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**CULTURAL DIPLOMACY & THE REPRODUCTION OF IDENTITY AND
MEMORY: THE CENTENARIES OF ESTONIA, FINLAND, LATVIA, AND
LITHUANIA**

MA Thesis

Supervisor: Heiko Pääbo

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I have written this Master's thesis independently. All viewpoints of other authors, literary sources and data from elsewhere used for writing this paper have been referenced.

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ABSTRACT

In 2017 and 2018, Estonia, Finland, Latvia, and Lithuania celebrated the hundredth anniversary of their independence. Considering these countries have limited international visibility due to their limited resources, population density and territory size, such milestones represent an extraordinary opportunity to resolve the situation. The practice of cultural diplomacy within the realm of diplomacy continues to be underestimated. Since most of its understanding is still stained by the Cold War period and its research focus too USA-centric, the practice of cultural diplomacy continues to be misleading. Therefore, the thesis seeks to demonstrate the benefits of cultural diplomacy by applying its methods on concrete examples that have had considerable domestic and international reach. It also seeks to demonstrate its usefulness in situations where conflicts or tense relations are absent. Consequently, the cases of the centenaries of Estonia, Finland, Latvia, and Finland have been chosen to highlight the potential of cultural diplomacy for small countries, who have yet to grow on the international stage. As a result, the research has found that the practice of cultural diplomacy was noticeable in the planning, organization, and celebration of the Estonian, Finnish, Latvian, and Lithuanian centenaries, and that its impacts, along with identity and collective memory, on small countries were consequential.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EU - European Union

NATO - North Atlantic Treaty Organization

OECD - Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

PPP - Public Private Partnership

QCA - Qualitative Content Analysis

INTRODUCTION

Although cultural diplomacy is a rather new term in the social sciences lexicon, it is, in fact, as old as international relations (Mulcahy 1999b: 8). In the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, countries such as France, Germany and the United Kingdom to name a few acknowledged the importance of culture in politics and started promoting their culture abroad by establishing cultural centres abroad such as the Alliance Française, the German Academic Exchange Service, and the British Council respectively. Governments also began to recognize the importance of culture in politics and established a separate division responsible for cultural affairs. Successful acts of cultural diplomacy are also plentiful. A notable and historical successful example is the cultural exchanges between the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War. To ease tensions and to promote international cooperation, both parties pursued cultural exchanges. Another noteworthy example of cultural diplomacy is the Eurovision Song Contest, which was established in the 1950s. The fact that it is not possible for voters to vote for the same country as their country of residence shifts the aim of the contest from fuelling competition between countries to rather focus on supporting songs from other cultures.

In a globalizing world, the distribution of countries' resources is unequal, pushing them to use different forms of power to meet their needs. Following the end of the Cold War, the world became more multipolar and various countries were gaining cultural influence and reach a wider international audience. The shift in the state of affairs led to a change in the use of culture. Therefore, it has become increasingly salient for nations with limited resources to seek greater international cooperation and attention as well as advantageous for them to understand the culture of other nations. Given that the republics of Estonia, Finland, Latvia, and Lithuania have limited international visibility due to their limited resources, population density and territory size. Therefore, it is worthwhile for their success to appeal to a greater public and seek their inclusion in international activities to increase their global standing. Cultural diplomacy is a dimension of diplomacy in which the capacity of culture to "foster understanding

among peoples" is exploited (Feigenbaum 2001: 25). It also considers culture as a two-sided form of power, thus the importance of its proper conductibility. On the one hand, culture can bind societies together and facilitate closer cooperation but also, on the other hand, it can divide societies and hinder any forms of collaboration (Ibid: 7). Consequently, to ensure its maximum impact, the practice of cultural diplomacy has to be compelling enough to its audience in order to evoke interest and attention and the audience sufficiently responsive to these practices (Ibid: 9).

The potential of cultural diplomacy, however, remains unrealized (Schneider 2006) as its practice within the realm of diplomacy continues to be underestimated. Over the course of its history, the term cultural diplomacy has been used interchangeably and its meaning considerably broadened to the point of becoming a "true floating signifier" (And et al. 2015: 367). Since most of its understanding is still stained by the Cold War period and its research focus too USA-centric, the practice of cultural diplomacy continues to be misleading. Therefore, the thesis seeks to demonstrate the benefits of cultural diplomacy by applying its methods on concrete examples that have had considerable domestic and international reach. It also seeks to demonstrate its usefulness in situations where conflicts or tense relations are absent. Consequently, the cases of the centenaries of Estonia, Finland, Latvia, and Finland have been chosen to highlight the potential of cultural diplomacy for small countries, who have yet to grow on the international stage.

Despite the fact that the practice of cultural diplomacy aims at replacing traditional forms of diplomacy in order to relieve tense relations (Gienow-Hecht and Donfried 2010: 20), the research problem of the present thesis does not lie with any hostility between Estonia, Finland, Latvia, and Lithuania as there is none. Rather, the centenary programmes of the four countries under review are compared and contrasted using cultural diplomacy as the main theoretical framework to determine its potentiality in international relations. Thus, the analysis focuses on the manner each of the case studies made use of their country's hundredth anniversary to project their image, share information about themselves, and promote their national attainments, both domestically and internationally. It is also important to point out that despite the

continuous friendly relationships the Baltic states, as well as Finland, maintained from the beginning of their statehood, it appears that they poorly know each other (O'Connor 2015: 10). Thus, this research attempts to draw attention to cultural diplomacy as a governmental practice in fostering greater cooperation between states by cultivating mutual understanding and encouraging information sharing. Moreover, it also seeks to depict the reproduction of identity and collective memory in the events and projects dedicated to the centenaries.

It should be also emphasized that, although the methods of cultural diplomacy are non-political, that is, "the exchange of ideas, events, and peoples," its goal, however, "projecting a favourable image of [a] society abroad" is (Mulcahy 1999b: 8). In other words, cultural diplomacy remains apolitical in its practices but political in its outcomes. Therefore, this thesis gives greater consideration to the structure and components of the centenary programmes of Estonia, Finland, Latvia, and Lithuania, in order to analyze their outcomes.

In order to achieve this task, the official websites of each country's centenary programme and events as well as publications were carefully scrutinized. Although most information made available to the public are displayed in the national language(s) of each case study, the focus has been given on their English version. Nonetheless, not all information released publicly contained English translations which have been an obstacle to the author. As a way to fill in the knowledge gap, face-to-face interviews with members of the centenary programmes have been conducted to collect more detailed data concerning the organization, planning, and coordination of the programmes.

Accordingly, the research tasks included the accumulation of required theoretical understanding, the examination of Estonian, Finnish, Latvian, and Lithuanian centenary programmes and related documents, the selection of pertinent interviewees, and ultimately the compilation of the empirical findings. Consequently, the structure of the thesis follows the same logic. The first section exposes the theoretical framework supported by cultural diplomacy and contrasted with other closely related concepts such as public diplomacy, nation branding, and soft power. For a more comprehensive

assessment of the topic, the section also includes definitions of identity and memory politics. The second section displays background information about each country's the road to statehood and its aftermaths, as well as an overview of the structure, organization, and planning of the centenary programmes. The third section explains the methodology used for the analysis as well as the way sources and data have been collected. The fourth section gathers the findings of the analysis and compares the four countries' centenary programme by classifying them into coding categories. The final section offers a conclusion of the research findings while further illustrating the practicality of cultural diplomacy in general.

1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1.1. Cultural Diplomacy & Other Concepts

Cultural diplomacy is usually practiced by civil society. In fact, it is to the advantage of the agent - i.e. governments and non-governmental organizations - to do so in order to remove any forms of alienation between the government and its citizens as "people will associate government programs with propaganda" (Gienow-Hecht and Donfried 2010: 23). Therefore, the success and sustainability of a cultural diplomacy program depend on its interactivity, that is, the established dialogue and exchange between the agent and the recipient - i.e. governments, associations people (Ibid). In brief, cultural diplomacy works best as a "two-way street" (Schneider 2009: 261). Moreover, cultural diplomacy practices allow cultural agents to speak for themselves abroad and constitute "the best advertising for the virtues of a free society" (Mulcahy 1999b: 8) and ultimately help combat ethnocentrism and stereotyping (Mulcahy 1999a: 3). Cultural diplomats also range from a wide variety of occupations such as professors, journalists, artists and so on (Ibid). In the case of the present thesis, cultural diplomacy was conducted by governmental agents, namely public servants, who were appointed by their government to organize the centenary programmes of their respective country and coordinate the different events and projects.

The usage of the term cultural diplomacy has been put together in different combinations with other terms such as public diplomacy, nation branding, and soft power, which blurred the lines between the definitions of these terms. Therefore, the focus of the following section is to demystify the overlapping meanings of those concepts, stress the importance of their differences, and highlight their roles in international relations. The entry of these notions in the glossary of international relations might share common characteristics in theory, but it does not mean they share common practices.

Cultural diplomacy presents itself in the form of an instrument of foreign policy. Essentially, it is the practice of diplomacy between cultures to connect to one another

(Mitchell 2015: 2). Cummings' definition is frequently cited in scholarly works tackling the subject of cultural diplomacy, which he defines as "the exchange of ideas, information, art, and other aspects of culture among nations and their peoples in order to foster mutual understanding" (2003: 1). Some scholars have contested this definition on the basis that the terms "nations" and "peoples" were seen as "abstract" and "generalized" and that cultural diplomacy should rather be considered as "a governmental practice that operates in the name of a clearly defined ethos of national or local representation, in a space where nationalism and internationalism merge" (Ang et al. 2015: 367). Although Cummings' definition has been criticized for its lack of precision, it is still widely used and therefore considered in this thesis.

Moreover, cultural diplomacy is a form of diplomacy that does not necessarily require government-to-government interactions, rather, it is done "between governments and foreign people" (Gienow-Hecht and Donfried 2010: 13). It does "not necessarily support for a nation's foreign policy" as "cultural exchanges stand on their own" (Mulcahy 1999b: 8). The contributions of cultural diplomacy to the study of international relations stress the fact that culture can be considered a source of power in the sense that it can make other countries more prone to comply with a country's interests.

Domestically, the impacts and potential of cultural diplomacy practices are mainly centred on their power to enhance national social cohesion (Mark 2009: 1). A feeling of belonging and togetherness is what unites the state with its people. Therefore, cultural diplomacy initiatives should not only please the designer but must "resonate with the local population" to be most effective (Schneider 2006: 196). Internationally, the practice of cultural diplomacy seeks to help break down stereotypes and better the reputation of nations (Mark 2009: 1). It is done through the exchange of information using different media such as films, art exhibitions, literature, and music as well as people from academic and non-academic occupations such as professors, students, and performing arts groups (Mulcahy 1999a: 3). Cultural diplomacy also differs from public diplomacy in that "it is less closely aligned with policy" (Schneider 2009: 261).

Public diplomacy, in contrast to cultural diplomacy, does not necessarily require culture in its practices. Rather, it concerns the interaction of governments and foreign audiences in order to "influence [...] public attitudes on the formation and execution of foreign policies" (Szondi 2008: 2). In other words, public diplomacy has an "explicit" and "immediate" political content, whereas cultural diplomacy remains apolitical in its methods (Mulcahy 1999b: 8). The theoretical uncertainty between public diplomacy and cultural diplomacy is due to a "paradigm shift" in recent years, which interfered with the meaning of cultural diplomacy and remained "loosely defined as a strand of public diplomacy" (Kim 2017: 293). Indeed, several scholars continue to define cultural diplomacy as mere component of public diplomacy (Higham 2002; Kim 2017). Since public diplomacy practices emerged during the Cold War and aimed to contain tensions between the United States and the USSR, information and persuasion campaigns were the dominant means in this situation (Gilboa 2008: 59). As a result, most research on cultural diplomacy has been US-centric and associated with these public diplomacy practices used during the Cold War, hence cultural diplomacy has come to be linked to political manipulation and subordination (Gienow-Hecht 2010: 3).

Nation branding is more oriented towards the general public of a country rather than the elites, unlike public diplomacy (Szondi 2008: 13). Its main interest is the promotion of a country's image. It seeks to make a nation stand out in the global market by putting culture at the centre of economic competition and, therefore, uses "the tools, techniques, and expertise of commercial branding" (Aronczyk 2013: 3). It is basically the strategic instrumentalization of a country's reputation in order to generate capital and elevate its economic standing in the global market. It then results in a "more coherent and cohesive" articulation of national identity and enhances the relationship between a nation and its people (Ibid). The main similarities between nation branding and cultural diplomacy are found in its outcomes rather than in its practices. In that sense, nation branding fits more into the realm of competition, whereas cultural diplomacy is more about cooperation. Moreover, it is unexceptional to see a linkage between the concepts of nation branding and soft power since they are both "concerned

with the nation's influence on the international stage and its image in the mind of international stakeholders" (Fan 2008: 147-148).

Soft power was coined by Nye (1990) when he noticed a "great power shift" in international politics. He stressed that the nature of power has changed from concrete and coercive to more intangible and cohesive (Ibid: 164). He defines soft power as the situation "when one country gets other countries to want what it wants" (Ibid: 166). However, the concept of soft power was criticized for its lack of meaningfulness and usefulness. For example, Fan (2008: 148) argued that soft power becomes relevant only in the advent of a conflict of objectives. He pursues by arguing that soft power is more dependent on the response and reaction of the targeted audience than the actor exercising its soft power (Ibid: 154). In addition, it has been argued that soft power represents to a greater extent the resources used to conduct a governmental policy rather than a policy process in itself (Gilboa 2008: 61). In other words, soft power constitutes "influential resources to achieve desired behaviours" (Hayden 2012: 6).

In sum, although different dimensions of diplomacy are mainly about maximizing a country's interests, cultural diplomacy uses the power of arts and culture as a diplomacy tool to negotiate an adhesion other countries' culture and values and foster mutual understanding and cooperation as an alternative to coercive power.

1.2. Identity

It is important to note that although cultural diplomacy encompasses non-state actors in its activities, it remains essentially the business of governments (Mitchell 2015: 3). In fact, governmental involvement in cultural diplomacy programs should not and cannot disappear as it ensures the cooperation between civil society and the national interests (Gienow-Hecht and Donfried 2010: 25). Consequently, the nation is the main unit of analysis used in this thesis considering that it remains "the only legitimate source of political power" as well as "the most pertinent form of collective identity" (Triandafyllidou 1998: 593). Since the practice of cultural diplomacy requires the existence of a government and a people as the upholders of identity and culture, the term nation is understood here both in the sense of nation-as-state and nation-as-people.

Regarding that point, it has been argued that "[t]here can be no nationalism without nation-states" (Billig 1995: 19) and that, consequently, national identity is constructed for those who inhabit the nation-state (Ibid: 24).

Ironically, it is difficult to set boundaries around a common definition of identity, yet, its very meaning starts by drawing a line between insiders and outsiders. Identities have a double-edged character, meaning that it is essential to determine "who is a member of the community but also who is a foreigner" (Triandafyllidou 1998: 594). Even though no universal definition is available, a working definition is essential to the aims of this thesis. Succinctly, identity is a concept that is "dynamic, contested, multiple, and fluid" (Edensor 2002: vi). Indeed, identity holds an "intersubjective basis" that implies a shared or collective understanding of its meaning by two or more subjects (Wendt 1994: 386). Consequently, for an identity to materialize, it needs interaction. Interactions are paramount to the formation of identity as it "becomes meaningful through the contrast with others" (Triandafyllidou 1998: 593). Therefore, identities cannot be formed separately from others and undergo continuous change through their interactions with different actors. Triandafyllidou (1998) has focused her study on the notion of "others" and how it plays a role in the formation and transformation of identities. Her main argument stresses the importance of a "significant other," which refers to the presence of another nation that influences the development of identity by threatening a nation's "distinctiveness, authenticity and/or independence" (Ibid: 600). In this case, language takes on a special significance on national identity when threatened as it is "still commonly take to be *the* central pillar of ethnic identity" and represents a "group marker" with both "communicative and symbolic value" (emphasis in the original text, Edwards 1991: 269). In the absence of a threatening presence that accompanies the "significant other," the notion of identity remains nonetheless for its manifestation shifts to a "banal, routine, almost invisible" form (Billig 1995: 15).

Inherently, identity is contested in the sense that it is not homogeneously shared by all its members. In other words, the way individuals share a common identity is not done unanimously but rather asymmetrically, that is, they do not consider that "widely held meanings [of identity] are necessarily acceptable to all, that all who define their

shared identity behave in the same way, or that all hold it equally intensely" (Ross 2009: 138). Moreover, "[t]o have a national identity is to possess ways of talking about nationhood" hence the variation from person to person (Billig 1995: 8).

As identities are reproduced through the interaction with different actors, the nature of those interactions varies and so does the formation of identity. This is why "actors normally have multiple social identities that vary in salience" (Wendt 1994: 385). Culture contributes to this multiplicity since it represents an expression of national identity (Mitchell 2015: 2) and involves collectivity rather than individuality (Bolewski 2008: 146). As a result, culture, concurrently with identity, can not only be individual or national but also regional (Ibid: 147). Depending on the situation, identities can also be cooperative or conflictual (Ibid: 386). However, culture has the potential to remove alienation between nations and transform interactions into "familiarity and feelings of common humanity" (Mitchell 2015: 2). Schneider (2006: 196-200) considers three key areas in a culture that have the possibilities to foster mutual understanding between nations, namely film, music, and literature.

To remain sustainable, identity needs continuous interaction and reproduction. In other words, identities are not static, rather, they are an "ongoing process" involving others being continuously differentiated with itself (Edensor 2002: 24-25). When arguing about the definition of identity, Billig (1995: 8) coined the term "banal nationalism," which he refers to as "the routine and familiar forms of nationalism." His main argument is that national identity cannot be found within individuals but through their habits of remembering and reproducing their nationality (Ibid: 7). Therefore, it is up to the people to maintain their national identity by reproducing it through speech and actions (Ibid: 8). Edensor (2002) and Paasi (2015) have both investigated this notion of national identity found in mundane activities and have analyzed the expression of nationalism in the everyday as well as the extraordinary. Edensor (2002: 18) stresses that the level of fluidity of identity is more noticeable during times of celebrity (i.e. the centenary of a country's independence) rather than in the quotidian. He also added to Billig's notion of banal nationalism by arguing that the manifestation of national identity is indeed not as prominent as in the "popular" or "high culture" of a society but

remains "grounded in the everyday, in the mundane details of social interaction, habits, routines, and practical knowledge" (Ibid: 17). Paasi (2015: 22) focused his argument on independence and national days as avenues to the expression of nationalism in both latent and salient ways as well as evidence of its complexity. Ultimately, identity is a malleable concept that adapts to different contexts such as "issue, time, and place" as well as different environments that can be "bilateral, regional, or global" (Wendt 1994: 388). It is also important to note that identity and memory are dependent on one another, that is, identity is "sustained by remembering; and what is remembered is defined by the assumed identity" (Gillis 1996: 3).

1.3. Memory Politics

In memory politics, remembering and forgetting are two sides of the same coin. Both actions of remembering and forgetting are closely related in the sense that one automatically affects the other, that is, "when something is explicitly remembered something else is implicitly or explicitly forgotten" (Turner 2006: 206). Consequently, it influences the way cultural diplomacy is practiced as identities and memories are linked by their dependence on the responsibility of a society to remember and forget as such a choice affects not only itself but also others (Gillis 1996: 5). Therefore, centenary events and projects serves as reproduction mechanism of the countries' identity and collective memory. Although collective memory appears to go hand in hand with history, both terms are essentially contradictory. History is the objective presentation of past events, whereas collective memory is the subjective portrayal of those same past events but in a way that it focuses on certain aspects that connects to the contemporary identity. This is when the act of remembering renders the past meaningful to the present (Misztal 2010: 28). In the case of centenaries, actual memories from participants are no longer available, therefore, the construction of collective memories determine the importance and meanings of past events (Frost and Laing 2013: 2). Collective memory has a strong connection to time, that is, it looks at its past, present and future to attain the empirical historical truth. What is particular to the collective memory of a nation, however, is that it deals simultaneously with the past and the future (Turner 2006: 205).

When commemorative events are carried out by a nation, they invite the nation to reflect on its past and to address the future (Ibid).

Commemorative events constitute the materialization and representation of a collective memory that is planned with "intentions of affirming and reinforcing memories that provide a sense of heritage and identity" (Frost and Laing 2013: 1). They are also what is most readily observable and tangible to outsiders. The holding and organization of anniversary commemorative events is justified by a date where the importance of a past occurrence is "worthy" of remembering in the present (Ibid: 2). Emphasizing a certain number of years capture more attention. For example, a hundred years is more important than ninety-nine or a hundred and one. It also emphasizes the rarity of its occurrence, here, once in a hundred years. Moreover, anniversaries are usually counted in blocks of continuous years, even if the element celebrated experienced interruptions. For example, in the case of the Baltic states, they all celebrated the centenary of their independence in 2018 in spite of the fact that they have been occupied by Russia for more than fifty years. Anniversaries transforms the ordinary into extraordinary and make the character of a celebration more valuable.

Interestingly enough, it is argued that the practice of cultural diplomacy in a country might pursue different goals from others "according to their respective historical context" (Gienow-Hecht 2010: 8). However, given that the case studies herein have similar histories with common enemies, the extent to which that statement is justified remains to be analyzed. Although it has been repeatedly argued in the literature that cultural diplomacy helps avoid or minimize clashes between countries (Gienow-Hecht and Donfried 2010: 25), this thesis disregards the dwelling on the past hostility between Russia and the four countries under review. As previously mentioned, it focuses primarily on the already established friendly relationships between Estonia, Finland, Latvia, and Lithuania as well as its strengthening instead.

Moreover, memory politics contributes to the building of a nation. In that sense, collective memory "ensures the reproduction and cohesion of a given social and political order" which helps defend and justify the establishment of a nation (Misztal 2010: 28). In the case of post-Soviet states such as the Baltic states or states that

experienced persecution in its past like Finland, their legacy are sought to be either partly or entirely removed from their collective memory (Kuzio 2002, p.241). Collective memory is particularly salient for these nations which were previously part of a bigger entity before achieving statehood. Since they struggled in keeping their political identity and in acquiring their modern political autonomy, they display greater importance to "acts of heroic resistance" (Turner 2006: 206).

In sum, this thesis analyzes how the centenary anniversary of Estonia, Finland, Latvia, and Lithuania contributed to the remembering and forgetting of their memory, the reformulation of their identity, and the conduction of cultural diplomacy practices in enhancing their information exchanges. Given that each case study has a complex and tumultuous past as well as rich and detailed centenary programmes, the following section will provide sufficient background knowledge in that regard.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION & PROGRAMMES OVERVIEW

Despite the unique unfoldment of each country's history, they also share common characteristics and similar battles. Their geopolitical position has played a major role in that characteristics and has retained "a profound influence on their cultural and economic development and continues to affect their identities and their sense of security" (O'Connor 2015: 1). In the nineteenth century, policies aimed at the cultural assimilation of non-Russian communities known as Russification were launched by the Russian Empire and oppressed and forced the Baltic countries to adopt the Russian culture, language, and faith. Even though such policies were not imposed on Finland during that period, the Soviet Union heavily influenced Finnish policies nonetheless and the Finnish government refrained from opposing Russian interests. During World War I, the weakening of the Russian Empire allowed all four countries to overturn the situation and gain the upper hand and declare their independence. After twenty years of independent statehood, all three Baltic states were re-occupied by the Soviet Union during most of the twentieth century and briefly by Nazi Germany during World War II. Under Soviet jurisdiction, they were subjected to deportation from their home country to forced settlements, mainly to Siberia. Fortunately, they managed to preserve their national identities throughout the fifty years of Soviet rule by reason of their interwar achievements (Hiden and Salmon 2014: 1). Unlike its Baltic neighbours, Finland managed to distant itself from the USSR during that time. As the centenary celebrations of the three Baltic republics as well as Finland occurred within a similar time frame, the present chapter is organized according to the chronological order of their declaration of independence: Finland, Lithuania, Estonia, and Latvia.

2.1. Finland

Throughout its history, Finland experienced the authority of two major powers, namely Sweden for almost 700 years and Russia for more than a century. Consequently, the Finnish territory ended up acting as a battlefield between the two. As a result of several religious wars during the Northern Crusades, the kingdom of Sweden managed

to take over most of the Baltic Sea region under its authority and Swedish rule was fully established in Finland in 1249. Finland would later become a province of Sweden and an integral part to the Swedish Kingdom until Russia took over in the nineteenth century. The century proved to be awakening for the Finns and nationalism grew considerably. The population had a growing interest for the Finnish language and culture following the publication of the national epic *Kalevala* in 1835. Gradually, Sweden's strength weakened and had to give up Finland to Russia in 1809. Unlike the period under Swedish rule, Finland was not absorbed by Russia as part of the country. Rather, Tsar Alexander I created the Grand Duchy of Finland and gave considerable autonomy to the Finns as well as allowing the continuation of Finnish traditions and laws. Following the troubles of World War I, Finland took advantage of a preoccupied Russia to declare its independence on December 6th, 1917. The declaration was unpopular among the Russian rulers who engaged in two major military conflicts shortly after, namely the Winter War from 1939 to 1940 and the Continuation War from 1941 to 1944.

In spite of the fact that no other war was fought between Finland and Russia, the latter remained influential to Finnish foreign policy. This was clearly noticeable during the Cold War period, in which Finland maintained a de facto policy of neutrality but had to go through self-imposed censorship known as Finlandization as well as increasing pressure from Russia on its domestic politics. To keep a distance from Russia, Finland actively engaged in European integration and Western European markets by joining the European Union (EU) in 1995 and adopted the euro in 2002.

To commemorate the hundredth anniversary of Finland's independence, the Prime Minister's Office as well as other appointed working groups organized and supervised the centenary project for the year of 2017. The theme "Together" was the focal point of the celebrations and developed into a central goal, which was articulated as "strengthening the sense of togetherness in Finnish society" (Finland 100 Centenary Celebration Report 2018: 10). In addition to the central theme, the centennial year was divided into thematic periods. It started on the 31st of December 2016 as the centenary's celebrations grand opening and ended with the independence day on the 6th of

December. The first period lasted from January to April 2017 and was called "Our common Finland," focusing on the nation's strengths. From May to August 2017, "A Finnish summer" marked the second period and prioritized numerous events. The third period, "The 100-day countdown," was dedicated to Finland's history (Ibid: 11).

As part of the "Together" theme, the formulation of ideas for the centenary events and projects was made through a public call launched in April 2015 and welcomed ideas from the public during two and a half years (Ibid: 116). Suggestions could be initiated by all people, not only Finnish citizens and descriptions of the projects had to be in Finnish, Swedish, or English. As a result, ideas were registered on the official website of the centenary from April 2015 to October 2017. To be accepted as an official event or project of the centenary, the ideas registered had to follow specific criteria:

In order to qualify for the programme, projects had to be in some way exceptional, related to the centenary of Finland's independence or celebrating the anniversary, in keeping with the together theme, and focused on one of the three time-based perspectives: 100 years of independence, Finland today, or the future of Finland. The projects had to mostly run during the year 2017, they had to be in good taste and in compliance with the law, and their main aim could not be to sell a product or a service. (Finland 100 Centenary Celebration Report 2018: 13)

Not all projects were financed by the programme and in order to obtain financial assistance, they were subject to additional criteria. In addition to the public programme, an effort to incorporate the business sector into the centenary project was initiated resulting in the inclusion of commercial operators in the Finland 100 programme in 2016 (Ibid: 117).

Preparations and planning already began in 2011 when the Prime Minister's Office established a four-person working group responsible for drawing up a proposal on the organization, implementation, and budget for the centenary year (Ibid: 114). The core organization of the centenary was assured by the Finland 100 Secretariat, the Finland 100 Board, and the Finland 100 Commission. In September 2013, the Secretariat began working on the centenary celebrations and was responsible for "coordinating and managing the Finland 100 project, designing and overseeing the implementation of the programme for the celebrations, and communications" (Finland Report Website, retrieved April 2019). The members of the Secretariat were recruited

using an open call resulting in a majority of members previously working outside the Prime Minister's Office (Interview Päivi). In November of the same year, the Prime Minister's Office appointed a board to oversee the projects, which was chaired by the State Secretary (Ibid: 115). In September 2014, the Finland 100 Commission, composed of 70 Finnish organizations and chaired by the prime minister, was set up to decide on the priorities of the centenary celebrations (Ibid: 116). During the five-year period, that is, from 2013 until 2017, the overall size of the Finland 100 team varied according to the help needed with members working from a few months up to the whole five years (Interview Päivi). In December of the same year, the Finnish Parliament confirms a 19 million euro budget to cover the costs of the centenary (Finland 100 Centenary Celebration Report 2018: 116).

2.2. Lithuania

Lithuania is the largest of the three Baltic states and has had the longest history out of the four case studies as it is the only state that has enjoyed self-jurisdiction before the twentieth century. The very first time Lithuania was mentioned in writing was in 1009 in a German chronicle. Although Lithuania had not yet achieved statehood at that time, it remains important for Lithuanians as its thousandth anniversary was commemorated in 2009 all over the country. Lithuania appeared on world maps in 1253 when Mindaugas was claimed king and ruler of the country. Mindaugas, previously known as the Grand Duke of Lithuania, remains an important character in Lithuanian history as the first and only king of the country but also as a major actor in the building of the state. Before its coronation, in 1230, he managed to counter the attacks of the Teutonic Order by uniting the Baltic tribes into a single state. In order to gain such authority, his self-conversion, as well as the country to Christianity, was unpopular among the Lithuanian nobility who assassinated him in 1263 in order to revert to paganism. However, the Teutonic Order was still going strong and appeared as a common enemy to both Lithuania and Poland. The latter then proposed to the new Grand Duke of Lithuania, Jogaila, to become the king of Poland, which he accepted in 1385. For the crown, however, Jogaila had to become Christian and re-Christianize

Lithuania as well as merge Lithuania and Poland into a "one indivisible homogeneous body" (Vardys and Sedaitis 2018: 15). In 1569, both countries became a single entity, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

The Commonwealth was particularly powerful in the sixteenth and seventeenth century. In fact, the country happened to be the largest European country at that time, which remains a part of Lithuania's national proudness (O'Connor 2015: 4). Nevertheless, the golden age of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth remained temporary. In 1768, the Commonwealth was considerably weakened due to external and internal conflicts and came under the protection of the Russian Empire. The latter managed to split the country into two and annexed Lithuania to the Russian Empire, while Poland was parted between its neighbours. The year 1795 marked the demise of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the complete deletion of both Lithuania and Poland from the European map. Under the new Tsarist jurisdiction, Lithuanian culture was oppressed and Lithuanian-speaking schools, books, and the usage of the Latin alphabet were prohibited. During the 19th century, Lithuania attempted to restore its independence by rebelling against the Russian Empire, but in vain. However, the devastating outcomes of World War I turned out to be a successful opportunity to formulate the Act of Independence and re-establish the state of Lithuania, which was done on February 16th, 1918. Nevertheless, Lithuania had to enter into war with Russia shortly after and the country was annexed by the Soviet Union until the Act of the Re-Establishment of the State of Lithuania was signed in 1990 and its statehood fully recognized in 1991.

In 2018, the year was dedicated to the hundredth anniversary of the Act of Independence of Lithuania. Throughout the year, the events and projects were grouped into three sectors of activity with a specific theme. The first sector had the keyword "Learn!" for its activities aiming at learning about Lithuania's past, that is, its history, achievements and challenges. The second sector was assigned the keyword "Celebrate!" for its activities regarding present-day Lithuania and celebrate its jubilee. The last sector had the keyword "Create!" for its activities concerning the future of Lithuania inviting its citizens to contribute to the prosperity of the country. Various events also took place

abroad in over twelve countries. The majority of Lithuania's events abroad were managed by either or in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the State Department of Tourism (LT100 Website: retrieved May 2019).

Since Lithuania enjoyed previous statehood before its re-independence in 1918, the jubilee year focused on its re-establishment, hence the name "Programme for the Centennial Celebration of the Restoration of the State of Lithuania" for the centenary programme as well as "Restored Lithuania" for the centenary year and celebrations. The main aims of the programme were concentrated on "bring[ing] together the people of Lithuania and Lithuanians," "inspir[ing] pride in their country," "encourag[ing] them [to take] an important and active role in the life of their country" as well as "increas[ing] Lithuania's global visibility" (LT100 Website: retrieved April 2019). The expected outcomes of the centenary programme were focused on increasing the importance of February 16th, to raise the awareness about the centenary year and its past, encourage the engagement of people living in Lithuania and abroad towards the state, and increase Lithuania's international visibility (Ibid). Unlike the other countries, Lithuania did not launch a public call to recruit the members of the Restored Lithuania centenary team. Instead, it was done internally and the members were recruited at the beginning of 2017 according to their competences. The team experienced various difficulties, for example, the size of the team was very small, comprising only four experts. Also, the programme had to be re-designed since a previous working group who worked on centenary ideas for two years left their work unfinished with a lack of financing and directions (Interview Gurskas 2019).

2.3. Estonia

The first rulers to seize the territory of Estonia were the Danes in the North and the Germans in the South. Although the Danish presence remained brief, the Germans managed to retain authority in the region until the end of World War I. In 1561, Sweden controlled northern Estonia while southern Estonia was part of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth for a brief period but was then entirely under Swedish rule by 1625. At

that time, the Duchy of Estonia was constituted of the provinces of Estonia in the north and Livonia in the south. When Sweden was defeated during the Great Northern War, Estonia and Livonia were officially incorporated into the Russian Empire in 1721 with the Treaty of Nystad. Under the new tsarist jurisdiction, Baltic Germans were allowed to retain their privileged position and, therefore, remained the main ruling elite of both Estonia and Latvia (Livonia at the time) and "enjoyed a far-reaching autonomy" (Hiden and Salmon 2014: 12).

In the meantime, an Estonian national awakening movement was most salient in the nineteenth century with the publication of the national epic *Kalevipoeg* in 1861. In 1917, Soviet Russia experienced two major revolutions, the February Revolution and the October Revolution, that both led to its collapse. Consequently, Estonia declared its independence on February 24th, 1918. The Estonian War of Independence followed shortly after and managed to defend the country with the signing of the peace agreement between Estonia and Soviet Russian in 1920, the Tartu Peace Treaty. However, the period of independence lasted only twenty-two years until the Soviet Union occupied the Republic of Estonia in 1940. Estonia's de facto independence was then restored in 1991.

The year of 2018 was then dedicated to the hundredth anniversary of Estonia's first declaration of independence but the celebrations were not limited to 2018 only. In fact, the celebrations are planned from 2017 to 2020. The events follow the hundredth anniversary of the unification of Estonia's territory until the signing of the Tartu Peace Treaty in February 2020. Before the organization, the Government Office of Estonia established a committee chaired by the Prime Minister and included the Minister of Education and Research, the Minister of Culture, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Defence, the Minister of Justice, the State Secretary and a representative of the President of the Republic (EV100 website: retrieved April 2019). Besides, two groups were assigned to assure the organization of the celebrations, namely the Estonia 100 steering group and the Estonia 100 organizing committee. There was a public open call for suggestions and everyone living in Estonia and beyond, including Estonians and non-Estonians, could also contribute to the organization of events. The focus of the

centenary celebrations was made on children and youth justifying this choice with the argument that the people of Estonia are "building the country for them and their future" (Ibid).

The centenary celebrations of Estonia were divided into five thematic stages. First, "Our land" put the emphasis on the Estonian territory, its roots, and its story, which took place from April 2017 until November 2017; second, "Our state" lasting from November 2017 until May 2018 and focused on statehood, how the state of Estonia became independent and what followed afterwards; third, "Our people" concentrated on getting to know the people of Estonia and occurred from May 2018 until November 2018; fourth, "Our freedom" stressed the importance of the meaning of independence and sovereignty as well as the commemoration of the War of Independence from November 2018 until July 2019; fifth, "Our future" focused on the aftermath of the centenary celebrations from July 2019 until February 2020 (Ibid). Along with the domestic Estonia 100 programme, the Estonia 100 international programme focused on the events occurring outside Estonia. The central aim of the programme was to "raise Estonia's profile globally" (Ibid). In order to be accepted as part of the international programme, projects had to have a partner in the country it would take place willing to collaborate and cover part of their costs. The countries in which the international projects could take place have been pre-selected by the government committee comprised of various ministers, totalling thirty countries.

According to the initial planning, the Estonian presidency of the Council of the European Union was expected to start in January 2018 alongside the centenary celebrations of the Estonia 100 international programme. However, due to Brexit negotiations, the United Kingdom, who was expected to assume the presidency of the Council in the last half of 2017, had to delegate its task half a year earlier to the next country in line, namely Estonia. As a result, the international programme had to readjust and start the official events period earlier than previously planned.

2.4. Latvia

Latvia's history is one of repeated occupation during several consecutive centuries. Since its capital, Riga, rapidly became a central European trading point with its accession to the Hanseatic League in the thirteenth century, the Latvian territory was contested by different ruling powers. At different times during its history, Latvia was parted between the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the West, Sweden in the North, and Russia in the East. Following the continuous unrest and shortly after the February Revolution in 1917 in Russia, Latvians began to see a possibility for independence. In the Fall of 1917, the Latvian Provisional National Council was established and would later proclaim Latvia as an independent state on November 18th, 1918. Thereafter, the Latvian War for Independence followed, which resulted in the annexation of the new republic by the Soviet Union until the restoration and full recognition of its independence in 1991.

Like Estonia and Lithuania, the year 2018 marked the hundredth anniversary of the Latvian declaration of independence. The centennial celebrations were planned to take place from 2017 until 2021. This planning was made according to the development of the Latvian state with events stretching over five years. Each year of the Latvian centenary programme was attributed a keyword to express the importance of different periods in Latvia's history and future. The year 2017 was labelled as the Year of the Will to stress the commitment of the Latvian nation in becoming an independent state. The Year of Birth was dedicated to the centenary year, 2018. The year of 2019 is considered the Year of Courage because of the wars Latvia had to fight against Bolshevik Russia. Then, the Year of Freedom is attributed to the year 2020 and marks the centenary of the first elected Constitutional Assembly in 1920. Finally, the year 2021 is called the Year of Growth which refers to the international recognition of the state, both de jure and de facto, as well as its accession to the United Nations.

Preparations and planning for the centenary celebrations began in 2014 with discussions focusing on education, science and culture, and youth and entrepreneurs taking place in the Latvian parliament (LV100 programme 2016: 3). In December 2014, both the Office Latvia 100 and the Creative Council of the Centenary Celebrations of

the State of Latvia were established by the Ministry of Culture. The former was responsible for organizing the centenary celebrations and coordinating the programme, whereas the latter was in charge of creating the content of the centenary programme (Ibid). From February 2015 onward, the preparation and implementation of the centenary programme were assured by the Action Committee for the Centenary of the Republic of Latvia led by the Minister for Culture (Ibid). Overall, the central aim of the celebration was "to strengthen the spirit of nationhood and a sense of belonging amongst the people of Latvia, and to promote collaboration and self-organization within the community" (LV100 Website: retrieved March 2019). The members of the programme as well as the programme itself were appointed and supervised by the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Latvia.

3. METHODOLOGY

The central aims surrounding this research project are to analyze the domestic and international programmes of the hundredth anniversary of Estonia, Finland, Latvia, and Lithuania, and find patterns in the way each country organized the different events, projects, and activities, the degree of their influence on national identity as well as relationships with other countries. The selection of the four cases previously mentioned was made with the intention to maximize the possible outcomes that might result from their comparison. These four cases share fundamental characteristics such as: small in size (in terms of territory, population, and popularity), homogeneous in population, geographically close to one another, EU Member States, share a common history, and display a similar timeframe of centenary celebrations. However, this small-N comparative study also aims at raising important differences resulting from the analysis. Moreover, it was taken into consideration, *prima facie*, that among the cases selected in this thesis, Finland is the only country with an image of a successful Western country, as opposed to the Baltic states that might still need to deal with external stigmas of post-communism. It is also important to note that the thesis focuses on the centenary year only, that is, it leaves out the extended programmes of certain case studies.

The data was gathered using two different qualitative methods. First, individual face-to-face interviews were conducted between the author and current or ex-members of the centenary programme of each country at hand. For every country, two individuals have been interviewed on their experiences (with the only exception of Estonia with three interviews) in their respective office and country of origin. The interviewees from the EV100 team were Heilika Pikkov, manager of the Estonia 100 international programme, Maarja-Liisa Soe, head of the Estonia 100 programme, and Elo Aun, consultant of the Estonia 100 programme. All interviewees are members of the Estonia 100 organising committee. The interviewees from Finland 100 were Päivi Pirttilä, Communications Manager and member of the Finland 100 Secretariat between 2014 and 2018, and Tiina-Kaisa Laakso-Liukkonen, Production Manager for Finland 100. The interviewees for the LV100 team were Leonarda Kestere, head of the Latvia 100

international programme, and Inga Oliņa, deputy head and marketing project manager for LV100. Finally, the interviewees from Restored Lithuania 100 were Marius Gurskas, communication specialist for the Secretariat of the Centennial of Lithuania, and Eglė Kudzmanienė, programme coordinator and head of the unit for Brand Lithuania. Here, given that the Restored Lithuania 100 team could not predict the irregularity of its membership as well as the difficulty for the author in finding relevant interviewees, the latter did not participate actively in the centenary programme. However, she was a prime witness of the organization and participated in several events as a citizen. Therefore, unlike the other interviewees, she offered the perspective of an outsider regarding the organization and celebrations of the Lithuanian centenary.

Moreover, it is noteworthy to point out that the author experienced a number of limitations. Taking into account the fact that by the time the author contacted potential respondents, most of the centenary celebrations were on the verge of or had already terminated. Although it is convenient for the comprehensive analysis of the topic, it is less so inasmuch as pertinent respondents had already ended their commitment to the centenary programmes and remained unreachable. Another notable restriction was the lack of documents and reports accessible in English for some cases. Even though the interviews worked as a way to bridge this knowledge gap, the comprehensiveness of the information provided in this thesis is, to a certain extent, asymmetrical.

Beside questions specific to the country and subquestions that have arisen from the discussion, each interviewee has been asked the same set of questions¹. To get a general overview of their conception of their own identity as well as the identity of their neighbours, general questions regarding the description of one's people and country to a foreigner or to someone who has never been to the country at hand and what comes to mind when thinking about their neighbours have been asked. Thereafter, to better understand the mechanics of the centenary programmes, several questions concerned their general organization and planning. These questions were about the goals, content, selection, rejection, and finances of the different events, projects, and activities, the potential existence of governmental constraints and its proportions, the recruitment of

¹ For the complete set of questions, see Annex.

its members, and the size of the budget. Subsequently, the focus of the questions shifted to the international dimension of the programmes to determine the extent to which each programme has put the effort in promoting their country externally. They covered the meetings between the members of the programmes of the case study countries, possible collaborations, the participation of foreigners, the extent of influence and/or guidance of each programme on one another, the awareness of the members on the centenary programmes of other countries than their own, the activeness of their diaspora, and the success of their networking with potential future foreign partners. Finally, several questions dealt with the present and future outcomes of each programme such as their impact or future impact on the drafting of their respective cultural policy document, on their national image, on their relations with other countries, and on social cohesion.

Second, qualitative content analysis (QCA) has been used as the other data analysis method to better grasp the meaning of written, verbal and visual communication messages, that is, events, projects, and symbols of the centenaries in a systematic and objective way. The documents analyzed were the transcripts of the individual interviews conducted by the author as well as the English version of the official webpage of each of the countries' centenary or official report if available. These are: www.ev100.ee/en for Estonia, the Finland 100 Celebration Report as well as suomi100raportti.fi/en for Finland, the Programme for the Preparation of the Centenary Celebrations of the State of Latvia (hereinafter - LV100 programme) as well as www.lv100.lv/en for Latvia, and www.lietuva.lt/100/en for Lithuania.

The main research question, which is the following: what role does cultural diplomacy play for countries with limited international reach such as Estonia, Finland, Latvia, and Lithuania? Subsequently, the thesis will also attempt to answer these following questions: what are the measures taken by countries to foster mutual understanding and increase their global visibility? How is identity reproduced in extraordinary events as in the case of a centenary anniversary? What is the role of collective memory in commemorative events?

For the purpose of analysis of the research data, a coding frame was developed following the logic of memory politics, identity, and cultural diplomacy. Thereby, each

code intended to identify similarities and differences within the content of the centenary programmes.

The first category, "Memory Politics," compiled information regarding the way each country perceived time. Therefore, the sub-codes under this category included the "Past," the "Present," and the "Future." These codes reveal the way the case studies attempted to concurrently remember and forget periods of their history, make them relevant to the country's current situation, and ultimately plan their future.

The second category, "Identity," was divided into two dimensions, namely internal and external identity. "Internal Identity" gathered information about identification at the domestic level. In other words, it sought to determine how the state connects to its people and how the people perceive themselves in relation to the state. Under this category, sub-codes have been added to analyze its dynamism in greater details. These are "Trust Building" and "Social Cohesion" respectively. The former discloses the establishment or intensification trust between governments, between different branches of the same government, and between the government and its people. The latter helps determine the extent to which the centenary celebrations brought people together. Conversely, "External Identity" collected details about identification at the international level, that is, how each country perceive themselves and want to be perceived in relation with the other states in the international system. Overall, these codes reveal how each country reproduced their identity in relation to other actors.

The last category, "Visibility," accumulated information concerning the extent to which the centenaries created or increased the level of interaction between different internal bodies of the country to project their joint forces internationally. Under this category, the sub-codes "Exchanges" and "Collaborations" were added to highlight the main outcomes resulting from the practice of cultural diplomacy, that is, the exchange of information, ideas, and people to increase their mutual understanding, as well as the extent to which each country worked together. As a result, these codes reveal how the centenaries' planning, organization, and programmes produced greater networking possibilities and expanded their domestic and international reach.

4. ANALYZING THE CENTENARIES

In this chapter, the centenary programmes and celebrations of Estonia, Finland, Latvia, and Lithuania will be analyzed through the lens of memory politics, identity, and cultural diplomacy. Following the logic of the coding frame, each section dissects the different components of the centenaries and reveal their impact and potential on states, on their relationship with other states, as well as on the people living within those states.

With regards to the preparation and planning of the centenaries, each programme counted several hundred if not thousands of events. To be able to carry out such a high quantity of events and projects and ensure their quality, the organization committee of each country had to prepare far ahead. For example, the programme for Estonia 100 started around 2014 (Interview Pikkov 2019) but competitions to collect projects started as early as 2011 with the film competition (Interview Soe 2019). The Latvian centenary framework began to form in 2014 (LV100 Programme 2016: 3). As for Finland, a working group was created in 2011 to plan the centenary celebrations and the centenary project was officially launched in 2013 (Finland 100 Centenary Celebration Report 2018: 8). However, the situation was different in case of Lithuania as the centenary preparations began only a year prior to the celebrations (Interview Gurskas 2019). Since it experienced difficulties to maintain a concrete budget (Ibid) and to start the preparations at an early stage (Interview Kudzmanienė 2019), the proportion of the Lithuanian centenary programme was compromised. Keeping that in mind, the extent to which the centenary programmes developed and promoted its content varied across countries hence their unequal representation in certain sections.

4.1. Memory Politics

Commemorative events are extraordinary events that are said to be "typically planned with intentions of affirming and reinforcing memories" (Frost and Laing 2013: 1). Given that collective memory has a strong connection to time (Turner 2006: 205), the past, the present, and the future were prominent components of the Estonian, Finnish, Latvian, and Lithuanian centenary programme. For example, to qualify for

selection and be incorporated within the Finnish centenary programme, project submissions had to contain either of the three dimensions of time (Finland 100 Centenary Celebration Report 2018: 13). The Estonian centenary celebrations were divided into five different thematic stages in which three of them, that is, "Our land," "Our state," and "Our freedom" tackled different periods of the past such as Estonia before statehood, the birth of the country, and the War of Independence, two of which addressed the notion of the present, namely "Our people" and "Our freedom," and only one, "Our future," concentrated on the future (EV100 Website: retrieved May 2019). Similarly, the Lithuania centenary programme classified all its activities into three sections in relation to time with "Learn!," "Celebrate!," and "Create!" approaching the notions of the past, the present, and the future respectively (LT100 Website: retrieved May 2019). As for the Latvian centenary programme, the centenary year itself did not display the three dimensions of time in such an apparent way. Rather, themes were given to each of the five years of the programme. All five themes, however, relate to a period of Latvian past and none of them explicitly mentions the importance of the present or the future. Instead, the heavy emphasis on the past is justified with the argument that history helps the Latvian population to "become aware of their role and responsibility in preserving the heritage of Latvia and creating the future of Latvia" (LV100 Programme 2016: 2).

Although provided to various extents, it is important to note that a significant emphasis on the past was not only put on the Latvian centenary programme but also on the centenary programmes of the four countries under review herein. Generally speaking, while the emphasis on the present remained limited and the examination of the possibilities of the future stayed modest, the weight of the past remained heavier, for the present and the future are connected together by the idea that "nations may become that which they once were in some mythical 'golden age'" (Edensor 2002: 18). Thus, the ways nations understand their past significantly influence their understanding of the present as well as the future inasmuch as history has both a meaning and a direction (Turner 2006: 212). Since Finland and the Baltic states previously belonged to larger entities and their difficult path to statehood remains a heartache, it is common for such

nations to attach greater importance to their history (Ibid: 206). The way the celebrations of the centenaries of Estonia, Finland, Latvia, and Lithuania were organized is no exception.

4.1.1. Past

As events go by in time, their recollection are slowly idealized and interpreted. As a result, they become more appealing than they really are. This is explained by the greater emphasis put on the positive rather than the negative in commemorative events, which is done with the intention to help a society remember and better understand its heritage (Frost and Laing 2013: 1). Although the past has been the most developed dimension of time, the extent to which it has been emphasized varied across countries. Therefore, it is important to make a distinction between the programme design of each country. On the one hand, not only have Estonia devoted an entire year to historical events separate from the centenary year and covering the battles for independence, the very structure of the Estonian, as well as the Latvian programme, have been designed according to the different stages of their state-building process. In the case of Estonia, celebrations started with the hundredth anniversary of the unification of the territory in April 2017 and are expected to carry on until February 2020, marking the signing of the Tartu Peace Treaty as well as the end of the conflict with Russia and its recognition of Estonia as a de jure independent state. In a similar fashion, Latvian celebrations began in April 2017 with the first Latgalian Congress and will end in 2021 with the international recognition of Latvia's independence and its accession to the United Nations. The reason for such blueprints was justified with the argument that a state "is not born overnight" (EV100 Website: retrieved May 2019) and that it "did not come to be in a single day" (LV100 Website: retrieved May 2019).

On the other hand, Finland and Lithuania have merged their historical celebrations within their overall centenary programme. Both programmes lasted one year only, that is, in 2017 and 2018 respectively. In the case of Finland, the centenary programme incorporated the three periods of time in its structure in reverse chronological order, ending with the hundred-day countdown focusing on Finland's

past. Such design was made with the intention to "increase awareness, keep the public interested, and build momentum towards the culmination of the celebrations" and also to form a "continuum" that "tells a story" (Finland 100 Centenary Celebration Report 2018: 11). Consequently, leaving the past for last shows the importance given to history as the turning point of Finland's narratives. In spite of the fact that the year of 2018 was dedicated to the celebration of the hundredth anniversary of the Finnish Civil War, it remained nonetheless a separate programme distinct from the Finnish centenary programme and limited to the independence year only. As for Lithuania, the entire structure of the centenary programme had practically the identical design as in the Finnish case, also following the same dimensions of time using three categories, that is, "Create" focusing on the future, "Celebrate" addressing the present, and "Learn" concentrating on the past, and with the intention to raise "public awareness about the Centennial and its achievements" (LT100 Website: retrieved May 2019). The only difference was that Finland 100 followed a strict chronology regarding the occurrence of its projects, whereas projects for Restored Lithuania 100 were taking place in a looser fashion. Moreover, several historians helped frame the narratives of the Lithuanian centenary programme (Interview Gurskas 2019), emphasizing the attention given to Lithuania's past during the jubilee year.

In regards to events themselves, some of them have been specifically designed to share the story of each country domestically and internationally. For example, in the case of Estonia, the Estonia 100 organizing committee collaborated with *Eesti Lastekirjanduse Keskus*, the Estonian Children's Literature Centre, to produce a touring event known as "The Children's Republic" and aiming at telling stories to children about Estonia combining theatre plays, games and workshops. Such an event has been put together to vulgarize the history of Estonia to children and express the importance of a free republic as a condition which should "not be taken for granted" (Interview Aun 2019). At the international stage, the artist Edward von Lõngus produced a street art version of Estonian characters from Estonia's archives of the past hundred years to "introduce Estonia in 11 European capitals in the context of the country's hundredth anniversary and EU presidency" (Ibid). Moreover, as the characters were brought to life

again, the project known as "(R)estart Reality" aimed at "building a bridge between the past and the present" (Ibid).

As part of Finland's centenary programme, historical events constituted more than half of the entire programme (Finland 100 Centenary Celebration Report 2018: 38). Consequently, the past was given more consideration as opposed to the present and the future. Since the last hundred days leading up to the Finnish independence day on December 6th focused on Finland's history, most of the events of history took place within that time frame. During that time, various concerts, seminars, and remakes of historical movies were presented throughout the country. At the international level, however, no key event seeking to transmit information about Finland's past is known to the author.

As for Latvia, most projects addressing the Latvian past during the centenary year took place at the national level, especially during the independence month, that is, November 2018. One notable example is "The Latvian School Bag" project, which is described as the biggest initiative from the Latvian centenary celebrations (LV100 Website: retrieved May 2019). Essentially, it consists of providing an opportunity for children and youth to access museums, theatres and other cultural events more easily in order for them to learn about Latvian history, among other things. The purpose of the project is to help Latvian students learn "everything that makes Latvia Latvia" (Ibid). Generally speaking, history is associated with the people of Latvia as the bearers of its past and who should acknowledge that "the State of Latvia is not a given or self-evident" (LV100 Programme 2016: 4). However, out of all the events that took place outside Latvia and to the best of the author's knowledge, no major event or project focused on the introduction of the Latvian past.

In the Lithuanian case and similarly to the Latvian case, despite the fact that there was a myriad of events about the centenary of Lithuania taking place in twelve different countries, there were no events specifically dedicated to the presentation of Lithuania's past abroad known to the author. It is possible, however, that any of the art exhibitions, movies, and audio-visual and information campaigns that were presented outside Lithuania contained historical content. Keeping that in mind, most of the effort

to promote Lithuanian history was made at the domestic level. Aside from the different exhibitions and films tackling Lithuania's past, the main event regarding this topic was the "Thank You Campaign" and consisted of sending postcards to "compatriots and foreign friends for their achievements benefiting Lithuania" (LT100 Website: retrieved May 2019). The project aimed at remembering the people who contributed to "Lithuania's success" by thanking them (Ibid). The notion of the past was also made the centre of the historical narratives of the overall centenary as well as the opening event of the Song and Dance festival specifically, stressing the importance of the achievements of the state and its people. It was presented as follows: "the past is seen not only as a reason to celebrate the important anniversary but also as an inspiration to reflect the historical significance of the past for today and the relevance of the issues of today for the past" (Ibid).

In brief, it appears that the topic of history remained separate from the celebrations of the centenary year of Estonia, Finland, and Latvia. As a result, the degree to which they sought to promote their past abroad during that specific year was limited. As for Lithuania, given that no separate programme dedicated to its history was established, it seems that the overall issue of the past remains more of a national than an international matter. It is possible, however, that such effort was made more important outside the purview of the centenary programmes.

4.1.2. Present

What belonged to a former time ultimately leads up to the time of speaking. The past and the present are intrinsically intertwined in the sense that societies reproduce stories of the past in the present in order to connect with their modern ethical principles (Heisler 2008: 199). In other words, the reproduction of the past in the present reinforces its interpretation and meaning (Frost and Laing 2013: 11). As part of each of the centenary programmes of the four case studies herein, the notion of the present has been acknowledged as a moment of celebration aiming at bridging the past and the future in a meaningful way. As a result, the present within each of the centenary programmes has remained more of a connecting rather than a fully developed concept.

Each country, however, has interpreted the present in their own individual way. In the case of Estonia, the present was understood as an opportunity to not only gather together and learn from one another but also reflect upon how the concept of freedom relates to today's Estonia (EV100 Website: retrieved May 2019). For Finland, the present represents an opportunity to learn from the past and make changes in order to better plan the future (Finland 100 Centenary Celebration Report 2018: 7). Latvia associates the people as the creators of the present thanks to their daily work (LV100 Website: retrieved May 2019). When referring to the Lithuanian independence day, the event is described as a way to maintain traditions and create new ones (LT100 Website: retrieved May 2019).

Lithuania's events regarding the present were gathered under the theme "Celebrate" and focused on two major events, namely the independence day on February 16th and the Song and Dance Festival from June 30th until July 6th 2018. The latter is a choral and dancing event held every four years and inscribed under UNESCO's Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity list since 2008. Within the description of the centenary programme, the Lithuanian independence day is described as "the most important date of the Centennial" (LT100 Website: retrieved May 2019). Apart from Lithuania as the only exception, each country's interpretation of the projects and events related to the present have remained superficial, especially in comparison to the past or the future. As described in the Finland 100 Centenary Celebration Report, people who joined the celebrations seemed to have "shifted their focus from the past to the future" leaving the present unaddressed (2018: 104). Nonetheless, the notion of modernity has been frequently stressed as a component of each country's identity, a characteristic that was promoted both domestically and internationally and that will be further discussed in the following sections.

When considering the notion of independence, Paasi (2015: 22) argues that it is useful for understanding hot and banal nationalism as well as "the hot in the banal." In this context, *banal* connotes the idea that habits, events, memories, and narratives are "routinized" and "latent," while *hot* is "salient" and "exceptional" (Ibid). In relation to the topic of this thesis, to discern "the hot in the banal", events or habits reproduced on a

regular basis, the banal, required the presence of an extraordinary element, the hot, in its reproduction. Therefore, the hundredth anniversary of the independence of Estonia, Finland, Latvia, and Lithuania magnified certain annual or periodic events by enhancing their scope and boosting their visibility. For example, Estonia's capital, Tallinn, has hosted an annual BMX and skateboarding contest known as "Simple Session" for several years and was exceptionally advertised on the Estonia 100 website for the occasion (retrieved May 2019). The event was also dedicated to the Estonian centenary and included visual elements of Estonia 100 such as the official logo (Interview Aun 2019). The Finnish independence day celebrations on December 6th of 2017 were described as "more cheerful than during other years" and that the event touched the people more personally than previous times (Finland 100 Centenary Celebration Report 2018: 5). Moreover, independence day celebrations occur every year in Finnish embassies around the world but were made bigger and the number of guests greater this time (Interview Pirttilä 2019). The Latvian and Lithuanian Song and Dance festival were also dedicated to the centennial anniversary of each country. During the festivals, songs and dances conveyed messages and values of the centenary celebrations (LV100 and LT100 Websites: retrieved May 2019). Consequently, considering that collective memories evolve over time to adapt to changing conditions (Heisler 2008: 205), the regular reproduction of certain events was made extraordinary in order to better reflect the present condition of the hundredth-anniversary celebrations.

4.1.3. Future

When describing the future, the Baltic states and Finland expressed promising sentiments. Estonia referred to the future as an opportunity to join the effort of the people to set new goals and build a better future (EV100 Website: retrieved May 2019). Projects tackling the future of Finland were described as "building a brighter future" (Finland 100 Centenary Celebration Report 2018: 38). Lithuania regards the possibilities of the future as "new emerging vistas for action" as well as a time to be "hopeful" for (LT100 Website: retrieved May 2019). Latvia stresses that the future needs to be jointly planned by the people in order to be beneficial (LV100 programme

2016: 7). Moreover, regarding their relation to time, it has been pointed out that nations appear to deal with both the past and the future "simultaneously" and "in equal measures" (Turner 2006: 205). This characteristic was also noticeable within the purview of the centenary programmes in the form of initiatives aiming at fostering internal and external cooperation, which will be tackled in greater details in the following sections. Nevertheless, few concrete examples with a specific mention of the future will be listed here.

The Finnish state facilitated the possibility of obtaining a subsidy through an open call for application within the Finland 100 programme for projects aiming at facilitating the creation and development of the future of the country. Moreover, an event referred to as "The Parliament of the Future" convened the Finnish Government and the population to discuss the future of the country's democracy and public involvement with the format of an open plenary session, an initiative that has been never done in Finnish history (Finland 100 Centenary Celebration Report 2018: 65). Within the Lithuanian centenary programme, "Create" stood for the activities addressing the future of the country, inviting its citizens to contribute to the prosperity of the country. A project called "Next 100" consisted of a forum aiming at gathering different sectors such business, science, and politics and discussing the potential of joint projects for the better future of Lithuania (LT100 Website: retrieved May 2019). In the case of Estonia, on the official website of Estonia 100, the centenary programme is described as focusing primarily on the future, emphasizing their focus on children and youth throughout the celebrations. However, since the events under the thematic period "Our future" is expected to take place from July 2019 until February 2020, information remains limited. As for Latvia, no projects clearly defined as focusing on the future is known to the author.

Moreover, Estonia, Finland, and Latvia identified the children and youth as the special target audience and contributors to their country's future. Referring again to the Estonian project "The Children's Republic" but this time focusing on children as "creators" and "audience" of Estonia's future, the Minister of Culture, Indrek Saar, commented that "[the] stories and songs, traditions and symbols that we pass on to the

younger generation will be a valuable contribution towards securing Estonian culture and independence" (EV100 Website: retrieved May 2019). Several projects of the Finland 100 campaign targeting the children and young people were present in the schools of Finland and were integrated into the lessons (Finland 100 Centenary Celebration Report 2018: 37). Although not specified, its aim seems to be to educate the younger generation about Finland and make them better citizens which will ultimately lead to a better future for the country. With regards to Latvia, a special coordinator in the Latvia 100 Office was the head of the Education and Youth Programme responsible for including the young people into the centenary celebrations as much as possible (LV100 Website: retrieved May 2019). As for Lithuania, the focus was more general, targeting the people as a whole who were considered as the creators of the future of the state of Lithuania. The central activity under the sector focusing on the future was "A Gift for the Centennial" which encouraged people to engage in voluntary activities and grow the number of volunteer initiatives to better the state for the next hundred years (LT100 Website: retrieved May 2019). The focus has been given on inciting people to offer their time and share their skills with others in need. On that matter, an online volunteer agency, Hiiop, has been specifically established for the Finnish centenary with the aim to accumulate a hundred years worth of voluntary work (Finland 100 Centenary Celebration Report 2018: 27). Although more modest, volunteering activities have also been part of Estonia's and Latvia's centenary programmes. Nevertheless, the extent to which such activities have taken place in those countries is unknown to the author.

4.2. Identity

The notion of independence is closely related to nationalism and is considered the "apex" of a nation's identity (Paasi 2015: 22). Given that the Baltic states and Finland are small countries that were once part of a bigger entity, Russia, their independence plays a central role in their identification as a way to express their own vision of the world and "reappropriat[e] their history" (Harvey 2002: 13). As the relevance of identity still persists in today's world, the nation "remains the pre-eminent entity around which identity is shaped" (Edensor 2002: vi). Consequently, the activities

surrounding the planning, organization, and celebrations of the centenary of Estonia, Finland, Latvia, and Lithuania are to be regarded as contributing to their national identity. In the Latvian case, the Office Latvia 100, whose members were appointed by and whose work was supervised by Ministry of Culture, was tasked to "try to put a meaning under what the state actually is" (Interview Oliņa 2019). As for Finland, Finnish identity was a particular focus of the centenary celebrations as they were intended to "bring out the importance and value of all perspectives in Finland's story" (Finland 100 Centenary Celebration Report 2018: 10). The Latvian centenary programme was also referred to as "a long-term investment in strengthening the national identity of Latvia" (LV100 Programme 2016: 2). Lithuania, however, did not explicitly formulate any statement regarding the relationship between the centenary programme and its identity.

Celebrations related to independence are said to be "performances" of the elements and symbols claimed to be part of the national identity (Paasi 2015: 27). However, the real significance of those celebrations lies in their practices and discourses (Ibid). By being responsible for the planning and organization of the centenary programmes, the state played a major role in setting the boundaries, in a loose fashion, of the kind of behaviour, habits, and learning experiences their citizens are expected to have (Edensor 202: 20). In other words, the elements chosen to be part of the centenary celebrations by the governments and its peoples speak volume in the way each country desired to present themselves publicly, both domestically and internationally. Such issues will be discussed in the following sections.

4.2.1. Internal Identity

The internal dimension of identity refers to the manner in which the state connects to its people and how the people perceive themselves in relation to the state. When asked to describe the culture and people of their country, although the answers differed from country to country, the respondents of the same country, however, gave rather similar answers. In the case of the members of the Estonia 100 organizing committee, Estonia and Estonians were described as a mix of old and new, referring to

the preservation of old traditions like smoke saunas or old songs with the modern positive mindset towards technology (Interview Pikkov 2019). The people, in particular, were described as "nature-lovers" and "tech-savvy" (Interview Aun and Soe 2019) as well as "pragmatic" (Interview Soe 2019). In a similar fashion, the Lithuanian respondents described the country as both ancient and modern with a particular emphasis on its history, stressing its long and difficult past (Interview Gurskas and Kudzmanienė 2019). Modernity was associated with the proudness of the country for its recent accession to various major international organizations like the EU, NATO, and OECD (Interview Gurskas 2019). The Finnish respondents highlighted the benefits of their welfare state, pointing out the care the state brings to its people in education and health (Interview Pirttilä 2019) but also in terms of overall safety (Interview Laakso-Liukkonen 2019). Accordingly, the selection of the centenary theme "Together" was made in order to display the warmth (Interview Pirttilä 2019) as well as the diversity of the country and its people (Interview Laakso-Liukkonen 2019). Moreover, both Latvian respondents discussed the popular trend on social media of "I am introvert," a series of comics depicting the life of an introverted Latvian, as a typical characteristic of the people of Latvia (Interview Kestere and Oliņa 2019). The trend was at the centre of the Latvian 100 communication campaign as well as part of the London Book Fair 2018. Regarding this matter, Estonians and Finns are said to have teased the Latvians by mentioning that the introverted nature fit the Estonian and Finnish people better (Ibid), stressing their similarities.

Various elements from the centenary programmes intended to go hand in hand with their internal definition of identity and was reproduced internationally. In the case of Estonia, the artist Edward von Lõngus fits the argument here again but this time in its form rather than in its content. The combination of street art representations of characters from the archives and digital technology for the project "(R)estart Reality" shows how Estonia decided to represent the combination of old and new that constituted its identity narratives. As for Lithuania, in addition to the newly created centenary logo, the organizing committee of the centenary defined the national flag as well as the coat of arms as official symbols of the celebrations, which were described to aim at

"bridging the two Lithuanias - the old and the new" (LT100 Website: retrieved May 2019).

Latvia stands out from the other case studies in terms of slogans as it is the only country which exhibits a prominent slogan alongside its logo. The logo reads *Es esmu Latvija* or "I am Latvia" and was used at the domestic level only and never for the communication of the international events (Interview Kēstere 2019). When asked to explain the meaning behind such slogan, the Latvian respondents stressed the need of a catchphrase that is broad enough to include everyone who associate themselves with Latvia but also specific enough to "unite" the people of Latvia together (Ibid) and along create "a sense of belonging and love to the state" (Interview Oliņa 2019). It also stresses the importance the state gives to the people as those who "create" and "make" Latvia (LV100 Website: retrieved May 2019). On that topic, it was specified to the author by a Lithuanian respondent that the internal use of the Lithuanian centenary logo had the purpose to encourage local businesses as an identification mark of local products (Interview Gurskas 2019).

4.2.1.1. Trust Building

The importance of building trust between different branches of the same government, as well as between the government and its people was made crucial in the preparation of the centenary programmes. It is noteworthy to point out that a significant effort by all four countries has been made in reducing the possible alienation between the state and its citizens. They acknowledged that their relationship "is not often ideal" and that they would have to "take down this barrier" in some way (Interview Aun 2019). Also, Latvia acknowledged that "society has high distrust for its State authorities" and that "political participation keeps diminishing" (LV100 Programme 2016: 2). Indeed, as people tend to be averse to governmental programs, this consideration is likely to lead to "greater neutrality," "better reception," and "more effective participation" (Gienow-Hecht 2010: 25). The main task of each organizing committees was to help their citizens in realizing their ideas and provide visual aids and funding when necessary. Consequently, the organization of the centenary programmes has been described as a

"bottom-up" (Interview Laakso-Liukkonen and Pirttilä 2019) and "grass-root" (Interview Aun and Pirttilä 2019) initiative. By letting the public personally decide on the events and projects for the centenary celebrations, their sense of trust towards the governments is expected to be heightened. For example, the slogan "let's give Estonia gifts" was formulated with the idea to "dissolve the distinction between the government and the people" and let the people decide for themselves how they wish to celebrate the hundredth anniversary of Estonia (Interview Aun 2019). Therefore, the Estonia 100 organizing committee acknowledged that people should be given enough freedom in personalizing their celebrations since "everyone celebrates their birthday differently" (Ibid). Moreover, it was possible to customize the logo of Estonia 100 with a personal photo (EV100 Website: retrieved May 2019) as a way to ease the possible resentment people might have towards government symbols. Finland offered a similar form of customization for the visuals of its centenary. An application called "Faces of Finland" allowed individuals to take selfies and give themselves a distinct look fitting the design of the centenary and also personalized the overall communication campaign (Finland 100 Centenary Celebration Report 2018: 19).

Moreover, although the extent to which each country's governmental institutions were involved in the organization and planning of the centenary programmes varied across countries, restrictions remained modest. Although the Estonian and Finnish organizing committees were formed under the Government's Office and Prime Minister's Office respectively, their connection with the government's agenda and interests was essentially made separate (Interview Aun and Laakso-Liukkonen 2019). On that matter, events and projects initiated by the government itself were more restricted than those initiated by the public (Interview Laakso-Liukkonen, Pirttilä, and Soe 2019). As for Lithuania, most initiatives were constrained by the historical narratives that composed the whole structure of the Lithuanian centenary programme (Interview Gurskas 2019). In the case of Latvia, given that the organizing committee was supervised by the Ministry of Culture, its influence over the centenary events and

projects has been more pronounced as it needed to follow specific demands². Nonetheless, all centenary programmes stayed as open as possible and accepted most proposals from the public. The reasons of rejections were reduced to either the disrespect of certain criteria (Interview Laakso-Liukkonen, Oliņa and Pirttilä 2019), the presence of a harmful or violent message or content (Interview Soe 2019), or the lack of funding (Interview Kestere, Gurskas and Pikkov 2019).

4.2.1.2. Social Cohesion

The centenaries were also rallying events that brought a great number of people together. The centenary celebrations have been very inclusive in the sense that they catered not only to all citizens living in the countries but also to those living abroad. Each country had an international programme, either as a separate branch or as an integral part of the centenary programme, which focused on giving a voice to their diaspora. For example, the Latvian international programme stressed the importance of including "anyone who has the sense of belonging to Latvia" to contribute to and join the celebrations (LV100 Programme 2016: 7), regardless of their nationality or language(s) they speak (Interview Kestere 2019). A respondent mentioned the existence of a significant Latvian community in Nova Odessa, Brazil, that were accepted as part of the Latvian centenary programme and visited by some of its members (Ibid). The Estonian international programme made a financial contribution to the Estonian Integration Foundation, an organization helping the integration of Estonians abroad (Interview Pikkov 2019). With the help of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Finnish expatriate organizations and people collaborated together to initiate most of the events that occurred outside Finland (Finland 100 Centenary Celebration Report 2018: 5). The only exception here would be Lithuania. Although it is nowhere specified that non-Lithuanian citizens could not contribute to the centenary celebrations, the target audience is formulated as "the people of Lithuania and Lithuanians living abroad,

² The Programme for the Preparation of the Centenary Celebrations of the state of Latvia mentions the following: "the Creative Council of the Centenary Celebrations of the State of Latvia has been established for creation of the content of the Celebrations Programme in accordance with the Order No. 5.1.-1-313 of the Ministry of Culture of 15 December 2014" (2016: 3).

especially the youth, and the foreign countries mass media" (LT100 Website, retrieved April 2019). However, everyone including non-Lithuanians could take part in the celebrations. For example, on Lithuania's independence day on the 16th of February 2018, there were free bus rides offered from Tallinn and Riga to invite the people of the neighbouring Baltic states to join the celebrations.

Interestingly enough, although the national language(s) of a country is considered to be a major part of its identity (Paasi 2015: 24), none of the four cases sought to actively promote them domestically or internationally. Nonetheless, a few respondents mentioned the link in language family between Finno-Ugric languages, that is, Estonian and Finnish, as well as the Baltic languages, Latvian and Lithuanian, as a characteristic of their affinities with their neighbouring countries (Interview Gurskas and Kudzmanienė 2019), indirectly stressing the fact that languages still play an important role in facilitating identification. Rather, the emphasis on languages was put indirectly. For example, on the independence day of Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland, the Estonia 100 team stood in front of each country's embassy in Tallinn and sang their national anthem in their national language. The event was referred to as a "heartfelt" gift (Interview Aun 2019) and by doing so, they acknowledged the importance nations attach to their national languages.

Moreover, as a way to include and invite everyone to the centenary celebrations, each country made its official centenary websites available in different languages. Most countries offered information in their national language, in addition to English for the international public, as well as a third language in order to include minorities. Russian translations were available for the Estonian and Latvian websites, and Swedish for Finland. However, the Lithuanian website was made available only in Lithuanian and English, excluding the Polish minority living in Lithuania.

4.2.2. External Identity

The external dimension of identity refers to the manner in which each country perceives themselves in the world and want to be perceived in relation with the other states in the international system. Symbols were also important components of the

centenary celebrations. In some cases, they were more developed and detailed than others. Those symbols worked as the main visual identity and as a labelling tool to identify a project, event, or product related to the centenary celebrations of each country. For instance, the most prominent symbol of Estonia 100 was the official logo of the centenary, which played on its geometry and simultaneously displayed the number 18 and 100 referring to both 2018 as the centenary year as well as the hundred years of Estonian independence (EV100 Website: retrieved April 2019). In contrast, the Latvian centenary logo was more complex and more elaborated than their Estonian counterparts. Indeed, the designer paid a lot of attention to details as every part of the logo has a particular meaning. The logo displays an infinity sign to mimic the number 100 as a sign of longevity for the independence of the state of Latvia and the letter font named "Cīrulis" refers to the Latvian designer Ansis Cīrulis, who was also the designer of the present-day Latvian flag (LV100 Website: retrieved May 2019). Here, such emphasis on state-related meanings also suggests that Latvia gives particular importance to its statehood as the primary source of its national identification. As for Lithuania, the Restored Lithuania 100 organizing committee create a logo out of the letters L-I-E-T-U-V-A, which translated from Lithuanian means "Lithuania," to form the figure 100 and shape different artworks in relations to the centenary (LT100 Website: retrieved May 2019). In addition to the centenary logo, the national flag was described as the most important symbol of the celebrations alongside the *Vytis*, Lithuania's coat of arms (LT100 Website retrieved May 2019). The emphasis on already established national symbols suggests here again the level of importance Lithuania places on the establishment of the country. In regards to the visuals of Finland 100, the centenary logo remains simple and straightforward displaying the name of the country in its two official languages, Finnish and Swedish, as well as the number 100 to indicate the centenary. The logo had no specific meaning behind it and was meant more as an indicator of events, projects, or products related to the Finnish centenary (Interview Pirttilä 2019). However, apart from the main logo, Finland displayed blue and white faces that individuals took themselves. They were then collected to form a recognizable pattern which was then used extensively in communication campaigns and "became

widely recognized symbol of the centenary celebrations" (Finland 100 Centenary Celebration Report 2018: 22).

The concept of "conditioning stereotype" has been put forward in the academic literature to refer to the way cultural diplomacy helps bring about the national compliance of a country with its image abroad (Higham 2002: 140). In other words, to get rid of unpleasant stereotypes, a country seeks to become what it claims to be as it wants to distance itself from false assumptions and restore the accuracy of its image. In this respect, it has been proclaimed that the centenary year "had an impact on the Finns' idea of Finland," that "[p]ositively open and pluralist Finnishness emerged" and that national identity was "more clearly defined on the basis of Finns' own values" (Finland 100 Centenary Celebration Report 2018: 86). Ostensibly, the decision to adopt "Together" as the overall theme of the Finnish celebrations stands as a way to debunk a general stereotype associated with Finns which evoked the need to appear more welcoming and inclusive instead. In the case of the three Baltic states, a particular focus has been given on their identification as modern countries. Lithuanian respondents used the term "modern" more than once when referring to the characteristics of the state of Lithuania (Interview Gurskas and Kudzmanienė 2019). In the case of Estonia and Latvia, such qualifier was also present in the speech of Estonians and Latvians delegates during their common meetings concerning the planning of the centenary celebrations (Interview Pirttilä 2019). Such emphasis on modernity as central narrative possibly stands for the attempt of the Baltic states to get rid of the stigma attached to their post-communist past and be stereotyped for backward or underdeveloped countries.

4.3. Visibility

Visibility stands for the the degree to which each country has attracted general attention though the celebrations of their centenaries. On a large scale, cultural diplomacy operates as a "fundamental instrument" of a country's presence abroad (Higham 2002: 134). In combination with the extraordinary circumstance that represents a country's centenary, the practice of cultural diplomacy in that situation is a great opportunity to gather together and attract more attention internationally. Thus, the

predominant and common objective of the centenary celebrations expressed by all four countries to increase their visibility abroad comes as no surprise. Indeed, the principal aim to the creation of a separate international programme for Estonia 100 was "to combine efforts to raise Estonia's profile globally" (EV100 Website: retrieved May 2019). Finland emphasized the need to "ensur[e] the visibility of the Finland 100 logo" as an indirect way to increase the visibility of Finland (Finland 100 Centenary Celebration Report 2018: 22). The Latvian centenary committee expressed their objective to "communicate Latvia as an active, responsible player in the field of building international and inter-cultural relationships" (LV100 Website: retrieved May 2019). Finally, Restored Lithuania 100 made clear that one of its main aims and expected outcomes was to "increase Lithuania's global visibility" (LT100 Website: retrieved May 2019).

Accordingly, each of the four countries found ways to be visible and promote some of their innovations to appeal to others. For example, as part of the Restored Lithuania 100 programme, the Lithuanian laser technology was put forward during the papal visit of the country. For the occasion, a nano-sized Jesus was made and offered to the Pope as a gift during his visit to Lithuania. Since the object could only be seen using a microscope, a video showing the initiative attracted a lot of attention online (Interview Gurskas 2019). In its planning, the Estonian international programme was determined to get as much visibility outside Estonia as possible by combining its presidency of the Council of the EU with its centenary celebrations simultaneously (Interview Pikkov 2019). A symbol similar to the centenary has been specifically designed for the presidency. In spite of the fact that the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the EU shattered the overall planning, the Estonian international programme decided to stick to the initial plan.

As part of its methodology, cultural diplomacy includes, but is not limited to, exchanges of ideas, information, and arts as well as collaborations between different actors. Therefore, the following section will analyze how they were conducted and what resulted from them.

4.3.1. Exchanges

All respondents mentioned the attendance of meetings, in which all organizing committees of the four countries shared ideas (Interview Gurskas 2019), "knowhow" (Interview Kestere 2019), and presented the planning of their centenary programmes (Interview Soe 2019) as well as experiences where possible (Interview Laakso-Liukkonen 2019). The meetings were also described as "benchmarks" for the countries attending (Interview Pirttilä 2019) and took place twice a year (Interview Pikkov 2019). As a result, the presence of similarities in the centenary programmes of the four countries under review is likely to have emerged from those meetings. Moreover, it was mentioned that Finland played a greater role as an adviser than the other three Baltic states, given that they celebrated their hundredth anniversary a year earlier (Interview Laakso-Liukkonen 2019). The respondents from the Latvia 100 Office expressed the benefits of those meeting by saying that they learned a lot from them, especially in terms of logistics and communication (Interview Kestere and Oliņa 2019). The meetings were also described as helpful in learning how to work with others (Interview Oliņa 2019) and useful to learn how to mobilize people and look for opportunities (Interview Gurskas 2019).

In addition, the meetings also helped the Baltic states and Finland learn from one another thanks to their interactions. Some expressed having learned more about Finnish history and organization as well as Estonian culture thanks to the meetings (Interview Kestere and Oliņa 2019). Lithuania was singled out as the country most contrasting with the rest of the quartet in terms of its approach to the planning and organization of the centenary. The interactions with Lithuania were described as "different" (Interview Kestere and Pirttilä 2019) for the reason that the country had a more pronounced focus on its long history as an independent state, a situation unknown to the other countries. Consequently, the country was regarded as a former "empire" rather than a "young country" (Interview Kestere 2019). The Estonian respondents also indicated their recent discovery of the thousandth anniversary of Lithuania and mentioned the long history of the country as a recurrent topic during those gatherings (Interview Pikkov and Soe 2019).

Since there cannot be anniversaries without gifts, the Baltic states and Finland exchanged gifts with one another but also with themselves as a way to show the recognition of one's birthday and a way to take part in the celebrations. These gifts were not material objects but actions and projects taking various forms and sizes. The vast majority of gifts were made by the people to their state. For example, Estonia 100 counted over 1,500 gifts from concerts in local schools to countrywide exhibitions (EV100 Website: retrieved May 2019). Estonia also offered gifts to their neighbours on the occasion of their centenary. On the independence day of Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland, one of the most prominent buildings in the Estonian capital, the Stenbock House, was lit up in their respective flag colours and the Estonia 100 team sang each anthem in their national languages (Interview Aun 2019). In the case of Finland, the biggest gift campaign, "My Nature Gift," was launched by the Ministry of the Environment and "encouraged landowners to set up private nature reserves in honour of the centenary of Finland's independence" (Finland 100 Centenary Celebration Report 2018: 133). As part of this project, Finland's oldest company, Fiskars, donated forty hectares of the nature conservation area for the public (Ibid: 124). Moreover, various countries abroad joined the celebrations by illuminating famous buildings and iconic landmarks in blue and white colours (Ibid: 60). As for Latvia, in combination with the commemoration of the Baltic Way, a peaceful political demonstration initiated by the people of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania that took place in 1989, cakes were given their Baltic neighbours to represent their continuous and sustained ties (Interview Gurskas 2019). In the case of Lithuania, most gifts were made by Lithuanians to Lithuania in the form of volunteering activities due to financial limitations (Ibid).

Moreover, a major element in the practice of cultural diplomacy is the exchange of people such as artists, actors, musicians, and writers (Schneider 2006: 193). Evidence of such exchanges were also present as part of the centenary programmes. For example, the Latvian National Opera and Ballet visited the Estonian National Opera to offer a guest performance (Interview Kestere 2019). Correspondingly, The Estonian National Opera presented a number of guest performances in Riga in honour of their centenaries (Interview Oliņa 2019). As for Finland, the Finnish orchestral conductor and composer,

Esa-Pekka Salonen, toured with an orchestra around Europe and North America to celebrate the hundredth anniversary of Finland (Finland 100 Centenary Celebration Report 2018: 136). The Finnish National Ballet also made a guest appearance at the Royal Danish Theatre in Denmark and performed there several times and is described as "one of the international highlights of Finland's centenary celebrations" (Ibid: 119).

4.3.2. Collaborations

Cultural diplomacy offers a "great potential for governments to work together with civil society and private organizations, companies, and individuals to create joint strategies in partnership with each other" (Gienow-Hecht and Donfried 2010: 25). Indeed, the centenary programmes of the Baltic states and Finland incited the cooperation of different actors, both at the domestic and the international level. The extent to which they were pushed to interact with others in order to exchange information and develop contacts will be discussed in this section.

On several occasions, the three Baltic states sought to be represented abroad as a group rather than individually. The motivation behind such behaviour was formulated as a way to have more impact and be more competitive abroad as each of the Baltic states acknowledge the lack of appeal their individuality projects (Interview Kudzmanienė 2019). Although this grouping format has been exploited before and did not come about as a result of the centenaries, the Baltic states joined their forces once again to reinforce their visibility during international events as part of their centenary celebrations. For example, the art exhibition "Wild Souls: Symbolism in the Baltic States" presented paintings of artists from the three Baltic states in the Musée d'Orsay in Paris. When asked to name a popular international event, several respondents selected this particular event (Interview Gurskas, Kestere, Oliņa 2019). Moreover, for the 2018 edition of the London Book Fair, the Baltic states were at the centre of attention as the market focus countries. The market focus initiative basically aims at putting the public eye on the publishing works of the countries showcased at the London Book Fair and give them opportunities to extend their business abroad. For this event specifically, a common

communication campaign was conducted by the three Baltic republics and was described as a "great success" (Interview Kestere 2019).

During the preparations of the centenary programme, one of the objectives of the Estonian 100 committee was to encourage experts from different fields to cooperate with one another (Interview Aun 2019). By doing so, the team acknowledged that one trait of Estonians is to be independent and have a tendency to avoid reaching for help (Ibid). By doing so, the Estonian centenary programme helped the state and the people realize that there is strength in numbers. For example, the committee invited architects from The Union of Estonian Architects to meet and brainstorm on the topic of public spaces. They all rose the issue of improper central squares in most of the cities in Estonia. Ultimately, the architects decided to collaborate with one another and find common ways to get funding and realize their project, known as "Great Public Spaces" (Ibid).

It is also noteworthy to point out that, in a disproportionate manner, the information provided to the author concerning the impacts of the centenary celebrations on fostering cooperation between different actors was substantially more important in the case of Estonia. This might be explained by the presence of a third Estonian respondent. However, given that the same set of questions were asked to all respondents, the extent of their coverage on the topic remained modest. Thus, it appears that the centenary programme of Estonia had a marked impact on its overall functioning. When referring to the collaboration between different branches of the Estonian government, that is, the Minister of Education and Research, the Minister of Culture, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Defence, the Minister of Justice, such initiative was described as "the first time when different institutions cooperated like this" (Interview Pikkov 2019). Moreover, in the case of the Estonian Ministry for Culture, it appears the process of selection and financing of projects was facilitated by the centenary. Usually, the regular rounds of applications run for a maximum of a year but for the centenary, the procedures were extended to allow, for example, funding for projects in 2016 to take place in 2018 (Ibid). The Estonia 100 organizing committee also cooperated for the first time with Enterprise Estonia, a

nonprofit organization supporting the development of companies with an export capacity. Especially for the centenary, the organization agreed to share information and work together with the ministries involved and increase their efficiency of the centenary planning (Interview Soe 2019). Another collaboration that resulted from the planning of the Estonian centenary was made with different private-sector companies using Public Private Partnerships (PPP). Such partnership results in either the financing, building, or operating of infrastructure projects. As part of the Estonian centenary celebrations, different projects such as "An Instrument for Every Child," which consisted of offering and replacing old instruments to various music schools over Estonia involved such collaboration took place. The project was described as the "first project" in collaboration with a PPP (Interview Aun 2019).

Interestingly enough, the Estonian and Latvian respondents mentioned the selection of specific countries identified as "strategic partners" in which they conducted the international events (Interview Pikkov and Kestere 2019). The Estonia 100 government committee selected thirty countries where their centenary events would take place where collaboration and mutual interests with Estonia were present (Interview Pikkov 2019). As for Latvia, countries that contributed to the development of the state of Latvia, for example, which recognized its de facto independence, were considered as "friends" and were treated accordingly (Interview Kestere 2019). Similar sentiments might also be present in the case of Finland and Lithuania, however, such information was not made as explicit. In that respect, it was also pointed out to the author that both Estonia and Latvia also encouraged greater collaborations with these partners. To do so, they imposed an additional criterion specifically for the project proposals of their international programmes which consisted of the prior obtention of a form of a sponsorship agreement with one of their partners in order to be eligible (Interview Pikkov and Kestere 2019).

Cultural diplomacy is said to be more impactful as a "two-way street" and operates best in the long term (Schneider 2006: 196). Therefore, to sustain long-lasting cooperation between actors, it necessitates the constant effort of the parties involved to keep and develop the newly-established relationships. In that regard, a few respondents

referred to past collaborations in connection with their planning of the centenary programme. For example, back in 2014, Riga was announced as the European Capital of Culture, an initiative supported by the European Commission, which seeks to highlight the culture of Europe by selecting a different European city every year. In 2015, Latvia had to ensure the smooth conduct of the rotating presidency of the Council of the EU. Subsequently, the Latvian government maintained close relations with their new partners, which turned out to be beneficial to the centenary programme as collaborations were maximized and fundings requests more effective thanks to those partners (Interview Kestere 2019). Regarding the Latvian presidency of the Council of the EU, it was not mentioned by any of the Estonian respondents that they consulted Latvia for their own presidency. It remains nonetheless possible, which would also be a pertinent example of cultural diplomacy. Conversely, the situation has not been the same in the case of Lithuania. The Lithuanian presidency of the EU Council took place during the second half of the year 2013. It was expressed by a respondent that the presidency helped the Lithuanian government increase the efficiency of its organization: "it was clear, who was responsible for what, and what to fund" (Interview Gurskas 2019). However, those experiences gained from this task were not applied to the organization of the Lithuanian centenary programme for unknown reasons (Ibid) and further explains the different struggles the Lithuanian organizing committee experienced during that time.

CONCLUSION

The thesis analyzed the role of cultural diplomacy for countries with limited international reach. For this, the centenary programmes and celebrations of Estonia, Finland, Latvia, and Lithuania were considered extraordinary events with considerable domestic and international reach. Besides this, the thesis also examined the case studies through the lens of identity and collective memory, how they were reproduced in the celebrations and what role they played in the centenary events and projects.

Following the logic of the coding frame, each country was considered on their collective memory, their identity, and their visibility on the international stage as main categories. The sub-codes Past, Present, and Future were created under the Memory Politics section to highlight each state's relation to time and how it was depicted in their centenary celebrations. The sub-codes Internal Identity and External Identity under the category Identity were meant to stress the double dimension of identity reproduction, namely at the domestic and international level. To be more specific, the data collected under the internal dimension of identity were divided into the following sub-codes: Trust-Building and Social Cohesion.

It was put forward as background information that the four countries reviewed in the thesis share considerable historical experiences that were made components of their respective centenary programme. A distinction was drawn between Lithuania and the other case studies as the only country with a history beyond the twentieth century. Correspondingly, the story of their statehood was made central to their centenary narratives.

The research relied on qualitative content analysis as well as face-to-face interviews for its execution. As the data used for analysis were the English version of their official websites and publications and as not all information were provided in that language, the interviews conducted with members of the organizing committees filled the knowledge gap when necessary.

The results of the empirical study indicate that coding categories used for the analysis of the centenary programmes and celebrations of each of the four cases herein

has proven to be appropriate in grasping their complexity. The extent to which an emphasis was put on a particular category was different for each country, which both reinforced existing similarities and differences and revealed new ones.

As a final point, the objective of the thesis was to disclose the potential of cultural diplomacy and reveal its practicality in the instance of friendly state relationships free from any conflicts or forms of hostility. In combination with a focus on identity and memory politics, the analysis demonstrates the complexity and eventful composition of state anniversaries.

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ANNEX

Interview Questions

1. How would you describe your country's culture to a foreigner?
2. Which event from the centenary programme would you say represents your country the most? Why?
3. Out of all the activities and events of the centenary programme, which of them would you consider most important? Why?
4. How much freedom did you have while designing/organizing the programme?
5. How were the activities/events/projects selected?
6. Were any of the activities/events/projects rejected? If yes, why?
7. What comes to mind when thinking about Estonia/Finland/Latvia/Lithuania (asking to non-locals)?
8. Have you looked at/been inspired by Estonia's/Finland's/Latvia's/Lithuania's centenary programme? If yes, why/how?
9. Have you learned something from the centenary celebrations of Estonia/Finland/Latvia/Lithuania that you did not know before (asking to non-locals)?
10. Would you say the centenary celebrations helped your country to get more attention internationally?
11. Would you say the centenary celebrations brought the people of your country closer together? Did they create a sense of togetherness?
12. Any other questions that might arise from the discussion or specific to the country.