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**COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF POLITICAL DISCOURSES ON  
ASTRAVETS NUCLEAR POWER PLANT IN BELARUS AND  
LITHUANIA**

Final project for Master degree

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## SUMMARY

Nuclear energy is seen as a risk in modern era, and disasters like Chernobyl along with Fukushima helped to influence this approach. For example, France gets majority of its energy from nuclear power plants, and other countries, like Hungary, UK, Belarus etc. are planning to build new reactors, though Germany started to close its nuclear reactors after the Fukushima disaster. It could be seen, that policy implementation and decision making depends significantly on governments approach, which is discursively constructed. Nuclear power plant being built in Belarus is important topic both in Belarus and Lithuania's public discourses. Astravets nuclear power plant (BelNPP) can have impact on different areas, like economy, safety, environment and politics. In order to have a better understanding, on how political actors speak of Astravets nuclear power plant, political discourse analysis has been performed.

Research problem is that political discourses on Astravets nuclear power plant in Belarus and Lithuania might have different framing, but this issue is little researched. The aim of this project is to conduct a comparative analysis of the content of Belarusian and Lithuanian political discourses on Astravets nuclear power plant. The tasks of the project are: to develop a theoretical framework for explaining political discourse on nuclear power and to describe the case of Astravets nuclear power plant; to adapt content analysis and discourse analysis methodologies for researching political communicative discourses on Astravets nuclear power plant in Belarus and Lithuania; to analyse the content of political communicative discourses on Astravets nuclear power plant communicated in Belarus and Lithuania by the respective Parliament and Government; to examine the differences of the discourse content.

For a theoretical framework several theories have been used: discursive institutionalism, agenda-setting, and issue framing. Examination of energy policies in Belarus and Lithuania was performed. For a research purpose, in order to gather data, official news sources of Parliaments and Governments, from both countries, have been used. News and press releases from the period of 2012-2017 october

4th, that have been communicated by political actors, that represent Parliament and Government of Belarus or Lithuania have been sampled out. Sampled news and press releases were coded, using open coding technique and followed the principles of abduction (deductive and inductive coding combined). Main codes cover discourse actors, main discourse topics, timeline etc. Nvivo software for qualitative and mixed methods research has been used for the analysis.

The most significant differences between Belarus' and Lithuania's political communicative discourses on BelNPP are: topics of 'safety', 'technical aspects', and 'information provision' are most frequent in Belarus, although in Lithuania most pronounced topics are 'safety', 'politics' and 'environment'. The 'safety' topic is important in both of the discourses; though in Belarus it is constructed mostly with a positive emotional load, and in Lithuania – mostly with negative one. In general, discourse on BelNPP in Belarus mostly has a positive or neutral emotional load; in Lithuania the discourse is dominated by negative emotional load. Moreover, in Belarus International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has been the most common international organization; in Lithuania it was Espoo Convention. In Belarusian discourse Lithuania is typically seen in the light of conflicting, cooperative, or informing relationship. In Lithuanian discourse Belarus is typically spoken about mentioning conflicting relationships. It is noted, that in Belarusian political discourse Lithuania is the only discourse actor associated with conflicting relationships. More discourse actors are mentioned in the light of conflicting relationships in Lithuanian discourse: Belarus, Government, Parliament and Russia.

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## SANTRAUKA

Atominė energetika yra matoma kaip rizika šiame amžiuje, ir tokios katastrofos kaip Černobylio kartu su Fukušimos padėjo įsivyrėti šiam požiūriui. Pavyzdžiui, Prancūzija gauna didžiąją dalį savo energijos iš branduolinės energetikos, ir kitos šalys kaip Vengrija, Jungtinė Karalystė ir t.t. planuoja statyti naujus reaktorius, vis dėlto Vokietija pradėjo uždarinėti savo atominės elektrines po Fukušimos katastrofos. Galima teigti, jog politikos įgyvendinimas ir sprendimų priėmimas reikšmingai priklauso nuo valdžios požiūrio, kuris gali būti diskursyviai konstruojamas. Statoma atominė elektrinė Baltarusijoje yra svarbi tema tiek Baltarusijos, tiek Lietuvos viešuosiuose diskursuose. Astravo atominė elektrinė gali turėti įtakos tokioms sritims kaip ekonomikai, saugumui, politikai. Siekiant geresnio supratimo apie tai, kaip politiniai aktoriai kalba apie Astravo atominę elektrinę, buvo atlikta politinių diskursų analizė.

Tyrimo problema šiame darbe yra ta, jog politiniai diskursai Astravo atominės elektrinės tema gali būti skirtingai konstruojami, tačiau ši problema yra mažai ištirta. Tikslas yra atlikti Baltarusijos ir Lietuvos politinių diskursų palyginamąją turinio analizę Astravo atominės elektrinės tema. Užduotys yra tokios kaip: išvystyti teorinį pagrindą siekiant paaiškinti politinį diskursą apie branduolinę energetiką, bei paaiškinti Astravo atominės elektrinės atvejį; pritaikyti turinio analizės ir diskurso analizės metodiką siekiant ištirti politinius komunikacinius diskursus Astravo atominės elektrinės tema Baltarusijoje ir Lietuvoje; išanalizuoti politinio komunikacinio diskurso turinį Astravo atominės elektrinės tema Baltarusijoje ir Lietuvoje; išnagrinėti diskurso turinio skirtumus.

Teorinei tyrimo daliai buvo naudojamos kelios pagrindinės teorijos: diskursyvusis institucionalizmas, darbotvarkės nustatymo, bei klausimų kadravimo. Šios teorijos leidžia paaiškinti politinio diskurso konstravimo procesą. Taip pat buvo išnagrinėtos Baltarusijos ir Lietuvos energetikos politikos. Tyrimo tikslais, siekiant surinkti duomenis, buvo panaudoti oficialūs abiejų šalių vyriausybės ir parlamento naujienų šaltiniai. Pasirinkta atrinkti politinių aktorių naujienas, kurios buvo komunikuojamos Baltarusijos ir Lietuvos vyriausybių, bei parlamento narių. Atrinktos naujienos buvo koduotos atvira kodavimo technika, bei sekant deduktyvaus ir induktyvaus kodavimo principus. Pagrindiniai kodai apima tokias temas kaip diskurso aktoriai, pagrindinės diskurso temos, chronologija

ir t.t. Analizei buvo naudojamas Nvivo programinės įrangos paketas skirtas kokybiniais ir mišriems tyrimų metodams.

Buvo gauti pagrindiniai skirtumai tarp Baltarusijos ir Lietuvos politinių diskursų. Baltarusijos diskurse vyrauja pagrindinės temos kaip sauga, techniniai aspektai, ir informacijos sklaida, tačiau Lietuvoje pagrindinės temos yra sauga, politika, ir aplinkosauga. Tema susijusi su sauga yra svarbi abiejų šalių diskursuose, tačiau Baltarusijoje ji yra konstruojama pozityviai, o Lietuvoje – negatyviai. Apibendrinant, Astravo atominės elektrinės diskursas Baltarusijoje buvo konstruojamas daugiausiai pozityviai, o tuo tarpu Lietuvoje – daugiausia negatyviai. Be to, Baltarusijos atveju TATENA buvo dažniausiai minima tarptautinė organizacija, o Lietuvoje Espo konvencija buvo minima dažniausiai. Baltarusijos diskurse Lietuva yra matoma kaip turinti skirtingus santykius: prieštarinę, bendradarbiaujančią, bei informuojančią. Tuo tarpu Lietuvos diskurse Baltarusija yra matoma daugiausiai prieštaringame ryšyje. Taip pat verta pabrėžti jog Lietuva yra vienintelis diskurso aktorius Baltarusijoje turintis prieštarinę ryšį. Lietuvos diskurse prieštarinę ryšį turėjo tokie veikėjai kaip Baltarusija, vyriausybė, Seimas, ir Rusija.

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## INTRODUCTION

Nuclear energy and nuclear power plants are seen as risk factors that are dangerous and can cause disasters at a regional level (Ulrich, 2015). According to various public discourses (Perrow, 2011), it could even seem that disasters are inevitable. Yet other experts state that nuclear energy provides more benefits than risks (Wilkerson, 2016). However, seeing nuclear energy as a risk is having influence for decision making. For example, Ignalina Nuclear Power Plant, which had similar design to Chernobyl's nuclear power plant has been closed due to pressure from the EU because of the safety concerns, although it faced strong public opposition against the closure (WNA, 2017). After the Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant disaster in 2011 nuclear safety of power plants became more important. European Commission took action and reviewed the safety features of European nuclear power plants (EC, 2012) and applied 'stress tests' for all of the plants in the European Union (EU). Nuclear risk acceptance varies significantly between the countries. A single country like Germany reviewed its energy policy and in 2012 closed eight of its nuclear reactors for political reasons (WNA, 2017). Although France still gets three quarters of its energy from nuclear power and countries like The United Kingdom, Poland etc. are planning to build new nuclear reactors. It could be seen that energy policy implementation depends significantly on politics and governmental approach, which can be subjective.

In Lithuania's public discourse, nuclear safety is important for a long time already, but gained a new momentum due to Belarussian Astravets Nuclear Power Plant (BelNPP) being built near Lithuanian border. BelNPP can have impact in different areas, like economy, safety, political influence, and politics plays a crucial role in this matter. Although Lithuania had plans to build its own nuclear power plant, but Astravets nuclear power plant is distinct as according to Lithuania's public discourse the project is likely to cause nuclear safety issues. Belarus denies claims on safety related issues. It is important to analyse political discourses of Lithuania and Belarus to see what is the content of communications by politicians about the situation. Comparative analysis of political actors' communications that represents Parliaments and Governments of Belarus and Lithuania will be performed in order to examine the political discourse on a national level.

Currently, there is a single research conducted by performing discourse analysis on Belarusian and Lithuanian texts in relation with nuclear energy by V. Pilibaitytė (2011) "Nuclear energy discourses in Lithuania and Belarus". Although the discourse analysis is based on media texts dated 2006-2009, and conducted using different methodology. So the current paper is going to provide additional information in this field. There are also a couple of Political Sciences articles published on Astravets Nuclear Power Plant. First one is "Lithuanian foreign policy vis-à-vis Belarusian nuclear power plant in Ostrovets" by Justinas Juozaitis (2016) about the implementation of Lithuania's foreign

policy towards BelNPP. Second writing is “Nuclear Geopolitics in the Baltic Sea Region” by Giedrius Česnakas and Justinas Juozaitis (2017) which introduces Russia’s relation with BelNPP and its political background.

**Problem.** What is the content of institutional political communicative discourses as produced by Belarus’ and Lithuania’s Parliaments and Governments about Astravets nuclear power plant related issues?

**Object.** Political communicative discourses on Astravets nuclear power plant.

**Aim.** To conduct a comparative analysis of the content of Belarusian and Lithuanian political discourses on Astravets nuclear power plant.

**Tasks:**

1. To develop a theoretical framework for explaining political discourse on nuclear power and to describe the case of Astravets nuclear power plant.
2. To adapt content analysis and discourse analysis methodologies for researching political communicative discourses on Astravets nuclear power plant in Belarus and Lithuania
3. To analyse the content of political communicative discourses on Astravets nuclear power plant communicated in Belarus and Lithuania by the respective Parliament and Government.
4. To examine the differences of the discourse content.

**Methods:** In order to develop a theoretical framework for explaining political discourse on Astravets nuclear power plant relevant scientific literature review has been used. Furthermore, content analysis of communications by Belarus and Lithuania’s political actors of Parliament and Government has been performed. It has been chosen to separate communications which were published since 2012. This was achieved by coding the content with abductively generated list of codes using Nvivo software for qualitative and mixed methods of research which was later used to perform descriptive analysis on the content of political discourses. Data analysis methods included qualitative content analysis and quantitative content analysis: word frequency, cluster analysis, coding intensity (hierarchy charts), measuring relations between variables or measuring coding differences between texts (matrix coding).

# **1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSING POLITICAL DISCOURSES ON NUCLEAR POWER**

In the first part of this section theoretical analysis will be performed using theories that enable political discourse conceptualisation. In order to do so discursive institutionalism, agenda-setting and issue framing theories will be used. In the second part, it is important to introduce the case of Astravets Nuclear Power Plant which is being built in Belarus. Pre-history of the power plant, current situation and why it is a relevant and problematic topic will be described. The third part of the section will be dedicated to examination of energy policies in Belarus and Lithuania. Lithuania's energy policy is significantly related to the EU energy policy, as the latter has legislative power over Lithuania, for this reason the EU energy policy will be included into the examination. It is necessary to do so for a better understanding on how these two countries develop regulatory frameworks in energy sector, also, with accordance to nuclear energy. Furthermore, nuclear security and safety will be reviewed as this is closely related with issues that Astravets Nuclear Power Plant faces. Additionally, legislation review will be performed, in order to see how Belarus and Lithuania are interrelated from a legal point in accordance with nuclear safety and security.

## **1.1 Theoretical Conceptualisation of Political Discourse**

First of all, it is important to define political discourse and its place in the research. It is not an easy task to define what discourse or political discourse is, as there are many possible interpretations of it. In Oxford dictionaries (2017) discourse is defined as “written or spoken communication or debate”, also “a formal discussion of a topic in speech or writing” or “a connected series of utterances; a text or conversation”. In this case, text and language are the most important parts of the discourse. Though, according to A. Telešienė (2005, p. 1), social science extends discourse definition by accentuating discourse as a social action, the concept of special interaction. This way, not only spoken or written text becomes important for a discourse analysis, but also actors that create, communicate and interpret it, and direct or historical contexts that enable or restrict discourse.

According to J. Wilson (2003, p. 2), “the study of political discourse, like that of other areas of discourse analysis, covers a broad range of subject matter, and draws on a wide range of analytic methods”. But “political discourse analysis first of all should be able to define its proper object of study: What exactly is 'political discourse'?” (Dijk, n.d., p. 2). With reference to Teun A. van Dijk (n.d., p. 2), political discourse is identified by its actors or authors, for example, politicians. In this paper political discourse actors (authors) are Belarus and Lithuania's politicians that communicate on relevant topics while representing political institutions, in this case Parliament and Government. Moreover the biggest share of studies on political discourse is about the text and talk of professional

politicians or political institutions, such as presidents and prime ministers and other members of government, parliament or political parties, both at the local, national and international levels. So political discourse is “concerned with formal/informal political contexts and political actors with, that is, inter alia, politicians, political institutions, governments, political media, and political supporters operating in political environments to achieve political goals” (Wilson J. , 2003, p. 1).

The term to ‘achieve political goals’ has to be separated in the research as it describes “political potential of language” (Wilson J. , 2003, p. 1). According to J. Wilson (2003, p. 12), George Orwell first paid attention to political use of language, as he wrote article ‘Politics and the English Language’. In the text author considers the way in which language may be used to manipulate thought. And “one of the core goals of political discourse analysis is to seek out the ways in which language choice is manipulated for specific political effect” (Wilson J. , 2005).

This gives that in the political discourse manipulation of meaning is a relevant aspect. This aspect of the discourse is important due to the characteristics of politics. According to S. Ismail (n.d., p. 2), indicating to the simple subject that has been found in the traditional study of politics, Chilton and Schaffner (2002, p. 5) define politics as “a struggle for power, between those who seek to assert and maintain their power and those who seek to resist it”. “This theme draws its shadow on the linguistic construction of such type of discourse. Consequently, politicians use language as a means of conveying political agendas that are, at most, far from the truth” (Ismail, n.d., p. 2). This can be seen in Chilton's (2008, p. 226) definition of political discourse as “the use of language to do the business of politics and includes persuasive rhetoric, the use of implied meanings, the use of euphemisms, the exclusion of references to undesirable reality, the use of language to arouse political emotions and the like”. It means that political discourse is not constructed neutrally as a typical communication. But rather it is “compared with the discourse of advertising which is designed to lead its audience in the direction of particular thoughts, beliefs, and ultimately actions” (Gloria, 2015, p. 28). In this paper political discourse analysis will be used. “One of the main research methods in international relations is political discourse analysis” (Jaanika, 2012, p. 3). In the research communications on a relevant topic by political actors from Belarus and Lithuania will be analysed. Purpose of it is to identify what is the content of political discourses on Astravets nuclear power plant.

First theory to be used is Discursive Institutionalism (DI) which helps to explain institutional context of the political discourse. This theory has originally been developed in political sciences. It has main goal to “reconcile, as well as extend, the potential of institutional theories to study stability and change” (Kromidha & Cordoba-Pachon, 2017). It is also called as the fourth “new institutionalism”. This perspective tends to concentrate on ideas and discourse, particularly in institutional context. The

approach distinguished discourses into coordinative and communicative, which will be briefly examined in this section, as well as simple polities and compound polities will be defined.

Change is significant factor in a frame of this theory. “Discursive Institutionalism endogenizes change, explaining much of how and why public actors bring about institutional change through public action” (Schmidt V. A., 2010). Moreover DI focuses both on ideas and discourse (Sigurdardottir, 2015). Also “on the interactive processes that serve to generate those ideas and communicate them to the public“ (Schmidt V. , 2008). „The ‘institutionalism’ in the term, moreover, highlights the fact that this is not only about the communication of ideas or ‘text’ but also about the institutional context in which and through which ideas are communicated via discourse“ (Schmidt V. A., 2008). These ideas is segregated into three main levels of generality:

- Policies: specific policies proposed by policy makers or „policy solutions“;
- Programs: more general programs that underpin the policy ideas, these reflect underlying assumptions or organizing principles;
- Public philosophies: these ideas tend to sit in the background as underlying assumptions that are rarely contested except in times of crisis. (Sigurdardottir, 2015)

From this follows two types of content:

- Cognitive: „what is and what to do“;
- Normative: „what is good or bad about what is“ in light of „what one ought to do“. (Sigurdardottir, 2015)

DI is seen as a fourth of the “new institutionalisms” together with historical, sociological and rational choice institutionalism (Schmidt V. , 2008). As an approach, it is closely related to sociological institutionalism. “The difference between the two is more one of degree than kind: discursive institutionalism treats ideas as “dynamic constructs”, while sociological institutionalism treats them as “static structures”” (Gorp, 2015). Discourse, as defined by Schmidt, is “whatever policy actors say to one another and to the public in their efforts to generate and legitimize a policy programme” J. Gorp (2015) citing Schmidt (2002: 210). “The institutional context of a country also matters, for it frames the discourse” (Gorp, 2015).

Two approaches of the discourse are separated: the ‘coordinative’ and ‘communicative’. “The ‘coordinative’ discourse among policy actors engaged in creating, arguing, bargaining, and reaching agreement on public policies in the policy sphere and the ‘communicative’ discourse between political actors and the public engaged in presenting, contesting, deliberating, and legitimating such policies in the political sphere” (Schmidt V. A., Bringing Ideas and Discourse Back into the Explanation of

Change in Varieties of Capitalism and Welfare States, 2008). This paper is related to the 'communicative' discourses as it is concerned with how those policies are communicated to the public. The 'communicative discourse' consist of "political actors who, as political leaders, government spokespeople, party activists, 'spin doctors,' and more, communicate the policy ideas and programs developed in the context of the coordinative discourse to the public for discussion and deliberation in a mass process of public persuasion" (Borras & Seabrooke, 2015, p. 157).

Simple polities and compound polities are relevant for the theory. "Schmidt argues that due to a stronger executive and the limited need to compromise with others, simple polities are characterized by stronger communicative discourse and weaker coordinative discourse. The opposite holds for compound polities. They will see stronger coordinative discourse because political actors need to coordinate and compromise with one another" (Gorp, 2015). By adapting this theory for the paper, Belarus would see itself as a simple polity together with stronger communicative discourse. The reason for this is because government there tends to be concentrated. Open discussions on the important matters are less likely to happen, although government has to justify its action in order not to face consequences, for example protests or loss of rating and approval from the public. In the case of Astravets nuclear power plant, Belarus government is more likely to implement a controversial project due to its authority, but justification is necessary, which can be achieved by paying significant attention to a communicative discourse. Lithuania would see itself as a compound polity, with strong coordinative discourse. Governance is distributed among different bodies, that all have to communicate and cooperate with each other. Controversial and significant projects are less likely, for example Visaginas nuclear power plant that faced controversy and eventually is not being implemented. In cooperative discourse communications between the institutions are more likely to happen.

Furthermore, in order to explain the communicative political discourse, agenda setting theory will be used. According to M. McCombs and A. Reynolds (2002) agenda setting theory describes "ability of the news media to influence the salience of topics on the public agenda". It is understood that the most important issues recognized by people are the same ones, which media communicated on the most. There are two main points that underlie most research on agenda-setting:

- the press and the media do not reflect reality; they filter and shape it;
- media concentration on a few issues and subjects leads the public to perceive those issues as more important than other issues. (UT, 2017)

"One of the most critical aspects in the concept of an agenda-setting role of mass communication is the time frame for this phenomenon. In addition, different media have different agenda-setting



potential. Agenda-setting theory seems quite appropriate to help us understand the pervasive role of the media (for example on political communication systems)” (UT, 2017).

Rogers and Dearing (1988) distinguish three main types of agenda setting. They are: public agenda setting; media agenda setting; policy agenda setting. According to A. Freeland (2012) public agenda setting focuses on the audience’s agenda while media agenda setting focuses on the influence of the mass media on the audience. Policy agenda setting deals with how media and public agendas might influence the decisions of elite policy makers. A. Freeland (2012, p. 4) citing S. Walgrave and P. Van Aelst (2006) “this part of the theory has since been explored by other scholars who want to further examine the factors that influence elite policy makers agendas”. In reference to M. Filipova (2006, p. 83) “Agenda Setting has two levels. As mentioned in Theories of Communication, the first level enacts the common subjects that are most important, and the second level decides what parts of the subject are important. These two levels of agenda setting lead path into what is the function of this concept”. And concept is process that is divided into three parts that were already mentioned above.

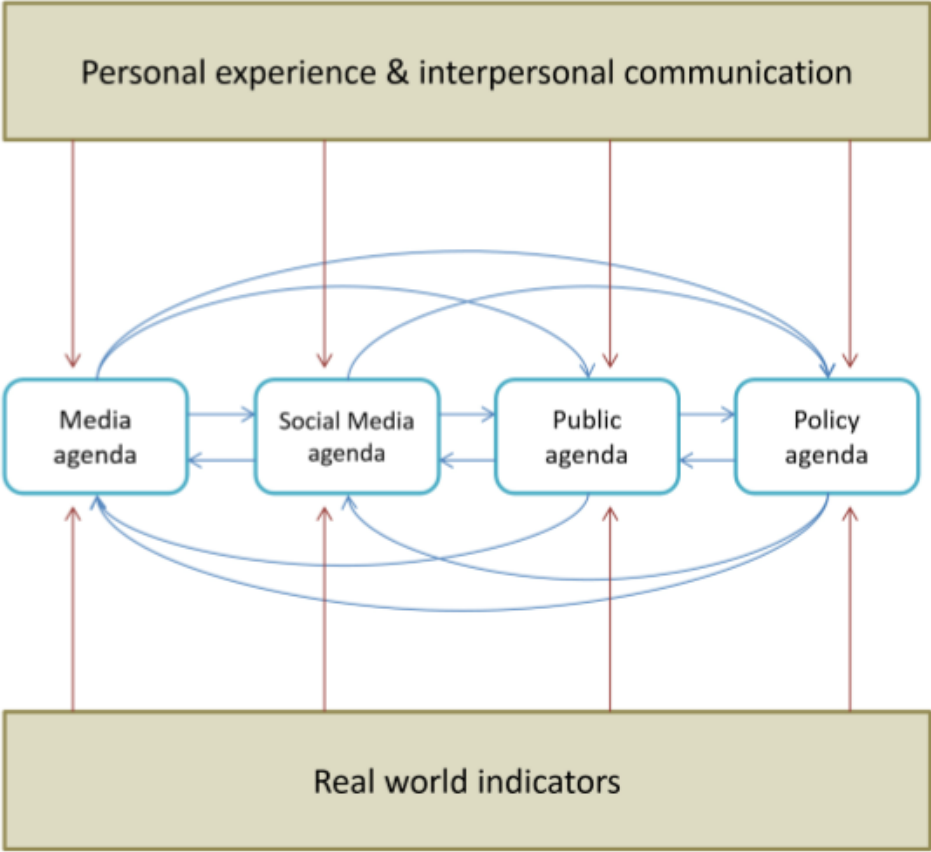


Figure 1. Proposed agenda setting model in the social media era (Albalawi, 2015).

Agenda setting theory has developed since the introduction of it. “Today, social media have become a new arena of policy debate bringing potentially different agenda dynamics to the table. In other words, they will have their own agenda logic of prioritizing and framing issues” (Dekker,

2013, p. 4). Furthermore, Y. Albalawi (2015) cites A. Zheluk, J. Gillespie and C. Quinn (2012) “simple application of agenda setting in the era of social media does not reflect the complex process of communication resulting from the use of social media platforms”. According to Y. Albalawi (2015), it is argued “that understanding agenda setting theory in the social media era should cover two levels of engagement: the first centres on agenda setting within the social media sphere and the second is related to the position of social media within the classic agenda-setting process implemented in the real world”. Social media has been introduced in the agenda setting framework as a separate matter having its specific agenda (Figure 1). In this paper analysis is based on policy agenda. The most relevant topics related with BelNPP and its context will be indicated. This will show which topics by policy makers are considered important. According to the theory, the same topics are considered important by the public, and the public have influence to the policy agenda.

It is also important to mention Framing and Issue Framing theories to help us understand the process of political discourses construction. The framing approach is related to the agenda setting theory but extends the research by concentrating not on exact subject, but on the nature of closely related issues instead. The main point of the framing theory is that the media concentrates its focus on certain cases and after that put them within a sphere of meaning. Framing is a relevant theory as it is influential and moreover the approach of framing is extended to the institutional level.

Framing is “a process by which people develop a particular conceptualization of an issue or reorient their thinking about an issue” (Chong & Druckman, Framing Theory, 2007). A framing effect occurs when, in describing an issue or event, a speaker’s emphasis on a subset of potentially relevant considerations causes individuals to focus on these considerations when forming their opinions (Druckman J. , 2001). For example, “the media draws the public attention to certain topics, it decides where people think about, the journalists select the topics” (UT, 2017). This represents the common idea of the agenda setting. Although “in news items occurs more than only bringing up certain topics. The way in which the news is brought, the frame in which the news is presented, is also a choice made by journalists. Thus, a frame refers to the way media and media gatekeepers organize and present the events and issues they cover, and the way audiences interpret what they are provided” (UT, 2017). Despite the fact this is an example of how media frames the matter, this also represents how political discourse can be framed by political actors or political institutions. Issues related to Astravets nuclear power plant can be framed by political actors that represent Parliament and Government in Belarus and Lithuania. This way political institutions are able to frame the matter regarding BelNPP in the direction that is desired. Framed approaches towards BelNPP may be different in Belarus and Lithuania, which means different content of communications. Furthermore, “frames are abstract notions that serve to organize or structure social meanings. Frames influence the perception of the

news of the audience, this form of agenda-setting not only tells what to think about, but also how to think about it” (UT, 2017).

There has been some opinions about agenda-setting and framing being basically the same theoretical model. According to A. Ardevol-Abreu (2015, p. 4), since the late 1990s, some authors, led by Maxwell McCombs, “have argued that framing is equivalent to the second level of the agenda-setting theory, and have proposed the integration of both models”. McCombs, Llamas, López-Escobar and Rey (1997), cited by A. Ardevol-Abreu (2015) “considered that framing is a natural extension of the agenda-setting model. According to this interpretation, frames would not be more than a special type of attributes – macro-attributes (second-level agenda setting theory) that due to their complexity allow us to define the problem, to interpret its causes and to propose a treatment”.

Framing techniques according to Fairhurst and Sarr (1996):

- Metaphor: A theoretical concept is framed over comparison with other objects.
- Stories (legends, myths): Subject is framed through the story in powerful and notable form.
- Tradition (rituals, ceremonies): Cultural attitudes with a possibility to inspire importance in everyday lives, closely related with artefacts.
- Slogan, jargon, catchphrase: Framing something by memorable expression in order to achieve significance and to make it identifiable.
- Artefact: Objects having basic significant purpose – observable or cultural matter that has more significance than the object itself.
- Contrast: Description of the object regarding what it is not.
- Spin: to introduce an idea in specific style as to bring a value judgement (positive or negative) which possibly could not be instantly obvious;
- to present a concept in such a way as to convey a value judgement (positive or negative) that might not be immediately apparent.

Separating Issue Framing theory, according to R. Slothuus and C. Vreese (2010, p. 2) “issue framing is one of the most important means of elite influence on public opinion. We understand issue framing as a process in which a communicator ‘defines and constructs a political issue or public controversy’ (Nelson, Clawson, & Oxley, 1997, p. 567) by emphasizing ‘a subset of potentially relevant considerations’ (Druckman & Kjersten, 2003, p. 730) and thereby pointing the receiver to ‘the essence of the issue’” (Gamson & Modigliani, 1987, p. 143). A framing effect occurs when such ‘frames in communication’ subsequently affect the ‘frames in thought’ of the receivers, that is, their

cognitive understanding of a given situation and/or their opinion (Chong & Druckman, Framing Theory, 2007). From this paper perspective framing could be used by Belarus and Lithuanian political actors to frame an issue on Astravets nuclear power plant in a way that is convenient for them. This approach can be helpful to achieve political goals or to justify their actions. Receivers, which is general society in this case, can accept the message provided by political discourse actors and approve or support their actions.

## **1.2 The Case of Astravets Nuclear Power Plant**

The research presented in this thesis is built on a case of Astravets nuclear power plant. In order to better understand, how and why this power plant has become part of political agendas both in Belarus and Lithuania, the comprehensive case description is presented as a separate chapter. First of all, according to World Nuclear Association (2017) under its 2011-2020 energy strategy, “Belarus is seeking to reduce its reliance on Russia as a major energy supplier”. In order to do so, Belarus is planning to build coal-fired plant, nuclear power plant, four hydropower stations and to work on wind projects. “If fully implemented, the strategy would bring the share of power generated using Russian gas down to 55% by 2020, from over 80% in 2009” (WNA, 2017).

In November 2007 a presidential decree defined the organizations responsible for preparing for the construction of the country's first nuclear power plant and budgeted money for engineering and site selection. “The document authorized preparation for the construction of a nuclear power plant in Belarus” (Belta, 2014). In 2008 Astravets site in Grodno Oblast has been chosen for the construction of BelNPP by the state commission assigned for this purpose. Krasnaya Polyana and Kukshinovo sites also have been considered. Astravets is 20km from the Lithuanian border and 50km from Vilnius (LGMA, 2016). According to Belarus Environmental Impact Assessment (MERB, n.d.) regarding the power plant, Krasnaya Polyana and Kukshinovo sites were less suitable due to possibilities of karst-suffusion appearances, also at Kukshinovo site geotechnical and hydrological conditions were complex. This resulted that with “regard to foregoing and IAEA recommendations, taking into account the importance of safety issues, the Ostrovets site has been identified as the priority site” (MERB, n.d.).

With reference to the World Nuclear Association (2017), “the 2007 decree also aimed to ensure that nuclear and radiation safety was in line with the recommendations of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The Nuclear & Radiation Safety Department was set up as part of the Emergencies Ministry to act as the state nuclear regulator and licensing authority”. A further decree in 2017 established a Centre of Nuclear and Radiation Safety as part of the Emergencies Ministry (WNA, 2017). In October 2011 a “contractual agreement on the construction of the nuclear power plant in

Belarus was signed” (Belta, 2014). It sets the construction of two power generating units of the nuclear power plant for a 2400 MWe (2 x 1200). Moreover, general construction contract was signed in July 2012. The first significant construction works started in November 2013 (Belta, 2014).

Since the beginning of the Astravets Nuclear Power Plant construction there has been a significant amount of accidents and it also received criticism from different sides like politicians or environmentalists. According to T. Wesolowsky (2016), there has been accidents, such as a nuclear reactor shell drop, while being moved, which has been reported by local news. And the structural frame of the nuclear service building at the site collapsed, which was first reported by an independent TV station. There also has been some criticism as Minsk possibly failed to carry out an environmental-impact study for Astravets. However, The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) director-general Yukiya Amano expressed opinion that the nuclear agency “has worked closely with Belarus on all aspects of this major project and will continue to offer every assistance”, and that Belarus “is one of the most advanced of what the IAEA calls ‘newcomer’ countries” (Gaspar, 2016).

In reference to P. Baumgartner (2017) “Minsk cites the report of an IAEA Site and External Events Design (SEED) visit to Astravets in January 2017 which concluded that officials had taken “appropriate steps” to “address all necessary aspects of site safety and site-specific design parameters...for relevant external hazards.” Although, according to S. de Jong (2017), “such a review during a SEED mission can include up to six modules, but the Astravets visit only involved two modules of examination, per Minsk's wishes”. This way, “the Belarussian authorities limited the scope of the IAEA’s mission only to an assessment of the plant design’s safety. This means that major verification steps pertaining to the choice of location, local geology and the plant’s environmental impact were skipped” (Jong, 2017).

International community treats the Belarussian Astravets Nuclear Power Plant as controversial project. For example, in a Statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Astravets Nuclear Power Plant under construction in Belarus (2017) Lithuania advices to stop a construction of the BelNPP. The Belarussian public is also split on BelNPP. “A poll conducted by the Independent Institute of Socio-Economic and Political Studies suggested that a slight majority - 35 percent or respondents - disapproved of the project” (Brown, 2016). The poll took place in 2016. Furthermore, according to J. Brown (2016), there has been a form of protest, like “during election campaigning, Green Party candidate Dmitry Kuchuk appeared on state-run television wearing a gas mask”. Or “Belarusian Nobel Prize-winning writer Svetlana Alexievich described Lukashenko's decision to progress plans for the nuclear station as “a crime”. Protests are still being organized, like for example the march “Chernobyl

Way-2017", with a main statement "Stop the nuclear power plant construction in Belarus!" organized by Belarusian Christian Democracy party (2017).

Belarus and Lithuania relation linked to BelNPP started in 2009 after Belarus released plans to build its first nuclear power plant and presented preliminary Environmental Impact Assessment. Responsible Lithuania's institutions and experts evaluated data provided by Belarus and suggested 39 comments, bringing attention to negative consequences if for the construction of the nuclear power plant would be chosen Astravets site. Lithuanian institutions also requested to provide information based on studies on how the nuclear power plant would influence Neris ecosystem and drinking water, how competence of Belarus regulator and independence will be assured etc. Belarus did not take into account essential remarks provided by Lithuania; for this reason Lithuania submitted a complaint in 2011 to United Nations Espoo Convention Implementation committee due to violations of the convention in carrying out cross-border Environment Impact Assessment by Belarus. In 2013 Espoo Convention Committee acknowledged, and in 2014 during the meeting of Ministers of the Espoo convention it has been verified, that Belarus violated Espoo convention and prepared 12 recommendations for Espoo Convention implementation and improvement, which Belarus is advised to implement. Moreover, in 2014 during the meeting of the United Nations Aarhus Convention conclusions has been adopted that Belarus during construction of the Astravets nuclear power plant violated this international agreement – convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters. In 2015 Lithuania also submitted a complaint regarding this convention. Furthermore, Lithuania requested for full IAEA SEED mission and stress tests to be performed by European Union and Lithuanian experts. (LRT, 2016) In the following parts of this paper energy policies in Belarus and Lithuania have been reviewed. Furthermore, nuclear safety and security definition was detailed, as well as international organizations that has jurisdiction regarding nuclear safety and security implementation were reviewed.

### **1.3 Energy Politics and Policy**

In this part energy policies in Belarus, Lithuania and the EU, with relation to Lithuania, will be examined. It is necessary for a better understanding on how two countries implement their policies in energy sector, also in relation with nuclear energy. It allows to explain the reasons why Belarus is constructing the nuclear power plant, as well as Lithuania's background in energy sector, which can have influence for its approach towards BelNPP.

First of all, energy policies are different in countries, as it depends on many different variables and issues that countries have to tackle. For example, "between 1991 and 2007, Belarus's energy dependency had gone from 80% to 85% and Lithuania's from 70% to 62%' from Russia" (Fraser,

2016). So, energy dependency is on political agenda for both of the countries. It has to be mentioned, that Belarus is still very dependent on Russia, and Lithuania, after a long period of strong dependence from Russia, is taking measures to reduce dependency, and now the European Union has strong influence for the Lithuania's energy policy and its legislation.

While talking about Belarus energy policy, according to A. Zaborovskiy (2011, p. 31), there are three main policy areas such as improving energy efficiency, reducing energy dependence and insuring gas transit to the EU. As mentioned before, Belarus has close ties with Russia. This development of cooperation between Belarus and Russia started after three treaties were signed: on the Commonwealth of Russia and Belarus (1996), on the Union between Belarus and Russia (1997), and on the Creation of a Union State of Russia and Belarus (1999). The treaties provide agreements such as the creation of a customs union; a common energy market; a common market; and common pricing for energy resources.

Although, in reference to A. Zaborovskiy (2011, p. 32), bilateral relations between Russia and Belarus in the energy sphere had worsened because the Belarusian government decided to revise its strategy for domestic energy sector development. For this reason in the beginning of 2007 Russia quit from the new deal and Gazprom declared plans to increase gas prices for Belarus to the European level. "Russia's unilateral withdrawal from the principles of a common market and its contradictory positions on oil and gas transit through Belarus in 2004, 2006, 2007 and 2009 resulted in considerable changes to both Russia's strategy for the development of oil and gas export infrastructure and Belarus's energy strategy" (Zaborovskiy, 2011, p. 32).

In October 2007, Belarus has approved the new concept of energy security and the state programme. Earlier documents were approved in 2005. However, according to the official point of view, the old concept is outdated because of the changed parameters of cooperation between Belarus and Russia in the field of energy. The country needed to reduce energy dependence on Russia, and the new instruments are designed to respond to new challenges (Rakava, 2010). Documents were approved such as (Zaborovskiy, 2011): the State Program for the Belarusian Energy System Modernization, the Concept of the Energy Security of the Republic of Belarus and the Directive N 3. They call for diversifying supply, improving efficiency and increasing use of domestic resources. "The key issues in Directive N 3 and the Strategy of Energy Security of Belarus are greater security of supply, reduced dependence on imports, in particular, from Russia, and exploitation of all possible advantages of Belarus's geopolitical situation as an energy transit country connecting Russia and the EU. These key issues take on greater significance when considering Russia's treatment of the Ukraine in 2005-2006 and 2008-2009. Russia limited supplies of natural gas to the Ukrainian gas transportation

system which in turn caused considerable havoc for EU gas supplies” (Zaborovskiy, 2011, p. 32). Under these circumstances, with inadequate local resources, it is reasonable to expect that Belarus could take measures like construction of a nuclear power plant or a coal plant. Although, “enhancing energy security through the construction of a nuclear power plant by a Russian contractor, and using Russian credit resources, does not seem to be a viable option” (Rakava, 2010).

Considering energy efficiency strategy, in reference to Energy Charter Secretariat (2013, p. 14), the current energy and energy efficiency policy and strategy of Belarus for the period of 2020 aims at restructuring and modernising the national economy based on energy efficient technologies. Some of the main goals have been set such as reduction in the energy intensity of GDP by 60% in 2020, compared with 2005 level. Also, share of domestic energy resources in the energy balance at least 32% in 2020. In order to achieve these goals, measures have been taken, for example, introduction of National Energy Saving Programme for 2011-2015; National Programme of Converting Boiler Houses into Mini-CHPs (mini-Combined Heat and Power plants) for 2007-2010; Programme of Constructing Biogas-Based Generation Facilities for 2010-2015; State Programme of Constructing Generation Facilities Using Local Fuels Sources for 2010-2015 etc. The construction of a nuclear power plant of 2,340 MW by 2020 is also foreseen in the Belarusian Government’s plans. Relevant legislation is in force: Law of the Republic of Belarus (RB) dated 15 July 1998 No. 190-3 on Energy Saving; Law of RB dated 30 July 2008 No. 426-3 On Use of Nuclear Power; the Rules of Heat Use etc.

Measures on climate action are additionally significant in order to achieve energy policy goals. “The Republic of Belarus submitted its intended nationally determined contributions in 2015, communicating its intention to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 25% by 2030 below 1990 level” (OECD, 2016, p. 2). According to OECD country study (2016, p. 2), “Belarus has already developed a range of legal and policy frameworks for addressing issues concerning climate change and a wider set of sustainable development agenda”. These are, for example, the State Programme on Mitigation Actions in 2013–2020; the National Strategy for Sustainable Development in the Republic of Belarus until 2030; and the Concept of the Law on Climate Protection. In reference to International Energy Agency (2016), there are various types’ of legislation in force which helps to achieve goals that are set in accordance with climate change and sustainable development. For instance: tax relief for renewable energy investors; Law on Renewable Energy Sources; resolution on Feed-in Tariffs for electricity generated from renewable energy sources; and National Program of Local and Renewable Energy Sources Development.

Speaking about the EU and Lithuania, for a start main points of the European Union energy policy will be noted. Furthermore, Lithuanian energy policy in relation with the EU policy will be



reviewed. Although energy related matters have been important during the integration process of the EU itself, as a separate policy area it is quite a new phenomenon. The most significant EU energy policy initiatives started to develop since 2005-2006, and now the EU energy policy is important object which receives attention in various meetings on the EU level (Vaičiūnas, 2009). According to D. Helm (Helm, 2012), as for the EU energy policy, there are three distinct parts: the internal energy market, climate change, and security of supply. The same parts will be distinguished in the energy policy review; additionally the EU energy policy and its relation with nuclear energy will be reviewed.

First of all, the internal market is closely related with two other firm EU policies – the single European Market and competition policy. In this case, liberalization of markets is at the core (Buchan, 2015). It started with a first package of directives. This package “requires MS to open access to all third parties to grids in non-discriminatory and transparent manner” (Urbanavicius, 2017). This “allowed the option of ‘regulated’ third-party access to networks on the basis of tariffs approved by national regulators” (Buchan, 2015). Afterwards followed a second package of open-access directives. The main point is that it “requires MS to legally unbundle energy transmission from generation” (Urbanavicius, 2017). It also “required every member state to have a national energy regulator (Buchan, 2015). With reference to D. Buchan (2015), powers of national regulators were weakened to a minimum and they had to coordinate with each other and to coordinate with the Commission. Finally, the third package came into force and this set of directives “requires MS to unbundle ownership” (Urbanavicius, 2017). “It harmonised up the powers of national regulators. More importantly, it upgraded European Regulators' Group for Electricity and Gas (EREG) in Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators (ACER) (Regulation 713/2009), which has, for the first time, the power to take and enforce binding decisions” (Buchan, 2015).

According to International Energy Agency (2017), definition of energy security is “the uninterrupted availability of energy sources at an affordable price”. EU actions in this case are to “ensure sources of supply from third countries, support energy infrastructure in and between Member States, ensure security of gas storage and reduce energy consumption” (Urbanavicius, 2017). The EU has legislated in the field throughout the history, but some key legislation is “for instance, the 2004 Gas Security Directive, the 2005 Electricity Security Directive, the 2010 Gas Security of Supply Regulation, and the establishment in 2011 of the Gas Coordination Group” etc. (Buchan, 2015). Some of the latest measures are Energy Security Strategy released in 2014 by the European Commission (2017). This includes certain short-term and long term measures in order to achieve energy security. It also can be noted that this field of energy policy gained its significance after the enlargement in 2004 as post-Soviet bloc countries had experienced issues related with energy security, and now this field gained reasonable importance.

With reference to D. Buchan (2015), the third pillar of the EU energy policy, which is climate change, probably is the one to which the EU paid the biggest attention. EU policy-makers think themselves as architects in developing both international and domestic measures to fight climate change. According to J. Urbanavicius (2017), main EU actions in this field are “support for renewable energy is allowed by the EU law, MS may choose different support schemes, MS may cooperate in achieving these goals, EU sets common standards in the area of energy efficiency and energy savings, EU also sets environmental standards aimed at emissions reduction”. From a legal point of view, the most important are such measures as the EU emissions trading system (EU ETS) by the European Commission (2017) with intention “to reduce its emission of man-made greenhouse gases”. It is also important to mention 2020 Energy Strategy. “By 2020, the EU aims to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by at least 20%, increase the share of renewable energy to at least 20% of consumption, and achieve energy savings of 20% or more. All EU countries must also achieve a 10% share of renewable energy in their transport sector” (Energy, 2017). Some main points (Urbanavicius, 2017) are that goals are compared with 1990 level, implemented by setting national targets, become 40-27-27 targets by 2030, further discussions on post-2050 targets.

Nuclear energy is important since the very start of the European Union itself, as together with Rome treaty in 1957 the European Atomic Energy Community (EURATOM) was established. Primary goal of the community was to ensure peaceful use of atomic energy. At this moment, European Commission (EC) (2017) distinguishes 5 separate areas for the nuclear energy agenda: nuclear safety, radioactive waste and spent fuel, radiation protection, decommissioning of nuclear facilities and safeguards to avoid misuse. Safe use of nuclear power is at the core. Nuclear energy plays a significant role in the EU, according to the EC (2017) together with more than 140 power reactors in the European Union, producing more than 25% of all the EU electricity. The nuclear industry contributes to EU energy objectives, such as achieving a viable and diverse energy mix; limiting CO<sub>2</sub> emissions; maintaining security of energy supply and energy independence; promoting economic development and employment (EC, 2016). For this reason, EU invests into nuclear energy sphere. For example, in 2007 EU’s Sustainable Nuclear Energy Technology Platform has been set up. „The overall goal is to support technological development for enhancing safe and competitive nuclear fission in a sustainable energy mix, as part of the EU’s SET-Plan (Strategic Energy Technology Plan)” (Sepielli, 2013). Although after Fukushima nuclear power plant disaster nuclear safety became more important. In 2011 and 2012 stress tests have been performed for all of the EU’s nuclear power plants. Some key legislation as Nuclear Safety directive 2009 saw amendment in 2014 in favour for stricter nuclear safety standards (EC, 2017).

As for Lithuanian energy policy, after the accession to the European Union in 2004, Lithuania's energy policy became closely related with EU's energy policy, as EU had significant legislative power for Lithuania in the field. For this reason, in order to review Lithuania's energy policy three parts will be distinguished, as in the EU energy policy, such as internal energy market, energy security, and climate change. In the beginning, it is important to mention, that Lithuania, during its accession negotiations agreed to decommission Ignalina nuclear power plant, together with Council Regulation (EU) No 1369/2013 of 13 December 2013 on Union support for the nuclear decommissioning assistance programme in Lithuania, and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1990/2006. According to European Commission (2017), this has been done following the Chernobyl disaster in 1986, as EU decided that so-called High Power Channel Type Reactors and first-generation Soviet-designed nuclear reactors would have to be shut down, for safety reasons.

Despite the closure of Ignalina nuclear power plant Lithuanian politicians were in favour for the development of nuclear energy. The main reason to favour nuclear energy was energy security as Lithuania was strongly dependent from Russia for energy imports. Discussions about building new nuclear power plant after the closure of the old one started in 2002 in Lithuanian Parliament, and official document was sign meaning start of implementing the project in 2006 (vae, 2017). The project was gradually developed and it saw approval of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) by the Ministry of Environment, also regional partners have been found and main investor (WNA, 2017). Although a non-binding referendum was held in 2012 which resulted in majority of voters rejecting the project implementation plan (VRK, 2012).

In the field of internal energy market Lithuania faces some issues. According to EC (n.d.) "Lithuania's electricity grid is still connected with and operates in a synchronous way with the Russian and Belarusian systems. Furthermore, the competitiveness of the power generation industry is affected by imports of cheap electricity from third countries, mainly Russia". Although the Third Energy Package provisions has been successfully implemented by Lithuania. According to European Commission Single Market Progress Report for 2014 (2014, p. 2) "in the electricity sector, the ownership unbundling model was chosen for unbundling the state-owned TSO Litgrid AB, making use of the possibility provided for in Article 9(6) Electricity Directive to implement the ownership unbundling model by means of separate public bodies within the State". In gas sector, Lietuvos Dujos AB was also unbundled, although "the planned implementation of ownership unbundling has been challenged by Gazprom (co-shareholder of Lietuvos Dujos AB and Amber Grid)". Furthermore the Baltic Energy Market Integration Plant (BEMIP) has to be mentioned which aims at improving regions integration into the continental energy grid.

Energy security is the most important pillar for Lithuania, due to comparatively high dependence on Russia in energy sector. “Since independence, Lithuania’s energy policy has been focused on diversification” (Fraser, 2016). With reference to European Commission (n.d.) “as regards Energy Security, Lithuania has made recently visible progress in improving its electricity and gas infrastructure. In the gas sector, the LNG Terminal in Klaipeda has been put in operation in December 2014 and the related gas pipeline, Klaipeda-Kursenai, was commissioned in November 2015. Furthermore, an agreement on the construction of a gas interconnector with Poland was reached in September 2015. In the electricity sector, two important interconnectors with Sweden (NordBalt) and with Poland (LitPol-Link) have been commissioned in 2015. As regards Energy Efficiency, further improving Lithuania’s energy efficiency will reduce long-term energy costs, and will strengthen energy security”. “After the shutdown of the Ignalina NPP, Lithuania has become an importer of electricity. The above mentioned NordBalt link and LitPol Link are necessary to integrate Lithuania into a common European electricity market, thus contributing to a more reliable electricity supply, more stable prices and enhanced competition on the Lithuanian market” (EC, Single market progress report, 2014). Lithuania paid biggest attention in energy security sector which helped to achieve significant results, though this sector is still of high priority for the country and receives considerable amount of support.

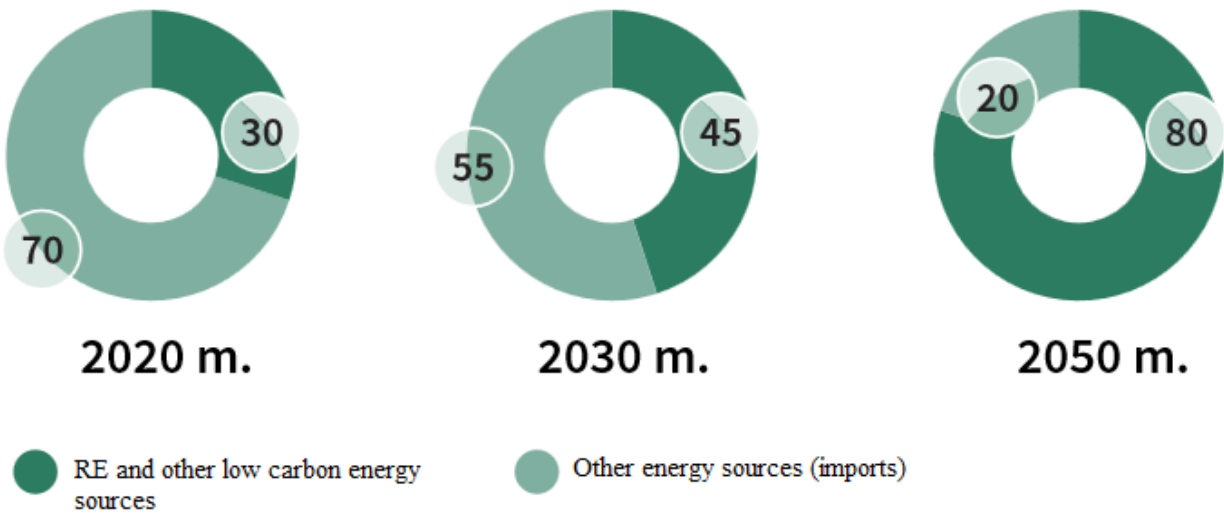


Figure 2. Lithuania’s energy resources target in the final energy consumption, %. (LREM, 2017)

In the Decarbonisation field Lithuania performs sufficiently regarding 2020 target for renewable energy as it already achieved its target in 2013. “On the basis of measures already in place, Lithuania is expected to meet its 2020 greenhouse emission target” (EC, n.d.) which is 20%. Lithuania has goals (Figure 2) to achieve 45% of renewable energy in its final energy consumption by 2030 and 80% by 2050. Biggest share of renewable energy will be generated by wind power.

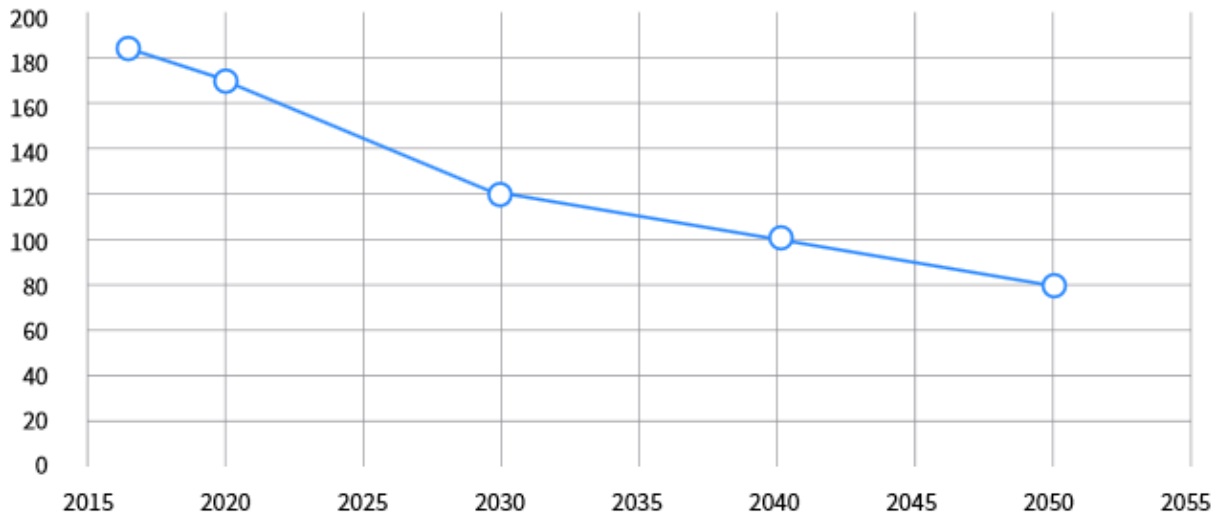


Figure 3. Energy intensity decrease forecast by 2050 in Lithuania, kgoe/1000eur. (LREM, 2017)

Energy efficiency is also high on the agenda and the biggest attention will be paid to increase the efficiency for heating apartment buildings, moreover to raise energy efficiency for transport sector. Target is to reduce energy intensity (Figure 3) to EU average by 2030, and by 2.6 times by 2050. (LREM, 2017) At this moment energy efficiency politics in Lithuania is directed towards expensive measures that guarantees biggest energy saving potential, although not enough attention is paid to low-cost yet comparatively limited energy saving and GHG emission reduction measures: voluntary agreements, energy efficiency requirements during procurement procedures and Green Purchasing. (Štreimikienė & Mikalauskienė, 2012) Furthermore with reference to European Commission in Lithuania “environmental taxes are very low, and there is remaining scope to reduce the high tax wedge for low income earners by shifting the tax burden to other sources less detrimental to growth” (EC, n.d.).

#### 1.4 Nuclear Safety and Security

In a framework of this paper nuclear safety and security is significant topic. Belarus Astravets nuclear power plant received considerable amount of criticism in relation to nuclear safety and it is important to separate nuclear safety and security definitions and to specify what safety is in a frame of the research. Furthermore, existing safety assurance measures for BelNPP are reviewed. It will be performed by examining how Belarus and Lithuania are interrelated from a legal point of view. International organizations provide this framework although they have no legally binding power to guarantee full safety measures for its members.

First of all, International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA, 2017) defines nuclear safety as “the achievement of proper operating conditions, prevention of accidents and mitigation of accident

consequences, resulting in protection of workers, the public and the environment from undue radiation hazards”. It aims to ensure people and environmental protection against risks related to nuclear energy object. With reference to IAEA (2017) “safety concerns both risks under normal circumstances and risks as a consequence of incidents, as well as other possible direct consequences of a loss of control over a nuclear reactor core, nuclear chain reaction, radioactive source or any other source of radiation. There are many different types of sources of radiation, and hence safety includes the safety of nuclear installations, radiation safety, the safety of radioactive waste management and safety in the transport of radioactive material; it does not include non-radiation-related aspects of safety”.

“Nuclear security’ is the prevention and detection of, and response to, theft, sabotage, unauthorized access, illegal transfer or other malicious acts involving nuclear material, other radioactive substances or their associated facilities. The response element of the definition refers to those actions aimed at ‘reversing’ the immediate consequences of unauthorized access or actions (e.g. recovering material). Response to the radiological consequences that might ensue is considered part of safety” (IAEA, IAEA.com, 2017). Nuclear security risks are such as nuclear proliferation and nuclear terrorism (Pakalniskis, 2015). Nuclear security is achieved through 5 main pillars: Policy, Law and Diplomacy; Education and Training; Science and Technology; Operations and Intelligence Capabilities; Real World Missions (UTK, 2017).

According to IAEA (2017) “there is not an exact distinction between the general terms safety and security. In general, security is concerned with malicious or negligent actions by humans that could cause or threaten harm to other humans; safety is concerned with the broader issue of harm to humans (or the environment) from radiation, whatever the cause”. The exact interaction among security and safety rely on the background. In this paper nuclear safety is distinguished as the most relevant term due to its relation with nuclear energy production in a safe and peaceful manner.

As for BelNPP essential principle exists at a global level according to which operator of the nuclear power plant is responsible for its safety. ”The national regulator is responsible for ensuring the plants are operated safely by the licensee, and that the design is approved” (WNA, 2016). Belarus holds full responsibility for the safety of BelNPP and its implementation despite influence from contractor or other bodies. Also, “a second important concept is that a regulator’s mission is to protect people and the environment” (WNA, 2016). This kind of protection from negative consequences could be described by introducing a risk concept in which case “an activity is considered to be safe when its associated risks are being controlled to acceptable levels” (NAP, 2014, p. 233) It is important as “safety is considered to be an inviolable constraint and part of the social contract under which nuclear plants are allowed to operate” (NAP, 2014, p. 233).

Despite the fact that operator is fully responsible for the safe use of nuclear energy there are a number of international organizations that supports, coordinates and regalement's the safe use of this type of energy, however they are not legally binding. In the context of BelNPP the most relevant are EU, IAEA together with Site and External Events Design (SEED) review, ESPOO Convention and Aarhus Convention. As for the EU it has legislated in the field for a reasonable amount of time together with EURATOM Treaty. Nuclear safety and security standards have been included in the legislation and it has relevant tasks as: “to establish uniform safety standards to protect the health of workers and of the general public and ensure that they are applied; to make certain that civil nuclear materials are not diverted to other (particularly military) purposes; to foster progress in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy by working with other countries and international organisations” (EUR-Lex, Treaty establishing the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom), 2007). In accordance to cooperation with third countries in energy security field the EU in 2013 and in this case the European Commission signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The EU's cooperation on nuclear safety with third countries has two main objectives (EC, 2013):

1. Promotion of an effective nuclear safety culture and implementation of the highest nuclear safety and security standards and radiation protection;
2. Responsible and safe management of spent fuel and radioactive waste, decommissioning and remediation of former nuclear sites and installations.

In addition, Instrument for Nuclear Safety Cooperation (INSC) is in place. In reference to European Commission (EC, 2017) “the geographical scope of the INSC extends to all third countries, but priority is given to accession and neighbouring countries. Via the INSC the following specific objectives are pursued: the promotion of an effective nuclear safety culture and implementation of the highest nuclear safety and radiation protection standards, and continuous improvement of nuclear safety; responsible and safe management of spent fuel and radioactive waste and remediation of former nuclear sites and installations; the establishment of frameworks and methodologies for the application of efficient and effective safeguards for nuclear material in third countries”. As Belarus is a neighbouring country for the EU it has higher importance in its agenda to cooperate in nuclear safety field implementation. Furthermore financial cooperation with non-EU countries on nuclear safety (2014–20) is functioning. Significant aim of this legislation is that it “allows for grants to non-EU countries with a view to maintaining the highest possible nuclear safety standards” (EUR-Lex, 2016).

International Atomic Energy Agency has certain legal documents to ensure nuclear safety. Convention on Nuclear Safety (IAEA) is a “1994 International Atomic Energy Agency treaty that

governs safety rules at nuclear power plants in state parties to the Convention” (IAEA, 2017). Belarus has accession since 27 Jan 1999 (IAEA, 2017). “The Convention creates obligations on state parties to implement certain safety rules and standards at all civil facilities related to nuclear energy. These include issues of site selection; design and construction; operation and safety verification; and emergency preparedness” (IAEA, 2017). Moreover, Site and External Events Design Review Service (SEED) is one of the instruments by IAEA created to assist member states to implement nuclear security safety measures. “On official request from a Member State, SEED provides an independent review of site evaluation and safety design of a nuclear installation against the demands posed by external natural and human induced hazards, as well as internal ones” (Haddad, 2013). It consist of six modules: Review on Site and Design Safety Regulations; Review of the Site Selection Process; Site Evaluation Review; Environmental Impact Assessment Review; Site Monitoring Review; Safety Review of Structures, Systems and Components against External Hazards (Haddad, 2013). A key point is that this review is optional and selected modules by a hosting country can be inspected.

UNECE Espoo Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context is one of the tools that can help to ensure nuclear safety and is relevant in the context of this research. “The Espoo (EIA) Convention sets out the obligation to assess the environmental impact of certain activities at an early stage of planning. Under the Convention states are obliged to notify and consult each other on all major projects under consideration that are likely to have a significant adverse environmental impact across boundaries” (UNECE, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, 2017). BelNPP falls under the definition of a major project which can have significant influence for the environment and Lithuania is a country that would be affected by the project.

The UNECE Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters is important in the context of this paper as Lithuania criticized Belarus for violating this convention.

The Convention (UNECE, 2017):

- Links environmental rights and human rights
- Acknowledges that we owe an obligation to future generations
- Establishes that sustainable development can be achieved only through the involvement of all stakeholders
- Links government accountability and environmental protection
- Focuses on interactions between the public and public authorities in a democratic context.



Neighbouring countries of the state constructing nuclear power plant can legislate to ensure nuclear safety. As for BelNPP Lithuania legislated and has approved two domestic laws to influence construction of the nuclear power plant. The first law established safety measures by banning the possibility to import electricity from countries that have unsafe nuclear power plants in operation or the use of domestic energy infrastructure for the purpose of unsafe power plants (LRS, Lietuvos Respublikos Seimas, 2017). This also prevents energy produced in unsafe nuclear power plants to move into other markets through Lithuania like Poland, Scandinavian countries etc. Second law declares BelNPP a threat to Lithuanian national security, environment and human health (LRS, 2017). There are also measures by Poland to support nuclear security of BelNPP at least on a political agenda by boycotting Astravets energy (Baumgartner, 2017). These safety measures can be justified as there is additionally a recommendation by Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) that calls on the Government of Belarus to suspend the construction of the Astravets Nuclear Power Plant due to various violations (PACE, 2017).

To conclude, three main theoretical perspectives have been used such as discursive institutionalism, agenda setting and issue framing, which explain how political discourses can be changed and adapted in order to achieve the desired approach towards the BelNPP. Belarus and Lithuania political institutions have reasons to use the so called framing in political discourses. Belarus ranks 127<sup>th</sup> according to the democracy index is (EIU, 2016), which shows that it faces issues with democracy. It is very likely to use framing for its discourse to achieve desired goals and to justify political actions. For example, although in Belarus energy policy reduction of energy dependence from Russia is one of the most important points, but due to close cooperation with Russia regarding BelNPP project there are doubts that dependency will decrease, so there can be more reasons behind the project that are framed. As for Lithuania, BelNPP could mean possibility to import cheap energy from Belarus, although energy dependence from Russia is high on the agenda. This way, Lithuanian political institutions can frame issues in a negative way towards BelNPP to justify expensive investments in energy security field. There can be more reasons to explain why and how issues towards certain projects are framed, but it makes it important to research how this is done.

## 2. RESEARCH DESIGN

Political discourse analysis has been chosen as main methodological strategy for the empirical research. The methodology of content analysis is also adapted for the purposes of this research. Operationalization of “discourse” definition is important in order to perform discourse analysis, which is achieved by indicating main dimensions of the discourse analysis (Telešienė, 2006, p. 18):

- Content: object of focus, theme or question, descriptive and evaluative statements on the object;
- Discourse actors and discourse context (discourse actors are often analysed as a part of context).

Content of the discourse includes various statements on the object of focus. Content is described through themes, which are developed in texts. Themes define what the discourse is about, they organize the process of discourse and provide with the most important information about the discourse. Furthermore there is more than a single approach to a discourse context. Firstly discourse is understood as social, political, cultural and historical structures where the discourse is happening. Also context in discourse analysis is understood as direct situation of the discourse process, where the situation of the discourse is commonly being described, discourse actors are named, as well as their relation. This allows to explain variety of language use, situational differences (RINOVA, 2009). As for content analysis, it is “a research technique used to make replicable and valid inferences by interpreting and coding textual material” (UoG, 2012). It is also important to note that “by systematically evaluating texts, qualitative data can be converted into quantitative data” (UoG, 2012). For a research purpose texts were interpreted and coded by codes having attributed value to them.

Main sources of information are communicative political discourse texts as produced by Belarusian and Lithuanian Parliaments and Governments. Those texts are treated as institutional products and do not represent directly or solely the views of separate political actors, but rather represent institutional approach towards the topic. The texts are produced mostly as news or press releases, thus are filtered, edited and directed towards general public audiences. Thus research results will speak of the discursively controlled and consciously constructed political institutional positions on Astravets nuclear power plant related issues.

In Lithuania’s case, official news and press releases from Parliament and Government websites (lrs.lt and lrv.lt) will be analysed. In Belarus case, news and press releases from official governmental Belarus website has been chosen (belarus.by). The latter has a bigger amount of material available on the website, so the sampling strategy has been developed. Criteria sampling was conducted and one of the main criteria was that news were communicated by political actors, which represents Belarus

Parliament and Government. Section 'Press centre' in the website was used to gather information. This included: News and Events in Belarus, Speeches and Interviews and Latest press releases. Some actors have been picked up in Lithuania's case. Differences between the sources have occurred, as there are no news from Belarus Parliament or Government websites available in English language, so official website of Belarus has been the closest source in order to see what was communicated by Belarus politicians. At the same time, Lithuania does not have its one single official governmental website, so lrs.lt and lrv.lt represents what is being communicated by these institutions. Belarus.by website has an important feature, as significant majority of its news is from the Belarusian Telegraph Agency (BelTA). According to the website, 'BelTA has been the country's official news agency and is the most respected source of up-to-the-minute news about Belarus supreme authorities (BelTA)'. There is no equivalent to BelTA in Lithuania, as it is a primary source of its own news, although official Lithuania's news agency LRT also publishes news from private news sources; additionally BelTA represents 'Belarus supreme authorities'. The texts were sampled from the period of 2012-2017. 2012 marks the rise of the discourse. The end date of the sampling period is 04/11/2017 as this marks the start of the data gathering.

In the second stage of purposive criterion sampling, the relevant texts were sampled out of the totality of news and press releases found in the lrs.lt, lrv.lt and Belarus.by for the period 2012-2017. In order to find relevant news on Astravets nuclear power plant, from Belarus.by website, the search option has been used, with search phrase 'Ostrovets nuclear power plant', which represents most relevant keywords for the topic. Word 'Ostrovets' has been used for Belarus news search, as it is commonly used in Belarus news, although in other news websites word 'Astravets' could be met. News messages were separated, which included Belarus Parliament or Government actors communicating on relevant topic. This has been achieved by reading available information, and sampling only those texts, that had a member of Parliament or Government communicating as a main actor, and if in the text topic is essentially about Astravets nuclear power plant. The same method has been used for Lithuanian communications. A total of 65 news and press releases were selected from Belarus communications.

For sampling of Lithuanian texts out of totality of texts in lrv.lt and lrs.lt websites, equivalent phrase (as for a search of Belarus news) was used, which is 'Astravo atominė elektrinė'. Number of news and press releases found was not sufficient for a research purpose. So keyword Astrav\* has been used for a search. Higher number of news was found, that fitted research. Additionally, to make Lithuanian political discourse comparable to that found of Belarus, websites of ministries have been examined using the same search method. Websites am.lt, enmin.lrv.lt and urm.lt, that stand for Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Lithuania, Ministry of Energy and Ministry of Foreign

Affairs had communications available on the relevant topic. In other websites of the Lithuanian ministries were no communications available on related topic. In this case, as also in Belarus, news communicated by Parliament and Government members were sampled. A total of 67 press releases and news have been sampled.

Table 1. List of codes used for the content analysis.

	Codes family	Codes	Comments on coding technique
Descriptive codes			
1.	Heading		Row/rows coded
2.	Author	Government members Parliament members	Phrase coded
3.	Date		Phrase coded
4.	Emotional load	Positive Negative Neutral	Whole document coded/ OR Big part of document coded/ OR Paragraph coded
Analytic codes			
5.	Discourse actors	Contractors Government Parliament International organizations and conventions European Union Lithuania Russia Japan Latvia Other countries	Any mention in the text Paragraph coding (inductively generated list)
6.	Stakeholder relations	Cooperative Conflicting Neutral Informing Other	Paragraph coding
7.	Statements	Descriptive statements Evaluative statements	Paragraph coding
8.	Topics	Technical aspects Environment Safety Politics Economy Information provision	Paragraph coding
9.	Localization	Local National Regional Global	Paragraph coding
10.	Timeline	Past Present Future	Paragraph coding

Sampled news and press releases were coded, using open coding technique and followed the principles of abduction (deductive and inductive coding combined). Main codes (Table 1) cover topics of discourse actors, main discourse themes, timeline etc. The data for the research was coded using the same codes for both of the countries. Nvivo software for qualitative and mixed research methods has been used. Nvivo 11 Plus software has different tools for the analysis, but for the purposes of this research the main data analysis methods used included qualitative content analysis and quantitative content analysis: word frequency, cluster analysis, coding intensity (hierarchy charts), measuring relations between variables or measuring coding differences between texts (matrix coding).

In the following part results of the analysis are presented by separating different codes families. Moreover, interrelation between selected codes families has been examined. Belarus and Lithuania's texts were separated in order to perform descriptive content analysis.

### 3. THE RESULTS OF POLITICAL DISCOURSES CONTENT ANALYSIS

In this part results of the political discourses content analysis of Belarus and Lithuania communications are presented. It is separated into five main distinct parts in accordance with codes families: Topics, Discourse Actors, Emotional Load, Localization, and Timeline. Questions are raised with a purpose to obtain the most important analysis results:

- What are the main topics under which Astravets nuclear power plant is discussed in Belarusian and Lithuanian political discourses?
- Which topics in political discourses are communicated similarly, and which differently?
- What discourse actors are present (mentioned, referred or otherwise) in Belarusian and Lithuanian political discourses?
- What type of stakeholder relations are mentioned when discourse actors are mentioned?
- What are the emotional loads of Belarusian and Lithuanian political discourses on Astravets nuclear power plant?
- What words are used in Belarusian/Lithuanian political discourses when speaking positively/negatively about BelNPP?
- Which topics in the Belarusian and Lithuanian political discourses are discussed in positive/negative/neutral emotional load?
- How the issues related to Astravets nuclear power plant are localized in the Belarusian and Lithuanian political discourses on BelNPP?
- How issues related to Astravets nuclear power plant are chronologically presented in the Belarusian and Lithuanian political discourses?

#### 3.1 Main Topics of the Political Communicative Discourses on BelNPP

In the beginning of the analysis the most common topics as pertaining to both Belarusian and Lithuanian communicative political discourses have been distinguished. During the analysis some of the most relevant topics found in the material were separated and coded as: “safety”, “politics”, “environment”, “technical aspects”, “economy”, “information provision”, and “other”. This raises the first question - *what are the main topics under which Astravets nuclear power plant is discussed in Belarusian and Lithuanian political discourses?* Quantitative analysis of the qualitative data has been performed and results are presented in the following picture.

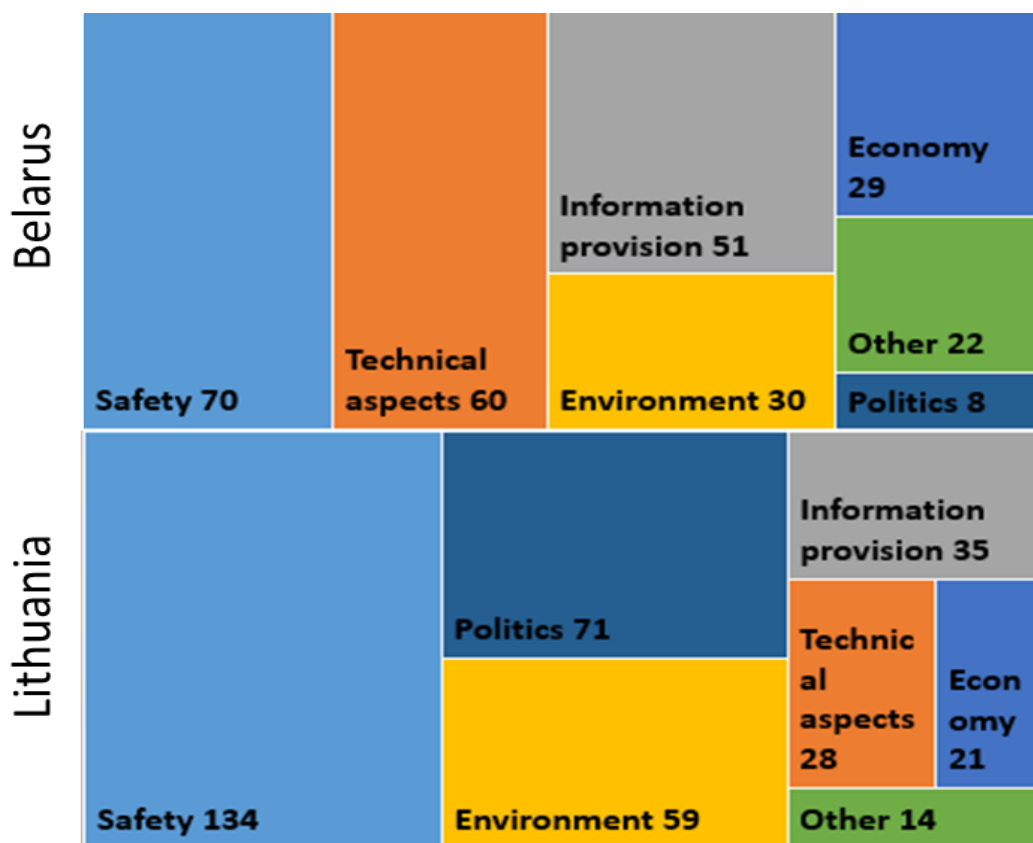


Figure 4. Main topics on BelNPP in Belarusian and Lithuanian communicative discourses; hierarchy charts (categories compared by a number of coded references).

Two hierarchy charts are provided (Figure 4) – one of them visually shows what the most common topics are in Belarusian discourse, and another one shows what the most common topics are in Lithuanian discourse. In Belarusian political discourse the main topics are “Safety” (N=70), “Technical aspects” (N=60), “Information provision” (N=51), “Environment” (N=30), “Economy” (N=29), “Other” (22) and “Politics” (N=8). In Lithuanian political discourses the main topics are “Safety” (N=134), “Politics” (N=71), “Environment” (N=59), “Information provision” (N=35), “Technical aspects” (N=28), “Economy” (N=21) and “Other” (N=14). Comparing the two charts, “Safety” is among the most pronounced topics in both of the discourses. Secondly, topic on “Technical aspects” is very much pronounced in Belarus case, although this topic is less manifest in Lithuanian discourse, where topic “Politics” is more pronounced. In Belarusian discourse “Information provision” and “Environment” are also relevant topics. For Lithuania “Environment” is more important, and “Information provision” follows.

Original excerpts of the main topics are presented in Table 2. It provides with examples of the content being created in the two political discourses. Typical excerpts are presented.

Table 2. Main topics of communicative political discourses on Astravets Nuclear Power Plant; original excerpts.

Code family: Topics	Original excerpts
Economy	<p>“Belarus’ economy will benefit from the nuclear power plant in Ostrovets...” (BY5)*</p> <p>“All this fuss regarding our project is nothing but Lithuania’s attempt to defend its economic interests...” (BY47)</p> <p>“This geopolitical, economically unjustified project poses a threat to national security.” (LT48)</p>
Environment	<p>“The environment around the Belarusian nuclear power plant construction site has been constantly monitored since 2009” (BY14)</p> <p>“This was enough to fulfil the requirements of the Espoo Convention” (BY35)</p> <p>“The official is confident that the construction of the nuclear power plant in Belarus will have a positive impact on the environmental situation in general and on the development of such important sectors as energy...” (BY22)</p> <p>“There are two essential problems – power plant is being built right near the border of Lithuania, near Vilnius. Second problem is that already could be seen opacity, non-cooperation, information not being shared, Espoo Convention violations.” (LT6)</p> <p>“Espoo and Aarhus Conventions are very important instruments, which helped to reveal for the international community Astravets nuclear power plant environmental and nuclear safety issues” (LT64)</p>
Information provision	<p>“We are open to everyone in what concerns the construction of the nuclear power plant. Even the smallest details on the project are available in the information centre in Ostrovets. We are absolutely open for our neighbours regarding the NPP construction project...” (BY3)</p> <p>“Those who are interested in any information about the plant can get it easily” (BY24)</p> <p>“In the nuclear power plant being built not a single accident has occurred, we receive information about the accidents much later and more commonly from Belarus opposition actors, but not from official institutions.” (LT3)</p>
Other	<p>“Many countries take a live interest in our experience, because Rosatom, which is the general contractor, praises the successful organization of the work both during the preparatory period and the construction period...” (BY12)</p>
Politics	<p>“We gave the answers to all the questions from our neighbour, but the issue has grown into a political one...” (BY15)</p> <p>“We also discussed political cooperation. We talked over our relations with the European Union and Lithuania in the area.” (BY59)</p> <p>“...This is also a clear signal for Russia, because Astravets nuclear power plant is Russia’s geopolitical project, with bad intentions towards Lithuania.” (LT2)</p> <p>“Without getting involved into internal social democrats party affairs, I can only be glad, that this kind of prime ministers position is not Ministers of Foreign affairs Lino Linkevicius position.” (LT9)</p>
Safety	<p>“Belarus is building the safest and most reliable nuclear power plant there is...” (BY36)</p> <p>“The preliminary results of the comprehensive inspection suggest that the safety requirements related to the construction of the Belarusian nuclear power plant are fulfilled in general...” (BY44)</p> <p>“Belarus nuclear power plant construction in Astravets is still the main topic on nuclear security in the region. During the meeting great concerns were expressed about the nuclear safety, constantly reoccurring incidents in Astravets nuclear power plant...” (LT14)</p> <p>“These irresponsible statements from one of the heads of the Republic of Lithuania damages Lithuania’s concerns. The main concern of Lithuania is to seek that Astravets nuclear power plant would never be built, because under current circumstances to make sure that it would be safe is impossible...” (LT4)</p>
Technical aspects	<p>“In his words, Belarus has chosen the most reliable design AES-2006 of the three-plus generation to build its own nuclear power plant...” (BY9)</p> <p>“A technology process needs clearly defined time frames, therefore, everything goes on in strict compliance with technological requirements. We have an entire quality control system in place and regulating bodies work...” (BY21)</p> <p>“... Lithuania can achieve this in two ways: or to disconnect from Russian BRELL system and switch to continental energy system, or while temporary being still in BRELL, but at the border constructing so called Phase shift equipment’s, which would protect Lithuania’s energy market from energy flows from Russia and Belarus.” (LT13)</p>



Furthermore, cluster analysis has been performed. The technique allows to display patterns in order to discover how similar words are used between the categories. It is assumed that subjects perceived by discourse actors as similar or related are communicated by similar words. A question is raised – *which topics in political discourses are communicated similarly, and which differently?* Cluster analysis for Belarusian and Lithuanian texts was performed separately. Cluster analysis results are presented in the following figure (Figure 3).

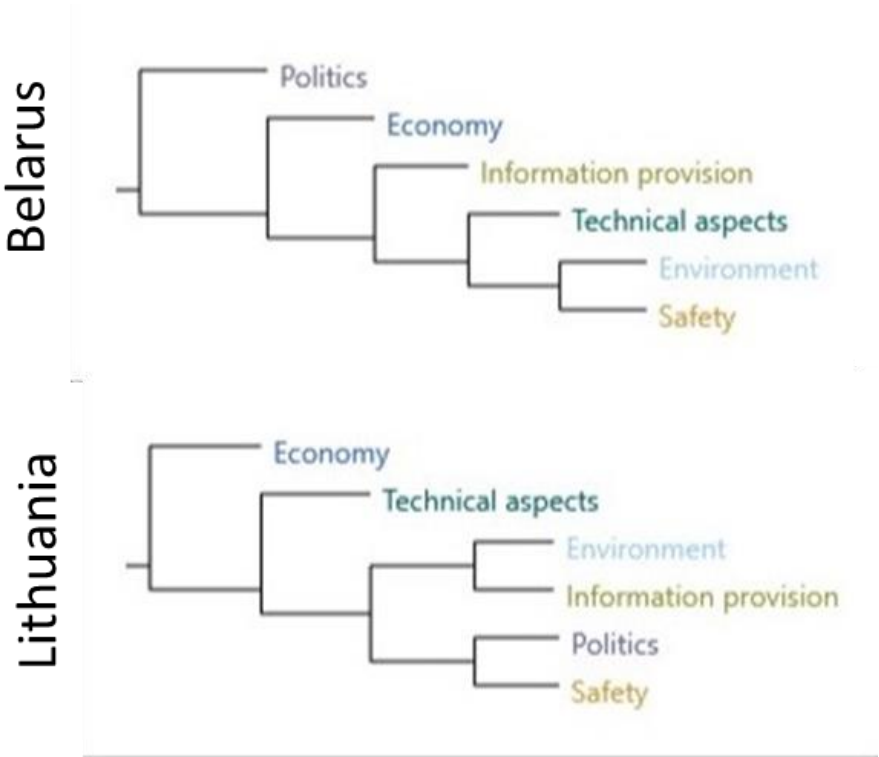


Figure 5. Cluster analysis of main topics within Lithuanian and Belarusian discourses (categories grouped by words similarities; Sørensen coefficient applied).

In Belarusian communicative political discourse (Figure 5) topics “Environment” and “Safety” fall within same cluster, because they use similar wording. Other topics are not constructed using significantly similar words. As an example of how “Environment” and “Safety” topics are constructed by using similar words a typical quote is specified: “According to the source, the design documents for building the Belarusian nuclear power plant have been approved by state environmental experts. During design and survey work the possible environmental impact of the future nuclear power plant was evaluated. All the necessary surveys and procedures were completed. Belarus is interested in the safe and reliable operation of its nuclear power plant like no other country...” (BY9). It appears that both “Environment” and “Safety” topics are closely related in the discourse as they are used in a similar context, when explanation of the construction of the power plant is provided.

In Lithuania's communicative political discourse (Figure 3), topics "Safety" and "Politics" fall within the same cluster, and topics "Environment" and "Information provision" form another cluster. Other codes have no significant words similarities. As for "Safety" and "Politics", a typical quote example is: "Political parties signed an agreement by which committed to unanimously support project concerning energy boycott from unsafe power plants from the third countries. This is political Lithuania's signal for Belarus that Lithuania will not buy unsafe energy, yet it is naïve to expect, that it will stop the construction..." (LT4). Political discourse on topics "Safety" and "Politics" has been constructed using similar words as there are reasonable amount of political communication between the political actors and institutions inside the Lithuania regarding this matter. For topics "Environment" and "Information provision" typical quote is provided: "Belarus does not follow Espoo Convention requirements and still have not answered many times asked questions by Lithuania about nuclear power plant safety and possible effect on our countries environment and residents..." (LT50). This illustrates significant amount of communications where Lithuania is arguing about the lack of information being provided by Belarus about the environmental impact by the BelNPP which are also related with certain international conventions.

### 3.2 Main Discourse Actors

In this part of the analysis codes family "Discourse actors" is used. It consists of actors: Belarus (used for coding only in Lithuania's texts), Contractors, European Union, Government, International organizations and conventions, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania (used for coding only in Belarus texts), Other countries, Parliament, and Russia. Analysis is continued by employing analysis tool called Matrix coding. It allows different codes families or sources to be compared. Belarus and Lithuania sources were compared using codes family "Discourse actors" which allows to answer question - *what discourse actors are present (mentioned, referred or otherwise) in Belarusian and Lithuanian political discourses?* Data is provided in the table 3.

The discourse actors mentioned in Belarusian political discourse (Table 3) are: "International organizations and conventions" (N=88), "Lithuania" (N=64), "Russia" (N=30), "Government" (N=19), "European Union" (N=16) and "Other countries" (N=16), "Contractors" (N=15), "Japan" (N=5), "Latvia" (N=2); "Parliament" has not been mentioned. In Lithuania these are: "Belarus" (N=169), "International organizations and conventions" (N=95), "Government" (N=88), "European Union" (N=69), "Parliament" (N=47), "Russia" (N=24), "Other countries" (N=23), "Latvia" (N=5), "Contractors" (N=4), "Japan" has not been mentioned.

Table 3. Discourse actors as mentioned in Belarusian and Lithuanian communicative political discourses; n of coded references (total references in Belarusian texts N=255, total references in Lithuanian texts N=524; Belarusian texts coded N=65, Lithuanian texts coded N=67.

Discourse actors:	A : Belarusian texts	B : Lithuanian texts
1 : Belarus	-	169
2 : Contractors	15	4
3 : European Union	16	69
4 : Government	19	88
5 : International organizations and conventions	88	95
6 : Japan	5	0
7 : Latvia	2	5
8 : Lithuania	64	-
9 : Other countries	16	23
10 : Parliament	0	47
11 : Russia	30	24

The discourse actors mentioned in Belarusian political discourse (Table 3) are: “International organizations and conventions” (N=88), “Lithuania” (N=64), “Russia” (N=30), “Government” (N=19), “European Union” (N=16) and “Other countries” (N=16), “Contractors” (N=15), “Japan” (N=5), “Latvia” (N=2); “Parliament” has not been mentioned. In Lithuania these are: “Belarus” (N=169), “International organizations and conventions” (N=95), “Government” (N=88), “European Union” (N=69), “Parliament” (N=47), “Russia” (N=24), “Other countries” (N=23), “Latvia” (N=5), “Contractors” (N=4), “Japan” has not been mentioned.

Discourse actors “International organizations and conventions” and “Other countries” has been coded in a broad way, connecting all of the international organisations in one code, and respectively all of the other countries into one code. In order to identify what type of material does these two codes families contain the relevant political discourse actors has been separated. Information is provided in two tables below, one for “International organizations” and another for “Other countries”.

Table 4. International organizations and conventions as discourse actors; n of coded references (total of references in Belarusian texts N=88, total of references in Lithuanian texts N=95; Belarusian texts coded N=65, Lithuanian texts coded N=67).

International organizations and conventions:	Belarusian texts:	Lithuanian texts:
IAEA	66	29
IAEA SEED	10	14
Espoo Convention	11	63
WANO	7	-
United Nations (Nuclear Safety Convention)	1	16
Aarhus Convention	-	15

Six international organizations and conventions have been distinguished (Table 4) the most commonly used in Belarus and Lithuania’s political discourses such as: IAEA, IAEA SEED, Espoo Convention, WANO, United Nations (Nuclear safety Convention), and Aarhus Convention. IAEA and IAEA SEED have been separated as in the discourses SEED mission is being used also separately from the IAEA. United Nations have been usually mentioned in a context of Nuclear Safety Convention. Although Espoo and Aarhus conventions are related to the UN, but in the discourses they were distinct. Results are that in Belarus political discourse the most frequent international organizations and conventions are: IAEA (N=66), Espoo Convention (N=11), IAEA SEED (N=10), WANO (N=7), UN (N=1), Aarhus convention has not been mentioned. In Lithuania these are: Espoo Convention (N=63), IAEA (N=29), UN (N=16), Aarhus Convention (N=15), IAEA SEED (N=14), WANO has not been mentioned.

It is noted that in Belarusian political discourse IAEA is the most often mentioned actor in comparison to other international organizations or conventions. In general, IAEA and Lithuania (Table 3) are the most often mentioned discourse actors. Original excerpt will be used to provide an example in what context IAEA is being commonly mentioned. “In particular, Mikhail Milhadyuk noted that the IAEA is satisfied with the NPP construction progress and the observation of safety requirements. ‘The IAEA is interested in the training of the personnel of the nuclear power plant and in the project as such, namely our efforts to learn the Fukushima lessons and the safety systems we are using,’ he said. The deputy energy minister stressed that the IAEA cannot criticize the Belarusian side for the violation of regulations and recommendations.” (BY39) It is concluded that IAEA is distinct because of the

cooperation in the safety field. Safety and cooperative relation (Table 3 and Table 6) are essentially important in Belarusian political discourse.

In Lithuania’s communicative political discourse Espoo Convention is most referred to. Original excerpt is provided to define the context of communication regarding Espoo Convention: “Seimas member reminded, that even this year on April implementation committee of the United Nations Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (known as Espoo) convention in Geneva, constituted, that Belarus violated Espoo Convention, by hiding prepared Environmental Impact Assessment documentation and by not providing real possibility for Lithuanian society to participate in this process as well as not properly informing about the state’s decision regarding the site for the construction for Astravets nuclear power plant.” (LT18) This illustrates that Espoo convention is being communicated as the main tool which can influence construction of the BelNPP. It is also related with one of the main issue in the discourse, a lack of information being provided by Belarus.

Table 5. Other countries as discourse actors; n of coded references (total of references in Belarusian texts N=16, total of references in Lithuanian texts N=23; Belarusian texts coded N=65, Lithuanian texts coded N=67).

Other countries:	Belarus:	Lithuania:
Poland	4	18
Estonia	-	5
Finland	2	5
Ukraine	5	4
Sweden	-	3
Germany	3	1
France	3	-
United Kingdom	4	-
Hungary	4	-

Other countries the most often mentioned in communicative political discourses in Belarus and Lithuania were obtained. Limited number of other countries will be indicated as there were a significant amount of the countries mentioned a single time in various contexts. The most frequently mentioned other countries for Belarus are: Ukraine (N=5), Poland (N=4) and United Kingdom (N=4) along with Hungary (N=4), Germany (N=3) and France (N=3), Finland (N=2). For Lithuania: Poland (N=18), Estonia (N=5) and Finland (N=5), Ukraine (N=4), Sweden (N=3), Germany (N=1).

To deepen analysis on discourse actors, Matrix coding has been performed including codes families of “Discourse actors” and “Stakeholder relations”. It shows in what kind of context discourse actors are mentioned as in conflicting, cooperative, informing or neutral relations. Question is asked – *what type of stakeholder relations are mentioned when discourse actors are mentioned?* Belarusian and Lithuanian cases were analysed separately.

Table 6. Coding matrix of “Stakeholder relations” and “Discourse actors”; Belarusian texts (references N=245, texts N=65).

Discourse actors:	A : Conflicting	B : Cooperative	C : Informing	D : Neutral
1 : Contractors	0	10	1	3
2 : European Union	0	15	1	0
3 : Government	0	15	2	2
4 : International organizations and conventions	0	72	4	3
5 : Japan	0	0	2	2
6 : Latvia	0	0	1	1
7 : Lithuania	16	24	22	5
8 : Other countries	0	7	5	5
9 : Parliament	0	0	0	0
10 : Russia	0	23	1	3

To begin with a conflicting relation (Table 6), a single country Lithuania is mentioned in Belarusian political discourse together with conflicting relations. This seems to happen because of Lithuania’s negative approach towards BelNPP. Cooperative relation is seen especially common with international organizations and conventions, Lithuania and Russia. International organizations and conventions are often mentioned in cooperative relations as cooperation with them in nuclear security field is very important topic in Belarusian discourse. Although Lithuania is mentioned in the discourse as having conflicting relations, however cooperative relations with Lithuania are mentioned more often. This is due to Belarus communications on importance of cooperation with Lithuania regarding BelNPP issues. Russia is seen as having cooperative relation because of its involvement in the project. Lithuania is a dominant subject in political discourse by being frequently mentioned in informing relations. This shows how Lithuania is distinct from other discourse actors by being involved in

various aspects of the project. International organizations are distinct as having strongly cooperative relation.

Table 7. Coding matrix of “Stakeholder relations” and “Discourse actors”; Lithuanian texts (references N=459, texts N=67).

Discourse actors:	A : Conflicting	B : Cooperative	C : Informing	D : Neutral
1 : Belarus	109	10	13	7
2 : Contractors	2	0	1	1
3 : European Union	0	52	7	0
4 : Government	25	33	18	7
5 : International organizations and conventions	0	69	15	1
6 : Japan	0	0	0	0
7 : Latvia	0	4	0	1
8 : Other countries	4	17	2	2
9 : Parliament	10	20	8	3
10 : Russia	8	5	2	4

Describing conflicting relations in Lithuania’s political discourse, Belarus is a dominant actor. This can be explained by a strong Lithuania’s criticism towards BelNPP. Lithuania’s Government is also often mentioned in the discourse as having conflicting relations. This is because of Lithuania’s Parliament criticism for the Government regarding performance on BelNPP. As cooperative actors in Lithuania’s discourse are seen international organizations and conventions, EU and Government. These discourse actors are mentioned in a context of cooperation related with issue solving regarding BelNPP. Government is also seen as informing actor, which shows Governments involvement in various aspects regarding the Belarus nuclear power plant project.

### 3.3 Emotional Load of Belarusian and Lithuanian Texts

In this part of the analysis results on the emotional load in Belarus and Lithuania’s political discourses will be provided. It shows if issues in political discourses on BelNPP are constructed positively, neutrally or negatively. This helps to answer the question - *what are the emotional loads of Belarusian and Lithuanian political discourses on Astravets nuclear power plant?* Matrix coding has been used on Belarus and Lithuania sources together with codes family “Emotional load”.

Table 8. Emotional load of Belarusian and Lithuanian political discourses; n of coded references (total of references in Belarusian texts N=224, total of references in Lithuanian texts N=233; Belarusian texts coded N=65, Lithuanian texts coded N=67).

	A : Negative	B : Neutral	C : Positive
1 : Belarus_news	16	108	150
2 : Lithuania_news	133	61	39

In Belarus political discourse on BelNPP positive emotional load dominates (N=150), although neutral emotional load is also frequent (N=108); negative emotional load (N=16) is not least frequent. In Lithuania’s political discourse negative emotional load dominates (N=133); neutral (N=61) and positive (N=39) emotional loads are less frequent. Original excerpts demonstrating typical wording of various emotional loads will be provided in the following table.

Table 9. Original excerpts demonstrating emotional load from Belarusian and Lithuanian texts.

Codes family: emotional load	Original excerpts
Negative	<p>“in fact, the society is being drawn into the campaign, into the hysteria against Belarus. For what?” (BY51)</p> <p>“L. Balsys in the current Ministries of Environment position sees interinstitutional miscommunication by the ruling governors”. (LT5)</p> <p>“Astravets nuclear power plant raises great threat for the citizens of the country, for their safety and health...” (LT7)</p>
Neutral	<p>“The intergovernmental agreement on building the Belarusian nuclear power plant that we signed back in 2012 stipulates that we can send spent nuclear fuel for processing [to Russia]. The agreement in principle has been signed. Working documents are being developed.” (BY11)</p> <p>“The provisions of this law will also be applied for Astravets nuclear power plant. We invite Latvia to join this initiative, by adopting relevant legislation. We also ask for Latvia’s support solving other questions, related with Astravets nuclear power plant, especially during the upcoming meeting of Espoo Convention Parties...” (LT1)</p>
Positive	<p>“All this is an alternative to hydrocarbons. Our decision to build the nuclear power plant was an absolutely correct and conscious one...” (BY5)</p> <p>For Lithuania it is important, that commissioner once again repeated, that Commission will pay great attention to make sure nuclear power plants being built in the EU neighbourhood would comply with highest safety standards, and testing during the most unfavourable conditions would comply with the EU requirements...” (LT62)</p>

In Belarus case, negative emotional load (Table 9) most of the times has been used in a context together with Lithuania. Neutral emotional load has been used significant amount of times as Belarus



Government provided explanations and details related to BelNPP. Positive emotional load has been used most of the times as BelNPP project seems to be very beneficial to Belarus, everything seems to be according to a plan and it faces no important issues. In Lithuania’s case, negative emotional load is being used while criticizing BelNPP project, which seems to be a threat, and also when Parliament criticizes Government, for not implementing proper measures against BelNPP. Neutral emotional load was used in cases where description was necessary, and positive emotional load usually has been used while communicating on success stories by Lithuanian political actors, which would have impact on BelNPP.

To deepen analysis, Word Frequency Query will be used. This tool counts frequency of the words in texts and shows the most frequent ones. Similar words have been included into the count and have been indicated in the table. Belarus and Lithuania’s texts were separated. Some of the most frequent words have not been included into the count, for example Belarus, power, plant, Lithuania etc. as these are technical words related to the topic. Questions have been raised – *what words are used in Belarusian political discourses when speaking positively about BelNPP? What words are used in Lithuanian political discourses when speaking negatively about BelNPP?*

Table 10. Word count for Belarusian texts excerpts coded with “positive emotional load”.

Word	Count	Similar words
Construction	244	Construction, constructive
Safety	188	Safety
IAEA	186	IAEA
Project	184	Project, projects
Minister	167	Minister, ministers
Mikhail, Mikhadyuk	122	Mikhail, Mikhadyuk
International	103	Internal, International
Development	102	develop, developed, developing, development, developments
Cooperation	96	cooperate, cooperated, cooperates, cooperating, cooperation

Table 11. Word count for Lithuanian texts excerpts coded with “negative emotional load”.

Word	Count	Similar words
Safety	263	safety
Environment	149	Environment, environmental
Europe	111	europe
Conventions	111	Conventions, convention
Minister	89	Minister, ministers
Espoo	85	Espoo
Construction	74	Construction, constructive
Project	70	Project, projects
2016	68	2016
IAEA	65	IAEA

The most frequently used words with a positive emotional load (Table 10) in Belarus political discourse were: construction, safety, IAEA, project, minister, Mikhail Mikhadyuk, international, development, and cooperation. The most frequently used words with a negative emotional load (Table 11) in Lithuania’s political discourse were: safety, environment, Europe, conventions, minister, Espoo, construction, project, 2016, IAEA. Comparing previously presented tables, there are words that match: construction, safety, IAEA, project, minister. This indicates that certain topics in Belarus has been constructed positively, and the same topics in Lithuania – negatively. From Belarus political discourse, words “Mikhail Mikhadyuk” is noted that is Deputy Energy Minister of Belarus, who communicates on a BelNPP topic in particularly positive emotional load. In general, word “Safety” is significant as it is important in both of the discourses; although in Lithuanian discourse it is most frequently mentioned with negative emotional load, when in Belarus discourse it is most frequently mentioned with positive emotional load.

In the following section Matrix coding tool has been used with a purpose to analyse how emotional load is distributed among topics. Codes families “Emotional load” and “Topics” were used. Belarusian and Lithuanian texts were separated. Question is raised – *which topics in the Belarusian and Lithuanian political discourses are discussed in positive/negative/neutral emotional load?*

Table 12. Coding matrix of “Emotional load” and “Main topics” in Belarusian texts; n of coded references (references N=237, texts N=65).

Topics:	A : Negative	B : Neutral	C : Positive
1 : Economy	1	12	18
2 : Environment	2	12	15
3 : Information provision	5	15	31
4 : Politics	5	3	2
5 : Safety	0	24	40
6 : Technical aspects	0	28	24

In Belarus political discourse topics on BelNPP (Table 12): economy, environment, information provision, safety have been constructed in a more positive emotional load. Topic “Technical aspects” has been constructed in mostly neutral emotional load. Topics “Information provision” and “Safety” are distinguished as they are mostly positive, also “Technical aspects” as it is similarly positive as well as neutral and has notable amount of codes used. Original excerpts for a better examination of these topics are presented.

Table 13. Original excerpts demonstrating wording of emotional load on topics in Belarusian texts.

Topics	Original excerpts
Information provision	<p>“We are open to everyone in what concerns the construction of the nuclear power plant. Even the smallest details on the project are available in the information center in Ostrovets. We are absolutely open for our neighbours regarding the NPP construction project...” (BY3)</p> <p>“Those who are interested in any information about the plant can get it easily...” (BY24)</p>
Safety	<p>“The design of the Belarusian nuclear power plant is the most advanced and safest in the world today...” (BY38)</p> <p>“The position of Belarus and the country’s voluntary adherence to the program confirms the country’s readiness to do whatever is necessary to ensure that the NPP project is maximum compliant with all safety standards...” (BY54)</p>
Technical aspects	<p>“We expect the new reactor pressure vessel to be delivered by the end of the year. It will be put in place in spring 2017. Thus, we expect the power-generating unit to commission in 2019...” (BY16)</p> <p>“speaking about equipment deliveries, the Energy Minister assured that all the issues are addressed in a timely manner. The Russian state corporation Rosatom guarantees the delivery of the most reliable equipment. There are no doubts that the supplied components meet all the quality and safety requirements.” (BY34)</p>

Topic “Information provision” (Table 13) in Belarus discourse is frequently used positively as there is considerable amount of communications that informs about the high level of Belarus cooperation in providing other parties with information in an open and transparent approach. Belarus communicates in its discourse on topic “Safety” in a positive way mostly by statements about the successful implementation of safety standards as well as about safe design of the power plant. Topic “Technical aspects” in political discourse is constructed in a mostly neutral approach as commonly technical features of the power plant is being described under the topic, without it being evaluated. Although, this topic is also notably positive, as some of the technical features are being described in a positive and beneficial way.

Table 14. Coding matrix of “Emotional load” and “Main topics” in Lithuanian texts; n of coded references (references N=252, texts N=67).

Topics:	A : Negative	B : Neutral	C : Positive
1 : Economy	7	3	4
2 : Environment	27	9	3
3 : Information provision	16	7	2
4 : Politics	44	10	8
5 : Safety	54	28	14
6 : Technical aspects	7	5	4

In Lithuanian political discourse topics on BelNPP (Table 13): economy, environment, information provision, politics, safety, and technical aspects have been constructed in mostly negative emotional load. Topics “Environment”, “Politics”, and “Safety” are distinguished as being constructed significantly negatively in the discourse. Original excerpts of the texts regarding the topics are presented in the following table in order to examine political discourse content.

Table 15. Original excerpts demonstrating wording of emotional load on topics in Lithuanian texts.

Topics	Original excerpts
Environment	<p>“Lithuania expresses great concerns at an international level regarding nuclear safety, environmental protection and radiation safety issues, as well as constantly reoccurring incident in the Astravets nuclear power plant...” (LT65)</p> <p>“Minister states, that Belarus at this moment constructs Astravets nuclear power plant by strongly violating main international conventions – Espoo and Aarhus, which regalement’s cross-border environmental effects assessment...” (LT57)</p>
Politics	<p>“According to minister, if Belarus after receiving this information is not going to stop the construction of Astravets NPP, this will be one more signal, that project is based not on economical, but on geopolitical motives.” (LT61)</p> <p>“Signs of Governments unwillingness and inability to act could be perceived since the very beginning, when plans became clear of neighbouring countries dictator to construct near Vilnius experimental, nowhere else in the world operating Russian nuclear reactor.” (LT12)</p>
Safety	<p>“So fundamental nuclear safety requirements are already violated, therefore Lithuania cannot allow itself to be forced and to agree, that near Vilnius would be operating unsafe nuclear power plant.“ (LT8)</p> <p>“In the document it is stated that Belarus violated many international construction safety requirements, especially by choosing inappropriate and unsafe construction site...” (LT2)</p>

In Lithuania’s political discourse communications on the topic “Environment” are constructed in mostly negative way. It is related with Lithuania’s criticism towards Belarus by the latter failing to implement international legislation closely related with environment. Also topic “Environment” is related with safety, which also receives criticism in the discourse. Topic “Politics” is constructed mostly negatively by statements from Lithuania that criticises Belarus for making BelNPP a political object. Also, internal communications in the discourse on politics by Lithuania ‘s Parliament and Government members have been negative which were related with criticism towards each other regarding activity connected with BelNPP. Topic “Safety” has significantly negative emotional load as the most important issues related with BelNPP correlate with violations during the construction of the power plant.

### 3.4 Discursive Localization of BelNPP Issues

Next, analysis will be performed on how political discourses in Belarus and Lithuania are localized. Analysis tool Hierarchy Chart is used for this purpose, to examine codes family “Localization” which has been coded as: global, local, national, regional. This will help to answer the question - *how the issues related to Astravets nuclear power plant are localized in the Belarusian and Lithuanian political discourses on BelNPP?*

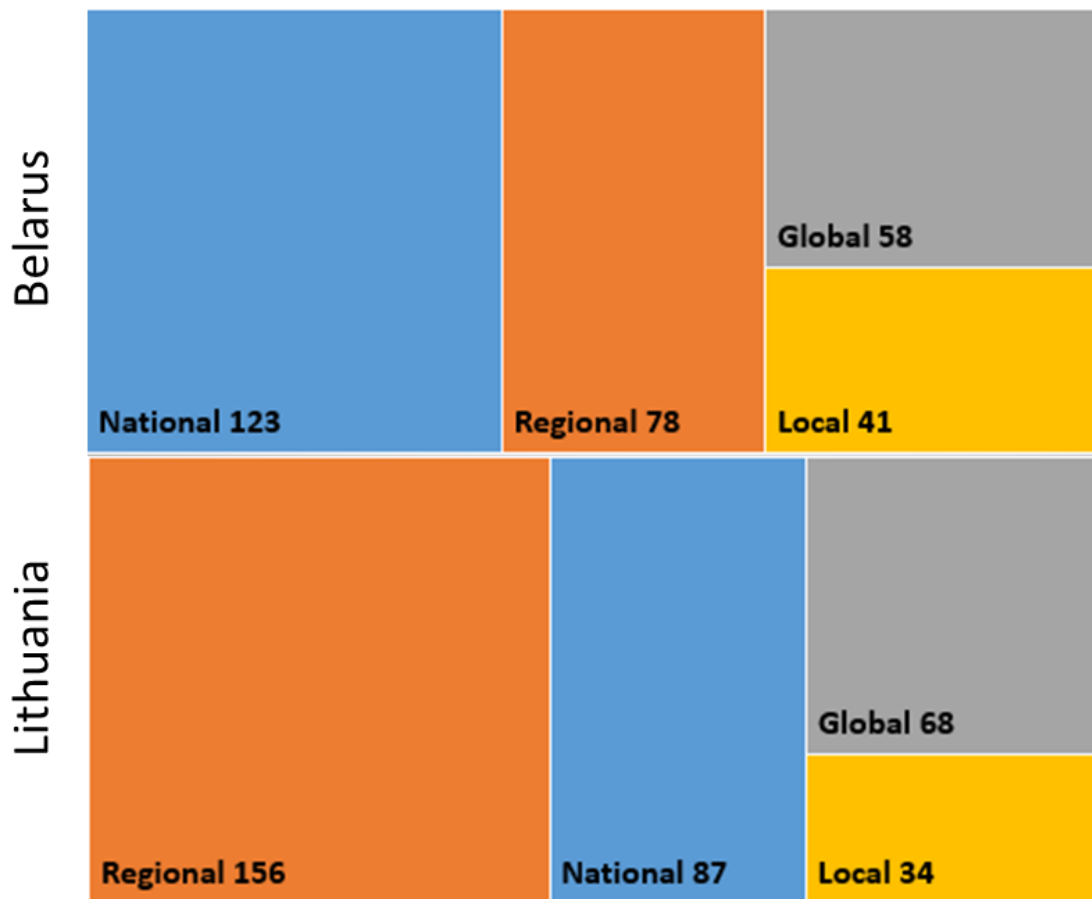


Figure 6. Localization on BelNPP in Belarusian and Lithuanian communicative political discourses; hierarchy charts (categories compared by a number of coded references).

In Belarus political discourse on BelNPP issues are localized as national (N=123), regional (N=78), global (N=58), and local (N=41). In Lithuania’s political discourse issues are localized as regional (N=156), national (N= 87), global (N=68), and local (N=34). The most significant difference is that discourse in Belarus is being localized mainly at national and regional levels, though in Lithuania it is localized mainly at regional level, and after that follows national level. Global and local levels are not essentially distinguished. For a further analysis original excerpts are presented in the table below.

Table 16. Original excerpts on political discourses localization in Belarus and Lithuania.

Localization	Original excerpts
Global	<p>“The information submitted by the Foreign Ministry of Lithuania after the meeting in Geneva is viewed by Belarus as pressure on the Implementation Committee for the Espoo Convention...” (BY53)</p> <p>“Ministry of Foreign Affairs Linas Linkevicius on the 4<sup>th</sup> of April in Vienna met International Atomic Energy Agency general director Yukiya Amano and expressed particular concerns due to serious nuclear safety violations during the construction of Astravets nuclear power plant.” (LT60)</p>
Local	<p>“Mikhail Mikhadyuk stressed that apart from the IAEA, Belarus also cooperates in nuclear safety with all parties concerned. For example, the country is an active participant of the Regulatory Cooperation Forum. Besides, the Nuclear and Radiation Safety Department of the Belarusian Emergencies Ministry (Gosatomnadzor) holds observer status in the Western European Nuclear Regulators Association and in the forum for cooperation of state regulatory bodies of countries that operate VVER-type power-generating units. Apart from that, the Belarusian nuclear power plant (BelNPP) is a member of the World Association of Nuclear Operators (WANO). The BelNPP is currently undergoing stress tests. The first stage of the tests will be completed by year-end 2016.” (BY61)</p> <p>“It’s been a while when Austria’s scientist criticising Astravets nuclear power plant technological safety performed a model of the accident, according to which nuclear material would spread out and would reach not only Lithuania, but also neighbouring Poland, Czech Republic, Germany, Sweden, Finland, Norway. That’s why Astravets nuclear power plant construction should concern not only Lithuania...” (LT24)</p>
National	<p>“The Belarusian side should do as many operations as possible and should supply as much equipment as possible. We would like to create additional jobs so that our people could work...”(BY1)</p> <p>“According to L. Balsys, national agreement signed by seven political parties for common action regarding Astravets nuclear power plant issues is a political signal for Belarus, though more active measures are necessary.” (LT4)</p>
Regional	<p>“The Belarusian nuclear power plant construction project is open and transparent, Belarus Deputy Energy Minister Mikhail Mikhadyuk said in an interview to the Lithuanian newspaper Lietuvos Rytas...” (BY24)</p> <p>“Invitation for Lithuanian representatives to a discussion on Saturday in Belarus about Astravets nuclear power plant Seimas member and chairman of the Lithuanian Party of the Greens Linas Balsys is calling a try of the Belarusian Government to imitate compliance with the international agreements, with a purpose to avoid responsibility for Espoo Convention violations.” (LT18)</p>

Belarus discourse actors (Table 14) are communicating mostly on BelNPP as a national subject as this is internal matter, and secondly on a regional level because of important regional actors such as Lithuania, Russia etc. that are having influence to the project. In Lithuania’s political discourse this is firstly regional issue, as the main subject is Belarusian nuclear power plant and Belarus is regional actor, and because of Russia and Poland etc., which are regional actors that are having influence for the project. Secondly it is a national issue for Lithuania due to communications between Parliament and Government regarding the project.

### 3.5 Discursive Representations of the Chronological Aspects of BelNPP Related Issues

Analysis is continued by using Hierarchy Chart with a codes family “Timeline”. This way it will be examined how political discourses in Belarus and Lithuania refer to timing when talking about BelNPP. Codes were selected as: future, past, and present. Question is raised - *how issues related to Astravets nuclear power plant are chronologically presented in the Belarusian and Lithuanian political discourses?* Belarusian and Lithuanian texts have been separated. Results are presented in a figure below.

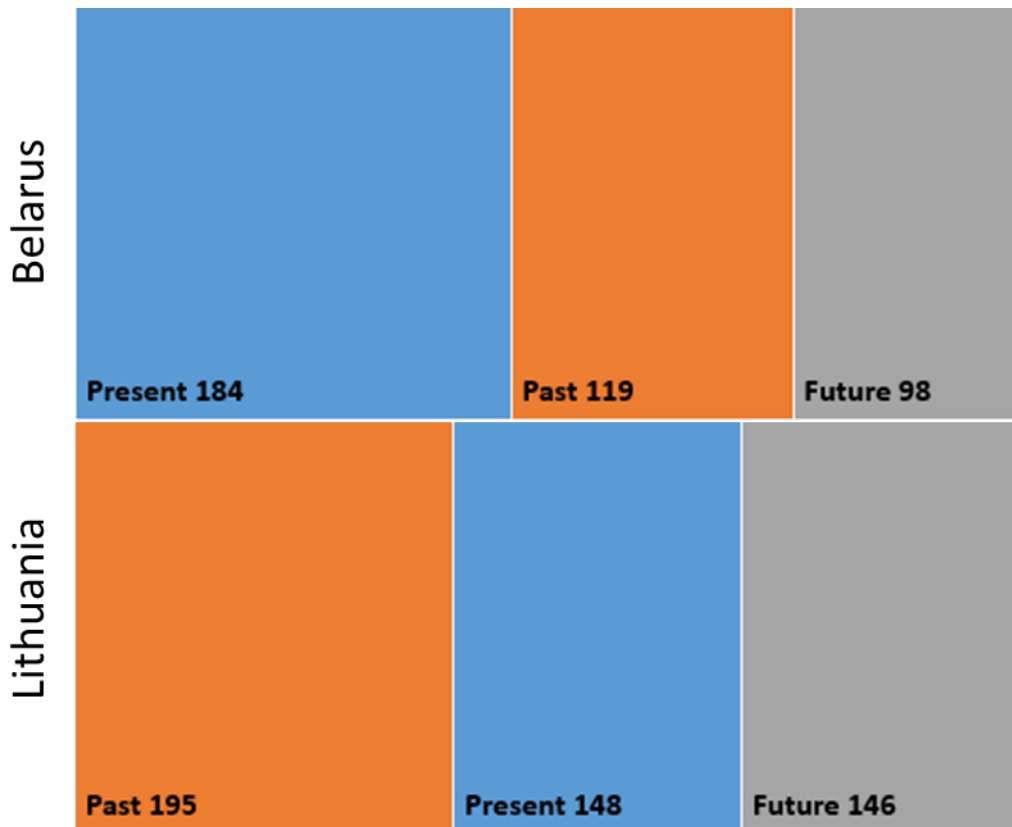


Figure 7. Chronological representations of BelNPP related issues in political discourses in Belarus and Lithuania; hierarchy charts (categories compared by a number of coded references).

In Belarus political discourse issues regarding BelNPP are presented in: present time (N=184), past (N=119), and future (N=98). In Lithuania’s political discourse these issues are presented in: past time (N=195), present (N=148), and future (N=146). Comparing political discourses timeline between Belarus and Lithuania notable difference is that Belarus constructs it mainly as an issue of the present time, and Lithuanian discourse represents BelNPP as an issue of the past and the future. Furthermore, original excerpts will be provided, to deepen analysis on how issues related to BelNPP are presented chronologically in the discourses.

Table 17. Original excerpts on the chronological representations of BelNPP related issues in political discourses in Belarus and Lithuania.



Timeline	Original excerpts
Future	<p>“Once the NPP is launched, 27-28% of electric power will be produced by the nuclear plant. This will help Belarus diversify its energy sources...” (BY5)</p> <p>“The first power-generating unit of the Belarusian nuclear power plant will be commissioned in 2019.” (BY16)</p> <p>“Lithuania is planning to agree with a measure which is offered by Espoo secretariat and to establish international group of expertise that would evaluate construction of the Astravets nuclear power plant and even not going to demand, that conventions Committee of Implementation would insist to stop the nuclear project, until it’s not going to receive Lithuania’s approval, what the spirit of convention provides.” (LT5)</p>
Past	<p>“An information center of the Belarusian nuclear power plant was opened in Ostrovets. More than 13.000 people have visited the center since it was opened.” (BY2)</p> <p>“Belarus would not have taken up such a decision if it had doubts regarding its objectivity and honesty in the implementation of the Convention...” (BY35)</p> <p>“In the document it is stated, that Belarus violated many international safety requirements regarding construction, especially because of choosing not suitable and unsafe construction site.” (LT2)</p> <p>“Personally myself I met IAEA general secretary two times, one time in Vilnius, another time in Vienna – during the meetings we guaranteed international support for our requirements...” (LT36)</p>
Present	<p>“At present out of the 32 subcontractors working to build the Belarusian nuclear power plant, 27 ones are Belarusian...” (BY1)</p> <p>“Belarus invites Lithuania to jointly monitor the environmental situation in the area around the Belarusian nuclear power plant...” (BY35)</p> <p>“Together with the Energy Ministry, we are implementing a range of projects that lay the foundation for the development of this sector in general...” (BY60)</p> <p>“This is obvious Lithuania’s victory in the international organizations, Vilnius is being heard...” (LT2)</p> <p>“National security and people’s concerns are the most important. Lithuania’s position regarding Astravets nuclear power plant is clear and principled – Astravets NPP construction cannot be continued...” (LT43)</p>

In Belarusian political discourse issues regarding BelNPP are presented mostly in the present time. The reason for this (Table 15) is because BelNPP is ongoing project and there are significant amount of communications related to the construction of the power plant, its technical aspects etc. In Lithuania’s political discourses past time is most commonly used for communications regarding BelNPP as the project already became controversial and there are significant amount of content about issues on what Belarus has failed to achieve in the past. Also, communications on what has been done or what has not been done by Lithuania’s political actors on solving issues related to BelNPP takes place.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECCOMENDATIONS

Three main theoretical perspectives have been used in order to explain political discourses on Astravets nuclear power plant in Belarus and Lithuania: discursive institutionalism, agenda setting, and issue framing. These approaches explain how communicative political discourses could be framed and filtered by political institutions with a purpose to create the desired attitude towards certain issues. It has been relevant as BelNPP case is controversial both in Belarus and Lithuania. For a better understanding of the background of political discourses, review of energy politics and policies in Belarus and Lithuania has been performed.

For the purposes of the empirical research, content analysis and discourse analysis methodologies were adapted. In this paper communications released by political institutions have been coded using Nvivo software for qualitative and mixed methods research. Data analysis methods included qualitative content analysis and quantitative content analysis: word frequency, cluster analysis, coding intensity, measuring relations between variables or measuring coding differences between texts.

In Belarus political discourse the main topics under which Astravets nuclear power plant is discussed are: safety, technical aspects, information provision, and environment. In Lithuania's case these are: safety, politics, environment, and information provision. The topic of safety is distinct as it is the most frequent in both of the discourses. As shown by cluster analysis, topics 'environment' and 'safety' are communicated similarly in Belarusian discourse. As for Lithuania, topics 'environment' and 'information provision' also topics 'politics' and 'safety' were communicated similarly. The topics of 'environment' and 'information provision' might be communicated similarly because of their relation to the Espoo Convention, which is relevant in Lithuanian discourse, and which regalement's how other parties have to be informed on environment related issues. The topics of 'politics' and 'safety' reflect importance of politics related issues towards BelNPP in Lithuanian discourse. The most common discourse actors mentioned in Belarus political discourse are various international organizations or international conventions. IAEA was mentioned most frequently. This is because of cooperation in the nuclear safety field, as "safety" and "cooperation" are significantly important in Belarus discourses. Also, mentioning of Lithuania and Russia is very frequent in Belarusian discourse. As for Lithuania, most frequently mentioned actors were Belarus and international organizations or conventions. Espoo convention was mentioned most frequently. Espoo Convention reflects important issue in Lithuania's discourse – a lack of information being received from Belarus on environment related issues. International organizations and Russia are usually mentioned in Belarusian discourse in the light of cooperative relationships. Lithuania is mentioned in the light of conflicting, cooperative relationships or as a partner to be informed about something. In Lithuania's discourse Belarus is

mentioned in strongly conflicting relation; international organizations are usually mentioned together with mentioning of cooperative relations. It is noted that Lithuania's Government is mentioned in conflicting relation due to Parliaments criticism towards actions being taken by the government on BelNPP. The emotional load of Belarusian discourse is mostly positive or neutral, in Lithuanian discourse it is mostly negative. Lithuania strongly criticizes BelNPP project, although Belarus sees it in a positive and beneficial way. In the case of Belarus, topics of 'safety' and 'information provision' have mostly positive emotional load; topic 'technical aspects' – mostly neutral. In the case of Lithuania, the topics of 'safety', 'politics' and 'environment' are constructed mostly negatively. In Belarusian discourse, BelNPP is presented as a national level matter; in Lithuanian discourse, BelNPP is presented as a regional level issue. It is also evident, that Belarus speaks of BelNPP as of a nowadays issue (present tense), and Lithuania mostly uses past tenses to describe issues related to BelNPP.

For a further research it would be valuable to adapt the same political institutional communicative discourse analysis method for more countries, for example Ukraine or Poland; because of two being located in the region and having indirect relation to the project. European Union and Russia are also significant in a context of BelNPP, but these actors have direct influence from Lithuania in the EU case, and from Belarus in the Russia's case (or opposite), so it is not recommended to perform discourse analysis for these actors. Additional data would provide with more variables which can be used for explaining the reasons behind issue framing. It would be possible to further research these reasons to define their significance in a frame of BelNPP case. For example, if political Russia's motives were behind the project. Furthermore, discourse analysis reflecting different timeline would be relevant. It can provide with data showing if discourse content has been different before or after the elections, or if it changed after the power plant became operational. Also media discourse analysis used instead of the political discourse analysis under the same topic would provide with data which then would be comparable to other research, previously mentioned in the introduction under similar topic, which was conducted using texts released before the construction of the power plant has started. This way it is possible to trace the development of the discourse content.

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### Appendix A

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## **Appendix B**

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