Latvian Identity and Culture
in the
Context of Eastern Enlargement
Of the European Union

The picture comes from European Commission: Key Indicators on Member States and Candidate Countries, URL: http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/docs/pdf/eurostatapril2003.pdf
Abstract

This research addresses the issues of identity and culture in Latvia in the context of the upcoming European Union enlargement in 2004. Political self-determination of Latvia was historically indebted to culture. Irrational attachments of the people to the language, folklore and origin set forth the ethnical singularity of the nation. The phenomenon of cultural identity, so important 12 years ago when Latvian independence was regained, is largely ignored by politicians in the upcoming enlargement process. This is especially worth attention since the 8-th parliamentary elections took place very recently, in October 2002. The obvious lack of interest on the part of politicians is compensated by the apprehensions in the society (reflected in mass media) to loose Latvian specific culture and identity when joining the big European family.

The recent data about Latvian support of the European integration showed that only 46.2% of the society was positive towards the enlargement in September 2002. The basic explanation for this relatively biggest unpopularity among other candidate-countries provided by the government was the lack of information in the society. The external political course of the government has one aim on the agenda: joining the EU, with no more alternatives for the future development of Latvia. From the point of view of Foucault’s post-modern theory the opportunities of the enlargement looked forward to by the authorities are viewed as operations of power with information about the pluses and minuses of the membership. The choice of the development path for Latvia (stay under the eastern impact or develop with the Western Europe) on the verge of European enlargement is very much influenced by the security apprehensions about the eastern neighbors. Economic and political opportunities for Latvia in the EU and the security issues solvable under the European roof are explained by the transition of Latvian modern political discourse into the post-modern modality.

Post-modern deconstruction strategies concern culture in the EU to the greatest extent. Latvian public, traditionally conservative, treats the desubjectivation of culture with skepticism and fears of globalization. The government, although it welcomes European development dimensions for culture and alterity, has also a tendency to modern management of culture as dependable on the economic factors in the country.
**Abstract**

This research addresses the issues of identity and culture in Latvia in the context of the upcoming European Union enlargement in 2004. Political self-determination of Latvia was historically indebted to culture. The phenomenon of cultural identity, so important 12 years ago when Latvian independence was regained, is largely ignored by politicians in the upcoming enlargement process. This is especially worth attention since the 8-th parliamentary elections took place in October 2002. The obvious lack of interest in cultural issues on the part of politicians is compensated by the apprehensions in the society (reflected in mass media) to loose Latvian specific culture and identity when joining the big European family.

The external political course of the government has one aim on the agenda: joining the EU, with no more alternatives for the future development of Latvia. From the point of view of Foucault’s post-modern theory the opportunities of the enlargement looked forward to by the authorities are viewed as operations of power with information about the pluses and minuses of the membership. Economic and political opportunities for Latvia in the EU and the security issues solvable under the European roof are explained by the transition of Latvian modern political discourse into the post-modern modality. Post-modern deconstruction strategies concern culture in the EU to the greatest extent. Latvian public, traditionally conservative, treats the desubjectivation of culture with skepticism and fears of globalization.
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1. Introduction

1.1. Setting the Scene

“The amazing progress of technology, the shrinking of distances thanks to modern communications… and the present-day tendency to form wider associations and larger areas for joint economic development…all these compel Europe to unite more closely. Europe has become too small for… self-contained sovereignties.

Departmental memorandum to von Ribbentrop, Berlin, 1943

The enlargement of the European Union to take place on May 1, 2004, poses lots of questions about European destiny and the purpose of the Union itself. The upcoming inclusion of former Soviet Union satellites (Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Bulgaria) and three Baltic states (Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania), much lagging behind economically into the originally “Western” bloc definitely signifies the shift of accents. Economic partnership is giving way to something a lot more valid and tenure: symbolic politics.

Political self-awareness that expresses itself in the neofederalistic search of constitutional approach to the Union is added up by looking for the common cultural background. Thus, the European Parliament had outlined the importance of culture in the Giorgio Ruffolo Report or the “Unity in Diversity” Resolution, approved on September

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Different cultural policies in the member states concerning centralization or decentralization, cultural programs that do not go under the Structural Funds' support and the principle of subsidiarity diminish the range of cultural cooperation in the present EU. The relevance of cultural unifying force seems to be debatable, since many Europeans hold that the Union is not interested in the cultural cooperation of the Member States.

However, the first cliché the scholar of European Union cultural heritage encounters is the “unity-in-diversity” destabilizing factor that does not allow coming to a common denominator. It is not necessarily the euroscptic-europositivist duel, but rather a question of identity politics for Europeans.

There are many more political scientists concerned with their national cultural legacy preservation in different European schools than scholars who seem to support the idea of articulating or recreating the common European past. Omitting cultural aspect in the European Union cooperation agenda can be partially explained by the prevailing principle of subsidiarity, setting the Member States in charge of their national peculiarities.

It was the end of the Cold War that brought about the question of a united Europe, when the so called “Eastern European countries” felt themselves more relieved to talk about their national feelings. There was a positive interest in common European history on their part and a strong wish to emphasize the sense of belonging to European family.

The question of common European culture seems rather controversial even in Eastern Europe with all its intentions to become a part of Western continent. That is all despite the fact that forging “Homo Sovieticus” policy should have provided the desirable similarities among easterners themselves.

The cultural theme is always very much connected to the topic of identity and nationalism. The last term seems to have different connotations in the west and the east of the continent. The very notion of nationalism demands a more detailed explanation that will be presented further.
To summarize the differences in the beginning one should know that the idea of nation presupposes the desire of the latter to secure its sovereignty as a state. The process of acquiring this sovereignty for certain states in the west of Europe happened faster and was less painful than that for Eastern Europe.¹¹

Western European nationalism does not have such intense colors. Its formation period, which usually precedes the formation of the state or coincides with it, started around the end of the 18-th century.¹²

Eastern nationalism was born in conflict “not primarily to transform it into a people’s state, but to redraw the political boundaries in conformity with ethnographic demands”.¹³

The history of Europe can provide its scholars with some facts to support the common or collective cultural identity theory. Hellenic heritages, Roman law, the devastating Christianity effects, the illusion of the “Charlemagne kingdom”, the Renaissance, the Romanticism and the humanistic traditions seem to stress cultural commonness.¹⁴

Usually people associate the idea of common European traditions with those of European Institutions. However, the appearance of the latter is explained as the reaction of the elite circles to the horrors of German nationalism.¹⁵ The destructive force that emanated from one single nation-state triggered the development of constructive policies, which made Europeans aware of the need to cooperate.

So far the possibility of European loyalty superceding ethnic commitments looks rather unworkable. The present revival of the regional, local and national patriotic feelings does not help to resolve the tensions when the debates around the common cultural identity in Europe arise. In the enlarged Union the popularity of generating common cultural basis for the group of very different nations is likely to be submerged. According to Oliver Schmidtke, “the new political relevance of ethnically framed cultural identities – national or regional – indicates that the process of European integration has reached a critical point where traditional nations of belonging are importantly challenged.”¹⁶

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Latvian integration into the EU is widely discussed in the country in terms of economic problems and political adjustment, leaving aspects of identity and culture behind. Since 1991 (Latvian Republic independence year) and further notions of culture and identity have been especially vital for the political self-awareness of Latvian inhabitants. Integration into the EU poses the questions of internal stability within the country, where ethnicity became highly politicized. As a consequence, the Council of Europe and later the European Community were concerned with the large number of Russian minority in Latvia and the violation of their rights in citizenship issues.\textsuperscript{18}

Since the state independence was regained, cultural policy was reformed towards vertical decentralization\textsuperscript{19} for the most part, and also horizontal decentralization\textsuperscript{20}. It is now the Ministry of Culture and municipalities that share the responsibilities for financing and cooperation programs\textsuperscript{21} in cultural field.

The communist regime set the institutional procedures on cultural policy decision making not only around the government administration, but mostly around the Party, trade unions and working organizations.\textsuperscript{22} So the new Latvian state in 1991 had to face the necessity to organize the support and promotion of culture and arts on its own. Basically, the researchers of cultural policies encounter lots of difficulties evaluating the changes that new governments introduced in the cultural policy field. They point out to the descending tendency of endorsing and financing cultural sector though.\textsuperscript{23}

### 1.1.1. Basic review of empirical literature

The significance of culture and identity in Latvia and the implications of the EU membership for Latvia in this respect is so far an untouched subject for research. Although there have been a lot of studies concerning CEEC enlargement and its implications on national cultures of the member states and the candidate countries, such as Bell-Fialkoff and Markovits\textsuperscript{24} did, presenting the analysis of different types of nationalist traditions in Europe.

\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., p.208
\textsuperscript{19} Vertical decentralization – public authorities divide power and financing responsibilities on central, regional, local levels; horizontal decentralization – decision making and implementation of it implies structuring of policy organization with the help of arm’s length bodies, independent organizations, supported by the state – quangos, etc. (According to Mitchell R, (2001))
\textsuperscript{21} http://vip.latnet.lv/culture/English/mech.htm
\textsuperscript{23} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{24} http://repositories.cdlib.org/uciaspubs/research/98/6/
R. Mitchell’s Paper on Cultural Policy Research\(^25\) and the “Bigger, Better, Beautiful…” conference\(^26\) on the EU enlargement impact on cultural opportunities across Europe come closer to discussion of cultural policies in the context of the upcoming enlargement.

Certain contemporary information about Latvian identity can be found in “The European Mosaic” edited by Gowland, O’Neill and Dunphy\(^27\), although it concerns all Baltic States and is very general. A more profound analysis of historical events that trace the formation of state national policy from 1987-1988 is given in “Europe’s New Nationalism” edited by Caplan and Feffer.\(^28\)

However, there is very little said about peculiarities of Latvian cultural policy, so it was particularized analyzing the official European Cultural Policy Network on the Internet\(^29\) and the Mitchell paper mentioned above.

Regarding European identity literature, one should point out to plenty of books about European identity, which are analyzed in the “European collective identity: discussion of prospects” chapter. The two papers that gave a particular feedback for this research on the European identity belong to Heather Field\(^30\) and David Green\(^31\). H. Field traces the development of European Union cultural policy, the main proponents and opponents of European identity, its meaning, the problems with it and the role of the English language in the enlarged Europe. D. Green in turn writes about the importance of common European identity, discusses the main theories on the subject and previous research and presents results of a whole panorama of Eurobarometer opinion polls of the citizens in the present member states concerning their identity.

### 1.1.2. Basic review of theoretical literature

The research will be testing two theories: primordialism and post-modernism.

\(^{25}\) http://www2.vuw.ac.nz/conted/iccr/papers/Mitchell.PDF
\(^{26}\) http://www.budobs.org/BBBsessions.pdf
\(^{29}\) http://www.culturalpolicies.net/profiles/logo.html
\(^{30}\) Field H. EU Cultural Policy and the Creation of a Common European Identity in http://www.pols.canterbury.ac.nz/ECSANZ/papers/Field.htm
\(^{31}\) Green D. (1999) Who Are “the Europeans”? European Political Identity in the Context of the Post-War Integration Project in
Primordial theory is usually viewed under the roof of nationalism theories. There are three main branches of nationalist theories discerned: primordialist, modernist and instrumentalist. To get to grips with the concept of nationalism itself this research studied mainly nationalist ideas presented by Hutchinson and Smith and Ernest Gellner. The book by Hutchinson and Smith is a contemporary compilation of ideas belonging to popular nationalism authors.

There have been found very few books on the primordialist theory. So the materials on it are mainly represented by scientific articles and electronic documents from the Internet and are very recent. The overview articles for the contemporary debate on nationalism are given by Adeed Dawisha in “International Studies Review” and Vera Bacova in “Human Affairs”.

The main postulates of the theory were described by A. Smith in his book “National identity”. Although his book dates back to 1991, he is considered by Hutchinson, Hobsbawm and Gellner an authentic primordialist.

A discussion of alternative theories: instrumentalist or constructionist and modernist or modernization theories can be found in J. R. Llobera and G. Bacik working papers.

The major books on postmodern theory became “Culture and International Relations” and “Theories of International Relations”.

It was rather difficult to find the ideas about culture in the post-modern mosaic of Michel Foucault’s “Archeology of Knowledge” (1972), the only book he wrote about the

34 Dawisha A., Nations and Nationalism: Historical Antecedents to Contemporary Debates in “International Studies Review”, vol. 4, issue 1, spring 2002
38 http://www.diba.es/icps/working_papers/docs/Wp_i_164.pdf
41 Theories of International Relations (2001), ed. Burchill, Devetak, Linklater, Paterson, Reus-Smit, True, New York, Palgrave
importance of culture. So the author found them mostly in the “Cultural Analysis”, edited by Wuthnow, Hunter, Bergesen and Kurzweil42.

To the general picture also contributed the paper of F. K. Dornelles on postmodernist theory and IR43 and the book of P. Rosenau that describes the ambiguous nature of postmodernism very plainly. 44

1.1.3. Aim and research questions

This research aims to explore the issues of identity and culture in Latvia in the context of the upcoming EU enlargement in 2004. The choice of Latvia as a case study is based on the fact that it is one of the most Euro sceptic candidate states, which has from its first independence day on the 18-th of November, 1918, emphasized the importance of cultural traditions. That is why the research addresses two groups of questions: the ontology of Latvian national identity and its place in the debates about European integration.

Latvian cultural policy states:

“There is no national definition of culture in Latvia. Culture and cultural policies are very much defined as questions of identity, defending and promoting Latvian language and cultural life.”45

Accordingly, in this research the terms “identity” and “culture” are implied and going to be used interchangeably.

The broader purpose is to direct attention to the importance of culture and identity issues for the enlargement in question both on Latvian and European level.

1. What is the nature of Latvian national identity?
2. How important is the EU membership for Latvian national interests?

42 Cultural analysis (1984), ed. Wuthnow, Pavison Hunter, Bergesen, Kurzweil, Boston, Routledge
43 http://www.globalpolitics.net/essays/Krause_Dornelles.pdf
45 See Cultural Policy in Latvia, Cultural development policies in member states of the Council of Europe (1998), Ministry of Culture, Republic of Latvia, pp.13-17
3. How does European post-modern discourse influence the importance of culture in Latvia?

The two questions below were developed in the process of gathering empirical data:

4. Why are identity and culture issues not covered in Latvian parliamentary debates in connection with the enlargement?

5. How is European cultural identity taken by Latvians?

1.1.4. Limitations and bias

This research deals only with Latvia and should not be taken as an example for all Baltic States.


This research is interesting because it was conducted at the same time with the parliamentary elections on the 5-th of October, 2002.

The author is aware of the probable bias coming from the epistemological implications of the ethnicity and identity, which may or may not influence the research, the author being Latvian herself⁴⁶.

1.1.5. Methodology

This research is a single case study. It is partly defined by the nature of “how” and “why” questions⁴⁷, both explanatory and descriptive of the significance of culture in

Latvian historical circumstances. It also involves an analysis of contemporary situation with culture and identity issues in the context of eastern enlargement. This type of research allows its author to use plenty of evidence, including interviewing and observation. According to the definition R. K. Yin gives\textsuperscript{48}, this research is a case study because it is:

- based on empirical investigation of contemporary phenomenon (importance of Latvian identity and culture) within real events context (under the CEEC enlargement circumstances),
- where there is no division made between the political salience of national identity in Latvia and cultural importance of the enlargement,
- there are multiple sources of evidence used: books, conference papers, scientific articles, parliamentary debates, newspapers, public opinion analyses and interviews.

Latvia as a case study was chosen because the author being Latvian herself holds that for an ethnically bounded country as Latvia is, European integration provides enormous cultural opportunities for mutual exchange and cooperation. At the same time, Latvia during its preparatory-integration period was among the most Euro-pessimistic candidate states. However the official position of Latvian authorities has always been “pro-integrationist”. This creates a misfit between advantages for cultural popularization, the course of the government and the conservative attitude of the public.

There were two theories operationalised: primordialist and post-modernist ones. The author tested primordialism, which is a theory of the significance of the ethnic belonging to a nation and state formation, to explain the ontology of Latvian national identity. Post-modernist theory (and Foucault’s ideas about culture and power in particular) was also used to give details on the changes Latvian cultural and political discourse experiences during the transition stage of European integration. Post-modernism is a contemporary theory that challenges the political importance of sovereignty and the achievements of market economy of the civilized West. It also emphasizes the role of culture in the formation of relations within society and in global politics.\textsuperscript{49}

The data collected included both qualitative and quantitative information. Different sources of evidence allowed looking from state official, general public and presented in the mass media viewpoints at the same problem. To ensure more validity and reliability, the qualitative data from different kinds of documents, newspapers etc. was supported with crucial statistics as quantitative data.

\textsuperscript{48} Ibid., p.23
Since this research focuses on the significance of culture and identity in the conditions of enlargement, it is the attitude and reflexive interaction within the community that matter for this topic. The research on identity and culture is respectively taken as more convenient for the native speaker coming from the same situation and background. Ethnographic content analysis is chosen for this purpose, also to leave the investigator focused on the narrative data analysis as well as documents without being rigid. The “constant discovery and comparison” mode of ethnographic content analysis presupposes concentrating on collection of both numerical and narrative information. Ethnographic content analysis is a combination of participant observation and the content analysis of documents. Plummer names it also a “reflexive analysis of documents” and Altheide – “qualitative document analysis”. The investigator remains interactive during the whole research, keeping the discovery mode, not just following the data in a positivist way. It also underpins the importance of descriptive information and “obtaining of unique data for every case studied”.

However, ethnographic content analysis is not a very popular method with political science researchers; it is more often applied by historians, literary scholars, and social scientists. This method is also not aimed at theory development, only at its verification.

1.1.6. Interviews

There were 15 interviews conducted, which are going to be used as a resource. They were made in a semi-structured format, with open ended interview questions and some closed ones.

The units of analysis were chosen according to their professional engagement in cultural field and/or lawmaking in the parliament.

The piloting was made through two groups of questions, which were designed in compliance with the aims of the research. The first group of issues is concerned with Latvian identity and the discussion of state policy in the context of EU membership. The questions asked involved the attitude toward nationalism and ethnicity in Latvia, the

51 Ibid., p.16
52 That was easily accomplished not only during the time of the interview, but also by the fact that both interviewees and the researcher come from the same city, speak the same language, live in the same society and to some of them the researcher was already acquainted and knew their particulars.
54 Ibid.
55 Ibid., p.17
discussion of EU membership in the society and the level of development of the state culture policy.

The second group asked the respondents about European identity, Latvian belonging to European cultural family and the actualities of the EU integration process. The questions encompassed the evaluation of the Anglo-Saxon culture and language influence in Europe, federative tendencies of the Convention and Latvian interests, also the belonging to the western culture.

Since the respondents did not remain anonymous some of them answered from the point of view of their positions, avoiding giving their personal opinions.

1.2. Background: a short insight into Latvian history

Interest in Latvian history recently experienced a new upheaval. In connection with political and public debates about the re-union with the rest of Europe, the idea of Latvian ancient cultural ties with European continent is very popular in every sense. Euro-optimists use historical determinants to emphasize “the return of the native” to its European family, while Euro-skeptics refer to the past when Latvia was very much divided between powerful nations. They appeal to nationalist feelings in order to escape from a new “wave of cultural imperialism” from the west.

Latvian history as probably every “buffer state’s” story has been told by many and received very different interpretations. The main difficulty here is that like many other eastern European states Latvia is ethnically very mixed. This creates a potentially fragile balance between Latvians and ethnic minorities.

To compile the opinions of several historians one should start with the fact that Latvian culture did not exist when the country’s European neighbors were dividing each other’s land.

If one looks at the geographical position of Latvia it comes as no surprise that the country lying on the junction of eastern and western ways to the Baltic Sea was continuously colonized. It was under German, Polish, and Swedish and later under Russian rule for many centuries.

At the beginning of this era the territory known as Latvia today became famous as a trading crossroads. The well-known route “from the Vikings to the Greeks” mentioned

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57 See Kucinskis J. (2001)Dzive karastavokli, Riga, Poligrafists
58 http://www.latinst.lv/li_history.htm
59 Ibid.
in ancient chronicles stretched from Scandinavia through Latvian territory along the Daugava River to the ancient Russia and Byzantine Empire. Because of its strategic geographic location, Latvian territory has always been invaded by larger nations.\footnote{Ibid.}

I should probably point out that like any other small nation Latvians grew concerned about their national identity quite early. Regional disparities, though little they were, became the first grounds for the Baltic people living on the southwestern coast of the Baltic Sea to identify themselves as Latvians\footnote{Ibid.}.

So in the 900’s A.D., the ancient Balts started to form specific tribal realms. Gradually, four individual Baltic tribal cultures developed: Couronians, Latgallians, Selonians and Semgallians (in Latvian: karsi, latgali, seli and zemgali). It is interesting that Couronians became famous on the west coast of the Baltic as the “Baltic Vikings”. They maintained a lifestyle of intensive invasions that included looting and pillaging in the 1100’s and 1200’s.\footnote{http://www.latinst.lv/li_history.htm}

Around 1160 the first German traders arrived, who were interested in closer trade connections with the east. At those times there was a major discord between Baltic tribes as well as with early Estonians or Finno-Ugrians, Lithuanians or Livians, the Danish and Russians.\footnote{Kucinskis J. (2001) Dzive karastavokli, Riga, Poligrafists, p.55}

Then the preachers of the Christian faith came, who tried to convert the Baltic pagans. Latvian and Finno-Ugrian tribes preferred their old traditions and rituals. It was decided in Rome to send Crusaders to Latvia to influence the situation. So, German Crusaders founded Riga in 1201, but with their arrival the development of the ancient tribal realms stopped.\footnote{This fact is widely discussed by Euro-skeptic historian as the first example of using imperialistic attitude towards a small nation. See Kucinskis J.(2001) Dzive karastavokli, p.65} European experience of trade and development was introduced far and wide. Many Latvian cities were included in the Hanseatic League. It was since then that Riga became an important point in west-east traffic of goods and formed close cultural contacts with Europe.\footnote{Prieditis A. (2000) Latvijas Kulturas Vesture, Daugavpils, AKA, p.55}

While they were fighting side by side with the Danes and Saxons to get a piece of Latvian territory, Germans formed a confederation of feudal nations which was called Livonia. One not very pleasant fact about these events in the 13-14 centuries was that Latvian tribes preferred to obey the oppressors and “did not miss a chance to attack their nation-brothers”.\footnote{Kucinskis J., (2001), p.58}

In 1558 the Livonia War started. It lasted for 25 years, after which Latvia came under the Polish-Lithuanian rule. The 1500s were a time of great changes notable for the reformation and for the collapse of the Livonia nation. The Lutheran faith was accepted
in Kurzeme, Zemgale and Vidzeme, but the Catholicism maintained its dominance in Latgale.  

Consolidation of the Latvian nation occurred around the 1600s, with merging of Couronians, Latgallians, Selonians, Sembgallians and Livians. So, a culturally unified nation that spoke a common language developed. In 1600s the dukedom of Kurzeme, once a part of Livonia experienced a notable economic boom. One could never imagine a dukedom establishing two colonies: an island in the estuary of the Gambia River (in Africa) and Tobago Island (in the Caribbean Sea). Names from this period still survive today in those places.

Once again Latvia was colonized at the beginning of the 18th century, when 21-year-long Northern War broke out. The course of the war was linked with today’s Latvian territory and the territorial claims of the Russian empire. Russian tsar Peter 1st managed to secure the territory of Vidzeme—a part of Latvia, and later in the course of the war the whole Latvian land was under the Russian control.

Since this time up to the signing of the Molotov-Ribentropp pact Latvia was the place of particular strategical interest for Russian territorial claims. Nowadays however, the governments of both countries strive very hard not to overstep the line of political interests of each other. Unfortunately, it is very hard for both Latvians and Russians to forget the past. Latvian - Russian relationship remain reserved, if not hostile. Even now Latvian president expresses an opinion concerning Latvian independent state status, that Russia is going to “come to its senses” only after Latvia joins the EU.

The actual awakening of strong national feelings took place at the beginning of the 1800s, as it was in many places in Europe at that time. At the same time the first newspapers in Latvian appeared. During this period of the formation of national feelings Latvians seemed to choose the German conception of a nation as an entity with a long common past and a language as the basic uniting force. This suggestion can be based on the similar lack of state organization in Germany and formation of German nation state in the beginning of the 19-th century.

The focus on the Latvian language and history could serve as a basis for nationalism founded on cultural identity. This kind of identity is unlikely to be created in order to organize the state. This suggests testing primordialist theory in this case as opposite to constructivist or instrumentalist ones. The two last ones see the national formation dependent on social interactions and the desire of the state or people to unite. The failure of these conceptions for the Latvian case shows the fate of the Soviet Union.

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67 http://www.latinst.lv/li_history.htm
68 http://www.latinst.lv/li_history.htm
69 Kucinskis J. (2001), p.64
71 http://www.latinst.lv/li_history.htm
72 See Dawisha A., Nations and Nationalism: Historical Antecedents to Contemporary Debates in International studies review, vol. 4 , issue 1, spring 2002, pp.7-8
73 Ibid., pp.16-19
which tried to create the “Soviet nation” despite the ethnical belonging of its population to different nations.

Application of the primordial theory to clarify the formation of Latvian national identity can be explained by the particular interest of Latvian intelligentsia in German Romanticist culture. Building of nation according to primordialists, involves writing historical chronicles. Latvians did that long before they became aware of their national identity. For instance Atskanu Chronicle and Indrika Chronicle date back to 13-14 centuries.

Faced with the awakening of national feelings, the most active members of Latvian social and cultural life (New-Latvians) managed to change the conditions the Latvian language was in. By the end of the 19-th century Latvian epic “Lacplesis” (1888) was written. Also a great number of Latvian schools were opened and lots of foreign words together with many invented ones complemented the language. It was also the time for the first novels, first translations into Latvian and first theater plays.

Being a part of the Russian empire Latvians felt very strongly that they belonged to another culture. Although the majority of their educated elite: painters, writers, artists and politicians, received their education in Russia. Latvian culture was still waiting to be developed. So in those times nationalism for Latvians meant patriotism and what was more important independence.

The idea of an independent Latvia became a reality at the beginning of the 1900s. It was activated by course of WWI. The post-war confusion was a suitable opportunity for the development of an independent nation, and Latvia proclaimed independence on November 18, 1918. In 1921 it became a member of the League of Nations and fully participated in the activities of democratic nations.

There was a period of economic growth in the second half of 1930s, due to which Latvia reached one of the highest living standards in Europe. Despite the fact that the country was under the authoritarian regime of the prime minister, Latvians were proud of their nation. According to statistics, by that time Latvians comprised more than 75% of the population. Besides, the Wilsonian principle which is to make state borders coincide

74 Dawisha A., Nations and Nationalism: Historical Antecedents to Contemporary Debates in International studies review, vol. 4, issue 1, spring 2002, p.17
76 Prieditis A. Latvijas Kulturas Vesture (2000), Daugavpils, AKA, p.49
77 Prieditis A. Latvijas Kulturas Vesture (2000), Daugavpils, AKA., pp.149-151
78 Kucinskis J. (2001), p. 67-68
79 See ibid., p. 68
80 http://www.latinst.lv/li_history.htm
with the borders of nationality that E.J. Hobsbawm writes about\(^81\), worked here quite smoothly.

However, after the signing of the Molotov-Ribentropp pact on August 23, 1939 Latvia was to experience mass expulsion and even genocide. So, included into the USSR, Latvia underwent the Russification campaign, though the Latvian language was used in all administrative institutions on Latvian territory. One hundred and twenty thousand Latvian inhabitants were deported to Soviet concentration camps or imprisoned.\(^82\)

Liberalization within the communist regime began in the mid 1980s in the USSR. There immediately appeared in Latvia a few mass social-political organizations that made use of this opportunity — *Tautas Fronte* (the Popular Front of Latvia), *Latvijas Nacionalas Neatkarības Kustiba* (the Movement for National Freedom of Latvia). These groups favored the reinstatement of national independence. Here one may notice that among the supporters of these movements were people of all nationalities living in Latvia: Russians, Belo-Russians, Jews, Ukrainians and Latvians themselves\(^83\). The unity of spirit showed that neither official ideology nor national differences were to guide the most loyal citizens.

A declaration restoring independence that included a transition period was adopted on May 4, 1990. On the August 21, 1991 the parliament (*Saeima*) voted for an end to the transition period and Latvian pre-war independence was restored.\(^84\)

At present national development is geared towards major foreign policy. Latvia foresees that general prosperity and welfare is possible only within the EU and NATO, as well as intensive cooperation with other nations of the Baltic Sea region. The twelve years of independence were marked by the tendency to protect the Latvian language from the relatively big Russian-speaking minority (here Russians are mixed with Ukrainians, Lithuanians, Jews, Belo-Russians and Poles). There is a certain tendency to overdo the protection policy by treating non-Latvians with neglect and imposing special language and history demands to pass the citizenship exam.\(^85\)

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\(^82\)http://www.latinst.lv/li_history.htm


\(^84\)http://www.latinst.lv/li_history.htm

2. Theory

2.1. Representation

One of the key questions developed in this research is why the cultural issues are not considered to be important enough to discuss them in Parliament before Latvia joins the EU. The debates in the Saeima for the period of 1999-2002 do not reflect the interest of politicians in identity and culture, since the topic was covered only once in the period of three years. This is especially worth attention since the 8-th parliamentary elections took place very recently, in October 2002. The obvious lack of interest on the part of politicians is compensated by the apprehensions in the society (reflected in mass media) to lose Latvian specific culture and identity joining the big European family.

The present situation in the country is that only 46.2% of the society was positive towards the enlargement in September 2002. The basic explanation for this relatively biggest unpopularity among other candidate-countries provided by the government is the lack of information in the society. The external political course of the government has one aim on the agenda: joining the EU, with no more alternatives for the future development of Latvia. To research cultural aspects on the verge of joining the European Union is particularly important for Latvia. Latvian historical legacy with episteme of annexing its lands to the USSR, Germany, Russia and Sweden had made identity and culture issues very sensitive.

12 years ago when Latvian independence was regained the phenomenon of cultural identity was very important for the country. For the time being the actuality of cultural identity seems to be lost for politicians in the upcoming enlargement process, so the phenomenon needs to be explained.

Two theories will be used. The first one is the primordialist theory, applied to clarify the particular interest of Latvians in their cultural origins. The second one will be the postmodernist theory, used to deal with the present political indifference towards culture and identity issues.

To understand why the importance of culture is getting more and more devaluated in the political course towards EU enlargement in Latvia, it is vital that culture has been so far interconnected with the concept of identity in this country.

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86 Discussed in the 4-th chapter
87 See http://www.delfi.lv/archive/print.php?id=4121839
88 Described in the 4-th chapter
2.2. Nationalism! Nationalism?

Before debating the issues of primordialism, its assets and limitations for this research one needs to get a clear notion of what nationalism, national identity and cultural identity actually mean. There are different connotations of nationalism that cultural researchers use. The thought that Europe “invented nationalism” usually associates with the liberating force of the French Revolution and it had set the scene for ambiguity in understanding. Both in Eastern and Western Europe nationalist ideas are connected to keeping and saving cultural heritage, language, traditions. The underlying idea here is that the term “nationalism” in this research is going to have a cultural implication, not only a political or social one. If one sticks to what historians and researchers of social sciences write about nationalism it is very easy to get trapped between theories discussing the origins and peculiarities of what the terms mean. One way of defining nationalism lies in interpreting actions to obtain sovereignty in the name of a state interest. This is where three researchers of nationalism - Ernest Gellner, Eric Hobsbawm and Anthony Smith would probably agree that nationalism could be explained as a means to acquire political sovereignty or anything else that might be of national interest.

Another way of treating nationalism is seeing it as a concept or a discourse in time and space. One could surmise that Western European political thought would tie nation to the notion of space or territoriality. It is possible to conceive this connection from Anthony Smith’s “National Identity”. The demand to have a motherland that would historically belong to people in the west is connected to the law and political rights of the people who dwell on that land. This is what the French Revolution was about. This set the idea of nationalism in the west. (A. Smith however would not agree with that. For him the ideas of nationalism survived from the ancient Greece times.)

Eastern European and Asian models of nationalism are more oriented to the concept of time, or history. It is the accumulation of customs, rituals and language that is passed through generation to generation that makes up an eastern nation. The eastern view also presupposes the belonging to one certain community’s culture for the life time, which cannot be changed no matter where this person decides to live. (In comparison with this perspective western European conception assumes that different ethnic groups do have a choice between nations they want to be part of. It is possible to get used to another cultural community, but it takes time.) It is closely connected to images, historical myths and folklore. To sum up, the key word for eastern European nation concept would be culture, and for western European one it would be law.

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92 See Ibid.
93 Ibid.
In addition, the very notion of nationalism implies some sort of political ideology, which cannot be effective without the uniting factor of common culture, common history and memories. Liah Greenfeld compares nationalism’s power in the modern times with the power of religion centuries ago.\textsuperscript{94}

However, the term national identity implies much more than nationalism does. The essence of nationalism and its structure is defined by the nature of national identity, whether it is inclusive or exclusive. By exclusive it is usually ethnic or inborn identity that is meant, and by inclusive it is law- or civic identity that can also be called acquired.

“The definition of national identity in civic terms presuppose the equation of nationality with citizenship, in which case it becomes, in principle, a matter of individual choice and commitment, the primary object of which is a specific set of rights and duties, or, in other words, a social contract… it is conceivable that one would exchange one national identity for another or even decide to live without nationality at all. Ethnic criteria of national identity, in distinction, imply that nationality is viewed as an inborn characteristic, genetically transmitted and essentially unalterable.”\textsuperscript{95}

As a matter of fact, this division cannot be so simple, for two similar types of nationalism do not exist, and more than that, according to Anthony Smith, in each kind of nationalism there are both ethnic and civic elements present.\textsuperscript{96}

The two definitions above are absolutely indispensable to understand the role culture plays in legitimizing nationalism as a state ideology. It functions as a mobilizing force in building a state for a particular nation. The majority of political scientists observe the ethnic character of nationalism in the east just after the collapse of the Soviet Union.\textsuperscript{97} Latvian case was not any different and in this respect,

“…ethnic identity was taken to be an intrinsic component of human culture and individual normalcy. It was even said to constitute a value far above all others, and people without any evident preoccupation with ethnic identity came to be viewed as abnormal…”\textsuperscript{98}

So far the importance of ethnic belonging to Latvian nation seems tangible. In this research I argue that ethnic nationalism intrinsic to Latvians cannot be characterized as constructed or invented in order to create a basis for a state. In this way the importance of cultural aspects for the people can be understood much clearer. To test this hypothesis I am going to use one of the nationalism theories: the primordialist one.

\textsuperscript{95} Ibid., p.32-33
\textsuperscript{96} See Smith A. National Identity (1991), Penguin Books
2.3. Competing theories

There are three branches of theories about nationalism: primordialist, modernist and instrumentalist.

All of them deal with the nation-building or the birth of nation-states, where a nation represents or should represent exemplary unity both within its own state territory (to regulate the state machine smoothly with the help of ideology) and in communication with other nation-states (to make sure other agencies can count on its stability in interstates' relations).

It is usually instrumentalism and primordialism which are represented as counterparts or opponents in the contemporary modernist debate.99

Instrumentalism is more likely to discuss ethnic groups, not nations, where the groups alter in their content according to circumstances.100 These circumstances might be political, social or economic, and, according to Ernest Gellner, nationalism is rather “picky” about cultural heritage, facts or traditions, including the use of language:

“Dead languages can be revived, traditions invented …”101

For instrumentalists the concept of ethnicity is not fixed, as the members of one ethnic group can easily become members of another, depending on certain conditions in the world around them. Some from this group of social scientists would doubt the primacy of ethnic ties for political interests of the state and would explain the popularity of ethnicity with certain economic interest102. One of the most prominent instrumentalists is Fredrik Barth, whose theory of variability of ethnic groupings suits better to explain the situation in the Third World, not Europe where ethnic factions are more or less constant.103 All in all, instrumentalist nationalism theory, which claims to shape and

100 Llobera J.R. Recent theories of nationalism in http://216.239.37.100/search?q=cache:r_LDeTJ9hOwC:www.diba.es/icps/working_papers
102 See Llobera J.R. Recent theories of nationalism in URL http://216.239.37.100/search?q=cache:r_LDeTJ9hOwC:www.diba.es/icps/working_papers
103 Ibid., p. 9
impose social linkages of people to construe a collective identity for political or material interest\textsuperscript{104}, is also called the constructionist one.

The modernization theories hold that nationalism is the product of transition from traditional to modern social framework, closely connected to industrialization. From the point of view of politics they deal with the national state as a polity and discuss its bureaucracy, secularity and sovereignty. There are many subdivisions of this theoretical branch, such as economistic, politico-ideological and socio-communication theories. Karl Deutsch belongs to the last mentioned ones, which are also named integrationist\textsuperscript{105}. Integrationists hold that the growing power of nations as comprised of individuals and small groups is explained by communication skills. It is through integration with the help of communication channels that nations are being built. It is not only media means such as radio, TV or Internet that is important, integration is mainly fostered through personal relations.\textsuperscript{106}

Another theory relating to the importance of ethnic ties in community was developed by a German sociologist Ferdinand Tonnies (1855-1936). He wrote about organizing social relationships in two ways\textsuperscript{107}. One was natural or traditional way, it was succeeded by artificial or profit relationships of modern times. He presumed relationships were based on viewing social order formed in community by harmonious consent or rational implications. The first alternative is named Gemeinschaft; it concerns powerful organic or natural folk force rooted in family. The second is Gesellschaft, and it treats order from the point of view of opportunism and calculations, sanctioned by the sovereign power of state\textsuperscript{108}.

\section*{2.4. Primordialist theory}

Primordialist theory assumes that national identity is inborn and can be obtained only hereditary. The primordialists hold that homogeneity of ethnic groups is provided by

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{105} See Taylor M., Kent M. (2002) \textit{Public relations Theory and Practice in Nation Building} in http://216.239.37.100/search?q=cache:_RVRx9U3cilC:www.montclair.edu/Pages/Co...
\bibitem{106} Ibid. p.8
\bibitem{107} http://www2.pfeiffer.edu/~lridener/courses/GEMEIN.HTML
\bibitem{108} http://www.src.uchicago.edu/ssr1/PRELIMS/Theory/thmise1.html
\end{thebibliography}
blood ties, common language, race, history, etc. That is why the process of nation-building can be inhibited by the impossibility of artificial social construction and heterogeneous communities are likely to be unstable. More than that, Taylor and Kent argue that primordialists surmise communication between different ethnic groups in culturally heterogeneous societies is likely to lead to additional conflicts and civil wars. The ties that hold ethnic communities together are inexpressible and also the result of long-term historical formation. Primordialist ideas shaped ideologies of the majority of European nation-states, and are largely applied to the nation-building processes in the Third World. The attraction of primordialism lies in its closeness to the very first and natural type of community – kinship or family ties. Primordial ideas are considered to be universal in this sort of communities. As Bacova mentions, ancestors and history are extremely important for this kind of attitude. Clifford Geertz, who managed to structure primordialist ideas, reflects on naturalness of primordial ties:

“...stems from the givens... of social existence. One is bound to one’s kinsman, one’s neighbour, one’s fellow believer, ipso facto; ...at least in great part by virtue of some unaccountable absolute import attributed to the very tie itself... For virtually every person, in every society, at almost all time, some attachments seem to flow more from a sense of natural – some would say spiritual – affinity than from social interaction.”

Clifford Geertz is usually mentioned to use the term “primordialism” for the first time. Geertz summarized three main points of primordialism:

- Primordial identities are natural or given
- Primordial identities are ineffable, that is, cannot be explained or analyzed by referring to social interaction, but are coercive

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109 http://216.239.37.100/search?q=cache:_RVRx9U3cilC:www.montclair.edu/Pag es/Co... p.7

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• Primordial identities deal essentially with sentiments or affection.

However, the degree of importance of primordial attachments fluctuates in particular time, varies from one person to another and from community to community. For Geertz, this kind of attachment is meant to be irrational. If nationalism is about loyalty to the community one lives in, then primordialist ideology seems to explain quite expressively ones insightful affection to it, as congruent to family affection. It is also clear that just like in a family, blood connection is the only true relation possible, in primordial society common ethnic origin is solely acceptable.

It might be valuable for this research to talk about another primordialist author, Walker Connor. He suggests that one-way top-down communication from governments to communities, which, in fact, formulates the official message in the society and sets the tone would excite ambiguous response in public if the language of municipal representatives was dialectically diverse.

The majority of nationalism researchers mention Anthony Smith as the most important primordialist author. Smith, in comparison with other nationalism theorists such as Gellner, Geertz or Connor, does not tie nationalistic tendencies to the new paradigm of modernity, which followed after Enlightenment. Despite the fact that the term “nationalism”, that implies the idea of popular rule, is only 200 years old, Smith begins to discuss the common national identity present in the V-th century’s Greek society. For Smith the idea of progress and social, political and cultural development has a long history and was not born in modern times. In “National Identity” he suggests that ethnicity is always present in one’s nature, it cannot be connected to any special period of time, thus being almost biologically given.

Before Latvian independence was regained in 1991, there were lots of debates about ethnic nationalist ideas that fully correspond to Smith’s primordialist theory. The tendency to create ethnically exclusive community, developing suggestions about limited access to citizenship based on the ethnic origin is described by Alex Grigorievs when he brings up initiatives of the major political party “the Popular Front” at the end of 80-ies. Accordingly,

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114 Ibid.
116 See http://www.geneseo.edu/~bicket/panop/topicsnat.htm
118 Ibid.
“…The Popular Front of Latvia played host to two competing tendencies: one that supported the integration of all ethnic groups into a democratic state and the other that fought for an ethnically exclusive democracy. According to the nationalist tendency, only those residents of the republics (Estonia and Latvia) who had been citizens of the pre-war states and their descendents had the right to citizenship in Estonia and Latvia. All other residents were illegal aliens. The exclusivist trend, whose slogan became “For a Latvian Latvia”, was soon institutionalized as the Latvian National Independence Movement.”

This unique political experience in Latvian case allowed enjoying the process of self-determination in the states system through regaining culture and, thus, self as a nation on the one hand. For, according to Smith, it is only through culture that we can identify ourselves with the particular place in the world and understand who we are. On the other hand, it led to acquisition of thought that primordial and nationalist ideas do not necessarily go hand in hand with democracy and unprejudiced judgment. Ethnic nationalism that forms the basics of primordialist theory clearly differentiates the insiders of the community from the outsiders. The situation in Latvia from the very first day of the regained independence up to date has been quite specific in comparison with other Baltic republics because of the large percentage of ethnic Russians among the inhabitants (in the year 2001 the population census determined that 30% of Latvian population comprised ethnic Russians; in Lithuania the amount of ethnic Russians is only 9%) 

So, the fact that the country has such a large number of unalterably different strangers must imply the potential instability within the country. In the words of Gökhan Bacik:

“Ethnic nationalism may be conflict-producing...when a country includes several ethnic groups.”

More than that, in today’s circumstances there are two communities formed in Latvia, the “Latvian” and the “Russian-speaking” ones, which in a way compete for their spheres of influence in the society. It is clear that there is a kind of primordial paradigm of maintaining national unity in Latvia. According to R. B. J. Walker,

“...an appropriate cultural ground for a strong sense of identity is indispensable for constructive participation in international relations.”

In order to protect the interests of the ethnic nation, the government cultural policy is to emphasize the symbols of primordial attachment (language, customs, ethnic origin):
“Culture, understood as a quality of national self-confidence, can achieve safety only in a politically guaranteed space”.\textsuperscript{125}

Thus in Latvian case, the concepts of culture and ethnicity seem to be mutually replaceable and depend on one another.

Primordialist theory stands for the importance that culture plays in Latvian internal politics, however it cannot explain why culture one of a sudden ceases to be on the agenda for the ethnic bounded country when it comes to the discussion about the EU membership. The exceptionist axiom of primordial nations can hardly prove functional without conflicts in the states-system of international relations. In addition to that, primordialism has some other limitations that happened to be heavily criticized. Even from the first main points mentioned by Geertz it is clear that primordialism is biologically biased, there is no way to assume that somebody has pure Jewish or Greek origin. Discussing the continuity of preceding and modern nations, Smith does not bring about the cases when some ethnic groups substituted or changed others, or disappeared.\textsuperscript{126} Llobera points out that his “apriorism, ineffability and affectivity” make the empirical analysis of nationalist issues hardly possible.\textsuperscript{127} Jack Eller and Reed Coughlan are the authors of the well-known critical article “The Poverty of Primordialism”, where they hold that the traits chosen by primordialists to characterize their theory do not exist because they are not socially constructed, and there are only socially constructed ideas that composite group identity. By socially constructed they meant the facts that were produced in social interaction.\textsuperscript{128}

2.5. Post-modernism

The other theory used to help resolve the question why the cultural issues are not any longer of vital importance for the ethnically nationalist tuned ideology of Latvian society is post-modernism.

Post-modernism is one of the most controversial theories not only in the field of international relations, but also in literature, art, psychoanalysis and philosophy, since it

\textsuperscript{125} Cultural Policy in Latvia, Cultural development policies in member states of the Council of Europe (1998), Ministry of Culture, Republic of Latvia, p.14
\textsuperscript{126} See Llobera J.R. Recent theories of nationalism in http://216.239.37.100/search?q=cache:r_LDeTJ9hOwC:www.diba.es/icps/working_papers, p.4
\textsuperscript{127} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{128} See www.alternativesjournal.com/gbacik.pdf, p.12-13
pertain all these spheres. It is usually defined by what modernism is not. Pauline Rosenau clarifies:

“As we in the west approach the end of the 20-th century, the “modern” record – world wars, the rise of Nazism, concentration camps (both in East and West), genocide, world-wide depression, Hiroshima, Vietnam...and a widening gap between the rich and poor – makes any belief in the idea of progress or faith in the future seen questionable. Post-modernists criticize all that modernity has engendered: the accumulated experience of western civilization, industrialization, urbanization, advanced technology, the nation state....Post-modernism challenges global, all-encompassing world views, be they political, religious or social.” 129

As it is clear from the above, the concept of post-modernism is implicitly associated with the idea of progress measured by material values, particularly in the west; it questions the positivist philosophy about the capabilities of a human being. R. B. J. Walker states that “…the framework of modernism, associated with the rise of the west is the main intellectual background against which thought about international relations developed.” 130

In international relations post-modernism has often been blamed for doubting the reliability of international relations and their value. 131 Besides the plenty of critics, the very proponents of post-modernism disagree about the meaning of the term, some of them naming it post-structuralism or deconstruction. According to Rosenau, post-modernism discharges all the immune postulates of our times: Christianity, modern science, liberal democracy, feminism, and blames them as logo centric, searching for totality narratives, which know the answers before asking questions. This ambiguity, vagueness about the vision of the world leaves the scholars of international relations with little explanations about the discipline on one hand, but on the other, it provides the innumerable possibilities to question the totality of present prerogatives of international relations, paying attention to emotions, speculations, personal reflections and culture. There is a view, which can be easily attributed to modernity, that the “contents” of culture that can be moods, beliefs and values is extremely difficult to study, to measure and evaluate. 132 As Walker points out, the value of culture in international relations has been contested for a long time before post-modernism. It was so, because the concept of culture was more connected to the idea of civilization, not state, and therefore not connected to the notion of territoriality and conflicts between states that are said to be the matter of international relations. 133 Post-modernism, in its turn, denies all the excepted

132 Cultural analysis (1984), ed. Wuthnow, Pavison Hunter, Bergesew, Kurzweil, Boston, Routledge, pp.3-4
133 See Culture and International Relations (1996), pp.267-268
standards of epistemology and ontology, extracting culture from purely philosophical 
matter into the field of politics.

The question of epistemology or the status of knowledge about reality seems to be 
of great importance for postmodernism. If man is the source of all science and 
knowledge, is responsible for its evaluation and analysis, which means that knowledge 
cannot be objective, a man is capable of using this knowledge as power (Foucault)\textsuperscript{134}. For 
post-modernism, knowledge is not only cognitive; it is a matter of politics.\textsuperscript{135}

“Post-modernist theories of IR put forward the view that although there is no one 
true political foundation for the study of international relations, the nature of change can 
be ascribed to the interaction of knowledge and power.”\textsuperscript{136}

The major authors connected with post-modernism are M. Foucault, J. Derrida and 
J.F. Lyotard. The mentioned authors were concerned with illusory perceptions of the 
production of knowledge by the contemporary authors. By “contemporary” they meant 
“modern” or, historically, attributing to the period that followed the medieval times. They 
focused on the critique of political philosophy of modernism and, thus, ideology that 
declared to be knowledge with its belief in instrumental rationality.\textsuperscript{137}

The input of Michel Foucault in post-modernism can be ambiguous, due to his 
ambivalence in expression; however the importance of his ideas for global politics is 
beyond doubt. Foucault’s name is usually connected to the idea of discourse, which he 
deﬁned as

“…ways of constituting knowledge, together with the social practices, forms of 
subjectivity and power relations which inhere in such knowledges and relations between 
them. Discourses are more than ways of thinking and producing meaning. They constitute 
the “nature” of the body, unconscious and conscious mind and emotional life of subjects 
they seek to govern…”\textsuperscript{138}

Foucault’s works, such as “Discipline and Punish” (1979), “The Archeology of 
Knowledge” (1972) are saturated with interest to history that found its way in Foucault’s 
genealogical method. It traces the history of knowledge systems that were in charge of 
the formation of thinking, each system ruling for certain period of time; he calls those 
knowledge systems “epistemes”. This presupposed that knowledge was unavoidably

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{134} Beginner’s Guide to Research in the History of Science: Michel Foucault’s 
Interpretive Analytics URL: http://www.horuspublications.com/guide/cm108.html-
\bibitem{135} Theories of International Relations (2001), ed. Burchill , Devetak, Linklater, 
Paterson, Reus-Smit, True, New York, Palgrave, p.182 
\bibitem{136} See www.globalpolitics.net/essays/Krause-Dornelles.pdf, p.6 
\bibitem{137} See Hornsey R., \textit{Postmodern critiques: Foucault, Lyotard and Modern 
Issue 3 
\bibitem{138} See http://www.massey.ac.nz/~a-lock//theory/foucault.htm
\end{thebibliography}
connected to power, it practically meant one and the same thing. To put it simply, genealogical method traced the correlation between searching for knowledge and searching for supremacy and power.

There are two strategies post-modernism uses to treat power politics, if one assumes that textual representation plays major role in forming opinions (and text is the key word for post-modernism: “Everything is text!”). According to Derrida, the world should be treated as a text, which is not a reality. Such a treatment implies explanation or interpretation of the textual world, which is done by the two strategies: deconstruction and double reading. Deconstruction, as decided by Derrida, involves dismantling all conservative conceptions and accepted dualities.

Deconstruction of totalities or oppositions means that all of them are, in fact, dependent on each other and hierarchically construed. Double-reading is discovering stability and instability effects by going through two readings when analyzing anything. The first reading engages in finding out how reliable and coherent a text is; the second reading spots the deficiencies of a text or discourse, what the strains of it are and how they are dealt with. Double – reading is about providing an answer to the question “How a text or an institution or a discourse is constructed?” and not looking for one general “correct” reading.

What is interesting for this research is Foucault’s analysis of cultural production or social activity that transformed from the top-down form of organizing society, which is “sovereign power”, to more subtle way of control – “social surveillance” or socially imposed standards of normalcy. The post-modernist critique of the accepted duality in IR – sovereignty versus anarchy, based on the realist premise about security in the states-system, was blamed as logo centric narrative of modernity, where logo-centrism implies creation of dualities. This modern sovereignty narrative, according to Ashley, suggests necessary homogeneity, gained by democratic or autocratic order within the agents (states) of the system, which makes sense only juxtaposed to unsolvable conflicts and anarchy outside.

Thus, post-modernism focuses on sovereignty and questions its totality. Sovereign state itself is taken as utmost form of subjectivity in international relations. So, the importance of sovereignty is being challenged and the importance of territoriality or location is being reexamined by post-modernists. Seems like that by rethinking the paradigm of sovereignty, post-modernism attempts to pluralize political possibilities beyond the state. In this way postmodernism strives to broaden the vision of international politics by challenging the nature of political aspect of sovereignty. Post-modernism welcomes plurality in culture, alterity, different perspectives. If we take the concept of

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139 Ibid.
141 Ibid., p. 187-188
142 http://www.massey.ac.nz/~alock//theory/foucault.htm
143 See www.globalpolitics.net/essays/Krause-Dornelles.pdf, p. 9

31
culture as signifying the political peculiarity of a state, while its uniqueness is the basis for state’s sovereignty, than we can surmise that sovereignty and culture are closely connected. Richard Devetak remarks:

“Both “Man” and the state are marked by the presence of sovereignty, which contrast with international relations which is marked, and violently so, by the absence of sovereignty (or alternatively stated, the presence of multiple sovereignties). In short, both theory and practice of international relations are conditioned by the constitutive principle of sovereignty.”

Post-modernism reckons the traditional power politics’ indebtedness to sovereignty in international relations has outlived itself. Resolving the state-centric tensions has deprived us of wider system of interactions, free for political, social, cultural activities. Post-modernists see deterritorialisation as natural phenomenon in connection with globalization of contacts across the state-borders. Interest towards identity is changed by the interest to diversity. This diversity democratically questions the privileged position of one perspective or culture.

“Post-modernism challenge cultural politics of modernism that negates the possibility of identities within the experience of multiple terrains, instead, modernism frames culture within rigid boundaries that both privilege and exclude around the categories of race, class, gender and ethnicity.”

There were lots of doubts cast on the validity of post-modernism; the most common one is probably about the nihilistic attitude towards the existing state-system, totalities and relativity of epistemology. If there is no objective “truth”, as Foucault declares,

146 how can one accept the truthfulness of Foucault’s position? In addition to that, post-modernist hate of totalities leaves us with no model of how the democratic society should look like, or how the cultural production in a progressive situation could change. It gives us the uncertainty of fragmentation, where no prognoses are possible.

Then, the scope of attitudes, ideologies, trends and new literary phenomena named “postmodernism” is enormous. It seems like many authors explain their materialization only with controversy of modernism and with the response to it, not capable of independent existence.

What represents limitations for this research in particular is the problems post-modernism creates for the validity of agency in the states system. Post-modernists assume that the traditional division of political space into state-agencies is neither natural, nor necessary. It appears to be an extra reminder of power geo-politics.

146 See http://www.genesoe.edu/~bicket/panop/topic_foucault.htm
147 In this respect it suites perfectly to represent the contemporary nature of the European Union, a “sui generis” itself.
148 See Culture and International Relations (1996), p. 276
refutes sovereignty episteme as the one that produces repressions, by using ideology as power, and substitutes it with a kind of socialist proposition that political change is possible through much smaller units than agency in the system. Those smaller units are people of the community, willing to cooperate, summing up their small amounts of power. If power is disseminated like that in states system, the importance of identity becomes subjugated to common international discourse.

Another aspect in the post-modernist theory of Foucault is that of all of his books there is only one that has the word “culture” in its index: “Archeology of Knowledge”.

“Foucault refutes … history as a study of discontinuities trying to get away from cultural totalities”. Since culture for Foucault associates with totality, anthropology, subjectivity, it looks for him as if limited of objective truth.

In addition to that, Lennart Davies points out that

“…by raising doubts about the ontology of meaning, the view that things unproblematically signify, that objects are, that genders exist, postmodern theorists have helped create the notion that identity is not given but a construction”.

2.6. Winding up…

If one uses the combination of primordialist ideas admired in Latvia and postmodernist theory, as tools to clarify the “unpopularity” of cultural issues on the eve of Euro-era in Latvia, it is likely that there are two conflicting epistemes changing places: modern and post-modern. As it was said above, nationalist ideas, which are still influential in Latvia, are traditionally held as distinctive feature of modernism. The opening or enlargement of the European Union happens to bring the post-modernist deconstructionist attitude into the society. Since information, which is knowledge, about the EU is mainly in the hands of the political elite in Riga, it has the power and the ability to adapt the new, post-modernist approach, before the society does it, to treatment of cultural identity. This means treating the latter as a “burden”, because its distinctive presence depends on the Common European Discourse. Latvian ethnic-centric cultural policy is being contested by European civic identity policy, which stresses cultural dynamics, democratic approach, which is more adapted to the idea of common Europe. It is the influence of post-modern ideas that are, according to Foucault, telling us that

150 Cultural analysis (1984), ed. Wuthnow, Pavison Hunter, Bergesew, Kurzweil, Boston, Routledge, p.148

151 Ibid.


153 Ibid.
“...cultural factors limit our thinking, that even the most imaginative individual functions within his or her language, that individual’s imagination itself is sparked by the age he or she lives in, and that each age has its own codes of knowledge. Time and space thus predetermine the individual’s scope of thought and action...”

In international relations this individual is a sovereign state with its particular identity and self-centrism. The new post-modernist treatment of the security paradigm that presupposes substitution of the other-“enemy” to the other-“different” precludes the presence of danger in the states system. It is necessary to keep in mind that to establish itself a political identity has to find its antipode, to establish itself against something.

To secure a singular niche as a “wholesome” identity in the geo-political situation of the world implies certain cultural homogeneity within the state. Since wholesome political identity in Latvia with its two communities, the Russian –speaking and the Latvian one, has its difficulties, there is a double problem with the other within the country, not only outside. The dangers this situation may lead to are described by David Campbell ("National Deconstruction") in his portrayal of the ethnic cleansing of the Bosnian War.

Post-modernism, with its tolerance of plurality is able to provide a constructive solution to this Latvian inner problem, shifting the paradigm of sovereignty by the discursive construction of multiple sovereignties. If one of the elements of post-modernism is the desubjectivation of discourse, it is probably worth talking about the certain “deculturisation” of Latvian government policy discourse that finds reflection in scarce interest to debate on national culture just before the enlargement.

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156 Ibid.,p.194
3. Eastern or Western national side?
(Latvian case)

“The day of the nation state is over”.
Roman Herzog, president of Germany, September 1996158

3.1. Foreword

The main difference one notices from the first sight between the peoples’ attitudes toward the term “nationalism” is tentatively positive evaluation from Western European and tentative rejection of its meaning from Eastern European points of view. One might have justified it with the major destructive effect nationalism had in Bosnia, former Yugoslavia. That could be also explained by the Soviet Union’s and its satellite states’ system of values, which correctly tried to avoid discussions on the topic of many nationalities in the country.

Here I must specify that by the division between Eastern and Western Europe in this research I mean not only the Cold War and Warsaw Pact geopolitical gap. These are also historical circumstances, Roger Eatwell writes about, from the Orthodox Byzantine traditions, quite different from the Roman ones, to the Bolshevik Revolution, which cut Russia from the European continent.159 Under these conditions, the countries that were under the influence of the Orthodox Church and communist ideology formed to be culturally and emotionally attached to their nations, not the civic status states offered to them.160

After many years of independence this attitude still persists in the minds of many Eastern Europeans. In the Baltic, nationalist feelings have no longer (it is considered from the Moscow coup of 1991) been associated with Patriotism, rather with extremism and national hatred.161 Anyways, the interpretation of the concept seems rather subjective, depending on the left–right political orientation.

160 Ibid., pp.253-255

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3.1.1. Geopolitical differences, concepts and traditions

Two notions are unavoidably connected to nationalism: sovereignty and identity. These seem to be the point of departure if one is to investigate the different approaches to nationalism in the east and west of Europe. The concept of sovereignty leads inevitably to the civil idea of nationalist belonging and discussion of citizenship; while the perception of identity is tied to ethnic or born national belonging and cultural uniqueness of each nation.

What is also very important for a political scientist discussing identity is the connection of this notion to the concepts “nation” and “state”. The process of nation-building is often juxtaposed to the course of state formation. The last one is connected to the matters of public institutions, international and national law, constitution and constitutional rights, and control over arm force. Though the boundaries of nations and states coincide quite rarely, the importance of nation-building for a state is unconditional. It is the state’s ideology that is involved in the process of creating state’s infrastructure in the name of the nation.

Here one should notify that many authors date the birth of national ideas differently. The majority is prone to counting forth from the French Revolution when citizenship defined civic “participation through particularistic identities”. Another alternative is the time of the creation of nation-states, such as the unification of Germany in 1830-ies, because nationalism and creation of nation state are in a way interrelated.

According to Ernest Gellner, who is cited a lot by many nationalism researchers, the process of crystallization of nationalist conception went through three stages, starting from the 18-th century. The first step would be the Congress of Vienna when the dynastic system attempted to institute its privileges again together with the “rehabilitation” of religion. The second step is attributed to the third decade of the nineteenth century. It was the time, when nationalistic forces were rising to its culmination in 1918; the third stage followed the year 1918 with extremist nationalisms of Germans and Italians that emphasized cultural dominance of the governing circles.

Another classic of nationalism studies, Hans Kohn mentions that

"The idea of nationalism goes back to the ancient Hebrews and Greeks, and was revived in Europe at the time of the Renaissance and the Reformation."

It is accepted by the majority of authors to introduce the division into eastern and western nationalism. The division is based on the peculiarities of cultural and political

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nationalisms, the former being ethnic, closed Herderian 167 eastern one and the latter – civic, open, Lockean western one. This division seems debatable to some scholars. Thus, A. V. Bell-Fialkoff and A. S. Markovits claim that different types of nationalist ideals are capable of existence both in the east and the west of the continent. 168

As a matter of fact, what is important for this research is the idea that in the west nationalism developed much sooner than in the east of Europe 169. Before the words “nation state” were introduced, many wondered what “nation” itself stood for. To simplify: common customs, traditions and a sense of belonging to a certain country’s population were gradually complemented by the “particularism” of a specific culture of concrete people. 170

Liah Greenfeld characterizes nation from the point of view of modernity:

“The word “nation”, meaning “sovereign people”, was now applied to other populations and countries which, like the first nation, naturally had some political, territorial, and /or ethnic qualities to distinguish them, and became associated with such geo-political and ethnic baggage.” 171

167 This research takes the view of Adeed Dawisha, who uses the term “Herderian nationalism” to imply cultural nationalism. The concept of Volk was developed in the 18-th century by Johan Gottfried Herder. Cultural nationalism for Dawisha is in the very being of people. It remains the immemorial past of a nation, fostering its homogeneity and divides it from other groups.

“Lockean nationalism” stems from the name of an English philosopher John Locke. In this research it signifies the symbolic connection of liberty that bounds the state and nation. It emphasizes individual freedoms of the governed. The government is dependent on the moral trust of its people. (According to Dawisha)


170 My summary

Anthony Smith defines nation as “a named population sharing a historical territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass, public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties for all members.”\(^{172}\)

If one looks back at historic events it is easy to follow that western tradition has its nationalistic developments intertwined with the political changes, which altered the existing systems of ruling, but were not in opposition before or after the attempt to alter it.

In the Eastern tradition nationalist ideas had to fight for existence despite the strong political resistance of governments and start not with “revolutions in the minds”, but try to connect compatriots on the unconscious level, culturally.\(^{173}\)

Accordingly, Latvian nationalist feelings, which seem closest to the German or eastern example of nationalism, were from the very beginning of the nation–state formation cultivated by poets, writers or simply people of arts and traditions. Here begins a highly debatable issue from the theoretical point of view, which will be developed later: should this kind of cultural nationalism be considered as a primordial or constructed? Since all traditions are in a way constructed, does it mean that cultural nationalism is actually regulated by constructivism?

Because of the particular importance attached to the cultural aspects in the east, its proponents made strong accent on the past and the sentiments ascribed to it. This is very true for the Latvian example. In this respect I could hardly agree with Hans Kohn, who asserts that nationalism in the east

“lacked self-assurance; its inferiority complex was often compensated by over-emphasis and overconfidence, their own nationalism appearing to nationalists in Germany, Russia, or India as something infinitely deeper than the nationalism in the West...”\(^{174}\)

Eastern nationalism was probably not that strong politically because of suppressing historical circumstances. Since it was under the influence of a stronger culture, eastern nationalism was constantly looking up to its western variation. However, it did not mean that its intention to express itself was weaker.

Another distinctive feature of the so called eastern nationalism for which it is often blamed is its tendency to closure, in comparison with international ideas of individual rights, value and liberty intrinsic to its western neighbors. Ideals of democracy did not seem to be of profound importance for the nations that had to stress their ethnicity in order not to forget that it had one. However this “preoccupation with ethnicity for the


\(^{173}\) See ibid., p.164


38
Baltic also led to the dangerous belief that every ethnic group has a natural home where members of the group ought to live”.  

Thus this straight connection of national belonging to territoriality let one suggest that Latvian nationalist ideas from the very beginning (from the end of the 19-th century) were disposed to ethnically bounded society. It was so because of the migratory inflows of Swedes, Germans and Russians, who in force of their countries’ imperialist policies shared the space with Latvians, who considered the former “outsiders”. The presence of hegemony emphasized the apprehensions to loose cultural identity for good. It was probably this idea that fostered nationalist concentration of thought on cultural peculiarities of Latvian folklore, including songs, tales and dances, especially since the nation state was still under the process of creation. Bell-Fialkoff and Markovits call this kind of separatism from other ethnic groups: “ethnic eligibility”\textsuperscript{176}. These authors would definitely attribute the Latvian type to the Herderian nationalisms and “nonstatist” ones. Herderian - because of its jealous safeguarding of people speaking the Latvian language and nationals of the country from foreigners. On the grounds that Latvian state historically could not promote nationalism’s development they would name the latter “nonstatist”\textsuperscript{177}.

There is a very susceptible attitude towards national epic, ballads and songs that had enormous impact on the formation of Latvian consciousness at the time when the state was defining its pattern as it is now. The country’s historical memory keeps the governing circles indebted to Latvian cultural discourse. One could speak about certain interdependence relationship between the state and culture, its development. Here is more than that, as a matter of fact, since the role of folklore is often to mark the line between the “insiders” and “outsiders” in the country.\textsuperscript{178}  

### 3.1.2. Theoretical implications

To put the debate on the theoretical basis it is essential to notify that analysts study the subject while attributing the particular nationalism type to civic or ethnic, in most cases. To repeat to a certain extent what was discussed earlier, civic or open nationalism,

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\textsuperscript{177} Ibid.

which appeared after the nation state was created in most cases is defended by the constructivists. Ethnic or closed nationalism, which claims to connect people not with ideas of individual values or democracy, but with blood, origin and language, is defended by the primordialists. Both theories applied to this topic cannot be considered the opposing ones, according to Bell-Fialkoff and Markovits. Since the paradigm of national self awareness or culture is never static, the process of enriching national heritage, adding new elements to it is, in fact, creates national attachments. That is how, one could probably say, primordialism is continued by constructivism.

Ethnic Latvians mostly agree that since the times of the Cold War their nationalist feelings were kept frozen under the surveillance of the Soviet Union. When the independence was restored, nationalist ideas and ethnic differences became the reason of many conflicts within the state. It seems very important, taking into consideration the present situation in Latvia, when the European Convention on the Human rights of Minorities is persistently denied ratification that the episteme of primordialism for Latvia has some difficulties transcending into a new constructive episteme.

It has been repeated here several times about the connection of the civic, inclusive nationalism type with the ideals of democracy. Liah Greenfeld gives details:

"...cultural validation and empowerment of ethnic identity and ethnic diversity endanger liberal democracy. However heretical in the current political climate this may sound, the best way to assure that such democracy will thrive within ethnically diverse populations may be rejecting the principles of ethnicity and ethnic diversity and, instead, encouraging civic identities and commitment to pluralism, or diversity, of a civic nature."\(^{181}\)

For primordialism “ethnicity” is a key word; moreover, ethnic homogeneity is essential, which would accentuate the peculiarity of the nation. There is certain inevitability about any nation in the context of primordialism, aspects of nationalism that cannot be changed, nation being as an entity closely connected to its past cultural experiences. There is a sense of history mixed with a tint of mystery, of legendary idealization, the belief in the sagaciousness of the fore comers. It is connected often to the German traditions of Romanticism.

Constructivist approach presupposes the mutability of nations due to social contacts, political compromises and customs’ and traditions’ inventions in order to stabilize the community, to create a common cultural base for it to function. “Nations are created, nourished, and sustained through the telling and retelling of their pasts. This process includes the myths, the heroisms, the unsurpassed achievements; the flowering of language and literature; the philosophical and artistic genius that has no peer...”\(^{182}\)

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This kind of nationalism is rooted in the English and French thought, which saw the nation as a follower of the state, often developing by the catalysts of social and political needs of it. Adeed Dawisha complements this division with a subdivision into instrumentalism under constructivist theory. Instrumentalists believe in pure political and materialistic interests when thinking about the common base for the nation. There is no talking about the fusing impact of the past (which can be invented), or social interaction compromise for the sake of different ethnicities.

For Ernest Gellner nationalism is no doubt constructive, for “the cultures it claims to defend and revive are often its own inventions”. He sees nationalist ideas as a “consequence of a new form of social organization, based on deeply internalized, education-dependent high cultures, each protected by its own state.”

This debate about the construction or hereditary formation of “nationhood” can be complemented with the two ways of viewing social relations by Ferdinand Tönnies. The concepts of Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft were already mentioned in the theoretical chapter. Tönnies disclose society as either a cosmopolitan mix of nations and cultures, with emphasis on individual civic rights (Gesellschaft), or a biological and cultural reality, stressing family and the importance of ethnic traditions (Gemeinschaft). It is the traditional contradiction between economic and kinship ties, conventional rural and modern city lives, mores and laws, community and society. The Gesellschaft concept (or “society”) develops around the rational choice of individuals in favor of economic interest. It constructs functional society that is organized in accordance with main ideas of international liberalism. However, different cultural values make it problematic. Gemeinschaft or “community” is connected to harmonious social relations with shared cultural heritage. It promotes national feelings and holism, but is likely to be a matter of the past, according to Tönnies. Although nationalist ideas of Gemeinschaft seem to be eventually juxtaposed to the rational and market relations of liberal capitalism for Gesellschaft, Tönnies gives no insights in this respect.

The popularity of the primordial theory among the contemporary political scientists is rather low, probably because of the narrow ethnical scope of it, or the high level of migration in Europe, or remoteness to the ideals of liberal democracy. Paul Brass gives some other suggestions: “It is difficult… to travel much further than this with the primordialists. First of all, it is clear that some primordial attachments are variable. In multilingual developing societies, many people command more than one language, dialect, or code. Many illiterate rural persons, far from being attached emotionally to their mother tongue, do not even know its proper name. In some situations, members of

184 Ibid., p.63
185 http://www2.pfeiffer.edu/~lridener/courses/GEMEIN.HTML
186 See www.imsa.edu/center/bernie/html/gemeingesell.html
188 Ibid.
linguistically diverse ethnic communities have chosen to change their language in order to provide an additional element in common with their group members…”\textsuperscript{189} 

One could probably think that many scholars in their choice of a theory would determine it according to the country’s ethnic homogeneity. Thus the United Kingdom and France would represent historically the constructive nationalisms, and Germany, for example – a primordialist one.

However, Latvian case does not go well into this scheme. From the period of the national consciousness being formed, Latvia was ethnically diverse. However, the testing of the primordial theory for the Latvian case (despite the criticism that primordial ideals could be destructive for the “civil society”) might be doubtful because of the idea that it is closely tied to emotions and irrationality. However, the state itself can actually determine on primordial ideas being the most rational ones, if there is ethnic identity endangered.\textsuperscript{190} 

Latvian oldest collection of national songs or verses known as Dainas, composed by no individual author, is as valuable for the people as an epic. It represents the Herderian idea of a nation’s soul or volksgeist. It is no coincidence that Latvian culture was subject to a great social and political influence on the part of Germany. Besides the German territorial claims, Latvia was just like Germany until 1830, divided into several sovereignties owned by many. In both cases the accents instead of statehood were shifted to the cultural nationalism. This very special treatment of national tradition stems from the idealistic philosophy of Johann Gotlieb Fichte (1762-1814), who defined the term “nation” as

\textit{“arising together out of the divine under a certain, special law of divine development”}.\textsuperscript{191} 

The closure of primordialism upon the blood ties and a certain brotherhood of nation members was influenced by Darwin’s biologic theory as well. Ernest Gellner mentions also the ideas of Nietzsche, which cultivated the image of a pure white nation\textsuperscript{192} that seemed vital for the Herderian type of nationalism.

Adeed Dawisha reports contemporary debate on the nationalistic issues is deeply connected to issues of history, education and especially, language. Language seems to be the most important issue everywhere in Europe, identifying the particularities of nations and keeping the culture alive. The language is extremely important as a means of putting down the history of a nation.

The ethnic feelings that primordialism juggles with have a very strong potential despite the fact that European model of nationalist attachments is usually the civic one. It is very powerful because it poses the question weather the countrymen are ready to sacrifice their lives for the nation. It is actually up to the people how they evaluate their

\textsuperscript{189} Nationalism (1994), ed. Hutchinson J. and Smith A.,p.84-85
\textsuperscript{190} See ibid., p. 85
\textsuperscript{191} Dawisha A., Nation and Nationalism: Historical Antecedents to Contemporary Debates, International Studies Review, Vol. 4, Issue 1, p10
national attachments – more in the ethnic or civic mode. It is also the transition from modernity (cultural nationalism) to post modernity (political nationalism).

The appeal to the inner ties between human beings apart from political or economic interests, always connected to one particular country, seem to match every single nation. It should be notified that primordialism does not necessarily imply that nation should acquire statehood. The blood, common origin and common culture endure for centuries and have their impact on the life of an individual even if he or she does not live in his country of origin\textsuperscript{193}.

The primordial ties are usually blamed in the West for being out of date, unrealistic under the particular political conditions, creating situations where chauvinism and xenophobia, based on the hereditary membership principle in the community, are provoked. However, the context of ethnic nationalism can be determined by the political and ideological interests present in particular society.

The research of Vera Bacova on primordialism and instrumentalism attributing to national identity focuses on different systems of values in the west and in the east, which explain ethnic or political attachments by cultural and historical circumstances in different societies. However, the psychological appeal of primordial values, its emphasis on blood ties, Bacova concludes, seems to touch questions of security and self-perseverance, liable for all, but for small communities specifically\textsuperscript{194}.

This is another reason for the primordial theory to be tested for explaining Latvian national attachments. The smaller the community, the more close the attachments get, transforming itself in almost a kinship. Latvia, with its 2, 4 million inhabitants, of whom Latvians comprise only 58. 4% (year 2000)\textsuperscript{195} seems to be the perfect case of a small community with a very strong wish to protect its ethnicity, since it was in danger for the last 70 years of Soviet times. Besides, there is a quite clear psychological need to determine themselves as an ethnic majority, the bigger community, the nation state.

\subsection*{3.1.3. Concluding remarks}

The conclusions of this discussion on nationalism could not overemphasize the role of the state in choosing the path of development in the Herderian or the Lockean mode. The very mission of state is instrumentalist or constructive, creating the imagined society and adjusting it to changes in politics.

Bell-Fialkoff and Markovits suggest focusing on how the state fosters its particular kind of nationalism, whether it is inclusive or exclusive one.

\textsuperscript{194} Ibid., pp. 40-41
\textsuperscript{195} See “\textit{Cultural policies in Europe: a compendium of basic facts and trends}” (2002), in \url{www.culturalpolicies.net}
“If a state already exists and has large ethnic minorities within its borders, it… will send it along the Lockean path. If the protective carapace of the state does not exist and a (small) ethny lacks the means of enforcing its language and culture even within its ethnic territory, it will have to fall back on the descent as the basis for incorporation and will be more likely to develop along the Herderian lines.”

From the point of view of international relations, primordialism with its knowledge of history and culture does not make it possible to foresee the future political situation in the country, even though it admits that some mutations in the ethnic culture groupings are likely to happen.

National unity and, as a result, stability, according to Geertz is “…maintained not by calls to blood and land, but by a vague, intermittent, and routine allegiance to a civil state, supplemented to a greater or lesser extent by governmental use of police powers and ideological exhortation.”

That is why the attitude towards primordialism in the western political space is generally tentative. Besides it is considered that individuals do not identify themselves with their state just on the grounds of origin, their attachments constantly alter and national identity is “the product of complex interactions between social, economic, political, and cultural histories.”

In Latvian case, primordial values do undermine the stability in the country, since a great deal of population is not ethnic Latvians. Bell-Fialkoff and Markovits comment on this situation in Latvia and Estonia suggesting the desirable shift from Herderian to Lockean attachment system, which would be the solution to potential instability. What is particularly interesting is that the authors speak about the tendency among the traditional Lockean states to turn to nationalist ideas:

"…the rapid Herderisation of the Lockean citadels like France and Britain, where the process is encouraged by the massive influx of immigrants and refugees. For some time now citizens of British dominions have been allowed to immigrate only if they can prove British ancestry (parents or grandparents)."

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Tracing nationalism developments in eastern and western parts of Europe helps to spot the differences between national political cultures that might lead to misunderstandings when implementing common cultural policy in the EU. If on the national level it is the degree of democratization that signifies that nationalism managed to foster the formation of cultural identity, crystallizing common political identity of the EU is the task to perform on the supranational level.

3.2. European collective identity: discussion of prospects

The question about culture for one Europe is also the question about European identity. Before asking whether the common European culture exists, it is worth to remember that in the discussion about symbols for Europe in the 80-ies there were just six European member states yet. A lot more countries were outside the union, which, according to the considerations of that time could not claim their belonging to European family. This seems absurd even now, since there are still Bosnia and Herzegovina, for example, that are geographically European. This apparently signifies the constructive nature of European identity; however, one argument is not enough to build the statement on.

From the analysis of literature on European identity it is noticed that beside the fact different authors may assume that such an identity can or cannot exist, they all agree with the ambiguity of it. The presence of European historical legacy can be treated both as a uniting and divisive force. In both cases the choice is said to be determined by the treatment of principle of subsidiarity. 201 James Joll managed to bring together common experiences of Europeans that includes Roman Empire, Christianity, the Enlightenment and industrialization. 202 Michael Wintle is the illustrious optimist in respect of European identity. He uses Joll’s summary to declare the existence of European cultural identity that, in his words “consists of partially shared historical heritage and experience, in the widest possible sense.” 203 It is not in any way a design of the European Commission, he

203 Ibid., p. 24
holds, because thus its life span would be very short from the point of view of history and quite geographically selective in nature.  

For Gerard Delanty European culture, as any other, is based on conflicts that must be overcome. In order to escape the perils of nationalism in the situation when the importance of agency in post-modern state-system is growing, he suggests distancing from the ethnic connotation of the term “culture” and stick to the term “political culture” for all Europeans. This can be achieved by no means with difficulty in his view, for the concept “ethnic Europeans” is too vague. This symbolic construction of political culture would help to deal with cultural diversity and promote European identity, which is impossible to create by the EU institutions.

Anthony Smith is probably the most well-known skeptic on the matter of European identity with his rhetorical question: “Who would die for Europe?” As a primordialist, Smith unsurprisingly rejects any thought about the existence of European identity, by no means inborn, for European nation’s history does not exist. Opposite to Delanty, Smith argues that so far, despite all the striving of the EU institutions European nationalist feelings have not developed. However, in the field of culture these efforts might not be that futile. The post-modern technological discourse cannot create anything better in Smith’s opinion, than fragmented and shallow cosmopolite culture, which is artificial and accurately calculated in the space of communications and information systems.

The choice of collective European identity is also a more conscientious choice of individuals in favor of political culture in comparison with ethnic attachment which is said to be irrational.

Oliver Schmidtke emphasizes the political aspect of collective identity, defining the latter as a dynamic relational process, established in a long-term period during interaction of individuals on the matter of their common traits. He also describes the three kinds of symbolic rules of constructing collective identity for Europe. These rules are likely to determine the inclusive-exclusive elements for constitution identity. Primordial pattern is obviously concerned with the national and cultural base for community building, which, in addition, is too exclusionist towards other nations. Universalistic mode does not include ethnic homogeneity in the community; it is much more culturally inclusive. The willing candidates to this community should be capable of adaptation, and even assimilation in search for cultural homogeneity. This community type treats other cultures as inferior and is capable of enforcing its rules on the novice in the community. Traditional mode of collective identity implies the acquisition by the newcomer of the civic rules of inclusive society. It is not negative towards outsiders; they are potential members of the group. Abiding by the rules of this community, which are

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204 Ibid.
not at all discriminatory, already presupposes inclusion into it. There is no partiality present when treating “us” and “them”. Definition of identity here is based on internal social procedures and rules.²⁰⁸

Soledad Garcia holds that European identity has its prospects and speaks about the consolidation opportunities the civic society can offer to the political community such as the EU. Civic rights and freedoms can ensure in her view, the creation of common traditions; and being loyal to local polity does not exclude European loyalty. Eclectic consciousness in the modern times implies eclectic societies, where beside the traditional identity elements – religion, education, literature, arts, and local myths – new definitions of security, new national myths and technological advances are developing. Civic society will enable the pervasiveness of European identity on all levels of social ladder with open participation in the institutions of the Community. The homogeneity of the European polity is often not trusted, so Garcia suggests looking over the creation of concentric identities, with loyalty to local communities first and European Community loyalties being most remote.²⁰⁹

Brigid Laffan mentions the elements European identity should be structured on: shared destiny, tolerance of diversity and emphasis on the civic dimension of nationality, not the archeology of national history.²¹⁰

The construction of European identity is not just a term mentioned in the Treaty of the EU; it has some empirical functions. Gerard Delanty describes the modern duality of self and the Other as the biggest difficulty integration should overcome in the culturally diverse Europe. More than that, he sees the changing idea of Europe the Foucauldian way: power structures form their own image of Europe every period of time, altering it according to their ideological perspectives, with no essence in identity, and keeping only the Christian “us and them” dichotomy.²¹¹

David Green makes many interesting points in the research of European identity, of which I summarized particularly important for this research²¹²:

The success European integration enjoyed since 1957, though elite-driven managed to persuade many scholars that introduction of institutional cooperation and the free-market ideas were not futile. The ambiguity of the common currency and the strains it has put on Europeans has proven that economic integration can never be a complete process in itself. To put it simply, there is no integration without European identity.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.
Although there is no war in Europe on the agenda, the presence of enormous military capabilities of Germany, France and Britain may place situation at risk. The modern security solution of determining one’s identity against the Other has outlived itself. The impossibility of war must be ensured by doing away with “the Other” through the common sense of identity.

David Green conducted his empirical research to find out what are the chances for the public support for European identity. The findings represent in 1999 that approximately 15% of Europeans (members of the EU), which is one in every six or seven, would identify themselves as Europeans. Nearly 35%, which is about every third questioned, would identify themselves with Europe, but to a lesser extent; the rest, which is nearly the half of the population, would rather reject European identity.213

All in all, the discussion about prospects for European identity seems to be the reflection of the argument between primordialists and constructionists, with the former representing the minority in this dispute. Loyalties to different political authorities are already present in one nation state. So it looks like political culture is a profound basis enough to ensure not only the usual top-down formation on the part of the European Commission. It could also promote cooperation on the bottom-up level, which would foster the European identity development.

10 new candidate states are to a certain extent capable of undermining the economic and political unity with their low fiscal development level and peculiar eastern, even though European means of reflecting and doing things. The ongoing process of constructing European Identity is so far beyond the theories of European integration and cannot be described in Treaties.

The eclectic nature of post-modernism is fairly well corresponding to the shifts from centre in Brussels to the member states; and the wider the Union grows the more there appear possibilities to come to a common denominator. Paradoxically, culture is one of these possibilities, if not the biggest of them, because of the scope of the fields of life it pertains to and because it is a matter of creation by the common and the unbiased. Culture is the matter of populace much more, than it is of politicians. This can ensure the better participation in the bottom-up creation of European identity.

The civic and social rights and participation in political processes must become the basis for such a theoretical aim. It is the status of citizenship that can bestow such rights on Europeans. Such a civic attitude toward citizenship would no doubt be more democratic, and ethnic qualities as origin or nationality would become politically outdated.

Brigid Laffan points out that the “inclusion in the Treaty of European Union of a chapter on “Citizenship of the Union” which lists seven rights, including two limited

213 Ibid.
political rights, begins the process of redefining of the boundaries of political community in Europe.\textsuperscript{214}

The concern for institutionalized political participation in social matters of the European Union, with all the rights it involves that are given by European citizenship, seems also to Schmidtke the best foundation for European integration and identity.\textsuperscript{215}


4. Significance of enlargement for Latvia

“I have never understood why public opinion about European ideas should be taken into account.”

Raymond Barre, former French premier and European commissioner

4.1. Difficulties: past and present

The ambivalence of nationalism in Latvia was not self-evident until the actual independence in the 1990s. E.J. Hobsbawm explains the rebirth of national consciousness in the east with the “unfinished business of 1918-21” 217, that “ancient and deep-seated national questions which actually seemed dangerous to European chanceries before 1914 have not proved explosive”.218

The regained independence meant a great deal to Latvians. At the end of 80-ies attitude towards multiethnic community in the country was more liberal. The pristine intentions to build up an independent country, where democracy would be unbiased were welcomed by everyone. Alex Grigorievs comments on how the situation developed in the 80-ies:

“The concept of a “multiethnic Latvia” as “our common home” was introduced, where all ethnic groups could live in peace and develop their national cultures. At the same time, the First Congress of the Peoples of Latvia endorsed certain other concepts that were not necessarily as liberal and democratic as they initially appeared. Ethnic identity was taken to be an intrinsic component of human culture and individual normalcy”.

218 Ibid.
Since that time it was strictly the question of political loyalty to the re-born country.

The importance of the language\textsuperscript{220} was primer for Latvia. This fear of losing the Latvian language seemed to be heightening it to the important moral characteristic one should have to be a potent member of the society. Such an approach granted national language with political power, which also presupposed the influence of culture for policy-making and the definition of Latvia.

It took five years before in 1995 the government plunged into the “teamwork” with the European Community. During these years the Parliament or Saeima was working very hard, elaborating the Latvian constitution, Satversme, (which dates back to the times of the First Republic, 1922) with new laws. These laws were mostly to do with the preserving of the Latvian language in the country that had the biggest percentage of Russians in the Baltic, 34%, not to say anything about Ukrainians, Byelorussians, Lithuanians or Poles.\textsuperscript{221} This, probably, is what makes the Latvian case an example of saliency the language has for its ethnic group. One should probably add about the inevitability of emotional tensions connected to the process, since, according to the new law, the status of Latvian citizen was given only to those, who were citizens of Latvia before 1940 and their ancestors. This left almost half of the population with very few rights and a status of an “alien” in the country\textsuperscript{222}.

After all, difficulties with the primordial system of values in Latvia, based on the superiority of ethnic origin and centered on the Latvian language, have produced a segmented state. Due to the legacy of the Soviet times, the percentage of non-Latvians remains very high; in December 2002 it was 42%.\textsuperscript{223} The size of the Russian minority, which is said to be “pro-Moscow”-oriented and not loyal to Latvia,\textsuperscript{224} is taken by the governing circles as dangerous for the security in the country. Thus the demands of the minority for citizenship giving all social and political rights are often seen by the position in the parliament as insolent.\textsuperscript{225} The problem with large minority is aggravated for Latvia with the fact that Russians being the former dominant majority in the times of the USSR, have obviously managed to keep their patronizingly imperialistic attitude toward the country. George Schöpflin reflects on this situation:

\textsuperscript{220} The status of Latvian was considered to be endangered because of historical circumstances of the Soviet “one-language-for-all” system and a large number of minorities for the time being. (According to \textit{Europe’s New Nationalism: states and minorities in conflict} (1996), ed. Caplan R., etc.)
\textsuperscript{222} Ibid., pp.120-133
\textsuperscript{223} See http://www.eib.lv/publ.php?doctype=3
\textsuperscript{224} See http://www.delfi.lv/archive/index.php?id=3973781

51
“…Formerly dominant minorities discover that their ethno-cultural identity, which they had unthinkingly assumed would “naturally” give them access to power, influence, status, social capital and information via their links with the centre, has overnight become a drawback… Correspondingly, formerly dominated majorities establish their own hierarchies, routines and forms of knowledge. They live with a sense of resentment at having been subjected to colonial rule and look to discharging these resentments on the local representatives of the colonial power, both real and symbolic. Under such circumstances, processes of multi-ethnic accommodation are lengthy, uneasy and...fraught with misunderstandings.”

4.2. Public opinion and party support for European integration

As it will be supported further by the citations from the Parliament debates, the so called Russian speaking circles are said to be euro-skeptic. However, the data fluctuates constantly. Thus, in the second half of 2002 from 42% of non-Latvians who were asked about the coming referendum on the future membership in the EU, both, non-Latvians (comprised 38, 4% of the population asked) and non-citizens of Latvia (35, 8% of the asked population) would rather vote for the membership, than not (non-Latvians -35, 2%, non-citizens – 35, 0%)227.

From 1995 the government took the course of European integration as its external policy. It was officially accepted by all parties in the government, although the consent of every single member was not absolute. This is hard to support documentaly, since only the official position is reflected in Saeima’s files. However, it becomes obvious, following the polemics.

According to the research on Euroscepticism in the EU candidate states of Central and Eastern Europe, of Paul Taggart and Aleks Szczerbiak228, there were two parties according to the parliamentary elections of 1998 that were prominent for their soft Eurosceptic position. They were adequately criticizing European integration and favoring national interests. Those were center-left Latvian Social Democratic Alliance and the right-wing Conservative Union for Fatherland and Freedom.

For this research the author studied the political programmes during the elections in October 2002 and discovered there were two right-wing nationalist parties - “Our

226 Ibid., p. 239
“Homeland” (Musu Zeme) and “The Latvian Party” (Latvijas Partija), and one left-wing “The Latvian Social Democratic Welfare Party” that distinctly articulated their anti-EU attitudes. None of them managed to surpass the 5% votes’ barrier necessary to get their seats in the Saeima. The mainstream parties that took most seats in the new government of 2002 – “The New Times” party, “For Human Rights in Unified Latvia”, “People’s ‘Party’” or “The Green and the Farmers’Union” – do not express even soft Euroscepticism in their election programmes. All of them tie Latvian identity and national interests to Latvian security to European security and NATO.

Looking at the level of public Euroscepticism provided by the Euro barometer, one finds strikingly different picture, a picture of fine balance between positive and negative public attitudes. According to the results presented by Taggart and Szczerbiak, in 2000 Latvia had the highest level of anti-membership public attitude among the candidate countries: 33% against and 44, 2% for the membership. The authors argue that the candidate states with low public support for EU-membership tend to have high party support for the EU. They also see no plain connection between party-based skepticism and public opinion on European integration. The researchers point out that the question of European membership for some candidate countries have more salience than for other ones. This political salience is not necessarily reflected in the active party-based Euroscepticism. Thus even hard party-based Euroscepticism does not signify that political salience of the European integration is of great actuality for the country.

The potential for expression of party-based Euroscepticism at the parliamentary elections 2002 in Latvia was not high. There one can mention two reasons for this: one is the general agreement among the parties to support the pro-EU state policy. The other is that the political “heaviness” of the EU membership might be of less importance among other, inner Latvian issues actual for politicians and their electorate.

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230 However, the research Taggart and Szczerbiak completed covered the election results of 1998 in Latvia. Slightly different party programs at that time suggested a certain level of soft Euroscepticism. The parties they defined as soft Eurosceptic were the Social Democratic Alliance and the Conservative Union for Fatherland and Freedom.

Soft Euroscepticism – One or several policy areas of the EU are opposed by the party, although opposition is not a complete rejection of European integration;

Hard Euroscepticism – complete opposition to the European integration, a party regret EU membership or reject it, being a candidate country.

231 See “Parliamentary debates” in chapter 4.4. further

In the Eurobarometer report of November 2002\textsuperscript{233} it is shown that at the referendum about the EU-membership 45% of people in Latvia would support the idea, 32% would vote against and 7% would not vote at all. The rest did not know the answer or simply did not reply. The slight differentiation in Europe-positive opinions in roughly one percent in two years (comparing Taggart and Szczerbiak and Eurobarometer results) suggests that either the mind of the majority of the population concerning enlargement is already settled, or the level of knowledge about the EU has not improved almost at all. Respectively, 39% of people characterize their EU knowledge level as low, 53% would name it as medium and only 5% as high, according to Eurobarometer in November 2002.

These numbers show to a certain extent the difference between Latvian state politics and the ambiguous attitude of the public in force of different reasons towards the enlargement. Negative attitude in the society finds its reflection in non-governmental organizations like “Movement against European Union membership” (founded in opposition to the “European Movement Latvia”), rather opinionated publications in the newspapers or on the net (as the one by Aivars Borovkovs, former member of the “Conservative Union for Fatherland and Freedom”, called “European Union is a big business” or even books - Janis Kucinskis is the author of one of such books. His “Living in the state of war” (“Dzive karastavokli”), (2001), is a sort of history of Latvia’s conquering by more powerful nation-states. He is terrified by the events of the September 11 and depicts the post-modern western civilization as violent, immoral and cruel:

"...We belong to the “civilized” west again...The mass media prepares us with western psychological war products to be the “movie-material”; it teaches us to be violent, pervert, greedy and capable of betrayal. Looking through Latvian TV-broadcasts makes one think Latvians do not have any brains. Commentators and newsmen constantly repeat what has been said by some high-ranked European commissioner, how

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See for example
http://www.home.lv/nees/rb2.html
approvingly he evaluated the way our market reforms, privatization and preparations to enter the EU and NATO are going. Although every single house-wife would tell the well-paid commentators and “experts” that we are going to hell in fact.  

Kucinskis is a good example of a certain part of common public opinion in Latvia viewing the post-modern western ideology and culture as decadent and artificial.

To illustrate the differences in public and official attitudes towards the enlargement pertaining culture and identity aspects for Latvia this research exploits newspaper articles, parliamentary debates’ transcripts and interview materials.

4.3. Newspapers

The research is focused on the number of articles about enlargement in connection with Latvian national interests and culture in “Independent Morning Newspaper” (“Neatkariga Rita Avize”) from 1999 to 2003 (February). The choice of the researcher is based on the mainly right-wing position this newspaper takes to compare it later with the Russian or left-wing press. The researcher used “Euro pessimism”, “EU integration”, “Culture”, “Identity” and “Europe” as key words for the selection of articles.

One should probably notify here that during the period of the last 3 years there were 14 articles found that discussed Latvian identity or culture in connection to the enlargement.

4.3.1. Latvian press

The discussion of identity and culture in the articles is very much connected to sovereignty and is set around two main Latvian government drawbacks: the lack of information to evaluate the significance of the process and the lack of trust towards the

236 Kucinskis J. (2001), Dzive karastavokli Riga, Poligrafists, p.69
237 My translation from Latvian here and everywhere in the paper
authorities of the country. Consistent with the enlargement negotiations getting more and more promising for the Latvian side, the majority of articles date back to 2002, very few to 1999 and 2001. The absence of adequate information about changes the EU is going to bring into Latvian society seems to be the cornerstone for the majority of article authors. Guntis Neimanis (Oct. 19, 2002) in his piece “Critique against careless attitude of politicians towards low support of the EU” repeats the words of the president of NGO “European Movement Latvia” Ainars Dimants:

“So far EU integration has never been higher than 50%. He is doubtful that this number is going to change before Referendum. He says that in the budget of 2003 there is no money for preparing information campaigns; no action plan is developed so far... The less a respondent is informed about the EU, the greater is the tendency to be against the EU membership”.238

The fact that the government is going to allot the money for the information campaign in March 2003239 was treated by “Neatkarīga Rita Avize” (Feb.7, 2003) with suspicion:

“No matter what happens, people have to be informed about what is the EU in fact, and as fast as possible”240 ... ...This will be done, since the government forms for this purpose a working group. R. Umblija241 has set the temporary information vision: information prepared for the public by professionals should be easy to understand, be interesting for different society groups, intriguing...What is that? Is that another commercial that makes us all sick? To start it (the campaign)242 there are 60 273 Ls allocated. Why? It seems cutbacks everywhere, though money is wasted needlessly. Standard and correct information is acquirable simply and inexpensively...243

All the above shows the government actions do not provide any profound support for the EU among citizens for the time being and are seen as a sort of manipulations with public opinion. More than that, Aija Lulle writes that

“...sociologists and politologists connect relatively low EU membership support with the lack of trust on the part of the public to the authorities. This lack of trust is supported by the idea that not only the public have, but also politicians themselves think that the biggest part of Latvian political elite acts in its own interests, and by no means in interests of the society. This is what the researches of 2001 showed in the "Review of the nation’s development in Latvia".244

Another wave of negative attitude about enlargement is connected to the changes in the constitution that are being made. It specifically concerns the Latvian language and the lame balance between Latvians and Russian-speaking minorities and possibility to quit the Union, which seemed likely to be discarded by the President of the European

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238 http://www.lursoft.lv/library?Form=NRART&docid=141477
239 See www.lursoft.lv/library?Form=NRART&docid=144585
240 The Referendum is to take place Sept. 20, 2003
241 The head of the EU pre-referendum information group
242 My brackets
243 http://www.lursoft.lv/library?Form=NRART&docid=147374
244 http://www.lursoft.lv/library?Form=NRART&docid=143097
Rather indignant about the former changes seemed the president of Latvian Lawyer Association Aivars Borovkovs, who “expressed his wonder at Latvian discrimination during the EU–entry negotiation process” and the fact of putting up with that. He reminded that

“…10 years after the independence was regained in Latvia, in 1999 there begins “some idiotic discussion” about the state language. Some “van der Stuls” come to Latvia, who express the ideas that are totally false.”

Borovkovs stated his disappointment with information, which Max Van der Stul, the High Commissioner on National Minorities provided concerning the accepted rules of the government to have all the correspondence only in Latvian.

The new Minister of Culture who came after the parliamentary elections of 2003, Inguna Ribena, has brought with her the idea of a new cultural policy in the country. She has already become well-known for her suggestion to discard the thought inherited from the Soviet times that culture is inseparable from the air of politics and economics in Latvia, writes “Independent Morning Newspaper”.

As a matter of fact, cultural policy in Latvia has been set around the Ministry of Culture since 1991, as it was explained in the introduction. According to what was already discovered in the previous chapters, Latvian culture and arts had traditionally been in antagonistic relationship with the state. That is why democratization and non-regulation of artistic creation became the basis for the new culture policy.

The present cultural policy is marked by the decentralization reforms that take place within municipal administrative organs. However, the cultural policy outline available on the Internet does not explain the essence of reforms, which were introduced. It also does not provide profound assessments of positive and negative traits of former and present policies.

Financial support of cultural projects was delegated to the Culture Capital Foundation in 1998. The Ministry of Culture fully supports only the institutions of national “weight”: national opera, national symphony orchestra, national ballet, state choir.

245 http://www.lursoft.lv/library?Form=NRART&docid=147578
246 www.lursoft.lv/library?Form=NRART&docid=88065
247 www.lursoft.lv/library?Form=NRART&docid=144375
248 http://vip.latnet.lv/culture/English/policy.htm
249 http://www.culturalpolicies.net/profiles/logo.html
The importance of cultural projects of different art sectors is growing and was emphasized by Latvian president V. Vike-Freiberga in her interview to the “Independent Morning Newspaper” (Dec. 27, 2002) when she spoke about the distinction of Latvian culture in the European Union family. According to her, to present something special to the EU in the cultural field Latvians have

“to offer not just their songs and choirs, Latvian people are not unique because they are capable of singing. It must be something done in depth, like exceptional ballet, opera or cinema”252.

The tendency of interior state policy to dispense with national financial capabilities and orientate toward subsidies and donations about to come from the EU structural funds and programs as SAPARD or Culture 2000 is being criticized by the public. Viktors Avotins notifies this tendency in his article “Europe as a gift” (“Eiropa ka davana”) with his idea that donations and financial support coming from Europe in a way leave no place for initiatives and creativity.

“...According to the European Integration Bureau in Riga, it is not that EU is going to give us possibilities to achieve something on our own, but as soon as we are in, we will be given everything “ready-made”. It looks like membership will provide us everything and promote us on the upper level.”253

The article “Globalization and nation-state” (Globalizacija un nacionāla valsts) pays attention to the absence of discussions in Latvian civil society about the processes of blending different nations in the European Union, that have given rise to mutual interdependence. The author contemplates over the possibility that globalization is the matter of free choice, but the reality is imposed by the international economic forces and this process is irreversible. If one assumes that

“International organizations are forms of national states’ multilateral functioning and global games are dictated by certain western states; is it impossible that global values are western values? ...From the French Revolution times the imposition of western values onto other cultures caused protests, terror and wars.”254

It seems like the author circuitously implies the unfair position Latvia as economically insignificant and small state is in. It is stated that the rise of national feelings in defense against globalization in France, for instance, is provoked by fears to lose not only state sovereignty, but also economic and cultural sovereignty. This fear is based on the indirect involvement of international institutions in the harmonization of national constitution for the sake of cooperation in the first place; in the second place violent international involvement is possible, and Kosovo is taken as an example.

To sum up, the major issues on the enlargement and Latvian identity during the period of three years covered in the “Independent Morning Newspaper” focused on the insufficient dialogue about the changes coming with the membership, financial support for the information campaign being provided right before the Referendum to impress the public before they make their choice. This seems to point to the absence of confidence in

252 http://www.lursoft.lv/library?Form=NRART&docid=144178
253 http://www.lursoft.lv/library?Form=NRART&docid=117315
254 See http://www.lursoft.lv/library?Form=NRART&docid=87870
public-authority relations. Membership in a way is viewed as a menace to sovereignty, for there are some changes relating to the state language made in the Latvian law to adjust it to *Acquis Communautaire*. Articles about cultural policy reveal public concern that this state policy is not developed enough to stand for the country in European space and is not likely to reach its fullness under the EU programs.

### 4.3.2. Russian press

From September 2002 up to February 2003 publications in the main Russian newspapers: “The News Today” (*Вести сегодня*), “Telegraph” (*Телеграф*) and “Business and the Baltic” (*Бизнес & Балтия*) were chosen for examination. All the Russian press mentioned during this time period has evaluated the EU membership rather critically, which can be probably explained by resentment about the fact that non-citizens will not participate in the referendum about EU membership and are not going to enjoy the full rights in the EU. In June 2000 the number of non-citizens in Latvia was 600,000 people. In force of the political circumstances Russian press finds itself in opposition to the government policies and this is explained by co-existence of two communities in Latvia. The present conditions for Russian non-citizen minority make it focus more on integration within the Latvian community, not the EU. The problem of Latvian identity and culture is not vital for them as a matter of fact. The discussion on the EU membership is focused on economic and political conditions for the country.

The new Minister of Integration, Nils Muiznieks, in his interview to “Evening Riga” (*Вечерняя Рига*, Feb. 10, 2003) admits there is a problem with the tendency to slow down the integration of non-citizens on the part of the authorities. He explains the waning interest of Latvians to take care of cultural identity within the country with the naturalization of Russians.

The problem that government external policy development considers the only scenario of Euro-positive national referendum results was criticized in several Russian newspapers. The absence of development model for Latvia in case if citizens vote against the EU is compensated by rather pessimistic prognosis for the future alliance with Russia and Byelorussia. On this topic write “Baltic Businessman” (*Коммерсант Балтий* – Jan. 27, 2003) and “Business and the Baltic” (*Бизнес & Балтия* – Nov. 4, 2002) citing the words of the Minister of Transport, Roberts Zile. The latter article resents results of the conference “Economists’ Union 2010” which discussed economic and political prospects of enlargement. In the case of anti-European choice of the public, money deficit, curtailment of foreign investments, devaluation of Latvian currency will follow,

according to Zile. The former article gathered public opinion about the disastrous prognosis. There, the Minister of Economics, Modris Lujans finds that the main potential drawbacks of enlargement for Latvia will concern individuals, not society as a whole, in cultural and social sectors.

Generally speaking, the review of the Russian press in Latvia for this period pictures rather big part of the society that is uninvolved in the political process of the EU enlargement. The absence of the left-wing “For Human Rights in Unified Latvia” party (that had the second largest number of votes in the last elections, but could not manage to join the coalition formed) in the position in Saeima, leaves the voices of the Russian-speaking minority unheard for the government. This leaves them without the motivation to discuss the prospects of Latvian cultural identity and concentrate instead on economic scenario of the ongoing process.

4.4. Parliamentary debates

Another category of empirical research is represented by the official documents from the Saeima – the examination of parliamentary sessions for the period from 1999 to 2002. The test of this protocol was made through asking the question: “How important culture and identity issues seem to be for the enlargement process in Latvia?” the answer will be given with the help of theoretical implications in the analysis chapter.

The discoveries were unexpected: parliamentarians discussed cultural issues only once in these 3 years in the context that was by no means related to the enlargement talks. The debates on the integration into the EU consisted of the critique of the implementation of the EU Integration Strategy. The rest of the protocols focused on the inner problems of the state, which almost in every second debate turned into the discussion on the internal division of the society into two communities.

The language used is not always official; sometimes it is blatant and plain, especially when it comes to confrontation on the subject of Russian minority. The low level of integration in the society is reproduced in the parliament by different treatment of this problem on the left (pro-integration, socially oriented, representing Russian-speaking part) and right side (ardently patriotic, nationalistic, anti-Russian sentiment part) of it.

To give an example, the Saeima discussed amendments to the language law on the 20-th of March 2002. They were instigated by the harmonization to the European Acquis. The right–wing MP from the national conservative “Union for Fatherland and Freedom” Peteris Tabuns described the implications of enforcing the Latvian language position, in accordance with these amendments, as measures against Russian “occupants” in the first place:

“After the occupation we received those 700 000 people, who, at least the majority of whom had to return home in fact. We made them non-citizens, handed out passports for them... So, we have come the long way to the total, - I stress- the total naturalization and got scared ourselves, that after the next elections ... there will be not enough places for this fraction, because another one, that fraction, probably will be larger.”

By “that fraction” P. Tabuns likely implies the left “For Human Rights in Unified Latvia” party.

The left MP Jakov Pliner at the discussion of the National Security Conception (Jan. 24, 2002) retorted to the right-party idea that it is a profitable job for leftists to keep up 2 communities existent:

“...One part of the society wants to be loyal to the Latvian state, but the state does not want (at least they assume so) them to be loyal...”

The division into Latvians and non-Latvians seems obvious for an independent reader with opposition of “us” and “them”, and the negative connotation intrinsic to the word “occupation” chosen by P. Tabuns in the statement of his. The lexis of the left-side parties substitutes “occupants” with “non-Latvians” and “national minorities”, “who did a very big job to ensure Latvian independence would be recognized” in 1991.

Different attitude in the parliament to the position of Russian-speaking minority is probably explainable with the important role the Latvian language plays for people with ethnic national sentiments. Ethnic attachments of Latvians appear to be very strong and ethncial parity with Russian-speaking minority so far seems not easy to reach. The protection of the language, which is the policy of the state, places this conflict into the situation where this attitude to Russian-speaking minorities is in a way motivated by the distinct language laws of Latvia. This idea may be supported by the feelings of apprehension or fear expressed by P. Tabuns at the total naturalization of the Russian minority. This is likely to be true for at least the right wing of the Saeima. As a matter of fact, the solution to the problem of the two communities in Latvian society seems worth a whole new research to conduct.

In several of the protocols examined (sessions of March 20, 2002, Feb. 13, 2002, Jan. 24, 2002, May 17, 2001) national interests of Latvia were discussed as inseparable from the EU membership. The argument behind this is that the large number of minorities endangers national security of Latvia (due to their “wishes for the reunion with Russia”), more than that, the right wing is likely to believe that Russian Latvians are the reason of the low support of population to the enlargement.

The discussion about the “Implementation of the EU Integration strategy” on the 17 of May 2001 begins with the words of the President of Ministers Andris Berzins that

20 http://www.saeima.lv/latvian/steno/st_02/st_2401/st2401.htm, p. 29
262 http://www.saeima.lv/latvian/steno/st_01/st_1110/st1110.htm, p.3
“State’s external policy’s goal - the secure and stable development of Latvia - is to be procured by the European Union and other transatlantic and international organizations as main instruments.”

A. Berzins points out to the lack of information in the society:

"...we all – the government, the Saeima and political parties – have to explain the state development objectives in plain language understandable for people."\[265\]

In his three-page speech he states twice (in the beginning and following up his speech) the argument in favor of the EU- the general well-being of the society, which can be ensured by the European standards.

European Union is viewed by A. Berzins mainly as an enormous range of opportunities: the access to modern technologies, possibilities in trade, education, agriculture and many more...The concern for national identity is seen as European prospects of growth for each member-state that are provided no matter what is the size of the state:

“...The idea that an access to these opportunities endangers our people’s national identity is incorrect... Maintaining our national identity depends on ourselves, on how strong we will be.”

Mentioning the protection of Latvian national interests A. Berzins brings up the negotiation topics - environment protection, fishing in the Gulf of Riga, agriculture - and the strivings of the state in these spheres.

If this speech is taken as an example of the Latvian EU integration policy, it seems culture is not on the priority list in the negotiations talks, more than that, it looks in a way dependable on the economic welfare of the state. Seeing national interests through the prism of European standards appears to guarantee development in cultural field by itself, on the grounds of joining European cultural family. However, politically this is an extremely significant decision that is narrowed down to almost no alternatives: “east, west or nowhere”. A. Berzins explains:

"...the next year will be crucial for us; it is going to show in a way to others and ourselves where we want to be – in the EU or the so called “grey zone” or somewhere else. Geographically we have always belonged to the Central Europe. We found ourselves in the east as a result of the Molotov-Ribentropp agreement. I hope that we will not be considered Eastern Europe the moment the consequences of the Molotov-Ribentropp agreement are destroyed in the minds of western Europeans, that is when we are admitted into the EU. We are defined by the western mentality and belong to the western political culture”.

Clearly, this political choice for the time being is very much influenced by the miserable experience in the Soviet Union and to depart with this past is the strategy of the country.

It is interesting to follow the words of the minister of Foreign Affairs Indulis Berzins who points out to the absence of clear idea on the part of ministers of France,
Germany and other member countries about the form future Europe will take. The important detail in his opinion is the fact that Latvia is able to participate in this discussion in the Convention being just a candidate for the EU, but there is no his view declared on federal or nonfederal Europe for Latvia. The question remains unanswered – does the political form of the European Union matter for Latvia? In the end of his speech he invited the parliament, the government and the society to join the discussion on the future of Europe and said:

"I think the basis of our national interests and our most genuine national interest is to join the EU and NATO as soon as possible".

Strangely enough, the words of I. Berzins give the impression that as long as Latvia joins the Union it will agree to whatever the structure of united Europe is, Convention discussions are secondary.

Another important aspect this session showed is that although all the parties in the Saeima agreed on the state EU integration strategy, not all members of the parliament were so optimistic about EU prospects. The following discussion of the validity of the “Implementation of the EU Integration Strategy Report” was rather vivid, with the Foreign minister retorting four times the arguments of left-centre (Latvian Social Democratic Workers’ Party) and left-left (“For Human Rights in the Unified Latvia”) and right-center (Nation’s party – “Tautas Partija”) members of parliament. The arguments considered by the Foreign Minister serious enough to respond concerned the fear of globalization form the west, national interests, the division of the society into the “Russian” and “Latvian” communities and the lack of strategy or plans for the time after the state joins the EU. These issues appeared to be valid counter arguments to the state EU integration strategy, the activity of the Foreign Minister responding evidentially showed it.

The initial speech of the Foreign minister was commented by Vaira Paegle (Nation’s party), she pointed out that the most significant for Latvia was to be ready to join the EU as soon as possible, not to become the member of it as fast as it can.

The MP from the same party Maris Sprindzūks worried about the absence of thought in the report about the role of Latvia in the new Europe. In his view Euroscepticism in Latvia is not necessarily based on some specific danger, it is the fear of globalization that enters the country. For the integration, in Sprindzūks eyes, has turned into a technocratic activity based on plans, quotas and harmonization done by the officials. The public stays out of this process, living its own life with very little idea of what’s going on.

To this idea Valdis Lauskis from the LSDWP added that Riga, which was turned by the development into the cosmopolitan city, cannot be compared to the regions of the

266 http://www.saeima.lv/latvian/steno/st_01/st1705.htm, pp.42-44
267 Ibid., p.44
268 Ibid., p.48
269 Ibid., p.50

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country, which are very much concerned with the language, national development and the nation itself.270

The problem of the different values of the nation and globalization was not answered by the Foreign minister, he just indicated the intention of the state to save itself in the globalization conditions by joining European nations in one attempt to save all of them, and not turn into the “melting pot”. He mentioned Ireland, Portugal and Denmark as the examples of relatively small nations that managed within the EU to keep their culture develop, to defend their national interests.271

Several of the MPs mentioned the problem, which was never covered in the report: the separation and sometimes hostility in the relations of the authorities with the public, based on different social levels that exist between the officials and the people.272 Also were stated the disparities between Latvians and the minorities, when the attitude on the part of the minorities to the state deteriorates proportionally to their language fluency improvement.273

The argument of the Foreign minister was that European idea is able to unite different social layers of the society and different age groups. Dissimilar attitudes toward the EU correspond to the idea of integration. Therefore, diverse society groups not only had something that was differently evaluated in the past, but they would have something common in the future. That is why I. Berzins is not naming “those who are against - Euro-opponents, but rather - Euro-pessimists”.274

The overall tone discussing the “Report” is rather hopeful; the comparative lines are drawn to some modest achievements of Russia, Ukraine, and other Baltic republics. This positivistic attitude was criticized by several MPs, who mentioned the lack of realistic analysis in the document. Thus, Egils Baldzens (LSDWP) called the report a poem or an epic “Into the shiny future” and stated that optimistic attitude of the government should not imply that in Latvia there are no economic problems.275

Another important detail criticized by the left and center-left party MPs is the absence of a distinct idea or plan for the time period after Latvia joins the EU.276 This certainty that Latvia will become the member of the EU seemed rather strong and was mocked also by Peteris Tabuns from the party “For Fatherland and Freedom”. He stressed the pressure European officials “like van der Stul” used to soften the language law and the citizenship law in order to promote naturalization of the minorities. He blamed the government for overlooking the national interests in this respect.277 The similar idea was given by the left MP Alexander Bartasevic, that government ignores

270 Ibid., pp.55-56
271 Ibid., p.67
272 Ibid., pp.67-70
273 Ibid., p.74-75
274 http://www.saeima.lv/latvian/steno/st_01/st1705.htm, p.76
275 Ibid., pp.80-83
276 Ibid., p.82
277 Ibid., p.77
national interests in order to comply with the European standards, which are not discussed but dictated to Latvia.\footnote{Ibid., pp.51-54}

The general tendency in the government according to this discussion of the report looks rather upsetting: obvious rush about entering the European Union space is not based on any distinct development plan for the future within or without Europe, and the slow integration process on the national level appears not to interfere into the integration on the supranational level in the future. The discussion of the enlargement issues analyzed above shows that despite the separation between the public and the authorities, criticized by the parliamentarians themselves, the parliament is well aware of the main problems the people tie to the EU. The rhetorical strategy of the discussion chosen by the government officials, however, remains fairly persuasive into the membership.

The session on the 28-th of January 1999 discussed the necessary rapidity of acceptance of changes in the Culture Capital Foundation law.\footnote{http://www.saeima.lv/steno/1999/st2801.html} The amendments to this law implied the curtailment of the budget for Culture Capital Foundation, which was discussed in the Cabinet of Ministers. The result was the curbing of the budget for that year for 1 million lats or half of the budget. The detail to pay attention to here is that the discussion over this cut in the budget of the only state fund, which finances cultural projects, was extremely short, with just two reporters in disagreement.

The MP from “Nation’s party” Dzintars Abikis argued against the acceptance of these changes. He commented on the budget cut with the fact that it was \textit{“done without any explanations on the part of the Cabinet of Ministers”}.\footnote{http://www.saeima.lv/steno/1999/st2801.html, pp.18-19}

The thought behind his argument suggested that justifying the need to invest in some other objectives, the government leaves the culture aside. Thus it is neglecting the most important national basis and identity determining factor. The important detail D. Abikis mentioned was the special attention of the last, the 6-th Saeima to elaborating this law.

As a counterargument Peteris Apinis from “The Latvian Way” fraction pointed out to the fact the D. Abikis \textit{“read his words from the paper”} and that the discussion was about the prompt acceptance of changes, not the essence of them.\footnote{Ibid., p.22}

The fact that this law was not important enough for the 7-th Saeima and was largely discussed by the 6-th, shows probably the shift of accents in the interior policy of the country. Further more, the haste of the amendment and the low activity of the parliamentarians in the debate plus the doubtful strength of counterarguments suggests the absence of interest or motivation to “legitimize” the significance of culture and...
identity in this period of time. In addition, cultural and identity issues have not been debated in the three more years to follow.

4.5. Interviews

This section will cover some questions, which appeared the most significant for the analysis of culture and identity in the context of enlargement negotiations for Latvia.

To the question about the importance of cultural issues in the ongoing debates many emphasized the fact that negotiation chapters were chosen by the European Commission and cultural issues do not belong to the first priority lines in the EU. This pure post-modern attack on the boundaries of Latvian territory and identity exclusionary policy is being treated rather conservatively on the part of the respondents, no matter Latvians or Russian-speaking. Only two of the 15 questioned would consider culture was not being marginalized under the circumstances. The explanations those 13 provided included:

- the primacy of economical interests for the EU, which is seen as an economic polity in the first place,
- the excessive poverty of the population, who can not afford caring about culture,
- the stage of development that “celebrates the importance of cruel capitalist values” that all western countries had to go through,
- the lack of interest about Latvian culture on the part of the EU,
- After the independence was returned the significance of culture as a unifying factor had diminished.

The non-discussion of cultural issues in the negotiation talks has been considered by two Latvian politicians as a positive fact; for it simply implied that the EU is not going to subdue to any standards the inner cultural policy of the state. One Ministry of Culture official and another one working for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Latvia argued that they would not separate culture from other areas of the government policy, like economics or politics.
The striking tendency in the discussion of this question seems to be the orientation to the demands of the EU officials of those who declared themselves Euro-optimists and the absence of their own subjective position on the topic. The concern about cultural negligence coexists with obvious prevalence of the economic factors in the discussion of pluses and minuses of Latvian position. However, since culture or identity determines who the nation is on international arena, it looks like Latvian image has not been of much interest for Latvians themselves.

To put this argument on the grounds of theoretical implications, economic factors being used as an external method of control of Latvian state policy are being treated by the respondents as operations of power that seem much more profound than concern for identity. Many see that there is no need to define identity against the opening deconstructive tendencies of common European space. Thus, if sovereign state exists in the possible conditions of outward danger, the changing political discourse – joining European unity in diversity - leaves no necessity for Latvian policy of cultural defense.

The question about the reasons for differences in the positions, the state official one, which set only one alternative for Latvia – EU membership, and the critical attitude of the public, made all respondents very eloquent in their statements. All the 15 mention the historical experience Latvia had with the Soviet Union and the associative comparison people make with the European Union, which is going to limit the sovereignty of the state in their opinion. Here is noticeable the primordial attitude of the people toward Latvian cultural identity as a product of historical and cultural practices. However, the range of explanation for this situation is not bounded by this only one.

Thirteen out of the 15 respondents clarify the low support of the EU in the society by the lack of information, which is seen as a very negative aspect of the government integration policy. To be more precise, four of the respondents expressed disappointment about the absence of detailed account of pluses and minuses, the consequences of membership, in the information pack given about the EU from the European Integration Bureau. One parliamentarian from the 7-th Saeima (from Nov.1998 to Oct. 2002) gave an example of government informing the population only to a certain limit. She talked about the fishing possibilities in the Gulf of Riga that Latvian officials managed to defend in the EU membership negotiations: “This fact was popularized widely in the mass media; however no one told the public that fishing quotas are going to be minimized and then cancelled that eventually would lead to the liquidation of the fishing fleet.” This specific dosage of information to the public the respondents talk about reveals the power-knowledge approach of the Latvian authorities toward the enlargement information campaign. Holding the information back or giving the certain parts of it empowers the government within the frame of sovereignty paradigm, with its normative of man or state as the “last instance of one and only truth”.

Another argument mentioned by the majority is the geographical position of Latvia, which is in fact European country on the crossroads between the west and the east. In force of these circumstances it has to make its choice: whether to join the EU, to remain in-between or to be prepared for the cooperation with the Big Eastern neighbor – Russia.


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In connection with the last aspect many add that there is no much choice to do if people are likely to aspire for the profound development for the country. This argument easily can be subjected to the post-modern critique of modernity associated with the western industrial achievements as an exemplary advance course for the less developed states. This modernist attitude substitutes nationalist ambitions with strivings for economic growth.

Two out of all asked brought about the topic about moral assessment of the enlargement procedure, whether Latvia is treated as an equal partner by its western counterparts. (One of the parliamentarians pointed out that the financial support provided by the EU development programs does not foster any initiative form Latvian side, but leads to a certain humiliation and degradation of the moral values of the less developed.)

One municipal government official treats EU membership for Latvia as necessary as a “result of economic considerations, for utopia in the shape of Globalization has won the game, where the rich become richer and the poor grow poorer... If this Globalization is going to rule the economy, the smaller states in the EU are going to be in the worse situation.”

Rather important question to answer for this research was what type of national identity Latvians have: open, civic, Lockean one or closed, ethnic, Herderian one. Twelve out of the 15 respondents would attribute Latvian identity to the second type, with the comment that for the time being there is an ongoing diffusion process or transition to the first type of civic identity.

The majority noticed that the creation of the first or Lockean type of identity would not exclude the Herderian ethnicity out of being in Latvia. Apparently, this attitude distinguishes the inborn nature of Latvian ethnie, which can adapt itself to political circumstances but will always remain present.

The reasons why respondents thought Latvia had this kind of identity included:

- Under the 700-year of foreign rule Latvians managed to keep their identity thanks to their culture (folklore, language, cultural nationalism in general),
- Heterogeneous national context as a result of historical circumstances
- The period of Latvian state independence was too short, that is why Latvian nation associates with a sense of belonging to certain people and the language is the first determinant for this.

One artist declared that national differences do not matter that much in the end. An official from the European Integration Bureau in Riga refused to talk about types of identity, because she felt incompetent on the topic.

A candidate into the 8-th Saeima (formed in Oct. 2002 to Nov.2006) added to these points that “at present Latvia does not have a nation in fact. The polity that is being formed right now due to Latvian political forces is very tragically separated into two communities. Right after the independence was restored, people had some patriotic glow in their eyes; both Russian-speakers and Latvians had it. When you talk to someone from
the Russian-speaking minority now, you feel they live in some absolutely different world. We live parallel lives.”

This argument uncovers rather important conflict within the state, which appears to be based on the strivings of the government for the monocultural community in Latvia. The presence of the “Other” within the country creates instability, while the authorities so far find no solution for this diverse-ethnic discourse.

To find out if Latvians attribute themselves to the western European space the respondents were asked whether they had to reduce their feelings of national belonging to see them European. All the respondents argued they were unlikely to reduce their national feelings. The majority added they felt themselves European on other continents, in Asia or Australia, or Africa.

One Russian-speaking respondent indicated: “internationalist upbringing of the Soviet Union did not emphasize one’s nationality, so it did not matter for me until Latvia became independent”.

Absolute majority stressed their belonging to Europe, however two respondents pointed out that Latvia had been also profoundly influenced by the Byzantine culture not only the Roman, European one.

Concerning European identity 3 of the respondents said it was artificially created. It was rather a “certain European civilization standard” with the prevalence of “multilingual, white skin male-“dominanta””.

A politician characterized general attitude in Latvia toward joining European family: “Psychologically the majority of population is not going to have European thinking and will not identify themselves with Europeans that fast. However, the younger generation, which goes in for studies in Europe will have the European consciousness shaped at the same time with Latvian one. It is going to take more time, probably, than in other European countries.”

All the respondents said Latvian identity will remain their first identity, prior to European.

To sum up, despite the different sources this empirical analysis used, the crucial issues discussed by the public and the government happened to be the same. The interviews permitted to spot many additional perspectives to view culture and identity issues from. However, it is not possible to discuss all of them in this research. Thus, only the most essential questions were chosen for the examination and the rest will be eclectically employed in the next chapter of analysis.
5. Analysis

5.1. Latvian identity

The findings from the previous chapters let one characterize Latvian identity by the interdependent relationship between state and culture. The importance of culture founded on the traditions, folklore and the Latvian language produced social relations that were based on the connection of national belonging to territoriality. This connection was “justified” by the historical presence of the “other” on Latvian territory. During the formation of the Latvian nation state Latvian national ideas had to fight for their existence to identify themselves against German and Russian cultures in the 19-th and 20-th centuries that co-existed on the Latvian land.

In the political claim of the state culture played crucial role, it empowered both consciously and unconsciously the irrational attachments to strive for the sovereignty of the nation. So, political determination of Latvia or its sovereignty has been maintained by its ethnic singularity based on the language, which is democratically subjective. This all let one suggest that Latvian identity is ethnic primordial one.

At present Latvian primordial attachments, respectively the language protection policy of the state, encounters hardly developed democratic consolidation of the nation with the biggest minority group in the Baltic. The widening gap between the authorities and the non-citizens from the minority group creates difficulties for the internal integration, as the interviewed pointed out. The primordial values of Latvian community, as it was clear from the interviews and the statements of the integration minister Nils Muiznieks, cannot permit faster naturalization process.

Primordial attachments can be easily traced in the examination of parliamentary debates or even in the interviews, which reflected that psychologically authorities are not prepared for the creation of the civil society in Latvia. There is a certain group of people with distinct primordial ties that feels the danger from the “other” inside the country, because quantitatively the number of non-Latvians is rather big.

However, Latvia is undergoing democratic transition from primordial, ethnic cultural values to European civic values, which are more liberal. The pressure to make this transition is felt both from within and outside the state. The inside problem is produced from the segmented state, where non-Latvians, who are also mostly non-citizens are not interested in the enlargement form the cultural point of view. Latvians in turn, attempt at disciplining a coherent single community to avoid adding instability to so far brittle European identity. The outside pressure comes from the European civic identity type that fosters Latvian internal integration to fit European cultural dynamics. This implies exercising democracy institute and the protection of minority rights according to Copenhagen criteria.
However, despite the changes in the state system the problem of internal and external policy strategies in Latvia is still being solved within the frame of modernity. Thus modern dualities of “us” and “them” persist inside the country and are present in the scarce choice of the future development only between east and west.

European external ways of influence upon the transition that Latvian state experiences, coincide with the policy of the state to depart from the sad practices in the Soviet Union. Politically, EU membership is also the guarantee of security from the eastern neighbors. So, this is probably one reason why enlargement is inseparable from the national interests.

5.2. Public conservatism versus official support

The low support of the public to European integration and the active maintenance the European course by the government, despite the fears of faster naturalization and language law harmonization, is all about power, according to Foucault’s theory\textsuperscript{283}, discussed in the theoretical chapter. By the information campaigns, which are very actual knowledge for the public, the power of authorities creates social and cultural standards, which in Latvian case are to substitute primordial system of values by the civic western ones. Latvian authorities, as post-modernism interprets it, do not blatantly protect the title ethnic group by emphasizing culture and sovereignty under the circumstances. What they do is use the power of knowledge about enlargement in the positive way, by informing about the new opportunities of opening Europe, if the people agree to join the EU. In the official information there is very little about the negative sides of enlargement for Latvia. This, from the point of view of Foucault’s post-modernism, is the most efficient application of power theory. The fact of late allocation of money for the pre-referendum information campaign, instinctively treated by the public as an advertising ploy, adds up to this hypothesis. As it is clear from the empirical part, the government is likely to form the vision of the EU opportunities to persuade the public to make the “right” choice. This is the second reason why for the authorities national interest is – read: “power is” – inseparable from the “pluses” of European integration.

In addition to this, the absence of one distinct anti-European party at the parliamentary elections looks rather strange if one takes into consideration the doubts of many people about the enlargement. On one hand it may signify the lack of connection between the electorate and the people who represent them in the parliament. On the other hand, it may again indicate to the absence of interest of politicians to develop this problem, because political and economic opportunities coming from Europe are treated as the matter of power. The support for the European integration also might be of such a great political salience for the state that politicians are not likely to discuss its probable effects. Although the parties in the parliament are aware of the dubious attitude of the people, they comply with the government course despite the doubts of the public, who represent them. This shows strong political will, although democracy does not work that

\textsuperscript{283} See http://www.horuspublications.com/guide/cm108.html
way. This also means that parties in Latvia do not always represent the public that votes for them.

From the point of view of the EU, enlargement poses the problem of culture with additional emphasis, it becomes extremely significant to unite the continent. Post-modernism, which fosters eclecticism, cultural pluralism and relativism, diverts attention from the exclusiveness of the sovereignty. Deconstruction tendencies, desubjectivation of political discourse, attention to individuality – all these factors characterizing the post-modern episteme apparently devote a lot of attention to culture. As a matter of fact, this sort of attention is far from particularizing any national culture; it creates cultural mosaic that cannot be reduced to particular time or space.

This European treatment of common cultural policy does not coincide with Latvian primordial vision of cultural identity based on territoriality. The opening of borders for European integration is associated by many with post-modern globalization coming in. Its deterritorialization and desubjectivation of culture would expand the scope of development and prevent orientation to the Baltic locality of Latvian cultural episteme. However the answer to the question: “If European post-modern discourse broadens the horizons of cultural politics for Latvia by promoting alterity, how does it foster the importance of cultural issues for the country?” is likely to be: It doesn’t, it can’t foster it.” The study of empirical material showed that culture is dependable on the economic welfare of the state, and that adjusting to European standards should guarantee the development of the culture by itself. The reason is probably that the level of development and achievements of the state are still measured by materialistic standards and points of reference are set to the west, which is the distinct trait of modernity.

The study of the interviews also showed that the concern on the part of the public about cultural negligence coexisted with obvious prevalence of economic factors in the discussion of pluses and minuses of Latvian position. The study also discovered that the level of Latvian cultural policy development needs a lot of improvement, as it was noticed by the president. The scarce financing by the state, even cutting the budget for culture, which used to serve as identity determining factor for ethnically biased country, seems absolutely groundless. On the verge of enlargement the small country like Latvia with undeveloped industry, agriculture and administrative problems has definitely an outstanding cultural heritage that gave impetus to found the nation state. The most considerate way to define itself on international arena for Latvia would probably be through cultural achievements (for example of painters, musicians, rich folklore).

However, the concern about identity on the part of the authorities does not go so far as to support cultural projects sufficiently, which is unusual, since the latter in particular could create Latvian image for Europe. This view is also shared by the director of European Movement Latvia (Ainars Dimants) and the director of Culture Capital Foundation (Edgars Verpe). It appears that so far the cultural policy of the government is implemented according to the primordial attachments. This implies protecting the interests of the title nation by accentuating the norms of cultural belonging: language, origin, common history.

According to the discussion of parliamentary debates about identity and culture, the low activity of the parliamentarians and the unpopularity of the topic itself, seem to imply that these issues have no special interest for them. It could be probably explained
by the lack of motivation to determine Latvian identity against the “Different” (not the “Other”!). There is no need, then, to ask for national unity if European Union is not a threat for national government. However, does this “difference” context imply that if cultural subsidiarity is a matter of state, it should put aside for the better economic times?

Recent tendencies of separating the culture from the economic-political complex of state policies, decentralization strategies and the emphasis on municipal authorities and the financing of cultural projects by the Culture Capital Foundation instead of the Communist party and the Ministry are evidence of slow alterations. Removing accents from the state functions to partly dependent on local power is the evidence of the state attaching more democracy to formerly centrally administrative system.

Another important aspect of the enlargement is the political form the European Union and its meaning for Latvians. They seem to perceive European values form the modern perspective, which identifies Western culture with the centre of civilization, which is supported also by the outstanding industrial development. This civilization, according to the interviewed, had always privileged white race, middle class and male gender. In addition to this, there is no vision of one distinct European culture and very elusive belief in the morality of elaborating common European identity.

Modern interpretation of European identity has no social interaction in the process of creating single European space implied. It is rather afraid of the control from the top down or correction of responsible behavior on the part of the European institutions. This is the context through which the public is still likely to apprehend common cultural policy.

What is particularly defying in these pre-enlargement conditions is the absence of national strategy, national goals, as stated by many Latvian officials. There is no information about the federative future within the EU for the public on the grounds that European constitution has not been accepted yet. However, some of the interviewed mentioned European Federation being the end of integration process.

From Latvian primordial perspective cultural meaning of the European identity is historically rich, but relative and not profound all in all. The number of separately developed cultural traditions of EU member states gives no ground for natural, hereditary characteristics of this construction. Basically, there is no future for the state without a nation. Modern vision of political regimes would found its claim to legitimacy on cultural self of a nation. Democracy is thus established by the top and accepted by the down only of the same cultural belonging. Foreigners, EU officials respectively are treated as pouncing on social control, sovereignty trespassers. In addition to that, Latvian modernity discourse is likely to criticize western cultural narrative as hegemonic, which does not foster the belief in building a common European identity on equal conditions, especially for the eastern European country on the crossroads.

All the empirics attribute to the haste of the preliminary stage of European integration for Latvia, and this cannot be apparent in the cultural field only. European Union is no longer purely economic cooperation of the states in Europe; it projects its prerogatives much further and deeper to create heterogeneous European construction. To transcend the sovereignty of the nation state European Union needs to be taken by its people from the cultural and anthropological perspective. In the case of enlargement European culture is all about post-modern politics, creating and understanding the Union.
Cultural construction of the Union is for the time being strategically a necessity, a ransom for the enlargement success. Thus the idea of democratically functioning Union is indebted to cultural reverence of all pieces of European member-states medley.

The design of procuring a functionally democratic Union for the enlarged Europe is focused on the citizenship institute and civic rights of Europeans. This European actuality is not new for Latvia, since the government has been relentlessly, though with little success, trying to develop a civic society of its own for ethnic Latvians and Russians since probably 1998. This is almost certainly a sign that post-modern democratic plurality has a chance to overcome the supremacy of nationalism despite the denial of authenticity of European identity in Latvia. The infusion of European common culture ideas based on democratic ideals of the post-modern plurality in politics is taken by Latvian public with suspicion about the artificial nature of this culture for the super-state in formation. Cosmopolite ideas are still being ridiculed here as the interviews showed.
6. Conclusions

6.1. Ethnic identity:

Political self-determination of Latvia was historically indebted to culture. Irrational attachments of the people to the language, folklore and origin set forth the ethnical singularity of the nation and make internal democracy subjective. This let one define Latvian identity as an ethnic primordial one.

6.2. The problem of two communities:

The way the division in the country into the Russian-speaking and Latvian communities is being handled by the government suggests that primordial attachments hold Latvia back in the modernity discourse. The presence of the “Other” inside the country trammels gradual transition to the inclusive European civic identity type. The present conditions for Russian non-citizen minority make it focus more on integration within the Latvian community, not the EU.

6.3. The importance of EU membership for Latvian national interests:

The research discovered a sharp difference in attitudes of the public in Latvia and the government and the Saeima towards the enlargement. The doubts of the people have not been represented by any of the major parties’ programs at the parliamentary elections-2002. So the underrepresented opinion of the public, which is rather Europessimistic, and the official domination of the party-based pro-Europe course is probably the question of whether representative democracy is functioning in this case. Should there be independent institutions introduced for this purpose, at least for the time of the EU integration evaluation in the candidate states?

From the point of view of Foucault’s post-modern theory the opportunities of the enlargement looked forward to by the authorities are viewed as operations of power with information about the pluses and minuses of the membership. The public is generally dispensed with information about the EU and is expecting a special campaign about it just before the referendum on the enlargement. Therefore it questions the motives of the authorities.
The choice of the development path for Latvia (stay under the eastern impact or develop with the Western Europe) on the verge of European enlargement is very much influenced by the security apprehensions about the eastern neighbors.

The two arguments above: economic and political opportunities for Latvia in the EU and the security issues solvable under the European roof are explained by the transition of Latvian modern political discourse into the post-modern modality. This modality is being delivered by the European political organization, which sets the new type of social relations between the top and the down in the country, the relations produced by power, coming from the EU.

6.4. European post-modern discourse and modernity in Latvian political culture and identity:

Post-modern deconstruction strategies concern culture in the EU to the greatest extent. Latvian public, traditionally conservative, treats the desubjectivation of culture with skepticism and fears of globalization. The government, although it welcomes European development dimensions for culture and alterity, has also a tendency to modern management of culture as dependable on the economic factors in the country.

The study of parliamentary debates, interviews and newspapers discovered cultural negligence on the part of the government and the Saeima. Cultural policy of the state needs a lot of improvement and lavish financing of cultural projects to define Latvia on the international arena.

The present policy of the state limits cultural concerns to primordial cornerstone of the language protection.

Despite all that there are tendencies towards decentralizing cultural policy of the state and making it more democratic.

European identity poses a problem for Latvians in conditions of the upcoming enlargement. The public views the creation of European identity as the top-down approach, with no means to provide social interaction of the people on the topic. Attachment to the primordial values is complemented by the absence of national strategy for the state development, which complicates the vision of future perspectives for Latvia. There is no discussion on the federative or any other future for the country within the enlarged Union.
6.5. European identity for Latvians:

Transcending to the European post-modern narrative in the culture and identity dimension seems to be the most complicated process and not only for Latvia, as a matter of fact. The course of dealing with the primacy of nationalism has been launched there since 1998. The creation of the civic society in Latvia is not always viewed as a positive process under the modern conditions both by the authorities and the minorities themselves. However, it is clear that within such a culturally heterogeneous polity as the enlarged EU is going to be, it is the political necessity to ensure democracy and stability with civic freedoms and rights. That is why solving the domestic problem with the two communities in the state is going to be about handling the post-modern political transformations on the European scale after all.
7. Further Research

As it was already mentioned, cultural policy can be the subject for further research for Latvia, for the Baltic States in general and for the enlarged EU. Cultural policy of the newly independent Baltic countries is still in the process of democratic formation. This topic might be extended to the comparative analysis of cultural policies of other CEE countries and their development and cooperation under the European Union cultural programs.

Another predicament worth of research is the problem with large minorities in the ethnically bounded state and the democracy issue connected to it. It is obvious that so far the situation cannot be resolved with the help of the primordial theory. The question to ask might be:

*Can Latvian and European authorities handle the integration of the minorities, who do not feel integrated in their own home countries?*

This is the concern of many former Soviet Union satellites, like Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia or Moldova for instance.
8. ANNEXES

8.1. Annex 1: Interview questions

The following questions were used to organize the interviews. However, some questions were not asked or new questions were added depending on the situation and the professional position of an interviewee. In addition the questions below were not always asked in the chronological order.

1. Latvia is about to join the EU. Membership discussions in the Parliament mostly concern economic pluses and minuses, as well as the interests of the state. Would you say that cultural interests remain aside, and why?

2. It has been more than 10 years since Latvian independence was restored, how well-developed, do you think, is Latvian cultural policy?

3. Latvian political elite, the government and the Parliament, assume that EU membership for Latvia is the best decision both politically and economically. However, a great deal of the society in the country seems rather reserved about the idea. Do you think it is true? And why do you think so?

4. Latvia is a small country, and the attitude towards nationalism is more likely to be positive than negative. To which type of the following ones would you attribute Latvian national identity:

   a) to the Lockean type, which is civic, underpins patriotic feelings toward a state and subordinates ethnic belonging to a nation;

   b) to the Herderian type, which is ethnic, with an emphasis on history, language and culture issues?
5. There is an opinion that political processes of European integration and European institutions are under the impact of Anglo-Saxon culture. More than that, the English language is dominating in comparison with other languages in Europe. How do you think it could influence Latvia and the Latvian language?

6. European Convention discusses the federative future of the EU. How do you see European federative future complying with Latvian political and cultural interests?

7. Would you suggest that European Union interests are never going to prevail over national interests of its member states?

8. What do you think could be the end of European integration?

9. “In order to develop the feeling of belonging to the EU, Latvians will have to reduce their national feelings of belonging.” How can you comment on this sentence?

10. Would you name yourself a “European”? 
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