Routinising and ritualising multiple emergencies

How Lithuania dealt with three crises in 2020-2022

Prof. Dovilė Jakniūnaitė Vilnius University July 14, 2024 Association for Advancement of Baltic Studies Conference 2024 Project "Mobility, migration and the COVID-19 epidemic: governing emergencies in Lithuania and Poland" (together with Warsaw University), financed by Lithuanian-Polish research programme DAINA2 (Research Council of Lithuania and Polish National Science Center), 2021-2024, Nr. S-LL-21-11



Lithuania: three years, three crises → three emergencies

Covid19

Migration from Belarus

War in Ukraine

How possible and with what consequences?

Emergency governance

Emergency

Exception

Huge (possible) harm

Management

Necessity

Temporariness

Emergency governance

Securitization and Exception

Security management through desecuritization (Hansen 2012)

Change, Replacement, Rearticulation, Silence

Lithuanian Case

Emergencies: Legal Regime

Quarantine

Emergency situation (state level)

A natural, technical, ecological or social event that endangers society and the performance of vital state functions

State of Emergency

Threat to the constitutional or public order

State of War

	COVID-19	Border crisis	Russian aggression in Ukraine
Quarantine	March–June 2020 November 2020–July 2021		
Emergency Situation	February 2020–May 2021	July 2021 – ongoing	
State of Emergency		November 2021– January 2022 (at the border area)	February-September 2022 (whole country) September 2022 – May 2023 (border area)

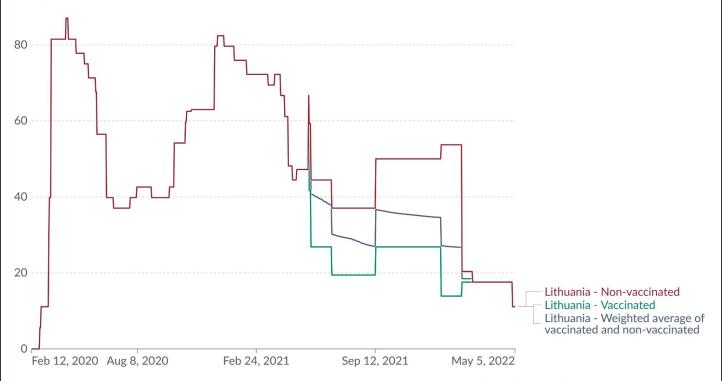
Regulation practices: COVID19

- 1) I stage (March 2020 June 2020): most stringent restrictive
- 2) II stage (June 2020 October/November 2020): relaxation, non-disruption, growth
- 3) III stage (November 2020 April/June 2020): restrictions back
- 4) IV stage (July 2021–May 2022): vaccination and "Opportunity Pass"
 - Overshadowed by Belarus migration and, later, Russian aggression

COVID-19: Stringency Index, Lithuania



The stringency index is a composite measure based on nine response indicators including school closures, workplace closures, and travel bans, rescaled to a value from 0 to 100 (100 = strictest).



Data source: Hale, T., Angrist, N., Goldszmidt, R. et al. A global panel database of pandemic policies (Oxford COVID-19 Government Response Tracker). Nat Hum Behav 5, 529–538 (2021). https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-021-01079-8
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Regulation practices: migration from Belarus

Push-backs since August 1, 2021

Movement restriction at the border

Movement and communications restrictions for migrating people

Regulation practices: Russia's aggression

Restriction on Russian/Belarussian TV channels

Limits on "spreading propaganda and disinformation"

Restricting public assemblies supporting war, Russia, Belarus

Discursive strategies: COVID

Responsibility

Solidarity

Save lives

_ _ _

Responsibility

Rule-following

Discursive strategies: Migration from Belarus

"Hybrid war"/ "hybrid aggression" and "mass influx of people", yet:

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Emergency: "for certain logistical reasons"

"For additional capacity"

"the technical and logistical tools, to be able to take quick and rapid decisions"

"will certainly not cause any inconvenience to the population"

Discursive strategies: Russia's war

"Just in Case"

"Nobody knew what could happen"

"The fear was real"

"Possible hybrid attacks and provocations of all kinds pose a **threat to public order**, which cannot be addressed without the proportionate restriction on the exercise of the rights and freedoms"

Surviving Multiple Emergencies

- 1) Simplification and routinization of emergencies
- 2) Pandemic emergency as a helpful framing device
- 3) Blending of the regimes
- 4) Executive power
- 5) Desecuritization through detachment
- 6) Enabling structural conditions for the future

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