SUBJECTIVE SECURITY IN A VOLATILE GEOPOLITICAL SITUATION: DOES LITHUANIAN SOCIETY FEEL SAFE?

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ABSTRACT. The geopolitical situation of Lithuania has deteriorated since the annexation of Crimea and the military conflict in Eastern Ukraine. It has affected the objective security of the state as well as subjective security of the Lithuanian population. This article analyses subjective security and deals with the subjective perception of geopolitical and military threats, mainly social attitudes towards national security and the willingness to defend the country. Article is based on theories of securitisation and human security and holds that individuals are the primary referents of security. Empirically, the article relies on the original data of the research project "Subjective Security in a Volatile Geopolitical Context: Traits, Factors and Individual Strategies", funded by the Research Council of Lithuania. Article shows the dynamics of social attitudes towards security. Over the last 15 years, a clear shift towards the understanding of potential military threats has occurred. Nevertheless, the predominant concern about individual security, overshadowing security of the state and

security of the global order, found in previous studies, has persisted. An individual, as a rule, feels most secure in his/her "closest" environment, e.g. family and friends, and least secure in the "farthest" environment, e.g. other continents.

Introduction

The annexation of Crimea and the ongoing military conflict in Eastern Ukraine has created a tense geopolitical situation in Europe. In response, the Lithuanian state has securitised the issue of geopolitical threats. Military expenditure has grown and in April 2015, the Lithuanian National Defence Council decided to reintroduce compulsory military service, which was suspended in 2008 with a provision that it could be reintroduced in the case of a deteriorating geopolitical situation.

The changed geopolitical situation of Lithuania has affected the objective security[1] of the state and has also affected the subjective security[2] of the Lithuanian population. In the previous two decades, Lithuanian researchers from various disciplines – political scientists, economists, sociologists, criminologists and lawyers – have been interested in the public perception of security. Researchers have mostly concentrated on political, economic and social aspects of subjective security (Grėbliauskas 2003; Šiukštienė 2004; Šimašius, Vilpišauskas 2005; Surplys 2007; Mažylis, Unikaitė-Jakuntavičienė 2014) as well as on public aspects of subjective security (Dobryninas, Gaidys 2004; Vileikienė 2010; Dobryninas et al. 2012; Dobryninas et al. 2013). Much less research was carried out on into other dimensions of security: ecological (Gavėnienė 2008; Sinkevičius, Ignatavičius 2009), energy security (Šatūnienė 2004; Budrys 2008), information security (Jurgelevičiūtė 2007), military security (Kojala, Keršanskas 2015) and perception of

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[1] Objective security means being safe.

[2] Subjective security means feeling safe.

military threats (Janušauskienė, Novagrockienė 2002; Gečienė 2015).

The most consistently analysed aspect of subjective security in Lithuania is public security, e.g. protection against crime. Every year since 2005, the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Lithuania has conducted a survey based on the same methodology (Vileikienė 2010; Vileikienė 2015). The accumulated data allows the establishment of long-term trends and shows how the perception of security in the population has changed at different levels (in the country, in the city, town or village, or the immediate neighbourhood); reasons for feeling insecure; factors that influence the perception of security and the influence of this perception on the trust in the institutions of criminal justice as well as on the evaluation of their performance.

Meanwhile, this article is devoted to the analysis of subjective perceptions of military threats in Lithuania and the individual strategies of coping with these threats, including willingness to defend the country. The article is based on part of the data collected within the project "Subjective Security in a Volatile Geopolitical Context: Traits, Factors and Individual Strategies", carried out at the Lithuanian Social Research Centre, Institute of Sociology and supported by the Research Council of Lithuania. The article uses the quantitative data of the project – a representative national survey (N=1,004) that was conducted in February 2016 by the polling company "Spinter tyrimai". The research included a questionnaire on security perception at different levels: in the immediate neighbourhood (e.g. family and friends); in the community (e.g. city, town or village where an individual lives); in the country; in the EU; and in the world; as well as on the change of perceived security in comparison to five years ago and, prospectively, five years from 2016. The research also included questions on how people perceive the importance of certain threats to security in Lithuania and the EU, and how they

perceive the probability (risk) that those threats might actually affect Lithuania. Additional empirical data sources are the above-mentioned surveys commissioned by the Ministry of Interior from 2005–2015, monthly surveys of trust in institutions[3] and Eurobarometer survey data.

Individuals as primary referents of security

Security studies underwent considerable transformation after the end of the Cold War. The primary concern of security studies in the Cold War period – international military security – was gradually losing its supremacy and giving way to new approaches. "Different referents, dangers and strategies" (Both 2013: xv) as well as new topics of research started to appear. Importantly, referents of security have extended from nation states and international political organisations to communities, families, and individuals, one the one hand, and the whole Earth, on the other hand. Threat stopped being associated purely with the war. Threats of local and global ecological and natural disasters, viruses, international criminal activities, cyber-attacks, terrorism, etc., have all become more prominent subjects of academic scrutiny. Strategies of coping with threats have evolved as well and went beyond the military and intelligence areas and into subjects as diverse and complex as cyber-safety, ecological safety, health safety, individual safety, social guarantees, civic rights, and many others. New areas of analysis include such phenomena as human trafficking, ecological security, and post-colonial security.

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[3] In Lithuania, surveys of trust in institutions are performed by two public opinion and market research companies: "Baltijos tyrimai" (commissioned by news agency ELTA) and "Vilmorus" (commissioned by the daily "Lietuvos rytas"). Representative face-to-face surveys are performed monthly. Although in both surveys respondents are presented with the same question "For each of the following institutions, please tell me if you tend to trust it or tend not to trust it", the answer options are slightly different.

Human security is one of the broadest "umbrella-type" theoretical alternatives to state-based international military security. The theory of human security goes "beyond purely state-based notions of military and territorial security" (Hudson et al 2013:25) and claims that individuals, not nation states, are the primary referents of security. Human security expands the understanding of threats, both within and outside the state. It stresses that contemporary "threats increasingly lack identifiable enemies and people can be insecure inside secure state" (Hamil as quoted in Hudson et al 2013:25).

For the first time, the term "human security" appeared on the agenda of security studies in 1994 in the United Nations' "Human Development Report". The Report stated that "there have always been two major components of human security: freedom from fear and freedom from want. <…> But later the concept was tilted in favour of the first component rather than the second" (Human Development Report 1994:24) and that "forgotten were the legitimate concerns of ordinary people who sought security in their daily lives. For many of them, security symbolized protection from the threat of disease, hunger, unemployment, crime, social conflict, political repression and environmental hazards (Human Development Report 1994:22). Thus, the Report redirected the attention from security of nation states and from war to security of individuals, their everyday life and their human rights: "human security is not a concern with weapons − it is a concern with human life and dignity" (Human Development Report 1994:22).

The Human Development Report defined human security in a very broad way, covering seven areas of security: economic (the threat for human security comes from falling incomes and unemployment); food (the threat comes from absence of access to basic food, food safety); health (threats come from infectious, parasitic, and other diseases, HIV/AIDS and other epidemics); environmental (threats come from intensive industrialization,

population growth, natural disasters, pollution, water scarcity and degradation of local ecosystems); personal (threats from the state (physical torture), threats from other states (war), threats from other groups of people (ethnic tension), threats from individuals or gangs against other individuals or gangs (crime, street violence), threats directed against women (rape, domestic violence), threats directed at children based on their vulnerability and dependence (child abuse), threats to self (suicide, drug use); community (threats from ethnic conflicts, problems of gender equality, oppressive practices of traditional communities, vulnerability of indigenous people); and political (threats of violation of human rights and state repressions) (Human Development Report 1994:23-32). The report wrote about global human security, pointing out that "real threats to human security in the next century will arise more from the actions of millions of people than from aggression by a few nations" (Human Development Report 1994:33).

Nevertheless, this all-inclusive approach was criticised that it "has made human security too vague to have any meaning for policy-makers" (Hudson et al 2013:26) and that it "shift[s] attention and resources away from conventional security issues" (Paris in Hudson et al 2013:26), and that the boundaries of definitions used in human security concept are not clear since "it is hard to know where human rights and human development end and where human security begins" (Hudson et al 2013:26). Nevertheless, despite these limitations, the human security approach creates a strong counter-theory to military-nation-states-centred approaches, and remains the major policy approach of the UN as well as the EU.

Securitisation was another important post-Cold War theory. It was developed by the Copenhagen school (formed at the Copenhagen Peace Research Institute) in the end of the 20th century. In 1998, Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver and Jaap de Wilde wrote a book called "Security: A New Framework of Analysis". The very notion

"securitization" was first introduced by Ole Wæver who went beyond the debate of whether security is objective (what really constitutes a threat) or subjective (what is perceived as a threat), suggesting that security is socially constructed by the speech act. Therefore, in order to better understand security, it is important to study ways in which certain issues are socially constructed as threats no matter whether these issues constitute a real threat or not. Thus, "securitisation refers to the process through which an issue is labelled a "security" issue by an (elite) actor, a process which moves the issue out of the normal political sphere and into the security sphere" (Nyman 2013:52). According to the Copenhagen school, to consider a speech act as securitising, this act should be connected to the notions of survival, urgency, threat, and defence. Securitisation, thus, refers to a discursive process by means of which "the issue is presented as an existential threat, requiring emergency measures and justifying actions outside the normal bounds of political procedure" (Buzan, Wæver, de Wilde 1998:23-4).

The theory of securitisation holds that security should be understood more broadly than political and military state-based arrangements and therefore speaks about five areas of security: military, environmental, economic, societal and political security (Buzan, Wæver, de Wilde 1998). In comparison to the theory of human security which revolves around seven areas of security (economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community and political) and does not directly speak about military security, the approach of securitization is quite similar even though it does not speak about societal security in detail as the theory of human security which refers to food, health, personal and community security.

Subjective security, which is a key issue in this article, deals with the feeling of safety. Objective security, on the other hand, refers to "being protected from danger" (Buzan 2009:50). In addition to

subjective security as a feeling of safety, it is necessary to mention "being free from doubt (confidence in one's knowledge)" (Buzan 2009:50). This means that an individual feels safe when he/she does not doubt his/her knowledge of the situation. The other important issue about objective and subjective security is that these two notions do not coincide as a rule. As Buzan states, "the referent threats (danger and doubt) are very vague, and the subjective feeling of safety or confidence has no necessary connections with actually being safe" (Buzan 2009:50).

Perception of security and threats by the individuals

Security can be defined as a freedom from threats. The bottom line of security is about survival, but it also includes concerns about the conditions of existence (Buzan 1983: 36–37). Such an understanding of security implies two main aspects of analysis: perceptions of existential threats and responses to these threats. Since security is inevitably linked with real or imagined threats, security analysis must include analysis of subjective perceptions of threats.

In general, there is a lack of empirical studies in Lithuania on this topic. In 2003, Janušauskienė and Novagrockienė published an article on the perception of security issues by the Lithuanian population based on qualitative interviews. They have reviewed survey data on security perception that were available in Lithuania up to 2002, and came to a conclusion that at the time, the Lithuanian population was mostly concerned with internal, as opposed to external, threats to security. In a survey from 2002, only 1% of population referred to external threats (Janušauskienė, Novagrockienė, 2003: 301–302). Surveys show that 15 years ago, the indicated sources of insecurity were first of all social and economic, e.g. unsafe living environment, level of crime, poor performance of law enforcement authorities, poor economic

situation, anxiety over price increases, fear of losing income sources, and health problems.

According to the data of the research project "Subjective Security in a Volatile Geopolitical Context: Traits, Factors and Individual Strategies", presented in this article by members of the research team, the perception of threats has changed due to a new geopolitical situation in the region. In the quantitative representative national survey, respondents were asked an open question to describe what the first thing that comes into mind when asked about security is[4]. After sorting answers into categories, the largest category, 21% of respondents indicated geopolitical military threats; 15% indicated the general crime situation, 14% safety in their neighbourhood, 12% insufficient income, standard of living or economic situation, and 6% indicated health problems (see Figure 1). All this indicates that, unlike 15 years ago, citizens think much more often of their security in terms of international threats next to domestic threats.

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[4] In Lithuanian language, there is no difference between "safety" and "security". One and the same word is used to refer to both: "saugumas".

Figure 1. General perception of security in 2016 by percentage (Open question: "When asked about security, what are your first thoughts?").
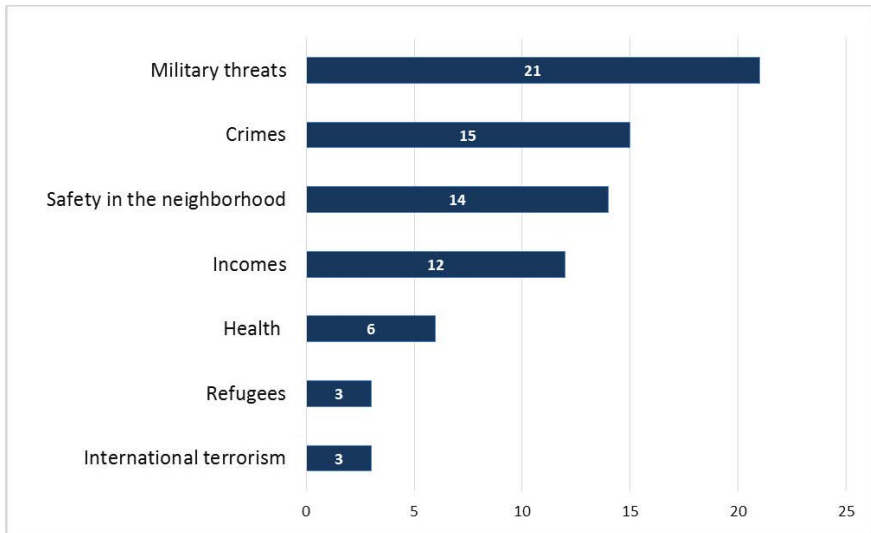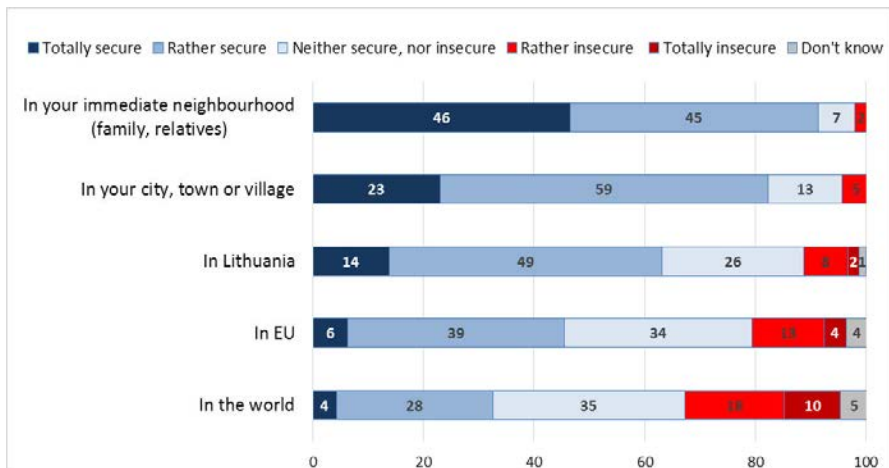

Source: Data of the research project "Subjective Security in a Volatile Geopolitical Context: Traits, Factors and Individual Strategies".

Comparison of the feeling of security in different environments (family, community, country, the EU, and the global world) shows that the closer the environment, the more secure an individual feels. In the immediate neighbourhood (family, relatives, friends), 91% of respondents feel totally or rather secure; the respective percentage for the city, town or village is 82%; for Lithuania as country it was 63%; for the EU 45%; and for the world 32% (see Figure 2). Other surveys also indicate a certain gap between subjective feeling of security in different environments, although a smaller one. For example, Eurobarometer 2015 survey[5] also

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[5]   European's   Attitude   towards   Security.

reveals a difference between the feeling of security in the neighbourhood and the EU, but the difference is not as large[6].

Figure 2. Feeling secure in different environments in 2016 (Question: "How secure do you feel in your immediate neighbourhood, in your city town or village, in Lithuania, in the EU, in the World?").

Source: Data of the research project "Subjective Security in a Volatile Geopolitical Context: Traits, Factors and Individual Strategies".

It is likely that in the case of more distant environments the feeling of security is associated not as much with real, as with perceived

http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_432_fact_lt_en.pdf

[6] It must be noted that we used a different wording of the question than the Eurobarometer study ("To what extent do you agree or disagree with the statement, that ... is a secure place to live?" , in our survey: "How secure do you feel in …"), as well as different answer options ("totally agree, tend to agree, tend to disagree, totally disagree, don't know" , in our study – a five point scale with a neutral position: "totally secure, rather secure, neither secure, nor insecure, rather insecure and totally insecure, don't know").

threats, for which the main source of information is mass media. Therefore, while considering the security situation in the EU and in the world, people tend to think about well-known media-escalated issues, such as military conflicts, political instability, terrorist attacks and refugee crises. Such selective use of information can build an image of a relatively secure Lithuania in comparison to other countries like France and Belgium or the Middle East. It could be said that Lithuanians tend to perceive their country as an oasis of relative safety in a dangerous world. Locally significant issues that are all but globally irrelevant overshadow important global problems. A good example is the limited coverage of global problems by the Lithuanian mass media after the terrorist attack in Nice this summer and of the failed Turkish *coup d'état*; at the time, the top news in the Lithuanian media was a story about a small hedgehog which was almost squashed by a drunk mob in a Lithuanian seaside resort[7].

Another interesting finding of the research was that people tend to exaggerate the importance of threats. Despite the fact that the majority of population (63%) say that they feel secure in their country and only 10% feel insecure, the data indicates that at the same time a majority (between 74−90%) see various issues of national security either as "very important", or "important" (see Table 1).

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[7] Delfi. Valatka, Rimvydas. Po Nicos ir Turkijos Lietuva tokia rami. O gal geriau apsidairykim? http://www.delfi.lt/news/ringas/lit/r-valatka-po-nicos-ir-turkijos-lietuva-tokia-rami-o-gal-geriau-apsidairykim.d?id=71827570

Table 1. The most important security issues in Lithuania and the EU as seen by the population in 2016 (percentage of respondents that think that it is "very important" and "rather important").

Security issues	In Lithuania	In the EU
Emigration	90	78
Unemployment	90	85
Crime	88	88
Energy security	87	89
Poor economic situation	87	87
Poverty and discrimination	85	79
Alcoholism	84	74
Protection of external borders	84	90
Possible military attack against one of the countries of EU	81	93
Terrorism	80	93
Health issues, such as epidemics, contagions	79	83
Possible collapse of the Euro zone	79	91
Man-made disasters, such as nuclear power plant accidents, oil spills	76	83
Lack of public awareness and patriotism	76	76
Large scale cyber-attacks against internet sites and computer systems of state institutions, businesses or media	75	87
Refugees from Asia and Africa	74	92
Hybrid war	74	86
Political instability, such as emergence of radical parties, political takeovers	74	85

Climate change and pollution	72	83
Military conflicts outside the borders of EU	68	87
Natural disasters, such as floods, droughts, earthquakes	65	81

Source: Data of the research project "Subjective Security in a Volatile Geopolitical Context: Traits, Factors and Individual Strategies".

As the data indicates, there are important differences between the perception of security threats related to Lithuania and to the EU. When asked about the most important problems in Lithuania, respondents first of all emphasize social and economic problems such as emigration, unemployment, crime, poor economic situation, poverty and discrimination. The problems they associate with the EU are mainly military and political issues: military attacks, terrorism, refugees from Asia and Africa, and the possible collapse of the Euro zone. The association of one's own country with the "internal" threats and of the EU with the "external" threats might be explained by information presented in the media, as well as a tendency to focus on domestic issues and (mental and physical) disassociation from problems taking place "somewhere far away" that, many believe, are less likely to happen in Lithuania or directly affect them.

Analysis of the data shows that the perceived importance of issues is influenced by the perceived likelihood that the problem will happen (will become more prominent) in Lithuania (see Figure 3)[8].

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[8] The matrix is modelled on two survey answers. The horizontal axis indicates the perceived importance of the issue (percentage of respondents who think that the issue is very important or rather important for Lithuania). The vertical axis indicates the perceived likelihood that the problem will actually happen in Lithuania (percentage of respondents who think that there is a very high risk or a high risk that the problem will actually

Therefore, the issues of increasing unemployment, worsening economic situation and increasing crime form a distinct group of issues. People think of these problems as "more real" than real or imaginary threats emanating from migration, terrorism, cyber and military attacks, political instability or energy security. Interestingly, the problems of migration and terrorism have yet barely affected Lithuania.

Figure 3. Relation between the perceived importance of a security issue and the perceived risk of it actually happening in Lithuania in 2016.
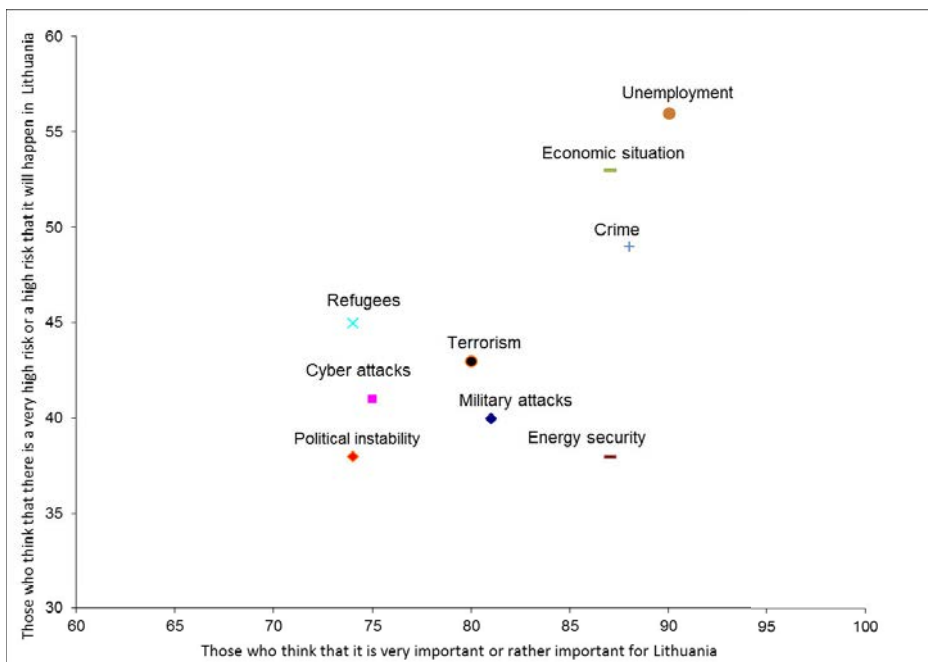
happen in Lithuania).

Source: Data of the research project "Subjective Security in a Volatile Geopolitical Context: Traits, Factors and Individual Strategies".

Thus, changing geopolitical situation in the region has influenced individual perceptions of security. If 15 years ago few people were concerned with external risks and threats, at the time of writing the importance attributed to potential military threats is much higher. For a long time, the prevailing perception was that membership of the EU and NATO are sufficient security guarantees against military threats. However, events in Ukraine, Russian imperial ambitions, and memories of the Soviet occupation have sensitised Lithuanians to potential military threats. According to our research, over a half of those polled (53%) see Russia as an unfriendly country to Lithuania. A similar proportion (49%) said that because of the events in Ukraine they feel less secure in Lithuania. It is important that this section of the respondents emphasize the importance of military threats and see a higher risk that Russia could attack Lithuania.

Intentions to defend the country

The next step in our analysis is to see what the response strategies in the face of threats are. Until now there were few comprehensive studies based on the same methodology that would reveal value orientations of Lithuanians on this question. One of the studies, "Civil Empowerment Index", has been conducted annually since 2007[9]. In recent years, as the geopolitical situation was changing and as the prospect of a military conflict seemed to become more real, several surveys on the perception of threats were conducted, e.g. the survey commissioned by the news portal Delfi.lt[10] and the

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[9] Civil Society institute. "Lietuvos visuomenės pilietinės galios indekso tyrimas 2014 m." http://www.civitas.lt/lt/?pid=74&id=78 .

[10] National survey on threats to Lithuanian sovereignty: http://sprinter.lt/site/lt/vidinis_noslide/menutop/9/home/publish/Njg5Ozk7OzA=.

research within the project "Mokslo pieva"[11]. The surveys presented respondents with similar questions, but due to differences in research methodologies the results are somewhat different.

The "Civil Empowerment Index" study, conducted by the Civil Society Institute in November 2014, revealed how the perception of threats is related to patriotism and the intention to defend one's country in case of military attack. The data showed that more than half of the Lithuanian population would defend their country in the case of war[12]. This question was included in surveys since 1990. Back then, the number of citizens who would have defended their country was highest throughout the whole period of independence (61%); later surveys revealed a diminishing commitment. Only in 2014 did the numbers rise again, almost reaching the level of 1990 (see Figure 4). These fluctuations can be explained by the perception of a real military threat. The same study also revealed that the patriotic attitude is related with civic empowerment, since those respondents who expressed a positive willingness to defend their country had a higher individual civic empowerment index[13] than those who did not have such a willingness or were undecided.

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[11] "Lietuvos gyventojų nuomonė apie Lietuvos gynybą ir saugumą". "Mokslo pieva" project report http://mokslopieva.lt/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Lietuvos%20gyventoju%20nuomone%20apie%20Lietuvos%20gynyba%20ir%20sauguma.pdf

[12] The wording of the question: "Of course we all hope that there will not be another war, but if it were to come to that, would you be willing to fight for your country?" Answer options: Yes, No, Don't know.

[13] Civic Empowerment Index is calculated annually since 2007. It is constituted of four dimensions: the first one measures the actual civic engagement, the second measures the potential engagement, i.e. how many people would take action in the case of certain political, economical or local problems. The third dimension is the perception of civic efficacy, and the fourth shows the assessment of risks associated with civic engagement.

Figure 4. Willingness to defend Lithuania in the case of war in 1990 - 2016[14].
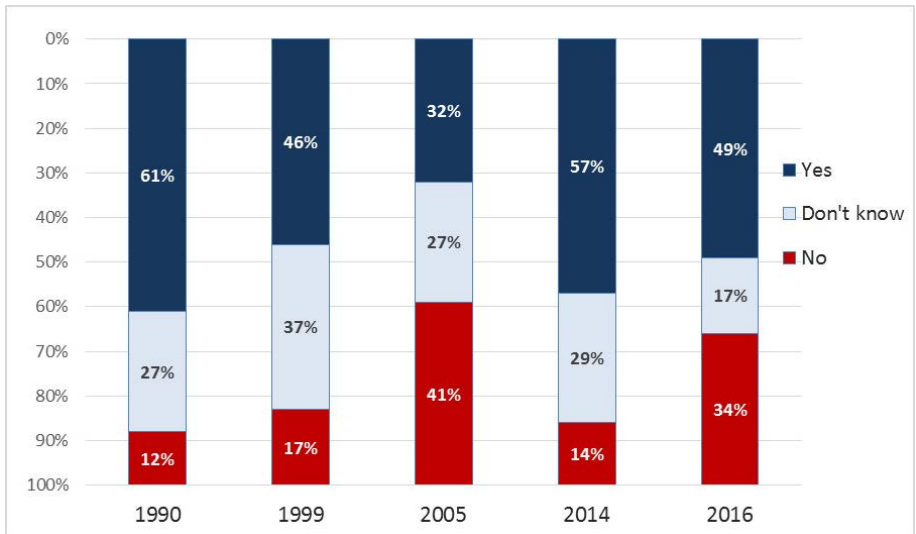
Source: European Values Survey 1990, 1999, 2005 m., Civic Empowerment Index 2014, data of the research project "Subjective Security in a Volatile Geopolitical Context: Traits, Factors and Individual Strategies", 2016.

The data of the survey conducted in February 2016 as a part of the project "Subjective Security in a Volatile Geopolitical Context: Traits, Factors and Individual Strategies" showed a lower willingness to defend the country compared to the data of 2014. Almost half of respondents said they would defend the country (49%), about one third said they would not (34%), and 17% were not sure. When interpreting this data it is necessary to take into

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[14] Civil Society institute. "Lietuvos visuomenės pilietinės galios indekso tyrimas 2014 m." http://www.civitas.lt/lt/?pid=74&id=78 . Wording of questions: "Of course we all hope that there will not be another war, but if it were to come to that, would you be willing to fight for your country?" Answer options: Yes, No, Don't know.

account that not all people would be able to actually take part in the defence due to their age, health situation, physical capabilities and other circumstances. The data shows that the group of those who would defend their country is predominantly constituted of young and middle aged men, especially those who have military-related experience (military service in the Lithuanian army, membership in the National Defence Volunteer Forces, Lithuanian Riflemen's Union, boy scout organisations and the like). Other important indicators that have a strong influence on the willingness to defend one's country are being proud of Lithuanian citizenship and patriotism[15]: 60% of those who are proud to be Lithuanian citizens and 60% of those who considered themselves patriots would defend their country in case of war (these two groups do not entirely coincide).

It is not possible to explain attitudes purely by the indicators of gender and age. Hypothetically, it could be due to a shift of attention from the Russia-Ukraine conflict to the issues of terrorism and the refugees crisis in the EU which came into the media's spotlight. It is also likely that the intention to defend one's country was affected by the reintroduction of conscription in 2015, though it must be noted that the planned number of conscripts was almost entirely filled up by volunteers, including females.

Figure 4 shows that the willingness of Lithuanians to defend their country was very low in 2005, when only 32% expressed willingness to defend it, and 41% said they would not. Possibly, one of the factors that influenced this change was Lithuania's accession to the EU and especially NATO, and the belief that they would ensure that Lithuania is never attacked again. This is confirmed by Eurobarometer data from 2005, when Lithuanians were among the few European nations that had very high

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[15] Wording of questions: "How proud are you to be a Lithuanian Citizen?" and "Are you a patriot of Lithuania?"

expectations about NATO. For example, in that year there were only three European nations that gave a clear preference to NATO concerning decisions on European defence policy: Denmark (45%), Lithuania (30%) and Poland (30%). Confidence in EU defence abilities was lower: 30% in Denmark, 20% in Poland and only 9% in Lithuania[16].

A survey commissioned by the news portal "Delfi.lt" and conducted by "Spinter tyrimai" in 2014 showed that in the case of real threat to Lithuanian sovereignty, the population pinned its hopes on military intervention by NATO. When asked if they believed that in the case of threat NATO would defend Lithuania, 44% gave a positive answer, while 35% thought that NATO would do so, but not immediately. 14% did not believe in the help of NATO, and 7% did not have an opinion[17]. The data could be interpreted in two ways. It shows a high level of confidence of Lithuanians in NATO, but it could also be a sign of doubt in the Lithuanian armed forces' ability to effectively defend the country. However, to test these assumptions, further research would be needed.

Opinions of preparedness and capacity of the country to defend against military attacks

The project "Subjective Security in a Volatile Geopolitical Context: Traits, Factors and Individual Strategies" also aimed to investigate the perception of preparedness and capacity of the country to

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[16]   Standart   Eurobarometer   64   October–November   2005. http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb64/eb64_en.pdf.
Wording of the question: "In your opinion, should decisions concerning European defence policy be taken by national governments, by NATO or by the European Union?"

[17]   National   survey   on   threats   to   Lithuanian   sovereignty: http://sprinter.lt/site/lt/vidinis_noslide/menutop/9/home/publish/Nj g5Ozk7OzA=.

defend against military attacks. Respondents were asked to evaluate the preparedness of Lithuanian society, of the national defence system, and of Lithuania together with the help of NATO. The data demonstrates the high expectations that Lithuanians placed on NATO and a rather pessimistic view of the capability to defend itself alone − 55% and 41% were critical of the capability of the society and of the Lithuanian army, respectively, to stop enemy attacks (see Figure 5).

Figure 5. Attitudes about preparedness of Lithuania to stop the attacks of the enemy[18].
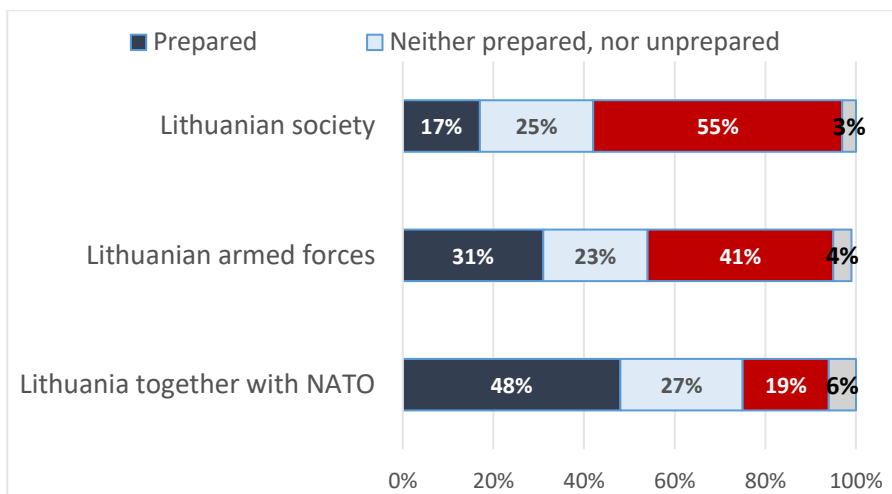
Source: data of the research project "Subjective Security in a Volatile Geopolitical Context: Traits, Factors and Individual Strategies".

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[18] Wording of the question: To what extent, in your opinion, Lithuania is prepared to stop the attacks of the enemy?"

For a long time, the prevailing idea in the public sphere was that NATO membership is a bullet-proof guarantee against military aggression, and that the USA as the biggest and militarily strongest NATO member would do everything to protect Lithuania from losing its independence. These expectations were confirmed by President George W. Bush who said in November 2002 during his visit to Lithuania: "(…) anyone who would choose Lithuania as an enemy has also made an enemy of the United States of America"[19]. These expectations filtered into defence policy, especially after the recent economic crisis. Budget assignations for national defence were reduced starting from 2010, and in 2013 constituted 0.78% of GDP. They are being increased again since 2014. The changing geopolitical situation in the region prompted a review of the priorities, and in 2016, appropriations to national defence were to equal 1.48% of GDP and continue growing.[20].

Our project also investigated where Lithuanian citizens placed responsibility for their own security and the security of the state[21]. In the first case of public security, e.g. protection against crime, we can observe long-term trends, since this question is included into surveys commissioned by the Ministry of Interior[22]. According to the data from 2007, respondents placed responsibility for their

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[19] Text of Bush's Speech in Lithuania. The New York Times. 2002. http://www.nytimes.com/2002/11/24/international/europe/24LITHU-WIRE.html

[20] Appropriations for the national defence. Ministry of National Defence of the Republic of Lithuania. http://www.kam.lt/en/budget_1065.html

[21] Respondents received two questions: "In your opinion, who is most responsible for your sense of security?"; "In your opinion, who is most responsible for the security of the Lithuanian state?" In both cases, respondents could choose up to three answers.

[22] Vileikienė E., Visuomenės saugumo jausmo ir teisėsaugos institucijų veiklos vertinimas. Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Lithuania. http://vrm.lrv.lt/uploads/vrm/documents/files/LT_versija/Viesasis_saugumas/Tyrimai/Gyventojuapklausa2010.pdf

own security on police (88%) and the population, i.e. themselves (63%). In 2010 the numbers were somewhat different: 63% and 47% respectively. The data from 2016 shows that citizens distributed the responsibility evenly: about half the respondents thought that both the police and the population had to take care of their security (see Figure 6). As indicated by surveys commissioned by the Ministry of Interior, the willingness to take more personal responsibility for one's own security is also evidenced by the increased willingness to personally take care for one's self-protection, and that of family and property (Vileikienė, 2015). It is also important, that during the last decade confidence in the police has increased dramatically, while recorded crime stabilised or even decreased, and unrecorded crime remained stable. This leads to the assumption that citizens consciously take more personal responsibility for their own security instead of expecting that "the state will take care of everything". On the one hand, people expect more from the police, yet, on the other hand, people have become active members of civil society and are less tolerant towards crimes. For example, the culture of driving has significantly improved, petty crimes have decreased, while personal responsibility for unsafe driving has increased.

Importantly, the largest part of respondents placed the responsibility for national security on the Lithuanian army (42%), and less so on the Cabinet of Ministers (37%), the State Security Department (36%), and NATO (36%).

Figure 6. Attitudes about the responsibility for the individual security and for security of the Lithuanian state in 2016.
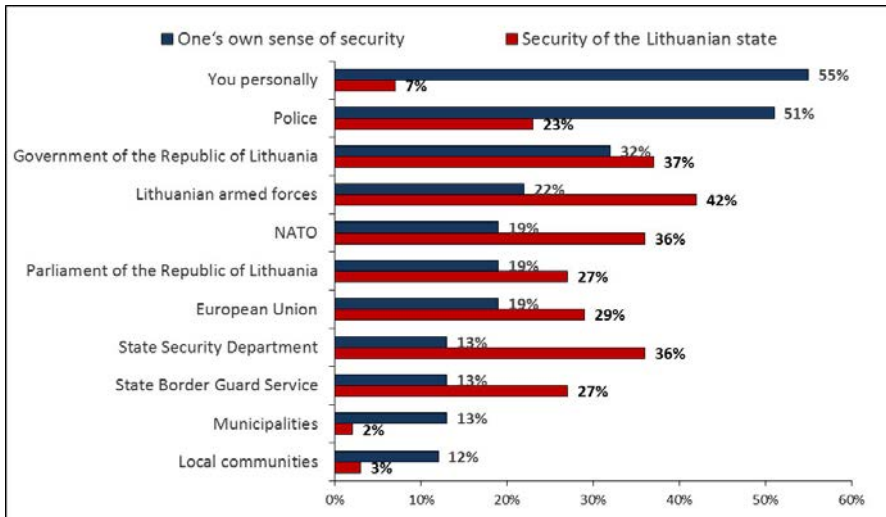
Source: data of the research project "Subjective Security in a Volatile Geopolitical Context: Traits, Factors and Individual Strategies".

Unlike what was observed a few years ago, expectations vis-à-vis NATO went down and the belief that the citizens (or the state) themselves have to take care of the defence of the country has become stronger. It is likely that this change of attitude was influenced by the visible concern of the state leaders for the defence of the country against external threats and the associated political decisions, i.e. the reintroduction of conscription and increased funding of national defence. Nevertheless, the decision to reintroduce conscription was not received unambiguously. Our data shows that about a half of respondents (51%) were positive about it, a third (33%) were negative, while the rest were neutral.

Attitudes towards the Lithuanian army and NATO

One of the issues analysed in the project was whether the changing geopolitical circumstances in the region affect social attitudes towards the national army and NATO. One of the indicators for the attitudes of population towards the army is the level of trust in it. In Lithuania, a systematic research on trust in institutions, the army amongst them, started 20 years ago.

Analysis of the trends of trust in the army among Lithuanians has to take into account some important events that might influence attitudes towards the army. For example, how trust in army changed after Lithuania became a member of the EU and NATO in 2004, after conscription was suspended in 2008, after the Russo-Georgian armed conflict in summer of the same year, the economic crisis of 2009, the occupation of Crimea and military conflict in Eastern Ukrainian in 2014, the reintroduction of conscription in Lithuania in 2015 and subsequent discussions, and a flow of news messages and expert comments on military threats. It is likely that when the geopolitical situation was relatively calm and there were no apparent external threats, people attributed less importance to the role of the army as a guarantee of national security.

Recently, the population's trust in the army is among the highest, compared to other state institutions. However, the attitude was not always that positive (see Figure 7). Data from public opinion research company "Vilmorus" shows that in 1998 the proportion of those who trusted the army and those who did not were similar − 30% and 28% respectively, while the proportion of those who chose a neutral answer was as high as 42%. The latter opinion is changeable and can shift depending on circumstances.

Figure 7. Percentage trust in the army 1998–2015 in Lithuania (blue line – trust, red line – distrust).
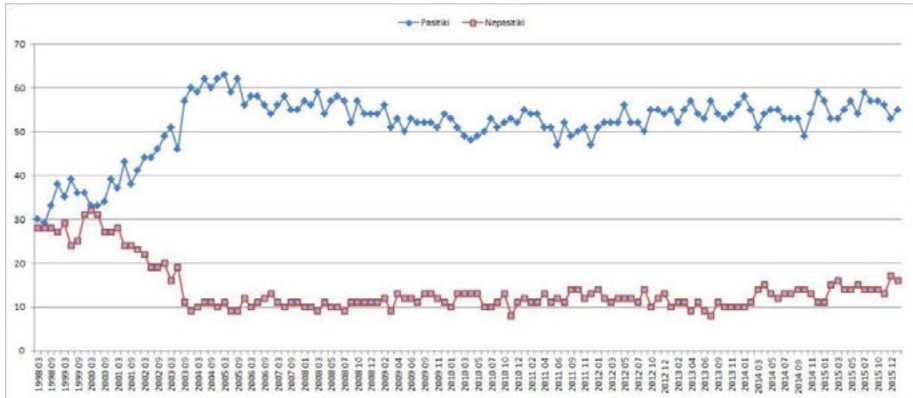
Sources: "Vilmorus" and daily "Lietuvos rytas"[23].

As the data shows that, since 2000, trust in the army started to increase gradually: in 2001, 40% said they did trust the army, about 50% in 2003, and in 2004–2005 it was about 60%. These years marked Lithuania's accession to the EU and NATO and the highest trust of Lithuanians in the army through the whole period between 1998 and 2016. A drop in trust level in October 2005 was related to the incident when a Russian fighter jet violated Lithuanian air space and crashed in its territory[24]. During that month, trust in the army dropped from 62% to 49%. Most likely, this incident raised doubts among the population in the state's

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[23]   Trust   in   army.   The   ministry   of   National   Defence.   https://www.kam.lt/lt/naujienos_874/pasitikejimas_krasto_apsauga_890.html

[24]   Delfi.   Įsimintiniausi   2005   metų   įvykiai   Lietuvoje.   http://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/lithuania/isimintiniausi-2005-metu-ivykiai-lietuvoje.d?id=8383049#ixzz3XlVS8tfl

ability to control its air space. Although later the indicators of trust gradually recovered, they never reached the level of 2004–2005.

It should be noted that the Russo-Georgian armed conflict in summer 2008 had little impact on attitudes. Since the start of the military conflict in Eastern Ukraine in 2014, trust of Lithuanians in the army fluctuated from 49% to 58%. These fluctuations of trust in the army can be related to the public reaction to the annexation of Crimea and the increased flow of news on the conflict. Trust in the Lithuanian army dropped in March 2014, during Crimean occupation, and in the autumn of the same year, when the capacity of Lithuania to stop a possible attack of the enemy was actively debated in the public.

Analysis of trust in the army also must take into account the context, i.e. attitudes towards other institutions (Parliament, Government, President, political parties, church, media, police, courts, public prosecutor's offices, firefighters, state boarder guard service, banks, education, healthcare system, social insurance system, and municipalities). Comparison of trust in these institutions in 1998–2016 shows that there were only two institutions that had very high ratings during the whole period: firefighters and, less so, the Catholic Church. The army is among the most positively evaluated institutions. In 1998–2000 the level of trust in the army was lower, but since 2004, with minor fluctuations, more than half of the population trusted it, and only 10% did not. One of the factors that may have influenced attitudes towards the army is Russian propaganda, which aims at destroying trust in the army and understating readiness to defend the country, as well as the possibility of receiving help from NATO. This propaganda is transmitted through the Russian television channels some of which can be watched in Lithuania. According to the data of our project, in 2016, 15% of Lithuanian population watched Russian TV every day, 16% – a couple of times a week, and 9% – at least once a week. Most exposed were ethnic Russians: 65% of

them said that they watched Russian TV every day, 23% – a couple of times a week, and 10% – at least once a week. None of the ethnic Russians claimed that they never watched Russian TV. Among ethnic Lithuanians 52% never watched it. Russian political leaders and the mass media transmit messages that Lithuania and other Baltic states are weak. In addition, the information war is fought on the internet in comments sections. Trolls are working hard trying to create the impression that the society is dissatisfied and misses the old good (Soviet) times, awaiting that "the friendly army of the neighbouring Russia will come to save them"[25].

Conclusions

Changes of geopolitical situation in recent years have affected the subjective security of the Lithuanian population. If 15 years ago few were concerned about the external risks (such as an occupation), currently potential military threats are perceived as much more real. Nevertheless, people continue to be very concerned about their everyday life security as well. Issues of economic security, social security and heath, as well as security against crime remain of key importance. It is also important to note that people feel the most secure in their immediate environment (e.g. family and friends), and least secure – in the farthest geographical environments.

Perception of security in the population greatly depends on the political, economic and social situation in the country, individual situations, as well as the presence of external threats to the country and coverage of these threats by the mass media. Importantly, people associate their own country with the "internal" threats (such as emigration, unemployment, crime, economic situation, poverty and discrimination), and the EU with the "external"

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[25]   Delfi.   http://pasaulis.lrytas.lt/rytai-vakarai/rusijos-interneto-trolius-triuskina-gudrus-lietuvos-elfai.htm

threats (such as terrorism, migration from the Middle East, Asia and Africa). This type of association might be explained by the information available in the media, as well as the tendency to focus on internal issues of the country and disassociate from problems that are happening "somewhere far away" and are less likely to occur in Lithuania. As the analysis shows, the perceived importance of certain security issues is influenced by the perceived likelihood that the problem will happen (will become more prominent). Increasing unemployment, worsening economic situation and growing crime are regarded by Lithuanians as most important and at the same time most likely to happen. People think of these problems as "more real" than the threats of migration, terrorism, cyber-attacks, military or terrorist attacks, political instability and energy security.

Research has shown that patriotism and intention to defend the country in case of war are closely related. Those proud being Lithuanian citizens and considering themselves patriots are much more willing to defend their country.

The highest level of willingness to defend the country in case of war was observed in 1990 (61%), while later surveys revealed a diminishing commitment (by 2005 it has dropped by almost half to 32%). The changes may be explained by the accession to NATO and especially high expectations about security guarantees provided by membership, as well as relatively stable geopolitical situation in the region at the time. The willingness to defend the country increased again in 2014 (to 57%), and dropped in 2016 (49%). It is likely that these fluctuations were influenced by the international context. The increase can be attributed to the perception of real military threat during the conflict in Eastern Ukraine. The decrease can be explained by the shift of attention in the public sphere from this conflict to the issues of terrorism and migration. It is also likely that the intention to defend one's country was affected by the reintroduction of conscription in 2015.

Research data shows that the population's trust in the national army increases in the face of military threat. During the last 15 years the army has become one of the most positively valued institutions in Lithuania. In case of military attack, Lithuanians still have high hopes and expectations of NATO and are critical about the capacity of the Lithuanian army to defend the country on its own. Nevertheless, the belief that the citizens (or the state) themselves have to take care for the defence of the country has become stronger. It is likely that the change in attitudes was influenced by the visible concern of state leaders for the defence of the country against external threats and the associated political decisions, i.e. reintroduction of conscription and the increased defence funding.

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