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Master's Thesis

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SECURE OR OTHERWISE: LITHUANIA'S ONTOLOGICAL SECURITY AFTER EU AND NATO ACCESSION

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I have written the Master's thesis independently.

All works and major viewpoints of the other authors, data from other sources of literature and elsewhere used for writing this paper have been referenced.

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ABSTRACT

This Master's Thesis analyzes the Lithuanian foreign policy narrative. The analyzed time frame begins with Lithuania's entry to the EU and NATO in 2004 and ends with the outset of the Euromaidan protest movement in 2013. It seeks to identify the principal drivers in the Lithuanian foreign policy narrative that lead to a persistently belligerent approach towards Russia. More specifically, this study examines why despite the favourable circumstances Lithuania chose to maintain a considerably sharper policy line towards Russia instead of following a more pragmatic path. This thesis is built on existing scholarship on ontological security which argues that physical security is not the only type of security states are concerned about. It suggests that states also seek for the security of consistent Self. The study reveals that despite a certain relief in the country's immediate security concerns after the EU and NATO accession, Lithuania experienced deep uncertainty which threatened its identity. Thus, in order to increase cognitive and behavioural certainty, Lithuania routinized its relationship with Russia. Lithuanian foreign policy makers chose clung to a confrontational rather than a pragmatic policy line towards Russia, because such a routinization of adversarial relations helped to secure Lithuania's identity. The findings confirm that Lithuania tends to pursue a value-based and morally driven foreign policy, where Russia is frequently portrayed through the Self/Other constellation and activation of memory politics. This becomes particularly visible in the analysis of Lithuania's policies regarding attending Victory Day celebrations in Moscow and the demands to compensate for Soviet damages.

Keywords: *foreign policy, Lithuania, narrative analysis, narrative, ontological security, Politics of memory, routines, Russia, uncertainty*

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1 INTRODUCTION

This thesis puts an emphasis on the foreign policy narrative of Lithuania and explores the link between the concerns over identity and foreign policy narrative in relation to Russia. More specifically, the study argues that Lithuania is engaging into an ontological security-seeking behaviour in order to reaffirm its sense of self-identity. Given this assumption, ontological security theory provides an account for a seemingly irrational Lithuania's behaviour, driven by identity and history motives, with regard to physical security. This study seeks to present a dilemma of ontological security, which indicates how concerns over security of the Self can lead to relationship which is suboptimal with regard to physical security.

The Baltic states offer a valuable case for ontological security theory due to their troubled past and an ongoing process of identity contestation ("returning to Europe", "becoming a good European", being "liminal Europeans"[1]). Additionally, it makes sense to apply this approach to the Baltic states because of the significant role played by the Other in their identity-building and construction of the statehood. Simultaneously, ontological security approach offers a theoretical ground based on which the intractable adversarial stance by the Baltic states towards Russia can be decomposed and explained.

It can be argued that the case of Lithuania occasionally stands out among the Baltic states for its persistently adversarial approach towards Russia than it could be expected on the basis of rationalist account and in the context of favourable circumstances (for details on favourable circumstances see page 38). The argumentation for the case selection is as follows: by the time Lithuania joined the EU and NATO, the overall condition for the major physical security concerns to be solved has been set. First, due to the considerably smaller number of Russian speakers, the issue of ethnic minorities has never attained much of the political significance in the Lithuanian-Russian relations. Second, Lithuania managed to agree on the complete withdrawal of ex-Soviet troops and sign the border agreement with Russia much earlier than it was done in the case of its Baltic neighbours. Third, a steadily growing economic connection between the two countries also pointed in the

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[1] For more on "liminal Europeanness" see Mälksoo (2010).

direction of the potential normalization in the Lithuanian-Russian relations.[2] Finally, the membership to the EU and NATO aimed at increasing physical security of Lithuania to an unprecedented level. Along with other indications of favourable circumstances to be discussed in this study, these factors illustrate the window of opportunity that emerged in regard to which a pragmatic improvement in the Lithuanian-Russian relations could have been expected.

Since Lithuania regained its independence in March 1990, the state's foreign and security policy-making has been highly dominated by the relations with Russia. Since then the relations between Lithuania and Russia continuously remained prone to friction and could be defined, on the whole, as adverse as well as highlighted with mistrust and occasionally limited to scathing rhetoric. Additionally, a full integration of the three Baltic states into the Euro-Atlantic structures was not only seen as a geopolitical choice to escape this straightjacket of physical insecurity but also as fundamentally in line with the Baltic identity and values (Kasekamp 2013). Thus, it can be argued that after 2004 we should have witnessed a notable gradual decrease in existentialism in the foreign policy narratives of the Baltic states and the increase in physical security being reflected in so-called normal politics (Mälksoo 2006). However, contrary to these expectations, neither Lithuania's membership in the EU and NATO nor occurred window of opportunity of favourable circumstances led the country to the state of normalcy and a decrease in existentialism in relations with Russia. Thus, this condition appeals to reassessment of this research puzzle.

Lithuanian foreign policy and the Lithuania-Russia relations have predominantly been analyzed through the lens of geopolitics.[3] This means that Lithuanian politicians were

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[2]Although, the Russian financial crisis in 1998 had some dramatic affect on the economic cooperation between these two countries, Lithuanian exports to and imports from Russia have been constantly growing since 2000. See more Kviklienė and Smolenskienė (2013) as well as Zdanavičius and Volovoj (2012).

[3]Lopata and Žalys (1995), "*Lietuvos geopolitinis kodas*" ["The Geopolitical Code of Lithuania"]; Janeliūnas (2003), "*The Distribution of Geopolitical Power in Central and Eastern Europe*"; Statkus, Motieka and Laurinavičius (2003), *Geopolitiniai kodai: tyrimo metodika* [Geopolitical Codes: Research Methodology]; Motieka and Statkus (2003), *Globalios ir Baltijos valstybių geopolitinės situacijos pokyčiai* [Changes in Global and Baltic Geopolitical Situation]; Kasčiūnas, Lukoševičius and Vaičiūnas (2004), *Geopolitikos akiračiai* [Geopolitical Perspectives]; Motieka, Statkus and Daniliauskas (2005), "Globali geopolitinė raida ir Lietuvos užsienio politikos galimybės" ["Global Geopolitical Developments and Opportunities for Lithuanian Foreign Policy"]; Statkus and Paulauskas (2008), *Tarp geopolitikos ir postmoderno: kur link sukti Lietuvos užsienio politikai?* [In Between Geopolitics and Postmodernism: What Direction the Lithuanian Foreign Policy Take?].

seen as having one major goal in mind in relations with other states – Lithuania's own physical survival - and all foreign policy choices are calculated by taking this single condition into account. Although, it can be argued that such an approach can offer an insightful and valuable perspective on various factors that affect Lithuania's foreign policy agenda, however this study claims that physical security (or security-as-survival) is not the only kind of security that states seek. In addition to it, there is a number of important elements that remain partly neglected by a survival-based (traditional) security approach, i.e. the correlation between identity and security and the identity effects on intractable and adverse relations. Consequently, this thesis draws on the gap in the research on the implications of ontological security on Lithuanian foreign policy. It is noteworthy that, overall, this study as well as the ontological security approach *per se* do not seek to falsify the survival-based approaches to security; however, it argues that the ontological security focus on the case of Lithuania is worthwhile.

An ontological security approach in International Relations develops an account of social action which interprets specific behaviour as fulfilling a state's motive to primarily secure self-identity through time (Steele 2008; see also Huysmans 1998; Steele 2007; Kinnvall 2004; Mitzen 2006a and 2006b; Rumelili 2015). This approach suggests that coherence and stability in relations with other actors is what states seek. With this in mind, states maintain the consistent "Self" through narratives that lay the foundation for routinized foreign policy actions (Steele 2008). In times of identity crisis and uncertainty states tend to establish routines in order to fulfil their ontological security needs. States routinize their actions towards significant Others even if it means clinging to the conflictual and harmful relationships in regard to their physical security (Mitzen 2006a).

In this study, an ontological security theory offers a supplementary identity-based account of Lithuanian-Russian relations, which thereby complements the survival-based approaches to security which dominates the scholarship on Lithuania's approach towards Russia. Additionally, this study seeks to provide a schematic overview of Russia's representation in the Lithuanian foreign policy narrative and define the main discursive mechanism/topics in which Russia is portrayed. The analysis also includes such instances of high discursive intensity as the issue of compensation for the Soviet damages and the

refusal by the Lithuanian high-rank officials to attend Victory Day festivities in Moscow. In the light of ontological security, such instances highlight the attempts carried out by Lithuanian political elites to primarily satisfy the demand for continuity of Lithuania's self-identity. Given these points, this study offers a reassessment and an alternative perspective to Lithuania's relationship with Russia and its complexity. In this regard, I base my research on the existing scholarship on ontological security supporting it with the findings disclosed by narrative analysis. In turn, narratives are equally important as routines in terms of perpetuating a stable sense of identity of the state. Namely narratives are collections of stories about the Self of a state based on the past experiences and collective sufferings which help us to read and understand routinized foreign policy actions, i.e. "we are looking back to see who we are at the present". More specifically, it is worth analyzing narratives in order to see how cumulative consequences of past actions increasingly constrain and limit the future actions of states that evolve into an apparent irrational path dependency (Griffin 1993).

In this research project I limit the scope of narrative analysis to a very specific subplot, political landscape and time frame. I will be closely looking at the foreign policy narrative of Lithuania from 2004 until 2013. The starting point of the study begins with the Lithuania's membership in the EU and NATO in 2004, whereas the outset of Euromaidan protest movement marks the endpoint of analyzed time period. This particular time interval was selected due to the fact Lithuania's membership in the EU and NATO constituted the major part of its "return to Europe" narrative during the 1990s and the early 2000s. Thus, with the entry of the Baltic states into the Euro-Atlantic structures in 2004, Lithuania not only achieved its major foreign policy goal but significantly reshaped its security position. Having in mind the new security reality after EU and NATO enlargement, a certain vacuum emerged in Lithuania's foreign policy agenda calling for new goals and narratives.

Despite the relief in its immediate physical security concerns, Lithuania, along with Estonia and Latvia, continued perceiving Russia as its potential threat, thus making the transition from existential politics to normal politics hardly attainable. EU and NATO enlargement posed a dilemma for Lithuanian foreign policy elites – while it, on the one hand, has increased certainty in regard to physical security; on the other hand – it brought

out a sense of looming deep uncertainty, because the narrative of "returning to Europe" became no longer eligible. In other words, the grand narrative has run its course and did not reflect "who we are" anymore. This assumption echoes the explanation provided by the ontological security approach which suggests that in times of creeping uncertainty and inconsistency of "who we are", states seek to find a new point of reference to their self-identity, which results in routinization of relations with other actors. This led to the interpretation that after achieving their decade-long foreign policy goal Lithuanian foreign policy elites became rhetorically trapped into the existing narratives and experienced a so-called lock-in effect. It appears that Lithuania experienced an identity dilemma of being simultaneously locked in its adversarial routines vis-à-vis Russia whilst using the same routines to sustain its own identity.

The empirical corpus of this thesis includes speeches, remarks and statements by the prominent Lithuanian foreign policy elites, namely, presidents, foreign and defence ministers and speakers of the Seimas, Lithuanian parliament. Overall, the data set consists of 215 texts, which, it can be argued, is enough to determine the main parameters of Lithuanian foreign policy narrative without losing depth. Drawing upon ontological security approach, the main aim of this thesis is:

— *to better understand the main parameters of Lithuania's self-positioning vis-à-vis Russia and identify the principal drivers in Lithuanian foreign policy narrative that lead to a persistent belligerent approach towards Russia.*

This goal translates into finding repetitive thematic meanings that Lithuanian foreign elites attach to the representation of Russia in the Lithuanian foreign policy narrative. The aim of this thesis is being achieved by utilizing (thematic) narrative analysis alongside a theoretical approach. In turn, the leading research question of this study reads as follows:

— *Why despite the favourable circumstances Lithuania chose to maintain a considerably confrontational policy line towards Russia instead of following a more pragmatic path?*

In this case a more pragmatic policy path refers to the prioritization of economic relations over morally driven policies, because the latter are precarious and can hinder a potential cooperation based on material interests. A considerably confrontational policy line, in turn, highlights continuously adversarial type of approach towards Russia which is characterized

with mistrust, icy silence and scathing remarks. The theoretical corpus of the study presupposes a statement that guides the analysis of this research. The thesis statement suggests that:

— *States, in periods of disjuncture in the narratives of their Selves, routinize relations with significant others in order not to lapse into a mode of ontological insecurity.*

Giddens (1986) and Steele (2008) refer to these periods of disjuncture as "critical situations", whilst Mitzen (2006a, 2006b) rather indicate them as periods of profound uncertainty. These periods of disjuncture bring in an unpredictable kind of circumstances that threaten the continuity and destroy certitudes of institutionalized ends. Beware of pitfalls of generalization, it is important note that, although, the need for ontological security is always in present for every state, the activation of routines features exclusively those states that are experiencing the disembodiment of their Selves. Therefore, it can be argued that small states, such as the Baltic states, form an excellent case for ontological security account because they are particularly sensitive to the disruptions in their narratives, because they are continuously engaging into the self-identity contestation.

In terms of limitations in this research project, it needs to be highlighted that I seek to analyze only the Lithuanian foreign policy narrative as well as the patterns and implications of Russia's representation in it. Although, in order to push the argumentation of the case of Lithuania further, an occasional juxtaposition with other two Baltic states occurs, this study does not intend to intrinsically make a comparative analysis of the Baltic states. I am also aware of the contextual specificity stemming from the significant role that the geopolitical context plays in the case of the Baltic states. However, the focus of this thesis lies on the discursive components of the Lithuanian foreign policy narrative *per se*, rather than the external contextual effect on it.

2 INTERDISCIPLINARY ORIGIN OF ONTOLOGICAL SECURITY

There is a growing corpus of literature in the field of International Relations (IR) whose central argument lays in the assumption that states are primarily concerned about their ontological security as much as they are concerned about their physical security (even its very survival). The concept of ontological security, which originates in psychology and sociology, has been introduced to IR literature by Jef Huysmans (1998) and was later further developed by Steele (2005, 2007, 2008), Mitzen (2006a, 2006b), Kinnvall (2004), Zarakol (2010), Rumelili (2015). With the help of their contribution in developing the concept of ontological security it has rapidly evolved in a number of directions and has gradually become a multidisciplinary work space for researches.

The term "ontological security" was coined by R. D. Laing, who used it in his study of the psychology of individuals and was primarily interested in ontological insecurity rather than security. Laing's *The Divided Self* defines an ontologically secure person as one who has "a sense of his presence in the world as a real, alive, whole and, in a temporal sense, a continuous person" and such a life experience inevitably forms "a centrally firm sense of his own and other people's reality and identity" (1990: 39). This psychological premise asserts that the condition described by Laing as "primary ontological insecurity", suggests that the individuals are continually exposed to fear, dread and anxiety and such a threatening experience of everyday life make them to lose a sense of Self and agency. The primary purpose of Laing's analysis was not to find a 'cure' for an individual (patient), however he aimed at identifying how the patient's way of being himself in his world can be again reconstructed and brought back to the pre-established category of secured identity (1990: 25). This leads to the assumption that deep insecurity emerges when an individual is constantly and existentially faced with "the dread of losing the Self" (Laing 1990: 49).

Within the discipline of sociology, the concept of ontological security is often associated with Anthony Giddens's work and his assumption that ontological security refers to "the confidence that most human beings have in the continuity of their self-identity and in the constancy of the surrounding social and material environment of action" (1990: 92). Giddens also draws an intimate connection between ontological security and

predictable routines, which are in "day-to-day life deeply involved with a sense of psychological security" and if these routines are shattered, "anxieties come flooding in" (1990: 98). Agents acquire their ontological security through their engagement in predictable, certain and meaningful narratives, based on which routines come into being. These routines and narratives help the agent to create stable ontological reference points to reality without being perpetually confronted by the threatening day-to-day life. This approach suggests that uncertainty about threats rather than these threats themselves pose a bigger problem (the state of uncertainty and its implications will be covered in the chapters below).

In developing the theory onwards, Giddens's theoretical account has been frequently supported by Laing's formulation of ontological (in)security. Both authors characterize ontological insecurity as an extreme and existential condition. Laing, in his turn, equates it with "the hazards of life, social, ethical, spiritual, biological" and a "life, without feeling alive" (1990: 39-40). As compared to Laing's account, Giddens associates it with fragmentation of the Self and a lack of "a consistent feeling of biographical continuity" (1990; 1991: 53). It can be argued that, although, the concept originates from two distinctive disciplinary wells, there is not much conceptual difference between them – a secure sense of self-identity is the upshot of both accounts.

2.1 LEVEL OF ANALYSIS – "SELF" OF A STATE

Scaling up the focus on ontological security from the individual level to the level of states provides a relatively different approach to security-seeking from its intellectual origin that can be found in the works of Laing and Giddens. It can be argued that not only for individual but also for collectivities, such as states, an ontological motive is constant. Critics assert that such an approach disregards the basic evidence that states, however, are not human beings and states' behaviour as well as various internal processes often are subject to a different logic. More extensive critical appraisals on this topic can be found in the works of Wight (2004) and Krolikowski (2008). Therefore, before turning to the

broader analysis of ontological security and its application to the level of states, a conceptual justification is necessary.

Such a "scale-up" of the need for ontological security from its original individual-level to the interstate-level of analysis may appear to be problematic in IR. It raises a question whether a state can be "viewed as a person" and weather one can ascribe human emotions and individual needs to the collective units (for a further discussion on state's personhood refer to Wendt (2004) and for more detail about level-of-analysis problem see Singer (1961)). Steele admits that the application of the ontological security concept to IR theory is a somewhat controversial move, which brings in "the levels-of-analysis problem" (2005: 529). Yet McSweeney justifies an attribution of the individual needs to collectives by assuming that the starting-point to understanding the collective phenomenon primarily rests at the individual level (1999: 158). In this way, McSweeney draws a parallel between the identity of the Self as a human and the identity of the Self as a state which are inextricably linked and both constitute inner and outer dimensions of one's being.

Mitzen, in turn, also seeks to justify the application of ontological security to states. In this regard, she claims the "state as a person" view has a heuristic value and is theoretically productive in indicating the essential aspects of the ways in which states operate (2006b: 352). Similarly to McSweeney's argument before, Mitzen argues that individuals become attached to national group identities, therefore they are motivated to preserve their collective identity because "losing a sense of state distinctiveness would threaten the ontological security of its members" (2006b: 352). Steele adds that "because state leaders engage in decision-making process they understand that they are making decisions for their nation-states, and therefore they are constrained by the identities not just of themselves but of their country as well" (2005: 529). Reading ontological security in this way leads us to the binary of individual vs. collective interest and the question of state's agency in this matter. McSweeney suggests treating "the state and other collectivities as unit actors, *as if* they were agents" because often their "action is subject to the same logical and sociological analysis as that of individuals or other collectivities" (1999: 150). As the arguments before have justified, just like individuals, states also attempt to pursue a stable sense of ontological security.

To summarize, using an individual-level theory to explain the behaviour of social groups poses a methodological dilemma. However, proponents of ontological security in IR claim that states are social actors and possess needs (namely ontological security demands), other than only survival. Moreover, states, just like individuals, are driven by self-identity needs as well as they seek to security in each other as well as from one another (Steele 2007; Rumelili 2015; Mitzen 2006a). In the light of these arguments, I go along with the ontological security idea and apply it to the case of Lithuania.

2.2 DILEMMA OF ONTOLOGICAL SECURITY IN IR

For a long time the "survival motive" has been dominating the materialist-laden view on international affairs. However, ontological security theory made a significant contribution to the IR field by shedding light on identity driven motives and interests that determine actions of states. An approach to ontological security-seeking refashioned the field's more materialist notions and conceptual framework of security.

Jef Huysmans, who introduced this concept to IR, argues that at that time "much of IR has neglected the question of ontological security" (1998: 242) and with his seminal article he intends to "add an extra layer of the exploration of the meaning of security" (1998: 233). Huysmans calls ontological security - "a strategy of managing the limits of reflexivity – death as undetermined – by fixing social relations into symbolic and institutional order (1998: 242). Huysmans also presents several other observations in his text that stipulate theoretically rewarding debates on what kind of questions and meanings security analysis involves.

The conceptual framework presented in Huysmans' article also suggests that regardless of various definitions and interpretations, the meaning of security also implies a state's particular way of organizing forms of life. This is central to the argument that the fear of the unknown, uncertainty and unpredictability "reigns under the sign of ontological security" (Huysmans 1998: 245). This leads to the interpretation that the changes in a state security narrative may also influence the course of state's foreign policy formulation. Huysmans offered an example of damaged identities in the post-Cold War period, when

states were not only affected by the elimination of a self-defining threat (their significant others) but also because they seemed "to lose credibility as representatives of the principle of determinacy itself" (1998: 240). This explanation provides an insight to the post-Cold War period as chaotic and charged with *angst*, where "uncertainty itself has become the primary threat" to states (ibidem). Furthermore, Rumelili also argues that the literature on ontological security provides a promising point of departure in advancing critical theories of security and helps to understand the process of identity reconstruction and transformation (2015: 54). From the point of view of survival-based security approaches, very often *security* and *identity* are defined as two entirely contrasting conceptions, with no causal links between them. In this respect, the attention that ontological security theory devotes to the link between self-narrative and security brings in a new supplementary approach to identity in security studies.

Steele also seeks to investigate what it means for states to feel ontologically secure. In his book 2008 *Ontological Security in International Relations: self-identity and the IR State* he convincingly confronts a steady position in the security studies which derives from an assumption that all states primarily strive for a single goal in relations with other states – their physical survival. This leads to the interpretation that nation-states tend to organize their foreign policy agenda with this exclusive goal in their mind. This survival assumption penetrates mainstream IR fields and is a flagship in the security studies. However, do states desire something more than physical security in international politics? What is the state's position regarding its security-of-being? Is it possible for states to move from a securitized to non-securitized relation with another state if the identity of the first state largely depends on this relationship? These questions encapsulate the complexity of interrelationship between the identity and security which are not always sufficiently untangled with the help of conventional approaches. A more extensive analysis of "physical vs. ontological" security binary will be developed in the following section.

Mitzen also seeks to engage realist theory, which treats nation-states as rational agents, and develop a complementary approach of ontological security with respect to rational agency. As she puts it:

"Rational agents make purposive choices in consequentialist terms, weighing alternatives and directing action toward a set of internally consistent ends. In most IR scholarship this capacity is taken-for-granted. The concept of ontological security allows us to see rational agency instead as an effect of practices."

(Mitzen 2006b: 345)

Similarly to Mitzen's position, Finnemore notes, her 'argument is not so much that neorealism and neoliberlism are wrong as they are grossly incomplete' (1996: 27).

It has long been argued that identity matters in IR. Additionally, juxtaposing ontological security (security of one's identity) with physical security (security of the body) helps to better understand why some states pursue seemingly irrational social actions to serve their identity needs even if these actions can potentially cause them material harm. For instance, Subotic (2015) illustrates this argument with an analysis of Serbia's foreign policy behaviour regarding the dispute over the status of Kosovo. In this regard, Mitzen argues that an application of ontological security to state-to-state relations reveals another dilemma in IR – "ontological security can conflict with physical security" hereby this conceptual incompatibility will be thoroughly analyzed in the following chapters (2006b: 342).

To conclude, the existing literature on survival-based approaches to security issues is unable to fully explain the interplay between the identity and security. As a result, it fails to distinguish the dimension of ontological security, where the distinctive Self of the state is located, from physical security, which defines the survival of this Self. The same way it is important to view this study of the Lithuanian case as complementary to mainstream IR theories rather than opposing them.

3 INTRODUCTION TO ONTOLOGICAL SECURITY: DISRUPTED STATE IDENTITY

The previous chapters looked at the process in which the theory of ontological security has been developed and expanded, starting from Laing's psychoanalytical approach, then turning to Giddens's sociological account and, finally, scaling up the concept to the IR level by Huysmans. As a result, this chapter offers an extensive explanation of what is ontological security and insecurity.

Firstly, it is important to draw a distinction between two different modes: ontological *security* and *insecurity*. Steele takes into account the Giddensian approach, which defines ontological security as a "sense of continuity and order in events" (Steele 2008: 7; Giddens 1991: 243). Mitzen with her definition seeks to shed light on the stability of social relationships, both cooperative and conflictual. She suggests that ontological security is "the condition that obtains when an individual has confident expectations, even if probabilistic, about the means – ends relationships that govern her social life" (2006a: 345). She adds that ontological security is "security not of the body but of the Self, the subjective sense of who one is, which enables and motivates action and choice" (2006a: 344). Additionally, Mitzen underlines that an ontologically insecure agent is locked into an "incapacitating state of not knowing which dangers to confront and which to ignore" (2006b: 345). As an illustration, consider Wertsch's (2000) assumption that the same kind of ontological disruption of the Self is visible in Russian collective memory. He argues that "people who believed they were part of a story about building communism, protecting the fatherland from imperialist enemies, or simply having a successful career in Soviet society suddenly, after the breakup of the Soviet Union, found themselves floundering when trying to make sense of their own and others' actions" (2000: 518). Similarly, Morozov (2015) applies ontological security theory to the Russian case in order to explain the behavioural patterns that are seemingly irrational, namely a repetitive anti-Western Othering by Russia.

The central argument in Steele's work suggests that "states pursue social actions to serve self-identity needs, even when these actions compromise their physical existence" (2008: 2; also see Mitzen 2006b). Steele supports his argument by turning to the case of Belgium in World War I, when after receiving an ultimatum from Germany for free

passage through Belgium and unrestricted access to its territory, Belgian authorities decided to fight Germany no matter what. In his case study Steele (2008: 96) employs discursive analysis and concludes that it was Belgium's concept of honour (self-narrative) that encouraged the small country to fight against the incomparably stronger enemy, although it was clear that their failure to accede could lead to fatal consequences (i.e. undermining physical security and an eventual state's survival).

In this regard, Rumelili makes an assumption that the different states of security "do not vary uniformly across the ontological and physical layers of security" (2015: 59). On the contrary, she echoes Steele's argumentation and claims that "one can be at the state of physical insecurity while being at a state of ontological security, and *vice versa*" (ibidem). With this in mind, in this thesis I suggest that the same security pattern can be found in the case of Lithuania, when after the entry to the EU and NATO the country experienced an unprecedented level of security, however the outcome of it resulted in nothing else but uncertainty about Lithuania's self-concept. As a result, Lithuania continuously fell back on the routinized confrontational relations with Russia in order to reduce ontological insecurity.

Regarding the Belgian case, it provides another empirical example how small states (at least in some cases) make irrational decisions to satisfy their ontological security. More specifically, small states feel "the external need to reinforce a social (or collective) identity to the greater European community" (Steele 2008: 96). In other words, fulfilling these identity commitments can affect a foreign policy decision-making of the state. Steele's empirical findings have shown that after seemingly irrational and suicidal decision by policymakers to fight a superior adversary, Belgium obtained a widespread recognition and admiration among the fellow European states (Steele 2008: 23). This leads to the interpretation that ontological security narratives are designed for both internal and external discursive consumption. It is important that the state's sense of self-integrity worthwhile is also maintained through the relationship with significant others (e.g. other amiable European states), because it adds stability and gives a credit to this state's ontological security narrative. It can also be argued that small states tend to find identity narratives more critical for their political life, because they constantly feel threatened by more

powerful neighbours and their generally minor significance to the international politics. This means that smaller states perceive the environment as less orderly and they are aware of the fact that they have more difficulties imposing this "order" onto this environment which could result in making them to feel more ontologically secure. To conclude this discussion, it can be argued that small states are particularly sensitive about disruptive processes that can lead to ontological insecurity.

In turn, ontological security-seeking sheds light on outright irrational behavioural patterns, namely intractable conflicts between the actors that persist over time. This leads to the aforementioned Mitzen's (2006a) position that identity security and material security can occasionally contradict each other. Mitzen notes that:

> "Even harmful or self-defeating relationships can provide actors with ontological security; and as long as that relationship is reliable, actors may prefer to hold onto relationship rather than to experiment with something new. From here it follows that breaking free of physical security dilemmas can generate ontological insecurity."

> (Mitzen, *Ontological Security and World Politics: State Identity and the Security Dilemma*, manuscript, cited in Steele 2005: 528).

To apply this interpretation of ontological security to the Lithuanian case, it can be argued that Lithuanian political elites hold onto routinized relations with Russia, because it fulfils Lithuania's identity and maintains ontological security. This assumption will be further analyzed in the empirical part of this study.

Steele, in turn, criticizes Mitzen's approach for being too dependent on the social context and her judgment of realist path for being depicted in a rather obscure way (2008: 58). Thus, although their starting positions are very similar: Steele and Mitzen the same way scale up the level of analysis from individuals to states and they both see their work as supplementing rather than contradicting the survival-based approaches to security, however they disagree in their explanations of how ontological security is achieved by states. Steele (2008), in contrast to Mitzen's view, assumes that it is not being dependent upon the social context that forms a state's security identity and helps to process relevant information, but rather the state's biographical narrative is what plays a crucial role in this process. Additionally, he puts more emphasis on "critical situations" as the major self-identity

threats (Steele 2008). In this regard, I will be also focusing on narration as a particular mechanism through which sense and ontological security is achieved. However, I do not disregard Mitzen's assumption that state identity is "formed and sustained through relationships" (2006a: 343). Her argument contributes to explaining the dynamics between a state's identity and the relationship with a significant Other, especially if this relationship has been ingrained into the state's narrative for decades. Such pattern can be found in the case of Lithuania, where, since the country regained its independence, the relationship with Russia has been occupying the major part of country's foreign policy narrative.

As it has been argued before, the notion of ontological security emphasizes the intimate relations between identity and security. States seek to maintain their stable identity and sense of secure-self and they do so by routinizing and habitualizing their relations with other actors. The key goal of routines is to produce and reproduce a stable self-understanding, solidify identity and provide states with a sense of agency. The process of routinization will be more thoroughly addressed in the following section. However, as it has been argued before, the activation of routines takes place in times of uncertainty and disruption in state narratives.

3.1 BINARY OF ONTOLOGICAL AND PHYSICAL SECURITY

This section identifies a two-layered conception of security as both material and ontological, and characterizes different dynamics and discourses where the dissimilarity between these two security meanings stems particularly out. Following the previous discussion, this section reinforces the argument that physical survival is not the only concern that states may have, thereby the pursuit of ontological security establishes an additional basis and motivation for the state behaviour.

Due to its multidimensional nature analyzing the concept of security is not an easy task. Lipschutz makes an accurate remark on the struggle over the concept of security in world affairs:

"Conceptualizations of security – from which follow policy and practice – are to be found in *discourses of security*. These are neither strictly objective assessments nor analytical constructs of threat, but rather the products of

historical structures and processes, of struggles for power within the state, of conflicts between the societal groupings that inhabit states and the interests that besiege them. Hence, there are not only struggles over security among *nations*, but also struggles over security among *notions*"

(Lipschutz 2000: 48, emphasis in original)

It can be argued that "in most IR theories, a concept of security has a basic meaning – that which ensures the survival to states so that they can pursue rational ends" (Steele 2008: 50). According to this materialist account, only when states have ensured their basic interest, namely security-as-survival, they can continue pursuing other less important goals. By describing offensive realism, Mearsheimer suggests that "the main goal of states is survival. They can pursue other goals like prosperity and protecting human rights, but those aims must always take a back seat to survival, because if a state does not survive, it cannot pursue those other goals" (2013: 79).

Although, a survival motive is highly entrenched in mainstream approaches to IR dominated by materialist account, constructivist Wendt argues that states, just the same way as individuals, have not only material but also social desires (1999: 123). Those social desires, unlike concerns about physical survival, underline a socio-psychological need of stability of social relationships between an actor and its significant others. The stability of these relationships is important for any states, because the notion of significant others plays an essential role in the production of narratives and routines as well as maintenance of a system of certitude about self-identity. States, just as individuals, define "who they are" by engaging with other actors and drawing on self/other categories. The role of a significant other is particularly visible in the case of Lithuania, where Lithuanian foreign policy behaviour and interests are influenced by the Russia's figure.

It is important to mention that threats are never genuinely and exceptionally only physical or ontological. In other words, various factors can push states into situations when they find themselves both ontologically and physically insecure, and vice versa (for a broader discussion on modes of ontological vs. physical security see Rumelili 2015). To better understand the conceptual difference, Steele detailed the main characteristics of in Table 1 below.

Table 1 Two conceptions of security (Steele 2008: 52)

	Traditional security*	Ontological security
Security as…	Survival	Being
Agent "structured" by…	Distribution of power	Routines and self-identity
Challenge/source of insecurity	Fear (in the face of threat)	Anxiety (uncomfortable disconnect with Self)
Outcome of incorrect decision in the face of challenge	Physical harm	Shame
Measurement of outcome	Change in material capabilities; deaths; damage	Difference between biographical narrative and actual behaviour; discursive remorse
Structural change	Change in distribution of power	Routinization critical situations; change in self-identity; change in agent routine

*The notion of traditional security, according to Steele, refers to strategic schools that base their assumptions on the survival motive, such as realism.

Intriguingly, ontological security is sometimes even more important than its physical counterpart, because the realization of ontological security "affirms not only its material existence but primarily how a state sees itself and secondarily how it wants to be inherently seen by others" (Steele 2008: 2-3).

The distinction between the two layers of security generates insights into few major assumptions. First, it sheds light on the notion that ontological and physical security can both overlap and conflict with each other. This leads to the interpretation of how "states might actually come to prefer their ongoing, certain conflict to the unsettling condition of deep uncertainty as to the other's and one's own identity" (Mitzen 2006b: 342). This way states become attached to relationships with another states, regardless the confrontational nature of this relation. This also speaks for the Lithuanian case – even when its physical security concerns were alleviated after the Euro-Atlantic integration, Lithuanian foreign policy makers continued operating *as if* under threat. This illustrates that even a destructive and harmful relationship with the Other can sustain actor's ontological security. The second assumption suggests that if a survival motive leads nation-states to pursuing rational ends, then ontological security theory "offers a structural explanation for the apparent irrationality of conflicts among security seekers that persists for long period of time (Mitzen 2006b: 343). The case of Lithuania's relations with Russia pushes this assumption forward and argues that the actions of ontological security-seeking can also be perceived as

rational. However, the pursuit of ontological security needs present a different form of rationality, because it aims at fulfilling not physical but identity interests. As Steele puts it, states can "rationalize" any action, any *one form of rationality is itself a normative construct* (2008: 44, emphasis in origin). Finally, the case of Lithuania also underlines the problem of ending such routinized conflicts and the difficulty of bringing a change into country's foreign policy actions.

The literature stresses that ontological security is intimately connected with identity, thus states feel the need to pursue their ontological security as much as their physical security (Mitzen 2006a, 2006b, Huysmans 1998, Steele 2008). This study is grounded in the assumption that "no realist argument fully captures the identity affects of persistent conflict, because none acknowledges the social construction of state identity (2006b: 343). It is worth noting that this thesis does not intent to falsify the materialist account of state actions, but seeks to provide a more complete perception of what instigates Lithuania to act in this specific and seemingly irrational way *vis-à-vis* Russia.

3.2   THE FUNCTION OF NARRATIVES

Over the past years, there has been a growing interest in the discussion about narrativity and its relationship to state foreign policy choices. This chapter aims at deepening our understanding of how narratives explain foreign policy behaviour of states and how they are being utilized by policy actors in order to counter back state ontological insecurities. It argues that through the prism of security narratives states view political reality, constitute their identities and create meanings for their actions.

At the individual level, according to Giddens, narratives are stories "by means of which self-identity is reflexively understood, both by the individual concerned and by others" (1991: 243). At the state level, narratives serve as compelling stories of particular events classified as successes or failures and turning points in state's history that state agents use to justify various political decisions in times of existential crisis. Riessman, in turn, argues that narratives foster sense of belonging and have a political and strategic function (2008: 8). Subotic argues that at times of great (identity) crisis and (physical) threats to manifold states securities, narratives are selectively activated to support the state

with a feeling of autobiographical continuity as well as a sense of routine, familiarity, and calm (2015: 2). Additionally, narratives are essential because they disperse the uncertainty and help to understand "who one is and what one ought to do" (Wertsch 2000: 518). Specifically, narratives gain relevance in times of identity transformation occurred in a compressed time frame, when policy makers are unable to immediately adjust. For example, "traumatic events such as wars or other political disasters are particularly useful windows of opportunity for selective narrative activation" (Subotic 2015: 7). Nation-states over time construct their security narratives which are partly based on past experiences and partially shaped by relationships with historical friends or foes (Subotic 2015). Due to their strong historic affiliations to the past events and to other international actors autobiographical identity narratives are difficult to interrupt, thus states become attached to these narratives.

In this regard, it is useful to draw a comparison between Mitzen's and Steele's assumptions of what actually sustains states identity and how ontological security is achieved. Mitzen's approach is more dependent on the social context, where she claims that identity is "formed and sustained through relationships" (2006a: 343). Whereas Steele (2008) argues that it is not the dependency upon the relations is what forms state identity, but rather the state's biographical narrative is what plays a crucial role in this process. However, in the case of Lithuania I find it valuable to combine these two approaches, because I argue that Lithuania's attachment to the confrontational relationship with Russia is actually included into its narrative.

Explanatory power of security narratives is twofold. Firstly, narratives are "fundamentally normative in nature" (Subotic 2015: 3; also see Wertsch 2000). They are socially constructed and create opportunities for action, as well as taboos that make certain action, such as desecuritization of threats, unimaginable (Subotic 2015: 4). This expands upon the assumption that state identity/narrative can hinder the possibilities of desecuritization and tend to (re-)shape the course of foreign policy actions of the state. The contingent nature of the identity and the continued reproduction of antithetical identity positions towards the Other make the elimination of the perception of the existential threat hardly possible. Rumelili underlines it with the example of Palestinian-Israeli relations,

where the historical narratives of both nations infringe and limit the process of desecuritization (2015: 53). This comes close to the previously discussed assumption that since the relationship with significant others defines "who we are" (state identity), Lithuania cannot just alter its relationship with Russia, because this would simultaneously change the notion of "who we are". Consequently, Lithuanian foreign policy elites prefer sticking to a confrontational (even harmful) relationship with Russia instead of having to face the radical uncertainty.

To elaborate more on the issue of self-identity (de-)construction, it can be argued that "Self vs. Other" nexus is an important part of state's identity narrative formation. The conceptualization of the self-notion can never be separated from the Self/Other representation. In turn, Steele invites to explore how a state's identity narrative is "a (at times dubious) political project to include certain individuals or collectivities at the expense of foreign or threatening 'others' (2008: 30). In simple terms, identity formation of the state is a political project where the 'us vs. them' distinction is the basis for the strengthening self-understanding and locating existential threats. Campbell adds an axiological level to this discussion and argues that "a notion of what 'we' are is intrinsic to an understanding of what 'we' fear" (1992: 85). In other words, the state's sense of Self and a narrative are linked to what it constructs as a threat. Campbell also mirrors foregoing Mitzen's assumption that even self-defeating relationship with the Other can reinforce state's sense of ontological security. He claims "ironically, then, the inability of the state project of security to succeed is the guarantor of the state's continued success as an impelling identity" (1992: 12).

Additionally, building on existing scholarship on narrative analysis it can be argued that narratives are used not only for internal but also external consumption. In other words, "it is not enough for states to feel secure in their view of Self: they also need to feel secure in the company of other states" (Subotic 2015: 7). This provides us with a window onto how small states seek to be perceived positively by other international actors. It is important to note that in this study I will be focusing primarily on the elements of narratives that are being produced for internal consumption (a more detailed explanation on empirical data is provided in the following chapter).

The perpetual pursuit of ontological security can coexist with securitization of the external Other and they jointly impact state's foreign policy behaviour. According to Campbell, the constant articulation of danger through foreign policy does not necessarily pose a threat to a state's identity or existence, on the contrary – it provides a condition of possibility (1992: 12). The Self is not a static object but is a part of a larger process of identity formation therefore securitizing subjectivity always involves the Self/Other relations (Kinnvall 2004). As a result, it can be argued that states can also move from one state of security to another and reconstruct their security environment. According to Rumelili, desecuritization does not necessarily always lead to an increase of ontological security, because "desecuritization threatens to unleash the inherent instability and inconsistency of internal self-narrative" (2015: 67). Desecuritization involves a movement toward a state of physical security and culmination in ontological insecurity. On the contrary, it is namely securitization that becomes an actor's source of ontological security (Rumelili 2015: 61). Rumelili builds her argument upon the example of the securitization of the events of 9/11:

> "it has challenged the Americans' post- Cold War self-perceptions as a nation with no enemies. The confusion was very evident in the popular reaction: 'Why do they hate us?' However, the continued securitisation of the global terrorist threat subsequently consolidated new definitions of Self and Other and became a source of ontological security".

<div align="right">(Rumelili 2015: 61)</div>

This somewhat explains why states occasionally fail in normalizing their relations with their significant Other and why they find themselves locked into the same continuously hostile and dilemmatic conflict. Even if the desecuritization process is successful, the patterns of the new interstate relationship is very unstable and easily reversible, because "concerns about instability and uncertainty of being can easily politically mobilized and manipulated into concerns of survival" (Rumelili 2015: 62).

To conclude, conceptualizing states as existing through narratives helps to explain not only their policy changes and why they have taken place in particular circumstances but also their persistent continuity in the course of foreign policy actions. Moreover, narratives

constitute an important part of state ontological security-seeking and provide a justification and continuity with their past actions (Subotic 2015: 5). They carry a powerful explanatory tool and serve as a natural interpretive instrument due to their installation in the everyday discourse of the state and political rhetoric of elites (Wertsch 2000). Finally, desecuritization of the existential threats does not necessarily incite state's sense of ontological security. Instead, state's agency rests upon routinized relationships with other actors therefore sudden changes in social narrative can generate a state of ontological insecurity.

3.2.1 DISJUNCTURE IN THE NARRATIVE

Before moving to the empirical part it is important to give a certain focus on disjuncture in the narrative of the state Self. It can be argued that states identify themselves with narratives to such an extent that even temporary disruptions in the narrative itself can threaten the cognitively stable Self of the state and increase uncertainty.

It can be argued that disruptions in the narrative occur "when external events cannot be neatly placed into the ontological security narrative because they represent a challenge to the state internal or external identity" (Innes and Steele 2014 cited in Subotic 2015: 5). Steele refers to such a disruption in the narrative as a "critical situation" (2008: 12). The situation becomes "critical" because it catches policy makers off guard and without proper ends to respond. Steele also argues that these critical situations "threaten identity because agents perceive that something can begin to be done to eliminate them" (ibidem). It is important to note that by "elimination" Steele here does not necessarily mean a threat to physical security. The disjuncture in the narrative can also occur when an actor becomes uncomfortable with its agency, hence it experiences instability of self-being. Mitzen argues that disruption certainly generates uncertainty, potentially tapping into the domain of ontological insecurity (2006a: 350). And when ontological insecurity kicks in, agency can even become, to some extent, impossible.

In the case of disruption it could be expected that states would attempt to rationally re-conceptualize their security narratives in response to these external or internal

developments in order to bridge the cognitive gap between policy actions necessary for addressing the new political reality and existing security narratives. However, Subotic (2015) argues that states predominantly avoid altering and somehow changing their biographical narratives and, instead, they interpret new events in line with specific elements of the existing master narrative. As far as the framework of relations with other actors is also embedded in the master narrative, states continue pursuing the same type of relations as the narrative is dictating. This is how, through the process of narration, state agents give necessary meanings to their actions and "rationalize" decisions which may look irrational at first from the perspective of the survival-based approach to security. However, it is worth mentioning that narratives are not entirely immobile, because if they were so, states, due to various domestic and international developments, would be constantly experiencing deep uncertainty about their Self. In order to some extent gain flexibility in their narratives, political actors during the period of high anxiety tend to selectively activate some elements of their master narrative and purposely deactivate unnecessary components. Such a selective activation of particular elements of the narrative implies that the process of narration gains ideological and emotional value.

It can be concluded that this discussion on the disruption in state's narratives gives a fruitful ground for further analysis of the Lithuanian case. Particular attention will be given to the completion of the "return to Europe" narrative (EU/NATO accession), which assumingly was portrayed by the Lithuanian political elites as a critical situation in the face of which changes in the perception of relations with Russia did not occur due to creeping uncertainty.

3.2.2 ROUTINES

It is through narratives that nation-states make the sense of political reality and their own position in the international arena. To maintain a consistent, actors establish routinized relationships with their significant others. From here it is only a short step to argue that relationships are enacted in routines with other international actors, providing a cognitive certainty and needed predictability.

To begin, narratives alone are just social constructed identity stories, built upon past experiences and critical historical junctures, but the main function of narratives – to provide a sense of predictability and continuity – is being realized through routines. Several valuable insights can be taken from Steele's perspective. He argues that "nation-states seek ontological security because they want to maintain consistent self-concepts, and the "Self" of states is constituted and maintained through a narrative which gives life to routinized foreign policy actions (Steele 2008: 3). State identity is under constant attack which causes an anxiety of daily life when a state realizes that "its narrative actions no longer reflect or are reflected by how it sees itself (ibidem). In order to minimize the feeling of ontological insecurity a state seeks to re-establish those routines or make them rigid and irresistible enough to identity disconnections. Mitzen associates such rigid routines with "an inability to learn" (2006b: 364) which constrains actors from transformative change in relationship with other states. The lack of trust renders country's ability to adapt to new environment inoperative. From the perspective of ontological security approach, the routinization is seen as a mechanism to generate this basic trust, which is needed to enable country's agency (Mitzen 2006a: 346). In times of identity disconnections routines serve as "internally programmed cognitive and behavioural responses to information or stimuli" (ibidem).

The routinization gives states an important form of security, therefore ontological security-seeking suggests that nation-states may not always be willing to escape dilemmatic and conflictual relations with others (Mitzen 2006b: 341). This argument reinforces a previously discussed assumption that even harmful relationships can provide ontological security and sheds new light on understanding seemingly intractable and irrational interstate conflicts. As far as actors cannot respond to all dangers at once, the capacity for their agency depends on the system of activated narratives and institutionalized routines (Mitzen 2006b: 346). In this way, routines enable states to develop a certain type of trust about their subjective social life and help them to bring their threat environment under cognitive control (Mitzen 2006a: 273).

To conclude, ontological security theory argues that an ontologically secure agent responds to the critical situations in a form of actions that take on the appearance of routine. A routinized relationship with other actors is emotionally satisfying, because it provides

predictability and certainty of the future developments and is linked to state's self-identity through narratives. Importantly, while routines are contributing to state's ontological security-seeking, they also constrain international actors from transforming dilemmatic conflict and escaping their narrative straitjacket they themselves have created (Mitzen 2006b; Subotic 2015).

4   METHODOLOGY

This thesis project argues that narratives play a significant role within the realm of state identity construction and maintenance. To understand the connection between foreign policy path and continuity of state's being, I build my inquiry on existing scholarship on narrative analysis.

Narrative analysis is a result of so called "narrative turn"[4] that began to travel form discipline to discipline as early as the 1960s, thus resulting in recognition of narrative inquiry as an "abstract, theoretically rich, flexible, and thus quickly moving" methodological instrument (Hyvärinen 2010: 73). It can be argued that we tend to frame our academic research in terms of narratives because "we believe that by doing so we are able to see different and sometimes contradictory layers of meaning, to bring them into useful dialogue with each other, and to understand more about individual and social change" (Andrews et al. 2008: 2). Steele puts it forward by arguing that the narrative not only interprets, but "armed with a refined theoretical account, it reconstructs a particular "story" in the case by looking for conjunctures that would not have been recognized, would not have appeared, may not have even existed otherwise" (Steele 2008: 9).

The finesse of narrative analysis lies in its method to "interrogate intention and language – *how* and *why* incidents are storied, not simply the content to which language refers (Riessman 2008: 11, emphasis in original). Narrative inquiry is based on the premise

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[4] For more details on the "narrative turn" refer to Riessman (2008).

which suggests that narratives compose and order life of states hence ensuring their ontological security. According to Riessman, narratives, at its most basic, consist of stories and do political work, because "groups use stories to mobilize others, and to foster a sense of belonging (2008: 8). To explain, narratives are stories that states tell to and about themselves which provide a powerful explanation of why states do what they do (Subotic 2015). It can be also added that narratives underpin a particular identity by offering a schematic template of how state agents should act in this world.

I make particular use of Catherine Kohler Riessman's account on narrative methods. Riessman (2008) delineates four main methodological approaches to narrative analysis: thematic analysis, structural analysis, dialogic/performance analysis, and visual narrative analysis. This thesis is grounded in the thematic analysis, because, as stated in the aim of this study, I seek to identify common thematic elements that regularly appear in the analyzed speeches and statements by Lithuanian foreign policy elites and serve to communicate meanings of their actions to the audience. This method puts primary attention on the content or "what is said" (Riessman 2008: 53). This thematic form of narrative analysis coincides with ontological security theory, which also analyzes how and why political actors create a vision and meanings of the Self that eventually serves as a foundation on which entire agency of the state is built. Therefore, it can be argue that the method of this study fits the theoretical lens and provides an insightful answer to the research question.

Importantly, there can be two different ways to conduct a narrative inquiry leading to two different outcomes of the analysis – first, a narrative itself can be taken as an object to analyze (i.e. the narrative told by the actors involved); second, a narrative can be also the outcome of the analysis (i.e. an explanatory narrative about events and processes produced by a researcher). As far as this study seeks to understand the motives behind Lithuania's foreign policy actions and it will follow the first path of narrative inquiry, exploring what kind of and how these narratives ensure the continuity and certitude of state's Self.

Speaking of the application of the method to the case study, the argumentation proceeds thus – in 2004, when Lithuania, together with Estonia and Latvia, joined the EU and NATO structures, the country experienced a certain relief in its immediate security

concerns. As it has been previously discussed, from the point of view of conventional approaches on security (i.e. security-as-survival), the Euro-Atlantic integration was perceived as a major security guarantee, making Lithuania as secure as never before. The quest of Lithuania for membership in the EU and NATO has been seen as politics of survival *par excellence* and this goal largely dictated Lithuanian foreign policy narrative for the over a decade-long preparation phase. During the pre-accession phase, it was in Lithuania's interests to solve all major issues that could have potentially hindered its process of transatlantic integration (e.g. Kaliningrad transit case has particularly taken a lot of diplomatic efforts to be resolved). With this in mind, it can be argued that by the time when Lithuania had joined the EU and NATO structures, the state had already solved all major "hard" security issues in relationship with Russia (Bagdonas 2011). Therefore, it could have been expected that new circumstances and improved security position could have led Lithuanian-Russian bilateral relations up to a new stage of normalcy and a decrease in existentialism (see Bagdonas 2011). Despite a certain relief in the country's immediate security concerns after the acquired membership in the EU and NATO in 2004, these expectations proved to be unfounded (for more details on existential politics of the Baltic states after 2004 see Mälksoo 2006). Lithuania's foreign policy towards Russia gradually formed into a routinized adverse policy line. To better understand this prevailing antagonism in Lithuania's foreign policy towards Russia, I turn to ontological security theory which argues that physical security is not the only type of security states are concerned about and explains motives behind state's actions to, regardless any irrational outcomes it could lead to, fulfil its self-identity.

The three Baltic states constitute a very dynamic region in terms of history, its geographical location and a complex interplay of powers within them. It can be argued that these countries present an insightful case for ontological security theory due to their troubled past and an ongoing process of self-identity contestation. In turn, the complicated and contentious history of the Baltic states reveals a case of identity trauma in the formation process, which resulted in states, such as Lithuania, relying even more deeply on the routines (for details on identity traumas see Mitzen 2006a). Interestingly, in the environment where a geopolitical account seemingly prevails and highly conditions

political ends, ontological security theory also plays an important role in defining behaviour and interests of states.

This study will also include a brief analysis on two instances of high discursive intensity – the refusal to attend the Victory Day events in Moscow and the demand for Soviet damages. These instances illustrate the salience of ontological security-seeking, which leads to the situation where Lithuania's identity concerns trump its material interests. In terms of Victory Day, there has been an intensive "interpretation war" over the meaning of the end of the Second World War for different European countries (Mälksoo 2010: 97). Victory day on 9 May marks more than just a parade for Russian people. It symbolizes not only the end of the Second World War, but it stands for the Soviet Victory and the capitulation of Nazi Germany in the so-called Great Patriotic War.[5] On the other hand, in Lithuanian mnemonic discourse the end of the Second World War was perceived as a half-century-long occupation of the Baltic states. Grigas argues that "Lithuanian policy regarding Victory Day celebrations stood out in comparison to Estonian and Latvian policies in its adversarial and principled, even dogmatic outlook" (2013: 136). In terms of the compensation demand for Soviet damages, reinforces the assumption in this thesis that history-driven factors play an important role in the Lithuanian foreign policy narrative and, consequently, in the process of identity preservation. In turn, Steele argues that "without narrative, without a state agent collecting the history of a nation-state into a story that informs current actions, the Self of a state does not exist" (2008: 20). According to Mitzen, this preservation of state's self-being can be achieved by projecting negative aspects of the Self onto an Other as well as essentializing Self and Other, such as through stereotyping, relying on enemy images, resurrecting national myths (2006b: 274). The latter tendency of Self/Other categorization will be also examined in the study.

It is worth mentioning that among the three Baltic states the case of Lithuania has been chosen for this study, because Lithuania had less striking immediate security concerns

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[5] According to Russia's president Putin, it is "difficult to find a more sacred and unifying day than May 9. [...] We have no right to simply forget about the sacrifices that were made for the fatherland and for world civilization by our nation". "Victory Day Promises Pride and Pomp", The Moscow Times, 2005-05-06, viewed 2016-04-25, http://www.themoscowtimes.com/sitemap/free/2005/5/article/victory-day-promises-pride-and-pomp/223412.html.

vis-à-vis Russia, than the cases of Estonia and Latvia. Throughout time, Estonia and Latvia still had pending questions to be solved, namely, the territorial and border question with Russia as well as situation of Russian-speakers in these countries. However, over time Lithuania's attitude towards Russia remained as confrontational – or sometimes even more adverse – as the attitudes of Latvia and Estonia (for more details on the justification of the case selection see page 38).

The choice of the case in this study follows the logic of the most-likely case research scenario, where on all dimensions an achievement of a certain outcome is expected yet, in the end, the result comes out to be different than expected. Bennett argues the significance of single-case study research design lies in their ability to provide tests that may strongly support or challenge theories, by presenting anomalies for accepted theories (Bennett 2004). In the same spirit, Riessman (2008) argues that a case-study helps to better understand the narration of actors, cope with the great amount of data without losing depth.

It is important to mention that this study does not necessarily seek to impugn traditional security accounts based on the survival motive and undermined confidence of their findings, but it argues that beyond what is already known there is another layer of explanation which is able to capture aspects that fall out of reach of conventional approaches. According to traditional notion of security (security-as-survival) it could have been expected that Lithuania after acquiring desired membership in the EU and NATO would no longer feel as insecure and anxious about its being as before. This could have naturally led to Lithuania being more openly optimistic about its geopolitical environment and the possibility of re-engaging with Russia in more pragmatic terms.

To conclude, this research has been designed this way in order to provide an insightful account of why Lithuanian foreign policy makers have continuously clung to confrontational attitudes towards Russia. I argue that by sticking to an adverse relationship with its significant Other Lithuania is able to maintain stability of its foreign policy narrative which is essential for assuring the certitude of states self-concept. Narrative analysis in this case helps to understand which way narratives are constructed, for whom, what kind of meanings they carry along and how they enable or disable state's agency.

4.1 DATA COLLECTION

This section illustrates the features of data collection used to answer the main research question of this study. I believe that the composed data serves well to the purpose of the study and guides through the complex and multilayer narrative research. But how can we assess security narratives and where can we read them? Langenbachen suggests starting with measuring the salience of a specific memory (or in this case a narrative) by assessing the degree of diffusion among both the political elite of the state and the masses (2003: 50). Narratives are "linguistically constituted and reconstituted through people's relationships" (Kinnvall 2004: 748), therefore they craft languages of decision-makers in order to reflect the concept of consistent Self.

The autobiographical narrative of the state is not a monolithic construct, but it is an immense collection of stories (subnarratives) that make up the master narrative. Acknowledging that there is a great number of existing narratives that constitute Lithuanian master narrative (or metanarrative) of the state, in this study I only focus on Lithuanian foreign policy narrative. Narratives are constantly in making, thus "through the use of framing, agenda setting, and discursive practices, political actors activate narratives or specific messages within narratives, to justify policy shifts, and deactivate those elements that no longer serve the policy purpose" (Subotic 2015: 7). This is how foreign policy narrative is constructed through an active and detailed process of storytelling that involves multiple political actors or as Subotic (2015) puts it, "narrative entrepreneurs".

The empirical corpus of this thesis includes speeches, remarks and official statements by the respective foreign policy elite and their offices (presidents, foreign and defence ministers, speakers of the Seimas). In this research I also include statements by V. Landsbergis, the *leader of* Sąjūdis and former *de facto* head of the state. I justify this decision by arguing that Landsbergis remains an important political figure for Lithuanian conservatives and the entire foreign policy making. As far as the selection of the politicians is concerned, it can be argued that aforementioned political actors are the ones who construct and (re)design the Lithuanian foreign policy narrative. Consequently, these are political leaders who decide about when and which aspects of the narrative to selectively activate in order to provide meanings for their policy actions. Hansen (2006) refers to this

circle of political elite as "authoritative speakers", whilst Subotic (2015) introduces them as "narrative entrepreneurs".

The data has been taken from the official sources, namely official websites of the President, government and ministries as well as from the official internet page of the parliament. In the specific cases of Landsbergis I refer to his personal website. Additionally, while the official discourse of Lithuanian political leaders is often transmitted through the media outlets, data collection occasionally spreads out to the statements by these political actors presented in media. To summarize, I will be focusing on written texts and documents, orally told or media interviews in order to examine the connection between foreign policy narratives and actions.

I carry out the data collection in three ways. First, I search for speeches that address specific events or occasions: the Day of Restoration of the State of Lithuania, Day of Restoration of Independence of Lithuania (from the Soviet Union), Statehood Day, annual address of the President to the nation, inaugural speeches of the President. Such speeches are not only well-thought and time consuming to set up, but they also clearly articulate the main messages as well as they are widely channelled and have formal authority (see Hansen 2006). Additionally, I use a keyword search (e.g. "Russia" or "foreign policy") which is provided by most of the official websites. Finally, in order to more substance to the selection I also search for materials manually by simply going through the list of statements in "selected time period", which is another possibility provided by the official websites. Collecting data by using a manual search helps to go beyond the keywords and look for meanings that appear indirectly in the text.

Specifically, I am looking at the discursive representations of Lithuania's membership in the EU and NATO, because in this thesis I claim that after the completion of the main goal of the "return to Europe" Lithuania experienced an emerging vacuum in its foreign policy narrative that presumably induced a certain degree of uncertainty about one's further agency. With the help of narrative analysis I will search for both explicit (expressed in the literal meaning of "uncertainty") and implicit (articulated indirectly, i.e. "we need new goals") indications of uncertainty. Additionally, I will be looking for repetitive discursive elements that indicate Russia's portrayal in Lithuania's foreign policy narrative

and illustrate a confrontational attitude towards Russia. Finally, I will be also analyzing how Lithuania's own identity is presented by the political elites and what kinds of elements are being stressed as fundamental for the identity construction. Overall, the research method can be defined as the process, where repetitive concepts, metaphors and figures in the analyzed speeches gradually stabilize as themes (subnarratives).

Following the selected methodological parameters of thematic narrative analysis, an extensive set of data was collected in order to conduct a comprehensive inquiry of Lithuanian foreign policy narrative. As a whole, the data set consists of 215 texts which, it can be argued, is enough to determine the main parameters of Lithuanian foreign policy narrative without losing depth. Most of the analyzed texts are only available in Lithuanian language, therefore the translation to English is provided by the author of this thesis.[6]

5   DECONSTRUCTING LITHUANIAN FOREIGN POLICY NARRATIVE TEMPLATE

The collective narrative of the state, at its most basic, is series of stories about the past events and meanings these events bear for actions in the present and future. This thesis is grounded in the assumption that the political elites are constantly engaging in the practice of storytelling, and they do so because "the "Self" of states is constituted and maintained through a narrative which gives life to routinized foreign policy actions" (Steele 2008: 3). The continuation of the main narrative is essential for states and any serious disruptions in the narrative can lead to the mode of ontological insecurity. On the other hand, the periods of disjuncture in the narratives preset a good empirical basis for analyzing routinized relationships between states. This chapter will examine the extent to which Lithuania's foreign policy narrative was disrupted after the EU and NATO enlargement in 2004 and how this disruption affected Lithuanian-Russian relations.

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[6] For more on Lithuanian to English translation of political texts refer to Maskaliūnienė (2010).

5.1 WINDOW OF A MISSED OPPORTUNITY?

At first glance, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia share many features in common. They are intertwined in their geopolitical code and cultural characteristics. These three countries also share common historical experiences and consequently chose similar paths to independence in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Moreover, a lack of material resources and political leverage has also been a common feature of the Baltic states. Finally, efforts of all three Baltic states to return to the European family brought tangible results in 2004 with the transatlantic integration. This has led to a number of observers to study the foreign policies and security constellations of the Baltic states (Kuus 2004, Ehin and Berg 2009, Mälksoo 2010, Miniotaitė 2011, Grigas 2013).

However, these structural similarities should not be taken for granted. Even among the Baltic states a finer distinction can be drawn. This section of the study aims at illustrating the main parameters of favourable circumstances that appeared in Lithuanian's relations with Russia, prior to EU and NATO enlargement, and which could have led to the shift from existential politics to normal politics. With this section I also seek to push further the argumentation, which was previously discussed in the methodology section, of why a more narrow focus on Lithuania, among the Baltic states, is worthwhile.

It is important to note that the question of what stands for "more favourable circumstances" requires an antithesis to build the argumentation on, which will be provided in this section. It makes a case for ontological security perspective, because, given these favourable circumstances, IR mainstream theories with the focus on the physical security concerns would expect an improvement in Lithuanian-Russian relations, however these expectations proved to be unfounded. In regard to the favourable circumstances, the case of Lithuania can be further distinguished from the other two Baltic states.

According to Grigas (2013), the ethnic composition of the country is the most frequently used independent variable which distinguishes Lithuania from its two Baltic neighbours. Due to the considerably smaller number of Russian speakers, the issue of ethnic minorities has never been of much significance in Lithuanian-Russian relations. According to the *Department of Statistics* (*Statistics Lithuania*), in 1989 Russians comprised 9.4 per cent of total population in Lithuania and by 2001 this number has

decreased to 6.3 per cent.[7] Although, it cannot be denied that certain issues have emerged throughout time, they were secondary and did not gain substantial political attention in the bilateral relations, unlike in Latvia and Estonia.

Additionally, after independence Vilnius exceptionally chose to adopt an inclusive approach in regard to citizenship policies for minorities residing in its territory. On the other hand, Latvia and Estonia, governed by hope to secure their internal stability, have adopted more conservative and exclusionary citizenship-related policies, leaving a substantial part of their inhabitants stateless. According to the Lithuanian citizenship law enforced in 1989 and a treaty signed between Lithuania and Russia in July 1991, all non-Lithuanians by ethnicity, who were residing in Lithuania before July 1991, could obtain citizenship without naturalization (Nørgaard and Johannsen 1999: 157). This resulted in over 90 per cent of ethnical Russians being automatically classified as Lithuanian citizens. As Šleivytė puts it, due to the country's high level of homogeneity in its population, Lithuania, as opposite to Latvia and Estonia, has been able to focus its political resources on other important issues, such as negotiations regarding Russian transit through Lithuania's territory, instead of being preoccupied with the ethnic one (2010: 156). The absence of ethnical controversies ensured "a high degree of coherence and stability, and significantly contributed to the process of fairly successful cooperation with Russia" throughout the 1990s (ibidem).

Another highlight in the first years after Lithuania had regained its independence was the bilateral agreement[8] signed between Lithuania and the Russian Soviet Republic in July 1991. Due to its content and time period, this political treaty with Russia was a great foreign policy achievement for Lithuania. Intriguingly, the preamble of this document officially recognized that the annexation in 1940 violated Lithuania's sovereignty and declared hope that the elimination of the consequences of the annexation would create conditions for mutual trust in the relations between Russia and Lithuania. In addition, in this treaty both parties agreed to respect each other's sovereignty as well territorial integrity

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[7]Population at the beginning of the year by ethnicity, the Department of Statistics of Lithuania, http://www.stat.gov.lt/en/home
[8] For more details on the 1991 Treaty refer to Mereckis and Morkveras (1998).

and border inviolability. To mark the 20th anniversary of this Lithuanian-Russia treaty, the Foreign Minister argued: "why today the relations between two neighbouring countries are not as they are supposed to be and as we would like them to be? [...] the only suitable and real master-key to the success of Lithuanian-Russian relations is [...] recorded in the July 29, 1991 agreement" (Ažubalis 2011b). In turn, Estonia and Latvia did not conclude similar political agreements with Russia, partly, according to Grigas, "due to outstanding territorial disagreements with Moscow and the fact that their leaders did not place the same importance on recognition of the occupation and receipt of compensation" (2013: 130-1).

Additionally, the negotiations over the process of the withdrawal of Russian troops from the territories of the Baltic states also constituted an essential part of state-building of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. Again, Lithuania's efforts to negotiate the withdrawal of the remaining troops with Russia proved to be more successful than the same process in Latvia and Estonia. Consequently, on August 31, 1993, one year before it entirely pulled out its troops from Latvia, Estonia and even reunited Germany, Russia completed the withdrawal of its military forces from Lithuania leaving more space for Lithuanian politicians to pursue their independent foreign policy course.[9] As a result, another major stumbling block to the development of closer cooperation between Lithuania and Russia had been removed. It can be argued that "neither the Kaliningrad transit issue nor the border issue nor the question of social guarantees for Russian military pensioners burdened the negotiations in an insurmountable manner" (Möller 2007: 135). Finally, due to Lithuania's flexible citizenship law and willingness to compromise on the Kaliningrad transit case, Russia did not have any pretext left for maintaining its military presence in Lithuania.

The issue of Russia's exclave Kaliningrad is important and exceptional by nature. As Šleivytė puts it, Kaliningrad Oblast has been "a tool [for Russia] to carry on the tradition of a great power" (2010: 158). Moreover, Lithuanian political elites clearly understood that the unsolved Kaliningrad question could, in the light of EU and NATO enlargement, become a pressing issue, potentially deterring Lithuania from the membership. Lithuania was concerned that EU and NATO enlargement to the East would

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[9] For example, in January 1994, the President of Lithuania A. M. Brazauskas sent an official letter to NATO Secretary General Manfred Wörner with a formal request for membership in NATO.

make Russia use unconventional strategies against Lithuania in order to free Kaliningrad Oblast from its geopolitical hostage. Thus, by all means Lithuania "sought to help mitigate Russian fears that the *oblast* might become closed or isolated" (Šleivytė 2010: 160). Lithuania started it by opening a consulate in Kaliningrad in 1994, which was in 1999 reconstructed into a Consulate General. This diplomatic effort was followed by the implementation of a visa-free regime between Lithuania and Kaliningrad, and Russian citizens that travel from the mainland to the exclave through Lithuania. Additionally, various people-to-people and business promotion initiatives have been established throughout the years.

In 2002 the Kaliningrad issue re-emerged in Lithuanian foreign policy agenda, when Lithuania had to further progress in adopting the EU *Acquis*, which also included the Schengen Agreement. This resulted in the cancellation of visa-free travels. However, notwithstanding Russia's clear discontent, this time the issue was successfully managed within the triangle of Russia, Lithuania and the EU. For Lithuania the membership in the EU and NATO meant a new stage and better position in negotiation of important issues with Russia. Hence, despite other issues related to Kaliningrad, such as military enhancement, the new agreement with Russia over transit question was ingenuously depicted as a "success story" by Lithuanian foreign policy elites. The Defence Minister, in turn, argued "the question of transit to Kaliningrad could be the latest example, how we can peacefully resolve even the most difficult disputes" (Linkevičius 2004a). The same stance can be observed in the President's rhetoric as well (Adamkus 2008d).

It is also important to note that the absence of border agreements between Estonia and Russia as well as Latvia and Russia provided the Kremlin with an advantageous position to exploit the missing border treaties as a pretext to postpone the withdrawal of its military forces from Estonian and Latvian territories and hinder their path to transatlantic integration (Möller 2007: 70). On the other hand, Lithuania managed to negotiate the completion of the border treaty with Russia much earlier, in 1997. This agreement which delimitates the 227-km-long border was ratified by the Seimas and the Duma in 1991 and 2003 respectively.

Regarding the domestic politics, according to Vitkus (2006: 186), in a very short period of time Lithuania managed to test different tactical approaches in relations with Russia – the categorical (that of Landsbergis), the moderate (Brazauskas), and the "solid" (Adamkus). Perhaps, the biggest hopes to normalize the relations with Russia were raised in 1993 when the former leader of Lithuania's Communist Party Brazauskas, was elected as the first president of newly independent Lithuania. It was expected that his moderate stance and the former high position in the Communist Party would help to establish a constructive dialogue with Russia. In contrast to Latvia and Estonia, who managed to make a clean break with the Soviet past in their founding elections, "Lithuania stunned the world by being the first post-Soviet country to return the former communists (renamed as the Democratic Labour Party) to power" (Kasekamp 2010: 174). In the end, the Baltic states became more aware that the continuation of the persistently conflictual approach towards Russia could be perceived as counterproductive by the older member-states in the EU and NATO (Möller 2007: 256; Kværnø and Rasmussen 2005). Thus, Lithuania consciously made an effort to downplay the Russian threat and adapted its rhetorical position[10] in the EU and NATO pre-accession phase. Finally, a growing economic interdependence between Russia and Lithuania also demanded more pragmatic approach from Vilnius.

To conclude, this chapter briefly explores the patterns of Lithuanian-Russian relations before the EU and NATO enlargement. This analysis helps to substantiate the previously made claim that by the time Lithuania joined the EU and NATO, the overall condition for the major physical security to be solved has been set. Two parties had agreed upon the border delimitation and the withdrawal of the ex-Soviet military forces. Also, the relatively small size of Russian-speakers as well as Lithuania's excellent manoeuvre to grant citizenship to all residents of Lithuania created no pretext for serious concerns to

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[10] For example, Lithuania was the first former Soviet republic to ask for membership in NATO, in an official letter to NATO Secretary-General Wörner, in January, 1994. In order not to provoke the giant neighbor, Russia, in the midst of important negotiations regarding Kaliningrad transit and border treaty, Lithuania's President, Brazauskas in the application letter emphasized that Lithuania was striving to "contribute to the security of the North Atlantic area", instead of clearly noting that this move aimed at mitigating the direct threat from Russia. Letter from H.E. Algirdas Brazauskas, President of the Republic of Lithuania to Manfred Wörner, NATO Secretary-General, 1994-01-04,
https://www.urm.lt/uploads/default/documents/uzienio_politika/NATO/pareiskimas.jpg

emerge on the Russian side. The EU and NATO accession, it is fair to say, in terms of physical security, has ensured an unprecedented level of physical security for Lithuania. All these factors point in the direction of favourable circumstances, in regard to which the improvement in the Lithuanian-Russian relations could have been expected. As noted above, the conditions were favourable for a "transformed" relationship and a qualitative leap towards a more cooperative stance *vis-à-vis* Russia. However, as the following section will show, even after the entry to the EU and NATO, Lithuania remained attached to conflictual routines with Russia. However, from the point of view of materialist interpretation of state behaviour these routinized actions were perceived as seemingly irrational in the context of the formed favourable circumstances.

5.2 "RETURN TO EUROPE": INSECURITY WHILE INCREASING SECURITY

The transatlantic integration has become one of the main strategic hallmarks of the foreign policy of the Baltic states. EU and NATO enlargement in 2004 not only created new opportunities for the foreign policy making of the Baltic states but also significantly alleviated the security climate for the Baltic states. The EU and NATO membership was seen by Lithuania as the reassurance of territorial integrity and sovereignty as well as an instrument, which could potentially increase the country's negotiating power vis-à-vis Russia. I argue that the pursuit of the "return to Europe" narrative aimed at providing Lithuania with both ontological and physical security. This section seeks to analyze how the "return to Europe" narrative has strongly conditioned a certain direction for the Lithuanian foreign policy makers. I also seek to examine how this narrative was perceived by the Lithuanian political elite in terms of ontological security-seeking.

Overall, since Lithuania regained its independence in 1990, its foreign policy narrative has been developed within a triangle of Eastern Europe, fully-fledged transatlantic integration and Russia, where the latter two comprised the major part of Lithuania's foreign policy and diplomatic efforts. It is not a surprise that all three pillars have been inextricably linked to each other, thus making the EU and NATO accession to implicitly and explicitly affect the country's relations with Russia.

Moreover, the Lithuanian political elite not only expected that after the events in 2004 Lithuanian-Russian relations would improve, but they also anticipated that Lithuania would play an active role in developing EU-Russian relations. This expectation can be exemplified by the resolution regarding foreign policy vectors adopted on May 1, 2004 by the Seimas, Lithuania's Parliament. This resolution affirmed that Lithuania will seek to "actively participate in the formation of a mutually beneficial partnership between European Union and Russia" (Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, 2004). However, these expectations proved to be unfounded. While evaluating the development of Lithuanian-Russian relations after 2004, it can be argued that notwithstanding re-occurring turbulences and exchanges of sharp rhetoric the bilateral relations between the two countries have remained *unstably stable*. What becomes evident throughout the analyzed discourse is the continuity of the negatively stable relations with Russia, rather than a drastic change.

As it has been argued before, for nearly a decade the driving force for Lithuania's foreign policy strategy has been a single and strategically fundamental goal − membership in the EU and NATO (Gurstis 2006; Mälksoo 2006, Lamoreaux and Galbreath 2008). Its newly acquired EU and NATO membership concluded a long and complex process that had begun in 1993-1994, when Lithuania declared the Euro-Atlantic integration to be its main foreign policy priority. As Foreign Minister, Valionis (2004b), puts it "Lithuania emerged from the aspiration of its people to belong to Europe, to be part of the integrated area of shared values. This aim has not changed much over the past centuries". In order to implement this pivotal foreign policy goal all national resources and diplomatic efforts were subordinated, including both reforms in domestic politics and the redefinition of the foreign policy agenda. In a demonstration of its determination to be reunited with Europe, Lithuania even chose to change its time zone, moving from the Eastern European Time Zone to Central European Time Zone, though later the country had to return back to its previous time zone.

It is worth noting that the strategic goal of membership in the EU and NATO was primarily aimed at reshaping Lithuania's security identity, which, in principle, included a "return to the Europe/European family" narrative (Adamkus 2008b; Paksas 2003a; Paksas 2003b) and drifting away from the zone of Russia's influence (Miniotaitė 2006). Through

the lens of ontological security, survival by belonging to Europe and self-understanding of being European was strongly conditioning the foreign policy narrative of Lithuania. Interestingly, it can be argued that in this period the requirement of physical and ontological security pointed in the same direction, towards the Euro-Atlantic integration. The membership in the EU and NATO was perceived as the key step to ensuring both ontological and physical security needs.

It can be argued that the notion of "return to the European family" has been a constituent element of Lithuanian foreign policy narrative which periodically reappeared in discourses of Lithuanian political establishment. For example, President Adamkus in his inaugural address to the nation said that Lithuania is "anchoring itself firmly in the family of Western democracies" (2004a). Again, in his other inaugural speech to the Seimas, Adamkus stressed that "we have built a new state […], which has become a member of the family of prospering democracies of the European Union and which has become a reliable ally in the North Atlantic Alliance" (2004b). The same narrative was also persistently reappearing in the President's annual addresses to the nation. As an illustration, Adamkus in one of his annual statements noted that the accession to the EU and NATO "marks a historic return of our nation and of our state to the Western civilization, which has been our home for hundreds of years, and from which we have been separated by force" (2003a). This illustrates that it is not only a matter of physical survival, but also belonging to Europe and being "who we are - Europeans" provided certainty for Lithuania. To add, the notion of Lithuania's "return to the European family" in foreign policy storyline remained firm in later years as well.[11] To continue with the same example, this fragment of the foreign policy narrative was successfully supplying Lithuania's identity needs internally (in addresses to the nation or statehood days) and externally (official state visits abroad[12]).

In this way it was essential to show that Lithuania, together with the other Baltic states, had not only been physically isolated from the *European milieu* for decades, but also a conflicting identity was imposed on them (Sovietization and denationalization of

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[11] For instance, see the speech by Valinskas, Speaker of the Seimas, on the 5th anniversary of Lithuania's EU membership (2009a).

[12] For instance, see the speech by President Adamkus (2008b) during the official state visit to Estonia in 2008.

Lithuanian identity). According to Gurstis, initially the identity transformation of Lithuania was proceeding relatively smoothly because "there was always a strong benchmark of the new identity – sovereign Lithuania in the family of western countries" (2006: 16) and this was reinforced by the belief that Lithuania would no longer have to worry so much about its national security problems, because it thought the membership would automatically solve the issues (Juknevičienė 2011b). Thus, it can be argued that the transatlantic integration was perceived with an aim to solve both physical and ontological security problems. It echoes the previously discussed assumption that in the pre-accession phase ontological and physical security pointed in the same direction; therefore methodologically it was difficult to distinguish them from each other.

The 2004 entry to the Euro-Atlantic structures was perceived as *an insurance policy* against the future Russian bitterness and hostilities (Valionis 2006a; also see Lamoreaux and Galbreath 2008). Paksas, the Lithuanian President, in his speech at the celebration of Lithuania's Statehood Day declared that "we are entering a new stage of development, when Lithuania becomes a fully-fledged and responsible member of the European family. Lithuania has never been as secure and has never had as many opportunities to strengthen itself as today" (2003a). However, later statements by the Lithuanian political elites revealed that the feeling of insecurity did not go away: "threats that have been disturbing us have not disappeared anywhere. We are safe, however many unsolved issues remain in the region" (Adamkus 2006a). It can be argued that the feeling of uncertainty rooted in ontological insecurity, rather than its physical counterpart. What becomes evident here is that, although, previously both notions of ontological and physical security were simultaneously evolving along each other, however at this point we can see how the gap between the perceptions of ontological and physical security opens up.

2004 marks a historic year for Lithuania. Over a period of one month Lithuania accomplished its decade-long strategic goal of rejoining the West. Additionally, the pro-Western turn increased the country's physical security to the largest possible extent and presented a shield from potential physical threats to Lithuania's sovereignty. The "return to Europe" narrative strongly conditioned Lithuanian foreign policy orientation; it provided a clear goal to strive for and a basis for understanding the Self. However, soon after the post-

accession euphoria had faded away, the confusion about the new future foreign policy goals followed. It can also be concluded that, despite increasing physical security to an unprecedented level, it, at the same time – paradoxically – led to Lithuania "experiencing (ontological) insecurity while increasing its (physical) security". To better understand the importance of the membership in the EU and NATO this analysis now turns to the examination of the concept of uncertainty and its effect on Lithuania's agency.

5.3 UNCERTAINTY MODE ACTIVATED: CONSTRUCTION OF ALTERNATIVE NARRATIVES

When the major goal of transatlantic integration was achieved and the "return to Europe" was successfully completed, it became clear that there was a need to establish a new vision in order to fill in the emerging vacuum in the *raison d'être* of Lithuanian foreign policy. This need derived from a growing sense of ontological insecurity, which started hindering Lithuania's agency. In this section I examine the sense of uncertainty and its implications which arguably an overwhelmed Lithuanian foreign policy narrative after 2004.

It can be argued that EU and NATO enlargement posed a puzzle for Lithuanian foreign policy makers. While, on the one hand, it has increased certainty, in terms of ensuring greater physical security, on the other hand, it also raised uncertainty because the narrative of the "return to Europe" became no longer eligible. This means that after having returned to Europe, Lithuania started losing its placard of "who we are", thus the sense of self-identity became radically disrupted. Following the previously discussed assumption by Mitzen (2006a) which suggests that a continued agency requires the cognitive certainty, this way some profound forms of uncertainty can threaten an actor's ontological security (or security of the Self), I argue that Lithuania sought to prevent lapsing into a state of ontological insecurity by clinging to alternative narratives which would provide that certainty in times of transformation, when new ends were yet unclear. What becomes obvious from the analyzed foreign policy discourse is that the Lithuanian narrative was formed on the basis of the policy triangle – EU-NATO-Russia. While the EU and NATO goals were achieved, relations with Russia remained the last component of this triangle which was still connecting Lithuanian foreign policy identity to the old narrative. It can be

argued that the routinized relations with Russia turned out to be a point of reference to Lithuania's foreign policy narrative, which continued providing the "idea" of the Self.

Having in mind the new reality after obtaining a Euro-Atlantic membership, a certain vacuum emerged in Lithuania's foreign policy agenda. Uncertainty and the question "but what to do now" filled this policy vacuum. Uncertainty about the future goals and the need to immediately find new priorities in the country's foreign policy scheme was often spelled out in the speeches by high officials. It is paradoxical that reaching the main foreign policy milestones and ensuring physical security to the greatest extent possible had actually led Lithuania to experience a high level of anxiety and uneasiness. From the point of view of ontological security, a stable and continuous foreign policy narrative provided a cognitive environment. In this knowable environment an actor could systematically relate foreign policy ends to means and enjoy a high level of predictability and behavioural certainty of whatever international affairs may bring. But when these linear narratives become disconnected (in our case - major foreign policy goals are achieved), it becomes unclear for an agent how to further pursue its ends. As a consequence, in order to counter ontological insecurity stemming out from uncertainty, the foreign policy elites may either come up with new narratives, which have to be successful and accepted; or they may revert to routines, even if it means structuring their behavior in a problematically conflictual way.

The uncertainty about Lithuania's self-concept could have been sensed already a couple of months after the accession. Valionis, Foreign Minister, delivered a speech in which he concluded that "there is a long road ahead until we will understand the country's needs and tasks" (2004a). Perhaps, the most obvious acknowledgment of uncertainty was expressed by President Adamkus who said: "today we are entering into a new world of numerous opportunities and full of *fearsome uncertainty*. We need clear milestones mapping out the road to *genuine values*, we need *good memory* and will in order *not to stumble* and hesitate" (2003b; emphasis added). If one reads this statement through the lens of ontological security, it becomes clear that the uncertainty, which emerged after the transatlantic integration, instilled an inclination for Lithuania to cling to the old routines. These routines where performed in persistently adversarial behaviour towards Russia, in order to sustain its transforming identity and ensure ontological security. Even a few years

later Lithuanian politicians were still locked in the process of Lithuanian foreign policy narrative formation. President Adamkus talked that Lithuania "reached this [membership] goal by working consistently and persistently […]. After achieving these goals, do we know today what we want from our country, our politicians and our diplomats?" (2008a). This shows that the euphoria that initially accompanied the membership in the EU and NATO was soon followed by a deep sense of experienced uncertainty and, consequently, urge to decide upon a new course of foreign policy.

To support the argument outlined above it can be argued that uncertainty about the continuation of the Self grew even prior to EU and NATO enlargement in 2004. Valionis already in 2002 encouraged everyone to get involved into discussion on "what is next? How we will define Lithuanian foreign policy priorities after the EU and NATO accession?" (2001a). A couple of years later he admitted that the "Euro-Atlantic integration has brought us to the world that still remains rather unfamiliar to us […]. It is not easy to distinguish new priorities in this context" (2004a). The theoretical account of this study suggests that when ontological insecurity, induced by the sense of growing uncertainty, increases, political agents "attempt to *securitize subjectivity*, which means an intensified search for *one* stable identity" (Kinnvall 2004: 749, emphasis in original). It is not a mere coincidence that the talks about Lithuania's new foreign policy have begun and intensified already before 2004.

As a result, foreign policy in Lithuania gradually became a polarizing issue in the country's politics. Again, to reiterate, this increasing foreign policy debate occurred against the backdrop of achieving foreign policy goals and success story in this respect. Disturbed by creeping uncertainty and governed by the need to devise a new point of reference to its self-identity, Lithuania started setting up new guidelines for foreign policy actions and composing alternative narratives. Valionis (2004b) referred to it as Lithuania's quest for its "permanent interests […] which will now be developed not just for the next decade but for the next twenty or thirty years". The same message was conveyed by President Adamkus (2004b) in his inaugural address: "today we plan our foreign policy for decades and not for just ten years." This search for "permanent interests" for at least decades indicates how emotionally significant a continuous and stable state's concept of Self is.

The new goals were first laid out in the statement by Paulauskas, Acting President of Lithuania, at Vilnius University in May 24, 2004 which was later expanded and finalized into other key foreign policy statements and documents.[13] These new foreign policy guidelines can be summarized into three following categories: (1) active and creative role in the EU and NATO; (2) pragmatic neighbourhood policy; and the last but not the least ambitious (3) Lithuania – a regional leader. As Paulauskas (2004a) argued, in his new vision "Lithuania is that of a country which through the quality of its membership of the European Union and NATO and good neighbour policy has become a leader of the region. I have a vision of Lithuania as a centre of the region, with Vilnius as a regional capital". Ideas of promoting Lithuania as an active member of international community were quickly absorbed by Lithuanian political "entrepreneurs" – Adamkus said that "active foreign policy is a key to security and wellbeing of our country and citizens" (2005a); "We will reach them [goals] only by being initiative members of the European club, not by being submissive listeners (Adamkus 2006a).

This new foreign policy doctrine was supposed "to give Lithuanian politics ambition and soundness" in the context of the EU and NATO affairs as well as to ensure a growing participatory role of the state not only in the region but also on the international stage (Valionis 2004a). Nevertheless, the boldest task of becoming a regional leader was not as simple as it appeared to be at the beginning and soon the doctrine was abandoned. This enthusiastic goal started waning around 2006, when Lithuania plunged into debating other important issues. For example, in 2006 Lithuania widely debated over the sale of the Maižeikių nafta oil refinery to Lukoil, the second largest Russian oil company. Furthermore, Lithuania wanted to secure its position as a front-runner among all new EU member states by being the first country (together with Slovenia) to join the Eurozone only three years after the membership. However, in 2006 Lithuania failed its bid to adopt euro

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[13] For details refer to speech by Paulauskas, on "Lithuania's New Foreign Policy" (2004a); Speech by Adamkus, President of Lithuania at the Annual Meeting with the Heads of the Lithuanian Diplomatic Mission (2004c); Speech by Valionis, Foreign Minister, at the Annual Meeting with the Heads of the Lithuanian Diplomatic Mission (2004a); See also the article, by Valionis, prepared on the basis of his speech (2004b) as well as an agreement among the Lithuanian political parties on the main foreign policy goals and objectives for 2004-2008, signed at the President's office on October 5, 2004 and agreement among Lithuanian parliamentary parties on security policy for 2005-2008, aiming at the security of Lithuania, signed on 17 March, 2004.

after its inflation missed the EU target by 0,1 percentage point. This bitter experience lessened Lithuania's ambition to further continue the doctrine of "regional leader".

Another alternative narrative that emerged in the wake of the "return to Europe" was realized in the notion of "finally being *good European*", which perfectly aligned with the "Lithuania as a regional centre" doctrine. A new pilot foreign policy course of being a "good European" also meant a more constructive approach towards Russia. Lithuanian political leaders portrayed Lithuania as an active middleman in the EU-Russia relations – "Lithuania can help the West to widely open the gates to Russia" (Valionis 2004c). However, it can be argued that eventually this narrative also did not succeed, because the routinized foreign policy stance towards Russia appeared to be too essential to be replaced with a more moderate approach.

To look for other substantial reasons why these alternative foreign policy courses have not been successfully incorporated into Lithuania's major foreign policy narrative, I refer to Subotic's (2015) argument that foreign policy "entrepreneurs" had become rhetorically trapped into the existing narratives (a so-called lock-in effect), therefore alternative competing narratives did not seem coherent or compelling enough to fully propel the transformation in the foreign policy narrative. As a result, more and more often the discourse of Lithuanian foreign policy makers was turned back to their starting line - "Lithuania must preserve its identity in Europe" and Lithuania's "national values must be respected and national interests must be heeded" (Valionis 2004a). Adamkus urged that it is necessary "to emphasize the values constituting national security of the country and the basis for existence of the nation […]. Only a strong hold on national identity and patriotism will allow us to retain self-awareness, preserve historical memory" (2008c). This resulted in a gradual shift back towards a "Russia-as-threat" narrative. It can be argued that the alternative narratives were not accepted due to the strong institutionalization of the grand narrative. This institutionalization was entrenched in the legal system already in the 1990s, as it was discussed in the previous chapter, therefore to replace the master narrative actually meant "to deny legal foundations of the state" (Bagdonas 2011: 23). Additionally, being a "good European" would have meant altering "the Russian component" in Lithuania's narrative, however, doing so would have also meant changing the notion of "who we are",

which was so firmly embedded in the "return to Europe" story. This way it becomes clear that the "return to Europe" narrative did not "remove" the sense of antagonism in Lithuania's approach towards Russia. Lithuanian foreign policy makers realized that two storylines ("returning to Europe" and consequently being a "good European") that previously fully aligned with each other, suddenly become contradicting.

It can be argued that the year of 2004 marked not only a fundamental increase in physical security of Lithuania, but also a raise in uncertainty[14] about state Self and a new foreign policy purpose. This section demonstrated Lithuania's efforts to recreate the sense of continuity of its foreign policy in order to remain ontologically secure. A durable state identity requires a stable narrative. However, Lithuania's efforts to develop an alternative narrative to provide a cognitive bridge between the challenging changes and policy ends proved to be unsuccessful. However, as demonstrated in the following section, the sense of stability and continuity of the Self was reproduced by routinizing adversarial relations with Russia.

6   REPRESENTATION OF RUSSIA IN LITHUANIAN FOREIGN POLICY NARRATIVE

In the light of the previous discussion it can be argued that deep uncertainty not only makes it difficult for political agents to act rationally, according to estimated risks and costs, but it also reduces their confidence both in their own agency and in other actors around. Thus, states with already impaired basic trust in other actors feel the urgent need to secure their self-conception.

Lithuania's membership in the EU and NATO was perceived as the greatest opportunity to finally eliminate all physical threats and return to "normal politics" with Russia. Olekas, Defence Minister, concluded that by joining NATO Lithuania "entered the

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[14] President Adamkus mentioned "identity crisis" in his annual addresses to the nation in two consecutive years (2007a, 2008c).

new stage of the defence [...]. The membership in NATO is one of the greatest political achievements of Lithuania [...] Belonging to the most secure Alliance in the world is an opportunity to act and assess the country's interests in the broader context" (2007a). It could have been expected that the sudden war between Georgia and Russia in 2008 as well as the elections to the Lithuanian Parliament in 2008 and the presidential elections in 2009 would bring changes to this rather optimistic assessment of Lithuania's security environment. The Homeland Union – Lithuanian Christian Democrats Party, a conservative party which is often seen as the biggest critic of Russia, won the parliamentary ballot in Lithuania, but the same confident attitude about the security environment prevailed and was regularly reappearing in the political texts. For instance, Juknevičienė, the Conservative Defence Minister, affirmed this position by saying that "today we do not see any direct threats, because we are members of one of the most powerful defence organizations, NATO" (2009a). This illustrated that the alleviation of physical security concerns can be also observed in the political actors' own assessments. Despite this prevailing attitude, the discursive images of Russia as an existential threat to ontological security remained an observable tendency in the Lithuanian foreign policy narrative. In order to better understand the representation of Russia in the Lithuanian foreign policy narrative, two observable tendencies are worth emphasizing in this chapter.

First, when it comes to pursuing relations with Lithuania's most significant neighbour, Russia, Lithuanian foreign policy makers frequently highlight two different policy directions to follow – either a value-based or pragmatic foreign policy agenda. In this regard, the pursuit of a value-based policy means openly criticizing Russia's human rights violations, lack of democracy in this country as well as falsification and alteration of history. On the other hand, the proponents of the pragmatic approach argue that such an emotionally charged attitude does nothing to improve the relations, thus they emphasize the importance of maintaining good economic ties with Russia and the pursuit of material interests. The tension between moral and material interests envelops Lithuania's foreign policy vision and divides foreign policy makers into several groups: those, who prioritize a pragmatic approach; those, who are willing to pursue a morally charged policy; and those, who officially advocate for a balanced approach (see Bagdonas 2011).

Taking into consideration the negative public opinion of Russia in Lithuania, it can be argued that overly pragmatic and "business as usual" position towards Russia can often become politically dangerous in the domestic affairs. As an illustration, the Russian-born and the current Lithuanian member of the European Parliament, Uspaskich, has been criticized for shady economic and political ties with Russia. It was also alleged that he fled to Russia in 2006 after he received the accusations of fraudulent financial management in Lithuania. Another more blatant example is the unprecedented impeachment of the President Paksas in 2004.[15] Paksas became the first European leader to be removed from office as a result of an impeachment process. The Lithuanian Parliament impeached Paksas for violating his oath and the Constitution through his dealings with a Russian businessman, who made a significant financial contribution to Paksas's election campaign and in exchange was later granted Lithuanian citizenship. This demonstrates the salience of the notion of "Russia-as-threat", in the Lithuanian domestic discourse.

Such cases make Lithuanian politicians concerned that any pragmatic rapprochement with Russia would increase Russia's ability to influence Lithuania's domestic politics. Ušackas, Foreign Minister, illustrated this concern by stating that Lithuania is interested in "developing a political dialogue with Russia, intensifying economic, cultural connection as well as enhancing the cooperation in tourism and sport, however, these connections cannot be used to camouflage the influence in Lithuanian domestic politics" (2009a).

In this context, the analyzed political texts often show that there is a certain belief among the Lithuanian foreign policy makers that building a relationship with Russia on moral standards and Western values would increase the predictability and certitude of actions carried out by Russia. In this regard, Lithuanian politicians stressed that if Russia improved its democratic performance and showed a respectful attitude towards its neighbors, Lithuania would be ready to intensify the cooperation. Such an attitude towards the cooperation based on norms and values can be observed across time and at European as

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[15] More recently, in January 2015, the former Lithuanian Foreign Minister and current Head of the delegation of the EU to Russia, Ušackas, was reported playing basketball with the administration chief of the Russian President Putin. This ambiguous "basketball diplomacy" with the Russian officials, just few days after the rebels' attacks against civilians in Mariupol, was heavily criticized in Lithuania.

well as on national levels. It can be illustrated with a quotation by the former Foreign Minister Vaitiekūnas, who argued that "an internal respect towards human rights and democratic principles is inextricably linked with respect towards neighbours as well as towards a transparent and long-term relationship between Russia and the EU; we believe in a democratic Russia, we also believe in the future of EU-Russia relations and as neighbours of Russia we are the most concerned" (2007a). Correspondingly, Lithuania's Defence Minister claimed that "the partnership with Russia will have to be built on the respect towards democratic values and towards the sovereignty, of the states in the Euro-Atlantic space, equality, mutual trust, transparency and predictability (Juknevičienė 2010a).

It can be also argued that sometimes both pragmatic and value-based policy lines are often presented as incompatible in relations with Russia. For example, Degutienė, the Speaker of the Lithuanian Parliament, argued that "after clearly visible threats have vanished, eternal and spiritual values seem to have retreated to the background. Today we value material things only" (2010a). She continued encouraging other politicians not to undermine these moral values and norms "for the sake of narrow ephemeral interests, a cheaper cubic meter of gas or a kilowatt-hour of electricity. We have to learn to live a free and dignified life and defend our state and independence, as well as to continue to stay on the road we have been on since the times of our national revival" (ibidem). In the same spirit, the Speaker of the Parliament criticized the European leaders by saying that "the old members states of the EU, first of all, seek to communicate with Russia in the language of pragmatism while trying to avoid listening to those countries, which, after experiencing great material and especially moral losses, broke free from the USSR" (Juršėnas 2008a). Correspondingly, President Adamkus in his speech clearly presented a binary of ontological vs. physical security: "in the EU's relations with Russia values are exceptionally important. Without them we are risking to establish such a relationship, which, first of all, would be based on cubic meters of gas and oil" (2008e). On the other hand, Ušackas admitted that very often this "moral vs. pragmatic" dichotomy is artificially created and "value-based and pragmatic policies are two sides of the same coin" (2009a). These quotations signify the salience of the contradiction between the pragmatic and value-based policy lines in the Lithuanian foreign policy narrative.

The second tendency which defines Russia's representation in Lithuanian foreign policy texts is the juxtaposition of the "Self" and the "Other". It can be argued that this persistent tendency of Othering of Russia in Lithuanian domestic and foreign discourses not only stems from Lithuanian identity, but it also, at the same time, constructs this identity. This tendency has much in common with Kinnvall's account which suggests that states construct a comforting story (narrative) about the Self by signifying the Other (2004). In this way, Lithuania established its certain identity traits by juxtaposing itself with Russia and creating a negative mirror image. This also helped to reassert Lithuania's ontological security and stable understanding of Self by using the notion of Other/Russia as an essential component in its foreign policy narrative.

It is also important to take into account the multiple different identity circles to which Lithuania relates itself with. Tulmets in her analysis of a Baltic foreign policy identity makes a distinction between "external circles of affiliation" and "internal circles of affiliation" (2014: 96). She argues that the former characterizes alliances or communities to which countries belong or have belonged before, while the latter stands for their cultural and historical identification (ibidem). Notwithstanding a blurry line between these two circles, they are both clearly articulated in the speeches by Lithuanian politicians. Thus, in this study I will firstly discuss how Lithuania's affiliation to the external circles affects its foreign policy narrative. Then, in order to maintain a fluent and clear argumentation, the historical and cultural identification will be discussed in the following section.

Notwithstanding its peripheral geographical location in the EU, Lithuania perceives itself as a fully-fledged member of the privileged club of "democratic and prospering" countries (Adamkus 2004b). It is seen by Lithuania that Europeanization has built the channel for downloading and consolidating Western values which include human rights, peaceful coexistence, market economy, the rule of law as well as fair and equal treatment to all of its citizens. What is more, Lithuania continues seeing the Euro-Atlantic integration as the main source of security and stability – "we have permanently changed Lithuania's geopolitical position [...] we ensured that, what Lithuania was lacking for centuries – reliable security with the most favourable conditions and for the cheapest price" (Valionis 2006a). The large part of this discourse is embedded in the "return to the European family"

narrative, which presupposes that Lithuania has always been European and only due to the historical injustice for fifty years it had to be a part of the civilization that it did not identified itself with – "we kept to our nation's values and no soviet official or politician could offer a trade-off" (Muntianas 2007a). Thus, Lithuanian identity is situated on a single axis of sameness-difference, where the post-Soviet world dominated by Russia is established as the Other.

The analyzed political speeches show that Lithuanian elites often draw an equality sign between modern Russia and the Soviet Union, stating that Russia not only inherited rights and privileges of the Soviet Union, but the same way it also obtained responsibilities (Paulauskas 2004b; Vatiekūnas 2007c). Characteristically, as the terrain of memory of the Soviet past remains deeply rooted in Lithuanian foreign policy identity, responsibilities inherited by Russia from the Soviet Union are often paired with guilt and shame – "there is a very strong identification of Russia as the Soviet Union in the mentality of Lithuanians, which sometimes marginalizes Lithuania's politics" (Vaitiekūnas 2007c). This illustrates the salience of the Other/Russia in the foreign policy narrative of Lithuania.

As it has been introduces in the theory part, the state maintains the ontological stability of its Self by simply differentiating itself from Other. However, the Self/Other categorization does not necessarily always lead to the securitization of the figure of Other. In the case of Lithuania, the political elites confirm that "old threats have vanished" (Valionis, 2005a), however the relations with Russia remain situated on the same old axis of sameness-difference which ensures the continuity of Lithuania's foreign policy identity. This echoes the previously discussed assumption that even contextual changes in the domestic affairs (e.g. elections and power shift in the government) as well as in the international arena (e.g. the Russian-Georgian conflict in 2008 and the Russian reset) did not significantly alleviate the routinized discursive strategies by Lithuanian politicians against Russia. In other words, Lithuanian political elites kept arguing that Lithuania was no longer facing any direct threats (see Juknevičienė 2009a), however the value-based foreign policy continuously prevailed and was often structured in a confrontational way. This shows that even in different geopolitical circumstances Lithuania cannot stop Othering Russia and move to "normal politics", because Lithuania's very identity depends on its

relation to Russia. Instead of normalizing the relationship with Russia, Lithuania changed the conception of its security. Security of the Self became "with the Other/Russia" rather than "against the Other/Russia". It can be illustrated with the statement by Juknevičienė: "Russia is a very big neighbour, with an immense territory. And of course Russia has played, now plays, and will continue to play an important role in our region [...]. It is evident that we cannot ensure complete regional stability and security without Russia's will and determination to support it" (Juknevičienė 2010b; see also Vaitiekūnas 2007a).

For the most part, there is a link between a value-based approach and a Self/Other identification in Lithuanian foreign policy identity. The narrative analysis of Lithuanian foreign policy illustrates the emphasis placed by the political elite on the discourses about the promotion of the Western values in Eastern Europe, including Russia. This inevitably creates two categories – a morally superior identity of being a democratic country as opposed to the inferior identity of Others acting less democratically – and externalizes the difference and danger of placing them outside Lithuania. This way, the externalization of difference and danger reproduces the distinction between "internal" and "external" by juxtaposing a unified and orderly "inside" to a chaotic and different "outside", and hence secures the state's existence (Rumelili 2004: 35; for broader discussion on the externalization of threats refer to Campbell 1998).

What is more, a notable distinction can be also drawn between two different types of analyzed political speeches and statements. First, speeches that were addressed nationwide on various occasions of national importance (i.e. the Freedom Defenders' Day, Day of Restoration of Independence on February 16 and March 11 as well as the Statehood Day) were more often charged with inimical and emotional messages as well as they had stronger references to the common history with Russia. On the other hand, those speeches that were presented to the diplomatic corpus and officials of the country and involved in the discussion on the key matters of foreign policy were usually characterized by restrained rhetoric as well as diplomatic and indirect language. This finding echoes Subotic's theoretical assumption (see page 24) that the country's political elites tend to selectively activate certain elements of a specific narrative, which serves a political purpose to transmit a message and mobilize the audience. At the same time, Lithuanian politicians deactivate

those aspects of their discursive strategies that can contradict with the foreign policy narrative. This would explain why the statements targeted towards the broader international audiences occasionally appear less provocative (i.e. shows an attempt to align with the narrative of being a "good European") and confrontational in comparison to speeches addressed to the nation.

The selective activation of the elements in the narratives illustrates that the narration acquires a strategic function, because policy makers design it to provide meanings to policy actions that help to maintain ontological security. In this context, a supplementary argument holds that Lithuanian foreign policy elites understood that Lithuania's constant adversarial stance towards Russia did not fully correspond with Lithuania's "return to the West" narrative. Vaitiekūnas, Lithuanian Foreign Minister, shared this assumption by arguing that Lithuania's sharp policy line towards its problematic neighbour "isolates Lithuania not only from Russia, but also sometimes causes misunderstandings with its own allies" (2007c). This corresponds to the initial expectation that the membership in the EU and NATO will increase Lithuania's negotiating power vis-à-vis Russia, however Lithuania needs to occasionally tone down its sharp rhetoric in order not to be perceived as a trouble maker and a "one-issue" state by the rest of the Western allies. This discourse can be aligned with the argument that the alternative narrative of Lithuania being a "good European" was not favoured by the Lithuanian political elites. The narrative appeared to be unsuccessful because after having returned back to Europe, Lithuanian elites discovered that this "return" did not satisfy all the triangular dimensions of the grand narrative, thus the element of "relations with Russia" remained contradictory between European and Lithuanian stances.

Another defining feature of the speeches given by and to the government officials is an observable attempt by Lithuania to finally accept the country's geopolitical location as well as an imminent proximity of Russia. As far as the relationship with Russia is concerned, Russia is generally perceived as a neighbour Lithuania cannot ignore (Ušackas 2009a, 2009b; Vaitiekūnas 2007b, 2007c). As Vaitiekūnas puts it "Lithuania and Russia are neighbours and neighbours have to coexist well and respect each other" (Vaitiekūnas 2007b; also see Adamkus 2008e). Similar articulation can be found in the texts by Foreign

Minister Ažubalis (2012a) who even elaborated the understanding of a neighbour – "neighbourhood has to be satisfying […]. Neighbourhood is a mutual connection which helps to co-exist and realize vital national needs".

To conclude, it can be argued that Russia's representation in Lithuania's foreign policy narrative can be characterized by a firm dichotomy of Self/Other. Additionally, relations with Russia are often based on the distinction between the value-based and pragmatic policies, which appear to be incompatible. This illustrate that Lithuania's perception of relationship with Russia is ultimately linked to identity-based factors. These factors align with the narration of Lithuania and result in a maintained consistent Self-concept. Finally, the narrative analysis of the political texts shows that Lithuania, after the entry to the EU and NATO, did not chose to redirect its focus on new threats or to re-invent a new "opponent" image, but maintained relations with Russia as a "perfect target" for routinization. Consequently, more pragmatic narratives (in terms of relations with Russia), such as "Lithuania as a regional centre" and "good European", did not succeed because they were not able to fully correspond with Lithuania's identity. In other words, "who we are" contradicted the sense of "who we thought we are becoming".

6.1 LOOKING BACK, LOOKING FORWARD: POLITICS OF HISTORY

This section aims at analyzing the role of debates over history and collective memory in Lithuania, which is principally a political rather than a material/economic concern, thus, these debates driven by the past experiences, are related to ontological rather than physical security. Additionally, this section argues that Lithuania primarily seeks to pursue a value-based foreign policy towards Russia. This relates to the previously discussed assumption that Lithuanian foreign policy elites by pursuing a morally-driven foreign policy course in relations with Russia preserve its sense of Self and increase the country's ontological security. Consequently, this section of the analysis will focus on attempts by the Lithuanian political elite to recall past events and traumatic experiences and organize them into a viable narrative which would enable the country's agency and realize the Self, thus directly confronting ontological insecurities.

In essence, Steele argues that "history exists, memory organizes history, and narrative expresses that organization to ourselves and others" (2008: 19). Since the memory-political dimension of Lithuania presents comprise a large part of the country's foreign policy narrative, this section will be primarily focusing on two instances of "high intensity events" that have become symbolic indicators of this complex issue – the cases of commemoration of the Victory Day in Moscow, marking the end of the Second World War, and the demand for the compensation of the damages of the Soviet occupation.

The Soviet occupation has always been a topic of high visibility for Lithuanian political circles and the public, thus the tensions over the historical Soviet legacy has been increasing since 1990s. The decision of attending or not attending the commemorative ceremonies of Victory Day by the Lithuanian politicians in Moscow is not an exception. Given the fact that the Baltic states share a common history of Soviet occupation as well as they have similar perception of their past experiences, it is valuable to compare the policy decisions by all three Baltic states regarding attending commemorative Victory Day events in Moscow. By looking at the Table 2 below, it can be argued that Lithuania's stance regarding the Victory Day events in Moscow occasionally stuck out in comparison to Estonia and Latvia. Additionally, the analysis of the instance of the Victory Day not only illustrates the elements of the narrative (i.e. justification), but also takes into consideration the policy action itself (i.e. attending or not attending).

Table 2 Baltic participation in Victory Day celebrations

Year	Country	President	Type of invitation	Attended
1995	Lithuania	Algirdas Brazauskas	Official	No
	Latvia	Guntis Ulmanis	Official	No
	Estonia	Lennart Meri	Official	No
2005	Lithuania	Valdas Adamkus	Official	No
	Latvia	Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga	Official	Yes
	Estonia	Arnold Rüüteli	Official	No
2010	Lithuania	Dalia Grybauskaitė	Unofficial*	No
	Latvia	Valdis Zatlers	Official	Yes
	Estonia	Toomas Hendrik Ilves	Official	Yes
2015	Lithuania	Dalia Grybauskaitė	Official	No
	Latvia	Andris Bērziņš	Official	No
	Estonia	Toomas Hendrik Ilves	Official	No

* The official invitation has not been issued by Moscow.

It can be argued that both internal and external factors played a significant role in influencing the Baltic states in making their decisions to accept or decline invitations by Moscow to participate in the Victory Day parades. The first Victory Day event in 1995 was greeted with a unanimous decision by the Baltic leaders to decline the invitation. According to Grigas, fresh memories of Russia's presence, protracted state building process, and Russia's engagement in the first Chechen war made it politically difficult to accept an invitation (2013: 138). However, the year of 2005 marked the breaking point, when, contrary to their all immediate neighbours and other Western countries, Lithuania and Estonia decided against attending the parade in Moscow.

This case induced an intense public debate on this issue. It can be argued that from the pragmatic point of view, around that time there were no urgent destabilizing issues in Lithuanian-Russian relations that could have led to the second consecutive refusal to accept an invitation to the Victory day parade. Such factors as the membership in the EU and NATO, obtained security guarantee, increasingly growing economic cooperation with Russia, and even the fact that most of Lithuania's allies, including Latvia, Poland, Germany and the US, were going to attend the commemorative ceremony did not influence Adamkus's decision. His explanation was marked by the references to common historical nuances and indirect confrontation:

> "Thus, aware of the painful historic experience of our nation and drawing on the discussions among the public, I have decided to stay on May 9th in Lithuania, with my people. Here in Lithuania we will duly honour the heroes of the war and commemorate all victims. And we should no longer deliberate the subject of the most proper place to mark the end of the Second World War."

> (Adamkus 2005b)

Next to an enhancement of economy as well as social and political development, Lithuania saw the Euro-Atlantic integration as an opportunity to re-establish historical justice. It is evident that Lithuania's collective memory and its reflection in the country's identity leave little room for foreign policy manoeuvres after the restoration of independence.

Consequently, in 2010 and 2015 Lithuania's President Grybauskaitė boycotted the invitation by Moscow to Victory Day parades.

Another important aspect of analyzing the role of history in Lithuanian policies towards Russia is the issue of compensation claims for Soviet damages. It can be argued that the question of damage reparation for the Soviet occupation has been strongly entrenched in Lithuanian domestic political discourse. It is important to note that the analysis of the entire case would, perhaps, take a book-length study to provide an in-depth and adequate examination. Therefore, this section primarily focuses on how this issue is reflected in Lithuanian foreign policy narrative and how it contributes to a more adversarial stance by Lithuania towards Russia.

In terms of seeking compensation for damages incurred by Soviet rule, just like in the case of attending Victory Day celebrations in Moscow, Lithuania again demonstrated more vocal and resolute position than the other two Baltic states (Grigas 2013: 155; Pettai and Pettai 2014: 291). Lithuania's uncompromising stance on damage reparation can be explained by the considerably smaller size of ethnical Russians in Lithuania, which allowed Lithuanian political elites to apply a more antagonistic rhetoric in both domestic and foreign discourse. The Foreign Minister stated that "the question of the compensation for the USSR occupation damages occupies an important place in the agenda of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania. [...] We suggest raising the question of the compensation of the USSR occupation in various parliamentary forums, as well as by communicating with parliamentarians from other countries" (Vaitiekūnas 2007d). This statement illustrates Lithuania's efforts to institutionalize and internationalize the question of compensation for Soviet damages.

In order to better examine the evolution of Lithuania's compensation claims in the post-accession phase, it is important to see how this issue has been approached and institutionalized throughout the 1990s and early 2000s. In 1992 the Lithuanian political elites made a very significant move to acquire public support regarding the issue of compensation. In July 1992 Lithuania called a national referendum, where, in addition to the main question of referendum concerning the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Russian military troops from the country's territory, Lithuanian legislators also included

the issue of compensation for damage caused by the army's presence. Although, in the later stage of negotiations over the pullout of Russian military Lithuania temporarily dropped the compensation issue, the referendum was perceived as a strong mandate to pursue further reparations claims, especially by the rightist political circles (Pettai and Pettai 2014: 289; Grigas 2013: 162; Bagdonas 2011: 13). Additionally, in 2000 Lithuania passed the law "On Compensation of Damage Resulting from the Occupation by the USSR". This marked another important move to legitimize the continuity of reparation question and aimed at legally bounding the future governments to request compensation from Russia. In this way Lithuania embedded the request of compensation from Moscow not only in its foreign policy narrative but also to its legal system, thus making the issue one of the major yardsticks of morally and history driven policies. It created a solid base for routinization of the issue in relations with Russia. This can be illustrated with the statement by the Foreign Minister who assured that Lithuania will not stop building up "constructive formulae in relations with Russia and pursuing a mutual understanding as well as the evaluation of history and the occupation period, because it is an obligation set off by Lithuanian people" (Ažubalis 2010a).

It can also be argued that Lithuania's ongoing policy of seeking compensation perfectly matched the grand "return to Europe" narrative. What also becomes evident throughout the analysis is that the Lithuanian political elite determined its claim for independence on the principle of the continuity of state. In other words, in the 1990s, Lithuania's chose to *restore* its statehood, which was unjustifiably undermined by the Soviet regime in 1940, instead of *building* up a new state (i.e. continuation of the interwar Lithuania vs. new Lithuania). Therefore, the Lithuanian foreign policy narrative has become saturated with direct references to the violated sovereignty and damaged statehood as well as indirect remarks that this was done by the Soviet Union and Russia, as a legal successor of the Soviet Union, has to recompense for it. In this respect the Defence Minister argued that Lithuania has "re-established its statehood, returned to the world map, legitimized itself in important and strong international organizations. [...] Although, the legal restoration of independence was rapid and effective, however it was much more difficult, and still is, to pursue the rehabilitation of moral foundations of society that was

destroyed during the occupation" (Juknevičienė 2012a). Frequently, in order to strengthen the compensation claim, Lithuanian foreign policy elites implicitly draw the equality sign between Russia and the Soviet Union[16], which can be observed in the statements by Juknevičienė. In one of her speeches she claims that "efforts to re-establish somewhat more modern, 21st century-related, differently named, yet bearing a strong resemblance to the empire of the Soviet Union are evident" (2012a).

Additionally, Lithuanian political elites were eager to establish the issue of compensation for Soviet damages as a matter of international, rather than only bilateral, negotiations. Juknevičienė argued: "it has to be learnt how to present our history, how not to forget it ourselves and how ensure that our history would become a part of European history" (2011a). Lithuania together with the other Baltic states has regularly appealed to the Western institutions for assistance in demands for compensation required from Russia. For example, the Lithuanian government was one of the founding institutions of the Platform of European Memory and Conscience. In regards to this Platform, Foreign Minister, Ažubalis, hoped that this initiative would "help both politically and legally protect Lithuania's aspirations of historical continuity" (2011a). Again, this quotation clearly illustrates that the question of compensation legally and logically has evolved from the claim by Lithuanian politicians that the independence was restored based on the continuity of the identity and existence of the interwar state. With regard to ontological security, this illustrates that the demand for compensation, even if somewhat illusionary, is maintained because it is linked to the security of Self. Lithuania cannot abandon this problematic issue of compensation because the preservation of this issue is demanded by the notion of "who we are".

Under these circumstances it can be argued that the component of history plays an essential role in Lithuanian foreign policy identity. Adamkus argues that the history, in turn, "sustains the Lithuanian people in their daily work and creative endeavours" (1999: 4). Thus, the practical side and utility of this demand for compensation becomes

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[16] The tendency of comparing nowadays Russia with the Soviet Union became particularly evident after Putin's has made his infamous statement in 2005, where he deplored the collapse of the Soviet Union as "the greatest geopolitical catastrophe" of the 20th century. In turn, Landsbergis commented this saying that "Stalin was happy in his grave" (2005a).

overshadowed by identity factors, and the material compensation loses its initial purpose. The Speaker of the Seimas argued that along the material compensation, actually Lithuania expects "more importantly, moral compensation for the grievances experienced by our deportees" (Muntianas 2007b), while the Foreign Minister concluded that "every claim that the occupation has never happened, firstly, is an insult" for Lithuanian people (Vaitiekūnas 2007e).

To conclude, this section focuses on two symbolic instances of history politics in Lithuania – the case of attendance of Victory Day events and the demand to compensate for the Soviet damages. These two instances of high discursive intensity provide Lithuania with the connecting linkage between the narrative and identity. The analysis showed that history served as a point of reference in the Lithuanian foreign policy narrative – "by looking back, we see who we are at the present and who we are aiming to be". Additionally, it can be argued that both instances of high discursive intensity have demonstrated that they serve for ontological security-seeking purposes, rather than physical security needs. It can be summarized that the essentialization of the historical background has impelled Lithuania to institutionalize these issues related to the country's complicated history and pursue highly adversarial policies towards Russia.

6.2   A DECADE OF UNSTABLE STABILITY: ACTIVATION OF ROUTINES

It is undeniable that a considerable part of Lithuanian-Russian relations can be characterized with geopolitical content. It is not at all surprising if regular military developments and exercises in Kaliningrad and the Baltic Sea as well as Russia's energy policies and ambitions in its *near aboard* are being taken into consideration. In essence, the geopolitical approach is able to capture a big part of the rationale of many Lithuanian foreign policy positions towards Russia. In turn, Juknevičienė made a case for a clearly principled reminder that Lithuania resides "on the periphery of the democratic world" (2012a). However, the geopolitical approach does not offer a full explanation of why, throughout time and regardless various domestic and foreign political developments,

Lithuanian political elites have (un)consciously chosen to maintain a continuously sharp policy line towards Russia.

Particularly, the geopolitical perspective is not sufficient to determine the motivation behind the value-based policies, driven by historical experiences and identity factors, i.e. the case of boycotting Victory Day events in Moscow and the case of the demand to compensate for Soviet damages. Reading these cases through the geopolitical lens, such policies appear to be instrumentally irrational and possibly damaging with regard to physical security. Irrationality lies here in the fact that these policy actions, driven by historical and identity motives, do not endogenously aim at improving the relations with Russia, but rather fulfilling Lithuania's identity needs, thus breaking free from this intractable and enduring value-based rivalry could actually generate ontological insecurity. In essence, Lithuania, instead of mitigating the potential physical security threats, it pursues policies which occasionally provoke Russia's inimical reaction and further consolidates this dilemmatic rivalry. Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov has recently expressed his dissatisfaction regarding Lithuania's attitude: "they [the Baltic states] joined NATO but no calm ensued, particularly not with our Lithuanian neighbour. For some reason Lithuania is the most aggressive russophobic country and is pushing NATO in an anti-Russian direction"[17].

Although, the demand for compensation logically derives from the whole concept of continuity of Lithuania's state identity and is linked to ontological security, however the practical utility and function of this policy proved to be disputable. In this regard Vaitiekūnas claimed: "at this stage creating unsolvable demands and some sort of inconsistency are sometimes pushing us to the niche of political province and even provocation, it creates confusion among the European partners, asking why we act like this" (2007c). However, it becomes beyond the bounds of possibility for Lithuania to disengage from this intractable conflict with Russia, because history, state narrative, and collective memory relate to the realization of Lithuania's Self, thus the struggle for ontological security becomes a part of Lithuania's foreign policy narrative (see also Steele

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[17] Interview with Sergey Lavrov in Swedish newspaper Dagens Nyheter, 2016-04-29
http://www.dn.se/nyheter/sverige/russia-issues-nato-warning-to-sweden/

2008: 49). The narrative analysis of Lithuanian political texts illustrate regular strong references to history: "history arranges everything. It has witnessed the restitution of the independent Lithuania, gave meaning to its existence" (Muntianas 2008a); "the past may be concern of historians, however, justice is a political fundamental" (Degutienė 2009a).

Lithuanian foreign policy elites also often declare that the Lithuanian-Russian (including the EU-Russian) relations are being built on distrust and the only way to revitalize these bilateral ties is to (re)establish this basic trust (Valionis 2005a; Ušackas 2009b; Juknevičienė 2010a; Ažubalis 2011b). From the viewpoint of ontological security, the "mechanism generating basic trust is routinization, which regularizes social life, making it, and the Self, knowable (Mitzen 2006a: 346). In other words, by routinizing the past experiences Lithuania creates this basic trust, which does not form trust and confidence in Russia *per se*, but it evolves into a basic trust system (cognitive and certain environment) of how to deal with Russia. In this context, the level of the essentialization of memory and historical justice between Vilnius and Moscow reaches a high level of politicization. The Lithuanian Foreign Minister, concluded that "the only way how Russia can start building the trust in relations with its neighbours and other partners" is to "find strength in itself not only to accept rights and privileges of the former USSR, but also acknowledge responsibilities of which, perhaps, the most important – legal evaluation of the Soviet military crimes" (Ažubalis 2011b). Paradoxically, the Lithuanian-Russian relations have been loaded with an immense number of various issues and sensitivities however the historical justice becomes the key to the potential reset. This becomes essential because the Lithuania's ontological security is built on the historical account of itself, aligned with the understanding of Russia, which has been exercised through the narrative.

Although, from the perspective of the traditional survival-based notion of security, Lithuania's effusive prioritization of issues that not only prevent the normalization of relations with Russia, but also provoke sharp reactions in Moscow and strengthens the perception of Lithuania as a "one-issue" state in the EU and NATO are seen as irrational, however ontological security-seeking illustrates different functionality and *rationality* behind such seemingly irrational actions. Morally-driven policies can also present a form of rational action because they serve to fulfil a sense of state self-identity and confront threats

to self-narrative (Steele 2008). This explains the rationale behind Lithuania's policies in relations with Russia and why value-based and historically charged issues have remained on the foreign policy agenda even after Lithuania's entry to the EU and NATO. Such Lithuania's behaviour also corresponds with the continuation of completed grand narrative of "returning to Europe", but in a different manner. Lithuania had returned to Europe and joined the privileged club of Western democratic and prospering countries, hence institutionalization of the Self/Other representation in relations with Russia occurred. Steele (2008: 26) argued that the country (as in this case Lithuania), which chooses to act morally does so 'because of its membership in a society that was constituted by an intersubjective web of meanings", i.e. promotion of democratic values and the rule of law, respect to historical justice and human rights (see Juknevičienė 2010a)

Bagdonas points out that conflict and animosity have become such regular features of Lithuania-Russia relations that, in 2010, when both President Medvedev and Prime Minister Putin dismissed Lithuanian invitations to attend events organized by Vilnius, Ažubalis "managed both to insist that relations with Russia are "normal" and claim that the government is implementing a strategy of containment in the same interview, without a hint of uneasiness about the apparent contradiction between the two" (2011: 2). Similar inconsistency of the argumentation can be also observed in the statements by Vaitiekūnas. In July 2007 he evaluated Lithuanian-Russian relations as "stable" and concluded that "in 17 years a lot has been achieved. [...] no big problems between Vilnius and Moscow have remained" (2007b). However, in November of the same year Vaitiekūnas already sounded less optimistic. In his interview he asked rhetorically "after all, is it normal that the President of Russia has not visited Vilnius in 17 years?", he also claimed that the cooperation between Lithuania and Russia is "minimal and hardly satisfying" (2007c).

The lack of trust in relations with Russia also did not give a chance to ultimately desecuritize Russia's threat, thus making Lithuania unable to spell the end of the routinized tensions with Russia. Noticeably, two parallel storylines can be simultaneously observed in the analyzed texts by Lithuanian politicians. First, as it has previously been discussed, Lithuania after the Euro-Atlantic integration no longer sees any "direct threats" (Juknevičienė 2009a). Second, at the same time Lithuanian politicians are being haunted by

the perception that their country should not take the "new" security for granted, hinting that NATO enlargement did not determine they are "going to live a boring daily life without any bigger shocks, just like Luxembourg" (Juknevičienė 2012a; also see 2011b). Simultaneously, politicians argued that Lithuania should always remain on standby and seek that "the relevance of NATO's Article 5 would not be weakened" (Valionis 2006a).

A noticeable disillusion among Lithuanian political circles in terms of how relations with Russia are being developed in the EU level can also be sensed. It can be argued that this disillusion stemmed from internal and external uncertainty. Internally, there was an ongoing debate whether "we" Lithuanians are already "enough European". On the other hand, Lithuanian politicians frequently pointed out that Europe did not have a "united voice" and "coherent policy" (Adamkus 2006a, 2007a; Ažubalis 2012a; Valionis 2005a) in relations with Russia and Europe in critical times seemingly did not know "what kind of Russia it would like to see" (Adamkus 2008e). This again leads to the argument that the alternative narrative of being a "good European" did not prove to be successful because it did not align with the "Russia's component" that remained hanging on from the previous narrative. As a result, Lithuanian politicians suddenly realized that the "European way" of handling relations with Russia did not fully coincide with the Lithuanian foreign policy course, which was highly conditioned by the ontological security needs.

It can be concluded that such rhetoric demonstrates that uncertainty kicked in - paradoxically – even after Lithuania's entry to the EU and NATO. Nevertheless, foreign policy elites urged that "Lithuania in Europe has to be itself" (Valionis 2004a). This leads to the interpretation that "being itself" means clinging to the same routines and habitual relationships with Russia and maintaining state's identity through history. Self/Other distinction provides a negative mirror image, while history explains what has happened in the past and systematically translates it into "who we are" now. In essence, value-based foreign policies can also be perceived as rational, because these actions serve to fulfil ontological security needs and confirm self-identity of the state.

7 CONCLUSION

The adverse post-enlargement Lithuanian-Russian relations have been traditionally viewed and explained through the perspective of geopolitics, primarily focusing on specific issues (i.e. military presence in Kaliningrad, the transit question, physical security and energy policies) as the main sources of such animosity. Ontological security theory offers a supplementary identity-based account of Lithuanian-Russian relations, which thereby complements the survival-based approaches to security that pervades the scholarship on Lithuania's approach towards Russia and elucidates the actions pursued by Lithuania to satisfy its identity demands. This account focuses on the need to be ontologically secure in order to ensure self-being as a source of interests and behaviour of the states and suggests that even harmful or self-defeating relations with other actors can fulfil this urgency of ontological security. The need of continuity of the self-concept is constant for states and it results in routinization of certain policies or drawing on already established routines that provide this continuity and unconscious attachment to relations with the Other. In this regard, ontological security approach sheds light on issues and behavioural aspects that otherwise remain neglected by the conventional approaches to security or are being labelled as irrational. The Baltic states, in turn, form an insightful case for ontological security theory due to their troubled past and an ongoing process of self-identity contestation ("returning to Europe", "becoming a good European", being "liminal Europeans") as well as a particularly pronounced role of the Other in their identity-building and construction of statehood. The complicated and contentious history of the Baltic states reveals a case of trauma in their identity formation, which results in states relying even more deeply on the routines. Regarding the external validity, which includes a question of generalizability of the thesis statement, it can be argued that the need for ontological security is present for every state, however the mode of ontological insecurity is activated only at times when states experience the disjuncture in the narrative of their Selves.

This thesis analyzed circumstances that have developed throughout the 1990s as well as in the early 2000s and appeared seemingly favourable for establishing pragmatic and neighbourly relations with Russia. The hallmark of this period was Lithuania's entry to

the EU and NATO in 2004, which was supposed to mark the new stage of security (i.e. physical security) and lead to the desecuritization of Russia's threat, hence ending the deadlock on Lithuanian-Russian relations. In the context of favourable circumstances and from the point of view of physical security interests alone, a shift towards a more pragmatic policy line with the notion "as secure as possible" could have been expected. However, throughout the analyzed period of time, i.e. from EU and NATO enlargement in 2004 until the Euromaidan protest movement started in 2013, Lithuania's policy approach towards Russia had remained marked by caution and firmly prone to friction.

According to ontological security theory, in the periods of disjuncture in the state's narrative we should witness the disembodiment of the state's Self. It can be concluded that Lithuania's membership in the EU and NATO and the completion of the decade-long foreign policy goal to "return to Europe" culminated in this type of disjuncture in the Lithuanian foreign policy narrative. Consequently, the analyzed political texts showed that the achievement of the principal goal and, fundamentally, the reality that the narrative, which had structured Lithuanian foreign policy in the post-Cold War period, had run its course, caused deep forms of uncertainty. A sense of deep existential uncertainty, in turn, was perceived as posing a challenge to Lithuania's identity and rendering Lithuania ontologically insecure.

The expectations by Lithuanian politicians and experts that Lithuania's membership in the EU and NATO would help to mitigate the long-lasting tensions with Russia proved to be unfounded. The findings, consequently, suggest that Lithuania unconsciously remained attached to the adversarial and inimical relations with Russia throughout the analyzed period of time, regardless changes in Lithuania's domestic political spectrum as well as developments in the international arena. It is important to mention that I am aware of the contextual specificity and sensitivity stemming from the significant role that the geopolitical context plays in the case of the Baltic states. Throughout the course of analysis, I therefore consciously take into account contextual factors, however my analysis shows that the identity component has remained central in the Lithuanian foreign policy performance regardless the developments in the international arena. On the other hand, the acknowledgment of the limitation of this topic allows devising areas for further research

which, having established the play of ontological security, could more intensely take into consideration the contextual characteristics – e.g. the case of developments in Kaliningrad or the Russian-Georgian conflict in 2008 – which would help to put some flesh on the bones of the theoretic contention. Additionally, the future research could also expand on the cases of Estonia and Latvia with the aim to see whether the similar identity factors and patterns of the representation of Russia in the foreign policy narratives can be detected across all three Baltic states.

Importantly, the findings appear to confirm that alternative narratives, namely "Lithuania as a regional centre", did not gain a foothold in the country's foreign policy agenda. The reasons why alternative narratives were marginalized are as follows: first, the grand narrative of the "return to Europe" was rigidly based on values and tied with the traumatic historical experiences – "escaping Russia's sphere of influence by returning to Europe"; second, the narratives of becoming a "regional centre" and being a "good European" also implied that Lithuania would need to improve its neighbourly relations with another important regional actor, Russia; and third, the new narratives had to take into account established sub-narratives of "who we are" and this narrated component remained unchanged, because it primarily derived from the historical-identity arguments such as "who they are" in relation to "who we are". Finally, because of these reasons the substitutive narratives were not capable to fully maintain Lithuania's ontological security.

For the purpose of this thesis I analyzed the Lithuanian foreign policy narrative and the representation of Russia in it, in order to demonstrate continuity of Lithuania's adverse stance towards Russia. In this respect, the narrative analysis of the political texts has shown that Lithuania's relations with Russia were dominantly presented through the prism of Self/Other categorization which served as a negative mirror for understanding and strengthening the construction of Lithuania's Self. Russia remains the most significant Other in relation to Lithuania's foreign policy, thus necessary for Lithuania's identity construction and maintenance of a stable sense of Self. Additionally, the study has demonstrated that Lithuanian foreign policy elites opted for a value-based policy towards Russia, which was seen as incompatible with a pragmatic approach. The findings of the analysis clearly demonstrate that Lithuanian political elites chose a value-based and

morally driven foreign policy course because it corresponded with the Self/Other constellation as well as it reinforced Lithuania's identity. In this context, a value-based foreign policy course focused on criticizing Russia's domestic policies, disrespect for human rights and democratic values as well as the Kremlin's attempts to alter common history – overall, pointing out Russia's failure in complying with "European values". Moreover, the narrative analysis suggests that speeches and statements addressed to the national audience are usually characterized with sharper rhetoric than those speeches delivered to the country's diplomatic corpus and the international audience. This gap in rhetoric towards different audiences can be explained by Lithuanian political elites trying to align with the narrative of being a "good European" hence scaling down its sharp rhetoric towards Russia in order not to be perceived as one-issue state by the Western allies.

The aim of this study was to identify the main drivers in Lithuanian foreign policy narrative that lead to a persistently adversarial approach towards Russia than it could be expected on the basis of rationalist accounts and in the context of the favourable circumstances which were discussed in the empirical section. In this regard, the analysis showed that history as well as traumatic experiences – all essential components of understanding of the Self – played a significant role in the Lithuanian foreign policy narrative. The issue of historical injustice, in principle, was portrayed as a political rather than a material/economic concern. This thesis, in turn, further focused on two already symbolic instances of high discursive intensity in Lithuania's memory politics - the participation in the Victory Day events in Moscow and the demand for the compensation of the damages of the Soviet occupation. As a result, Lithuania became the only former Soviet republic which has never been represented by the highest rank officials during the Victory Day events in Moscow. What this instance illustrates is the salience of ontological security-seeking, which leads to the situation where Lithuania's identity concerns trump its material interests (i.e. Lithuanian businessmen were encouraging political elites to attend Victory Day celebrations). Accordingly, the analysis confirms that Lithuanian politicians have predominantly couched their explanations against attending the Victory Day events in normative and value-based language, rather than physical security concerns. This leads to

the interpretation that Lithuania's collective memory and its reflection in country's identity left little room for pragmatic foreign policy manoeuvres in relations with Russia.

Speaking of the demands to recompense for Soviet crimes, the analysis also illustrated that the legal foundation for the institutionalization of compensation demands has been laid out already in the 1990s. This established a precedent where the avoidance of the compensation question in relations with Russia would have been perceived as the denial of Lithuania's value and legal system, i.e. as the denial of the key component of "who we are" would have unravelled the stable understanding of Self and pushed to the mode of looming uncertainty. Despite doubts in the practical utility and function of these demands, the claim for reparation has become the yardstick of value-based policies vis-à-vis Russia. Reading these findings through the lens of ontological security, it can be argued that Lithuanian political elites recalled past events and traumatic experiences and organized them into a viable narrative which enabled the country's agency and realized the Self, thus directly confronting ontological insecurities. Both discussed cases of the demand for compensation and the participation in Victory Day events from the point of survival-based approaches to security appear irrational, because they do nothing to improve relations with Russia, but, on the contrary, provoke Russia's bitter reaction. In this case, ontological security approach suggests that such value-based policies present a different kind of rationality, because such actions serve to fulfil Lithuania's self-concept.

Numerous references to history and continuous parallels to identity – both indicative of concerns of ontological security rather than its physical counterpart – were identified in the analyzed political texts. This led to the interpretation that Lithuanian foreign policy makers became rhetorically trapped into the existing narratives and experienced a so-called lock-in effect. Consequently, an adverse tone has become such a frequent feature of Lithuania's discourse towards Russia that Lithuanian politicians would often in their statements inconsistently describe the bilateral relations as both "satisfying" and "unsatisfying". It can also be concluded that Lithuania experienced an identity dilemma of being simultaneously locked in its adversarial routines vis-à-vis Russia whilst using the same routines to sustain its own identity. This finding echoes Mitzen (2006a) assumption that states come to prefer a persistent conflictual relations with a significant Other to the

sense of creeping uncertainty, because even a conflictual relationship can provide a sense of ontological security.

This thesis unpacks the role of identity in Lithuania's foreign policy making towards Russia. Furthermore, it brings out the dilemma of ontological security, which indicates how concerns over security of the Self can lead to a relationship which is suboptimal with regard to physical security. Ontological security approach suggests that identity factors play an important role in stimulating an adversarial rhetoric in Lithuanian foreign policy discourse in relations with Russia. With this in mind, it can be argued that harmonizing seemingly incompatible Lithuanian and Russian attitudes towards the common history could potentially built a concrete foundation for normalizing these bilateral relations. However, it is unlikely to happen in the near future due to the following reasons: first, Russia's foreign policy in the recent years have been perceived as neo-imperialist, thus intimidating Lithuania – physical security potentially dominates ontological security concerns; second, both Russia and Lithuania do not seem to be ready to indulge in a discussion over the interpretation of common history, because the historical narrative plays an important role in the foreign policy agenda of both countries; third, even though concerns over the essentialization of historical sufferings has little to offer in terms of a future orientation and prospects is growing, Lithuanian politicians cannot abandon this issue because it is a part of Self-identity construction. It derives from the theoretical assumption (Steele 2008; Mitzen 2006a, 2006b) that a desire for ontological security is as constant as the survival-motive. In the future, the stimulus for a gradual shift towards normalization could be found in the greater sense of security invoked by the more assertive and coherent stance of the EU and NATO towards Russia. This would not only reaffirm Lithuania's sense of physical security but, consequently, it would also align with the narrative of being a "good European" and "Russia's component" in it.

To conclude, it can be argued that Lithuania foreign policy elites were nudged to maintaining a confrontative policy line towards Russia instead of following a more pragmatic path because such a routinization of adversarial relations serves to secure Lithuania's identity. Additionally, routinized and habitualized relations with Russia establish a cognitive and predictable environment for Lithuania to pursue its foreign policy

goals. This predictability has been particularly required in times of perceived deep uncertainty at the ontological level, such as after Lithuania's entry to the EU and NATO. Finally, the analysis showed that over the analyzed period of time the Lithuanian-Russian relations remained *unstably stable*. Pushing the argument further, the existence of conflictual routines suggests that this *instability* in the end *stabilizes* this relationship.

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