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SECURITIZATION IN DEFINING REGIONAL SECURITY COMPLEXES: THE CASE OF THE BALTIC STATES (2004–2013)

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INTRODUCTION

Ensuring a state of peace has traditionally been one of the main problems of states – normal development of every state and society is only possible in peacetime. History shows that long-lasting periods of peace have been rather the exception to the rule. It is true also for the Baltic States – Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia – which in the 20th century were exposed to two world wars, different occupying powers and different conflicts. Although, since they regained independence in 1991, they have not been involved in military or other serious inter-state conflicts, maintenance of peace has not lost its significance.

Since the end of the Cold War and since the Baltic States regained their independence, the role of non-state actors has grown and types of non-military threats have multiplied. However, traditional threats have also preserved their relevance and they have even increased in some regions, including the Baltic States. Also studies of security issues have evolved, with increased emphasis on post-positivist methodology and a wider spectrum of security issues. Thus, analysis of security problems of the Baltic States and accordingly analysis of theoretical aspects of security is still relevant, essential and necessary. It can be especially attributed to questions as to what the actual security situation of the Baltic States is under the new circumstances? Which actors and factors influence their security situation and security perception? With which states do the Baltic States have the strongest security ties and what regional security construction are they located in? What is influence of being part of political and military alliances in determining location among regional security complexes? How can the security of the Baltic States be explained in the developing framework of security studies and what contribution can analysis of security problems of these states bring in the research of theoretical aspects of security?

The regional security complex theory (and the related securitization theory) as elaborated by Buzan, forms the theoretical basis for this thesis. The theory enables conceptual division of the world in regions as determined by security dynamics. The securitization theory, elaborated by Wæver, offers an analytical framework to study security construction, in particular to determine if threats are real (objective) or if they are simply constructed as such, and what their role is in the formation of regional security complexes.

It is difficult to determine a precise timeframe for phenomena examined in the thesis as the current security situation is determined by different factors, including historical ones. However, the events since 2004 are emphasized as the Baltic States joined both the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Union (EU) in 2004. It marked not only symbolic, but also practical alterations in their security environment.

The objective of the thesis is to examine the role of securitization processes in defining regional security complexes and their role in determining the place of the Baltic States among regional security complexes. To achieve the aim, the following **tasks** have been carried out: analysis of the regional security complex theory and its constructing elements; examination of the securitization theory (aspects of securitization and de-securitization) and its place in the regional security complex theory; overview of previous applications of the regional security complex theory to the Baltic States in order to explore practical aspects of its empirical application; analysis, as part of the regional security complex theory, of the factors intrinsic to "traditional security" in determining security environment of the Baltic States; analysis of the Baltic States as a contact area amongst the EU, NATO, the United States and Russia and of the influence of great powers on their place amongst regional security complexes; analysis of the most significant inter-state securitization processes (those linked to Russia) and the reverse processes of securitization of

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the Baltic States in Russia; putting forward proposals for further development of the regional security complex theory and the securitization theory.

The following **hypotheses** are tested: 1) factors intrinsic to traditional security apart from securitization and de-securitization processes cannot determine regional security complexes; 2) the Baltic States form a sub-region of regional security complex; 3) membership in the EU and NATO has not altered the place of the Baltic States within regional security complexes and they still belong to a regional security complex centered on Russia; 4) the intensity of securitization processes is the determining factor when identifying the place of the Baltic States amongst regional security complexes.

The thesis has been elaborated by using qualitative research methods, including analysis of relevant literature, sources, reference sources, and interviews and interpretation of data. The literature consists of theoretical studies on the international system and its sub-systems, security in the international system, regional security, regional security complexes, securitization and de-securitization, power, amity and enmity. The theoretical aspects of the thesis rest on studies on the regional security complex theory by Buzan and his fellows. The literature also includes empirical studies of the Baltic States in the framework of the regional security complex theory, policy papers and legal acts in the field of security and defense, reports by state institutions and state representatives, statements of officials and politicians, statistical data, studies by other researchers and other information, including different reference sources and video materials.

The thesis is structured in three chapters: "1. Regional Security Dynamics and Theoretical Aspects of Regional Security Complexes", "2. The Baltic States as a Sub-region of Regional Security Complex" and "3. Securitization in Relations between the Baltic States and Russia". These chapters are further structured in sub-chapters.

The thesis is characterized by a close link between the empirical and theoretical aspects it includes – the regional security complex theory and the securitization theory (and the related elements from schools of international relations they align with, mainly neorealism and constructivism (synthesis of both)). Not only do the theoretical aspects align the thesis within the context of theories of international relations. It also establishes a systemic framework for further analysis of the empirical phenomena. Previous theoretical aspects are critically examined and proposals for their enhancement are provided. Thus, not only is the essentiality of interaction between the theories and empiric analyses underlined, but the theoretical aspects also allow the thesis to be generalizable and, thus, usable in a spectrum of issues wider than the Baltic States.

It is based on synthesis of positivist and post-positivist ontology and positivist epistemology. Post-positivist ontology mainly is present through applying the securitization theory. Through this theory, wider attention is devoted to the empirical phenomena, and observations related to them are interpreted and reviewed in a wider context, as well as their interaction and indirect links that form them are analyzed.

The thesis contributes to the research of the new security theories – the regional security complex theory and the securitization theory. Aspects related to them are analyzed critically and in a wider scientific context. The regional security complex theory and, in particular, the securitization theory have been widely analyzed lately (accordingly, e.g., Lake 1997, Lake and Morgan 1997, Buzan et al. 1998, Kaski 2001, Buzan and Wæver 2003; and Buzan et al. 1998, Buzan and Wæver 2003, Balzacq 2005, Stritzel 2007, Wilkinson 2007, Vuori 2008, Åtland 2008, McDonald 2008, Buzan and Wæver 2009, Rostoks 2010, Wæver 2011, Hansen 2011). However, less attention has been devoted to aspects related to the securitization theory as an element of the regional security complex theory. Thus, in the context of this thesis, analysis of

the securitization theory and of its place (alignment) in the regional security complex theory has to be underlined. Not only are both theories analyzed in a theoretical perspective, but they are also further applied to the research of empiric phenomena. Likewise, proposals for further development of these theories are proposed. Thus, conclusions drawn and proposals proposed can be useful in further development of these theories – both for increased accuracy of their application on the Baltic States and also to other states and other empirical phenomena.

So far, different aspects of security related issues of the Baltic States have been analyzed – their military cooperation and issues related to other aspects of their military security (e.g., Molis 2006, 2009, Jermalavičius 2009, 2010, Rublovskis 2011, 2013, Šešelgyte 2010, 2013, Ljung et al. [incl. Neretnieks] 2012, Paulauskas 2013, Mölder 2013), problems in relations among the Baltic States and Russia (e.g., Rostoks 2008, Muižnieks 2008, 2011a, 2011b, Doroņenkova 2011, Ločmele et al. 2011, Kaas 2012, Tüür and Vare 2012, Zdanavičius and Volovoj 2012). With the spectrum of security issues widening, the rise in the number of studies in energy security issues has been evident, most of them focusing on problems related to Russia (e.g., Janeliūnas and Molis 2006, Janeliūnas 2009, Sprūds 2009a, 2009b, 2010, Molis 2011, Maigre 2010, Grigas 2013), the number of studies of cyber-security has also grown (e.g., Tiirmaa-Klaar 2008, Ottis 2009, Tikk et al. 2010, Sprice 2010, Andžāns 2013a, Pernik and Tuohy 2013). However, relatively fewer research papers have been devoted to analyzing all three of the Baltic States in a wider spectrum of security issues. There have been few studies in which the Baltic States, at least partly, have been analyzed by using the regional security complex theory or the securitization theory. Analysis of or insight in security problems of the Baltic States in the context of different approaches to the regional security complex theory has been given in different studies (e.g., Roeder 1997, Buzan et al. 1998, Kaski 2001, Buzan and Wæver 2003, Kværnø

and Rasmussen 2005, Mölder 2006, Lacassagne 2009, Palonkorpi, Ljung et al. 2012, Andžāns 2013a, 2014); however, most of them have limitations – they have touched upon the Baltic States only as an issue among others or have analyzed them in general, or the securitization theory has not been used, or regional security complexes have only been analyzed in particular security sectors. As already mentioned, the thesis mainly relies on the works of Buzan and his fellows. From the perspective of focus and deepness, the closest research to the current thesis is a study by Kaski (2001).

As both the securitization theory and the regional security complex theory are applied to the Baltic States in a single research, this can be considered the first scientific paper to include the most significant aspects of the regional security complex theory and the securitization theory to the Baltic States in a wider spectrum of security issues. The theoretical framework enables comprehensive analysis of the Baltic States security problems and also to determine the impact of different factors on the security of the Baltic States.

The results of the thesis on the role of perception of material factors and subjective factors in constructing security situation point to how threat perception among states forms and can further raise discussions as to what extent state security depends on actual or exaggerated or even imaginary threats. Accordingly, the results of this thesis might facilitate more conscientious approaches, especially among state institutions, officials and politicians to consider as to why and to what extent creating or maintaining security issues is desirable, and if some of inter-state (and not only inter-state) security problems can be transformed to non-security issues. Or on the contrary – it can demonstrate that there might be non-securitized issues whose securitization is necessary – if an objective security problem exists (an actual threat) but it is not securitized, then such a problem most probably will not be appropriately considered and treated as a real threat. Thus, no steps will be taken to address the problem (by assuming that securitization would be

a way of doing that). At a certain point it can materialize, no matter if securitization has or has not been done.

The results of the thesis have been discussed in scientific publications (Andžāns 2013a, 2013b, 2014) (detailed information about the publications is on the "List of Publications") and have been presented in scientific conferences: The XIV International Scientific Conference of Turība University "Creating the Future: Communication, Education, Business" (Rīga, 30.05.2013) – "Prospects of Regionalization of Security in the Cyber Space: Case of the Baltic States"; The 55th International Scientific Conference of the Daugavpils University (Daugavpils, 10.–12.04.2013) – "Transition of the Baltic States Sub-region: from "post-Soviet" to "EU-Europe" Regional Security Complex?"; The 2013 Scientific Conference of the Rīga Stradiņš University (Rīga, 21.–22.03.2013) – "Interaction of Factors Constructing Regional Security Complexes"; The 2012 Scientific Conference of the Rīga Stradiņš University (Rīga, 29.–30.03.2012) – "Drošībiskošana un atdrošībiskošana reģionālās drošības kompleksu konceptā" ["Securitization and De-securitization in the Regional Security Complex Concept"].

Information available in the public domain for the period until the end of 2013 has been examined in the thesis.

1. REGIONAL SECURITY DYNAMICS
AND THEORETICAL ASPECTS OF
THE REGIONAL SECURITY COMPLEXES

The first chapter consists of three sub-chapters: "1.1. The "Classical" Security Complex Theory" (further structured in "1.1.1. Power and its Role in Determining Security Complexes", "1.1.2. Amity and Enmity in Determining Security Complexes"); "1.2. The "New" Regional Security Complex Theory" (further structured in "1.2.1. Actors of Regional Security Complexes", "1.2.2. Security Concept and the Regional Security Complex Theory", "1.2.3. Securitization and De-securitization as Determining Factors of Regional Security Complexes"); and "1.3. Problematic Aspects of the Regional Security Complex Theory, and Solutions" (further structured in "1.3.1. Identification of Regional Security Complexes – The Case of the Baltic States in Previous Analyses", "1.3.2. Problematic Aspects, and Theoretical Framework for Further Analysis").

Different aspects of the regional security complex theory – in particular, power, security, factors of amity and enmity, actors of complexes and different studies on regional security complexes – are examined (in particular, Buzan 1983, 1991, Buzan et al. 1998, Buzan and Wæver 2003). Although the initial explanation of "classical" security complexes was not defined unambiguously, it can be concluded from previous studies by Buzan that elements constructing security complexes can be classified as follows: security links between and among states; patterns of amity and enmity; power relations; other links binding complexes – geographical, political, strategic, historical, economic, and cultural. However, the "new" or the regional security complex theory expanded security out of military sector and political sector (that were dominant before), expanded range of actors, and introduced securitization and de-securitization in

determining regional security complexes. At the same time, this move did not exclude power relations, patterns of amity and enmity and other binding links.

A review of previous applications of the regional security complex theoretical framework to the Baltic States (Roeder 1997, Buzan et al. 1998, Kaski 2001, Buzan and Wæver 2003, Kværnø and Rasmussen 2005, Mölder 2006, Lacassagne 2009, Palonkorpi, Ljung et al. 2012, Andžāns 2013a, 2014) highlighted that the theory had been developed and applied in empirical analysis in different ways, which have often deviated significantly from the basic elements of the theory (as defined and developed by Buzan). Thus, it is important to note that empiric applications, first of all, depend on the version of the theory applied. It can be either the "classical" or the "new" (also mono-sector analyses), and it can also be a newly developed (alternative) version of the theory. From different versions of the theory arises necessity to define a clear theoretical framework for further analysis. Otherwise, the thesis would not be based on a joint and clear theoretical framework because of different possibilities to reach results in various aspects of research. This task is complicated not only because of different versions of the theory, as mentioned above, but also because of the ambiguities in its initial formulations.

The first problem arises from the question of how an appropriate proportion of different elements constructing regional security complexes has to be arranged – because in different regions different issues (elements determining complexes) will be present and different combinations of such elements can leave place for "manipulations" (for instance, to note some aspects or diminish others). In this regard it is concluded that the only way towards maximal objectivity is to review elements as broadly as possible. Thus, security dynamics arising from every significant element has to be considered and dismissal of any other element has to be justified.

The next point is the securitization theory in the context of the regional security complex theory. As for the securitization theory, based on its different

developments and criticisms (in particular, Buzan et al. 1998, Buzan and Wæver 2003, Balzacq 2005, Stritzel 2007, Wilkinson 2007, Vuori 2008, Åtland 2008, McDonald 2008, Buzan and Wæver 2009, Wæver 2011, Hansen 2011), it is offered to minimize its shortcomings as follows (although they are not new, it is important to summarize and define them clearly in this particular context): securitization is possible not only as a result of speech acts but also other means; consideration of widened scope of securitizing actors and audiences (also allowing several audiences simultaneously); securitization is tied to external factors and, thus, different impacting factors have to be considered; securitization can also be an unintentional process. This framework will also allow to regard some factors as being more important than others. This subjectivity can only be decreased with analysis of securitization processes in a spectrum as wide as possible. However, it has to be proportional and it cannot extend indefinitely – the margins for securitization processes to be considered have to be defined. Otherwise, analysis of securitization processes is possible on different levels and the range of actors and issues can become too wide.

Although according to the "new" regional security complex definition, states are not the only actors that can be considered as units constructing complexes, in this thesis states are analyzed as the main units constructing complexes. However, this does not exclude other actors entirely, especially international organizations. The meaning of security is directly linked to the issue of actors – although its widening opens new ways as to how see and analyze security, it can also expand the range of issues to be considered too wide. Thus, a conceptual problem emerges as to how widely and in which security sectors it has to be analyzed. Identification of all security sectors – the exact number of which is unclear – does not have to be the basic aim; in each particular situation the most significant security issues will vary and, thus, there is no need to strive to identify security issues in every security sector. Nevertheless, it is crucial to identify the most important security issues

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independently of what sectors they belong to based on their impact on inter-state relations. Likewise, it has to be justified that the considered issues are the only ones with significant impact on inter-state relations in order to avoid unjustified dismissal of some other issues.

Based on the analysis of theoretical works and problematic aspects as mentioned above, adjusted definitions are provided for these terms: regional security complex, sub-region of regional security complex, securitization, inter-state securitization, audience, securitizing actor, factors affecting state security, perception of factors affecting state security. Unlike the theoretical aspects defined by Buzan and his fellows (but at the same time not diverging from them considerably), the role of states and elements linked to the states are emphasized to a greater extent (as for referent objects and also securitizing actors and audiences). Relations among different factors determining construction of regional security complexes are defined more definitely – both by examining securitization and de-securitization processes and other factors affecting state security. The role of securitization is also defined in a more definite way – by putting emphasis on state-linked securitizing actors, referent objects and audiences. Although it is not possible to answer every problematic aspect here, with the help of this conceptualization the problematic aspects can be minimized.

Based on the analysis of theoretical aspects and empirical aspects, the following suggestions are proposed for further development of the regional security complex theory and its empirical applications (independently of what version of the theory is applied):

- to state clearly what version of the regional security complex theory is used and, accordingly, defining elements of the regional security complexes (especially, in regards to security sectors) in order to reduce space for intentional or unintentional "manipulations" in identifying complexes;

- to define clearly the margins after which securitization and de-securitization processes are considered as significant enough to be taken for analysis in order to avoid unnecessarily wide analysis of securitization and de-securitization processes and, on the other hand, to avoid dismissal of significant ones;
- to clearly define the version of securitization theory used in order to limit the space for intentional or unintentional "manipulation" in analysis of securitization and de-securitization processes and, accordingly, identification of regional security complexes;
- to prioritize securitization rather than de-securitization processes because in identification of regional security complexes actual and/or intensifying security dynamics prevails.

2. THE BALTIC STATES AS A SUB-REGION OF REGIONAL SECURITY COMPLEX

The chapter is structured in three sub-chapters: "2.1. Defining Aspects of the Baltic States as a Sub-region of Regional Security Complex" (further structured into "2.1.1. Conjunctive Security-related Factors of the Baltic States", "2.1.2. Security Problems of the Baltic States" and "2.1.3. Euro-Atlantic Actors and Their Impact on Security Environment of the Baltic States"); "2.2. Interaction of the Baltic States and Their Neighboring States" (further structured into "2.2.1. The Baltic States and Their Neighboring States – NATO and the EU Member States", "2.2.2. The Baltic States and Their Neighboring States – the CIS and CSTO Member States"); and "2.3. The Baltic States as a Contact Area of Great Powers".

In accordance with the adjusted theoretical framework defined in the previous chapter, a sub-region of regional security complex is defined as a geographically linked group of states inside a regional security complex which can be seen as a single group in the context of inter-state securitization processes and/or factors affecting state security and of their perception. As far as the factors examined in this chapter are concerned (those that are intrinsic to traditional security perception), the Baltic States form a sub-region of regional security complex, as in the context of these problems they cannot be viewed separately. They have not only been viewed externally as a single group, but in accordance with factors affecting state security they can be considered as a group of states apart from others – they form a geographically linked group that is uniform in their strategic and political links (both trilateral and in the context of these links in NATO, the EU, Nordic cooperation formats, strategic partnership with the United States which, taken together, run contrary

to those links of Russia and Belarus), they have similar history, they are bound by close economic links (and also by controversies arising from economic issues), their ethnic nations can be considered as rather similar.

Relatively close political and strategic relations, historical links, cultural links, economic links between Lithuania and Poland and between Estonia and Finland have to be noted. However, these bilateral cooperation processes (Lithuania–Poland, Estonia–Finland), in general, do not stand out of the regional context – both in comparison to the trilateral cooperation amongst the Baltic States and other cooperation formats and regional priorities of Poland and Finland (Poland as a Central European state, part of the "Visegrad Group", its positioning as a European power; Finland as one of the Nordic states, its rather different position towards Russia (if compared to the Baltic States)).

At the same time, it has to be noted that strategic and political links clearly define the division line between the Baltic States, Poland as member states of NATO and the EU and Finland and Sweden as the EU member states, on the one hand, and Russia and Belarus, as part of the "Union State", Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), on the other. The contrast of political and strategic links, historical links, economic ties, and security problems of the Baltic States underline the close interaction of the Baltic States and Russia, which also forms the basis for negative security dynamics – mutual securitization which is examined in the next chapter.

By examining the role of great powers in this sub-region, it is concluded that the Baltic States are a contact area of great powers. The EU, even though not a clearly unified actor, can be considered as a local institutional-type great power, the United States – a geographically external great power "penetrating" the sub-region, but Russia – a geographically local great power. Interaction of great powers has a significant impact on the situation in this sub-region as it emerges from the interaction of the EU, NATO and/or the United States, on

the one hand, and Russia, on the other – not only in the Baltic States but also in the Central and Eastern Europe in general. At the same time, the transformation of the role of great powers shows that it has also had a significant impact on the regional security complexes – NATO and the EU have enlarged and, thus, pluralistic security community, as defined by Deutsch et al. (2003), centered on them. Furthermore, both of them, and the EU in particular, have become more fragmented and more internally diversified. With devoting more attention to regions other than Europe the relative role of the United States in Europe has started to decrease (in the period considered in this thesis), but the role of Russia has steadily grown. It is hard to deny the role of EU and NATO in the Baltic States through membership – the impact of the EU on the Baltic States advance to the West institutionally, politically and economically, and the impact of NATO in maintaining pluralistic security community as far as military security and related issues matter. However, at this stage of thesis it cannot be argued that the Baltic States have become part of the "EU Europe" as defined by Buzan and Wæver (2003), and even that such complex still exists. For a complete review of this sub-region and regional security complexes surrounding it, the securitization processes have to be analyzed.

It also has to be noted that Buzan and Wæver saw in 2003 the Baltic States as part of the "post-Soviet" regional security complex and that Russia was the main security problem of the Baltic States. However, even before the analysis of the securitization processes several aspects reinforce the argument that Russia still is the main security problem of the Baltic States: wide perception of Russia as a threat (both among state institutions and societies); strategic and political links of the Baltic States which are opposite to those of Russia; close economic ties between the Baltic States and Russia (among other things, resulting in energy dependence); historical links as a foundation for feeling of insecurity; the proportion of Russian-speaking inhabitants and

problems related to their integration, including the issue of Russian language and culture – as a potential for tensions.

3. SECURITIZATION IN RELATIONS BETWEEN THE BALTIC STATES AND RUSSIA

The last chapter consists of two sub-chapters. First of them is called "3.1. Securitization of Russia in the Baltic States" which is further structured into "3.1.1. Military Security Sector" (it consists of lower level sub-chapters "3.1.1.1. Traditional Threats Dimension" and "3.1.1.2. "New" Threats Dimension") and "3.1.2. Political Security Sector" (consists of lower level sub-chapters "3.1.2.1. Political Threats Dimension", "3.1.2.2. Societal Threats Dimension", "3.1.2.3. Economic Threats Dimension"). Sub-chapter "3.2. "Securitization of the Baltic States in Russia" is further divided into "3.2.1. Military Security Sector" and "3.2.2. Political Security Sector".

Securitization processes of Russia in the Baltic States and securitization of the Baltic States in Russia derive from the fact that Russia is still the main security problem of the Baltic States. However, before turning attention to Russia, it has to be mentioned that in comparison to the securitization of Russia there is no other similar securitization in inter-state relations of the Baltic States. One can note some securitizations also of the West (regarding the United States, NATO, the EU and their member states). However, in general, there has been almost no securitization of the West at state level.

Securitization processes are categorized in security sectors. The first of them is the military sector in which the threats in cyber-space as part of the "non-traditional" dimension are also examined. The perception of Russia as a military threat has been relatively widespread and it is based on power asymmetry between the two sides and also history and historical memory – occupation, former presence of armed forces of the Soviet Union and Russia. Likewise, the state institutions through their official documents have not

excluded military threats emanating from Russia. Heading to and participating in the collective defense system of NATO (and practical aspects related to it) can be seen as characterizing the threat perception. Securitization of Russia has been done in responding to the actions of Russia itself – constant sorties of its military aircraft near the Baltic States, the Russia–Georgia armed conflict in 2008, large scale military exercises in the vicinity of the Baltic States, the development of Russia's military capabilities, Russia's own threat perception and its public positioning. The threats in cyber-space have increasingly become a topic for securitization. In the case of the Baltic States, there have been clear links with threats probably emanating from Russia – securitization related to it has been visible in the development of cyber-security policies of the Baltic States (with emphasis on inter-state threats among others). There have been different incidents in cyber-space probably originating in Russia, the best known of which was a series of attacks against Estonia in 2007.

In regard to securitization of Russia in other security sectors, it is hard to separate threats in political, societal and economic sectors. Even though these threats can be analyzed in separate security sectors, at least in the case of the Baltic States they are directly linked to the threats to sovereignty – by threatening each of these elements (in particular, national languages, energy security), they almost immediately become a threat to the political security of state, like the threats to freedom from external intervention in national decision-making processes. Accordingly, societal and economic (primarily energy-related) threats are analyzed as part of the political sector, but as separate dimensions. It also has to be mentioned that there have been inter-state securitizations in the environmental sector, however, the most significant ones as part of energy security issues.

Russia has often been perceived and securitized as a state which aims to influence the internal processes of the Baltic States. It has been widely held that the aim of those actions is to return the three states under the control of Russia.

As manifestations of it have been the "compatriots" policy, strengthening of Russian language and cultural space, attempts to influence internal economic and political processes and the public opinion both in the Baltic States and outside them. As the most visible instrument of influence has been positioned the operation of intelligence services of Russia (there have been various spy scandals, including expulsion of Russian diplomats and state treason cases). Especially in Estonia and Latvia, significant securitization of Russian-speakers and of influence of Russian language and culture has been visible. Such threats have been mainly perceived as threats to existence of the Baltic nations and their identities, in particular Latvian and Estonia and elements (primarily languages) by which they are primarily defined. It has been to a great extent securitized (self-securitized) as a constant threat that exists by itself – Russian speakers who use their native language create a type of "competition" to languages of the Baltic nations. At the same time, this threat has been almost automatically seen and securitized as emanating from Russia which has defended the rights of Russian-speakers and a wider use of Russian language and has constantly and severely criticized the Baltic States for alleged non-observance of Russian-speakers' rights and different interpretation of history (mainly related to the outcome of the Second World War and the occupation of the Baltic States). Processes in this sector have also instigated many incidents, especially in Latvia and Estonia – e.g. protests over "Russian language schools reform" in Latvia in 2004, riots (both in the physical and cyber-space) in 2007 in Estonia against the relocation of the so called "bronze soldier", referendum in Latvia in 2012 with a proposal to grant a status of official language to Russian language (which was, however, overwhelmingly rejected).

As a part of the economic dimension, there has been constant perception of different risk factors related to Russia – widespread perception of unpredictability of Russia, its unstable economic environment and direct links between political and economic decision-making processes. However, it would

be difficult to classify this as a distinct category of securitization. For instance, cargo related to Russia, Russia's market and other economic aspects can be rather seen as an opportunity – an opportunity that has been mainly related to general political relations with Russia. Therefore, attempts of representatives of private sector related to Russian market and/or capital to enhance (de-securitize) relations with Russia have been visible. The most securitized aspects in economic dimension have been those related to energy security – Russia as the primary source of energy resources and in particular as the only source of natural gas. Russia has been securitized in different contexts, including as part of efforts to enhance independence from Russian energy resources and, thus, to integrate their energy systems with other EU member states. Dependence on Russia has been securitized not only as a static situation but also as active Russia's policy to reach control also over other spheres in the Baltic States. As one of the most securitized issues has to be underlined the construction of "Nord Stream" pipeline on the seabed of the Baltic Sea. It has been harshly opposed and criticized not only as a potential environmental threat but indirectly and directly also as a factor affecting energy dependence on Russia.

Securitization of Russia in the Baltic States has been linked to the securitization of them in Russia. Russia has been securitized as a military threat in the Baltic States, and, at the same time, they have been securitized as military threat to Russia. However, it is important to note that as a military threat they have been mainly securitized as member states of NATO (with some particular elements not to be equated with threat perception of all NATO member states). The main points under securitization have been the global role of NATO (and Baltic States as members of this alliance) in contrast to Russia's interests in different regions, the role of NATO in Russia's vicinity (in its spheres of interest) – with the enlargement of NATO and respective advance of its infrastructure (resources) (and issues related to it) to Russia's borders. Securitization of the Baltic States in terms of Russian-speakers, Russian

language and culture (as referent objects) has been done not only with clear reference to the Baltic States but also at a much higher intensity compared to the military threats. These issues have constantly been on the agenda for securitization since the end of 1990s. The main directions of criticism and securitization have been clearly visible – the rights of Russian-speakers, especially in Estonia and Latvia. It has been inseparably linked to Russian language and its status in these countries. Another direction has been severe criticism and securitization of the Baltic States over historic issues (mainly linked to the Second World War), by accusing them of "rewriting history" and "glorifying Nazism". Taken together, securitization of the Baltic States in Russia has been narrower (regarding the range of issues) if compared to the extent Russia has been securitized in the Baltic States.

By assessing securitization processes in the Baltic States, it is concluded that the main securitizing actors have been affiliated to the state – mainly state institutions (and officials, politicians), mainly defense ministries in military issues and state security agencies in aspects related to external threats to domestic politics. In societal dimension, however, self-securitization by societies (mainly in Estonia and Latvia) has been visible – both securitizing actors and referent objects have been societies in general (their existence close to a larger nation and elements defining it, in particular Russian language). Securitization by political actors and organizations has to be noted as well. This, however, can also be considered as a manifestation of the will of the people who support these actors. As a difference in the economic dimension (energy security issues), a larger influence on securitization from actors that are not linked to state has to be noted. In all of securitization processes the role of mass media has been significant, yet in the Baltic States the media have mostly acted as transmission channels of information rather than independent securitizing actors. Sovereignty and constitutional order can be considered as referent objects in all of the issues (that also includes the Baltic nations as

foundations of respective countries). The audiences have been the Baltic nations and international society (mainly Western states). In general, the Baltic nations have accepted securitized issues as security issues, which has also been illustrated by public opinion polls regarding enmity towards other states.

Securitization of the Baltic States in Russia has been narrower in its scope (by the range of issues on agenda), but with a more visible influence of state institutions and their representatives, including politicians (those can also be considered as the main securitizing actors). Considering the close relations of mass media, non-governmental organizations and state institutions in Russia, securitization of such actors can also rather be considered as an indirect manifestation of state-led securitization. Audience has mainly been the Russian society and international society. Referent objects have mainly been sovereignty of Russia and elements determining its identity – language and culture (mainly history related issues), and Russian-speakers ("compatriots") and their situation in the Baltic States. Also in the case of Russia its society has accepted these issues as security issues, as also illustrated by public opinion polls and generally negative attitude towards not only the Baltic States, but also NATO and the United States.

In Russia, the Baltic States have been over-securitized in political security sector because the alleged threats to Russian-speakers, Russian language and culture in and by the Baltic States cannot be considered as proportionate if compared to attempts of the Baltic States to secure and enhance their sovereignty and nations (thus, objectively reducing role of other states, languages and cultures). As over-securitized in the Baltic States can be considered issues in political and in economic dimensions, because both in influencing domestic policy-making and energy dependence Russia's negative image could have been lower, if it would not have been securitized to the extent it has been. But it is important to note that it would not mean that real threats would not exist and securitizations have not been necessary. It also has to be

underlined that it is currently almost impossible to expect inter-state non-securitization because in their very basics military security and political security of both sides rest on mutually opposite elements:

- being part of different if not opposite political and collective defense (security) organizations with related wider implications they imply;
- strengthening of the Baltic nations and their languages by definition runs in conflict with Russia's "compatriots" policy and its strive to expand the role of Russian language and to preserve it in the Baltic States;
- strengthening of sovereignty of the Baltic States, by definition, runs in conflict with Russia's strive to reestablish its role both regionally and globally.

In the end, it has to be noted that there might also be other issues that can be securitized but have not been securitized so far. Similarly, there are currently no signs of effective attempts to de-securitize inter-state relations.

CONCLUSIONS

According to the definition developed (adjusted) to define sub-regions, the Baltic States form a sub-region of regional security complex. Accordingly, the second hypothesis – *the Baltic States form a sub-region of regional security complex* – is proven. The three states have not only externally been viewed as a single group but, in accordance with factors affecting state security, they can be considered as a group of states apart from others – they form a geographically linked group that is uniform by their strategic and political links, they have similar history, they are bound by close economic links (and also by controversies linked to economic issues), their ethnic nations can be considered rather similar to one another. They also share similar security perception and main inter-state securitization processes – those with Russia: mutual securitization in the military security sector and in the political security sector and even with a wider spectrum of securitization of Russia in the Baltic States.

While securitization processes, enmity patterns and economic links could arrange the Baltic States as part of a regional security complex centered on Russia, the strategic and political links, however, as well as historical experience (partly), cultural links and economic links do not allow to separate the Baltic States from Poland, Nordic countries and the EU and NATO member states in general. Accordingly, a question arises which regional security complex the Baltic sub-region belongs to.

As Buzan and Wæver concluded in their 2003 analysis, and this is possibly even more true today, the Baltic States form a significant problem in explaining two separate regional security complexes. However, in contrast to prognosis of Buzan and his fellows, de-securitization has not evolved and, accordingly, negative security dynamics has not diminished. Furthermore, it

can be considered as even stronger and intense as before – securitization processes have continued in traditional spheres of security and new issues have been placed on securitization agenda.

When Buzan and Wæver (2003) referred to the Baltic States as part of the "post-Soviet" regional security complex, these countries were not part of NATO and the EU and they were in mutual "securitization relations" with Russia. Currently, with the same securitization processes that have even expanded, the Baltic States are part of NATO and the EU and could be accordingly considered as part of a pluralistic security community centered on these organizations. Thus, they could be considered as part of a complex centered on both organizations. These facts and different processes of interaction on different issues globally and regionally among the EU, NATO, the United States, on the one hand, and Russia, on the other, lead to the definition of one single complex – the "EU/NATO Europe – Russia" regional security complex. It has two centers – the EU/NATO and Russia, and it includes different sub-regions, the Baltic as one of them. In regard to the part centered on EU/NATO, there are clear signs of existence of pluralistic security community. Thus, as previously noted by Buzan and Wæver (2003), "Kantian" culture of anarchy, as defined by Wendt (2003), prevails. Around the part of the complex that is centered on Russia, attempts by it to strengthen its influence in regions surrounding it through various means determines Wendt's defined "Lockean" or even synthesis of "Lockean"/"Hobbesian" cultures of anarchy. It also has to be noted that in the part of the complex centered on the EU and NATO and in certain parts of Russia's sphere of interest, significant "penetration" of the United States as an external power is visible. Even though going beyond the scope of the thesis, it can be noted that the complex includes the geographical Europe and Russia, and external border can be sought in the Mediterranean, Black Sea and Caucasus regions as well as in Central Asia.

Thus, the third hypothesis – *membership in the EU and NATO has not altered the place of the Baltic States within regional security complexes and they still belong to a regional security complex centered on Russia* – can only be considered as partly proven. Even though the Baltic States, according to some factors and intensity of securitization processes in particular, could be identified as part of a complex centered on Russia, according to other factors, they could be arranged as part of an EU/NATO centered regional security complex. Thus, the Baltic States as one of the interaction points of great powers underlines that complex centered on Russia cannot be viewed separately. At the same time, the first hypothesis – *factors intrinsic to traditional security apart from securitization and de-securitization processes cannot determine regional security complexes*, and the forth hypothesis – *the intensity of securitization processes is the determining factor when identifying the place of the Baltic States amongst regional security complexes* – can be considered as proven. Analysis of the Baltic States highlights the significant role of securitization processes in determining threat perceptions and, accordingly, regional security complexes. Securitization processes and their intensity most clearly determine actual negative security dynamics. Even though factors affecting state security and their perception (power relations, geographical, strategic and political, historical, economic, cultural links, patterns of amity and enmity) form basis for inter-state securitization processes, these factors do not fully show actual security dynamics; without securitization, such factors can also not be perceived in threat categories. Thus, with no identification of securitization processes, the respective factors and their perception can also be non-objective indicators. For instance, some factors can show potential for real enmity, but, at the same time, there might be no topical issues (securitized issues).

For further alterations of regional security complexes and their borders related to the Baltic States to take place, significant de-securitization is

a prerequisite. However, in the current situation mutual non-securitization is almost impossible because military and political security of both sides is based on mutually opposite elements. However, in the future, a decrease of securitization intensity is possible, especially in the political security sector. Thus, current borders of this regional security complex might be reduced to the military security sector. Similarly, as with the re-orientation of Baltic States' external trade vectors (in particular, if compared to the first stages after independence), with practical strengthening of energy independence, securitization of Russia in the economic (energy) dimension can significantly decrease. Likewise, a gradual de-securitization of the Baltic States in political security issues in Russia is possible because the Baltic States do not form an existential threat to Russia, compared to the threats posed by Russia and Russia-related elements in the same sector. However, potential de-securitization in political sector and also in military sector directly depends on Russia, especially because a part of securitization processes in these sectors are caused by power asymmetry and actions of Russia. If Russia stopped securitizing the Baltic States, it could serve as a strong foundation for decreased securitization of Russia in the Baltic States. However, this is only possible with a precondition that Russia under non-securitized circumstances does not constitute existential threats. Otherwise, the Baltic States, by not securitizing actual objective threats, could constitute threats to their own security. Thus, states and societies might not be ready to face threats in an appropriate way. It can be concluded that non-securitization and de-securitization of Russia is only possible with alterations in threats related to actions of Russia.

Russia's occupation of Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula in 2014 is another clear sign that Russia determines the intensity of securitization between Russia and the Baltic States.

LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

Results of the thesis have been discussed in the following scientific publications:

1. ANDŽĀNS, Māris, 2013. Prospects of Regionalization of Security in the Cyberspace: Case of the Baltic States. *Biznesa augstskolas Turība konferenču rakstu krājums. XIV Starptautiskā zinātniskā konference* "*Radīt nākotni: komunikācija, izglītība, bizness*" *// Proceedings of the Conference of Turiba University. XIV International Scientific Conference* "*Creating the Future: Communication, Education, Business*" [disc]. Rīga: Biznesa augstskola Turība. 14-24. ISSN 1691-6069.

2. ANDŽĀNS, Māris, 2013. Drošībiskošanas koncepta ierobežojumi. *Rīgas Stradiņa universitāte. Zinātniskie raksti: 2012. gada sociālo zinātņu nozares pētnieciskā darba publikācijas: Ekonomika. Komunikācija. Politika. Socioloģija. Sociālā politika un sociālais darbs. Tiesības.* Rīga: Rīgas Stradiņa universitāte. 5-11. ISBN 978-9984-793-44-3. ISSN 1407-9453 [viewed 31 March 2014]. Available from: http://www.rsu.lv/images/stories/dokumenti/publikacijas/zinatniskie_raksti_2012/2012_socialo_zinatnu_nozares_raksti.pdf

3. ANDŽĀNS, Māris, 2014. Transition of the Baltic States Sub-region: from the "post-Soviet" to the "EU-Europe" Regional Security Complex? *Daugavpils Universitātes 55.starptautiskās zinātniskās konferences rakstu krājums // Proceedings of the 55th International Scientific Conference of Daugavpils University.* Daugavpils: Daugavpils Universitāte. 454-464. ISBN 978-9984-14-665-2 [viewed 31 March 2014]. Available from: http://www.dukonference.lv/files/proceedings_of_conf/DU_55_starpt_zinatn_konf_rakstu_kraj.pdf

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