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**The Giedroyc Doctrine as *Idée Fixe* and *Modus Operandi* of
the Polish Foreign Policy towards Ukraine after 2015:
Change and Continuity**

Magister (MA) Thesis

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Olena Shcherbatiuk, August 2024

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Abstract

Title: “The Giedroyć doctrine as *idée fixe* and *modus operandi* of the Polish foreign policy towards Ukraine after 2015: Change and continuity”

The thesis in question explores the Polish foreign policy approaches towards Ukraine of the two biggest opposing parties – Law and Justice and Civic Platform – based on the principles of the Giedroyć doctrine. Despite the fact that both parties recognise the Polish-Ukrainian relations essential in Poland’s foreign policy, their approaches to its implementation differ. And in order to understand why this difference takes place, this thesis provides the analysis of the narratives of the both parties in the exposes and records of the debates.

As a result of the conducted research, it has been concluded that the major reasons for different foreign policy approaches towards Ukraine depend upon the contrasting understanding of the Polish *raison d’etat*, the perceptions of ontological (in)security and the threat of Russian imperialism in the circumstances of drastic shifts in the international system. In particular, the value systems of the parties embedded in the perception of the *raison d’etat* are different. It should be noted that ontological insecurities are to the large extent shared by both parties, especially perceiving Russia as a threat to Poland’s identity and independence.

Moreover, it is important to emphasise that the more unstable and unpredictable external environment of Poland is, the more support is expressed for Ukraine. Russia’s invasion of Ukraine triggered the revival of the Giedroyć doctrine principles in the rhetoric of both parties since it proved to be relevant in the contemporary circumstances as never before.

Key words: foreign policy, constructivism, *raison d’etat*, Polish-Ukrainian relations, Giedroyć doctrine, Poland’s Eastern policy, changing international environment

Streszczenie

Tytuł: “Doktryna Giedroycia jako idée fixe i modus operandi polskiej polityki zagranicznej wobec Ukrainy po 2015 roku: Zmiana i ciągłość”

Teza, o której mowa, bada podejście dwóch największych partii rywalizujących ze sobą - Prawa i Sprawiedliwości oraz Platformy Obywatelskiej - do polskiej polityki zagranicznej wobec Ukrainy w oparciu o zasady doktryny Giedroycia. Pomimo faktu, że obie partie uznają stosunki polsko-ukraińskie za istotne w polskiej polityce zagranicznej, ich podejście do ich realizacji różni się. Aby zrozumieć, dlaczego ta różnica ma miejsce, niniejsza rozprawa zawiera analizę narracji obu stron w ekspozycjach i zapisach debat.

W wyniku przeprowadzonych badań stwierdzono, że główne przyczyny różnych podejść do polityki zagranicznej wobec Ukrainy zależą od kontrastującego rozumienia polskiej racji stanu, postrzegania ontologicznego (nie)bezpieczeństwa i zagrożenia rosyjskim imperializmem w warunkach drastycznych zmian w systemie międzynarodowym. W szczególności odmienne są systemy wartości stron osadzone w postrzeganiu racji stanu. Należy zauważyć, że niepewność ontologiczna jest w dużej mierze wspólna dla obu stron, zwłaszcza postrzeganie Rosji jako zagrożenia dla tożsamości i niepodległości Polski.

Ponadto należy podkreślić, że im bardziej niestabilne i nieprzewidywalne jest otoczenie zewnętrzne Polski, tym większe jest poparcie dla Ukrainy. Inwazja Rosji na Ukrainę spowodowała ożywienie zasad doktryny Giedroycia w retoryce obu stron, ponieważ okazała się ona aktualna we współczesnych okolicznościach jak nigdy dotąd.

Słowa kluczowe: polityka zagraniczna, konstruktywizm, racja stanu, stosunki polsko-ukraińskie, doktryna Giedroycia, polska polityka wschodnia, zmieniające się otoczenie międzynarodowe

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Introduction

Poland and Ukraine have historically had close relations based on territorial proximity, statehood development as well as interpersonal connections between the people of the two nations. Thus, it is only natural for Poland's foreign policy to consider relations with Ukraine to be one of the most important directions. Foreign policy of a state is formed not just by the structural changes in the international system posing a threat to the national interests and national security but rather by the perception of threats and understanding of the national interests by governments in the context of those changes (Flockhart, 2016b, p.90) which is the basic premise of constructivism discussed in Chapter 1.

In my thesis, I look specifically at 2015-2023 period of Poland's foreign policy towards Ukraine which is the period of the Law and Justice party in the government. In my thesis I aim to explain the difference between the narratives and consequently approaches to the foreign policy towards Ukraine undertaken by the Civic Platform and Law and Justice governments during 2015-2023 and what induced inconsistency of Poland's foreign policy towards Ukraine throughout the period mentioned.

One of the reasons why these governments pursued different approaches to the interpretation of the doctrine in their narratives is the fundamental contrast between the understandings of the role of Poland in Europe and in the Central and Eastern Europe. While Civic Platform believes that Poland has to implement the Giedroyc doctrine and Eastern policy in general through the EU means and resources and become one of the influential EU members along with Germany and France, Law and Justice is convinced that Poland has to establish itself as a regional leader in CEE through the means of regional and bilateral cooperation (Cambridge Polish Studies, 2017). These opposite approaches refer to the Piast and Jagiellonian paradigms of the Polish foreign policy (Reeves, 2021, p.148) the difference between which will be explained in Chapter 3.

Another important reason for the inconsistent foreign policy towards Ukraine includes the influence of increased domestication and instrumentalization of Poland's foreign policy during the Law and Justice's term. This is coupled with the Polish governments' differing perception of the national preferences/interests and threats endangering their achievements, including Russian imperialism. Moreover, the ongoing Russia's war against Ukraine had huge impact on the Polish-Ukrainian relations and still serves as an intervening development. Thus, I consider this topic very relevant for explaining both practical and theoretical aspects of the interdependence of foreign policy and perceptions of *raison d'état*, national interests as well as ontological security through the empirical case-study of Poland's foreign policy towards Ukraine.

Consequently, I assume that Polish governments' foreign and security policy discourse and its instrumentalization depend upon the understanding of the *raison d'état*, the perceptions of

ontological security and the threat of Russian imperialism in the circumstances of drastic shifts in the international system. This assumption consists of the explanatory factor which is conceptualised as the Polish national preferences and interests understood through the prism of ensuring the development of independent and democratic Ukraine; the object of the study understood as perceptions of the instruments and how these perceptions affect the choice of these tools for achieving Poland's national preferences; the additional factor which includes the disturbing external changes coming from the international system.

In order to answer the assumption, I formulated the following research questions:

- How are the differences in the approaches of the Civic Platform government and Law and Justice government to the understanding of the Giedroyć doctrine reflected in their foreign policy discourse? How these approaches evolved throughout the period of 2015 – 2023?

- How did Russia's war against Ukraine in 2022 change the Polish foreign policy responses in relations with Ukraine?

Further, I would like to provide the brief overview of the structure of the thesis. The thesis consists of the introduction, four chapters, the conclusions and the list of references.

Chapter 1 is dedicated to the theoretical framework of the research. It is divided into three sub-chapters on constructivism, ontological security and *raison d'état* where constructivism is employed as an overarching theory and ontological security and *raison d'état* are considered as concepts within constructivism as a theory.

Chapter 2 is dedicated to the methodological aspects of the research and also consists of three sub-chapters devoted to explaining the research design of the thesis, methods and data sources employed in the thesis as well as limitations of the research.

Chapter 3 represents the context information necessary for understanding the peculiarities Polish-Ukrainian relations during the time period in question as well as providing the required knowledge for interpreting the results of the content analysis in Chapter 4. The structure of Chapter 3 includes three subchapters dedicated to the explanation of what the Giedroyć doctrine is, to the brief overview of the Polish Foreign Policy towards Ukraine since 1990s to 2014 as well as a more detailed description of the Polish foreign policy in 2015–2023 with a specific focus on Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022 which incredibly affected the Polish foreign policy towards Ukraine, but also in a broader context.

Chapter 4 is dedicated to the interpretation of the content analysis results. It also consists of three sub-chapters representing the themes I highlighted in the content analysis including the understanding of the Polish *raison d'état* in the Polish foreign policy towards Ukraine.

Chapter 1. Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

The following chapter delves into the theory and concepts employed for the purpose of answering the research questions asked in this master thesis. First, I will start with the constructivism theory which serves as an overarching theory of the study, and then I will proceed to the explanation of the concepts of ontological security and *raison d'état* which are observed through the prism of constructivism. As it was mentioned earlier, given its major postulate that the world is socially constructed and behaviour of states and governments to the large extent is determined by the perception and interpretation of the developments in the international system, constructivism allows me to look at the internal factors forming varying foreign policy narratives and approaches towards Ukraine by different Polish governments. Meanwhile, such concepts as ontological security and *raison d'état* are helpful in specifying how a particular actor's identity, values and beliefs are related to the feeling of security and thus define their foreign policy discourses and actions often with the purpose of maintaining and enhancing the feeling of security within the state. *Raison d'état* provides a more specific explanation of the interplay of such factors as national interests/preferences (for instance, national security and sovereignty), understanding of values and norms, the role to be played by the state as it is defined by the adopted identity and how these and other factors determine the narratives and the course of foreign policy actions in each particular situation.

1.1. Constructivism

In my thesis foreign and security policy as well as international relations in general are explained through the prism of constructivism which is one of the mainstream theoretical approaches in this field. The major postulates of constructivism as a theory of international relations include the recognition of the agency of political elites of the state in defining the national preferences as well as the interconnectedness of structure and agency. International relations and foreign policy are considered to be "social worlds" where the meaning of situations and events depend upon the perception of the actors. Moreover, ideas are considered to be the most important in constructing identities of states which in their turn define national preferences, thus the great emphasis is put on the importance of identity and norms which these identities adopt as appropriate (Houghton, 2007, p.28-29, p.31).

Constructivist approach understands "foreign policy practices of states as a product of discursive factors and socio-cultural constructions including identities" (Behraves, 2011). National preferences are constructed from the perspective of identities and understandings of the actors conducting foreign policy (Houghton, 2017, p.6), and a major tool which is used to convey

the understanding of these national preferences is speech and discourse (Finnemore and Sikkink, 2001, p.402). According to Houghton (2007) “FPA elites act on the basis of their ‘definition of the situation’” which implies difference in the perceptions of the level of importance of those situations. Constructivism posits that relations between states heavily depend upon the events and domestic power interactions within the state this way defining the foreign policy interests and behaviour in relations with other states. Constructivist researchers strive to understand how “domestically constituted ... identities of states and their internationally driven social identities” counteract and form foreign policy of states (Behraves, 2011).

As it was already mentioned, norms are in the centre of constructivist approach since they are one of the determinants of states’ behaviour and serve as drivers for specific actions (Björkdahl, 2002, p.9). In order to better understand the role of norms in international relations and foreign policy practices, it is necessary to provide the definitions of norms provided in the existing literature. For instance, Paul Kowert and Jeffrey Legro define norms as “as collective beliefs regulating the behavior and identity of actors” (Kowert and Legro, 1996 p.467), while Hoffmann identifies norms “as ideas or expectations about ‘appropriate behavior for actors with a given identity’” (Hoffmann, 2010, p.2). This definition is also supported by Björkdahl (2002, p.15), who clarifies that norms are “a set of intersubjective understandings and collective expectations regarding the proper behaviour of states and other actors in a given context or identity”. Therefore, one can notice that shared understanding of how a state should act in a specific situation constitutes the basis of a norm.

A great example of such interpretations of the norm is illustrated in the article by Thomas Biersteker and Cynthia Weber (1996, p.9-10) who argue that the norm of sovereignty is regarded as a norm mainly due to the existence of shared in the international arena understanding of who qualifies to be a sovereign state and who is not (which qualifications the entities should possess to be considered as a sovereign state) which is reflected in the international recognition of the sovereignty of some states and denial of such recognition of others. Moreover, interrelated “mutually reinforcing and consistent norms” (Finnemore, 1996, p.157) usually constitute a “network” of norms for states to abide with the aim of maintaining the chosen identity so that their actions and behaviour would be perceived as legitimate and would not be contested.

According to constructivists, norms play an important role in foreign policy of states. In particular, scholars argue that norms serve as so-called “road maps” (Björkdahl, 2002; Flockhart, 2016a), which provide patterns of appropriate behaviour for those states whose identities have accepted and internalised these norms. While norms provide the states with tools to justify and legitimise their actions (Björkdahl, 2002), the states’ identity is supposed to be “the link between norms and interests that motivate [their] behavior” (Herman, 1996, p.276). These definitions

reflect the “logic of appropriateness” which is the basis of the constructivist approach to foreign policy and international relations. The idea of this “logic” presupposes that states act with regard to their understanding of what should be done in a specific situation and, therefore, influences the interests and preferences of states in each case. This understanding is built on the norms and identity adopted by a particular state (Hoffmann, 2010).

Not only are norms and identities interdependent, but are also both formed and maintained in the process of socialisation which implies that states interact with each other through “social relations” (Erbaş, 2022; Zehfuss, 2001, p.318). These relations include “shared knowledge, shared understandings, shared opinions, expectations” (Erbaş, 2022, p. 5088) which shape foreign policy practices and develop/modify the states’ identities in response to the actions of each other. As it was mentioned above, speech and discourse are the major instruments of transmitting one’s perceptions and understanding of what appropriate behaviour would be in line with the national preferences, norm serving as an idea of what an appropriate behaviour is, can be also defined as a “speech act which depend on successful communication” (Zehfuss, 2002, p.16-17). This emphasises that norms will have impact on identities and behaviour provided that these speech acts are positively received and accepted by the target audience either internal or external. It should be also noted that the level of influence of the norm increases with the number of times it is repeated in the discourse or speech acts. Thus, the need of the public acceptance proves once again that norms do not exist outside of the context and can be interpreted differently in each particular situation.

Returning to the definition of identity, constructivists conceptualise identity as “relatively stable, role-specific understandings and expectations about self” (Wendt, 1992, p.397), “self-awareness of whom we are” which is “one of the existential needs of ... social groups [which states are] [in ensuring] collective feeling of security” (Požarlik, 2015, p.34). Since states have multiple identities or constituent parts of identity which are enacted in specific situations, some constructivist scholars talk about identity as the process of identification. They argue that identity is not a stable structure, but a process when “actors articulate, bundle and (temporarily and incompletely) stabilize interpretations of the ‘self’, thereby privileging some identifications over others” (Bucher and Jasper, 2017, p.408). Here the important emphasis is put on the choice of identities or parts of identities which underlines the functional way of identity formation which reflect the national preferences in specific circumstances.

This leads to the need of explanation of what national preferences are, how they are connected to identity of a state and what is the difference between national preferences and national interests from the constructivist scholarship perspective. According to Maja Zehfuss (2002, p.14) “identities provide the basis for interests which are defined in the process of conceptualising

situations". James Walsh (2002, p.62-63) argues that preferences are flexible "in the face of experience, communication, ... changing ideas about how the social world operates ... and the process of interaction among states". While national interests correspond to broader and more abstract, but relatively stable and unchangeable norms, ideas and concepts constituting the identity of the state, national preferences are more specific and adjustable to the situation in question by different state actors. Interests mostly encompass three areas: political, economic and ideological (Alons, 2007, p.2014). Mostly, constructivism deals with political and ideological dimensions, since they deal with the state's credibility (positive reputation) and legitimacy of its actions internationally as well as "national role-perceptions, principles and paradigms" (ibid., p.2015) which is directly connected to the identity of the state and norms it accepted and adopted. Preferences can be also referred to as "behavioural options" (Alons, 2007, p.215) or in other words a course of action, which can have both positive and negative effects on the national interests of a state. Thus, I could say that preferences constitute specific action, speech or symbolic act through which political elites aim at achieving national interests according to the way they perceive them. It should be noted that the state's preferences are formed through the interaction of domestic and foreign policies' ideas and principles, although constructivist scholarship has not been able to trace the specific mechanisms of this interaction (Nincic and Ramos, 2010, p.122). However, it has been proven that the more vulnerable internally the government of the state is, the more intertwined the domestic policy and the foreign policy are, especially during the pre-election period as well as when the society is highly engaged in the debate on foreign policy issues (Alons, 2007, p.218).

Moving back to the identity formation process, it should be noted that the constructivist scholarship argues that both norms and identities are mostly formed through continuous practices (Adler, 1997; Flockhart, 2016b, p.89; Hopf, 2010; Wendt, 1992; Zehfuss, 2001, p.318) which have been conducted in specific historic, political and cultural contexts. The notion of practices includes not only how states act, but also speech acts, statements and discourses, both domestic and international, which provide the meanings for the states' action (Adler, 1997, p.333; Wicaksana, 2009), and if successful and repetitive, these speech acts and statements establish common practices in diplomacy and foreign policy (Kratochwil and Peltonen, 2022, p.18). To the large extent these practices are conditioned by historical experiences, which are often reflected in national memory through which these experiences frame foreign policy practices (Guzzini, 2000; Požarlik, 2015). In Guzzini's view (2000, p.166) "past experiences ... [provide] schemes of perception, thought and action which tend to reproduce practices in conformity with the field throughout time". In the same vein, Adler and Pouliot (2011, p.4) define practices as "socially meaningful patterns of action, which, in being performed more or less competently, simultaneously embody, act out, and possibly reify background knowledge and discourse in and

on the material world”. Practices consist of actions, mostly repetitive and of the same symbolic meaning, but not always.

On the other hand, another constructivist scholar Ted Hopf (2010, p.544) emphasises that “logic of practice” aims at simplifying the decision-making process by providing specific frameworks and patterns, but does not prevent state actors’ from being able to act reflectively and in “out of the box” way. Likewise, Flockhart (2016b, p.90) underpins that practices are not always the basis for the state’s action. Instead, states engage in “non-routine actions designed to effect, or deal with, change”. Maja Zehfuss (2002, p.42) emphasises that these practices are developed as a reflection to the practices of states who are considered as “significant others”. The scholar also points out that “practices on the international level depend on practices on the domestic level” (ibid., p.94) and therefore the change in practices depend upon the modifications of “beliefs and identities of domestic actors [inducing the alteration of] rules and norms that are constitutive of their political practices” (ibid., p.94).

Overall, constructivism as one of the major comprehensive approaches to the analysis of foreign policy and international relations is based on explaining how norms, identities, national interests and preferences, practices interact and mutually constitute each other and consequently define foreign policy actions and strategies of a particular state. Special attention in the identity, interests/preferences and practice formation constructivism pays to the historical and cultural experiences serving as contexts for each decision-making process as well as past experiences reflected in collective memory of the state and nation. When talking about the application of constructivism to the empirical case of Poland foreign policy the major focus is on the values, different understanding of the national interests and foreign policy preferences by different governments of Poland and how they are reflected in the foreign policy narratives and discourse, how they define which behaviour towards Ukraine is appropriate in each specific situation, but also how past experience as a constituent part of the state’s identity serves as a point of reference in foreign and security policy statements.

1.2. Ontological security

For the purposes of my thesis, ontological security is considered as a concept within the constructivist premises. It fits well into the constructivism theory, since it enables a researcher to explain foreign policy narratives, choices and decisions from the perspective of the feeling of security/insecurity which, in its turn, is strongly dependent on the stable understanding of the self-identity of the state. The concept was first coined by Ronald Laing in the field of psychological sciences, and his definition, although related to individuals not states, highlights the feeling a “whole ... and continuous person” (Laing in Resende, Sandrin and Solomon, 2023, p.2-3). Later

this concept was incorporated in sociological sciences by Anthony Giddens, whose understanding of ontological security became the foundation of the interpretation of the concept in political sciences and international relations scholarship. According to Giddens the feeling of ontological security consists in possessing “on the level of the unconscious and practical consciousness, “answers” to fundamental existential questions which all human life in some way addresses” (Resende, Sandrin and Solomon, 2023, p.3; Kinnvall and Mitzen, 2020, p.245).

Jennifer Mitzen, a renowned political scientist in ontological security studies, argues that “ontological security refers to the security not of the physical body but of the self or identity, the subjective sense of who one is that enables and motivates action and choice” (Mitzen and Larson, 2017 p.1). Other political scientists, like Alexandria Innes and Brent Steele (2013, p.16), define ontological security “as the desire and urge of a social actor [a state or political elite] to survive and surpass not only as a physical entity, but also as a certain sort of (social) being”. Jakub Eberle and Vladimir Handl (2020, p.44) also emphasise the importance of “a relatively stable sense of identity” which is the core of the states’ ontological security and is essential for steering their behaviour in a specific situation.

It is logical to explain ontological security through the constructivist lenses since this concept aims at explaining the linkage between the identity and behaviour highlighting that in order “to be secure, countries establish an integrity with their identity through their behaviour” (Bachleitner, 2023, p.26) and that the maintenance of the integrity of the state’s identity may override the importance of its physical security (Mahant, 2019, p.188). Moreover, scholarly literature mostly emphasises that ontological security can be achieved through maintaining the feeling of identity by the state as well as “by routinizing relations with significant others” (Mitzen, 2006, p.270; Gustafsson, 2014) which combined together define the state’s behaviour and responses to the events in the international arena. These routines and practices should, however, be always in the process of adaptation to the context in order to effectively guarantee ontological security of the state (Greve, 2018, p.862). This is the major reference to the constructivist understanding of foreign policy and international relations of states which are formed through the prism intersubjective interactions between the states which play a pivotal role in the formation of the latter’s identities which in their turn guide states’ foreign policy activities.

This idea is elaborated on by Mitzen (2006, p.271) who explains the relation between routines/practices, identities and ontological security of the state. More precisely, she explains the concept of ontological security through the following process:

“actors value their sense of agency, the ability to make choices and pursue favourable outcomes. That ability rests on knowing one’s own preferences and interests. In other words, it rests on an identity, which means that actors need stable

identities to be 'actors' or 'agents' at all. In any given social environment, actors solidify identity and learn to be 'agentic' through routinized relations with significant others. From a platform of stable routines, aspiring agents come to know who they are and therefore can act" (Mitzen, 2006, p.271).

Further, Innes and Steele (2013, p.16) emphasise that these practices and routines are being made “predictable and recognisable” between the state actors through the shared knowledge about each other honed in the interactional process of states’ identity formation. It should be noted that for a state to be ontologically secure, there is a need of recognition of the state’s identity both internally by the domestic audience and by other actors of the international system. The idea of importance of routines in ensuring ontological security is further developed by Patricia Greve (2018), who argues “that the routinisation of relationships implies struggles for recognition” (p.860). Additionally, she complements Mitzen’s argument that not only conflictual relations tend to pertain due to the states’ “attachment to routines” (Greve, 2018, p.861), but also cooperation. Cooperation presupposes the juxtaposition of the states’ “claims towards distinctiveness (individuality) as well as belonging (affiliation)” (ibid., p.868) which may as well be the source for political conflicts in relations between the states concerned. The scholar insists on the importance of intersubjective interaction as well as the desire for recognition in the identity and ontological security formation processes by adopting “the premise that (a) citizens of a state are interested in having their state’s historical narrative accepted by others, and that (b) modern states require legitimacy for their actions” which in its turn determines the “state representatives’ actions in international politics” (ibid., p.866). Mälksoo supports Greve’s statement that “state[s] “selves” [are] incomplete without some sense of external affirmation, intersubjective support, and recognition” (Mälksoo, 2019, p.379)

While Mitzen perceives ontological security through the identity which is relatively stable, Kathrin Bachleitner argues that ontological security is rather temporal phenomenon by elaborating on the central role of collective memory as “a country’s ... identity emerges from its past experience, which is transported into its present through ‘narration” (Bachleitner, 2023, p.26). According to her explanation identity of a state is built in relation to a “significant historical other from the country’s past” (ibid.). This indicates that ontological security of a state is formed not only externally through the interaction with others, but also internally based on “its own experience in the past: ‘who the state was, is and wants to be”” (ibid., p.28). Moreover, Katharina Langwald argues that “states are ontological security-seekers, either in relation with other states or for their own citizens” (Langwald, 2021, p.2), which means that the direction of ontological security-seeking attempts may be both internal and external.

According to Trine Flockhart, states aim to maximise their ontological security by the means

of two strategies – “strategy of doing” and “strategy of being” (Flockhart, 2016a, p.799). While the first one is related to the achieving of ontological security through established routines and practices, the second one refers to the correlation of narratives and identity and is aimed at securing “a stable and esteem-enhancing identity and biographical continuity through the construction of a ‘strong narrative’” (ibid., p.816). Both of the strategies are necessary for the efficient ontological security-seeking process.

Here I would like to expand on the role of narratives in ensuring ontological security of the state, including biographical narratives or “biographical continuity” (Kinnvall and Mitzen, 2018) forming the collective memory (Innes and Steele, 2013) which connects the past with the present through the relevant at a specific moment of time frames this way maintaining the continuity of the state’s identity and ensuring the feeling of ontological security. Biographical narratives are understood as “stories which a group, a society, or a culture lives by” (Gustaffson, 2014, p. 73). They “give life to routinized foreign policy actions” (Resende, Sandrin and Solomon, 2023, p.4) as they function as a point of reference when explaining/justifying why a specific decision has been made while ruling out the alternative patterns of behaviour in a particular case.

The state’s biographical narrative has three dimensions: internal – “about the self” and external consisting of two parts – “about relationships with significant others and about the international order” (Eberle and Handl, 2020, p.45). More so, when a disruptive event in the international system occurs and endangers the state’s ontological security, the latter is mostly likely to change some of these narratives while preserving the others to restore the feeling of coherent identity and therefore security (ibid., p.41). As Klose (2020, p.855) emphasises “critical situations present opportunities ... to restore a sense of ontological security through the creative re-telling of an international actor’s biography” which in fact is a process of adaptation to the new environment and context.

Maria Mälksoo is one of the pioneer researchers who highlighted the importance of memory for ontological security-seeking process. She insists that:

“Remembering in a particular way is instrumental in order to sustain a coherent and consistent biographical narrative of a state. Memory hence emerges as a vital self-identity need as it is invoked to constitute state's central narrative about its past in order to form a core part of its consistent sense of the self in present” (Mälksoo, 2015, p.227)

According to the scholar, historical memory has both direct and indirect influence of foreign policy and international relations “through shaping identities and values that the foreign policy makers bring into the process of decision-making as well as concrete historical “lessons” and analogies drawn on in making a particular foreign policy decision” (Mälksoo, 2019, p.378). In

particular, she develops the concept of mnemonical security-seeking which is understood as a “coordinated state-level attempt at fixing distinct understandings of the past in social memory in particular ways in order to buttress the state’s stable sense of self” (Belavusau, Gliszczyńska-Grabias and Mälksoo, 2021, p.111). She explains that memory plays a pivotal role in biographical narrativity and continuity especially due to the necessity of the state’s self-identity to be “constantly reconstituted and re-grounded on the basis of changing knowledge structures that are captured in narratives and incorporated into identification processes” (Flockhart, 2016a, p.805-806) which ensures the stability and solidity of ontological security.

One should notice that the important role in ensuring ontological security is played by the threat perception. For Trine Flockhart (2016a, p.803) being “ontologically secure is to possess ‘answers’ to fundamental and existential questions and to have ‘basic trust’ which can limit anxiety to a manageable level”.

Threats are part and parcel of any crisis which endangers the feeling of the state’s self-identity and therefore ontological security. Some scientists follow quite a simplistic definition of a threat which “means that something is perceived as having potentially negative implications for someone ... or something ...” (Erikson, 2020, p.3). However, from the constructivist perspective threats are not objective by nature, but rather matter only through the prism of the perception by a specific actor and are conditioned by numerous factors. For some states, a specific external event might pose a threat while others will not even react to it. Often threats are perceived and constructed through both domestic and international discourse and narrativity. According to Stein, “perception is the process of apprehending by means of the senses, ... recognizing and interpreting what is processed. ... [It] is the basis for understanding, learning, and knowing and the motivation for action” (Stein, 2013, p.365). She specifies that “threats are socially constructed within and among private and public conversations of experts, political leaders, and publics” due to the shared understanding and knowledge influencing the process of threat perception (ibid., p.365).

Furthermore, “threats perceptions are related to collective lessons learnt from previous events that are seen or intentionally portrayed as similar” (Meyer, 2009, p.653) which means that predisposition of a state to consider a specific development as a threat is embedded in the ways how the past is remembered. Rousseau and Garcia-Retamero (2007, p.745) proposed a more detailed definition of a threat stating that it is “a situation in which one agent or group has either the capability or intention to inflict a negative consequence on another agent or group”. More so, they explain that consistent and continuous identity is crucial for anchoring a state’s ontological security due to the fact that “shared sense of identity [enables them to] reduce ... perceptions of intergroup threat” (ibid., p.744). From this statement one can make a conclusion that shared sense of identity encourages cooperation between states through creation a degree of belonging to the

same group which automatically implies the low possibility or absence of threat on the part of another state. Alternatively, threats affect the “established practices of collectivities like states” which “disrupt the predictability of the context in which they operate and require the adaptation of routines” (Greves, 2018, p.864) and thus may on the opposite endanger cooperative relations between the actors.

Overall, one can argue for sure that ontological security is of vital importance for analysing foreign policy of states as it serves as one of the factors affecting decision-making processes resulting in specific actions, statements and behaviour in general (Mälksoo, 2019). Moreover, the concept of ontological security aims at explaining how state-actors’ identities are modified and adapted in response to drastic external changes through routines, practices, biographical narratives and other instruments to ensure the continuity of the stable feeling of the “self” while interacting with other states. Applying it to the practical part of this thesis, the concept of ontological security can be helpful in analysing how foreign policy narratives of Poland related to Ukraine as well as the understanding and remembering of the past are conditioned by the feeling of security/insecurity in the conditions of drastic changes in the international system (specifically, Russian aggression and full-fledged war against Ukraine) which is perceived as a threat to both physical and ontological security of Poland.

1.3. Raison d’etat

Raison d’etat as a concept is explained in this research through the constructivist lenses for several reasons. First and foremost, raison d’etat is considered in this thesis as an art of governance which aims to provide the decision-makers with the answers to such questions as “[h]ow to govern oneself, how to be governed, how to govern others, by whom the people will accept being governed, how to become the best possible governor” (Foucault in Enroth, 2014, p.60) and provide hints to the political elites which tools to use. According to Enroth, “one never governs a state, a territory, or a political structure. Those whom one governs are people, individuals, or groups” (ibid., p.60-61) which reflects the constructivist postulate that through intersubjective interactions the understanding of what is good, what is an appropriate behaviour or what is desirable to achieve is a specific situation. It should be noted that while making a decision, political elite has to make sure that it is compliant with their values, defined state’s identity and the role it plays in the international arena, understanding of the national interests, it does not endanger the internal stability by wreaking havoc in the society and most importantly does not provide opposition with the possibility to obtain more influence and public support enabling them to contest the power of the ruling elite. The latter plays a decisive factor and sometimes causes situations when other factors have to be compromised. Such balancing to prevent the opposition from gaining influence

makes the political elite somewhat accountable to other internal forces, for instance, civil society, economic elite etc., and sensitive to their demands which may cause the change in values and understanding of the interests by the ruling elite. Here the public support of the *raison d'état* pursued by the political elites is important as a way of increasing its validity. Spasimir Domaradzki argues that “*raison d'état* is superior in the sense, that it overrides the particular group interests within the democratic state ... The consolidation of these primary interests and their recognition by vast majority of the population, secures greater effectiveness in their pursuit” (Domaradzki, 2020, p.106).

The understanding of *raison d'état* as an art of governance is considered through the prism of the performative approach. It implies that rather than considering vital national interests and *raison d'état* as an objective and uncontested narrative declared by government or the ruling political party, this narrative is actually always in the centre of competition between the executive branch in power and opposition in obtaining and maintaining the legitimate power to define the “genuine” meaning of the *raison d'état*. Thus, performativity explains the process of changing narratives and rhetoric in an attempt to achieve the dominant or even the hegemonial position in representing the “real” understanding of *raison d'état*. Usually, this occurs through the speech act and discourse which in fact form, modify and maintain the understanding of the national interests and *raison d'état* overall (Larsen, 2020, p.964). In this vein, in order to gain legitimacy to define *raison d'état* the ruling political elite forms “the discourses that demarcate the boundaries between self and other. These discourses are performative not only because they identify possible dangers threatening the self, but also because they establish the state [represented by the government or the ruling political party] as the designated actor to deal with them” (Braun, Schindler and White, 2019, p.794) which also falls under the constructivist postulate that discourse and speech acts form and change perceptions, understandings, identities as well as are part and parcel of the internal power struggle that determines to the large extent foreign policy discourse and behaviour. The performative approach underpins that narratives and speech acts “enact in their very utterance, the reality they purport to describe” (Başak, 2015, p.67), thus *raison d'état* does not exist objectively in social reality but is constructed through the political discourse between the government and opposition aimed at establishing the only way of understanding of the concept by each of the actors.

In addition to that, the concept of *raison d'état* is related to the ontological security. In particular, *raison d'état* actually defines the ontological security narration of the state because it sets the hierarchy of values and national interests which when endangered may induce the feeling of insecurity, and therefore define the process of narrative construction to restore the relevant understanding of one's self-identity in accordance to the changes in the international system. This

way *raison d'état* provides direction for the biographical narrativity for the purpose of “maintaining ‘cognitive stability’” (Heinrichs, 2020, p.24) of the state. Therefore, the ontological security narrative serves as “a means to push for the achievement of political objectives” (ibid., p.27) set by both the *raison d'état* and its interpretation by the specific political elite.

In political science literature *raison d'état* is an essential, yet highly contested concept, triggering the discussion on its interoperability and application regarding the empirical verification. Moreover, it lacks the widely adopted single definition which increases its ambiguity when applying this concept to foreign policy (Wolff-Powęska, 2007, p.161). Therefore, it is highly important to specify it in the way it is employed in this thesis. First of all, while in Western literature *raison d'état* possesses mostly negative connotation related to the absolutism and state egoism, in the Polish scholarly literature as well as in politics and diplomacy this concept is perceived rather performatively (Rzegocki, 2021, p.62) as it was mentioned earlier.

The importance and the use of the applicability of the *raison d'état* concept for the analysis of foreign policy and diplomatic practices is explained well by Sanecka-Tyczyńska who claims that *raison d'état* “functions as the theoretical element of social practice” as well as particularises the hierarchy of policy goals and measures to achieve them, including the goals negotiated with foreign entities” (Sanecka-Tyczyńska, 2015b, p. 128). Moreover, she supports her idea that sovereignty in its classical meaning “as full independence from the external environment is losing its foundations” and the new meaning comes into play “expressed by definitions pointing to subjectivity and abilities of States to achieve their *raison d'état*” (ibid.).

Sanecka-Tyczyńska states that the different “understanding of *raison d'état*” in Central and Eastern Europe, including Poland, is caused by the contrasting historical experiences with the Western Europe (Sanecka-Tyczyńska, 2015b, p.130). For instance, the importance of sovereignty for these states was of higher importance because of the influence of the Soviet Union in the region which results in that “the significance of the national state and its interests is more important than in Western Europe” (ibid.) which makes the concept of *raison d'état* much more relevant in analysing foreign policy in Central and Eastern European states. The same idea is conveyed by Rzegocki that for these states, and Poland in particular, *raison d'état* consists in “maintaining security against any damage to the recovered state heritage” (Rzegocki, 2013, p.37, translation is mine). The important role of *raison d'état* is conditioned by the fact that “the state can be seen as contested” since it is a constructed organisation (Cerny, 2010, p.10). Philip Cerny further insists that the state “is organised around relationships of power as well as political ideas such as fairness and justice”. This way *raison d'état* provides the state with the justification for its existence and functioning at a specific period of time since “states are ongoing political projects, always in progress, always incomplete” (ibid.). The major purpose of *raison d'état* in foreign policy is to

ensure its efficiency and effectiveness which means “full satisfaction of the needs and interests of the state (objectives are achieved at all levels)” (Piechowiak-Lamparska, 2015, p.236). In general, “the ultimate value and the goal” of *raison d’etat* is to maintain “the well-being of the State and of its population” (Mokrosinska, 2023, p.30).

Since *raison d’etat* is a very broad concept, mostly, scholars recognise two dimensions of the concept: “as a system of vital interests of the state and as a category of political thought” (Sanecka-Tyczyńska, 2015a, p.51). However, one can find a bulk of definitions of *raison d’etat* including such most frequently used conceptualisations as “(1) the reason for having a sovereign State; (2) functioning in accordance with realistic principles; (3) the necessity of using special measures; (4) ensuring the security of the State and its citizens; (5) searching for objective principles and determinants of foreign policy; (6) the justification of unethical actions of the authorities or the public; and (6) the “clash” between ethics and politics” (Sanecka-Tyczyńska, 2015b, p. 125).

For the purposes of my master thesis, I mostly regard the concept of *raison d’etat* as a norm representing “a system of vital interests” which may be both individual for each state and common for those states sharing the same set of values. As a norm, *raison d’etat* refers to the understanding of “sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity, protection of security, national identity, and the country’s development capacities” (Sanecka-Tyczyńska, 2015a, p.52) by the political actors. The norm of *raison d’etat* serves as “a postulate for specific conceptualization i.e. molding of activity consisting in governing the state’s policy; it functions as a theoretical element of social practice” and, therefore, is the core for defining the national preferences as well as their hierarchy specifying “those that cannot be negotiated with foreign entities” (ibid.) by specific domestic actors. Thus, as a norm *raison d’etat* provides the framework of what actions by the ruling elite are appropriate/inappropriate, desirable/non-desirable, allowed/not allowed through identifying the hierarchy of values and interests/preferences which can be either negotiable or non-negotiable which fits into the constructivist understanding of the norm.

The basic and vital national interests constitute the *raison d’etat* of political actors of the state and their foreign policy preferences and “implement constitutional values and principles” (ibid., p.54). Moreover, *raison d’etat* “is systematically updated and is publicly justified” (ibid., p.54) which implies a relatively changing character of *raison d’etat* which was unravelled by Meinecke in his monograph. According to Friedrich Meinecke, the specific state’s understanding “of itself and its environment” formulates the principles guiding its behaviour (and constituting the *raison d’etat* to the large extent), and “these principles are always bound to be at the same time both individual and general, both constant and changeable” and “change subtly as alterations take place in the State itself and in its environment” (Meinecke, 1962, p.43). Sanecka-Tyczyńska argues

that “the contemporary *raison d'état* comprises diversified [preferences] that can be classified into five major groups, including [preferences] ... related to the country's existence in the international arena, ... system-related preferences, i.e. establishing a democratic, stable and efficient social and political system, respect for human rights, socioeconomic development [preferences], ensuring a continual improvement in the citizens' well-being, ... [preferences] in strengthening the country's international position, which allows it to increase its abilities to improve internal security and to play prominent international roles ... as well as national security preferences” (*ibid.*, p.57-58).

Sanecka-Tyczyńska understands “*raison d'état* as a system of the state's existential interests pursued in an uncompromising way, about which there should be a consensus of the main political forces in a state” (*ibid.*, p.61). In that vein, Krzysztof Łabędź defines *raison d'état* as the best possible way of behaviour which brings the most benefit to the state while protecting underlying interests (Łabędź, 2013, p.203). This definition will constitute the basis for analysing Poland's foreign policy towards Ukraine in the following chapters of the thesis.

In contemporary politics the concept of *raison d'état* also includes such areas as domestic politics, “values, national identity, social well-being, economic solutions or even historical policy” (Sanecka-Tyczyńska, 2015b, p. 127). According to Ryszard Stemplowski “emphasizes that the importance of values is crucial” in the *raison d'état* (Stemplowski, 2013, p.27, translation is mine).

Ideally *raison d'état* should reflect the interests shared by both the population of the state and its political elites and, therefore, not be contested by other preferences, values, priorities etc. This way *raison d'état* reflects the most important, widely accepted and the least contested ideas about the state's interests and preferences (Domaradzki, 2020). Therefore, *raison d'état* should be a relatively stable concept.

However, in practice this concept is often manipulated by the opposing political elites who have differing understanding of the values and interests to be pursued and thus leads to its instrumental application in foreign policy practices. In this context Krzysztof Łabędź indicated that when studying specific foreign policy developments one can actually “rather talk about different reasons of state, depending on the entities defining the content of the concept for themselves” (Łabędź, 2013, p.204, translation is mine). He argues that these “reasons of state” “are characterized by different hierarchies of values, experiences, views, beliefs, etc., which leads to different assessments of what is most beneficial for the state” (*ibid.*, translation is mine). Krzysztof Łabędź further continues that “the existence of various ideas of “*raison d'état*” present in society must be considered by the political parties that formulate their visions of *raison d'état* and who are obliged to rationalize them” (Łabędź, 2013, p.205, translation is mine) which in its turn leads to different foreign policies conducted based on the expectations and priorities of their

electorate. Similar ideas can be found in the article by Michał Wenklar where he maintains “that there is only one reason of state at a given moment, only its different interpretations can exist in parallel” (Wenklar, 2013, p.58, translation is mine). On the other hand, Sanecka-Tyczyńska “stressed that *raison d'état* is defined by the ruling authorities” which poses “the issue of the superficial identification of *raison d'état*” (Sanecka-Tyczyńska, 2015b, p. 126). This way their statements support the idea that *raison d'état* in order to be considered as such should be relatively the same for different actors, but the means with which it is realised may be understood differently based on the abovementioned factors that influence the attitudes and behaviour of political elites. Furthermore, “*raison d'état* very often [refers to] the principles of morality or justice and [this way emphasises] their importance as invaluable in international relations” (Sanecka-Tyczyńska, 2015b, p.130) which underlines the “idealistic approach to international relations” (ibid.). Thus, from one can say that the concept of *raison d'état* fits quite well in the constructivist premises.

The literature on *raison d'état* also recognises the duality of the concept which relates specifically to the connection between the political ends and means with which they are achieved. In other words, the duality relies in the maintenance of balance between ethical and moral behaviour and national interests/preferences (Aronoff, 1999). According to Anna Wolff-Powęska “*raison d'état* embodies the relationship between law, power, and morality” (Wolff-Powęska, 2007, p.161). She further elaborates “that the notion of *raison d'état* should be understood as the historically variable system of a state’s fundamental long-term internal and external interests backed by the majority of its citizens” (ibid.) with much attention paid to “the scope of its dependence on current circumstances and the interests of individual groups, other nations, and legal and moral norms” (ibid.). And each state decides how to deal with this duality in its individual manner. For instance, Carl Schmitt emphasises that the contemporary *raison d'état* is determined by the “new form of thinking which discovered the concrete, individual life of individual states” (Schmitt, 2017, p.56) which influences the further “development, even progress” (ibid.) of the *raison d'état*. And with the development of international principles such as respect territorial integrity and sovereignty, peaceful settlement of conflicts, non-interference in internal affairs of other states etc, those states who identify themselves with these principles modify their *raison d'état* to be more or less on compliance with those principles.

All this induces the need of explaining what a common good for a state is, since it is part and parcel of its *raison d'état*. In this vein, Ryszard Stemplowski asserts that the constitutional values such as “security, freedom, justice, dignity, prosperity ... are directly related to the common good of all citizens and the citizen as an individual” (Stemplowski, 2013, p.21-22, translation is mine). According to Anna Krzynówek-Arndt, “the reason for the existence of the state is the personal development of individuals, which can only take place within the political community”

(Krzynówek-Arndt, 2013, p.87-88, translation is mine). Therefore, the true *raison d'état* should be shared by the people of the state and provide the means enabling them to enjoy the possibility of development. According to Dańkowski, that the *raison d'état* should be constructed and assessed based on the common good which “consists of three elements: 1) the very nature of those interests (defense of one’s territory, economic interests, citizens’ rights) that the state is supposed to protect; 2) by the political environment in which these interests clash; 3) rational necessities that limit the choice of means and methods for foreign policy actors” (Dańkowski, 2013, p.108, translation is mine).

To sum up, the contemporary understanding of the concept of *raison d'état* as it is applied in my thesis highlights the performative aspect. *Raison d'état* deals with the most fundamental and vital interests of the state which should be recognised as such by the majority of the political elites and the population. And the purpose of the *raison d'état* is to ensure the implementation of these interests both internally and externally. Compared to the national interests or preferences, *raison d'état* is more stable and is changed only either in the aftermath of the internal political reshuffle or rapid changes in the international system. With the establishment of the international democratic principles and values, *raison d'état* of states associating themselves with those values modified bringing forward the issue of the duality of the concept in terms of the morality of its application with common good being in the centre of the formation of the true ethical *raison d'état*. *Raison d'état* is also related to ontological security, since the former defines the hierarchy of vital interests (constituting together with the values and norms guiding the state’s foreign policy narrative and behaviour a part of the state’s identity) which could not be compromised at any cost. The threat of any other contestation of those interests may cause the feeling of ontological insecurity which requires to be fixed by adaptation of understanding of those values, norms, preferences and interests in order to restore the relevancy of the identity in the changed international system.

The above analysed theoretical and conceptual framework is relevant in the case of Poland’s foreign policy towards Ukraine as the Giedroyć doctrine which is the foundation of the Polish Eastern policy towards Ukraine constitutes a part of Polish *raison d'état* representing the vital interests of the states, including national security and sovereignty. Nevertheless, despite the consensus between the Law and Justice and Civic Platform parties on the importance of this doctrine for the Polish interests, the foreign policy narratives and understanding of the appropriate behaviour differ. As it has been stated in the introduction, I assume that foreign policy narrative and consequently behaviour depend upon the difference in understanding of what constitutes the Polish *raison d'état*, including national preferences, the feeling of being ontologically secure amidst the threat of Russian imperialism in the context of Russian aggression since 2014 which I will elaborate on more in the empirical chapters.

Chapter 2. Methodology

2.1. Research Design

The research design of my thesis is an interpretivist outcome-centric single case-study. First of all, I would like to elaborate on why I chose the interpretivist paradigm for the research. Since the theoretical framework of the master thesis is based on the constructivist approach to foreign policy and the concepts of ontological security and *raison d'état*, it presupposes that the research problem is considered as not objective but conditioned by cultural and historical experiences defining the people's understanding and perception of foreign policy and shaping the decision-making process which is also one of the postulates of interpretivism (Porta and Keating, 2008, p.25; Gemma, 2018). Moreover, interpretivism allows that research "is often dependent on the values and concerns" (Porta and Keating, 2008, p.25) of the researcher indicating the subjectivity of interpretations. From my perspective, the great advantage of the interpretivist approach is its holistic character when a specific problem is studied in its complexity with the emphasis on the context forming the people's understanding of the world and informing their decisions (*ibid.* p.30).

In addition to that, the qualitative content analysis, which is a research method in this thesis, avails the opportunity to study the meanings and understandings as the interpretivist approach aims for. Like constructivism, interpretivist approach "assumes that reality is socially constructed and the researcher becomes the vehicle by which this reality is revealed" through analysing and interpreting data which is usually a social construct too in the form of "language, consciousness, shared meanings, documents, tools, and other artifacts" (Andrade, 2009, p.43). Therefore, for the purposes of answering the research questions asked in the thesis interpretivist approach is the most appropriate one, because it allows for a deeper scrutiny of such factors as *raison d'état*, threat perception, identity, ontological security etc. and the way how they affect foreign policy decision of a particular political elite.

In addition to the interpretivist approach, the outcome centric approach to the research design, also aims at the explanation of a specific phenomenon as comprehensively as possible (Lehnert, 2007, p.69). It is also applicable to the research explaining the phenomenon which has many independent factors (Gschwend and Schimmelfennig, 2007, p.8), which in the case of this thesis includes internal factors such as understanding of the *raison d'état*, perception of the national preferences, identity, threat perception, the feeling of security as well as external factors like rapid and often disruptive changes in the international system (in this particular case, the ongoing Russian aggression against Ukraine). Moreover, due to the in-depth-oriented nature of the outcome-centric approach, it is the best aligned with the single case-study research design employed in the current research (*ibid.*, p.14).

Single case-study as a research design was chosen for this thesis since it is most useful in

answering the research questions and assumption stated in the research. A case-study design can be explained as “an empirical inquiry which investigates a phenomenon in its real-life context” (Priya, 2021, p.95), a “research [that] entails an in-depth study of a social unit over a long period of time” (ibid., p.108) as well as “an intensive study of a single unit with an aim to generalize across a larger set of units” (Gerring, 2004, p.341). In this master thesis, Poland’s foreign policy towards Ukraine is the phenomenon being studied. Moreover, “case studies allow for analytic generalisations in which a previously developed theory is used as a template to compare the empirical results of the case under study. Such generalisations strengthen the explanatory power of a case study” (Priya, 2021, p.103). Although I do not aim at generalising the results of the research into the broader context due to the limitations of the case-study research design, the research in question may be used for further analysis of foreign policy of other states which can constitute similar case-studies employing the same theoretical framework applied in this thesis. This way, the results of my thesis may contribute not only to the existing scholarship on Polish foreign policy towards Ukraine but also provide some information which could be further employed in the research of similar type but with regard to other countries.

Just as importantly, the current research is an explanatory case-study, which means that the author “looks for causal factors to explain a particular phenomenon. The primary focus of such a case study is to explain ‘why’ and ‘how’ certain conditions come into being” (Priya, 2021, p.96; Blatter and Haverland, 2014). The research questions in this master thesis are asked in the way to explain how and why Polish governments’ approaches towards Ukraine differ throughout the defined period (and what factors caused these differences).

In my case I will look mostly at the centrist and right-wing populist Law and Justice party, since it held the majority in the government during 2015–2023. But in order to trace the differences in the governments’ approaches to the Eastern policy towards Ukraine I will analyse contextually the Polish Eastern policy conducted by the Civic Platform, a liberal conservative party, which was the most numerous and active (and thus the most influential in contesting the central government narrative on Polish *raison d’etat* and foreign policy tasks) among the opposition parties till the elections in November 2023 and preceded the former in the office during 2007–2014. The years of 2015–2023 were chosen as a time frame for this research, as they represent the period when Law and Justice party held the majority in the government and therefore was the one defining the foreign policy objectives, narratives and behaviour. The purpose of this research is to understand how their preferences, beliefs, values etc. affect foreign policy decision-making process and why these parties use different approaches and methods in foreign policy towards Ukraine. From all of the above, the empirical case of Poland fits perfectly into the interpretivist explanatory outcome-centric single-case study.

2.2. Methods and Data Sources

The main research method used in this thesis is qualitative content analysis. The data for the qualitative content analysis includes strategic policy documents, annual exposés of the Minister for foreign affairs, parliamentary debates as well as the Yearbook of Polish Foreign Policy published by Polish Institute of Foreign Affairs.

First of all, the policy documents – Polish Foreign Policy Strategy 2017-2021 and National Security Policy Strategy 2020 – were chosen because they contain the long-term multiannual objectives of foreign and security policies and set the course for the foreign policy activities. Currently, they are the latest versions of strategies available publicly. The fact that the outdated strategies were still in the use in 2023 indicated that the Law and Justice government lacked the systematic approach towards foreign and security policy. While strategies have multiannual character, the exposés of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Poland represent an annual elaborate speech on the foreign policy goals of Poland for the year to come. The analysis of both of them gives the opportunity to compare the long-term and short-term understandings of threat perception, ontological insecurities, vital national interests, *raison d'état* as applied in the Polish foreign policy as well as trace whether the change of these understandings took place.

The exposés are useful in searching for words and phrases representing the obvious and subtle reasoning of the government in defining foreign policy objectives in a specific way, how foreign policy interests and preferences are conceptualised and how it reflects the *raison d'état* of a ruling party in the government. These include the Government Information on Polish Foreign Policy in 2015-2017, Information of the Minister of Foreign Affairs on Polish Foreign Policy Tasks in 2018, Information of the Minister of Foreign Affairs on Polish Foreign Policy Tasks in 2019, Information on the principles and objectives of Poland's foreign policy 2023. However, it should be noted that exposés for the years 2020–2022 were not delivered and, therefore, these years are not included into the analysis.

Among the analysed exposés, the only one was delivered by the Minister for foreign affairs Grzegorz Schetyna who was a member of the Civic Platform party in 2015 before the elections were held later that year. The rest of exposés were presented during the Law and Justice government term 2015-2023, with 2016-2017 the Government information on the foreign policy tasks was presented by Witold Waszczykowski who was a member of the Law and Justice party. Likewise, the expose of 2023 was also delivered by the representative of the Law and Justice party Zbigniew Rau who served as Minister of foreign affairs at that time. During 2018 and 2019 exposés were delivered by the non-affiliated to the Law and Justice party Minister for foreign affairs Jacek Czaputowicz. It will be later noted that the affiliation of the Minister for Foreign Affairs to one of the parties actually affected the narratives regarding the Polish foreign policy towards Ukraine.

As for the parliamentary debates on the Information of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, I believe this is a reliable source where I can actually track down the difference in understanding of the Polish *raison d'état*, national interests and preferences by skimming through the observations to the information on foreign policy tasks as defined by the government (represented by Law and Justice party) made by the representatives of other parties in opposition to the government, in particular by Civic Platform. This category of documents includes parliamentary debates for 2015–2017 and 2023. Parliamentary debates of 2018 and 2019 are inaccessible on the website of the Polish Sejm, and parliamentary debates of 2020–2022 are non-existent due to the absence of the Information on Polish Foreign Policy tasks in that period. In fact, this reflects a very characteristic feature of the Law and Justice attitude towards foreign policy which lacked systematic approach, always considered to be rather of ad-hoc and improvised nature in the decision-making process, while the role of the Minister was quite marginalised, and the Law and Justice party leadership was the major actor influencing the foreign policy decision-making process, often behind the scenes. It is worth noting that, while analysing the minutes of the parliamentary debates I focused only on the statements and comments of the representatives of the Law and Justice party and Civic Platform party since other parties do not constitute an object of research in my thesis.

Additionally, I analyse the chapters on Polish foreign policy towards Ukraine of the annual publication titled *Yearbook of Polish Foreign policy 2015–2017* and *Rocznik Polskiej Polityki Zagranicznej 2018–2021* (Polish version of the *Yearbook*). These publications are used in this research as secondary data sources, and the information contained in them is not in particular used in the content analysis, but rather for providing examples to illustrate how the narratives are reflected in particular actions and activities.

The *Yearbook of Polish Foreign policy* is published by the Polish Institute of International Affairs, a think tank which was established by the Polish governmental institutions with the purpose to provide the decision-making process with the high-quality analysis and recommendations in the fields of international relations, foreign policy and diplomacy (About PISM, 2019). Therefore, the sources published by this institute are considered to be credible, reliable and also to some extent representing and analysing the government's activities in this field. From the preface of this publication one can conclude that the analysis of foreign policy is based on the annually delivered Information on Polish Foreign policy, existing strategic policy documents as well as statements of the decision-makers. As the preface explains it, "the *Yearbook of Polish Foreign policy* contains the "analysis of its goals set by the government. ... Then authors describe the means to achieve them, and finally evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of these objectives. ... It makes it possible to observe changes in foreign policy and compare its different periods, and it helps to highlight elements that are constant in Polish foreign policy as

deeply rooted in the *raison d'état*.” (Rocznik Poliskiej Polityki Zagranicznej 2020, p.7-9). I chose this annual publication because it is the most comprehensive edition that includes both general analysis of foreign policy as well as the section on bilateral relations of Poland with specific countries, in particular Ukraine. Moreover, the analysis contained in them covers all dimensions of these bilateral relations. Although, the latest year of the publication is 2021, the Yearbook holds an upper hand compared to other analytical materials, because this periodical is partially published in English which simplifies the process of analysis for me.

Moving on to the method of qualitative content analysis (QCA), it “is defined as a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns” (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005, p.1278). For a better understanding of the usefulness of the QCA in this particular research, it is important to specify the characteristics which differentiate this method from its quantitative variant. First of all, the most important feature is the predominant “inductive category formation” (Mayring, 2014, p.80; Bengtsson, 2016, p.9-10), which enables to look into the codes in the texts during the analysis process and reducing the information according to the assumption and the research questions by summarizing the codes in categories. This way QCA helps to find the actual meanings and ““coherent” meaning structures” (Scheufele, 2008, p.1) in the resource texts.

Nevertheless, I combine inductive and deductive approaches to QCA, with deductive one being represented through the assumption, research questions and applied theoretical framework (Armat, 2018, p.219) which predetermine the dimensions of codes and categories to be constructed inductively. The inductive character of QCA results in the fact that “qualitative content analysis reduces data” (Devi Prasad, 2019, p.8; Schreier, 2012, p.7) when only those meanings which are within the scope of the assumption and research questions are studied, while others are omitted or not paid attention to. This allows me to focus specifically on those words and meanings that can be of a particular value to my thesis and “not take into account all the information provided by a case” (Schreier, 2012, p.7).

Moreover, flexibility of QCA (Devi Prasad, 2019) presupposes that the coding frame is constantly adapted to the specific material so that the analysis could be valid and “adequately represent the concepts in [the] research question” (Schreier, 2012, p.7). Also, the process of “selection, reduction, generalization, construction, combination, integration [and interpretation]” (Gläser-Zikuda, Hagenauer and Stephan, 2020, p.4) of developed codes and categories with the purpose of constructing a comprehensive picture to provide empirical evidence for the research problem reflects a systematic nature of QCA refers to the rule-based analytical procedure with the defined steps including

Lastly, the interpretativity of QCA encompasses several aspects including specific attention

to latent meanings and information, since it “is more context-dependent and interpretive, and therefore ... more likely to be subjective” (Devi Prasad, 2019, p.9). This leads to the fact that the author conducting the analysis may interpret the findings based on her beliefs, values, background knowledge which may differ from another researchers’ interpretation. Additionally, QCA often includes peoples’ beliefs, values, perceptions and opinions (Graneheim, Lindgren and Lundman, 2017, p.32). The interpretative nature of the qualitative content analysis aligns with its ultimate goal of constructing “new knowledge gleaned from context-sensitive interpretation of data” (Selvi, 2019, p.444).

From the abovementioned features of the qualitative content analysis, it can be concluded that QCA as a method is built on the constructivist premises. In particular, it is reflected in its interpretativity and subjectivity (Drisko and Maschi, 2015, p.92). Moreover, the meanings the researchers assign to the studied objects are based on “perception of the material with their own individual background” (Schreier, 2012, p.2) including knowledge, environment, personal emotions about the issue etc. Therefore, the meanings and their interpretations in QCA are socially constructed.

Further, I would like to elaborate on the specific process how QCA was conducted in my research. The starting point of the content analysis is the assumption which reads as follows: Polish governments’ foreign and security policy discourse and its instrumentalization depend upon the understanding of the *raison d’etat*, including national preferences, the perceptions of ontological security and the threat of Russian imperialism in the circumstances of drastic shifts in the international system. First of all, at the first stage I familiarised myself with the text and made a table with the extracts relevant to the codes for creation of which my assumption served as a basis. According to the assumption the initial codes were elaborated which in its turn were useful in searching for themes in the analysed materials. Next, I went through the paragraphs included in the table again meanwhile combining the codes in the broader themes. Eventually, I divided all the categories into 3 themes, including the understanding of the Polish *raison d’etat* in general, the feelings of ontological insecurity, the perceptions of threats and changing international environment as well as the narratives representing the Giedroyc doctrine postulates specifically.

Since the content analysis employed in the current thesis has an interpretative character I did not focus on the codes as such, but on the themes and interpreted the narratives as I found it logical within the themes I featured. After conducting content analysis and interpreting the results, I compared them to the initial assumption and used the results to respond to the questions I asked in the introduction.

The documents written in Polish were translated into English with the assistance of [deepl.com](https://www.onlinedoctranslator.com/en/translationform) and Google translate (<https://www.onlinedoctranslator.com/en/translationform>). These

documents include the minutes of parliamentary debates as well as the Government information on foreign policy tasks 2018. Overall, the content analysis was conducted with the materials written in English.

Finally, I would like to briefly touch upon the novelty and contribution of the current thesis. First, I should mention that there is no comprehensive research, like PhD research or monographies which would discuss the topic of Poland's foreign policy towards Ukraine based on the theoretical framework applied in this thesis (combining the three elements of constructivism, ontological security and threat perception as well as *raison d'état*). Moreover, the concept of *raison d'état* in the Polish scholarship is applied in a specific way different from other states' scholarship. What is also important, most of the literature on *raison d'état* both theoretically and applied to the Polish case are written in Polish and therefore limit the access to the information for those who do not know Polish or related Slavic languages. And most of the research were conducted previously to Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, which has a tremendous effect on the all elements mentioned above (only few articles written in the aftermath of the war are available). In addition to that, since the war is still an actively ongoing process, continuous research on the Polish foreign policy towards Ukraine should be conducted with the purpose of registering any changes occurring, and the purpose of my research is to constitute a part of the scholarship on this evolving topic. Thus, my research aims to contribute to resolving the aforementioned research gaps.

2.3. Limitations of the Research

Like all other research papers, this master thesis has a number of limitations in connection with the chosen research design, research method as well as the general process of conducting the research. To start with, the major limitation for me is the language barrier when analysing the sources in qualitative content analysis as well as secondary literature. In order to overcome it I translate the material online through the machine translation in online document translator <https://www.onlinedoctranslator.com/en/> as well as Google translate, although it may result that I might miss out some meanings while conducting QCA.

Another limitation relates to the confirmation bias implying that I might tend to search for information that confirms my assumption and unconsciously skip the opposite opinions. My confirmation bias may depend on the prior knowledge and beliefs related to the topic of bilateral relations between Poland and Ukraine from the Ukrainian perspective, on the other hand, I am not quite acquainted with the issue from the Polish standpoint, which is the major focus of the study. This fact balances the situation and prevents me from adopting a "defence motivation" approach and encourages to follow the "accuracy motivation" approach to the selection of information decreases the chances of choosing the preferred information (Schwind and Buder, 2012, p. 2281).

Lastly, moving to the limitations of the qualitative content analysis which may affect the current research, the major issue is related to the interpretive and subjective nature of this method. Specifically, because the interpretation of the researcher can be subjective as it was discussed earlier, there might be an issue with the validity of the results obtained through the QCA method. In order to overcome this drawback of the QCA, Schreier (2012, p.34) recommends to “recode part of the material after approximately 10–14 days” and if the results are identical or mostly identical, that means the coding was done correctly and the further analysis is reliable and valid. This is the way I am going to proceed with the qualitative content analysis in this master thesis.

Chapter 3. Giedroyć Doctrine in Poland's Foreign Policy towards Ukraine

3.1. Giedroyć Doctrine as Part and Parcel of the Polish Raison D'état: General Overview

The idea underlying the Giedroyć doctrine dates back to 1950–1970s and relates to the activity of the Polish émigré society in Paris who discussed the political and social issues of the Polish statehood and the future of the relations among the states in Central and Eastern Europe in the journal titled “Kultura”. Most prominent issue of the journal was the “Program of Polish Independence Mutual Understanding” which was published in 1976 and contained a chapter on Eastern policy (Senych, 2017, p.136).

The major ideas which laid the foundations for the Giedroyć doctrine and were further adopted by the Polish political elites in the implementation of the Eastern policy since 1989 included the ULB idea (Ukraine, Lithuania and Belarus), which presupposed the need to refuse from the territorial claims towards these states and treat them on the basis of equality by “abandoning the feeling of superiority towards these nations and rejecting the policy of a regional power”¹ (Urbańczyk, 2015, p.315, translation is mine). Moreover, in order to “create a strong area”² to achieve the subjectivity of the Central and Eastern European states, Poland and ULB states should cooperate economically, political and culturally (ibid., translation is mine). According to the Polish president Lech Kaczyński, “the growth of these countries’ subjectivity ... would in the long run contribute to strengthening the subjectivity of Poland. The sovereignty of the ULB countries, with priority given to Ukraine, has been perceived as a pivotal barrier to Russian imperial ambitions” (Raś, 2020, p.25).

The second component of the Giedroyć doctrine is the necessity to build a new regional system enabling “the right to self-determination of peoples in the region” with the priority given to Ukraine due to the “fact that Ukrainians was the most oppressed people in USSR and they most of all aspired to get the independence beside Lithuanians” (Senych, 2017, p.135). It has been emphasised that “the existence of the independent Ukraine as a big buffer-state between Poland and Russia was considered as providing Warsaw with the opportunity of a manoeuvre” (Senych, 2017, p.135). To the large extent, “Independent [and democratic] Ukraine was perceived as the main barrier preventing the restoration of the Russian Empire [in any form]” (Stolarczyk, 2019, p.61). This idea still serves as a deeply enrooted foundation for Poland’s support for Ukraine. Interestingly enough, the Giedroyć doctrine presupposed the recognition of the need to develop “the best possible relations between Poland and Russia, but not at the cost of the neighbours, especially Ukraine” (Stolarczyk, 2019, p.61) which turned into the “Ukraine first” foreign policy

¹ “porzucenie poczucia wyższości w stosunku do tych narodów oraz odrzucenie polityki regionalnego mocarstwa”

² “tak by stworzyć silny obszar”

tradition. And last but not least, the interconnectedness of both Poland's Western and Eastern policies was emphasised in the doctrine too. According to Giedroyć, "the stronger [Poland's] position is in the East, the more invulnerable its position will be in Western Europe" (Tsependa, 2014, p.22). The desire of Poland to be the link or the so-called interlocutor between the Western European states and the Eastern European countries is partially built on this logic. Moreover, Poland's Eastern partnership initiative was driven by the conviction that by increasing its influence in Eastern Europe Poland enhances the chances to be heard and its interests to be realised within the EU broader policies.

With the establishment of independent states in Eastern Europe, the evolution of bilateral relations of Poland with the states in the region, in particular with Ukraine, as well as the changes in the international system (the transition to the multipolar world and the emergence of the new conflicts in the region) the postulates of the Giedroyć doctrine and their understanding by the ruling political elites modified, although the core ideas remained the same. However, it continued to constitute the basis of the Polish Eastern policy the purpose of which is to promote Western values and foster democratic transition in the post-Soviet Eastern European states, including Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus as well as facilitate their potential integration in the EU (currently, in the case of Moldova and Ukraine) (*Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic of Poland*). Thus, one can talk about the change and continuity of the doctrine and Eastern policy in the Polish foreign policy throughout the years after the USSR lost its political control over Poland.

The Giedroyć doctrine represents the romantic approach to the Polish foreign policy towards its Eastern neighbours, in particular Ukraine. This approach originates from the Commonwealth period when Poland played a role of the regional power and was continued in the politics of Józef Piłsudski (although unsuccessfully). It presupposes that Poland has "a particular civilising mission in Eastern Europe, not only in the strictly cultural dimension, but political as well" (Szczepanik, 2011, p.48). This "tradition of great power missionism" (ibid) is a constituent part of Polish national identity and *raison d'état*. In the contemporary setting, the romantic approach aims at "the promotion of democracy, rule of law and the protection of human rights in former Soviet republics ... in the name of solidarity with the countries Poland shares a common legacy with as well as for strategic purposes" (Korska, 2017, p.46).

This approach as well as the Giedroyć doctrine itself are also built on the Promethean understanding of the role of Poland in the region developed during the Second Polish Republic, but without any "Polish imperialism and any territorial claims" of the past (Raś, 2020, p.20). Thus, the core of the romantic approach to Polish foreign policy in the East is characterised by the existence of the "Polish civilizational mission in the East" currently embodied in the "eastward extrapolation of EU values, norms and standards [such as] liberal democracy, the protection of

human rights ... etc.” (ibid., p.18). This mission is enrooted in the Polish successful transition to the liberal democracy in 1990s along with the emphasis on “Poland’s normative strength, derived from its historical identity and commitment to the values” (ibid., p.22). As Klatt argues, “Poland presents itself as a normative actor with a commitment to spreading European norms to the East” with reference to the Polish experience of the establishment of democratic institutions domestically (Klatt, 2011, p.3). On the other hand, this approach has been often criticised of Polish of falling prey to the “feelings of superiority” and “paternalism” to the Eastern neighbours employed as a compensation mechanism to counteract the Polish ontological insecurity “of being inferior in their relations with Western Europe” (Raś, 2020, p.18–19). This approach is the foundation of the Law and Justice’s political thought and understanding of the foreign policy.

The Promethean approach to foreign policy in its turn is closely related to the Jagiellonian paradigm (Stolarczyk, 2019) which can be traced back to the Commonwealth period too. It originally implied “a vision of desirable political development and geopolitical strategy that is inspired by the historical experience” (Pietrzyk-Reeves, 2017, p.80) with Poland playing the role of a regional leader uniting the lands of the former Commonwealth in opposition to the Russian influence. In other words, it related to the Polish understanding of the national identity and reconstruction of its sovereignty, especially in the late 18th century struggle for independence and in Piłsudski’s federalist conception (ibid.). Throughout all these periods Russia was perceived as a threat to the Polish sovereignty and independence.

Nowadays, the Jagiellonian paradigm “sees Poland as an important player in the region who can attract regional partners having similar interests in Europe and potentially in other parts of the world, such as the Caucasus” (ibid., p.89), however, without the Polish imperialism which was characteristic during the Commonwealth period. The need of such regional alliance with Poland in charge is explained by “the strategic reasons [which] are still the same as they were in the sixteenth and early twentieth centuries and are meant to counterbalance ... Russian influence in Europe” (ibid.).

The opposite paradigm to the Jagiellonian is called the Piast paradigm and establishes that Poland’s priority should be the development of stable and reliable relations with the West and stabilisation of relations with Russia, even if it is done at the expense of relations with the Polish Eastern neighbours (Krzak, 2017, p.325; Banaś, 2017, p.28). While the Piast paradigm presupposes “focusing on increasing [Poland’s] internal strength and advocating a *modus vivendi* with their more powerful neighbours [like Germany]”, the latter is based on the “moralistic view that Poland has its rightful place in Europe and its existence is indispensable for upholding a moral order in international politics, including bringing freedom to its Eastern neighbours” (Klatt, 2011, p.148-149). Partially, the Civic Platform party adopted this paradigm in its understanding of the

foreign policy approach, especially before Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022. Despite this, the Jagiellonian one is still prevailing in Poland's foreign policy under the Law and Justice party.

The Jagiellonian paradigm brought such values "as tolerance, mutual respect" which are also the foundation of the Giedroyć doctrine and are necessary "to maintain good relationships with Ukraine, Lithuania and Belarus as partners, but also partners from the West" (Krzak, 2017, p.326–327). Moreover, the Jagiellonian paradigm established the political culture based on such values "partnership, cooperation, solidarity and trust" (Banaś, 2017, p.32). These values constitute the basis of the *raison d'état* as understood by Law and Justice party.

Moving back to the Giedroyć doctrine, it serves as both *idée fixe* and *modus operandi* in the Polish Eastern policy. According to the Britannica dictionary *modus operandi* means "a usual way of doing something" (Britannica Dictionary), while *idée fixe* is translated as "a fixed idea or obsession" (Collins Dictionary).

The Giedroyć doctrine and Eastern policy of Poland in general as *idée fixe* as it was discussed above is based on several central beliefs which in its turn define the *modus operandi* of Poland's foreign policy towards its Eastern neighbours. First of all, the reestablishment of Poland as a historically regional leader can be done through providing support for Polish Eastern neighbours. This support includes normative, economic, political, military and other types of support. Secondly, the major driver of Poland's active position in the region is the threat of Russia's neo-imperialistic domination embedded in the strategic rationale of Poland based on the previous historical experience. Thirdly, the need for reconciliation over the past events with the Eastern neighbours (especially Ukraine) in order to establish reliable long-term partnership. Forth, the emphasis on the increase of subjectivity of Poland and other states in Central and Eastern Europe, which lingers from the historical geographical position of these states between the great powers of the past, in particular Germany and Russia (Bornio, 2024, p.192). And last but not the least, the authors of the doctrine believed that the only way to ensure the national security of Poland is "the existence of independent states on its eastern border directly, which would exclude Poland from being between the super-powerful states – Germany and the USSR [at that time]" (Strilchuk and Dobrzhanskyi, 2021, p.224–225).

As a *modus operandi*, the Giedroyć doctrine is reflected in such actions as promotion of democratic reforms and dissemination of the Western values in the East neighbourhood, the attempts to rejuvenate the regional cooperation under the lead of Poland as well as strengthening its position in the region, the EU and Polish-US relations especially in the security dimension (Kopper, Szalai and Góra, 2023). As Bartoszewicz (2023, p.798) argues the Giedroyć doctrine as *modus operandi* implies such international and regional cooperation which does not impede "the sovereignty and subjectivity of individual members". These and other dimensions and their

implementation will be in brief analysed in the further sub-chapters dedicated to the particular analysis of the Polish foreign policy towards Ukraine throughout different periods.

While analysing the essence and origins of the Giedroyć doctrine, I managed to highlight the elements of the Polish *raison d'état*, which incorporate the need for subjectivity, independence, sovereignty and democratic development of Poland along with its Eastern neighbours, since the latter's subjectivity, independence, sovereignty and democratic development are considered to be indispensable for the Polish independent existence. For example, the *Intermarum* project is aimed at enhancing "political subjectivity" of Poland and other states in Central and Eastern Europe with the purpose of "maintaining unity and ensure optimal conditions for the development of individual CEE countries" (Bartoszewicz, 2023, p.804).

Furthermore, the values of partnership, cooperation, solidarity and trust produced by the Jagiellonian paradigm of foreign policy, to which the Giedroyć doctrine belongs, likewise constitute Polish *raison d'état*. These values are supported by the democratic principles, including "democratic order, the rule of law, and respect for human rights" (Komarnytskyy, 2023, p.312) Poland has been following in its foreign policy. One can observe that Poland in its support of Ukraine is often guided by the feelings of solidarity, especially in matters related to the fight for independence and sovereignty amidst Russia's aggression against Ukraine, partially because Poland still remembers its own struggle against Russia's and Soviet imperialism. This can be described by the principle "for your security and ours" (Latawski, 2001) based on the historical Polish motto "for your freedom and ours" deriving from the Polish struggle to restore its statehood in the 19th century. Thus, the Giedroyć doctrine and its followers strongly believe that "Ukraine is the key to [Polish] Russian policy, the pivot of the Polish *raison d'état*" (Pomianowski, 2001, p.278).

Another aspect of the Polish *raison d'état* which induces its support for Ukraine is the necessity of "having a stable and predictable neighbour which could become a valuable partner" (Pieńkowski, 2015, p.75), which also a reference to the Jagiellonian value of partnership. That is why Poland is trying hard to promote European values and democratic reforms in Ukraine with the objective of the latter joining the EU and NATO in the long run. Therefore, "European Ukraine is Poland's *raison d'état*" (Zwolski, 2018, p.179).

Overall, Ukraine plays a central role not only in the Giedroyć doctrine and Eastern policy, but also in the Polish *raison d'état* since both the Giedroyć doctrine and Eastern policy represent "the state's vital interests, including national security and Poland's position in Western structures" (Raś, 2020, p.17) by serving as a link between the West and the East of Europe in spreading democratisation and Europeanisation of Ukraine and other Eastern European states.

3.2. Brief Overview of Polish Foreign Policy towards Ukraine 1990s – 2014

In order to better understand the role of the Giedroyc doctrine and Eastern policy in the Polish foreign policy and *raison d'état* I will briefly analyse in this section the continuity of its foreign policy with a specific emphasis on the Civic platform and Law and Justice governments since they represent two opposite vision of the understanding how the Giedroyc doctrine and Eastern policy should be implemented prior to the Russia's aggression against Ukraine in 2014 and full-scale invasion in 2022.

The major milestones that influenced the Polish foreign policy towards Ukraine throughout the period highlighted in the sub-chapter include Poland's joining the NATO and the EU in 1999 and 2004 respectively, Orange Revolution in Ukraine in 2004, Russia's war in Georgia in 2008, the launch of the EU Eastern Neighbourhood policy under the auspices of Poland and Sweden in 2009 and the last but not least – Russia's aggression against Ukraine and annexation of Crimea in 2014.

The last development in the list constituted a pivotal factor in the Poland's Foreign Policy for the following decade, since it resulted in the urgent need for Poland to find a new *modus operandi* in a less stable and predictable regional and international milieu to “ensure its security and strengthen its international position” (Lakomy, 2020, p.330). The specific impact of all the listed developments will be concisely touched upon further in this chapter.

Starting from 1989, when Poland got rid of the influence of the USSR on its politics and the democratically elected government held power, the state started to build its foreign policy towards Ukraine through the promotion of the latter's independence and supporting the liberal pro-democratic and pro-independence movements (Trupia, 2020, p.144), in particular the “establishment of contacts between the Polish “Solidarność” and Ukrainian “People's Movement of Ukraine”³ (Mieliekiestsev and But, 2020, p.46, translation is mine). For example, during the early 1990s one of the tools of Polish foreign policy were the “good neighbourliness” bilateral treaties, which were based on the democratic normative basis adopted in the European structures, including CoE and OSCE, and served as “an important instrument of reconciliation” (Latawski, 2001, p.224). Such treaty was signed with Ukraine as well in 1992 after the latter obtained independence. Another document signed between Poland and Ukraine even before the dissolution of the USSR was the “Declaration on the Foundations and Fundamental Directions in the Development of Polish-Ukrainian Relations” (Burant, 1993, p.409) which “enshrined that the all-encompassing development of the good-neighbourly Ukrainian-Polish relations is a substantial

³ з контактів Народного руху України та польської «Солідарності»

contribution to strengthening regional cooperation and constructing the European home”⁴ (Mieliekiestsev and But, 2020, p.48-49, translation is mine). Moreover, it was the document in which the parties abandoned all territorial claims against each other (Burant, 1993, p.409). This action demonstrated the importance of Ukraine in the Polish foreign policy as well as the determination of Poland to restore its positions in the region through regional cooperation.

Nevertheless, Polish foreign policy at that time was not fully in coordination with the Giedroyć understanding of the doctrine who believed that more attention should be drawn to the cooperation within the Vysegrad group, including military aspect, with active involvement of Ukraine (Senych, 2017, p.137). But due to the fact that Polish integration in the EU and NATO was the priority, this regional cooperation was somewhat neglected and Vysegrad group was mostly utilised for expressing the joint positions of these states on their way to the membership the EU and NATO. Since membership in these organisations was considered primary in order to ensure Poland’s security, it was prioritised over the foreign policy towards Ukraine. One of the examples of the secondary character of the foreign policy towards Ukraine in 1990s is the case when Ukraine was refused membership in the Visegrad group “out of fear that forging overly close ties with the still unstable Ukraine could make the EU and NATO bid more difficult” (Szczepanik, 2011, p.50).

Overall, Polish-Ukrainian relations obtained a legal framework based on bilateral treaties in various fields which enabled the future deeper cooperation. Tsependa (2014, p.22) supports the idea by emphasising that “the 1990s were the period of creating a political basis for the development of interstate relations between the two countries”. It was Poland who advocated the acceleration of the Ukrainian membership in international institutions, including the Council of Europe (1995), the World Bank (1992), the International Monetary Fund (1994), CSCE (1992), Central European Initiative (1996) (ibid., p.58). All of these examples illustrate the practical implementation of the Giedroyć doctrine in early 1990s. This cooperation was strengthened by the fact that Poland and Ukraine both were pursuing the same goal in their foreign and domestic policies, which is “independence from Russia”⁵ (Wicha, 2012, p.72, translation is mine) and which constituted *raison d’etat* for both of them and actually drew them together in further cooperation and strategic partnership.

Moving on to the Polish foreign policy in 2000s, I will mostly focus on the period of 2005–2007 when Law and Justice party was leading in the government for the first time as well as the years of 2007–2014 when Civic Platform held the majority in the government.

⁴ закріплювала, що всеохоплюючий розвиток добросусідських українсько-польських відносин є «конкретним внеском у зміцнення регіонального співробітництва та будівництва Європейського дому»

⁵ “uniezależnienie od Rosji”

During this period, Poland after joining the EU and NATO obtained a new status in the region and for its Eastern partners, especially Ukraine – Poland became a “security provider” (Chappell, 2021, p.233). With joining the EU and NATO Poland strived to become a “coordinator of Eastern policy” in these organisations (Senych, 2017, p.137) which would provide a range of tools to stronger advocate for further integration of Ukraine into these institutions in 2000s and decrease its dependency on Russia both economic and political (Krasnodębska, 2021a, p.189).

It should be noted that three most important external developments that shaped and modified Polish foreign policy towards Ukraine included Orange revolution in Ukraine in 2004, Russia’s war against Georgia in 2008 as well as Russia’s aggression against Ukraine in 2013 and illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014.

Poland’s response to the “Orange revolution” was highly supportive on the part of both the public and the political circles. And the major driver for the Polish response was the “solidarity with the Ukrainian people’s demands for ‘fair elections’” (Krasnodębska, 2021a, p.197) which demonstrates the importance of the promotion of democratic values in the foreign policy of Poland towards Ukraine. This revolution was a turning point in strengthening the Polish-Ukrainian relations and Poland becoming the major advocate of Ukraine’s pro-EU aspirations with Poland embracing it as its foreign policy goal and role (ibid.). While Law and Justice leader Jarosław Kaczyński was of a more active pro-Maidan stance, visited the site of the protests and delivered a highly supportive speech, a then-foreign minister Sikorski took a more reserved position characterised by “refraining from visiting the Maidan, ... avoiding ‘emotional’ language directed at the Ukrainian public, but focusing on official negotiations” (Krasnodębska, 2021a, p.209), which once again indicated the pragmatic approach to the foreign policy in the East and slight deviation from the Giedroyć doctrine.

Polish reaction to the Five-Day Russia’s War against Georgia in 2008 represented by the President Kaczyński was quite predictable. It is when the narrative on Russia’s neo-imperialism and revanchism entered the Polish political discourse as well as instigated the feelings of ontological insecurity of Poland: “We know well that today, it was Georgia, tomorrow it will be Ukraine, the day after tomorrow, the Baltic states, and later the time may come for my country, Poland” (Kazharski, 2024, p.104), which later after Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine would give the Law and Justice government leverage in convincing the EU of a swift and concrete reaction with sending military aid and conducting firm anti-Russian policy.

However, the pivot year for the Polish foreign policy was 2014 when Russia illegally annexed Crimea. It is after this event, Poland defined specifically in its defence documents, in particular in the National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland adopted in November 2014, that Russia is a “potential major military threat” (Śliwa, 2022, p.130; Stolarczyk, 2019, p.55).

Thus, threat perceptions of Russia's imperialism by both the Polish public and the political circles have gained the substantial grounds for strengthening anti-Russian rhetoric and foreign policy actions towards Ukraine (Kamiński and Śliwa, 2023, p.132).

Therefore, one can argue that with the increase of the intensity of Russia's illegal activities and neo-imperialistic desires Poland's perceptions of it as a threat continued to be reinforced and these perceptions were proven to be legitimate by Russia's aggression against Ukraine in 2014 and the following fully-fledged invasion in 2022. And Poland's support for Ukraine increased likewise in opposition to Russia's violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The period of 2005–2007 was the first term Law and Justice party was in power. It was characterised by refocusing Poland's Eastern policy from Russia to Ukraine and other Eastern European states located between Poland and Russia. Additionally, regional partnership and alliances were considered as a countermeasure to Russia's attempts to pressure Eastern European states as well as the EU states through the energy blackmail. In response to that Polish authorities was trying to develop a project of oil supply from Azerbaijan through Ukraine which would increase both Polish and Ukrainian independence from Moscow ("concept of the so-called geopolitics of pipelines"⁶) (Chojan, 2016a, p.307, translation is mine). Moreover, during its term Law and Justice party along with the President Kaczyński, who was a co-leader of the party, professed in its activities the "Jagiellonian policy and tried to create a new image of an influential Poland in the region"⁷ (ibid., p.311, translation is mine).

However, the claimed strategic partnership with Ukraine as well as Polish support for democratic transformation of Ukraine were to some extent half-hearted. At that time Law and Justice government was slightly disappointed by the slow pace of democratic reforms in Ukraine which should have served as a basis for Poland advocating for Ukraine's integration in the EU and NATO. At that moment "in its eastern policy, Poland was a cautious country, acting according to the "Poland first!" principle, focusing much more on domestic policy"⁸ (ibid., p.312, translation is mine) and using foreign policy for solving domestic issues. This tendency will be exacerbated during their second and third term in office in 2015 – 2023 partially due to the rule-of-law problems within Poland itself caused by the Law and Justice's policies (Dyduch and Góra, 2024, p.313). Nevertheless, in the Eastern policy Poland's position switched from "Russia first" to "Ukraine first" with the emphasis on the need to assist the foreign policy aspirations of the latter.

Moving to the Civic Platform's administration in 2008 – 2014, it should be noted that its

⁶ "koncepcja ... tzw. geopolityki rurociągów"

⁷ "polityki jagiellońskiej i starali się kreować nowy, bardziej wyraźny wizerunek wpływowej Polski w regionie"

⁸ "Polska w polityce wschodniej jest państwem ostrożnym, działającym w myśl zasady „Poland first!”. Innymi słowy, nowy rząd w znacznie większym stopniu skoncentrował się na polityce wewnętrznej"

“program did not differ significantly in terms of the basic assumptions formulated by PiS; the differences concerned mainly the style of conducting foreign policy and the distribution of emphasis”⁹ (Grodzki, 2009, p.36; Chappell, 2021, p.236, translation is mine). In line with the change of the Polish foreign policy “highlighting the Western vector priority” (Strilchuk and Dobrzahnskyi, 2021, p.226), Prime-minister Tusk kept emphasising in his exposé of 2007 that “the future of Ukraine should be a key element of the eastern dimension and neighbourhood policy of the European Union”¹⁰ (Habowski, 2011, p.92, translation is mine), but not on the basis of the Polish-Ukrainian bilateral relations.

Nevertheless, the actions of the government symbolically signalled about the opposite, when Tusk’s first official visit since his assuming the office of the Prime-minister was to Russia, and only after that to Ukraine. Moreover, the position of the Civic Platform government switched to the more reserved one in terms of facilitating Ukraine’s integration in the EU institutions. In particular, it was believed that “the role of the Republic of Poland was defined as only auxiliary, not initiating”¹¹ (Kowalczyk, 2016, p.102, translation is mine) in this process and the initiative to speed up should come from the Ukrainian authorities and accompanied by the democratic reforms domestically.

From the abovementioned, I can argue that the foreign policy position of Civic Platform towards Ukraine was diametrically opposite the one of the Law and Justice and was formulated in the following way: “a strong Poland in the European Union, and therefore also towards Russia, is Poland, which is recognized as a desirable, wise, predictable partner within the European Union”¹² (Habowski, 2011, p.101, translation is mine). Other elements of Civic Platform’s foreign policy approach included the understanding that “Russia is not an eternal threat”¹³ (Sokół, 2023, p.107, translation is mine) and therefore some pragmatic relations between Poland and Russia should be developed, especially in “cultural and elite cooperation” (ibid., translation is mine).

The only two points where both parties share the common ground relate to recognising that “Russia pursues an imperial policy ... and is rebuilding spheres of influence”¹⁴ (ibid., translation is mine), and after 2014 and even more so after 2022 full-scale invasion the parties have consensus that “Russia should have been perceived as an adversary, not as a partner [like] earlier”¹⁵ (ibid.,

⁹ “Program partii opozycyjnej nie odbiegał znacząco w zakresie podstawowych założeń sformułowanych przez PiS, różnice dotyczyły przede wszystkim stylu prowadzenia polityki zagranicznej i rozłożenia akcentów”

¹⁰ “Przyszłość Ukrainy powinna być kluczowym elementem wymiaru wschodniego i polityki sąsiedztwa Unii Europejskiej”

¹¹ “rola RP została zaś określona jako wyłącznie pomocnicza, nie zaś kreacyjna”

¹² “Silna Polska w Unii Europejskiej, a więc także wobec Rosji, to jest Polska, która jest uznawana jako pożądanym, mądrym, przewidywalnym partnerem wewnątrz Unii Europejskiej”

¹³ “Państwo rosyjskie nie jest odwiecznym zagrożeniem”

¹⁴ “Państwo rosyjskie prowadzi politykę imperialną ... oraz odbudowuje strefy wpływów na obszarze poradzieckim”

¹⁵ “należało postrzegać państwo rosyjskie jako przeciwnika, a nie jako partnera”

p.108, translation is mine).

While President Kaczyński took a more active anti-Russian position especially after 2008, the Civic platform government was trying to stick to the ‘balanced’ stance (Grodzki, 2009, p.50), emphasising the role of Poland within the EU institutions and the need employing the joint EU tools and downplaying the role of Polish bilateral relations with the Eastern European states, mostly Ukraine. Although both Minister of foreign affairs Sikorski and President Kaczyński spoke in unison for granting Ukraine and Georgia NATO’s Membership Action Plan in 2008 in Bucharest, it was rather an exception rather than a rule (Kowalczyk, 2016, p.104).

During the 2007–2010 cohabitation period of Law and Justice and Civic Platform rule, the area of foreign policy towards Ukraine and other Eastern European states became the battlefield of the domestic political struggle in competing for who can define the foreign policy priorities and exert more influence on how the state’s position and behaviour are formed (Kowalczyk, 2016, p.102). Tusk “tried to show off the image of a statesman who can play a strategic game in cold blood and does not easily get carried away by emotions [unlike President Kaczyński]”¹⁶ (Grodzki, 2009, p.47-48, translation is mine). This is the practical example of the defined in the theoretical chapter *raison d’etat* as an art of governance. This competition remained in place during 2015–2023, although Civic platform party had less opportunities to establish its vision of the Polish *raison d’etat* since it was in the opposition.

After 2014 illegal annexation of Crimea by Russia, Civic Platform government’s reaction was strong condemnation of the violations of Ukraine’s territorial integrity and sovereignty, as well as active calling for other EU states to undertake some action to prevent the further escalation as well as the need to proceed with signing the Association Agreement with Ukraine (Zajac, 2016, p.146). During the parliament session in March Tusk highlighted that Poland assumed the leading role in this issue and gained subjectivity in regional politics. Moreover, it was Polish foreign minister Sikorski who managed to convince his EU counterparts that the appearance of the ‘green men’ in Crimea should be called “the Russian intervention in Crimea [and] an act of aggression” (ibid., p.147). It should be noted that Tusk also emphasised that “the entire future of the Polish nation, its very existence and sovereignty is being put into question” (Janowski, 2014, p.119) by Russia’s actions. Thus, it can be seen that the values such as sovereignty and subjectivity which constitute the core of Polish *raison d’etat* are common for both Civic Platform and Law and Justice parties. But the major clash in defining the Polish *raison d’etat* between these two parties lies in the perception of the role of Poland in the EU and its influence on the state’s subjectivity and foreign policy capabilities. While Civic Platform argued “that Polish foreign policymaking would be more

¹⁶ “Premier z kolei starał się pokazać wizerunek męża stanu, który potrafi z zimną krwią prowadzić grę strategiczną i nie daje łatwo ponieść się emocjom”

effective “through the EU”” (Sanecka-Tyczyńska, 2014, p.17) and adhered to this principle in its foreign policy towards Ukraine in 2007–2014, for Law and Justice party perceived the EU as one of the directions of the Polish foreign policy along with the relations with the non-EU states, primarily those in the vicinity to the Polish Eastern border.

Therefore, during the Civic platform government in 2007–2014 a temporary deviation from some of the principles of the Giedroyć doctrine in foreign policy towards Ukraine can be traced, with prioritisation of pragmatic relations with Russia. Although soon enough after Russia’s war in Georgia in 2008 as well as Russia’s aggression against Ukraine in 2013/2014, the doctrine was brought back to the table of the Polish foreign policy. Such deviation can be explained by the different political approach of the Civic platform and Law and Justice parties, the instrumental use of foreign policy in the domestic political struggle in order to obtain the monopoly on defining the foreign policy rationale and goals as well as the Polish *raison d’etat* in broader terms. The change in the foreign policy of Poland towards Ukraine was also accompanied by the disappointment of Polish political elites in the stalled democratic reform process in Ukraine as well as the latter’s democratic backsliding during Yanukowich’s presidency who the Polish elites opposed to during 2004 Orange revolution by supporting Yushchenko and other members of the then-opposition. Despite this, the rhetoric regarding Poland’s facilitation of Ukraine’s integration in the EU remained present, although it was not as enthusiastic as in late 1990s – beginning 2000s, which is the core of the doctrine. However, the pragmatic approach to Russia was not driven by Civic platform’s perceptions of Russia as a friendly state, but rather by the desire to fit in the EU politics, which at that time were by and large Russian-friendly and Poland’s anti-Russian position during 2005 – 2007 limited Polish influence and role in the EU. It is notable, though, that Polish foreign Policy towards Ukraine always has an ‘intervening variable’ which is Russia and its policies. This can be explained by the fact that the latter has always been Poland’s ‘significant other’ both in the past and now, and will continue to be if it proceeds with its authoritarian rule domestically and neo-imperialistic aspirations in Central and Eastern Europe.

3.3. Poland’s Foreign policy during the Law and Justice Governments of 2015 – 2023. Russia’s Full-scale Invasion as a Sea Change in the International and Regional Order.

As it can be inferred from the previous sub-chapters, Law and Justice party’s approach to foreign policy is based on such elements as the emphasis on the historical past and competitive international environment (especially in the context of the constant looming threat of Russian imperialism in Central and Eastern Europe). Due to this environment, according to Law and Justice party “a state should be oriented towards defending its own political community and its identity [as well as] ... developing its interpretation of events and its own symbols” (Paruch and Rydel,

2011, p.229), which was the major focus of the government under Law and Justice party during 2015–2023 especially in the context of its historical policy which was extended to the Polish foreign policy toward Ukraine as well (Chojan, 2018, p.113). These elements were the major determinants of the party's understanding of the Polish *raison d'état* which constituted “a justification for the implementation of a specific policy at a given time”¹⁷ (Liszkowska, 2023, p.41, translation is mine) as well as determined the for main goals Poland has been pursuing mostly for this period, including “ensuring and striving to achieve national security... increasing the power of the state [under the call for increasing subjectivity], its international position and prestige..., as well as shaping and optimizing the functioning of the international environment”¹⁸ (ibid., translation is mine).

Moreover, the Law and Justice's policy towards Ukraine could be characterised by adopting rather a minimalist approach while still following the narrative of supporting Ukraine's pro-EU and pro-NATO aspirations but not putting more efforts in actually promoting it in the EU. Another aspect of bilateral relations demonstrated that Poland prioritised economic ties with Ukraine over the political dimension of cooperation (Chojan, 2018, p.113). Despite this Andrzej Duda who came to office in 2015 declared that “Poland has ‘to profess the Giedroyć and Piłsudski doctrines’ including the restitution of the Intermarium project and maintaining respect for Eastern neighbours’ sovereignty as it has been enshrined in the Giedroyć doctrine”¹⁹ (Mieliekiestsev and But, 2020, p.109, translation is mine).

This minimalist approach was partially caused by the primacy of the domestic politics, but also by the fact that Poland was left out from the Minsk agreements and was not included in the Normandy format, both platforms aimed at the peaceful settlement of the so-called ‘conflict’ between Russia and Ukraine after 2014 illegal annexation with Germany and France serving as mediators in the negotiation processes within these formats. Since this situation ignored Poland's vital interest constituting its *raison d'état* to participate in the decision-making processes where Polish interests are involved (Chappell, 2021, p.235), it only supported the conviction of the Law and Justice government that Poland had to increase its subjectivity. Moreover, when President Andrzej Duda offered his Ukrainian counterpart Petro Poroshenko to expand the Normandy format by including Poland as a mediator as well, the latter was not enthusiastic about this initiative and ultimately rejected it (Mróz, 2019, p.28). This deviation of Poland from the traditionally active

¹⁷ “uzasadnienie dla realizacji określonej polityki w danym czasie”

¹⁸ “zapewnienie i dążenie do realizacji bezpieczeństwa narodowego... wzrost siły państwa, wzrost jego pozycji międzynarodowej i prestiżu, a także kształtowanie oraz optymalizacja funkcjonowania środowiska międzynarodowego”

¹⁹ “Польща має «сповідувати доктрини Ю. Пілсудського та Є. Гедройця». По-перше, відроджувати проєкт Міжмор'я, Інтермаріуму – Польща на чолі держав Східної Європи. По-друге, поважати збереження суверенітету східних сусідів, відповідно до «Доктрини Гедройця»”

Eastern policy was further aggravated by the overall “primacy of internal issues over foreign policy”²⁰ (ibid., p.24, translation is mine) pursued by the Law and Justice government as well as the loss of influence of Poland on the formation of the EU policies due to the democratic backsliding. In addition to that, the foreign policy was largely neglected and mostly improvised with most of the decision-making power concentrated in the hands of the leader of the Law and Justice party and the President Andrzej Duda who is the party’s member as well, while the role of the Minister for foreign affairs in conducting foreign policy was underscored (ibid., p.26). Another evidence of the lack of the strategic character of Poland’s foreign policy at that time is the absence of the Foreign minister’s exposés delivered previously on an annual basis and consequently the absence of the debate in the Sejm with regard to the delivered exposé.

In order to fulfil the objectives and meet the Polish *raison d’état* as defined by the Law and Justice party, the greatest emphasis was put on regional cooperation in Central and Eastern Europe with the leading role of Poland. The Three Seas Initiative and Lublin Triangle formats are the most referred examples. In the aftermath of Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, a trilateral partnership between Poland, Ukraine and the United Kingdom was established as well.

The Three Seas Initiative (Trimarium) is the modified and adapted to the contemporary circumstances in the region embodiment of the interwar concept of *Intermarium*. Currently, it is officially claimed that it is an economic cooperation, although it is designed as geopolitical in nature (Pawłuszko, 2022, p.244; Buras, 2020; Podraza, 2023). The initiative consists of the “12 EU Member States between the Baltic, Black and Adriatic seas with Ukraine holding a status of observer granted after Russia’s full-scale invasion which is also indicative of the Law and Justice’s ‘cooling’ foreign policy approach towards Ukraine before the war. Although originally the project aimed at “promoting the development of European infrastructure in the North-South belt” (Pawłuszko, 2022, p.245), now the objectives of this project explicitly speak of its geopolitical nature including among the others intensifying “the process of 3SI enlargement [taking into account] a geopolitically reconfigured neighbourhood [after Russia’s invasion of Ukraine]” as well as encouraging the participation in the project of more economically and politically influential powers like the UK (Objectives, n.d.). According to the Status Report of 2024, the Initiative has in total 143 Interconnection Projects divided into 3 types of projects: digital, energy and transport, with Ukraine participating in 12 of them (Status Report of 2024, n.d.) including such fields as integration of drones into airspace and economy, construction of railway connection with Poland and Romania, designing a digital platform on monitoring hydrographic bases in the 3SI region etc. (Projects – three seas, n.d.).

²⁰ “prymatu polityki wewnętrznej nad zagraniczną”

As for the involvement of the United Kingdom in the region, trilateral agreement between Poland, Ukraine and the UK has been concluded just days prior the beginning of the invasion. For Poland it is one of the ways to diversify the regional alliances operating on its initiative. Furthermore, is it an opportunity “to provide an alternative mode of cooperation to non-NATO European countries” (Biskup et. al, 2024, p.7) in which Poland can rightfully play a role of a mediator between NATO and Eastern European states as it is defined in the Giedroyć doctrine. With the participation of the UK, Poland’s position within NATO can be strengthened due to the former’s support of the Polish policies in the Eastern Europe, especially in curbing Russian imperialism by all means. Moreover, this trilateral cooperation may give impetus for the intensified involvement of “Ukraine, similarly to the UK, in the EU’s Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) projects, where Poland as an EU member will lead” (ibid., p.18) and again serve as a mediator which will induce the strengthening of Poland’s position in Central and Eastern Europe. The priorities of this cooperation include “strengthening the national resilience of the three states; consolidating bilateral and trilateral defence-industrial cooperation; preparing for a robust post-war peace; and, boosting connectivity and infrastructure” (ibid., p.12) as well as promoting Ukraine’s membership on NATO among other members of the organisation. Thus, to some extent it is complementary to the Three Seas Initiative and can facilitate Poland’s possibilities and influence in implementing its Eastern policy by enhancing Poland’s credibility both within Eastern European states and NATO/EU members.

Another crucial regional cooperation initiative is called Lublin triangle which was established in 2020 between Poland, Lithuania and Ukraine (Podraza, 2023, p.83). It is interesting that there is a clear reference to the Union of Lublin of 1569 establishing the Commonwealth, which indicates the reference to the common historical past as well as common threat perception of Russia’s imperialism demonstrated in the Joint Statement of the Foreign Ministers of the three countries in 2022 in response to Russia’s invasion of Ukraine (Śliwa, 2022, p.129-130).

In fact, this particular project of regional cooperation is the core of contemporary Eastern policy of Poland as defined in the Giedroyć doctrine, since it focuses on Ukraine and Lithuania. Lublin Triangle serves as additional forum for facilitating Ukraine’s integration with the EU and NATO. Effective cooperation within this initiative may help to “push through specific solutions and decisions based on the “common position of the Lublin Triangle” or “interests of the Lublin Triangle” than by playing “alone” based on the interests and potential of individual states” (Kuczyńska-Zonik and Olchowski, 2023, p.21). According to The Road Map of Cooperation of 2021 the dimensions of cooperation include “security and defence, energy security, cyber security, humanitarian assistance, economy and infrastructure, ... strategic communication and countering hybrid threats” which intensified after Russia’s full-scale invasion of

Ukraine (Blyzniak, 2023, p.55).

A prominent example of the delivering a joint position of these states is the report titled “Resilience to Disinformation: Lublin Triangle Perspective” published in December 2022. In this report they presented the analysis of Russian propaganda, its influence on different stakeholders, including governments, citizens, civil societies, elaborated of the most widespread propaganda narratives and sources spreading them as well as developed a set of recommendations how to build-up the resilience of these stakeholders to propaganda and disinformation threats (Resilience to Disinformation: Lublin Triangle Perspective, 2023). The findings of the report were presented in Brussels “during the EU-Ukraine Anti-Disinformation Forum” (Blyzniak, 2023, p.57).

Along with the Lublin triangle initiative these three countries attempt to cooperate in the military field. A great example of it is LITPOLUKR brigade, established in response to Russia’s aggression against Ukraine in 2014 and headquartered in Lublin. Before the war outbreak in 2022, the major task of the brigade was to assist in UN peacekeeping missions as well as participating in NATO operations (Flynn, 2022, p.320-321). Likewise, the other Polish-driven initiatives, the major issue of the LITPOLUKR brigade is the limited scope of its operation as well as the secondary role to the EU and NATO cooperation, which jeopardises the development of the initiative due to the relative lack of interest on the part of the participants themselves. Nevertheless, this format of cooperation has the potential “to build a stronger regional identity and tripartite cooperation based on common values, interests, experiences and common threat’s perception” (Fryc, 2020, p.5) especially after the full-scale invasion since the common values and threat perceptions have been intensified across the region. But, overall, it helped to conduct the exchange of information and experiences, as well as to increase the interoperability of the participating military units of the three states (ibid.) which aligns with the objectives of other Polish-driven regional initiatives.

As for the memory politics, paradoxically enough, along with the call for the intensified regional cooperation, Law and Justice party conducted such external historical policy that only caused disputes in bilateral relations with Ukraine. This is a sign of the lack of the systemic and consistent approach to the foreign policy towards Ukraine and a justification for Chojan’s argument of its contradictory and improvised character during the Law and Justice term (Chojan, 2018).

In Polish-Ukrainian relations the biggest sticking point is the Volyn massacre during the World War II. The memory of this past conflict became highly politicised in the interstate discourse in 2015–2018 and used instrumentally. In Ukraine these memory laws have been adopted amidst Russian aggression and were called “de-communisation laws” aiming at deviating from the communist past. The most contested one was the one “On the Legal Status and Honouring

of the Memory of the Fighters for the Independence of Ukraine in the 20th Century”, since it “has been criticized for failing to mention the controversial aspects of UPA and OUN activities, and for making the struggle for independence the main aspect of Ukrainian history” (Zhurzhenko, 2022, p.114). In response Poland adopted “a resolution accusing the OUN and the UPA of an ethnic purge of Poles in Volhyn in 1943”, followed by the establishment of the national holiday called “the National Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Genocide committed by Ukrainian nationalists on citizens of the Second Polish Republic” (Rysicz-Szafraniec, 2021, p.503). In 2018 amendments to the Act on the Institute of National Remembrance allowing the prosecution of the UPA and Ukrainian nationalists’ crimes against Poles were passed (ibid.), although later in 2019 they were declared unconstitutional (Cherviatsova, 2020, p.135).

Despite the similar nature of these laws, they performed different functions in Poland and Ukraine. In particular, while Polish memory laws were used by the Law and Justice party to increase their voters’ support and demonstrate the deviation from the Civic Platform policies, which were criticised for their pragmatic approach to Russia (Belavusau, Gliszczyńska-Grabias and Mälksoo, 2021, p.9) as well as the loss of Poland’s subjectivity in the EU, Ukrainian memory laws represented an example of mnemonic-security seeking measure to underpin the state’s self-identity and “sense of the self” in response to the ontological and physical threats originating in Ukraine’s external environment (Mälksoo, 2015 p.224). Therefore, it can be concluded that for Ukrainians such legalization of memory regarding UPA plays a mnemonic security role amidst Russian aggression and does not have anti-Polish character, when for Poland it is rather an act of domestic-oriented politics of memory.

However, it should be emphasised that with the beginning of the full-scale war the historical narratives faded away from the foreign policy towards Ukraine. In particular, Law and Justice party in its both 2014 and 2019 electoral programs “emphasized Poland’s role as a promoter of international values, such as freedom, justice, solidarity and truth” (ibid., p.45) which presupposed bringing the historical past in foreign policy and international relations between Poland and the neighbouring states with the emphasis on “a positive image ... of the nation and the state [as well as] the heroism of national heroes” both nationwide and abroad (ibid.; Słowiński, 2021, p.182). In this context memory politics serves as a tool used in domestic power politics in order to draw as much electorate as possible compared to the opposition party.

In conclusion, due to the widely adopted consensus among the Polish political elites on the importance of the doctrine in Poland's foreign policy, the Giedroyć doctrine became both an *idée fixe* and *modus operandi*. Thus, the Giedroyć doctrine was incorporated in the Polish *raison d'état* which presupposes the adherence to such vital interests to the Polish state as independence, subjectivity, sovereignty, participation in the international/regional decision-making process

related to the Polish national preferences, democratic development of Poland and its Eastern neighbours, distancing Poland from Russia's influence by erasing the understanding of Eastern Europe, and specifically Ukraine as a grey zone between the West and East.

Nevertheless, Civic Platform and Law and Justice parties have differing views on how to achieve it which are reflected in their political positions and foreign policy approaches. Law and Justice party is an ardent follower of the Jagiellonian paradigm of the foreign policy deeply enrooted in Poland's historical past and its interpretation. Civic Platform party represents the adherents of the Piast paradigm. In particular, while Civic Platform saw Polish activities in Ukraine predominantly within the EU institutional framework and closer cooperation with Germany and France, for Law and Justice party the most important task was to restore Polish regional importance in order to gain more influence in the EU (since according to the Giedroyć doctrine both Polish Western and Eastern policies are interconnected). However, during the Law and Justice 2015-2023 terms, regional cooperation was only a partial success due to its secondary role to the NATO cooperation and bilateral partnership with the US, insufficient funding as well as ambiguous historical policy towards Ukraine and other partners in the region which was used instrumentally as a leverage in domestic political struggle.

2022 Russia's invasion of Ukraine became a pivotal historical moment for Poland's foreign policy towards Ukraine. First of all, it pushed the memory politics conducted by Law and Justice to the fringes of foreign policy. Secondly, it resulted in the issue of national and regional security as well as the undisputable resolute support for Ukraine having become the only topics both Civic Platform and Law and Justice parties fully agreed upon. Thirdly, the invasion gave impetus to new regionalisms, in particular, encouragement of a more active participation of Ukraine in the Three Seas Initiative, the establishment of the Poland-Ukraine-United Kingdom trilateral cooperation. Fourthly, Poland intensified its role as a promoter of Ukraine's membership in NATO and the EU as well as is the driving force in encouraging other Western states to provide military support for Ukraine as fast as possible making Poland serve as a connecting link between the West and Ukraine. All of this indicates the ever-relevant importance of the postulates of the Giedroyć doctrine as described in this chapter.

Chapter 4. Law and Justice Party's Foreign Policy Discourse towards Ukraine during 2015 – 2023

I would like to start with the general assessment of the analysed documents. First and foremost, it should be noted that both the National Security strategy of Poland 2020 and Polish Foreign Policy Strategy 2017–2021 are quite outdated which supports the argument that foreign policy of Poland during the Law and Justice government term was not consistent, rather ad-hoc. It also illustrates the lack of comprehensive well-thought strategic approach to foreign policy as well as the domination of the domestic issues over foreign policy which is also the case with some of the exposes, particularly those of 2016 and 2017.

For example, the expose of 2017 (p.13) contained the narrative that “foreign policy ... is a civil policy” implying the primary focus of the Polish foreign policy should be put on “the aspirations and needs of Polish citizens abroad”. Another instance is mentioned in the expose of 2016 when the minister elaborated on the sovereignty and subjectivity of Poland and emphasised that they are created “primarily in your own home” (Expose 2016, p.30).

Another sign of the domestication and instrumental use of foreign policy is the emphasis on the protection of the Polish minority and diaspora in the neighbour countries which increased in exposes delivered during the Law and Justice government. According to the 2018 expose, the Polish minority and diaspora in the ULB countries always constitute a part of Poland's foreign policy towards Eastern European states, including Ukraine, and that the Polish diaspora should be a channel in promoting the Polish *raison d'état* in the countries of their residence. This is implemented through the means of the diaspora diplomacy which became a “pragmatic instrument for implementing the Polish *raison d'état*”²¹ (Gońda, Nowosielki and Józwiak, 2023, p.18, translation is mine)

In the strategies the narratives were much more outspoken on Russia's aggressive policies and behaviour compared to the majority of annual exposes with the exception of the 2018, 2019 and 2023 exposes which named that threat was coming directly from Russia. The strategies directly mention Russia's neo-imperial and revisionist policy pursued with the military means as the biggest threat to the security of Poland (National Security Strategy 2020).

The fact that the exposes of 2018 and 2019 were delivered by the Minister for foreign affairs who was not affiliated to the Law and Justice party impacted the level of intensity of narratives. For example, exposes of 2018 and 2019 transmitted much milder and friendlier narrative regarding the historical disputes between Poland and Ukraine compared to 2016 and 2017 ones emphasising

²¹ “pragmatyczny instrument realizacji polskiej racji stanu”

the common Polish-Ukrainian history commemoration events (especially those representing the common struggle against the Soviets and Russians). Such softening in rhetoric facilitated the starting point of further political rapprochement between Poland and Ukraine (Szeligowski, 2021, p.176).

The expose of 2023 is of a distinctive character compared to the previous ones. First of all, it is the first expose on the Polish foreign policy tasks delivered after Russia's full-fledged war against Ukraine. Secondly, the theme of Russian war against Ukraine, its imperialistic behaviour in the region of Central and Eastern Europe as well as the need for constant unwavering support for Ukraine serve as major thematic line throughout the whole expose. More so, when assessing the cooperation with each Polish partner, that partner's response to the war and its assistance to Ukraine was considered the basis for bilateral cooperation indicating that Ukraine currently is a "big deal" for Poland and takes the central position not only in Poland's foreign policy as a whole.

I noticed that Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine reinforced the relevancy of the Giedroyć doctrine in Poland's foreign policy towards Ukraine because the war endangered the very principles of the doctrine in particular the concept of "free and independent Ukraine", Ukraine's sovereignty and subjectivity as well as its democratic development Poland has been advocating for years since 1989 and which have become the Polish *raison d'état* in Eastern Europe. It is important to notice that with respect to regional cooperation with the participation of Ukraine on this expose spotlighted the importance of the Lublin Triangle which have not been used in the previous exposes. Moreover, only this expose explicitly elaborates on the Polish *raison d'état* in the Polish foreign policy (as it is understood by the Law and justice party).

As for the debates, in general these were the statements in response to the delivered exposes. In the 2016-2017 debates, unlike in 2023, only those foreign policy issues were discussed that were related to the domestic politics one way or another, including Poland's national security, migration, rule of law as well as historical policy towards Poland's neighbours, while in 2023 debates the majority of statements of the representatives of both parties concerned international and regional relations in the aftermath of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

Moving back to the discussion of the results of the content analysis I will try to highlight the differences and similarities in understandings of the Polish *raison d'état* in its foreign policy towards Ukraine, perception of ontological insecurities and threats, changes in Poland's international environment as well as the understanding of the principles of the Giedroyć doctrine itself.

4.1. The Polish *raison d'état* in foreign policy towards Ukraine

The first theme of the content analysis I will discuss is the Polish *raison d'état* since it is the foundation of the Polish foreign policy determining the state's reactions and behaviour in the

international arena. This theme incorporates several narrower categories, including core values as well as Poland's vital interests, mainly regional cooperation.

The core values of the Polish *raison d'état* as understood by the Law and Justice party include "independence, territorial integrity, sovereignty...solidarity and respect for international law ... as well as the national identity" (National security strategy 2020, p.11). Additionally, the party believes that through historical heritage for Poles such values as "freedom, the peaceful co-existence of nations, respect for human rights and human dignity" (Polish Foreign Policy Strategy 2017–2021, p.5). This indicates the importance of the historical past and experience constitutes one of the major pillars of the value system of the Law and Justice party.

Moreover, representatives of the Law and Justice party often refer to the values highlighted by the former president Lech Kaczyński, namely "freedom, justice, solidarity and truth" (Debates, 2023, p.168). These values define the Law and Justice attitude towards Ukraine since 2015, but even more so after the war started in 2022, although the focus on the 'truth' in historical policy has significantly diminished if not disappeared from the political discourse since it was contradicting to the Polish *raison d'état* in unwavering support for Ukraine's "fighting for freedom in solidarity" (Debates, 2023, p.168). Other values enrooted in the Polish *raison d'état* in the Law and Justice's interpretation include those "that constitute the heritage of European civilization [including] ... Christian ethics, rationalism, the common good and respect for human rights [as well as] tradition and historical experience" (Expose 2016, p.12) which not only orients the Polish *raison d'état* to the past, but also stresses Poland's belonging to Europe.

As for the Civic Platform party, they focus on such values as "good governance, regional integration, global order based on the equality of states, their sovereignty and integrity, saying no to external violence and hegemony, supporting inter-civilisation dialogue" (Expose 2015, p.85). The major driving idea behind the Polish *raison d'état* as defined by the Civic Platform party relies on the need "to ensure that the Republic of Poland possesses two basic goods that all of its citizens deserve: security and the ability to develop" (Expose 2015, p.77) which implies the dynamism and relatively changeable nature of the *raison d'état*.

Thus, comparing the value systems of the Polish *raison d'état* as formulated by the two parties, the major difference is reflected in the understanding of the vital national interests, particularly regional cooperation vs regional integration. While Law and Justice tries to maintain as much influence and ability to participate in the decision-making process in the region as a nation state, Civic platform strives to increase Poland's participation in the collective decision-making processes in for increasing Poland's influence in international organisations, primarily EU and NATO. With respect of the 'inter-civilisation dialogue', the stance of Civic platform emphasises cultural and political exchange between the civilisations, while the Law and Justice's idea more

relies on the Promethean understanding of the Polish foreign policy presupposing its civilizing role as a more developed neighbour should be the driving force of the regional cooperation and bilateral relations (Debates, 2023, p.179). In contrast, Civic Platform criticises the idea of Prometheanism that it prevents the spread of European values in the enlargement process “to the limits, ... determined by ... history” (Debates 2023, p.171), since history is often a point of dissent between the states in the region resulting in reluctance to accept the ‘civilizing role’ of Poland.

More emotional narrative in 2023 by Law and Justice is directed to the value of “solidarity with the victims of armed force, such as Ukraine” since Poland plays a role of “a nation who has always fought for the independence of other oppressed people” (Expose 2023, p.4) as well as has been “interested not only in [its] own security, but also in the security of others” (Expose 2017, p.18) which is based on the principle “for your security and ours” (Latawski, 2001) – a contemporary modification of the traditional “for your and our freedom” (Debates 2023, p.199).

This demonstrated the primacy of the security as a vital national interest which has been reinforced in the aftermath of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in 2022, since “security is not everything, but without security everything is nothing” (Debates 2023, p.199). Law and Justice’s vision holds that the primary principle of the Polish foreign policy is “security first” highlighting that Poland “a state providing common security” (Expose 2018) in the circumstances when “security is increasingly becoming a common good of all mankind” (Expose 2017, p.14) referring to the increasing number of conflicts including Poland’s immediate neighbourhood. With the need to ensure the national security of Poland in mind, Law and Justice party further expands its perception of Poland’s security depending on the security in the whole region requiring Poland’s “eastern neighbourhood enjoy independence and security” (Expose 2018) so that “Eastern Europe cease to be a source of unrest and become a stable region” (Expose 2016, p.16; Expose 2017, p.16) which is a direct reference to the Giedroyc doctrine confirming that the latter does in fact constitute the Polish *raison d’etat*. The Law and Justice’s idea of the primacy of the national and regional security is shared by the Civic Platform party asserting that “any change of borders by force is against Polish interests, whether in Crimea or closer” (Debates 2023, p.171) implying that security depends on the adherence to the democratic principles of respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The aforementioned narratives illustrate that the core elements forming the Polish foreign policy towards Ukraine include “long historical experience of unfavourable geopolitical conditions” (Dyduch and Góra, 2024, p.303) and the full-scale invasion entailed “a dramatic worsening of security conditions” leading to “the suspension of domestic political conflicts” (ibid.) which facilitated the consolidation of both political parties around the staunch support for Ukraine.

Based on the abovementioned values the Law and Justice party aims to strengthen and

maintain Poland's image of a credible, reliable and responsible regional and global player (Polish Foreign Policy Strategy 2017–2021). Moreover, it highlights the role of Poland as a leader in protecting the European values Poland professes “from hegemonic tendencies, ... and from ... authoritarian regimes” (Expose 2023, p.4) in order to maintain “free and independent Poland [which] is particularly important for Polish identity” (ibid., p.2). Another role of Poland, according to the Law and Justice party is to be a good neighbour who respects the “the sovereign choice of own development path by each society” (Expose 2017, p.25) which serves as a reference to such values and sovereignty and subjectivity professed by the party.

In contrast, Civic Platform's motto with respect to the Polish foreign policy in the East was “without fear, but with caution” (Debates 2015), indicating the pragmatic approach to Russia of maintaining dialogue, which though to some extent was substituted with the “Ukraine first” policy after the illegal annexation of Crimea (Szeligowski, 2019, p.218).

It should be noted that in 2023, instigated by the intensification of Russia's aggressive policy in the region escalating to the full-fledged war against Ukraine, Law and Justice stronger emphasised “the right to defend oneself” (Expose 2023, p.5) which emerged as a novel value based on “Poland's tradition of resisting the dictatorship of political powers” (Expose 2023, p.31).

The emphasis on defence was accompanied by Poland's advocacy for assisting Ukraine in facilitating the latter's adjustment to NATO standards, including such joint military exercises Silver Saber (Poland-USA-Ukraine), Polish Three Swords exercises (Ukraine-Lithuania-U.S.), multinational Sea Breeze exercises in 2021 (Piechowska, 2023a, p.140-141). Likewise, Poland raised the issue of Russia's aggression against Ukraine at all possible international fora, including the UN Security Council, UN General Assembly, UN Human Rights Council, EU Foreign Affairs council etc., in particular Poland among those UN members who voted against Russia's motion to hold a special meeting dedicated to the adoption of establishing Ukrainian language as the only official language (Piechowska, 2021, p.165). Moreover, Ukraine was invited to participate “in a meeting of the Chiefs of Staff of the Visegrad Group in Krakow” (Szeligowski, 2020b p.145) resulting in “participation of Ukrainian Units in the EU Visegrad Battle Group” (ibid., p.146) which is a good example of Poland's regional leadership.

Although the understanding of many of the above discussed values and vital interests is shared between Law and Justice party and the Civic Platform parties, a major point of dispute relates to such value as subjectivity which is transmitted in different positions on regional cooperation arising from the different interpretation of what subjectivity of Poland should be. In particular, Law and Justice's understanding of Poland's subjectivity is founded on the two traditional principles “Free with the free, equal with the equal” and “nothing about us without us” (Expose 2023, p.3; Expose 2018) which demonstrates the vital interest of Poland to participate in

the decision-making processes with regard to matters related to Poland. Poland's influence in promoting support for Ukraine internationally was evident in the US President claiming that "Nothing about Ukraine without Ukraine!" (Expose 2023, p.20) will be decided during this war. The aim of this approach is to maximise Poland's influence in both regional and international organisations in order to satisfy the Polish interests to the fullest. Thus, while Law and Justice look at bilateral relations from the perspective of uncompromising national interests as it interprets them, its foreign policy always focuses on portraying states who have opposing positions on security or other issues as those who are trying to deprive Poland of subjectivity and overrule Poland's visions of regional and international security.

The aforementioned principles in Law and Justice's foreign policy from a set of roles for Poland to play, including "being a reliable ally, acting as a bridge between east and west, and supporting countries' self-determination" (Chappell, 2021, p.235). These principles were mostly formed based on Poland's historical experiences, but also in response to the disruptive changes in the international environment, most of which are related to Russia's aggressive politics in the region.

For the Civic Platform, in contrast to Law and Justice, subjectivity means maintaining a healthy balance between meeting the national interests and fitting in the EU institutions and collective decision-making processes so that Poland's voice would be heard and respected by global players and to avoid "sliding into a niche position, focusing on developments in its own back yard" (Expose 2015, p.85). For this party the most important principle is that "there are no permanent allies, only permanent interests" (Debates 2016, p.104) which presupposes the need to cooperate with different partners based on "what [they] have in common" (Debates 2023, p.183) emphasising that "whoever turns his back on the West, whoever turns his back on the free world, always faces Russia" (Debates 2023, p.184) since lack of unity within the democratic states always plays in Russia's hands by slowing down the support for Ukraine. Nevertheless, representatives of the Civic Platform also point out to the need for Poland to be treated as "an equal partner in building this new world [after Russia launched the fully-fledged war against Ukraine]" but not just as "a logistic centre" for Western support for Ukraine (Debates 2023, p.170) which is quite contrasting to the vision of Poland as a link between the West and Eastern Europe (mainly Ukraine) as described in the Giedroyc doctrine.

Therefore, the analysis of the perception of Poland's subjectivity has shown the continuity in the visions of both parties, with Russia's war against Ukraine slightly bringing the positions of the two parties a little bit closer with regard to the relations with the EU, especially Germany, with a milder position of the Law and Justice towards the latter. The Civic Platform party, in its turn, reinforced its position towards Russia recognising that currently no pragmatic relations can be

maintained unless the latter refuses from its imperialist and revanchist behaviour which was escalated in 2022. The aforementioned dispute over Poland's subjectivity and other values determines how each of the parties interpret what are the national interests and with which means these interests should be achieved.

As I mentioned it before, regional cooperation, including the regional leadership of Poland, are the national interests which are interpreted through the prism of the values of sovereignty and subjectivity. From the Law and Justice's perspective, although NATO and EU are still the primary formats of cooperation, this party emphasises at least in their narratives the importance of Central and Eastern European region cooperation based on "proximity of fate, history in the political, economic and religious dimensions" (Debates 2016, p.121-122) as well as the region of Central and Eastern Europe serving as a "barrier or space that will guarantee Europe a sense of security before entering this idealess space, specific to Western Europe". (Debates 2016, p.123). This way, one can clearly identify that in dealing with the issue of regional cooperation Law and Justice party refer to the past and history as a common denominator (Expose 2019). Moreover, based on these commonalities Law and Justice party argues that Poland's strength is in that it "is perceived as an expert, or at least as a country that is an important element in international debates on regional security and methods of dealing with this barbaric state such as Putin's Russia" (Debates 2023, p.199; Debates 2017, p.153) which should ensure Poland's leadership in "the empowerment of each country across the region and, above all, to the region as a whole" (Expose 2023, p.16).

The Poland's leading role in regional cooperation, according to Law and Justice, is conditioned by the geographical location, the size of the country, the historical experience of being a regional leader in the past, Poland's "place in the West... in the world of democracy and European culture" (Debates 2016, p.85) as well as Poland's duty "to be on the side of smaller Central and Eastern European states that were painfully afflicted by history" (Expose 2023, p.17).

Therefore, Poland "has the main burden of promoting and defending the interests of our regional partners, which coincide with Polish ones" (Expose 2018). The interesting element in this quote is that Poland will promote only those regional interests and interests if their neighbours which are aligning with those of Poland. Law and Justice party further argue that Poland's strength in such organisations as NATO and EU relies on "it's ability to articulate the interests of the countries of our region and act as their advocate" (ibid). This way one can conclude that actually Law and Justice party is trying to employ regional cooperation for more efficient promotion of the Polish interests within NATO and EU, and not the interests of the whole region. However, in the parliamentary debate representatives of the Law and Justice party emphasised that "Poland is gaining the position of a local leader...a desired leader" (Expose 2023, p.180-181).

Furthermore, the reference of the slogan "equal with equal, free with free" underlying the

understanding of the Polish subjectivity was echoed in Law and Justice's assessment of current relations at that time Poland's relations with the United Kingdom and the US saying that "Poland is an equal partner" (Debates, 2023, p.201) of those two states. Arising from this understanding of the role of Poland, Law and Justice members assert that they "must constantly demand Poland's rightful place in Western structures by continuing to be active in many fields" (Debates 2023, p.180). Especially important this position is in the current context of Russia's war against Ukraine, resulting in the gradual change of the international order, when Poland aims to use its active role in supporting Ukraine in this war to obtain more influence and power in the Western institutions like NATO and the EU. Law and Justice party was trying to play the card that Poland having expertise and knowledge in Central and Eastern European affairs used to warn other EU states against Russia aggression but no one listened, which eventually led to such developments in the region.

Generally, Law and Justice's concept of regional cooperation (although not proclaimed explicitly in their statements) is designed as opposition to the Franco-German leadership in the EU. According to Law and Justice, the goal of the regional cooperation within the EU and NATO frameworks is needed to prevent situations when the countries of the region are "outvoted, their fate is decided by others, which means that their freedom is fundamentally violated" (Expose 2023, p.14).

Russia's invasion of Ukraine impacted Law and Justice's understanding of regional cooperation the way that attention from rather economic cooperation shifted to the defence and military cooperation. More emphasis has been put on "institutional forms of cooperation" (Expose 2023, p.9) as well as "unique anti-imperial traditions and experiences" (Expose 2023, p.4) common for the states of the region. What is also noticeable that the 2023 expose repeatedly emphasised that these formats of cooperation mostly operate within broader NATO and EU frameworks and guidelines (Expose 2023, p.18). Moreover, Law and Justice representatives emphasise the Poland's contribution to these organisations, particularly that NATO "continues to expand thanks to [Poland's] efforts" (Debates 2023, p.202). At the same time, the debates also stressed the need to develop "a regional security system strong enough to survive on its own or with only limited American and British support in the face of the Russian threat" (Debates, 2023, p.181). This statement partially supports the argument that in fact regional cooperation as understood by the Law and Justice is not aimed at fostering other types of international and bilateral relations of Poland.

It is interesting that, only in the 2023 expose and debate the Lublin Triangle as a format of regional cooperation was mentioned for the first time during the time-span of this research which once again demonstrates the revitalisation of the Giedroyc doctrine in the Polish foreign policy.

According to Law and Justice, Lublin Triangle serves for Ukrainians "as the antithesis to

Russkiy mir and the imperial ideology behind it” (Expose 2023, p.18-19) and therefore it has the potential to become one of the main channels of garnering all kinds of regional support for Ukraine, including political, military, cultural and post-war reconstruction initiatives. More broadly, from the Polish perspective this and other regional cooperation formats are designed “to build regional resilience to external threats” (Debates, 2023, p.169) in the context of “the changes in the balance of power and the growing position and strengthening international subjectivity of Central Europe” (Debates, 2023, p.180). In the previous debates on the Polish foreign policy tasks Ukraine’s participation in regional cooperation has never been mentioned overtly, it could only be assumed from the context. For instance, the incorporation of Ukraine to regional cooperation in the V+ format was presented rather as a “dialogue” (Expose 2017, p.24). In the exposes and debates prior 2023, the activities of this regional cooperation were on the agenda of Poland foreign policy too, predominantly including cross-border matters, civil society development and interaction as well as the security dimension represented by the activities of the LITPOLUKRBRIG, main goal of which was assistance for Ukraine in adjusting to NATO standards (Piechowska, 2023b, pp.133-135). What is more, the functional task of the Lublin Triangle was to give impetus to the long-lasting regional partnership project amidst Russia’s intensifying aggression and the historical policy tensions between Poland and Ukraine (Piechowska, 2023a, p.145).

The idea of regional cooperation as described by the Law and Justice party has been continuously criticised by the Civic Platform party, who argues that the former’s policy isolated Poland from “the main decision-making circle” due to lack of substantial cooperation with Germany and France (Debates 2017, p.152). Likewise, Law and Justice, Civic Platform also recognises Poland’s potential as a regional leader, but at the same time it posits Poland has “the best possible relations ... with the countries of the old EU” (Debates, 2017, p.126) through which Poland could be a transmitter of the regional interests, including the Eastern neighbours if Poland maintains friendly relations with Germany and France.

Thus, the Weimar Triangle also plays a central role in the Civic Platform understanding of regional cooperation and leads to the criticism of the Law and Justice’s policy that Central and Eastern European regional cooperation formats cannot “replace the European first league, it cannot replace the Weimar Triangle” (Debates 2017, p.140). Consequently, here we can see the westward orientation of the Polish foreign policy characteristic for the Piast paradigm.

Another aspect of regional cooperation Civic Platform is sceptical about relates to the Law and Justice’s understanding of regional cooperation oriented to the past experiences. For example, they argue that the idea of Intermarium if it is to be put in motion properly has to be founded not of the 20th century concept but interpreted from the contemporary perspective (Debates, 2016,

p.88; Debates, 2017, p.140). In this vein, while criticising Law and Justice's vision of regional cooperation Civic Platform emphasised the need for Poland to strike a balance between its interests and maintaining the image of a good neighbour in Central and Eastern Europe pointing out to the need of considering the interests of all neighbours not only those who are convenient (a reference to the intensified cooperation with Orban and his populist government) (Debates 2016, p.125).

On the contrary, Civic Platform contends that cooperation within the region can be very influential if facilitating the unity and cooperation within the whole EU (Debates 2015). In particular, Civic Platform stance is that "Poland is inclined to union, to the Union of Brest, to the Union of Lublin, and today to the European Union, because it serves the Polish national interest" (Debates, 2023, p.171). Civic Platform representatives in all their statements stress on the fact that the European Union is Poland's place and therefore cooperation within the EU should be prioritised over cooperation with the US and the UK (Debates 2017, p.124).

4.2. Contemporary feelings of ontological insecurities and perception of threats in the changing international environment

Moving on to the second theme of the ontological insecurity and perception of threats by the political parties, it is very much interconnected with the changing international environment because the feelings of ontological insecurity and threat perception often are triggered by the developments in the external environment. In case of Poland, these are developments in Eastern Europe.

In particular, the most prominent feeling of ontological insecurity relates to the perception of Russia as a potential threat due to its neo-imperialistic behaviour. This insecurity comes from the Polish historical experience of the Commonwealth partitioning by the three empires with the Polish "resistance [being the] strongest among the inhabitants of the lands annexed to Russia" (Zięba, 2020, p.57) as well as from the more recent history when due to the Soviet influence the Communist government ruled till 1989. This perception of Russia as a threat induces the decrease in "the subjective sense of safety, permanence, stability, security and predictability" (Pieńkowski, 2015, p.73) coupled with the historical experience of "limited sovereignty for a large part of the twentieth century, instability of national borders, the threat from immediate neighbours, and unreliable alliances" (Krasnodębska, 2021b, p.83).

The historical experience serves as a major reference when the feelings of ontological insecurity and perceptions of threats are instigated by the external changes. These historical experiences include the imperial past in Europe where Poland and other states in the region were divided between several empires (Expose 2023, p.15), to the bipolar division of Europe during the Cold War (Expose 2017, p.17), to the Yalta system which enshrined the division of Europe into

two camps till 1989-1991 (Polish Foreign Policy Strategy 2017–2021, p.10), to long periods of the loss of independence (Expose 2023, p.15).

These historical experiences bring to the surface of the Polish foreign policy the strong opposition to any neo-imperial and revisionist policy originating from Russia (National security strategy 2020, p.6), the fear of re-establishing spheres of influence and the ‘concert of superpowers’ (Polish Foreign Policy Strategy 2017–2021, p.24; Expose 2023, p.3), the fear of creating a grey or buffer zone in Central and Eastern Europe (Polish Foreign Policy Strategy 2017–2021, p.9).

This feeling of inferiority can be traced in both Civic Platform and Law and Justice’s narratives emphasising the fact that “Poland is part of the West” (Expose 2015, p.90) which in its turn triggers the feeling of endangering Polish subjectivity and sovereignty based on the “frustration with the never-ending struggle to catch up [with the Western European states] and the feeling of still being left behind [or not being recognised as European enough]” (Zhurzhenko, 2024, p.38) coupled with the still alive historical memory of the “betrayal” of the Western EU countries lingering from the Second World War (Chappell, 2021, p.234; Sokała, 2005, p.150). Thus, “Western recognition of [Poland’s] Europeanness” (Krasnodębska, 2021c, p.65) if endangered triggers the above discussed and other ontological insecurities among both the Polish people and the Polish political leadership. All of these perceptions of threats and ontological insecurities are the foundation of the Polish staunch support for Ukraine.

It should be noted that both Law and Justice and Civic Platform agree upon Russian aggression against Ukraine to be an adverse external environment affecting Poland since “the region has witnessed a steady downward trend in stability and predictability” (Polish Foreign Policy Strategy 2017–2021, p.9).

The position of the Civic Platform with regard to the external environment implies that it only becomes more threatening due to the intensification of existing conflicts and emergence of the new ones, and since Poland borders the non-EU and non-NATO countries it is more exposed and vulnerable to “the threat from the East” (Debates 2015; Expose 2015). It is interesting to notice that in 2023 the Civic Platform’s narrative escalated by naming Russia’s “the enemy in the East” (Debates, 2023, p.198). The idea that the threat to Poland’s security comes from the East is shared by the Law and Justice party who argue that Russia’s policy with “the use of military force [which] has become a tool for changing state borders” leads to “a steady erosion of a world order” (Expose 2019).

It should be noted that the perception of the changing environment and threats by both parties has been intensified after Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022. In particular, that was evident in the 2023 expose where the Minister for foreign affairs emphasised the “ever-increasing

threat level in the region” (Expose 2023, p.16). The both parties agree on the fact that “the situation beyond [Poland’s] eastern border has been the most important point of reference since February 24 last year” (Debates 2023, p.168). They further concur that “the war in Ukraine has changed the entire geopolitical reality in the region” (Debates 2023, p.183; Debates 2023, p.179) and that Russia’s war instigated the change of the post-World War 2 order as well as the established security system in Europe (Debates 2023, p.181).

It is interesting to trace the intensification of narratives in portraying Russia as a threat in during 2015–2023. It is noticeable that during 2017-2019 the narratives were sometimes covert and evasive with the emphasis on the need to maintain bilateral relations compared to the 2023 debate. For example, the Civic Platform was trying to keep the moderate language towards the whole situation in the east of Ukraine. In particular, the war was not named as such but rather referred to as “an armed conflict in the East, with changing dynamics” (Debates 2015).

Later in 2016 expose the Minister for foreign affairs cites President Andrzej Duda who said that “Poland has no eternal enemies” with reference that there is a need for Poland “to align relations [with Russia] and take into account our interests and expectations” (Expose 2016, p.17). Meanwhile, in 2015 as well as 2017 debates Law and Justice criticised not a very proactive stance of the Civic Platform party as well as other EU states in appeasing Russia in 2014 as well as not perceiving it as a real threat referring to the National Security strategy signed in 2014 in which “Russia [was] mentioned only three times ...in a 56-page document” (Debates 2015; Debates 2017, p.152). Also, in 2017 Law and Justice representatives were critical of the Civic Platform and other EU states “seeking to reach an agreement with Russia at all costs” (Debates, 2017, p.121) arguing that it will lead to the establishment of the spheres of influence which is an absolutely unacceptable scenario (Polish Foreign Policy Strategy 2017–2021, p.10).

In 2023, however, the rhetoric was much more outspoken. Specifically, Russia’s full-scale war against Ukraine was called “a barbaric invasion of Imperial Russia into an independent and sovereign state” (Debates 2023, p.196), Russia instead of being called a threat was labelled as an “enemy” (Debates, 2023, p.198) and “a gangster terrorizing the neighbourhood” (Debates, 2023, p.169). Moreover, the famous warnings of the late president Lech Kaczyński “we must not yield to imperialism” (Expose 2023, p.6) as well as “first Georgia, then Ukraine, then the Baltic states ... and then perhaps it will be our turn” (Debates, 2023, p.201) has been cited by the Law and Justice members during the debate for several times and raised no objections from the Civic Platform representatives. Russia’s full-fledged war was perceived as an attack on all countries of the region due to Russia’s “treating all its neighbours jointly, and by attacking Ukraine it poses a threat to ...Poland” (Expose 2023, p.11-12).

Thus, in 2023 Russia was being portrayed not as an ontological security threat, but also as a

possible physical threat. Law and Justice representatives further deepened their position by speculating that “the mass Russian crimes committed against the civilian population of the occupied lands convince [the Poles] that the operational goal of Poland’s military defence must be to prevent the occupation of any part of the territory of the Republic of Poland” (Debates, 2023, p.180) and that strong and independent Poland is a thorn in Russia’s eye because it significantly impedes “the simple restoration [of Russian imperial rule] in relation to Ukraine and the Baltic states” (Debates, 2023, p.181).

Another distinction in 2023 debates is related to referring to Russia’s war against Ukraine as a factor that “united the two nations and generated enormous social capital of friendliness and trust” (Expose 2023, p.33) in fact implying that having a common enemy plays a crucial role in strengthening relations between Poland and Ukraine and is the only development which can outweigh the importance of the historical policy Law and Justice conducted in the years before the invasion. Furthermore, an amplified wave of narratives related to the shared historical experience in the region as uniting factor against imperialism as a threat to the “civilizational development, and prosperity” (Expose 2023, p.15). The topic of the division of Europe has gathered momentum again with the Minister referring to it for several times (Expose 2023, p.12; Expose 2023, p.16).

Overall, the understanding and perception of threats and ontological insecurities of both Civic Platform and Law and Justice are quite similar, with the latter sometimes being more emotional in general. However, the major issue on which their perceptions of threats differed was related to the understanding of the memory politics and especially the memory law adopted by Ukraine amidst Russia’s aggression. For Law and Justice party, since their major narrative is related to subjectivity, truth and national identity, the adoption of these law constituted a significant ontological insecurity. For Civic Platform such reaction to the Ukrainian memory laws was against the Polish *raison d’etat*. Moreover, they pointed out that “playing on tragic events in the history of Polish-Ukrainian relations only serves Putin's imperialist policy” (Debates 2015) and that the memory laws in Ukraine were not anti-Polish in nature but rather aimed at creating a pro-Ukrainian ideological basis in opposition to the pro-Russian and pro-communist narratives (ibid). Notably, after the full-scale invasion of Ukraine which triggered the Polish ontological insecurities and threat perceptions, both parties focused on “the restoration of peace in Europe, respect for the norms of international law, and establishment of more systemic, institutional barriers that would protect Poland from another wave of imperialism” (Expose 2023, p.8) leaving the disagreements behind.

4.3. The postulates and principles of the Giedroyć doctrine as narrated in contemporary foreign policy

Finally, the third theme is directly dedicated to the Giedroyć doctrine principles in the foreign policy narratives of the both parties. Overall, both of the parties refer to the Giedroyć doctrine, however, the frequency of the Law and Justice representatives mentioning the ideas originating from the doctrine is higher than those of the Civic Platform. It should be noted that the slogans of the Giedroyć doctrine were reactivated in the narratives after Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, and the 2023 expose and parliamentary debates contain more references to the doctrine than the previous ones. The major narratives existing in the analysed documents and transmitting the ideas of the Giedroyć doctrine include:

- *Solidarity as a principle of the broader Polish raison d'état is adopted in the Giedroyć doctrine*

For example, Law and Justice in expose 2018 stated that Ukraine's experience of Russian aggression "evokes in Poland a natural feeling of sympathy and solidarity with the nation fighting for "freedom, wholeness and independence" (Expose 2018). It is interesting that the importance of the solidarity narrative increased in 2023 expose and debates. In particular, Law and Justice's representatives claimed that "Poland ... is a showcase of freedom and solidarity in the world ... in the context of the barbaric war in Ukraine" (Debates, 2023, p.201). In this vein, they also argued that "Poland has been in solidarity with Ukraine since the first day of the war ... sharing everything it had" (Debates, 2023, p.196). Finally, they noted that shared responsibility and solidarity with other states in the region are the values upon which 'local' raison d'état of Poland works demonstrating the example of "the impressive solidarity of most countries in the region with Ukraine" (Expose 2023, p.16) amidst Russia's full-scale war and hinting to Poland serving as an example for such a reaction to Russia's invasion in the region of Central and Eastern Europe.

Although the reference to solidarity was dominant in Law and Justice's narratives, the Civic Platform party did not object to Law and Justice with regard to solidarity, and even if the word solidarity was not as frequently used by the Civic Platform party their rhetoric with regard to Polish assistance to Ukraine signalled that this value is adopted in the Civic Platform's approach to foreign policy as well.

- *Support for Ukraine in any form as the Polish raison d'état (assistance in democratic development, advocating for "open door" policy of NATO and EU to Ukraine)*

This narrative has been a continuous thread in both Law and Justice's and Civic Platform's rhetoric. Law and Justice party declared "support for Ukraine to be our highest raison d'état ... in the face of the recidivism of Russia's imperial policy" (Debates, 2017, p.120), including the assistance in democratic reforms, civil society development, advocating for Ukraine's interests

internationally (ibid.). Both Law and Justice and Civic Platform parties continuously claimed their support for “Ukraine's territorial integrity and the sovereignty of its government throughout the country's territory within its internationally recognised borders” (Expose 2019). Both parties advocated for the ultimate membership of Ukraine in NATO and EU emphasising the higher engagement of NATO in “partner countries, primarily from [Poland’s] immediate environment” (Expose 2018) as well as convincing that only “full membership in the European Union” can serve as “sufficient motivation to carry out the difficult process of introducing reforms” in Ukraine (Debates 2015). Civic Platform representatives further elaborated that Poland “absolutely fully meets every need they [Ukrainians] come to us with” (Debates 2015) emphasising the comprehensive support for Ukraine and Poland’s responsiveness. A great example of the Poland’s facilitation of the democratic reforms relates to the “decentralisation initiatives, education and social welfare systems, as well as projects aimed at improving the competences of public administration staff” (Piechowska, 2023b, p.140) such as the cooperation within “the Eastern Partnership Academy of Public Administration, and training programs for the Ukrainian fire brigade” (ibid.).

The rhetoric on support for Ukraine has been influenced by Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in 2022, and therefore, in 2023 expose and debates more attention was paid to the establishment of “more concrete shapes” (Debates, 2023, p.168-169) to “form [the] permanent cooperation between two nations closely related to each other in terms of language, culture, and mentality, living in two sovereign states” (Expose 2023, p.34). The Minister for foreign affairs also gave a message that “Ukraine will prevail, survive, and move the spectre of war away from our borders” (Expose 2023, p.8) implying that Poland will do everything what is needed for the desirable outcome (Expose 2023, p.32).

The Civic Platform party supported these narratives of Law and Justice representatives by arguing the necessity to establish “a real initiative to rebuild Ukraine” which will be conducted after the war ends (Debates 2023, p.170). Moreover, they stressed that “Poland needs a new, comprehensive eastern policy today, ... a new support strategy for Ukraine” (Debates 2023, p.183) emphasising the pressing demand to adjust Poland’s foreign policy to the new realities existing now as well as in the near future which to some extent echoed the Civic Platform earlier narrative accusing (but in a milder way) Law and Justice of the lack of consistency in its foreign policy towards Ukraine which requires the establishment of a “coherent concept of the Polish state's policy” (Debates 2015). Overall, the narratives on Poland’s support for Ukraine are the evidence of the bipartisan consensus with some latent criticism of the consistency of the Law and Justice’s foreign policy towards Ukraine, mostly, based on how it was conducted in previous years.

- *Poland as a connecting link between Ukraine and the EU*

This narrative is based on Poland's claim to be aware of the Ukrainian needs the best due to shared historical past and territorial proximity referring to Poland's role of a leader in this matter as well as its positive image among Ukrainians.

Both Civic Platform and Law and Justice parties argued that Poland is a leader in advocating and supporting Ukraine. In particular, Civic Platform emphasised that Poland is perceived as a leader in the democratisation process of Ukraine and should "respond to this expectation" (Debate 2015). Furthermore, Civic Platform emphasised that "Poland and Poles are the best perceived country and nation in Ukraine" (Debates 2016, p.125) and this is the asset to be used for nurturing long-lasting strategic relations. Likewise, Law and Justice party posits that due to the successful example of democratic development and resulting in Poland's membership in the EU and NATO "Poland has remarkable branding potential" (Polish Foreign Policy Strategy 2017–2021, p.23) in Eastern Europe which should be wisely exploited for supporting democratic development in Ukraine and other Eastern European states.

The emphasis on territorial proximity and shared historical experience of Poland and Ukraine is mostly traced in Law and Justice's narratives. For instance, the party holds that "the eastern direction" constitutes "a geographical area about which [Poland] should know everything and on which its attention and the competence of state institutions should focus" (Debates 2015). In this vein, they further elaborate Ukraine should not serve as a cordon sanitaire, but rather "is the key to understanding the situation in which our region of Europe will find itself in the next 5, 10, 15, or maybe 20 years" (ibid.) which implies that Ukraine's interests, independence, freedom etc. are also those of the region and Europe as a whole.

As expected, 2023 witnessed the intensification of the narratives related to Poland's leadership and connecting role. Law and Justice argued that "defence of Ukraine relies on us" (Debates 2023, p.197), that "Poland behaved appropriately" (Debates 2023, p.200) in response to Russia's war against Ukraine. Moreover, emphasising Poland's role as a transit country for the Western military, humanitarian and other types of aid, Law and Justice party highlighted that "Poland has become a key country in the relations of the democratic West with Ukraine" (ibid.) which illustrates Poland's role as intermediary between Western countries and Ukraine. This narrative was further supported by claiming Poland's initiative with regard to military assistance of Ukraine, including "the EU Military Assistance Mission in support of Ukraine" and the exploitation of "the European Peace Facility to refinance the supply of military equipment to Ukraine's armed forces" (Expose 2023, p.12). Also, the Giedroyć doctrine principles were vividly referred to in the Law and Justice's narrative calling for "increasing Poland's presence in the region as an important political and economic player" (Debates, 2023, p.179). Traditionally, Law and

Justice referred to “common historical experience” (Expose 2023, p.16) as evidence of the interconnectedness of Central and Eastern European states’ independence.

- *The independent, free, safe and democratic Ukraine as Poland’s raison d’etat*

In particular, Civic Platform asserted that “Poland's raison d'état is an independent Ukraine. Everything that harms independent Ukraine today harms Poland. There is no independent Ukraine without independent Poland, and vice versa, history has proven this” (Debates 2015). This narrative was mirrored in the Law and Justice’s statement in 2016 onwards saying that “a democratic, politically and economically stable Ukrainian state is an important element of European order and security” (Expose 2016, p.18). For Law and Justice, it was also important so that Ukraine would be the one to decide “on the shape of its constitution” (Debates, 2016, p.83).

What is more, with the ongoing Russia’s war against Law and Justice’s narrative focused on Ukraine’s safety: “a safe Ukraine means a safe Poland and a peaceful Europe. This is therefore our raison d’etat” (Expose 2023, p.33). The representatives of the Law and Justice party stressed that Ukraine combats with Russia “for the whole of Europe” (Debates, 2023, p.196). Thus, the analysis of the Giedroyć doctrine narratives specifically

- *‘Ukraine first’ policy narrative*

This narrative has been revived in the Law and Justice party’s rhetoric in 2023 in response to Russia’s invasion of Ukraine as well. First of all, Law and Justice mentioned that Ukraine is now the most important factor influencing the quality of Poland’s relations with others, determining who it will cooperate and to which extent (Expose 2023, p.29). Also, Law and Justice indicated its intention to “counter premature proposals to rebuild bridges with Russia” (Expose 2023, p.36-37) before the war ends on Ukraine’s terms and Russia fully pays for what it did. Moreover, Law and Justice party called the representatives other European states to visit Kyiv to demonstrate their commitment to “the free world’s coalition against imperialism and autocracy” (Expose 2023, p.17).

It is worth mentioning that, there are several differences in understanding the Polish Eastern policy towards Ukraine between the two parties. First and foremost, while Law and Justice party considers the EU Eastern policy secondary to the Polish national Eastern policy, for the Civic Platform this hierarchy is the opposite. For instance, the narrative that “effective Eastern European policy is only the policy of the entire European Union, who listens to the Polish voice” (Debates 2016, p.88) represents Civic Platform’s position which has been consistent throughout the whole period of the research with a particular emphasis on this aspect arising in 2023 probably due to the upcoming parliamentary elections. In 2023 the Civic Platform representatives argued that “an effective Eastern policy cannot be a policy of competition. Eastern policy must have a European face, it must be the policy of the entire European Union” (Debates 2023, p.183). This is supported

by Civic Platform's conviction that "it is the EU that conducts Poland's policy" (Debates 2015).

On the other hand, Law and Justice posited that Poland lost its subjectivity and independence in the EU's Eastern policy, particularly showcasing the fact that Poland was left out and not included as an intermediary in the Minsk and Normandy formats, which indicated the diminishing role of Poland in the EU's Eastern policy. Moreover, they persisted that Eastern partnership should be only one of the aspects of Poland's Eastern policy (Debates 2016, p.110) that despite supporting this programme Poland must use other tools for accelerating the integration process of Eastern European states which was considered by the Civic Platform as a way of driving a wedge among the EU states.

Secondly, another issue of differing approaches is related to the historical policy and the vision of both parties how it should be conducted. While Law and Justice emphasised the need to find the 'truth', Civic Platform has been consistently accusing Law and Justice party in "practicing a policy of historical defeats, provoking nationalists and radicals on both sides" and emphasised that "it took a war for you to come to your senses" (Debates, 2023, p.181-182). Moreover, Civic Platform was trying to bring other examples of Polish-Ukrainian history which were assessed positively, including the common for both Poles and Ukrainians struggle "against the Soviet occupation" (Debates 2015).

After conducting content analysis, I came to the conclusions that with the beginning of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine the 2023 Law and Justice's expose and debates were not as aggressive in terms of historical policy towards Ukraine. In particular, the uniting role of history and historical experience has been strongly highlighted. It is interesting that this time Law and Justice stressed that "misunderstood historical policy is a tool of Russian manipulation" and argued that "no one, can ever divide us again" referring to Russia (Debates 2023, p.179-180). The Minister for foreign affairs even used the greeting "glory to Ukraine" (Expose 2023, p.33) while praising Ukraine for outstanding resistance to Russia's attack. This greeting has historically been used by Ukrainian nationalists fighting for Ukrainian freedom in the beginning of the XX century (including OUN-UPA who were previously called killers), which illustrates that the previously conducted historical policy was highly politicised and driven by the domestic political conflict. Thus, there has been a shift from the historical policy based on the historical memory conflict to the policy based on the recognition of the need to find the past that brings Poles and Ukrainians together.

Thirdly, slight discrepancy between the two parties also regards to the understanding of the importance of the eastern dimension in the general Polish foreign policy. While Law and Justice party declares eastern dimension as the "key area of our activity" (Expose 2019), for Civic Platform it remains one of "the most important links in Polish foreign policy" (Debates 2016,

p.108), which, however, got more relevancy after Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine. Prior to the war Civic Platform rhetoric towards Ukraine joining the EU was quite moderate with the emphasis put that this process "depends on Ukraine, on the reforms and changes it will implement" (Debates 2016, p.124). Predominantly, this difference arises from the broader understanding of the Polish *raison d'état*, which for Law and Justice is more oriented to regional cooperation and Poland's civilizational role in Eastern Europe, and for Civic Platform it is a balance between Western and Eastern dimensions of the Polish foreign policy with the later conducted through the EU means.

In conclusion, the conducted analysis provided me with the answers to the research questions put forward in the thesis. From the analysed documents it can be inferred that the differences in the foreign policy approaches of Law and Justice and Civic Platform arise from some variations in interpreting the Polish *raison d'état*, which also implies some discrepancies in the understanding of the Giedroyc doctrine, while the perception of ontological insecurities and threat perceptions is mostly common for both parties, with Law and Justice unlike the Civic Platform party being more wary of the possibility of the betrayal of the West which is based on the understanding of Poland's subjectivity and sovereignty. All the differences are reflected in the narratives in exposes and parliamentary debates.

The continuity of the understanding of the Polish *raison d'état* by the both political parties can be traced throughout the period under the study. In particular, the value system of the *raison d'état* as perceived by both parties constitutes the core of their perception. For example, while Law and Justice's value system is based on such values as freedom, subjectivity, solidarity, justice and truth, we can see that in general Law and Justice's value system embedded in the interpretation of the Polish *raison d'état* is mostly past-oriented. For the Civic Platform's value system, one can distinguish regional integration based on the equality of states, good governance with full adherence to the international law. Thus, Civic Platform's value system is more adaptable to the evolution of the international relations since it represents the values adopted in the EU and globally. Moreover, since the major goal of the Civic Platform's *raison d'état* is the development of its citizens in every aspect, it indicates the its future oriented nature.

The major differences in the perception of the *raison d'état* between the two parties affecting the variations in foreign policy approaches include views of subjectivity and regional cooperation/integration. While Law and Justice declare that Poland's role of the leader should not only be restricted to the EU and NATO frameworks but also through other regional projects which should be equally important but still complementary to the former, Civic Platform argues that the only chance for Poland to assume the role of a leader both in the region as well as in the EU and globally is to join the already existing group of influential states, including Germany and France. However, as the narrative illustrates that for Law and Justice party the latent intention behind the

regional cooperation is the possibility to strengthen its voice in implementing Poland's interests in NATO and EU, since they mostly support only those of their neighbours' initiatives which align with those of Poland's. But in general, for both parties the primacy of Poland's security constitutes the basis of the Polish *raison d'etat*,

It is also interesting to note that all three of the analysed themes are based on references to Poland's historical past and experiences. Specifically, for both Law and Justice and Civic Platform historical experiences serve as triggers for the feeling of ontological insecurity, threat perception and the changing international environment. For both parties Russia is considered as the major threat. The difference is that Law and Justice directly refer to the history with emotions, while Civic Platform attempts to do it more latently and more rationally, but both of the parties emphasise the Polish European heritage and Poland's place in Europe and the West. But for Law and Justice except for Russia as a threat, Ukraine's memory laws constituted a threat as violating the policy of truth in the Polish-Ukrainian relations which caused an extremely aggressive historical policy, while Law and Justice did not perceive those laws as a threat to Poland at all.

As for the narratives related to the Giedroyć doctrine, it has been evident that for both parties the Giedroyć doctrine occupies a central role in foreign policy towards Ukraine. The major narratives were based on the values enrooted in the Polish *raison d'etat* as understood by both parties. Nevertheless, some differences in the interpretation of the Giedroyć doctrine postulates have been still present. For instance, even though the "solidarity with Ukraine" narrative has been employed mostly by Law and Justice, it was not questioned by the Civic Platform directly. As for the support for Ukraine both parties recognised assistance in democratic development, military assistance, Poland's pro-Ukrainian advocacy as part as parcel of Ukraine's successful integration in the EU and NATO institutions, although Civic Platform prior to 2023 followed less emotionally coloured rhetoric emphasising that mostly this process depends on Ukraine's political will as well as reinforced their position that Poland can efficiently support Ukraine mostly through the EU means and instruments, unlike Law and Justice who were also focusing on regional cooperation projects, like the Lublin Triangle, to facilitate Ukraine's advancement in terms of EU and NATO requirements.

It is noteworthy to highlight that 2023 expose and parliamentary debates are of a distinct character compared to the previous ones. This is the result of the 2022 Russia's full-fledged war against Ukraine which ignited the change of narrative of the both parties. In particular, the narratives related to the perception of Russia and changing international environment as a result of Russia's war against Ukraine, all-encompassing support for Ukraine have witnessed the bipartisan consensus as well as increased the intensity of the narratives of the both parties. Moreover, despite the parliamentary elections in autumn 2023, these issues have not been the object of the dispute unlike in the run-up to the previous elections when these topics were instrumentalised in the domestic political struggle.

Conclusions

To draw the final conclusions, the analysis conducted in the current research has proved my assumption that posited that Polish governments' foreign and security policy discourse and its instrumentalization depend upon the understanding of the *raison d'état*, the perceptions of ontological security and the threat of Russian imperialism in the circumstances of drastic shifts in the international system.

In the thesis I answered the research questions raised in the introduction, namely:

- How are the differences in the approaches of the Civic Platform government and Law and Justice government to the understanding of the Giedroyć doctrine reflected in their foreign policy discourse? How these approaches evolved throughout the period of 2015 – 2023?

- How did Russia's war against Ukraine in 2022 change the Polish foreign policy responses in relations with Ukraine?

Having analysed the rhetoric of both Law and Justice and Civic Platform parties, traced the differences in understanding of the Polish *raison d'état*, the perceptions of ontological security and threats as well as the drastic shifts in the international system. Although these differences appeared to be relatively minor and latently expressed, the biggest discrepancies between the parties' perceptions is related to the understanding of the Polish *raison d'état*.

In particular, the value systems of the parties embedded in the perception of the *raison d'état* are different. While such values as democratic principles based on treaties and international law, including territorial integrity, non-interference in the internal politics of other states, sovereignty and independence are common for both, values of subjectivity and solidarity assume different meanings. Specifically, for Law and Justice both subjectivity and solidarity are oriented to the regional cooperation with the restoration of Poland's leadership role in parallel to the cooperation within the EU aimed at strengthening the voice of Central European states in the EU and stronger advocacy for Eastern European states' membership. At the same time Law and Justice's orientation to the past and historical experiences is enrooted in such values as justice and truth. For Civic Platform, solidarity has not only the external direction, but also domestic one – the need for political solidarity among the parties “in the context of the dangers, but also the opportunities that Poles face” (Debates, 2023, p.172). The value of subjectivity for Civic Platform has a directly opposite meaning who claim that Poland's subjectivity can only be achieved by strengthening its position within the EU and its policies with secondary role given to regional cooperation formats like Visegrad group and Lublin Triangle. A distinctive value for Civic Platform is the all-encompassing development of Poland's citizens which provides an illustration of the theoretical statement that the *raison d'état* is a common good for the people. Thus, we can see how the values of the *raison d'état* establish the different for the two parties' hierarchies of interests and foreign policy goals which can be either negotiable or non-negotiable falling under the constructivist understanding of the norm. The differences discussed above constitute the ideological basis for

contrasting approaches of Law and Justice and Civic Platform to foreign policy towards Ukraine.

It should be noted that ontological insecurities are to the large extent shared by both parties, including perceiving Russia as a threat to Poland's identity and independence as well as the feeling of inferiority to the older members of the EU which is evident in the continuous emphasis on Poland's belonging to the Western and European culture and civilization based on shared history. The latter insecurity is more evident in the Law and Justice rhetoric along with the strongly highlighted insecurity related to the possible betrayal of the West. Both insecurities of inferiority and betrayal of the West are drawn from Poland's historical experiences continuously referred to by the Law and Justice and conditioning the foreign policy they are conducting by positioning themselves as promoters of democratic transformation of Eastern European states, particularly Ukraine.

Russia's neo-imperialist and revanchist behaviour in the region triggers the memory about Poland's historical experiences which constitute the core of the abovementioned ontological insecurities and form the *raison d'état* in which sovereignty and independence take the central stage. That is why both parties share the perception of Russia as a threat to the democratic order in Europe and ultimately Poland's independence and development. This is an empirical evidence of the theoretical claim that ontological security is formed in relation to the "significant historical other from the country's past" but is also based on "its own experience in the past: 'who the state was, is and wants to be'" (Bachleitner, 2023, p.28).

Moreover, it is important to emphasise that the more unstable and unpredictable external environment of Poland is, the more support is expressed for Ukraine. This was evident both in 2014 and 2022/2023. The perception of Russia as a threat by the Polish political elites increased over 2019-2021, which resulted in the decrease of the intensity of the historical disputes between Poland and Ukraine. Even more so, in 2023 after Russia's invasion of Ukraine there has been bipartisan consensus on Poland's Eastern policy. Law and Justice party fully departed from its aggressive historical policy towards Ukraine, while the Civic Platform party rejected its narratives regarding the possibility of dialogue with Russia and used as harsh language towards the latter as ever.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine triggered the revival of the Giedroyc doctrine principles in the rhetoric of both parties since it proved to be relevant in the contemporary circumstances as never before. Russia is now perceived not just an ontological threat, but also as a physical one, and Poland due to its staunch support for Ukraine since 2014 proved to be one of the most targeted by Russia's malicious actions among the states in the region and EU in general. But overall, this war facilitated the feelings of solidarity embedded in the Polish *raison d'état* and fostered the unprecedented unity between Poland and Ukraine. After the beginning of the war there has been no differences in the interpretation of the Giedroyc doctrine, although previously both parties criticised each other for not conducting the Eastern policy properly. Civic Platform emphasised the role of the EU and criticised the politics of isolationism conducted by Law and Justice as well

as politization of history in relation with Ukraine calling it destructive and counterproductive. Law and Justice criticised the Civic Platform back for causing Poland to lose its subjectivity as well as for weak response to Russia's aggression back in 2014. Moreover, Russia's invasion of Ukraine solidified and strengthened the regional cooperation projects, including the Lublin triangle, tripartite cooperation between the UK, Poland and Ukraine, Three Seas Initiative.

Thus, Russia's invasion of Ukraine became an extremely pivotal turning point for Poland's foreign policy towards Ukraine. Nowadays, Poland is striving to strengthen its positions both regionally and internationally in order to gain more influence in NATO and EU in view of Poland's role in assisting Ukraine, so that Poland would have a stronger and more influential voice in the post-war regional and international order formation. This will allow Poland to realise its national interests to the fullest, of which security and safety are of the highest importance.

As for the Giedroyc doctrine postulates, after 2022 invasion of Ukraine both parties expressed solidarity with Ukraine, reassured Poland's multidimensional support for Ukraine – military, political, humanitarian etc. Poland's role as a connecting link between other EU and NATO states intensified due to its geographic location. Moreover, Poland acted as a driving force for increased and faster military assistance for Ukraine as well as enhanced advocacy for the simplified procedure of Ukraine's integration in the EU and NATO. Moreover, "Ukraine first" re-entered the Polish political discourse with the emphasis on the existential nature of Ukraine's victory for maintaining peace and security in Europe.

Overall, this research contributes to the contemporary scholarship in the field of the Polish foreign policy towards Ukraine by combining the three elements (constructivism, ontological security and *raison d'état*) in a single theoretical framework in the absence of a comprehensive research, like PhD research or monography, which would discuss the topic based on this theoretical background. Moreover, this research expands the audience coverage since it provides the analysis in English while the vast majority of the research with regard to the empirical is available in Polish. Finally, this thesis covered the analysis of the period of 2022-2023 after Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, and most of the research were conducted previously to Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022. Apart from the abovementioned academic contribution, the findings of the thesis can be employed in the policy analysis to advise in the decision-making processes with regard to bilateral Polish-Ukrainian relations.

Thus, the research conducted in this master thesis is highly relevant and can be further developed into a scientific research at the higher level since the topic of Poland's foreign policy towards Ukraine and the Giedroyc doctrine in it is a dynamic process which is constantly evolving and depends on numerous factors, not only those analysed in this thesis. Moreover, the pace of the development of these matters is accelerated by the ongoing war which is an extreme intervening factor. That is why this issue requires continuous research with the purpose of registering any changes occurred this way enhancing the findings of the thesis as well as scholarship related to this topic in general.

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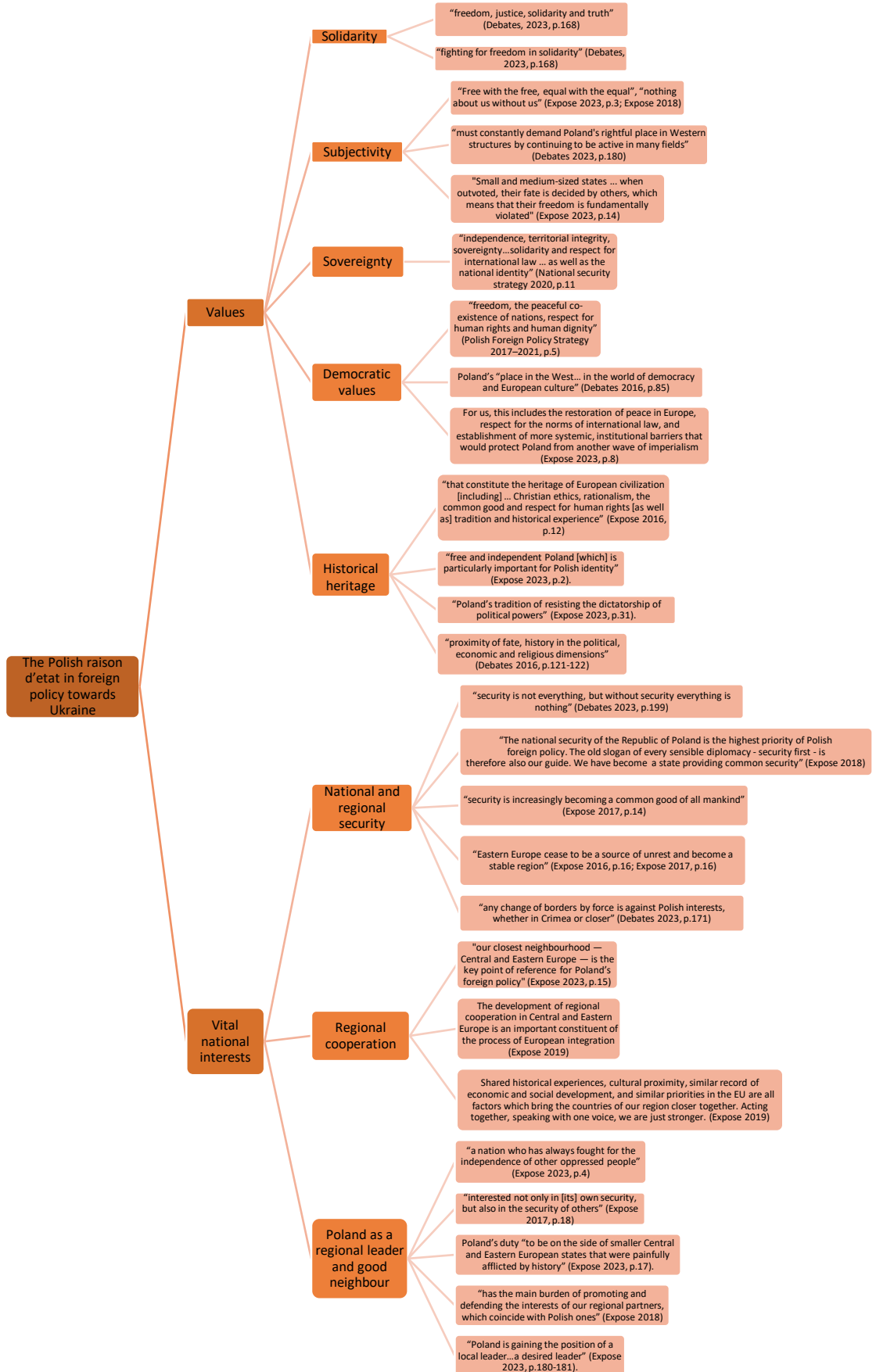
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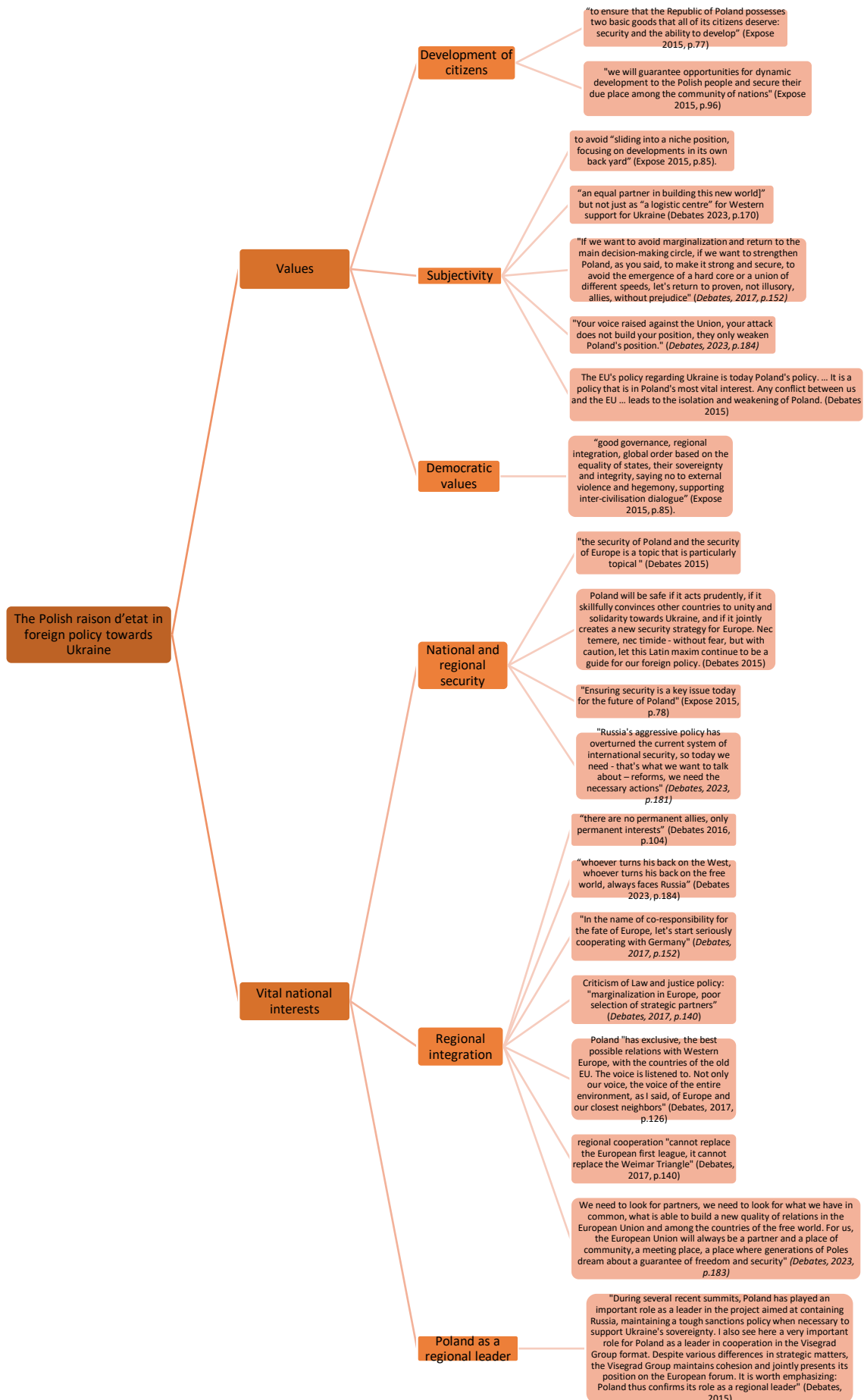
Appendix A: Coding Tree

Appendix A: Coding Tree

Theme 1. The Polish raison d'état in foreign policy towards Ukraine Law and Justice's narratives:

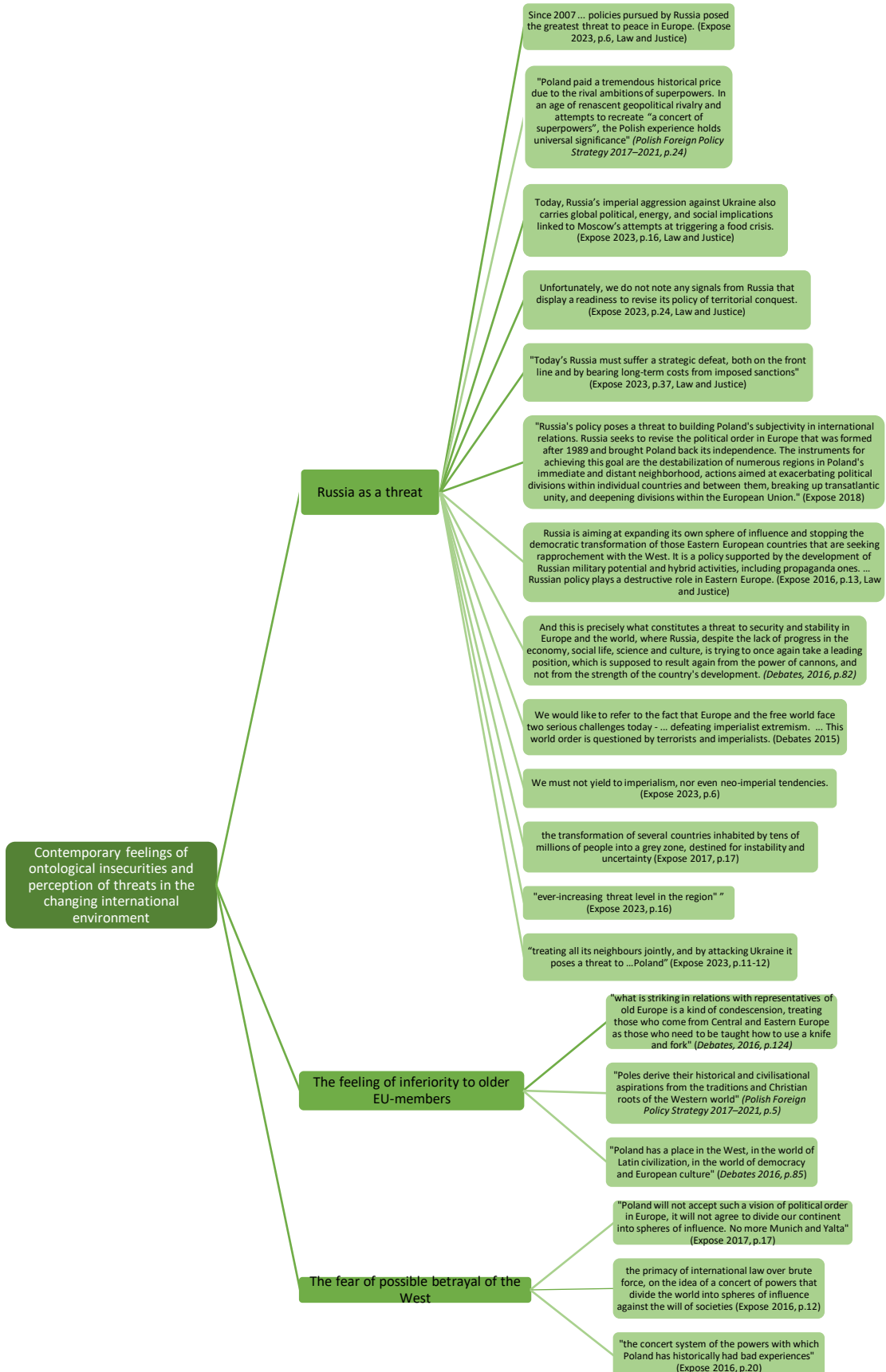


Civic Platform's narratives:

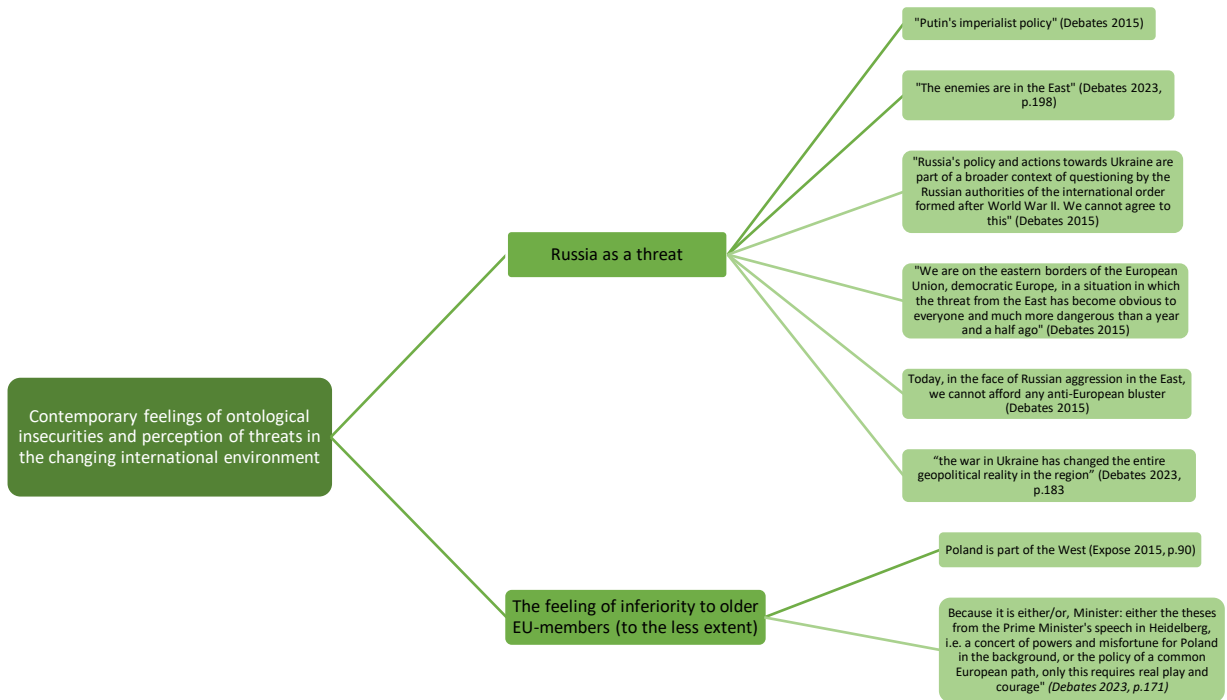


Theme 2. Contemporary feelings of ontological insecurities and perception of threats in the changing international environment

Law and Justice's narratives:



Civic Platform's narratives:



Theme 3. The postulates and principles of the Giedroyc doctrine as narrated in contemporary foreign policy

Law and Justice's narratives:



Civic Platform's narratives:

