Venclova's “metaphoric use of some terms”.<sup>26</sup> This, I suggest, demonstrates that a precise transfer was expected when translating from hard science. Yet *Golem* received more praise for its balanced critical scholarly considerations and the popularisation of science than did *Rockets, Planets and Us*.

However, elsewhere the very attempt to translate from cybernetics to humanities and culture was criticised. In 1966, shortly after the publication of *Golem*, Jonas Trinkūnas published an article entitled “The Era of Robots or People?” in the “thick” literary journal, *Victory* (Pergalė).<sup>27</sup> It has to be noted that in the 1960s, *Victory* published quite a few articles on science, particularly genetics, and thus Trinkūnas's article was quite at home in that otherwise literary journal.<sup>28</sup> Just like Venclova, Trinkūnas acknowledged the all-pervasive

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<sup>25</sup> V. Lujanas, A. Samulionis, “Pasakojimai apie kibernetiką,” *Literatūra ir menas* 16 (1966), 7.

<sup>26</sup> Lujanas, Samulionis, 7.

<sup>27</sup> The thick literary magazine *Victory* had been published since 1944, but its roots can be traced to two issues of a literary supplement of the Lithuanian Unit of the Soviet Army newspaper *Motherland Calls* (Tėvynė šaukia), published in 1942. “Taip kūrėsi Tarybų Lietuvos periodika,” KB 11 (1970), 63-64. In 1991, *Victory* was reorganised and renamed into *Years* (Metai).

<sup>28</sup> A critique of Trofim Lysenko and a detailed presentation of Gregor Mendel's theory was published in 1966 under the rubric “Publicistika,” Jonas Rubikas, “Genetika vakar ir šiandien,” *Pergalė* 3 (1966), 110-127. The author noted that Lithuanian scholars did not suffer from Lysenko's

influence of cybernetics: “it is a creation of our days that defines us. To an increasing extent, everything that surprises and promises speaks in the language of this science”.<sup>29</sup> The translation from a scientific domain of cybernetics to humanities and arts, Trinkūnas admitted, was already happening. It was perceived as a fact of life in the mid-1960s.

Trinkūnas operated with a more narrow definition of “cybernetics” than did Venclova. He postulated that cybernetics consisted of “mathematics, logics and electronic calculation machines”.<sup>30</sup> Unlike Venclova, Trinkūnas did not elevate cybernetics to a “style of thinking”. Because of his more in-depth education in the technical sciences, Trinkūnas saw cybernetics as a cross-over between fundamental science and technical applications. His article was not very enthusiastic about translating cybernetics into other spheres. Trinkūnas was concerned about “a threatening, creeping plant of scientific reality, possibility and fantasy”, which was about to strangle culture.<sup>31</sup> True, he also acknowledged the fresh, innovative contribution of the new science to traditional disciplines, which it “invaded” because it was “convinced of its own universality”. Nonetheless, this conviction in its own universality was wrong. Trinkūnas argued that cybernetics was simply unable to admit that it was just another historically bounded science:

We often forget that we are children of a certain epoch and inclined to understand everything from our point of view. The history of science can provide us with many pedagogical examples in which certain features of studied phenomena were overrated and treated as being absolutely essential. In the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, mechanical science flourished. When Harvey discovered blood circulation, he looked for mechanical features in it. The science of our times is most definitely inclined towards formalism. The power of exact, mathematical methods is well-acknowledged. A search for mathematical structures and processes is launched everywhere, even where it is not needed [...] Most often, old truths are expressed with new signs. It cannot be otherwise. Every century gives us a new weapon, and each time it seems that the ultimate knowledge of nature is close at hand.<sup>32</sup>

The translation of cybernetics into human beings was considered to be particularly limited. This critical position of Trinkūnas was inspired by the American librarian and critic of new technologies, Mortimer Taube (1910-1965), whose *Computers and Common Sense: The Myth of Thinking Machines* was translated

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policies merely because there were no “geneticists” at that time. However, quite a few Lithuanian biologists suffered from the “anti-mendelists-morganists” campaign. *Lietuva 1940-1990*, 369.

<sup>29</sup> Jonas Trinkūnas, “Robotų ar žmonių era?” *Pergalė* 5 (1966), 108.

<sup>30</sup> Trinkūnas, “Robotų ar žmonių era?” 109.

<sup>31</sup> Trinkūnas, “Robotų ar žmonių era?” 109.

<sup>32</sup> Trinkūnas, “Robotų ar žmonių era?” 115-7.

into Russian in 1964 (only three years after it was first published in English).<sup>33</sup> In line with Taube, Trinkūnas disapproved of describing a man in computer terms. On the other hand, Trinkūnas admitted that a partial translation was possible. He agreed that, from a strictly control point of view, machines and human beings could indeed be treated alike: “No one would deny that in relation to some processes of information or management, machines and living organisms can be similarly evaluated. The same features can be found in both”.<sup>34</sup> However, this, he argued, should not lead to the identification of brain processes exclusively with computers.

No less contested was a translation among different branches of academia. Translating hard science into humanities was seen as problematic, especially in the case of machine translation and mathematical linguistics. Being trained in machine translation, Trinkūnas was highly sceptical about its prospects. According to him, the major obstacle to developing machine translation was its underlying assumption of language as information or code. Trinkūnas’s graduate thesis dealt with the mathematisation of the phonology of Lithuanian. In an interview, he revealed that discovering that phonemes themselves are only conditional codes, arbitrarily marked by letters and inherently unstable, made him doubt the possibilities of machine translation. Thus, he contended, if such a relatively well-defined element of language as a phoneme could not be precisely coded in such a way that a computer would recognise it, then the coding of meaning would be even more complicated.<sup>35</sup> He saw meaning as essentially evasive and contextual and therefore too amorphous to be expressed in a digital way.

In addition, translation from cybernetics to arts was criticised as a hierarchical interaction of fields in which cybernetics occupied a superior position in relation to culture. Trinkūnas was worried about the trend of identifying creativity with science and technology and even reserving it to the machines themselves. This, in his opinion, “painfully” damaged the status of the arts:

Finally, we degraded this to the point that our artists became accustomed to beginning their discourses with: “Despite the fact that we live in an age of technology, art is also...”. Sadly, such speeches frequently sought to prove the necessity and utility of art.<sup>36</sup>

In another article entitled “Humanities – Technical or Integrated Culture?” Trinkūnas expressed a concern that the prestigious hard sciences as a predominant mode of knowledge production undermined and threatened the role of culture and arts as another mode of knowledge production:

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<sup>33</sup> Mortimer Taube, *Vychislitel'nye mashiny i zdnavyi smysl. Mif o dumaiushikh mashin* (Moscow: Progress, 1964). For more on Taube’s criticism of cognitivism Holmqvist, 116-120.

<sup>34</sup> Trinkūnas, “Robotų ar žmonių era?” 117.

<sup>35</sup> Interview with Jonas Trinkūnas, Vilnius, November 2007.

<sup>36</sup> Trinkūnas, “Robotų ar žmonių era?” 118.

For example, in the post-war UNESCO bulletins about public sciences, there is no place for art. Spiritual human culture, in which the core is reserved for art, is pushed into an auxiliary position in the educational system”.<sup>37</sup>

The perception of inferiority was increasingly pressing: “Today’s scholars of the humanities are jealous about the growth of the natural sciences and their increasing role in society, and they attempt to apply their methods and means not only, for example, to literary scholarship, but also to creation”.<sup>38</sup> For Trinkūnas, art is not just for entertainment, a regulator of “changing moods”, but a true “instrument of knowledge”, a provider with values, whilst science is an instrument of “action and production”.<sup>39</sup>

### *b) To Translate or Not?*

However, there was no debate about whether to translate or not, but rather how and for what reasons. The ongoing translation was driven by many reasons, intellectual as well as political ones. Among the political reasons was Khrushchev’s call to “catch up and surpass” the West. As was argued in Chapter IV, economically, culture was rationalised as a service and thus was rather low in the hierarchy of economic priorities. Yet improving the social welfare of the Soviet population was another Khrushchevian policy line. Aimed at improving services to the population, state cultural policy as intellectual and material machinery had to be modernised. Thus, it reacted to the call “to widely apply” cybernetics to many Soviet policy areas (in which comparisons with similar applications in the United States, were drawn and vice versa).<sup>40</sup> In a larger context, cybernetics translation was a part of Western modernisation, which largely consisted of translations from the natural sciences to the humanities, culture and governance.<sup>41</sup>

Nevertheless, Trinkūnas and Venclova admitted that cybernetics had succeeded in acquiring a hegemonic position as a science of governance and was soon to be experienced in everyday life. Indeed, they thought that the greatest problem was that the Soviet Lithuanian intellectual climate reacted rather slowly and insufficiently to this ongoing translation. In his article “About Art

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<sup>37</sup> Jonas Trinkūnas, “Humanitarinė, techninė ar integruota kultūra?” *KB* 8 (1966), 15-16.

<sup>38</sup> Jonas Trinkūnas, “S. Lemo ‘atsitiktinumo filosofija’,” *Literatūra ir menas* 35, 1969, 14.

<sup>39</sup> Trinkūnas, “S. Lemo...,” 14. Indeed, this stance first advocated by Trinkūnas will later be defended by Krescencijus Stoškus. That this position was not popular among professional Lithuanian philosophers was revealed in the All-Union conference “Art and Knowledge” (*Menas ir pažinimas*) arranged in late 1977-8(?) in Vilnius. See a report in *KB* 1 (1978), 72-73.

<sup>40</sup> See Aksel’ I. Berg, “Cybernetics at the Service of Communism,” *Cybernetics at the Service of Communism. USSR. Vol. 1.* (Washington D.C., 1962).

<sup>41</sup> This has been explored by many historical studies. Translation from science was famously theorised in Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*.

and Machine”, published in *Domains of Culture* (1966), Venclova replied to Trinkūnas and further defended the need for translating from cybernetics to culture.<sup>42</sup> In the spirit of Thomas Kuhn’s description of “normal science”, Venclova wrote, in defence of cybernetics, that:

The destiny of cybernetics is quite special today; its lexicon, even the most superficial one, is considered to be fashionable in any scientific discipline. [...] recently it [cybernetics] one may say, settled down, normalised, ceased to be a bold and suspicious innovation and became an ordinary, unquestionable discipline or direction of thought. “Anti-cybernetic poems” are met with a grin, since no one writes anti-physical, anti-biological poems or poems against a multiplication table, a “cruel plot” against humanity. However, recently a new wave of “disclosing” or demythologising cybernetics, dealing mostly with mathematical linguistics and mathematical art history, has arisen.<sup>43</sup>

Venclova engaged in a debate with Trinkūnas for several reasons. First, it was not improbable that the anti-cybernetic attacks of the mid-1960s were perceived in light of criticism, which took place in the early 1950s and motivated the prohibition of cybernetics.<sup>44</sup> From this point of view, as several of my informants noted, to defend cybernetics was to defend intellectual freedom.<sup>45</sup> From the very beginning, Soviet cybernetics was branded as “a bourgeois pseudo-science” (*burzhuaznaia lzhenauka*). For a scientist to engage in something that was recognised in the West but, for political reasons, prohibited in the Soviet Union, was an assertion of his or her immunity to a political regime. Similarly, I believed that the desire to stay away from things political influenced the increasingly negative attitudes of Soviet natural scientists to cybernetics, even as it became widely praised by the Party officials. Gerovitch argued that as of the 1970s, “cyberspeak” came to prevail in official discourses. This meant that a previously “pure” language of science became a hybrid language of politics. Consequently, many scientists wanted to dissociate from it.

Second, in retrospect, Venclova argued that he was highly motivated to debate “for the sake of the debate” and was looking for a constructive confrontation with the public, which was a very rare occurrence in conformist Soviet reality.<sup>46</sup> True, the issues of techno-science and culture were addressed in loose debates, which occurred during the 1960s and 1970s in the Soviet Russian and Lithuanian literary press and were labelled by contemporaries as a debate be-

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<sup>42</sup> Tomas Venclova, “Apie meną ir mašiną,” *KB 8* (1966), 17-19.

<sup>43</sup> Venclova, “Apie meną ir mašiną,” 17. On normal science, see Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1996).

<sup>44</sup> Gerovitch, *From Newspeak to Cyberspeak*, 113-131.

<sup>45</sup> This point was also argued by an informant, a Lithuanian mathematician and economist. Interview with Eduardas Vilkas, Vilnius, December 2007.

<sup>46</sup> Unrecorded interview with Tomas Venclova, Vilnius, August 2005.

tween “physicists and lyricists”. Notably, here a “physicist” referred to anyone who was optimistic about techno-sciences and a “lyricist” to a more sceptical proponent. This debate, however, deserves a book of its own and cannot be addressed in this chapter.

Indeed, the criticism of the 1960s did not address the issues of ideological correctness, but rather the excessively high ambitions declared by many admirers of cybernetics. Trinkūnas was particularly sceptical and concerned about aspirations to model social reality with the help of cybernetic models, invent “thinking machines” and construct “mechanic translators” – in his opinion, they were, if not impossible, then clearly unnecessary.<sup>47</sup> Venclova agreed that cybernetic applications did not always succeed in practice, especially since expectations tended to be exceedingly high. He criticised exaggerated expectations that mathematic methods and technical mediation could, by themselves, solve any social or economic problems. In this regard, both Venclova and Trinkūnas agreed that the new intellectual and material machinery had strong limitations. However, as I will demonstrate shortly, this contention was not a feature of ideological pronouncements. The official Party ideologues disseminated a belief in the virtually limitless power of science and technology, which would be limited only by the Communist Party.

Trinkūnas feared that cybernetic translation would produce a “dehumanising” effect in the spheres that were previously regarded as untouched by the new techno-sciences. To this, Venclova replied that the cause of “dehumanisation” was not a techno-science *per se*:

Today’s human situation is not really easier than it was in previous centuries, but we should not blame technology and the soullessness it inflicted for that, but rather the soulless people who got an opportunity to use technology. There are a sufficient number of bureaucratic, military and similar “machines” that oppress and humiliate people, and it is hardly meaningful to passionately blame “overly arrogant cyberneticians”, “mythical engineers” or “physicists”, ostensibly enemies of lyricists. Believe me, lyricists (and also physicists) have much more serious enemies than these...<sup>48</sup>

According to Venclova, only human beings caused the vices of rapidly advancing sciences and technologies. On the one hand, for Venclova, cybernetic translation was value-neutral. On the other, however, he saw cybernetic translation as productive, able to give a birth to something new. According to Venclova, cybernetics contributed to culture by making it knowable in new ways: “renaming phenomena in cybernetic terms (only if we do not blindly follow fashion)

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<sup>47</sup> It is important to note that cybernetic modelling of art was later conceptualised by many Soviet scholars. See for instance I. V. Gutchin, “Kiberneticheskoe modelirovanie proizvedenii iskusstva,” in *Iskusstvo i nauchno-technicheskii progress* (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1973).

<sup>48</sup> Venclova, “Apie meną ir mašiną,” 18.

overcomes mundane habits; automation makes a phenomenon “odd” and therefore enables us to look into it in greater depth.. This is very similar to a method used in art”.<sup>49</sup> Venclova did not explicitly refer to the Russian formalist literary theoretician Viktor Shklovsky in that text. Yet I think that he was clearly influenced by Shklovsky’s theory of artistic estrangement<sup>50</sup> in seeing cybernetics as a special heuristic tool.

Finally, automatic self-regulation was translated as a general act of ordering in thermodynamic terms. Venclova’s input consisted of a rather open criticism of the Soviet regime. Holding that the “conflict between art and science was clearly exaggerated”,<sup>51</sup> he indicated the real problems to be “obscurantism”, “ignorance”, “bureaucratic thinking”. Both art and science were partners in fighting these problems. Nevertheless, Venclova also rejected the notion of art as primarily concerned with emotion. Instead, he argued that the value of art was its capacity to generate order because, first and foremost, it was:

[...] a challenge to death, temporality, that what is called entropy. Art plugs us into the world, explains it in its own way and models it (first, it models the parts that science missed).<sup>52</sup>

Venclova and Trinkūnas were not alone in this discussion. For example, more opinions about cybernetics were brought together in a special edition of *Domains of Culture*, which published roundtable proceedings dedicated to art, science and technology in 1966. During the roundtable proceedings, cybernetics was addressed by another important Lithuanian intellectual, Aleksandras Shtromas.<sup>53</sup> Shtromas would later become a famous political exile, but at the time he was the head of the Court Expertise Department and familiar with cybernetics, which was expected to modernise criminology:

There is no need to fear cybernetics. It is a powerful instrument for knowledge for the representatives of all the creative professions. There are no such spheres of behaviour that could not be modelled and through modelling – explored and improved. Cybernetics will have to play the core role

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<sup>49</sup> Venclova, “Apie meną ir mašiną,” 19.

<sup>50</sup> Viktor Shklovsky, “Art as Technique,” in *Modern Criticism and Theory: A Reader*, ed. D. Lodge (London: Longmans, 1988).

<sup>51</sup> Tomas Venclova, Roundtable “Menas, mokslas, technika,” KB 8 (1966), 3. This was emphasised in several interviews with a mathematician, Saulius, and physicists Simas and Paulius, Vilnius, December 2005.

<sup>52</sup> Venclova, “Menas...,” 3.

<sup>53</sup> As a child, Aleksandras Shtromas survived the holocaust by miraculously escaping from Kaunas ghetto and grew up in the family of the First Secretary (LCP) Antanas Sniečkus, who was indebted to Shtromas’s family (Shtromas family helped Sniečkus to hide when he was prosecuted as a communist by the Lithuanian government in the 1930s). See Leonidas Donskis, *Identity and Freedom: Mapping Nationalism and Social Criticism in Twentieth-Century Lithuania* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 74.

in fighting alienation and professional dissociation; it will unite all the representatives of the creative professions in turning every sphere of human activity into something both intellectual and creative. Essentially, cybernetics has to help human beings make use of new possibilities. Just as a sledgehammer is more perfect than a fist, so an electronic computational machine is more perfect than an abacus. [...] Everyone wants to know everything, but is limited. This limitation will be defied by the machine.<sup>54</sup>

In this quote, Shtromas makes a strong case for relating creativity to cybernetics and progress.<sup>55</sup> Trinkūnas strongly disagreed with this. For him, it was wrong to embed creativity in cybernetic methods. The cybernetic methods would produce knowledge only at the cost of leaving out too many other important things. Trinkūnas defended his position in a later article, a review of the book, *The Philosophy of Contingency* (1968, *Literature and Art*), by the world-famous Polish mathematician and science fiction writer, Stanislaw Lem. Backing his own position with that of Lem, Trinkūnas argued against “cybernetic structuralists”, who were “trying to achieve only one thing in the humanities: the evasion of meaning. They never describe events or phenomena themselves, but their generators”. He further insisted that cybernetics did not “suit literary theory, first and foremost, because it specialises in transmitting and receiving information, whereas in art the most important element is artistic reception – experience. Artistic experience is not the same thing as understanding”.<sup>56</sup>

For Trinkūnas, “technology” was meaningless. For example, he argued that “it is not engineering that gives meaning to life, science, machines. Cinema, radio, press, television are the pride of our epoch. This is a merit of scientists and technicians. They created those devices and mechanisms – but note – only mechanisms. Content is another matter”.<sup>57</sup> Thus, he contended that meaning or “content” was produced only in extra-technological spheres. From this point of view, technologies were only mechanisms, as they possessed no “content”. It could certainly be reasoned that, were the “content” to be defined in cognitive terms, then computers would be capable of producing meaning. However, Trinkūnas was against an exclusively cognitive definition of meaning. For him, meaning was primarily sensual, embedded in experience.

By drawing strict lines between meaning and cognitivism, Trinkūnas did not seek to develop his own philosophy or coherent thought. Indeed, in an interview, he confessed that he preferred acting to writing.<sup>58</sup> By writing anti-cybernetic articles, he signalled the fact that he belonged to a group of under-

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<sup>54</sup> Aleksandras Shtromas, Roundtable “Menas, mokslas, technika,” KB 8 (1966), 3.

<sup>55</sup> In Soviet Russia, modelling with the help of arts was in turn criticised together with structuralism and Lotman’s semiotics. See M.V. Khrapchenko, “Literatura i modelirovaniie deistvitel’nosti,” in *Kontekst. Literaturno-teoreticheskie issledovaniia. 1973* (Moscow: Nauka, 1974), 15, 16-17.

<sup>56</sup> Trinkūnas, “S. Lemo...,” 14.

<sup>57</sup> Trinkūnas, “Humanitarinė,...,” 16.

<sup>58</sup> Interview with Jonas Trinkūnas, Vilnius, November 2007.

financed humanistic intellectuals. In his rather tedious job as a receptionist at the computer centre in the Institute of Physics and Mathematics, he was sensitive to the dethroning of humanistic intellectuals and artists, whose status as knowledge producers was evaporating in the wake of advancing engineering and the natural sciences. On the other hand, it was an expression of his adherence to Occidentalism, that is, disenchantment with Western civilisation as a whole. In retrospect, Trinkūnas explained that he was already an adherent of a religious world view, something which was impossible to admit in a public intellectual debate at that time.

Unlike Venclova, Trinkūnas did not advocate translations from the natural sciences and engineering to humanities, but rather the internal cultivation of one's own field by building on traditional methods and ideas. Indeed, Trinkūnas was negative towards the very term "cybernetics", as it was too heterogeneous and did not imply "a normal scientific discipline". For example, when I asked him for his opinion about Gvishiani, Trinkūnas argued that he was an example of someone pursuing an academic career by becoming an adherent of "cybernetics and systems theory" whilst lacking "real scientific abilities".<sup>59</sup> Therefore, in a Latourian way, Trinkūnas could be called a purist, whilst Venclova could be called a hybrid thinker.<sup>60</sup>

From a purist perspective, culture was regarded as a field with its own, autonomous criteria of progress.<sup>61</sup> Trinkūnas repeatedly warned against the trend of identifying "progress" exclusively with the natural sciences and technology.<sup>62</sup> Moreover, one form of progress should not be translated into another because such a translation would inevitably inflict a hegemonic relationship. Subsequently, he argued, "most people" would no longer be able "to look at art and spiritual activity through anything other than a technical lens. It seems that people do not know what is to be done with art anymore. For some it is entertainment, for others, a trinket, for others, a way of passing the time, and for others, an illustration of scientific or political truths".<sup>63</sup>

To summarize, the translation of cybernetics to culture in the Venclova-Trinkūnas debate exhibited some similarities, but also important differences from the point of view of the translation of cybernetics into management. First, the cultural debate stressed cybernetics' contribution to the knowledgeability of

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<sup>59</sup> Interview with Jonas Trinkūnas, Vilnius, November 2007.

<sup>60</sup> Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*.

<sup>61</sup> This resembles Pierre Bourdieu's idea of hierarchically organised cultural fields, where the stronger ones can afford "internally developed" rules. See Pierre Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure in the Literary Field* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996).

<sup>62</sup> Despite Trinkūnas receiving some education in hard sciences, some of his ideas were simply wrong, as noticed by Venclova. For example, Trinkūnas was convinced that "most of today's inventions were planned" and thus maintained that scientific research had little to do with individual curiosity. Meanwhile, he held that "art and societal ideas cannot be planned – only the conditions for their development can be secured". Trinkūnas, "Humanitarinė,...." 16.

<sup>63</sup> Trinkūnas, "Humanitarinė,...." 16.

culture. However, Venclova and Trinkūnas had different perceptions of the role of new knowledge produced with the help of cybernetic theory and technology. For Venclova, the new knowledge would escalate the internal development of culture, especially the arts. It would shift human reason to the next, higher level. Trinkūnas, on the other hand, resisted the imposition of the cybernetic rationalisation of traditional methods and objects of art and culture in general. It was the dimension of governability that distinguished the cultural discourses on cybernetics from the managerial ones. Neither Venclova nor Trinkūnas believed that cybernetic technologies should be used for the more effective administration of culture.

What was behind this indifference to cybernetics' potential to reform cultural administration? Hypothetically, the techno-scientific rationalisation of the governance of culture would ameliorate its ideological restrictions. For example, in the post-Stalinist Soviet Union, the natural sciences enjoyed a considerable degree of intellectual freedom. The professional autonomy of the "producers of knowledge", natural scientists, was rather respected by the Party officials. This autonomy, of course, was much more restricted to scientists as individuals – for example, their right to free movement abroad was strictly limited according to their political loyalty. Since de-Stalinisation, Soviet scientists themselves had been cultivating a mythology of their field as an "isle of freedom". Compared with the natural sciences, neither artists nor cultural workers enjoyed a similar degree of independence from ideology. As described in Chapter III, the ideological restrictions in the culture sphere were abundant: from entry into the professional ranks (creative unions) to the content of production (a novel, a painting, an amateur art circle). For a Soviet ideologue, culture filled up leisure time and trained emotions (through representations both at home and abroad); it stimulated sociality and a spirit of collectivism (amateur art collectives); it did not create new knowledge. Thus, in this world view, emotion did not require autonomy from politics, but knowledge did. Moreover, unlike in economics and management, the principles of cybernetic governance were introduced into cultural policy, not from below by pioneering, daring cultural operators, but from above, by Soviet officials.

### *Cybernetic Control Appropriated*

At the first glance, it may seem as if culture and its scientific governance [*kontrolė*] are incompatible. However, culture is not an impalpable, amorphous phenomenon – it is the product of human activity, values and accepted ways of behaviour, which are created in certain communities and transmitted to other communities and generations. Therefore, culture is a *regulable* thing. [...] culture is "regulated" not only by the social conditions of human existence, but also by human beings themselves. In socialism (though the preconditions emerged significantly earlier), a man becomes a real subject of historical process and can purposefully regulate so-

cial relations. Socialism opened up real ways to *regulate not only separate elements of culture, their complexes, systems and examples, but also to purposively, scientifically act upon culture in general.*<sup>64</sup> [The italics are mine – E. R.]

This quote, taken from a roundtable discussion that took place at *Domains of Culture* in 1970, encapsulates the key features of the post-Stalinist notion of the governability of culture. First, its opening sentence admits that it was still not self-evident that culture *could* and *should* be governed scientifically. This important hint indicates that, as late as 1970, the necessity of scientific governance of culture was not yet a hegemonic feature of public discourse. It had to be asserted, explained and defended. Second, it emphasises that culture was man-made and thus governable (the next chapter argues that, in later discourses, non-manmade systems were also perceived as governable). Third, the quote emphasises the holistic approach, as it claims that it was “culture in general” and not its isolated parts that should be acted upon. Finally, the quote uses the fancy Soviet management words of the 1960s, such as “complexes” and “systems”, but implies that “culture in general” transcends even the term “system”. Thus, the vocabulary of systems theory was mobilised as an instrument that was to help manage culture, but it did not thoroughly describe its essence. Or, as the Russian cyberneticians Biriukov and Geller noted, the very purpose of applying a system-cybernetic approach to culture and society was their governance.<sup>65</sup>

Here, it is important to note that the quote cited above belonged to the ideological secretary at the CC (LCP). Thus, it was a highly placed Party official who initiated a roundtable discussion (“The Scientific Basis of Cultural Development”). Representatives from various backgrounds, including the director of the Vilnius Factory of Electronic Calculators, took part in the discussion. The very selection of speakers clearly acknowledged that the scientific governance of culture was regarded as a multidisciplinary matter. Compared with the previously analysed roundtables, which took place in the mid-1960s, the role of the ideological secretary was more pronounced. It was not a science professor who opened the debate and set its tone, but a Party official. Cybernetic language was no longer the original suggestion of a scientist or daring cultural intellectual, but the official speech of the government.

The times were also different. In Lithuania, as in Latvia and Estonia, the post-1968 period was characterised as a time of political stabilisation and economic stagnation (which was to last for about 20 years, until the late 1980s).<sup>66</sup> From the beginning of the 1960s, anti-Western ideological control of cultural production, mainly film, arts and literature, intensified. Stricter measures for controlling the expressions of Lithuanian cultural elites were enforced in 1972;

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<sup>64</sup> Justinas Lazauskas, A roundtable “Moksliniai kultūros ugdymo pagrindai,” KB 11 (1970), 10.

<sup>65</sup> B.V. Biriukov and E.S. Geller, *Kibernetika v gumanitarnykh naukakh* (Moscow: Nauka, 1973).

<sup>66</sup> Misiunas and Taagepera, 208-211.

for example, the chief editors of the most liberal magazines, *Domains of Culture* and *Nemunas*, were dismissed.<sup>67</sup>

However, and this is one of my dissertation's most salient points, in the late 1960s and the 1970s, the Soviet cultural policy in Lithuania was not limited to prohibitions and the management of the expression of cultural elites. The cultural policy-makers were not only engaged in controlling individual voices and internal power struggles. They also faced the difficult task of keeping cultural policy appropriately integrated in Soviet social and economic planning, which was continuously challenged by the ongoing changes, driven by scientific-technological progress. Rapid industrialisation (large chemistry and cement plants, an oil refinery and a nuclear plant were built) and urbanisation, and a growing influx of Western youth cultures, along with the need to support and expand the network of culture houses in the provinces, as a large part of the population still lived in the countryside and their leisure time had to be managed – all of these were massive tasks, which had to be addressed. And, as ever, the bureaucratic apparatus was notoriously late, slow and backward.

Thus, this slow pace only increased the significance of the texts from that period, which revealed an overwhelming awareness on the part of contemporaries of the ongoing changes. For example, in *Domains of Culture*, “culture” was increasingly described as ambivalent. Changes in culture were described as indeterminate. It was feared that culture continuously risked changing in an unwanted direction, for example, “good culture” could degrade into “mass culture”, “genuine” socialist culture into “perverted” capitalist culture, and so on.<sup>68</sup> Science and technologies, especially cybernetics and the systems approach, were looked on with hope, regarded as a tool box for governance that would help to cope with these changes. In this section, I will demonstrate how system-cybernetic terms were incorporated into Soviet Lithuanian cultural policy discourses.

As outlined in Chapter IV, cybernetic control was incorporated into management discourse both as a conceptual system and electronic machinery. I showed how the computer was translated into an organisation and control-based feedback in the regulation of the economy and society. Here, I will further focus on translation, with a particular emphasis on language. Thus, in the texts I analysed, I looked for those terms and their combinations, as they referred to key aspects of cybernetic steering: 1) *system*, 2) *feedback and prediction*, 3) *automation*.

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<sup>67</sup> As Lithuanian historians noted, in 1964 the CC (LCP) passed the decree to intensify counter-propaganda, which aimed to demean the new cultural developments in the West. Bagušauskas and Streikus, 19-22.

<sup>68</sup> From the mid-1970s, one of the most salient issues was a growing “cult of things”. This was posed as a risk and associated by public writers with “mediocracy” and “technocracy” and described as a “de-humanising activity”. References to such risks were utilised for backing calls for “perfecting the theory and practice of the governance of cultural processes”. Zigmantas Viktoras Morkūnas, “Kultūros valdymo ypatybės,” KB 2 (1977), 22.

## 1) System

As I demonstrated in Chapter IV, in Soviet state policy, “culture” was economically rationalised as consisting of material objects (a material base), organisations, people and “services” (art and other cultural works). For the purpose of planning, these components of “culture” were described by “indicators”. Such a rationalisation of “culture” was already present in Leninist and Stalinist cultural policies. In this section I will show that beginning in the 1960s, this rationalisation came to be reframed in terms of systems theory. From this viewpoint, “culture” was perceived not as “a sum” of objects, organisations, people and services, but as a system, in which these components were dynamically interlinked and controlled by feedback via the flows of information. Moreover, understanding “culture” as a system made it possible to link both its components and the sector as a whole with other systems, most importantly, the “social” one.

The translation of General Systems Theory (GST) to culture took place in both Soviet and democratic regimes.<sup>69</sup> While there is not enough space to do justice to the rich history of the term “system”, fortunately, it has already been covered quite well elsewhere.<sup>70</sup> Suffice it to state that the notion of “system” should be differentiated from “structure”, which is used in structuralist approaches to culture and society. Whilst the combination of structure and change had been an ongoing problem of structuralism, “system” itself was defined through relations of ongoing processes. Openness, flow, change – these and other qualities have been conceptualised as key features constituting a system. von Bertalanffy defined “system” as a sustained relationship among components. Both conceptually and materially, cybernetic steering was embedded in complex *systems*. Outside of electronic engineering, systems were used for formulating environmental, econometric, culture-metric, art-metric and other models.<sup>71</sup> In governance models, systematic features were attributed to objects of control and often seen as embedded in larger systems. Such a concept of “system” was believed to fit with culture, a very heterogeneous sphere.

Just as in the case of Soviet management thought, culture was predominantly conceptualised as a system in the texts of Russian scholars, such as B. Biriukov and E. Geller, Nikolai Kriukovsky and Moisei Kagan, to name just a few.<sup>72</sup> In 1971, G. Povarov described culture, particularly the arts, as constitut-

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<sup>69</sup> Holmqvist, 47-62. The Western translation of GST and cybernetics to culture and especially its sciences remains to be addressed.

<sup>70</sup> Susiluoto; Mindell, “Bodies, Ideas, and Dynamics...”.

<sup>71</sup> See Lotman and Petrov; Viachislav V. Ivanov, “The Role of Semiotics in the Cybernetic Study of Man and Collective,” in *Soviet Semiotics: An Anthology*, ed. D. P. Lucid (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977).

<sup>72</sup> Biriukov and Geller; Nikolai I. Kriukovsky, *Kibernetika i zakony krasoty. Filosofskii ocherk* (Minsk: Izdatel'stvo Belaruskogo gos.universiteta imeni V.I.Lenina, 1977); Moisei S. Kagan, “Iskusstvo kak fenomen kul'tury,” in *Isskusstvo v sisteme kul'tury*, ed. by M. S. Kagan (Leningrad: Nauka, 1987). It is significant that this line of Russian thought persisted into the 1990s. V.M. Petrov, “Sistemnost' sotsiokulturnoi sfery: mekhanizmy, obespechivaiushchie dinamiku,” in

ing “a complex system” characterised by a large number of components, which were “becoming” and connected by stochastic interactions.<sup>73</sup> The changes within and outside the cultural sector were seen as a flow of “processes”, which could be known and steered with the help of feedback control, which I will discuss later in greater depth.<sup>74</sup> This conceptual grid made it possible to conceptualise culture, on the whole, as governable. It is curious that this description of culture as a system related by flows with other systems (economic and technical) was at odds with the Marxist theory of culture as a superstructure determined by the base or production relations. In a system-cybernetic model of culture, there is little room for determination, and culture would be seen as interacting with the base.

Thus, by the early 1970s, culture was officially postulated to be thinkable and governable as a system. But how was the term “system”, charged with potentially political values such as openness and internal change, adapted to a cultural policy discourse? Chapter V showed that Soviet management discourses combined a systems approach with a need for internal coercion and external defence. The fundamental postulate of a system-cybernetic theory, namely that the degree of order depends on the degree of difference, was disregarded, as the ideologically Soviet social “system” aimed at escalating equality. How could art, with its modernist need for originality and uniqueness, be conceptualised as a “system”? I will argue that in cultural policy discourses the conceptualisation took place on the level of economic rationalisation. Art as a service could be conceptualised as an equalising system as long as it could be accessed by the people and understood by them.

In the analysed texts, taken from *Domains of Culture*, several consequences of translations of “system” into culture could be distinguished. First, the concept of system was superimposed on administrative categories. Thus, a “system of the Ministry of Culture” was a phrase that simply referred to the organisations under the ministry.<sup>75</sup> In this sense, the term “system” did not fully transfer the qualities of GST to the bureaucratic structure of cultural organisations. However, as I will show, in some aspects the bureaucratic structure came to be described in GST terms. For example, this is how an instructor in ideology described rational decision-making in relation to culture as a system:

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*Kul'turologicheskie zapiski. Vol. 5. Khudozhestvennaia zhizn' Rossii ot 1970-kh k 1990-m.* (Moscow: 1999).

<sup>73</sup> G. N. Povarov, “Novoe puteshestvie na Gelikon, ili istoriia kul'tury v svete obshcheii teorii sistem,” *Tochnye metody v issledovaniakh kul'tury i iskusstva (material k simpoziumu) Vol. I.* (Moscow, 1971), 58.

<sup>74</sup> Semiotics was also to contribute to the governance of culture as a system of signs. L. T. Kuzin, “Metody strukturnoi lingvistiki v upravlenii,” in *Semioticheskie metody upravlenia v bol'shikh sistemakh* (Moscow: Moskovskii dom nauchno-tekhnicheskoi propagandy imeni F.E. Dzerzhinskogo, 1971); L.T. Kuzin and D.A. Pospelov, “Problemy semioticheskogo upravleniia,” in *Semioticheskie metody...*

<sup>75</sup> LLMA, f. 342, ap. 1, b. 16, l. 1.

One of the main things in governance [*valdymas*] is decision. Decision, as a method of influence that aims at a particular goal, is described in literature as a process that has several components: when we need to decide, what we have to know about a current situation (state of exit), the purposive goal, criteria by which we are guided, obstacles (hindrances) that obstruct. ... In order for the system to reorganise itself from the state of exit into the one for which we strive, many decisions are needed. [...] Control of the implementation of the programme and regulation are needed. [...] *what does it mean to scientifically govern culture as a process? We have to look at culture as a system and therefore its modelling should be important to us.*<sup>76</sup> [The italics are mine – E.R.]

Administrative command and large-scale centralised economic planning were strong incentives for conceptualising culture as a system. Another way to use systems theory was to conceptualise culture as a feature of human population: “humanity is the only self-regulating system [...] that combines knowledge, purposive and creative activity, will and reason, freedom and responsibility”.<sup>77</sup> Third, systems theory “smuggled in” the non-human agents in Soviet cultural policy discourses. Systems were multiple; culture as a system was not isolated from other systems. Take, for example, this quote from the chairman of the Republican Committee for the Scientific Organisation of Labour:

When governing an activity [*veikla*], whether it is a small brigade or a large factory or even such a complicated *process as culture* – a man encounters a system, and here his relations are defined by three systems: technical, organisational and psychological.<sup>78</sup> [The italics are mine– E.R.]

In this quote, “culture” is described as a process that involves non-human agents (“technical, organisational”). The fourth way to use the term “system” was to describe human individuals. Such use of the term, which was mobilised in the loftiest discourses, persisted into the 1980s. For example, in 1985, the First Secretary (LCP) described a man not as “a product of circumstances” but “a system that has to perfect itself by its own means”.<sup>79</sup> Thus, from this perspective the communist enlightenment of a man did not have a mechanical cause and effect

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<sup>76</sup> Lazauskas, 10-11.

<sup>77</sup> Minkevičius, *Mokslo ir technikos revoliucija*, 112. The growing academic discipline of ethics also stressed the importance of self-regulation. L. I. Timofeeva, “Osnovnye mekhanizmy vnutrennei reguliatsii nraivstvennogo soznaniia,” in *Problemy etiki i estetiki Vol. 1.*, eds. V. G. Ivanov and V.V. Selivanova (Leningrad: Izdatel’stvo Leningradskogo universiteta, 1973).

<sup>78</sup> Romualdas Razauskas, A roundtable “Moksliniai kultūros ugdymo pagrindai,” KB 11 (1970), 11.

<sup>79</sup> Petras Griškevičius, *Partija ir kultūra* (Vinius: Mintis, 1985), 175. He was a prolific writer, being the author of 13 books, whilst his hobby was translating detective stories.

impact. On the contrary, it was conceptualised as a dynamic, relational process, one that took place inside and on its own energy.

In summary, as of the late 1960s, the definitions of culture as a system in *Domains of Culture* emphasised its artificiality (a result of human construction), as well as its internal energy and its ability to internally sustain and produce order. Culture as a system was linked to technical systems. In this system-driven world, a new type of control was needed.

## 2) *Feedback and Prediction*

As argued in Chapter V, cybernetic feedback became synonymous with management and was incorporated into Soviet management theory as the circulation of information transmitted by signals. Better feedback was expected to improve the work of particular organisations and ultimately to lift up the entire national economy. Not surprisingly, the term “feedback” was seen as crucial in cultural policy-making.<sup>80</sup> Here I would like to contrast two approaches – a scholarly semiotic one and an administrative one – in relation to feedback in culture. The a-Soviet intellectuals, adherents to semiotic discipline, emphasised the autonomy-building or internal self-regulative aspects of feedback. However, the officials saw feedback as a tool to improve the accounting system and facilitate centralised control. In the first case, feedback was seen as important for the appropriate development of the cultural sector across time. It was considered crucial for viable cultural (re)production, an internal generation of order. In the second case, feedback was considered important for controlling the administrative sector of culture both across time and space, where prediction was very important. From this point of view, timely feedback would enable the central organs to manage remote, wide-spread cultural organisations. In the first case, cybernetic feedback was translated as a memory process, which transmitted (national) tradition. In the second case, cybernetic feedback was translated into reporting back through accounting and forecasting.

The notion of feedback across longer periods of time (as cultural tradition) was formulated by cultural intellectual Venclova in 1970. Notably, such an approach to cultural tradition, as well as to the theory of culture as a system of signs, which essentially works as described in GST, was formulated in both Soviet and Western semiotics, especially by Yurii Lotman and Umberto Eco.<sup>81</sup> In the Soviet Union, however, semiotics was marginalised somewhat in relation to the mainstream literary sciences. Lotman, one of its most famous Russian proponents, even had to leave Moscow for Tartu University in Estonia. In

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<sup>80</sup> See, for example an article by a Russian theorist on methodology of studying feedback between population and cultural organisations, V. S. Tsukerman, “O metodakh issledovaniia obratnoi svyazi mezhdru naseleniiem i uchrezhdeniiami kul’turno-dosugovoi sfery,” in *Sotsiologiya kul’tury*, ed. A.L. Marshak (Moscow: Institute of Sociology of the USSR Academy of Sciences, 1988).

<sup>81</sup> Umberto Eco, *The Open Work* (London: Hutchinson Radius, 1989); Yuri Lotman, *Universe of the Mind: A Semiotic Theory of Culture* (Bloomington: Indiana University press, 1990).

Lithuania, with the exception of Venclova, very few scholars were interested in semiotics.<sup>82</sup>

The cybernetic feedback model was described in Venclova's last article, published in *Domains of Culture* ("Culture and Its Backdrop", April 1970). In it, he conceptualised feedback in culture as cutting across time and geographical space. Indirectly confronting the official anti-Western line that had been in place since the mid-1960s, Venclova argued for the necessity to translate Western writers into Lithuanian. He insisted that the "national Lithuanian culture" would vanish or at least recede into deep provinciality if it was not interlinked dialogically with the international "backdrop" (first and foremost Western).<sup>83</sup> Wiener had already noticed that since cybernetic feedback implied an exchange of information, it resembled an older notion of dialogue. Similarly, dialogical governance was one of many synonyms for cybernetic steering. Thus, as early as the 1960s, in Soviet semiotics, the uses of "dialogue" were shaped by the intellectual and technical cybernetic legacy. Thus, Venclova described Soviet Lithuania's culture, with its spatial (foreign) and chronological (past) borders, as related by a cybernetic analogy:

Lithuanian national tradition consists not only of folk sculpture, songs and lamentations, but also of Vilnius University, Vilnius's architecture, old and modern Kaunas and Klaipėda and, for example, literature and music of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. Here, a biological and cybernetic comparison can be made: folk creation is like a reserve of culture, the second line (culture resembles the human brain – when certain parts become damaged, the reserve ones switch on). In crisis situations, for example, from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century onward, that reserve performed its role by saving culture from stagnation and collapse. But one must always remember that there is the first line, namely, that Lithuania was a country with considerable traditions of professional culture, open to influences from various epochs and styles.<sup>84</sup>

In this quote, Venclova defined folk creation as a "reserve" and professional creation as the "major" part of "culture", governed like a brain. It could be understood that he claimed that an important professional culture (high culture, such as fine arts and literature) was created in Lithuania even before the Soviet regime. Most importantly, he implied that this pre-Soviet professional culture

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<sup>82</sup> Interview with a semiotician, Saulius Žukas, Vilnius, December 2005; see also an interview with the Lithuanian semiotician Kęstutis Nastopka, "Semiotinis meistrautojas," *Baltos lankos* 20 (2005), 5-49.

<sup>83</sup> Venclova argued that Lithuania needed something like the "Looming library" series of translations of foreign authors initiated by the Estonian cultural magazine *Looming*. Tomas Venclova, "Kultūra ir jos fonas," KB 4 (1970), 47.

<sup>84</sup> Venclova, "Kultūra ir jos fonas," 47.

could and should serve as a resource for “national culture”.<sup>85</sup> I will come back to the rationales of techno-scientifically assisted feedback on culture for governing bodies in later chapters, which will analyse its failures. I will now consider what is probably the most important function of cybernetic feedback, namely, prediction. In the cybernetic model of steering, feedback was intended to not only provide information about the actual performance, but also, on the basis of extrapolation, to enable the prediction and control of the future. Cultural policy-making was reformulated precisely in relation to this aspect of cybernetic feedback.

The function of feedback in a cybernetic system is to provide a controlling mechanism with the information needed for the regulation of the actual behaviour of the system. The regulatory action is always based on the actual information (what is really going on as opposed to what is expected to go on). The regulation of complex and dynamic (learning and changing) systems means having to deal with changes, described as “uncertain” processes. The behaviour of a system is corrected by the calculated prognosis of its future behaviour. In cultural policy, this method of cybernetic control was expressed as statistical representation and forecasting.<sup>86</sup> “Prognosis” provided by statistical forecasting was essential once the changes were conceptualised as “uncertain”.<sup>87</sup>

As of the late 1950s, Soviet “scientific prognosis” meant statistical forecasting. Statistical forecasting based on time series was an important spill-over of the World War II scientific and technological development and of course, was just as much a Soviet as a Western a phenomenon.<sup>88</sup> However, in the Soviet context, the introduction of statistical forecasting acquired special political significance. Statistical prediction was seen as a necessary instrument to prevent governance (also of culture) from “voluntarism”. Voluntarism, a notorious quality attributed to Khrushchev, was represented as particularly negative in Brezhnevian discourses. From a semantic standpoint as well, “voluntarism” seriously clashed with “governance”, as one of governance’s official definitions was “an execution of the plan”.<sup>89</sup> Thus, the promotion of statistical forecasting in policy-making was a part of a plan to do away with strong individual leadership in the Soviet Union. To recap, the principle of strong leadership had its roots in Stalinist management and a stress on *edinonachalie* or concentrating

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<sup>85</sup> From 1966 to 1971 Venclova worked on his candidate dissertation in Semiotics and Russian Literature under the supervision of Yurii Lotman at Tartu University, Estonian SSR. At the same time he also taught at Vilnius University (in which the famous Lithuanian-French semiotician Algirdas Julius Greimas later delivered two lectures about the semiotics of Lithuanian mythology in 1972).

<sup>86</sup> For a history of statistical term of “state” in state governance, see Hacking, 160-169.

<sup>87</sup> Grounding his approach in Wiener, Gerovitch attributed the term “uncertainty” to the human domain and translated it into “entropy” and “noise”. Gerovitch, *From Newspeak to Cyberspeak*, 88.

<sup>88</sup> As Andersson has pointed out in her study of forecasting in Sweden in a similar period, see Andersson, 277-295.

<sup>89</sup> Afanas’ev, “O soderzhanii...,” 23.

responsibility and command in a single person, such as the director of industrial enterprise.<sup>90</sup> Whilst *edinonachalie* persisted in enterprises after de-Stalinisation, it lost its legitimacy at higher political levels.

Why statistical prediction when the Party had already established the ultimate goal of communism? As pointed out earlier, the Soviets regarded culture and society as changing. First and foremost, they were supposed to change and head towards communism. However, the “actual” behaviour of Soviet “culture as a system” varied; it was seen as changing in more than one way and not only heading towards a communist future. Soviet “culture as a system” was developing in an uncertain way. In the cybernetic imagination, it could have been conjectured as a fleet of enemy planes guided by many pilots, determined technically, physiologically and intellectually. All these trajectories, good or bad, were to be mapped, their future predicted; wrong ones would be extinguished or modified. Zygmunt Bauman described the ambition of the authoritarian modern state as one of “weeding out” undesirable practices.<sup>91</sup> I suggest that, as of the 1960s, detecting an undesirable practice was less a matter of the visual observation of a gardener and more a matter of sophisticated mathematical calculations. Thus, the cybernetic model conceptualised “culture” in a macro way, as consisting of “trends”, which were to be influenced. In contrast, a gardener’s “weeding out” was a micro- strategy for detecting an individual divergence, which was to be removed.

In order to be susceptible to statistical forecasting or a “scientific prognosis”, culture had to be translated into a mathematical language. In order to be expressed mathematically, culture had to be divided into categories or coded. In the Soviet cybernetic model of steering culture, the objective Marxist-Leninist historical laws had to be combined with Wiener’s statistical time-series analysis. Although the combination was a contradiction in terms, it worked in public discourses. Soviet statistical models made it particularly clear that “culture” and its policy were a part of larger social and economic planning. It was not “art for art’s sake” for only ideological aesthetics, but also for social statistical reasons. As Jakelaitis, the LSSR Vice-Minister of Culture, put it in 1983, “Culture, just as every other sphere of society, needs the scientific organisation of labour, insightfulness, purposefulness”. According to him, this implied the need for conducting “sociological research on the basis of well-studied, generalised experience in an attempt to fashion a prognosis of the future”.<sup>92</sup> According to an instructor at the Central Committee, modelling and the prognosis of culture had

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<sup>90</sup> Sil.

<sup>91</sup> Zygmunt Bauman, *Intimations of Postmodernity* (London: Routledge, 1992).

<sup>92</sup> Dainius Trinkūnas, “Kultūros užmojams – tvirtus pamatus,” KB 5 (1983), 4. This, by the way, was to be achieved by a somewhat mythical “scientific centre,” the foundation of which never took place, despite voices describing it as a pressing need since the 1970s. The Institute of Culture (LAS) was nominated for that function, while the Republican Scientific-Methodological Centre of Culture was excluded for being “too methodological” (indeed, it dealt with amateur culture and cultural-enlightenment).

to rely on the purposeful analysis of culture's development trends "in the past and the present".<sup>93</sup>

Ideally, statistical information was to be processed by computers and entered into automated management systems. Chapter V demonstrated the limited use of computers and AMS in both industry and culture. Here I will show that "coding" was addressed in the cultural policy discourses as a translation of heterogeneous reality into a computer language. Remember how disappointed Trinkūnas was by the prospects of coding for the purposes of computing a seemingly articulated and stabilised system, a language. How then to code such a broad and heterogeneous thing as "culture"? Indeed, broadness and heterogeneity of culture was immediately acknowledged by the Soviet officials. Thus, the coding of culture for policy predictions was perceived as a challenging, multidisciplinary undertaking. For example, Jakelaitis insisted on the need for a "scientific theory of cultural labour". According to him, such a theory could be developed through the joint efforts of cultural workers, art historians, philosophers and sociologists (Note that he did not mention economists!). While pointing out the one-sided, fragmented nature of current cultural statistics, Jakelaitis also acknowledged the need for them in the "scientific governance of culture".<sup>94</sup> At this important point in time, the ambition to code "culture" was perceived not as utopian, but as necessary and comparable to the mathematical rationalisation of processes in any production plant ("labour of culture"). Cultural "services" were provided by a centralised organisational network of the Ministry of Culture. The ministry, therefore, embraced the new methods of organisation to rationalise this network by making it visible, accountable, traceable, predictable.

The old Stalinist system of economic indicators was held to be insufficient for governance by "advanced" system-cybernetic methods. It was generally accepted that the existing practices of quantitative statistics of cultural consumption were insufficient for more advanced policy-making. Most cultural statistics contained only those figures that dealt with production and consumption. Therefore, with regard to the population, they only demonstrated "access" and said nothing about the "effect" of culture. Yes, a large number of workers were taken to the theatre in groups, but did they become better Soviet citizens because they had been exposed to a play for a few hours? The existing Soviet statistics did not provide any answers. (And the Soviet state wanted to know in order to be sure that they had become better citizens.) However, despite the often recurring statements about the need to thoroughly code and calculate the present, past and future of the cultural sector, the coding of culture remained an academically, administratively and technically underdeveloped sphere from the late 1960s to the 1980s. It was in the 1980s that the significance of computers, or material cybernetic technologies, for solving the problems of the governance of culture was addressed in a straightforward manner:

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<sup>93</sup> Lazauskas, 10-11.

<sup>94</sup> Vytautas Jakelaitis, A roundtable "Moksliniai kultūros ugdymo pagrindai," KB 11 (1970), 13.

Scientific and technological progress is related to cybernetisation, the computerisation of processes of governance, the growing influence of informatics. In the country, republic-automated management systems and subsystems for certain branches of culture have already been created (the press, radio and television, education, cinema, cultural enlightenment work). But they usually involve only statistical, bureaucratic information. The use of cybernetics in the sphere of culture is under-explored. There has been much written about computers that write poetry and music and are used for information searches in large databases [*saugyklos*] of cultural values, but an information supply to the governing organs remains as it was before the Deluge [*prieštvaninio lygio*].<sup>95</sup>

According to one sociologist, the fact that cultural policy lagged behind was intolerable in the view of general technological development in the Soviet Union.<sup>96</sup> In this process, the intersecting knowledge skills were to play a crucial role in assisting formalisation:

For example, a vocabulary of special terms for the automated processing of information necessary for governing and planning is needed. However, the object of scientific terminology in all its aspects is part of philosophy, language sciences, logics, informatics, science studies [*mokslo tyra*], and some areas of cultural theories. Additionally, the terms have to be aligned with the notions of general and partial sciences that study spiritual culture in order to align with the notions that were taken from foreign literature, to align terminology in the various languages of the Soviet Union used by the our country's and international organisations. For that, a united, state, inter-branch, interdisciplinary programme of ordering terminology is needed. The special programmes of complex terminology, standardisation, classification and preparation of norms for the cultural sphere would assist in creating a united automated system for gathering empirical data.<sup>97</sup>

This quote reveals that 1) in the late 1980s, the coding of the cultural sector was still a work in progress; and 2) the coding would require cross-disciplinary co-operation, which would be very much in the universalist spirit of cybernetics. Such a formalisation of a language needed for cultural policy-making would

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<sup>95</sup> Laima Kastanauskaitė, "Svarbiausia neatsilikti," KB 7 (1987), 52.

<sup>96</sup> "Meanwhile in the country super systems of managing the ESM [electronic calculating machines] and large objects have already been created, a new technology of storing, systematising and transferring the information to users, based on ESM memory and not paper is being created; a course on basic informatics and computing technology was introduced in the secondary school programme. [...] It is believed that in the future various specialists of national economy will be able to connect their personal computers to shared information nets. Echoes of these changes are rather weak in the cultural sphere, though it should not lag behind from the general tempo of society's development". Kastanauskaitė, 52.

<sup>97</sup> Kastanauskaitė, 53.

have entailed an enormous cooperative venture on the part of formal organisations; ironically, this would be a barely achievable task in “collectivist” Soviet society. Thus, it seems that almost 20 years ago, Trinkūnas may have been right in doubting that any language could be treated as a code and successfully formalised. It was even more difficult to code culture. And yet Krescencijus Stoškus pointed out that governmental intervention assisted by social science was needed:

If we had sufficient data from sociological research about the real state of our culture, we could more objectively and operatively evaluate the relationship between our cultural traditions and new (often only indicted by fashion) cultural phenomena. The cultural upbringing of a person is related to many factors that are difficult to control, and sometimes even the controlled factors cross each other in such a way that a consumer does not receive the most valuable products. [...] The scientific analysis of the current cultural situation would reveal the “geography” of societal interests and enable decision-making on options for improving the situation.<sup>98</sup>

The head of the Mathematics and Cybernetics Institute (LAS) supported both Stoškus and Venclova, as he agreed for the need for longitudinal sociological studies and stressed that it was “unrealistic to talk about the danger of technicisation of culture”.<sup>99</sup> He compared sociological studies with meteorology and, based on this model, encouraged the study of the past at different sites in order to enable better predictions of the future. In all likelihood, it was no accident that meteorology was utilised for comparison. As Wiener noted, meteorology is concerned with short-term predictions that study quasi-objects (for example, clouds), which are in a permanent transitory state, the initial state of which is unknown. In this respect, the metaphor of meteorology might be seen as fitting for “culture”. However, one obviously does not have a policy on weather: meteorology concerns the forecasting of irreversible processes, a task that is nearly impossible from a statistical standpoint.<sup>100</sup> On the other hand, the Marxist-Leninist view was built on deterministic relations among production, class and culture as a representation. All of these relationships would potentially be destabilised if the meteorological model was applied to them. Thus, I argue that this example, like similar ones, was used in a metaphorical sense. Rather, the writers indicated their general affiliation with techno-scientific governance, guided by statistical prediction, and did not reflect on its deeper implications.

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<sup>98</sup> Krescencijus Stoškus, Roundtable “Asmenybė, visuomenė, kultūra,” KB 1 (1968), 2.

<sup>99</sup> Vytautas Statulevičius, Roundtable “Asmenybė, visuomenė, kultūra,” KB 1 (1968), 3.

<sup>100</sup> As Wiener put it, “for a system starting from an unknown position to end up in any tightly defined statistical range is so rare an occurrence that we may regard it as a miracle and we cannot base our experimental technique on awaiting and counting miracles,” Wiener, *Cybernetics*, 30-31, 33.

The uncertain nature of cultural processes and the need for a hard-science approach was repeatedly argued by the LSSR Ministers of Culture. The emphasis on the “professionalism of leading creative processes” was regularly voiced.<sup>101</sup> However, the limitation of available cultural statistics, provided mainly by sociological research, was explicitly and officially acknowledged. For example, in his speech at the plenum of the CC (LCP), the Minister of Culture admitted that

But [knowing] the great number of visitors provides only a quantitative characteristic of the activity of cultural enterprises, which do not adequately address the essential issue – what is the “utility coefficient” [*naud-ingumo koeficientas*] of the functioning of cultural values among the masses. Here, full-fledged and in-depth scientific research is needed because we have reached such a stage of cultural development that we are interested not only in knowing how many people socialised [*bendravo*] with artistic values, but also what was the influence [of their artistic values]. The time has come to establish a scientific research centre at the Ministry of Culture, which would study the effectiveness of the functioning of spiritual values. Objective scientific knowledge about the influence of art on man’s spiritual world is just as necessary to us as a compass and other means of navigation for a boat sailing in the ocean. We can no longer be guided by only intuition and general reflections.<sup>102</sup>

This passage suggests a pressing need for scientific research regarding steering-orienting governance. Individual opinion, based on experience (“intuition”) and ideological postulates (“general reflections”) were seen as limiting and preventing more effective cultural policy-making. Since speeches at the Plenum were always edited by the ideological department at the CC, this means that it was officially possible to admit serious shortcomings regarding the implementation of scientific governance. More important, however, is the metaphoric model of steering used by the minister. Perhaps it would not be too far fetched to indicate the parallel between Bielinis’s metaphor of cultural policy-making as sailing with the assistance of navigation instruments with Wiener’s inspiration to formalise stochastic processes, which he received by observing oscillating waves on a beach. It is interesting to note that one Western scholar criticised Soviet governance by saying that it was more about rowing rather than about steering.

Thus, by the late 1960s, the statistical representation and forecasting of culture was translated into “geography” and “meteorology”. Governance came to be conceptualised as “steering”, which would rely on responsiveness to feedback. To jump forward, the 1990s saw an explosion of “cultural policy observatories” or institutes concerned with monitoring both policies and cultural proc-

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<sup>101</sup> Jonas Bielinis speech at the CC (LCP) plenum, “Ministro kalba plenumė (LKP CK) dorovinio auklėjimo klausimais,” (September 1976), LLMA, f. 342, ap. 1, b. 2856, l. 129.

<sup>102</sup> LLMA, f. 342, ap. 1, b. 2856, l. 131-132.

esses in Western Europe. Back in Soviet Lithuania, society and culture were imagined by the debaters as territorial and characterised by flows. They were seen as systematic, representable and predictable with the help of models and maps. Hence, culture was constructed as a knowable, governable sphere with the help of the social sciences, which imported models from the natural sciences. In the words of James Scott, statistical representation and prediction were meant to make culture's past and presence but also its future visible in the eyes of the state.<sup>103</sup>

### 3) Automation

The idea of automation was crucial for cybernetic steering. The key problem in designing air-missile defence was that the amount of information to be processed and the speed and precision of the commands to be issued were beyond the capacity of human operators – they were far too slow and imprecise. Indeed, it took a good deal of effort to create adequate electronic machinery that would work rapidly and with a high degree of precision.<sup>104</sup> After World War II, the idea of planning national economy and society (to a different extent) was popular in both the West and the Soviet Union. Interestingly, large-scale steering was also described in terms of automation:

We want super-planning on a large scale rather than in bits in order to avoid blatant inconsistencies and wasteful duplication, not for its own sake, but so that human beings can be free to apply themselves to human pursuits, the arts and crafts. What we have to avoid are inhuman, dull routines, crude and ugly standardisation, and the dullness of which science is capable. [...] Automation, though, is far more than the rather questionable ideal of producing a completely automatic factory, but is a part of the tremendous influence of science on our social evolution. ... This whole movement affects every aspect of modern life, and in particular has implications for education, economics, and the wider planning of our whole society.<sup>105</sup>

It is not paradoxical that it would be difficult to find a better description of the goals of Soviet planners in the 1960s than this vision, presented by the head of the American Cybernetics Society. System-cybernetic language influenced the discourses of governance irrespective of the political system. Thus, for such large-scale planning, a human being was to be replaced or at least assisted by a computer, connected into an automated management system. The idea was perceived as a particularly viable one because the principle of automatic self-regulation was seen as an already existing part of naturally occurring phenom-

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<sup>103</sup> Scott.

<sup>104</sup> For a detailed account, see Mindell, *Between Human and Machine*.

<sup>105</sup> F. G. George, *Automation, Cybernetics and Society* (Leonard Hill, 1959), 40, 42.

ena, such as organisms, populations and markets. How was the idea of automation translated into Soviet cultural policy?

First, direct references to the contemporaneous history of science and technology were made in connection with culture. For example, in the late 1970s, the Lithuanian philosopher Zigmantas Morkūnas emphasised that a pivotal event in the history of the governance of culture was the invention of the servomechanism. The automated technology of the servomechanism not only transformed the governance of the economy and society, but even influenced the internal definitions of culture: automation, according to Morkūnas, contributed towards making labour an intellectual and creative activity. Such advanced labour, emancipated by technology, itself became culture. With the help of advanced cybernetic technology, labour was de-classified.<sup>106</sup>

Second, automatic metaphors of cultural processes and human subjects were used. Not only in liberal but also in Soviet discourses, the idea of automation was useful for dealing with very complex processes and relying on self-governance.<sup>107</sup> According to Morkūnas, in a future society, the object of the governance of culture will be “an entirely artistic and scientific activity – the humanisation of the natural and social world”. Here, the subject of governance would be “a man (society) that conducts that humanising activity”. The goal of governance would be “the unlimited development of human spiritual richness as a goal in itself”. As Morkūnas concluded:

Since a subject of governance hereby governs causes of its own development [*tapsmas*] which is free, full-fledged activity, then a governance [*valdymas*] of culture is already self-governance.<sup>108</sup>

This quotation recalls Foucaultian accounts of liberal governmentality, according to which both society and the individual are produced by discerning and stimulating their self-regulating powers.<sup>109</sup> It is important to note that this type of control takes place at a distance and is mediated by a signal (in a Foucaultian framework, this has often been framed as knowledge distribution). Similarly, self-regulation was conceived in Soviet cultural policy. For example, in 1967, a letter to the editors of *Domains of Culture*, the official journal of the Lithuanian Ministry of Culture, described the following cultural experience:

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<sup>106</sup> But Morkūnas immediately argued against the theories of such a de-classifying effect (“convergence,” “technocratic,” “post-industrial”) thus enabling an eventual rapprochement of capitalism and socialism. Promoting and enabling “creative activity” was indeed successfully achieved in the West, but that was not enough, according to him, as it was not “fully fledged”. “Fully-fledged creativity” could be ensured only by “communist production relations”. Morkūnas, 22.

<sup>107</sup> For historical substantiation of the argument, see first and foremost Beniger.

<sup>108</sup> Morkūnas, 22.

<sup>109</sup> Rose, 49-50.

A book for me is like the spark in an engine. When I read it, flocks of thoughts surround me and I get inspired; plans are aligned; self-reflection takes place. The better the book – the brighter this process, and the more bulbs light up in my brain (V. Motiejūnas, teacher).<sup>110</sup>

This quote was selected by the journal's editors to give a normative example of a "well-cultured" individual. A cultural product, a book, was described as a signal to the brain. The brain was stimulated to act (*inspiration*), producing an organised activity (*plans*) and heading towards self-regulation (*self-reflection*). Here, "a teacher reading a book" was framed as a self-regulating system. A book, being part of "culture", was described as a controlling system that, through giving signals, optimised the functioning of "man and system." In this model, a man was a controlled system and culture was a controlling system.

It should be noted that techno-scientific metaphors were even used by the Ministers of Culture to describe cultural judgments. For example, one minister described taste as a tool of precision measurement (1979): "an aesthetic taste serves a man in the same way as a slide rule, which he always picks up in order to check his intention".<sup>111</sup> Remember, that in 1966 Venclova suggested that mathematised cultural sciences would help make taste more precise. The entire text, dedicated to considerations of the notion of taste, contained an abundance of similar phraseology related to technology and calculability:

A man is not a *mechanical calculator* that calculates how many individualising and socialising processes should be contained in individual taste. A human personality is like an *electric arc*, which melts all external impressions into a completely new alloy in which it is impossible to separate social taste from individual taste.<sup>112</sup> [The italics are mine – E.R.]

In Soviet translations of cybernetic control, freedom was translated as a regulative mechanism of action. Yet this model of control was underpinned with the notions of collective and self, which, as Oleg Kharkhordin argued in his exhaustive study, were rather different from their Western counterparts.<sup>113</sup> As demonstrated in the above quote, the individual and social ideally had to merge into one another in the Soviet imagination. Thus, Soviet parallels between freedom as self-regulation and automation typically emphasised unity, not differentiation:

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<sup>110</sup> KB 1 (1967), 15.

<sup>111</sup> "Kas yra estetinis skonis" (1979), LLMA, f. 342, ap. 1, b. 3258, l. 61. It is likely that the author was Lioginas Šepetyš, as the manuscript dedicates a lot of attention to industrial and interior design and architecture.

<sup>112</sup> LLMA, f. 342, ap. 1, b. 3258, l. 66.

<sup>113</sup> Oleg Kharkhordin, *The Collective and the Individual in Russia. A Study of Practices* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

The beginning of automated production coincides with the beginning of the development of a unitary [*vientisa*] human culture. In socialism, a process of automation accelerates and undoubtedly becomes a typical phenomenon.<sup>114</sup>

In this process, amateur art was attributed a special role in enabling self-regulation. One philosopher described the Lithuanian factory workers who, according to a survey, were increasingly educated and involved in learning more and expressed a great wish to participate in amateur art collectives.

Doubtless, this argument of self-governance, which is implicit in amateur art, was not intended to inject some liberalism into communist rule. Quite the opposite, and this was clearly explicated: “This, of course, cannot be understood in such a way that, under current conditions, the leading role of the working class and its avant-garde – the Communist Party and the socialist state - in governing culture, would diminish”.<sup>115</sup> Several reasons were put forth. First, despite the de-classifying effect of technology, labour was still differentiated into execution and creation. Second, in order for “scientific-artistic creativity” to become the “spiritual culture of a person”, it had to first be interpreted and understood in the “right way”. Similarly, many rules of discourse had to be met in order to publicly translate cybernetics into culture. In the following section I will reflect on some of those rules.

### *Silenced Voices*

As I have detailed so far, the translations of cybernetic steering into cultural policy were performed by various voices in Soviet Lithuania. At its early stage, the translation was carried out by young, controversial intellectuals. Later, cybernetic control occurred in different shapes in the discourses on cultural policy. It was mainly propagated by the communist officials, such as instructors in ideology at the Central Committee (LCP), philosophers and administrators. However, in both instances, the translation of cybernetic techno-science into culture cut across disciplinary boundaries, and the question of the governance of culture emerged beyond the issues of loyalty and effective Party control. Governance was framed not only via communist loyalty, but via more complicated issues of relation between techno-sciences and culture. Hence, the translation of cybernetic steering into cultural policy made a discourse more pluralistic. Bakhtin’s heteroglossia may be a good concept to describe the analysis of the discussion about techno-science and the governance of culture.<sup>116</sup> However, whilst in the

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<sup>114</sup> Morkūnas, 24.

<sup>115</sup> Morkūnas, 24.

<sup>116</sup> It has been pointed out that Bakhtin’s view on language was influenced by systems theory, especially “population thinking”. See Michael Holqvist, “Dialogism and Aesthetics,” in *Late Soviet Culture: From Perestroika to Novostroika*, eds. Th. Lahusen and G. Kuperman (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1993), 171, 172.

late 1950s the voices of techno-science eventually entered the cultural policy discourse, in the late 1960s, quite a few voices were silenced and eventually expelled beyond discursive and physical boundaries.

The year 1968 saw the first Lithuanian *samizdat* or self-published underground publications, which consisted of petitions of Catholic religious dissent. In 1972 the first systematic Lithuanian underground press was born: Lithuanian Catholic Church Chronicles (1972), *Aušra* (1975), *Laisvės šauklys* (1976) and the theoretical *Perspektyvos* (1978), among others.<sup>117</sup> Indeed, Venclova ceased being explicitly interested in cybernetics as he became engaged in the problems of poetics.<sup>118</sup> However, he was fired from Vilnius University in 1973 for his divergent views.<sup>119</sup> His texts were repeatedly refused by publishers and his intellectual isolation grew, although he was relatively fortunate in that he held a position of junior researcher at the Institute of History (LAS).<sup>120</sup> Being closely linked to the Russian dissidents who gathered around Alexander Ginsburg, Venclova joined the Lithuanian Helsinki Group in 1976.<sup>121</sup> On the grounds of his alienation from communist ideology and with the help of the Minister of Culture Lionginas Šepetyš, he was given permission to emigrate from the Soviet Union to the United States in 1977. In his letter to the Central Committee (LCP), Venclova wrote “The Communist ideology is alien to me and, in my opinion, is largely false. Its absolute reign has brought much misfortune to our land ... I take a serious view of Communist ideology, and therefore refuse to repeat its formulas in a mechanical or hypocritical manner”.<sup>122</sup> That same year, Venclova’s books (*Rockets, Planets and Us* (1962) and *or an Artificial Man* (1965), along with a poetry collection, *The Signs of Language* (1972), were banned and removed from bookstores and public libraries. Venclova pursued his academic career in the United States and became Professor of Slavic Languages and Literatures at Yale University in 1993.<sup>123</sup> The 1970s saw an exodus

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<sup>117</sup> For more see Misiunas and Taagepera, 254-260; Genzelis, 189-94.

<sup>118</sup> Unrecorded interview with Tomas Venclova, Vilnius, August 2005.

<sup>119</sup> According to Donskis, the death of Venclova’s influential father, Antanas Venclova (a communist writer, the first LSSR minister of education, the head of the Writers’ Union) in 1971 contributed to the increasingly harsh reaction of party officials. Donskis, 124.

<sup>120</sup> The History Institute accommodated many expelled literary scholars, like Irena Kostkevičiūtė (1968) and Vanda Zaborskaitė (1962). The Literature Department at Vilnius University saw the worst purges during Khrushchev’s Thaw. The Lithuanian department was repeatedly purged between 1957 and 1961 and in 1968. The Lithuanian historian Genzelis suggested that Lithuanian literature studies were suppressed as a part of the Soviet policy against the “nationalism of marginal nations” and later reinforced by events in Czechoslovakia, Genzelis, 173.

<sup>121</sup> For more on the philosophical views, especially on nation and freedom, of Tomas Venclova and Aleksandras Shtromas as dissents, see the intellectual biography by Donskis, 2002.

<sup>122</sup> The translation is from *Lituanus* 23, no.3 (1977), 76, cf Misiunas and Taagepera, 258. It took two years for the Central Committee (LCP) to process the letter.

<sup>123</sup> Since Lithuania regained independence, Venclova had been a frequent visitor and an ardent debater in both the local and international academic press, where he attacked narrow-minded nationalism and presented his, at that time unorthodox, interpretations of Lithuania’s multicultural history. For Venclova’s take on Lithuanian nationalism, see and Donskis; Egle Rindzevičiute,

of more individuals who were featured in the early debates about cybernetics. Aleksandras Shtromas left for the United Kingdom in 1973. He later became a renowned Sovietologist and held lecturer positions at the Universities of Bradford and Salford in the UK.

Another strong voice that could not be directly expressed in writing was a religious world view, especially that of “orientalism”, which was in sharp contrast to the technological civilisation of the West. In retrospect, Trinkūnas dated his disappointment with natural sciences to 1966, when his article that decried Venclova was published. At that time, influenced by Romas Kolonaitis, he was attracted by an idea of the declining West. At the end of 1966 and into 1967, the two founded the Lithuania-India Association for the study of Indian history, religion and philosophy. However, soon after, Trinkūnas got the idea that one does not have to look as far as India for an alternative to Western civilisation. After about six months, he joined an increasingly popular folklore and local history movement. Following the celebration of a pagan festival *Rasa* in the old Lithuanian capital Kernavė, Trinkūnas helped establish a student club *Ramuva*, based at Vilnius University.<sup>124</sup> In 1970, while teaching and conducting research in VU’s philosophy department, Trinkūnas began working on a doctoral dissertation about the ancient Lithuanian religion. However, he actively engaged in the *Ramuva* movement, often neglected his research and teaching duties, and clashed with his superiors.

In his own words, it was Trinkūnas’s relationship to an unofficial nationalist local history group (*kraštotyra*) that aroused the KGB’s interest in him. The group was based in Kaunas and distributed anti-communist leaflets that, for example, promoted Lithuania’s National Day, 16 February. Because of his contact with members of the group, Trinkūnas was expelled from Vilnius University in 1973. As he could not be employed in an “intellectual profession”, he did various odd jobs, often in the countryside, and continued to gather folklore material until 1988. After 1988, he was given a research position at the Institute of Culture, Philosophy and Art (LAS) and participated in establishing a club (as *Romuva*). He also became active internationally and served as the president of the World Congress of Ethnic Religions. At present, he is the main *krivis* of Lithuania (a pagan priest).

Some voices were expelled, but others never even managed to enter the techno-science discourse of culture. In the publications analysed I encountered

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“‘Nation’ and ‘Europe’: Re-approaching the Debates about Lithuanian National Identity,” *Journal of Baltic Studies* 34, no.1 (2003), 74-91.

<sup>124</sup> *Ramuva* started its activities in 1967, was formally registered in 1969, closed down in 1971 and was recreated as *Romuva* in 1988. In the interview, Trinkūnas especially emphasised that club tours of Lithuanian countryside enabled them to touch upon the “nineteenth-century’s Lithuanians”. By this he meant the authentic folklore, particularly language and songs. Interview with Jonas Trinkūnas, Vilnius, November 2007. See also Arūnas Vaicekauskas, “The Academic Youth Movement *Ramuva*. From Passive Resistance to the Community of the Old Faith of the Balts,” in *The Baltic Countries under Occupation. Soviet and Nazi Rule 1939-1991*, ed. A. M. Köll (Stockholm: Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis, 2003).

few articles about techno-scientific governance written by women. For example, the 1966 special issue of *Domains of Culture* published the proceedings of a roundtable entitled “Art, Science, Technology” (*Menas, mokslas, technika*). The roundtable hosted a number of Lithuanian professionals and intellectuals: S. Butkus (an engineer and head of *cechas*, the Computation Machines Factory); the famous public debator and professor of chemistry Kazys Daukšas; the poet Vytautas P. Bložė; Jonas Trinkūnas and Tomas Venclova; the head of the Law Expertise Institute Aleksandras Shtromas; and the head of the philosophy department at Vilnius University, Eugenijus Meškauskas (who was one of Lithuania’s unorthodox Marxists). The participants represented three generations: Daukšas and Meškauskas were in their late 50s and early 60s, Bložė and Shtromas were in their mid-30s, and Trinkūnas and Venclova were in their late 20s.

All were men.<sup>125</sup> However, the first generation of Lithuanian programmers in the late 1950s was predominantly female<sup>126</sup>. As Jeremy Smith pointed out, official school curricula listed “women’s work”, which involved “instruments radio-technical, electro-technical, textile, sewing and knitting industries”.<sup>127</sup> Despite this, I found only one article about techno-science and culture written by a woman in the press I studied (*Domains of Culture*, 1987). I found this interesting, because a woman tractor driver was such an important part of the iconographical canon of Soviet visual ideology. While it is true that women could operate simple (at the time) mechanical machines, they were not linked to advanced electronic technologies to any great extent. Promoting a woman as a creative natural scientist or an inventive electronic engineer was not a salient feature in the Lithuanian cultural press. Notably, in photographs, women often figure in the background as operators of the machines, but not as scientists. Of course, Valentina Tereshkova, the first woman to fly in space (1963) was the quintessential Soviet space heroine and of vital importance to the iconography of Soviet progress. However, strictly speaking, Tereshkova was the user rather than the creator of a machine during her flight, although she later received a doctorate in space engineering. Together with the All-Union Minister of Culture

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<sup>125</sup> Take another example. Two years later Venclova participated in a roundtable discussion “Personality, Society, Culture” published in *Domains of Culture*, January 1968. The discussion may have taken place in late 1967 as its publication coincided with the Prague Spring, as Alexander Dubček came to power on 5 January 1968. The roundtable discussion involved many young and senior scholars, writers and engineers, among whom were the engineer J. Binkis, Krescencijus Stoškus a doctoral student of philosophy at Vilnius University, Edmundas Meškauskas mentioned above as the head of VU philosophy department, writer Jonas Mikelinskas, Tomas Venclova at that time lecturer in foreign literature at VU, Bronius Genzelis, lecturer in philosophy (VU) and Vytautas Statulevičius the head of the Mathematics and Cybernetics Institute (LAS). The purpose of the roundtable was to introduce a series of articles on the cultural preferences of students and the leisure activities of the population.

<sup>126</sup> Information based on the interview with a physicist, Jonas Grigas, Vilnius, December 2005; which unfortunately at the moment of writing could not be compared with hard data.

<sup>127</sup> Jeremy Smith, “Khrushchev and the Path to Modernisation through Education,” in *Modernisation in Russia since 1900*, eds. M. Kangaspuro and J. Smith (Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society, 2006), 235.

Furtseva, Tereshkova was one of a handful of women who were admitted as members to the Presidium of the Central Committee (CPSU).<sup>128</sup> However, there were no “Tereshkovas” in Lithuanian SSR, nor did I encounter her as a role model in the texts I analysed (although such models may exist elsewhere).

## *Conclusion*

“I think that in our profession before starting to fantasise, before mounting Pegasus, one has to keep in mind that theatre directors are organisers par excellence. If we are organisers, engineers of production, then we have to arm ourselves with knowledge about organisations and to know what kind of ‘entity’ an organisation is”. These words were pronounced when cybernetics or systems theory or other “entities”, which were needed so much for contemporary management systems, including for the theatre, were still unknown.<sup>129</sup>

The above quotation, taken from a Lithuanian economist’s article about the implications of Kosygin’s reform of theatres, illustrates that, by the mid-1970s, the techno-scientific, calculation-based approach to the governance of culture sought to legitimise itself by referring back to pre-war traditions. It quoted Vsevolod E. Meyerhold, the famous Russian avant-garde theatre director, who was executed during Stalin’s Great Purges in the 1930s. On the other hand, it reveals that, at that time, cybernetics and systems theory were already seen as being self-evident, normal parts of the intellectual machinery of contemporary management. In this chapter I have shown that the idea of cybernetic steering, coupled with scientific knowledge production, gradually entered Soviet discourses on the governance of culture. Like all of the Soviet Union, the Lithuanian SSR faced the translation of techno-sciences into governance and an adjustment to the specific needs of culture. The translation was sanctioned and performed by high-ranking Party officials, such as ideological secretaries, but also by cultural operators.

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<sup>128</sup> There were more women outside of the Politburo in the Central Committee. Yet the late Stalinist elite (Central Committee) included only 11 women (3.4 percent). The post-Stalinist period saw a slightly larger but still very small number of women, 41, or 4.3 percent. The number grew only as a result of Gorbachev’s reforms to 8 percent in 1990, still a small number if compared with their general party membership (30 percent). Mawdsley and White, 2006, 109, 206. In Lithuania, however, the percentage of women was higher. See Antanaitis.

<sup>129</sup> Saulius Razma, “Teatras ir ekonomika. Poleminės pastabos,” *Literatūra ir menas*, 27 July 1974, 11. The author graduated in economics from Vilnius University in 1960 and since then was engaged in management studies. His interest in culture and particularly theatre could probably be explained by the occupation of his spouse who was prima ballerina at the Vilnius Opera and Ballet Theatre.

This chapter has argued that the translation of cybernetic steering into cultural policy discourses had several consequences. In its early stage – the mid-1960s – cybernetics was seen, on the one hand, as a source of heuristic methods for culture sciences (Venclova). Cybernetic theory, it was held, would make culture knowable in a new and better way. On the other hand, others perceived this cybernetic knowledgeability as a humiliating invasion of hierarchically superior hard sciences into the cultural field (Trinkūnas). The former view identified cybernetics with academic freedom and welcomed the opportunity to experiment with it in culture. The latter view pronounced disappointment with the reductive effects of cybernetics and saw it as another proof of the failure of Western modernisation. However, both views did not focus in particular on cybernetic control as a resource for steering, but rather as a tool for rethinking culture.

Indeed, it would be hard to find a better example of the Foucaultian connection of knowledge to state power than in the case of translating cybernetics to culture. I have demonstrated that in the post-1968 discourse, cybernetics emerged as a provider of the intellectual models of governing culture. The model of cybernetic steering, I argued, was manifested in the use of terms such as system and process, feedback-based control, prediction and automation. Taken together, these terms helped to rationalise and integrate a heterogeneous sphere of culture as governable by one administrative structure using one method. They were used to describe culture at various levels, for example, bureaucratic organisational structures and accounting, the transmission of tradition and individual consumption of cultural products. Thus, cybernetic terms were mobilised and constructed a distinct cultural policy world, with its own language, subjects and objects.

The chapter opened with an analysis of the debate between Venclova and Trinkūnas. I suggest interpreting this debate in relation to the later cybernetic discourses on culture as typological and not genealogical. It should come as no surprise that their discussion was never brought up again, as in the mid-1960s, both Venclova and Trinkūnas were already quite controversial. Since they were officially condemned in the mid-1970s, no references to them could be made in the press. The actual translation of cybernetics that took place in Lithuanian discourses was quite different from that advocated by Venclova. The translations of cybernetic steering into culture and especially its state policy were not backed up with deeper, more scholarly considerations.

Thus far, I have demonstrated the development of the state's ambition to administer culture from the centre and to use cybernetic control in these matters. However, the introduction of cybernetic control was perceived as part of a larger process – Western techno-scientific modernisation, especially its post-World War II stage known as the scientific-technical revolution. The next chapter looks more closely at the role of techno-sciences in cultural policy discourses in relation to ongoing, uncertain changes.

## VII. From Hope to Discontent: Soviet Cultural Policy in the Grip of the Scientific-Technical Revolution

Scientific-technical revolution has evolved into the most significant phenomenon and engine of culture since the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century; it accelerated progress and raised new contradictions and problems. ... For culture and, first and foremost, man, STR created a new ecological, anthropological and social situation: it increased the possibility for transgressing rational boundaries of culture and nature and their interaction, increased the danger of one-sided scientism and technocracy, negatively influenced the relationship between material and spiritual culture. [...] STR made it especially clear that it was necessary to rationally govern [*valdyti*] the processes of culture for human purposes.<sup>1</sup>

As of the 1960s, scientific-technical revolution (STR) was a core concept in Soviet cultural policy discourses. Soviet cultural policy-making was publicly described as being embedded in a formative context of change, which was driven by techno-science. In 1980, STR was incorporated into an encyclopaedic definition of “culture”, as revealed in the above entry on “culture” from the Lithuanian Soviet Encyclopaedia. Taking this quote as an eloquent hint, this chapter explores more deeply the extent to which STR became a nexus of the discourse of steering or governing culture.

So far, I have argued that cybernetics and systems theory were expected to help the Soviet government improve economic planning and the administration of organisations. But although it was often named as a driving force of STR, Soviet cybernetics was not its only one. For example, it was held that the “contemporary revolution in the natural sciences and technology” was initiated by physics, accompanied by other “leaders”, such as mathematics and cybernetics.<sup>2</sup> Chapters V and VI demonstrated how the system-cybernetic approach was used to formulate a general notion of governance in management and cultural policy discourses. As noted by Hoffmann and Laird, in many ways, techno-science was a source of hope for a better future for the Soviet economy and society.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Lietuviškoji tarybinė enciklopedija* Vol. 6 (Vilnius: Mokslas, 1980), 244.

<sup>2</sup> Minkevičius, 24.

<sup>3</sup> Erik P. Hoffmann and Robin F. Laird, *The Politics of Economic Modernization in the Soviet Union* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1982).

However, there also was another side to this hope. STR not only provided Soviet governance with new ideas and techniques; it further complicated the ambition of governance by introducing the idea of complexity. STR should become a part of social planning: the “traditional branch planning of the national economy and culture should become a complex programme of social development otherwise STR would be disconnected from the advantages of socialism”. STR imposed “a necessity to forecast, plan, programme, govern [*valdyti*] on the biotechno-socio-cosmo-noosphere scale”.<sup>4</sup>

With a focus on discontent, this chapter further elaborates the main thesis’s idea, which states that techno-sciences were translated into Soviet policy language and powerfully shaped the mentality of the governance of culture<sup>5</sup> by arguing that techno-sciences did more than simply empower the central organs of the government. Indeed, STR discourse was used by Soviet cultural operators both to define themselves as “modern” and to criticise Soviet conditions. With or without an explicit connection to cybernetics, the term “scientific-technical revolution” frequently occurred in the analysed texts. In these texts, I treated STR as an idiom in the language of policy. Idiom in linguistics is defined by its use as a cliché: being a word or a phrase with a fixed meaning, it features qualities of a sign. Irrespective of context, it maintains its meaning, which usually is shared by a large discursive community.<sup>6</sup> In other words, a valid idiom does not need an explanation within its community of speakers. In turn, such a community itself could be understood as constructed and maintained through the circulation of idioms.<sup>7</sup> I suggest that the use of STR in cultural policy discourses could be understood as an example of the performative role of idiomatic language, which constructs the speaker’s belonging to the discourse community and modernity in general.

Before proceeding further, I would like to expand on the term STR. The origin of the term is unclear although, since the early 1960s, many attempts to define and conceptualise it have been made. Because a separate study would be needed to properly address these attempts, I shall limit myself to a brief overview. Western scholars attributed the authorship of the concept to the British analytic philosopher Bertrand Russell, who used it in the 1950s. In line with Russell’s view, “scientific-technical revolution” was seen as progress in advanced societies, which was born out of techno-scientific development during World War II.<sup>8</sup> However, during de-Stalinisation, Soviet theoreticians sought to locate the roots of Soviet STR in the efforts of Russian scientists imprisoned in

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<sup>4</sup> Minkevičius, 104.

<sup>5</sup> For a recent study of modernisation in Russia, see the excellent collection, Kangaspuro and Smith.

<sup>6</sup> In a different context, a similar definition of sign is used by Judith Butler, *Excitable Speech. A Politics of the Performative* (New York and London: Routledge, 1997), 147-148.

<sup>7</sup> Irina Sandomirskaja, *Kniga o rodine. Opyt analiza diskursivnykh praktik* (Wien: Wiener Slawistischer Almanach, 2001), 22-25.

<sup>8</sup> Wilczynski, 6. Wilczynski though did not give a reference to Russell’s definition (and I did not manage to find it myself).

the Gulags during the 1930s.<sup>9</sup> As it integrated fundamental research, technology and production on an unprecedented scale, STR was distinguished from the 19<sup>th</sup> century's Industrial Revolution.<sup>10</sup> Further distinctions were made on the basis of technology type: whilst the Industrial Revolution was largely mechanical, STR relied on electronic technologies, which were increasingly automated and intelligent.<sup>11</sup> Just like the Industrial Revolution, STR was about a new perception of the surrounding world. As the Russian physicist Evgenii L. Feinberg put it, "We live in a world which is becoming more and more formalised, mathematicised and 'cyberneticised'."<sup>12</sup>

STR was used alongside the notion of "scientific technical progress" (STP). STR was conceived as a "wider social process", whilst STP was seen as a narrower "scientific technical progress", which did not automatically imply social transformation.<sup>13</sup> STR designated a revolution, an abrupt change, whilst, to quote the Soviet economist Abel G. Aganbegian, STP referred to an "evolutionary" development. However, the two terms and their abbreviations, STR and STP, were often used interchangeably as late as the end of the 1980s.<sup>14</sup> Their lifetime coincided with the Soviet regime: both terms disappeared from public Lithuanian discourses after the collapse of the Soviet Union (an interesting case of the relation between discourse and political structures). In turn, the system-cybernetic vocabulary, a successfully neutralised toolbox, persisted into the post-Soviet Lithuanian (and Russian) discourses on (the management of) culture.<sup>15</sup>

Politically, STR was a hotly contested issue in Soviet discourses because it was seen as a global process, the next stage of modernisation, which was going on in both the communist East and the capitalist West.<sup>16</sup> The "ongoing STR"

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<sup>9</sup> N.V. Markov, *Nauchno-tekhničeskaja revoliutsija: analiz, perspektivy, posledstviia* (Moscow, 1973), 40, cf. Minkevičius 1979, 13. I.G. Marchuk, Abel G. Aganbegian et al., *Nauchno-tekhničeskii progress. Ekonomika i upravlenie* (Moscow: Ekonomika, 1988), 26. For Soviet scientists in Gulags, see Kremontsov, 34.

<sup>10</sup> Wilczynski, 6.

<sup>11</sup> Wilczynski listed the following "elements" of STR: "a more effective utilization of traditional and superior sources of power, nuclear energy, computers and electronic data processing, automation, cybernetics, lasers and ultrasonics, synthetics with desired characteristics, new chemical and biological sources of food" and so on. Wilczynski, 6-7. In the West, it was even called a "cybernetic revolution". John Rose, *The Cybernetic Revolution* (London: Elek Science, 1974).

<sup>12</sup> Evgenii L. Feinberg, *Art in the Science Dominated World: Science, Logic and Art* (New York: Gordon and Breach, 1987), xiii.

<sup>13</sup> See, for example, material about STR for a lecturer, prepared by the Lithuanian philosopher Minkevičius, 3.

<sup>14</sup> For example, Aganbegian saw the post-Khrushchev period as evolutionary or STP and *perestroika* as revolutionary or STR. Marchuk, Aganbegian, 19, 20.

<sup>15</sup> For an example of the post-Soviet use of the system-cybernetic approach see a recent Lithuanian textbook on arts management, Elona Lubyte and Borisas Melnikas, *Šiuolaikinės dailės sistema ir jos vadyba* (Vilnius: Baltijos kopija, 2001). This was also an argument of Gerovitch, *From Newspeak to Cyberspeak*, 300-303.

<sup>16</sup> For example, in 1979 the Lithuanian philosopher stated that STR was "a world phenomenon, its essence and significance, social outcomes and problems are also global". Minkevičius, 5.

was mobilised in the Khrushchevian ideological discourse of “catching up and surpassing”.<sup>17</sup> However, STR was also important terrain for Cold War polarisation.<sup>18</sup> In 1973, for example, a decision of the 24<sup>th</sup> Party Congress stated that:

With scientific and technical revolution now at a very important stage, the world socialist system is required not only to hold its own in this biggest ever competition with capitalism but also to win this battle for progress and prosperity of nations. [...] the scientific and technical revolution is [...] a focal point in the struggle between two world systems, socialism and capitalism.<sup>19</sup>

Thus, the Soviet STR discourse was organised around the ideas of both catching-up with and confronting the West. However, the two ideas were accommodated by what was described by Latour as a strategy of purification.<sup>20</sup> A line was drawn between the socio-political and techno-scientific sides of STR. From an ideological standpoint, the techno-scientific STR, even as developed in the West, could be safely transferred to the Soviet Union. Such Soviet techno-scientific definitions of STR involved, first and foremost, information and automation technologies. The social side of STR was more complicated. From the West, the Soviet Union accepted only the natural sciences and technologies, not the social sciences. If, in the West the post-World War II techno-scientific developments inspired a theorist to describe social change as an emergence of “information”, “post-industrial” or “technotronic” society, then the Soviets rejected these theorisations as wrongly guided by “technological determinism”.<sup>21</sup> The Soviets believed that Western attempts at “post-industrial” theories disregarded the role of the mode of ownership of production and hence conflicted with “historical materialism and scientific communism”. It was held that these new notions merely sought to mask the fact that Western societies were essentially capitalist.<sup>22</sup> Soviet scholars conceptualised the ongoing social change under the umbrella of the notion of STR.

STR was seen as a powerful change. In 1973, an official description of the positive effects of Soviet STR was articulated as follows: “The scientific and

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<sup>17</sup> Notably, “catching up” technologically was not only Soviet a problem, but a feature of Western techno-scientific development. See the discussion in relation to contemporary information technologies in Japan, the USA and Western Europe, see McGuigan, 20.

<sup>18</sup> The “confrontation of two developed world systems, the development of the “third world” is a global driving force of STR,” Minkevičius 1979, 13. For more see Erik P. Hoffmann and Robbin F. Laird, *“The Scientific-Technical Revolution” and Soviet Foreign Policy* (New York: Pergamon Press, 1982).

<sup>19</sup> *USSR. Scientific and Technical Revolution* (Moscow: Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, 1973), 6, 13.

<sup>20</sup> Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*.

<sup>21</sup> For “information society” and the related “network society,” see Manuel Castells, *The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Blackwell, 1996). For an attempt to apply Castells’s approach to cultural policy see McGuigan.

<sup>22</sup> Minkevičius, 73.

technical revolution is destroying everything that is old and conservative in the way of life of classes and nations. Their ideas, psychologies and cultures are changing dramatically”.<sup>23</sup> However, my analysis of discourses on STR in culture revealed that the perception of the absence of changes was just as salient. Moreover, evaluations of STR evolved from those of a positive ally of cultural policy to a source of deep ambiguity and even anxiety.

I will now proceed to demonstrate how STR empowered criticism of Soviet realities of the cultural sector’s daily existence by revealing the shortcomings of existing modes of governance; several distinctive cases will be discussed. First, I will consider the STR effects on labour because labour, restructured by STR, was seen by the Soviets as a very important source of challenges for cultural policy-making. Second, it was expected that STR would spill over into the civil sector and dramatically increase the welfare of the population and yet, I will show that the claims of on-going STR only made the actual poverty of the cultural sector more visible. Indeed, the discourse of ongoing STR enabled the cultural operators to openly complain about their grave material situation. That STR discourse was useful in legitimising criticisms and complaints was especially salient in the case of the natural environment. In the third section, I will demonstrate how the negative effects of STR made culture include nature and eventually exposed the limits of techno-scientific governance. Finally, I will consider the textual role of STR as an idiom and a source of self-identification of a new critical subject, modern Soviet man.

### *STR and Labour*

Beginning at the time of Narkompros, Soviet cultural policy was mobilised to improve the productivity of labour: it was geared to industrialisation and, after 1928, to collectivisation in Russia. As of the 1950s, Soviet cultural policy in Lithuania was largely organised around the ongoing collectivisation campaigns. As quoted earlier, the success of Soviet cultural policy was measured “by litres of milk”. As of the early 1960s, however, the economic rationale of Soviet cultural policy was modified: now its role was to facilitate STR. Post-Stalinist cultural policy had to facilitate not only material production but also “non-material processes”, in particular, in order to assist STR by ensuring “information flows”. For example, in 1965 the publishing industries and the library network, which were improving, were described by the Minister of Culture as contributions to the “rapid development of the national economy, an aid in the imple-

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<sup>23</sup>USSR. *Scientific and Technical Revolution*, 18.

mentation of innovations in the fields of science and technology”.<sup>24</sup> In the early 1980s, the minister quoted the CPSU programme:

“The cultural growth of inhabitants greatly depends on the rise of productive forces, technological progress and the organisation of production, an increase in the public activity of working people...”. Therefore, along with an ideological and aesthetical upbringing, amateur art is called upon to carry out a no less significant social task.<sup>25</sup>

As noted previously in quotes from Afanas’ev and Kubilius, cybernetic technologies transformed the character of human labour. In the course of STR, work became more sophisticated because it required greater intelligence and more education. Sometimes it was even re-defined as a part of new “culture”.<sup>26</sup> STR also produced a “new type of worker” and demanded “a new organisation of governance” – both were seen as “typical of the new technology”.<sup>27</sup> Such a new worker would be engaged in the branches of “nuclear power engineering, cybernetic equipment, computers, automatic equipment for recording and information processing [...] and the use of automation as an aid to engineering and administrative personnel”.<sup>28</sup>

It is significant that despite an increase in the education rates, the disciplinary task of cultural policy continued to be a relevant and rather pressing issue. I found it quite peculiar that in the late 1960s and 1970s, the Soviet cultural policy discourses still featured the rhetoric of a civilising mission towards industrial and collective farm workers, something which signified a considerable lack of trust in the people’s ability to self-educate in an age of universal literacy and broadcasting. A corrective and cumulative function of culture was repeatedly emphasised in the ministers’ speeches. Participation in amateur arts was seen as a powerful disciplinary tool, one meant to socialise individuals in collectives and to eliminate deviance and drunkenness.<sup>29</sup> The culture minister’s speech at the first session of LSSR Supreme Council in 1963 focused on the significance of the corrective social effects of cultural policy for constructing such a technical base of communism. A later minister stated that “drinking and

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<sup>24</sup> Speech by Juozas Banaitis at the Republican Jubilee Conference dedicated for the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Soviet Lithuania, “Tarybų Lietuvos kultūros klestėjimas” (1965), LLMA, f. 342, ap. 1, b. 1371, l. 153.

<sup>25</sup> Jonas Bielinis, “Meno saviveiklos vaidmuo komunistinio žmogaus auklėjimui” (1981), LLMA, f. 342, ap. 1, b. 3386, l. 52.

<sup>26</sup> “The intellectualisation of work,” it was held, “brings the working class closer to the *intelligentsia*, the social boundaries between them eventually wither away, physical and intellectual labour get closer to each other,” Minkevičius, 37; Juhan Kahk, “Culture and the Scientific and Technological Revolution,” in *Social Sciences in the Soviet Baltic Republics* (Moscow: “Social Sciences Today” Editorial Board, 1988).

<sup>27</sup> Marchuk, Aganbegian et al., 19, 20, 21.

<sup>28</sup> *USSR. Scientific and Technical Revolution*, 42.

<sup>29</sup> For a Foucaultian account of Soviet techniques of individuation and collective-building see Kharkhordin, 1999.

cursing, negligence and filthiness are the ultimate extremes of anti-culture, and an audacious fight against those phenomena is also a fight for a socialist culture”.<sup>30</sup>

Further, the growing class of engineers and improved standards of living was seen as a cause of the increasing needs of the population, which became another challenge to cultural policy. The number of engineers had increased dramatically: the Soviet Union boasted that it had educated the greatest number of engineers in the world.<sup>31</sup> Engineers earned higher incomes and were suspiciously attracted to “material values”. Their cultural consumption diverged from the ideologically correct one, as they were fascinated by kitsch and other kinds of “vulgar culture”.<sup>32</sup> Thus, the traditional task of communist cultural policy – to educate the worker – was re-actualised by the advances of techno-sciences and complemented with the supervision of engineers’ tastes. This posed a new problem for cultural policy-makers: because they were better educated and had more leisure time at their disposal, “the new type of worker” did not want to use the cultural services provided by clubs. This phenomenon was particularly acute in the cultural-enlightenment sector. For example, in 1970 the Minister of Culture observed that “many social groups” were, “in general, not satisfied with any kind of lecture, book or mass event”. He stressed that cultural-educational work had “to compete” with television and the cinema.<sup>33</sup> Consequently, it was feared that cultural work was becoming increasingly outdated, incapable of capturing the changing tastes and habits of the population. For example, in his speech in 1970, the LSSR Minister of Culture observed that:

The societal-production conditions are obviously improving the cultural level of people, which is continuously changing and growing. Village populations are declining and will continue to decline in the future, and the social conditions of those individuals who remain in the villages are changing daily. The mass media, including the press, radio, television and cinema, are relegating many cultural-educational forms of work, which have been used up to now, to the past.<sup>34</sup>

Lithuanian television broadcasting was launched from Vilnius in 1957, whilst radio was established in the 1920s.<sup>35</sup> However, as was mentioned earlier, nei-

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<sup>30</sup> Speech by Juozas Banaitis at the First session of LSSR Supreme Council (18-19 April 1963). LLMA, f. 342, ap. 1, b. 1164, l. 101-109. Speech “Už tolimesnį lietuvių tarybinės kultūros suklestėjimą!” by Lionginas Šepetys at the First Republican Congress of Cultural Workers (2 June 1969), LLMA, f.342, ap. 1, b. 1856, l. 59.

<sup>31</sup> Beissinger.

<sup>32</sup> See for example a discussion about the petty-bourgeois taste of the engineers in the Writers’ Union’s weekly *Literature and Art* in 1970.

<sup>33</sup> (1970), LLMA, f.342, ap.1, b.1983, l. 6.

<sup>34</sup> (1970), LLMA, f.342, ap.1, b.1983, l. 4.

<sup>35</sup> In 1936, there were 86 shops selling portable radios in Kaunas, the provisional capital. However, in the 1930s Lithuania lagged way behind radio consumption in Latvia and Estonia.

ther television nor radio was under the responsibility of the Ministry of Culture. Supervised by the Radio and Television Committee (since 1958, Gosteleradio), broadcasting, for some strange reason, was not conceptualised as a part of the “cultural sector”. Thus, it was not considered as a potential source of “new forms of work” in the eyes of the Ministry of Culture. In the sphere of cultural enlightenment, as explicated in a later document, the major “forms of work” were “lectures”, “presentations” and “visual agitation”.<sup>36</sup> Thus, in cultural policy the notion of “forms of work” referred to a very traditional medium of Soviet ideological communication, probably because the ministry did not have direct financial or administrative power over them, and in the Soviet Union, cross-branch cooperation was particularly inefficient.

I would suggest that STR did not radically change, but rather stimulated the re-actualisation of older labour-related rationales of Soviet cultural policy. In the context of STR, cultural policy continued to be a part of economic rationalisation, a service aimed at improving working conditions. Its object, however, became more complicated – not an illiterate worker or peasant, but an intelligent worker or engineer who operated intelligent machines. The new nature of labour inevitably led to the idea that cultural administration should also be some form of a sophisticated, technically equipped process. Despite its higher level of education, this object of cultural policy still needed to be disciplined. This, I suggest, indicates that despite the declaration of “mature socialism”, the construction of a communist society was an open, ongoing project with no end in sight.

### *Poverty and STR*

Cultural operators hoped that STR in culture would help to overcome the staggering poverty that existed in many provincial, as well as town cultural clubs and houses of culture. The first speech by a LSSR Minister of Culture that I found referred to the Twentieth Congress (1956) and emphasised the general need for developing technology and science, especially for the purposes of economy; but it did not specify the uses of technology for cultural administration.<sup>37</sup> Soon, however, hints at the realisation of technical progress began to appear to an increasing extent in cultural policy discourses. It was expected that STR would drive material progress in the culture sector by contributing more financing and, in particular, more electronic equipment. Yet the paradigmatic attributes of STR, such as automated management systems, were more or less absent from the everyday life of the cultural operator. Nonetheless, it is difficult

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<sup>36</sup> The Agency of Cultural-Educational Enterprises (1965), LLMA, f.342, ap.1, b.1374, l. 39.

<sup>37</sup> “Apie XX Partijos suvažiavimo išvadas”(1956). LLMA, f.342, ap.1, b. 6, l. 288-300; manuscript by minister J. Smilgevičius for *Sovetskaia Litva*, “Į naujus laimėjimus kultūrinėje statyboje” (14 July 1955), LLMA, f. 342, ap. 1, b. 6, l. 38-52. Both a radio program and a newspaper existed under the name *Sovetskaia Litva* and it is unclear for which one the text was intended.

to estimate just how acutely the lack of computer technology was perceived. As I argued in Chapter V, its usefulness was severely limited by informal and arbitrary rules of the Soviet economy game (I will return to specific cases in the next chapter).

Indeed, descriptions of the anticipated progress revealed only the overwhelming poverty of the cultural sector. The positive STR effects on culture, as discussed in the Soviet Lithuanian press, concerned rather basic provisions. It is interesting to note that from the 1960s onwards, the notion of a technical base of culture included “organisation” itself and, in turn, the resources needed by organisations.<sup>38</sup> Thus, as noted by the Minister of Culture in 1966, the key problems of a “material base” were the lack of heating, furniture and musical instruments; dilapidated buildings; and uneducated directors (40 percent still did not have a secondary education); low density; and little or no means of transportation (it was not uncommon for people to walk 6 to 8 kilometres or more to reach a village house of culture).<sup>39</sup> Thus, STR in culture was seen as any improvement of the basic standards of living as, for example, housing:

[...] how our technical weaponry significantly increased; thousands of families are meeting the New Year in great apartments, and two leisure days a week became a simple phenomenon of everyday life.<sup>40</sup>

The discourse of STR was teleological, with a clearly expressed axis of time. It was assumed that STR would shortly arrive at the cultural sector; accordingly, the pressing need to “prepare” for this arrival was repeatedly expressed. Thus a minister’s speech entitled “For a Further Flourishing of Lithuanian Soviet culture!”, prepared for the First Republican Congress of Cultural Workers (Vilnius, June 1969), enthusiastically proclaimed:

*Culture has entered an age of technology, which opened up many opportunities, but also raised many demands. Immediately – now we have to rapidly improve a material-technical base of professional culture and also a base of cultural mass work [...]. Otherwise we will lag behind and not be able to justify the higher calling of socialist culture.*<sup>41</sup> [The italics are mine – E.R.]

The issue of “lagging behind” appeared to be unavoidable. The frustration – that STR was not reaching the cultural sector, especially in the countryside – accumulated with time. Bureaucratic demands for reports, calculations and papers

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<sup>38</sup> In 1980 Jonas Bielinis referred to the number of organisations in the LSSR to illustrate the “widening of the material-technical base”. Jonas Bielinis, “Su socialistinio humanizmo vėliava,” LLMA, f. 342, ap. 1, b. 3323, l. 18.

<sup>39</sup> LLMA, f. 342, ap. 1, b. 1494.

<sup>40</sup> (1970), LLMA, f. 342, ap. 1, b. 1983, l. 2.

<sup>41</sup> LLMA, f. 342, ap. 1, b. 1856, l. 40.

were suffocating the administrative work of the ministry and cultural organisations. In the next chapter, I will analyse how this discontent grew and was generalised towards scientific, calculation-based governance in general and was finally turned against the political organisation, the Party and the ethnic group, Russians.

To summarise, the advance of STR required cultural policy to “shape up”, at least discursively. As discussed in Chapters V and VI, the development of techno-science changed the Soviet understanding of both administration and labour. These changes led to a re-evaluation of the existing modes of the governance (*valdymas*) of culture and its purpose. As of the late 1960s, the pressures of STR intensified: the growing complexity of industry and, in Lithuania, industrialisation itself, brought with them new, serious problems. STR was increasingly framed as a process that generated risks. It was both securitised and used as a tool of securitisation, but not only in Kennan’s sense. As the Soviet Union found itself in the grip of a scientific-technical revolution, the enemy was no longer “internal” (exploiting class) or “external” (capitalist system). It was “global”, transcending the boundaries of political regimes. STR, like bourgeois culture and capitalist industries, had to be subverted for socialist goals. However, now STR threatened to get out of hand in both capitalist and socialist systems. It became a source of global problems.

### *From Limits of Growth to Limits of Governance: Culture and Nature*

The positive teleological discourse of STR increasingly featured discontent and even warnings about the potential dangers for culture. As early as the mid-1960s, the scientific-technical revolution was addressed as a source of risks in a special issue of *Domains of Culture*, the official magazine of the Ministry of Culture (October 1966). The editorial, subtitled “An Olive Branch in Space”, asked: “What is the destiny of art, of a humanities culture in general? Are they not condemned to debase in view of scientific progress and ‘thinking’ machines? What does the contemporary interrelation between art and science and technology mean?”<sup>42</sup> The previously quoted *Soviet Lithuanian Encyclopaedia* (1980) also described STR as a force that threatened culture. This special issue of *Domains of Culture* included the debate between Venclova and Trinkūnas, which was analysed in Chapter VI. Nevertheless, it is also important to discuss its broader agenda because it presents a very concentrated, intentional account of the view of the Lithuanian cultural intelligentsia of the 1960s regarding techno-sciences and governance.

First and foremost, it was quite striking that in those times of overwhelming optimism, the “Space Age”, the editors articulated their fear of an imminent, uncontrollable disaster. The subtitle referred to the biblical deluge (the phrase

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<sup>42</sup> KB 8 (1966), 1.

“an olive branch” referred to the story of Noah’s Ark). In all likelihood, Cold War-related anxiety could be detected between the lines, though at the beginning of the 1960s, the Soviet Union was still leading the space race, with its sputniks (1957 and later) and first cosmonaut Yuriy Gagarin (1961). Americans would not land on the moon until 1969. Explicit critical references to the Cold War-driven, techno-scientific development would not emerge in the Lithuanian cultural press until the late 1980s, probably in relation to Reagan’s Star Wars programme. Did the editors see arts or culture in general as an “olive branch” or a sign of salvation in a dystopian context of techno-scientific progress? To what extent was it legitimate to express doubts about techno-scientific progress in Soviet public discourses? Were cultural discourses a special place in which to express such doubts?

The answers to these questions should be seen in the context of Soviet industrialisation, which traditionally had been characterised by hasty decisions, a lack of regard for local conditions, especially the natural environment, and large-scale construction.<sup>43</sup> If the late 1940s saw collectivisation in the countryside, then the late 1950s and 1960s could be characterised by major growth in heavy and light industries in Lithuania, traditionally an agricultural country. Electronics factories were joined by large concrete and chemistry plants and later an oil refinery (Mažeikiai) and a nuclear plant (formerly Sniečkus, now Visaginas). Sterile, computer-controlled laboratories were housed behind the walls of secret institutes. What cultural intellectuals saw were smoking chimneys and the ugly sprawl of factories on the outskirts of towns; polluted rivers; and megalomaniac agricultural complexes.

I found it curious that the official magazine of the LSSR Ministry of Culture increasingly featured articles about environmental concerns. Indeed, these environmental concerns, interestingly enough, dealt with the issues of cultural policy. Of course, the environment eventually became a matter of public discussion all over the Soviet Union. In Latvia, the first concerns about polluted rivers were voiced in 1959. According to Brudny, the Soviet Russian intelligentsia expressed its environmental concerns as early as 1961 in relation to the plans for building a cellulose plant on the banks of Lake Baikal.<sup>44</sup> Whilst Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring*, published in 1962, caused a wave of anxiety about the environment in the United States, in the mid-1960s, Latvia and Estonia were the only Soviet republics to ban the use of DDT, hexachlorone and several other chlorine and phosphorus preparations. However, by the late 1960s, the situation was rapidly deteriorating in the Soviet Baltic area. In 1969, the Panevėžys Chemical Plant released a pollutant into the Nevėžis, one main rivers, which killed the entire fish population. The Klaipėda Cellulose and Paper Plant regularly discharged massive amounts of waste into shallow waters, and ships dumped oil into Klaipėda harbour at the same time that the construction of puri-

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<sup>43</sup> For more on the Soviet industrialisation of Lithuania, see Misiunas and Taagepera 2006; *Lietuva. 1940-1990*.

<sup>44</sup> Brudny, 46.

fication facilities, initiated in 1974, was pending for years.<sup>45</sup> The Lithuanian Nature Protection Association was founded in 1971, just a year after the United States's Environmental Protection Agency (1970). All of this was outside the responsibility of the Soviet Ministry of Culture. However, I will show that it was easier for “nature” than “television” to become a part of official definition of “culture”.

Among the first Lithuanian thinkers to bring culture and nature together from the perspective of governance was the influential philosopher Jokūbas Minkevičius.<sup>46</sup> Minkevičius could be called a career party intellectual. He began his career path as the head of the department of Marxism-Leninism at the Kaunas Medical Institute; later he occupied high positions in the philosophy departments at the Vilnius Party School and the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences. Thus, his views could be taken as representative of an official ideological line on science, technology and culture. On the other hand, he was concerned about the fate of his country's “nature and culture” and in that he represented an emerging Soviet intellectual academic culture that did not blindly follow the official line. In describing the “contemporary backdrop of human existence and its cultural progress”, Minkevičius located STR at the centre of the Soviet transformation:

[...] the contemporary epoch is especially dynamic. This dynamism is first of all marked by the progress in knowledge of the forces of nature and engineering their governance, known as the scientific technical revolution. Today's industrial and scientific technical potential manifests itself in nearly all spheres of human existence and activity. Urbanisation, universal technicisation, the flow of information, the powerful means of communication and information, specialisation, the increase of leisure time – all of these factors significantly change the human situation in the contemporary world. To this can be added the newly emerging problems regarding ecology [...].<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Misiunas and Taagepera, 240-241. For pre-1980s environmental movements in the Baltic countries see Katrina Z.S. Schwartz, *Nature and National Identity after Communism: Globalizing the Ethnoscape* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2006), 60-1. The association grew from 20,000 members in 1971 to 320,000 in 1983. Misiunas and Taagepera, 2006, 293.

<sup>46</sup> Jokūbas Minkevičius (1921-1996) was born in Ufa, Bashkirstan and served in the Soviet Army during World War II. He started as a committed communist, but later revised his views. Educated in Moscow, at the Party College at the Central Committee (CPSU) in 1953 and the Academy of Societal Sciences in 1959, he later became the head of Philosophy department in Vilnius Party College (1963-1971) and the head of the Philosophy Department at the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences (1971-1990). In 1988 he participated in the foundation of Sąjūdis and was a signatory of the Independence Act (1990). He has been generally positively regarded by his contemporary colleagues, especially as he attempted to enlighten and teach “technicised partocrats” the values of nature and cultural heritage. See Genzelis, 26.

<sup>47</sup> Jokūbas Minkevičius, “Kultūros priedaravimai,” KB 2 (1974), 16-17.

Dated 1974, this article was the first to introduce ecological issues under the theme of culture and progress in *Domains of Culture*. Although the inclusion of environmental concerns in the key platform for cultural policy discourse was delayed, it was not entirely untimely. Environmental problems were not traditionally linked to the agenda of Soviet cultural policy. Moreover, nature had been the opposite of culture. In this respect, the Soviet mid-1970s were very different from the 1920s and the 1930s, when nature was to be conquered and tamed by man (and in turn culture was understood as exclusively artificial or manmade).<sup>48</sup> From the perspective of governance, the Soviet philosopher attempted to bring culture and nature together for the good of the population. Minkevičius argued that “the structure of culture was complicated, and its components were not straightforward”; he also pointed out that the protection of nature (a “rational relationship with nature”) should be included in the concept of socialist culture.<sup>49</sup>

This coupling of two binary opposites was largely enabled by the systems-cybernetic approach. Such a governmental task gave birth to a number of hyphenated words. The linguistic sign of a hyphen could be taken as a good indicator that the spheres of knowledge that were previously separated by institutional and disciplinary boundaries were gradually coming closer to each other. By the mid-1970s, such words as “bio-social sphere” and “bio-technosphere” were increasingly featured in *Domains of Culture* (as was the previously mentioned “bio-techno-socio-cosmo-noosphere”). Beginning in the 1970s, “nature”, defined in terms of system, flow, equilibrium (all the terms of the cybernetic discourse on governance), became a new source of components for assembling Soviet culture.<sup>50</sup> Even in his book *Culture and Society* (1975), Antanas Barkauskas, the ideological secretary of the Central Committee (LCP), suggested the expansion of “culture” to include “ecological culture”.<sup>51</sup>

In the context of STR, the issue of an agent – human or techno-scientific system – became problematic. In the mid-1970s, for Minkevičius it was still clearly a man who was an agent:

The contemporary means of mass communication and information create a mass culture, and at least technically and superficially remove the privileges from the “cultural elite”, democratise the entire cultural process. ... The technicisation of the cultural process is like a stick with two ends. Hence, there is no point in asking whether television, a concert transmitted

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<sup>48</sup> Paul Josephson, *Industrialized Nature: Brute Force Technology and the Transformation of the Natural World* (Washington D.C.: Island Press, 2002).

<sup>49</sup> Minkevičius, “Kultūros prieštaravimai,” 17.

<sup>50</sup> The ecological theme was further developed by Česlovas Kudaba, who emphasised the importance of “ethnological landscape” and civilised, cultural uses of nature for leisure. Kudaba in the late 1980s was instrumental in establishing the Culture Fund and then Soros’s Open Society Fund, and was an active member of the *Sąjūdis* liberation movement. Česlovas Kudaba, “Gamtosaugai reikia kultūros ir mokslo,” KB 7 (1977), 13-17.

<sup>51</sup> Jonas Minkevičius, a roundtable “Kultūros mokykla ruošia specialistą,” KB 7 (1976), 69.

on the radio [*radiofikuotas*] or a reproduced painting are good or bad... The role of technology as the mediator in spiritual culture depends on a man's own position.<sup>52</sup>

Thus, mediation had some productive effects (mass culture), but it did not replace the subject of governance, a man. However, a few years later, Minkevičius's pupil Vytautas Rubavičius pointed out that the role of technology as the mediator of culture (and human activity in general) was indeed complicated, as any mediation tended to diminish responsibility (the mediator has its own agency), and this further escalated the fears that technology "came to enslave a man and became uncontrollable".<sup>53</sup>

It can be argued that, by the 1980s, cultural operators came to understand that the new technologies, which were intended to increase control, also produced new, barely manageable risks. As was previously noted, in Lithuanian SSR, the first concerns linking environmental issues with cultural policy dated to 1974, well before the establishment of country-wide environmental movements (which in the late 1980s played an important role in undermining the legitimacy of Soviet regime).<sup>54</sup> In texts published in *Domains of Culture*, an "un-polluted" and "ordered" landscape was described as the result of high "culturedness", an intrinsic part of "national culture" and thus an object for state care and preservation. For example, an editorial in 1982 stated that "a cultured leader will not allow his enterprise to poison a river that would serve hundreds or thousands of future generations".<sup>55</sup> Note that the value of nature (the river) is described as a public service. In this way, the value of nature was constructed in the same way as that of culture. As described in Chapter III, wide access was essential for a "true culture". Therefore, in the 1980s, nature was inscribed into both Soviet projects of democratisation – *narodnost'* and *kul'turnost'*.

STR's transformation of labour into a more intelligent entity had consequences on the very notion of culture. STR also transformed nature by making it vulnerable. This also had consequences on culture. Because of STR (and STP), the understanding of culture was expanded to include "environment" or "nature":

Scientific and technological progress changes the structure of culture, forms its new features. Traditionally, the notion of culture itself does not remain the same. It is necessary to formulate new criteria of cultural pro-

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<sup>52</sup> Minkevičius, "Kultūros prieštaramai," 18.

<sup>53</sup> Vytautas Rubavičius, "Mokslas ir humanitarinė kultūra," KB 10 (1982), 37, 40. Rubavičius was born in 1952, graduated in physics from Vilnius University in 1975, started publishing poetry in 1979 and was active as a writer, journalist and later scholar in philosophy and culture at LAS.

<sup>54</sup> Misiunas and Taagepera.

<sup>55</sup> "Kultūros darbuotojas ir kultūra," KB 7 (1982), 2.

gress. There is a pressing need to inscribe issues of culture as a lifestyle and an ecological culture into the wider meaning of culture.<sup>56</sup>

It must be emphasised that the ultimate goal – and a challenge in the context of STR – for Minkevičius was creating and maintaining man as a *rational governor*. This goal was not easy to achieve, as it faced a long series of controversies posed by society, which was progressing rapidly:

The real issue in the social governance of human cultural potential is that culture not be used for militarism and not be threatened by its dooming force; that spiritual culture not lag behind its material basis; that there not be technical limitations and paradoxical amorality and spiritual poverty in the context of a luxurious material culture; that a society's value system not be deformed by a cult of things and one-sided consumer interests; that a man be a clever and far-seeing landlord of his palace of nature and that he not destroy and soil that palace – *in other words, that he rationally govern the product of his activity and not be alienated.*<sup>57</sup> [The italics are mine – E.R.]

When the green movement started to take off, in 1983 Minkevičius voiced his concerns in an even more articulate manner and explicitly called for an integrated governance of both “nature” and “culture”.<sup>58</sup> He asked, “Is it not so that at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century humanity is caught unaware by another great problem: the necessity to regulate and govern the relationship between culture and nature?”<sup>59</sup> Here the role of philosophy was seen as exploring this relationship and “constructing an optimal model of the relationship between culture and nature”. Just as in operational analysis, this would require a “total integration of all sciences (natural sciences, technical research and sociology)”.<sup>60</sup> There a man was defined as a “bio-socio-cultural subject” and his activity as “culture”, divisible into “humanities” and “scientist technological”, with the sphere of governance further diversified.

It seems that by the late 1980s, the ecological dimension became a stable part of cultural policy discourse. The official discourses on cultural policy increasingly mentioned nature as a part of culture. For example, in 1987, Bielinis, the LSSR Minister of Culture, reported that “today a notion of culture is most closely related to economics, industry, agriculture, the preservation of nature

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<sup>56</sup> Minkevičius, “Kultūros mokykla...,” 36.

<sup>57</sup> Minkevičius, “Kultūros prieštaravimai,” 19.

<sup>58</sup> On Latvian debates about nature and culture see Schwartz, *Nature and National Identity*.

<sup>59</sup> Jokūbas Minkevičius, “Kultūra ir natūra,” KB 6 (1983), 36. I found it quite striking that the writer cited Pope John Paul II in the article.

<sup>60</sup> Minkevičius, “Kultūra ir natūra,” 36, 38. Thus the environmental problems and issues of failing governance in the 1980s saw the revival of crossovers between technology and humanities disciplines.

and everyday life [*buitis, byt*]”.<sup>61</sup> In 1989, another LSSR Minister of Culture stated that the main goals of the “rejuvenation of culture” were its “humanisation, decentralisation, ecologisation, individualisation and historisation”.<sup>62</sup> I suggest that this minister’s quote, and Minkevičius’s texts, in particular, testify to a more complex picture of the Soviet mentality of governance of culture than has been acknowledged up to now. If previously the governable sphere of culture was perceived as complicated, since it involved various professional and amateur arts, ideology and lifestyles, in the 1980s it was further expanded to deal with ecological problems, which were also largely attributed to the effects of STR.

The “revenge of nature” was coupled with these concerns. As expressed by a journalist for *Domains of Culture* in her interview with the party secretary of the Vilnius Factory of Computing Machines, “Technisation, chemicalisation and automation can, without sentimentality, act exactly like a press (*volas*), crushing both cultural civilisational heritage and the ecological environment; this is why I intuit that, in the very near future, man will have to save himself from the revenge of a humiliated nature”.<sup>63</sup> Note that the quote did not criticise the side effects of industries, but rather actual state policies as programmes and courses of action, as it used the “-ation” form.

In many ways, Soviet Lithuanian definitions and the management of “nature” were similar to those in Latvia. They were recently analysed as a special component of Latvian nationalism by Schwartz.<sup>64</sup> I agree with Schwartz that the couplings of culture and nature in the 1960s and 1970s were instrumental in later nationalist discourses (and were largely rooted in the agrarianism of the pre-World War II period). However, it is important to point out that since the 1960s, the Soviet Lithuanian nature/culture connection was largely enabled by the rules of system-cybernetic discourse: nature and culture were defined as systems, integrated in a discourse of governance.

### *STR – The Soviet Idiom of the Modern Condition*

The British art historian Susan Reid has noted that, as early as the Khrushchev era (1956-1964), “STR” became “a central term in official pronouncements [...], which made it a defining feature of socialist modernity”.<sup>65</sup> The term “scientific-technical revolution” and its abbreviation “STR” were used repeatedly in the analysed published texts. The abundance of abbreviations in Soviet and Fascist political discourses was famously noted by Victor Klemperer as early as 1947, whilst Fesenko and Fesenko mocked Lenin’s formulas with their own

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<sup>61</sup> Jonas Bielinis (3 April 1987), LLMA, f. 342, ap. 1, b. 3771, l. 25.

<sup>62</sup> Dainius Trinkūnas, “Kada kultūra atgaus prestižą?” KB 12 (1989), 3.

<sup>63</sup> Anelė Dvilinskaitė, “Nevengti kuo drąsiausių žingsnių,” KB 5 (1986), 4.

<sup>64</sup> Schwartz.

<sup>65</sup> Susan E. Reid, “The Khrushchev Kitchen: Domesticating the Scientific-Technological Revolution,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 40, no.2 (2005), 290.

equation “Soviet language = politicisation + abbreviation”.<sup>66</sup> However, I would like to point out that in addition to “politicisation”, a good deal of neutralisation was at work in assembling the techno-scientific language of Soviet cultural policy. For Soviets, modernisation, identified with scientific and technological progress, was conceived as being immune to the prevailing political regime.

Regardless of the realities of the Soviet shortage economy, it seems that STR was textually constructed as an overwhelming process, which involved everything and went on everywhere, that is, the word – in a full or abbreviated form – occurred frequently in the most diverse intra-textual contexts in the press. However, in the archived speeches of the LSSR Ministers of Culture, STR was used much more sparingly. This discrepancy between the repetitive use of the abbreviation STR and the term “scientific-technical revolution” in the press led me to examine them in the speeches in a stricter textual sense.<sup>67</sup> All published Soviet texts had to undergo more or less formalised censorship and editing. Books had to be approved by Glavlit, articles – by editors, speeches – by the Central Committee. Recently, it has been argued that every Soviet had an “internal censor” inside their head.<sup>68</sup> Thus, the ministers’ speeches could be taken as examples of an anonymous official discourse. Their manuscripts enabled the analysis of material traces of editing.

In 1958, for the first time, science and technology in relation to culture were mentioned in an archived document of the Ministry of Culture. The All-Union project for the branch plan of culture for 1959-1965 stated the need for particular attention to “propaganda regarding the achievements of science and technology” in films.<sup>69</sup> In 1963, a speech delivered at a session of the LSSR Supreme Council stressed that “there was no doubt” that the Soviet Union was about to complete the development of a “technical basis of communism”; yet the construction of “a new man” was lagging behind.<sup>70</sup> Thus, technology and science were perceived as being ahead of society, which needed to catch up with the help of cultural policy. It was only in 1969 that the “epoch-making” role of technology in relation to culture was admitted for the first time: the minister announced that “culture had stepped into the age of technology”.<sup>71</sup> The term “scientific technical revolution” was first used in speeches in 1978. The

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<sup>66</sup> Andrei Fesenko and Tat’iana Fesenko, *Russkii iazyk pri sovetakh* (New York, 1955), 25 cf Pöppel, 28.

<sup>67</sup> Victor Klemperer, *The Language of the Third Reich: LTI lingua tertii imperii, a philologist’s notebook* (London: Athlone, 2000).

<sup>68</sup> I certainly did not assume that it was always the ministers or vice-ministers themselves who wrote speeches; the actual texts may have been produced by their assistants. However, I still refer to them as “authors” since they authorised the texts, following the definition in Foucault, *The Archaeology...*, 92-4.

<sup>69</sup> “Dokladnaia zapiska o proekte razvitiia otraslei kul’tury na 1959-1965 gody” (December 1958), LLMA, f. 342, ap. 1, b. 727, l. 220.

<sup>70</sup> Juozas Banaitis. LLMA, f. 342, ap. 1, b. 1164, l. 101. The speech suggested that “a new man” should be the opposite of the personality imagined by Sigmund Freud and the existentialists as well as sparing with his drink.

<sup>71</sup> LLMA, f. 342, ap. 1, b. 1856, l. 40.

minister stated that “our life is changing at a rapid pace; there is not a single sphere of human activity that would not be influenced by scientific-technical revolution”.<sup>72</sup> It is quite curious that the exact same text (about amateur art) was used in a speech delivered three years later, in 1981. In the more recent manuscript, “scientific-technical revolution” was crossed out, as follows:

~~There is no sphere of human activity that would not be influenced by the scientific-technical revolution.~~ Today’s folk artist, in his education, world view and world perception, differs considerably from a carver of gods’ sculptures [*dievdirbys*] at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. We do not regret this; on the contrary, we, are happy because the new social and economic conditions have shaped a new creator. [...]

During the course of a rapidly changing world, the expansion of communication and information networks, improved conditions of material and spiritual life, and the emergence of new needs, it is only natural that the directions of amateur art, its content, forms and methods also have to change, ~~the entire system has to be perfected.~~<sup>73</sup>

The phrase “scientific-technical progress” and its abbreviation “STP” were first mentioned in a 1987 speech. In his opening remarks about museums, the minister referred back to the 27<sup>th</sup> Party Congress, which recommended the “acceleration of the social-economic development of the country by optimising the application of the achievements of scientific-technical progress”. This Party guideline “essentially determined the new perspectives and ways of developing today’s cultural enterprises”.<sup>74</sup> In this context, the museums were to construct a new man by providing him with “a deep communication” with the past, a “flow of history”.<sup>75</sup> Indeed, this was also the first time that the word “communication” (*komunikacija*) appeared in the official cultural policy discourse. I found it rather odd that the term “scientific-technical revolution” would be used so extensively in the ministry’s magazine *Domains of Culture* but that it would be such a latecomer and be used so sparingly in official discourses (speeches). Moreover, the fact that the STR sentence was crossed out by the speech editor probably meant that it was considered nonessential (note above that the phrase “the entire system has to be perfected” was also crossed out). Indeed, the entire the speech was heavily edited and shortened. My guess is because the speech was quite long (29 pages), a decision was made to remove generic ideological statements. While reading the manuscripts of speeches, I observed that clichés were often crossed out. The examples ranged from “whistling bullets” bravely

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<sup>72</sup> Jonas Bielinis, “Meno saviveiklos vaidmuo komunistinio žmogaus auklėjimui” (1978), LLMA, f. 342, ap.1, b.3121, l. 64.

<sup>73</sup> Jonas Bielinis, “Meno saviveiklos vaidmuo komunistinio žmogaus auklėjimui” (1981), LLMA, f. 342, ap.1, b. 3386, l. 72, 79.

<sup>74</sup> Jonas Bielinis, (19 November 1987), LLMA, f. 342, ap. 1, b. 3771, l. 52.

<sup>75</sup> LLMA, f. 342, ap. 1, b. 3771, l. 53.

faced by post-war cultural operators, to unnecessarily long quotes on Lenin's childhood, which did not deal directly with the main topic of the text. It seems that, since these phrases belonged to the STR discourse that developed in the 1960s, they became a target of scepticism and editing in the early 1980s. To get a better idea of what it meant to use or not use the phrase STR, it may be helpful to look at its discursive "siblings".

STR was often coupled with the phrase "information flow". As discussed earlier, a "flow of information" was regarded by both Wiener and Soviet economists as a necessary feature of a viable system, be it the economy, culture or society. Flows were also enabled by technological networks, first and foremost, communication technologies. This phrase often occurred in Soviet cultural policy discourses and became a keyword, which specified the transformative power of the "scientific and technical revolution". On the one hand, "information flow" had to be achieved by human beings, aided by communication machines; however, it also marked the general transformation of the Soviet condition. For example, at the conference of cultural workers (Vilnius, 1982), a representative of the Vilkaviškis council noted that "a flow of cultural information runs unrestrained; it also changes us".<sup>76</sup> It has to be added that Vilkaviškis was a small settlement in a picturesque but rather remote area. Keeping in mind that even the LSSR Ministry of Culture did not have computers or copying machines, what could Vilkaviškis's cultural operators possibly mean by saying that "cultural information" changed them? How did this "flow of information" reach provincial culture houses and what did it do? Apparently, the information "flooded in" via public broadcasting. As a flood, it was held to be excessive. Indeed, "culture", meaning the spheres under the aegis of the ministry, was expected to counteract the mass media flows.

The "flow of information" was perceived as necessary both within an organisation as well as across a territory (a country). Ideally, Soviet cultural development was meant to be the same in both urban and rural areas (hence Vilkaviškis's account, cited above). Its side effect was not only excess but also standardisation.<sup>77</sup> Both were seen as potential threats to culture. In the 1970s, even official accounts of STR warned about standardisation:

Standardisation has penetrated into all spheres of the material life of society. At the same time, the danger is that it might also lead to the standardisation of the human personality. In the future, the technological application of cybernetics will optimise the industrial management of plants, entire

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<sup>76</sup> "Vilkaviškio rajono pranešimas" (1982), LLMA, f. 342, ap. 1, b. 3478, l. 344.

<sup>77</sup> Indeed, a Central Bureau for Standardisation, the first Soviet regulative body for standards, was founded by the initiative of the NOT movement in July 1924. Renamed the Committee for Standardisation it was chaired, amongst others, by Aleksei Gastev. Beissinger, 1988, 62. As noted by Raymond Hutchings, despite initially performing poorly, the roster of All-Union Standards (GOST, introduced first in 1925), grew and became more effective in the 1970s. Raymond Hutchings, *Soviet Science, Technology, Design: Interaction and Convergence* (London: Oxford University Press, 1976), 111-114.

branches of the economy and production as a whole. But will it not also deprive man of the freedom of decision and the freedom of choice?<sup>78</sup>

On the other hand, the increasing presence and role of man-made machinery identified with STR was seen as an opportunity to reformulate the unique mission of culture in building a Soviet man and society. Thus in his 1980 speech, a minister of culture claimed that the new technologies give a special impetus to the arts:

Today a man, who is *surrounded by standards, oppressed by the information flow*, is irresistibly attracted to the world of aesthetic values,<sup>79</sup> in which an unrepeatable, bright uniqueness gives meaning to the human personality and fortifies the ideals of humanism.<sup>80</sup> [The italics are mine – E.R.]

I suggest that STR and flow were used idiomatically to mark the particular, ongoing Soviet modernisation. While giving overt tributes to the official teleological discourse of communist progress, speakers also situated themselves in its post-Stalinist stage. To claim that one was transformed by STR or an information flow was to signify loyalty to the modernising Soviet society in general (as opposed to the indication of an empirical fact or a concrete result, otherwise an important constituent of a Soviet minister's speech about culture). It may be argued that the above reference to the scientific technical revolution should be understood as a formal rhetorical device, an idiom.<sup>81</sup> It was used to indicate awareness and belonging to a community that was undergoing a general change, but not to specify and describe particular features of the cultural sector. By claiming to be transformed by the flow of information, Vilkaviškis's cultural operators saw themselves as modern, that is, exposed and transformed by global flows of ambivalent modernisation. Thus, it would be incorrect to say that the idiom of STR "did not mean anything" in cultural policy discourses. Indeed, it was a case of the performativity of idiomatic language *par excellence*.

### Conclusion

As early as 1964, Lithuanian workers at the Elektrėnai electricity plant complained to the Minister of Culture that artists painted "only landscapes", while

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<sup>78</sup> USSR. *Scientific and Technical Revolution*, 36.

<sup>79</sup> It is critical that, since the end of the 1970s, the issues of aesthetics and taste started to become more salient in the minister's discourse on culture. Quite frequently a war theme – and especially post-war realities – were included to demonstrate the courageousness and dedication of art activists, particularly amateurs. LLMA, f. 342, ap. 1, b. 3386, l. 56.

<sup>80</sup> Jonas Bielinis (1980), LLMA, f. 342, ap. 1, b. 3323, l. 74.

<sup>81</sup> Similarly "motherland" (*rodina*) has been analysed as an idiom of Soviet discourse by Sandomirskaja.

they were hungry to see the “dignity and romanticism of their own work” celebrated.<sup>82</sup> Even as late as 1987, the Lithuanian museums were criticised for failing to organise displays on the technical revolution.<sup>83</sup> This chapter has attempted to stress that the lack of STR in Soviet cultural policy was equally important as its presence. Indeed, every aspect under consideration could potentially be developed into a broader study of its own. However, my goal was not to provide an in-depth analysis but, by means of an overview, to discern a more general logic of the techno-scientific discourse of governance of culture. The major point was that STR, a manifestation of another stage of progress, functioned as a discursive vehicle that, in a peculiar way, provided the Soviet agents with both the language and rationale to criticise the existing state of Soviet governance.

This chapter demonstrated how, in many ways, STR was assembled as a source of both anxiety and hope in public and official discourses on cultural policy. On the one hand, the problems caused by STR were seen as a sign of an advanced communist society. As the Soviet philosopher noted, “The lower the economic, political and cultural level of society, the fewer problems it has and vice-versa”.<sup>84</sup> On the other hand, the destructive side effects of industrialisation jeopardised the very notion of progress. The risks and dangers brought about by STR stimulated further discursive transformations of culture. I have shown that “culture” came to merge with its traditional opposite “nature”. The connection between the two signalled an ambition for cultural policy to rationalise the ever-broadening sphere of life.

As an idiom, STR, within Soviet discourses, functioned as an indicator of modernity untamed. Several idiomatic uses of STR were distinguished in the chapter. It was used to frame positive changes in cultural policy: improving the material base of culture, contributing with better tools for its administration and finally, reasserting the need of a cultural policy, as the intellectualisation of labour broadened the educated classes, which in turn were to be provided with cultured leisure time. To refer to STR in cultural policy discourses signified that one belonged to a contemporary community that was competent to face new changes.

STR was understood as both material and nonmaterial. If its material side (buildings, machines) was perceived as being somewhat absent from the cultural sector, its nonmaterial side (information, rules of standardisation) was more pervasive. It is mainly with regard to the latter that the Soviet modes of cultural work, especially in the cultural-enlightenment sector, had to be revised and adjusted. Here it is important to emphasise that neither culture nor the leadership of the Communist Party was presented as capable of resolving the fears of a techno-scientific “Space Age”. Indeed, none of the analysed texts contained an explicit statement asserting that the “wisdom of the Party” would ameliorate

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<sup>82</sup> LLMA, f. 342, ap.1, b.1268, l. 15.

<sup>83</sup> LLMA, f. 342, ap. 1, b. 3771, l. 31.

<sup>84</sup> Minkevičius, *Mokslo ir technikos revoliucija*, 99.

the negative effects of STR. Instead it was humanities intellectuals, scientists and other cultural operators who formulated the definitions of the real and imagined risks of STR, as well as the strategies for coping with them. STR was a laudable consequence of progressive Party politics; however, its effects could legitimately be publicly discussed, praised or disputed. Arguably, it was held that the effects of STR were quite beyond the Party's control.

STR's legacy was very strong and, from the early 1960s onwards, it did not diminish. Gorbachev's push to rejuvenate the Soviet economy through policies directed towards acceleration (*uskorenie*) and openness (*glastnost'*) drew strongly on STR's discursive resources: the free flow of information and innovation. Indeed, it is symbolic that one of the most recent books about STR published in Russia (*Scientific-Technical Progress: Economy and Governance*, 1988) was written jointly by the nuclear physicist and president of the Soviet Academy of Sciences Guriy I. Marchuk and the mathematician Abel G. Aganbegian (schooled in "economic cybernetics"), who served as economic advisor to Gorbachev and later became the rector of the National Academy of Economy. Marchuk argued for the need to "accelerate scientific-technical progress", to which such economic mechanisms as planning should be harnessed.<sup>85</sup>

Meanwhile in Lithuania, Gorbachev's acceleration quickly led to an increasingly explicit and serious questioning of the entire state's ambition to govern at that scale, to that extent, and with those instruments.<sup>86</sup> In the final chapter, I will show how the calculation-based governance, empowered with the material and intellectual machinery of system-cybernetic steering, became a target of direct criticism of the society and was identified with the very Soviet political system. In other words, the discourse of governance that, by the sustained efforts of Soviet agents, was ideologically and institutionally neutralised, came to be re-charged with political meanings. The discursive resources that were mobilised to construct clashes between culture, steering and technoscience eventually opposed the very centre of power in Lithuania – Russian rule through the CPSU. In Lithuania, "culture" ceased to be understood as a service to the population and once again became a vehicle of the sovereignty of the nation.

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<sup>85</sup> Marchuk, Aganbegian et al., 14.

<sup>86</sup> For a concise overview of the program of perestroika see Aleksandras Shtromas, "The Inevitable Collapse of Socialism," in *Totalitarianism and the Prospects for World Order: Closing the Door on the Twentieth Century*, eds. R. Faulkner and D. J. Mahoney (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2003), 109-11.

## VIII. Cultural Policy in Conflict with Calculating Communism

Those active elements (people) make the total formalisation of governance into an algorithm on the basis of classical mathematical methods impossible.<sup>1</sup>

To satisfy, ensure, educate, enrich, shape.<sup>2</sup>

In 1986, the former Vice-Minister of Culture, Vytautas Jakelaitis, wrote that the work of Juozas Banaitis (the LSSR Minister of Culture from 1958 to 1967) “was not oriented to a current scientific organisation of labour because no one was imposing such requirements at that time”.<sup>3</sup> According to Jakelaitis, it was self-evident that cultural policy-making in mid-1980s’ Lithuania had to be scientifically organised. Let me recapitulate this ideal model of a scientifically organised, post-Stalinist Soviet cultural policy. Thus far, I have argued that the construction of Soviet cultural policy was a hybrid process in which economic reason and scientific-technical modernisation played an important role. From an economic standpoint, the cultural sector was defined as a service; its agents were professionals who provided that service. Both administrators and cultural operators – artists and cultural workers – were rationalised as “cadres” in the Soviet governing mentality, that is, employees of the state with clearly defined job descriptions.<sup>4</sup> Cultural policy goals were integrated with economic rationales: however, seen as a service, Soviet cultural policy sought to produce the very object it served: a socially cohesive population and a competent labour force. As stated in the above quote, Soviet cultural policy as a service aimed not only to “satisfy” its clients but also to “ensure, educate, enrich, shape” them. The persistent need for knowledge about “the current state” accompanied a Soviet cultural policy maker. To be known, culture had to be categorised and calculated. There was a perception that in order to administer cultural organisations efficiently, the future of broader social, cultural and economic developments had to be forecast with the help of mathematised social sciences. If culture diverged from the “course set by the Party”, this divergence would be de-

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<sup>1</sup> Kuzin and Pospelov, “Problemy semioticheskogo...,” 3.

<sup>2</sup> Stasė Dilienė, “Atsakai už patikėtą barą,” KB 1 (1986), 2.

<sup>3</sup> Jakelaitis, *Juozas Banaitis*, 146.

<sup>4</sup> LLMA, f. 342, ap. 1, b. 728, l. 165-168.

tected immediately and steered back to the right path by top-down directives. Such was the ideal model of Soviet cultural policy-making.

I have demonstrated that this interpretation of the steering of the cultural sector was embedded in a wider system of Soviet economic planning. It used the principles of cybernetic control, which were smoothly translated to management, initially debated, and eventually accommodated in public discourses on cultural policy. Chapter VII demonstrated that the scientific-technical revolution (STR) brought about a growing awareness of uncertain changes and a need for more control but also recognition of the limits of governance. STR blurred the traditional boundaries of the governed objects (culture-nature). Programmes of cultural policy had to draw on calculated predictions, but its object – the practices of both the producers and consumers of culture – were hard to capture; they continuously evaded rationalisation into processes in a system. As revealed in the above quote, it was difficult to write an algorithm for human behaviour. I will now proceed to further probe the Soviet awareness of the limitations of techno-scientific governance.

This chapter argues that there was a growing awareness among Soviet administrators and cultural operators that the ambition of the modern state to subsume all subjects to its controlling eye and calculating brain was particularly limited in the case of culture. They held that culture was not easily defined and quantified. Its boundaries were blurred. It turned into something else. Culture, as a system characterised by flows – capital investments, cultural production and consumption – was translated into various sets of numbers, which created a reality of their own.<sup>5</sup> Eventually, the entire paradigm of calculation-based, centrally planned and directed cultural policy came into question. This led to more criticisms of the Communist Party monopoly.

This chapter explores the roots of these scepticisms, which had already begun in the 1960s and 1970s; however, its main focus is on the period after 1986, known as the reconstruction (*perestroika*, *perestroika*) period. To cover all the innovative aspects of Lithuanian reconstruction debates about Soviet cultural policy would go well beyond the limits of this chapter. Therefore, I will focus only on the most explicit debates about calculation-based, techno-scientifically assisted cultural policy. I will briefly address the issues of nationalism and ethnicity, which were traditionally considered as being the most important ones of the period. Whilst scholars like Suny demonstrated that the Soviet regime stimulated the formation of ethnic identities and thus, that the nationalisms of the 1980s did not appear from out of the blue, I will point out that the STR discourse also contributed towards the creation of the anti-Soviet nationalist discourse.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> For a definition of capital investments and a statistical expression of their growth in Soviet Lithuania, see Meškauskas, *Lietuvos ūkis*, 168-170.

<sup>6</sup> Suny.

## *Numbers Disenchanted*

As argued in Chapter IV, centralised economic planning demanded many diverse cultural statistics. The key economic indicators were set by the State Planning Committee, and statistical forms were filled out by cultural organisations and provided to the Ministry of Culture. The aggregated numbers were used in abundance both in planning and public discourses. Soviet officials compiled their speeches and articles from the ideological statements that originated in CPSU Congresses and from numbers drawn from statistical tables. Such a Soviet collage of ideological statements and numbers was widely described by scholars as a propaganda discourse directed at both internal and external audiences. Obviously, the use of such numbers was not only a Soviet feature: for example, Rose conceptualised the use of numbers as an important political technology in liberal democracies. He also noted the political neutralisation effect of such discourses of calculation.<sup>7</sup>

I suggest that the translation of the cultural sphere in a language of numbers was an increasingly reflexive act. To begin with, numbers created considerable optimism and were greeted as a measure of success. It seemed that the ability to calculate something as amorphous as “culture” was a promise of order and progress. For example, the Minister of Culture Šepetys was fascinated by a quantitative language of cultural policy in 1966:

It is hard to evaluate and express in numbers the cultural education of a man, but sometimes even silent rows of reports also start talking in an impressive, articulated language. 1 million 177 thousand readers at libraries in the system of the Ministry of Culture alone, 1 million 652 thousand museum visitors, 2 million 237 thousand visitors at professional theatres and concerts per year!<sup>8</sup>

The minister’s fascination with numbers was on solid ground. Numbers indicated performance; they “said” that the Ministry of Culture was doing good work. The statistical figures made many normally invisible practices visible. They were performative: the ministry performed its role by producing numbers, the numbers indicated the progress of the Lithuanian SSR, and Lithuanian progress illustrated the victory of communism over capitalism. It has to be noted that this performance, backed by the military force of the Soviet Union, was not open to external scrutiny from abroad.<sup>9</sup> However, the mechanism for the production of numbers came to be increasingly visible, as it was discussed in Soviet Lithuanian cultural policy discourses.

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<sup>7</sup> Rose, *Powers of Freedom*, 197-232.

<sup>8</sup> LLMA, f. 342, ap. 1, b. 1604, l. 141.

<sup>9</sup> For an interesting study of the role of international organisations in scrutinizing and constructing post-Soviet transition in the three Baltic states, see Matilda Dahl, *States under Scrutiny: International Organization, Transformation and the Construction of Progress* (Stockholm: Stockholm University, 2007).

Was it held that numbers suited culture? Some people believed that they did. For example, in talking about the possibility of applying Andrei Kosygin's incentive-based reforms in theatres (for instance, a better individual performance would entail greater financial rewards), the Lithuanian economist and publicist Saulius Razma insisted that it was only "natural for the creative spirit and economic wisdom to merge in every theatre". Nevertheless, he cautiously indicated the reductive power of numbers saying that "of course, no one claims that dry statistical data, numbers in financial accounting, and standardised forms can fully reflect the results of creativity".<sup>10</sup>

Numbers were intended to help not only policy makers and administrators, but also to motivate cultural operators to work more efficiently. Statistical comparisons were used to inject competition into a lethargic Soviet economy. "Friendly socialist competition" campaigns, based on a system of symbolic and material incentives (bonuses, receiving a red flag as a symbol of victory) were often announced; they had to simulate market competition. It was assumed that republics, regions, towns and other administrative units would strive to improve their activities in order to submit better numbers. The cultural sector was not exempted from socialist competition: for example, cultural houses would compete with each other for better attendance at their events and more visitors to their libraries. However, it was difficult to translate socialist competition into culture because culture was not seen as being susceptible to Fordist rationalisation into clear-cut stages:

The process of culture is so specific, so particular that it is not really possible to divide it into separate time or length segments. A collective farm or a factory can tell precisely how much it lost or made last year. We also evaluate our work in numbers, but they are a very conditional indicator and do not describe the entire essence, meaning, achievements and losses of our work.<sup>11</sup>

Not only did numbers contribute with increasing visibility; they also made many practices invisible. This problem was often raised publicly by the Soviet cultural-policy makers and operators. The Minister of Culture Lionginas Šepetys opened his speech about the previous year's achievements in "the domains of culture" in the early 1970s with the following quote. (He held that it was necessary to be aware of the limitations of using numbers and calculations in cultural policy):

What is the Soviet socialist Lithuanian culture like today...? It is not easy to answer this question. It is easier to sum up results of agriculture or indus-

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<sup>10</sup> Saulius Razma, "Teatras ir ekonomika. Poleminės pastabos," *Literatūra ir menas*, 27 July 1974, 11.

<sup>11</sup> "Mūsų interviu. Naujų metų išvakarėse su Lietuvos TSR kultūros ministru Lionginu Šepečiu kalbasi LM bendradarbis Romas Sadauskas," *Literatūra ir menas*, no. 52, 1973, 2.

try: at the end of an economic year or month they become quite clear. Achievements in sports are measured precisely in seconds, minutes, and points. Meanwhile, in the cultural sphere, the results are not always completed within a calendar year and not all indicators directly reflect the actual state of affairs. And yet even here numbers and comparisons can tell a lot. *Not in vain, sometimes the situation is paraphrased as follows: there is as much truth in a certain phenomenon as it is possible to express it mathematically.* [The italics are mine– E.R.]<sup>12</sup>

To be able to tell “quite a lot” was not to tell everything. Thus, this quote tells us that the highly placed Soviet cultural official did not fully buy into the hegemonic economic discourse of quantitative measurability. And yet his reservations were strongly coupled with paying homage to the power of numbers as a “language of truth”. In retrospect, Šepetyš was very critical about the “blind guidelines” of “indicators”. In his recently published memoirs, he described his argument with the head of the organisational work department at the Central Committee about the distribution of prizes to distinguished artists:

When it came to a ballet dancer, T. Sventickaitė, our deliberations got bogged down in a morass of indicators. “What are the concrete indicators of her achievements?” the head [of the organisational work department at the Central Committee] kept asking. I kept repeating that she had danced many expressive roles and that she was at a high professional level and a virtuoso, a temperamental dancer... “If there are no concrete indicators, there will be no award”, he stated and cut short the conversation.<sup>13</sup>

Numbers were supposed to stimulate the work of culture. However, making numbers was in itself hard work. Processing numbers and circulating them within the bureaucratic system was a source of frustration. Even highly placed cultural policy-makers had to deal with the massive system of accounting and reporting on a daily basis. As Vice-Minister Vytautas Jakelaitis commented about the mid-1960s, his last years in the Ministry of Culture:

First, the formalism of the leadership of culture strengthened each year. Higher ministerial officers were increasingly suspicious of cultural initiatives and demanded various forms [*spravki*] nearly everyday; inspectors returned again and again. [...] I saw how my colleagues were depressed by this overwhelming “socialist competition”, having to weigh creative endeavours on the basis of points on paper. [...] And inspectors had only one occupation – counting, writing and counting again – instead of solving

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<sup>12</sup> Lionginas Šepetyš, “Nauji darbo barai” (1972), LLMA, f. 342, a. 1, b. 2288, l. 17.

<sup>13</sup> Šepetyš, *Neprarastoji karta*, 60. It took a turn to the means of *realpolitik* to solve the situation. The ballet dancer received the award only after Šepetyš complained about Novickas to the higher Party members.

problems. And everywhere there were demands for “pure ideology” above all else! [...] One year, we realised that it was already the beginning of May and we had not even started working yet; we were only pushing paper and sending off forms [*pažyma*].<sup>14</sup>

Of course, traditional bureaucracies practiced statistical accounting. As argued in Chapter V, in the post-1960 Soviet bureaucracy, the statistical flows were re-conceptualised in system-cybernetic terms and assisted by computerisation. In 1983, the meeting of the presidium of the All-Union Academy of Sciences adopted a new definition of “informatics”: the term ceased to mean the contents of databases and instead would refer to the science of communication. The concept of “informatics” absorbed many fields that previously had been included in the Soviet definition of “cybernetics” (keeping in mind that the Soviet use of cybernetics was more widespread than it was in the West).<sup>15</sup> In the mid-1980s, Gorbachev felt it necessary to update Lenin’s slogan of “industrialisation” with “informatisation” (*informatizatsiia*).<sup>16</sup>

I believe that this suggests that although the recasting of the state administration in cybernetic terms was barely achieved in practice, cybernetic governance endured in the Soviet mentality as an appropriate mode for governing complex spheres. At the end of 1985, the LSSR Minister of Culture argued that the principles of ideological work should agree with the contemporary principles of management and thus combine elements of cybernetics, systems theory and sociological research. He viewed them as being based on “scientificity”, “complexity”, “differentiated work with separate inhabitants’ groups”, “coherence and systematicity”, and “flow”.<sup>17</sup> In 1985, “systemic” work was often opposed to “sporadic” or “chaotic” (*stichiškas*) or “clichéd” (*šabloniškas*) work.<sup>18</sup> In the same year, the minister stressed that cultural policy-making was about to face the changes that were “on an equally great – or maybe even greater scale than those that followed the 20<sup>th</sup> Congress of the CPSU” and called for a “technical re-arming of museums and libraries”.<sup>19</sup> Perestroika was announced at the 27<sup>th</sup> Party Congress held in February and March of 1986. A stronger and more

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<sup>14</sup> Jakelaitis, *Saulei leidžiantis*, 5-6.

<sup>15</sup> In explaining the reasons for this change, Lithuanian historian of informatics Voverienė quoted the head of the Cybernetics Board at the Soviet Academy of Sciences, A. Dorodnitsin, who argued that “malicious tumours of empty wordiness grew on cybernetics [...] serious people came to be ashamed of the name of cybernetician, [...] it appeared necessary to clean away the rubbish of chatter.” A. A. Dorodnitsin, “Informatika: predmet i zadachi” *Priroda* 2 (1985), 27, cf Voverienė, 1996, 107-108.

<sup>16</sup> Shane, 70.

<sup>17</sup> For example, “the activity of a club – an uninterrupted purposive flow of pedagogical impact,” LLMA, f.342, ap.1, b. 3645, l. 86. This vision of a club was clearly very normative. As it had been noted in an earlier decision of the LSSR Ministry of Culture, the chain “information-propaganda-effect” did not always work properly in club enterprises. Decision N. 3 (24 April 1985), LLMA, f. 342, ap. 1, b. 3671, l. 23.

<sup>18</sup> LLMA, f. 342, ap. 1, b. 3676.

<sup>19</sup> “Pranešimo planas” (1985), LLMA, f. 342, ap. 1, b. 3645, l. 8, 14.

explicit emphasis on science and technology for cultural governance was introduced. The minister addressed the Collegium of the Ministry of Culture<sup>20</sup> by saying:

The growing complexity of the socialist society and economy implied the need to strengthen the scientific basis of government, to make it adequate for the new scale of our economy, to the new requirements of the times. The general logic of the development of socio-economic processes puts forward the task of uplifting a scientific basis of cultural construction.<sup>21</sup>

I think that the way in which this conviction of appropriate governance clashed with everyday reality is quite remarkable. The intellectual machinery of calculation-based governance was poorly supported by material machinery. Just like the limited power of numbers to express the value of culture and effectivise cultural-policy making, the failure of the government to provide the cultural sector with “cybernetic technologies” was publicly acknowledged.

### *The Poverty of Technology*

In this section, I will briefly describe how the technical embodiment of cybernetic steering into computer technologies was expected to enter Soviet Lithuanian libraries, museums and contemporary music. As mentioned earlier, for largely arbitrary reasons, the publishing and broadcasting sectors did not fall under the responsibility of the Ministry of Culture; thus, television, cinema and radio will be considered here. However, there was a perception that libraries and museums needed new, cybernetic technologies just as much as did television and radio. Additionally, I will consider an organisation, definitely not one that was dependent on the Ministry of Culture but that was essential for providing information for the government, namely, the Committee for State Security (KGB), which, judging from available documents, was somewhat surprisingly ill-equipped technically to conduct surveillance of culture. Hence, the KGB case rounds out this section by demonstrating how cybernetic management was somewhat more efficiently implemented (although its use was probably still limited) in more prioritised spheres (such as KGB surveillance of the population) than in less prioritised cultural work (the effectivisation of self-education of the population through libraries and museums).

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<sup>20</sup> The Collegium was the highest decision-making body in the ministry, under whose responsibility fell planning, cadres and reports. It was launched in 29 September 1953, though its regulations were passed somewhat later, 13 January 1954. See Lisenkaitė, 200.

<sup>21</sup> Jonas Bielinis, “Materialy k vystupeniiu na kolegii Ministerstva kul'tury Litovskoi SSR” (1986), LLMA, f. 342, ap. 1, b. 3709, l. 51.

### 1) *Libraries, Museums, Music*

It was the librarians who invested big hopes in the age of “the flow of information”. In the mid-1970s, however, as the polemical-critical articles in *Domains of Culture* revealed, Soviet Lithuanian library work could hardly be characterised as a smooth flow. The centralisation of the libraries did create the preconditions required for computerising the sector. The technical equipment of the majority of libraries, especially in the countryside, was quite poor. Even some very basic technical components of librarianship, such as telephones were often missing. Although libraries were described as “banks of information”, much of the information was often stored, not in printed or electronic databases, but in the brain of a librarian. In 1976, an article about the Utena district’s libraries complained that:

He [a librarian] uses scarce bibliographical sources and often informs a reader “after digging in his own memory”. Without reproduction technology (only typewriters were available), the central district library is unable to provide the staffs of library branches with information about the available book resources of the district. [...] Teletype machines would be needed to transmit and receive requests, but this seems to be a thing in the distant future. At this point, only nine out of 35 village libraries even have a telephone. A very old requirement of librarian scholars (this is also emphasised in the documents of centralisation) is that contemporary libraries need teletype machines, library buses, machines for copying and duplication, computing technology, specialised librarians – all these good suggestions are perceived as unnecessary, as a library is expected to manage even without this technological reconstruction. And it is managing. Of course, the readers are suffering.<sup>22</sup>

The interlibrary loan system was in particular need of “cybernetisation” or an automated management system. And even though AMS were introduced into cargo transport by the late 1960s, they never reached public libraries (the situation of scientific libraries with restricted access was somewhat better). As Beissinger pointedly observed, in the Soviet offices of the 1970s, 19<sup>th</sup> century technologies, such as manual typewriters, carbon paper and an abacus prevailed, while the computerised equipment was reserved for the “production” sphere.<sup>23</sup> Thus, in 1987, the LSSR Minister of Culture criticised the state of computerisation of libraries: “Systemically, though not quickly, work is being carried out in the sphere of a national retrospective bibliography: a republic-wide automated library information system, which lays the foundation for librarianship and bibliography of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, is being created”.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Antanas Staponkus, “Naujus kelius išžvalgant,” KB 4 (1976), 36.37.

<sup>23</sup> Beissinger, 250.

<sup>24</sup> LLMA, f. 342, ap. 1, b. 3771, l. 31, 35, 33.

Like libraries, museums and restoration institutes also voiced the need for advanced technology. Since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, museums have been regarded as important sites for the production of scientific knowledge.<sup>25</sup> This particular function was of utmost importance in the Soviet Union, in particular because museums were used for anti-religious propaganda. It can hardly be a coincidence that museums were the only sphere of the Soviet Lithuanian cultural sector that saw the materialisation of cybernetic rationalisation. First, just like the Soviet administrative apparatus of governance, museums themselves were redefined in system-cybernetic terms. In 1987 Bielinis noted that

Scientific-technical progress that opens up new themes and ideas, new exhibits and new means of displays for museums can play an active role in helping these institutions protect, propagate and relate today's traditional cultural values to historical experience. It may seem paradoxical that today's means of mass communications, which can help a person quickly retrieve the most diverse information, do not diminish the significance of such an immobile source of information as a museum. [...] a museum, being a kind of a passive storage facility, actively generates and transfers the charges of ideas.<sup>26</sup>

Indeed, since the mid-1970s, several published articles have called for the “cybernetisation” of museum work. For example, Romualdas Budrys, the director of the Lithuanian SSR Art Museum, stated that an important goal of a museum is to “shape museum collections on the grounds of modern science”.<sup>27</sup> Of course, modern science was impossible without efficient methods for processing large quantities of information. Thus, information processing was the first sphere to be computerised. The director noted that in “the advanced countries” the computerisation of museum catalogues started “30 years ago”. Meanwhile the Lithuanian art museum “only recently” initiated rather primitive computerisation using punch cards.

In 1987, for the first time, the Minister of Culture stressed the importance of using “the achievements of science and technology in all spheres of museum work”. It was envisioned that “technical and biological systems” would be applied in the museums’ storage rooms. The “electronic computing machines” would be used to create “dynamic systems of information and catalogues”. The computerisation of all the country’s museums was necessary in order to create a “unified state accounting system of museum values”. Moreover, “audiovisual

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<sup>25</sup> In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the museums predominantly concentrated on collecting and displaying the typical as opposed to the curious and irregular, which was common to baroque collections. See Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum*; Tony Bennett, *Pasts Beyond Memory: Evolution, Museums, Colonialism* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), 64-84.

<sup>26</sup> Jonas Bielinis (16 November 1987), LLMA, f. 342, ap. 1, b. 3771, l. 54.

<sup>27</sup> Romualdas Budrys, “Elektroninė technika muziejuje,” KB 7 (1983), 49.

design”, particularly holograms, were to be used in constructing displays.<sup>28</sup> The minister regretted that despite “the great industrial potential in the spheres of electronics, radio technology and television in the republic, it was rare for museums to be provided with audiovisual equipment and new technologies”.<sup>29</sup> Thus, the Soviet Lithuanian museums lagged about 20 years behind their Western counterparts when it came to the use of computer and cybernetic technologies.

Interestingly, computerisation was first introduced at the Palanga Amber Museum. Established in 1963, this natural history museum focuses on palaeontology. This case suggests that the logic of economic priority was replicated where the natural sciences were seen as superior to culture (the arts). Thus, the Amber Museum was seen being as “more scientific” than an art gallery and hence more deserving of computerisation. Further, the choice might have been motivated by the museum’s discursive role in Soviet Lithuania. Natural history, as pointed out by Bennett, had been mobilised by museums in the 19<sup>th</sup> century to construct and govern the social.<sup>30</sup> In the Lithuanian context, the Amber Museum brought the “natural” and the “national” closer together. It studied and displayed amber pieces that contained pre-historic fossils and were found in Lithuanian territory. In this exhibit, the museum showed the territoriality of the country, which extended well beyond the history of its population. In addition, historically, the amber trade was one of the major characteristics of the Baltic tribes and marked their routes in the historiography. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, amber was also used as a metaphor for the country. In a poem (a standard part of school curricula) by the communist Lithuanian poet Salomėja Nėris, Lithuania was described as a “drop of amber”.<sup>31</sup> Material memory, which enabled the tracing of both extinct species frozen in amber pieces and the prehistoric Baltic trade routes and cultural contacts, was to be translated and hosted by a new “electronic memory”.<sup>32</sup> However, in addition to a database, new technologies for displays were required. One archival document stated that museums lacked “audiovisual equipment and new technology, despite the fact that the republic has accumulated the potential for technological production in electronics, radio technology and television”.<sup>33</sup> As late as 1987, the computerisation of museums, along with the creation of a “unitary state accounting system of museums’ values” and cataloguing with the help of “electronic calculation machines” were only part of a plan for the future.<sup>34</sup>

Cybernetic technologies were seen not only as machines of governance and the production of knowledge but also as tools for creation in culture. Fi-

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<sup>28</sup> LLMA, f. 342, ap. 1, b. 3771, l. 64.

<sup>29</sup> Jonas Bielinis (3 April 1987), LLMA, f. 342, ap. 1, b. 3771, l. 33.

<sup>30</sup> Bennett, *Pasts Beyond Memory*.

<sup>31</sup> Gintautas Mažeikis, “Propagandinė literatūra: Nuo ideologinės mimezės iki mitografijos. Vėlyvojo stalinizmo laikotarpio lietuvių literatūra,” *Darbai ir dienos* 48 (2007), 233-260.

<sup>32</sup> Budrys, “Elektroninė technika muziejuje,” 50.

<sup>33</sup> LLMA, f. 342, ap. 1, b. 3771, l. 31, 35, 33.

<sup>34</sup> LLMA, f. 342, ap. 1, b. 3771, l. 64.

nally, I would like to consider computer music and electronic instruments, which constituted a somewhat specialised zone, which involved only a few artists. However, in the mid-1980s, in addition to libraries and museums, Lithuanian electronic music was publicly discussed as another meeting point between “traditional culture” and “advanced technology”. As the importance of Lithuanian and Baltic electronic music in general in the Soviet Union has already been briefly addressed by some researchers, I will limit myself to pointing out that 1984 marked a tipping point.<sup>35</sup> The musicians started to complain publicly about the inadequacy of the transformative powers of widely announced STR and the actual paucity of technical innovations in their sector.

In July 1984, *Domains of Culture* published an article entitled “Music and Technological Progress”, which appraised the opportunities provided by computer technologies and complained about the poor state of electronic music in Lithuania. It stated that composers “have a difficult time with primitive, sometimes homemade apparatuses”.<sup>36</sup> In the next issue, the problem was further addressed by the vice-rector of the LSSR Music Academy, who also regretted that the “tools of a composer working in the cybernetic age are still a sheet of lined paper and a pencil, just like 100 years ago”. Arguing that “the union of music-science-technology would be a positive generator of new artistic expression”, he called for the establishment of a republican studio of electronic music.<sup>37</sup> In October, the famous composer Osvaldas Balakauskas published a solid historical overview of electronic music in the West and presented Lithuanian efforts to move “towards electronic music”.<sup>38</sup> The composer complained that electronic and computer technologies were unavailable to composers. The magazine invited several scientists to comment on the musicians’ complaints: a lecturer on programming, the head of the Venta scientific research institute, and a physicist, the vice-rector of Vilnius University. Their reaction was quite defensive. The lecturer dismissed the musicians’ complaints and suggested that access to computers was not really a problem because the machines were, in principle, available for public use at the republic’s computing centres. He insisted that the “theoreticians of art” themselves were not interested in using electronic computing machines.<sup>39</sup> It would be difficult to speculate on how the composers’ requests for access would have been treated at those centralised centres, which were equipped with machinery that was outdated and often in need of repair and also had to serve the needs of many economists and scientists. On the other hand, as mentioned earlier, the computing centres were indeed often underused. The other two scientists agreed that the technical base was not that bad and used this opportunity to popularise computer technologies in the pages of *Domains of*

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<sup>35</sup> See Mark Rais, “Some Notes about Soviet Computer Music,” *Leonardo* 24, no.5 (1991), 535-39.

<sup>36</sup> Birutė Sinkevičiūtė, “Muzika ir technikos pažanga,” KB 7 (1984), 19.

<sup>37</sup> Juozas Antanavičius, “Perspektyvi sąjunga,” KB 8 (1984), 26-28.

<sup>38</sup> Osvaldas Balakauskas, “Elektroninės muzikos link,” KB 10 (1984), 7-11.

<sup>39</sup> Ginatutas Grigas, KB 10 (1984), 8-9.

*Culture.* The head of the Venta institute emphasised that new electronic instruments were being developed in cooperation with the Mathematics and Cybernetics Institute (LAS).<sup>40</sup> Meanwhile, the vice-rector regretted the widespread computer illiteracy and emphasised plans to establish computer-related education in various university departments.<sup>41</sup>

It is important to note that the responses to the musicians' problems did not try to downplay the significance of electronic music. Since the Soviet Union could claim the leading role in some spheres of electronic music, especially computer algorithms produced by the Russian mathematician and composer Rudolf Zaripov (1929-1991), electronic music enjoyed a very good reputation, although this apparently did not facilitate its "material base". Thus, the case of electronic music reveals the paradoxical status of culture in the Soviet system. Ideologically, it was both an important instrument for governing Soviet citizens and a resource for communicating Soviet progress abroad and yet it was not exempt from the prevailing low supply or even lack of new technologies. Indeed, judging from available documents, even the Lithuanian department of the KGB could not boast that it had a solid technical base of computer technologies.

## 2) *The KGB*<sup>42</sup>

The movement of information in society has its own specific features.<sup>43</sup>

As Shane pointed out, the KGB, the state security apparatus, was probably the main instrument for both circulating and suppressing information about the population in the Soviet Union.<sup>44</sup> It is no wonder then that the KGB also used a system-cybernetic language and technologies. This section presents some new data about the system-cybernetic lenses that the KGB used to make Lithuanian culture legible and controllable. Culture was assigned particular meanings in AMS that was designed for the state security organs.

It should come as no surprise that the LSSR state security committee (KGB) was better equipped with computer technologies than was the Ministry of Culture. It is difficult to determine just how good the KGB's equipment was in relation to other institutions, as there is not sufficient documentation available at the time of this writing. It has to be emphasised that the documents obtained from the KGB archives in Vilnius provide only a very limited understanding of the use of computer technology in relation to culture. First, the secret documents were regularly destroyed according to the internal rules of the agency. It is very likely that many of the surviving documents were exported from Lithuania dur-

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<sup>40</sup> Liucijus Kondratas, KB 10 (1984), 9.

<sup>41</sup> Algimantas Bikelis, KB 10 (1984), 10-11.

<sup>42</sup> I am grateful to Arvydas Anušauskas for referring me to *Del'ta-Litva*.

<sup>43</sup> Afanas'ev, "O soderzhanii...", 42.

<sup>44</sup> Shane, *Dismantling Utopia*, 103, 104. Shane quoted a story of how a KGB official himself referred to Wiener and called the KGB a "kind of feedback".

ing the period 1990-1991, when the KGB was moving to Russia. Hence, the findings presented in this section rely on only a few remaining sources found in the Lithuanian Special Archives and therefore should not be regarded as conclusive. Second, at the moment it is nearly impossible to know how and if the AMS was even used by the KGB.

Based on documents at the LSSR KGB archives, I was able to establish that no computer equipment was included in acquisitions planned for the early 1980s.<sup>45</sup> Most probably, some computers were acquired in the late 1980s. An inventory conducted in 1990 revealed that the Vilnius department of the KGB operated with two Xerox copying machines, 64 desk calculators and four moderately powerful “electronic calculation machines” (*ESM*).<sup>46</sup> The archives also contained some computer tapes; however the tapes had not been decoded.<sup>47</sup> These documents revealed the existence of an automated information system (*automatinė informacinė sistema*) known as *Del'ta-Litva*, which was developed and kept at the Information-Analytical Department. The archives contained codes or a “normative vocabulary” to be used with *Del'ta-Litva*, dated 1985. The codes were to be entered on punch cards, which were archived; they dated from 1987 to 1990.<sup>48</sup> I did not find any technical information about the computer, but the name of the system suggests that it was probably based on the *Del'ta* computer (a Soviet clone of a popular *ZX-Spectrum* computer, produced in Great Britain). Data about a similar system has been located in the Latvian KGB archives; however, both the Latvian and Estonian KGB archives are unavailable to researchers. It is known, however, that Latvian archivists succeeded in decoding their punch cards.<sup>49</sup> Thus, it could be rather safely assumed that the *Del'ta* information system was in use throughout the Soviet Union. On the basis of available material, the *Del'ta-Litva* information system could be described as a computerised tool for processing information about various actions that would concern the KGB. The “normative vocabulary” expressed a fascinating conceptualisation of places, types of actions, causes of actions and actants, of which a full-fledged Greimasian analysis should be conducted elsewhere.

The *Del'ta-Litva* system was not designed specially for the cultural sector. Indeed, it was a database of many administrative units in Lithuanian SSR and included a coded list of towns, addresses, organisations, objects, motives and types of actions. In *Del'ta-Litva*, culture was constructed in three ways. First, it was a place or the location of an action. Second, it was a cause and third, it was

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<sup>45</sup> The plan of expenses for bureau equipment for 1982 allocated financing only for typewriters, calculators and copying machines. “(1981) Sekretno. Proekt smety raskhodov na sodержanie Komiteta gosudarstvennoi bezopasnosti Litovskoi SSR na 1982 god,” LYA, f. K-1, ap. 12, b. 424, l. 6.

<sup>46</sup> “Inventorius” (1990), LYA, f. K-1, ap. B/n-2, b. 30, l. 1, 2. Informal evaluation by Mifodijus Sapagovas, 2008.

<sup>47</sup> LYA, f. K-1, ap. B/n-3, b. 1374-1379.

<sup>48</sup> “Perforuotos kortelės ‘Deltos’ aparatai. 1987-1990,” LYA, f. K-1, ap. 49, b. 1527. I could not access the cards because they contained names of KGB agents and residents.

<sup>49</sup> Information based on conversation with Arvydas Anušauskas, Vilnius, December 2007.

the means of an action. For example, the nomenclature for “the type of the means for conducting an action” contained a sub-section entitled “the means of ideological impact”. Thus “art and literature” were marked with code 23, and “printed or handwritten ‘samizdat’ works” – 24.<sup>50</sup> Other types included “the means of physical impact”, such as weapons, and the “the means of duplication”, such as photography equipment or typewriters. The domain of the Ministry of Culture was also absent from the category known as “categories of information source”.<sup>51</sup> One category “social status”, contained two applicable categories: “creatively intelligent” (Code 33) and “cultural operator” (*kultūros tarnautojas*, Code 40).<sup>52</sup> The vocabulary about “purpose, motive and cause of an action” coded several cultural activities, such as the “influence of radio” (11), the “influence of television” (12), “film” (13), “completed education” (46) and “literature” (14).<sup>53</sup> Notably, the fine arts and music were absent from the code. The code list also covered cultural organisations and agencies. Thus, the vocabulary for “department subordination” (*Žinybinis pavaldumas*, 016) indicated the Ministries of Culture, both republican and all-union. It also included the association for the protection of historical and cultural monuments (139) and creative unions (092-097).<sup>54</sup> The cultural sphere as a physical and organisational location was thoroughly coded. The vocabulary for “categories of organisations (objects)” included an ensemble (014), various libraries (056-060), a gallery (338), a permanent exhibition (097), a palace of culture (120), a house of culture (127), an exhibition hall (177), a concert hall (178), a theatre (514) and a ministry (569).<sup>55</sup> Further, the coding system included some of Vilnius’s city organisations, such as “the agency of culture of the Vilnius *gorispolkom*” (4397), a trust *Dailė* (4282),<sup>56</sup> the Philharmonic Society (552, 314), the Čiurlionis String Quartet (798), the State Philharmonic Society Ensemble (*Gosfilharmonija*, 819), the Opera and Ballet Theatre (2022), the Theatre of Youth (1120), the Art Fund (763), the Book Palace (541), the Artists’ Union (4327, 915), the Writers’ Union (7364), the Art Institute (4324), the Conservatory (616) and the editorial board of the newspaper *Literature and Art* (779). I believe that this listing nicely illustrates another numerical guise of culture as it emerged in the eyes of the state security surveillants.

As I noted, at the present time, it is nearly impossible to find out how and if the *Del'ta-Litva* information system was used by the KGB and other institutions. Judging from the archival documents, it is clear that certain actions were coded on information cards, for example, a certain individual performed a certain action by manipulating certain objects and other individuals at a certain

<sup>50</sup> “Informacinė sistema “Delta-Litva” 1985,” LYA, f. K-1, ap. B/n-1, b. 71, l. 4.

<sup>51</sup> LYA, f. K-1, ap. B/n-1, b. 71, l. 10,11.

<sup>52</sup> LYA, f. K-1, ap. B/n-1, b. 71, l. 12.

<sup>53</sup> LYA, f. K-1, ap. B/n-1, b. 71, l. 17-19.

<sup>54</sup> LYA, f. K-1, ap. B/n-1, b. 71, l. 21-44.

<sup>55</sup> LYA, f. K-1, ap. B/n-1, b. 71, l. 45-62.

<sup>56</sup> “IAS. Vilniaus m. įmonių, įstaigų ir organizacijų sąrašai su informacinės sistemos “Delta-Litva” inf.kortelių Nr.,” LYA, f. K-1, ap. B/n-1, b. 77, l. 6, 30.

organisation and address. The database was supposed to be searchable on the basis of all of these variables. However, as the archived instructions revealed, primary information was entered on paper cards by hand, transferred onto punch cards and then entered into a computer.<sup>57</sup> It can be hypothesised that the information on the punch cards was intended for use in Moscow rather than locally.<sup>58</sup> It is difficult to know precisely how much the system was used in the Information-Analytical Department. More than the fact that the department was small, there is no reliable information about it since a list of its personnel could not be accessed. According to an LYA employee, however, only two people were employed there.<sup>59</sup>

On the basis of this very scarce information, it can be contended that the *Del'ta-Litva* automated information system did not introduce any new categories to the existing cultural nomenclature, defined in the documents of the Ministry of Culture. The selection of certain organisations was not obvious to me: it was another example of a Borgesian list. However, the “normative vocabularies” project was an open one because new titles and codes were added. In all probability, the coded organisations were those with which the KGB was most engaged at that time. Thus, *Del'ta-Litva* was a kind of surveillance and accounting system, which made it possible to digitally search information about, for example, the types of actions conducted in certain locations, their consequences, causes, time, and agents – titular agents and mediators – involved. Notably, cultural production, like literature, was listed among the means of possible actions.

In summary, by the end of the 1980s, some concrete cases of cybernetisation of governance and work in the cultural sector emerged. All of them, including the *Del'ta* system at the KGB, were severely limited in a technical sense (and probably in actual use). The techno-scientific equipment of cultural organisations was, from a discursive point of view, closely linked with the very rationale of Soviet governance, which was based on economic rationalisation and calculation. Thus, KGB codified cultural organisations as informational units for its policing purposes, whilst the computerisation of museums fell into the economic priority of the means of production (natural sciences as the production of the means of production). Nevertheless, at the same time, the centralised, administratively commanded, Soviet system came under increasingly strong attack.

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<sup>57</sup> LYA, f. K-1, ap. B/n-1, b. 75, l. 8.

<sup>58</sup> A similar story was told by the head of the Institute of the State Planning Committee. According to him, certain economic information was demanded by Moscow, to be sent on magnetic tapes. Interview with an economist, Aleksandras Vasiliauskas, Vilnius, December 2005.

<sup>59</sup> Author's conversation, LYA, Vilnius, November 2007.

## *1986 and After: Taking Culture Out of the Bureaucrat's Briefcase*

Calculation, control and ideology were intertwined in complex ways in the Soviet cultural sector. In 1950, Gudaitis-Guzevičius, in a private communication to an undercover KGB agent, confessed his lack of interest in writing Soviet “official literature” (*valdiška literatūra*). Guzevičius said that in these days “every accountant could become a writer; all one had to do was calculate all the official ‘pros’ and ‘cons’”.<sup>60</sup> It is remarkable that even such a hard-line communist as the former head of the LSSR NKVD contrasted the productive and creative work of a writer with a calculative manipulator. Two things are important here. First, calculation, seeking to meet official expectations, was opposed to an ideal of cultural creation as an un-contracted expression of individual talent. Second, the authority of the official ideology was questioned: Guzevičius suggested that it was limited and uninspiring. For sure, in the 1940s-1950s, such opinions could be stated only in private and then, as in this case, they risked being documented in KGB reports. It was only about 30 years later that the Soviet calculation-based governance of culture could be criticised openly. In this section, I will show how criticism of the Soviet methods of governing culture intensified to such an extent that the mode was rejected.

In the second half of the 1980s, my main source, *Domains of Culture*, published many critical articles written by a wide variety of representatives from the cultural sector: they ranged from a librarian in a village house of culture to an administrator at the LSSR Ministry of Culture. Even though the magazine belonged to the official body of the communist government, the ministry, it became a channel for the ideas of the Sajūdis independence movement and sought to provide a forum in which all cultural operators could express their views. It is quite curious that I found almost no reference to ongoing cultural policy debates in the other Baltic republics or Russia. Thus, the Lithuanian reconstruction debates could be seen as rather self-contained. The liberalising programme of *perestroika*, or reconstruction, announced by Mikhail Gorbachev in 1986, did not seek to do away with “scientific governance”. Quite the contrary: its important part was the “technological rejuvenation” of the Soviet Union and, of course, the cultural sector. In his internal address to the Collegium of the Ministry, the LSSR Minister of Culture reported that “the general logic of the development of social-economic processes posed the task of advancing a scientific basis of planning cultural construction”.<sup>61</sup> At about the same time, “the scientific basis of planning cultural construction” was attacked by cultural intellectuals and cultural workers from various sides. However, attacks against calculation-based governance of culture began even before the announcement of economic reconstruction and openness.

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<sup>60</sup> “Pažyma apie lietuvių inteligentijos reakcinės dalies antitarybines nuotaikas” (9 June 1950), *Lietuvos kultūra sovietinės ideologijos nelaisvėje*, 137.

<sup>61</sup> LLMA, f. 342, ap. 1, b. 3709, l. 51.

As early as 1982, the scientifically and economically rationalised governance of culture was thoroughly criticised in an internal meeting of the Agency of Cultural-Enlightenment Enterprises. The existing statistical calculations were criticised for being badly designed and unreliable and for creating the wrong incentives. Arguing that “the norms of standards and measurements do not always fit cultural life”, a participant criticised the role of coefficients in socialist competition and its relation to the Party postulate of equality. Let me explain: the results of the work of cultural organisations were evaluated on the basis of proportional statistical representation. For instance, attendance rates at movie theatres were not evaluated in relation to the total average of moviegoers per city but per city inhabitant. However, in reality, larger towns always boasted higher rates, mainly because the choice of films was greater in these towns. It appeared that all towns wanted to reach the coefficients of the capital Vilnius, which led to the falsification of numbers. As one cultural worker stated, “By ignoring the laws of logic, the result was already evident before the calculating even began. As if all the smaller towns had come to a mutual agreement, not only did they raise the numbers to the level of those of the large cities, they also left them far behind”. In a similar vein, he complained about attempts to use points to calculate the achievements of folk art. The points were calculated per a folk artist’s participation in an exhibition, not by place of residence. Consequently, Vilnius garnered 860 points because many exhibitions took place there, whereas the places where folk artists actually lived and worked – provincial towns like Alytus – received no points at all. The speaker argued that the system of calculation itself was clearly faulty and was further distorted by unreliable numbers. He also claimed that, in general, it made no sense to “compare the efforts put into the work and the impact on the republic’s cultural life”.<sup>62</sup>

Statistical calculations of the performance of cultural organisations produced more than the activities initially intended. There were complaints that sometimes “secondary indicators” were better evaluated by awarding staff with bonuses than “primary” (cultural results). It was seen as unfair that libraries with better results in “telephonisation” (succeeding in installing more telephones) received higher awards than those that had a higher level of readership per librarian. In the ministry meetings, it was acknowledged that the economic incentives stimulated people to strive for higher levels of performance in relation to certain indicators. However, there was concern that this indicator-driven competition would lead to the creation of capitalist relationships inside socialism: “a kind of NEP time has arrived – one attempts to complete work in a more profitable way and accumulate the dubious capital of socialist competition”.<sup>63</sup> On the other hand, a cultural-enlightenment worker, arguing against the standardisation imposed by accounting for culture, asked whether “instead of stimu-

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<sup>62</sup> Bielskis (1982), LLMA, f. 342, ap. 1, b. 3473, l. 9-10.

<sup>63</sup> LLMA, f. 342, ap. 1, b. 3473, l. 11.

lating socialist competition, we were bandaging it like an invalid with those tables, graphs, instructions?”<sup>64</sup>

To put it metaphorically, in the 1980s, culture was seen not as a flow processed by “thinking machines” but as a document locked inside the briefcase of a Soviet bureaucrat. Cultural workers complained about being tired of filling in detailed accounting forms, which they regarded as pointless because they were aware of the wide-spread falsification of the results. They were unhappy that their suggestions to improve administrative procedures were met with indifference by higher officials. All these issues were encapsulated in an article published in *Domains of Culture* (1987), in which the head of the culture department in Kelmė district complained about the pervasive formalisation of cultural work:

Our everyday life is very much complicated by formalism, the cult of a little bit of paper, which has survived in times of reconstruction. It is sufficient to remember that it took an entire month for us to prepare, together with district cultural workers, for a discussion about differentiated work at the Agency of Cultural-Enlightenment Enterprises. We gathered and studied the material and proposed, in our view, the most suitable version of a system, but it was all in vain. Routine won out. It was recommended to sacrifice with... additional logs to mark what, for one or another event was noted in a journal. The enormous flow of papers is never-ending; we are continuously being asked to provide various certificates and information. What else to call this, if not the crushing of independent initiative? And the nerve of asking us to carry out continuous check-ups and meticulous cost control? Because of inertia, there is still a greater belief in statements on paper than real facts. This is how culture is locked inside a briefcase, how it is endangered and how it risks being suffocated.<sup>65</sup>

It is hard to overestimate the importance of this dissatisfaction and despair regarding the Soviet government’s failure to effectively administer culture in the Lithuania of the late 1980s. I would like to stress this aspect in particular because it has been so grossly overlooked in the studies that focused on ideological censorship and control of the cultural creators. It is important to note the despair was mutual and present both at the top and at the bottom of the hierarchy of cultural administration. While the cultural workers complained that administratively commanded culture was “locked inside a briefcase”, the ministry officials feared that they were losing their grip on culture in a dusty office. The archives of the Ministry of Culture contained a detailed acknowledgement of the dysfunctional administration of culture in one of the country’s provinces:

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<sup>64</sup> LLMA, f. 342, ap. 1, b. 3473, l. 12.

<sup>65</sup> Hubertas Smilgys, “Permainos, kurių laukiam,” KB 12 (1987), 40.

The execution of decrees is not controlled. These issues are not properly accounted for by the employees of the cultural department and the district culture house. No control cards have been made for the implementation of decrees. Informational material is not gathered together; it is located in various places – in a culture department, in a methodical cabinet, at the home of the director of the district culture house.<sup>66</sup>

This 1984 report revealed an organisational bottleneck, which clearly prevented the entire “system of culture” from “perfecting itself” (a reference to the speech quoted in Chapter VII). A messy local office was indeed a nightmare for a planner of culture. In line with Glushkov, the bad organisation of information was seen as a fundamental obstacle to efficient management. And yet, as the above quote informs us, the information was to be “put on cards” and not entered into a computer database. Thus, even successful Soviet administration was based on the circulation of paper documents and phone calls rather than on electronic signals. However, as it turned out, even the smooth flow of reports did not always entail greater knowledge. As the Lithuanian sociologist put it:

No scientific discipline can fully explore spiritual culture and the conditions of its development on an empirical level alone. The results of general theoretical and concrete, applied research – the sociology of culture, the economics of culture, ethics, aesthetics, pedagogy, social psychology and special disciplines of cultural enlightenment work are needed. [...] But a contradiction emerges here: the majority of leading cultural workers and practitioners claim that the available scientific information is still insufficient to form the basis for work plans, methodical organisational work and yet... never before has there been so much writing, talk about red-tape, overflow and the gratuitous proffering of scripts, certificates and other official information!<sup>67</sup>

In 1986, the launch year of “economic restructuring”, the LSSR Minister of Culture reported on a proposal, written by a working group at the Institute of Art History and Theory in cooperation with the economic planning and finance departments of the ministry. In line with a newly fashionable concept, “management and planning by objectives”, the working group suggested the introduction of *purposive indicators* into the long-term plan. The purposive indicators were meant to specify the “real” outcomes of cultural participation, which

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<sup>66</sup> Decision no.1, the meeting of the Agency of Cultural-Enlightenment Enterprises, “Dėl LTSR Kultūros ministerijos nutarimų kultūros švietimo darbo klausimais vykdymo efektyvumo Kaišiadorių raj. kultūros skyriuose ir rajoniniuose kultūros namuose” (14 March 1984), LLMA, f. 342, ap. 1, b. 3602, l. 7.

<sup>67</sup> Laima Kastanauskaitė, “Svarbiausia neatsilikti,” KB 7 (1987), 52.

were not revealed by attendance rates.<sup>68</sup> In particular, the minister emphasised the scientific research that was the underpinning for the recommendations:

In order to define purposive indicators, special research was conducted in the republic's territory in cities and villages and various types of settlements. This research made it possible to account for the specific conditions under which culture functions in Lithuanian SSR. The research, which included sociological surveys of the population, statistical analyses and expert surveys of specialists, revealed the cultural needs of various groups in the population, factors for activating their interest in cultural values [*tėsenosti*] and opportunities for perfecting the functioning networks of cultural and artistic enterprises.<sup>69</sup>

Further:

The recommendations for a long-term plan of cultural construction in the republic represent yet another step towards raising the scientific basis of the governance of culture. They target the development of culture towards its end results, a differentiated approach to the objects of planning, [and] a complex solution of socio-cultural tasks.<sup>70</sup>

Typically, just how “purposive indicators” would help to better measure the efficacy of cultural policy was not revealed in the document. Nevertheless, it was officially acknowledged that the measurability of culture in statistical data continued to be at least problematic and often very limited. The number of such tangible economic units, such as organisations, finance flows and employed individuals was easy to calculate, but the *utility* of cultural policy was difficult to express in numbers.<sup>71</sup> For the Communist Party, the ideological indoctrination and loyalty of the population was always vital: “first and foremost, an understanding of Marxist-Leninist ideology and a comprehension of communist moral norms and their application in everyday activity”.<sup>72</sup> However, even the success of propaganda was hard to measure and especially to quantify.<sup>73</sup> In her account about a “mature” Soviet cultural policy, the candidate-member of the

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<sup>68</sup> Jonas Bielinis, “Materialy k vystupeniui na kolegii Ministerstva kul'tury Litovskoi SSR” (1986), LLMA, f. 342, ap. 1, b. 3709, l. 52,53.

<sup>69</sup> LLMA, f. 342, ap. 1, b. 3709, l. 53.

<sup>70</sup> LLMA, f. 342, ap. 1, b. 3709, l. 60.

<sup>71</sup> Yúdice, for example, has argued that the end of the Cold War rehabilitated the notion of the usefulness of culture in governing populations in Western democratic regimes, George Yúdice, *The Expediency of Culture: Uses of Culture in the Global Era (Post-Contemporary Interventions)* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2003).

<sup>72</sup> Diržinskaitė, 7.

<sup>73</sup> A rather low level of impact was ascribed to Soviet political education by Stephen White, “The Effectiveness of Political Propaganda,” in *The Soviet Polity in the Modern Era*, eds. E. P. Hoffmann and R. Laird (New York: Aldine Publishing Company, 1984), 663-690.

Politburo (LCP) Diržinskaitė, admitted that “the ideological results of social-cultural activity can only be measured indirectly”.<sup>74</sup>

Taking all of this into consideration, I would like to suggest that during the 1980s the requirements for measuring culture were the subject of increasing criticism. In the course of growing openness, concerns about statistical misrepresentations were voiced. First, this was harsh criticism because it dealt with intentional deception. Second, even the conceptual basis for measurement was criticised. For example, the ability of numbers to collate and generalise small processes into one, manageable body was rendered as fairly useless for effective governance. In 1986, the party secretary of the Vilnius Factory of Computing Machines commented on a new condition for the acceleration policy:

In all chains, one must think realistically, to decide realistically. I can quote official instructions from a much high superior: *we do not need a proper general overview*. We do not need it! Neither the proper general overview nor the made-up statistics, which are nice to hide. [...] Neither previously nor today did we need that equilibristic game of little numbers. We want and are able to manage and be responsible for the results of our work ourselves.<sup>75</sup>

Whilst this quote suggests that macro-governance should be replaced with micro-steering, it also acknowledges an absence of trust in the mediatory apparatus of a number-crunching bureaucracy. Calling for “self-management”, in which larger governing bodies would not intervene, the party secretary saw the Soviet numeric calculations as a *rideau* or a ritual, the skilful performance of which made it possible to hide the “real” actions. Another article exclaimed that “we are extremely tired of that statistical culture, that paper optimism”.<sup>76</sup>

Reporting the numbers back to a bureaucratic apparatus was a necessary part of planning future development and designing forecasts. However, the Soviet forecasts turned out to be another disappointment. For example, in 1986 the head of the Agency for Cultural-Enlightenment organisations at the LSSR Ministry of Culture complained about the town of Kapsuka’s low rate of satisfaction with its “cultural servicing” (only 6 percent were satisfied). To a journalist’s question as to whether a better “prognosis of culture” conducted by the scientific-methodical Centre of Culture at the ministry would help improve the situation, the administrator replied that it was self-evident that “the centre” always lagged behind actual cultural development. Moreover, she doubted the efficacy of the use of cultural forecasting in general:

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<sup>74</sup> Diržinskaitė, 7.

<sup>75</sup> Anelė Dvilinskaitė, “Nevengti kuo drąsiausių žingsnių,” KB 5 (1986), 5.

<sup>76</sup> Regina Orakauskienė, “Kultūros decentralizacijos procesas iš arti,” KB 3 (1987), 31.

A living, changing process of creation can not be captured by methodological literature! It would be much more expedient to learn from examples rather than from statistical accounts [*apyrašai*].<sup>77</sup>

However, others held that forecasting was not to be abandoned but improved. In 1987, the former vice-minister of culture and rector of Klaipėda University wrote the following about “cultural prognosis”:

The errors of the prognoses of culture are particularly painful – they increase people’s disappointment and indifference. We will continue wandering like that until we make the methods of public opinion research, surveys and analysis accessible to district workers. [...] Feedback is one of the most important stimuli for tomorrow’s activity.<sup>78</sup>

Thus, in a cybernetic spirit, forecasting was formulated as an important component of governance. A forecast would provide a meaningful framework for a purposive feedback-guided action, the actual work of cultural operators. However, interestingly enough, this reformulation of reporting back as feedback was not capable of rejuvenating the Soviet bureaucracy. For example, in 1987, the former vice -minister of culture stated:

The attempts to evaluate every single step do not stimulate creativity - they restrict it – this is a psychologist’s idea. There was a time when there were fewer criteria and indicators for evaluation and more arguments. A type of person appeared, one who lived for the competition, spent days and nights counting those points [*balai*], those steps towards a desired flag. Sometimes the things people needed were not implemented because they would not “give points”. There were so many things like these, which do not suit a noble notion of culture.

And what has this competition turned into? Has it come to pass that without competition, which is increasingly made of paper [...] it is not clear which district works well and which work badly? Has it come to pass that things only become clear when they are lined up from 1 to 44? Perhaps, this “lining up” has little to contribute if the same names appear frequently at the end of a table.<sup>79</sup>

In this way, the numbers were criticised as powerless to represent a job well-done. They were seen as lacking the force to motivate those who “always end up at the end of the list”. They did not necessarily motivate the cultural projects best suited to local needs, but those which were preferred by the system of indicators. Regrettably, the work of culture was not carried out for the sake of peo-

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<sup>77</sup> Bernadeta Markevičienė, “Atmesti stereotipą ir dirbti naujai,” KB 11 (1986), 2.

<sup>78</sup> Vytautas Jakelaitis, “Kur ta pozityvi persitvarkymo programa?” KB 1 (1987), 14.

<sup>79</sup> Jakelaitis, *Juozas Banaitis*, 16.

ple but for the sake of vanity and the material benefits of receiving the flag of socialist competition. Furthermore, the bureaucratic procedure of producing numbers entailed hyper-accountability of “every step”, which limited creative manoeuvrability. Disenchantment with similar counter-effects of quantification stimulated a Union-wide theatre reform, which was launched in 1986. The leadership of theatres was to be reorganised by expanding the rights of their councils, and their activities would be evaluated according to the end results. This, it was hoped, would reduce “detailed supervision of the creative process” and “diminish the plan indicators to a minimum” (leaving 3 out of 11).<sup>80</sup>

The calculation-based governance of culture was seen as failing to effectively reach its formal goals, but it was regarded as very productive in generating various unintended side effects. Once “culture” was engaged in performing numbers, it was seen as turning into something else. For example, in 1987 a Lithuanian philosopher and active public debater argued that:

By defecting to a purely superficial form of activity, a façade culture becomes identical with the mere marking of a performed activity. Its meaning can be translated in an approximate way: “A habitual procedure is carried out; therefore, a work is done”. The participants of such a para-ritualistic procedure do not take their own activity very seriously. They feel relatively free, almost as if they are participating in a game, but in a game that is uninteresting and is played not because it would be fun, but out of need.<sup>81</sup>

On the other hand, the philosopher noted, such superficiality could be quite a sophisticated activity, one that required specific skills:

An artificial (not unusually even a coercive) increase in the progress of schools, the number of library readers and of audience members at lectures or theatres, an organised public review and praise of the works of authors (or their friends), the paper implementation of production plans, the fabrication of the results of socialist competition and many other similar actions demand considerable efforts, dedication, skill. A para-theatrical playing must create an illusion of the real or at least of the probable. As in theatre, here acting [*vaidyba*] is not confused with reality. The arrival of inspectors and control commissions to a workplace is usually announced in advance (except in those cases where there is a plan to denounce those under control), and there, of course, façade preparations are made for façade control. Previously, the culmination of an inspection usually consisted of a festive dinner, during which façade positions would finally be aligned.

The achievements of a façade culture are not difficult to express with quantitative indicators, namely, numbers. When indicating numbers become the main goal, they are quickly achieved. Of course, they are made

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<sup>80</sup> Valdas Vasiliauskas, “Būti drauge su visais,” KB 8 (1986), 2.

<sup>81</sup> Krescencijus Stoškus, “Kriticizmas ir fasadinės kultūros kritika,” KB 2 (1987), 4.

formally, superficially, in a parade-like manner, but they are made... It is held to be normal that a pedagogue, a leader of an organisation “organises” the audiences at lectures and concerts by decree ...<sup>82</sup>

The “language of numbers” generated for the purposes of governance gave rise to a new type of “culture”. The philosopher despised this type of culture because it was bad. In his opinion, it was marked by pretence, executed with the means of coercion and not free choice. As the philosopher noted, it was not quite right that decrees commanded the audiences. Moreover, the need to perform well focused not on the “internal goals” of culture (note that this also included social and economic goals) but on its measurement machinery. In other words, instead of being a medium, the machinery of governance became a goal itself. Both cultural workers and their auditors were engaged in performing the numbers, but, as the above quote states, in a type of informal agreement rather than through scrupulous checks and mathematical calculations. This focus on numbers demanded a lot of time and energy, which resulted in a “public façade”. As was noted by others, this was very standard and, hence, uninteresting. In the same year (1987), a method specialist from the house of culture in the Kupiškis district criticised the standardising effects of socialist competition in a similar manner:

Let’s not talk about socialist competition. I have heard that it will cease to exist this year. And that is fair! Perhaps one district achieves more in one sphere, another one – in another, there is no need to make everything the same at the same time. [...] It is important to strive for exclusiveness and uniqueness, not mind-numbing uniformity. The word “typical” does not suit culture!<sup>83</sup>

“Typical” was also uninteresting to a Soviet citizen. In the second half of the 1980s, a Soviet cultural worker was encouraged to increasingly treat citizens as clients and consumers. True, the Soviet population still had to be educated or enlightened, but more and more often, the means became a matter of choice. Thus, for example, the Minister of Culture announced in his speech that a key mission of cultural workers in *perestroika* was still to “educate a man to become a conscious citizen and to assemble the conditions needed for maintaining his working potential by using the methods available for ideological and cultural activity”.<sup>84</sup> For the first time in the analysed texts, the freedom of a governed subject to choose was acknowledged:

A reconstruction of forces and an ability to work takes place during leisure time. It [the leisure time] is used only by a man who, of his own free will,

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<sup>82</sup> Stoškus, “Kriticizmas ir...” 4.

<sup>83</sup> “Kas ką nukonkuruos,” KB 7 (1987), 55.

<sup>84</sup> (20 December 1985), LLMA, f. 342, ap. 1, b. 3645, l. 57.

chooses the way he will spend it. And he can choose only when he has a supply, when there is a real possibility of choice.<sup>85</sup>

Socialist competition also became the target of criticism. For example, a highly placed ministry official argued that the detailed accounting required by competitions was counterproductive:

Let's take a traditional socialist competition – again we created various tables, summaries... What for? It is the wrong way... Probably we should select several criteria, which would stimulate activity and show its results. That's it! And it is not our business how or in what way it was achieved.<sup>86</sup>

The quantitative norms of performance imposed from above were also criticised:

The earth would not turn upside down if every house of culture could freely plan their work and not have to implement norms imposed “from above”. Why is it that a village house of culture has to organise 20-24 lectures and presentations (and when did a presentation become an event?), 50-72 theme events, 6-8 theatrical celebrations, 64-105 evenings of dance and recreation, 20-28 amateur art concerts, 2-5 professional art performances, 6-7 exhibitions? Who has measured and on what grounds established these norms? Why is it necessary to measure the immeasurable?<sup>87</sup>

It is quite interesting that the authority of the Soviet discourse of calculation-based governance eroded on so many different fronts. This process took place regardless of the official rhetoric of Gorbachev's techno-scientific rejuvenation. I observed that many ministers' speeches singled out Gorbachev's acceleration, as it “essentially determined the new perspectives and ways of development of today's cultural enterprises”.<sup>88</sup> However, the references to scientific research and advanced technologies of management were further used in an idiomatic way (they were still deleted by editors)<sup>89</sup>. Eventually, however, the catchphrases of policy vocabulary were deconstructed, criticised and abolished by cultural workers. One such phrase was “new forms of work”, something which was invented by cultural organisations in reaction to the pressures of STR. In 1987, one article stated that it was popular to blame the “old forms of work” when a cultural event did not attract audiences. The lack of interest prompted a paper production of those forms:

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<sup>85</sup> LLMA, f. 342, ap. 1, b. 3645, l. 60.

<sup>86</sup> Markevičienė, 3.

<sup>87</sup> Lina Daunytė, “O kas perspektyvoje?” KB 9 (1987), 50.

<sup>88</sup> Jonas Bielinis (16 November 1987), LLMA, f. 342, ap. 1, b. 3771, l. 52.

<sup>89</sup> LLMA, f. 342, ap. 1, b. 3709, l. 60.

Well, then investigations began and previously unknown and unheard of forms of events appeared. Understandably, no one could explain them, but after a closer look, it appeared that it was old stuff under a new name because one received points for new forms of work!<sup>90</sup>

The issue of openness in management was addressed in speeches. On the occasion of the establishment of a Lithuanian branch of the Soviet Art Fund (3 April 1987) two ministers emphasised new organisational principles in their speeches. Among these, a public debate of plans and reports was distinguished as a “democratic” feature, meant to ensure “a new, flexible organisational form, one that would react, with sensitivity, to the changes in society”.<sup>91</sup> Stronger statements appeared in the press, which explicitly criticised the very ambition to administratively steer culture:

It is erroneous and dangerous to think that culture can function if it is bureaucratically governed [*valdoma*] and regulated in all ways from above. There exists a self-regulation mechanism of culture that, for some reason, is suppressed by various means. A very important factor, namely, personality, must be kept in mind – and personality always resists instructions.<sup>92</sup>

I would like to note that it was the mechanical and not cybernetic metaphors that were mobilised to criticise centralism and command administrations. I will shortly show that at this point in time, cybernetic metaphors were reserved for the emerging discourse on national superiority. For instance, the Lithuanian philosopher complained that a man turned into “a small mechanical cog in a bulky machine of governance” was only expected to implement orders. The goal of reconstruction was to replace “an instruction” with “a conscience”, that is, external regulation with internal regulation. Of course, the argument was based on the proceedings of the CPSU Plenum (June 1987), which stated that “the times during which governance [*valdymas*] consisted only of decrees, prohibitions and incitement [*raginimas*] have passed. It is clear to everyone that it is impossible to work with such methods”. Instead, the Plenum stated, “a powerful system of motivation and incentives” should be constructed.<sup>93</sup> Be it external or internal governance, this quote clearly demonstrates that the project of governing remained an object under active construction.

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<sup>90</sup> Erna Frankaitė, “O kaltinam... darbo formas,” KB 4 (1987), 53.

<sup>91</sup> Jonas Bielinis’s speech at the founding conference (3 April 1987), LLMA, f. 342, ap. 1, b. 3771, l. 27, 28. It was not Bielinis’s idea to create the fund, indeed many of its initiators next year contributed towards founding the liberation movement *Sąjūdis*. Their intentions, however, influenced the minister as he noted that “it is hoped that many foreign organisations and individual persons will be interested in the fund as a democratic public organisation and will be willing to cooperate with it”.

<sup>92</sup> Rimantas Pukys, “Nekompetentingo žmogaus nuomonė,” KB 4 (1987), 52.

<sup>93</sup> Vincentas Žemaitis, “Sažinė ir instrukcija,” KB 2 (1988), 3,4.

The abolishment of the state-centralised control of culture was first mentioned in an official speech in 1988. Speaking about amateur art, Jonas Bielinis addressed preparations for a future song festival and pointed out that “now there will not be any regulations ‘from above’ – the success of a district or city song contest will depend only on their leaders’ industriousness and the artistic level of the repertoire”.<sup>94</sup> The minister emphasised the need to “remove formalism and unprofessional ideas [*konceptija*], which took shape during the years of stagnation”. For the first time, it was acknowledged that previous cultural statistics had often been falsified and that organisations reported bigger numbers. Still it was expected that “contemporary data would better represent reality”.<sup>95</sup> And yet, during this period, grass-roots cultural activity was officially encouraged only as long as it did not generate economic profits. For instance, Bielinis harshly criticised the mushrooming of popular rock and pop bands, especially as their concert activities violated the decree according to which “every concert activity that charges entrance fees has to take place through the state concert agencies”.<sup>96</sup>

Despite the fact that the discourse of reconstruction, and later that of the independence movement, was directed against the calculating regime of communism, scientific metaphors were used to highlight positive future developments. Despite at least two decades of cyberspeak, a member of Sajūdis, the economist Antanas Buračas, told *Domains of Culture* that Soviet governance was insufficiently cybernetised:

The pace of our development has slowed incredibly because we are still guided by a logic of governance [*valdymas*], which dates back to the period of machine industries. Everything is thought through as if it was a complicated machine! But the possibilities of intellectual growth on which both the 21<sup>st</sup> century and our society will have to base themselves demand an electronic logic, with activated neuron-based mechanisms that are incredibly fast and individualised. It is no longer a matter of standardised, logical thinking, but primarily a new search for solutions [...].<sup>97</sup>

Another Lithuanian philosopher went even further when he stated that the highly ambitious Soviet scientific governance of culture failed to such an extent that at the end of the 1980s, culture “had to be saved by the public Fund of Culture, informal groups and organisations”. Further, the philosopher indicated a general disappointment with the socialist experiment to design “people’s lives and culture by putting them into narrow theoretical schemes”; instead, he called for a return to an “historically approved elementary force of life, namely, simple

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<sup>94</sup> Jonas Bielinis, “Saviveiklinė meno kūryba” (1988), LLMA, f. 342, ap. 1, b. 3826, l. 14.

<sup>95</sup> LLMA, f. 342, ap. 1, b. 3826, l. 15, 17.

<sup>96</sup> LLMA, f. 342, ap. 1, b. 3826, l. 14. Apparently the speech was made before the Law on Cooperatives was passed (May 1988).

<sup>97</sup> Antanas Buračas, “Alternatyva technokratiniam pamišimui,” KB 11 (1988), 3.

self-regulation, which is analogous to the elements of nature, leaving people's lives to the free play of all of their forces".<sup>98</sup> A conscious governance, conducted by a man, would inevitably "spoil and break everything". The philosopher further attempted to draw a line between "real science" and state governance. He claimed that Soviet scientific governance had never had anything in common with "real science", which is based on competitive theories and scrutinised facts, as it was not interested in real data provided by social research but only used it as a means of legitimising itself.<sup>99</sup> A year later, Stoškus went even further and openly called for a "new cultural policy", one that would not rely on abstract models and would not divide people into educators and those who are educated. The imposition of professional culture from above was to be replaced by stimulating polilogical cultural expressions from below, whilst the "centralised governance of culture" had to give way to the "self-regulation of culture", which would tolerate competition from a diverse group of "schools and trends". Finally, the philosopher wished that the new cultural policy would still be connected with welfare projects. As he put it, the "fostering of spiritual culture" should be "related to and united with improvements in every aspect of life".<sup>100</sup> I would like to jump ahead and note that after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the same philosopher would become one of the most outspoken public debaters, equally outraged by both "post-modern" contemporary art and American pop culture, among other things.<sup>101</sup> The pluralism endorsed by the "new cultural policy" turned out not to be quite as expected. Apparently, the pre-1990 tolerance for diversity was merely an expression of good will and motivated by a lack of experience.

Criticism also targeted the subjectification that resulted from Soviet scientific governance. In 1988, another Lithuanian philosopher regretted that "people were regarded as a work force that implemented plans, the intelligentsia as public servants, cadres, and the nation – as a population of a certain territory".<sup>102</sup> To an ever greater extent, the ethnic nationalist movement, which was growing in strength, redefined the object of state cultural policy as the "Lithuanian nation", the analysis of which, however, requires a separate study.<sup>103</sup> I would only like to point out that the nationalist discourse was also pervaded by scientific-technical metaphors, which originated from the Soviet STR discourse. For example, the Lithuanian nation was described as "coded" in both people's "genetic cells" and in an "ethnic field". With the help of quantum physics, the "ethnic field" itself was defined as "energetic waves".<sup>104</sup> Lithuania's independence was discussed in

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<sup>98</sup> Krescencijus Stoškus, "Koks kultūros persitvarkymas?" KB 10 (1988), 41.

<sup>99</sup> Stoškus, "Koks kultūros..." 42.

<sup>100</sup> Krescencijus Stoškus, "Reikia naujos kultūros politikos," KB 3 (1989), 13,14.

<sup>101</sup> Stoškus became one of the leaders of a rather reactionary movement for cultural policy reforms. See my article, Rindzeviciute, "Framing Lithuanian Cultural Policy...", 25-50.

<sup>102</sup> Bronius Kuzmickas, "Kultūros nacionalumas ir visuomenės persitvarkymas," KB 10 (1988), 3.

<sup>103</sup> I have addressed the ethnic construction of Lithuanian national culture in post-Soviet state cultural policy in Rindzeviciute, "Discursive Realities".

<sup>104</sup> Irena Gaidamavičienė, "Dvasingumo ir tautiškumo vienovė," KB 2 (1989), 2,3.

terms of equilibrium, since the question arose as to whether “the independent development of a small nation could be optimal”.<sup>105</sup> Some people wondered whether Lithuanian national culture was “balanced” or not.<sup>106</sup> The rejuvenation of Lithuanian nationalism was also framed in the term “ethno-homo-sphere” (coined by the Russian thinker D. Likhachev), as Lithuania’s “atoms” were to be “gathered and reconstructed, the body cells revived, and the genes of the Lithuanian national consciousness restored”.<sup>107</sup> Finally, the Lithuanian poet Marcelijus Martinaitis, one of the leaders of Sajūdis, conceptualised ethnicity as an important factor in scientific-technical progress. He argued that *homo sovieticus* “did not manage to create and control [*valdyti*] sophisticated technologies” because “sophisticated electronics and ecology demand knowledge that was accumulated by ethnic cultures. We could interpret them as complicated computers, in which the knowledge that may be needed in the future is programmed”.<sup>108</sup>

To conclude this brief discussion, I would like to note that references to techno-sciences in the Lithuanian nationalist discourses were not the result of deep scientific consideration or precision. Just as in Soviet “cyberspeak” (Gerovitch’s derogative term), “STR-speak” in nationalism was intended to symbolise the contemporaneous, up-to-date context of speech, as well as the importance and priority status of its subject, culture. It can be argued that by the end of the 1980s, just as in the early 1960s, the techno-scientific components of cultural policy debates were mobilised as a vehicle to elevate culture in the priority pyramid of the national economy.

In 1986 and 1987, a public foundation, the Soviet Fund of Culture, was established with some assistance from the American philanthropist George Soros.<sup>109</sup> The Fund was to be supported by public donations whilst its board would direct support to culture. This was the first Soviet alternative to the state bodies (the Ministry of Culture, municipalities, collective farms, trade unions, etc) for financing culture. In 1987, a theatre reform liberalised artistic decision-making. The year 1988 saw the abolishment of censorship bodies. In 1988, Jonas Bielinis left his position and was replaced by the composer Dainius Trinkūnas (who acted as the vice-minister in 1973-88). The year 1989 saw the victory of the non-Communist Party in Poland; Hungary took down the barbed wire fences from its border with Austria; and the Berlin wall came down.

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<sup>105</sup> Juozas Gaižiūnas, “Mažos tautos statusas ir raida,” KB 2 (1989), 5.

<sup>106</sup> S. Venckevičius, Roundtable “Visuomenės atgimimas ir kultūros demokratizacija,” KB 3 (1989), 8.

<sup>107</sup> Česlovas Kalenda, “Žvilgsnis į kultūros lauką,” KB 4 (1989), 3.

<sup>108</sup> Marcelijus Martinaitis, “Tai mums duota vieną kartą,” KB 6 (1989), 4.

<sup>109</sup> The founding conference of the Soviet Fund of Culture, patronised by Raisa Gorbacheva, took place in Moscow, 12 November 1986. Its regulations were adopted on 12 March 1987. See George Soros, *The Age of Fallibility. The Consequences of the War on Terror* (London: Phoenix, 2006), 56.

In December 1989, the new minister of culture was interviewed for *Domains of Culture*. He was eager to announce that during his first year at this position, “there were no directives and commands from the Central Committee (LCP)”. The goals of the ministry, he said, were “to foster and nurture national consciousness, traditions, culture and art”. Building Soviet culture was removed from the agenda of the LSSR Ministry of Culture. The actions of the ministry were to be grounded in the principles of “humanism and democracy”. Its ambition to steer culture was explicitly limited: “it [...] does not pretend to have a cultural monopoly and acknowledges the rights of all other cultural institutions and public organisations”.<sup>110</sup> The ministry was to be modernised technologically: a month later, the plans included the development of an automated management system. However, about three months later, on 26 March 1990 (two weeks after the declaration of independence), the LSSR Ministry of Culture was merged with the Ministry of Education. The words “cybernetics” and “AMS” disappeared from the vocabulary of cultural policy discourses. However, just like Gerovitch in his conclusion to the story of Soviet cyberspeak, I would like to point out that the principles of calculation-based, cybernetically assisted governance eventually were re-imported to the de-Sovietising Lithuania from the West, embodied in new rationales, sciences and technologies: machines such as computers and their networks, which backed the notions of neo-liberal governance, expressed in concepts of knowledge and information society and combining strategic planning with rule from a distance. However, this is already the subject of another book.

### *Conclusion*

This chapter analysed the emerging critical attitudes of Soviet cultural policy makers, cultural operators and intellectuals towards the calculation-based, scientifically- and technologically-assisted state cultural policy. It has described the rise of a calculation-based cultural policy beginning in the 1960s and the cautious criticism that was lodged against it by both highly placed officials and the intelligentsia. Such a critical attitude was reinforced by the obvious technological poverty of the Soviet cultural sector. The chapter illustrated the limitations of the ambitions to provide cultural organizations with products of cybernetic techno-sciences. Libraries and museums were redefined as primarily dealing with “information”: creating, processing, storing and transmitting it, and yet their computerisation lagged. As revealed in the case of the *Del'ta-Litva* automated information system, computer technologies were reserved for the state security organs, which performed politically sensitive work and were in need of “real feedback”.

Finally, as Gorbachev’s policy of openness, acceleration and reconstruction opened up opportunities to express criticism more freely, the model and

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<sup>110</sup> Dainius Trinkūnas, “Kada kultūra atgaus prestižą?” KB 12 (1989), 5, 6.

language of Soviet cultural policy found themselves at the centre of attacks from the Lithuanian intelligentsia. Notably, the critical texts analysed here were written not only by philosophers and cultural intellectuals but also by cultural workers and even ideological secretaries of Party organisations. On the basis of my analysis of articles from both *Domains of Culture* and archived speeches, I would like to argue that the cybernetic mentality of governance of culture was ambivalent. There was an awareness of a great lack of technical equipment in the cultural sector and the failure to meet state policy goals; nevertheless, an idea of good and proper governance, which would be based on cutting-edge techno-scientific developments, still prevailed. Notably, in the 1980s “cutting-edge” was still largely identified with the word “cybernetics”.

However, some more general changes also took place. While criticism was initially (1986-87) oriented against bureaucratism and inefficient administration (“culture in a briefcase”), later, it also targeted the overarching ambition to administer culture centrally and from the top. It is remarkable that the official magazine of the LSSR Ministry of Culture, *Domains of Culture*, did not publish a single text defending the centralised, calculation-based governance of culture. When some cultural operators expressed hopes that a better forecast would help to organise the state administration of culture, Soviet forecasting practices were mainly regarded as a failure. The Soviet definition of “culture as a service to the population” was replaced by the notion of “culture as the spirit of a nation”. I would like to suggest that this change was yet another bricolage or a profound regrouping of the resources of Soviet cultural discourses. I have shown that “culture as the spirit of a nation” was conceptualised in line with “STR-speak” as a container of genes, a pattern of information. The really new element was the incorporation of an idea of national sovereignty in cultural policy discourses.

With the gradually increasing belief in the possibility of separation from the Soviet Union, the techno-scientific aspects of governance lost the public’s attention. Identified with central planning, which was to be abolished, techno-scientific governance became somewhat irrelevant in Lithuanian cultural policy debates at the end of the 1980s. Thus, one could conclude that in culture, a discourse on sovereignty replaced a discourse on techno-scientific governance. However, this is not to say that the debates were exempt from techno-scientific metaphors. Quite the contrary: this time, the STR discourse analysed previously was mobilised to describe the Lithuanian “national culture”.



## IX. Conclusions

What does it mean to govern and what makes culture governable? Hopefully, this dissertation has succeeded in disentangling some of the threads, which may lead to a better understanding of what it meant for a state to govern culture in Lithuania. In all, it could be concluded that the construction of state cultural policy in Lithuania was a complex project, in which a special discourse on the governance of culture was assembled. In this discourse, the definition of “governance” (of culture) was produced by way of borrowing from other fields, such as economics and the natural and technical sciences. Thus, on the one hand, the “governance” of culture was defined as part of an administrative, bureaucratic and calculation-based mode of governance. On the other hand, the definition of the “governance” of culture came to include the elements of a new scientific theory, cybernetics, and related machinery. I have described this process of borrowing as one of translation. In this chapter I will briefly recapitulate my argument and reflect on my main findings.

As I have written in the Prologue, the dissertation could be seen as engaged with the history of state cultural policy in Lithuania in two ways. The first story concerned continuities and disruptions in the formation of state cultural policy, an important issue given that Lithuania faced the loss of her political sovereignty. My analysis allows us to discern the following trajectory in the history of the construction of state cultural policy in Lithuania. As shown in Chapter III, in the interwar period cultural operators not only required from the state government to increase financial support to culture, but also to establish a special administrative body in the central governmental structures, dedicated to cultural matters. However, based on the available material, I received the impression that there was little discussion about the meaning of state cultural policy or the governance of culture in Lithuania in the 1920s-1930s. It could be contended that the “governance” of culture or state cultural policy was not a particularly distinctive object of reflection at that time. On the other hand, I have indicated that the Lithuanian interwar government encouraged the organisationalisation of cultural sector. This development established the conditions for the first continuity because a good deal of the cultural organisations established in the 1920s-1930s sustained their work after the Soviet occupation. Another continuity between the nationalist and Soviet regimes in Lithuania was that, just like the Soviet state, the nationalist government of the interwar period was a major sponsor of the arts. The difference between the two regimes was that in the interwar period state officials considered that situation to be abnor-

mal rather than desirable. Moreover, the initiatives to establish state administration for culture originated from the cultural operators themselves and were not enforced by the central government, as was the case after the Soviet occupation.

The Soviet governance of culture differed from the one exercised during the period of independence in two major ways. First, the Soviet state government had constructed a central administration for cultural matters which both financed and supervised cultural work in the country. Second, the meaning of “governance of culture” became an object of reflection: it became a sphere of scholarly investigation, knowledge production, techno-scientific applications and eventually of criticism. The ideal model of Soviet cultural policy was envisaged in the Marxist-Leninist spirit as a purposeful, rational and scientific activity. Calculation-based governance (planning and organisational management) was subdued during Stalinist era, because it was mainly the political leaders (first and foremost Stalin), and not experts, who defined the contents of policies and their means of implementation. Though political decisions continued to be decisive in running the Soviet economy (and not forgetting about the rules of informality), the understanding that special competence was needed had eventually emerged. Techno-scientifically equipped governance was actively promoted during Khrushchev’s period, though in reality it was often disregarded by Khrushchev himself. In the 1960s, the idea of the political neutrality of the sciences was actively cultivated by the scientists themselves, as they wanted to escape ideological control, and also by Party officials, because the “neutrality” of techno-science legitimised the transfer from the West. Indeed, it can be conjectured that in the 1960s there was a hope for the de-ideologisation of techno-scientific governance in the Soviet Union. However, techno-scientific formulation of both goals and means of governance became unquestionable only during the period of economic decline and tightening of political control that was retrospectively called “stagnation”, from the mid-1960s to the mid-1980s. The strengthening of calculation-based governance, which was reformulated with a regard to the scientific-technical revolution, had considerable effects on Soviet cultural policy. Thus, for the Soviet state to govern culture meant not only to structure it through formal organisations and to centrally administer them in line with political and other goals, but also to shape all these activities with the help of new sciences and technologies.

The second goal of my thesis was to explore how cybernetics, one of the most important outcomes of post-World War II techno-scientific development, had influenced Soviet governance of culture. To achieve this goal, a broader reconstruction of the Soviet governmental rationale of culture was needed, because unlike some spheres of industrial production, the sphere of culture did not immanently require techno-scientifically advanced modes of steering. I suggested that a facilitating mechanism for the cybernetisation of cultural policy was the Soviet economic rationale of central planning and administrative command, which underlined the construction of a vast organisational network, centralised and hierarchically structured under the Ministry of Culture and the Party

organisations. During de-Stalinisation, this network became an arena of translations from new techno-sciences which were developed during World War II, most importantly, cybernetics. The translations from cybernetics and systems theory to state governance, I argued, constituted a particular intellectual machinery, manifest in Lithuanian cultural policy discourses, as explicated in the main cultural press and the ministers' statements.

I therefore analysed the construction of Soviet techno-scientific governance of culture as a process of translation. Several important consequences of cybernetics's translation into the governance of culture could be distinguished. First, translation from Western cybernetic techno-sciences into the Soviet context was selective. The system-cybernetic approach had to be reconciled with materialist philosophy, the ideological and undisputable principles of Marxism-Leninism. Further, the cybernetic intellectual and material machinery (as in the case of AMS) had to be reconciled with existing administrative centralisation and Party political structure. In order to be translated intellectually and materially, the "Western" techno-sciences had to be politically neutralised. Accordingly, techno-scientific modernisation thus was seen by Soviet official ideologues as a non-antagonistic development. Therefore, the Soviet ideologues described in detail how dialogical cybernetic feedback control and an open, complex and dynamic systems approach could be combined with the principle of "democratic centralism", public ownership of the means of production and Cold War securitisation. Second, and consequently, translation took place not as a systematic, coherence-seeking rewriting but as a *bricolage*. In the Lithuanian texts analysed I did not encounter a single fully-fledged account of the system-cybernetic model of governance of culture (despite such a model being developed by Biriukov and Geller in Russia). But I traced numerous fragments of that system-cybernetic approach which regularly occurred in the texts published in *Domains of Culture* and the speeches of ministers of culture. Third, the application of the system-cybernetic approach entailed rewriting of the existing economic rationalisation of the cultural sector into the language of system, feedback, prediction and automation. Thus translation as a bricolage enabled not only a discursive transformation, but also reproduction of the centralised system of Soviet governance. Fourth, the fragments of translation were used by cultural operators not only to make sense of cultural policy, but also to define themselves. Some key expressions, especially "the scientific-technical revolution" and "information flow" were used in an idiomatic way. Such translations could be traced in a variety of guises, such as metaphors ("the brain as a processor"), idioms ("the scientific-technical revolution") or entire models ("tradition feeds back"). Their immediate textual context was of the utmost importance. For example, "the scientific-technical revolution" (STR) formed a certain idiom, which was transported across texts of the most diverse genres and issues. I demonstrated in Chapters IV and VIII that cybernetic "machines of governance" and electronic equipment generally was scarcely used in the cultural sector in Lithuania. Despite this, cultural operators described themselves as "being trans-

formed” by STR, becoming part of “information flow”. Using “STR” and “information flow” as idioms of language, cultural operators textually constructed themselves as modern subjects: aware and plugged in to contemporary techno-scientific networks.

Furthermore, the construction of this techno-scientifically assisted, calculation-based policy of culture was a reflexive process. In Chapter VI I have shown that the translation of cybernetics into culture was already being debated by Lithuanian cultural intellectuals in its early stage, the mid-1960s. Whilst cybernetic language became a part of the hegemonic discourse of Soviet governance in the 1970s-1980s, there also emerged doubts which later intensified into strong direct criticisms of the very Soviet mentality of calculation-based governance of culture, which was detailed in Chapter VIII. As the language of cybernetic management was politically neutralised in order to meet the conditions of translation (technology transfer from the West), it could be legitimately criticised and in this it was different from the language of Marxism-Leninism which could not be criticised at all. As shown in Chapters VI and VII, techno-scientific governance of culture was questioned by Soviet cultural operators of both high and low rank. It had proven to be quite porous and fragile in the 1980s, when the techno-scientific, calculation-based mentality of governance of culture received harsh criticisms. These criticisms resulted in rejection of the idea of a centrally planned and administratively commanded economy, the political system of communism and Russian rule, and state control of culture.

It could thus be contended that cybernetics and systems theory “made culture governable” in the Lithuanian SSR by providing the conceptual tools to envision the cultural sector as complex and relational (connected with the economic, but also the natural environment). Rooted in Einstein’s relativity theory, the system-cybernetic approach enabled formalisation of the development of culture which was otherwise perceived as intrinsically uncertain. In the age of cybernetic control culture could be governed by means of predictive calculations: the future of the cultural sector could be forecasted on the basis of statistical accounts of its past behaviour. In the case of the Soviet cultural sector, it was mainly the education of cadres, consumption of population and outputs of cultural organisations which were calculated. But both advanced statistics and the material “cybernetisation” of the cultural sector lagged quite far behind the industrial sector, as detailed in Chapter V and VIII.

My empirical material does not provide sufficient ground to draw comparisons between the Soviet Russian and Lithuanian cases (and a similar study about Russia has not been done yet). But it could be hypothesised that the Lithuanian intellectual climate was somewhat less receptive to the intentional translation of techno-science to culture. Relatively few engaged in an explicit public debate about cybernetics and culture in the Lithuanian SSR. In the mid-1960s, the debate was driven by Venclova and Trinkūnas, two young and innovative intellectuals, both suspicious in the eyes of Soviet officials. However, unlike in the Russian case (Biriukov and Geller), the Lithuanian SSR did not

produce its own system-cybernetic theoreticians of the governance of culture. It seems that it was Russian thinkers who initiated the broadening of cybernetics's and systems theory's influence from technical sciences to management and subsequently to humanities and the cultural sphere. As revealed in Chapter V, the major difference between the pioneers of this discourse (Venclova and Trinkūnas) and later, less conscious users (officials like ideological instructors, but also other intellectuals, such as Stoškus), was that the former referred to cybernetics as a unique tool for knowledge production in cultural sciences and arts criticism. The latter meanwhile referred to cybernetics solely as a theory of governance – both state policy towards the entire sector of culture and management of particular organisations. It could be contended that cybernetic intellectual machinery was thus transformed from an instrument of scholarly knowledge to a tool of administrative governance. If in the mid-1960s it attracted young cultural intellectuals as an alternative to previously dogmatised Soviet sciences, in the 1970s it was already part of the Soviet official discourse of governance.

I hope to have made clear that the meaning of the governance of culture in the Lithuanian SSR changed from the late 1940s to the 1980s. As discussed in Chapter III, from 1944 to the mid-1950s was a period of deportations, purges of otherwise-minded individuals and severe economic decline in Lithuania. The major concern of the governing bodies, as of 1953 the LSSR Ministry of Culture, was to see that the established cultural organisations received the minimum resources needed to keep functioning and to supervise individual cultural operators, especially to inculcate them with political ideology. Not scientific steering, but political loyalty and willingness to comply with centrally made decisions regardless of local constrictions were pursued by government bodies. The 1960s in this respect was quite a different era, marked by pacification and relative prosperity in the cultural sector as it was already purged of “enemies”, whilst the cadres had learned not to question the political legitimacy of the governing regime. The major cultural organisations were restored to work. It was also the time of revival of the notion of scientific governance based on system-cybernetic notions of control by feedback and prediction. Cybernetics came to be firmly institutionalised in the Soviet Union during the 1960s. Whilst the organisational structure of culture and the production of cultural services were captured by statistically aggregated numbers, there emerged a perception that the effects of cultural policy on population should be mathematically measured. It was hoped that cybernetic techno-science would help to predict and counteract uncertain changes in the cultural sphere. It was not, however, held that indeterminate changes should be made more “determinate”. Quite the opposite: by the 1970s-1980s Soviet administrators and cultural operators had accommodated the idea of uncertainty. Being calculable, uncertainty was hoped to be harnessed by mathematics. To control uncertainty, the 1960s-1970s maintained the understanding of the governance of culture as a centrally decided programme based on a broad overview of centrally collected data. However, Soviet

everyday life was notoriously poor in electronic technologies, Soviet scientific research was to a large extent isolated from international science, the civil sector saw only a very limited spill-over from the ongoing techno-scientific innovations, and finally the mainly traditional media used in arts and cultural organisations were not well equipped with the latest technologies. Disappointment with the promises of techno-sciences, particularly system-cybernetic technologies, fuelled criticisms of cultural operators which strengthened in the second half of the 1980s. As Chapter VIII has revealed, it was precisely calculation-based, large scale governance which was treated with the utmost scepticism.

Foucault's governmentality perspective enabled me to focus on things other than terror and repression, which are usually identified as the essential features of Soviet cultural policy. The emergence of techno-scientific governance was also part of overcoming terror-based Stalinist rule. In cultural policy this was expressed by an increasing emphasis on cultural planning on scientific grounds in accordance with the experts' decisions. Systematic work was expected to replace campaign management. Foucault charted the emerging governmentalisation of the state as a result of the growing importance of population as the major rationale of state governance. Indeed, my case of cultural policy demonstrated that not only in Western liberal democracies, but also in the authoritarian Soviet state population emerged as an important nexus of governance. The re-orientation towards population took place in line with Khrushchev's welfare programme. As I showed in Chapter IV, already at its early stage in the 1920s Soviet culture was first and foremost conceptualised as servicing the population. The importance of servicing the population strengthened after de-Stalinisation. I have argued that to "govern culture" in the Soviet Union meant not only building loyalty to the Communist Party and ideologically controlling individual expression. As shown in Chapter IV, the foundation of a network of cultural organisations and the organisation of their work were tuned in with central planning and the broader territorial administration of the country. To service population entailed shaping the serviced: cultural policy thus was about enlightenment, instruction, discipline and repression. The population in Soviet policy discourses was conceptualised primarily as a workforce (some scholars have already suggested that the Soviet Union was run like a giant corporation). Indeed, in the late 1980s "population" as a rationale of governance became an object of criticism of Lithuanian cultural operators, just like large-scale comprehensive planning. In the emerging post-Soviet discourse, "population" was replaced by "nation" as a rationale for cultural policy.

By showing how Soviet state cultural policy was constructed by the broader mentality of cybernetically assisted calculation-based governance, I sought to map an alternative view of the history of Soviet cultural policy which so far had been dominated by aesthetics and arts history based studies. Whilst such studies focused on the meaning of "culture", I concentrated on the meaning of "governance" in state cultural policy. How could one meaningfully claim to "govern" such a broad and heterogeneous sphere? I hope that this dissertation

has made it clear that such a claim was by and large enabled by the available techno-scientific resources for formulating a notion of control. Further, it is important to note that there was a pervasive conviction that there was a need to make a claim for consistent governance. Cybernetic techno-sciences thus could be understood as the source of meaning (and not only legitimacy) for Soviet rule.

My principal method of discourse analysis proved to be quite successful in dealing with my empirical material. The texts of *Domains of Culture* were analysed in relation to other textual and extra-textual materials, such as the development of institutions and relevant discourses both elsewhere in the Lithuanian press, in archived materials and Russian publications. Of course, a broader empirical study could potentially cast some additional light on my findings. For instance, it would be interesting to explore how techno-scientific governance and issues of state cultural policy were addressed in Lithuanian techno-scientific publications. On the other hand, comparisons with other Soviet republics, especially with Russian discourses would be especially interesting, but even more vital comparisons could be developed by extending the study to Eastern European state socialist countries and Western democracies.

My study of Soviet Lithuanian state cultural policy raises some issues which are relevant more broadly to the conceptualisation of modern governance and the relation between authoritarian Soviet and democratic Western regimes. My analysis of Soviet governance of culture revealed a peculiar relation between governance and ordering, meaning and coherence. The production of governance in discourses of Soviet state cultural policy featured a high degree of incoherence from a strictly theoretical point of view. That is, the Soviet notion of state governance was not grounded in a thorough, philosophically consistent ordering of the subject area. Further, I observed that a certain degree of administrative arbitrariness was recognised as legitimate as long as it worked in practice. The administrative constitution of state cultural policy field testified to the fact that state governance could freely be imposed on quite random spheres. The administrative definitions of “culture” were rather contingently set and this was acknowledged by the Soviet agents themselves. Thus in principle they would admit that film, television and radio could be seen as a part of “culture”, but in public discourses “culture” would usually refer to the Ministry of Culture’s sector. A similar lack of coherence in political discourses has been observed by Rose in his study of British political discourses.<sup>1</sup> Just like Rose, I would like to point out that there was hardly any “hidden” coherent system behind the fragmentary and heterogeneous discourses of Soviet governance. The techno-scientific rationality was thus bricolaged into the discourse of cultural policy. It was a partial appropriation which resulted in a heterogeneous discourse of governance, the parts of which could more or less easily be decoupled from each other and still make sense. Similar to a lizard losing its tail, I think the cyber-

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<sup>1</sup> Rose and Miller, 178-81.

netic discourse of governance featured an ability to survive in parts, to regenerate itself from smaller components, and thus managed to be accommodated under different political regimes and areas of governance.<sup>2</sup> But further studies are needed to produce a more fine-grained comparative analysis of “liberal” and “authoritarian” technologies of governance (among other things, of culture).

Translation of cybernetic control into governance had an ironic destiny. From the very beginning cybernetics offered itself for heterogeneous uses, its terminology was quick to be disseminated in various contexts. I suggest that because of its capacity to be broken into pieces and bricolaged into such different fields, in the Soviet Union cybernetics sustained its label of “*lzhenuka*” or a pseudo-science, as it was half-humorously termed even after its rehabilitation. Its uses stretching from management to linguistics, Soviet cybernetics was regarded as having lost the “purity” of a scientific discipline and therefore was looked down upon by natural scientists. As one Lithuanian scientist has put, “cybernetics had been and remained a pseudo-science [*lzhenuka*]”.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, the introduction of the rigidity of mathematical language, arbitrary coding and subsequent standardisation, all of which increased the possibilities of control, were frowned upon by humanities scholars and cultural operators. In contrast to this view of the history of Soviet cybernetics as a gradual degradation of scientific language, I suggested that Soviet cybernetic discourses on the governance of culture were a productive sphere in which complex translations and hybridisations took place. They were the spaces in which techno-sciences were used for assembling governance and finally modernisation itself. From this perspective, the post-Stalinist Soviet governance of culture could be regarded as engaged in invention and not only oppression, exploitation, crushing, or withdrawing its repressions (“thawing”).

While cybernetic techno-science provided a particular way of thinking about the process of governance and its object and subject, it also made the very act of governance visible, palpable, debatable. In other words, cybernetics did not only empower the Soviet governance of culture but also made it doubtful, questionable and rejectable. A hypothesis could be raised that cybernetic “governance” thus worked as an interface which not only made “culture” visible and knowable to the state, but also made “the state” visible and knowable to cultural operators. This, I believe, is an interesting issue for future studies to tackle.

Finally, let us return to the puzzle which I encountered during my pilot fieldwork, the complaints of post-Soviet Lithuanian cultural operators about the

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<sup>2</sup> This situated, limited and fragmented presence of discourse nicely corresponds with Wiener’s idea about the limited character of order as a “local enclave in the general stream of increasing entropy, of increasing chaos and de-differentiation”. Wiener, *The Human Use*, 95. Of course, I do not argue that the rest of the texts contained “entropy,” but rather make a point about the limitation of the organised. Wiener did not write about overlapping or multiple enclaves; it is precisely in this way I suggest we understand heterogeneous discourse formations. In addition, “enclave” conveys a sense of being shut off and enclosed, but Wiener saw any order as susceptible to disorder, thus an open structure.

<sup>3</sup> Interview with a mathematician, Tomas, Vilnius, December 2005.

“absence of state cultural policy” (regardless of the presence of the Ministry of Culture and its financial and legislative interventions). I suggest that the awareness that it was not enough to have an administrative state body and financing (which would have been held to be sufficient in interwar Lithuania) was rooted in a particular mentality of governance, which contended that proper state governance is a matter of definition, a meaningful discourse. Probably, post-Soviet Lithuanian cultural operators understood contemporary state cultural policy as incomplete, because after rejecting the Soviet principles of centralised regulation and administrative command it failed to produce and intentionally disseminate a new articulated discourse of governance. And yet it would not require too much effort for a careful eye to spot the on-going production of cybernetic discourse on governance in post-Soviet official documents and public arguments. But again, this would require another study.

# X. Sources and Bibliography

## Archives

LLMA – Lithuanian Archives of Literature and Art  
LYA – Lithuanian Special Archives

## Serial publications

*Kultūros barai*  
*Literatūra ir menas*  
*Mokslas ir technika*  
*Pergalė*  
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## XI. Appendix

### *Topic questions for the interviews about cybernetics*

The interviews were designed to be explorative and evidence-searching. I started the first interviews with several questions in mind and finally developed a questionnaire which was used in later interviews. My general attitude was to try not to impose my definitions on matters related to cybernetics, its significance and so on. These were the standard questions that I used in the talks.

- What was your personal way into (one's scientific field)?
- How did cybernetics come to Lithuania?
- How was it financed - who financed whom?
- How was education in the field was organised?
- What was the relationship with the Moscow institute and other institutes?
- What about secrecy? Where was it used?
- What about its prestige?
- What disciplines were gathered around cybernetics?
- To what extent was its language universal?
- Who else was interested in cybernetics except mathematicians?
- Were there any commissions from non-military complexes?
- Were there any public debates about cybernetics before? Any controversies?
- Who resisted cybernetics?
- Were there any interdisciplinary projects? Discussion forums?
- Was it used for governance - of the state, organizations, society?

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