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**Recognition of the Russian threat in Poland.
From othering to securitisation**

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Abstract

The theory-driven research aims to investigate securitisation as a phenomenon applied to a particular case of Polish perception of Russia. Despite the fact that Russia's expansionist ambitions toward neighbouring states have permanently given cause for concern, identifying an object as a potential threat to own national sovereignty requires a political will to proclaim it as such and to deal with it. We state that the traditional approach to security does not allow illustrating the whole mosaic of bilateral relations, one of the elements of which is national memory.

In the absence of any objective criteria for measuring and classifying threats, constructivists argue that threat is a subjective category. This study aims to identify the conditions behind securitisation of Russia, which shape the general public agreement over Polish defence policy. The work intends to test the assumption that public support for an increase in military spending depends on securitisation of Russia by political elites, the premise of which is the mobilisation of collective memory.

The author hopes to contribute to the existing literature on securitisation by addressing the question of threat construction through the role of external conditions and mobilisation of historical memory to facilitate the adoption of certain defence policy measures. Support for possible Polish engagement in military actions in accordance with the NATO principle of collective defence is observed against the background of the Russian-Ukrainian escalation in 2014. Although security concerns expressed in relation to Russian external policy prove to be largely independent of historical controversies, national memory reinforces the self-identification process, when shared memory is called upon to draw an unambiguous line between own community and Others.

Keywords: securitisation (securitization), othering, collective memory, defence strategy

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Introduction

In May 2020 President Andrzej Duda approved the new National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland. The threat posed by Russia's neo-imperial policy is pointed out in the document (National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland, 2020, p. 6):

The most serious threat is the neo-imperial policy of the authorities of the Russian Federation, pursued also by means of military force. The aggression against Georgia, the illegal annexation of Crimea and activities in eastern Ukraine have violated the basic principles of international law and undermined the pillars of the European security system.

Therefore, Poland declares enhancing the protection of its territory in the face of the Russian threat. This trajectory is not new on the Polish agenda as relations between the two countries are clouded by a long history of rivalry (Zajac, 2016). One might argue that today Polish-Russian relations are deeply rooted in the resentments and memories of history that the two countries shared. Despite the efforts of both sides directed at improving the relations in the post-Cold War period through various means, including the creation of the Centre for Polish-Russian Dialogue and Understanding, these tensions continue to exist up to date. Poland's strengthening of its security by joining NATO did not significantly reduce the degree of fear about the threat posed by Russia, which was reflected in the rhetoric of high-ranking politicians (TVP World, 2018). In the next paragraphs, the author seeks to justify the **relevance of the topic** chosen and the grounds for approaching research issues from the chosen theoretical and methodological perspectives.

The Polish view of Russia as an enduring threat in spite of the existence of a constructive dialogue points to the more general question in international relations (IR) of what turns something into a security issue. Arguably, foreign policy decisions do not simply reflect objective reality and "genuine security concerns" (Schmitt, 2020, p. 923), but are based on constructed images and concepts. The classical approach to security tends to distinguish between objective and subjective threats (Wolfers, 1962), admitting that objectively in security studies can reveal a real threat. There is, however, a postmodernist view, which argues that there are no objective criteria to measure and categorise threats. It can be assumed that none of the above-mentioned (the Russo-Georgian war or the annexation of Crimea¹) represents a direct threat to the security of Polish residents and the territory of the country, which is, unlike Georgia and Ukraine, a NATO member. Nevertheless,

¹ Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly. 2015. Resolution 2034 (2015); EU Delegation to the Russian Federation. 2017. Declaration by the High Representative Federica Mogherini on behalf of the EU on Crimea.

Russia's expansionist ambitions toward neighbouring states have permanently given cause for concern. Russian political elites cannot fail to understand the possible reaction to their expansionist policies or lack of respect for human rights and freedoms. Not only did Russia's actions against Ukraine fundamentally challenge the "vision of a Europe whole, free, and at peace..." (NATO, 2014), but also openly demonstrated that Russia sees itself as an antagonist to the liberal international order.

Regardless of the economic costs at stake and eventually absence of any direct gains for Poland, it consistently supported imposition of the EU economic sanctions against Russia (Wallberg, 2015; Zięba, 2019). Along with declaring Russia a key threat, Poland reaffirms its commitment to increase its defence expenditure (National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland, 2020). A questionable statement has been made by the defence and security analyst Dr. Jacek Raubo (2020), who claims that regardless of possible economic hardships and pandemic, the military budget should be significantly increased. Something that could be considered irrational from a neorealist perspective (Zięba, 2019) might have its roots in the historically and socially constructed patterns that are reflected in the national strategy and security policy.

This study aims to identify the conditions behind securitisation of Russia, which shape the general public agreement over Polish defence and foreign policy. The author hopes to contribute to the existing literature on securitisation by addressing the question of threat construction through revealing the role of external conditions and mobilisation of historical memory to facilitate adoption of certain defence policy measures. Unlike the traditional Copenhagen school, we claim that securitisation does not necessarily lead to the rejection of ordinary politics' decision-making tools, which were laid down in the system itself and provided for by the norms regulating this policy. Therefore, the question of the effects of securitisation on the established political mechanisms as well as the security policy modification may demonstrate how acceptance of a threat, identified and proclaimed by securitising actors, correlates with further political decisions in the framework of existing political traditions and norms.

The author looks at the reason behind general agreement over the acceptance of the securitisation move. Public agreement over the increase of the military budget and intensive NATO cooperation would demonstrate that changes in the structure of budget not in favour of other spheres (education, healthcare, social benefits, etc.) can be easily adopted in case audience is convinced in the necessity to protect against an external threat. Therefore, **our hypothesis is the following:** support for an increase in military spending increases in Polish society due to the securitisation of Russia, which is drawn on historical memory. We suggest that there is a link between support for an increase in military spending with Poland's active involvement in the North Atlantic Alliance

operations on the one hand, and representation of Russia as a growing threat despite possible economic losses at stake on the other hand. Here public opinion survey results are combined with national memory (Snyder, 2002) analysis to identify the impact of memory on the audience's choices, in our case – acceptance of Russia as a primary threat. Public opinion survey results on support for NATO membership and increased or maintained defence spending in the Alliance will serve as the main indicators for the phenomenon under study. For the purpose of evaluating the changes in the defence policy, the author will additionally refer to the data provided by the Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC) along with the Stockholm Peace Research Institute (SIPRI).

The antecedent condition that magnifies the presence of the phenomena under analysis is the Ukrainian crisis of 2014, which will be addressed in the general context of research into external factors. Thus, we suppose that the fear of a possible invasion, being rooted in their common history, has an impact on their attitude towards Russia in the face of the Ukraine crisis.

The time frame of the analysis is limited by 2021 which allows the researcher to have a more complete picture and statistical data for the selected period, as well as rely on credible primary and secondary sources. The 2014-2021 time frame is justified by the suspension of NATO-Russia civilian and military cooperation in response to Russia's military intervention in Ukraine. The shooting down of Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 over eastern Ukraine in 2014 led to the cancellation of the "Polish Year in Russia" and "Russian Year in Poland" planned for 2015. The Russo-Ukrainian War and the annexation of Crimea toughened Poland's position on Russia and resulted in a series of EU sanctions backed by Poland.

If we turn to formal declarations endorsed by Poland (Visegrad Declaration, 2004, Polish National Cyber Security Strategy, 2019), a complex approach to security issues including non-military threats can be traced. In fact, the problems of human trafficking, organised crimes or environmental sustainability are not equally prioritised. Modernisation of the Polish armed forces is actively brought to the fore. The Defence Concept of the Republic of Poland (Ministry of National Defence, 2017) along with the Strategic Defence Review of 2016 proclaim it as one of the key goals in the face of continuous technical modernisation of the Russian armed forces. Poland sees rising Russian defense spending as a clear signal for adopting reciprocal measures that could deter creating a larger imbalance of power.

In view of the foregoing, military security occupies a key position in the Polish defence strategy. While many western EU partners derive from a wider understanding of security, Poland adopts a narrower approach focusing on resistance to its powerful neighbour and relying on conventional

warfare tools (Zajac, 2016). It should be admitted that in recent years a lot of attention has been paid to countering disinformation and ensuring cybersecurity. Either way, in its foreign policy the Polish leadership does not deviate from the neorealist view of world order (Zajac 2016), where Poland allies itself with other NATO members to contain the threats posed by Russia. Nevertheless, neorealism neither reveals the role of historical memory, victimhood, and national identity nor allows assessing the impact of speech and reports in portraying a particular event as a threat to national security.

In line with constructivists, we claim that threat perception cannot be understood by simply addressing the geographical position or military capabilities of parties. It presumably depends on a wide range of factors including the history and culture that impacted the identity formation of Poles. Although material factors are not neglected, the state's response to a threat is not rational. Here the author seeks to introduce critical elements to studies by shedding light on social and economic processes and historical narratives. According to postmodernists, we as individuals and researchers have the power of giving meaning to the world. Although this does not entail that we affect the material reality itself, it still gives plenty of room for constructing and manipulating meanings (Shackel, 2005). Therefore, we rightfully expect ambiguity and equivocation to be accepted as a part of the worldview of a postmodernist. Whether we speak of truth, peace or threat, we refer to equivocal accounts, which are constructed deriving from a context and other subjective conditions rather than rationality.

As for **the structure of the dissertation**, it reflects the central role the theory plays in the analysis of the questions raised. The first chapter opens the discussion on the essence of the notions such as 'security policy' and 'threat'. The first chapter following the introduction is devoted to the description of the Copenhagen School approach and critique of this model of securitisation. A comprehensive review of the theoretical literature on securitisation, the concept of othering and victimhood are provided. The literature review chapter is of particular importance for addressing the role of memory in mass perception. This provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the significance of the research and its theoretical model. The next chapter on methodology helps to complement the understanding of the research design. We claim that there are several limitations to the research due to the complexity of addressing the securitisation issue quantitatively as well as due to the fact that the researcher's values and beliefs may influence the way research is conducted.

The following chapter on the case analysis presents empirical findings. The explanatory research involves case analysis to explain a series of events by applying an existing theory to new cases. Here I claim that the Polish case allows analysing how political elites representing major forces

prioritise strengthening military potential in response to a particular threat. Survey results' analysis will become an important addition to the research into the securitisation of Russia. We expect to observe general trends and see how relevant a particular question for society is. The outcomes of the process of securitisation are considered by taking into account the social context in which the process was evolving. In this chapter, the author addresses the case study by using both descriptive and interpretative stances.

The concluding chapter summarises the key findings and contributions. Although we are striving to minimise the scope of limitations, we admit the necessity of identifying and acknowledging our research limitations. On the other hand, here I must say that simply conducting a qualitative analysis of Poland's military build-up is not sufficient for uncovering the full complexity of bilateral relations as Poland's perception of the Russian threat is also rooted in historical memory, victimhood, the idea of national, economic and energy independence. Finally, I claim that this case study can be extended to a wider context in different ways. Non-conventional understanding of security issues may form the basis for further studies on hybrid warfare.

2. Theoretical Framework: Securitisation Theory

There is no simple answer to what theoretical approach should be applied to particular research. It is rather a question of selecting a looking glass through which the academic can engage with empirical materials (Lytje, 2015). The aim of the chapter is not only to present the theoretical approach applied in the research work but also to guide the readers through the process of reconciliation between different ways of approaching the issues of security studies. It is the Copenhagen School that has become a synthesis of postmodernist thinking and traditionalist ideas (Williams, 2003; Filimon, 2016).

Based on the contributions to security studies made by the scholars representing Critical Security Studies, we aspire to develop a theoretical framework, within which the subject matter can be addressed. Although the securitisation theory developed by Buzan, Wæver, Wilde and others focused on the conditions and the process of securitisation through speech acts, this work is more concerned with its incentives and consequences for the security policy of the country. In accordance with the aim of the thesis, we are concerned with the questions of ‘why this ‘other’ is viewed as a threat to Poland and what it means for its defence policy.

The reason why we resort to othering as a baseline lies in the nature of securitisation. By constructing the other as a threat to one’s identity, we assume that conflicting relations may lead to an open confrontation and, therefore, legitimise actions towards this Other beforehand (Rumelili, 2004). However, the question does not only concern the object presented as a threat to vital interest, but the degree to which it is securitised in this self-other relationship. In other words, not all others eventually become securitised. The process usually requires the fulfillment of certain external and internal conditions.

By assuming that threats do not represent a naturally given phenomenon, we immediately flag that we deal with agents that have power over labelling something as a security threat and defining its level and urgency. That is why the conceptualisation of securitisation plays a key role in assessing the role of the political elites, the community and their interconnecting in identifying priorities of national security policy.

For our further discussion, it is important to emphasise that we base our judgments on an understanding of the structure of relations in the society, where states and individuals have an influence on shaping the society and are in their turn shaped by the international society (Buzan, 2004). These reciprocal effects among states and non-state actors were outlined by Keohane and Nye (1997). Their idea of the costly effects of policies conducted in relation to another actor has taken root in many other concepts, some referring to economic interdependence between states as

a means of avoiding conflicts. On the other hand, the authors admit that with interdependence comes vulnerability: actors' actions are dependent on the policies made by other IR actors and might involve some states in wars or pernicious decision-making because of their membership in treaty organisations (de Vries, 1990).

And while one might be tempted to view international organisations as closed systems where member states exert the most influence over each other, this disregards a whole layer of causal links. So, when it comes to the outcome of national elections, including in Poland, a member of the EU since 2004, we need to look at the wider context. One example is how the European refugee crisis catalysed a shift in electorate preferences across the EU with right-wing parties entering or dominating the political scene (e.g. Law and Justice in Poland). The shift in the official agenda in its turn lead to delay and neglect of other pressing issues such as unemployment, corruption and healthcare (Osmandzikovic, 2020). This example reflects how events in the Middle East and North Africa lead to systemic changes elsewhere, influencing the agenda. EU citizens express their acceptance or rejection of the importance of an issue through elections.

Another example is Poland's accession to NATO in 1999 and the subsequent modernisation of the armed forces, structural changes in Poland's defence budget and participation in Allied missions. The accession talks reflected the changing world order and became a symbol of rejection of the Russian influence in the region (Tyburski 2021). One might argue that at the time the Act of Accession to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization was signed, Poland did not face any direct threat. Arguably, such kinds of foreign policy decisions are multifaceted by their nature. They do not simply reflect objective reality and "genuine security concerns" (Schmitt 2020, 923). Thus, these developments are not predetermined by 'objective' or material conditions. For instance, a qualitative analysis of Poland's military build-up will not be able to uncover the full complexity of bilateral relations as Poland's perception of the Russian threat is rooted in historical memory, victimhood, the idea of national independence and sovereignty, economic and energy independence.

The foreign policy decision-making process is a more complex mechanism meaning that certain questions can be prioritised depending on the perception and representation of events. Although a state's foreign policy is formulated within the state's internal system, it is conditioned by the global socio-political context, which shapes and directs the internal agenda. Furthermore, stemming from its history and national identity formation process, Poland's Eastern politics has an extremely complex origin. Russia has traditionally been considered the most difficult partner among its eastern neighbours (Garnett, 1996).

In view of the foregoing, we state that the traditional approach to security does not allow illustrating the whole mosaic of bilateral relations. It is necessary to take into consideration the contextual changes and social conditions under which the events were developing. Secondly, the approach we adopt is flexible with regard to the acceptance of classical school terminological basis and understanding of national interests, but it seeks to introduce critical elements to studies by shedding light on social and economic processes, historical narratives. According to some scholars (Williams, M.C. 2003; Filimon, 2016), the result of such synthesis of constructivism and realist ideas is the Copenhagen School.

2.1 Conceptualisation and Terminology

As many scholars and political analysts (Pezard et al., 2017; Sperling and Webber, 2017; Hinčica, Řezanková and Worcester, 2020) rightly point out, the perception of Russia as a threat was exacerbated by the Ukrainian crisis. Western powers were unanimous in condemning the annexation of Crimea, but it is noteworthy that the rhetoric of both NATO and EU member states towards the Russian state had significant differences. Even within the Visegrád Group (V4) rhetoric varies from Russia being characterised as a revanchist power aiming to threaten Europe's democratic principles (Bugajski, 2016) to a more pragmatic and friendly attitude (Baczynska and Chalmers, 2020). This is, *inter alia*, a result of internal political processes in the V4 member states (Herman, 2016).

Therefore, a broader perception of threat will be used by the author. In accordance with David L. Rousseau and Rocio Garcia-Retamero (2007), Wendt (1999) and some other scholars' interpretations, threat perception is conditioned by the existence of a collective identity, common values, norms as well as understanding of us and others. When it comes to social categorisation, scholars highlight that although the distinction between 'us' and 'them' is based on some shared attributes, it often happens unconsciously or unintentionally, however, is not fixed by its nature (Rumelili 2004). These shared attributes might include race, ethnicity, physical features, etc. (Presaghi and Rullo 2018).

The questions of othering and identity formation generate interest among many scholars (Wæver, 1996; Campbell, 1998; Rumelili, 2004; Hansen 2006; Reinke de Buitrago, 2012). David Campbell's ideas are of particular interest to us as he ties threat formation to the issues of identity. Based on the assumption that threat is not an objective category, he assigns the key role in the differentiation of own identity to the formation of danger (Campbell, 1998). The representation of the West in Russia and Russia in the West can also be analysed through this prism.

A real or potential threat of an enemy has created a need for belonging to a group that people can rely on. Tribalism or, in other words, loyalty to one's group is an answer to these external threats represented by anything unknown or unfamiliar. Digging deeper into history Hobfoll concludes that due to several hundred thousand years of tribal existence, people have adapted to the necessity to sustain and protect their tribe: "This transition from gentle neighbor to actor of genocide illustrates how fragile civilized culture is and how quickly it can degrade into powerful tribal animosity" (Hobfoll, 2018, p. 34).

Another feature common to tribalism and emphasised by the self-categorisation theory is the perception of the own group as superior to out-groups (Hansen 2006; Reinke de Buitrago, 2012). Not only do we see the Other as different, but we also position ourselves or the group we identify with higher. Due to the power that the dominant group holds, it is able to marginalise and stigmatise those who are not part of this group. The concept can be easily implemented in the studies of asymmetrical groups, where one group has power over the Other. For instance, the self-identification of Central European states largely depends on how they counterpose themselves to their eastern and western neighbours. While Central European states experience an inferiority complex in their relations with Western Europe, members of the political elite display their own superiority over Eastern Europe in terms of membership in transatlantic and European institutions that promote the development of democratic institutions and the economic prosperity of nations.

In the field of international relations, states and non-state actors constitute part of the process of othering with various motivations and tools at their disposal. Oftentimes collective memory of the past events and their link to the present are identified and utilised. National self-images are not self-contained; they require differentiation from the other. These are sets of ideas about the country's political purpose and international status (Clunan, 2009). National identities, according to Rumelili (2004), are a result of self-distinction, when social constructions are built to draw an unambiguous line between Self and Others. Mental construction similarly to state borders have an important function in separating the inside from the outside. Liberal constructivism admits that the construction of identities such as enemy or rival is a result of practices of differentiation of self from others (Rumelili, 2004). For us as researchers interested in the genesis of the securitisation of Russia, the question is in what way and to what extent the image of Russia was mobilised in the process of the construction of Polish identity.

In general, one of the biggest obstacles to the establishment of full-fledged bilateral cooperation has traditionally been related to the two countries' views of their history. These sensitive historical issues primarily related to the Second World War and the communist past can hardly be separated from the present as they constitute part of the national identity of both states, however, their

leverage over foreign policy decision-making is a consequence of certain political aspirations, socio-economic incentives, political elites' calculations and, therefore, is dependent on the political processes within and outside the countries.

Returning to the issue of othering in the contemporary Polish political domain, one might conclude that for Poland these 'others' refers more to Russians than to Estonians or French as the latter two are considered to share the same or similar western values, ideas of a free-market economy and are economically and politically interdependent. This is to a lesser extent conditioned by geographical position or military capabilities and presumably depends on a wide range of factors including the history and culture that impacted the identity formation of Poles. It eventually leads to an irrational response to threats. Material factors are not neglected because with a decrease in a sense of shared identity, "the material balance of power becomes a more powerful predictor of threat perception" (Rousseau and Garcia-Retamero, 2007, p. 766).

Thanks to the social interdependence theory, we are able to shed light on how this othering in relation to Russia is reflected in Polish foreign policy strategy. In the chosen time frame of the analysis, Polish-Russian relations were tense to varying degrees, but it is fundamentally important for us that relations in the energy sector and at the diplomatic level existed. These bilateral trade and economic ties could potentially serve as the basis for expanding cooperation (Coate 2017; de Vries, 1990). The presence of dialogue at a high level is not an indicative of the absence of conflicts per se. For the Polish-Russian cooperation, the reciprocal effects are not built on positive interdependence. If we consider this as a zero-sum game, it can be identified that gains for one side would be presented as fails for another, which is a characteristic of negative interdependence. For Poland the presence of US and NATO troops in its territory is a sign of stability, for Russia – an act of potential aggression depicted as an existential threat to the Russian sovereignty.

Despite the fact that the energy sector remained one of a few areas of cooperation, the two countries did not strive to find common ground in this area either. For Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki the Nord Stream 2 was a threat to European peace (Dziennik Gazeta Prawna, 2021; Wilczek, 2022); Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov would describe it as a beneficial project for both Russia and European energy security (Prime, 2021).

Energy policy is one of the core components of Polish national security. Not coincidentally, it has voiced concerns over the EU's overdependence on energy imports since its accession to the Union. Energy security issues are traditionally highly securitised (Korkmaz, 2021) in Poland and framed in terms of a vulnerable area, which is influenced by external forces and is used to manipulate society as well as influence the decision-making process. The imposition of mutual sanctions,

economic instability and inflation in Russia along with a recurring decline in oil prices led to a decrease in Russia's role in global trade. While V4 relations with European partners have been built on the basis of liberal values and a single market, relations with Russia are based on raw materials and heavy metals imports. In fact, the Czech Republic and Slovakia are heavily dependent on Russian gas supplies, Poland – by 66%, and Hungary - by 60% (Chetverikova, 2019). Therefore, they appeared to be vulnerable in relation to Russian supply cuts. Zeyno Baran (2007) states that by interrupting energy supplies the Kremlin may pursue its economic and political goals. She adds: “Russian power and influence is no longer measured in ballistic missile accuracy or bomber production but in miles of pipeline constructed and barrels of oil per day exported...” (Baran, 2007, p. 132). It compelled Polish authorities to resort to other suppliers such as the USA regardless of the higher price of American liquefied natural gas. Diversification of energy supplies has been a priority for the state energy security for many years, however, it must be stated that the energy sector may not be the only area but the main one where Russian companies still have leverage over the Central European countries.

Although military security occupies an important place in our research, we neither understand security through the lens of political realism nor appeal to the well-established positivist definition of national interests, which does not uncover the role of individual actors and their use of the language of security (Emmers, 2015). The author conceptualises security policy as means used by leaders to deal with an object identified and labelled as a threat (Balzacq and Guzzini, 2015). The author's assertions are supported by the arguments of Buzan et al. (1998), who see it as an intersubjective process. Security threats are not natural phenomena existing out there independently of communities and politicians. At the same time, we are not obliged to abandon such notions as ‘anarchy’, ‘sovereignty’, ‘national interests’ (Onuf, 2012), however, presume that they can be changed and manipulated depending on political goals and social context. While Garnett (1996) used the term ‘canonical threat’ to the sovereignty of Poland referring to Russian imperialist ambitions, for Zięba (2019) the assumption that this is an objectively identified existential threat is questionable. The letter studied how selective historical memory may evoke various connotations of the Russian threat.

For the purpose of a more detailed appeal to the securitisation of Russia, the author will make a use of the Copenhagen School's securitisation theory. A critical approach to security policy as a constructed concept rather than objective reality allows revealing the role of the language used and the general rhetoric in portraying a particular event or phenomenon as a threat to national security shifting it from a low priority issue to a high priority concern (Buzan et al. 1998).

In accordance with Buzan et al. (1998) categorisation, any public issue can be assigned to one of the three main levels from nonpoliticised to politicised and eventually securitised (Neal, 2019). As we are more interested in the extreme version of politicisation – securitisation, it will be explored in more detail below. Politicisation as such refers to the process of giving special meaning to issues that had not been previously present in the public domain (Hartwell, 1979). Security issues are prioritised a priori, however, what is included in this area and what constitutes a state concern might vary. Therefore, state power in some areas, for instance, migration, reproductive health and birth control policy, increases as against the power of individuals and private associations. Ultimately politicians create imbalance and ideologisation by formulating and prioritising certain domains (Krzyżanowski and Wodak, 2018).

Securitisation is understood as extreme version of politicisation, in other words, attributing high level of urgency and existential threat to a particular public issues by making this issue a part of public debate (Buzan et al., 1998, pp. 22-24). Hence, the *securitising actors* – politicians and decision-makers, legitimise the implementation of subsequent measures to deal with this threat (Baysal, 2020; Eroukhmanoff, 2018). Language is the instrument used to describe facts and events putting the event on a scale from a low priority political matter to a high priority concern. When an issue is declared, it's *the audience's* turn to act by either rejecting or accepting the *speech act*. It is important to mention that in the case of Poland, as well as in other case studies, it is hardly possible to speak of the audience as a homogeneous group (Balzacq et al., 2016). It could be so that the Law and Justice (PiS) electorate and the Civic Platform (PO) voters have diametrically opposed views on a particular speech act. Moreover, the dividing line can be identified on the basis of sex, educational level or the level of income. Therefore, the analysis of how successful a particular act of securitisation is a separate and complex research question. Consequently, the researcher does not intend to conduct a descriptive analysis of how Russia is securitised in speech acts transmitted to the audience. Our main concern is with the potential impact of the memory of victimhood on the facilitation of the securitisation move and consequences of the transition of an issue to the domain of security policy.

In Poland, the President represent the country internationally. According to the provisions of Article 126 of the Polish Constitution, the President is “the supreme representative of the Republic of Poland and the guarantor of continuity of the State authority” (The Constitution of the Republic of Poland, 1997). It's the Prime Minister's duty to ensure the implementation of the policies adopted by the Council of Ministers. The Minister of Foreign Affairs is responsible for the foreign policy of the state as well as for abiding by the principles set out in the Polish Foreign Policy

Strategy. Therefore, these bodies are considered to be the actors responsible for setting the state security and foreign policy agenda.

However, as some researchers rightly point out (Williams, 2003; McDonald, 2008; Aras and Polat, 2008), the theory tend to limit security to speech acts simultaneously ignoring the social context. This research will contribute to the theory by taking into consideration the social context of securitisation. Importantly, we will proceed from the dual nature of the notion ‘social context’ as shaped by human action and interaction as well as material or objective reality (Zehfuss, 2002; Jung, 2019). Norms defining social structure both impose limitations on actors and are themselves formed by the interactions of those actors (Farrell, 2002). The author conceptualises norms as historically and socially constructed patterns but also legal frameworks formed by the laws of the Republic of Poland adopted at the state level as well as the European Union laws. This addition to the classical school is significant for understanding the framework in which political leaders in Poland can act in the conditions limited by legal constraints, social foundations and political tradition.

In this section, the author attempted to evince that with the existence of a vast body of literature on security studies, there is no straightforward or universal approach to what constitutes a threat, how national security is different from societal security, etc. The key terms and definitions used in line with the theoretical approach were presented with the purpose to reveal the core characteristics of the system and variables addressed in the work. Although we admit that the notions we deal with are not universally agreed upon, we rely on existing accounts of security studies.

In line with liberal constructivists, we claim that to identify how the image of an enemy has developed and been accepted in Polish society, one needs to compare and contrast the state of affairs in different time periods. Thus, securitisation is conceptualised as a threat design through the instrument of language that, under certain social conditions, leads to the acceptance by society and justification of the foreign policy strategy. Although the processes described as securitisation and desecuritisation are not linear and unambiguous, by analysing the response to the key events in the chosen time frame we will be able to trace the role played by the Russian threat in the national security policy of Poland.

2.2 Critical Remarks

Some of the aspects of the theory that according to the author require clarification and rectification have already been touched upon in the previous sections. The Copenhagen School’s original securitisation theory made a great contribution to the understanding and conceptualisation of

securitisation. The authors' ideas about the construction of a security issue, as opposed to normal politics, were developed more than 20 years ago and are still widely used as a theoretical framework in security studies. At the same time, many scholars admit the need for further modification of the concept (Floyd, 2011; Stritzel, 2014). I believe that a few aspects addressed below are going to be a useful addition to the original theory taking into account the changes in the international system accompanied by the development of the security studies during the years following Buzan, Waever and De Wilde's work entitled 'The Security: A New Framework for Analysis'.

First of all, what the classical securitisation theory tends to overlook is that a speech act targets the object presented as a threat as well. It is a warning to the aggressor and an expression of a will and readiness to act accordingly. Not only does it send a message to the securitisation object, but it also influences the way the dialogue develops. The backlash is based on the intersubjective interpretation of the language used by the securitising actor rather than the political decision themselves. In other words, we cannot interpret Lavrov's (2019) statements about Western hostility towards Russia and its history as an assessment of actual events. It can equally be perceived as an attempt to oppose the accusations of the West by creating own concept. Therefore, our first remark is that by the action of securitisation through language (oral or written) the subject changes the initial conditions by influencing the further decision-making process. The object of the securitisation speech in this case is expected to react to the presence of such discourse and the language used to access its actions.

Another aspect that the Copenhagen School is traditionally criticised for is a narrow understanding of speech acts. With the technological developments influencing all spheres of our life, one cannot ignore their impact on the way we consume information (Williams, 2003). In recent year this process has become more dynamic. However, from a methodological perspective, such data set analysis is particularly time-consuming and requires a high level of analytical skills from the researcher. It might be also considered that language, either way, remains a part of many other forms of addressing the audience. On the other hand, TV and the Internet are not only a way of transmitting information, but also a powerful source of constructing it through propaganda and government control. In Poland with a right-wing PiS in power, the media experiences growing political pressure (Schmitz, 2021).

Thirdly and most importantly, the original theory insists that securitisation occurs when exceptional policy measures are taken. These extraordinary conditions go beyond the rules that previously existed in politics. In practice, however, this view of security politics is not clearly conceptualised. Following the ideas of Floyd (2011), we put some constraints on this rather

nebulous notion of exceptional measures. First, securitisation does not equate to a chaotic state of affairs. It is still a part of the established order and overall framework within which the decision-making process takes place. However, it requires the mobilisation of exceptional measures, which were most likely laid down in the system itself and provided for by the norms regulating this policy. These exceptional measures are mainly understood as decision-makers' powers to call an emergency meeting on a particular matter, to identify a source of threat and reciprocal measures through their proclamation in new foreign and security policy strategies or formal declarations and to order mobilisation. Secondly, these responsive measures must be primarily aimed at addressing the object or a phenomenon identified as a threat. In this case, public opinion is mobilised in order to obtain support for further action in relation to this particular threat. Finally, securitisation is not viewed as contrary to cooperation. This issue was touched upon when referring to the theory of interdependency. Nevertheless, it is important to emphasise that neither cooperation refers to the situation of an absence of conflict nor conflict is defined as an absence of cooperation between the two parties. In fact, cooperation may serve as a response to long-term tensions in relations or a reaction to potential conflict (de Vries, 1990). In Polish-Russian relations, the period of the 2010s, addressed in the following chapter, can serve as an example of attempts to find a formal framework for dialogue against a background of controversies.

Therefore, our key assumptions about security are based on the principles developed by the Copenhagen School of securitisation. By admitting that securitisation is a political act and not a naturally given condition, we open a door for the discussion of its constitutive effects and construction tools at the disposal of actors responsible for the decision-making process. For an issue to become a threat to national security it should be articulated as such. However, any linguistic analysis must take into account the broader context (Stritzel, 2014), the legal framework, social foundations and political tradition.

Unlike the revision of the securitisation theory proposed by Floyd (2011), our critical remarks are compatible with the Copenhagen School and do not contradict the core ideas developed by the scholars. Nevertheless, we contribute to security studies by filling the voids related to the changing world order and reconciling a more critical constructivist position with more conventional approaches. Moreover, securitisation theory has traditionally focused on the conditions and the process of securitisation, while our research hypothesis is more concerned with the prerequisites of public agreement over it. The questions we ask are 'why this 'other' is viewed as a threat to Poland and in what way it shapes the acceptance of the foreign and defence policy by the Polish audience.

3. Literature review: Conflicting Views on Common Narratives

History is considered to be a relevant component of Polish-Russian dialogue at any level for the simple reason that mutually exclusive historical views impede the creation of a basis for rapprochement. Today's Polish-Russian relations are supposedly deeply rooted in the resentments and memories of history that the two countries shared (Samorukov, 2021). In the official rhetoric, there have been numerous cases of mutual accusations of false representation and deliberate disinformation related to historical episodes, some of which will be scrutinised below.

Following the arguments of Neumann (2002), we can state that memories of the past underpin the perception of Self and Others. Identity is a result of a layer of historical and cultural attributes; it is a non-linear process, which implies the creation and reformulation of constructs associated with one's own past as well as with other actors involved in the interaction. Barth (1969) agrees that identity is created where there is a clear distinction between Self and Other. Memory studies went one step further claiming that memories of the past are patterns that can be constructed and utilised by the political elites (Müller, 2002). Indeed, even addressing the questions of modernisation of defence capabilities in the face of various threats, Polish Minister of National Defence Antoni Macierewicz refers to traditions rooted in the past glory of the national army: "Being faithful to the memory of the heroes of the past, supported by experience and reflection, we are creating another chapter of this history" (Ministry of National Defence, 2017, p. 8).

One might consider that the history of relations between the Polish and the Russian nations and the open conflict of 2014 predetermined the current level of securitisation of Russia. However, there are some aspects that need to be taken into consideration. Notably, historical and territorial issues in Polish-Ukrainian relations faded into the background in the face of a major challenge. What could have been turned into a narrative of historic injustices, did not play a decisive role in bilateral relations these states. In the case of Polish-Russian relations, memory overbalanced the advantages of cooperation. Another analogy could be drawn with Belarus. Despite tense relations on the state level and accusations of the Lukashenko's regime in authoritarianism and violation of human rights and freedoms, including the rights of Polish minorities in Belarus, Poland does not oppose itself to Belarus or securitise it the same way as Russia was securitised, which is also reflected in Polish public opinion about Belarus (The Centre for Polish-Russian Dialogue and Understanding, 2020a). Undoubtedly, Russia's military capabilities played a highly important role. However, the lack of incentives for cooperation and external conditions determined by the membership of countries in different alliances cannot be ignored. In terms of economic and trade relations, the two sides did not see each other as key partners. The imposition of an embargo on Polish food products was one of the indicatives of obviously tense relations on the highest level.

Nevertheless, high-level meetings did not cease by sending mixed signals to the public. Another achievement was related to the creation of the Centre for Polish-Russian Dialogue and Understanding in 2011, which is a legal body supervised by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage of the Republic of Poland.

3.1 Historical Context

Despite cultural and geographical proximity, the distant past is considered to be a stronger variable driving the sides apart (Zabielska 2020). The unwillingness of the Russian officials to admit the secret protocol to the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact and the subsequent tragic events related to World War II as erroneous and catastrophic (Samorukov, 2021) cast a shadow over bilateral political dialogue. For the Russian people, the Soviet victory is one of the key elements of national identity associated with great-power status, meanwhile, the Polish historical narrative is dominated by the idea of victimhood. According to the IPSOS survey conducted in 2019 in Poland, 74% of all the respondents stated that their nation has suffered more than other nations. Only one in twenty-five Poles answered that the Polish nation did not experience more evil and suffering in their history than other nations (Sitnicka, 2019).

Polish-American historian, Yale University professor Piotr Wandycz believed that it is through understanding the past that the future is constructed (Luehrs, 1993). Undoubtedly, we as individuals have limited knowledge of the factual events, which facilitates disinformation and misinterpretation of historical events by media as well as by political leaders. Therefore, our individual memory of political events is conditioned by several factors including social and political conditions, education, the choice of primary sources of information and trust in media. Despite the fact that individual memories form the mosaic of collective memory, the latter is a result of multifaceted processes. In ‘Memory and Power in Post-War Europe: Studies in the Presence of the Past’ Timothy Snyder suggests two main types of collective memory. The first one is made of cumulative individual memories of those who have personal experience or relation to the events. The author calls it ‘mass personal memory’. The second type forms the basis of national history. It is usually less vivid but dependent to a greater extent on current political and social demands. This national memory can be easily reshaped or manipulated (Snyder, 2002). Therefore, one of our primary concerns is with the type of memory we deal with and the extent to which it can be reshaped and tied to the present political discourse.

Distant past. What we refer to as the distant past is several centuries of relations between the two nations before the Second World War. These relationships are important from the point of view of a detailed perception of history, but they are generally given less attention in today's political

discourse (Centre for Polish-Russian Dialogue and Understanding, 2020b; Centre for Polish-Russian Dialogue and Understanding, 2020b; Chucherko, 2011). For instance, according to Levada Center, an independent polling centre based in Russia, more than 40 per cent of the Russian population have not heard about the partitions of Poland (The Centre for Polish-Russian Dialogue and Understanding, 2020b). It is both an outcome of selective perception of historical events and a result of memory construction practices.

One of the most hotly debated topics among European scholars is if the Kievan Rus can be considered a beginning of a Russian state. While it is widely discussed in Poland and Ukraine (Nowak, 1997), it remains within the limits of scientific circles and rarely triggers the broad masses.

Despite the fact that Russian Orthodoxy took roots in the Byzantine Church and the Polish Catholic Church – in Rome, it did not cease the relatively peaceful coexistence of Kievan Rus and Poland. During the period of the Polish union with Lithuania, relations were developing more actively in a form of rivalry for dominance in the region. Today Russia celebrates National Unity Day to commemorate the uprising against Polish–Lithuanian occupation forces in 1612. According to the Russian "Public Opinion" Foundation (RU: Фонд «Общественное мнение») face-to-face survey results, 50% of the respondents do not consider it an important holiday for them personally (FOM, 2021).

The growing political and military influence of the Russian Empire was accompanied by the extension of political control. As a result of three partitions by Austria, Russia and Prussia at the end of the 18th century, Poland lost its sovereignty for more than one hundred years. The Kościuszko Uprising, although failed, had a great influence on Polish political ideas and the will to restore independence. The subsequent national independence movements are seen in Russia as harmful to the modernisation of the Russian state (Nowak, 1997). Eventually under the Russian influence and reign Poles would not gain full independence until 1918. With the collapse of the Russian Empire, Polish independence was regained.

WWII, the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. It was the secret protocol of the Treaty of Non-Aggression between Germany and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics that has been hotly contested for decades. While the Soviet Union and then Russia treated it as a necessary measure for self-defence, in the Western literature it is widely criticised (Müller, 2002; Benn, 2011). The pact was condemned by the Organisation for Security and Cooperation as a part of a resolution blaming both Stalinism and Nazism for unleashing the Second World War (Shuster, 2009). Russian President Vladimir Putin (2020) in his article published in the National Interest magazine begins

by accusing Poland (along with Germany) of the partitioning of Czechoslovakia and continues by putting the burden of the events following the signing of the protocol on the Polish leadership.

For Poland, the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact became an agreement of the fourth partition of Poland (Müller, 2002). In line with the same logic, what the Russian President calls the “process of incorporation of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia” (Putin, 2020) in 1939, for Polish authors is an act of invasion (Kornat, 2020). As far as Polish public opinion is concerned, the picture is rather unambiguous: the entrance of the Red Army to the Polish soil is considered to be a result of a plan for the division of the country agreed by Germany and the USSR by 60 per cent of people (CBOS, 2009).

The controversies over this historical period became one of the reasons why Putin was not present at the Auschwitz commemoration events in 2015 and 2020. In Russian historiography, this period is less unambiguous, which is also proved by the results of surveys. When asked about the states responsible for the outbreak of the Second World War, Germany is mentioned by more than 80 per cent of Russian people, UK – by 21%. Less respondents accuse the USSR and the USA. One in ten respondents points to Poland (The Centre for Polish-Russian Dialogue and Understanding, 2020b).

It is argued that the historical realities of that time created unfavourable conditions for the Soviet Union. It is noted that unsuccessful attempts of working out a framework for cooperation with Britain and France pushed the USSR to approach Germany (Benn, 2011). Among the most controversial arguments one could mention the irrelevance of the secret protocol provisions to the more significant priorities of the Soviet diplomacy. By describing it as a solely moral issue, the authors diminish the importance of the subsequent tragic events (Ministersvo Oborony Rossiyskoy Federacii, 2012). Historian David Katz blames the far-right political elites of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Ukraine and Poland for ignoring the contribution and the great role of the Soviet Union in the victory interpreting it as sympathy for Nazism strengthened by their membership in NATO. In fact, the alliance is widely criticised by Russian scholars as an organisation putting pressure on Russia and approaching its borders similarly to Nazi Germany (RISI, 2010).

WWII, the Katyn massacre. Katyn is one of the most bitter memories in the relations of the two nations. Russia avoids admitting Soviet responsibility for a war crime of mass murder. In the Russian language sources, it is an episode of abuse of power typical of the Stalinist regime, which is often contraposed to the liberation of Europe by the Red Army. Cases related to the death of Soviet soldiers in Polish prison camps during the Polish-Soviet war are also brought in as an argument. The efforts of the government aimed at promoting the official rhetoric turned out to be

‘fruitful’. According to the public opinion polls, slightly less than half of the respondents have never heard of the Katyn massacre and 43% of those who knew about it consider that it was organised by Germany (The Centre for Polish-Russian Dialogue and Understanding, 2020b). On the other hand, it should be mentioned that in 2010 a declaration condemning Stalin and other people involved was approved by the State Duma.

In Poland the mass execution of almost 22 thousand of Polish prisoners (Chucherko, 2011) is one of the most sensitive historical issues related to the Second World War. Today it can hardly be separated from the Polish national identity.

Rolf Fredheim, however, approaches the issue from a different perspective. By doing a research into mobilisation of Katyn memory by the Law and Justice (PL: Prawo i Sprawiedliwość – PiS) party, he demonstrates how historical events are tied to domestic identity conflicts. Katyn was mobilised by PiS, an opposition party at that time, to gain public support in criticising the Civic Platform (PL: Platforma Obywatelska—PO) for not serving the Polish national interests. According to Fredheim’s analysis, the rhetoric on Russia tends to toughen during the electoral campaign. And usually it is the opposition forces who promote such issues and thus push the ruling elites to take drastic measures (Fredheim, 2014).

The Law and Justice party built its rhetoric on the memory of the events to justify its position toward Russia to the domestic audience rather than increase hostility toward a particular group or a nation. Indeed, political elites have the power to shape common identity in a particular direction by bringing particular events to the forefront. Based on the analysis of political speeches, statements and articles, Rolf Fredheim in his work about the memory of Katyn in Polish political discourse states that the debate on Katyn memory is more likely to be intensified at times of difficult relations with Russia, “suggesting that elites calculate that if relations are bad, hostile rhetoric will not have external costs but may come with domestic gains” (Fredheim, 2014, p. 1184).

Communist past. Mass deportations and Katyn could not go unnoticed despite the Soviet attempts of withholding facts. The memory of these events is still vivid in Polish society. Thus, according to the data collected by the CBOS Public Opinion Research Center in 2009, communism and fascism are perceived as equally harmful by about 60% of Poles (CBOS, 2009). In parallel, the regime has contributed to the growth of a sense of national identity in Poland but also superiority over other eastern neighbours due to the existence of more progressive views on the economic and political course of the state (Zajac, 2016).

Although with the Warsaw Pact agreement in 1955 Poland definitively joined the Eastern bloc politically and militarily, the anti-communist resistance has become part of the expression of the

will of People for several decades. During the period of the Cold War Poland became “one of the key elements of the Soviet-led Eastern Bloc” (Zięba, 2019, p.2). Needless to mention that the Polish nation played a leading role in bringing political transformations to communist regimes in Europe and beyond. In contrast to the communist period of Polish history, *Solidarność* or the Solidarity movement embodies the aspirations of the Polish people for free and independent development.

Smolensk plane crash. Another milestone in bilateral relations is related to the crash of at that time president of Poland, Lech Kaczyński, and other 95 people including Polish high-ranking officials in 2010 in Smolensk.

Here we observe how the second type of memory proposed by Snyder gave a new direction to the development of relations. Moreover, it became one of the most mythologised and knotty episodes in the relations of the states (Janke, 2020). From that time on any tension between the two states on the political arena was accompanied by allegations of a planned assassination. Not only did it impact the views on Russia in Poland, but it also led to mistrust and discredit of the leading Civic Platform.

Therefore, history became part of the political agenda, however, public opinion on some of the events is very divided (especially in Russia), which can be explained by a lack of confidence in the official rhetoric or simply a lack of sufficient knowledge and information. By making a reference to the key historical events that are still on the agenda, we disclose the link to the public opinion formation. At this stage, othering is strengthened by referring to historical injustices and their interpretation by the two sides. The narratives of Russia and Poland seem to be the most incomplicit when turning back to the Second World War presumably due to the central role of the events in the national identity formation.

Indeed, one can notice that political elites have the power to shape common identity in a particular direction by bringing particular events to the forefront to justify irrational political decisions priorities or hostile foreign policy. Grudziński (2008, p.85) formulates it this way: “Przeszłość przechodzi przez filtr zapatrywań tych, którzy się na nią powołują” (The past passes through the filter of views of those who comment on it).

3.2 External Factors in the Narrative Construction

Another aspect of memory affecting internal discourse is traced through external factors' determination. Systematising the literature on external factors, the author divided the main external triggers into logical parts. It is worth noting, however, that this division is primarily aimed at trying

to identify whether any of the main external factors are decisive in the process of securitisation for our case study.

On the one hand, following the arguments of Ryszard Zięba, a Polish political scientist and a professor at the University of Warsaw, one might claim that Polish foreign policy is highly dependent on the “surrounding international order” (Zięba, 2019, p.7), which is one of the characteristics of medium-sized states, differentiated from other categories by power and economic potential, self-identification, territory and other features. On the other hand, the same author insists that Poland is not a typical example of a medium-rank country due to the radical and more vocal stance on Russia, a militarily more powerful neighbour. Against this backdrop of the Ukrainian crisis, it actively supported the anti-Russian policy but it is far from being the only period in relation characterised by mutual hostility.

We cannot discount the role of internal political processes in anti-Russian shifts. Unlike the previous forces in power, the coalition government of the Civic Platform (PO) and the Polish People's Party (PSL) formed in 2007 demonstrated an openness to a dialogue with Moscow (Chucherko 2011). The right-wing and nationalist political forces' stance on Russia is explained by their concern about economic independence and state security within the NATO block, which are placed at the heart of their political campaign. Nevertheless, Przemysław Grudziński, a Polish diplomat and an ambassador of Poland to the USA from 2000 to 2005, voices his concern over such a limited understanding of national interests. Poland's success in the international arena lies in the incorporation of its interests into the common interests of the blocs of which it is a part as a counterbalance to the isolationist policy (Grudziński, 2008).

Another important conclusion related to the role of Poland is its mediation possibility. By being an economic and political intermediary instead of neglecting its own economic and trade interests, Poland may strengthen its position by playing a stabilising role in the international system and achieve significant profits. The power medium-sized states wield lies in providing a notional system of checks and balances to limit the autocracy of the great players. The patterns that determine social, economic and political framework can be defined as norms. Those norms both impose limitations on actors and are themselves formed by the interactions of those actors (Farrell 2002). In the case of Poland, its historical and cultural features and its geopolitical role increase the potential for “acting as an intermediary between Europe and Russia, between Europe and the United States” (Grudziński, 2008, p.69).

Finally, we revert to one of the most important concepts that we touch upon in this work – self-identification through the distinction between Self and Others. National self-awareness similarly

to an individual's self-perception is inextricably linked to differentiation from the Other in order to separate the inside from the outside. Furthermore, identity is not a fixed construct; it is a reflexive process of self-definition projected onto other actors in the international arena. For Poland, the question of preserving its national identity was especially crucial during periods when a sovereign state was absent. Indeed, the question of self-awareness remains a complex one.

This section is devoted to the external factors that create the context for securitisation. Below we aim to identify some of the most pressing issues that form the environment, which impacts the mutual perception of the two nations.

The United States. The US by being the most influential external actor plays a key role in regional security through the mechanisms of NATO and bilateral agreements with Poland, Russia and other Eastern and Central European states. America has long enjoyed a hegemonic power, which could not but impact the configuration of power in the region (Zajac, 2016). Without going as far back as the 1999 Kosovo War, which undoubtedly became a defining point for Russia in building its discourse on NATO, let us point out the factors that influenced the US presence and role in the region.

The terrorist attacks in 2001 had a significant impact on global security and power balance in the subsequent years. 9/11 brought Poland and the US closer in the sphere of military cooperation. Polish involvement in the wars in Afghanistan and later in Iraq got public support back home. According to Szostkiewicz (2011), this wave of support and solidarity with the American foreign policy did not last long and was replaced with contradicting feelings over the rise of radical forces and nationalist parties in different parts of the world. Polish support for the Washington policy was clearly expressed in the creation of an American secret prison for terrorist suspects on the Polish soil, the existence of which was confirmed by the Human Rights Watch and the Council of Europe (Zajac, 2016).

After 9/11, US-Russian ties strengthened giving hope for a strategic partnership between the two countries. Tensions, however, did not fade away. The US disagreed with Russia over the future of Georgia, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan after the colour revolutions in these countries in 2003, 2004 and 2005 respectively.

The Russo-Georgian war of 2008 became a critical point in relations between the West and Russia. The invasion was preceded by the 20th NATO Summit where Georgia and Ukraine's membership in the alliance was discussed. On the same day when the Russian president announces that the goal in Georgia has been achieved, President Kaczyński accuses Russia of imperialist ambitions in his speech in Tbilisi. He directly linked the events to Moscow's anticipated ambitions in other

neighbouring regions: “Today Georgia, tomorrow Ukraine, the day after tomorrow – the Baltic States and later, perhaps, time will come for my country, Poland” (TVP World, 2018). After the invasion NATO increased its naval presence in the Black Sea. Russia once again demonstrated its sensitivity to any attempts of the alliance to expand to its borders.

A new phase in US-Russian relations was launched by President Obama and President Medvedev. With the improvement of diplomatic relations, cooperation in various fields from counterterrorism to IT has intensified. In the summer of 2009, Barack Obama gives a speech in Moscow expressing hope for finding common ground to overcome controversies. The decision of the American president not to place the elements of nuclear shield in Poland did not cause much indignation on the part of Polish society despite the dissatisfaction of the opposition. The data collected by the CBOS Public Opinion Research Center (2009) shows that less than 20% would treat the outcome as a failure of the Polish government.

President Putin was present in Gdansk to mark the 70th anniversary of the beginning of WWII, where he condemned the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact because of its moral dimension and dangerous consequences for the world. The Red Square Victory Day Parade of 2010 commemorating the 65th anniversary of the end of the Second World War was remarkable for the fact that NATO member states (the United Kingdom, France, Poland and the United States of America) were represented.

The Arab Spring brought new challenges to relations. The US was responsible for the overthrow of the Libyan regime and, contrary to the Kremlin, supported the opposition forces in Syria. However, the lowest level of trust after the Cold War was reached with the Ukrainian crisis.

Among the events impacting the deterioration of US-Russia relations, the American side would mention the invasion of Georgia, the Ukrainian crisis and the annexation of Crimea, alleged violation of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, support for the Assad regime in Syria, alleged interference with the American presidential elections in 2016, poisoning of Sergei Skripal and his daughter. For decades the relationship rocked from side to side, almost reaching the point of no return after the invasion of Ukraine in 2014 (Janke, 2020).

The Eastern Partnership and the EU. A number of political decisions related to the westernisation of Poland in the early 21st century, including active engagement in NATO operations, EU membership and promotion of the Eastern Partnership have been to varying degrees regarded by the Russian political elites as an antagonistic policy.

It is evident that Poland is one of the strongest advocates of Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine and other post-Soviet states’ integration into the western structures. Moving the alliance border further to

the east from Poland was among the benefits of Ukraine's accession to NATO. Regardless of the fact that the perspective of EU membership was vague for the states, the EU European Neighborhood Policy provided the basis for modernisation and economic reforms. The Eastern Partnership could serve as a regional stabilisation mechanism. It was launched to bring economic and political stability to a highly volatile region at the same time allowing these states to spiral out of their powerful neighbour's control. Although Russia's reaction to the project was initially quite modest, Moscow had no intention of losing its influence in the region.

Stability in the region was understood differently by the Russian side and its key western partners. What used to be described as "frozen conflicts" became a defining factor in the relations of states in the post-Soviet region. Those conflicts, which regularly escalate into military clashes or even full-fledged warfare, endanger the European concept of peaceful development. At the same time, the EU members as well as the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe initially took a very reserved position with regard to interference in their solution. Russia's role as a guarantor of peace in the region was tacitly accepted until the climax was reached in 2014 (Legucka and Włodkowska, 2021). Russia sees the long-lasting conflicts in Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Transnistria, Nagorno-Karabakh and Donbas as a bargaining chip to increase its political influence and military presence in the region. Therefore, the EU relies on soft power tools and economic integration with the Eastern Partnership countries, while Russia sticks to its hard power.

Another significant dimension in relations between the EU and Russia is energy security. In 2020, Russia was providing about 30% of crude oil coming from outside the EU. Dependence on Russia as a leading oil and gas supplier has long been a hot topic of discussion within European bodies, especially since 2014. From the very beginning, the German–Russian energy cooperation on the Nord-Stream pipeline was met with scepticism by Polish political elites. There were even attempts to draw a parallel with the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact (Zajac, 2016).

Poland, being worried about its own energy security, was particularly interested in diversification. However, the prospects of extracting Polish shale gas seem to be unclear (Johnson and Boersma, 2013). Despite controversies over regional security and conflicts in neighbouring states, both Russia and EU members remain interested in preserving the current state of affairs when it comes to energy cooperation.

The Ukrainian issue. Interestingly, the concept of othering is inextricably linked to the possession of material or ideological power over the other. It can be said that Central European states used to demonstrate inferiority in relations with Western Europe, at the same time feeling superior over

their eastern neighbours. In the Polish case this developed into paternalistic behaviour in relation to Ukraine and Belarus.

The mediating role of the Polish president during the Orange revolution of 2004-2005 and then the Polish support for a pro-Western candidate in 2014 has been subjected to criticism by Moscow. They were seen as an attempt to undermine Russia's authority in the region. With the beginning of the Russian invasion in Ukraine, Polish Prime Minister D. Tusk provided a response plan, including sanctions against Russia and financial assistance to Ukraine. Poland as well as other EU members recognised neither the results of the Crimean referendum and nor Crimea as a part of Russia. Further tightening of Poland's foreign policy was associated with the change of power in Poland rather than external situation. By 2021 Poland became the second-largest trading partner and one of the main investors to Ukrainian companies (Balcer, 2021). Reflecting on Polish-Russian relations a Polish sociologist and the former Ambassador of Poland to Russia Katarzyna Pełczyńska-Nałęcz described the state of affairs before the annexation of Crimea as “a golden age” (Pełczyńska-Nałęcz, 2015, p. 540) of bilateral relations notwithstanding the tensions that have traditionally accompanied the high-level negotiations.

The Ukrainian conflict provoked a sharp reaction from the West. However, with time these measures have been criticised and considered insufficient or meaningless in terms of increasing European security and stability. Poland's position on Russia's actions did not undergo significant changes and, was pretty vocal even among other European states. The same cannot be said about the attitude to building own security system and taking response measures. These questions were approached differently by different political forces in power and were more susceptible to internal demands.

With a thaw in US-Russian relations in 2001 and then 2009, Poland followed the same path of finding a common ground for cooperation. In general, Polish leaders seem to be more tolerant to the thaw in Washington-Moscow relations than to energy ties of Moscow and Berlin. In case of the latter, the memory of historical injustices combined with a vulnerable geographic position supposedly create a need for prioritising own energy security in the face of potentially more powerful neighbours.

The European Union–Ukraine Association Agreement of 2014 ratified following the revolution in Ukraine is an example of gains and benefits distribution, which are considered to be characteristics of negative interdependence. It was negatively perceived by Russia, which was expecting to see its trade partner joining the Union of Russia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan. Meanwhile, not only did Poland welcome the signing of the agreement, but it also actively supported Ukraine's aspirations

for further integration. The Joint Declaration on the European perspective of Ukraine (President.pl 2021) states that Poland treats the Association Agreement as preparation for the integration of Ukraine with the European Union.

Finally yet importantly, historical review presented in the chapter suggests that countries bordering Russia have lived with a memory of complicated bilateral relations with Russia, which traditionally relies on hard power tools in its foreign policy. These sensitive issues primarily related to the memories of the WWII and the communist past can hardly be separated from the present due to their role in national identity formation. However, one should not disregard the role of political developments within the Polish state. This conclusion is also valid for assessing the role of external factors. The Ukrainian crisis and the annexation of Crimea of 2014 are identified as an antecedent variable magnifying the process of securitisation. The event is reflected in the time frame of the analysis. Although the events of 2014 undoubtedly play a key role in building the image of Russia as a key external threat, securitisation was not formulated automatically on the basis of the very development of events in Ukraine but passed a certain stage of acceptance by the Polish society.

4. Methodology and Research Design

This thesis is designed as theory-driven explanatory research. The author aims to investigate securitisation as a phenomenon applied to a particular case of Polish perception of the Russian threat. Despite the fact that Polish-Russian relations have been repeatedly studied, the approach to them has been predominantly positivist. Hence, the phenomenon has not been explored well enough to understand it from a constructivist perspective taking into account the social context and the rhetoric that accompanies threat construction. The idea behind the work is to help understand the phenomenon of securitisation in a single case study form.

The author finds a single case study suitable to the aim and hypothesis identified. It provides a stronger basis for identifying causal inferences with fewer resources. The case study chosen is of particular interest as the relationship between the two actors has long been addressed from a neorealist perspective disregarding the presence of victimhood as a part of Polish national identity. The view of Russia as an enduring threat in spite of the existence of constructive dialogue questions the classical understanding of state security. This work contributes to the existing research on Poland's resistance to Russian extending understanding of own national interests by referring to the concept of othering. As it has been previously mentioned, for Central European states self-identification largely depends on how they counterpose themselves to their neighbours. However, public opinion polls show that this othering of the neighbour nations has significant differences in Eastern and Central European states, with Poland being one of the most vocal opponents of any potential increase in Russian dominance in the region. We assume that othering, which finds its origin in historical memory, can be involved in a causal relationship with the acceptance of securitisation by Polish society.

When it comes to methodology, the sphere of security studies is considered to be highly pluralistic. Securitisation theory itself was built on the ideas closely affiliated with the speech act theory, social constructivism and even political realism. It incorporates a wide range of sociological methodological approaches. Balzacq et al. (2016) admit the methodological ambiguity when it comes to capturing the processes of threat construction. The scholars warn against using an approach based on the author's own subjective preferences and expertise. Based on the foregoing, what we as researchers seek to achieve while choosing a methodological approach is not objectivity, but relevance. If the approach was chosen taking into account the aims of the study, it might be considered appropriate to the case under consideration.

Traditionally the securitisation theory was mainly used to address the securitisation process and, therefore, discourse analysis remained a dominant method regardless of its normative and value-

driven nature (Wodak, Meyer, 2009). Today scholars are more inclined to the use of a broader range of approaches including process tracing. It is, in fact, an umbrella term referring to a range of practices applied for the systematic description of political and social phenomena required to evaluate the hypothesis (Collier, 2011). By making use of a number of primary and secondary sources, the investigator seeks to trace the connections between the events and processes under study. Mahoney proposes to examine the possible outcomes of the case chosen by considering four questions: “Did the outcome to be explained actually occur?.. Did the causal factors hypothesised to explain this outcome actually occur?.. Did the posited cause(s) actually cause the outcome?.. How are rival hypotheses eliminated?” (Mahoney, 2012, pp. 588-589). When testing the hypothesis of the dissertation, these questions will serve as an important guideline.

4.1 Methodological Overview

By applying the theoretical lenses chosen, the author analyses the case of securitisation of Russia in Poland. The interdisciplinary nature of the topic requires going beyond one's own discipline of security research and infiltrating other areas to establish connections between them, which increases the potential of scientific knowledge. By excluding the superiority of any research method, we come up with methodological pluralism (Barker and Pistrang, 2005). Qualitative methods are used by the author to test the assumption made in the hypothesis. The work widely uses methods of analysis of statistical data collected over time, theoretical literature and other materials in the field of security policy and memory analysis.

Deriving from the hypothesis identified, we expect to explore the reason behind general agreement over the acceptance of the securitisation move and then to see how it impacts Polish foreign and security policy agenda. The author assumes that public agreement over the increase of the military budget and intensive NATO cooperation demonstrates that changes in the structure of national budget in favour of an increase in defence capabilities can be easily applied in case the audience is convinced in the necessity to protect against an external threat.

Securitisation is operationalised through the language and rhetoric used in official statements and documents such as the National Security Strategies. In the hypothesis, the author refers to historical memory as a prerequisite for threat acceptance. For the victimhood analysis in the framework of memory studies, we turn to the key events in bilateral relations that form the basis of today's mutual perception. The author provides a comprehensive review of the literature on the historical background and memory construction in the Polish case. Combining public opinion survey results along with memory (Snyder, 2002) analysis, the impact of historic memory on the audience's choices will be revealed.

Discourse analysis elements are used to assess language used in relation to external threats. Discourse analysis is crucial to our study as it helps to uncover the sociolinguistic context (Cheng 2009). Document analysis of the three last National Security Strategies of the Republic of Poland (2007, 2014, 2020) and the Polish Foreign Policy Strategy are believed to complement the research into securitisation move significantly. The National Security Strategy is approved by the President of the state after being presented by the Prime Minister. To initiate the work on the 2014 National Security Strategy, a special Interdepartmental Group for the Development of the National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland was established. When it comes to the Polish Foreign Policy Strategy for 2017-2021, it required the approval by the Council of Ministers but is a result of the work conducted by the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

In addition to displaying the context of some of the words and concepts used, a comparative study of the language used in the strategic documents may bring clarity to the changes in the official rhetoric depending on the forces in power. The language barrier and other limitations to the research will be highlighted in the final part of the chapter. As the study of the process of securitisation of Russia itself is beyond the scope of the research, the author does not have to resort to linguistic analysis as a method of studying speech acts. In other words, the aspects of threat stimulus and its management prevail over the study of the process of threat design.

The level of analysis is another aspect inextricably linked to the operationalisation of our variables. Undoubtedly, political analysis can go as far as the individual level and bioanalysis. Due to the fact that we are interested in state security policy, our primary interest is with the states. Successful securitisation, however, requires a response from the audience. This type of state-society interaction means that society is another unit, which has the responsibility and power to act. Society is addressed in the analysis of public opinion polls and is understood as a group of people of different age, gender and education residing in Poland.

The choice of the topic was, among others, driven by the idea of revealing how the prospects of cooperation are perceived by Poles in the background of securitisation. The relevance of an issue for a society opens up a door for discussions about dealing with it using exceptional measures envisaged by the existing norms and traditions. At the heart of this lies the idea that people are believed to have a significant influence on decision-making. Hence, policymakers in democratic entities are not supposed to decide against the majority (Risse-Kappen, 1991).

4.2 Secondary Data Collection

Our mixed method research incorporates both qualitative analysis and research into quantitative secondary data as the hypothesis requires measuring public opinion on the threat identified and

proclaimed by the government and public support for Poland's active engagement in NATO. For this reason, our main indicators are public opinion survey results on support for NATO membership and increased or maintained defence spending in the Alliance. The author will additionally utilise the data on global military build-up trends provided by the Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC) along with the Stockholm Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). This serves the purpose of putting the Polish case in the general context.

Surveys conducted by the Levada Center, Pew Research Center, ARC Rynek i Opinia, CBOS ([PL] Centrum Badania Opinii Społecznej) and GLOBSEC are applied to assess how the audience accepts or refuses the implementation of security policy measures. Due to the insufficiency and incompleteness of the data over time collected by one institution, and in order to increase the credibility of the results, the author considered the possibility of working with several reliable sources of information. By analysing public opinion, we expect to observe general trends and see how relevant a particular question for society is. The point is that people are believed to have a significant influence on decision-making for the simple reason that policymakers in liberal democracies are not supposed to decide against the majority (Risse-Kappen, 1991). That is why survey analysis will become an important addition to the research into the securitisation of Russia. Although public opinion is an expression of many individuals' opinions, it is a complex phenomenon rather than just a sum of these opinions due to the fact that society as a separate unit puts pressure on the mind of an individual (Gunnell, 2011). At the same time, public opinion itself is dependent on organised groups, political and media elites (Paletz, Owen and Cook, 2011).

Assessment of public opinion is based on the data collected by a number of credible organisations. A detailed survey on Polish-Russian relations was conducted by the ARC Rynek i Opinia, the results of which were published by the Centre for Polish-Russian Dialogue and Understanding. The 2020 survey was carried out on a basis of a sample of about one thousand Poles. Their sex, age and residential area were taken into account to provide a coherent picture.

Pew Research Center is an American neutral nonprofit fact tank. Its surveys are either face-to-face or via phone. It has been conducting studies of views on NATO since 2007. In case of Central and Eastern European states, including Poland, Russia and Ukraine, these were face-to-face surveys. In Poland, about 1,500 individuals aged 18 years and over were selected using computer randomisation of all people living in the household. The survey questionnaire is available and the response options on questions requiring expressing an attitude to the issue raised included the following: very favourable, somewhat favourable, somewhat unfavourable, very unfavourable, do not know or refuse to answer.

Another organisation that examines the issues of war, peace and stability in Europe is GLOBSEC. It is a non-governmental think-tank based in Bratislava, and most of its surveys are based on a 1000 respondents sample taking into consideration characteristics such as gender or sex, education, residence area and settlement size. The method that the organisation uses is stratified multistage random sampling, when the population is divided into clusters and then further divided into smaller groups to finally reach ultimate sampling strata.

The Centre for Public Opinion Research (Centrum Badania Opinii Społecznej) is an independent Polish institution examining Polish public opinion since 1982 that contributed greatly to our research. Most of their surveys are conducted on a nationally representative random sample of 1,000 or 1,500 people aged 18 or over. The territory of the country was divided into 12 macroregions with each of them being further split into 4 areas based on social, economic and historical peculiarities. Thus, multistage sampling was applied. The method that the centre relies on is face-to-face interviews with the assistance of a computer, which is used in order to display the questions and select answers.

4.3 Research Limitations

In addition to outlining the research design, I admit the necessity of acknowledging the methodological limitations in the research paper. Firstly, the use of secondary data assumes that the author might deal with an issue of sample bias without being able to clearly identify its presence. Although trustworthy sources were chosen by the author, the lack of access to the geographic scope and other characteristics of participants constitutes a limitation.

Despite the significance of survey results for political and social analysis, it should be noted that attitudes may widely differ depending on age, social and material status, and other indicators. Moreover, sampling error and bias are a part of public opinion polls whether their impact is insignificant or tangible. Finally, the choice and wording of the survey questions tend to put certain limits not allowing the respondents to develop their thoughts. One example given by Berinsky (2017) is questions related to the changes in the structure of a state budget. It is likely that people will be asked about their relative preferences (should the spending on a particular sphere increase or decrease) rather than given a chance to express their views through open-ended questions.

Secondly, time constraints and linguistic limitations prevented the author from applying a full-fledged discourse analysis to observe the process of securitisation. However, this does not directly interfere with the hypothesis of the research as the work does not aim to test the presence of securitisation language of Russia as such. Another barrier to linguistic analysis occurs due to the fact the author predominantly works with translated official sources. Although most of the

documents related to the case study are official English versions of the strategies presented, the author also attempted to refer to Polish literature on bilateral relations and Polish version of the documents under analysis. Having experience of working with Russian and English texts, the author also applies her modest knowledge of Polish to verify contextual features.

Finally, the author admits the possibility of personal bias related to the fact that she was born and raised in Russia, one of the countries the study deals with. At the same time, versatile educational background, which encourages a broader view of global processes and contributes to work with the monographs of Russian scholars, may be regarded as a potential advantage.

5. Case Analysis

The case study allows an in-depth exploration of theoretical assumptions by applying them to a distinct context. In our understanding, an in-depth analysis requires multiple sources of data. The first part of the chapter deals with document analysis to trace how Russia is securitised through the language used in official documents. To be able to appeal to the phenomena under study as securitisation, one needs to use descriptive and interpretative tools to complement literature review on Polish securitisation of Russia. Critical discourse analysis that includes text description and interpretation is carried out in view of the presented historical and social context. The second part deals with the acceptance of securitisation move by society, which empowers the decision-making bodies to deal with a threat identified by shifting the focus of foreign and defence strategies prioritising a particular issue. Opinion poll results are mobilised to provide an overview of attitudes towards the Russian threat and the role of NATO as a security guarantor in response to potential threat coming from the eastern neighbour.

Security is a complex term that cannot be defined as the absence of war and military threats. It incorporates various political, cultural, social, economic and environmental elements. Own security just like own identity is not formed in isolation from the international order and roles attributed to other actors. This idea lies behind the concept of friends and enemies in politics developed by Carl Schmitt (Petrović, 2009). For Buzan (in Alvarez, 2006), security is a political process. The Copenhagen School's theoreticians are interested in this process of the transition from normal politics to a security dimension when exceptional measures are treated as reasonable. The facilitation is not possible without a linguistic act or proclamation by political actors, who take responsibility and power to act (Buzan et al., 1998).

When it comes to decision-making actors, we refer to the basic law of the country to deduce the core subjects of securitisation call. According to the Polish Constitution, the President is responsible for maintaining the sovereignty and security of the State. Together with the Prime Minister and the minister of foreign affairs they take responsibility and hold decisive power over foreign policy issues. The President of the Republic of Poland approves the National security strategy and issues the Political and Strategic Defence Directive (The Constitution of the Republic of Poland, 1997).

5.1 NATO factor in the Polish security policy

The National Security Strategy is supposedly the most important document devoted to the security policy of the country. The document is aimed at presenting the interest and objectives of Poland in accordance to the principles of NATO and the EU, of which Poland is a member since 1999 and

2004 respectively. Appendix A represents an appeal to the key dimensions of the Polish security policy. The comparative analysis of the three last National Security Strategies of the Republic of Poland (2007, 2014, 2020) allows tracing the securitisation language in relation to external threats. We can see that the Russian threat was not formed overnight, but became a result of the growing fear of instability and unpredictability of Russia's foreign policy course.

According to the National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland of 2007, the Polish governing bodies saw the international environment as favourable for the economic development and strengthening of country's geopolitical role. Membership in the EU and NATO is proclaimed to be the key component of ensuring global and regional security. Fundamental state interests are treated as permanent units defined in the Constitution of the Republic of Poland. The three categories of national interests are the following: vital (deal with the question of nation's existence and survival), important (ensure the development of prosperous society) and other significant interests (strengthening of the position on the international scene). An attempt to use energy supply opportunities as a lever to achieve own geopolitical ambitions is the only concern related to Russia's foreign policy expressed in the document.

In contrast to the previous strategy, the document adopted in 2014 is alarmed by the external socio-political conditions affecting Poland. The strategy provides a comprehensive review of the security environment at the global, regional and national levels. Two out of the four chapters specifically focus on preventive mechanisms and defensive actions. Poland's foreign policy corresponds to the values of NATO and the European Union. Additionally, it relies on its NATO partners' ability to ensure regional stability through collective defence mechanisms. We claim that the 2014 Polish National Security Strategy does not reflect the whole complexity of the new challenges for Polish security. This document along with the earlier prepared Strategic National Security Review and the White Book on National Security is not particularly specific when it comes to the identification and naming of external threats. The language used in the National Security Strategy (2014) demonstrates that the officials responsible for the foreign policy decision-making do not envisage the use of outstanding measures to deal with a high-priority concern.

As a neighbour of the Russian Federation, Poland considers that both bilateral relations and NATO-Russia and EU-Russia relations should be developed on the basis of full respect for international law, including sovereignty and territorial integrity of states, as well as freedom to choose their own path of development, political and military alliance (p. 10).

On the one hand, the Polish government immediately expressed deep concerns and condemned Russia's actions. On the other hand, the Polish political elites were not unanimous in their rhetoric and assessment of the threat to the Polish national interests. Donald Tusk, the leader of the Civic Platform and the Prime Minister of Poland from November 2007 to September 2014, adhered to a balancing position regarding the issue of taking measures to counter the Russian threat, although he recognised its existence (Dziennik.pl, 2014). For president Lech Kaczyński and then Andrzej Duda securitisation of Russia is a backlash of a pronounced threat to the Polish and European stability coming from the great power ambitions. For Duda no concessions to Russia are acceptable after the Russo-Georgian and the Russo-Ukrainian conflicts. With the Law and Justice party regaining the presidency in the 2015 election and getting a majority of seats in the parliamentary election, the position has toughened, which was also reflected in the next National Security Strategy adopted in 2020.

The latest strategy presented is increasingly worrisome with respect to Russia's destructive activities in the region. The first threat to Polish security mentioned in the document is "the neo-imperial policy of the authorities of the Russian Federation" [PL: neoimperialna polityka władz Federacji Rosyjskiej] (Strategia Bezpieczeństwa Narodowego Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej, 2020, p.6). The response to the potential threat can be found in enhancing state security through regional and global cooperation with partners in the framework of the transatlantic and European structures. The National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland of 2020 provides a broader perspective on the conceptualisation of security, covering both conventional and non-conventional threats including hybrid warfare, environmental protection and others (Reeves, 2022).

The overview of the key security concerns presented in the last three National Security Strategies (2007, 2014, 2020) shows that there is a growing concern about the changing nature of the international environment. By admitting the existence of global power asymmetry and its own limited capabilities, Poland identifies a number of threats of various nature. Its eastern neighbour is traditionally seen as a source of uncertainty due to its foreign policy ambitions. The main concern raised is related to the understanding of Russian foreign policy decision in context of reinforcement of its dominant position in the region (Appendix A).

The simple linguistic analysis was conducted to display the context of some of the words and concepts used. The results presented in the Appendix B require interpretation in view of the general rhetoric in relation to Russia as well as the social context forming the basis of bilateral relations, which was revealed in the third chapter. We see that the threat to Polish energy security associated with dependence on Russian supplies became less proclaimed and merged with other types of threats posed to Polish state security. At the same time, more attention has recently been paid to

information security. The context in which Russia is mentioned in documents allows concluding that the first two strategies on state security are predominantly positive about the possibility of bilateral cooperation based on mutual trust and respect for international law. 2020 National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland along with the Polish Foreign Policy Strategy are more vocal about Russian revisionist foreign policy ambitions. The latest National Security Strategy demonstrates less willingness to seek points of contact to promote partnership. This also confirms the position expressed in the Defense Concept of the Republic of Poland, which tends to view Russia as a source of instability in Europe in the future (Ministry of National Defence, 2017). This forecast, expressed in the form of concern, requires the government to respond to Russian policies, which it identifies as a potential threat to Poland's security. It makes the responsible state institutions accountable to the audience for the effectiveness of the measures taken to ensure national security. That is when the decisions requiring an increase in the military budget are generally seen as necessary and therefore are accepted by society.

We assume that by 2032 Russia will maintain its aggressive stance in its foreign and security policies. Taking into account the asymmetry of military capabilities between Russia and NATO's eastern flank members, such a situation creates a direct threat for Poland and the region (p. 23).

All the three documents on the Polish National Security Strategy view NATO as a key dimension of Polish security policy and express trust in the capabilities of the organisation in Europe. In fact, with the Solidarity movement the idea of uniting forces with western security structures became popular among Poles as it was proclaimed one of the priorities of national security policy. NATO-Poland accession negotiations came to an end in December 1997, when the accession agreement was signed. In Poland, it was regarded as a great success despite an overall favourable international environment (Pawelec and Szeliga, 2014). While the USA acquired a reliable ally in the face of Poland, Polish-Russian relations were marred by a diplomatic scandal (ibid.). Fearing a Russian external threat, Poland is ready to share part of the responsibility for its security with NATO and the United States in exchange for the guarantees provided by Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty.

The Polish Foreign Policy Strategy of 2017-2021, which is a key document reflecting the foreign policy priorities of the state, holds Russia responsible for violating European security architecture. Although Russia is accused of spreading disinformation and reviving disputes between its neighbour states, the necessity of maintaining a Polish-Russian dialogue is not neglected. The Polish Foreign Policy Strategy 2017-2021 sees both the US and NATO as guarantors of European security. NATO collective defence constitutes an integral part of Polish security policy. By maintaining defence spending at a minimum of 2 per cent of GDP and armed forces modernisation

spending at a minimum of 20 per cent, Poland contributes to strengthening NATO's potential in the region. Some of the most significant decisions adopted by NATO member states to safeguard the interests of Central and Eastern European states are presented below. The fact that Poland sees its defense policy in alignment with the principles and capabilities developed by NATO dictates the need to refer to key decisions of the organisation in order to shed light on the discourse present at the summits before and after the escalation of Russian-Ukrainian relations in 2014.

2012 Chicago Summit. Although Russia was not high on the agenda as a threat that needs to be addressed by the member states, it was declared that recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia by the Russian Federation undermined the stability in the region (Chicago Summit Declaration, 2012). The proposal of the Polish president was related to maintaining the level of defence contribution at a high level as it is done by Poland.

2014 Newport Summit. Unlike the previous NATO summit, the Newport summit represented a turning point in the policy of the alliance. The Wales Summit Declaration (2014) condemned Russia's aggression in Ukraine. The peace and stability in Europe were undermined by Russia. One of the key dimensions of NATO activities has become Readiness Action Plan (RAP), adopted as a response to threats at the border of the alliance. Poland was particularly satisfied with the decision to strengthen NATO presence in Poland, Bulgaria, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Slovakia, Hungary and Romania.

2016 Warsaw Summit. Russia's provocative foreign policy and its military presence in the periphery of NATO were discussed. Not only did the Warsaw Summit Communiqué (2016) accuse Russia of aggression in Ukraine, but it also noted the contradicting positions over regional conflicts in the South Caucasus, the Syrian regime and hybrid warfare used as a foreign policy tool. Thus, the states agreed on the deployment of four multinational battalions to Poland and the Baltic States.

2017 Brussels Summit. NATO budget was in the center of attention. The US president called on to increase contribution to the NATO budget in accordance to the principles of the alliance.

2018 Brussels Summit. NATO remains critical of the violation of international law by Russia. Interference with elections in other countries as well as Sergey Skripal's poisoning were stated as a form of hybrid actions aimed at undermining global stability.

2019 London Summit. The Polish President expressed his satisfaction with the NATO presence in Central Europe, describing it as a great achievement of the alliance (Jureńczyk, 2020). Improving relations with Russia was proposed as one of the solutions that could bring more stability to Europe.

2021 Brussels Summit. Following the decision of Russia to announce the Czech Republic and the United States as ‘unfriendly states’, NATO Communiqué insisted on finding diplomatic solutions to disputes. Polish president Andrzej Duda along with his American colleague characterised the current Russian foreign policy course as the most significant threat to international order (President.PI, 2021).

Turning to the issue of Polish military budget and its contribution to NATO defence spending, I would like to refer to the data provided by the independent national and international organisations as well as official statistics available on the Polish government and North Atlantic Treaty Organization’s websites.

Estimates for the 2014-2021 show that the US and Greece had the highest relative spending. In Europe, Poland is among the main contributors to the NATO budget and military personnel. Polish defence expenditure has almost reached 60 000 million zlotys by 2021 (2,34% of the national GDP) in comparison to 31 900 million in 2014, which was equal to 1,86% of its GDP (NATO Public Diplomacy Division, 2021).

The SIPRI Military Expenditure Database shows that the military expenditure remained at the level of 1,9% of the national GDP from 2001 to 2006, then it fluctuated between 1,8% and 2%, finally reaching 2,1% in 2015. The peak can be observed in 2020 with the percentage reaching 2,3, which confirms the above-given data (SIPRI, 2022). In October 2021 the Polish Sejm presented the first draft of the Homeland Defence Act (HDA) with the purpose to modernise the Polish armed forces, which implies an increase in the military spending. In fact, the preparation of the document was accompanied by migration crisis on the Polish-Belarussian border, in which Russia was considered to be involved.

The BICC’s Global Militarisation Index measures the indicators of military expenditure, number of military personnel and heavy weapons. According to data collected, Eastern Europe is characterised by a strong trend of militarisation. Poland, however, occupies only 50th position in the global ranking, which indicates that it has a lower level of militarisation than Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Lithuania and some other European states (BICC, 2021).

In 2015 RAND Arroyo Center conducted interviews with high-ranking officials, researchers and journalists from eight states, including Poland, the majority of whom expressed doubts about the effectiveness of NATO for rapid reaction to threats, though, in fairness, rapid reaction forces of the alliance were only at the developing stage at that time. According to the interviewees, the Russian goal would be to create a division within NATO in order to weaken its potential (Pezard et al., 2017).

To sum up, the document analysis gives grounds to speak about an act of securitisation through the language and rhetoric used in relation to Russia. The assessment of policy actions as an attempt to restore its role in the region reveal the link to the past in understanding of current strategy of Russian foreign policy. The document analysis clearly demonstrates that following the Ukrainian crisis of 2014 Polish ruling elites have formulated an understanding of Russia as a key external threat to state security. In the light of regional destabilisation caused by the escalation of local territorial conflicts, information attacks and political manipulations in the field of energy supplies, a sufficient level of defense spending and the modernisation of the armed forces are seen as conditions that NATO members must fulfill in order to ensure collective security.

Since joining NATO, Poland's national security has remained inextricably linked to the Alliance's collective defence mechanisms. Today the large-scale exercises conducted by NATO members and Russia have both practical and symbolic significance. They demonstratively resist to any potential expansion of the sphere of influence by the other side.

In Europe, Poland is among the main contributors to the budget and military personnel of the Alliance. While the Homeland Defence Act (HDA) confirms the priority of modernisation of the Polish armed forces stated in the Defense Concept of the Republic of Poland, military spending requires a certain tacit agreement on the part of society that these funds from the budget will not be distributed to other areas. The question of budget allocation may become particularly acute taking into consideration the fact that among the European countries Poland remains with one of the lowest estimates for expenditure on social protection (Eurostat, 2022).

5.2 Public Opinion Analysis

Undoubtedly, by analysing public opinion we are able to observe general trends and see how relevant a particular question for the society is (Berinsky, 2017). Furthermore, some researchers suggest that there is a link between public opinion and decision-makers' behaviour implying that political decisions respond to the needs of the public (Soroka and Wlezien, 2005).

Our primary concern is with the public opinion on NATO as a military alliance aiming to safeguard the security of its member states. Pew Research Center has conducted several surveys across NATO member states and beyond to examine public opinion on the alliance and its role. When asked about attitudes to NATO in 2019 (Fagan and Poushter, 2020), the majority of respondents in Central and Eastern European countries have favourable opinion of the alliance, with the exception of Hungary, where only 48% have a positive attitude to NATO (16% of respondents have a negative attitude, 35% refused to answer or did not know). With 82% of respondents seeing NATO positively Polish respondents are the most approving across 19 nations participating in the

survey. The percentage of respondents expressing a very favourable attitude is also the highest in Poland. There are, however, tangible fluctuations over time in this number. The most recent leap can be observed in 2017. The same year the number of negative attitudes dropped significantly. In general, in 2015-2017 the number of favourable attitudes was steadily growing in contrast to the negative ones, while 2011-2013 were the least positive years for the image of the alliance in Poland. Despite the fact that the data on 2018 is missing, GLOBSEC analytics confirms that in 2018 Poles were the strongest NATO supporters in the region, but this number decreased in comparison to 2017 (Hajdu, Klingova, Milo, 2018).

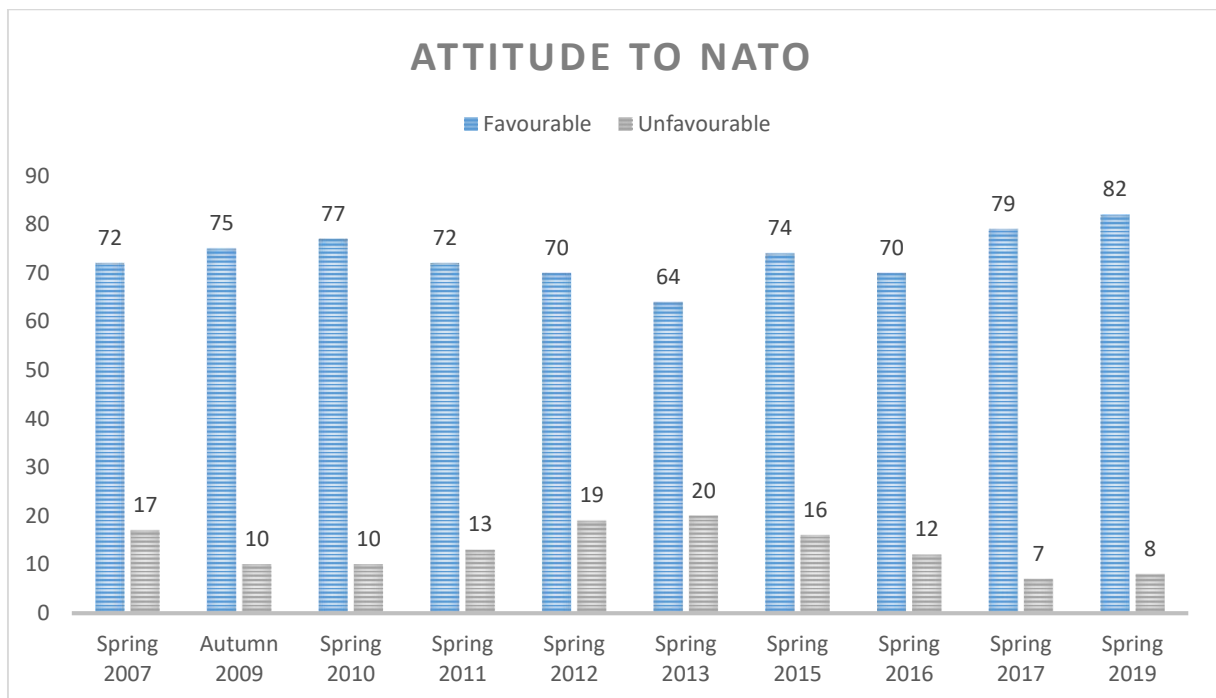


Figure 1. Opinion on the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in Poland by Pew Research Center (%)

According to the Centre for Public Opinion Research polls, Poland's membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization is widely supported among the population. The level of support rose significantly after the Crimean referendum, organised by Russia (CBOS, 2022).

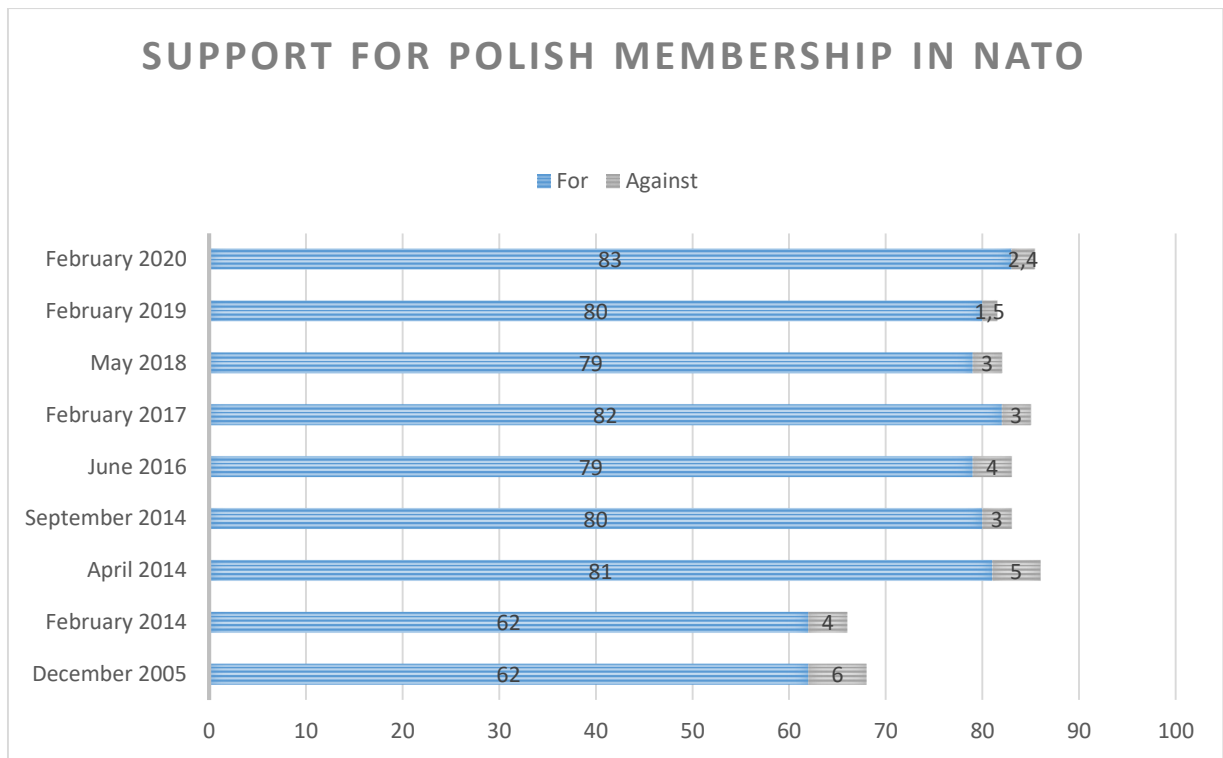


Figure 2. CBOS Polish Public Opinion polls' results on support for Poland's membership in NATO (%)

The hypothetical question was asked by Pew Research Center in 2015, 2017 and 2019 about the possibility of a military conflict between Russia and a NATO member state. For Poland the percentage of people believing that their country should use military force to protect its ally appears to be higher than in neighbouring Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic in the same years (Fagan and Poushter, 2020). Similar data is presented by GLOBSEC survey in 2017 (Milo, Klingova and Hajdu, 2017). There is a significant increase in 2017 followed by a drop from 62% to 40% in the number of Poles agreeing that their state should participate in a military conflict with Russia to protect its NATO ally. Moreover, out of 8 nations surveyed in 2015 Polish respondents were the most supportive of NATO sending arms to Ukraine. Other measures including economic aid and membership in the alliance were also widely supported. Possibly due to the fact that Poles approve of NATO as a mechanism of protection, slightly more than 1/3 of them consider that the EU needs to launch its own alternative to the alliance (Milo, Klingova and Hajdu, 2019).

Being asked about the feeling of threat, most respondents in the Central and East European region feel quite safe. Poland stands out as a country where most of the respondents would feel threatened by Russia (Milo, Klingova and Hajdu, 2019). Almost 70% of Polish respondents in 2020 think that Russia's foreign policy in Eastern Europe is provocative, while NATO is believed to be the primary initiator of tensions in the region by only one-fourth of Poles. No wonder, the overwhelming majority of Poles (84%) state that Russia pursues an aggressive policy against its

neighbouring states (Milo, 2020). Another poll confirms that the majority of Poles share the opinion about Russia being a threat to Poland's security (The Centre for Polish-Russian Dialogue and Understanding, 2020a).

According to the Pew Research Center (Fagan and Poushter, 2020) data, close relationships with Russia are considered to be more important than relations with the US only for 12% of Poles. The results of the 2020 GLOBSEC survey confirm these assumptions. Only 6% of respondents seek strategic partnership between Poland and Russia. It is the lowest number among all the nine Central and Eastern Europe and the Western Balkans states surveyed (GLOBSEC, 2020). However, there is a general trend for Central and Eastern Europe towards a balance, when close relationships with both Russia and US are important.

Thus, Poles actively supported the imposition of more rigorous sanctions against Russia seeing Moscow as a major threat (Simmons, Stokes and Poushter, 2015). Interestingly, the responses differ depending on a gender factor. Women in several countries including Poland are twice less likely to support military actions in case of a conflict with Russia (Fagan and Poushter, 2020).

Proceeding from the fact that Poles consider that Russian people have a much more positive attitude to the Polish nation than the Russian government does, one might conclude that there is a general agreement among Poles that the threat is coming from the Kremlin and not from the ordinary people (The Centre for Polish-Russian Dialogue and Understanding, 2020a).

When directly asked about their opinion of Russia, only 2% of Poles had very favourable attitude in 2015, while in Ukraine it was 5% for the same year (Simmons, Stokes and Poushter, 2015). Although the negative opinion prevailed, the number had never reached 80% before spring 2014 or after 2015 (Huang and Cha, 2020). If we compare the attitudes in 2020, after the Ukrainian crisis in 2014 and 2012, we can observe that in 2020 a positive attitude got back to 2012 numbers, while in 2014 it had considerably fallen (The Centre for Polish-Russian Dialogue and Understanding, 2020a). We observe how the perception of Russia is fluctuating depending on its external policy, namely aggression in Ukraine in 2014, which made Poles raise their concerns about their own security. In general, even though the views gradually returned to the stance prior to 2014, the proportion of answers stating that Russia is an unfriendly country remained significant for several years prior to the Russo-Ukrainian war as well as after the escalation of 2014.

As public opinion is formed under the influence of social circumstances and historical events, it is essential to shed light on this aspect of attitude to Russia. Poland seems to be the most sceptical of the nine Central and Eastern Europe and the Western Balkans (Bulgaria, Czechia, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia) when it comes to Russia's

role in the Second World War. However, it must be admitted that the wording of the statement that respondents were asked about allows ambiguous interpretation: “Russia as the main actor responsible for the defeat of Fascism in WWII continues to play the leading role in the fight against fascism today” (Milo, 2020, p.25).

Regarding the question of othering, we make a use of GLOBSEC public opinion polls. They show that only 30% of Polish people perceive Russians as their Slavic brothers (Milo, 2020). It does not necessarily lead to the conclusion about negative perception, but indicates that the Polish society has a clear dividing line between their own culture and nation and Russia. On the other hand, mental associations with the word ‘Russian’ can serve as another important indicator of attitudes to the nation. Most of them described it as positive and mentioned similarities related to a Slavic identity and hospitality (The Centre for Polish-Russian Dialogue and Understanding, 2020a). Similarly, people were asked about the phrase ‘Russia’s foreign policy’. In this case, negative associations prevailed and were linked to the ideas of Russian imperialism, expansionist and aggressive policy and propaganda.

The ARC Rynek i Opinia data allows concluding that in comparison to older respondents, more younger people (under 34) assess Russia’s attitude to Poland as friendly. This correlation demonstrates that younger respondents, who have no personal memory of living under the communist regime, see Polish-Russian relations in a more favourable light.

Pew Research Center report concludes that there is a link between admitting the need to defend a NATO member from a possible Russian attack and respondents’ views on the role of the military. It comes as no surprise that those who consider the use of military force a necessary measure to safeguard security, tend to agree to the use of military force by their nation to protect an ally. Secondly, the use of military force is more often seen as just and necessary by people supporting right-wing parties (Fagan and Poushter, 2020). Therefore, it can be assumed that the right-wing electorate will be more supportive of military actions even if their state is not under attack (following the provisions of Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty).

It can be concluded that the overwhelming majority of the population in Poland approves of their country’s membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization due to confidence in the organisation as a guarantor of security. After 2014 there was a tangible increase in this figure.

In terms of public opinion on Russia, two trends are clearly observed in Poland. Firstly, the majority of Poles are convinced that the Russian government poses a threat to Polish and international security. In Poland, where victimhood memory has a strong impact on the collective identity, any potential threat from Russia identified by the ruling forces is largely approved by the

society. Poland remains the most sceptical country in the region. Although the peak was reached after Russia's involvement in Ukraine in 2014-2015, public opinion softened with time. Secondly, these negative attitudes do not directly extend to the Russian people and culture as the treat source is clearly associated with the governing bodies and aggressive foreign policy strategy approved by the ruling elites.

Conclusion

This thesis work is considered to contribute to the literature on securitisation and in particular regional security studies in many ways. Firstly, it provides a comprehensive review of literature on the concept of securitisation that was formulated by the scholars representing the Copenhagen School. Secondly, we looked at the process of securitisation in a wider context, attempting to prove the presence of a relationship between the process of othering through collective memory mobilisation and, ultimately, the acceptance of the securitisation move.

The geopolitical approach to the Russian threat treats it in connection to the proximity of Russian borders. Thus, in European countries sharing borders with Russia the fear of a possible foreign attack may also be higher. However, other factors such as internal political processes and external developments outside the region, economy and trade flows, cultural and historical ties are considered to impact acceptance of the securitisation. In fact, support for NATO does not directly correlate with the proximity to Russian borders. It is traditionally strong in Poland, the Netherlands, the UK and Lithuania. Moreover, the variation in public attitude was shown to be connected with political and ideological preferences: the use of military force was more often seen as a necessary measure by people supporting right-wing parties (Fagan and Poushter, 2020). This assumption, however, needs to be further tested to be applied to the case under consideration.

When neorealists would insist on a power imbalance between Russia and Central European forces, constructivists see it as a narrow understanding of security concerns. Finally, the case of Poland exemplifies the complexity and variability of approaches to security. Hence constructivist perspective on a case allows addressing the high level of demand in Polish society to militarise, actively engage with NATO projects and put economic and energy pressure on Russia.

It is important to highlight that while securitisation theory has traditionally focused on the conditions and descriptive analysis of the process of securitisation, our research is more concerned with the questions of 'why this 'other' in the face of Russia is viewed as a threat to Poland and in what way it shapes the acceptance of the foreign and defence policy by the Polish audience.

As for the hypothesis tested, our key assumption about the Russian threat in the national discourse eventually leading to higher public support for the Polish active role in NATO and its military build-up has proven to be present. The survey results that we appealed to indicate that the majority of Poles are convinced that the Russian government poses a threat to Polish and international security. As of 2020, among all the nine Central and Eastern Europe and the Western Balkans states surveyed Poland demonstrated the lowest level of interest in strategic partnership with Russia. Here support for possible Polish engagement in military actions in accordance with the

NATO principle of collective defence was also observed. There is a significant increase in 2017 followed by a drop in the number of Poles agreeing that their state should participate in a military conflict with Russia to protect its NATO ally. Poles also demonstrated a high level of support for the idea of NATO sending arms to Ukraine. As expected, there is a trend towards a less critical approach to NATO whenever Russia is brought to the agenda as a major source of uncertainty.

When it comes to a link between securitisation acceptance and collective memory of historical injustice, one must admit that a strong feeling of victimhood present in the Polish society up to date plays a crucial role in constructing the image of the Russian state. Thus, the two countries' contradicting views of their history contribute to mutual reluctance to cooperate. National memory primarily related to the Second World War and the communist past can hardly be separated from the present day issues as they constitute part of the national identity of both states. It is no surprise that opinion polls show a high level of scepticism in the Polish society when it comes to Russia's role in the Second World War. In official documents of the Polish foreign strategy, today's foreign policy decisions of Russia are continuously linked to its ambitions to revive as a great power.

This, however, was not proven to directly lead to the public acceptance of the securitisation of Russia but was utilised by political parties for internal campaigns often attempting to manipulate the sentiments of the electorate. The national memory may facilitate the process of othering within the national self-identification construction as well as complement the rhetoric on the urgent need to resist the current aggressive policy. The securitisation move, however, is not possible without illustrating (by linguistic means and the general rhetoric) that the identified threat poses a real-time danger to society. There is an absence of evidence to conclude that Russia is consistently perceived as a historical enemy. The survey results, nonetheless, confirm that the Polish society has developed a clear idea of dissimilarity between their own culture and nation and Russia. It does not necessarily lead to the conclusion about negative perception but shows that cultural and linguistic proximity fade into the background in view of more significant differences.

Moreover, some research works show that the extent to which mass memory influences the current rhetoric is a consequence of certain political aspirations, socio-economic incentives, political elites' calculations related to internal power struggle. Although threat perception is conditioned by a number of factors affecting national identity formation, norms and values as well as understanding of us and others, it requires a political decision to apply certain measures to deal with an issue or an object identified as a source of threat to national interests.

Instead, the perception of Russia as a threat was exacerbated by the Ukrainian crisis of 2014. Public opinion polls clearly demonstrate that the aggression in Ukraine in 2014 made Poles raise their

concerns about own state security. This, however, has not proven to be a consistent securitisation factor, meaning that during the years following the events the views gradually returned to the stance prior to 2014. Additionally, a different reaction to the events can be observed within the Alliance or even among Central European states. This once again brings us to the point that threat perception is, *inter alia*, a result of internal political processes in these countries.

To sum up, security concerns expressed in relation to Russian external policy have solid grounds largely independent of former tense relations between the two nations and historical controversies. Nevertheless, in our understanding, an imbalanced external security strategy does not fully reflect the interests of Polish society. We claim that successful counteraction to external threats is possible only with an integrated approach to security issues, constructed to reflect foreign policy interests and based on internal needs and resources at disposal rather than appeal to historical injustices. In line with the statements of scholars to whom we refer in this dissertation, we assume that Poland has a strong mediation capability at its disposal. By being an economic and political intermediary instead of neglecting its own economic and trade interests, Poland may strengthen its position by playing a stabilising role in the international system and achieve significant profits.

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Polish National Security Strategies (2007, 2014, 2020) Overview

Areas of focus	2007 National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland	2014 National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland	2020 National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland
International environment	Favourable international conditions for pursuing its goals of European integration: <i>“Poland made good use of this international situation, the best in many decades”</i> (National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland, 2007, p.3).	Challenged by globalisation and power asymmetry. <i>“The threat of regional and local conflicts have not disappeared”</i> (National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland, 2014, p.17).	Unstable and difficult conditions: <i>“security environment has become uncertain and unpredictable”</i> (National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland, 2020, p.6).
Main threats identified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Dependence on supplies of energy resources; – Organised international terrorism; – Ongoing conflicts and a risk of breakout of regional conflicts; – Authoritarianism; – Environmental threats, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Shortage of resources: <i>“an increase in the demand for energy, food and drinking water”</i> (ibid., p.19). – New cyber threats; – Demographic decline and ageing of the population; – Terrorism and extremism, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Russia and its foreign policy ambitions; – Regional conflicts in the Polish neighbourhood; – <i>“Proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the threat of terrorism and organised crime”</i> (ibid., p.7); – epidemic risks, etc.

Factors of security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>“To guarantee that our country develops civilizationally and economically, that conditions are created for the growth of a more prosperous society, for the development of science and technology and for a proper protection of its national heritage and identity, and also of its natural environment”</i> (ibid., p.5). – To modernize the defence policy and the armed forces; – To coordinate efforts with the allied military forces. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>“To preserve the national identity by cultivating national culture as well as historical and generational continuity”</i> (ibid., p.38). – <i>“NATO, European Union, strategic presence of the US in the European continent and relations with Russia”</i> (ibid., p.19). – To ensure energy security through energy diversification; – To strengthen defence capabilities; – Fight against terrorism and extremism. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – To strengthen Polish national identity, Christian and universal values; – <i>“Guarding independence, territorial integrity, sovereignty and security of the state and its citizens”</i> (ibid., p.11). – To ensure energy diversification; – To combat cyber threats; – To make the Polish army more capable by increasing the defence budget <i>“reaching 2.5% of GDP in 2024”</i> (ibid., p.18).
NATO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – NATO is the most important political and military framework <i>“of security and a pillar of stability on the European continent, as well as the main ground of transatlantic relations”</i> (p.10). – <i>“It is in Poland’s interest to see the North Atlantic Alliance remain as an instrument of collective defence of member states”</i> (ibid., p.7). 	<p><i>“NATO will remain the most important political and military Alliance and a guarantor of Poland’s security”</i> (ibid., p.20).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – NATO is one of the main pillars of national security; – <i>“The process of strategic adaptation of NATO has led to the strengthening of the allied policy of deterrence and defence, including through the presence of allied forces in Polish territory”</i> (ibid., p.10).

Russia	<p>“The Russian Federation, taking advantage of the rising energy prices, has been attempting intensively to reinforce its position on a supraregional level. Russia’s efforts to establish closer contacts with selected Western countries go hand in hand with the imposition of selective restrictions and discrimination of some NATO and EU members” (ibid., p.6).</p>	<p>“Russia’s relations with the West will remain an important factor influencing the security of Poland, the region and Europe” (ibid., p.21).</p>	<p>– Hybrid war threat, undermining international security; – “<i>The neo-imperial policy of the authorities of the Russian Federation, pursued also by means of military force</i>” (ibid., p.6).</p>
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Securitisation Terminology in the Official Strategies

The term	2007 National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland	2014 National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland	2020 National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland	2017-2021 Polish Foreign Policy Strategy
Russia (the Russian Federation)	Appears 6 times in the text. Twice mentioned as a source of threat to energy security and selective policy in relation to western partners (National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland, 2007).	Mentioned 10 times, only 2 of which are in the context of potential challenges to the peace in the region, in other cases the importance of building relations with Russia is highlighted (National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland, 2014).	The state is mentioned 8 times with half of the cases directly naming its foreign policy as a source of threat and warfare (National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland, 2020).	35 references. At least 27 of those references to Russia are tied to its aggressive and revisionist foreign policy ambitions (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, 2021).

Threat	Appears 18 times in the document. 3 cases are related to military security and regional conflicts ² . Energy security and threat to Poland are tied 3 times. The term was not mentioned in the context of cyber security (ibid.).	Mentioned 66 times, 18 of which can be attributed to threats that are military by nature. Once the term is mentioned in the context of regional conflicts, posing a threat to Polish stable development. Cyberspace and information security are mentioned in 8 cases, threats to energy security – 1 time (ibid.).	The word ‘threat’ is mentioned 32 times. 8 of the cases are presented in the context of military security, 6 – cybersecurity, 1 – energy safety (ibid.).	The term can be found 10 times, in the context of global security and hybrid warfare – 6 (ibid.).
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² Terrorism as a general global phenomenon that requires conceptualisation is excluded from this category.