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When the Baltic States declared their independence in 1991, they did not become equal members of the international community in one day. Although the fall of the Berlin wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union declared the end to the Cold War, ideas, beliefs, prejudices and discourses were much harder to trigger. The study addresses the issues of newly independent states, establishing themselves in the international community, analysing the processes of learning in the interaction with the other international actors. By combining Role theory and Constructivism the author develops a framework to understand the development and change of Baltic States role conceptions. How have Baltic states perceived their role in the Baltic Sea region during the period 1993-2002? How has the western discourse treated them? What role did the application for the EU membership play in the process? What have been the individual and group features of the Baltic States? The study attempts to answer these and other questions through the discourse analysis of public speeches.

role theory, constructivism, baltic
ABSTRACT

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Introductory Chapter I

“Foreign policy change revolves around the redefinition of states’ roles in the international system” (Le Prestre 1997:3).

After the end of the Cold War, state officials of numerous states have been faced with a problem of redefining the international role their country ought to play on the international arena (Le Prestre 1997, Aggestam 2000). This gave the researchers a unique opportunity to observe the change and development of role conceptions in the context of structural change (Le Prestre 1997). In a world characterised by thickening webs of interdependence, international networks, processes of integration, globalisation and regionalisation, recognition by international actors is becoming increasingly important to the state’s integration in the international community (Aggestam & Hyde-Price 2000, Checkel 1998a, 1999, Wendt 1999). Why is it important to study state roles? How does the understanding of state roles, their change and development contribute to the international relations theory and practice?

First, following Le Prestre (1997:5), “defining a role and having it accepted by other actors remain the basic objectives of states. A role reflects a claim on the international system, a recognition by international actors and a conception of national identity”. Furthermore, role research sheds insight on foreign policy continuities and anomalies and allows for understanding of general direction of policymaking (Le Prestre 1997). Although states do act to pursue their national interest, they define the interest in the context of political culture of the state and its immediate environment. This entails that the definition of roles is both an ideational and interactive process (Wendt 1999). The understanding of this process sheds light on both, the political culture of the subject state and the international structures in its international neighbourhood. Following Wendt (1999:251), “The concept of a role should be a key concept in structural theorizing about the international system. The culture of the international system is based on a structure of roles.”

The interest of the study lies in understanding the construction and development of the states’ role conceptions in the process of the international interaction and eventual socialisation. This rather wide claim is contextualised in the Baltic Sea Region where the author seeks to understand the development and change of the Baltic States’ role conceptions. The Baltic
States have been chosen for the study due to their relatively recent re-declaration of independence and consequent integration into the international community. This allows for the understanding of the construction of international roles in contrast to change and adjustment as practised by the internationally established states. Limiting the study with the Baltic Sea region decreases the number of possible variables, at the same time embracing the most important actors: The Baltic states, the Nordic states, Russia, the EU\(^1\) and NATO. The research is to be based on a combined approach of Role and Constructivist theories and discourse analysis of public speeches serves as a method.

The paper is divided into seven chapters. The first chapter serves as an introduction and gives the overview of the structure of the paper. The second chapter is devoted to the development of theoretical framework and eventual formulation of the research problem, purpose and questions. Chapter III will give an overview of the context for the object of study by introducing the Baltic Sea regional cooperation and stopping shortly at the development of the foreign policies of the Baltic States during the nineties. Chapter IV will discuss the methodological issues and provide with the analytical framework for the research. The immediate results of the study will be presented in Chapter V of the paper and Chapter VI will continue to investigate theoretical and empirical implications of the results of the analysis and coming back to the research questions. Finally, Chapter VII will conclude the essay by evaluating the contribution of the study to both theory and practical knowledge, as well as providing some issues for further research.

\(^1\) See list of abbreviations pp.101.
Chapter II
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE ANALYSIS OF STATE ROLES

2.1. The Concept of a Role in the International Relations Theory

The role theory has its roots in sociology, where social interactionists (Goffman 1978) have done a significant amount of research and social psychologists (Biddle & Thomas 1979). The concept of role first received attention of researchers in International Relations (IR) after the study of K. Holsti on national role conceptions in the foreign policy (Holsti 1972). Although there can be many ways to understand the concept of the role (Le Prestre has counted up to six (1997)), this study will follow the definition proposed by Holsti (1970: 245-6): “The policymakers’ own definitions of the general kinds of decisions, commitments, rules and actions suitable to their state and of the functions, if any, their state should perform on a continuing basis in the international system”. Holsti suggested that the concept of a role can be divided into role performance (behaviour), role prescriptions (role expectations, held by other actors of the system) and role conceptions, held by the policy makers. Role behaviour is defined as the repetitive patterns of behaviour governments take to implement. Role prescriptions and role conceptions imply different sources (internal and external, respectively). The former is understood as “norms and expectations, that cultures, societies, institutions, or groups attach to particular positions” (Holsti 1987:7) and the latter as “ego’s own conception of his position and functions, and behaviour appropriate to them” (Holsti 1987:7). The author believes that the policymakers’ individual properties (beliefs, values and attitudes) have a largest and the most determining impact on their role conceptions. However, he admits “action always takes place within a position, that is, a system of role prescriptions” (Holsti 1987:8). He also emphasises the interaction between the former and the latter, although his study does not reveal the relationship between role prescriptions and role conceptions. On the contrary, the results of his research give a static picture of the distribution of roles in the world. Nevertheless, it laid the foundation for the role theory and coined the concepts that were later used by other scientists.

The almost immediate followers of Holsti’s approach were Walker (1979, 1981) and Wish (1980). Much of the role theory analysis has been informed by the researchers of foreign policy (Rosenau 1968, 1987). However, the research on national role conceptions virtually
burst out after the end of the Cold War when “the old and the new great powers had to learn new roles and figure out how to enact them on a shifting stage” (Waltz c.f. Le Prestre 1997:3).

Stephen Walker released a detailed study on role theory and foreign policy analysis (1987) with contributions from numerous authors and after a short break, Le Prestre edited a selection of studies on foreign policies in transition after the end of the Cold war. The author distinguished between the dominant and secondary role sets. Although the study was very informative, it just as all other previous research relied on positivistic methods, which allowed merely quantitative insight into national role conceptions.

Nevertheless, there have been studies that allowed a wider and less deterministic approach to role analysis. Barnett (1993:275) claimed the significance of the international actors and international socialisation. In his study, he concludes that roles are learned in the process of socialisation. The distinction between position and preference roles points to the binding systemic influences in the first case and individual influences in the second. Rosenau (1987, 1990) investigated role sets, scenarios and conflicts.

However, the growth of constructivist literature eventually introduced qualitative methods to the role theory and finally a discourse analysis based study on national roles appeared in Aggestam and Hyde-Price Security and Identity in Europe: Exploring the New Agenda. Lisbeth Aggestam’s study on role conceptions and the politics of identity in the EU used a social constructivist perspective to explore ‘how the process of EU foreign policy cooperation affects perceptions of identity and interests’ (Aggestam 2000: 87).

In conclusion, although role theory sheds insight into the state behaviour and hence contributes to both theoretical and empirical knowledge of International relations, the framework suggested by Holsti has several shortcomings. First of all, his theory lacks the dynamics. How do roles and role conceptions arise? How do they change in time? What systemic and individual influences are important? These questions are left unanswered by Holsti. As mentioned before, another lack of Holsti’s research is the quantitative approach. The post-positivist research questions the explanation of such subjective concepts as identity, perceptions and beliefs in terms of cause and effect (George 1994, Whitebrook 2001, Howarth 1998, Sayyid & Zac 1998, Kendall & Wickham 1999). Finally, the research in the area has been mainly focused on the domestic sources of role conceptions and exclusive of
international discourse as a systemic factor. In other words, classical role theory has preferred agency to structure and role-taking issues to role-constitutive issues (Wendt 1999).

In order to minimise these shortcomings, insights from the constructivist approach will be used to inform the Role theory. The evaluation of the constructivist contribution to the theory follows below.

2.2. Role Theory and Constructivism

The previous research on role conceptions has been mainly based on the assumptions of structural realism. This study aims to inform the role theory with the concepts and assumptions from constructivist thought, which has been largely ignored by the role theorists. In contrast to the works of Holsti and other research conducted in the area, the study will focus on the interactive dimension of the role perceptions, this way bringing in some dynamism into the theory. This subchapter will introduce the core claims of Constructivism to the reader and discuss the possible insights this theory may shed on the understanding of roles.

Constructivism is believed to be the middle ground between rationalists and postmodernists (Wendt 1999, Checkel 1998a). Although it shares similar epistemology with the rationalists, Constructivism brings in such previously ignored concepts as discourse, norms, identity and symbolic interaction into IR research. Constructivist theory of international relations makes following core claims:

1. States are principal actors in the system.
2. The key structures in the states system are intersubjective rather that material.
3. States’ identities and interests are in large part constructed by those structures, rather than being determined exogenously to the system by human nature or domestic politics. (Wendt 1996:48)

As Tarnas has correctly formulated:

“The inherent human capacity for concept and symbol formation is recognised as a fundamental and necessary element in the human understanding, anticipation, and creation of
reality. The mind is not the passive reflector of an external world and its intrinsic order, but is active and creative in the process of perception and cognition. Reality is in some sense constructed by the mind, not simply perceived by it, and may such constructions are possible, none necessarily sovereign” (Tarnas 1991-396).

Similarly, the way we visualise the state is symbolic rather than material. This does not entail, that a state may be created just by starting believe in it. Certain material resources, such as the territory, population, institutions etc. are a necessity, however, it is the symbolic layer that finalises the state and eventually makes it possible.

Supposing that state is a symbolical rather than material structure, a question of subjectivity arises. Does international community exist, if the states are by and at large present in our minds? Wendt answers with the concept of corporate identity, which according to him, “refers to the intrinsic qualities that constitute actor individuality” (Wendt 1996:51). In other words, the people, who act as if the state existed at some point start acting as if they were the state. That is they act on the behalf of the state that exists in their minds. This brings in the Benedict Anderson’s (1983) concept of imagined communities. This is why role perceptions become suddenly so important. The way the people that act on behalf of the state act depends on the way they perceive the state and its role in the international community. As Howarth (1995) argues, things (consequently, state) become meaningful as a part of a wider framework of meaning. Since these people act within a political discourse of the country, their perceptions are likely to be relatively similar (Aggestam 2000), which allows us to speak of corporate identity. Wendt points out four basic interests generated by a corporate identity:

1. Physical security, including differentiation from the other actors.
2. Ontological security or predictability in relationship to the world.
3. Recognition as an actor by others, above and beyond survival through brute force.
4. Development, in the sense of meeting the human aspiration for a better life, for which states are repositories at the collective level. (Wendt 1996:51)

These interests however may be satisfied in a variety of ways, the selection of which, following Wendt, depends on the social identity of the state. At this point, it is useful introduce the definition of role in terms of Wendt. The author takes up a more interactive approach towards the concept defining it as “sets of meanings that an actor attributes to itself while taking the perspective of others – i.e. as a social subject” (Wendt 1996:51). Following
this, it will be assumed that states are the beholders of socially originated roles (Aggestam 2000).

The main innovation of Constructivism to the role theory is the origin of roles. As mentioned before, Holsti prioritised domestic sources to the external. Wendt (1999) argues, that roles are attributes of the structure, not actor. What he means is that roles are pre-inscribed in the system before an actor enters it. Furthermore, the author maintains, that “the culture of an international system is based on a structure of roles” (ibid. 1999:251), where the structure of roles is defined as “the configuration of subject positions that shared ideas make available to its holders” (ibid. 1999:257). The structural definition of a role, as developed by Wendt would be “objective, collectively constituted positions that give meaning to those understandings” (1999:259). This entails, that a role cannot be enacted on one’s own, as it is incorporated in the cultural structure and is tied to other roles in it. That is why it is important to learn and understand the structure (of, for example, discourse as it will be practised further in this study), as the position of the role in the structure might reveal some interesting attributes.

This together with the third core claim of the theory allows for the infusion of the international actors into the development of national role conceptions. In other words, it brings out the issue of state socialisation, the grounding concept for this research. Socialisation entails primarily the existence of the ‘significant other’. In order to enact a role, one must get the approval of others, in other words, be recognised by the others.

It is important to note the significance attributed to the interaction with the ‘other’. Following Inayatullah and Blaney (1996:80), “Past, present and future are socially constructed according to meanings actors hold among themselves and their world. These meanings and the world change as the interaction among cultures proceeds”. This implies that state actors always already hold the presuppositions about each other, which develop after the first encounter and during the interaction. The ‘other’ always already affects state roles as well as identities, since they need the existence of the ‘other’ to be able to define themselves. Ironically, although state entities need ‘the other’ for the definition of the self and the world, they never have the possibility to learn about the real ‘other’. Simultaneously the identities are never completed, but always changing in the interaction. The latter implies, that identities and interests are endogenous to interaction and can be treated as dependent variables (Wendt 1996:53). Holsti (1987:8) has once mentioned that an action always takes place within a system of role prescriptions (the origins of which may be domestic as well as international
politics). Wendt maintains, that socialisation takes place through the following patterns of interaction:\(^2\):

1. **Learning.** The symbolic interactionist concept of “reflected appraisals/reciprocal typifications” – actors form identities by learning through interaction to see themselves as others do. By showing others through cooperative acts that one expects them to be cooperators too, one changes the intersubjective knowledge in terms of which their identities are defined (Wendt 1996:57). The essence of learning lies in the reactions of the ‘Significant other’, its appraisals, reinforcements and respectively discouragement and punishment. Wendt (1999) maintains that power is crucial in determining the ‘Significant other’. In the study, this power is understood as the degree of dependence. Another important remark Wendt makes about learning is that learning may change identities, in contrast to the realist belief that actors only learn means to achieve their interests (not changing their interests and eventually identity).

2. **Imitation.** Adopting the model of success, where success can be perceived in material terms as power or wealth and in cultural terms as status or degree of prestige (Wendt 1999). Success, according to Wendt is always a cultural matter and is defined differently in different cultures. The author maintains that imitation tends to result in homogenisation. Thus, by engaging in cooperative behaviour an actor will gradually change its own beliefs about which it is, helping to internalise that new identity for itself (Wendt 1996:57).

Many of the previous research has focused on role behaviour or congruity between role conceptions and role behaviour (Le Prestre 1997, Walker 1987). In constructivist terms, speech acts may also be considered as behaviour as they do make a difference. One does not have to be radical to admit that the material act does not matter as much as the way it is framed and perceived. Thus discursive interaction, i.e. exchange of speeches will also be considered as cooperative behaviour.

One of the main criticisms of Constructivism has been its overt emphasis of structure over agency (Checkel 1998a). The same author argues, that Constructivism lacks a middle-range theory, which would connect the highly theoretical assumptions to Constructivism as a method. In this study, Role theory will hopefully serve as a middle-range theory.

\(^2\) For the concept of socialisation in Constructivist theory see also Checkel (1998b, 1999a, 1999b).
Furthermore, Wendt’s theory misses the element of double hermeneutics, which is unavoidable in the analysis of meanings. Just as mentioned above, every actor is never a *tabula rasa* and always already has a history and identity of its own. The identity implies the understanding of the world in a particular way. Consequently, the actor will never completely internalise the new identity (as stated by Wendt), but the old identity will change in interaction with the identity of the other. The socialisation process of the subject will always already be biased by its identity and history and all interactions will be interpreted in terms already familiar to the subject.

These and other biases to learning in the process of socialisation are discussed in the subchapter below.

The study will focus on the cultural and symbolic layer of role conceptions and role prescriptions. In other words, the emphasis is put not on the actual state behaviour, but on what role the state officials and politicians believe their state should play in the international community; what role is prescribed to certain states by certain international actors; and the interaction between the two.

### 2.3. Other Factors Influencing National Role Perceptions

It is important to acknowledge the complexity of the concept of the national role perceptions. As all the concepts involving identity issues, national role perceptions are affected by a variety of sources and factors. The fact that the research is mainly directed at the external and interactive forces does not discard the domestic and individual factors. The national role perceptions are inescapably influenced by the domestic political, socio-economical, demographic situation as well as material and human resources and the author will take them into consideration in the analysis.

Historical and cultural dimensions may also be of crucial significance to the definition of national role perceptions. Comparative perspective has been chosen with a purpose to reveal the impact of history and culture on the way the national role is perceived. As suggested by Holsti (1987:12), location and major topographic features of the state, and needs as expressed through national public can also be of considerable importance to the process of formation of role perceptions.
Furthermore, individual or personal factors may make an immense influence upon the national role perceptions. Even when they are acting on behalf of the state, officers remain individual beings with their peculiar histories and attitudes. Besides, they are also engaged in a variety of other roles (e.g. head of the family, leader of the party, member of a golf club, sports fan and collector of stamps) that do affect the general thinking and perceptions of the officers. However, “people basically live with multiple identities and these do not necessarily have a clear or permanent hierarchy in relation to each other” (Waever et al. 1993). The analysis will not exclude these factors either. The officers, however will be considered to be collections of roles, prescribed to them by society and institutions as suggested by Rosenau: “not only does positing the individual as a complex of roles provide a convenient model, it also serves to focus inquiry on it at level of analysis wherein the aggregative processes that produce and differentiate collectivities and global structures originate” (Rosenau 1987:47-8).

2.4. Problem: Baltic States Re-establishing themselves in the International Environment.

The end of the Cold War and even more so the collapse of the Soviet Union brought crucial changes to both international and academic communities. It reshaped the political and socio-economic landscape of the world by turning the relatively well ordered bipolar world into numerous small states of multipolar orientation. Among the academics, it facilitated the third debate and particularly focus on culture and identity issues. More and more researchers started to recognize the importance of the actors’ understandings about the world to the social theory (Inayatullah and Blaney 1996:80). The post-Cold War landscape is characterised as:

“…context of a continent transformed by thickening webs of economic interdependence, the spread of democratic norms and values, multilateral integration and institutionalised cooperation. Thus, while states may continue to pursue what they perceive to be their national interest, ‘they do so in an environment marked by levels of interaction and communication, and institutions and cooperation that clearly differentiate it from the environment of earlier centuries that gave birth to the seemingly iron concept of ‘Realpolitik’” (Czempiel 1998:xi).

The purpose of the study is to understand the process of socialisation in the interstate interaction through investigating the construction and development of the Baltic States’ role conceptions in the context of the Baltic Sea regional cooperation.
The re-establishing of the Baltic States independence resulted in a kind of ‘discursive discontinuity’. The discourse of the Soviet Union was abrupted, but the original political discourse of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, the one that had naturally developed through the processes of the construction of the nation, had been repressed by the alien soviet discourse after the Second World War, and was no longer actual or proper way of viewing the world. It is not to say that the political discourse and social identity of these countries had disappeared for 50 years. Rather, it evolved in a peculiar way without the interaction with the international ‘other’. The other’ existed within the country, in the form of the entire political system (Neumann 1993, Jæger 2000). Having been away from the international arena for nearly fifty years, the Baltic States had to establish themselves in the network of relations in the international community through developing their state identity. This does not point to that either Latvia, or Estonia and by no means Lithuania were ‘tabula rasa’ when they re-appeared on the world map. On the contrary, their social identities (role conceptions) were already deeply affected by their peculiar histories. Similarly, the international community already had some presuppositions about the newly independent states. The comparative perspective will hopefully demonstrate that. Nevertheless, the Baltic States had to re-introduce themselves and re-gain recognition by presenting their own images and the roles they aspired to play. Their aspirations, nevertheless, could not continue, without the constant confirmation by the significant others, who both influenced the national role perceptions and were influenced by the relationship themselves. According to Hill and Wallace (1996:8) the success of the international recognition of a country, “…rests upon a shared sense of identity, of a nation-state’s place in the world, its friends and enemies, its interests and aspirations.”. Hence, a link between national identity and the place of the state in the international system may be established.

To explore national role conceptions in relation to the rest of the international community would be difficult, “since nation-states are multifunctional collectivities, operating within innumerable sets of bilateral and multilateral relationships in a comparatively unorganised milieu (Holsti 1987:10). National roles may be perceived with relation to particular international actors and a global focus, thus would be neither informative nor reliable.

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Nevertheless, regional perspective may be more useful as it provides a more organised milieu and lower number of potential biases. According to Holsti, “To most states in the world, regional roles and problems are of considerably greater importance than system wide issues” (Holsti 1987:35). Since the international co-operation for the Baltic States started with the Baltic Sea Region (BSR)\textsuperscript{4}, it may be assumed that the interaction with the other actors of the region (especially those that were already internationally established) played an important role in the socialisation of Baltic States, thus affected their role conceptions, and eventually identity formation. Socialisation would be impossible without the presence of the ‘significant other’. The EU and NATO are assumed to be the ‘significant others’ of the Baltic States in the region, as relations with these actors are incorporated deeply in the foreign policies of the countries (see part II).

Even more interesting is to follow these developments in a temporal dimension. How has continuous interaction shaped the national role conceptions of Baltic States? The following research questions are raised at the beginning of the research.

2.4.1. Research questions

- What role perceptions of Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania within the context of the BSR may be identified in the foreign discourses of these countries?
- What role did the Western countries prescribe to Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania in 1993-2002?
- What do the differences/similarities imply about their interaction?
- How did the Baltic States application for the EU membership and established dialogue with the EU influence the Baltic States role perceptions and the role prescribed to them by the Western countries and the EU?

To sum up, a constructivist approach will be applied to investigate the change and development of the national role conceptions of Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania. The main

\textsuperscript{4} and it is presently the most extensive (Ruszkowski 1999), except maybe for the negotiations of EU accession. The latter is of course also very important, however this paper would examine EU’s role
assumptions are that states have roles, which are socially constructed in the interaction with the ‘significant other’ through learning, imitation or eventual assimilation. Interaction with the EU and the Nordic countries in the Baltic Sea Region is assumed to have crucial influence on the Baltic countries role formations.

At this point, it is important to emphasise, that although Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania are occasionally referred to as the Baltic States, this by no way implies that these countries are considered an entity. The study has a comparative approach and aims to illustrate the uniqueness of each country in concern.

The next section will discuss the geopolitical landscape and actors in the Baltic Sea Region. Separate sections on Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania will point out the particularities of each country.

only partially, to the extent, that EU is involved in BSR cooperation in general and not with the Baltic States individually.
Chapter III

CONTEXTEXTUALISING ROLE FORMATION

3.1. The Baltic Sea Region

“It is a Nordic mission, tolerated by the Russia and Germans, welcomed by the Baltic states, and encouraged by the EU and the USA” (Archer & Jaeger 1998:460).

It would be difficult to draw the map of the Baltic Sea Region as its boundaries are so blurred. Although the name presupposes geographical location as a primary requirement for members of the region, the region is rather a discursive than geographical construct. It would be much easier to call Denmark or Estonia a Baltic country than Russia or Germany. Finally, Iceland and Norway are typically included in the region, even if they do not belong to it geographically. The paper will focus on the Baltic Sea region as a discursive construct in the Northern Europe within the framework of the Council of the Baltic Sea States, which had served as a forum for the member states for the last decade. Thus, for this study, Baltic Sea Region will embrace Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Iceland, Finland, north-western parts of Russia and Kaliningrad Oblast, Estonia, Latvia, Poland and Germany (ft. see http://www.cbss.st) - together a population of 55 million, with a solemn presence of the EU and a hidden participation of the U.S. (Hedegaard & Lindström 1998).

3.1.1. Geopolitical landscape

BSR holds a fair share of problems for a relatively small population of 55 million. Interestingly enough, it has always been an area of conflict rather than cooperation. Due to the presence of two world powers, Russia and Germany, the region had been divided and re-divided several times in the twentieth century, whereas earlier times in history witnessed threat from the Scandinavian side also. After the Second World War, the order finally prevailed in the region at the expense of sovereignty of several small countries (Aggestam & Hyde-Price 2000). However, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the re-appearance of the Baltic States on the world map and international arena destroyed the order that had been kept by the division of the Iron Curtain. The end of the Cold War brought, among others, one
significant change into the minds of politicians as well as political scientists. The world was no longer bipolar. There was no black or white, wrong or right any more. Instead, there was a whole rainbow of different countries with their specific regimes and particular affiliations. The third debate gained increasingly stronger grounds and the liberalists claimed the victory of the West. The world celebrated peace, or did it? The countries (except for Lithuania) had a mere memory of statehood from the interwar period, which was marked by stains of autocracy (Behnke 2000). On the contrary, to other CEE states, that had been mere satellites of the Soviet Union, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia had actually been soviet territory. This was probably the fact that had most aggravated the integration of the Baltic States into the international community, which treated them with great respect to Russia (Mouritzen 1999, Christiansen 1999, Davis 2000, Jopp & Arnswald 1998). There was confusion over the place the states should be granted in the structure of the world states and the role they should play on the world arena. Although celebrated in speeches and literature, the multipolar world was still a vision. The heritage of the Iron Curtain was in the air and the small states at the Eastern Shore of the Baltic sea were at best prescribed the roles of a ‘buffer’ or ‘grey’ zone (Dahl 1999, Bengtsson 2000).

3.1.2. The Balts Step out into the World

After the Baltic States had re-gained their independence by making a good deal of fuss in the world’s political structure, they faced an international community. What were their first moves?

It is important to remember, that although the path of the Baltic States towards the NATO and the EU is taken for granted, at the beginning of the 1990s different scenarios for the placement of the countries within the international community were discussed (Heisler & Quester 1999).

Some third debate scientists (such as Joenniemi 1994, 1997, Joenniemi & Stålvant 1995, Waever 1996, 1997 et al.) appraised glocalisation in the form of regionalisation marked by “dynamization, integration, free flows, networking and the like” instead of “fear, domination and control” (Joenniemi 1994-32). These authors imagine the Baltic Sea Region with multiple identities, different state and non-states actors operating at the same level, but remain silent or ambiguous about wider European integration in terms of the EU. Meanwhile other scientists feared the international isolation prospects for the Baltic States (Heurlin 1996, 1994,
Hansen & Heurlin 1998) or believed in Russia’s right to include the Balts in her ‘near abroad’ (Archer & Jones 1999, Grey c.f. Lejins 1997).

However, the Baltic governments immediately crossed out one of them after the re-establishment of independence, when the Baltic countries asserted their westward orientations by refusing any affiliation with Russia (CIS agreements, being soviet successor states). On the contrary, the countries claimed their cultural and historical proximity to Europe and stressed their will to integrate themselves into the western economic and security structures (Arnswald 1998:99). Nevertheless, the countries took different paths at different paces to reach their common goals, which not only reveals their different political cultures, but also highlights the different roles they intended to play in the international community.

3.1.2.1. Estonia

The Estonian start was similar for all the three countries – desperate search for the tangible security guarantees in international institutions lead by the U.S. and Europe. However, both institutions disappointed Estonians as they learned that neither U.S. nor Europe was ready to provide the country with tangible security guarantees (Haab & Vaares 1996). Another alternative was to turn to the neighbouring Baltic countries for the Baltic Union. Notwithstanding the creation of military cooperation (BaltBat, Baltron etc.), Estonia has preferred its Nordic neighbours to the other two Baltic countries. In fact, beginning with the Estonia’s selection to the first wave of the EU enlargement, Estonians have repeatedly discarded themselves from Baltic unity, prescribing themselves to the Nordic identity (Ruutsoo 2002) and a ‘better company’ of Scandinavian states. Haab & Vares (1996) conclude that Estonia has been generally viewed in Europe as a ‘soft’ security consumer. Following their investigation, the main obstacle of becoming a security producer is that Estonia had failed to perform the role of inter-mediator between East and West due to its complicated relations with Russia. Smith, who has recently produced an implicit study on Estonian politics is of the same opinion: “For the Estonians, it seems that western integration – bringing with it concrete guarantees of state security – remains the essential prerequisite for full normalisation with the East.” (Smith 2002:149).
3.1.2.2. Lithuania

Lithuania has been combining small state identity with diplomacy and neutrality. Similarly to Latvia and Estonia, it started out with the identity of a vulnerable victim. According to Miniotaite “In the post-Cold War realities Lithuania perceived itself as a tiny and weak state, situated at the geopolitically unfavourable crossroads of the East and the West, neighbour to the always potentially dangerous Russia.” (Miniotaite 1997:93). Russia was and remains perceived as a major threat to national security, and the only way to avoid the repetition of history is by belonging to Western political, defence and economic institutions (A. Brazauskas cf. Miniotaite 1997:95). Lane insists that despite their determination not to join any alliance or confederacy with Russia, “there was a general agreement to maintain good neighbourly relations with Russia” (Lane 2002:200).

Regarding relations with other countries of the Region, by joining the CBSS and other regional organisations Lithuania (as well as the other two Baltic States) has demonstrated the perception of the commonality of goals and values shared by the Baltic and the Nordic states” (Miniotaite 1997:97). During the 1990’s, there was a shift in political discourse from the emphasis on peculiar (disadvantaged) geopolitical position to the beneficious cooperation with the Nordic countries and the Baltic Sea States in general. They were regarded as both, potential economic partners and the promoters of fair enlargement in the EU.

In contrast to Estonia, which preferred integration with the EU, Lithuania prioritised ‘hard’ security issues and membership in NATO. Since several countries in the BSR have been known for their neutral position and cautiousness toward military alliance (i.e. Sweden and Finland) Lithuania has somewhat drifted away from the regional cooperation and tightened its ties to Poland and Central Europe, by launching its initiative of the Vilnius Group. In this sense, following Lane, the participation in the Nordic-Baltic organisations served as a preparation for membership in Euro-Atlantic bodies (Lane 2002:216) (with the Danish PfP cooperation in mind). However, geopolitically painful Kaliningrad issue has maintained Lithuania’s interest in the Baltic Sea Region.
3.1.2.3. Latvia

While Estonia and Lithuania is heading different directions, Latvian position remains the most ambiguous one. This depends, following Ruutsoo (2002), due to the unfavourable geographical location, where Latvia is situated far away from the European gravity centres and is therefore most economically dependent on Russia. This has lead Latvia to search for a particular stance in international politics. According to Pabriks and Purs, “Latvian identity lies with the core of the BSR” (Pabriks & Purs 2002:131). In Pabriks and Purs (2002) cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region has been placed within the essential interests of Latvian state. The authors define essential interests as “determined by international developments that might radically influence the political environment around the particular country, undermine its international position and have reasonable influence on domestic politics.” (Pabriks & Purs 2002:125). Furthermore, the authors believe, that “Latvia, along with other two Baltic states, is in the sphere of essential interests to the Nordic Countries” (Pabriks & Purs 2002:130). It is noteworthy that the most important aspects of cooperation, as pointed out by Pabriks and Purs are the economic cooperation and political socialisation. Besides, Latvia is also the author of a visionary, but still noteworthy initiative ‘The Amber Gateway’. The initiative is about turning “the negative aspects of the strategic importance of the Baltic States into a positive advantage (Pabriks & Purs 2002:131). The potential advantages of the initiative are visioned as increasing interdependence in the Baltic Sea Region, resulting in better relations in the EU-Russia Baltic states ‘triangle’. At the same time, the region would benefit from the Nordic U.S. military cooperation. Unfortunately, the idea has not been sufficiently evolved to become a reality due to the lack of initiative from the Baltic states (Pabriks & Purs 2002).

In conclusion, although there has been much reasoning about Baltic Unity (Vilpisauskas 2001, Väyrynen 1999, Santangelo 1997 et al.) the countries have chosen different paths to their common goal. In terms of foreign policymaking the period of their independence, can be divided in three watersheds. The re-establishment of independence in 1990 resulted in democratic elections and active cooperation among the Baltic countries. The retreat of the Russian military forces from the territories of the republics in 1994 caused a shift from neutrality to westward orientation. The third watershed put an end to Baltic Unity, when Estonia was included into the first wave of the EU enlargement process in 1997. Estonia early became one of the leading candidate countries facilitated by progressive and radical economic reforms and rapid economic growth. Linguistic similarity to Finland encouraged cooperation
between the two countries and it seems like Estonia is leaving its more economically backward Baltic neighbours behind. Lithuania has recently revived its historical and cultural ties to Poland and Central Europe. Eventually Latvia is left as the ‘only’ Baltic country (Pabriks & Purs 2002).

These developments will be taken into deep consideration in further chapters of the paper. Despite the differences in foreign policy directions, the countries share “the anxiety that the country might again find itself part of a ‘grey area’ between the predatory East and an indifferent West.” (Ozolins 1994:62). They are all locked in the Baltic Rim with unavoidable presence of Russia and the EU that they have to deal with. This is why the BSR is the most interesting region for investigating national role perceptions of the Baltic states and especially their development in time. The definition of their roles in the community of the region bears two complex problems or tasks for the Balts. The first one carries the burden of the soviet past, namely re-establishing relations with Russia, which they had been part of for a significant period of time and establishing new relations with western countries in the same regional space. In other words, the region provides us with the mini-picture of the problems, faced by the Baltic States in the wider international community. Moreover, the NATO and the EU have become integral parts of the region and have had significant influence upon it. However, in contrast to the wider picture of the international community, the contacts between the Baltic States and the western countries started very early in the region, predating the official recognition of the new independent countries. As it has been said by Stålvant:

“In many ways, the Baltic Sea is a microcosm of wider European society. It transcends the core for the former politico-military divide. The territories surrounding the Baltic Sea include large and small states; established democracies/market economies and new democracies/countries in transition; and big discrepancies between rich and poor states and between certain regions and areas within individual states”. (Stålvant 55:99)

This allows us to assume that state socialisation process, which is inherent to all means of interaction first started here, when the Baltic States for the first time became equal members of a Western intergovernmental organisations (CBSS) and when the interaction at all (intergovernmental, regional, subregional and face-to-face) levels began. The socialisation took effect not only through the ministerial meetings and through summits of the heads of state, as may seem from the selected sample for analysis. The western values must have reached Baltic ears through the discourse in numerous training’s, conferences, study visits and
common projects that took place in the Region. It is in those face-to-face situations that western and Baltic political discourses met and interacted, later shedding reflections on the views and attitudes of the high politicians, whose perceptions will be analysed.

That is why the next chapter will deal with the actual intensity, quality and quantity of the international interaction in the Baltic Sea region in the 1990s. The author will also touch upon the national views and dynamics of other members (EU and Nordic countries) of the region to highlight the interactive agenda of the cooperation.

3.1.3. Other Actors in the Region

3.1.3.1. Nordic and Baltic Countries in the BSR

It is no secret, that most of the BSR regional initiatives have originated on the Western shores of the Baltic Sea which makes BSR a Western Project for constructing a new European region (Lehti 1999:24). However, the approaches of the countries have not been unanimous. While the Nordic countries have shown initiative, EU for a long time remained sceptical and cautious. As Værnø has said, the Nordic states have been so active, that they have occasionally stumbled into each other (1999). Archer & Jones (1999) explain that with the concept of liberal institutionalism which entails the promotion of liberal values and norms beyond the borders western Europe. The activities of the Nordic countries have been in general described as altruistic with a significant amount of selfishness (Ishiwari 1996).

Denmark has been the most open to the Baltic States (Archer & Jæger 1998). It has also been the informal leader of regional development, at times competing with Sweden (Mouritzen 1999, Stålvant 1999). According to Værnø (1999), Denmark, together with Sweden, has been promoting ‘Baltics-first’ policy, in contrast to, for example Finland, which practised ‘Russia-first’ policy. To summarise Denmark’s position in the region, one could describe Denmark as ‘pro-enlargement of the EU’, ‘pro-enlargement of NATO’ and ‘pro-military cooperation in the region’ (Archer & Jæger 1998, Mouritzen 1999).

Besides competing with Denmark for the regional leadership, Sweden maintained a middle position between the enthusiastic Danes and the more sceptical Finns and Germans. Sweden remained most reluctant to ‘high security’ issues in the beginning of the nineties (Archer & Jæger 1998). The middle position could be described as ‘pro-enlargement of the EU’, ‘anti-

Notwithstanding a significant turn in Finnish foreign policy after the end of the Cold War, Finland, as mentioned earlier, has been promoting ‘Russia-first’ policy (Værnø 1999), although the recent statements of Finnish officials show a turn away from Russia (Browning 2001). The best example of Finnish Russian policy is the EU’s Nordic dimension (http://www.northerndimension.org). Nevertheless, Finland has been positive towards the EU eastern enlargement (Mouritzen 1999). As regarding Baltic States in particular, Finns have been most active in establishing parliamentary links with the Baltics (Archer & Jæger 1998).

Norway, Germany and Iceland have been less enthusiastic about Baltic Sea cooperation, although bilateral Inks to Baltic States were intensive. In the regional context, Norway was mainly pre-occupied with the Arctic council and Germany feared to wake the historical memories in the region. Lucas (1998) discusses the importance of the ‘Russian factor’ in the German Baltic policy, whereas Krohn (1999) is more sceptical and argues that Germany does not have a Baltic policy whatsoever. Nevertheless, it was Germany and Denmark, that were the founders of the Baltic Sea Regional Cooperation (http://www.cbss.st). In general, Germany has supported Baltic EU membership together with the other Nordic countries, although Germany retained a more realistic attitude, but was sceptic of NATO enlargement (Mouritzen 1999, Lange 1998).
3.1.3.2. The EU as a Baltic Sea Regional Actor

“What we witness in EU relations with the region is a gradual process of adaptation, with policy-learning by the actors in various institutional settings”.

(Christiansen 1999:195).

The European Union’s approach to the Baltic Sea region in general and Baltic States in particular was highly cautious direct after the break up of the Soviet Union. This was connected to the fact that contrary to, for example Poland, the Baltic States have actually been the territory of the Soviet Union and thus was presumed to be highly affected by the communist regime (Arnswald 1998, Van Ham 1999). After 1991 the relations European Union - Baltic states relations were within the framework of economic assistance, TACIS and later PHARE (Davis 2000). One of the first documents on the Baltic Sea Region, Orientations for the Union Approach towards the Baltic Sea Region (Commission 1994), states that “It is primarily the responsibility of the countries in the area and of the various actors operating at all levels in both the public (regions and municipalities) and private sectors to work towards the political and economic development of the area” this way showing reluctance to get too much involved in the regional matters. Nevertheless, this was a start to the EU’s Baltic policy. The second document on Baltic Sea Region was also merely a report over the economic assistance to the countries in transition (Commission 1995). The EU – Baltic States cooperation accelerated with the accession of Sweden and Finland to the EU. Communication on the Baltic Sea Region Initiative (Commission 1996) acknowledges the importance of the Council of the Baltic Sea States in coordinating EU assistance programmes. The Baltic Sea Region Initiative did not provide a new framework for cooperation. It was rather an attempt to gather and coordinate the existing activities and programmes concerned with the region. Finally, the latest EU policy on the BSR has been the Nordic Dimension (Commission 1998, European Parliament 1999). In short, the policy aims at the EU – Russia relations, in the meantime and after the enlargement. Apart from the high rhetoric, the success of the policy is questionable. The main reason for that is most likely the fact that the EU did not assure any financing measures for the implementation. However, at the meantime, there is hope that together with the new action programme the policy will be ascribed a budget line.
In general, EU has played, both, active and passive roles in the region (Christiansen 1999). By active role, the author means, the particular policies and programmes designed for the region, that have their faults and benefits. However the passive role of being present in the region has in general brought stability and security to the region.

The fact that both EU and Nordic countries have been chosen for the analysis may arise questions, since most of the Western countries in the region are also members of the EU. The reason for that was, that EU is still far from able to speak with one voice in foreign policy matters and its northern member countries have different opinions from the southern members. And although several Nordic countries held EU presidencies during the period of analysis it is possible to distinguish between general EU position and the positions of separate countries concerning the issues of the study.

3.2. Cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region – the CBSS

During the last decade, tight networks of cooperation among governments, sub-regional authorities, cities and municipalities, businesses and NGOs replaced the Iron Curtain, which previously had divided the region. By now, much of the cooperation has occurred under the umbrella of the largest intergovernmental institution in the Region – CBSS. Other important actors in the region have been 3+5 framework, containing of Nordic and Baltic Councils, Baltic Sea States Parliamentary Conference (http://www.bspc.net/), Baltic Sea States Subregional Cooperation (http://www.bsssc.com), Baltic Sea Area NGO forum (http://www.cbss.st) and, of course, the annual Stockholm conference on Baltic Sea Security and Cooperation (http://www.usis.usemb.se) that has been a forum for security issues since 1996. This section will be devoted to CBSS as a framework for interstate socialisation and discuss the regionalisation process in the Baltic Sea area. The purpose of this section is to give a background to the nature and intensity of regional cooperation around the Baltic Sea. Since the focus lies primarily on political socialisation, economical matters will not be discussed. The CBSS was chosen not only because it is an umbrella organisation covering many other regional organisation, but also because it is the most institutionalised and ‘thickest’ organisation covering many aspects of political life. Furthermore, the CBSS will was one of the very first organisations, which accepted the Baltic states as equal members.
At the dawn of the 90’s the region lay bound in numerous barriers and frontiers which caused the common perception that the situation there is ‘of potential conflict as well as of opportunity’ (Jopp & Lippert 1998:10). At the beginning of the 90’s (and our study period) only Denmark and Germany were members of both the EU and the NATO. Denmark, however also owed its allegiance to the old Norden together with Sweden and Norway. Contrary to Norway, Sweden was neutral, but became a member of the EU in 1995 together with Finland. Iceland was the first to recognise the Baltic independence, but otherwise it tried to avoid political interventions in the matters of the region. Poland participated in both Visegrad and Baltic cooperation and in the mid 90’s moved the external border of NATO to Lithuanian-Polish borderline.

The borders and frontiers that bound the region did not help to ‘warm up’ the international climate in the BSR after the cold war. The development in the Balkans proved the vulnerability and fragility of newly re-born democracies and pointed to the need of concerted action to tackle the post-communist world. In the case of the BSR, the Western countries in the region faced a dilemma: including Russia into regional arrangements as an equal partner might have caused suspicion that the West is adjusting to the needs and demands of Russia, on the other hand, the exclusion of Russia would reinforced the already existent East-West opposition (Værnø 1999:198) . As a response to this, CBSS was founded in March 1992 due to the initiative of the Danish and German Foreign Ministers. The solution was to include heavy international actors (the EU) to balance Russia and to avoid issues that might cause a conflict (Værnø 1999). The founding declaration was signed by the foreign ministers of Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russia, Sweden, Norway and the member of the Commission of the European Community. Later, in 1996, the organisation was joined by Iceland and several other countries and organisations (like Italy, France, Slovakia, The Netherlands, Ukraine, United Kingdom and United States, who enjoy the observer status in CBSS; and Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference, Baltic Sea States Sub-regional Cooperation, Union of the Baltic Cities, and Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, who are the so called special participants).

There were also other ideas about the reasons behind the CBSS. The thing that most authors agree on is that, that the region was first created at a discursive level and then handed down to the public (Browning 2001) through a discourse of the new Hanseatic league which was used
to create the regional feeling around the Baltic Rim. Following Mouritzen (1999) the aim of the regional intergovernmental organisation was to blur the boundaries mentioned above, in this way alleviating the inclusion/exclusion effect. Another important achievement with the creation of the CBSS was the possibility to bring together the Baltic states and Russia in a controllable environment (Stålvant 1999). Some authors have linked the establishment of the Baltic sea region cooperation with the Nordic cooperation that had burned out by the beginning of the nineties and the Baltic states provided Nordic states with new objects for cooperation and the new potential receivers of their societal and political values (Heurlin 1996).

According to the Copenhagen declaration, the CBSS serves “as an overall regional forum to focus on needs for intensified cooperation and coordination among the Baltic Sea States”. It operates at a highest representative level, embracing foreign ministers and head of state of the member states. The foreign ministers and heads of state meet annually at CBSS ministerial conferences and summits respectively. Although it started off as a mere forum, CBSS grew eventually into an umbrella organisation, fostering not only other regional organisations, but also issue specific work groups and task forces. Currently it is coordinating the working group on the assistance to democratic institutions, the working group on nuclear and radiation safety, and working group on economic cooperation as well as task forces on combating organised crime and communicable disease in the Baltic Sea Region. The day-to-day issues of the Council are tackled by the Council of Senior Officials, comprised of high-ranking representatives of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the Member States as well as of the European Commission. The Council also fosters such institutions as the CBSS Commissioner for Democracy and Human Rights, who serves as a sort of an international ombudsman for the region. Business Advisory Council reports on the developments of the economies in transition. Baltic Sea Region Energy Cooperation is an important forum for the ministers of energy of the member countries. Environmental and sustainable development issues are addressed with the help of Baltic 21 together with the Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission (HelCom). Recently a new – children’s unit was founded at the secretariat of the Council of the Baltic Sea States, which targets children at risk in the Region.

This colourful rainbow of issues and institutions is a strong contrast to the CBSS in 1992, when it was a thin intergovernmental organisation for exchanging the views of the foreign
ministers. It did not even have a permanent secretariat until 1998. How did it come this far and what were the factors behind this?

As mentioned above, the primary goal of the newly independent countries was immediate integration in Western security structures and establishing closer cooperation with the Nordic states was one of the steps to achieve that. According to Stålvant, the origins of the CBSS stem from both – fear and expectation (Stålvant 1999:49). Fear of the unknown, the economic, political and social disorder in the newly re-established states and an expectation of an economic deal to counterbalance the ‘Blue banana’ of the EU, i.e. to avoid becoming a European periphery. Another reason for region building, promoted by Lehti (1999) is the overall process of regionalisation in Europe and Nordic States desire to have a region of their own. Although a common history and culture discourse was used to create a regional feeling, the activities of the CBSS point to the efforts of the western states to keep the developments on the Eastern coast of the Baltic Sea in control (Lehti 1999:25).

According to Lehti (1999), the region building has been justified by the high degree of pollution in the region, the need for democracy and sovereignty assistance in the post-communist countries and creating a new zone of growth close to the centre of Europe.

The development of the CBSS points to the question of socialisation, as formulated by Stålvant: “The various cooperation and assistance schemes are likely to disseminate Nordic experience and values and the notion of cooperation with neighbouring areas has quickly penetrated working programmes and institutional arrangements” (Stålvant 1999:49). One of the most illustrative cases of state socialisation is the development of the security perceptions in the Baltic Region. In the beginning of the cooperation, there has been a significant pressure from the Baltic States to include ‘hard’ security issues in the CBSS agenda (Stålvant 1999). However, already in 1996 the concept of security was reframed in terms of ‘soft’ security by the then president of the Republic of Lithuania A. Brazauskas (1996). The security demands were discarded and replaced by ‘soft’ security issues as border control and rescue missions. Similar changes have taken place in two other Baltic States as well.
In conclusion, it could be possible to say that the secret of the success of the Baltic Sea Region Project lies within the mutual usefulness of it to the members. For the western shore, the CBSS serves as a window to the Eastern states where they can tackle the disorder and numerous social, political, environmental and other problems before these have reached their shores. At the meantime, for the eastern shore and Baltic States in particular, the CBSS provides a window into the EU and NATO in the form of the possibility of lobbying the organisations via such known advocates of the Baltic States as Denmark, Sweden, Finland and Germany. This in result provides a sort of security community in which the further socialisation can take place. According to Bailes:

“Subregional groups working by free consent provided an arena for exploring national roles and identities, for seeking a new non-zero-sum relation between the ‘self’ and the ‘other’. For the smaller or most remote states, lacking powerful sponsors or early prospects of NATO or EU membership, they brought comfort which was hard to find elsewhere and some assurance of maintaining titular equality, self-respect and a hedge against isolation” (Bailes 157:99).

Indeed, as the developments of the CBSS and the intensity of its activities illustrates, there has been a major watershed in the nature of the BSR cooperation. The vague formulation of the nature of the CBSS as an intergovernmental regional forum in the 1992 Copenhagen declaration points to the cautiousness with which the parties took up the regional project. As described by Stålvant (1999) in the first half of the nineties the CBSS was used for a mere exchange of the views of the member states. This could be explained by complicating presence of the Russian military force in the Baltic states.

Year 1996-1997 and namely the Visby summit is considered a breakthrough in the development of the CBSS, which started both deepening and widening the nature of the cooperation. In terms of deepening, several task forces and work groups were created to facilitate the intergovernmental cooperation in the region. Probably the most important event was the establishment of the permanent secretariat, which symbolised a qualitatively new period in the existence of the CBSS. At the same time, the spectrum of the CBSS was widening by increasing coordination of other regional organisations, such as Baltic 21, Child at Risk, Baser, Eurofaculty and many others. A very important event in this respect was the beginning of the debates on the northern dimension initiative, which seems lately to give more
form to the CBSS by both strengthening its links to the EU and institutionalising a variety of fields of cooperation, such as transport, energy and other.

One can only speculate about the reasons of the relational warm up in the region in the second half of the decade. The reason could be the stabilised governments and economies of the Baltic states, Poland and Russia and thus by increased contacts between the countries. One could point out the issue of socialisation and successful discourse of cooperation. However, the most obvious impact has been done by the increasing interest of the EU in the candidate countries (all three Baltic countries applied for membership in 1997) and the awareness that after the enlargement, the CBSS will probably become a framework for the EU-Russia dialogue.

The previous chapter aimed to provide the background to the Baltic Sea Regional Cooperation and the activities of separate countries in the region. It highlighted the problems and dilemmas faced by actors in the region, that have shaped the regional discourse which will be analysed in chapters IV and V. It is important to notice, that despite the variety of actors involved in the regional cooperation, the core of the cooperation has been the Baltic and Nordic countries; and despite the variety of issues tackled at regional and bilateral levels, the core issues has been Baltic – Russian relations and overall stability of the region.

The following chapter will discuss the methodology used in the study as well as some issues of limitation.
Chapter IV
DISCOURSE IN THE ANALYSIS OF ROLES

4.1. Discourse Analysis as a Tool for Post-positivistic Research

“Discourses are not confined to inner realm of mental phenomena, but are those frameworks of meaning which constitute the intersubjective rules of social life”


Whilst relatively well established in other social sciences, discourse analysis is still a new and debatable method in International Relations, a discipline, which has been especially strongly affected by the positivist thinking. One of the reasons to that has been that discourse or ideational has been separated from the material (Howarth 1998). Furthermore, in line with other qualitative research methods, discourse analysis can not be measured and evaluated in terms of positivistic parameters as reliability and generalisability (Bryman 1988). The findings obtained through intuition and interpretation rather than statistical methods are of qualitatively different nature. It follows that discourse analysis, similarly to other qualitative methodology is always more subjective as the researcher is more involved in the production of the findings. Furthermore, they are hardly widely applicable, but give insight to a particular phenomenon in a particular context (Devine 1995). However, notwithstanding rather strong critique from the positivist side, discourse analysis is becoming more and more widely used in International Relations research, especially when researching identity, self-perceptions, ideology, community and increasingly security issues (Sayyid & Zac 1998, Milliken 1999). This methodology has been used in a variety of theoretical approaches, such as post-structuralists, post-modernists, feminists, and as practised in this study, constructivists (Milliken 1999). Following Sayyid and Zac, “The discursive approach focuses on the way in which communities construct their limits; their relationship to that which they are or that which threatens them; and the narratives which produce the founding past of a community, its identity, and its projections of the future” (ibid. p. 261). Thus most often discourse researchers aim to show the inherent contingency of a social subject and its ability to change (Howarth
Moreover, discourse analysis is used to understand how and why certain identities and social formations prevail over others (Ibid.).

In contrast to the positivist approach, based on the logic of rationality, and cause and effect, “discursive accounts are concerned with the understanding and interpreting socially produced meanings” (Howarth 1998:281). Hence, the researcher employs intuition to understand the social processes and as Winch (1990:22) has formulated, after one understands the process the need to explain it disappears. Thus, in some cases and contexts understanding may be put above quantitative measurement and following causal explanation. Following Howarth, “the work of discursive analysis is to discover those rules and conventions which structure the production of meaning in particular contexts; investigating why and how these systems of meaning change; and how social agents come to identify themselves in discursive terms” (Howarth 1998:281).

The object of the discourse analysis is meaning and its construction. In discourse analysis meaning is understood in relation to practice and the latter, respectively in relation to a particular discourse (Howarth 1995, George 1994). This is one of the differences from, for example, content analysis, where the focus is on separate words. Discourse analysis entails the relation of a word to the rest of the discourse.

In other words, it is assumed that discourse analysis is chosen as the method of analysis mainly because the object of the study – role perceptions is a subjective entity *sui generis* and thus cannot be measured, but understood by in-depth analysis of the political discourse, the particularities of which will be discussed in the following section.

### 4.2. The Structure of Discourse – Analytical concepts.

In its widest sense, discourse can be understood as “system(s) of meaningful practices that form the identities of subjects and objects” (Howarth and Stavrakakis 2000:4). Following the same authors, it will be assumed that discourses are constitutive of social relations and practices, which are intrinsically political. Sayyid and Zac maintain that “Subjects within a discourse acquire, through the process of identification, an identity, or identities, defining their positioning relative to others, the nature of their positioning to others, and the scope of their behaviour” (Sayyid & Zac 1998:264). The precondition to the discursive construction,
according to Laclau and Mouffe (1985) is that the identities are never finished, never finalised, which allows for constant change.

The concept of discourse can be further broken down to articulation, elements, moments and nodal points. According to Laclau and Mouffe (1985:112) articulation establishes a relation among elements thereby modifying their identity. This means, that by establishing links among several concepts a new identity may be created. It follows that discourse is the totality of such articulatory practices. The analysis will follow such articulatory practices.

One of the most important concepts in the analysis is ‘nodal point’. In Laclau’s point of view, ‘the articulation of a political discourse can only take place around an empty signifier that functions as a nodal point’ (Howarth & Stavrakakis 2000:9). The concept of empty signifier comes from the deconstruction of a word into signified, i.e., the concept and the signifier – sound-image, that expresses the signified. When the signifier does not have a steady signified, that is the meaning of the word is floating – changing depending on situation, time and space, the example of empty signifier is exhibited. Most popular empty signifiers are ‘freedom’, ‘nation’, ‘sickness’, ‘decency’ etc. Consequently, nodal points are empty signifiers that organise a discourse in a way that they fix the floating signifiers within a paradigmatic chain of equivalence (Torfing 1999).

Another concept employed in the analysis is social antagonism. Social antagonism is an inherent inability of an identity to fully constitute itself due to the existence of the ’Other’. On the other hand, it also establishes boundaries of the social formation (Torfing 1999). As proposed by Howarth (1998:276), social antagonisms “do not just reveal a fundamental negativity or lack in social relations, in that they show the impossibility of agents achieving their identity, but are also formative of social subjectivity itself”. In other words, social antagonism is an inner identity or role conflict, when the subjects identities are contradictory to each other. An example to this may be a capitalist state citizen fighting against the economic exploitation of the third world. Being a capitalist state citizen (according to some theories, e.g. Wallenstein) presumes the exploitation in the third world and thus, the identity of the fighter against the exploitation can not be fully achieved as long as the subject is herself involved in the exploitation. This often results in a radical negation of one of the identities, for example, the subject ceases buying products, made in the third world.
Finally, there is a need to define the logic of equivalence and logic of difference as the tools for the analysis. The logic of equivalence produces relations between different elements on the grounds of sameness meanwhile the logic of difference relates different elements on the grounds of their mutual difference (ibid.).

4.3. Analytical Framework

Previous research on roles has been mainly conducted using quantitative analysis. Holsti (1970), Walker (1987), Le Prestre (1997) and others used content analysis of the public speeches and interviews to determine national role conceptions. Thus their findings resulted in dominant (often expressed) and secondary (expressed less often) roles. The calculations of correlation between role conceptions, identity and status were also common. With the qualitative methodology, this study resigns from ambitions to estimate the correlation between different variables. As argued by Howarth “Social formations (identities) are not reducible to laws of history or self-interested actions of rational agents, but are political and historical phenomena undergoing constant deformation and redefinition, according to the ways in which social divisions are instituted” (Howarth 1998:276). The aim is to understand the process and by doing this to reveal qualitative dimensions of role typology. The frequency of statements evaluated as belonging to one or another role conception will not be considered important. Subjective perceptions are best expressed not by numbers, but by understanding. It is the depth of the statement and its relation to the rest of the discourse that will be considered.

As previously mentioned, discourse analysis has very wide applicability, from linguistics to mass media and to political science. There is also no consensus on the unified analysis technique. Based on the logic of the qualitative analysis, the researcher is rather free to chose his/her approach to the issue. Jennifer Milliken has grouped the variety of approaches to discourse analysis within the discipline of IR into three ‘bundles of theoretical claims’ (Milliken 1999:228-230):

1. Discourse as systems of signification – where the focus lies on the construction of meaning by identifying the relationship of the object to the other concepts in the discursive structure;
2. Discourse productivity – where discourses are analysed as ‘regimes of truth’ and their inclusive and exclusive practices as well as framing of the speakers and public as subjects of discourse.
3. The play of practice – the analysis of dominant/hegemonic discourses and their influence on implementing practices.

Obviously, in practice these bundles are interrelated and overlapping. This study will focus mainly on the first and second bundles of problems by trying to determine the relationship of particular concepts, as for example ‘cooperation’, to the overall structure of discourse and by investigating the practices of framing particular actors of discourse, i.e. the Baltic States. Besides these very broad approaches to discourse analysis, five narrower trends may be distinguished following Howarth and Stavrakakis (2000):

1. Derrida’s method of deconstruction,
2. Foucault’s archaeological and genealogical approaches to discourse analysis,
3. The theory of rhetoric and tropes,
4. Saussure’s distinction between the paradigmatic and syntagmatic poles of language, the Jakobsonian concepts of metaphor and metonymy, esp. as reformulated by Lacan.
5. Laclau and Mouffe’s logics of equivalence and difference.

The latter have been chosen for the analysis in this study. At this point it is important to point out that the study uses a constructivist approach to the role theory and does not apply the discourse theory of Laclau and Mouffe. In the analysis, the author will apply the following techniques to obtain the answers to the research questions.

The perceptions of the government officials of the international role of their country in the BSR (referred to as national role self-perceptions) will be investigated via the following means:

- First the author will try to understand the overall structure of the Baltic Sea regional discourse. This will include the determination of such properties of regional discourse as inclusiveness, exclusiveness, ‘othering’, and nodal points as well as chains of significance. The self-perceived/prescribed roles will be analysed by tracing the relationship to this nodal point. In other words, through answering the questions ‘what does cooperation mean?’, ‘who is the other of the region/actor’, ‘how are the actors framed in the chains of significance?’ the author expects to understand the roles of the entities engaged in the cooperation;
• The analysis of definition of self by tracing the contexts/schemata of the appearance of the country name/reference. Logic of difference/equivalence will be used in the analysis and the use of history and culture will be taken into the account;

• What action does the country undertake, consider to undertake in the BSR. What is mentioned/not mentioned and in what context. What is given major importance? What verbs are used to define the process of cooperation (i.e. ‘actively participates’, ‘needs’, ‘requires’, ‘contributes’);

• The ‘Other’ will be given particular attention. The alienation to a certain subgroup of states within the region or even wider framework will be traced. The logic of equivalence/difference as well as overdetermination again will be used to determine that. The EU and Russia will be given particular attention due to their strategic importance in the region;

• Similar techniques will be applied to the other western actors of the region.

Finally, it should be noted, that an inductive approach was applied as no possible roles were pre-determined, but the role typifications will be formulated drawing on the results obtained.

4.4. Data collection

A number of speeches of politicians and high officials of Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Germany, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Norway and the EU have been chosen as the material for analysis. The preference of speeches could be explained by a number of reasons:

1. A speech act provides with the access to the speaker’s perceptions minimising the researcher bias (as in the case of an interview). Since the researcher does not have a direct contact with the speaker, he/she does not have any impact on the speaker. Of course, the researcher bias is present through the phase of analysis and interpretation, but this is an overall feature of qualitative (and even, to some extent quantitative) studies that one has to be aware of.

2. A common argument against the analysis of speeches is that the speakers rarely write their speeches themselves (as pointed out by Le Prestre (1997:13). The answer to this is twofold. First of all, author’s personal contacts with some of the speakers show that in some particular cases (especially speeches of the Baltic speakers in the beginning of the analysis period) the speeches were prepared by the speakers themselves or were delivered without extensive preparation. On the other hand, the fact, that some of the speeches were not prepared by the
speakers themselves does not bias, but on the contrary adds more value to the material. As mentioned above, speaking of interstate interaction and eventual socialisation, these processes are by no means limited to the highest degree officials. On the contrary, it is believed, that these processes are present and active all the way down to interinstitutional and interpersonal communication. A speech that is prepared by a number of lower officials, produces then a broader and institutional perspective on the subject reducing the bias of the speaker’s individuality. On the other hand, even if the speeches are technically written by lower officials, they express the general ideas and views of the speakers (Le Prestre 1997:13-14).

3. As one of the arguments for analysis of speeches Le Prestre (1997:13), in line with the other researchers points out that ‘Not only do official speeches act as constraints on speakers through their impact on speakers through their impact on other actors’ expectations, they also influence the speakers themselves’.

4. Another argument is that although speeches are often described as ‘lip service’, i.e., formal and instrumental, they are taken into account by other actors. According to Le Prestre (1997), the speakers aim to generate support, persuade the public and most importantly serve as a guideline for the actions of other actors.

5. Furthermore, as has been pointed out by Thibault and Levesque (1997), the analysis of speeches is particularly useful in the periods of turbulence, when there is certain uncertainty about the identity and role conceptions of a state, which is the case for this study. In such cases public speeches are aimed at consolidating state’s role in the international community.

6. Finally, quoting Abba Eban (Eban 1983:393 cf. Le Prestre 1997:14), ‘What statesmen and diplomats say is often as vital as what they do. It would not be far–reached to go further and declare that speech is an incisive form of action’.

The total number of speeches was 117, which equals about 500 pages\(^5\) of printed material. About half of the material (57 speeches) was selected from the representatives of Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania and the other half (60) came from the speakers of Finland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Germany and European Union\(^6\). Only the speeches of politicians and high officials were included. The approximate time span for the selection was 1993-2002, although no yearly quota was used. Despite the fact that several languages in the region are accessible to the author, the sample was limited to the material in English. This was done in order to avoid deviation occuring from translation and in order to be able to have equal accession to all

\(^5\) Where one page =~360 words.

\(^6\) For full list of material see appendix.
material indiscriminately. Furthermore, the author assumes that only the speeches in English have been accessible to the other countries, and consequently influenced role formation. Some exceptions were made in the case of the Baltic States, as the impact of the Baltic discourse on the western actors’ conceptions was not the subject of the research. Nevertheless, in such cases only the official translations of the speeches were analysed. The other criteria for selecting the material was its relevance to the subject, namely the Baltic Sea region. Location and occasion were not considered of major importance as long as the content was relevant. Following Le Prestre (1997:13), modern communications have made it impossible to tailor speeches with respect to the audience and all speeches, regardless of their location have become attainable.
Chapter V

ROLE PRESCRIPTIONS, ROLE CONCEPTIONS AND OTHER FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH

5.1. Analysis of the Western Expectations Concerning the Role of the Baltic States in the BSR: Cooperation through Learning.

As it has been pointed out at the beginning of the paper, the socialization of the state in the international community is possible in two ways. The first one has been described by Wendt (1996:57) as “The symbolic interactionist concept of “reflected appraisals/reciprocal typifications” – actors form identities by learning through interaction to see themselves as others do. By showing others through cooperative acts that one expects them to be cooperators too, one changes the intersubjective knowledge in terms of which their identities are defined” and the other one as imitation, i.e., “Project and sustain the presentations of self. Thus, by engaging in cooperative behaviour an actor will gradually change its own beliefs about who it is, helping to internalise that new identity for itself”. The first strategy can be traced in the discourse in the form of encouragement, forbids, expectations and restrains from the behalf of the significant other. This is what one can find in the speeches. The second strategy is more difficult to trace in any particular statements and thus needs a temporal dimension to understand the substantial changes in the discourse of a state.

In the early western discourse on the BSR cooperation it is possible to distinguish between the explicit statements about the western expectations of the Baltics and the implicit roles prescribed to Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania, which are embedded in the structure of discourse. The explicit expectations were among others: improved relations with Russia, development of democracy, human rights, economic cooperation and environmental issues. Whereas the implicitly prescribed roles are available through in-depth analysis and interpretation of the discourse and could be summarised as a passive role within a ‘tutor’/’apprentice’ relationship. The former and the latter will be discussed below.
Probably the most explicit source of expectations regarding Latvia’s, Lithuania’s and Estonia’s international activity in the BSR is the Copenhagen declaration of the CBSS. The founding declaration in the 1992 points out the following areas of cooperation:

1. Assistance to democratic institutions
2. Economic and technological assistance and cooperation
3. Humanitarian matters and health
4. Protection of the environment and energy
5. Cooperation in the field of culture, education, tourism and information
6. Transport and communication.

These goals are often reiterated in the speeches of the senior officials from both Western and Eastern shores of the Baltic Sea.

In addition, especially in the earliest period of analysis, maintaining good relations with Russia are given special importance, as for example in the following statement:

“What is ultimately at stake is the broader question of the relations between Russia and the West at large...[...] a negative development in relations between Russia and the Baltic countries would have repercussions far beyond the regional scene” or later in the same speech: ‘Good relations between Russia and the Baltic countries are, of course, a crucial component of stability and security in the region’.

These statements, whether in a meeker or more determinate tone are reiterated in almost all analyzed speeches, as, for example:

“building a Russian-Baltic relationship that is not only free from acrimony and rhetoric, but genuinely constructive and mutually beneficial”.

It follows that the role of the mediator between the East and the West is ascribed to Sweden and the Baltic States are not prescribed any active role at all.

However, the ambition of this paper is to reach beyond these explicit statements and try to understand what is implied in this discourse and how has it been constructive of the Baltic

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7 Copenhagen declaration at the Conference of Foreign ministers of Baltic Sea States, Copenhagen, March 5-6, 1992.
8 Ulf Hjertonsson ”Sweden and Security in the Baltic Sea Region” at the 1st annual Stockholm Conference on Security and Stability in the Baltic Sea Region. Mr Hjertonsson was at that time director general of Political affairs at the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
states international roles in the region. To achieve that, the researcher has looked into the concept of cooperation and what it entails in the Baltic Sea regional discourse.

The results of the study imply that ‘cooperation’ is an empty/ floating signifier, which at the same time functions as a nodal point in the Baltic Sea Regional discourse. Indeed, it has become a ‘catchword’ of the decade, which is used so often that its meaning has been lost. Since it has been assumed that discourse is always political and always involves power relations, it could be revealing to look closer at the concept and how it structures the political discourse around the Baltic Rim.

A closer look at the concept reveals two tendencies. On one hand, logic of difference is employed to distinguish between the disorderly East with major societal, political and economical problems and wealthy and stable West:

“The major differences in standard of living and social conditions between people in the region is the second challenge for Baltic Sea Cooperation”\textsuperscript{10} or later in the speech “To prevent conflicts and build our common security in the Baltic Sea region, we need to create equality. Today, we are facing major differences democratically, socially, economically and environmentally. If we are not able to overcome the serious gap in democratic culture, standard of living and the environmental situation, we will not be able to achieve common security in reality”.

The latter quote is also interesting in that respect, that it not only creates a dialectical relationship between the past and the future, disorder and success, dispensable and desirable, but also implies a kind of conditionality to follow the rules of the cooperation on the way to success. One of the speakers\textsuperscript{11} describes the EU – Baltic States relationship in terms of learning, assistance and cooperation. He and other speakers refer to Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania as ‘young’, ‘inexperienced’, ‘growing’, ‘transition’ whilst the Western democracies are referred to as ‘stable’, ‘mature’, ‘established’, ‘old’, thus creating a major gap between the actors in the region and establishing unequal power relations.

\textsuperscript{10} Lena Hjelm Wallén (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sweden). Address at the Baltic Sea States Sub-regional Cooperation Conference, November 8, 1995.

This brings us to the second point – the relationship between the prosperous West and the disorderly East. By being described as merely aid recipients, the Baltic states are prescribed a passive role and thus placed in an unfavourable position in the power relationship. This is reinforced by the next kind relationship – Baltic states as a challenge to the West Europe, as, for example:

“the new closeness to Russia and the Baltic region will be both a challenge and an opportunity for the EU”\(^\text{12}\) or in “The Baltic countries and the northwestern part of Europe present Finland and the other Nordic countries with a European challenge”\(^\text{13}\).

Framing the countries as a ‘challenge’ moves them to an even more passive position, because this does not imply any action or determination at all and is rather in line with an overall Western European mission to promote liberal democratic values throughout the world as present in:

“respect for democracy, human rights and law and order, combined with a social market economy and free trade, are fundamental criteria for building up cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region”\(^\text{14}\) or in the same speech “We have a historic opportunity to create a united Europe – a Europe characterised by integration, cooperation and common security” or in “It is Europe's role to ensure that, amid this worldwide transition, freedom, democracy and social responsibility prevent the return of chauvinism and dominating ideologies as the forces ruling societies”\(^\text{15}\) and other places.

On the other kind, the chains of equivalence are employed to establish a relationship of tutor/apprentice. As mentioned above, the relations/cooperation are often described as ‘learning’ and ‘assistance’, when the Western European values and knowledge are exported to Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania:

“The Nordic countries have a well-established tradition and long experience of their own successful cooperation to offer the Baltic Sea region as a model”\(^\text{16}\) or “Existing EU countries can share their knowledge and experience”\(^\text{17}\).


\(^\text{13}\) Pertti Torstila (Ambassador and Director General of Political Affairs at the Foreign Ministry of Finland). “Finland and the Evolving European Security Order” at Ist annual Stockholm Conference on Security and Stability in the Baltic Sea Region.


\(^\text{15}\) M. Ahtisaari (President of Finland). ”Baltic Region within an Integrating Europe” 1994.

\(^\text{16}\) Ibid.
Logic of equivalence is then used to induce the process of learning as for example in the speech of the Finnish president M. Ahtisaari\textsuperscript{18}:

‘In it [Western European space auth. remark], there is room for differences, minorities are not oppressed, but instead individuality is encouraged’.

Thus, by belonging to the European space (which Estonia aspired to do) Estonia should comply with those rules. By referring to Estonia in present time, the speaker here points to minority issues in Estonia and encourages settling it, because Estonia is a European country and this is the way European countries act:

“Both Finland and Estonia are constructing a multicultural, but increasingly unified Europe’. ‘small nations, their capacity for cooperation and their creative contribution are important factors in the development of the new Europe. In this process, Finland and Estonia are turning out of their solitary paths into the mainstream of unity and solidarity’.

The speaker encourages Estonians to identify with Finland, which is a similar country, only better established in the global context. Estonia should follow Finnish advice on its road to success:

“each state must find its place within a regional, continental and global context. It is increasingly clear that the smaller countries of the Baltic Sea region share the same kind of position in world politics”.

Such and other claims illustrate, how the relationship of tutor/apprentice is enbuilt in the western regional discourse. The Nordic countries here could be metaphorically described as ‘mentors’ determined to educate and introduce the newly independent Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania into the international community, by handing down their values, political practices and experience:

“Such multilateral cooperation goes hand in hand with bilateral efforts toward, for instance, international integration of the reforming countries”\textsuperscript{19}.

Somewhere in 1997-1998 one may notice a change in the status of Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania, as from ‘new’ and ‘young’ they turn to ‘applicant’, ‘candidate’ and ‘accession’ and


\textsuperscript{18} M. Ahtisaari (President of Finland). “Baltic Region within an Integrating Europe” 1994.

\textsuperscript{19} Per Poulsen-Hansen (Under-secretary of State, Political Director at the Royal Danish Foreign Ministry). “NATO, the EU and the Baltic Sea Region” at Ist annual Stockholm Conference on Security and Stability in the Baltic Sea Region.
the focus of the regional discourse turns to Russia. What does this mean? Have Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania been accepted to the Western community as equals? What role do they have to play in it?

On one hand, along other factors, regional cooperation, domestic reforms and negotiations with the EU have rendered that the frontier of East and West has been shifted to the eastern borders of the Baltic states and Poland. In contrast to the first half of the 90s, Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania have been more or less accepted to the European space, even if this entailed subsequent ‘othering’ of Russia:\(^\text{20}\):

“I am thinking first and foremost of the rebirth of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania as well as the unleashing of Poland’s dynamic potential. Although Russia, too, is a completely different country now than it was ten years ago, a country that has passed the point of no return, Russia has not yet experienced the stable development of Central Europe”\(^\text{21}\).

According to the same speaker, this line marks the differences in order, norms and prosperity:

“Enlargement will, however, also entail new challenges. A deepening normative and socio-economic divide could be such a challenge which is best avoided through an expanded cooperation on the Northern Dimension”\(^\text{22}\).

Consequently the regional discourse tends to be more and more Baltic States inclusive and Russia exclusive.

On the other hand, although explicit distinguishing of the Baltics has become more rare, the subject of Baltic – Russian relations is not abandoned. Indeed,

“The relationship between Russia and the Baltic States constitutes, without doubt, the key to the regional stability”\(^\text{23}\) and “Although the northern initiative is comprehensive - it involves also Poland, Norway and Iceland - the EU relations with Russia and the Baltic States make up its core.”\(^\text{24}\)

\(^\text{22}\) Friis Arne Petersen (Permanent Secretary, Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs). Address at the Conference on the Northern Dimension and Kaliningrad: European and Regional Integration, 17-18 May, 2000, Copenhagen, Denmark.
\(^\text{24}\) Ibid.
Thus, even with a shifting centre of gravity, the Baltic states remain of special regional concern and continue shaping their national role conceptions through international socialisation.

In the late 90s and early 2000, the concept of cooperation is still bound to the same signifiers: learning, integration into international community and relations with Russia.

Despite the unwillingness of Latvia and Estonia to be placed in an unfavourable tutor/apprentice relationship, it continues to be present in the Baltic Sea regional discourse: “this subregional cooperation has helped to increase security by promoting confidence and trust between the states and peoples of the region, reinforcing mutual dependence, strengthening democratic structures, reducing economic differences, promoting economic and social development, reducing region specific risks and threats, and promoting further regional integration”25 or “States that are currently not members of these organisations (NATO, the EU etc.) must be part of the process of sharing resources, disseminating norms and standards and establishing greater understanding and trust designed to reinforce common security”26.

Although to a lesser extent, the Baltic countries remained a Nordic contribution to the European mission to promote liberal democratic values and market economy in the rest of the world. Through appraisals and encouragement the Nordic speakers continued to shape the domestic and international discourse and behaviour of the Baltic States:

“On their initiative, the Baltic countries established a council identical to the Nordic Council. Ever since, Trans-national parliamentary contacts have been an important element of the networks that have contributed to political progress”27.

One of the speakers once called the Baltic states “The new Nordics”28 which sheds light on both the tutor/apprentice relationship and the successful implementation of the ‘European mission’.

26 Ibid.
Nevertheless, the relationship of integrator/integrated, which is rather close to the issue discussed above has become more dominant. In this respect it could be the successor of the former. Being known as the advocates of the Baltic states membership in the EU, Nordic countries have assumed a role of integrating Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania into the international and primarily European community or in the word of one of the speakers “make it easier to find their place in the international community”\textsuperscript{29}:

“Aspiring members need guidance concerning “the rules of the road” towards membership in order for them to stay on course”\textsuperscript{30} or “...Denmark has special responsibilities, and possibilities, to contribute to making this region a secure and prosperous part of Europe.”\textsuperscript{31} or “In conclusion, one can say that the enlargement of the European Union is the most powerful single factor in promoting practical cooperation between the Baltic States and the Nordic countries”\textsuperscript{32}.

The use of this relationship is mutually beneficial. The Baltic countries get inside lobbyists for their accession process and the Nordic countries strengthen their position in the EU by bringing in the countries that have been heavily influenced by them. It could be compared to a situation when a newcomer is introduced in a company of old friends. The one that takes up the job of introducing the newcomer, has also the possibility to ‘enlighten’ or ‘educate’ him/her in a self-advantageous way.

Among the ‘rules of the road’ Baltic – Russian relations take up an important place. On one hand, the foreseen role of Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania in the international community is the mediator between the East and the West:

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{28} René Nyberg (Ambassador Head of Division for Eastern Affairs Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland) The Baltic as an Interface Between the EU and Russia. “The Dynamics of the Baltic Sea Region: What belongs together is now growing together” Greifswald, 30 March 2000.
\textsuperscript{29} Pertti Torstila, Director General for Political Affairs. Second Annual Conference on Atlanticism Hungarian Atlantic Council. Budapest, 3-4 March 2000.
\textsuperscript{30} Friis Arne Petersen (Permanent Secretary, Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs). “Denmark’s strategy for the Political Integration of the Baltic Region” at IIIrd Annual Stockholm Conference on Baltic Sea Security and Cooperation.
\textsuperscript{31} Ibid.
\end{flushright}
“The Northern Dimension will help Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania to adapt to their new role, which will make them a central actor in developing cooperation between the EU, Russia and the nearby CIS countries.”

On the other hand, the Baltic states are differentiated on this issue, where minority issues are brought up in Latvia and Estonia and Lithuania’s cooperation with Russia is appraised:

“We should also draw in the efforts exercised by immediate neighbours of Kaliningrad as for example Lithuania as well as by other actors” or “Lithuania has demonstrated what European integration means to a small country. We have especially Lithuania to thank for the breakthrough in Kaliningrad. I personally am convinced that it was the astute and well-considered approach of the Lithuanian government that convinced Moscow to revise its policy towards Kaliningrad.”

To sum up, the Baltic sea regional discourse in the Western countries of the region has been about the promotion of liberal democratic values eastwards, assistance to the eastern countries and integration of Russia. The Baltic states are treated in the western regional discourse as a ‘project’ of the Nordic states, where the Nordic countries are trying, roughly said, to duplicate themselves. On the other hand this raises the question of the reciprocity of the relationship. As the further section will show, not all Baltic states have been satisfied with the handed down roles.

5.2. Estonian Foreign Discourse

Speaking about the foreign discourses of the three Baltic countries, it is possible to distinguish between different sets of roles. Explicit roles are extracted from the explicit statements on the international roles of countries under concern. Implicit roles are traced through more in-depth discourse analysis, mainly using the methods of Laclau and Mouffe (as described above). Long-term roles are not permanent, but lasting over a significant period of time

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33 Ibid.
34 Ibid.
35 Gunnar Ortman (Secretary of State, Denmark). Address at the Foreign Ministers Conference on the Northern Dimension, Helsinki, 11-12 November 1999.
(dominant/present under all period of investigation). Short-term roles are situational and change rather fast. Later in the analysis, it will also be distinguished between the individual roles that are unique to each country and roles perceived relatively similarly in all three countries.

The particularities of the Estonian discourse will be discussed with regard to following issues: ‘cooperation’ as a nodal point, Estonia’s role emerging from the relationship to the other (mainly western) actors of the region; Estonia’s role as related to relations with Russia and the implications of Estonian identity discourse; and issue specific international role in the region.

The nodal point of cooperation as a concept organising the discourse is in chains of equivalence to other signifiers than for example it is in the western discourse. In the early Estonian regional discourse ‘cooperation’ entails security issues and assistance: “if cooperation is to work, it has to be cooperation on all fronts, in all spheres, and this includes security”\textsuperscript{37} or “would like to inject an element of security policy into the activities of the Council of Baltic Sea States”\textsuperscript{38}. Eventually the security issues are left aside as ‘cooperation’ is bound to enhancement of economic and trade issues\textsuperscript{39}.

In the speeches at the beginning of the study period, Estonia is pictured as a small, weak and aid-recipient country:

“..is the strong support we have seen in bilateral relations with our closest neighbors in the confused period following Russia’s parliamentary elections. Sweden has taken the lead in trying to exert a moderating influence on Russia, at the same time reassuring us that we will not be left alone”\textsuperscript{40}.

The discourse on Estonia’s international role transforms as in 1995 Baltic Sea region cooperation is acknowledged as a tool for further integration in Europe:


“An important means by which to move toward these goals [integration into European structures] is the Council of Baltic Sea States”\textsuperscript{41} or “the foundation of integration is regional cooperation, which, on a small scale, serves as a microcosm for cooperation in increasingly larger fora”\textsuperscript{42}.

This implies that the country no longer is a passive recipient, but is ready to seize the opportunity for lobbying at the same time learning from the West. Eventually, the unequal relationship with the Western actors in the region becomes unsatisfactory and Estonian speakers call for more equality among the countries in the region:

“it strikes me that developments in the Baltic region, especially economic developments, have outpaced the work and initial focus of the Council”\textsuperscript{43}.

Finally, in 1997 the situation is mature for stating that Estonia has overgrown the role of passive ‘apprentice/recipient’ and that it wishes to stand on more equal grounds with the other actors in the region:

“it sounds as if some consider Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania to be some kind of tribes incapable of making up their own minds and in need of caretaking”\textsuperscript{44}.

It seems like Estonia has been fighting most of all Baltic countries for the status of an equal partner. In one of the speeches, a substantial Constructivist statement is approved, when the speaker concludes that some ideas live longer than material constructions, referring to the Cold War\textsuperscript{45}. Thus, the conflict about the unequal treatment has probably been the most visible in the case of Estonia and least in the case of Lithuania.

As Russia is an important actor in the region and much of the western discourse is focused on this country and its relations with the Baltics, it is almost impossible to skip this point in the analysis. Despite explicit encouragement of the western actors to improve relations with Russia, Estonians have probably been the most sensitive to this issue. The early speeches of 1993 – 1996 feature strong hostility towards Russia, where large parts of speeches are dedicated to enlisting the damage Russia has done to Estonia in the past and the threat that it entails at present:

\textsuperscript{41} R. Sinijärv (Foreign minister of Estonia). Remarks at the ministerial conference of the CBSS, 19 May 1995, Gdansk.
\textsuperscript{42} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{43} Toomas Hendrik Ilves (Minister of Foreign Affairs of Estonia). Statement at the Ministerial meeting of the Council of Baltic Sea States, 2 July 1997, Riga.
\textsuperscript{44} Harry Tiido (Deputy Under-Secretary, Policy, Press and Information Affairs). “Speech “The Impossibility of A Baltic Sea Region Security” at Vth Annual Stockholm Conference on Baltic Sea Region Security and Cooperation, October 19, 2000.
“Because Russia's intentions toward the Baltic states arguably play a significant role in Baltic and Nordic security as a whole, and because the central focus of this conference's meetings tomorrow is regional security arrangements, I would turn now to my second point, which is the need for institutional ties to help bolster the security of the Baltic states”.

The early speeches often contain narratives on Estonian – Russian relations, where Russia is described as a great threat to the region. The narratives are built, again, on references to authoritative sources, which helps to achieve higher persuasion. Furthermore, it becomes clear, that cooperation is with the West (reference to NATO) against the East (Russia). Estonia is described as a country “Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea”, a metaphorical description of inaccessible West and the ‘beastly’ (unpredictable and dangerous) Russia. The logic of difference is used separating ‘us’ ‘we’ ‘our’ (Estonian) from ‘foreign’ (Russian). By using the logic of equivalence, in this case, common threat, Estonian ‘self’ is tied to the triad of the Baltic states, extended to the Nordic region and finally incorporated in the body European states. In fact, Estonia has been the country that has least complied with the encouragement from the West to maintain good relations with Russia. Except for its ‘positive engagement’ policy, which was by and at large the achievement of Finnish officials, Estonians have at their best tended to exclude Russia from the discourse or refer to it in a very cold and indifferent tone.

It is interesting to follow the connection between the latter development and allusions to Estonian identity. Out of the three Baltic States, Estonia has been the one that most rejects its Eastern European roots and rather perceives itself as a Nordic country:

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45 See, for example, Clyde Kull “Strengthening Civil Society in Europe and the Baltic Sea Region” at the IIId annual Stockholm Conference on Baltic Sea Security and Cooperation, Stockholm, 1999.
51 See, for example, Toomas Hendrik Ilves (Minister of Foreign Affairs of Estonia). “Estonia’s Main Foreign Priorities”, Address to the Riigikogu, June 1999.
52 See, for example, Harry Tiido (Deputy Under-Secretary, Policy, Press and Information Affairs). Speech “The Impossibility of A Baltic Sea Region Security” at Vth Annual Stockholm Conference on Baltic Sea Region Security and Cooperation, October 19, 2000.
“as the current explosion of political, cultural economic ties between a number of countries that once had Stockholm as their capital’ or F.S.E. – former Swedish empire”\textsuperscript{53} or “Above all, it is a means of restoring our natural place in the Nordic space. We have belonged to this region for many centuries. Our sense of identity is rooted in the close ties we share with the Nordic peoples. Now we have been offered an opportunity to reconfirm these traditional ties”\textsuperscript{54}.

Such rather radical statements point to peculiar social antagonisms inside the country. Estonia has had it most difficult to develop its identity. Antagonisms, which then, later and even now hinder the construction of the identity of the Estonian State. Having a large Russian minority, a strict line between the Estonian and Russian is drawn. For a long time, Russia has constituted the ‘Other’ with reference to which the Estonian identity has been constructed. After the regain of independence, Estonia was left with a significant Russian population, which caused social antagonisms in the country. Estonian identity could not be completed due to the presence of the ‘Other’ within the boundaries of the Estonian State. This might have caused the use of the logic of difference where a part of the self is rejected in order to complete the identity and such identification with the non-eastern European/post-communist countries is pursued.

Finally, the issue specific international role prescribed to Estonia by Estonian officials could be defined as a ‘postmodern’ actor in the region. This could be illustrated by Estonian speakers’ interest in economic cooperation without boundaries, free financial flows, emphasis on ITC and R&D: “stability, liberalism, openness, dynamic development, functioning market economy, and developing information society”\textsuperscript{55}.

In fact, it is difficult to trace a long-term international role in Estonian regional discourse, as it seems that the main aim of the officials is to act and speak alike ‘Northerners’. On the other hand, this goal is unachievable due to their approach to Russia. This is a very good example of social antagonism as described by Laclau and Mouffe (1985). Thus, Estonian regional


\textsuperscript{55} Toomas Hendrik Ilves (Minister of Foreign Affairs of Estonia). “Estonia’s Main Foreign Priorities”, Address to the Riigikogu, June 1999; see also Ilves 2001 ND, Ojuland 2002 CBSS etc.
discourse has been mostly marked by hostility towards Russia, assertions of Nordic identity and later in the period of analysis, ambitions to be the leading state in IT and R&D matters.

5.3. Lithuanian Foreign Discourse

If ‘cooperation’ in Estonian discourse implied ‘assistance’, ‘military’ and then ‘economic’, Lithuanian discourse framed ‘cooperation’ as ‘assistance’, ‘military’ and ‘learning’. Having analysed the findings regarding the Lithuanian officials perceptions of their country’s international role in the region, it is possible to point out the following issues: the development of the Lithuanian – Russian relations in the context of reflected appraisals/reciprocal typifications, and the change and development of more general role perceptions in the process of socialisation.

To begin with the more explicit role, Lithuania’s willingness to become a mediator between the East and the West can be noticed already in 1993, when the minister of defense Audrius Butkevicius explicitly advocated Lithuania’s natural role of the bridge/mediator presenting a number of arguments. The geographical position is used to depict the country as lying ‘on the shortest path between the countries of East and West Europe’ and ‘at the crossroads between East, North and Central Europe’, thus arguing that the role of the ‘bridge/mediator’ is inherent to Lithuania, as it has the unique preconditions for fulfilling the role. Furthermore, such features of the Lithuanian national character as tolerance and respect for different cultures are presented as especially fitting the role of the mediator. As encouragement and advice for improved Baltic relations with Russia continues, Lithuanian officials maintain their commitment to this role:

‘...affirming Lithuania as a full-fledged partner in her relations with Russia, a country with which Lithuania, over centuries, has had an uneasy relationship. Although memories of recent occupation are still alive, through becoming part of the Alliance and thus gaining recognition that our nation is an inalienable part of Western democracy, Lithuania could further pursue an open and mutually beneficial economic partnership with Russia, and such relationship is equally in the interest of Russia itself’.

It is interesting to note there’s been a change in such reasoning after the complete withdrawal of the Russian army from Lithuanian territory. Then was more explicitly stated that good neighbourly relations with Russian federation are nothing more than conditionality for integration into Western structures:

“We know that instability will not bring us closer to membership in NATO or the WEU. Poor relations with our neighbour Russia will not help either”.

However similarly to Latvia and Estonia, Lithuanian speakers in their own turn, positioned membership in the Western Structures as a prerequisite for good relations with Russia (as visible in the quote of V. Usackas above).

‘Tutor/apprentice’ relationship, prescribed by the Western discourse is admitted, nonetheless, the speakers ascribe Lithuania an active learning role with a perspective to forward the knowledge and experience further east, thus engaging in the European project. Similarly to the other Baltic countries at that period, the speaker presents the country as young and inexperienced (‘young’, ‘impatient’, ‘small’, ‘weak’), which matches the role of the ‘apprentice’ that the speaker seeks to promote (or assume?). The role of the ‘apprentice’ is achieved by both, individual efforts to learn and by accepting lessons from the West. In addition to ‘developing’, ‘building’, ‘proceeding as rapidly as it can’, the country is ‘training’, ‘studying’ (with the help of the West), receiving help and contributions from Western countries.

And indeed, marking a qualitatively new period, after the association agreement with the European Union (1997) Lithuanian regional discourse bursts out with initiatives for Russian integration. From 1997 and onwards, regional integration of Russia is the most promoted topic of the Lithuanian speakers. As Lithuania takes over the CBSS presidency in 1998, she “Strongly supports the active participation of Russia in the CBSS and would like to encourage ever stronger practical cooperation with St. Petersburg, Leningrad and Kaliningrad regions in the CBSS framework. CBSS must make its contribution to overcome the present crisis in Russia.”

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59 Ibid.
After the association agreement with the EU is signed, a more distinct ‘contributor/initiator’ role emerges in the Lithuanian foreign discourse. In 1998, Lithuanian foreign minister declares, that ‘the lessons have been learned’ and that the country no longer wishes to be an apprentice, but an active and contributing member of the region:

“We have been successfully implementing economic and political reforms and have no outstanding border disputes or national minority problems. We have promoted or launched bilateral and multilateral partnerships in the region and are developing a constructive relationship with Russia, notably in the Kaliningrad region”\textsuperscript{61}. Furthermore, it is maintained that ‘Lithuania is at the forefront of regional cooperative efforts’ and even leads, as in\textsuperscript{62} “In many cases, such as cooperation with Poland and the Kaliningrad region of Russia, Lithuanian parliamentarians play a major, even leading, role in establishing close personal contacts and institutional relationships with their counterparts in these two neighbouring countries”.

Besides, the Lithuanian officials seem to perceive their country’s role to forward their experience further East. They have started to use similar tutor/apprentice’ or European challenge discourse towards their Eastern neighbours\textsuperscript{63}:

“In particular, Lithuania attaches great importance to the inclusion of the Kaliningrad region into the framework of the CBSS as well as through the development of the EU projects in the area. We believe that a higher level of social and economic development in the Kaliningrad region will enhance the integration process in the Baltic Sea area”.

Thus, the integration and development of the Kaliningrad region has become a Lithuanian project, not least in foreign discourse, but also in practice: “Our initiatives towards the Kaliningrad region are aimed at assisting the region to become an attractive partner of trade and investment thus contributing to even and stable development in the Baltic Sea Region. As Lithuania integrates into Euro-Atlantic institutions, it is in our interest that Kaliningrad Region would benefit from this through greater involvement into regional and subregional cooperation, increased economic relationship and growing “people-to-people” contacts”\textsuperscript{64} or “From our own experience of relations with the EU, we know how important it is for the Russian regions embarking upon intensified cooperation through Northern Dimension to be

\textsuperscript{62} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{63} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{64} Vygaudas Usackas (Vice minister of Foreign Affairs). Statement at Foreign Ministers’ conference on teh Northern Dimension. Helsinki, 11-12 November, 1999.
well equipped with management skills and administrative capabilities. In this area, we are already sharing our modest expertise with the Kaliningrad officials”.

In conclusion it may be said, that Lithuania’s international role pointed out in 1993 as “Many of the democratic reforms begun in Lithuania later spread to Russia itself [...] thus Lithuania is once again leading the way”\(^6^5\) remained rather stable throughout the period and resulted in that Lithuanian speakers not only perceived themselves as leaders in the democratisation of Russia, but also as the authors of regional initiatives on the issue\(^6^6\).

5.3. Latvian Foreign Discourse

The nodal point of ‘cooperation’ has been the most ambiguous in Latvian foreign discourse. Although it is definitely the nodal point of Latvian foreign discourse, its signifier remains very vague and floating. However, it is possible to distinguish at least two other signifiers that are bound in chains of equivalence to the concept of ‘cooperation’ and that would be ‘equal (partnership)’ and ‘pragmatic’. The first one will be discussed later in this section. The illustration for the second one could be the project of the Amber Gateway\(^6^7\), which, unfortunately was never implemented. Latvian foreign discourse features contradictory role perceptions. On one hand, it also responds to the western encouragement to assume the role of the mediator between the East and the West, this way improving relations with Russia. On the other hand, Russia is still alienated or excluded from the foreign discourse. It is also possible to distinguish between the longer-term roles\(^6^8\), that are probably more connected to the political culture and state identity and shorter-term roles, most likely caused by peculiar international situations.

It is interesting to observe that despite patterns in the western regional discourse, Latvian speakers hardly ascribed their country with a role of an ‘apprentice’. On the contrary, the speakers were bitter that Latvia, as a small country is not treated as an equal partner. An illustrative example in this case is the speech of the Latvian president Guntis Ulmanis in

\(^6^5\) A. Butkevicius (Minister of Defense, Lithuania). “The Baltic Region in the Post-Cold War Europe” in NATO review No. 1 February 1993
\(^6^6\) See for example A. Valionis (Foreign minister, Lithuania). Statement at the CBSS ministerial conference 2002.
The speech was an attempt to situate Latvia in the international community, particularly in Europe and the role of an ‘apprentice’ was not appreciated. On the contrary, the speaker was critical towards the ‘Western European centrism’ and called to ‘measure every country with its own yardstick’. Similar viewpoints were also heard later as in “Latvia believes, that the principle of “equal participation” is especially important in the Northern Dimension context. Equal participation means transparency and openness in the dialogue between the countries involved in the relevant institutions. Equal participation also means the Opportunity to engage in regional cooperation and in the implementation of projects in the regional setting”70 (the speaker also expresses a wish to contribute to and get involved in the initiative).

This becomes especially obvious in the later part of the analysis period:

“The establishment of long-term stability, security, and prosperity in Europe cannot take place without the full participation of the continent’s Central and Eastern democracies, which have invested a great deal of their efforts to forge closer ties with their Western neighbours. Sometimes these efforts have come at a great social cost, but we see this as an investment in our common future”71

Instead, the Latvian speakers promote the role of a genuine regional integrator, first of all in terms of Baltic trilateral relations:

“Latvia is the uniting element in the ‘chain’ of the three countries; therefore, it can benefit a lot from trilateral co-operation. The capital of Latvia- Riga- is not only the largest city in the sub-region, but also the natural centre of economic activity in the region. However, Latvia perfectly understands, that Baltic co-operation is a game of give and take. We are prepared to contribute to Baltic co-operation as much as possible in order to cement and develop the existing achievements which include joint institutions designed to foster political co-

68 At this point it important to note, that long term does not imply permanent. The author believes that subjectivity is never complete and is always in a process of change.
operation”72 or “..among the Baltic States, Latvia has the strongest motivation for maintaining the unity of the subregion. For us, the Baltic identity is the only stepping stone into integrated European and transatlantic security structures”73.

It is also the only Baltic state that remained genuinely loyal to the concept of the Baltic states, whereas Estonians were inclined to associate with the Nordic states and the concept was hardly used by Lithuanians either. The discourse on promotion of the Baltic Sea regional integration is slightly younger:

“As an associated country of the EU and an integral part of the Northern Dimension, Latvia quickly assumed a leading role in promotion of regional development (...) Regional cooperation of various modes and on various levels through existing institutions and initiatives allows us to search for and exploit the comparative advantages within a region of shared and competing interests”74 or “At the moment, the Baltic Sea region is made up of a checkerboard of nations at different stages of development. I believe that ultimately, we must work together to fashion a more integrated region all around the Baltic seaboard, a region comprised of nations closely comparable in status, all of them closely compatible in their mode of governance and tempo of development”75.

Similarly to the other two Baltic States, Latvian speakers perceived cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region as facilitating integration into Western regional structures:

“For Latvia, the CBSS has been and continues to be both a very important frame of reference in the process of integration into the European Union and a forum for fostering good neighbourly relations with all the countries of our region”76.

Similarly to the other Baltic States, Latvia has had its own ‘Baltic project’ too, the so-called ‘Amber Gateway’. The project was in line with the international role of Latvian State as a

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72 Valdis Birkavs (Minister of foreign affairs, Latvia). Lecture at the University of London, School of Slavonic and East European Studies (SSEES), The Priorities of Latvia's Foreign Policy March 10, 1997.
75 Vaira Vike-Freiberga (President of the Republic of Latvia). “Latvia in the Process of Regional and European Integration” at the Norwegian School of Economics and Business Administration, Bergen, Norway, 21 September, 2000
76 Indulis Berzins(Foreign Minister, Latvia). Intervention at the 10th ministerial session of the CBSS, Hamburg, 7 June 2001.
promoter of regional integration, although (also rather characteristic of Latvia) the project focused on purely pragmatic issues of regionalism, i.e. infrastructure:

“The Amber Gateway is a co-operative network of markets, linked by ports and airports, fuelled by free enterprise and supported by democratic governments sharing a common vision of peace, trade and prosperity.”

Close to the previously discussed international role is the role of a bridge/mediator between East and West as in

“The strategic importance of the Baltic area is manifested in its geographic location. In considering further development of its economy, Latvia is devoting particular attention to projects which ensure links between East and West.”

However in contrast to, for example, Lithuanian discourse, the link between East and West are perceived in strictly pragmatic terms, primarily as infrastructure, i.e. roads, ports and gaspipes:

“Latvia’s strategic geographic position at an important crossroads between West and East, together with its modern, ice-free ports, and its well-developed infrastructure, have already helped it to become one of the most important transit countries in the Baltic Sea Region. And Riga has become an important centre of financial and commercial activity for Northern Europe.”

Talks about more general integration of Russia begin quite late:

“Latvia can serve as a valuable partner in this dialogue, and is ready to participate in it at any moment” or “We are committed to the continued development of pragmatic and constructive relations with our eastern neighbour. Latvia could serve as a useful bridge to help Russia integrate more closely with the Western economies and stands ready to play a role in that regard. Since we are a future member of the European Union, our continuing dialogue with Russia will also affect the Kremlin’s relations with this international

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79 Vaira Vike-Freiberga. (President of the Republic of Latvia). “Latvia in the Process of Regional and European Integration” at the Norwegian School of Economics and Business Administration, Bergen, Norway, 21 September, 2000
organization”⁸¹ or “As a fully integrated member of the Euro-Atlantic community, Latvia, with its unique history and citizenry will be a strong facilitator of East-West dialogue”⁸².

Despite the numerous references to ‘good neighbourly relations with Russia”, the country is still very much ‘othered’ in Latvian discourse throughout the decade. This is achieved either through excluding Russia from the regional discourse⁸³ or by referring to it indirectly as, for example “alien”⁸⁴ or through emphasising substantial differences between the countries: “Despite the fact that Latvia and Russia have quite different visions of the future European security architecture, we believe our relations with the present Russian government are developing in a really positive direction⁸⁵ or “From Latvia to the West we have a stable space where international structures such as NATO, and integration processes in the EU significantly reduce the possibility of conflict. In contrary, from Latvia to the East there is not enough stability”.⁸⁶

Although one of the ideas behind the CBSS project was to provide a round table for the Russia – Baltics interaction, the speaker pinpoints that ‘no international organisations have proven efficient in resolving the problems inherited from the Soviet regime”⁸⁷. This shows, that the adoption of the West initiated “integration of Russia” discourse has not been so successful in Latvia, as for instance, in Lithuania, because “the legacy of the Soviet era heritage still has certain influence on our relations and the images of the past still cast shadow on Latvian- Russian relations in both Riga and Moscow”⁸⁸. This is in line with overall Latvian cautiousness towards Russia. To some extent, Latvia is indeed a middle state, between the sharp Estonian discourse on Russia and the “democracy promotion” discourse in

⁸³ See, for example Valdis Birkavs (Foreign Minister). “Partnership for Peace in the Baltic Region” at XI NATO Workshop, 1994; and Valdis Birkavs (Foreign Minister of Latvia), “Cooperation in the Northern Region and the Baltics” at XII NATO Workshop, 1995.
⁸⁶ Valdis Birkavs (Minister of foreign affairs, Latvia), Lecture at the University of London, School of Slavonic and East European Studies (SSEES), The Priorities of Latvia’s Foreign Policy March 10, 1997.
⁸⁷ Ibid.
⁸⁸ Ibid.
Lithuania. Latvian discourse assumes a cool, cautious and pragmatic approach towards Russia as expressed by Valdis Birkavs:

“Looking into the future of Latvian-Russian relations I would like to emphasise that they should develop along the lines of tolerance and strict application of the principles of international law. The time needed for to overcome the historically developed problems or prejudices depends on the good will of both parties.”

Even in the year 2001, when the overall regional discourse has been adopted, Latvian speakers remain somewhat bitter and cautious about Russia:

“To be successful [in cooperation with Russia aut. remark] we need the same level of interest from the Russian side”.

To conclude, Latvian regional discourse has been the most ambiguous. The contradicting statements and meanings suggest the diplomatic insecurity of the country, which is trying to take all sides at the same time. This is also obvious in that despite rhetorics, Latvians have not been eager to get engaged into regional initiatives. This implies, that similarly to Estonia, Latvia is still searching for the role to play in the region.

The purpose of the previous chapter has been to overview and illustrate the findings. It overviewed the key trends in the foreign discourses of the Western and Baltic countries, suggesting particular role types and relationships.

The following chapter will elaborate the results and discuss the theoretical and empirical implications of the findings in order to answer the research questions raised at the beginning of the paper (pg. 20). Having discussed the implications of the findings to the theoretical framework, the chapter will analyse how the latter has enhanced understanding about the role perceptions in Latvian, Estonian and Lithuanian as well as western foreign discourses and the role of the EU in this process.

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89 Ibid.
90 Indulis Berzins (Foreign Minister, Latvia). Intervention at the 10th ministerial session of the CBSS, Hamburg, 7 June 2001.
91 This conclusion has been drawn on the basis of observation experience at the CBSS as well as from the informal talks with the members of the CBSS secretariat.
Chapter VI
ROLE TYPOLOGY AND DYNAMICS IN THE BSR

6.1. Theoretical Implications of the Results

The purpose of this chapter is to round up the results of the analysis and to formulate a more comprehensive framework for the integration of the theory and the empirics. The temporal dimension was chosen to enable the following of the dynamics of the discourse. Due to that, it was possible to observe the process of socialisation and the change of values and role conceptions.

As the analysis has showed, the concept of role and role perceptions is manifold. Besides the classical typifications pointed out by Holsti (1972) (i.e. role behaviour, role conceptions and role prescriptions), which are based on the source of the role perceptions (respectively behaviour, domestic and individual sources and external or foreign sources) it is possible to group role prescriptions and role conceptions into implicit, explicit, long term/cultural, short term/situational, issue specific, individual and group roles. At this point it is worth mentioning that this list does not exhaust all possible role variations, but sheds light on the fact that role conceptions, just like identities, are multiple and multidimensional.

The typification into explicit and implicit roles has been achieved due to the discourse analysis. The analytical concepts of floating signifier and nodal points as well as different strategies of building regional discourse and producing relationships between concepts as well as actors have contributed in the investigation of the regional cooperation discourse.

Another distinction could be into short term/situational and longer term roles. Short term/situational roles are immediate reactions to a specific domestic or foreign situation. As the situation comes back to normal, these roles are abandoned and the country returns to its usual role. It is important to notice that longer-term roles do not mean permanent. All roles are temporary as the national and international context, defining them changes throughout the time. That is why, one may speak about role conceptions which last relatively longer.

Furthermore, drawing on the results of the analysis, it is possible to distinguish between the individual and group/collective roles. Individual role conceptions are unique to the country,
whilst group/collective roles are a result of a regional identity, common history and other contextual factors.

Last, but not least, it is possible to point out issue specific roles. A country may be perceived to play a leading role in one of the areas and a minor or submissive role in another. A country may be willing to integrate in one area and remain isolationist in another.

As one may see in the graph below, these are no binary distinctions. Indeed, the boundaries are rather blurred and concepts relative.

Graph 1. Possible differentiation of role conceptions and role prescriptions

Implicit ←-------------→ Explicit
Situational ←-------------→ Long term
Individual ←-------------→ Collective
              Issue Specific

The analysis of the Baltic Sea regional discourse has resulted in a number of role conceptions and prescriptions. The section below will define these roles, as they were understood in the analysis and what criteria were applied to refer to this role.

Tutor.
Apprentice.
Donor.
Aid-recipient.
Challenge.
Missionary.
Integrator.
Integrated.
Lobbyist.
Equal partner.
Progressive, post-modern.
Mediator.
6.2. Empirical Implications of the Results

Concerning the empirical material, three main issues are left to discuss: the dynamics of the overall structure of the discourse throughout the period of analysis; the interaction of Eastern and Western discourses, and the particularities of the individual states which became apparent due to the analysis.

6.2.1. The Overall Structure of the Western Regional Discourse

To begin with the structure of the regional discourse, practices of inclusion and exclusion are crucial. If we assume, that regions are discursive constructs (Neumann 1994), then belonging to the region is about being within or outside the discourse, belonging to the regional ‘self’ or the ‘other’. To start with, the regional process was started in order to overcome the post-Cold War barriers and frontiers (Joenniemi 1997). Despite that, the region was divided into East and West during the early nineties and some authors argue, that it continues to be divided through the ‘othering’ of Russia (Browning 2001). Nevertheless, there were some changes in the discursive landscape of the region. In the early nineties, and up to the Baltic States applications for the EU membership, the dividing line between the East and the West was the Baltic Sea. With the start of the accession negotiations, the line moves Eastwards to the Eastern borders of the Baltic states and Poland.

A floating signifier of cooperation seems to have been the nodal point of the regional discourse. The meaning of the signifier has changed respective of time and discourse as different signifiers were attached to it in the chain of equivalence. The early Western discourse, for example, tended to frame ‘cooperation’ in terms of ‘learning’ and ‘assistance’. This, in turn, produced the following power relationships between the Eastern and Western shores of the Baltic Sea: ‘missionary’/’challenge’ and ‘tutor’/’apprentice’.
The difference between the two lies in the degree of the empowerment. The ‘missionary’/’challenge’ relationship puts the ‘challenge’ (in this case Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania) into more unfavourable position, because ‘challenge’ implies ‘othering’. In this particular case the challenge lies in transforming ‘the Other’ into ‘self’, ‘the Enemy’ into ‘Friend’. The statements of the Baltic speaker discussed above have showed that this role has not been appreciated by the Baltic counterparts.

The transformation of the ‘Other’ into ‘self’ has been tackled though learning, which establishes a relationship of ‘tutor’/’apprentice’ between the West and the Baltic states. At this point it is interesting to note, that this relationship was applied predominantly to the Baltic states, in contrast of the ‘missionary’/’challenge’, which embraced all Eastern and Western actors in the region. The actors symbolic distance to Europe must have played a part in this, as Poland with its long European history was considered already relatively close to Europe and Russia too far away from Europe. Nevertheless, Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania had an unclear (in any case unfamiliar) stance in the international community and with their soviet experience lied already in a more unfavourable position than other post-communist block countries. It is not to say, that the lack of the memory of statehood determined the relationship between the East and West, but the lack of established traditions of international as well as domestic politics might have facilitated the establishment of the ‘tutor’/’apprentice relationship’.

The process of learning and socialisation took place between the actors of all levels, beginning with grassroots and up to the heads of state, thus it would be difficult to demonstrate any particular models of learning. The processes of learning that have been made accessible are the ones in the regional discourse, namely through the reflective appraisals and discouragement, creating chains of difference and equivalence and handing down the western values and norms.

6.2.2. Estonia: “The New Nordics”

The role of Estonia is presented in a simplistic manner in table 1. Although the findings are presented in a form of plus or minus, the roles should not be perceived as a matter of either/or, rather as a gradual scale. The role types are presented vertically and their attributes – horizontally.
In the case of Estonia, it is possible to distinguish the following role typifications. ‘Apprentice’, ‘challenge’ and ‘integrated’ role types belong to the bundle of prescribed roles that were not acknowledged by the Estonian foreign discourse. The fact that all of them are ‘collective’ points to the general Western tendency to perceive Baltic states as a unit. However, only the ‘apprentice’ and ‘integrated’ have been present under the entire period of analysis. The ‘aid-recipient’ role assumed by Estonia belongs both to the type of temporary/short term roles and group or collective roles. The role of the ‘aid-recipient’ was situational and determined largely by the situational context. The fact that this role was assumed by the other two Baltic countries reinforces the situational nature of the role, as it shows, that few other alternatives were possible at that period of time. The role of the ‘lobbyist’ for the EU membership, which developed in the mid nineties, is also of similar nature, i.e. both situational and group/collective.

However, Estonian discourse exhibited some individual roles that were unique for the country. Estonian speakers have been fighting hardest for the more equal treatment in the region, since they were the first to assume that rapid economic, social and political development of the country has enabled them to participate in the regional cooperation as equal partners. Estonian officials were fast to grasp the regional discourse of the Baltic Sea region, emphasising post-modern values and development and were building an image of a post-modern Nordic state. The way they assumed (and in part, were prescribed) the role of the ‘Baltic tiger’ allowed them to claim the role of the most progressive country in the region, with the post-modern orientation. Post-modern orientation here is understood as economic cooperation without boundaries, free financial flows, emphasis on ITC and R&D (Joenniemi 1997). At the end of the analysis period, ‘cooperation’ meant first of all ‘economic’ for Estonian speakers. Although these role types appeared only in the second period on the analysis, they are assumed to be longer term, although it might be debatable.

The role to maintain good relations with Russia has been implicitly and explicitly advocated by the western discourse through the entire period of time, that is why it is placed in the longer-term square in the table 1. However, it is important to keep in mind that this role type appeared in the Estonian foreign discourse much later and has not been implicit and comprehensive. Latvian case experienced quite a similar phenomenon as displayed in table 3.
The reason why in the title of this subchapter Estonia has been called the new Nordics is that Estonia has put most effort in claiming her allegiance to the Nordic Bloc. There are in fact more than linguistic similarities between Estonia and Finland as both countries have tried to escape being stamped as Russia’s ‘near abroad’ by pleading allegiance to the Nordic club. However, if one digs deeper under the success story of the Baltics, one can find a country torn in social antagonisms that hinder the completion of Estonia’s role in the region. Unfortunately, these implicit processes seem also to be relatively long term, thus complicating Estonia’s establishment in the both regional and international community. This is not to say that the problem of minorities is solely the problem of Estonia. On the contrary, this process has to a lesser or larger extent affected all Baltic countries, but as long as focus lies on regional discourse, this process is most obvious in Estonia.
6.2.3. Lithuania: “The Country with a Short Memory”

Since the group roles have already been discussed, this section will not embrace them. Besides the collective roles such as ‘aid-recipient’, ‘weak and abused’ and ‘lobbyist’, Lithuanian foreign discourse has exhibited the roles of ‘apprentice’, ‘tutor’ and ‘regional integrator of Russia’. Indeed, Lithuania seems to have found a niche in the BSR through her relationship with Russia. As this section will show, all of Lithuania’s individual roles are related to her relationship to Russia. A more systematic presentation of findings on Lithuania may be seen in Table 2.

The role of the ‘apprentice’ explains why Lithuanian speakers have been the least dissatisfied with the relationship enbuilt into the Western regional discourse. The misbalance caused by this relationship was restored by ‘tutor’ role conceptions. Thus, by forwarding the knowledge to the East, a satisfactory status was maintained. It is difficult to identify the sources of this phenomenon and neither it is the purpose of this study to do that. Obviously, the sources are multiple, the pressure for improved relations with Russia in the Western discourse was equally directed at all three Baltic States, but only one of them assumed the prescribed role. In fact, the Lithuanian discourse on the regional integration of Russia is not a mirror reflection of the Western expectations. Western discourse expected mainly ‘normal’ relations, since the Nordic countries East and West held the role of the integrator of Russia and mediator between, which challenges the Wendt’s proposition about socialisation. On the other hand, this proves that internal sources may be as important as external and the truth lies somewhere in between. No one expected Lithuania to take up a leading role in the integration of Russia. To put it plainly, Lithuania was the country with the shortest memory regarding relations with Russia. One must also look for influences in the national political culture, historical experience and domestic developments to fully understand the process.

To return to the types of role conceptions distinguished above, the role of the ‘apprentice’, despite the fact that it has been present in the Lithuanian foreign discourse for more than a decade, could be referred to as temporary. Nevertheless the emerging and developing role conceptions of a ‘tutor’, ‘promoter of democracy in Russia’ and ‘regional integrator of Russia’ are probably more long term than not. Probably this is also the reason why the role to maintain good relations with Russia has been expressed both implicitly and explicitly in Lithuanian foreign discourse.
To conclude, the reason why Lithuania has been called the country with a short memory is that the country managed to forget past injustices fastest of the three Baltic States. Besides this defection, the country has acted in line with the other two Baltic states.
6.2.4. Latvia: “Cooperation, not Competition”

If there was a need to describe the national role conceptions of the Baltic states in just a few words, Estonia would be ‘the progressive state’ and ‘the engine of postmodern science and economics’, Lithuania would be the ‘promoter of Western European values Eastwards’ and Latvia would be ‘the middle of the middle’ or a ‘regional integrator’ (see Table 3).

Again, leaving aside the group roles, the focus lies on the role that is unique to Latvia. The role of ‘mediator between East and West’ is present, however in this case it could be referred to as ‘situational’. The role conceptions do not seem to be sincere, but a mere reaction to Western conditionality. Parallel discourse of the ‘othering’ of Russia, does not make the statements convincible.

The reaction to western encouragement to improve relations with Russia, Latvia has also taken a unique stance. In contrast to rather vague rhetoric of Estonia and almost overtly enthusiastic engagement of Lithuania, Latvian foreign discourse promotes a middle position. By taking up a position of a ‘bridge’/”mediator’ in highly pragmatic, economic or infrastructural terms (one should not forget, that being still heavily dependent on Russian economy, Latvia does not have much of other choice), Latvia avoids getting involved in painful political debates, but gains from the economic benefit of being a gateway to Russia.

The longer-term role conception, extracted from the Latvian foreign discourse could be ‘regional integrator’. This entailed, in Latvian speakers’ statements, a complete equality among regional actors (with the exception of Russia), intensive regional cooperation, interdependence and highly developed infrastructure. It is again, difficult to say the sources of this role conception; it might depend on geopolitics as well as national character, history or certain domestic developments.
6.2.5. Other Considerations

In the end, what were the visible effects of the interstate socialisation in the Baltic Sea region? The answer is two-fold: since all countries were affected by the interaction. It might seem strange that the discourse of this paper did divide the region into East and West, which is constructive of symbolic barriers. It could be explained by the fact that the region is still divided into two poles, even if the Baltic states and Poland are almost over the western border. However, this is not all too pessimistic, since the moving of the Europe’s eastern borders eastwards towards Russia and the entrance of the transition countries into the European space makes the borders more blurred and the experience and practices of the Baltic states, which have been discussed above, give hope for a better mutual understanding of Europe and Russia. Thus, socialisation has been destructive of Cold War superstitions, prejudices and suspicions.

On the other hand, the developments in the region have been deeply affected by the EU, where the influences have also been mutual. The intensive cooperation between Nordic and Baltic countries and the Nordic countries determination to socialise and integrate Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania into the western European structures have contributed to the beginning of the accession negotiations. As it has been discussed above, the EU was highly suspicious and cautious about the former Soviet Union and only after the accession of Sweden and Finland to the EU which strengthened positions of Denmark, the EU – Baltic relations gained speed. On the other hand, the start of the accession negotiations was a watershed in the Baltic states treatment in the region, as they moved symbolically closer westwards.

It would be difficult to deny that the EU and Nordic countries' practices in the region did not affect Baltic – Russian relations. Of course, the western discourse was by far not the only factor, but as the analysis has showed, discursive strategies and implications, together with explicit conditionalities did significantly shape the foreign discourses of the Baltic states.

Last, but not least, the intensive interaction and socialisation have had influences on the Baltic states security perceptions. In the early nineties the foreign discourses of Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania featured the Cold War realism and increased the likelihood of destabilisation of the region with the hostile statements emphasising the East/West division. At the end of the study period, these countries are at least discursively contributing to the security and stability in the region by addressing soft security issues. It is possible to observe both processes of interaction
distinguished by Wendt at the beginning of the paper. Socialisation or “reciprocal appraisals/typifications” took place in different conditionalities and discursive encouragement and discouragement posed by the western actors to economically dependent Baltic States. The processes of imitation become visible when one compares discourses of Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania at the beginning of the analysis period to the discourses at the end of the period. It is clear that the Baltic States representatives have not only learned special concepts as ‘soft security’ and ‘integration of Russia’, but the whole structure of the discourses has changed also to a different degree of diplomacy. The straightforward accusations and appeals have been exchanged by more sophisticated statements. The spectrum of issues has broadened from only military and economic issues to ecology, culture, education etc. It would be unwise to state, that development of democratic environment in the domestic sphere and increased education opportunities have not affected the process, but intensive regional cooperation at all levels and in all issues (as discussed in chapter III) has definitely contributed to the process.
Concluding Chapter VII

7.1. How has the Research Informed the Role Theory?

To round up the results of the paper, this section will evaluate the contribution of the research to both, theory and existing knowledge on the Baltic States and the Baltic Sea region.

The study combined role theory and constructivist approach to achieve more dynamic results and this way gain understanding about the processes of socialisation and role formation of the Baltic states in the context of the Baltic sea regional cooperation. Using a constructivist approach enabled the focus on external/systemic sources of role formation by infusing an interactive element. Furthermore, this combination allowed for discourse analysis, i.e. qualitative research methods. Qualitative research methods differ from quantitative primarily in that understanding is placed above explanation. Understanding the socialisation processes in the Baltic Sea region has contributed to the role theory through breaking down the concepts of role conceptions and prescriptions into several categories. Grouping of roles into certain categories, as implicit/explicit, prescribed/perceived, longer term/situational and issue specific provides with a more detailed picture of role formation and, answering the quest of the study for more dynamics in the role theory, allows to follow and understand the processes of change. Discourse analysis has helped to dig under the obvious and identify and understand the discursive structure of the region and the way it binds actors in certain relationships and how its inclusive and exclusive practices shape the roles of the actors.

On the other hand, the analysis has shown that structure does not have complete control over agency as is sometimes claimed by Constructivism (Checkel 1998a). The findings revealed that foreign pressure and international structure do not shape the role definitions entirely. Domestic factors, such as the political orientation of the government, political culture and historical memories of the country do have impact on the formation of roles.

7.2. How has the Study Contributed to the Research on the Baltic States?

As it has been mentioned before, learning and understanding the role conceptions of states, enhances the predictability of state behaviour, explains anomalies and provides the state with
the face. Using constructivist perspective and qualitative methods has contributed to the existing research on the Baltic states by unveiling their implicit roles, their relationships to the other actors in the region and showing the dynamics of role formation. The differentiation into ascribed and prescribed roles provided insight on what roles Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania aspire to play in the region and what roles are handed down to them by other regional actors. It also uncovers how the lack of understanding in communication and discursive structure hinder the identification of perceived and prescribed roles. The study has showed that few prescribed roles are also acknowledged and approved of the Baltic countries and how the regional discourses has drawn them into fulfilling these roles unwillingly. On the other hand, it showed how perceived roles are not always acknowledged and approved of the external actors. Such a picture unfortunately implies the power of the structure over the agent. However, the agent may also influence the structure, as the continuous interaction has been destructive of the cold war superstitions and suspicions in the region.

Besides, the research has shed light on the regionalisation and identity processes in the Baltic States. The results of the study imply that meanwhile Europe is undergoing the processes of regionalisation and integration, Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania are striving to exhibit their individuality (as their individual roles). This might be a reaction to the often reference to the Baltic States as an entity or just a part of the process of the identity development and establishment in the international community. On the other hand, the countries also exhibit certain collective roles that do point to the fact, that there is certain regional identity in the Baltics.

If complemented with some deeper and wider research, the results obtained in this study may contribute to the overall understanding of the Baltic States and their place in the enlarged EU.

7.3. The Shortcomings of the Analysis

Nevertheless, the study has its shortcomings and could be improved and complemented with a number of things. First of all, it was a great pity and it changed the initial course of the study, that there was virtually no material available on the period between 1991-1993. Assumingly, this initial period has an immense influence on the Baltic States role conceptions as well as on the development of regional relationships. The complementation of the study with the analysis of the latter period would enhance significantly the understanding of the processes of state
socialisation at the initial stage. Unfortunately, that period in the Baltics was characterised by domestic institutions not capable of carrying and administrating the heavy load of international relations and most of the material has been lost. Personal contacts with some of the speakers of those days revealed that in many cases, the speakers spoke without extensive preparation and this way the speeches were never written down.

Another important factor that was not taken into consideration implicitly in the study is Russia. The author is deeply convinced that the inclusion of Russia into the sample of the study would have contributed significantly to understanding of the problem. Nevertheless, Baltic – Russian relations are a subject for research on its own, and there is a significant amount of research already produced on this topic. Thus, the inclusion of Russian foreign discourse is left for the further research.

7.4. Issues for Further Research

This study only opens a wide variety of issues for further research. First of all, to complement the study and to get a fuller picture of the state socialisation processes in the region, one might include the Russian foreign discourse and its impact on the formation of the Baltic States role conceptions. Next, the study could be complemented with the analysis of different other discourses. The same analysis technique could be applied to study official documents and foreign policies as well as media and academic discourse. Furthermore, it would be interesting to continue this study in the enlarged EU and learn the processes of role formation within the regional framework of the EU. This could also be applied to other candidate countries.

On a more theoretical level, the possible follow-up could be to continue the focus on the interactive processes of role formation. Besides the study raises some thoughts for the agent – structure relationship and it could be interesting to examine the enabling and disabling practices of the structure on the agent.
x. SUMMARY

The study addresses the issues of newly independent states, establishing themselves in the international community, analysing the processes of learning in the interaction with the other international actors. The purpose of the study has been to understand the process of socialisation in the interstate interaction through investigating the construction and development of the Baltic States’ role conceptions in the context of the Baltic Sea regional cooperation. The study was limited to the Baltic Sea region in order to decrease the number of variables. At the same time most important actors were embraced. The combined Role theory – Constructivist approach was chosen in search for a better balance in agency – structure relationship. Although external sources were given priority, domestic sources were given consideration too. The study focused on the symbolic practices of states to define their roles and to frame the roles of other states.

The research questions raised at the beginning of the paper were the following:
- What role perceptions of Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania within the context of the BSR may be identified in the foreign discourses of these countries in 1993-2002?
- What role did the Western countries prescribe to Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania in 1993-2002?
- What do the differences/similarities imply about their interaction?
- How did the Baltic States application for the EU membership and established dialogue with the EU influence the Baltic States role perceptions and the role prescribed to them by the Western countries and the EU?

The author employed discourse analysis, following the analytical framework developed by Laclau and Mouffe. 117 speeches from Estonian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Danish, Norwegian, Swedish, Finnish, German and EU foreign discourses were choses for the analysis. The following conclusions have been drawn from the findings of the research:
- Role conceptions and prescriptions are multidimensional and can be differentiated into several categories (See graph 1. pg. 65).
- Latvian, Lithuanian and Estonian foreign discourses have had a number of common and individual role types (see tables 1, 2, 3).
- There are certain differences among prescribed and perceived role types.
Some of the prescribed role types have been eventually adopted by the Baltic States in the process of learning.

The Baltic States application for the EU membership and established dialogue with the EU influenced the Baltic States role perceptions and the role prescribed to them by the Western countries and the EU in the way that the Baltics were at least discursively admitted into the western regional discourse. It also changed the prescribed role types, framing them as more mature and equal.

xx. REFERENCES


**Internet Pages**

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Council of the Baltic Sea States [http://www.cbss.st](http://www.cbss.st)
U.S. Embassy in Sweden [http://www.usis.usemb.se](http://www.usis.usemb.se)
Programme on the Northern Dimension of the CFSP [http://www.northerndimension.org](http://www.northerndimension.org)

**Cover Picture from** [http://www.grida.no](http://www.grida.no)
APPENDIX – The List of the Analysis Material

1. Western Regional Discourse


Nielsen Dan (Ambassador, Chairman of the Committee of Senior Officials during 97-98). Interview “Denmark taker over 97/98” in J. Baltinfo, No 4, June/July 1997.


Ortman Gunnar (Secretary of State, Denmark). Address in the Foreign Ministers Conference on the Northern Dimension, Helsinki, 11-12 November 1999. A Compilation of


2. Estonian Regional Discourse


3. Lithuanian Foreign Discourse


4. Latvian Foreign Discourse


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BSR</td>
<td>Baltic Sea Region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBSS</td>
<td>Council of the Baltic Sea States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEE</td>
<td>Central and East European (countries)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NATO</td>
<td>North Atlantic Treaty Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHARE</td>
<td>Poland and Hungary Aid for Restructuring the Economy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TACIS</td>
<td>Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States</td>
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