Periphery as Context: Enlightenment Influences Towards Conceptual Change in Polish-Lithuanian Political Thinking in the Later 18th Century

Vilius Mačkinis

Institute of International Relations and Political Science
E-mail vilius.mackinis@tspmi.vu.lt

Abstract. The specific political culture of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and its changes, leading to state reforms by the end of the 18th century, require a methodological approach, which would allow understanding the flow and interconnectedness of the ideas between wider European and smaller local contexts. Arguing that entangled history approach allows understanding peripheral contexts better, the article presents specific aspects of the Polish-Lithuanian Enlightenment creating the context for conceptual change in political thinking. The context specific details are presented with the analysis of Vilnius University related discourse showing that the Enlightenment ideas were used to achieve certain goals of local improvement.
Keywords: conceptual history, political thought, the Enlightenment, the Catholic Enlightenment, periphery, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.

Introduction

The unprecedented situation of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth by the turn of the 18th century makes it an interesting and distinct case of European political development. With the rule of the last king (1764-1795), the country experienced radical political and social changes and a rising interest by neighbouring powers led to the ultimate partition of the country in 1795. The upheavals experienced make it an extraordinary case for historians and political scientists interested in how the conservative country dealt with the leap towards modernisation caused by the Enlightenment ideas and scholarly advancement. Multi-cultural and multi-ethnic, politically decentralised and confederal state with a large territorial extent experienced differentiating development and formation of several nationally important "centres" of political thought forming a network between the capital Warsaw and other regions. This local network at the same time had to deal with an external pressure of the Enlightenment forces causing uneven influences on

local hubs of political thought and forming their own distinct character. This specificity of local or peripheral agenda make it a stimulating example of context requiring methodological tools which could capture its particularity. This article relies on the main methodological principles of the history of ideas with an emphasis of the specific Lithuanian context during the particular historical period of the Enlightenment arguing that tools of *entangled history* (*histoire croisée*) approach allow understanding the particularity of the Lithuanian case better.

The Enlightenment in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth received a distinctive and particular character because of a specific political culture of the state. As the political sphere in the Commonwealth even before the Enlightenment dealt with concepts of freedom and supremacy of political nation, it is hard to "track down" the Enlightenment influences in them. However, it is clear that as these concepts were threatened by the extinction of the state itself, they received a major revision and incorporated the Enlightenment's ideals. One of the major political concepts was liberty, which changed its contents form "noble liberty" to "civic liberty", refusing one of the major components in nobility's ruling tradition the *liberum veto* (decision making principle in parliamentary procedures requiring unanimous consent) itself. The emphasis on the concept of liberty in Polish-Lithuanian political tradition is a well-known argument (Butterwick, Grzeskowiak-Krwawicz, Pietrzyk-Reeves) in a research dealing with concept of "Golden" or "Queen Liberty" describing the political thinking and action from 16th to 18th centuries. The abuse of liberty is often prescribed as a cause of state's demise, but as it was understood as a source of nobility's power, which saw the liberty as encompassing concept of their ruling privileges, it was hard to change it without strong central authority. However, the Constitution adopted in 1791 clearly states that the old tradition of *liberum veto* has to be abandoned. It is one of the most visible aspects of conceptual change in political thinking, but in order to understand how and why it happened in the state, where at least one-tenth of the population, having a right of political assembly and decision-making, allowed to drop one their most precious privileges, one has to delve into the 18th century political debates themselves.

These debates understood as political thought in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth during the Enlightenment require analysis of the historical discourse to understand texts of that time, to reconstruct thinking and ideas used. In this article the main sources of political thought are related to Vilnius and Vilnius University as a local centre of ideas, thus making the political and social situation of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and educational reforms an important context.

To understand the historical discourse properly and grasp the change therein, one has to understand the complexity of influences forming it. As two most prominent contextualists of Cambridge School Quentin Skinner and John Greville Agard Pocock argued: to understand an utterance we must locate it in the appropriate linguistic context (Bevir, 2000, p. 395). However, as the appropriate Polish-Lithuanian case is multifaceted, one needs the proper methodological tools to grasp it. Therefore, the main task of the article is to present the entangled history approach as a welcoming tool to understand such cases dealing with local particularities understood only if general trends are considered at the same time. The case of the Grand-Duchy of Lithuania serves as an illustration of such an entanglement.

The article starts by presenting the main methodological principles of the history of ideas (Chapter 1) and discusses the tools of entangled history approach, which allows understanding the

peripheral context better (Chapter 2). It is followed by the analysis of political thought in Vilnius as local centre of ideas and Vilnius University related discourse to illustrate specific aspects of the Polish-Lithuanian Enlightenment and shed light on the Polish-Lithuanian entanglements (Chapter 3). The article ends with Conclusions.

1. History of Ideas: Tools for grasping the conceptual change

Quentin Skinner (1969, pp. 4-5) emphasised that a historian of ideas has to analyse and interpret classical texts, because they contain "timeless elements" in the form of "universal ideas" and recovery of "timeless questions and answers" is the whole point of the historians undertaking. At the same time Skinner's accentuation of reflexivity towards the sources and their authors is of utmost importance. His emphasis on the dilemma that "it will never be possible simply to study what any writer has said without bringing to bear our own expectations and pre-judgements about what they must be saying" (Skinner, 2002, p. 58) is one of the most important methodological contributions. Skinner's emphasis on illocutionary intentions gives a possibility to "catch an author in the act" providing an opportunity to grasp the debate and changes in the usage of concepts.

Another important approach allowing to study political thought is a conceptual history (*Begriffsgeschichte*), the prominent figure of which is Reinhart Kosselleck. The argument of conceptual change can be understood while adopting Koselleck's hypotheses, on which his famous Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe (henceforward – GG) project relied: temporalization, ideologization, politization, and democratization. As Pim den Boer (2011, p. 210) suggests, these hypotheses together with Koselleck's "saddle-time" (*sattelzeit*) idea are "closely linked and have universal pretensions". Koselleck's task of understanding conceptual change in time is the primary idea of the GG project: "to investigate the dissolution of the old world and the rise of the modern through the history of their conceptual framing" (Koselleck, 1972, p. XIV). *Sattelzeit* in Koselleck's programme meant the period between 1750 and 1850, when deep sociopolitical changes happened together with fundamental conceptual changes in topography, when the most important social and political concepts got the meaning still understandable today. Also during this period part of past concepts received a new meaning, and part were newly forged (Olsen, 2012, p. 171).

The attempts to accommodate both approaches of Cambridge school as well as *Begriffsgeschichte* are nothing new in the field of political history. Kari Palonen (1999) synthesizes Skinner's (Cambridge school) and Kosselleck's (*Begriffsgeschichte*) approaches arguing, that while Skinner emphasises rhetorical view on conceptual change, Koselleck advocates a theory of historical times. For Skinner "time is background for the changing rhetoric of concepts", while Koselleck uses rhetoric only as instrument for "expressing temporal changes in the concepts" (Palonen, 1999, p. 43). These searches for commonalities between Cambridge school and *Begriffsgeschichte* are not uncommon (Fuentes, Richter, Palonen) and allow to use the best insights from both approaches.

For Skinner, the use of the concept is an illocutionary act making concrete goal of argumentation and the speaker the most important. Concepts are only tools in political fight. The use of paradiastole and rhetorical reformulation changes the meaning and importance of the concept, thus enabling the depreciation of virtues and appreciation of vices. Meanwhile, Kosselleck emphasises that the whole social and political vocabulary changes with a wider process of secularisation and

modernisation – the *sattelzeit*. The beginning of this process can be traced in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth as well, but because of the political disappearance of the state in 1795, we can never be sure about its ending. If one sees the Enlightenment in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth as an abrupt process methodological difficulties are inevitable.

The adoption of Skinner's argument of synchronic time, though clearly helpful in showing the elements of paradiastole, fails to take into account that royalist camp and their Enlightenment projects were the projects with a political language in motion, where both diachronic and synchronic semantic aspects (or past and future) were embedded in the meanings of the concepts used. What is more, the particularity of the Polish-Lithuanian case with a distinct Catholic element in its Enlightenment meant adoption of the ideals of rationality in its own way. The concepts used were the product of a local political culture at the same time influenced by processes abroad. It was a time of change, which never reached its fulfilment, where the change from *sarmatic* republican tradition would be changed by enlightened republicanism. Political discourse is divided between the defence of old noble liberties and new forces of the Enlightenment and education advocating for the reform of the state. In this case, the political programme of the Enlightenment becomes not a history of an idea, but a battle of ideas at the time when the questions of the state, nation, the Commonwealth, and responsibility of its people towards the state were raised. Andrzej Walicki (1989, pp. 6-27) emphasised this transformation from political nation *par excellence*, which was based on unity and uniformity of the nobles into the state, which was based on political nation and had to ground its existence against interference of foreign powers.

The transformation of discourse with a changing idea of education within itself can be traced together with a changing context. For example, sermons by a famous preacher and Vilnius University professor Mykolas Pranciškus Karpavičius usually emphasised religious education, criticised backwardness and superstition, but during the Kosciuszko insurrection emphasised defence of the motherland, national memory and wars with Muscovy. Thus, it is important to analyse and understand what happens when texts migrate and language changes because of the movement from one historical situation / context to another. It is not the unit idea or an author's intention which matters, but discourse itself.

Efforts to grasp these transformations raises several methodological challenges, which require methodological and theoretical answers as to how organise such a research:

1. Problem of comparison (the Polish Enlightenment; the Lithuanian Enlightenment) and can it be compared (question of scale)
2. Problem of transfer
3. Problem of translation (translations made in the past and made today)
4. Problem of subjectivity (present hopes about the past)

These problems deal a lot with transnational issues, requiring to consider issues forming a specific multi-layered centre-periphery relations. Fania Oz-Salzberger's (2006) argument that due to translations "republic of letters" could slowly evolve into "democracy of letters", "where numerous people could read, but only in one language", meant that the enlightened thought became sensitive to linguistic and cultural differences. As she points out, the Enlightenment lent itself to translation: "its fundamental ideas, those of progress, dispersal of knowledge, freedom of thought, universal humanity and critical reasoning, proved highly translatable" (Oz-Salzberger,

2006, p. 389). In this sense, Europe's cosmopolitan tradition encountered multilingual modernity. This encounter allows us to talk about the Enlightenments and lends itself to comparison between them. Thus, Jurgen Kocka's (2003, p. 40) argument that comparative history is indispensable when answering causal questions and Jani Marjanen's (2009, p. 239) emphasis that "we need a tool which would allow us to conceptualise transnational processes" are valid points when speaking about specific (peripheral) cases.

In order to grasp this specificity of Lithuanian context, research methodology relying on conceptual history is diverted from classical text analysis towards entangled history or *histoire croisée* approach, which would allow tackling such questions as importance and meaning of centre-periphery relations, transfer, and translation. Certainly, the projects going beyond classical history of concepts and integrating several approaches (mainly Kosselleckian and Skinnerian) in order to better understand the idea and its connection to the influences from outside (Palonen, Sebastian, and Fuentes), are one of the ways to let the others / peripheries speak.

If the task goes beyond description and specialization reaching for explanation, comparative approaches might be inevitable. As Marc Bloch (1928, cited from den Boer, 2011, p. 210) suggested, if one seeks "to observe significant similarities and explain important contrasts, one has to compare the use of concepts in different languages". To deal with different languages and different national contexts the issues of transfer, translation, and intersection arise making methodological decisions an important aspect of one's research. As Jeffrey D. Burson (2013, p. 2) already suggested, entangled history provides "some enticing approaches to resolving (or at least making methodologically explicit) critical dilemmas at the heart of the field of Enlightenment studies". The adoption of entangled history approach might provide much more insight into why and how the political concepts and ideas change in peripheral areas, where differing influences and a local agenda get entangled into one.

2. Entangled history

The Entangled history approach is part of the linguistic and cultural turn in historical research and goes together with a rise of social history. The renewed debates after the Cold War over methodology while trying to make transnational and global history pointed out the interconnectedness of histories. As Jurgen Kocka (2003, p. 41) suggests, abandonment of the history on one country or region and doing comparative history might have "a deprovincializing, liberating and eye-opening effect" and, though the approach is "indispensable for asking and answering causal questions", out of the critique of these comparative approaches rose the emphasis on entanglement. Comparative historical analysis requires a researcher to decide upon the aspect of comparison as totalities are incomparable. This way, "comparison implies selection, abstraction, and de-contextualization to some degree" (Kocka, 2003, p. 41) and does not solve the problems of all historical research, particularly selective bias intrinsic to the present (Skinner's mythologies). The situation encouraged the German and French historians Michael Werner and Michel Espagne to formulate the methods of entangled history. As Michael Werner and Benedicte Zimmerman (2006) presented in their article *"Beyond comparison: histoire croisée and the challenge of reflexivity"*, the most general idea behind *histoire croisée* is an argument that something occurs within the crossing and there is

a need for dynamic and flexible approach, which combines empirical and reflexive concerns taking into account: position of observer; scale of comparison; definition of the object of comparison; conflicts between synchronic and diachronic logics; interaction among the objects of comparison.

Entangled history makes an inquiry into transfers and is clearly situated in diachronic perspective (Werner and Zimmerman, 2006, p. 35). It intrinsically has a process-oriented dimension and asks about the transformation itself while criticizing the traditional historiography for its ignorance of at least four aspects of research. Firstly, it emphasises the absence of clear-cut frames of reference. The comparative studies should not "presuppose a beginning and an end through which the process under study becomes intelligible and interpretative" (Werner and Zimmerman, 2006, p. 36). This generates the problem where the fixed nature of the points of departure and arrival is reflected in the invariability of categories of analysis. Second, the approach that "categories used to analyse a transfer belong to differing national perspectives" make it nationally particular and only under-stood in national tradition making not only "the object of the transfer but the activities associated with it as well – translation, for example" being apprehended trough concepts elaborated within national traditions (Werner and Zimmerman, 2006, p. 36). The third point of criticism stresses the "reflexivity deficit due to a lack of control over important self-referential loops". In this case the study of exchange helps to emphasize the foreign contribution, but does not take into question the representation of national culture and its historicity, which becomes the reference point once again despite an effort to avoid it. The final point touches the issue of reciprocity and reversibility. The simple linear dimension of introduction-transmission-reception is usually more complex, with such aspects as "re-transfer" and "overlap". *Histoire croisée* approach offers a possibility to examine phenomena of interaction "involving a variety of directions and multiple effects".

As authors state, "*histoire croisée* is concerned as much with the novel and original elements produced by the intercrossing as with the way in which it affects each of the 'intercrossed' par-ties, which are assumed to remain identifiable, even in an altered form". Thus, entangled history encourages caution and reflexivity taking into account the possibility of a shifting context. As Jef-frey D. Burson (2013, p. 3) emphasises, the general view is that historical entanglement requires to consider the research object constituted and understood at the intercrossing among various historical contexts and not in an isolated context. The entanglement works at least in three dimen-sions: multicultural entanglement (encounter of synchronic cultures); transdiscoursal entanglement (intercrossing of theological, scholarly, ethnic, political debates); and diachronic entanglement (inevitable distortion of the past connected to scholarly analysis of previous two entanglements) (Burson, 2013, p. 3). Jorn Leonhard (2011) in his article *"Language experience and translation: towards a comparative dimension"* introduces the analytical term of experience, which encom-passes interrelation of both objective (fact) and subjective (interpretation) through differentiation, because of diachronic change (different epochs), synchronic differences (different cultures, societ-ies etc.) and plurality of particular spaces of experiences (politics, economics etc.). He argues that any study of historical semantics has to take into consideration these dimensions of experience, which refer to the stream of past events and their subjective interpretations (Leonhard, 2011, p. 248). He stated that "new research on the relations between experience and language needs to go beyond a classical history of concepts" and emphasized three methodological aspects: the need to concentrate on semantic fields and clusters (not just concepts), take into account dimen-

sions of comparison, transfer and entanglement, and consider methodological consequences of tension between unique historical experiences and application of past experiences through historical analogies (Leonhard, 2011, p. 248).

Entangled history approach allows us to reflect on particularity of the experiences (Leonhard, 2011). In the Polish-Lithuanian case, such an approach allows to see that in the cases of centre-periphery relations periphery becomes not only a passive receptor of ideas and meanings, but an active applicator to its own particular context. Being peripheral it constantly relies on translation and reinterpretation, demanding continual reflexivity.

3. Case of Polish-Lithuanian entanglements

Relying on the main methodological principles of the history of ideas and applying the tools of entangled history, discussed above, this Chapter focuses on local transformations (Chapter 3.1), specificity of Catholic Enlightenment (Chapter 3.2), and conceptual change in the later 18th century Vilnius as a local centre of ideas in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (Chapter 3.3), and by doing so it sheds light on the Polish-Lithuanian entanglements.

3.1. Periphery speaks: local transformations

The Polish-Lithuanian case presents its specificity through differing context depending on a locality. It should be noted that separate cities, universities and noble estates can be named as points of the Enlightenment, but one has to see all of them belonging to the same Polish–Lithuanian context, which could be interpreted as a network of ideas between various (differing) geographical points of the Enlightenment. While analysing Gdansk during its heyday (1720-1772), Anna Grzeskowiak-Krwawicz defined the role of the city in terms of centre-periphery relations with regard to other cultural Enlightenment centres in Poland. As she emphasised, the usage of terms like "centre" or "periphery" requires definitions and understanding about what should be regarded a centre (region or territory) and what role their play in Polish Enlightenment. It is established that Warsaw was a cultural centre of the Enlightenment (at least from 1760s) of the whole Commonwealth, which itself accepted ideas coming from the West, usually from Paris. While smaller centres, be it urban as Vilnius and Cracow or noble estates across the country, while peripheral in relation to Warsaw, worked as local cultural centres of the Enlightenment with their own (local) influences (Grzeskowiak-Krwawicz, 2003, p. 99).

According to Anna Grzeskowiak-Krwawicz (2003), it is only natural to simplify the complex knot of various cultural relations, however, the dominant strands are obvious. The complicated part is to map out cities which have long-lasting cultural relations with Europe. The position of these places on the centre-periphery map depends on the point of view and more frequently than not they are left in an ambiguous limbo. The historical significance of such cities as Krakow or Vilnius with a domination of the university in a cultural landscape of the city makes them following the trends and achievements of the Enlightenment proper, but a peripheral status provides a different setting, thus in the words of Jerzy Snopek (1999) making them an enlightened periphery. However, as Teodora Shek Brnardič (2006, p. 416) argues, these spaces became spaces of "microscopic or little enlightenments" understood only through a micro-historical perspective in local frameworks.

Her argument that local societies were following their own "improvement" projects with a distinct patriotic element of the particular local framework lets the peripheries speak for themselves and even assumes the formation of "different networks" of Enlightenment (Brnardič, 2006, p. 426). The adoption of entangled history approach allows to understand the complexity of such spaces and grasps local transformations and their particular quest for improvement.

Vilnius case is best understood through the academic setting and changes brought by the Enlightenment to politics and the system of education. Vilnius University was transformed into one of the major sources of the Enlightenment ideas through the reforms supervised by the Commission of National Education (established in 1773). The whole idea to create a new enlightened society with the help of education, which would rely on modern curricula, was by itself the product of an enlightened age. Vilnius University as an institution became instrumental in achieving state-wide goals of improvement. However, despite its enlightened vision, it did not follow the idea of radical societal transformations, which would require shedding the former authorities, scientific neutrality, and critical engagement with the Church, but rather fused the scientific advancement with educational goals of the Church. This fusion was based on the principles of natural law, which allows the God's given mind to reach for both – religious and secular goals. One of the examples illustrating such a mind-set are Vilnius University instructions for professors indicating obligatory content, which had to be delivered. Such instructions for a 1784-1785 academic year stated that the professor Mykolas Pranciskus Karpavičius, a famous preacher in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, who was teaching history of theology at the Department of Moral Sciences, had to teach that "science shows, that use of natural reason in the matters of belief proves that revelation of God and belief cannot provide or show anything, which would object the principles of common sense or passion free and healthy mind. Thus belief and rationality do not work as eternal oppositions of Truth and God, but even more, as the famous Tournely tells us, in their mutual actions encourages, proves, defends and perfects belief of the enlightened mind" (Academia Vilnensi, 1784). Such reciprocity of rational mind and religious belief was a founding aspect of the Enlightenment in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.

Secular goals of improvement, which took their support from scholarly advancement in the West, became the education changing context in the state, where education and ideas of the Enlightenment belonged to clergy. Ideas of scholarly advancement transferred to reformed school programmes reached for eradication of state backwardness while maintaining (traditional) moral beliefs instilled by the Christian faith. Reflections on state backwardness prompted the tasks of improvement in order to catch-up with the West and these are clearly visible in aforementioned teaching instructions. In the case of mathematics, taught at the Department of Physical sciences, where professor had to teach "Newton's tracts of higher mathematics, such as Newton's analytical geometry, Newton's 'Quadratura curvarum', Newton's interpolation, as well as common aspects of geometrical lines by Maclaurin <...> that Lithuanian talents are equal to other nations, which have associated mathematical capabilities with their large benefits and where hard science of higher mathematics proved useful to their astute and sensible governments" (Academia Vilnensi, 1784). These teaching goals of the Enlightenment were entangled with agenda of practical training and civic upbringing instilled through principles of the Christian life. These instructions presented how a true Christian has to behave in the society and uphold his family affairs.

None of these teachings directly discussed issues of governance, but they were part of what could be called the programme for upbringing enlightened citizens. In this programme matters of state structure, relations between the ruler and the subjects were understood as an outcome of moral (faith) and enlightened (knowledge) actions of a man and a citizen, and that proper and just government stems out from the upheld truisms of faith and science. In the Polish translation of the book by French Jesuit Pierre Gattey (re)printed by Vilnius University Press in 1780 the answer to a straightforward question "Who has the natural right to rule the others?" is "the one who has knowledge, morals, and courage. Knowledge for achieving justice, morals to strife for it and courage to pursue both these things" (Gattey, 1780). Knowledge and morals are understood as primary skills in need of training during this age of Enlightenment. This interpretation relied on the belief that after conquering the darkness and achieving knowledge following the regulations of faith, citizens will start building strong and orderly state. As stated in the book by Gattey (1780), "the strongest state will be the one, where rights are based on knowledge and not on fear and where the goal to build such a strong state is prevalent".

Intelligence and education were understood as fundamental prerequisites in order to understand one's obligations. Elucidation of duties was inseparable from natural law and this stipulated the entangled teaching of both Christian and civic obligations in which duties of faith and civic obligations arising from (noble) nature supplement each other in achieving the same goals of improvement and fostered better believers and citizens at the same time. In this reciprocal relationship moral imperatives were derived from natural law determining that these imperatives received their political content. Thus, general Christian instructions received political aspect, as can be seen in such textbooks as the "Marital life or rules of happy life between spouses and proper Christian upbringing" by Juzef Legowicz printed by the University Press in 1787, in which not only faith related obligations, but also duties arising from living with other human beings are accentuated.

These instructions were intended to raise a generation, which would reflect on its status and duties. This can be illustrated with the example of the textbook *"Introduction to moral sciences"* (translation from Italian, printed at the University Press in 1792) intended for (noble) youth, which addressed the readers in the following way: "[each of you] is a Christian in the first place", thus obliged "to fulfil the duties of religion which you follow" and due to noble birth "you have to fulfil extraordinary duties of nobility", i.e. to be worth the noble birth, which "starts with one's soul" (Anon., 1792). The idea of "starting with the soul" ascertained the place of individual through God given nature of things, where everyone has the possibility to fulfil obligations according to one's nature. As the before mentioned textbook by Legowicz (1787) states, all of us are creations of God and our parents, thus "the first obligation and responsibility is towards God and parents". At the end of this chain of obligations one finds societal duties, and these are understood with the help of rational mind: "You are created as a rational [intelligent] being; <...> and you have to let the rational mind lead. People are governed by rationality and all are united by the societal relations, so as each of them could fulfil one's obligations according to one's status" (Legowicz, 1787).

Elucidation of societal relations in the Enlightenment tradition of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was based on natural law. Social state was understood as an outcome of such a divine organisation and meant that human being – a social member of the society, having a gift of natural reason – has to make decisions which will create his wellbeing. Such a thinking can be illustrated by Franciszek

Ksawery Dmochowski's (1799) teaching that "human nature puts a human into the society: thus societal life stems out from natural law. We have to live with fellow human beings, because we cannot survive without them, but nature itself prepares us for such a social life. We have to interact with other creations of God, naturally equal to us as they are awarded with sensitivity and reason; so we have to learn how to behave properly. Our good or bad conduct will determine our happiness". Such an explication were society is attributed to natural order was a main pillar upon which political thought of the Grand Duchy rested. It encompassed the goal of the upbringing the rational and reasonable individual, which by itself connected aspects of both religious and secular life. The outcome of such teaching was a new and differently thinking (enlightened) generation of citizens. This specificity of the Enlightenment in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania is the main context framing political thinking during the 2nd half of the 18th century and its religious aspect deserves attention.

3.2. Catholic Enlightenment

The Polish-Lithuanian Enlightenment experiences most vividly manifested themselves in educational reforms. The main component of this manifestation in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was Vilnius University reform, under which the program of education of the new citizen can be glimpsed. Although the major aspect of it was a universal education, one still has to take into account that despite these goals, the foundational force behind them was the Catholic Church. Being a part of the European Enlightenment networks' ideas of universal education and scientific advancement could not escape the public attention, but as education was the prerogative of the Church, it can be named as a major enlightener. However, this important role of the Church raises such questions as: how similar were the Enlightenment processes in the Commonwealth to the Western European Enlightenment? What can we tell about the program of the Catholic Enlightenment?

Richard Butterwick (2010) raised this question in his article *"Catholicism and Enlightenment in Poland-Lithuania"*. The basis for this question is a philosophical and theological problem: "was Catholicism part of Enlightenment or not?". If one follows prevailing interpretations, the Enlightenment itself arises from anthropocentric and antireligious (or as P. Gay argues, modern paganism) aspects of the Renaissance. However, as Butterwick suggests, that does not mean that a union between the Catholicism and the Enlightenment is impossible. As there is no sole and integral definition of the Enlightenment, the Catholic Enlightenment may enter the conception of this phenomenon as well. Pocock (1999) has emphasised that we should talk about the family of Enlightenments or many Enlightenments, which had different, but abundant intellectual outputs, and out of these one part was sincerely religious and others – antireligious.

The Catholicism-as-part-of-Enlightenment case also requires the differentiation of its reforms. The Church fight against superstition, preaching Christian virtues, scientific explanation of God's creation should be expediently named as "enlightened Catholicism" and can be associated with the start of the Enlightenment in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The main accent here is the Catholicism itself, extremity of it would be the criticism of the Enlightenment, which expressed itself as a contempt for philosophes and their writings. The second stage is the promotion of the principles of the Enlightenment, which are disseminated through the Church and teaching deliv-

ered by clericals, but the accentuation of the Enlightenment and education here points towards "Catholic Enlightenment" (Butterwick, 2008). The embodiment of such thinking in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was Hieronym Stroinowski, the bishop of Vilnius and rector of Vilnius University.

Because of the dominant position of priests as the Enlightenment writers and disseminators, the Enlightenment processes in the Commonwealth took the middle ground and supported conviction that the state needs a socially responsible religion (Butterwick, 2008, p. 208). The main preachers of Vilnius diocese – M. P. Karpavičius, V. Kalinskis, J. N. Kasakauskas and a bishop I. J. Masalskis – upheld a physiocratic approach. It influenced their Enlightenment programme with principles of natural right and economic principles of physiocrats, emphasising land, ownership, and need for work and responsibility for the future of the state, which is attainable only if the welfare of the country is on the rise.

David Sorkin (2008) argues that religious enlighteners put forward the conception of religion, which used the new philosophy and scientific advancement in order to generate tolerance and understanding of the peaceful belief serving for the general politics and morals. Trying to connect belief and rationality, these enlighteners viewed themselves in a same group with all the philosophes, excluding the radical wing. This meant that they quite frequently used courageous and non-traditional ideas of the 17th century to represent traditional belief of the 18th century (Sorkin, 2008, p. 6). The Catholic Enlightenment suggested an alternative to the traditional Jesuit teaching with a change of the method, but not of the contents, thus allowing better explanation of belief. They used the scientific ideas of Copernicus and Newton as well as the philosophy of Leibnitz, Wolff and Locke together with the historical studies of the Scripture and the Church.

In this context of the Catholic Enlightenment, the emphasis on the welfare of the state and strive for reforms took root. In the Polish-Lithuanian political sphere these endeavours undoubtedly culminated in the Constitution in 1791. The reformist political thought matured in the context of physiocratic political tradition, which accentuated the preference of the nation through its natural rights and liberties, which require the political contract in order to achieve security and safety of one's property.

The aim of the Catholic Enlightenment can be summarised into conception proposed by Romanas Plečkaitis (2008, p. 99) stressing that "Modern Catholicism can achieve its goals through realisation of secularly significant tasks proposed by Enlightenment ideology". These secularly important goals relied on economic advancement in the first place and this required reformation of all aspects related to it in order to achieve productivity. The first task at hand was the ordering of law and law enforcement guaranteeing property rights. As it is visible in the textbook *"Polish civil or specific law"* of Vilnius University professor Teodor Ostrowski (1784), the Enlightenment forces were vested in the king himself. While praising the king for correcting the law-making mistakes of the past, Ostrowski emphasises that "[the king] has passed several laws of ours, which guarantee that each and every one has his property and life and the justice itself guaranteed".

The foundational principle of ensuring life, property, and justice became the principle of all the reforms and it was pursued by the widely reformed science of morals. The reformed curriculum asked that this new science of morals should rely not on theory but on praxis with concrete examples. In this way it aimed for explanation of duties towards one's parents, fellow citizens, God, and oneself (Plečkaitis, 2008). The idea that the teaching of responsibility was essential for

preparing a young generation for a civic life in a state where nobility has safeguarded its rights and liberties, and avoided fulfilling duties for centuries was a transforming one hinting towards a conceptual change in political debates.

3.3. Conceptual change

Specificity of the Catholic Enlightenment and its arguments stemming out from natural order principles created a specific situation in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. While emphasising the primacy of societal relations and reciprocal obligations, enlighteners left the question of social order (deeply political question) as a secondary one. Political aspects in such argumentation are clear as order is presented as impossible without authority. The preacher and Vilnius University professor M. P. Karpavičius (1788) in one of his sermons clearly talks that "because of their nature people cannot create an ordered society nor live in it usefully without respected authority, which would rule them". However, the questions of how this authority is constructed or political forms of it are left out and their importance understood only after society reflects its duties and reasserts itself. It was not that a concrete political order (one political system better than the other) which mattered, but its connection to natural order of things. And the natural order conception dictated that a good and just government never transgresses it, but ensures it.

Following the reasoning that social condition stems from natural order, enlighteners in the Grand Duchy upheld the physiocratic ideals while naming the principles of authority. According to them, authority is needed to ensure security, prosperity, and justice of the society. For example, M. P. Karpavičius claimed that happiness is not possible in the society without authority and government. He argued that this is why nations elect the brightest, so that having a mandate they could "think about everyone's happiness and could ensure justice to everyone" (M. P. Karpavičius, 1775). Recognising that the main aim of the authority is to ensure the happiness in the society and, at the same time, acknowledging that people are unable to escape jealousy, suspiciousness, and mistrust due to the human character in all authority, M. P. Karpavičius and other enlighteners turned to the Catholic concept of happiness.

The concept of salvation was an integral part of the conception of happiness. Arguing that belief is instrumental to education and achievement of societal prosperity, M. P. Karpavičius explains that people form societies seeking happiness and benefit. This happiness and benefit are both blessings of the future afterlife and the present life. Creating dual concept of authority to represent these two spheres of life, he mixes religious and secular arguments. M. P. Karpavičius (1788) claims that "rational mind and religion show us two kinds of authority, each of them responsible only for the obligations of its own kind and each of them aspiring for total happiness of humanity cannot harm each other. This is why secular authority of nations and spiritual authority of the Church are both originating from God". Authority is a part of the God given (natural) order and thus, if it follows the principles of natural order and upholds reciprocal duties, it is impossible for worldly and spiritual goals to collide. This is an important argument of the Catholic Enlightenment countering critical arguments of enlightened philosophers who claimed that the Church hinders social progress. For the Lithuanian enlighteners the main task of any government, irrespective of its form, is to protect natural rights and all the kings and rulers have a duty to watch over diligently

and see that they are upheld. In its essence this argument remains physiocratic, emphasising the basic tenets of life, property, and justice.

This notion of authority in the Enlightenment processes of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania intertwined with the ideas of citizenship and love for the motherland. The reciprocal duties receive a resounding name of love for one's country, which allows receiving and enjoying wealth created by social condition. One of the Catholic preachers – Jonas Nepomukas Kasakauskas – in his sermon about love for the motherland connects it to the same argumentation of life, property ,and order: "How is it possible not to love the motherland, [its] wealth, glory and all the happiness of which is also our own happiness, which secures our life and wealth allowing us calmly sleep in its embrace, which guarantees us this most precious gift of our nature, that is liberty, leaves to our own discretion its definition and subordination of one's will to the general will, which governs us in the most gentle way and gives us such authorities as we desire ourselves" (Kasakauskas, 1789). The consistent goal was not a change of political order, but elucidation of duties stemming from natural order. The social contract deriving from this order inevitably brought politics, thus each citizen was taught to understand this and support the order which did not contradict principles of natural law, but the exact (political) form of it was understood as a matter of time and place.

In the context of such thinking, the political changes in the Commonwealth and the Constitution of the 3rd May were regarded as the guarantees of natural rights in the first place. M. P. Karpavičius in one of his sermons (praising the Constitution and delivered to the members of nobility who had to ratify it in a local diet) mentions that it suits them as they are naturally noble thinkers. He notes "that the main law of the state is based on eternal natural rights" and it serves to ensure their liberty, equality, property, and happiness (M. P. Karpavičius, 1792). Despite an apparent significance and political rhetoric of the arguments, the thought of the Constitution ensuring liberty, equality, and property, and the Constitution itself fit neatly into the conception of natural order. Appellation to liberty and equality still upheld the idea that everyone was equal as they had natural rights, but they were not equal by nature. M. P. Karpavičius (1792) continues to convince nobility to vote in favour of the new Constitution not only stating that it will bring peace and will guarantee safety from foreign invaders and violence against each other, but also emphasizing that it will guarantee "personal, property, trade, honour and glory related freedom which belongs according to one's status prescribed by divine Providence". Accentuation of noble privileges suggests only minor changes in political thinking, but bearing in mind the improvement agenda one has to see that the argument used in the debate was directed towards the creation of responsible society. The societal order and citizens duties towards the state received a primary role in the arguments of Lithuanian enlighteners. In this case, the Enlightenment was instrumental in order to understand the benefits of such a societal order and education was used as a primary tool to deliver such understanding.

Conclusions

The Enlightenment ideas in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth manifested themselves in overlapping and entangled contexts. The peripheral status of Vilnius in the European Enlightenment networks and specifics of local political culture together with the abruptness of the Polish-

Lithuanian Enlightenment processes formed a distinct political programme, in which the battle of ideas was fought. Questions of the state, nation, the Commonwealth, and responsibility of its people towards the state were raised signifying the transformation of the discourse which relied on a changing idea of education, at the same time forming a transformative context. The particularity of it dictates two important tasks of understanding both the generality of the Polish-Lithuanian Enlightenment and its specificity and difference. These tasks require considering issues forming a specific multi-layered centre-periphery relations, where comparison becomes inevitable.

Comparative approaches at the same time point towards entanglement issues asking for a flexibility and dynamism when dealing with ideas travelling from different contextual situations. The entangled history approach offers reflexivity in such cases. It makes an inquiry into transfers and is clearly situated in diachronic perspective, it encourages caution and reflexivity with reference to the possibility of shifting context. In the Polish-Lithuanian case such an approach allows to see that in the cases of centre-periphery relations periphery becomes not only a passive receptor of ideas and meanings, but an active applicator to its own particular context. Being peripheral it constantly relies on translation and reinterpretation, demanding constant reflexivity.

Understanding the Polish-Lithuanian Enlightenment as a network of ideas, where separate cities, universities and noble estates form a unifying context, one has also to see that each of the units worked as a local cultural centres of the Enlightenment with their own (local) influences. The entangled history approach allows the understanding of the complexity of such spaces and grasps local transformations and their particular quest for improvement. Vilnius case is best understood through the academic setting and changes brought by the Enlightenment to political thought and system of education. External influences encouraged creation of a new enlightened society with the help of education, which would rely on modern curricula. Despite its enlightened vision, it did not follow the idea of radical societal transformations, which would require shedding the former authorities, scientific neutrality, and critical engagement with the Church, but rather fused the scientific advancement with educational goals of the Church. Scholarly advancement reached for eradication of state backwardness while maintaining (traditional) moral beliefs instilled by the Christian faith. Political transformations of thought and state-structure were understood as an outcome of moral (faith) and enlightened (knowledge) actions of a man and a citizen, and that proper and just government stems out from the upheld truisms of faith and science. Explication of duties and attribution of the social relations to natural order was a main pillar, upon which political thought of the Lithuanian Grand Duchy rested. It encompassed the goal of the upbringing the rational and reasonable individual, which by itself connected aspects of both religious and secular life. The outcome of such teaching was a new and differently thinking (enlightened) generation of citizens.

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