

Central European Journal of International and Security Studies
Volume 17, Issue 2, 2023, pp. 138-162

DOI: 10.51870/RNCC4980

Research article

Special issue

Constructing Crises in Europe: Multifaceted Securitisation in Times
of Exception

Small Powers, Geopolitical Crisis and Hypersecuritisation: Latvia and the Effects of Russia's Second War in Ukraine

Māris Andžāns

Rīga Stradiņš University, Latvia, ORCID: 0000-0002-4695-3929, corresponding
address: maris.andzans@rsu.lv

Abstract

This article presents a case where securitisation of one state in another increased dramatically and exponentially. The scale and intensity of securitisation were unprecedented, as were the range of securitisation actors, and the tone of language of speech acts and nonverbal securitisation acts. This case in question is the securitisation of Russia in Latvia over Russia's war in Ukraine starting in 2022. Although Russia was securitised by its smaller neighbour before the war, the sudden explosion of securitisation in 2022 differs from any securitisation in recent decades there. Securitisation of Russia is evaluated within the margins of the hypersecuritisation subconcept that purports securitisation beyond the 'normal' level, characterised by exaggeration of threats and excessive countermeasures. This article offers a reformulation of the subconcept, omitting the negative connotation built into the initial definition, as well as addresses the transition from securitisation to hypersecuritisation.

Keywords: hypersecuritisation, securitisation, Latvia, Russia, Ukraine

First published online on 21 June 2023, issue published on 21 June 2023

Introduction

Insecurity is an intrinsic feature of almost any small power. Small powers in the vicinity of (a) hostile great power(s) tend to feel permanently insecure. Geopolitical crises, even if not directly involving small powers themselves, tend to exacerbate their insecurity. The securitisation theory of the Copenhagen School provides a set of tools to untangle and explain the formation of security issues. The original normative stance of the securitisation approach provides that a securitised issue is negative per se since, according to the approach, securitisation is the inability to solve a problem as a part of normal political practice (Buzan, Wæver & de Wilde 1998: 29). But what should small powers do in a geopolitical crisis with existential threats looming? Should they desecuritize an objective existential threat for normative reasons? Or should they securitize and hypersecuritize to invoke emergency measures to protect themselves?

Russia's war in Ukraine and its effects in Latvia, another neighbour of Russia, provide a peculiar case for analysis. Although Russia has also been (hyper)securitized in many other countries in the West since the war broke out, Russia was already a constant subject of securitisation in Latvia since the latter regained its independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. Before Russia started the full-scale war in Ukraine in 2022, it was a common view – not only in Russia but also in the West – that Latvia was a Russophobe and paranoid, and that it unnecessarily securitized and over-securitized Russia.

Given the painful history of Latvia – the loss of independence to the Soviet Union in 1940 and the ordeals that followed during the five-decade occupation – permanent securitisation of Russia did not come without fair reasoning. Furthermore, the securitisation of Russia by Latvia interacted with consistent countersecuritisation. Over the three decades, Russia mostly securitized Latvia over the alleged abuse of Russian speakers, the supposed glorification of Nazism and revision of history, and the military threats Latvia as a member of NATO presumably poses to Russia. Thus, the securitisation following the war in Ukraine was not new, but rather a new phase of the previous securitisation. Events after 24 February 2022, when Russia started a full-scale war in Ukraine, went far above any intensity of securitisation witnessed in Latvia in recent decades.

Another aspect of the peculiarity of the Latvian case is the severe impact of the war on the Latvian state and society. This was the largest geopolitical and societal shock in the recent history of the country. If in most other countries where the war led to significant levels of securitisation, direct threat from Russia was a distant prospect, in the Latvian case it was perceived as real and existential – if Ukraine were to fall, Latvia could be among the next victims of Rus-

sia. Therefore, the following (hyper)securitisation was not only a top-down but also a grassroots process. Meanwhile, the significant number of Russian speakers in Latvia further complicated the picture since sympathies of a notable part of them remained with Russia while other Russian speakers were confused between competing loyalties.

The following research questions will guide the article. First, how did Russia's war in Ukraine change the pattern and intensity of Russia's securitisation in Latvia? Second, how did securitisation of Russia transcend the level of normal securitisation to hypersecuritisation? And third, how can this transcendence between securitisation and hypersecuritisation contribute to the development of the hypersecuritisation (sub-)concept?

To address the research questions, first, the hypersecuritisation subconcept will be explored along with the main tenets of securitisation theory. Hypersecuritisation was developed in a slightly different context – the American foreign and security policy in the wake of the 21st century (Buzan 2004). Later it was re-considered in the context of cyber security (Hansen & Nissenbaum 2009). It has also been applied with regard to other empirical issues (for example, Saeed 2016; Lacy & Prince 2018; Tittensor, Hoffstaedter & Possamai 2020; Stivas & Sliwinski 2020; Dunn Cavelti & Egloff 2021; Liu 2021). Notwithstanding this, the subconcept provides both a useful framework in this case, as well as it leaves a space for progress in understanding large-scale securitisation processes.

From there, the analysis will immerse in the case of securitisation of Russia in Latvia over the six months from February 2022 to August 2022. This part of the article will begin with the status quo of securitisation of Russia in Latvia prior to the war, thus trying to lay ground to delineate between the 'normal' and 'hyper' securitisation. The article will then explore the escalation of securitisation acts and their reception by the securitisation audience – the domestic society. The remaining share of the empirical part will follow the requested emergency measures to counter the existential threat and their implementation. Both regarding the main securitisation processes and emergency measures, the situation before 24 February will be summarised to provide a comparative perspective of the situation before and after.

Given the scale of securitisation processes, including the large number of securitisation actors before the war and, furthermore, following it, only the main securitisation processes and actors will be excelled. To trace these, the analysis will rest on official documents, statements of authoritative politicians, sociological studies and reports from the most notable media outlets of Latvia.

To conclude the introduction, this article enriches the body of publications on the response of small countries to the war in Ukraine and more specifically on Latvia's response and the evolution of its defence and security policy. Given

the time normally needed for elaborating academic papers, most reflections of the Latvian case have so far focused purely on the empirical aspects of the events, for example Bergmane 2022, 2023; Andžāns 2022a; Džatkoviča 2023a. Latvian security and defence policy, which has been inextricably entangled with Russia, has been broadly studied. Studies since the first Russo-Ukrainian War in 2014 include Bērziņš 2014, 2018, 2022; Rostoks & Vanaga 2016; Rostoks 2018, 2022; Bērziņa 2018; Vanaga & Rostoks 2019; Andžāns & Bērziņa-Čerenkova 2021; Andžāns & Sprūds 2021; Banka & Bussmann 2022; Džatkoviča 2023b. This publication will elaborate on the developments of Latvian security and defence policy, as well as Latvia-Russia relations after the war. Thus, it will offer a comparison of the situation before and after 24 February 2022.

Also, a topic broadly studied is the issue of Russian speakers in Latvia, a notable aspect of the Latvian domestic and security policy, with both explicit and implicit linkage to Russia. The body of research include Dilāns & Zepa 2015; Českin 2015; Kaprāns & Saulītis 2017; Kaprāns & Mieriņa 2019; Kaprāns & Juzefovičs 2019; Andžāns 2021; Pupčenoks, Rostoks & Mieriņa 2022; Bērziņa, Krūmiņš, Šiliņš & Andžāns 2023. This article will consider the so-called Russian speakers' issue in Latvia in the post-2022 environment, in particular by comparing the responses to the war in Ukraine among Russian speakers and Latvian speakers.

Hypersecuritisation: going exponentially beyond the 'normal' levels of securitisation

A concept, or rather a subconcept, that deals with securitisation processes beyond the 'normal' levels of securitisation is hypersecuritisation. The securitisation theory itself was created by Wæver in the late 1980s and early 1990s (for example, Wæver 1989; 1995). Since then, the theory has been further advanced by Wæver and his co-authors (most notably culminating in Buzan, Wæver & de Wilde 1998), as well as by many other scholars. Over more than three decades, the theory has been extensively debated and enriched. It has been applied in countless empirical cases covering all five security sectors of the Copenhagen School, the military, the environmental, the political, the societal and the economic.¹ The basic offer of the theory remains largely intact – a framework for tracing and analysing formation of security issues, that is, how ordinary issues are transformed in security issues, as well as the opposite process on how security issues are transformed to non-security issues.

Hypersecuritisation, ostensibly built on the main premises of securitisation theory, was coined by Buzan in 2004 as a part of his assessment of American foreign policy in the early years of the 21st century. Buzan presented this (sub-)concept as an element of the American exceptionalism, alongside unilateralism and Mani-

¹ Security sectors as defined and later advanced by Buzan (1983; 1991), and most specifically elaborated by Buzan, Wæver & de Wilde (1998).

cheanism (Buzan 2004: 177). In this context, he defined hypersecuritisation as 'a tendency both to exaggerate threats and to resort to excessive countermeasures' arising from an exaggerated sense of insecurity and anticipation of a high level of security (Buzan 2004: 172). He also went as far as to mark an equation between hypersecuritisation and 'excesses of paranoia' (Buzan 2004: 193) thus underlining the imbalance of threats and response with which the United States responded. Thus, in Buzan's formulation the (sub-)concept bears a negative connotation.

Hansen and Nissenbaum reconsidered hypersecuritisation in 2009 while assessing cyber security as a distinct sector along with the classical five sectors of the Copenhagen School. Hansen and Nissenbaum abolished the 'exaggeration' aspect from Buzan's definition to avoid the alleged 'objectivist ring' (considering securitisation 'as an essentially intersubjective process' (Buzan, Wæver & de Wilde 1998: 30)). Henceforth, they applied the (sub-)concept to the realm of cyber security 'to identify the striking manner in which cyber security discourse hinges on multi-dimensional cyber disaster scenarios that pack a long list of severe threats into a monumental cascading sequence *and* the fact that neither of these scenarios has so far taken place' (Hansen & Nissenbaum 2009: 1164). By leaving out 'exaggeration' from the definition, Hansen and Nissenbaum focused more on the extensive scale and multiple levels of securitisation processes.

Henceforth, hypersecuritisation has not received widespread attention in academic literature. It has been used in studies related to cyber security (Lacy & Prince 2018; Dunn Cavelti & Egloff 2021), religion and minorities (Saeed 2016; Tittensor, Hoffstaedter & Possamai 2020), and health (Stivas & Sliwinski 2020; Liu 2022). To a different extent in each case, these authors utilised the subconcept to explain the widespread securitisations of the respective issues to levels beyond the 'normal'. However, the issue of the borderline between the 'normal' levels of securitisation and 'hyper-securitisation' has so far been omitted.

Lack of considerable attention to hypersecuritisation is likely to be related to the normative stance of the 'classical' securitisation theory whereby 'security should be seen as negative, as a failure to deal with issues as normal politics' and 'desecuritization is the optimal long-range option . . .' (Buzan, Wæver & de Wilde 1998: 29). That in turn is related to the 'objectivist ring' invoked by Hansen and Nissenbaum as a reason for dropping 'exaggeration' from Buzan's definition of hypersecuritisation (Hansen & Nissenbaum 2009: 1164). In the words of the initial formulation of securitisation theory, 'the issue becomes a security issue – not necessarily because a real existential threat exists but because the issue is presented as such a threat' (Buzan, Wæver & de Wilde 1998: 24). For that reason, the issue of objectivity of threats was left out of the initial approach to securitisation. In other words, the authors were not investigating whether threats

to referent object are real or not (Buzan, Wæver & de Wilde 1998: 204). With that, however, the theory did not rule out the existence of real threats; Wæver has admitted the existence of 'lots of real threats' (Wæver 2011: 472). Rather, it emphasised preference to avoid securitisation where the respective issues could have been solved as a part of the normal politics.

The approach of this article omits the negative connotation built into the definition, that is, that hypersecuritisation as such is negative. Rather, securitisation and hypersecuritisation might be necessary in certain cases.² Similarly to Hansen & Nissenbaum (2009: 1164), this approach drops 'exaggeration' from the definition, though for a different reason. Hypersecuritisation can indeed be a result of an exaggerated sense of insecurity and thus can result in exaggeration of threats, but it should not be taken as a rule. Similarly, the 'excessive' is also dropped from Buzan's definition since response in exaggerated situations can indeed be excessive but in other situations seemingly excessive measures can be in fact proportional to the threats. Thus, the definition of hypersecuritisation proposed here: (a) securitisation process(es) advancing significantly beyond the previous levels of securitisation in terms of securitisation intensity and the number of securitising actors.

The adjusted definition does not yet touch the issue of the borderline between the 'normal' levels of securitisation and 'hyper-securitisation'. This gap will be further addressed following the review of the empirical issues central to this article.

From securitisation of hypersecuritisation of Russia in Latvia in 2022

Russia was already a permanent subject of securitisation in Latvia prior to 24 February 2022. Since the renewal of Latvia's independence in 1991 securitisation of Russia has gone through ups and downs, despite Russia being permanently seen as the main source of risks to the national security.

Over the three decades securitisation actors from Latvia securitised Russia as a source of existing and potential existential threats – as a potential military invader, as a cyber threat, as an unreliable economic & energy partner, as a threat to the societal cohesiveness, political system and sovereignty. The main surges of securitisation of Russia in Latvia were in 2008 (Russia invaded Georgia), in 2012 (a (failed) referendum on assigning the Russian language a state language status held in Latvia) and 2014 (Russia occupied Crimea and started the first war in Ukraine).

Major securitisations of Russia also intertwined with periods of desecuritisation and nonsecuritisation: the latter included the early 2000s as Latvia sought

² As Buzan, Wæver & de Wilde themselves put it, '[i]n some cases securitization of issues is unavoidable, as when states are faced with an implacable or barbarian aggressor' (Buzan, Wæver & de Wilde 1998: 29).

membership to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Union (EU), while Russia was relatively weak domestically and internationally, and seen as a partner in the West; also, starting in 2009 when the United States and Russia tried to reset their relations, in that light Latvia tried to pragmatise and economise its ties to its eastern neighbour.³

The pre-2022 perception of Russia and its securitisation is well characterised by the basic national security and defence documents (Saeima 2019, 2020). They clearly earmarked Russia as the main source of risks to Latvia. According to the National Security Concept which mentions Russia by name on 65 occasions, Russia's 'employed aggressive security policy in the Baltic region is considered the main source of threats to the national security of Latvia'. Russia was securitised in the document over military threats, intelligence activities, cyber-threats, internal security risks as well as its challenges in the information space (Saeima 2019).

Escalation in quantity and language of securitisation acts

Securitisation of Russia in Latvia was already heightened from the autumn and winter of 2021, when Russia started to amass its armed forces near the Ukrainian border. Nevertheless, from 24 February 2022 onward, the securitisation acts of Russia increased exponentially to the level that it is not possible to trace them all. Also, the number of non-state securitising actors and their securitisation efficiency rose sharply. For this reason, the selection of securitising acts and actors henceforth is partly arbitrary, nonetheless striving to identify the most significant ones.

Institutions and politicians led the securitisation of Russia immediately. On that day, the Latvian Parliament adopted a resolution in which it 'strongly condemns the military aggression of the Russian Federation and the full-scale invasion of Ukraine' (Saeima 2022a: 1). The president of Latvia used similar words and demanded 'the harshest possible sanctions to punish Russia and send it into isolation' (Levits 2022a).

In an escalation of atrocities committed by Russia, Latvia raised the tone. In April, the Parliament adopted a statement in which it 'acknowledges that the Russian Federation is currently committing genocide against the people of Ukraine' (Saeima 2022b: 2). In August, the Parliament went further and denoted Russia 'a state sponsor of terrorism' and asked other like-minded states to follow suit (Saeima 2022c: 2). Though these declarations were of limited practical impact, the stigmatised connotation of both genocide and terrorism were strong signals in the escalation of security speech. Politicians and civil servants consistently amplified these messages in domestic and international formats.

3 For a more detailed analysis of Latvia-Russia securitisation and desecuritisation processes see, for example, analysis of Andžāns & Bērziņa-Čerenkova (2021).

Russia's aggression became the dominant story in the media. Extra editions and special broadcasts were devoted to the war in Ukraine, and the same topic occupied large parts of ordinary broadcasts. The media themselves became co-securitising and securitising actors. They themselves set the agenda and not through requests or persuasion of state institutions. What was also different from previous surges of Russia's securitisation was that the most prominent and influential media went beyond rather neutral designations of Russia like 'aggressor' or 'invader' to denote Russia and Russians regularly as 'occupiers', 'Russia occupiers' and 'Russian occupiers' (for example, Delfi (2022a), LSM.lv (2022a), tv3.lv (2022), TVNET (2022a)). Though the intensity of securitisation of Russia in media decreased towards the end of the first six months of the war, the issue remained permanently high in the media agenda.

While it is difficult to quantify the extent of securitisation of Russia in society, it was endemic across the society, bar parts of the Russian speaking communities (see the next subchapter for the ethnolinguistic divisions in this regard), in everyday interactions in the physical space and online. The most visible and widespread acts of defiance and support for Ukraine became Ukrainian flags flying from windows, balconies and flagpoles, along with virtual Ukrainian flags displayed on social networks. Although there is no study to validate it, possibly in Riga and elsewhere in Latvia Ukrainian flags outnumbered those of Latvia. This became the most visible way of visual securitisation, whereby support to Ukraine is seen as defiance to Russia.

Reception of securitisation by the audience

From the widespread securitisation of Russia by members of the society, it is quite clear that the acceptance of Russia's securitisation was largely successful. Countless members of the society became minisecuritising actors themselves by expressing their views in the physical and electronic information space domestically and internationally.

That securitisation of Russia has been largely successful was also demonstrated by studies of the societal opinion. In July 2022, only 20% of respondents of a nationally representative survey held a positive view of Russia while 66% had a negative view of it, compared to 48% positive and 37% negative a year earlier (Kaktiņš 2022).⁴ In a comparative perspective among different countries, results from two other consecutive nationally representative sociological surveys in May and July 2022 identified Russia as the unfriendliest country among respondents in Latvia (Andžāns 2022b).

4 The same study offers data on Russia since 2008. The peak of positive attitudes towards Russia in Latvia was in 2010/2011: 64%/63% positive and 25%/24% negative. Even in July 2014, after the first war in Ukraine, the views of Russia were balanced: 45% positive and 43% negative (Kaktiņš 2022).

However, given the ethnic composition of Latvia, the picture in Latvia is more complex. Predominantly resulting from the Soviet occupation, a significant portion of Latvia's population is of Eastern Slavic background (i.e. 24.2% Russians, 3.1% Belarussians and 2.2% Ukrainians) (National Statistical System of Latvia 2022).⁵ A significant portion of Russian speakers, also including Russified non-Russians, have maintained close links to the so-called 'Russian world' by following Russian state media (Bērziņa & Zupa 2020: 19-20) where the image of Latvia and the West at large has been negative and even hostile. Thus, also their views on foreign and security policy issues have often differed from the Latvian official and mainstream societal discourse.

The differences are also visible in other sociological surveys conducted during the first six months of the war. A nationally representative survey in February found that 76.3% of all respondents do not support Russia's action in Ukraine, although this number was only 51.6% among Russian speakers, compared to 92.6% among Latvian speakers (Factum 2022). In June, another poll delivered similar findings, according to which 73% of all respondents condemned Russia; however, only 40% of Russian speakers condemned it, while the number was much higher among Latvian speakers – 93% (LSM.lv 2022b). These data support the claim that acceptance of Russia as an existential threat and the respective emergency measures can be safely attributed to a convincing majority of Latvian speakers but ostensibly not to most of Latvia's Russian speakers.

Remaining on the same issue, one should also note incidents of vandalising Ukrainian flags and cars with Ukrainian numberplates, attacking supporters of Ukraine as well as openly supporting Russia's war and alike. During the first five months of the war, Latvian police initiated 112 criminal proceedings and at least 250 administrative cases over such incidents (Delfi 2022b). Presumably, these incidents were mainly caused by Russian speakers. Such incidents demonstrate the enduring affection of a significant portion of Russian speakers to the narratives of Russia. This is despite Latvia having blocked all television channels registered in Russia, along with scores of websites related to Russia (National Electronic Mass Media Council 2022a, 2022b). Therefore, these incidents cannot be credibly attributed to influence operations of Russia after the war because Russia's influence in the Latvian information space was significantly curtailed by the aforementioned bans.

5 Non-Latvians are commonly referred to as Russian speakers. While this category cannot be treated in black and white categories, it is widely referred to as such in political science and sociology studies (for example, Bērziņa and Zupa 2020; Factum 2022; LSM 2022b).

Emergency measures demanded and executed to address the existential threat

As Russia was a frequent object of securitisation before 2022, so were various measures to counter the threats emanating from Russia. The most notable were, however, aimed at lessening the vulnerabilities of Latvia itself: by increasing defence expenditure (from less than 1% of the gross domestic product in 2014 to 2% and more since 2018 (NATO 2022a: 8)) and thus laying ground for improved defence capabilities; similarly by reducing risks to the national security in various non-military national security sectors, especially the border security, counter-intelligence and the safeguarding of information space; by requesting NATO to, first, deploy allied forces to Latvia (the Canadian-led multi-national NATO battlegroup was inaugurated in 2017) and then for expanding the allied presence. Also on the international stage, Latvian officials and politicians advocated continuation of sanctions imposed on Russia following the first war in Ukraine in 2014.

The scale and intensity of emergency measures demanded after 24 February 2022 significantly escalated. Although typically state institutions take the lead role in demanding legitimisation of emergency measures to tackle an existential threat, Latvian society and private sector representatives acted not only as securitising and functional actors but also as responders and executors of the measures. Many measures went beyond what would normally be at stake when another country is invaded.

Measures to support Ukraine and Ukrainians

Immediately after the war broke out, Latvia securitised Russia (and advocated Ukraine) in different international formats, including NATO, the EU, the Council of Europe and the United Nations. In all these organisations, Latvia along with Lithuania, Estonia and Poland were among the lead securitisers.⁶ In NATO, it was condemnation of Russia and advocacy of military support to Ukraine ('as Russian aggression continues we must double down our efforts to provide more assistance to Ukraine' (Rinkēvičs 2022a)). At the margins of the EU, it was the condemnation and sanctions, and material support to Ukraine ('We should not give in to Russian blackmail but double down our support to Ukraine and sanctions against Russia' (Rinkēvičs 2022b)). In the Council of Europe, it was condemnation of Russia and a demand of the eventual exclusion from the organisation ('Aggressive and revanchist #Russia that violates human rights and international law does not have [a] place in the Council of Europe or any other international organisation' (Rinkēvičs 2022c)). In the United Nations, it was condemnation of Russia ('If Russia hates this organisation so much, maybe it should leave or be expelled' (Rinkēvičs 2022d)).

6 The Latvian minister of foreign affairs is henceforth quoted to illustrate the language and emergency measures requested on the international stage.

During the period discussed in this article, Latvia also provided direct military support to Ukraine worth at least 200 million euros and an additional 0.9 million euros worth of assistance in responding to Ukrainian requests (Cabinet of Ministers of Latvia 2022), being one of the leading contributors to Ukraine measured against its gross domestic product (Trebesch, Antezza, Bushnell et al. 2023: 31). Although Latvia itself is a small military power and thus highly vulnerable to Russia, it donated military helicopters, self-propelled howitzers and portable air defence systems, among other military equipment. The assistance was not purely a sign of compassion and solidarity but also self-defence. Effective Ukrainian resistance and eventual victory in the war are seen as a precondition to deter Russia from aggression toward Latvia.

Finally, it was support for Ukrainians both in Ukraine and refugees that had reached Latvia. In the first weeks of the war, ordinary people organised transport from the Ukrainian/Polish border and brought humanitarian aid to the border. While Latvia had no recent history of taking in significant numbers of refugees and the general reluctance to admit predominantly economic migrants from the more distant parts of the globe was well known (for example, United Nations Refugee Agency 2018), the war in Ukraine changed this overnight.⁷ More than 36 thousand Ukrainian refugees were registered in Latvia in August (Delfi 2022c); the de facto number was probably even higher. For comparison, slightly less than 42 thousand Ukrainians lived in Latvia prior to the war (National Statistical System of Latvia 2022). At least a third of them were provided shelter by the government (Cabinet of Ministers of Latvia 2022), along with many other forms of basic assistance.

Measures to improve national self-defence capabilities

Many emergency measures requested were related to the national defence. In April, the Latvian Parliament approved the increase in defence expenditure to 2.5% of the gross domestic product (or more than 1.1 billion euros) from 2025, up from the current minimum target of 2% (Saeima 2022d). The reason was clearly articulated by the Parliament – it was the ‘military aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine and the growing geopolitical risks’ (Saeima 2022e). Among military upgrades, Latvia announced the construction of a new military base (shooting range) and the intention to acquire advanced American-made multiple rocket launchers.

The most polarising and most debated proposal presented was to gradually reinstate conscription from 2023, named as the State Defence Service: ‘each citi-

7 This change, though, has been questioned by Amnesty International (2022), which has accused Latvia of being hostile toward migrants from other regions of the world who tried to cross the border from Belarus where they were lured in by Belarussian authorities.

zen must take part in the defence of the state because this involvement is one of the most significant guarantees that Latvia would not face Russia's aggression' (Ministry of Defence of Latvia 2022a). Conscription in Latvia was abolished in 2007 and was not reinstated after the first Russian war against Ukraine in 2014, as Lithuania did in 2015. The polarisation lies in the fact that conscription pertained to negative associations with the Soviet model of conscription – such as violence among and against conscripts and a 'lost year of the life.' Also, the State Defence Service will essentially introduce a new social contract between the state and the society, whereas most male citizens will have to devote a year to the state defence.

Being a small power and a member of NATO, Latvia is highly dependent on the military support of allies. Increasing the number of allied troops and armament deployed to Latvia became another priority. Although part of NATO since 2004, only the first war in Ukraine in 2014 pushed NATO allies to establish a modest military presence in the Baltic states. Now, the task was to convince allies of a more formidable and long-term military presence to deter Russia. In the words of the president of Latvia, 'Russian invasion of Ukraine has drastically changed the security environment in Europe. . . . NATO must significantly reinforce its presence in the Eastern Flank, especially the Baltics' (Levits 2022b). Subsequently, at the NATO Madrid Summit in June 2022, NATO leaders agreed, among other things, to expand the NATO-led battalion unit to a brigade level (NATO 2022b). Even before that decision, several NATO allies sent reinforcements to the Baltics. Denmark, for example, had already deployed around 750 soldiers to Latvia starting in April 2022 (Ministry of Defence of Latvia 2022b).

Measures to improve the non-military aspects of national security

Latvia proceeded with numerous other measures that were intended both to punish Russia and to limit its influence in Latvia. On the diplomatic front, in April, Latvia decided to close two Russian Federation consulates in the country (in Liepāja and Daugavpils), as well as to expel its employees thus standing 'in solidarity with Ukraine in its fight against the unprovoked and unjustified military aggression and war started by Russia' (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Latvia 2022). In August, Latvia stopped issuing visas to most citizens of the Russian Federation (Embassy of Latvia in Russia 2022), although visa issuing had already been significantly scaled down earlier. Additionally, Russian citizens who entered Latvia with valid visas were subjected to increased scrutiny.

On the basis of risks to the national security, Latvia blocked all television channels registered in Russia (80 in total), along with scores of websites related to Russia (131 in total) (National Electronic Mass Media Council 2022a, 2022b). At the same time, Latvia became a hub of Russian independent media in exile and

Western media offices previously based in Russia, for example, the best known Russian independent station TV Rain started broadcasting from Riga in July 2022⁸ and 247 foreign journalists, including those from Russia, received Latvian visas up to August 2022 (Delfi 2022d).

State security authorities, most notably the State Security Service, investigated domestic cases of, presumably Russian speakers', hate speech against Ukraine and Ukrainians (26 criminal proceedings by the beginning of August) (State Security Service of Latvia 2022a). The service also detained a person accused of 'acting in the interests of Russia' (State Security Service of Latvia 2022b).

Another target for countermeasures was the historical heritage of the Soviet Union and the 'Russian World', mainly associated with almost five decades of occupation. In June, a new law 'On prohibition and demolition of objects glorifying Soviet and Nazi regimes on the territory of the Republic of Latvia' was adopted. In particular, it ordered the demolition by November 15 of the most controversial Soviet era monument in Riga: 'It was easier to live alongside such objects until February of this year but not any more. . . . Russia's image as liberator in the world has been ruined and transformed as aggressor' (Saeima 2022f). In addition, local governments renamed streets carrying names related to the Soviet occupation. Additionally, a section of the street that hosts the Russian embassy was renamed 'Ukraine's independence street'.

To limit Russia's soft power, in April the Latvian Parliament banned Latvian sportsmen and sportswomen from participating in any sport competition in Russia and Belarus (the latter allowed Russia to use its territory and provided support for Russia's invasion of Ukraine), partly because 'one of the directions of Russia's use of "soft power" is sport' (Saeima 2022g). Subsequently, uproars emerged in the news that some sportsmen prefer to represent Russian sports clubs at the expense of being barred from representing Latvia henceforth.

Finally, on a more practical note, Latvia strived to accelerate its energy independence from Russia, one of the last sectors where the role of Russia remained meaningful. Latvia was largely dependent on natural gas deliveries from Russia. Although already conceptually agreed earlier, in July the Latvian Parliament banned the import of natural gas from Russia as of 1 January 2023 (Saeima 2022h).⁹ Among measures to ensure alternative supplies, the intention to construct a liquified natural gas terminal in Latvia was approved (Saeima 2022i). Meanwhile, the increase in prices of natural gas and electricity and dependent commodities and services became one of the main factors of concern for most members of society.

8 Later, in December 2022, the broadcasting licence of TV Rain was revoked since the media outlet did not distance from the narratives of the Russian state sufficiently (National Electronic Mass Media Council 2022c), and the channel ceased its operations from Latvia.

9 In the same month, Russia's Gazprom announced that it terminated natural gas export to Latvia, similar to other EU countries.

Measures initiated and taken by the private sector and society

Private companies came up with their own initiatives in support of Ukraine and in defiance of Russia. A day after the invasion of Ukraine started, the largest grocery chains announced that they would withdraw products made in Russia from the shelves (Delfi 2022e). A platform called 'Entrepreneurs for Peace' raised almost 3 million euros for assistance to Ukraine (Entrepreneurs for Peace 2022). In addition, Ukrainian flags were a common sight on flagpoles and buildings, as well as in temporary logos of private companies.

Although public demonstrations are generally atypical for Latvia, the war altered this trend. In the early weeks of the war, frequent protests were held at the Russian Embassy, while support was expressed at the nearby Ukrainian Embassy. Among the highlights, in March, the largest march in recent decades called 'Together with Ukraine! Together against Putin!' gathered around 30 thousand people (Delfi 2022f). In May, several thousand people joined a march in Riga and the following concert 'On abolishing the Soviet heritage', organised by members of civil society. The organisers of the event, among other things, demanded to 'demolish all monuments and memorial signs of USSR or Russia's occupation rule' and, controversially, 'the expulsion from Latvia and stripping of citizenship of non-loyal persons to the Latvian state' (TVNET 2022b).

Various other donation campaigns were launched to help Ukraine and Ukrainians. More than 5 million euros was donated by members of society to the defence of Ukraine and a similar amount in humanitarian assistance, including more than 400 sport utility vehicles delivered by the so-called 'Twitter convoy' (Cabinet of Ministers of Latvia 2022).

A notable donation campaign aimed at Latvia was also launched. 'Demolition of the occupation monument', aimed at financing the demolition of the best-known Soviet-era monument in Riga, collected more than a quarter million euros consisting of almost 18 thousand separate donations (Ziedot.lv 2022). Subsequently, the Parliament decided to demolish the monument. It was torn down in August 2022.

Finally, Latvian volunteers also went to fight for Ukraine, including a member of the Latvian Parliament. There was also a surge in interest in joining the National Guard, a voluntary force formally part of the National Armed Forces. In March, 1.8 thousand people applied to join the organisation, almost ten times more than the month before (LSM.lv 2022c).

Conclusions: from securitisation to hypersecuritisation

Although before the second Russian war on Ukraine, Russia was rather often securitised in Latvia, it was mostly done so by security-related and other state institutions and politicians at a low or moderate intensity. Since February 2022,

the range of securitising actors has widened significantly to include a variety of both state-related actors and nonstate actors, from media and private companies to members of the civil society. Russia was securitised as an existential threat across various security sectors. The escalation of language in securitisation acts went beyond what had been normally applied to other countries to include 'genocide', 'terrorism', and 'occupiers' in everyday public deliberations. As a result, Russia was securitised and perceived as a predominant existential threat to the Latvian state and society, although some parts of the Russian-speaking community did not share this perception.

In an external constellation, the Latvian case was also part of the regional and global securitisation of Russia. Latvia, as a state, through its formal representatives and ordinary people, became part of the securitisation of Russia at the international level. Latvia and the other two Baltic states were among the most belligerent and active in this regard.

Countermeasures to deal with Russia as an existential threat went beyond what was previously seen. These measures included, first, targeting Russia and its citizens: requesting sanctions and international isolation; designating Russia a state sponsor of terrorism and complicit in genocide; closing two Russian consulates and expelling their staff; limiting entry of Russian citizens to Latvia. Second, it included measures aimed at protecting the national security of Latvia: banning television channels registered in Russia and websites of Russian media and institutions; investigations and detentions related to support for Russia; banning import of Russian natural gas and looking for alternatives; increasing the national defence budget and restoring conscription. Third, it included measures aimed at supporting Ukraine and thus preventing Russia from future military adventures possibly in the Baltics: military and humanitarian support to Ukraine and Ukrainians; international advocacy of Ukraine via international organisations, especially the EU and NATO. Finally, countermeasures, clearly initiated and referred to Russia's war in Ukraine, but not of imminent and existential character, were the de-Sovietisation and de-Russification initiatives. The most well-known were the demolition of Soviet-era monuments and renaming of streets.

In terms of hypersecuritisation, there is no doubt about the exponential increase of Russia's securitisation in Latvia, in other words, going beyond the 'normal' levels of securitisation. The number and intensity of securitisation acts and modes, as well as the number and intensity of securitisation actors was dazzling. Looking from the specific case study addressed in this article, it would be completely illogical for Latvia (or Lithuania, Estonia, Poland and others) not to (hyper-)securitise Russia in the respective circumstances: a much larger and mightier country has launched a brutal war on another neighbour; the invader

has previously invaded and occupied the smaller country (the referent object), along with others; the invader levelled similar accusations to the recently invaded country as it did against the smaller country.

Similarly, the countermeasures were also largely appropriate since they were proportional to the potential existential threat to the state and the population, and the benefits largely outweighed minuses. Some measures might raise questions of the direct link with existential threats to the national security, for example, restricting Russian television channels and websites, de-Sovietisation and de-Russification initiatives. These were presented as a direct reaction to the actions of Russia in Ukraine and as a continuation of previous efforts. What previously stood out of the margins of acceptance became possible under the new circumstances. Although seemingly directly unrelated to the war in Ukraine, they were predominantly aimed at short- and long-term prevention of destabilisation of the Russian speaking community in Latvia.

In the beginning of this article, a reformulation of hypersecuritisation was proposed. This version omits the negative connotation built into the initial definition, that is, that hypersecuritisation per se is negative, since hypersecuritisation might be a necessity when a state faces threats of scale. The proposed redefinition is the following: a securitisation process(es) advancing significantly beyond the previous levels of securitisation in terms of securitisation intensity and the number of securitising actors. Depending on the specific case, the margin between 'normal' and 'hyper' will depend. In the case of Russia's securitisation in Latvia, the watershed moment was 24 February 2022 when the securitisation expanded immediately and exponentially. Before the war, Russia was securitised often but mostly by institutions and politicians with low or moderate intensity. After the war broke out, the range of securitising actors and securitised issues widened significantly. Russia was securitised as an existential and immediate threat in multiple security sectors. The language used in the securitisation acts became unprecedentedly emotional and strong.



Acknowledgement

The author is grateful to the Academy of International Affairs NRW during whose fellowship this article was completed.

MĀRIS ANDŽĀNS is an Associate Professor at Riga Stradins University, as well as the Director of the Center for Geopolitical Studies Riga.

References

- Amnesty International (2022): Latvia: Refugees and Migrants Arbitrarily Detained, Tortured and Forced to 'Voluntarily' Return to Their Countries. *Amnesty International*, 12 October, <accessed online: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2022/10/latvia-refugees-and-migrants-arbitrarily-detained-tortured-and-forced-to-voluntarily-return-to-their-countries/>>.
- Andžāns, M. (2021): Multiethnic Societies and Willingness to Defend One's Own Country: Russian Speakers in the Baltic States. *Lithuanian Annual Strategic Review*, 19(1), 47–68.
- Andžāns, M. & Bērziņa-Čerenkova, U. (2021): The COVID-19 Pandemic and Latvia-Russia Relations: Landscape for Desecuritization or Further Securitization? *Social Sciences*, 10(9), 323.
- Andžāns, M. & Sprūds, A. (2021): Securitization and Desecuritization of Russia in the National Security and Defence Concepts of Latvia (1995–2020). *Journal of International Studies*, 14(1), 190–200.
- Andžāns, M. (2022a): Fear, Solidarity, and Calls for Further Action in the Baltics as Russia Invades Ukraine. *Foreign Policy Research Institute*, 16 March, <accessed online: <https://www.fpri.org/article/2022/03/fear-solidarity-and-calls-for-further-action-in-the-baltics-as-russia-invades-ukraine/>>.
- Andžāns, M. (2022b): Good and Bad Neighbors: Perceptions in Latvian Society. *Foreign Policy Research Institute*, 23 September, <accessed online: <https://www.fpri.org/article/2022/09/good-and-bad-neighbors-perceptions-in-latvian-society/>>.
- Banka, A. & Bussmann, M. (2022): Uncomfortable Neighbors: NATO, Russia and the Shifting Logic of Military Exercises in the Baltics. *Defence Studies*, 23(1), 1–24.
- Bergmane, U. (2022): Latvia's First Response to Russia's War in Ukraine. *Foreign Policy Research Institute*, 11 March, <accessed online: <https://www.fpri.org/article/2022/03/latvias-first-response-to-russias-war-in-ukraine/>>.
- Bergmane, U. (2023): Seven Lessons from Latvia a Year After Russia's Invasion of Ukraine. *Foreign Policy Research Institute*, 24 March, <accessed online: <https://www.fpri.org/article/2023/03/seven-lessons-from-latvia-a-year-after-russias-invasion-of-ukraine/>>.
- Bērziņa, I. (2018). Political Trust and Russian Media in Latvia. *Journal on Baltic Security*, 4(2), 2–9.
- Bērziņa, I. & Zupa, U. (2020): *Latvijas sabiedrības griba aizstāvēt valsti: veicinošie un kavējošie faktori* [Willingness to Defend Own Country in the Latvian Society: Facilitating and Impedimental Factors]. Riga: National Defence Academy of Latvia, Center for Security and Strategic Research, <accessed online: https://www.naa.mil.lv/sites/naa/files/document/DSPC_GribaAizstavetValsti_o.pdf>.

- Bērziņa, I., Krūmiņš, G., Šiliņš, J. & Andžāns, M. (2023): History Perceptions and National Identity among Latvian Youth: Entrapped between Narratives of Latvia and Russia? *Nations and Nationalism*, 29(2), 700–717.
- Bērziņš, J. (2014): *Russia's New Generation Warfare in Ukraine: Implications for Latvian Defense Policy*. Riga: Defence Academy of Latvia, Center for Security and Strategic Research, April, <accessed online: <https://www.sldinfo.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/New-Generation-Warfare.pdf>>.
- Bērziņš, J. (2018): *Possible Scenarios of Russian Intervention in Latvia*. American Enterprise Institute, 12 February, <accessed online: <https://policycommons.net/artifacts/1296449/possible-scenarios-of-russian-intervention-in-latvia/1899701/>>.
- Bērziņš, J. (2022): Latvia's Comprehensive Defence Approach. *Security. Theory and Practice*, 3, 223–235.
- Buzan, B. (1983): *People, States and Fear: The National Security Problem in International Relations*. Brighton: Wheatsheaf Books.
- Buzan, B. (1991): *People, States and Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-cold War Era*. New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf.
- Buzan, B. (2004): *The United States and the Great Powers: World Politics in the Twenty-First Century*. Cambridge, Malden: Polity Press.
- Buzan, B., Wæver, O. & de Wilde, J. (1998): *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*. Boulder, London: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Cabinet of Ministers of Latvia (2022): Latvia Supports Ukraine. *Cabinet of Ministers of Latvia*, <accessed online: https://www.mk.gov.lv/en/latvia-supports-ukraine?utm_source=https%3A%2F%2F>.
- Cheskin, A. (2015): Identity and Integration of Russian Speakers in the Baltic States: A Framework for Analysis, *Ethnopolitics*, 14(1), 72–93.
- Delfi (2022a): Krievijas iebrukums Ukrainā [Russia's Invasion of Ukraine]. *Delfi*, <accessed online: <https://www.delfi.lv/temas/krievijas-iebrukums-ukraina?page=24>>.
- Delfi (2022b): Pieci mēneši Ukrainas kara ēnā – Latvijā likumpārkāpumu tendences nemainās [Five Months in the Shadow of Ukraine War – Tendencies of Offences Unchanged in Latvia]. *Delfi*, 31 July, <accessed online: <https://www.delfi.lv/news/national/criminal/pieci-menesi-ukrainas-kara-ena-latvija-likumparkapumu-tendences-nemainas.d?id=54592536>>.
- Delfi (2022c): Latvijā reģistrēti 36 369 Ukrainas bēgļi [36 369 Ukrainian Refugees Registered in Latvia]. *Delfi*, 9 August, <accessed online: <https://www.delfi.lv/news/national/politics/latvija-registreti-36-369-ukrainas-begli.d?id=54624010>>.
- Delfi (2022d): Kopš kara sākuma Latvija izsniegusi vīzas 247 ārvalstu mediju darbiniekiem [Since the Beginning of the War Latvia Has Issued 247 Visas to

- Foreign Media Employees]. *Delfi*, 2 August, <accessed online: <https://www.delfi.lv/news/national/politics/kops-kara-sakuma-latvija-izsniegusi-vizas-247-arvalstu-mediju-darbiniekiem.d?id=54600544>>.
- Delfi (2022e): 'Rimi' un 'Maxima' pārtrauks Krievijā ražotu preču tirgošanu ['Rimi' and 'Maxima' to Cease Selling Products Produced in Russia]. *Delfi*, 24 February, <<https://www.delfi.lv/news/national/politics/rimi-un-maxima-partrauks-krievija-razotu-precu-tirgosanu.d?id=54095086>>.
- Delfi (2022f): Video: Gājiens 'Kopā ar Ukrainu! Kopā pret Putinu!' pulcējis 30 000 cilvēku [Video: March 'Together with Ukraine! Together against Putin' Has Gathered 30 000 People]. *Delfi*, 5 March, <accessed online: <https://www.delfi.lv/news/national/politics/video-gajiens-kopa-ar-ukrainu-kopa-pret-putinu-pulcejis-30-000-cilveku.d?id=54122464>>.
- Dilāns, G. & Zepa, B. (2015): Bilingual and Multilingual Education in the Former Soviet Republics: The Case of Latvia. In: Wright, W. E., Boun, S. & García, O. (eds.): *The Handbook of Bilingual and Multilingual Education*. John Wiley & Sons, 632–644.
- Djatkoviča, E. (2023a): In the Shadow of War: How Russia's Catastrophic Invasion of Ukraine Impacts Latvia. *Open Canada*, 13 January, <accessed online: <https://opencanada.org/in-the-shadow-of-war/>>.
- Djatkoviča, E. (2023b): Personal Epistemology on the War in Eastern Ukraine in 2021: Constructing and Deconstructing Knowledge. *Visual Anthropology*, 36, 1–35.
- Dunn Cavelty, M. & Egloff, F. J. (2021): Hyper-Securitization, Everyday Security Practice and Technification: Cyber-Security Logics in Switzerland. *Swiss Political Science Review*, 27(1), 139–149.
- Embassy of Latvia in Russia (2022): Latvijas vēstniecībā Krievijā uz nenoteiktu laiku ir pārtraukta vīzu pieteikumu pieņemšana no Krievijas Federācijas pilsoņiem, izņemot gadījumus, ja personas ieceļošana saistīta ar dalību tuva radnieka bērēs [The Embassy of Latvia in Russia Has Indefinitely Ceased Accepting Visa Applications from Citizens of the Russian Federation, Save Cases where Entry of a Person is Related to Participation in Funeral of a Close Relative]. *Twitter*, 4 August, <accessed online: <https://twitter.com/LVembRussia/status/1555178896974307328>>.
- Entrepreneurs for Peace (2022): Support the People of Ukraine in the Fight for Freedom! *Entrepreneurs for Peace*, <accessed online: <https://www.uznemejimieram.lv/en>>.
- Factum (2022): Attieksme pret Krievijas rīcību Ukrainā [Attitude towards Russia's Action in Ukraine]. *Factum*, February, <accessed online: <https://reitingi.factum.lv>>.
- Hansen, L. & Nissenbaum, H. (2009): Digital Disaster, Cyber Security, and the Copenhagen School. *International Studies Quarterly*, 53, 1155–1175.

- Kaktiņš, A. (2022): Krievija Latvijā saprotamu iemeslu dēļ vairs nav pārāk ieredzēta. Šogad jūlijā tikai 20% atzina, ka tiem par Krieviju ir pozitīvs viedoklis. Pagājušā gada vasarā tādi bija gandrīz puse, bet pirms ~10 gadiem (2010. un 2011.) gandrīz divas trešdaļas pie mums simpatizēja Krievijai [For Obvious Reasons Russia Is Not Well Regarded in Latvia Any More. This July Only 20% Admitted that They Have a Positive View of Russia. Last Summer Almost a Half Did but ~10 Years Ago (2010. and 2011.) Almost Two Thirds Here Sympathized to Russia]. *Twitter*, 19 September, <accessed online: <https://twitter.com/Arniskaktins/status/1571907376747544576/photo/1>>.
- Kaprāns, M. & Saulītis, A. (2017): *Latvijas sociālās atmiņas monitorings. Ziņojums Nr. 2 [Monitoring of Latvia's Social Memory. Report No. 2]*, Sociālās atmiņas pētniecības centrs, Latvijas Universitāte, <accessed online: https://www.academia.edu/32932266/Latvijas_soci%C4%81%C4%81s_atmi%C5%86as_monitorings_2017>.
- Kaprāns, M. & Mierīņa, I. (2019): Minority Reconsidered: Towards a Typology of Latvia's Russophone Identity. *Europe-Asia Studies*, 71(1), 24–47.
- Kaprāns, M. & Juzefovičs, J. (2019): Reconsidering Media-Centrism: Latvia's Russian-Speaking Audiences in Light of the Russia-Ukraine Conflict. In: Wijermars, M. & Lehtisaari, K. (eds.): *Freedom of Expression in Russia's New Media-sphere*. Abingdon, New York: Routledge, 159–185.
- Lacy, M. & Prince, D. (2018): Securitization and the Global Politics of Cybersecurity. *Global Discourse*, 8(1), 100–115.
- Levits, E. (2022a): Statement by the President of Latvia Egils Levits on Russian Invasion of Ukraine. *President of Latvia*, 24 February, <accessed online: <https://www.president.lv/en/article/statement-president-latvia-egils-levits-russian-invasion-ukraine>>.
- Levits, E. (2022b): President of Latvia: NATO Must Further Reinforce its Presence in the Eastern Flank, Especially the Baltics. *President of Latvia*, 10 June, <accessed online: <https://www.president.lv/en/article/president-latvia-nato-must-further-reinforce-its-presence-eastern-flank-especially-baltics>>.
- Liu, J. (2022): Health Security and Public Emergency Management in China. In: Zhang, C.: *Human Security in China: A Post-Pandemic State*. Palgrave Macmillan Singapore, 175–198.
- LSM.lv (2022a): Krievijas okupanti vairs neslēpj savus nolūkus ieņemtājā Ukrainas teritorijā [Russia's Occupants Do Not Hide Their Intentions Any More in the Occupied Territory of Ukraine]. *LSM.lv*, 6 May, <accessed online: <https://www.lsm.lv/raksts/zinas/arzemes/krievijas-okupanti-vairs-neslepj-savus-nolukus-ienemtaja-ukrainas-teritorija.a455653/>>.
- LSM.lv (2022b): SKDS: Krievijas rīcību Ukrainā nosoda 40% krievvalodīgo, no tiem vairums – pret Uzvaras parka pieminekļa nojaukšanu [SKDS: 40% of

- Russian Speakers Condemn Russia's Action in Ukraine, Majority of Them – Against the Demolition of Uzvaras Park Monument]. *LSM.lv*, 7 July, <accessed online: <https://www.lsm.lv/raksts/zinas/latvija/skds-krievijas-ricibu-ukrainanosoda-40-krievvalodigo-no-tiem-vairums--pret-uzvaras-parka-piemineklanojauksanu.a464187/>>.
- LSM.lv (2022c): Zemessardzes štāba priekšnieks: Interese par iestāšanos mūsu rindās mazinās [Chief of Staff of the National Guard: Interest in Joining Our Ranks is Decreasing]. *LSM.lv*, 28 July, <accessed online: https://www.lsm.lv/raksts/zinas/latvija/zemessardzes-staba-prieksnieks-interese-par-iestasanos-musu-rindas-mazinas.a467160/?utm_source=lsm&utm_medium=theme&utm_campaign=theme>.
- Ministry of Defence of Latvia (2022a): Biežāk uzdotie jautājumi par valsts aizsardzības dienestu [Frequently Asked Questions about the State Defence Service]. *Ministry of Defence of Latvia*, <accessed online: <https://www.mod.gov.lv/lv/valsts-aizsardzibas-dienests/biezak-uzdotie-jautajumi-par-valsts-aizsardzibas-dienestu>>.
- Ministry of Defence of Latvia (2022b): The First Soldiers of the Royal Danish Armed Forces Contingent Arrive in Latvia. *Ministry of Defence of Latvia*, 27 April, <accessed online: <https://www.mod.gov.lv/en/news/first-soldiers-royal-danish-armed-forces-contingent-arrive-latvia>>.
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Latvia (2022): Latvia Closes Russia's Consulates General and Expels Their Staff. *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Latvia*, 5 April, <accessed online: <https://www.mfa.gov.lv/en/article/latvia-closes-russias-consulates-general-and-expels-their-staff>>.
- National Electronic Mass Media Council (2022a): NEPLP aizliedz 80 Krievijā reģistrētu TV programmu izplatīšanu Latvijā [NEPLP Forbids Distribution in Latvia of 80 TV Programs Registered in Russia]. *National Electronic Mass Media Council*, 7 June, <accessed online: <https://www.neplp.lv/lv/jaunums/neplp-aizliedz-80-krievija-registretu-tv-programmu-izplatisanu-latvija>>.
- National Electronic Mass Media Council (2022b): NEPLP saistībā ar apdraudējumu valsts drošībai ierobežo piekļuvi vēl 16 tīmekļvietnēm Latvijas teritorijā [On Grounds of Threats to State Security NEPLP Restricts Access to 16 More Websites in the Territory of Latvia]. *National Electronic Mass Media Council*, 13 July, <accessed online: <https://www.neplp.lv/lv/jaunums/neplp-saistiba-ar-apdraudejumu-valsts-drosibai-ierobezo-piekluvi-vel-16-timeklvietnem-latvijas-teritorija>>.
- National Electronic Mass Media Council (2022c): NEPLP anulē apraides atļauju TV Rain saistībā ar draudiem valsts drošībai un sabiedriskajai kārtībai [On Grounds of Threats to State Security and Public Order NEPLP Annuls Broadcasting Permission of TV Rain]. *National Electronic Mass Media Council*, 8 De-

cember, <accessed online: <https://www.neplp.lv/lv/jaunums/neplp-anule-apraides-atlauju-tv-rain-saistiba-ar-draudiem-valsts-drosibai-un-sabiedris-kajai-kartibai>>.

National Statistical System of Latvia (2022): Population by Ethnicity at the Beginning of Year 1935 - 2022. *National Statistical System of Latvia*, <accessed online: https://data.stat.gov.lv/pxweb/en/OSP_PUB/START__POP__IR__IRE/IREo1o>.

NATO (2022a): Defence Expenditure of NATO Countries (2014-2022). NATO, 27 June, <accessed online: https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2022/6/pdf/220627-def-exp-2022-en.pdf>.

NATO (2022b): Madrid Summit Declaration. Issued by NATO Heads of State and Government Participating in the Meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Madrid 29 June 2022. NATO, 29 June, <accessed online: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_196951.htm>.

Pupčēnoks, J., Rostoks, T. & Mierīņa, I. (2022): Microfoundations of Threat and Security Perceptions in Ethnically Diverse States: Lessons from Russia's "Near Abroad". *Nationalities Papers*, 1–26.

Rinkēvičs, E. (2022a): On My Way to Washington DC to Discuss Upcoming #NATO Madrid Summit, Longterm Increased Allied Presence in the Eastern Flank, further Support to #Ukraine, as Russian Aggression Continues we Must Double Down our Efforts to Provide More Assistance to Ukraine. *Twitter*, 14 June, <accessed online: <https://twitter.com/edgarsrinkevics/status/1536698902270861312>>.

Rinkēvičs, E. (2022b): If #Russia threatens the Third World War, then it is a clear sign that #Ukraine is succeeding. We should not give in to Russian blackmail but double down our support to Ukraine and sanctions against Russia. Only firm and consistent approach can restore international law and order. *Twitter*, 26 April, <accessed online: <https://twitter.com/edgarsrinkevics/status/1518701970781097991?s=21&t=sRtAJohlpS6XQTxMaLl3gQ>>.

Rinkēvičs, E. (2022c): Aggressive and revanchist #Russia that violates human rights and international law does not have place in the Council of Europe or any other international organisation. We will be happy to welcome back democratic and peaceful Russia in the community of nations. *Twitter*, 15 March, <accessed online: <https://twitter.com/edgarsrinkevics/status/1503763161492697100?s=21&t=sRtAJohlpS6XQTxMaLl3gQ>>.

Rinkēvičs, E. (2022d): As SG of @UN @antonioguterres visits #Kyiv, permanent member of the United Nation's Security Council- Russia strikes the capital of #Ukraine with missiles. If Russia hates this organisation so much, maybe it should leave or be expelled. #Latvia strongly condemns this attack. *Twitter*, 28 April, <accessed online: <https://twitter.com/edgarsrinkevics/status/1519743059008925697>>.

- Rostoks, T. & Vanaga, N. (2016): Latvia's Security and Defence Post-2014. *Journal on Baltic Security*, 2(2), 71–108.
- Rostoks, T. (2018): Identifying Intentions: Latvian Policy-Makers' Perceptions of Russia's Intentions. *Journal of Baltic Studies*, 49(1), 21–45.
- Rostoks, T. (2022): Military Capabilities First, Politics Later. Latvia's Approach to European Strategic Autonomy. In: Česnakas, G. & Juozaitis, J. (eds.). *European Strategic Autonomy and Small States' Security: In the Shadow of Power*. 1st ed. London: Routledge, 109–120.
- Saeed, T. (2016): *Islamophobia and Securitization: Religion, Ethnicity and the Female Voice*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Saeima (2019): Par Nacionālās drošības koncepcijas apstiprināšanu [On the Approval of the National Security Concept]. *Saeima*, 26 September, <accessed online: <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/309647-par-nacionalas-drosibas-koncepcijas-apstiprinasanu>>.
- Saeima (2020): Par Valsts aizsardzības koncepcijas apstiprināšanu [On the Approval of the State Defence Concept]. *Saeima*, 24 September, <accessed online: <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/317591-par-valsts-aizsardzibas-koncepcijas-apstiprinasanu>>.
- Saeima (2022a): Latvijas Republikas Saeimas Paziņojums. Par Ukrainas suverenitāti un teritoriālo integritāti [Statement of the Saeima of the Republic of Latvia. On Sovereignty and Territorial Integrity of Ukraine]. *Saeima*, 24 February, <accessed online: <https://www.saeima.lv/documents/ad357d-51b23d94ofa5525bca3d2457a47ba2a09f>>.
- Saeima (2022b): Statement of the Saeima of the Republic of Latvia. On the Aggression and War Crimes of the Russian Federation in Ukraine. *Saeima*, 21 April, <accessed online: <https://www.saeima.lv/documents/41d9ce36c93773649d6b33c444d99cc78363c81e>>.
- Saeima (2022c): Statement. *Saeima*, 11 August, <accessed online: <https://www.saeima.lv/documents/02eba975fbc29662e63e1b25a772cda81fc9060e>>.
- Saeima (2022d): Grozījumi Valsts aizsardzības finansēšanas likumā [Amendments to the State Defence Funding Law]. *Saeima*, 22 April, <accessed online: <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/331863-grozijumi-valsts-aizsardzibas-finansesanas-likuma>>.
- Saeima (2022e): Tiesību akta projekta “Grozījumi Valsts aizsardzības finansēšanas likumā” sākotnējās ietekmes (ex-ante) novērtējuma ziņojums (anotācija) [Initial Impact (Ex-ante) Assessment Report (Annotation) of the Legal Act Project “Amendments to the State Defence Funding Law”]. *Saeima*, 29 March, <accessed online: <https://titania.saeima.lv/LIVS13/SaeimaLIVS13.nsf/o/186601FB804BF65C225881500209EE8?OpenDocument>>.
- Saeima (2022f): Likumprojekta “Par padomju un nacistisko režīmu slavinošu objektu eksponēšanas aizliegumu un to demontāžu Latvijas Republikas

- teritorijā” anotācija [Annotation of the Draft Law “On Prohibition of Exhibition and on Dismantling of Objects Glorifying Soviet and Nazi Regimes in the Territory of the Republic of Latvia”]. *Saeima*, 25 May, <accessed online: <https://titania.saeima.lv/LIVS13/SaeimaLIVS13.nsf/o/E5E09B97CA3BF00BC225884D00380658?OpenDocument>>.
- Saeima (2022g): Sporta komandas nedrīkstēs piedalīties Krievijas vai Baltkrievijas nacionālajos čempionātos un kausu izcīņās [Sports Teams Will Be Barred from Participating in the National Championships and Cup Competitions of Russia or Belarus]. *Saeima*, 28 April, <accessed online: <https://www.saeima.lv/lv/aktualitates/saeimas-zinas/30966-sporta-komandas-nedrisktes-piedalities-krievijas-vai-baltkrievijas-nacionalajos-čempionatos-un-kausuzicinās>>.
- Saeima (2022h): Grozījumi Enerģētikas likumā [Amendments to the Energy law]. *Saeima*, 11 August, <accessed online: <https://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=%20334350>>.
- Saeima (2022i): Par Skultes sašķidrinātās dabasgāzes termināli [On Skulte Liquefied Natural Gas Terminal]. *Saeima*, 5 October, <accessed online: <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/336088-par-skultes-saskidrinatas-dabasgazes-terminali>>.
- State Security Service of Latvia (2022a): VDD calls to prosecute three persons for supporting Russia’s aggression against Ukraine. *State Security Service of Latvia*, 4 August, <accessed online: <https://vdd.gov.lv/en/news/press-releases/vdd-calls-to-prosecute-three-persons-for-supporting-russias-aggression-against-ukraine>>.
- State Security Service of Latvia (2022b): VDD detains a person for acting in the interests of Russia. *State Security Service of Latvia*, 1 August, <accessed online: <https://vdd.gov.lv/en/news/press-releases/vdd-detains-a-person-for-acting-in-the-interests-of-russia>>.
- Stivas, D. & Sliwinski, K. (2020): Securitizing Coronavirus: Global Risks, Responses, and Consequences. *global-e*, 13(61), 8 September, <accessed online: <https://globalejournal.org/global-e/september-2020/securitizing-coronavirus-global-risks-responses-and-consequences>>.
- Tittensor, D., Hoffstaedter, G. & Possamai, A. (2020): Hyper-Securitisation and Belonging: Understanding the Plight of Young Muslims in Melbourne, Australia. *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, 40(3), 480–496.
- Trebesch, C., Antezza, A., Bushnell, K., Frank, A., Frank, P., Franz, L., Kharitonov, I., Kumar, B., Rebinskaya, E. & Schramm, S. (2023). *The Ukraine Support Tracker: Which countries help Ukraine and how?* Kiel Working Paper, No. 2218. Kiel Institute for the World Economy, February, <accessed online: https://www.ifw-kiel.de/fileadmin/Dateiverwaltung/IfW-Publications/-ifw/Kiel_Working_Paper/2022/KWP_2218_Which_countries_help_Ukraine_and_how/_KWP_2218_Trebesch_et_al_Ukraine_Support_Tracker.pdf>.

- tv3.lv (2022): Krievijas okupanti Hersonā un Zaporizžā sāk gatavoties “vēlēšanām” [Russia’s Occupants in Kherson and Zaporizhzhia Begin Preparations for “Elections”]. *tv3.lv*, 24 July, <accessed online: <https://zinas.tv3.lv/arvalstis/krievijas-okupanti-hersona-un-zaporizja-sak-gatavoties-velesanam/>>.
- TVNET (2022a): Krievu okupanti Ukrainā nolaupījuši Eiropas tirgum paredzētu tēraudu simtiem miljonu vērtībā [Russian Occupants in Ukraine Have Stolen Steel Worth Hundreds of Millions Destined for the European Market]. *TVNET*, 22 July, <accessed online: <https://www.tvnet.lv/7569583/krievu-okupanti-ukraina-nolaupijusi-eiropas-tirgum-paredzetu-teraudu-simtiem-miljonu-vertiba>>.
- TVNET (2022b): Notiks gājiens “Par atbrīvošanos no padomju mantojuma” [March “On Getting Rid of the Soviet Legacy” Will Take Place]. *TVNET*, 20 May, <accessed online: <https://www.tvnet.lv/7526995/notiks-gajiens-par-atbrivosanos-no-padomju-mantojuma>>.
- United Nations Refugee Agency (2018): Refugees in Latvia Still in Lack of Support. *United Nations Refugee Agency*, 30 January, <accessed online: <https://www.unhcr.org/neu/16761-refugees-in-latvia-still-in-lack-of-support.html>>.
- Vanaga, N. & Rostoks, T. (2019): *Deterring Russia in Europe: Defence Strategies for Neighbouring States*. 1st ed. London: Routledge.
- Wæver, O. (1989): *Security, the Speech Act: Analysing the Politics of a Word*. Working Paper no. 1989/19. Copenhagen: Centre for Peace and Conflict Research.
- Wæver, O. (1995): Securitization and Desecuritization. In: Lipschutz, R. D. (ed.): *On Security*. New York: Columbia University Press, 46–86.
- Wæver, O. (2011): Politics, Security, Theory. *Security Dialogue*, 42(4-5), 465–480.
- Ziedot.lv (2022): Okupācijas pieminekļa nojaukšana [Demolition of the Occupation Monument]. *Ziedot.lv*, 11 May, <accessed online: <https://www.ziedot.lv/en/completed-projects/okupacijas-pieminekla-nojauksana-4256>>.