Being a Small State:
Discussion on the Role of Size

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Abstract. This paper discusses theoretical debates regarding small states and their foreign policy and also argues that research should include more analysis of small states' identities and the dominant meanings related to being a small state. Using poststructuralistic theoretical perspective and discourse analysis, two empirical cases – Lithuania and New Zealand – are analysed with attention paid to the meanings of smallness and the ways these meanings are constructed. Empirical analysis follows with suggestions for how future research of small states could be improved.

Keywords. Small state, discourse, poststructuralism, Lithuania, New Zealand, size.

Introduction

One of the main issues of the study field is a significant lack of agreement pertaining to how to define a small state (Thorhalsson and Wivel, 2006; Crowards, 2002; Steinmetz and Wivel, 2010). Therefore, a pluralism of theoretical and behaviour explanations can be observed – states can be considered objectively small, based on resources, small in relation to other countries, or subjectively small due to the perceptions of others (Neumann and Gstöhl, 2004).

A conventional approach basically refers to (neo)realistic arguments claiming that small states are concerned about their survival and play a limited role in the international system (Keohane, 1969, p.295). Therefore, small countries will struggle to maintain their existence and will seek support from powerful countries. Smallness itself is defined objectively – by territory, population, GDP, and military power. Consequently, fewer resources should signify a lack of power and identify a weakness (Browning, 2006, p.670). However, quantitative criteria alone do not explain why some countries, with similar populations or territorial size (generalized as small ones) exercise different foreign policies and have different levels of influence at the international level (for example, Denmark and Estonia).

A constructivist perspective tries to overstep such limitations and includes so-called subjective criteria such as norms, ideas, and identity in order to define small states and possible differences

between them. Constructivist research is mostly based on the participation of small states in international organizations and their influence. For example, Baldur Thorhallsson argues that small states can be influential while creating images of norm entrepreneur or neutrality (Thorhallsson, 2011, p. 139). However, although constructivists show that small states have ways to exercise influence at the international level, proposed images or identity tendencies are still generalized and presented as stable. Therefore, the assumption that small size describes weakness and vulnerability dominates (for example, Diana Panke claims that despite existing instruments, small EU member states face size-related disadvantages within the union (Panke, 2008, p. 26)).

Thus, existing definitions and explanations of small states and their policy practices are limited and reinforce a one-size-fits-all approach to small states in the realm of international affairs (Gigleux, 2016, p. 27). Uncertainty remains regarding how smallness influences states and their foreign and security policies. Therefore, questions—such as: What is a small state and how does it behave?—could be changed to ask instead: When does size becomes relevant? How is smallness perceived? How do these understandings shape foreign and security policy (Andreou, 2006, p. 2)? This paper argues that the identity of small states might be an essential factor in constructing perceptions, and foreign and security policy. However, such self-understanding does not lead to overall or thorough answers applicable to similar states, but proposes unique and context specific definitions.

The first and second sections of this paper introduce the poststructuralistic approach to research of small states and explores the methodological framework for the analysis. The third section focuses on the empirical analysis of specific cases chosen in order to present the dominant meanings of being a small state, and how these meanings are constructed and revealed. The fourth section introduces a few conceptual principles, which might be beneficial for further studies of small states.

1. Smallness as a part of identity

Although poststructuralism does not suggest its own definition of explicit insights related to small states, this approach allows small states to be considered as subjects, and it questions how subjectivities are formed and how they change in interaction with international politics, and a country's foreign and security policies. For example, Finland's case study revealed that representations related to being small have changed over time. At first, Finland's smallness was understood as a limitation, but later it was considered palliative and an opportunity (Browning, 2006, pp. 681–682).

Thus, poststructuralism stresses the importance of identity and the role identity plays in foreign and security policy. However, contrary to constructivist explanations, poststructuralism rejects the idea of stability and objectivity, and instead defines identity as discursive, intersubjective, and formed in a continuous process (Campbell, 1992, p. 12). Akriví Andreou (2006, p. 4) claims that small states do not necessarily comprise a specific category of states based on similarities, that they are identified instead by their relationship to the Other – something that countries are not or do not want, cannot be related to. Therefore, self-definition is constructed through the formula *I know who I am, when I know who the Other is* (Lebow, 2008, p. 474) may change when affected by internal and external processes, or imposed narratives. Thus, such a perspective also provides another way to discuss the identity of a small state –the question: *What is the identity of a small*

state? changes to *What is smallness and how is smallness understood? How does being a small state become a part of 'matter-of-course reality'* (Berger and Luckmann, 1999, p. 14)?

The idea of flexibility and a continuous process of never-ending meaning construction is based on the constitutive relationship between identity and foreign and security policy. Lene Hansen (2006, p. XIV) argues that identity does not form before foreign and security policy, but is revealed through the practice of such policies. On the other hand, identity is also necessary for the political process, which constantly reproduces it. Therefore, meanings of identity and foreign and security policy are not perceived as separate or deterministic, but presented as mutually related and interactive phenomena.

Nevertheless, poststructuralism goes even further than constructivism by stressing the importance of identity, its meanings, and the process of social construction. The main question for poststructuralists concerns what happens to *material* reality and existing differences between states. The theoretical framework does not deny the existence of material reality. Criticism of modern assumptions is based on the argument that materiality cannot be recognized and understood without discourse. This means that a distinction between materiality and meanings questions the dualism between reality (characteristics which are independent of will, but typical to phenomenon) and knowledge (characteristics which are attributed to phenomenon). There is no denial that structural or physical differences depend on given resources, but the question remains as to how, and in which contexts, they become relevant and are reflected (Browning, 2006, p. 669).

2. How to analyse small states?

Smallness by itself can be understood as a discourse – linguistic and non-linguistic practices reveal how the world is understood and perceived, how subjective meanings become objective facts (Edkins, 2007, p. 88). Such a perspective requires discourse analysis as the main research method.

In this case, discourse is understood as written and spoken texts – speech acts (Hansen, 2006, p. 2). It is argued that there is no agreed upon way to adjust discourse analysis, but interpretation is usually named as the main instrument for applying this method (Vinogradnaitė, 2006, pp. 44–45). Therefore, clear research design is essential in order to achieve valid and structured findings.

The research includes two cases – Lithuania and New Zealand that are significantly reflected as small states in internal political discourses. It is important to stress that this tendency is not so common among states that could be named small following the objective criteria. Both Lithuania's and New Zealand's political and especially foreign and security policy discourses become exceptional in how frequent the phrase 'small state' is used. Therefore, following the previously mentioned idea, both cases were chosen not due to objective characteristics imposed by tendencies in the study field (when questions about other possible cases could be obviously raised), but because of an active reflection and reproduction of small state's meanings in foreign and security policy discourse. Interestingly, despite being very different in their geographical position and political tradition, both *are considered* small ones (internally and externally). Therefore, the selection of these cases makes it possible to test whether the relevance and self-definition of smallness somehow determines similar perceptions and actions of the countries, which are otherwise exceptionally different in their key characteristics.

The chosen period is two years – from 2014 to 2015, when foreign and security policy became especially relevant in both countries. For Lithuania, the annexation of Crimea and military actions in eastern Ukraine dominated political discourse. Moreover, Lithuania, for the first time, became a non-permanent member of the Security Council. New Zealand, during this period, was preparing for its election to the Security Council and began its own non-permanent membership in the organization. Therefore, these extraordinary events become important incentives for the political elite to reflect on and discuss foreign and security policies together with chosen measures. Of course, two years is quite a short time period for overarching generalizations. In order to provide a broader and more sustainable view, different periods throughout the time could be analysed and compared with attention paid to noticing dynamics or changes in terms of perceptions.

Attention is paid to everyday discussions, and to statements related to foreign and security policy, which construct the foreign and security policy discourse. The most popular news outlets and official sites of political leaders were screened in order to identify relevant texts. Texts were selected according to these criteria: 1) speeches, announcements, interviews, or other statements issued by a country's political leaders; 2) the use of the phrases „small state" or „small country" in the text; 3) discussion of international events, processes, or foreign and security policy. Texts selected included various statements, announcements, speeches, and comments made by political leaders. They were organized according to topic and found meanings (i.e. selected texts that include discussion of Russia were put in the same block). Looking through debates of discourse analysis, any guideline does not indicate the standard quantity required for the analysis. Therefore, the principle of saturation is taken with the results of 65 selected texts. The research was also based on the principles of intertextuality and induction.

One of the main issues for processing the analysis was deciding on a framework that could be used to systemize, analyze, and compare different meanings found in the texts. In seeking to measure the relationship between influence in the European Union and size, Baldur Thorhallsson (2006, p. 8) proposes a valuable analytical instrument, expanding the idea of a small state into different categories of size (physical, sovereignty, political, economic, perception and desirable sizes). It allows some of them to be operationalized into more detailed variables and all six sizes are measured using two scales of capability and vulnerability.

However, the suggested model was not directly applied to this research for a two reasons: firstly, a preconceived definition of a small state was noticed, i.e. categories of size are defined by differences between territory and population (stress on *material objectivity*), secondly, secondary data was taken and compared with scales that lack a broader reflection about smallness as a phenomenon. Therefore, categories with newly constructed definitions are applied: 1) *physical size* – when do foreign and security policy context and relations to other actors' size becomes relevant? 2) *sovereignty size* – which threats to the state emerge and which of them are emphasized by defining the state's size? 3) *political size* – which political resources (hard or soft) become relevant and are included in a definition of smallness? 4) *perceived size* – How do the state's leaders and outside actors perceive the state's smallness? 5) *desirable size* – what ambitions, tasks, and relationships to the international system are formulated in terms of foreign and security policy and how do they emerge while reflecting the smallness?

These different categories of size are important as they illustrate and argue that smallness is not necessarily integral, but is instead a multidimensional phenomenon, in which a given factor may play a particular role in understanding smallness.

3. Lithuania and New Zealand – what small states?

There is little research analysing Lithuania and New Zealand's foreign and security policies through the lens of the small state, such as Baldur Thorhallsson's (2012, p. 156) inclusion of New Zealand in his paper on the role of small states in the Security Council. However, broader discussions of identity and foreign and security policy provide valuable context for better understanding where the reflection of being a small state might be situated.

In Lithuania's case, its identity in foreign and security policy could be generalized naming two dominant pillars: first, its proximity to Russia is described in negative and critical terms; second, its orientation to the West (the EU and the USA) is presented as a constant return to and integration in Western civilisation, political tradition, and security (Lingevičius, 2015, p. 76). Although these pillars may sound too generic for the multi-layered Lithuanian identity that has varied through the years (from bridge between East and West in early 90s, regional leader in 2004–2008 or Nordic country around 2009–2011), they remain the core of those interchangeable meanings and identity tendencies[1]. In general, existing research of Lithuanian identity suggest that self-identification and foreign and security policy are determined by two key factors – geopolitical position and historical memory (Šešelgytė, 2013, p. 35).

In the case of New Zealand, its identity and foreign and security policy is mostly described in the comments of the political elite and various experts. Sovereignty and independence are named as the main values of self-reflection – it is stressed that New Zealand is not a member of any political or military alliance and behaves as 'being under great powers radar' (O'Brien, 2016, p. 16). New Zealand's former United Nations representative Jim McLay (2013, p. 4) claims that the country's self-definition is based on three pillars: the Pacific region's, historical (colonial) experience with and relationships with the West, and being a small state.

Keeping in mind the particularity of found discourses, Lithuania is influenced by two conditions during the analysed period – the annexation of Crimea and the conflict in Eastern Ukraine, and two years of non-permanent membership in the United Nations Security Council. In New Zealand's case, the issue of a non-permanent seat on the Security Council in 2015 and 2016 dominated discourse as a goal of foreign policy established back in 2008 (Watkins, 2014).

The selected texts reveal that a few political leaders in both countries construct most of the foreign and security policy discourse. These actors include the President of the Republic of Lithuania Dalia Grybauskaitė and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania Linas Linkevičius; the former Prime Minister of New Zealand (actual leader of the state) John Key and the former Minister of Foreign Affairs of New Zealand Murray McCully. A few *texts* issued by New Zealand's

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[1] The research is based on the idea that identity is not a stable narrative that is set only once, but a constantly changing process in which various meanings may coexist or oppose each other. In this research, the geneology of dominant identity narratives is not explicitly presented, rather than focusing on smallness, which is perceived as one (but not necessarily the only or most dominant) narrative of identity in Lithuania and New Zealand.

representative to the United Nations Jim McLay were also taken into consideration. However, though these leaders are important in discourse construction, their role and influence is not analysed as the chosen theoretical perspective emphasizes concentrating on the discourse itself.

The discourse of New Zealand was not affected by any external shocks, which would require extraordinary reaction or rapid decisions; therefore, the discourse appears to be more consistent than Lithuania's, where the annexation of Crimea and military activities in eastern Ukraine were perceived as a major and unexpected security crisis.

In general, further analysis will reveal that Lithuania's smallness is considered in a careful way, while searching for applicable and suitable meanings to be more engaged and heard at the international stage. New Zealand's self-presentation, in contrast, is based on relatively clear provisions, which create a cohesive narrative from different interrelated meanings.

3.1. The relevance of smallness

The analysis of Lithuania and New Zealand shows that even though both countries are considered small, the meanings of their smallness are different and influenced by geopolitical position, historical experience, and relations with other key countries or organisations. The differences found between the countries' and attitudes towards smallness lead to a further discussion regarding how it is generally possible to define category of states and their behaviour.

Physical size is important in the discourses of both countries. However, it is not the main characteristic defining both Lithuania and New Zealand, instead size becomes relevant in certain contexts.

For Lithuania, smallness becomes relevant regarding its relationship with Russia. For example, Minister of Foreign Affairs Linas Linkevičius stated, "look at a map – the size of Lithuania and our big big neighbour" (Npr.org, 2014), 'we are a small country and we need to prepare to defend ourselves' (Shapiro, Thoburn, 2015). Self – Another difference becomes relevant when a country compares itself with a physically superior neighbouring country. This distinction and antagonism reveals a modern understanding of foreign and security policy. The dimension of sovereignty dominates; claims such as 'we should prepare' represent the need to ensure physical or *hard* security and the independence of the country. Similar tendencies appear in endeavours to question the idea of small states being weak and unable to deal with a big Other: "we seek to showing the Kremlin that a small state will defend itself. We will not allow ourselves to be taken <…> we are not afraid of anything" (Lrp.lt, 2014). Thus, there is no contradiction between physical and desirable size, because even a small state can challenge large powers.

In comparison to theoretical arguments that hold that small states are those with leaders who admit that their country will never have significant influence (Keohane, 1969, p. 239), the case of Lithuania shows that smallness is not accepted as weakness, but as an imminent condition. However, this condition does not limit to be an active and independent actor in international politics ("to sustain a clear mind, dignity, and self-confidence and to never allow that we – even a country as small country as Lithuania – will not be kicked again" (Miliūtė, 2014)). The phrase 'even such a small country' refers to physical size, but it is not an obstacle to the country's ability to "sustain clear a mind, dignity, and self-confidence". If anyone tries to "kick again", Lithuania is ready to open fire (Miliūtė, 2014).

In the Lithuanian case, smallness becomes relevant not only given the context of adverse bilateral relations with Russia, but also in that of the international system: "it does not matter how big or small a country is, nobody has a right to make any decisions about or for it against its will" (Delfi.lt, 2014). Although such a claim intends to deny the importance of size and make it less relevant, naming the issue of size makes it even more relevant. It seems that the international system's main problem is the unfounded superiority of major powers: "big values should not be for big actors and small values for small actors. They have to be equal" (Npr.org, 2014). The very phrase "have to be" reveals that states are not in fact equal and equality is yet to be attained. From this point of view, the international system itself has become an Other, because an imbalance and the possibility of negative influence remain: "the time has passed when big countries decide about the fate of small ones. Every nation has a right to its own country and anyone cannot prescribe how it has to live, despite how big a small a country is" (Sabet-Parry, 2014). Thus, the international system and international politics are described through terms of modern thinking – countries still have to fight for their statehood and sovereignty when survival requires constant endeavours.

Although the international system is described in general phrases, claims of parity and the unjustified behaviour of large powers are addressed regarding Russia again: "we [small states] do not have tanks, rockets, or heavy arms which destroy eastern Ukraine. Respect of international law, its norms and principles, firmed in the Charter of United Nations, is our fundament of respect" (Un.org, 2015). Although "we" and "ours" are abstract definitions, the distinction between small and large or moderate and aggressive states is clearly made. Thus, criticism of the system is not directed at international institutions such as the Security Council. On the contrary, the assumption of anarchy and a constant struggle between countries is the main condition and architecture of international politics. Therefore, the international system, even though Lithuania was a permanent member of Security Council at that time, is not considered as institutionalized or built on coopera-tion, but instead it is seen as affected by interests and power competition.

It is important to stress that after the annexation of Crimea, NATO's commitment and presence in the region was one of the main topics in the discourse. NATO's role is intensively reflected on in considerations of the alliance as a key actor in ensuring deterrence and the very possibility to exist. However, NATO's discourse does not include a reflection of smallness and related meanings. This could be explained by arguing that the need for shelter and security guarantees is a different narrative that is somehow separate from the small state narrative. What the analysis reveals is that being a small state is more associated with greater responsibility and sovereignty rather than an excuse to seek shelter. Lithuania's subjectivity remains a key pillar in defining smallness, which can be related to decisions and their legitimacy in the context of meanings (i.e. increasing defense spending, reintroducing conscription, updating the national security strategy, etc.).

New Zealand, from its very different geographical position, discusses its smallness in terms of the international system rather than in terms of bilateral relations. Self-definition in the context of Self-Other dimension is based on the Security Council and the place of its permanent members. Former Prime Minister John Key said that "New Zealand is a small country at the bottom of the world" (Stuff.co.nz, 2015), as if the country is evaluated by looking at the map through the lenses of *geographical objectivity.* However, the discourse of smallness reveals how a country reflects its role in the United Nations and Security Council: "the win [at Security Council] proved small coun-

tries had a role to play at the UN, and New Zealand was determined to represent the perspective of small states" (Radionz.co.nz, 2014). Desirable and physical sizes interconnect in order to have a clear role and represent other small states at the international level – "we advocate for small states" (nzunsc.govt.nz, n.d.).

In this context, smallness is presented as an ambition and a tool for achieving a political agenda: "we want to be in the Security Council, because we believe that small states can contribute positively and we want to give a voice for those who are not often heard" (nzunsc.govt.nz, n.d.). In this context, being a small is not associated with being lonely or vulnerable, but refers to an imagined blocking of small states, defined through the issue of limited action in the international system. Apparently, New Zealand's election to the Security Council does not ensure the expected change – "the challenge for a small elected member to have its voice heard and its views taken into account is considerable" (Stuff.co.nz, 2015).

Criticism of the international system is directed at the exceptional veto right of permanent members (great powers) of the Security Council: "the permanent members have become used to exercising power and are protective of their privileged position. The conflicts and human suffering <...> show how far we are from achieving the aspirations of our founders and of today's members" (Un.org, 2015). Therefore, the Security Council, as far as it is related to a superiority of powers, is understood as a negative Other: "the Security Council has become paralyzed by the permanent five members, who pursue their national interests" (Powles, 2015). Therefore, the way to change this situation is to become a member of the Security Council and try to reform it: "<...>it was important for us to get there is not just because New Zealand, can bring some qualities to the council, but also because smaller countries are being squeezed out of the reckoning" (Young and Trevett, 2014).

Smallness in the case of New Zealand becomes relevant when the country faces obstacles to implementing its ambitions in the international arena. Systemic limitations, independent of the will of the country, restrict the opportunity to implement a size-based identity dimension, which is understood not only as a physical feature, but also as an element of the political agenda (to reach wide scale recognition of smallness). Thus, this tendency questions the theoretical argument that small states have limited freedom of action (Lamoreaux and Galbreath, 2010, p. 11). The problem is not size in itself, but a system that does not allow small states to act – imbalance exists not only because of quantitative differences, but because they are institutionalized.

The issue of being an important part of the United Nations may be related to the fact that New Zealand defines itself as the one of the United Nations founders actively engaged since 1945 (Keating, 2008, p. 1). It is claimed that even then, wartime Prime Minister Peter Fraser opposed the principle of five permanent member states with exceptional veto right (Goff, 2013, p. 18). Thus, the criticism, as far as it relates to large powers in the Security Council, is not a onetime campaign. This position is long-term and New Zealand has had a consistent relationship with the international system and its institutions: "we are committed to an inclusive, transparent and effective Security Council that delivers on its international peace and security responsibilities" (nzunsc.govt.nz, n.d.). Hence, New Zealand has long been an advocate of an institutionalized international system, based on equality and effective problem solving, where the narrative of smallness is constructed through active participation and freedom (Kristjansson, 2011, p. 21).

Similar to Lithuania, for New Zealand, the relevance of physical size is described similarly as desirable size. However, foreign and security policy ambitions, in light of smallness between the states are different. In Lithuania's case, the narrative is mostly concentrated on an ambition to be independent, to ensure self-defense, and maintain physical and political survival. In New Zealand's case, attention is mostly directed towards the international system – and on how to become an acknowledged and equal participant and even a representative for other small states. New Zealand not only states *the fact* of size, but also *chooses* to be a small state. Therefore, political ambitions are an integral part of a state's self-reflected identity of smallness, without tension between actions and a perceived self-image.

3.2. (Not) threatening Others and security definition

Sovereignty and security issues are defined differently in both countries. In Lithuania, Russia's military threat is considered a main and direct danger to the country. Therefore, Russia remains one of the most securitized objects in Lithuania (Jakniūnaitė, 2013, p. 41), in which not only the current political situation, but also historical experience (experienced aggression) becomes important. Military actions close to borders have raised the question of whether the past is really the past (Mälksoo, 2010, p. 85), a question that shows that geographical position and today's security issues are related to historical memory – together these factors stimulate threat perceptions and remain a constant existential concern (Jakniūnaitė, 2015, p. 21). In this context, smallness is defined in terms of hard security (to avoid a military conflict with a large, aggressive neighbor) without any *soft* or global issues.

In New Zealand's case, conversely, military security issues are not discussed. It is claimed that New Zealand is partially isolated in geographical terms and this situation allows the country to avoid invasion or territorial disputes (Goff, 2013, p. 18). Nevertheless, a clear distinction between Self and Other is defined through New Zealand's criticism of the Security Council and its very architecture. According to the leaders of New Zealand, the organization operates ineffectively due to its structure and may negatively impact small states such as New Zealand.

Nonetheless, New Zealand's understanding of security is defined in terms of stability and expectations: "a particular focus will be the peace and security challenges confronting Small Island Developing States, including many of our Pacific neighbours" (Tvnz.co.nz, 2015). Again, the main concern here is not territorial defense, but global order, interdependency, and active engagement in international politics: "despite being far away from many of the world's trouble-spots, we are not immune from their consequences"(nzunsc.govt.nz, 2015). Liberal institutionalism would claim that small states are especially concerned about international security and peace, because this is their way to survive and the United Nations is probably the main political platform for such purposes (Thorhallsson, 2012, p. 142). However, found meanings show that the questions concerning territorial defense and survival are not relevant. Sovereignty size is defined through ideas of conflict resolution and a just world order (Wivel, 2005, p. 396), revealing a postmodern security perception.

3.3. Small, but strong. In search of power.

In both cases, the definition of political size is mostly discussed in terms of resources, capacity, and the possibility to influence a preferable self-image. In Lithuania's case, it admits that the country's role in the region and international organizations is limited due to insufficient resources: "we are doing our best, but we are a small country" (Dailymail.co.uk, 2016). In 2014 President Grybauskaitė claimed that Lithuania could not determine the ongoing conflict in Ukraine: "being a small state, Lithuania will not make a difference in this conflict, but we provide our support in all territories" (Urm.lt, 2014).

However, doubts of capabilities are rather instantaneous and concentrate on the role Lithuania can play: "we need to contribute [to the solution of conflict in Ukraine] with our modest, but significant endeavors. We have already proved, that a small country can achieve a lot" (Delfi. lt, 2014), "a small state can achieve much if concentrates its power" (Lrt.lt, 2014). Capability to act is formed by contrasting smallness – modest and significant endeavors promote the stance that physical size does not limit action because, according to politicians, even a small state can be influential. The idea that "small states do not create headaches, but they can do something" (Ktu. edu, 2016) reflects a constant effort to implement or justify this discourse of being a small state.

For example, Lithuania constantly maintained that the conflict in Ukraine should be one of the main priorities of the Security Council. During the non-permanent membership term, the annexation of Crimea and military conflict in Eastern Ukraine were considered thirty times; eleven meetings were initiated by Lithuania (BNS, 2015). Thus, "even small states can help Ukraine. It is important to clearly speak out against Russian aggression" (Vaida, 2014). The importance of being seen and heard within the organization can be understood as a way to overcome limited resources and, at the same time, can be considered an means to prove a capability to contribute and serve as an advantageous ally (Jakniūnaitė, 2015, p. 20). Nevertheless, subjective characteristics suggest the way in which a small state could act in order to achieve its interests: "visibility as a measure to survive without becoming an uninteresting province to others" (Jackūnaitė, 2014). However, visibility and audibility in the international arena appear to be goals in and of themselves, but not as a clearly defined policy with a broader agenda (Miglinaitė and Jakniūnaitė, 2014, p. 39). A country that is still looking for its extraordinary features and political influence at the international level needs constant recognition of itself and its symbols. Therefore, it is important to name not only the political resources that country has and seeks to develop, but to also highlight how it uses them (Wivel, Bailes and Archer, 2014, p. 9), and how they complete the idea of smallness.

In the case of New Zealand, soft power and its characteristics can be described as the political size of the country.

On the one hand, the difference between material resources and New Zealand's advantage is stressed: "we are very clearly the little guy in our competition and there is something of a New York myth these days that little countries can't foot it with big countries because of the issues of financial resources" (Craymer, 2014). Thus, assumptions regarding sufficient or insufficient resources for action are questioned: "<...> a nation of just 4.5 million people with modest resources could win, amid concerns in recent years about wealthy nations pledging tens of millions of dollars in aid to developing nations in return for support" (Newshub.co.nz, 2016). Hence, New Zealand's political

size is defined as a counterargument to material capabilities: "many will question the cost of this campaign but should measure that against the confidence that many smaller nations like New Zealand will have in our presence" (Young and Trevett, 2014).

A country's sources of power and its main elements are also reflected in the context of smallness: "New Zealand is a relatively small country (in both size and population) but our international reputation for fairness and leadership means we can be very effective on the world stage" (Murraymccully.national.org.nz, n.d.). Mentioned characteristics lean on policy practices: the reputation of New Zealand consists of independence, support for impartiality, and the implementation of antinuclear policy (O'Brien, 2013, p. 21). Despite theoretical debates on whether countries with a colonial experience tend to be loyal allies of big powers (Kristjansson, 2011, p. 6), neutrality and a reputation as an honest broker become more important in this case. In this context, the construction of intersubjective identity is observed: characteristics are not chosen as a way to overstep small size, but become a part of the country's identity.

Characteristics such as reputation and reliance are classified as political, but not desirable size because New Zealand has already created precedents of concrete actions. For example, New Zealand has defended antinuclear policy, which became one of the core principles of its foreign and security policy. In 1987, New Zealand prohibited any ships carrying nuclear weapon from entering its territory, which restricted the USA's accessibility to its USS Buchanan base. In 2003, New Zealand's labor government refused to contribute to international intervention in Iraq on the grounds of a lack of transparency and the non-existence of the Security Council's approval (Patnam, 2005, p. 14). This decision was perceived as unprecedented opposition to a powerful ally, proving impartiality, support of international law, openness, and agitation for peace — even when those principles went against widespread policy choices. These policy measures also illustrate that soft power and desirable image are based on a real background of experience and uniqueness in foreign and security policy.

Thus, the meanings discussed show that although both countries refer to subjective factors as their sources of potential power, they define political size differently. The leaders of Lithuania reflect the role of the country in regional and international terms; at the same time, they seek to find factors that establish the role of the small country. Principles of visibility, audibility, and activity should be considered the key pillars defining political size and measures of soft power. However, they still have to be reached and implemented; the country still needs to approve its ability to apply those principles in foreign and security practices.

In the case of New Zealand, despite an existing discussion of material resources, political size and identity are built on soft power including concrete characteristics (neutrality, impartiality, a reputation as an honest broker and as a just political actor). Besides, the characteristics of reputation and reliance are not just self-declared, they also require recognition and interaction with other actors –this is the way to adjust them as power instruments.

3.4. What is the identity of smallness?

For Lithuania, the underlying definition of its smallness is the relation with Russia. Different levels, which directly or indirectly lead to discussion about Russia, present the never-ending contempla-

tion of coexistence between two antagonistic neighbors – relations between Lithuania and Russia are considered as problematic even looking from long-term perspective (Vitkus, 2006, p. 173).

In Lithuania's case, the idea of being a small state consists of two dimensions – territory and political body, which face military threat and the issue of survival. Therefore, in formulating and developing the idea of being a small state, the underlying aspect remains preservation of *small* (referring to territory) and *state* (referring to political body/subject). Political size and desirable size are also based on the need to firm subjectivity through engagement on the international stage. In general, the discourse shows that the narrative of being a small modern state dominates. The question is, though: How does this identity dimension fits in a broader picture of Lithuania's perceptions and important narratives of foreign and security policy?

In New Zealand's case, the identity of small state is perceived differently. Firstly, New Zealand is understood as a global small state. The issue of size becomes relevant in the light of being a part of international system, active participation and engagement in international institutions. Therefore, the identity defined through Self and other distinction, is constructed based on inequalities in the architecture of the Security Council and the unfavorable representation of other states, including small ones. The discourse reveals that any concrete threats related to survival are not named and security is described in positive terms such as stability, peace, and just order. The same tendency exists with the definition of being a small state – it is described in positive characteristics such as independence, reputation, honesty, and leadership. Therefore, in criticizing the international system, the leaders of New Zealand seek a distinctive and extraordinary identity based on different principles.

Coming back to suggested theoretical debates, founds meanings refer to two theoretical traditions of International Relations – (neo)realism (referring to the case of Lithuania) and liberal institutionalism (referring to the case of New Zealand). However, empirical analysis proves that meanings differ or overlap within both countries. The reflection of smallness, in both cases, varies and may combine features related to different theoretical perspectives or propose unique descriptions. This grounds the assumption that smallness is not an integral and homogenous narrative, but rather a multidimensional phenomenon dependent on its role and importance in multilayered identity dimensions. Therefore, discussions regarding the most suitable or already formulated explanations could be changed by questioning which analyses of smallness improves an understanding of theories and possible ways to harmonize them. Poststructuralistic view shows that radically different positions – size determines state's behavior vs. size is not important and all countries can be analysed using the same pattern – are not supported.

Firstly, empirical analysis argues that policy actions are different despite the fact that leaders reflect both states as small. These differences in self-understanding and choices of foreign and security policy may be influenced by country specific factors, such as geopolitical position, historical experience, and strategic culture and security issues. Therefore, size can be considered as one of the possible factors that might have an impact – differences in perceptions, interests and external strategies may lead countries to pursue different foreign policies (Gigleux, 2016, p. 27).

Secondly, there is no questioning that different countries cannot be analysed with the same methods and tools. However, arguments about determination and causality between size and

policy actions should not deny the fact that size might be relevant and essentially reflected. Similar questions of size and its relation to policy making might reveal different answers proposed by political leaders (Maas, 2009, p. 81).

4. How to analyse small states?

As empirical analysis suggests the common definition of smallness applicable to both cases is impossible – the found meanings and their context are too different and country-specific. Of course, chosen theoretical framework of small states studies would allow for explanations of some foreign and security policy actions, but these explanations would remain limited and adjusted to theoretical presumptions rather than to reality and its diversity. On the other hand, a poststructuralistic approach could be criticised for being just another part of the ongoing discussion on definitions and theoretical presumptions, without any clear or superior answers for the field of study. Therefore, two questions remain: 1) How should small states and existing theoretical debates be analysed (Is pluralism the only possible condition?); 2) How can this research and a poststructuralistic perspective promote a broader understanding and improve future research of small states?

First of all, instead of endeavouring to find an all-suited definition, the heterogeneity of small states should be admitted. In this way, empirical analysis would not only be more extensive, but would also create the opportunity to observe and develop broader and more detailed theoretical debates. According to Tim Dunne, Lene Hansen, and Colin Wight (2013, p. 418), integral pluralism should be chosen to cope with the complexity of debates and presumptions. This concept is based on the idea that some theories could be rejected; and others could be modified or revised to avoid radical relativism and find the best possible solution. Therefore, even in the case of diversity, a common background and agreement on relevant presumptions could be found.

The same situation could be observed in the case of small state studies. On the one hand, the concrete phenomenon becomes of interest to various theoretical perspectives, but lacks agreement on how to analyse it. On the other hand, endeavours to describe objective and subjective criteria and to find a set of relevant characteristics seem to reveal that integral pluralism could be an answer for this field of studies. However, the bottom line is that a coherent theory of small states does not exist and cannot be reached due to different strategies for constructing theory – through empirical results (empirical generalization) or through prior presumptions (conformity with reality) (Guzzini, 2013, p. 531).

In addition to this, part of the existing analysis of small states considers the small state a tool for analysing foreign and security policy – the small state is a filter or selection criterion, but not a conceptual phenomenon (Wivel, Bailes and Archer, 2014, p. 5). In this case, smallness becomes a tool, but not a purpose of the research, i.e. when two or more countries are compared, size is used as one of the characteristics explaining similarities or differences between countries (Carlsnaes, p. 12). However, this approach is also limited, because questions remain regarding what a small state is and how size is identified. Finally, not only scholars, but also politicians encourage the act of conceptualization. The analysed cases of Lithuania and New Zealand prove that political leaders are very active in defining size and constructing related meanings. Therefore, they also propose their definitions of the small state and its nature, making the phenomenon not only a

theoretical issue, but also a political issue. Thus, the discussion becomes even more diverse and based on intersubjective interaction between discourse constructors (Zambernardi, 2016, p. 15).

Nevertheless, existing disagreements in the field of small states studies do not rebut the need to analyse smallness. First and foremost, being a small state is part of a state's political agenda and identity. Therefore, questions such as what do countries make of being small, and why it is relevant or not relevant for a country to describe itself as small become even more important. That is why future research, analysing the conditions under which smallness does or does not become an issue or limitation, or how discourse is changed or affected by internal or external political processes, is needed. For example, the case of Lithuania shows that smallness becomes relevant in relation to Russia and its potentially aggressive actions, but discussion of NATO and NATO defence do not include the meanings of smallness. Therefore, the limitations or relevance of smallness would be revealed in an even more nuanced way, taking into account a much wider discourse or a broader timeframe.

Lastly, the field of small state study could also be taken as a research object in and of itself. As Cristine Sylvester (2013, p. 615) argues, every movement or debate generates its own vocabulary, celebrities, and texts that are followed and quoted by supporters. In the case of small state studies, questions can be asked regarding how this field is constructed, which institutions influence it, and its purpose of knowledge and relation with political practice. Although these questions belong to an analysis of the discipline and its sociology, they might be important in considering the field as an object that constructs theoretical and practical knowledge, and proposes a research framework.

Conclusion

The analysis has showed that smallness is defined through different meanings in both countries. Firstly, different starting points can be observed: the small state vs. a large power and the small state vs. the international system. Countries also differ in terms of their ambitions and objectives. Lithuania stresses its sovereignty and sufficient defense capabilities, while New Zealand concentrates on equal participation in international organizations, global representation for all small states, and leadership. Both cases present different attitudes towards security. In Lithuania, a direct military threat is considered, which reveals modern thinking about security concerns. New Zealand is linked to postmodern provisions and anxiety about global peace. Eventually, although both states emphasize the importance of subjective factors related to soft power, Lithuania is

Table 1. **Dominant meanings of smallness by country**

	Physical	Sovereignty	Political	Desirable	Perception
Lithuania	Small in relation to Russia	Threat of military attack	Search for soft power and recognition	Independent and able to ensure self-defence	Modern small state (*hard* security and local issues)
New Zealand	Small in a relation to the International System (the UN Security Council)	Need for global stability and a just world order	Established authority and defined characteristics	Equal participant of political processes in the international arena	Global small state (postmodern security and global issues)

still searching for an appropriate set of relevant characteristics. New Zealand, at the same time, presents, more or less, clearly defined and integral features.

Firstly, as the analysis reveals, the idea of a small state cannot be separated from a country's specific characteristics and broader context, such as geopolitical position, historical experience and dominant historical narratives, strategic culture, and the security environment. This also supports the argument that smallness should be considered a part of identity, but not an overarching factor that can explain a country's actions and apply them to other states, where smallness might be relevant.

Secondly, it is also essential to consider the situation in which discourse is constructed: in the case of Lithuania, it emerged in reaction to unexpected security changes, while New Zealand did not confront any security surprises; therefore, its definition of smallness is related to its expedient long-term foreign policy objective – membership in the Security Council. Finally, different attitudes towards the international system are also relevant. Although both countries were non-permanent members in the Security Council, Lithuania reflects the international system in terms of anarchy and balance of power. In the case of New Zealand, the international system is institutionalized and identical to international organizations.

New Zealand's meanings of smallness may seem more consistent because being a small country is more *historical* and has genealogy. New Zealand seeks to develop this narrative further and consolidate its identity of smallness. In the case of Lithuania, the realization of smallness is still in process, but not as an overarching national brand. There is no denial that being a small state is an integral part of the Lithuania's identity, but, as politicians reflect, such a narrative still has to be proved. In this context, Lithuania still has to present its smallness in terms of political action and precedent. At the same time, it is important to notice that policy actions related to the concept of smallness are associated within the particular discourse and reproduced through the constitutive relation between discourse and policy process. Therefore, the analysis cannot suggest a generic model for research on small states' foreign and security policy, because the relevance of smallness, its dominant meanings, and interrelated country-specific factors are equally, and sometimes, even more important compared to settled *a priori* definitions of strategies or roles of small states.

Thus, this analysis supports the position that theoretical discussion on differences between objects and subjects of international politics based on their physical size is limited and narrows foreign policy analysis. Moreover, the research design also suggests that selection of cases should be considered carefully, especially when applying certain concepts such as *small states.* Though various countries in different regions might be called small when one roughly looks at a map and compares countries with their neighbors, smallness might be an irrelevant or marginal argument in their foreign and security policy discourses or practices. Then the analysis as such might remain limited or useful only in terms of an *act of theorization.*

Generally, the question of how to define and analyze small states is not just about cases and tools for analysis; it encourages a much broader discussion as to how phenomenon can be conceptualized, approaches to theory construction, and how the discipline evolves or is developed. Therefore, future research should concentrate on further identity analysis, should include a larger number of carefully selected cases from different regions, and should consider the evolution of the field together with its potential driving forces.

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