

The thesis deals with political aspects of the situation of the Polish minority in the contemporary Republic of Lithuania. Basis and practice of the Lithuanian ethnic and language policy, relevant sociodemographic features of the Polish minority, and their interaction within the political system, as manifested by the patterns of Polish minority mobilization and representation in the political structures, are successively analyzed in mutual cohesion. A study of the political dimension of the Lithuanian Poles' and the Polish kin-state's interrelationship together with a brief comparison of their situation with kin minorities in Belarus and Ukraine contextualize the analysis. In spite of both comparatively very good endogenous resources and the formally non-discriminatory political practice of the Lithuanian state, the thesis documents Polish minority's underrepresentation within the political system, as caused by the political opportunity structures. Aggregation and articulation of Polish minority interests in contemporary Lithuania fully comply with conventional patterns in institutionalized democracies. However, the findings of the thesis contradict the presumption of eventual weakening of the Lithuanian-Polish ethnic cleavage within the political system, and, more to the contrary, point to proofs of actual monoethnicization of rival political subjects.