

Vilnius University
INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND POLITICAL
SCIENCE

EASTERN EUROPEAN AND RUSSIAN STUDIES

VADIM VILEITA

Between Securitization and Integration of Competing Historical Narratives:

Lithuanian Responses to Belarusian 'Litvinism'

MASTER'S THESIS

Tutor: Dr. Laurynas Jonavičius

8 January 2022

Vilnius

Confirmation

I confirm that I am the author of submitted paper: *Between Securitization and Integration of Competing Historical Narratives: Lithuanian Responses to Belarusian 'Litvinism'*, which has been prepared independently and has never been presented for any other course or used in another educational institution, neither in Lithuania, or abroad. I also provide a full bibliographical list which indicates all the sources that were used to prepare this assignment and contains no un-used sources.

Vadim Vileita



MASTER'S THESIS FLYLEAF

Conclusions of the tutor of the Master's thesis (concerning the public defence):

.....
.....
.....

.....
(date)

.....
(name, surname)

.....
(signature)

The Master's thesis has been submitted to the Commission of Defence:

.....
(date)

.....
(signature of the secretary of the Commission of Defence)

Reviewer of the thesis:

.....
(name, surname)

Evaluation of the Commission of Defence:

.....

Head of the commission:

Members of the commission:

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL ENTRY

Vileita, Vadim: Between Securitization and Integration of Competing Historical Narratives: Lithuanian Responses to Belarusian 'Litvinism': Master in Eastern European and Russian Studies program, Master thesis / Vilnius University Institute of International Relations and Political Science; tutor: dr. Laurynas Jonavičius, Vilnius, 2022. – 62 pages

Key words: Belarus, Litvinism, securitization, history policy, Grand Duchy of Lithuania, information war

Summary (maximum: 700 characters)

Referred to as Litvinism, some interpretations of the history of Grand Duchy of Lithuania claim that this was a Belarusian state (dominated by Belarusians or 'shared' with Lithuanians, depending on a flow).

The thesis analyses the response of the Lithuanian society and state to Litvinism, ranging between securitisation and integration. Out of factors that determine the intensity of securitisation of Litvinism in Lithuania, the research found two to be key: foreign and history policies of Belarus, and history paradigm prevailing in Lithuania. Other factors: Russian information war, potential transition of power in Belarus, and popularity of Litvinism in Belarus, exert indirect influence.

INDEX

INTRODUCTION	6
CHAPTER 1: ANALYSIS OF SECURITISING MOVES AGAINST LITVINISM	9
CHAPTER II: FACTORS OF LITVINISM SECURITISATION.....	19
Factor 1: Russian information war.....	19
Factor 2: Popularity of Litvinism in Belarusian society	24
2.1 Categorisations of Litvinism.....	26
A. Traditional and contemporary Litvinism	26
B. Radical and moderate Litvinism	29
2.2 Litvinism in public opinion of Belarus	30
2.3 Given names as an indicator of identity.....	34
Factor 3. Litvinism in foreign and history policy of Belarus.....	36
Factor 4: History paradigm prevailing in Lithuania.....	40
Factor 5: transition of power in Belarus.....	46
CONCLUSIONS.....	50
LITERATURE.....	53

INTRODUCTION

Marked by outburst of protests in the country in 2020, unprecedented crackdown on dissenting views and the ensuing long-standing confrontation of the dictatorial regime with the West, the relations with Belarus have been among key focuses of Lithuania's foreign policy in recent years. For decades, the Baltic country has been seen as a champion of democracy promotion in its closest post-Soviet neighbour, hosting Belarus-expelled pro-democratic leaders and numerous asylum-seekers, and advocating for a more active response of EU and NATO partners to Lukashenka's atrocities.

However, there is more to study about Lithuania-Belarus relations than the ongoing political battles and the still intensive pragmatic economic ties. Usually overlooked by researchers and media, identity processes that are happening under the surface in both countries offer a fertile ground to reflect on the future of these two nations, which share what is frequently referred to as 'common history', yet are strongly divided by geopolitical choices.

The two nations situated in the terrain previously occupied by the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (GDL), Lithuania and Belarus, experienced very different developments in 20th century. While Lithuania succeeded in establishing its modern national identity and statehood, Belarus became a 'founding republic' of the Soviet Union, underwent thorough Russification and lost most of its intellectual elites to emigration or Stalinist repressions, resulting in a very different type of identity for the remaining population. Early 90-ies, though, gave a chance to the Belarusian nation, too, to claim a position in the family of independent European nations by building on the heritage of the same old Duchy, seen by many historians in Belarus as a cradle of Belarusian statehood, no less (or for some, more) than today's Lithuania. New processes of identity building started in Belarus immediately after the collapse of the Soviet Union; partially halted by the subsequent rise of a Soviet-style anti-Western personalistic regime, they survived decades of dictatorship and started to play a role in relations of the Belarusian society with the West, particularly Lithuania.

Where are these processes heading, and will the common historical past play a uniting or dividing role in further dynamics of Lithuania-Belarus ties? Naturally, people in Lithuania might be concerned about the growing popularity of some nationalist ideas in Belarus. Some of these ideas are that Vilnius (Vilnia) should belong to Belarus, not Lithuania; GDL was the country dominated by Slavs, not Balts, and therefore Belarus is the true successor of its

heritage; ‘old Belarusian’ was the ‘official language’ of this medieval state etc. This study offers a glimpse into whether these views are actually gaining ground in today’s Belarus.

The main focus of this paper, though, is Lithuania and its response to the above-mentioned developments. While the puzzling Belarusian identity has already attracted interest of quite a few researchers, and some theoretical models have been offered to analyse it, the reaction of the Baltic neighbour to this ‘theft of identity’ and potential territorial claims, as some people in Lithuania argue, remains underresearched. Potentially, these considerations bear more practical implications than we might think today. At this point, we cannot be certain if Belarus will stay independent over the coming decade, or when (and if) it will undergo a democratic transition. Yet, should this happen one day, and should Belarus decide to rediscover its ‘European’ identity and turn to the GDL heritage, will Lithuania stay enthusiastic about pro-Western integration of and willingly share its historical identity with Belarus? Or, will it generate a new ‘identity war’ in Europe, similar to that between Greece and North Macedonia, or even the old conflict over Vilnius/Wilno between Lithuania and Poland in 1920-30s?

Therefore, **the goal of this paper is to explore the response of Lithuanian state and society to Belarusian historical narratives contesting the traditional Lithuanian understanding of the GDL history and identity.** For the purpose of this research, such narratives are jointly referred to as ‘**Litvinism**’. Exploited and promoted by some historians and public figures in Lithuania, this concept will be used herein as a conventional general label to refer to historical theories and narratives circulating in Belarus, at all levels and in multiple variants, that justify a right for Belarusians to lay claims on the symbolic and material heritage of GDL. The term derives from the idea that the correct ethnonym of Belarusians should be ‘Litvins’, an old Slavonic word referring to people living in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (Litva).

As the study shows, some actors view these narratives originating from Belarus as a threat for social (ontological) security of Lithuania, and attempt to securitise them, which is in line with the theory of securitisation in dealing with ‘existential threats’ as perceived by securitising actors and / or their audiences. *Securitisation*, therefore, is viewed in this study as one of potential extreme responses towards manifestations of the Belarusian ‘Litvinism’, as opposed to *integration*, another extreme option, which seeks to reconcile Lithuanian and Belarusian historical narratives. The paper will look into the spectrum between these two extremes over the previous two decades, mostly focusing on intensity of securitising moves against Litvinism in Lithuania between 2012 and 2021, and try to identify trends and factors behind these moves.

In which periods were securitising moves against Litvinism more or less successful, i.e. leading to actual state-level securitisation in Lithuania? What are factors explaining why some time frames in Lithuania were marked by spikes in attempts to securitise Belarusian historical narratives? Are there some ways to predict the response from Lithuania depending on situation in Belarus and the broader region, or in Lithuania itself? Answering these questions and studying potential underlying reasons will help to answer the research question: **What are the most relevant factors determining the response of the Lithuanian state and society to Litvinism in order to ensure its social (ontological) security** (the options of response ranging between ‘securitisation’ and ‘integration’ of Litvinist narratives)?

In order to answer the research question, the study will follow several steps:

- Overview of Litvinism securitisation trends in 2012-2020;
- Identification of potential securitisation factors based on rhetoric of securitising actors;
- Exploration of the factors to check their actual influence on securitisation trends;
- Crystallisation of most relevant factors that determine the response of Lithuania to Litvinism.

Chapter I will focus on attempts to securitise Belarusian Litvinist theories and narratives in Lithuania in the recent past (2012-2021). Given the importance of history for the Lithuanian national worldview, ontological and social security, the constructivist theory of security studies is invoked to explore pushback in the Lithuanian society against the manifestations of Litvinism in Belarus. The chapter will therefore scrutinise the securitising moves in the Lithuanian public discourse presenting Litvinism as a threat to the social (and, potentially, physical) security of the EU member state. The analysis builds on previous studies of Litvinism securitisation and GDL heritage division narratives in Lithuania, conducted by other authors. The key goal of this chapter is to identify the intensity of securitisation of Litvinism in Lithuania, which will be measured on a scale between 0 and 3, and to see when and why main ‘spikes’ occurred in the past.

Chapter II will look into the factors of securitising attempts, to identify the most relevant and direct ones. The main factors, as implied by securitising actors, will be verified by applying methods that suit the needs of the research. For example, some actors in Lithuania claim, or assume, that Russian information war against Lithuania (as a part of the West) is the actual reason / factor of Litvinism, which serves as an argument to securitise it. Correspondingly, the subchapter on Russian information aggression will serve as a reality

check to see if this line of argumentation fits the facts. To do this, this subchapter will study the main theses of Litvinism and its role in determining the identity and geopolitical orientation of Belarus; this analysis can help answer the question whether Litvinism is in line with goals and strategies of Russian information attacks against Lithuania. Based on analysis of each factor, the paper will answer the question, what factors actually explain the trends of Litvinism securitisation in Lithuania, as compared to other, not so significant factors, which might be referred to as arguments in securitising rhetoric, yet they have no direct influence on the securitisation process.

The research topic is particularly relevant in our days, when audiences in Lithuania, like many countries in Europe, are experiencing information attacks coming from Russia and partially Belarus (seen as a part of 'hybrid war'). While history and national identities are frequently seen as a battlefield in information warfare, it also creates a threat that any attempts towards legitimate academic discussion about past events may be securitised and 'banned' due to their sensitive nature. This paper offers insights into when and how Russian information aggression might serve as a real factor in securitisation of historical relations between its neighbours, Belarus and Lithuania, and when the very presence of Russian military power and informational 'noise' can undermine attempts towards reconciliation of historical narratives of the states previously cohabitating in GDL.

CHAPTER 1: ANALYSIS OF SECURITISING MOVES AGAINST LITVINISM

Developed by the so-called Copenhagen school, the constructivist theory of security studies is mostly associated with (socially constructed) high-scale and intensive military threats, or response to global challenges like pandemics, terrorism, climate change etc. The analysis of full-fledged securitisation, the central concept of this theory, includes units like referent objects, securitising actors and securitising moves, speech act, audience, existential threat, extraordinary (emergency) measures etc.¹ Yet, beyond very direct physical threats, mostly related to military, environmental or economic sectors, this theory deals with more sophisticated insecurities. In particular, the societal and political sectors of security, as described by Buzan et. al. (1998), constitute other important dimensions where threats can

¹ Buzan, Barry, Ole Wæver, Jaap de Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*. London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998, 23-26, 35-39.

unfold. “In the societal sector, <...> the referent object is large-scale collective identities. <...> Given the peculiar nature of this type of referent object, it is extremely difficult to establish hard boundaries that differentiate existential from lesser threats”.² Related to identity, issues of legitimacy and recognition are crucial for political security. “The idea of the state, particularly its national identity and organizing ideology, <...> are the normal target of political threats”³; “ideas that hold a state together are typically nationalism (especially civic nationalism but sometimes ethnonationalism) and political ideology. By threatening these ideas, one can threaten the stability of the political order”.⁴ According to Buzan et al., such threats include threats to the territorial integrity or the existence of the state itself.

Ingrid Creppell (2011) further developed the distinction between physical and normative threats. She stressed that “people care about more than physical survival. <...> We care about things that are constructed from the past (communal history, ancestors) and projected into the future (future generations, our society’s survival).”⁵ Among situations that undermine people’s normative security, as the author put it, are cases when “people and leaders may find themselves thrown into sharp contrast with another normative ordering on what they thought was their own stage.”⁶ She also refers to the work of David Campbell, indicating that “threat becomes activated when <...> a void opens up in the imagination of the whole about ‘who we are’”, and pointing out to the need “to examine the role of the frameworks – normative orders – within which identities are located”.⁷

Budryte et. al. (2020) uses the terms of ontological and mnemonic security: “Ontological security directs researchers to consider a state’s identity as a focus of protection in their calculations. Mnemonic security then directly links a state’s identity to its memory and its historical narratives, constantly altered and revised yet remaining essential to the state’s conception of itself.”⁸ Both terms are used in this paper synonymously, though.

² *Ibid*, 22-23.

³ Buzan, Barry, *People, States and Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era*. 2nd ed. Boulder: Lynne Rienner; Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991, cited from *Ibid*, 1998, 142.

⁴ *Ibid*, 150.

⁵ Creppell, Ingrid, *The Concept of Normative Threat*, International Theory / Volume 3 / Issue 03 / November 2011, 455.

⁶ *Ibid*, 474.

⁷ Campbell, David, *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity*. Minneapolis, MN: University Of Minnesota Press, 1992, cited from *Ibid*, 457.

⁸ Budryte, Dovile, Erica Resende, Douglas Becker, ‘Defending Memory’: *Exploring the Relationship Between Mnemonic In/Security and Crisis in Global Politics*, Interdisciplinary Political Studies, Issue 6(1) 2020, 14.

Mälksoo (2015) studied the securitisation of memory, to which she attached a negative meaning, labelling it as a “knee-jerk reactive treatment of issues of identity, memory and history as problems of security.”⁹ As a positive alternative, she offers ‘agonistic memory pluralism’, or ‘different readings of the commonly experienced past.’ “Because ontological anxiety is, to an extent, quite simply inevitable, it would be wiser to acknowledge and come to terms with it instead of entertaining a pipe dream of a perfectly ‘securable’ identity and its beholder’s historical memory. The openendedness of any identity should be recognized with regard to its perpetual state of ‘becoming’ on the boundaries of identity and difference in its enduring dialogues with others”.¹⁰ Agonistic model of history policy (or politics of difference) is also outlined by Vinogradnaitė, along with authoritarian, hegemonic, and liberal/neutral.¹¹

In this paper, however, the term of securitisation is not necessarily ascribed a negative connotation. When something appears like a threat to decision-making audiences, and when securitising actors manage to persuade them that an existential threat to precious values is real, securitisation can well be a natural or inevitable choice. This is true that, once marked as a threat, an issue tends to be treated with hostility rather than curiosity, which can lead to wrong decisions, not least because “national security organisations have short-term horizons”.¹² Having short-term horizons can definitely constitute a problem when dealing with issues of history and memory; yet, not so much as in the societal sector, short-sighted approach is characteristic of military sector.¹³ At all events, securitisation plays a role in understanding the world: “some acts of securitization simply serve to make salient the difference between friends and enemies.” This paper is neutral about prospects of securitising Litvinism. Regardless of whether it is or is not a threat for Lithuania, staying curious and exploring this phenomenon from multiple perspectives is worthwhile; this research is a humble input into these efforts.

⁹ Mälksoo, Maria, ‘*Memory must be defended*’: *Beyond the Politics of Mnemonical Security*, *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 46, No. 3 (2015), 232.

¹⁰ Mälksoo, Maria, *The Politics of Becoming European: A Study of Polish and Baltic Post-Cold War Security Imaginaries*, London and New York, NY: Routledge, 2010, in *Ibid*, 226.

¹¹ Vinogradnaitė, Inga, *Tarp tiesos ir politikos: Lietuvos istorijos politikos prielaidos*, in: Lopata, Raimundas, et. al. *Valstybė ir istorija*, Vilnius: VU leidykla, 2014, 58-60.

¹² Deudney, Daniel, *The case against linking environmental degradation and national security*. *Millennium* 19(3), 1990: 460-476, cited from Roe, Paul, *Is securitization a 'negative' concept? Revisiting the normative debate over normal versus extraordinary politics*, *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 43, No. 3, 2012, 253.

¹³ Knudsen, Olav, *Post-Copenhagen security studies: Desecuritizing securitization*, *Security Dialogue* 32(3), 2001, cited from Roe, 260.

To what extent are these theoretical lenses applicable to the Lithuania-Belarus relations? The securitisation of Litvinism is a rather new topic of research, since the very clash of Belarusian and Lithuanian narratives became apparent to many quite recently. (As a Lithuanian historian Inga Baranauskiene put it, “when internet became available, we started to be more in touch with neighbours, found out what they spoke about GDL, and clutched out heads”¹⁴). In his study on the place of Belarus in the Lithuanian memory culture, Dementavičius (2016) outlined that “Belarus hardly exists in the popular historical memory of Lithuanians. <...> Lithuanians are used to remembering and interpreting Belarus only as a Soviet republic, while its earlier history <...> is seen as the history of Slavic periphery subordinated to GDL (therefore, Lithuania)”.¹⁵ The same applies to the Lithuanian policy of history, in which, according to Dementavičius, Belarus is not seen as a political actor on par with Lithuania.

Therefore, contrary to Poland, Russia, Latvia, or Germany, Belarus has never had a clearly articulated role in the Lithuanian historical narrative. As such, the history of Belarus remains terra incognita to Lithuanian historical remembrance. For decades, Lithuanians remained, and many remain, unaware of the Belarusian view of themselves as successors of GDL heritage. This ‘blissful ignorance’, as put by Dementavičius, could not last forever. As Belarus departed from the Soviet understanding of its own history, Lithuanians stayed comfortable with the Soviet vision of Belarusianness. Paradoxically, while rejecting the Soviet version of their own history, Lithuania embraced the “neo-Soviet historical narrative about Belarus, as more understandable and acceptable”.¹⁶ The essence of this narrative is: Belarus never existed before 1917; this was a periphery void of its own national awareness; and then it emerged as a pseudo-independent ‘republic’ thanks to the Soviet rule in brotherhood with the great Russian people. This narrative is gradually losing its domination in Belarus to newly constructed national narratives since the beginning of independence, yet it stayed mostly inviolable in Lithuania.

Naturally, some Lithuanians are shocked to discover new Belarusian narratives about GDL. Their traditional understanding of their own history undergoes what they perceive as a challenge, or a ‘normative threat’. This leads to what Dementavičius describes as ‘a kind of

¹⁴ “Istorikai Inga ir Tomas Baranauskai. LICVINIZMAS”, *B&R Pristato* 2019.10.10, 0:01:13, https://trshow.info/watch/SrAPFh_fiQ8/b-r-pristato-Istorikai-Inga-ir-tomas-baranauskai-IIcvInIzmas-20191010.html [2022 01 07].

¹⁵ Dementavičius, Justinas, *Baltarusijos istorijos politika kaip Lietuvos istorijos politikos subjektas ir aporija*, in Lopata, Raimundas, Inga Vinogradnaitė (ed.), *Lietuvos ir Baltarusijos istorijos politika*, Vilnius: VU leidykla, 2016, 243.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 245.

securitisation of historical narratives'.¹⁷ He identifies media and, partially, historians as key securitising actors in this subject. It fits the theoretical provision posited by Buzan et al. (1998) on role of media for securitisation trends in societal sector: "With its attraction to simple stories, the media will often tell the news in terms of 'us' and 'them'".¹⁸ This same phenomenon is noted with a note of irony in the introduction to the publication on Lithuanian and Belarusian policies of history: "Some Belarusian interpretations of GDL history are presented in Lithuania as almost a national security issue, the essence of which is the 'appropriation' of GDL heritage marked by denying the link between statehood of Lithuania and that of GDL".¹⁹

On one hand, this process is a part of rediscovering Belarus by Lithuanians among their significant 'Others'; previously non-existent on the map of Lithuanian historical conscience and crowded out by bigger powers, Belarus is making its way to the map by claiming a role in the history of the region. On the other hand, the securitisation of Belarusian narratives in Lithuania is in many cases accompanied by continued denial of agency to Belarus, seeing these narratives as a mere component of a bigger traditional threat, Russia and its information warfare. The very mentioning of Russia as a potential actor standing behind this or that narrative serves as an argument to make a case for securitisation. Like 'dikes' in Netherlands, "there is no further need to spell out that this issue has to take precedence, that this is a security issue—by saying 'defence' or 'dikes', one has also implicitly said 'security' and 'priority'".²⁰ The same applies to 'Russia' in Lithuania.

Another researcher who has studied what he called 'international conflict' between Lithuania and Belarus is Venckūnas (2018; 2021). Based on communication studies, his works address narratives of the division of GDL tangible and intangible heritage. The international conflict between Lithuanians and Belarusians, according to Venckūnas, is taking place in the dimension of communication; "lacking escalation, which is an essential attribute of a conflict",²¹ it remains invisible to many. There are three groups of securitising actors identified: politicians, media, and the public, though only occasionally does the author refer to 'securitisation' term as such. Venckūnas claims that, after the 'radical period' of securitising rhetoric in Lithuania (2012-2015), a new period started about 2014-2015, whereas Belarusian claims on GDL

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Buzan, 124.

¹⁹ Lopata, Vinogradnaitė (ed.), 10.

²⁰ Buzan, 28.

²¹ Venckūnas, Valius, *LDK paveldo dalybų naratyvai Lietuvos ir Baltarusijos politinėje komunikacijoje XXI a. pradžioje*, daktaro disertacija, Vilnius: VU, 2021, 12.

legacies started to be seen more positively: “There are still some stories securitising the Belarusian nationalism; yet, they are softer. <...> This change reached its top maturity in 2019, when <...> mainstream media openly called to stop considering the Belarusian nationalism as a threat to Lithuania”.²² Like Dementavičius, Venckūnas never refers to the term of ‘Litvinism’ as such, but they both come up with analysis of main features thereof by enlisting the main differences between Lithuanian and Belarusian narratives.

Building on the securitisation theory and findings of previous researchers, this paper offers a more systematic and substantive look into securitisation of Litvinism in Lithuania, and partially disagrees with Venckūnas’s statement on fade-out of securitising moves against Litvinism since 2015 and ‘top maturity’ of this trend in 2019.

As the goal of this chapter is to identify the main trends in intensity of securitisation of Litvinism, we need a tool to measure this intensity. For the purpose of this paper, we can refer as ‘0’ level securitisation to a situation when a phenomenon is not securitised in any way, except very marginal voices. ‘1’ level securitisation (bottom-up securitising moves) would describe a situation when media publish stories or opinion articles about a phenomenon presenting it as a threat, or quoting some actors who attempt to securitise it. In case of ‘2’ level securitisation (partial securitisation, or top-down securitising moves), securitising actors are decision-makers who represent or speak on behalf of state institutions; they mention threats in press statements or governmental documents. Finally, level ‘3’ would represent a situation of full-fledged securitisation, when top state officials and key official security papers securitise a certain phenomenon.

The following section applies this ranking to findings of Venckūnas who monitored securitisation of Litvinism in Lithuania in 2000-19, and to my own independent findings on this period and 2020-21. While Venckūnas’s methodology is based on Google.com advanced search option, as he mentioned in his PhD thesis²³, this paper also relies on additional publications (‘Suggested articles’ offered by portals), which enabled to cover more securitising moves that might have been overlooked by the abovementioned author. This slight difference in methodology can explain differences in findings.

²² *Ibid*, 87-88

²³ *Ibid*, 116.

Unlike Venckūnas, this paper identifies two peaks in securitisation of Litvinism in Lithuania. One of them, as this author mentioned, falls within the period of 2012-15, reaching its highest point in 2013, when the Ministry of National Defence of Lithuania presented its annual overview of threats to national security and shared comments with media about history of Lithuania as the most frequent target of informational attacks from Russia and Belarus. Medieval history of Lithuania, as ‘one of the most honourable episodes of Lithuanian history’, was quoted by ministry representatives among the targets allegedly chosen by Russia and Belarus for discrediting their Baltic neighbour. When asked about specific examples by media, the ministry spokesperson is quoted to refer to, inter alia, ‘attempts of Belarus to overtake GDL monarchs from Lithuania and assign them as Belarusians’.²⁴ Other episodes quoted were linked to the history of the World War II, ensuing underground war in Lithuania, and the restoration of independence in Lithuania, including bloody events of January 1991, traditionally sparking heated discussions between Vilnius and Moscow.

Another episode that can be assessed as level ‘2’ of securitisation of Litvinism in Lithuania occurred in 2017. This time, the Ministry of Culture took the lead. In her comments to media, the minister Liana Ruokytė-Jonsson shared her opinion about plans to stage in Vilnius a Belarusian ballet performance *Vytaūt/Vytautas*, dedicated to one of the most outstanding grand dukes in the history of Lithuania. Ruokytė-Jonsson named this a demonstration of soft power at the background of Lithuania’s centenary celebrations: “As we are conscious of our eastern neighbours’ attempts to utilise culture and arts as soft power tools, hosting such events on the eve of 16 February (Lithuania’s independence day –V.V.) should be deemed a provocation”, - said the minister.²⁵

Therefore, the recent decade has seen two points of securitisation of Litvinism reaching level ‘2’ in Lithuania, whereas Lithuanian state officials denounced Belarusian attempts to own the history of GDL as hostile. However, as the study of Lithuanian strategic security documents and statements from supreme authorities of Lithuania indicate, the securitisation of Litvinism has never reached the level ‘3’, i.e. the actual ‘full’ securitisation. Approved annually since 2013 by the Defence Intelligence and Security Service under the Ministry of National Defence, since 2014 by the State Security Department, and since 2015 jointly by these two institutions,

²⁴ “Ministerija: Rusijos ir Baltarusijos taikiniai - Lietuvos viduramžių istorija”, *Kauno diena*, 2013-12-30. <https://kauno.diena.lt/naujienos/lietuva/politika/ministerija-rusijos-ir-baltarusijos-taikiniai-lietuvos-viduramziu-istorija-607797>, [2022 01 07].

²⁵ Ignas Jačauskas, “Planai Vilniuje parodyti baltarusių baletą „Vytautas“ yra provokacija, sako L.Ruokytė-Jonsson”, *BNS*, 2017.09.04, <https://www.bns.lt/topic/1912/news/53652839/print/true/> [2022 01 07].

assessments of threats to national security do not mention Belarus in the context of targeting the historical memory of Lithuania.²⁶

For example, the assessment of 2013 mentioned Russia 102 times, and Belarus 27 times. Despite strong statements quoted by media coming from the Ministry of National Defence after the presentation of the overview that ‘the history of Lithuania was the most frequent target of informational confrontation’, the assessment of threats hardly mentioned history. It was mentioned only twice in the context of Russia’s accusations against Lithuania of “rewriting history” and “rehabilitation of Nazism”.

This is in line with general trends observable over years in all assessments of threats, and in national security strategies of Lithuania. Available in five editions (2002, 2005, 2012, 2017, and 2021), the National Security Strategy never mentions Belarus in context of threats to the Lithuanian understanding of history. In 2005, Belarus is only mentioned as a pragmatic cooperation partner and, simultaneously, as a country where democracy needs to be supported. In 2012, the only mentioning of Belarus is among other member states of the EU Eastern Partnership programme, with a view to support their European and Euro-Atlantic integration. In 2017, Belarus is mostly mentioned as a source of nuclear threat originating from Astraviec NPP; in 2021, it is also quoted as a threat because of its authoritarian regime displaying hostility and provocations against Lithuania, and growing Russia’s influence. Both countries are also identified as those in need for support of democracy, free market, rule of law, civil society, and human rights.²⁷

In contrast and unsurprisingly, Russia is mentioned on much more numerous occasions, including those related to informational security and, correspondingly, historical memory. While editions of 2005 and 2012 do not mention history at all, the situation obviously changed in 2017. Including multiple provisions of ‘informational threats’, the strategy defined them, among others, as ‘attempts to distort historical memory’, and included intentions to ‘promote’

²⁶ Assessments of Threats to National Security (2012-20), *KAM Antrasis operatyvinių tarnybų departamentas*, http://kam.lt/lt/struktura_ir_kontaktai_563/kas_institucijos_567/aotd.html?fbclid=IwAR0Uc1eX6mViM1J5KYaINzBiUyc6byADRYFwzJn1xW9L7o9QNh2FYX7jKY; Valstybės saugumo departamentas, *Metiniai grėsmių vertinimai* (2014-21), <https://www.vsd.lt/gresmes/metiniai-gresmiu-vertinimai/> [2022 01 07].

²⁷ “Nutarimas dėl nacionalinio saugumo strategijos patvirtinimo”, *Lietuvos Respublikos Seimas*, 2002 m. gegužės 28 d. Nr. IX-907, Vilnius, <https://www.e-tar.lt/portal/lt/legalActEditions/TAR.2627131DA3D2?faces-redirect=true>; Suvestinė redakcija 2005 m. [X-91 Dėl Seimo nutarimo "Dėl Nacionalinio saugumo strategijos patvirtinimo" priedo pakeitimo \(e-tar.lt\)](https://www.e-tar.lt/portal/lt/legalActEditions/TAR.2627131DA3D2?faces-redirect=true); Suvestinė redakcija 2012 m. [X-91 Dėl Seimo nutarimo "Dėl Nacionalinio saugumo strategijos patvirtinimo" priedo pakeitimo \(e-tar.lt\)](https://www.e-tar.lt/portal/lt/legalActEditions/TAR.2627131DA3D2?faces-redirect=true); Suvestinė redakcija 2017 m. [IX-907 Dėl Nacionalinio saugumo strategijos patvirtinimo \(e-tar.lt\)](https://www.e-tar.lt/portal/lt/legalActEditions/TAR.2627131DA3D2?faces-redirect=true); Suvestinė redakcija 2021 m. [XIV-795 Dėl Lietuvos Respublikos Seimo 2002 m. gegužės 28 d. nutarimo Nr. IX-907 „Dėl Nacionalinio saugum... \(e-tar.lt\)](https://www.e-tar.lt/portal/lt/legalActEditions/TAR.2627131DA3D2?faces-redirect=true) [2022 01 07].

the official understanding of history. Russia is indicated as a sole source of informational threats. Focus on informational threats remains an important highlight of the newly approved Strategy'2021.

The Lithuanian Defence Policy White Paper²⁸, too, focuses mostly on threats of Russia, including those in the area of information. Along with trust in the state and its institutions, Lithuanian Armed Forces, Lithuanian-Polish relations, energy projects, NATO and the EU, as well as Lithuania's membership in NATO and the EU, the Lithuanian history is mentioned as one of the most important targets of *Russian* information attacks in Lithuania (emphasis added). The Paper claims that information attacks are organised against Lithuania, "in which the perpetrator(s) seeks to incite discord or hate, *falsify the history of the country*, weaken the trust of the public in the state and NATO Allies" (emphasis added).

Therefore, Lithuanian strategic security documents have never explicitly securitised Belarusian historical narratives. What about top-ranking securitising actors, such as the head of state, prime minister, or the minister of foreign affairs? The answer is no; Lithuanian public discourse has never seen any open high-level securitisation of Litvinism. Venckūnas's monitoring confirms this observation: "References to Belarus in communications of the President, the parliament and the government usually gain abstract form of 'cultural/historical ties between the two states'".²⁹ He also found that statements of official institutions, most frequently the ministry of foreign affairs, as a rule opted for "general statements, <...> referring to 'common history' as a background of bilateral cooperation, mostly in the area of culture".³⁰ His discourse analysis found no cases of Lithuanian top-level state officials or institutions raising concerns about Belarusian interpretations of history; rather than official institutional communications, these were always statements made by individual MPs or experts, or informal concerns shared during interviews.³¹

In the period not covered by Venckūnas's analysis, the situation has not changed significantly, despite this author's conclusion that the securitisation trends were over in 2019. On one hand, top-level official communications indicated further attempts towards integration and reconciliation of Lithuanian and Belarusian historical narratives, rather than securitisation, e.g.

²⁸ "The White Paper on Lithuanian Defence Policy", *Ministry of National Defence of the Republic of Lithuania*, 2017, Vilnius https://kam.lt/en/defence_policy_1053/important_documents/the_white_paper_on_lithuanian_defence_policy.html [2022 01 07].

²⁹ Venckūnas, 79.

³⁰ Ibid, 80.

³¹ Ibid.

“It is our moral duty to help the Belarusian civil society; in the end, we used to be a single state some time ago, and we share a common history” (President Nausėda)³². The same idea inspired the initiative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to change the name of Belarus in Lithuanian, to make it sound less like ‘Russia’ and more like ‘Ruthenia’.³³ On the other hand, lower-level securitisation attempts continued in mainstream media and military communication channels.³⁴ Notably however, all securitising moves against Litvinism stopped after the rigged presidential elections in Belarus in August 2020 and the beginning of massive resistance to Lukashenka’s regime.

Therefore, the analysis of Lithuanian response to Litvinist historical narratives circulating in Belarus over the previous two decades reveals the following. First, securitisation trends grew in 2010s, compared to 2000s (both in media, statements of securitising actors, and in strategic documents). In some years over the previous decades, securitisation reached level 2, while in most other years it stayed at level 1, and decreased to 0 in 2021. Second, in all years, integration trends continued prevailing over those of securitisation. While securitising moves would always stay limited to media actors, historians, relatively low-ranking politicians (with rare exceptions of ministers acting as securitising actors personally or via their spokespersons), the top layer of state officials would always stick to integrating, not securitising rhetoric. Third, securitisation and integration-based approaches towards Litvinism operate with very different assumptions, arguments and terms, which leaves many unanswered questions about reasons and factors behind their deliberations. The focus of this paper is exactly on these reasons and factors that determine the response of Lithuanian society to Belarusian historical narratives. The following chapter scrutinises them in a more detailed manner.

³² “Prezidentas: Lietuva remia ir remis Baltarusijos pilietinę visuomenę”, *Lietuvos Respublikos Prezidentas*, 2020.11.24, <https://www.lrp.lt/lt/prezidentas-lietuva-remia-ir-rems-baltarusijos-pilietine-visuomene/35050> [2022 01 07].

³³ “G. Landsbergis kreipėsi dėl Baltarusijos pavadinimo keitimo, VLKK kol kas nesvarstys”, *Verslo žinios*, 2021-01-12, <https://www.vz.lt/verslo-aplinka/2021/01/12/g-landsbergis-kreipesi-del-baltarusijos-pavadinimo-keitimo-vlkk-vadovas-tam-kol-kas-nemato-galimybiu> [2022 01 07].

³⁴ Darius Sūkys „Litvinizmas: istorija, prielaidos, perspektyvos“, *Karys*, 1 (January), 2020, https://kam.lt/lt/naujienos_874/karine_ziniasklaida_655/karys/2020_m._kario_numeriai/2020_m._karys_nr.1.html; [2022 01 07];

Darius Sūkys, “Litvinizmas II: Baltarusija – ideologinės kovos laukas“, *Karys*, 2 (February), 2020, https://kam.lt/lt/naujienos_874/karine_ziniasklaida_655/karys/2020_m._kario_numeriai/2020_m._karys_nr.2.html [2022 01 07].

“Proto džiunglės. Kaip Rusija galėtų teisintis okupuojant mūsų šalį bei kaip tai susiję su Baltarusija? (host Virginijus Savukynas)”, *LRT*, 2020.02.08, <https://www.lrt.lt/mediateka/irasas/2000092469/proto-dziungles?fbclid=IwAR2QZ3IIMFMDjH7gVGJZDIcnKM350PrDCSGbwZ7xi1phUjH22qgXANmwFe8> [2022 01 07].

CHAPTER II: FACTORS OF LITVINISM SECURITISATION

Why does securitisation happen or not happen? Why do securitising actors find it important under certain circumstances to speak up about threats, while staying silent in a different context? Should we expect Lithuania to accept the Belarusian Litvinist understanding of GDL and 'share' its history with the Eastern neighbour, or are we going to face another page of historical rows and a new surge in securitising rhetoric against Belarus in Lithuania? This chapter looks into potential motives of presenting or non-presenting Litvinist narratives as a threat to Lithuania and attempts to outline the most relevant and influential factors behind securitising trends.

Factor 1: Russian information war

Referring to Litvinism as being useful for or directly produced by Russian propaganda is a typical feature of securitising attempts against the Litvinist understanding of GDL history. One could assume that the Russian information war against the West and Lithuania in particular should constitute a number one reason of Litvinism securitisation: as long as Russian propaganda is on its mission to, inter alia, undermine the fundamentals of Lithuanian state, Litvinism can be used as a card to prove that Lithuanians have no history of their own, Vilnius should belong to Belarus and not Lithuania etc. In this interpretation, Litvinism is merely a part of Kremlin's smart plan against Lithuania.

There are different ways of linking Russia to Litvinism.

Lithuanian historians who are sceptical and critical about Litvinism, such as Tomas Baranauskas and his wife Baranauskienė, point at similarities between Litvinism and the Russian historiographical theory of Western Russism (Zapadnorussism) dating back to 19th century; Baranauskienė affirms that Litvinism 'originated from' Russian historiography.³⁵ In times of the Russian Empire, tsarist historians sought to prove that GDL was just 'another Russia', an alternative Russian state, where Slavic population dominated. This theory referred to GDL as a 'Lithuanian Russian state',³⁶ a term echoed by the current Belarusian historiography's idea of GDL as a joint 'Lithuanian Belarusian state'. In this way, according

³⁵ Baranauskienė, 2020.

³⁶ "Istorikai Inga ir Tomas Baranauskai. LICVINIZMAS", 0:24:40

to historians, Russia has been engaged in an ‘information warfare’ denying agency to Lithuanians since old times by downplaying their role in their medieval monarchy, and Litvinism is allegedly a mere continuation of these efforts, modified to meet current realities.

Other securitising actors, who are more focused on modern times, are not so concerned about historical theories. For them, Kremlin comes as a force behind Litvinist theories just as a main foe of the West and as an ally of current Belarusian regime (which allegedly promotes Litvinism). In both cases of ‘2’ level securitisation, communications of the Ministry of National Defence in 2013 and the minister of culture in 2017 referred to Russia or ‘eastern neighbours’ while securitising Belarusian historical narratives. During the surge of securitising moves in 2013-14, in particular, Litvinist ideas were put on a par with Russian attempts to falsify the history of World War II or events of 1990-91. The-then editor-in-chief of Delfi, Lithuania’s leading news portal, warned that “Belarus followed Russia in re-writing the history of Lithuania as they saw fit”.³⁷ Another Delfi story even drew a parallel between Litvinism and joint Belarus-Russia military exercise.³⁸

At later stages, references to Russia in the context of securitising moves against Litvinism continued. In 2016, the head of Lithuanian military’s strategic communication and propaganda expert Auksė Ūsienė broadly elaborated on Belarusian ‘history manipulation projects’ with references to Russian historical concepts; she claimed that ‘Russian propaganda stirred and upheld these games’ and highlighted that Belarus was a military partner of Russia. Phrased by an interviewer and confirmed by Ūsienė, the conclusion was that ‘propaganda of the Belarusian GDL was an informational and ideological attack against Lithuania and its statehood’.³⁹ In early 2020, the national broadcaster LRT and the magazine of Lithuanian military published large stories explicitly focusing on the concept of Litvinism in the context of Russian threat.⁴⁰ These late developments flip the hypothesis of Venckūnas on ‘fade-out’ of Litvinism securitisation in 2019.

³⁷ Monika Garbačiauskaitė-Budrienė. “Pasiduoti be mūšio? (atsakymas K. Girniui)”, *DELFI*, 2014 m. rugpjūčio 10 d., <https://www.delfi.lt/news/ringas/lit/m-garbaciauskaite-budriene-pasiduoti-be-musio-atsakymas-k-girniui.d?id=65517614> [2022 01 07].

³⁸ Eglė Samoškaitė, “Diena, kai baltarusiai pareišk: Vilnius – mūsų”, *DELFI*, 2013 m. lapkričio 6 d., <https://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/lithuania/diena-kai-baltarusiai-pareiks-vilnius-musu.d?id=63135410> [2022 01 07].

³⁹ “Kaip LDK tapo baltarusiškuoju renesansu”, *Vakarų ekspresas*, 2016-08-13, <https://ve.lt/naujienos/visuomene/sociumas/kaip-ldk-tapo-baltarusiskuoju-renesansu1-1484913> [2022 01 07].

⁴⁰ “Proto džiunglės”; Sutkus, “Litvinizmas”, “Litvinizmas II”.

To summarise statements in abovementioned and other publications that link Litvinism to Russia, Belarusian historical narratives in fact are not a product of Belarusian independent thinking; instead, they are just a part of Russian information war against the West and Lithuania in particular. In this framework, the Belarusian regime (which allegedly sponsors Litvinism) is just a tool or ‘twin brother’ of Kremlin. Along with normative threats for Lithuanian identity, the securitising moves in this category also highlight physical (military) threats, as Belarusian claims on GDL heritage presumably might be used by Russia, the ally of Belarus, as an excuse to occupy Vilnius (the capital of former GDL) or even whole of Lithuania. The idea of Litvinism as a Russia-backed doctrine, therefore, sees Kremlin as a final beneficiary of and an ultimate factor behind Belarusian historical theories, thus justifying a need for defending history in Lithuania.

This thinking, however, has several flaws and contradictions, which sometimes are admitted by securitising actors themselves. Baranauskas admits that Litvinism, as a theory justifying the contemporary independent statehood of Belarus, is frowned upon in Russia,⁴¹ because rather than justifying Russian claims upon the GDL heritage, it serves as a tool for promoting independent statehood and, potentially, pro-European orientation of the Belarusian nation. This is an essential difference of Litvinism (as a generalised term marking independent Belarusian historical narratives) from Zapadnorussism, as outlined by Rūstis Kamuntavičius,⁴² an historian who advocates for integration rather than securitisation of Belarusian version of history.⁴³

Search for term ‘Litvinism’ (or ‘Litvinstvo’) in Russian confirms that Kremlin-oriented Russian authors are very negative about this phenomenon and securitise it as ‘an ideological product intended for the dismemberment of the Russian (East Slavonic) world’, a Belarusian analogy of Ukrainian ‘Banderovshchina’⁴⁴, attempt ‘to tear Belarusians apart from the common

⁴¹ “Istorikai Inga ir Tomas Baranauskai. LICVINIZMAS”, 1.00.45-1.01.30.

⁴² Rūstis Kamuntavičius, “Kodėl iki šiol neparašėme Baltarusijos istorijos?” *Gudija.lt*, 2017.07.17 <https://www.gudija.lt/single-post/istorija-1-1> [2022 01 07].

⁴³ Rūstis Kamuntavičius, “Lietuvisai ir licvinai: naujos senos gudų istoriografijos paieškos”, *Darbai ir dienos*. Kaunas: Vytauto Didžiojo universiteto leidykla, 2012, T. 58, p. 335-340.

⁴⁴ “Litvinstvo and White Russia”, *Top War*, January 17, 2015, <https://en.topwar.ru/66636-litvinstvo-i-belaya-rus.html> (original: “Литвинство и Белая Русь”, *Военное обозрение*, 17 января 2015 г., <https://topwar.ru/66636-litvinstvo-i-belaya-rus.html>) [2022 01 07].

Russian tree'⁴⁵, a 'form of Russophobia'⁴⁶, and an 'historical fraud'.⁴⁷ These furious statements are in line with observations of numerous scholars who indicate that GDL-centred historical narratives in Belarusian society function as an *alternative* rather than a complement to mainstream Moscow-centred historical narratives that prevailed in Soviet Belarus and largely prevail in many areas of life until now (Ioffe, 2003; Bekus, 2010; Vileita, 2005, 2013).

While designating Litvinism as a Russia-sponsored threat, some sources actually admit that Russians denounce Litvinism. In particular, Darius Sutkus of *Karys* presents Litvinism as 'good for and influenced by Russia', while he is also positive about the erection of Algirdas/Alhierd monument in Viciebsk, and describes the frantic pushback against this project from pro-Russian actors in Belarus (whom he misleadingly refers to as 'Russian-speakers', as if they constituted a minority community).⁴⁸ He has his own explanation of it: some Russian groups do not see through the Kremlin's cunning plan, and speak against it due to their hot temper.

Poorly coordinated conspiracy theory might be a version; however, such ideas aside, it still remains a logical contradiction to claim that Russia is interested in promoting pro-Western interpretation of Belarusian identity and history.

Some authors, who seem to be more familiar with particularities of Belarusian identity, make attempts towards rationalising this argument via dividing Litvinism to 'radical' and 'moderate'; the first one is allegedly more favourable for Russia, because it is focused on clashes with the Lithuanian version of GDL history (the next subchapter elaborates on this categorisation). However, in many cases, securitising actors seem to disregard contradictions in their own argumentation and demonstrate what Mälksoo (2015) named a "knee-jerk" or "reactive" securitisation of memory by automatically attributing any competitive interpretations of history to Moscow's evil plans (even if these interpretations might be at odds with Russian national interests as currently seen by Kremlin). This is best illustrated by Ūsienė's point about a music video produced by Budźma pro-national identity campaign: "Who saw *History of Belarus in 5 minutes*, saw the history of Lithuania presented as that of Belarus. I believe this was no amateur

⁴⁵ Семён Скопич, «Рядовые бациллы литвинизма», *Сегодня.ру*, 26.04.2013, <https://www.segodnia.ru/content/121790> [2022 01 07].

⁴⁶ Анатолий Матвиенко, «Литвинизм как форма русофобии», *Белорусский политринг*, 28-04-2018, <https://politring.com/articles/16234-anatoliy-matvienko-litvinizm-kak-forma-rusofobii.html> [2022 01 07].

⁴⁷ Кирилл Аверьянов-Минский, «Белорусы — это литвины!»: разбор одной исторической фальсификации», *EurAsia Daily*, 24 декабря 2017, <https://eadaily.com/ru/news/2017/12/24/belorusy-eto-litviny-razbor-odnoy-istoricheskoy-falsifikacii> [2022 01 07].

⁴⁸ Sutkus, "Litvinizmas II", 3-4. [2022 01 07].

work at all". By guessing that the video was produced most likely by professionals, not amateurs, she apparently hints at hostile forces standing behind this product (most likely the Belarusian regime, which is presented as a twin brother of Kremlin in her interview). However, Budźma campaign (<https://budzma.org/>) is a pro-democratic and pro-Western civil society actor, which can hardly be suspected of ties with the regime, leave alone Kremlin.

Such examples relate well with a point in the introduction to the *Lietuvos ir Baltarusijos istorijos politika* (ed. Lopata, Vinogradnaite, 2016). It stated that the securitisation of the so-called 'appropriation' of GDL heritage by Belarus is frequently escalated "either by media for sensation-seeking or due to lack of proper understanding that Belarusians make efforts to exploit GDL theme as a tool to distance themselves from the Russian geopolitical space".⁴⁹ It is therefore a contradiction in argumentation to claim that Kremlin is a factor behind Litvinism, as long as Litvinism serves a purpose of countering the influence of Moscow in Belarus.

The chronological dynamics of securitising moves against Litvinism in Lithuania, too, confirm that the Russian informational aggression cannot be viewed as its direct cause. As was found in Chapter 1, securitising moves against Litvinism all but stopped in Lithuania since the middle of 2020, and the rhetoric of integration of historical narratives started to dominate almost uncontested. The Russian informational threat, though, stays in full swing, as explicitly confirmed by the recently updated National Security Strategy (2021).

Therefore, there are other, more direct and straightforward, factors behind the level of securitisation of Belarusian historical narratives in Lithuania. The Russian information warfare can be seen as a general background or trigger behind securitising moves; yet, its influence is not direct. It does not mean that securitising actors who speak about the Russian threat in the context of Litvinism are wrong. Furthering its own agenda, Moscow can and might play a role in exploiting and/or even promoting radical Litvinist and other nationalist trends in Belarus on ad hoc basis, so that to use it as a tool to drive a wedge between Lithuanians and Belarusians. Similarly, Moscow is routinely and most likely rightfully quoted as a source and/or final beneficiary of nationalist clashes between Lithuania and Poland, or the ongoing conflict between Vilnius and Minsk over the location of the Belarusian NPP. Kremlin can also influence nationalist groups in Belarus to propel their impetus against Lithuania and minimise their anti-Russian grudge.

⁴⁹ Lopata, Vinogradnaite (ed.), 10.

There are hence certainly some grounds to believe that Russia can be a player behind Litvinist trends, thus contributing to securitisation sentiments in Lithuania; informed securitising actors are nuanced enough to outline that, being a product of Belarusian national identity-seeking, Litvinism could potentially be used as a tool in the hands of Kremlin against the West. However, some actors in Lithuania bluntly portray Litvinism as a direct product of Russian propaganda, which misses the point altogether. In such cases of securitising argumentation, the mentioning of Russia should be seen not as an actual factor or reason of the alleged ‘existential threat’, but as a ‘code word’ for making a serious securitisation case, the way ‘dikes’ are used in Netherlands.

Factor 2: Popularity of Litvinism in Belarusian society

During discussions in Lithuania on whether Belarusian claims on GDL heritage pose a threat for Lithuania or not, a natural question to contemplate is how widespread Litvinist ideas are in the Belarusian society. An assumed answer to this question is frequently postulated as a factor, which informs the securitisation of Litvinism. If an actor claims that Litvinism is popular and circulates broadly, he or she predictably seeks to convince others that this is a big and dangerous trend, hence a good securitisation case. If someone wants to present Litvinism as not so much of a threat, they argue that Litvinism is not popular at all.

Securitising actors, especially media, in Lithuania communicate very conflicting messages to the public regarding the popularity of Litvinism in Belarus. A sub-headline of Baranauskienė’s interview on *alkas.lt* makes it clear: “Litvinism is a pipe-dream of a tiny minority”.⁵⁰ However, the actual content of the interview shows that the situation depends on how one defines Litvinism. The historian explains that the official Belarusian historiography, too, “tries to portray GDL as a Belarusian rather than a Lithuanian state”; yet, according to her, it “settles for a more moderate version of Litvinism”. While speaking about the society in general, Baranauskienė points out that “the general public, unfortunately, holds more affection for Russia, not Lithuania”. This fragment of the interview highlights the paradox of Litvinism securitisation in Lithuania: Litvinism is bad, so it is good that only a tiny minority likes it in Belarus; but it is also bad that the majority associates themselves with Russia, not Lithuania.

Many other securitising moves against Litvinism in Lithuania carry similar confusion about the scale of GDL ‘appropriation’ in Belarus. Media headlines, e.g. “Belarus has created a ballet

⁵⁰ Baranauskienė, 2020.

about ‘their own’ duke Vitaū/Vytautas”⁵¹, “Belarusian political scientist admits: from your perspective, Belarus has already stolen the history of GDL”⁵², “Vilnius is not yours, it’s ours: what stops the neighbours from ‘reclaiming’ the capital of Lithuania”⁵³, create much of this confusion. For click-bait purposes, such statements instil an idea that the Belarusian ‘appropriation of GDL history’ is massive and overwhelming. On the other hand, a term of ‘Litvinism’ is frequently used to label Belarusian theories justifying the ‘appropriation’. In this context, it is hard to believe that ‘Litvinists’ are a tiny minority, since the process is presented by media as massive and popular.

Some non-media securitising actors are also far from limiting Litvinism to marginal groups. Ūsienė claims, „a new generation of Belarusians has grown up with the idea of ‚Belarusian Lithuania’”.⁵⁴ Professor Valdas Rakutis, a war historian and currently an MP, is equally serious about prospects of Litvinism to turn Belarusians and Lithuanians ‘from compatriots into real enemies’.⁵⁵ (Both Rakutis and Ūsienė represent the military community, a trend confirmed by consistent efforts of the Lithuanian military magazine to confront Belarusians on history. Based on this as well as the case of the ‘2’ level securitisation originating from the Ministry of National Defence, the military community can be added to the list of securitising groups composed by Dementavičius, which included media and, partially, historians; Venckūnas also included low-ranking politicians and civil society groups).⁵⁶

As the argument of popularity or non-popularity is one of the main in this discourse, it is worth looking into it as a potential factor of securitisation and try to find a connection between securitisation surges in Lithuania and Belarusian society’s attitudes. For assessing the popularity of Litvinism in Belarus, this chapter relies on opinion polls conducted by independent agencies ISEPS and Novak, and data on the most popular names in Belarus in recent years.

⁵¹ Martynas Čerkauskas, “Baltarusija sukūrė baletą apie „savo“ kunigaikštį Vytautą”, *Lietuvos rytas*, 2013 08 27, <https://www.lrytas.lt/kultura/istorija/2013/08/27/news/baltarusija-sukure-baleta-apie-savo-kunigaiksti-vytauta-4929169-2013-08-27> [2022 01 07].

⁵² Violeta Grigaliūnaitė, “Baltarusijos politologas: iš jūsų perspektyvos žiūrint, baltarusiai jau pavogė LDK istoriją”, *15min*, 2018 spalio 27 d. <https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/baltarusijos-politologas-is-jusu-perspektyvos-ziurint-baltarusiai-jau-pavoge-ldk-istorija-56-1050956?copied> [2022 01 07].

⁵³ Vaidas Saldžiūnas, “Vilnius ne jūsų, o mūsų: kas atbaido kaimynus nuo žygio „atsiimti“ Lietuvos sostinę”, *DELFI*, 2019 m. rugpjūčio 18 d. <https://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/lithuania/vilnius-ne-jusu-o-musu-kas-atbaido-kaimynus-nuo-zygio-atsiimti-lietuvos-sostine.d?id=81921629> [2022 01 07].

⁵⁴ Ūsienė in “Kaip LDK tapo baltarusiškuoju renesansu”.

⁵⁵ Rakutis in Samoškaitė.

⁵⁶ Dementavičius, 248-249; Venckūnas, 78, 92.

However, to have a meaningful assessment, it is necessary first to eliminate the confusion about what is meant by Litvinism, which creates so many misunderstandings in discussions.

2.1 Categorisations of Litvinism

While some people characterise ‘Litvinism’ as a marginal theory, others argue that this has reached the level of state policy. This misunderstanding might be caused by inconsistent usage of terms. This paper has already touched upon the distinction between ‘radical’ and ‘moderate’ Litvinism, implied in many works and statements of securitising actors. This distinction might hold the key to answering the question if Litvinism is a marginal flow or an official policy.

Reading Belarusian sources on Litvinism reveals another important distinction when talking about Litvinism: traditional and contemporary. Let us focus on this one first.

A. Traditional and contemporary Litvinism

The older perception of ‘Litvinism’ in Belarus is based on the tradition of separation between the ‘Lithuanian’ and ‘Ruthenian’ component of the GDL population. This notion of Litvinism is comprehensively described in Aliaksei Yankovich’s article in *Palityčnaja sfera* (2006). It emerged in the ‘provincial’ (krajowa) ideas of noblemen living in the former GDL under significant influence of Polish culture in 19th century. Some of them leaned towards Belarusian language and culture, which they still would name as ‘Lithuanian’, because of their self-identification with the old GDL.

This version of Litvinism is also described in Hoffmann and Buhr (ed., 2013): “In general, the Litvinism apparent on the Belarusian lands in the 19th century presented itself like a peculiar form of regionalism in line with Polish culture and Polish influence in Belarus. To a great extent, the ideology of Litvin gentry was reflected in the works of Mickiewicz, who created works of literature in Polish, but at the same time honored the homeland of Lithuania, that is the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.”⁵⁷

In modern Belarus, these ideas gave rise to attempts of ‘Litvinist separatism’ in the West of Belarus, claiming that ‘Litvins’ were a separate nation from Belarusians. In total, this movement failed to collect anything more than 20 members, and is believed by Belarusian

⁵⁷ Aliaksandr Tsikhamirau, “A Work in Progress: The Formation of Belarusian National Identity” in Hoffman, Steven M., and Buhr, Renee (ed.), *Lithuanian and Belarusian National Identity in the Context of European Integration*, Kaunas: Vytautas Magnus University, 2013.

intellectuals to be initiated by FSB, or ‘enemies’.⁵⁸ (Authors who call themselves ‘Litvins’ also confirm unpopularity of this kind of Litvinism in Belarus⁵⁹). In less radical forms, this sort of Litvinism is a movement of enthusiasts in Belarus interested in the tradition of GDL nobility.

In the current discourse, the term of Litvinism is used in a different meaning. The term is claimed to be coined by Baranauskas who defined it as ‘an unscientific theory of GDL as a Belarusian state, or the national Belarusian branch of folk history’.⁶⁰ Rather than a separatist movement or ‘subculture’ in Belarus, it refers to a notion that (all) current Belarusians own the heritage of GDL – either exclusively, in its radical form, or together with Lithuanians and partially other nations, in its moderate form. The term comes from the idea that today’s Belarusian nation originated from historical ‘Litvins’ (citizens of GDL). It justifies the perception by Belarusians of Lithuanian grand dukes as ‘ours’, Vilnius as ‘our’ capital, and in general, GDL as ‘our’ state, because ancestors of current Belarusians were citizens of GDL (where they also constituted the majority).

In Lithuanian discourse, this understanding of ‘Litvinism’ term absolutely prevails. As analysis of publications collected by Venckūnas in 2000-19 (and also later publications, reviewed in Chapter 1) shows, Litvinism in Lithuanian discourse is used mostly with negative (or, sometimes, neutral) connotations. The same is true about the Russian discourse, as shows the analysis of Russian publications in the *Factor 1* subchapter. In narratives of the division of GDL heritage in Lithuania, some authors can be more or less positive or even supportive about alternative Belarusian narratives. Usually it is framed in a point that ‘GDL heritage is big enough for all of us’.⁶¹ However, whenever Lithuanians are positive about the phenomenon of

⁵⁸ Киркевич, Аlesь. „«Литвины»: патриоты, секта или агенты ФСБ?“ *Белсат*, 2017.01.19, <https://belsat.eu/ru/opinions/litviny-patrioty-sekta-ili-agenty-fsb/>; [2022 01 07];

Uladzimir Matskevich. “Litvinism carries the germ of separatism”, *EuroBelarus*, 09.02.2017, <https://en.eurobelarus.info/news/society/2017/02/09/uladzimir-matskevich-litvinism-carries-the-germ-of-separatism.html> (Longer version in Russian: <https://eurobelarus.info/news/society/2017/01/23/vladimir-matskevich-litvinstvo-neset-v-sebe-zarodysh-separatizma.html>) [2022 01 07];

Александр Кравцевич, “Литвинство — выдумка врагов, которую поддержали дураки”, *Наша ніва*, 28.03.2015, <https://nashaniva.com/?c=ar&i=146173&lang=ru> [2022 01 07].

⁵⁹ Аlesь Белый, «Существует ли в Беларуси литвинский проект?», *Regnum*, 21 августа 2012 г., <https://regnum.ru/news/society/1563089.html> [2022 01 07].

⁶⁰ “Главные тезисы литвинизма”, *Istorija.net – Tomo Baranausko istorijos puslapiai*, <http://lietuvos.istorija.net/lituanistica/litvinizm.htm> [2022 01 07].

⁶¹ Mindaugas Jackevičius, “A.Eidintas: Lietuvos istoriją reikia saugoti nuo falsifikavimo”, *DELFI*, 2012 m. rugsėjo 16 d., <https://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/lithuania/aeidintas-lietuvos-istorija-reikia-saugoti-nuo-falsifikavimo.d?id=59512833> [2022 01 07].

(moderate) Litvinism, they never use this term as such, and prefer just speaking about ‘common past’ or ‘Belarusians being positive about GDL’.

The author of the term, Baranauskas, too, expresses opinions that interest of Belarusians in and positive attitude towards GDL, as ‘a country which shaped the borders of today’s Belarus’⁶², should be welcomed.⁶³ Yet, his own usage of his own term always comes in a negative context, and other participants of the Lithuanian discourse follow suit whenever they refer to this term.

These observations indicate that, apart from referring to certain understanding of the history of Belarus, ‘Litvinism’ in today’s Lithuanian discourse also expresses negative attitude toward them. Therefore, rather than a neutral scientific term (which is used as such in this work), the term of Litvinism was coined and is used as a *securitising tool* against certain understanding of the Belarusian nation’s history in Lithuania.

The analysis of few Russian sources referring to Litvinism (or ‘Litvinstvo’) shows that, though much less common, the usage of this term in Russian discourse is the same as in Lithuanian one, or even more negative and securitising.

In contrast, the Belarusian discourse of Litvinism is completely different. Belarusians do not use any specific term indicating positive attitude towards or self-identification with the history of GDL. Therefore, almost all references to ‘Litvinism’ in the Belarusian discourse are associated with the old, traditional understanding of Litvinism as a regional historical phenomenon or separatist movement. As mentioned above, participants of Belarusian discourse are usually negative about the separatist component of traditional Litvinism. On the other hand, they positively refer to the idea of contemporary Litvinism as self-identification of all Belarusians as ‘Litvins’ (usually it does not imply changing the name of a country, but a mere declaration of continuity between GDL tradition and the current Belarusian nation).⁶⁴

⁶² “Istorikai Inga ir Tomas Baranauskai. LICVINIZMAS”, 1:26:10.

⁶³ “Tomas Baranauskas: Litvinistams svarbiausia turėti gražią istoriją, kuri galėtų sutelkti tautą”, *Bernardinai.lt*, 2012 09 29, <https://www.berardinai.lt/2012-09-29-tomas-baranauskas-litvinistams-svarbiausia-tureti-grazia-istorija-kuri-galetu-sutelkti-tauta/> [2022 01 07].

⁶⁴ E.g., the head of the Belarusian state TV has once mentioned (in the context of Belarusians being constantly in war against alien interests both from East and West) that he prefers the term ‘Litsvins’ as an alternative to ‘Belarusians’; ‘Litsvins’ (ліцвіны, ліцвіны) is a Belarusian variation of ‘Litvins’. “Геннадий Давыдько: предателей я на телевидение не позову”, *TVR.by*, 30.01.2012, <https://www.tvr.by/company/prensa-onas/gennadiy-davydtko-predateley-ya-na-televidenie-ne-pozovu/>; the Belarusian cuisine restaurant in Minsk <https://litviny.by/>;

Therefore, contrary to the traditional notion of Litvinism as a regional phenomenon or ‘subculture’ in Belarus, which was largely ignored in Lithuanian and Russian sources and frowned upon in Belarusian sources due to its danger of separatism, the contemporary Litvinism is a different kind of ideology. While the traditional notion was seen as a threat by some Belarusian nationalists, who saw its potential to split the nation, the contemporary Litvinism provokes securitising responses in neighbouring countries, such as Lithuania and Russia. It happens because this version of Litvinism is supposedly in conflict with traditional Lithuanian and Russian understanding of history. Both Lithuanian and Russian traditional understanding of history denies agency to Belarusians as a nation, while the national Litvinist narrative of Belarusians seeks to grant this nation with historical agency at risk of infringing on national feelings of Lithuanians and Russians (or the historical truth, as some historians say). Rather than upholding ‘Litvinism’ as a competitor to Belarusian national idea or a segment of Belarusian nation, the contemporary Litvinism seeks to prove that ‘all Belarusians are Litvins’, all of Belarus is the inheritor of GDL, and the history of GDL is therefore the history of Belarus.

B. Radical and moderate Litvinism

This section dwells on categorisation of contemporary Litvinism into radical and moderate flows. Not developed in any academic works, the perception that Litvinism can be more or less ‘radical’ keeps resurfacing in the context of public discussions.

Baranauskas refers to ‘moderate’ and ‘radical’ (‘real’, ‘rampant’) Litvinism in his peer review of *The History of Belarusian Statehood* (2019), and in TV and radio shows of 2019-20.⁶⁵ The host of the show, Algis Ramanauskas, who is a celebrity in Lithuania with a habit of confronting Litvinist ideas, also admitted during the same conversation that, apart from ‘radical’ Litvinists, Lithuania should be interested in bridging gaps with ‘good’ Belarusians and sharing the GDL heritage. Baranauskienė repeated her husband’s points in the 2020

“Contrasting Litvins to Belarusians is like contrasting Gauls to Franchmen” (Дзьмітры Гурневіч «Проціпастаўляць ліцьвінаў беларусам — гэта як проціпастаўляць галаў французам», *Свабода*, 18 студзень 2017, <https://www.svaboda.org/a/28241698.html>);

Артём Бузинный, “Кто такие литвины? «Литвинская» идея в белорусской перспективе”, *Imhoclub.by*, 25.02.2017 https://imhoclub.by/ru/material/kto_takie_litvini;

Алесь Кіркевіч «Яшчэ не позна вярнуць краіне сапраўднае імя — Літва», *Новы час*, 29-01-2017 <https://novychas.online/kultura/jaszcz-ne-pozna-vjarnuc-kraine-sapraudnae-imja> [2022 01 07].

⁶⁵ ‘For a real Litvinist, all dukes were Belarusians, <...> and Vilnius is a Belarusian city’ (in Proto džiuŋlės, 13:23-17:16); in “Istorikai Inga ir Tomas Baranauskai. LICVINIZMAS”: ‘moderate Litvinists admit that Litvins were both Slavs and Balts’ (0:32:30); ‘there are normal historians in Belarus; not all of them are Litvinists; if Litvinism loses its radicalism, what is left is positive attitude to GDL’ (1:10:50).

interview.⁶⁶ Sutkus in *Karys* (2020, issue 1) refers to ‘radical’ and ‘moderate’ flows; he believes that radical Litvinism is something that has to fade out and that the propaganda machine of Moscow tries to take over the radical Litvinism.

As we can see, references to ‘moderate’ and ‘radical’ variants of Litvinism are a rather recent phenomenon in Lithuania. Back in 2012-17, during the peaks of securitising attempts, securitising agents did not dig deep. They would just refer to ‘Belarus’ stealing the Lithuanian history, as if the Belarusian historiography were consolidated and united in this position, and as if the autocratic regime and nationalist civil society groups were an integral whole. Baranauskas himself did not use any distinctions of Litvinism during his early interviews on this topic (e.g. 2012). The trend towards being more cautious about securitising anything that looks like ‘bad’ Litvinism started to emerge in 2017, when Baranauskienė openly criticised the minister of culture for her harsh accusations against the Belarusian ballet ‘Vitaūt/Vytautas’. She said the minister should grant an award to the ballet-makers, rather than labelling their efforts as a provocation.⁶⁷

Based on the publications quoted above, the radical Litvinism claims Vilnius is a Belarusian city, labels the grand dukes of Lithuania as ethnic Belarusians, and blames the current Lithuanians (‘lietuvisy’ or ‘žmudziny’) of stealing the history and the name of Belarus. According to radical Litvinists, the GDL started with the coronation of Mindoūh/Mindaugas in Navahrudak, which is presented as the centre of the newly emerging state in 13th century.

On the other hand, the moderate Litvinism sees GDL as a biethnic state, co-created by the ancestors of current Lithuanians and Belarusians, a postulate largely accepted by the current official Belarusian historiography.

To put it simply, the radical Litvinism argues that Belarusians are *single owners* of GDL, while the moderate Litvinism is guided by a belief that Belarusians *co-owned* GDL with other nations, primarily Lithuanians.

2.2 Litvinism in public opinion of Belarus

The best way to identify whether Litvinism is popular or gaining popularity in Belarus is to look into findings of independent opinion polls. Problematic as they are in a dictatorship, until

⁶⁶ Baranauskienė, 2020.

⁶⁷ Inga Baranauskienė “Aistros dėl „Vytauto“, arba vėl daug triukšmo dėl nieko”, www.alkas.lt, 2017 09 05 <https://alkas.lt/2017/09/05/i-baranauskiene-aistros-del-vytauto-arba-vel-daug-triuksmo-del-nieko-video/> [2022 01 07].

recently they were possible, mostly in cooperation with private businesses and international community. On regular basis, they would include questions on identity and geopolitical self-identification of Belarusians.

The theoretical framework of this part of the study relies on nation-building theories and ensuing models of Belarusian identity.⁶⁸ In the core of this framework lies the generalised categorisation of nation theories into the so-called ‘German school’ (ethnic nation-building) and ‘French school’ (civil nation-building). (Based on Anderson, 1999; Brubaker, 1998; Gellner, 1996; Smith, 2000; Statkus, 2003, 2004). According to previous studies of Ioffe (2003), Vileita (2005, 2013), Rudling (2008), Praneviciute (2009), Bekus (2010), and Hoffman and Buhr (2013), the Belarusian state identity was in the making rather than finalised.

Echoing the previously mentioned works, the premise of this paper is that the identity of Belarusians is emerging in line with the French civil model, with a limited influence of the German ethnic model. While the majority of Belarusians hold the identity that can be designated as Eurasian ethnic, the minority sticks to the European national self-identification. The ‘Belarusian national identity’ is predominantly pro-European and negative about integration with Russia. The ‘Eurasian ethnic identity’, while being culturally subordinated to the Russian identity, is geopolitically divided; while some segments of it tend to be positive about European integration of Belarus (we could call them ‘zapadniks’), other components are more conservative, anti-West and Moscow-centred (‘Slavophiles’).

Unfortunately, the latest available findings of independent opinion polls are from the year 2016, which is a limitation on following the identity processes described above. Nevertheless, they are still helpful for understanding the dynamics. The majority of respondents in 2016 would prefer integration with Russia (42%) to joining EU (34%). Yet, the majority is not interested in full unification of the two countries. While 39% would have voted against unification of Belarus and Russia in 2008, the opposition to unification exceeded 50% in 2013 and fluctuated between 50 and 60% in 2013-16; the support to unification never exceeded 30% since 2010. Belarusians also demonstrate a growing consolidation around the value of independence, and the vast majority no longer want the restoration of the USSR.

⁶⁸ The theoretical framework and the ‘triple model’ of the Belarusian identities (Belarusian national identity, ‘Byelorussian’ Soviet identity and Western-Russian identity) were developed and presented in unpublished bachelor’s thesis: Vadim Vileita, *Baltarusijos valstybinės tapatybės formavimosi procesas: veiksniai, tendencijos ir perspektyvos*, Vilnius University, 2005. The findings are briefly summarised and updated in Vileita, 2013.

There are conflicting findings on whether Belarusians consider themselves a separate nation from Russians and Ukrainians. ISEPS findings consistently indicate that about 65% of Belarusian population between 2008 and 2016 believed that Belarusians, Ukrainians and Russians were just branches of a single nation, while only about 30% thought these were different nations. On the other hand, a slightly different phrasing in NOVAK research ordered by Budźma campaign brought somewhat different results in 2009: about 52% felt like Belarusians were a nation with its own history and culture, and 42% identified themselves with a triune Slavonic nation of Belarusians, Ukrainians and Russians.⁶⁹

The dynamics of responses to the question what makes the difference between Belarusians and Russians between 2002 and 2015, shows further gradual transformation of Belarus into a civil rather than ethnic nation. In 2002, 44% believed there was no difference between the two nations, down to 33% in 2015. While 39% stressed the language difference in 2002, this share decreased to 25% in 2015. On the other hand, more people believed that Belarusians and Russians were different due to their different histories (up from 22% to 33%), and culture/traditions (27% to 36%).⁷⁰ Therefore, the history is developing into one of the most significant indicators of the national self-consciousness.

While the majority of respondents between 2009 and 2014 supported the current soviet-style symbols of Belarus (52-55%) over the national white-red-white flag and the GDL coat-of-arms 'Pahonia' (28-34%), these findings significantly differ in age groups: in 60+ group the domination of soviet symbols constitutes 73% over 19%, whereas the group of 18-29 years is divided more equally: 38% vs. 45%. Unfortunately, there are no fully representative data available on popularity of white-red-white flag and Pahonia after the protests of 2020. In the group of supporters of the national symbols, the majority supports EU integration and condemns Russian occupation of Crimea; the opposite is true in the pro-soviet symbols group, which confirms the correlation between the 'Litvinist' symbols and pro-European geopolitical orientation.⁷¹

⁶⁹ "The most important results of the public opinion poll in March 2016", *Independent Institute of Socio-Economic and Political Studies (IASEPS)*, March 2016, <http://www.iaseps.org/?p=3960&lang=en>; Бюллетень «Новости НИСЭПИ» № 2 2016 г. <http://www.iaseps.org/?p=4756>; "Чым нам ганарыцца: гістарычная памяць, нацыянальныя героі і брэндзы вачыма сучасных беларусаў", *Будзьма беларусамі*, 03.12.2009 <https://budzma.org/news/chym-nam-hanarycca-histarychnaya-pamyac-nacyyanalnyya-heroi-i-brendy-vachyima-suchasnykh-byelarusaw.html> [2022 01 07].

⁷⁰ «Братское похолодание», IASEPS News Analytical Bulletin of Independent Institute of Socio-Economic and Political Studies, № 1 (75), март 2015 г. с. 19, <http://www.iaseps.org/?p=1333> [2022 01 07].

⁷¹ «Символы белорусов», IASEPS News Analytical Bulletin of Independent Institute of Socio-Economic and Political Studies, № 2 (72), июнь 2014 г. с. 12-13, <http://www.iaseps.org/?p=2108> [2022 01 07].

When asked about the origins of the Belarusian state, the plurality of 38% chose GDL in 2009⁷² and 45% in 2012.⁷³ This option is by far more popular than Ruthenian Polack and Turaŭ duchies, the Belarusian People’s Republic (1918), the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic (1919) and the today’s Republic of Belarus (1991). This might be an indirect confirmation of Lithuanian securitising actors’ concerns about a new generation of Belarusians ‘having grown up with the notion of Belarusian GDL’; it is also an indication of gradual consolidation of non-Soviet national identity.

The study of favourite historic figures finds that, nonetheless, Litvinist and Belarusian national characters remain far from popular nation-wide. While Lukashenka was on top in 2013, competing with soviet Belarusian leader Masherau and Russian president Putin (21%, 20% and 20%, respectively), only 7% favoured the grand duke of GDL Vitaŭt/Vytautas, and 6% the GDL chancellor Sapieha/Sapiega. Yet, situation in age groups was very different. While Lukashenka overwhelmingly won in the 60+ group, he ended up on par with GDL characters in 18-29 group (12.5% Lukashenka, 12% Vitaŭt, and 8.5% Sapieha). Nevertheless, the pluralities of younger respondents preferred Putin (20%) and Margaret Thatcher (19%), with Belarusian national leader Kastuś Kalinoŭski getting 17%, and Russian empress, the occupant of GDL Catherine I – 14.5%.⁷⁴ It shows that the younger generation in Belarus is much more diverse than the older one and much more willing to look beyond the current and soviet historical period, as well as the borders of Belarus, inspired by both old historical Belarusian and Lithuanian leaders, as well as Russian and Western political personalities alike.

Back in 2009, when asked whether they considered themselves ‘Litvins’, the vast majority of Belarusians said ‘absolutely no’ (67%), while about 4% said ‘very much so’, and 24% said ‘on a minor degree’. This option was not popular at all compared to ‘a Belarusian’, ‘a soviet person’, ‘a citizen of the world’, or ‘a European’.⁷⁵ It shows that a minority of Belarusian population in a certain way identify themselves with Litvinist ideas, yet this part of identity is

⁷² “Чым нам ганарыцца”.

⁷³ “Гістарычная памяць беларусаў” *Будзьма беларусамі*, 06.06.2012 <https://budzma.org/news/historychnaya-pamyac-belarusau.html> [2022 01 07].

⁷⁴ «Белорусские герои: Калиновский и другие», ISEPS News Analytical Bulletin of Independent Institute of Socio-Economic and Political Studies, № 1 (67), март 2013 г. с. 25 <http://www.iiseps.org/?p=2114> [2022 01 07].

⁷⁵ “Вынікі сацыялагічнага даследвання “Нацыянальная ідэнтычнасць вачамі беларусаў: хто мы і якімі мы будзем?””, *Будзьма беларусамі*, 14.10.2009 <https://budzma.org/news/vyniki-prezientacyi-sacyjalahichnaha-dasliedvannia-2009.html>, https://budzma.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/vyniki_2009.pdf [2022 01 07].

not very important for them. Unfortunately, there is no way to follow the dynamics of this indicator over time.

The findings of independent opinion polls, therefore, indicate further slow but steady consolidation of Belarusian state identity around the so-called French civil model, while the language-based German model is losing in influence. While the national identity is slowly growing in popularity, together with Litvinist ideas, the majority of population still displays predominantly ‘Eurasian ethnic’ rather than ‘European national’ Belarusian identity. However, findings also confirm that Litvinist and Belarusian national ideas (accept the Belarusian language) in their moderate form are appealing to a significant and growing share of the Belarusian society, especially youth. On the scale of the population, and particularly in the youngest age group, the pro-national historical narrative with integrated Litvinist ideas amount to a viable alternative to the prevalent soviet narration.

2.3 Given names as an indicator of identity

The aspect of names as identifying markers emerges in discussions of Litvinism occasionally. In a conversation with Ūsienė, a journalist said: “While Vytautas, Jogaila, Algirdas, and Mindaugas are the most popular names in our nation, Belarusians <...> for some reason do not call their kids with names of their alleged ‘ancestors’”, and Ūsienė confirmed this was ‘an obvious argument for us’.⁷⁶ Baranauskienė, too, contemplated in her interview to Algis Ramanauskas, that Lithuanians were much more responsive than Belarusians to the idea of GDL as ‘ours’ since the very beginning of national movements in former GDL lands, including by choosing the Baltic names of grand dukes for their children. She also noted that the names of Lithuanian dukes were becoming more popular in Belarus, yet this trend was ‘minimal’.⁷⁷

There is no comprehensive information available on the most popular names across Belarus. Yet, fragmented data from recent years from some regions of the country validate the statements above.

Mikhail, Matvey, Mark, Maksim, Alexander, Artyom, Ivan, and Roman are quoted by multiple Belarusian sources to be among the most popular male names, while girls are most frequently named Sofia, Maria, Alisa, Anna, Yeva, Alexandra, Kseniya, Polina, or Darya. Names that could be considered ‘Litvinist’, such as Biruta or Yadviga/Jadžviha for girls, or Vitovt/Vitaūt,

⁷⁶ Ūsienė in “Kaip LDK tapo baltarusiškuoju renesansu”.

⁷⁷ “Istorikai Inga ir Tomas Baranauskai. LICVINIZMAS”, 1:49:10.

Algerd/Alhierd, or Gedymin/Hiedymin for boys, are mentioned as extremely rare single cases.⁷⁸

Therefore, in contrast to general understanding of history, the willingness of common Belarusians to apply ‘Litvinist’ identity to their offspring remains a very rare phenomenon, which cannot be seen as a viable alternative to the existing tradition of predominantly using international names, usually in their Slavic versions, or purely traditional Slavic given names.

Therefore, the factor of ‘popularity’ or ‘circulation’ of Litvinism in the Belarusian society, whether it is ‘marginal’ or ‘wide spread’, largely depends on definition and type of Litvinism one refers to. There are significant differences between e.g. radical and moderate Litvinism in terms of both their ideological fundamentals and their commonness in Belarus, which creates multiple misunderstandings in the context of public debate in Lithuania. While radical Litvinism is mostly marginal, the moderate one is gradually progressing into a viable alternative to the pro-soviet historical narrative or even making its way into the mainstream. However, this process is slow and hardly visible as such; as a rule, it can provoke reaction in Lithuania only when Litvinism manifests itself in state policies or decisions (see the next sub-chapter), or as acts of individual activists, such as bringing the white-red-white flag to important historical sites in Vilnius.⁷⁹ There are no direct ‘links’ between the Belarusian society’s attitudes and reoccurring spikes in securitisation of Litvinism by the Baltic neighbour. Therefore, the societal processes and identity building of Belarusians, despite being very important for the prospects of Belarus-Lithuania relations, can hardly be called a direct factor or trigger of securitisation in Lithuania.

⁷⁸ «Имена, присвоенные детям при регистрации рождения 2019-2020», *Администрация Советского района г. Минска* <https://sov.minsk.gov.by/otdel-zags/imena-prisvoennye-detyam-pri-registratsii-rozhdeniya>; «Беларусь. Рейтинги имён новорожденных. Статистика отделов ЗАГС», 2013-2016, https://1000names.ru/belarusian_names_12; «Названы самые популярные имена для младенцев в Минске», *The Village Беларусь*, 2 листопада 2017 г., <https://www.the-village.me/village/children/kids-news/263903-populyarnye-imena>; «Какие имена для детей самые популярные у белорусов?» *Аргументы и факты в Беларуси* № 6, 06.02.2021 https://aif.by/dontknows/kakie_imena_dlya_detey_samye_populyarnye_u_belorusov; «Самые популярные и самые редкие имена девочек в Беларуси», *БрестСИТИ*, 9 января 2019 г. <https://brestcity.com/blog/samye-populyarnye-i-samye-redkie-imena-devochek-v-belarusi>; «Названы самые популярные детские имена у минчан», *БелТА*, 9 января 2019 г. <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/nazvany-samye-populyarnye-detskie-imena-u-minchan-332019-2019/> [2022 01 07].

⁷⁹ “Gedimino kalne – kova su kitų valstybių vėliavomis”, *Lietuvos rytas*, 2013.03.31, <https://www.lrytas.lt/lietuvosdiena/aktualijos/2013/03/31/news/gedimino-kalne-kova-su-kitu-valstybiu-veliavomis-4779185> [2022 01 07].

Factor 3. Litvinism in foreign and history policy of Belarus

This subchapter will look into another likely factor of Litvinism securitisation in Lithuania, the policies of official Minsk. This could be seen as a variation of the previously analysed factor of Litvinism popularity, yet with an important difference. Rather than looking into how strongly Litvinism has taken or not taken root in the Belarusian society, this part of the thesis will focus on manifestations of Litvinism in decisions of the government. While this part mostly focuses on the history policy, it should be flagged that this policy is closely connected to foreign policy choices of the regime (externally) and general identity policy (internally).

There are conflicting positions on the nature of history policy in Belarus. Dementavičius (2014, 2016) holds that the Belarusian policy of history is monist, i.e. consistent and one-dimensional.⁸⁰ However, readings of Baranauskas (The Year-Book of Lithuanian History 2019; Bernardinai.lt 2012), and Belarusian historians of different views (Snapkouski/Snapkovskis, Sharapa/Šarapa, Tsikhamirau/Tichomirovas, Shadurski/Šadurskis, 2016⁸¹; Marzaliuk 2018), leave an impression that, lacking coherence in content, fragmented or ‘synthetic’,⁸² the Belarusian state’s approach to history does not meet the criteria of ‘monist’ approach. It cannot be clearly labelled as pluralist, though, since like other policies, history is largely subordinated to the interests of the ruling establishment, and its geopolitical and domestic choices.

Over the previous three decades, the history policy of Belarus has undergone considerable transformations and turbulences, following the uneasy path of Belarusian government’s relations with Russia, the West and its own population. Biketova and Chernyshov outline three periods in history policy of Belarus, which she refers to as ‘nation-building policy’: 1991-94, the ‘Lithuanian’ period; 1994-2010, the ‘Soviet’ period; and 2010-18 (the time of their writing), the ‘consolidated Belarusian’ period.⁸³ While the ideas of GDL as a source of Belarusian statehood started to dominate in Belarus, including school textbooks, in early 1990s, this trend came under pressure after 1994, when Lukashenka was elected a president, and the ‘Soviet’

⁸⁰ Dementavičius 2016, 256; Dementavičius, Justinas, “Istorijos politika postsovietinio autoritarizmo sąlygomis: Baltarusijos atvejis”, in *Istorijos politikos modeliai ir kryptys: Europos Sąjungos, Lenkijos, Rusijos ir Baltarusijos istorijos politika*. Vilnius: Vilniaus universitetas, 2014, p. 135-167.

⁸¹ In Lopata, Raimundas, et. al. *Valstybė ir istorija*, Vilnius: VU leidykla, 2014.

⁸² Snapkovskis, Vladimiras, *Pagrindiniai Baltarusijos Respublikos istorijos politikos raidos etapai ir tendencijos*, in Lopata, Vinogradnaitė (ed.), 29-31.

⁸³ Бикетова Екатерина, Чернышов Юрий, «Нациестроительство Республики Беларусь и европейский компонент белорусской идентичности», *Мировая экономика и международные отношения*, 2018, том 62, № 1, с. 94–103 http://case.asu.ru/files/form_312-30391.pdf [2022 01 07].

period of history policy started, in an attempt to fit Lukashenka's idea of Belarusian past and integration with Russia. Nevertheless, as Snapkouski noted, the majority of Belarusian historians continued to stick to national and democratic perception of history.⁸⁴ Albeit with some modifications, the history of GDL remained in national historiography and school textbooks throughout the 'Soviet' period of history policy, as an inalienable part of the Belarusian history.

The situation began to change in early 2000s, when Lukashenka's policies started to transform from integration into Russia towards upholding the Belarusian statehood, which he saw as a guarantee of his power. The change of attitude towards GDL heritage became particularly visible over the previous decade, the decade of 'consolidated Belarusian' history policy. This attempt was just a part of the regime's general effort towards consolidation of the nation and adding more balance to its foreign policy.

After suppressing a massive protest following the presidential election in late 2010, the Belarusian regime faced targeted sanctions and frozen political ties with Western partners. However, Minsk showed interest towards reopening in 2011-12. Russian aggression against Ukraine in 2014 paved the way to a real reset in Belarus-West relations, as Minsk was trying to distance itself from Kremlin, and the West was more willing to disregard democracy and human rights problems in Belarus in return for geopolitical gains. As Preiherman outlined in his measurement of intensity in relations of Belarus with EU, Russia, US and China, Belarus-EU cooperation left the "negative zone" already at the end of 2012. His "most striking conclusion is that at the start of the observations, in early 2011, relations with the EU were the least intense and the most negative vector of Belarus's foreign policy; but since the end of 2015, they have become the most intense and positive one, in some periods well above the Russian vector."⁸⁵

As Preiherman noted, this "should not be misinterpreted as Belarus turning away from Russia and attempting to fully reorient its foreign policy". However, the events of 2012-14 demonstrate successful switch of the Belarusian regime from frozen relations with the West to balancing between Moscow and EU amidst the Ukraine crisis. These developments in foreign policy arena were accompanied by important changes in domestic identity policies. Outlined

⁸⁴ Snapkovskis, 34.

⁸⁵ Yauheni Preiherman, "Belarus and the EU: Where Could Another Rapprochement Lead?", *The Jamestown Foundation*, January 27, 2020 <https://jamestown.org/program/belarus-and-the-eu-where-could-another-rapprochement-lead/> [2022 01 07].

by Biketova and Chernyshov, the period of ‘consolidated Belarusian’ memory policy brought about monuments of GDL dukes and the state programme *Castles of Belarus* in 2012, which included restoration of numerous objects of GDL heritage. Since 2014, responding to Russian attacks against Ukraine, official Minsk also pursued the so-called ‘soft Belarusisation’ policy, enabling broader use of and more positive attitude to Belarusian language.

As in the foreign policy, these cautious changes did not mean full transformation of Belarus’s history or language policies. Quite the opposite, the prevailing model of history policy remained soviet-oriented, as demonstrated by the continued domination of soviet symbols, toponymy, and monuments across the country. As authorities attempted “to keep the Belarusization process as “soft” as possible”,⁸⁶ Russian comfortably survived as the dominant public sphere language; what changed for users and promoters of Belarusian language and culture was only more tolerant attitude and relative *laissez-faire* on the side of authorities.

Nevertheless, even these relatively small changes towards more balance between two main pillars of the Belarusian history policy did not go unnoticed in neighbouring Lithuania, and gave rise to numerous securitising moves discussed above. A direct link is visible between the growing level of securitisation of Litvinism in Lithuania and adjustments in policies of Belarus, including foreign, history and identity policies, towards more pro-European and national identity-oriented one. Paradoxically, whereas stressing the European component of the Belarusian history was, among others, clearly a part of Minsk’s strategy towards improving relations with the West, we see that it provoked quite an opposite response from some actors in Lithuania, including formal institutions, who grew suspicious about Lukashenka’s regime ‘stealing’ the Lithuanian history. These securitising responses on the side of Lithuania came immediately after the change in Belarusian history policy in 2012, and re-activated after each new ‘Litvinist’ development, including the plans to stage Vitaūt/Vytautas ballet in Vilnius (which was also a manifestation of the regime’s changing policy).

The shock of 2020 uprising and brutal crackdown on protests was so deep, long-lasting and detrimental for Belarus’s relations with the West that it is still too early to evaluate their effects on history policy. What can be claimed most likely is that the consolidation efforts on the side of the Belarusian regime have failed, and the Belarusian society is as split as never before. It might well mark the end of ‘consolidated Belarusian’ period of history policy. The regime

⁸⁶ Juljan Jachovič, “The Reconstruction of Belarusian Identity Narratives: The Belarusian Language”, *Lithuanian Annual Strategic Review*, 2019, Volume 17, p. 267 <https://journals.lka.lt/journal/lasr/article/180/info> [2022 01 07].

continues to pay lip service to the ‘consolidation’ idea, e.g. by all-Belarusian peace prayer at anti-Nazi monument in Chatyń in March 2021, or announcing the Year of People’s Unity and the celebration of people’s unity on 17 September, the day of reunification of Belarus via soviet occupation of eastern Poland in 1939. Yet, anything but actual consolidation or unity, these attempts are good demonstrations of reinstallation of neo-soviet historical narratives by appealing solely to events from soviet Belarusian history, namely those of the World War II. There are no further visible attempts towards balance between pro-European and Soviet understanding of Belarusian history.

Therefore, the ‘Litvinist’ developments in history policy de facto stopped in 2020, as so did the rapprochement of Minsk with Western capitals, giving the way to massive repressions inside and sanctions outside, and open reliance on Moscow’s support for survival. Symptomatically, the middle of 2020 also marks almost full end of securitising moves against Belarusian versions of GDL history in Lithuania, which has not been broken until now. While the attempt towards peaceful revolution in Belarus and brutal suppression of the uprising switched focus from old history to history being created in our times, the enduring Lukashenka’s regime causes so many more pressing security challenges for Lithuania that securitisation of Litvinism does not appear relevant at this point. Abstract ontological challenges (‘normative threats’) have given way to very feasible physical, economic and hybrid threats.

Single references to Belarusian interpretations (or ‘appropriations’) of Lithuanian history after the summer of 2020⁸⁷ serve as exceptions that actually confirm the finding of this chapter: rather than securitising Litvinism as a policy and potential threat coming from Belarus as a state, they merely highlight isolated cases of disagreements on episodes from history of GDL. Therefore, they remain in a framework of ongoing historical discussion rather than attempt to raise concerns about ‘existential threats’ or need for ‘extraordinary measures’ in response.

Therefore, as this chapter finds, unlike previously analysed factors, there is a clear direct link between the policies of official Minsk and securitising response on the side of Lithuania. the Belarusian regime and its choices appear to stand out as a direct factor of Litvinism securitisation in its Baltic neighbour. The peak of securitisation clearly came as a response to the launch of ‘consolidated Belarusian’ period of history policy as a part of Belarusian

⁸⁷ Vitkūnas; Violeta Grigaliūnaitė, “Istorijos profesorius baltarusiškos televizijos BELSAT laidoje apie Vilnių: jį įkūrė baltarusiai”, *15min*, 2021 m. kovo 3 d. <https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/istorijos-profesorius-baltarusiskos-televizijos-belsat-laidoje-apie-vilniu-ji-ikure-baltarusiai-56-1464704?copied> [2022 01 07].

rapprochement with the West and an attempt towards (or at least imitation of) more balance in Belarusian foreign and memory policies. It happened because some actors in Lithuania interpreted these steps as a continuation of Russian information war or an attempt of the undemocratic regime to undermine Lithuania's ontological security, rather than a friendly gesture. The securitisation of Litvinism, which continued through the beginning of 2020, ended immediately after the collapse of the regime's balancing exercises in its external and domestic history policies. The comeback of official Minsk's openly anti-Western and repressive policies against all pro-European actors clearly signalled that, rather than Litvinist ideas, the regime relies on much more down-to-earth tools in its attacks against its EU neighbours, such as hijacking planes and trafficking irregular migrants.

Factor 4: History paradigm prevailing in Lithuania

Along with developments in Belarus, preconditions for securitisation of (or at least securitising moves against) the Belarusian historical narratives lie within Lithuania itself. When Litvinist triggers from Belarus reach minds of Lithuanians, the reaction depends on the worldview of a particular recipient and the general cognitive framework prevailing in the Lithuanian historical thinking. In other words, a threat is not only out there; a threat is also in the eye of the beholder.

Jokubaitis refers to the return of GDL history into political debate as a new problem of the Lithuanian policy of history. He sees it as a result of EU integration, globalisation, multiculturalism and a nation-state's changing role. "While GDL is portrayed as an EU prototype, the modern nation-state is perceived as a relic. <...> Two camps emerge, pro-GDL and pro-nation-state".⁸⁸ Admitting that references to GDL multiculturalism can be instrumental for Lithuanian external policies, since 'recalling common past is suitable for our diplomats in talks with Poles, Belarusians, Ukrainians and other neighbours', Jokubaitis argues that it creates political identity challenges and destroys the clear vision as for the origins of the Lithuanian state.

This concept is shared by Radžvilas, who presents EU integration as a challenge for the Lithuanian policy of history. Both of them refer to similarities in EU and USSR policies on nationalities.⁸⁹ Both indicate that 'multicultural' interpretations of history are used to improve

⁸⁸ Jokubaitis Alvydas, *Istorijos neutralizacija ir depolitizacija*, in Lopata, 22.

⁸⁹ *Ibid*, 21; Radžvilas, Vytautas, *LDK ir Lietuvos Respublikos sąsajų klausimas kaip šių dienų istorijos politikos problema*, in Lopata, 91.

relations with Poland and reduce Russia's influence over Belarus and Ukraine,⁹⁰ yet can be detrimental to self-view of Lithuanians (a point also supported by Laurinavičius⁹¹). Radžvilas is critical on attempts to shift towards more 'contemporary' and 'pro-European' approach to GDL studies; he does not agree with rejection of the ethnocentric narrative as 'narrow-minded' or 'defensive'.

It is striking that, whilst seen as helpful for nation-building in Belarus, references to GDL are being shunned by proponents of nation-centred approach to history in Lithuania. Previously associated with the rebirth of nation, GDL is becoming a symbol of cosmopolitanism and multiculturalism, an undesirable development for some local researchers. This same point is disclosed in Merkinaitė (2014); yet, she also identifies that references to GDL (and its multiculturalism) can stay Lithuanian-centred and different from post-modern approaches. This Lithuanian narrative of GDL can be referred to as 'imperial'. It is attributed to Beresnevičius who appealed to 'barbarian' origins of his nation, a 'tribe born to conquer and rule': "We have shaped Ukrainians and Belarusians out of Eastern Slavs, <...> as nations with their distinct languages and futures. <...> We are responsible for our kids, the nations between Baltic and Black Seas".⁹²

The most comprehensive typology of GDL conceptual roles in Lithuanian history is provided in Merkinaitė and Radžvilas (2011). This typology includes (neo-)Marxist, national/ethnic and liberal(ist)/'eurointegrational' approaches. Disregarding Marxist approach as currently marginal, this paper relies on categorisation between the ethnocentric/national/patriotic and multicultural/liberal concepts.

The ethnocentric approach to GDL sees it as a Lithuanian state, which collapsed because of national and cultural heterogeneity, since Lithuanians failed to use their political domination for establishing linguistic or cultural prevalence;⁹³ geopolitically, this doctrine is neutral and independence-oriented. This approach stresses subordination of GDL Ruthenian lands to Baltic rulers, who over time embraced Catholicism; Orthodox Slavic lands are seen as conquered or subdued, not peacefully co-existing with Baltic neighbours. The abovementioned 'imperial' approach is a variant of ethnocentric concept, which stresses the military superiority of GDL's

⁹⁰ Jokubaitis, 21; Radžvilas, 95.

⁹¹ Laurinavičius, Česlovas, *Dėl istorijos ir valstybės santykio*, in Lopata, 37-39.

⁹² Merkinaitė, Simona, *LDK kaip istorinis valstybę depolitizuojantis veiksnys*, in Lopata, 133.

⁹³ Merkinaitė, Simona, Vytautas Radžvilas, *Istorijos mokymas mokyklose kaip valstybinės istorijos politikos problema*, in Radžvilas, Vytautas, et. al. *Istorijos subjektas kaip istorijos politikos problema*, Vilnius: VU, 2011, 140.

Baltic core described as pagan or barbarian in its origins, as opposed to the then more culturally advanced Christianised Ruthenia.

On the contrary, the ‘eurointegrational’, or liberal tradition is positive about tolerance and multicultural environment in GDL. It presents the Duchy as a unique geopolitical entity between East and West; the role of West is emphasised, though. Appeals to multi-confessional and multi-ethnic nature of GDL are to make it closer to the today’s European identity, based on diversity and tolerance.⁹⁴ Rather than seeking to prove who had the upper hand in GDL, this approach emphasises lack of major violent clashes between Balts and Slavs during GDL genesis, and further relatively peaceful coexistence of different ethnicities and religious denominations.

It is therefore in this context of alternative concepts of the Lithuanian history, in which attempts to securitise Litvinism are taking place. Unsurprisingly, the ethnocentric understanding of history is conducive to securitisation of Belarusian historic narratives, while the multicultural concept is interested in integrating them with Lithuanian narratives and either finding common ground, or ‘agreeing to disagree’, as suggested by agonistic memory pluralism.

The premise of this chapter is that the eurointegrational, or liberal approach to GDL history dominates in politics of Lithuania, which partially explains why attempts of high-level Litvinism securitisation have been largely unsuccessful over years.

Therefore, Lithuanian approach to GDL history is based on competition between two possible approaches, which define the *content* of Lithuanian history policy. Dementavičius defined this competition, or choice, via two possible options for Lithuania: building a liberal pluralist model, which can potentially integrate and peacefully co-exist with Belarusian Litvinist ideas, or instituting its own monist, national and statist historical narration as a possible alternative to the Belarusian one.⁹⁵ The choice between these two options also depends on a model, or *form* of history policy in Lithuania.

According to Vinogradnaitė (2014), the form of policy history can be authoritarian (or totalitarian), hegemonic, liberal (neutral), or agonistic.⁹⁶ As Jokubaitis, Radžvilas, Dementavičius, Merkinaitė etc. indicate, Lithuania strongly leans towards the neutral model

⁹⁴ *Ibid*, 141.

⁹⁵ Dementavičius 2016, 256.

⁹⁶ Vinogradnaitė, 2014, 58-60.

(sometimes described as pluralist, unstructured or even anarchist⁹⁷). This situation is not carved in stone, though, as there have been attempts to shift the model to more hegemonic or authoritarian one,⁹⁸ and such examples can reoccur in the future. Symptomatically, such attempts were justified by a need to respond to the ‘information war’ against Lithuania.

Therefore, success of securitisation of foreign historical narratives, including those with Litvinist connotations, can depend on the prevailing model of history policy. A shift back from what Bumblauskas described as the ‘emerging cosmopolitan’ to ‘the dominant grand patriotic’ narrative⁹⁹ would mean more active securitisation of foreign historical narratives, including not only Belarusian Litvinism, but also Polish and German views of history. While the current cosmopolitan liberal narrative prioritises good historical relations with neighbours (except Russia, vis-à-vis which ‘the conflict strategy’ is still in place¹⁰⁰), the ‘patriotic’ or ‘ethnocentric’ narrative, which prevailed in inter-war Lithuania, would mean more hostility in relations with all neighbours, most likely including Belarusians. Based on findings of Safronovas, Vinogradnaitė summarises that “although the nationalist narrative functioning in today’s Lithuania is strongly modified compared to that in inter-war Lithuania, there has been no essential update of memory”.¹⁰¹

While references to ‘common’ historical past between Lithuania and Belarus is, albeit superficial, an indication of cosmopolitan, or pluralist, model of history policy, securitising moves from some actors usually feature arguments based on ethnocentric or patriotic narrative, and call the government to switch to more active, i.e. authoritarian or hegemonic policy of history. As Venckūnas points out, the preferred paradigm of history policy strongly influences attitude to Litvinism. According to him, some actors in Lithuania see the Belarusian attempts to divide the GDL heritage as solely a result of Lukashenka’s regime’s political decision to influence its historiography, while the Lithuanian historiography is seen as a ‘set of

⁹⁷ Dementavičius 2016, 256.

⁹⁸ Vinogradnaitė, 2014, 61-67.

⁹⁹ Bumblauskas, Alfredas, “Lietuvos etninės įtampos kaip didžiųjų istorijos naratyvų priešpriešų išdava”, Magnus Ducatus Lithuaniae, 2013, <http://www.mdl.projektas.vu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/2011-lietuvos-etnines-itamos-kaip-didziuju-istorijos-naratyvu-priespriesu-isdava.pdf>, cited from Inga Vinogradnaitė, “Lietuvos istorijos politikos transformacijos 1990-2014 metais” in Lopata, Vinogradnaitė (ed.), 2016, 159.

¹⁰⁰ Vinogradnaitė, 2016, 163.

¹⁰¹ Safronovas, Vasilijus, “Lietuvos atminimo politikos tendencijos po 1990 metų”, in *Nuo Basanavičiaus, Vytauto Didžiojo iki Molotovo ir Ribbentropo: atminties ir atminimo kultūrų transformacijos XX-XXI amžiuje*, sudarė Alvydas Nikžentaitis, Vilnius: LII leidykla, 2011, cited from Ibid, 164

unquestionable axioms’, in what appears to be ‘a return to pre-narrativist romanticised primordialist identity model’.¹⁰²

In particular, Ūsienė describes GDL as an ‘empire founded by Lithuanians’ (imperial patriotic model). Referring to the British Empire she argues that some promoters of ‘multicultural’ argument “consciously forget that all great empires have been multinational and multilingual”. Correspondingly, the military communicator wants the society and the government to do more to promote history: “This is not only a role of historians; <...> I think this is a mistake that the history exam is not mandatory. <...> The history is strongly connected to the statehood. <...> This is why it is targeted: if you kick the history from beneath someone’s feet, it is easier to subdue them”.

In a similar manner, Rakutis, who acted as a securitising agent against Litvinism under a number of occasions and, in particular, most likely contributed to the level ‘2’ securitisation effort from the Ministry of National Defence in 2013,¹⁰³ has been elected to Seimas and continues advocating for authoritarian or hegemonic model of history policy.¹⁰⁴ As a positive example, the professor offers the Polish Institute of National Memory. “We have to work hard in the current environment of information war. <...> If we don’t do it, other states will impose their narratives upon us, and we will look miserable. <...> We will end up as a nation of Jew-shooters, which has never won a single battle”.¹⁰⁵

In their criticism of Litvinism, most securitising actors do make a reservation that they see nothing bad in aspirations of Belarusians to find their own historical foundations and strengthen their national identity. However, as they say, problematic are attempts to “distort the history completely, while leaving nothing Lithuanian in it and manipulating the self-conception of Belarusians” (Ūsienė); “Belarusians do need to define who they are and where they come from; <...> however, some facts that Belarusians try to use are very doubtful” (Rakutis in Samoškaitė).

¹⁰² Venckūnas, 88.

¹⁰³ Ibid, 85.

¹⁰⁴ According to Vinogradnaitė, these models of history policy are not limited to authoritarian states. In democratic states, criminalisation of using certain symbols or e.g. Holocaust denial can be mentioned as manifestations of authoritarian policy of history: Vinogradnaitė, 2014, 58.

¹⁰⁵ Ronaldas Galinis, “Į Seimą išrinktas istorikas Rakutis: apleidę istorijos politiką, tapsime pagrindine žydšaudžių tauta, niekada nelaimėjusia jokio mūšio”, *LRT*, 2020.11.23

<https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/lietuvoje/2/1274579/i-seima-istrinktas-istorikas-rakutis-agleide-istorijos-politika-tapsime-pagrindine-zydsaudziu-tauta-niekada-nelaimėjusia-jokio-musio> [2022 01 07].

Military magazine *Karys* displaying consistent interest in Litvinism, refers to the history of GDL as “something Belarusians can be proud of, but should not appropriate”.¹⁰⁶ Sutkus of *Karys* claims the GDL creation and expansion was not violent, and helped Belarusians and Ukrainian nations to emerge. Unlike other securitisers, Sutkus believes that Belarusians erecting monuments to Lithuanian dukes are ‘on a right track’¹⁰⁷; in his securitising rhetoric, he focuses only on radical Litvinism, which he sees as a tool of Moscow to drive a wedge between Lithuanians and Belarusians. In general, *Karys* magazine, too, seems to confirm the hypothesis that securitisation of Litvinism is associated with support for ‘ethnocentric’ model of history policy. In particular, in his introductory word to 2020 issue 9, the editor-in-chief explicitly supported the ‘ethnocentric’ side of symbolic war ongoing in Lithuania over the use of national GDL coat-of-arms in public spaces: “When we see how many locals, who are almost open about their contempt for our national Vytis, see no problem in waving the Belarusian one as if to support the people repressed by the dictator, the smell of hypocrisy and cheap tricks becomes even more pronounced”.¹⁰⁸

Baranauskas spouses, who make occasional sympathetic comments about Belarusians in need of their own history, and even have acted as de-securitising actors on some occasions, apply the same model of argumentation: Belarusians might want to use GDL history for knowing more about their past, yet they should not distort facts. Baranauskas has disagreed with Rakutis on Litvinism as a part of Belarusian information war against Lithuania, and argued that Belarusians needed Litvinism for their own internal purposes, not as a tool against Lithuania.¹⁰⁹ He has also agreed with his wife and Algis Ramanauskas that they did not grudge the history of GDL, because this was also an important part of Belarusian history.¹¹⁰ However, despite these reservations, Baranauskas has been used as a key contributor of multiple media stories seeking to securitise Litvinism. In his writings and comments, he focuses mostly on radical Litvinism as a key example of history distortion and potential threat to Lithuania. Moreover, Baranauskas comes across as negative about theses of moderate Litvinism of Belarusians co-

¹⁰⁶ Manvydas Vitkūnas, “Europos artilerijos genijus iš Lietuvos” *Karys*, 1, 2021, 32
https://kam.lt/lt/naujienos_874/karine_ziniasklaida_655/karys/2021_m_kario_numeriai/2021_m_karys_nr.1.html [2022 01 07].

¹⁰⁷ Sutkus, „Litvinizmas II“, 6.

¹⁰⁸ Varanavičius, Darius, “Redakcijos skiltis”, *Karys*, 9, 2020, 2
https://kam.lt/lt/naujienos_874/karine_ziniasklaida_655/karys/2020_m_kario_numeriai/2020_m_karys_nr.9.html [2022 01 07].

¹⁰⁹ “Tomas Baranauskas: Litvinistams svarbiausia...”

¹¹⁰ “Istorikai Inga ir Tomas Baranauskai...”, 1:11:30

owning GDL heritage, which are shared by about 40% of Belarusians: that Belarusians see GDL as ‘their’ state, and that GDL is a form of Belarusians statehood.¹¹¹

Having authored the very concept of Litvinism, Baranauskas can therefore be seen as an important securitising actor, despite some reservations (as Dementavičius rightfully concludes, the role of historians in securitising moves against Litvinism is ‘ambiguous’¹¹²). In their writings, the Baranauskas couple posit about the ‘Lithuanians’ (the Baltic and pagan/Catholic component of GDL) as dominant over ‘Belarusians’ (Slavonic or Orthodox component). When asked about the examples of the violent expansion of Lithuanians into Slavonic lands, Baranauskienė points to single killings, not actual battles¹¹³; yet, her focus remains on the ‘imperial’ rather than ‘cosmopolitan’ interpretation of GDL multinational nature. Their recommendation to Belarusians to search for ‘Belarusians in GDL history’ while focusing exclusively on ethnic delineation (search among Ruthenians, not Balts)¹¹⁴ also indicates their thinking along the lines of ethnocentric paradigm.

The conclusion of this subchapter, therefore, rests on two components. First, as comes from the argumentation, there is a correlation between the inclination towards Litvinism securitisation and ethnocentric or grand patriotic historical narrative, while supporters of eurointegrational (pluralist, or liberal) concept of GDL history tend to integrate the Belarusian GDL element as more or less equal to the Lithuanian one.

Second, most researchers currently define the Lithuanian policy of history as liberal and pluralist; yet, the discussion on the paradigm of history policy in Lithuania is ongoing, and shifts towards more monist (authoritarian, patriotic or hegemonic) model are possible.

Therefore, there remains a possibility of shifting from integration towards securitisation of Litvinism (including that of ‘3’ level) in the future, if the history policy model changed. The paradigm of history policy prevailing in Lithuania is thus another important factor that can play a direct role in securitisation of Belarusian historical narratives.

Factor 5: Transition of power in Belarus

One more factor, which is frequently invoked in discussions on prospects of Litvinism, is an assumed and awaited by many advent of democracy in Belarus once the current regime is gone.

¹¹¹ *Ibid*, 1:14:00, 1:51:15.

¹¹² Dementavičius, 2016, 249.

¹¹³ “Istorikai Inga ir Tomas Baranauskai...”, 0:17:00.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid*, 1:11:30.

As Lukashenka is associated with more pro-Eastern geopolitical orientation and policy of history, the idea is that after his departure Belarus might switch to a more nationalist and pro-Western path, conducive to Litvinist ideas. As Sadauskas-Kvietkevičius put it, some Lithuanians are afraid that “after the collapse of the dictator, Litvinists would become more active in appropriating GDL history and would immediately occupy our Vilnius”.¹¹⁵

It is true that many authors underline the role of the regime in balancing and containing concurring Belarusian historiographies, with an underlying concern that, once new times come to Belarus, Litvinism might go more rampant and aggressive. Back in 2012, Baranauskas said that “Lukashenka is a kind of product of his epoch, stabilising the Belarusian society, which is confused between the homo sovieticus and aggressive nationalists who want to lay claims against all neighbours, including Lithuania”.¹¹⁶ Even academic texts sometimes speculatively affirm that the opposition to the regime in Belarus is characterised by *radical* Litvinism and nationalism.¹¹⁷ Unconfirmed by references, this point has been proven by time to be wrong. Yet, same ideas endured throughout 2010s, despite Lukashenka’s own drift towards more balance in history policy and more favourable treatment of Litvinism,¹¹⁸ which made some observers compare him to ‘Belarusian Sniečkus’ gradually integrating Litvinism into Belarusian vision of history.¹¹⁹ Many observers continued to see Lukashenka’s role as cementing the society: “Lukashenka’s power maintains the balance. No one can predict what would happen, if the status quo shook”.¹²⁰

Therefore, it makes sense to consider potential democratisation of Belarus as another likely factor of securitisation of Litvinism in Lithuania. Yet, it is hardly possible to verify the relevance of this factor, since democracy has never materialised in Belarus over the previous almost 30 years, hence it is hard to predict how Lithuanian society would respond to change of historical paradigm by a *democratic* Belarus as opposed to Lukashenka’s regime.

To assess the relevance of potential democratisation of Belarus as a threat for Lithuanian historical narrative, one could look into the current state of affairs, whereas Lithuania de facto

¹¹⁵ Romas Sadauskas-Kvietkevičius, “Kas Lietuvoje bijo baltarusių laisvės?”, *DELFI*, 2020 m. rugpjūčio 15 d. <https://www.delfi.lt/news/ringas/lit/romas-sadauskas-kvietkevicius-kas-lietuvoje-bijo-baltarusiu-laisves.d?id=85008909> [2022 01 07].

¹¹⁶ “Tomas Baranauskas...”, *Bernardinai.lt*, 2012

¹¹⁷ Dementavičius, 2016, 249, 250.

¹¹⁸ “Лукашенко: Великое княжество Литовское было белорусским государством, это неоспоримо”, *Наша ніва*, 25.12.2019, <https://nashaniva.com/?c=ar&i=243471&lang=ru> [2022 01 07].

¹¹⁹ “Istorikai Inga ir Tomas Baranauskai...”, 1:38:50.

¹²⁰ Sutkus, “Litvinizmas”, 9.

acts as a patron of Belarusian repressed opposition and hosts them in Vilnius, and also turn back to history of early 1990s. The period of parliamentary republic, 1990-94, is the only relatively democratic period in the history of the Republic of Belarus. Those times were marked by what securitising actors in Lithuania warn against: actual territorial claims from Belarus to Lithuania, or what Timothy Snyder called 'Belarusian irredentism'. This occurred when "the Belarusian Supreme Soviet responded to the Lithuanian declaration of independence by stating that it would contest the Vilnius region."¹²¹

However, this happened still in times when Belarus was a part of USSR and under full control of Moscow. Snyder notes that Vilnius saw this move as a 'part of Gorbachev's effort to frighten Lithuania'. The Belarusian pro-democracy movement, even though it shared some Litvinist sentiment about changes in borders, announced that it did not approve of Moscow's blackmail against Lithuania.¹²²

Despite some original attempts of Belarusian nationalists to take the offensive in contesting borders and traditions of the former GDL, Belarus nevertheless soon refused its territorial claims. It happened still in times of the democratic parliamentary republic, before Lukashenka's ascend to power. As the peak of Belarusian irredentism occurred in February 1992, "few months later, in July 1992, Belarusian and Lithuanian historians gathered in Herviaty, Belarus, to discuss the legacy of the Grand Duchy. After long and trying discussions, a fragile consensus emerged that both Belarus and Lithuania can lay claim to the traditions of the Duchy, each without prejudice to the other."¹²³

This historical insight was to remind the fact that many securitising actors in Lithuania overlook: democratic independent Lithuania and Belarus have already agreed on sharing GDL history and not laying territorial claims against each other. Nowadays, when Lithuania is a part of EU and NATO, rather than a fragile newly independent post-soviet republic, the probability of territorial claims appears even more vague. However, the historical precedent of Belarus claiming its right to Vilnius region is of course an argument for potential securitisation. It is symptomatic that Belarus made this step still as a soviet republic, formally having announced its sovereignty, but still fully subordinated to Moscow. This precedent confirms that Kremlin can use radical Litvinism (manifesting itself not so much in promoting national feelings of

¹²¹ Timothy Snyder, "The Polish-Lithuanian commonwealth since 1989: National narratives in relations among Poland, Lithuania, Belarus and Ukraine", *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, 1998, 4:3, 14.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Ibid, 15.

Belarusians, but in aggressive position vis-à-vis neighbouring territories and identities) for inciting a conflict between Vilnius and Minsk. However, it is only possible under conditions of direct control of Moscow over Belarus.

Therefore, potential transition of power in Belarus can definitely occur as a factor of trends leading to securitisation of Litvinism in Lithuania. However, this factor depends too much on many other things: the direction of transition, the geopolitical orientation of Belarus after the transition, and most importantly, the history policy that the new Belarusian leadership would undertake (which brings us back to the already scrutinised factor 3). Should the new Belarusian leadership be more pro-Russian or even give up the Belarusian independence altogether, it can lead to more pro-Russian interpretation of GDL heritage, something that Lithuanians have reasons to worry about. On the other hand, should Belarus turn to democracy, securitisation attempts might increase, yet they would most likely be overshadowed by pro-democratic enthusiasm and building new ties with European neighbours, the trend observable during the previous attempt at democratic transition in Belarus in August 2020. Unless a new Belarusian leadership would pursue inadequately rigid Litvinist policies, Lithuania would most likely become its ally, and securitisation of history would not reach the level 3. This is comparable to Lithuania's relations with Warsaw: despite some actors sniffing at Poles as former occupants of Vilnius, the relations remain strategically important and positive.

Therefore, having analysed potential factors behind securitisation of Litvinism in Lithuania, we have arrived at a conclusion that:

- Factor 1, the Russian information war against Lithuania, is mostly irrelevant or indirect in its influence, because of chronological discrepancies and logical inconsistencies, even though it of course constitutes an important background for securitisation arguments;
- Factor 2, the popularity of Litvinism in Belarus, is mostly irrelevant or indirect, because society's dynamics is slow, complicated and multifaceted in its nature, and has low potential to trigger securitising moves directly;
- Factor 3, foreign and history policies of the regime, is highly relevant and direct, because it is the most visible to securitising actors and provoke direct responses, and also coincide in time with securitisation surges;

- Factor 4, the history paradigm prevailing in Lithuania, is highly relevant and direct; should it change to more nationalist one, securitisation of Litvinism could reach a much higher level, to suit the securitising actors' idea about the need for a single nationalist narrative;
- Factor 5, the power transition in Belarus, remains theoretical, and its influence upon securitising moves in Lithuania is too unpredictable and indirect to consider it as a direct trigger of securitisation; it brings us back to Factor 3 (the history and foreign policies of the new government in Minsk).

CONCLUSIONS

Analysis of the main arguments and factors of securitising moves against Litvinism in Lithuania has therefore crystallised two key variables, upon which the response of Lithuania to Belarusian historical narratives depends. While the response ranges on the scale between securitisation and integration options, one key variable stems from Belarus and the second one is pertinent to Lithuania.

The first variable is the history and foreign policy of Belarus, as defined by its ongoing geopolitical situation. The assumption is that the more anti-Western and pro-Russian policies Belarus pursues (and the more dominant are its neo-Soviet historical narratives), the more comfortable Lithuania feels about the Belarusian understanding of history. On the contrary, opening of Belarus to the West and the European component of its own identity sparkles fears in Lithuania about a need to share its historical heritage with the neighbour. Paradoxically, while causing multiple insecurities in other spheres, having a hostile neighbour behind its eastern border gives Lithuanians more ontological security ('this is the way it is and has always been'), than a neighbour which is trying to change its behaviours and views.

The second variable is the concept of history in Lithuania, which prevails in and informs its other policies. As long as the multicultural eurointegrational paradigm of history underlies the foreign policy, securitisation is not likely to succeed in any form. However, should the situation change in Lithuania, bringing nationalist and/or populist actors to the top and enabling them to mainstream the patriotic ethnocentric concept of history into other policies, Belarusian versions of history may well come to be perceived as a threat and become an issue in inter-state policies, once more pressing issues are resolved in the future. As the analysis of securitising moves

shows, whenever policy-makers in Lithuania in any areas (e.g. security or culture) appear to be negative about Litvinism, they tend to be guided by the ethnocentric or patriotic version of the Lithuanian history.

These two factors were found as the most relevant ones by different criteria. On the one hand, the policies of official Minsk turned out chronologically the most consistent with securitising moves in Lithuania. Active securitising moves in media (securitisation level 1) and surges of top-down securitisation in statements of the Ministry of National Defence and the minister of culture (securitisation level 2) clearly came as a reaction to policies of Lukashenka's regime, showing direct influence thereof on responses in the Lithuanian society. On the other hand, the Lithuanian history paradigm appears to be crucial in determining the perception of Litvinism by Lithuanian actors, as proceeds from analysis of their argumentation. While the official foreign policy of Lithuania rests upon the multicultural eurointegrational perspective, its references to GDL experience are restrained to the rhetoric of 'common past'; this is why integration approach dominates at the top level. Securitising actors, in their turn, employ postulates of ethnocentric, or patriotic concept of history. It demonstrates that, should the history paradigm change, the general choice of response to Litvinism would switch from integration to securitisation.

Other three factors explored were found not primary for securitisation or integration of Belarusian historical views.

The transit of power in Belarus, frequently quoted as a potential game-changer in potential of Litvinism, appears to be too abstract a factor, and can lead to either higher level securitisation or integration of Belarusian historical perspective with Lithuanian one, depending on the nature and outcome of transition.

Discarding two other factors, popularity of Litvinism in Belarus and Russian information war against Lithuania, drew on important distinction between radical and moderate flows of Litvinism. Radical Litvinism, as an idea targeted against the current state of Lithuania and alienating it from the GDL heritage, could be used by Russia as an argument to drive a wedge between Lithuanians and Belarusians, or for laying territorial claims on Lithuania. However, this version of Litvinism is marginal and unpopular. On the other hand, moderate Litvinism, according to which Belarus co-owns the GDL heritage with Lithuania and originates from GDL as a nation and state, is popular in large and growing segments of Belarusian population and dominates in mainstream historiography, sometimes also in state policies of Belarus. This

moderate version of Litvinism is used by Belarus to distance themselves from Kremlin and strengthen ties with the West; this is a reason why it cannot be seen as a part of Russian conspiracy against Lithuania. Chronological argument, too, shows lack of link between Russian hybrid aggression and Litvinism securitisation: while Moscow's informational threats remain very relevant and ongoing, securitisation of Litvinism stopped in 2020.

While building on findings of other researchers, the paper has also updated, augmented and corrected their conclusions in a number of cases. In particular, while Dementavičius listed media and, partially, historians as key securitising actors against Litvinism in Lithuania, this research also found an important role of military and near-military actors. Contrary to Venckūnas's conclusion that 2019 marked de-securitisation of Litvinism in Lithuania, this paper showed that securitising moves continued in 2020, and the end of active securitising phase was only reached when the regime in Minsk fully changed its policies in response to popular uprising, proving regime policies to be a key factor of securitisation.

On the other hand, findings of this paper confirm Venckūnas's point on the gradually changing nature of securitising moves against Belarusian historical narratives. In late 2010s, understanding that Litvinism had its radical and moderate flows emerged in Lithuanian discourse, which shows a more flexible and nuanced approach to the choice between alienating or supporting independence aspirations of the neighbouring Belarusian nation. The radical Litvinism has clear anti-Lithuanian connotations and can thus be used as a card against Lithuania, as shows the past and Kremlin's routine practices in Eastern Europe; however, this flow of Litvinism is limited to marginal groups. On the other hand, the moderate Litvinism has been slowly making its way into the mainstream of Belarusian understanding of history and their own identity, and can be potentially used as a leverage to outweigh Moscow's influence. Mostly confessed by Belarusian pro-European and pro-independence actors, this approach has also been occasionally exploited by the Belarusian regime when it saw fit.

Therefore, along with its own prevailing history paradigm as a key factor, the position of the Lithuanian state and society on Litvinism in the future might well depend on the type of Litvinism, which gains the upper hand in eastern neighbourhood. Should Belarus survive as a nation, escape overwhelming control of Moscow, and opt for moderate Litvinism as a cornerstone of its independent historiography, identity and history policy, this would surely continue to spark debates in the historical community and citizen inter-communications, yet top-level policy-makers in Vilnius would most likely welcome it. On the other hand, the

theoretical possibility for advent of radical Litvinism in Belarus, either independent or under the Russian rule, would most likely lead to more conflicts with its closest Baltic neighbour, and provoke active securitising response.

LITERATURE

Anderson, Benedict, *Įsivaizduojamos bendruomenės*. Vilnius: Baltos lankos, 1999.

Bekus, Nelly, *Struggle over Identity: The Official and the Alternative “Belarusianness”*, Central European University Press, 2010.

Biketova, Chernyshov / Бикетова Екатерина, Чернышов Юрий, «*Нацестроительство Республики Беларусь и европейский компонент белорусской идентичности*», «Мировая экономика и международные отношения», 2018, том 62, № 1, с. 94–103.

Brubaker, Rogers, *Pilietybė ir tautiškas Prancūzijoje ir Vokietijoje*. Vilnius: Pradai, 1998.

Budryte, Dovile, Erica Resende, Douglas Becker, ‘*Defending Memory*’: *Exploring the Relationship Between Mnemonical In/Security and Crisis in Global Politics*, *Interdisciplinary Political Studies*, Issue 6(1) 2020: 5-19.

Buzan, Barry, Ole Wæver, Jaap de Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*. London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998.

Creppell, Ingrid, *The Concept of Normative Threat*, *International Theory / Volume 3 / Issue 03 / November 2011*: 450 – 487.

Dementavičius, Justinas, “Istorijos politika postsovietinio autoritarizmo sąlygomis : Baltarusijos atvejis”, in *Istorijos politikos modeliai ir kryptys: Europos Sąjungos, Lenkijos, Rusijos ir Baltarusijos istorijos politika*. Vilnius: Vilniaus universitetas, 2014. P. 135-167

Gellner, Ernest, *Tautos ir nacionalizmas*. Vilnius: Pradai, 1996.

Hoffman, Steven M., and Buhr, Renee (ed.), *Lithuanian and Belarusian National Identity in the Context of European Integration*, Kaunas: Vytautas Magnus University, 2013.

Ioffe, Grigory, *Understanding Belarus: Belarusian Identity*. *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 55, 8, 2003.

Ioffe, Grigory, *Understanding Belarus: Questions of Language*. Europe-Asia Studies, Vol. 55, 7, 2003.

Jachovič, Juljan, *The Reconstruction of Belarusian Identity Narratives: The Belarusian Language*, Lithuanian Annual Strategic Review, 2019, Volume 17: 249-270.

Mälksoo, Maria, 'Memory must be defended': *Beyond the Politics of Mnemonical Security*, Security Dialogue, Vol. 46, No. 3 (2015): 221-237.

Lopata, Raimundas, Inga Vinogradnaitė (eds.), *Lietuvos ir Baltarusijos istorijos politika*, Vilnius: VU leidykla, 2016.

Lopata, Raimundas, et. al. *Valstybė ir istorija*, Vilnius: VU leidykla, 2014.

Pranevičiūtė, Jovita, *Factors of national identity formation in CIS area: Belarus and Ukraine case study*, Summary of doctoral dissertation, Social science, political science (02S), Vilnius: VU, 2009.

Preiherman, Yauheni "Belarus and the EU: Where Could Another Rapprochement Lead?", *The Jamestown Foundation*, January 27, 2020 <https://jamestown.org/program/belarus-and-the-eu-where-could-another-rapprochement-lead/> [2022 01 07].

Radžvilas, Vytautas, et. al. *Istorijos subjektas kaip istorijos politikos problema*, Vilnius: VU, 2011.

Roe, Paul, *Is securitization a 'negative' concept? Revisiting the normative debate over normal versus extraordinary politics*, Security Dialogue, Vol. 43, No. 3, 2012: 249-266.

Rudling, Per Anders, *Belarus in the Lukashenka Era: National Identity and Relations with Russia* (in Schmidtke, Oliver, and Yekelchik, Serhy (eds.) - *Europe's Last Frontier*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

Snyder, Timothy "The Polish-Lithuanian commonwealth since 1989: National narratives in relations among Poland, Lithuania, Belarus and Ukraine", *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, 1998, 4:3.

Smith, Anthony D., *The nation in history: historiographical debates about ethnicity and nationalism*. Hanover: Univ. Press of New England, 2000.

Statkus, Nortautas, *Etniškumas ir nacionalizmas: istorinis ir teorinis aspektai*. Vilnius: Vilniaus universiteto leidykla, 2003.

Statkus, Nortautas, Tapatybės politika etniniams konfliktams reguliuoti. Vilnius: Versus Aurius, 2004.

Venckūnas, Valius, *LDK paveldo dalybų naratyvai Lietuvos ir Baltarusijos politinėje komunikacijoje XXI a. pradžioje*, daktaro disertacija, Vilnius: VU, 2021.

Vileita, Vadim, *The Identity of the Belarusian State: a Never-Ending Process?* Bell, BelarusInfo Letter, Issue 2 (32), 2013.

SOURCES AND CITED PUBLICATIONS

Assessments of Threats to National Security (2012-20), *KAM Antrasis operatyvinių tarnybų departamentas*,

http://kam.lt/lt/struktura_ir_kontaktai_563/kas_institucijos_567/aotd.html?fbclid=IwAR0Uc1eX6mViM1J5KYaINzBiUyc6byADRYFwzJn1xW9L7o9QNNh2FYX7jKY [2022 01 07]

Baranauskas, Tomas, “Recenzija: История белорусской государственности. Т. 1: Белорусская государственность: от истоков до конца XVIII в. Отв. ред. тома: О. Н. Левко, В. Ф. Голубев. Минск: Беларуская навука, 2018”, *The Year-Book of Lithuanian History*, 2019/2.

Baranauskienė, Inga “Aistros dėl „Vytauto“, arba vėl daug triukšmo dėl nieko”, www.alkas.lt, 2017 09 05 <https://alkas.lt/2017/09/05/i-baranauskiene-aistros-del-vytauto-arba-vel-daug-triuksmo-del-nieko-video/> [2022 01 07].

Budzma campaign, *Будзьма беларусамі*, <https://budzma.org/>

Čerkauskas, Martynas “Baltarusija sukūrė baletą apie „savo“ kunigaikštį Vytautą”, *Lietuvos rytas*, 2013 08 27, <https://www.lrytas.lt/kultura/istorija/2013/08/27/news/baltarusija-sukure-baleta-apie-savo-kunigaiksti-vytauta-4929169-2013-08-27> [2022 01 07]

“G. Landsbergis kreipėsi dėl Baltarusijos pavadinimo keitimo, VLKK kol kas nesvarstys”, *Verslo žinios*, 2021-01-12, <https://www.vz.lt/verslo-aplinka/2021/01/12/g-landsbergis-kreipesi-del-baltarusijos-pavadinimo-keitimo-vlkk-vadovas-tam-kol-kas-nemato-galimybiu> [2022 01 07].

Galinis, Ronaldas “Į Seimą išrinktas istorikas Rakutis: apleidę istorijos politiką, tapsime pagrindine žydšaudžių tauta, niekada nelaimėjusia jokio mūšio”, *LRT*, 2020.11.23 <https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/lietuvoje/2/1274579/i-seima-isrinktas-istorikas-rakutis-apeide-istorijos-politika-tapsime-pagrindine-zydsaudziu-tauta-niekada-nelaimėjusia-jokio-musio> [2022 01 07].

Garbačiauskaitė-Budrienė, Monika. “Pasiduoti be mūšio? (atsakymas K. Girniui)”, *DELFI*, 2014 m. rugpjūčio 10 d., <https://www.delfi.lt/news/ringas/lit/m-garbaciauskaite-budriene-pasiduoti-be-musio-atsakymas-k-girniui.d?id=65517614> [2022 01 07].

“Gedimino kalne – kova su kitų valstybių vėliavomis”, *Lietuvos rytas*, 2013.03.31, <https://www.lrytas.lt/lietuvsdiena/aktualijos/2013/03/31/news/gedimino-kalne-kova-su-kitu-valstybiu-veliavomis-4779185> [2022 01 07].

Grigaliūnaitė, Violeta “Baltarusijos politologas: iš jūsų perspektyvos žiūrint, baltarusiai jau pavogė LDK istoriją”, *15min*, 2018 spalio 27 d. <https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/baltarusijos-politologas-is-jusu-perspektyvos-ziurint-baltarusiai-jau-pavoge-ldk-istorija-56-1050956?copied> [2022 01 07].

Grigaliūnaitė, Violeta “Istorijos profesorius baltarusiškos televizijos BELSAT laidoje apie Vilnių: jį įkūrė baltarusiai”, *15min*, 2021 m. kovo 3 d. <https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/istorijos-profesorius-baltarusiskos-televizijos-belsat-laidoje-apie-vilniu-ji-ikure-baltarusiai-56-1464704?copied> [2022 01 07].

Independent Institute of Socio-Economic and Political Studies (IISEPS), <http://www.iiseps.org/>;

“Istorikai Inga ir Tomas Baranauskai. LICVINIZMAS”, *B&R Pristato* 2019.10.10, https://trshow.info/watch/SrAPFh_fiQ8/b-r-pristato-Istorikai-Inga-ir-tomas-baranauskai-IlcvInIzmas-20191010.html [2022 01 07]

Jackevičius, Mindaugas “A.Eidintas: Lietuvos istoriją reikia saugoti nuo falsifikavimo”, *DELFI*, 2012 m. rugsėjo 16 d., <https://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/lithuania/aeidintas-lietuvos-istorija-reikia-saugoti-nuo-falsifikavimo.d?id=59512833> [2022 01 07].

Jačauskas, Ignas “Planai Vilniuje parodyti baltarusių baletą „Vytautas“ yra provokacija, sako L.Ruokytė-Jonsson”, *BNS*, 2017.09.04, <https://www.bns.lt/topic/1912/news/53652839/print/true/> [2022 01 07]

“Kaip LDK tapo baltarusiškuoju renesansu”, *Vakarų ekspresas*, 2016-08-13, <https://ve.lt/naujienos/visuomene/sociumas/kaip-ldk-tapo-baltarusiskuoju-renesansu1-1484913> [2022 01 07].

Kamuntavičius, Rūstis “Kodėl iki šiol neparašėme Baltarusijos istorijos?” *Gudija.lt*, 2017.07.17 <https://www.gudija.lt/single-post/istorija-1-1> [2022 01 07].

Kamuntavičius, Rūstis “Lietuvisai ir lievinai: naujos senos gudų istoriografijos paieškos”, *Darbai ir dienos*. Kaunas: Vytauto Didžiojo universiteto leidykla, 2012, T. 58, p. 335-340.

“Litvinstvo and White Russia”, *Top War*, January 17, 2015, <https://en.topwar.ru/66636-litvinstvo-i-belaya-rus.html> (original: “Литвинство и Белая Русь”, *Военное обозрение*, 17 января 2015 г., <https://topwar.ru/66636-litvinstvo-i-belaya-rus.html>) [2022 01 07].

Matskevich, Uladzimir “Litvinism carries the germ of separatism”, *EuroBelarus*, 09.02.2017, <https://en.eurobelarus.info/news/society/2017/02/09/uladzimir-matskevich-litvinism-carries-the-germ-of-separatism.html> (Longer version in Russian: <https://eurobelarus.info/news/society/2017/01/23/vladimir-matskevich-litvinstvo-neset-v-sebe-zarodysh-separatizma.html>) [2022 01 07];

“Ministerija: Rusijos ir Baltarusijos taikiniai - Lietuvos viduramžių istorija”, *Kauno diena*, 2013-12-30, <https://kauno.diena.lt/naujienos/lietuva/politika/ministerija-rusijos-ir-baltarusijos-taikiniai-lietuvos-viduramziu-istorija-607797>, [2022 01 07]

“Nutarimas dėl nacionalinio saugumo strategijos patvirtinimo”, *Lietuvos Respublikos Seimas*, 2002 m. gegužės 28 d. Nr. IX-907, Vilnius, <https://www.e-tar.lt/portal/lt/legalActEditions/TAR.2627131DA3D2?faces-redirect=true>; Suvestinė redakcija 2005 m. [X-91 Dėl Seimo nutarimo "Dėl Nacionalinio saugumo strategijos patvirtinimo" priedo pakeitimo \(e-tar.lt\)](#); Suvestinė redakcija 2012 m. [X-91 Dėl Seimo nutarimo "Dėl Nacionalinio saugumo strategijos patvirtinimo" priedo pakeitimo \(e-tar.lt\)](#); Suvestinė redakcija 2017 m. [IX-907 Dėl Nacionalinio saugumo strategijos patvirtinimo \(e-tar.lt\)](#); Suvestinė redakcija 2021 m. [XIV-795 Dėl Lietuvos Respublikos Seimo 2002 m. gegužės 28 d. nutarimo Nr. IX-907 „Dėl Nacionalinio saugum... \(e-tar.lt\)](#) [2022 01 07]

“Prezidentas: Lietuva remia ir remis Baltarusijos pilietinę visuomenę”, *Lietuvos Respublikos Prezidentas*, 2020.11.24, <https://www.lrp.lt/lt/prezidentas-lietuva-remia-ir-rems-baltarusijos-pilietine-visuomene/35050> [2022 01 07].

“Proto džiuaglės. Kaip Rusija galėtų teisintis okupuojant mūsų šalį bei kaip tai susiję su Baltarusija? (host Virginijus Savukynas)”, *LRT*, 2020.02.08, [https://www.lrt.lt/mediateka/irasas/2000092469/proto-](https://www.lrt.lt/mediateka/irasas/2000092469/proto-dziungles?fbclid=IwAR2QZ3IIMFMDjH7gVGJZDIcnKM350PrDCSGbwZ7xi1phUjH22qgXANmwFe8)

[dziungles?fbclid=IwAR2QZ3IIMFMDjH7gVGJZDIcnKM350PrDCSGbwZ7xi1phUjH22qgXANmwFe8](https://www.lrt.lt/mediateka/irasas/2000092469/proto-dziungles?fbclid=IwAR2QZ3IIMFMDjH7gVGJZDIcnKM350PrDCSGbwZ7xi1phUjH22qgXANmwFe8) [2022 01 07].

Saldžiūnas, Vaidas “Vilnius ne jūsu, o mūsų: kas atbaido kaimynus nuo žygio „atsiimti“ Lietuvos sostinę”, *DELFI*, 2019 m. rugpjūčio 18 d.

<https://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/lithuania/vilnius-ne-jusu-o-musu-kas-atbaido-kaimynus-nuo-zygio-atsiimti-lietuvos-sostine.d?id=81921629> [2022 01 07].

Sadauskas-Kvietkevičius, Romas “Kas Lietuvoje bijo baltarusių laisvės?”, *DELFI*, 2020 m. rugpjūčio 15 d.

<https://www.delfi.lt/news/ringas/lit/romas-sadauskas-kvietkevicius-kas-lietuvoje-bijo-baltarusiu-laisves.d?id=85008909> [2022 01 07].

Samoškaitė, Eglė “Diena, kai baltarusiai pareikš: Vilnius – mūsų”, *DELFI*, 2013 m. lapkričio 6 d.,

<https://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/lithuania/diena-kai-baltarusiai-pareiks-vilnius-musu.d?id=63135410> [2022 01 07].

Sutkus, Darius „Litvinizmas: istorija, prielaidos, perspektyvos“, *Karys*, 1 (January), 2020,

https://kam.lt/lt/naujienos_874/karine_ziniasklaida_655/karys/2020_m._kario_numeriai/2020_m._karys_nr.1.html; [2022 01 07];

Sutkus, Darius, “Litvinizmas II: Baltarusija – ideologinės kovos laukas“, *Karys*, 2 (February), 2020,

https://kam.lt/lt/naujienos_874/karine_ziniasklaida_655/karys/2020_m._kario_numeriai/2020_m._karys_nr.2.html [2022 01 07].

“Tomas Baranauskas: Litvinistams svarbiausia turėti gražią istoriją, kuri galėtų sutelkti tautą”, *Bernardinai.lt*, 2012 09 29,

<https://www.bernardinai.lt/2012-09-29-tomas-baranauskas-litvinistams-svarbiausia-tureti-grazia-istorija-kuri-galetu-sutelkti-tauta/> [2022 01 07].

Valstybės saugumo departamentas, Metiniai grėsmių vertinimai (2014-21), <https://www.vsd.lt/gresmes/metiniai-gresmiu-vertinimai/> [2022 01 07]

Varanavičius, Darius, “Redakcijos skiltis”, *Karys*, 9, 2020, 2

https://kam.lt/lt/naujienos_874/karine_ziniasklaida_655/karys/2020_m._kario_numeriai/2020_m._karys_nr._9.html [2022 01 07].

Vitkūnas, Manvydas “Europos artilerijos genijus iš Lietuvos” *Karys*, 1, 2021, p. 32
https://kam.lt/lt/naujienos_874/karine_ziniasklaida_655/karys/2021_m_kario_numeriai/2021_m_karys_nr.1.html [2022 01 07];

“White Paper on Lithuanian Defence Policy”, *Ministry of National Defence of the Republic of Lithuania*, 2017, Vilnius
https://kam.lt/en/defence_policy_1053/important_documents/the_white_paper_on_lithuanian_defence_policy.html [2022 01 07].

Аверьянов-Минский, Кирилл “«Белорусы — это литвины!»: разбор одной исторической фальсификации”, *EurAsia Daily*, 24 декабря 2017,
<https://eadaily.com/ru/news/2017/12/24/belorusy-eto-litviny-razbor-odnoy-istoricheskoy-falsifikacii> [2022 01 07].

«Беларусь. Рейтинги имён новорожденных. Статистика отделов ЗАГС», 2013-2016,
https://1000names.ru/belarusian_names_12;

Белый, Алесь «Существует ли в Беларуси литвинский проект?», *Regnum*, 21 августа 2012 г.,
<https://regnum.ru/news/society/1563089.html> [2022 01 07].

Бужинный, Артём “Кто такие литвины? «Литвинская» идея в белорусской перспективе”, *Imhoclub.by*, 25.02.2017 https://imhoclub.by/ru/material/kto_takie_litvini [2022 01 07].;

“Геннадий Давыдько: предателей я на телевидение не позову”, *TVR.by*, 30.01.2012,
https://www.tvr.by/company/pressa-o-nas/gennadiy_davydtko_predateley_ya_na_televidenie_ne_pozovu/;

“Главные тезисы литвинизма”, *Istorija.net – Tomo Baranausko istorijos puslapiai*,
<https://lietuvos.istorija.net/lituanistica/litvinizm.htm> [2022 01 07].

Гурневич, Дзьмітры «Проціпастаўляць ліцьвінаў беларусам — гэта як проціпастаўляць галаў французам», *Свабода*, 18 студзень 2017, <https://www.svaboda.org/a/28241698.html>;

«Имена, присвоенные детям при регистрации рождения 2019-2020», *Адміністрацыя Советского района г. Минска* <https://sov.minsk.gov.by/otdel-zags/imena-prisvoennye-detyam-pri-registratsii-rozhdeniya>;

«Какие имена для детей самые популярные у белорусов?» *Аргументы и факты в Беларуси* № 6, 06.02.2021
https://aif.by/dontknows/kakie_imena_dlya_detey_samy_e_populyarnye_u_belorusov;

Киркевич, Алесь „«Литвины»: патриоты, секта или агенты ФСБ?“ *Белсат*, 2017.01.19, <https://belsat.eu/ru/opinions/litviny-patrioty-sekta-ili-agenty-fsb/> [2022 01 07];

Кіркевіч, Алесь «Яшчэ не позна вярнуць краіне сапраўднае імя — Літва», *Новы час*, 29-01-2017 <https://novychas.online/kultura/jaszczе-ne-pozna-vjarnuc-kraine-sapraudnae-imja> [2022 01 07].

Кравцевич, Александр “Литвинство — выдумка врагов, которую поддержали дураки”, *Наша ніва*, 28.03.2015, <https://nashaniva.com/?c=ar&i=146173&lang=ru> [2022 01 07].

“Лукашенко: Великое княжество Литовское было белорусским государством, это неоспоримо”, *Наша ніва*, 25.12.2019, <https://nashaniva.com/?c=ar&i=243471&lang=ru> [2022 01 07].

Марзалюк Игорь, «Как построить цитадель правды», «Беларусь сегодня», 19 ноября 2018 г., <https://www.sb.by/articles/kak-postroit-tsitadel-pravdy.html> [access on 21/06/2021].

Матвиенко, Анатолий «Литвинизм как форма русофобии», *Белорусский политринг*, 28-04-2018, <https://politrting.com/articles/16234-anatoliy-matvienko-litvinizm-kak-forma-rusofobii.html> [2022 01 07].

«Названы самые популярные детские имена у минчан», *БелТА*, 9 января 2019 г. <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/nazvany-samyе-populjarnye-detskie-imena-u-minchan-332019-2019/> [2022 01 07].

«Названы самые популярные имена для младенцев в Минске», *The Village Беларусь*, 2 лістапада 2017 г., <https://www.the-village.me/village/children/kids-news/263903-populyarnye-imena>; [2022 01 07].

«Самые популярные и самые редкие имена девочек в Беларуси», *БрестСИТИ*, 9 января 2019 г. <https://brestcity.com/blog/samyе-populyarnye-i-samyе-redkie-imena-devochek-v-belarusi>; [2022 01 07].

Скопич, Семён «Рядовые бациллы литвинизма», *Сегодня.ру*, 26.04.2013, <https://www.segodaya.ru/content/121790> [2022 01 07].

SUMMARY IN LITHUANIAN / SANTRAUKA LIETUVIŲ KALBA

Darbe nagrinėjamas Lietuvos visuomenės ir valstybės atsakas į Baltarusijoje populiarėjančią litvinizmo koncepciją vertinant Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštystės (LDK) istoriją.

Litvinizmu darbe įvardijamos koncepcijos, leidžiančios baltarusiams pretenduoti į materialųjį ir nematerialųjį LDK paveldą, laikyti save šios valstybės įpėdiniais. Analizuojant mokslinę literatūrą ir viešojoje diskusijoje dėstomus argumentus, litvinizmas skirstomas į radikalųjį ir nuosaikųjį. Radikaliu juo laikomas požiūris, kad dabartiniai baltarusiai yra tikrieji LDK gyvenusių lietuvių („litvinų“) palikuonys. LDK palikimas, anot radikaliojo litvinizmo, priklauso tik dabartiniams baltarusiams, reiškiamos pretenzijos į Vilnių. Dabartiniai lietuviai, pagal šią logiką, pavogė iš baltarusių jų tikrąjį pavadinimą, o šiaip neva nieko bendra su istoriniais „litvinais“ neturi. Net ir LDK kunigaikščiai buvę baltarusiai.

Pagal nuosaikųjį litvinizmą, baltarusiai kaip tauta susiformavo LDK dėka, jie dalijasi LDK paveldą su lietuviais. Teigiama, kad LDK susikūrė gana taikiai. Pabrėžiama valstybės raštvedyboje plačiai vartota rusėnų („senoji baltarusių“) kalba, santykinė tolerancija tarp konfesijų ir tautybių, visiems valstybės gyventojams taikytas politonimas „lietuviai“. Taigi LDK, kalbant šiandienos terminais, laikoma baltarusių valstybe, bet ir lietuvių.

Tyrime aiškinamasi, kaip Lietuvoje reaguojama į šias teorijas, nagrinėjami vienokį ir kitokį atsaką lemiantys veiksniai. Atsakas suskirstomas skalėje nuo baltarusių istorinių naratyvų sugrėsminimo iki jų integravimo su lietuviškaisiais, vadovaujantis Kopenhagos saugumo mokyklos pasiūlyta sugrėsminimo, bandymų sugrėsmininti ir sugrėsminančių veikėjų sąvoka. Remiantis ankstesnių autorių tyrimais, kur pateikiama ir įžvalgų dėl litvinizmo sugrėsminimo Lietuvoje, atliekama analizė, kurie veiksniai lemia sugrėsminimo bangas Lietuvoje. Tai leidžia prognozuoti ir ateities scenarijus – ar litvinizmas Lietuvoje bus pasitinkamas priešišškai, ar bus linkstama jį suderinti su lietuviška istorijos vizija.

Išnagrinėjus galimus sugrėsminimo veiksnius, padaroma išvada, kad pagrindiniai veiksniai yra du: (1) Baltarusijos istorijos ir užsienio politika bei (2) Lietuvoje vyraujanti istorijos paradigma. Pirmasis pripažįstamas lemiamu ir tiesioginiu, nes stebint litvinizmo sugrėsminimo lygį Lietuvoje (matuojamą nuo 0 iki 3) būtent pasikeitusi Baltarusijos politika – paminklai LDK kunigaikščiams, LDK pilių atnaujinimas, baletas „Vytautas“ pastatymas ir rodymas – lėmė didžiausią bandymų sugrėsmininti bangą Lietuvoje po 2012 m. Antrasis yra svarbus, nes

būtent Lietuvos politikoje vyraujančio eurointegracinio (multikultūrinio) istorijos modelio dėka litvinizmo sugrėsminimas niekad nepasiekė maksimalaus lygio, valstybės mastu vyravo integravimo retorika. Tačiau įsigilinant į sugrėsminančių veikėjų argumentus, išryškėja, kad jie vadovaujasi etnocentristine (patriotine) istorijos paradigma, o kadangi istorijos politikos modelio pasikeitimo Lietuvoje negalima atmesti, gali pasikeisti ir santykis su litvinizmu valstybės politikos mastu.

Kita vertus, dažnai minimas Rusijos vykdomo informacinio karo veiksnys pripažįstamas nedarančiu tiesioginės įtakos sugrėsminant litvinizmą. Parodoma, kad nėra chronologinio ryšio tarp Rusijos informacinių atakų ir litvinizmo sugrėsminimo Lietuvoje – sugrėsminimo tendencijos prasidėjo anksčiau nei pasiektas informacinių išpuolių pikas, o paskui visiškai baigėsi pasikeitus politinei padėčiai Baltarusijoje, nors informacinis Rusijos karas prieš Vakarų liko open problema. Be to, įrodoma, kad Baltarusijoje įsitvirtinantis nuosaikusias litvinizmas nėra palankus Rusijos interesams, nes stiprina savarankišką baltarusių tautinę savimonę ir padeda atsiriboti nuo Kremliaus įtakos. Rusija savo tikslams galėtų nebent mėginti išnaudoti radikalų litvinizmą, kurio įtaka išlieka nereikšminga. Taigi laikyti litvinistines tendencijas Baltarusijoje Rusijos plano dalimi logiškai nėra nuoseklu.

Pasitelkiant viešosios nuomonės apklausas išsiaiškinama, kad nepaisant Baltarusijoje iš lėto vykstančių tautos konsolidavimosi ir nuosaikiojo litvinizmo populiarėjimo procesų, gyventojų dauguma lieka labiau orientuota į Rusiją (vyrauja eurazinė etninė, o ne europinė tautinė tapatybė). Šie procesai nedaro tiesioginės įtakos litvinizmo sugrėsminimui, nes savaime jie pernelyg nepastebimi, kad pasitarnautų kaip dirgiklis ir sukeltų Lietuvoje reakciją, nebent pasireikštų konkrečiais valstybės politikos sprendimais ar pavienių aktyvistų veiksmais.

Tik netiesioginę įtaką darančiu pripažįstamas ir kitas dažnai diskusijoje minimas veiksnys – galimas valdžios pasikeitimas Baltarusijoje. Kaip jis paveiktų lietuvių požiūrį į litvinizmą, labai priklausytų nuo to, kokia kryptimi judėtų Baltarusija pasikeitus valdžiai, ar įvyktų demokratizacija, ar pasikeistų geopolitinė orientacija, kokia būtų vykdoma istorijos politika, taigi grįžtama prie kito, svarbesniu pripažinto veiksnio.