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Mutual Stereotypes in Latvia and Estonia

4+2 MA Studies

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Introduction

In 23 August of 1989 the world media showed three united Baltic States holding hands in a human chain in the name of independence and unity to be recognized and known as three Baltic countries on the coast of the Baltic Sea with long and rich history and traditions. Along with independence they had returned to Europe, where they once belonged before Soviet Occupation. From the moment the Soviet Union dissolved the three countries Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania were comprehended to as the Baltic States or Baltic region starting its rise with its' economic and democratic development. But Estonia, which implemented reforms quicker than the other Baltic States and promoted a new generation of politicians to the forefront earlier, was invited to join the European Union in 1997, before Latvia and Lithuania. That early success helped fashion a new identity, Estonia would now call itself a Nordic state, identifying with the prosperous and transparent Scandinavian states, and leave behind Latvia and much the rest of east and central Europe. This can be seen as an important turning point in Baltic identification and finding the place in new Europe. The question rises how much the self identification is recognized and seen by neighbouring countries.

In 2004 three Baltic countries along with 7 other countries joined European Union, by doing so, becoming part of united Europe. Each country and nationality has their own characteristics, traditions and ways how rest of the world comprehends to them. Although world is going through globalization and multicultural communication, nations so far have kept their uniqueness and differences.

Being born in a family with Estonian mother strongly maintaining Estonian language and traditions and father being Latvian, I have come into contact with both Latvian and Estonian cultures. Along with that by living in Latvia I have come in close interaction to people expressing their views and beliefs about Estonians. As well I have always paid additional attention to information in Latvian media about Estonia. It seems that Estonians are one of the most described, stereotyped and talked about nations in Latvian media. That makes me wonder where the stereotypes are based, what is their source and can they be overcome when coming face to face collaborating with person from that nation and how much stereotypes determine ones actions. As I have been living in Latvia then so far I can give a subjective opinion about the Estonians being represented in media. At this point I believe that in media through different jokes and sketches, where Estonians are represented, it is done very stereotypically. From other hand I have noticed that Estonia is often presented as a good example in the context of Baltic States.

Both countries have experienced very similar history and development although both nations have their complete differences, for example, cultural heritage. Language is one of the most obvious peculiarities. In all times Latvians and Estonians have lived side by side which necessarily developed in some sort of close attitude and relationship between both countries. Cooperation does not exist only on state level but also in peoples' everyday lives, as business relations, in peoples' daily assumptions, experience and information from other sources.

Existence of a nation can be reduced to a life of a person. It is a known phenomenon that nations living next to each other express their experience in stories, songs or jokes, revealing their attitude and thoughts about their neighbouring nations. Although it is worth researching what is the reason for stereotyped attitude towards one country to be more distinct.

Today along with personal experience and interpersonal communication the main source of information is various media, which provides and updates with different kind of news and viewpoints. Newspapers, TV, radio and Internet have a crucial part in creating people's opinions about matters around them and in the rest of the world.

In this paper I am planning to disclose sources and points of view between Estonia and Latvia about each other in a so called mirror image.

Firstly, I am going to study the main terms and basic concepts of attitude building and stereotype development.

Secondly, it is crucial to follow the historical background of both states to determine what has been the cooperation along the years between Latvia and Estonia. At the same time it is relevant to study the individual peculiarities in the development of each country, as it can serve as an interpretation of longer term track record of Latvia and Estonia.

As I am going to carry out the media analysis, I plan to follow not only the historical development of print media in both states but study and compare the newspapers which are going to be used as source material for the further analysis.

To disclose stereotypical attitudes towards each country and nation in printed media I am going to carry out content and discourse analysis. On other hand focus group discussions held both in Latvia and Estonia can provide me with representation of individual attitude, which later on can be compared and contrasted with the media analysis outcome. As the main source of analysis is language usage and attitudes expressed by it then I am also going to slightly touch upon ideas of language and it's symbolic power in creating a social understanding.

Starting the research I assume that main role in creating attitude towards neighbouring nation and state are both the historic developments and cooperation as well as daily information provided by media which later is taken over in the individual level in the forms of attitude and certain language usage, carrying with it fixed connotations.

1. Basic Concepts

1.1. Social Stereotypes

Describing any social group, object or event people are using generalizations and tend to group and categorize things, often using stereotypical or generalized assumptions. In finding out the mutual perception between Estonians and Latvians it is important to define the main terms which uncover the phenomenon and explain how reception is formed and why. I see following terms as the most important to be unlocked: **stereotype** (in general, long term) and **national stereotype** (mainly including attitude and its building towards nations).

Studying different literature following can be concluded: if social history tries to determine why within a particular culture certain attributes get assigned to concrete groups then psychology tries to explain why people need to stereotype at all (Hinton, 2000).

The question of stereotype has occupied psychologists and sociologists till 1920's, when Walter Lippmann in his work "Public Opinion" (1922) introduces the concept and structure of **stereotype**. Lippmann defines stereotypes as "*simplified pictures in our heads*" (Lippmann, 1922).

The author gives the basic structure of the stereotype as follows:

Stereotypes are simplified "pictures in our heads" of people and events. The environment all together is too big and complex for realizing all the details, receiving objective picture and to get direct acquaintance. To cope people construct previously mentioned "pictures" of the surrounding environment. So further any actions and conceptions arise not from the "direct and certain knowledge" of people and events but they are based on simplified "pictures".

The basic points of Lippmann's views are that field of information is so large and wide while human cognitive process is limited. That is why so called "simplified pictures" help to narrow down the world and information in it. That according to Lippmann greatly causes an inaccuracy of the result stereotype (Lippmann, 1922). That is mainly because information is being generalized, leaving out the details and exceptions.

Stereotypes can be grouped as (Šulmane, Kruks, 2001: 12):

- Mutual conceptions of a social group and its individuals
- Simplified pictures in one's head (Lippmann, 1922)
- Ones' exaggerated opinions linked to certain category or group. Purpose of which is to rationalise or to justify ones' behaviour towards the category or group (Allport, 1958)
- Opinions of persons' qualities – for example, personal characters or manners of a group or person (Leyens)
- Hetero-stereotypes – stereotypes of another group
- Auto-stereotypes – stereotypes of one's group.

It is interesting to note that auto - stereotypes usually strengthen the characteristics which are accepted in certain culture while hetero- stereotypes impersonate those negative characteristics which are not preferable in one's culture. There are authors (Levine, Campbell, 1972) who assume that hetero-stereotypes can be considered as ones' negative characteristics projected to another group (Šulmane, Kruks, 2001: 14).

Also the dominant view of several studies is that stereotypes are mostly incorrect and contradicting the reality which further leads to prejudice against different groups. That makes one think that stereotyping is a product or outcome of wrong thinking. But different authors in 1970s come to the conclusion once again that categorization is needed to be able to perceive the world around. Later, Fox (1992) argues that negative stereotypical thinking which may create prejudice can be viewed as defensive form from one group to another.

McGarty brings forward additional definitions of stereotypes: the term stereotype is reserved to refer to a specific representation of a particular group at a particular time (McGarty, 2002: 6-7).

The author also describes stereotypes as shared group beliefs. The same as Lippmann, McGarty confirms that stereotypes are based on collective cultural knowledge and social representations from which different people produce the commonality of views.

As explained above, stereotypes are based on kind of categorization of situations, individuals and social groups for providing more simplified viewpoint of social environment around. The categorization is based on interaction between received information with background information (McGarty, 2002).

It is important to know and define how we gain the knowledge that we have about world around.

And that it is done in two general ways: one's own experience and through other people or sources. If we find a high consensus on a particular view of a particular social group – from our friends, acquaintances and the media – it is likely that we will accept this normative influence as the appropriate way to view the group (Hinton, 2000: 19)

Which means, if one does not have its own experience with certain group of people, situation or phenomenon then one is likely to presume existing or heard information as general description or ground. People tend to learn and adapt stereotypes from conversations and communication with other members of society and through media. Big role in reproducing of stereotypes has political, economic, cultural and media elite (van Dijk, 1993; 1996).

Even if there are no evident differences between groups' stereotypes can form anyway. For example, if any possible difference attracts the attention it becomes more available and cultivated in the memory and is used as stereotype (McGarty, 2002).

Tajfel (1981) divides so called social stereotypes (opinions that one group have about another group of people) into two kinds:

- 1) Ideological – justifying and interpreting behaviour of a group
- 2) Identification – contradiction of “us” – as positive and ‘them’ – as negative, which helps to cultivate pre occupancy, economic status, political powers, self-esteem of the group.

Substance of stereotypes is not too multi-formed but keeps repeating the same patterns (Tajfel & Turner, 1986):

- Favour to my group vs. rejection of the other group
- Highlighting the diversity of my group vs. homogeneousness of the other group
- Highlighting the good examples of my group vs. bad examples of the other group
- Attributing the failures of my group to the particular situation vs. attributing the failures of other group to their abilities

(I.Šulmane, S.Kruks, 2001: 13-14)

Narrowing down the term of stereotype, on one hand in the frame of this field work it can be talked about **national stereotypes**. National stereotype can be described as system of culture – specific beliefs connected to certain nationality, for example, appearance, language, food, habits, psychological traits, attitudes, values etc. Although, at the same time I would not want to use only the understanding of the national stereotype, as I assume that stereotyped attitudes developed between Latvia and Estonia are not just rooted in national and cultural differences as rather political, economic and social differences and peculiarities of the state. On other hand I assume that further compared attitudes between media and individuals in Latvia and Estonia could be assumed not just as stereotypes but in some way can be called **stereotyped images**. With this term I understand stereotyped attitudes and belief of an individual that has been caused by or rooted in created image of the state and nation by media.

1.2. Social Identity

Studying social behaviour on stereotyped attitudes it is important to look at creation of social identity. As people live in society and tend to form identities to belong and understand groups around them. As basic social identity theory researchers can be mentioned Tajfel and Turner (1979) who studied how, when and why people identify with a certain group of people and how they learn to adopt attitudes to outside or other groups.

Group or social identity that people adopt is created both by society around and an individual. As people interrelate within various groups there are several identities open which vary according to

the social context, every time informing who or which identity one holds and what it entails. It can be grouped as:

Categorisation – people tend, like and need to put themselves and others into groups or categories and labelling them.

Identification – association of differences of certain groups and categories which also serves as distinction of oneself.

Comparison - people compare the group where they belong to with the other, outside one. At the same time there is exaggeration of similarities within one's own group and differences from the other group (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

Each social identity is active and relevant in the context of the certain social space. In case of the national identity the social space which plays the major role is the state.

1.3. Social Space

Media, language and society around can be grouped into three main reality and communication creators. Society creates its reality by using language, which is reproduced and contemplated on in media. That on other hand makes new or secondary reality by society observing itself and relating to itself already as observer.

The social space can be defined as process in which individual uses the material and symbolic resources, based on their relation to the around world. The social space can be perceived distances amongst different countries/cultures, the way individual defines their geo-cultural identity, their readiness for contacts with different cultures, and their relationships with language communication (Masso, 2008).

A. Masso in the study of personal social space (2008) as the major authors who could be linked with the history of the social space studies mentions Edward Soja, Henri Lefebvre and David Harvey. According to A. Masso (2008) their theories put forward ideas of dual and triple division of social space. The dual opposition of physical or objective (factual circumstances related to the space such as ethnic groups and state borders), and mental and subjective space (mental constructions such as imagined distances between different cultures) (Soja, 1995). At the same time A. Masso notes that E. Soja's theory has often been criticized by other authors due to moderate contribution to earlier authors analysing the theories (Masso, 2008:10).

On other hand H. Lefebvre develops triple division defining it as perceived space (contact with different cultures) which is formed by conceived space (created by outside factors) and lived space (personal, individual meanings). D. Harvey develops further the triple division emphasizing the creation of social space more as certain act of communication (Harvey, 2006). D. Harvey

differentiates between absolute (fixed context where the communication takes place), relative (reception of space of individuals) and relational (when the external influences in the context are internalised and expressed by individuals) space. In that way social space is not only context or expression of communication but can also be considered as a way of communication (Masso, 2008:11).

Social systems and way of communication greatly creates and forms its own way of life or reality. Social order is another aspect determines our everyday social relations and attitudes. Berger and Luckmann (1971) in their book „Social construction of reality” try to find answer to question about how social reality is created or how people see and relate to the world around them.

For people to communicate and understand meaning they have to share some fundamental understanding. Society and people continually create and construct ways and standards of living and existing in social world. These attitudes and approaches in time become rituals, traditions and ways of acting and thinking in everyday life and become their reality.

Firstly, language has a crucial meaning in process of creating and understanding social reality. Berger and Luckmann (1971) see it as possibility or a mean to name, make objective and share with others social meanings and reality. That can be considered as one of the ways how individuals and society in general produce meanings, explanations and in time also stereotypes about surrounding world and happenings.

Our everyday life is the way people interpret the reality and put forward meanings. Although that is my reality at the same time I share it with others. Correlation with others also complements the social reality and the way we see things.

Berger and Luckmann (1971) as most important experience in relation with society see face - to - face situations. Then the other is accepted, seen and related to as fully real. In face - to - face interaction person manifests as unique and atypical individual. My encounters with others in everyday life are typical in a double sense – I apprehend the other as a type and I interact him in a situation that is itself typical (Berger and Luckmann, 1971: 46).

It means, further away my relation is from face - to - face, more typified it is and interaction becomes more anonymous and generalized or stereotyped. This is one of the explanations that can serve as where I see stereotypical attitudes and generalized views or assumptions can be originated about, for example, neighbouring nation.

Berger and Luckmann (1971: 47 – 48) note that the social reality of everyday life is thus apprehended in a continuum of typifications, which are progressively anonymous as they are removed from the “here and now” of the face - to - face situation.

Social structure or reality is created by these: face - to - face situations and anonymous abstractions. They further create ones attitude and way of seeing and explaining social reality. People interact in

a social system and over time form representations of each other and their actions and add meanings to these conceptions.

At the same time not only individual experience plays a role, but also greatly the knowledge that one takes over from others or share between groups (Masso, 2008).

It is important to mention that due to development of communication technologies and processes of globalisation social space cannot be considered and looked at as static definition but is rather a interaction between imaginary, symbolic and material dimensions (Masso, 2008:12).

According to P. Vihalemm (2007) **the international social space** (social reality) is based and can be characterized by density of political, cultural and economic relations. International social space can be categorized in to micro and macro level in other words into state and individual or every day level.

The micro level of international space is constituted from everyday contacts of individuals with other countries, including consumption of imported goods, travelling, professional co-operation, personal communications, etc. On this personal level, international space is represented through people's interests and attitudes, experiences, impressions, and visions of other countries (Vihalemm, 1999: 250 – 269).

Looking separately at the categories the framework of political social space could be understood as diplomatic relations, formed unions and power relations between countries. For Latvia and Estonia it could be mentioned being joined as Baltic countries (mainly in the early nineties during the regaining of Independence and secondly late nineties - working towards joining the European Union).

Economic space is based on amounts of investments, common infrastructure and developments of common economic space. And thirdly, cultural space is mainly related to language, religion, common traditions, symbols, history, change of cultural contacts and media reflection (Vihalemm, 1999).

The political, cultural and economic relations between Estonia and Latvia are going to be discussed further on in the context of historical development.

Mediatization of interrelations between countries is greatly reflected in the amount of the media content which reflects people's interest toward representations and images of these particular countries (Bolin, 2006).

As mentioned before then media has a major role in creating the social reality as well as social identity. The aspects of how media influences and shapes the reality and attitudes of individuals are going to be discussed further.

1.4. Media and Social Reality

The way society (people) defines and forms attitudes to things and situations around them can be defined as social reality (Luhmann, 1996; Berger & Luckmann, 1971). It is the ability and way to orientate and understand environment, different processes and world around.

Today along with personal experience and interpersonal communication one of the main sources of information is the media, which provides with different kinds of news, facts, opinions, experiences and viewpoints. Printed and electronic media have a crucial part in creating people's assumptions about matters around them and in the rest of the world. In other words, the media has greatly obtained the function of creating and reflecting the social reality. D. Mcquail (1994) calls media a mediator between individuals and social reality.

We can speak of the reality of mass media...in the sense of what appears to them, or through them to others, to be reality. Put in Kantian terms: the mass media generate a transcendental illusion (Luhmann, 1996: 4).

The mass media can be considered as one of the biggest assumption, stereotype and attitude creators and cultivators between neighbouring nations. On one hand it includes the way the media presents happenings, state economic development and political decisions in comparison with home country (for example, how media in Latvia presents Estonia compared to Latvia and vice versa). On other hand social discussions and beliefs about nation and its characteristics or peculiarities (often based on stereotypes) are the same greatly cultivated by media as within society itself through different stories, jokes, caricatures etc. Even if one does not have personal contact or experience with represented topic, through media one gets enough information and statements to build an opinion or gain some orientation and knowledge.

Media more or less in indirect way forms perceptions of groups and cultures to which we, ourselves might not belong (Mcquail, 1994). It is done by using certain words and meanings with language, for example, often using comparisons.

The reality that society lives in is greatly created by mass media. Meanings are given by media and further used by society (Luhmann, 1996) and interpreted by individuals. D. Mcquail (1994) confirms that media give reference to past, present and future, create identities and social relations.

The information, images and ideas made available by the media may, for most people, be the main source of an awareness of shared past time (history) and of present social location. They are also a store of memories and a map of where we are and who we are (identity) and may also provide the materials for orientation to the future. ...the media at a large extent constitute social reality and

normality for purposes of a public, shared social life, and are key source of standards, models and norms (Mcquail, 1994: 64).

At the same time author notes that it is very difficult to distinct who influences who, media – society or other way round. It can be assumed as a mutual process. And so in a way media not only sets the agenda but also reflects the mass society view (Mcquail, 1994).

1.5. Language and the Symbolic Power

As further I am planning to conduct a print media analysis to reveal the usage of language and determine operated terms about the nation and state then it is relevant to get acquainted with the theory of language usage and its symbolic power. Language is the source of communicating and handing over the attitudes, knowledge and ideas both through media as well as in individual communication.

It is a known phenomenon that nations living next to each other express their experience in stories, songs or jokes, revealing their attitude and thoughts about their neighbouring nations. In this aspect language and its symbolic meaning, constructions of social reality or environment play dominant role. Pierre Bourdieu (1991) in his book “Language and Symbolic Power” greatly reveals the connection between language, its use and creation of social reality and relations of different social roles. Use of language is not only seen as way of expression and communication but at the same time it has a strong symbolic power, which actualizes and creates relations and connotations.

This aspect is important to note when revealing the discourse of expressions and usage of language between both nations about each other. As often using and promoting (often not consciously) stereotypical attitudes people use words with symbolic meaning or connotation which might not be evident at first without the background information or be closed to someone from a different culture. It is understandable for people from certain nation but might not mean anything to member of other nation who does not have anything to do or has no information about the background of the used words and meanings in the circumstances.

Stereotype can be roughly defined as a standardized image or conception of a type of person etc. (Collins Dictionary and Thesaurus, 1990). Conceptions are given further and told through communication, using language. Stereotypical description includes attitude and evaluation of things, person, groups etc. It means that symbolic meaning and connotation of used words, expressions and language in general are greatly present. According to P. Bordieu the used language in some way represents the relations and possible attitudes from the speaker to the object talked about.

...the relations of communication per excellence – linguistic exchange – are also relations of symbolic power in which the power relations between speakers or their respective groups are actualized (Bourdieu, 1991: 37).

By expressing any evaluation or characterizing other nation or member of it, speaker uses symbols, which are known and recognized by other members of society, in such way creating and cultivating stereotype. It means that stereotype cannot exist if rest of the society members do not understand or share the same meaning. On other hand Bourdieu (1991) sees usage of language as power play always expressing and giving an evaluation. Every evaluation shows attitude and relationship between speaker and the object that he is speaking of. The way of cultivating and keeping this social reality for members of society or culture, nation to understand has different sources, for example, the media and social constructions.

Bergman and Luckmann (1971) discover and describe language also in other perspective. The language used in everyday life continuously provides me with the necessary objectifications and posits the order within which these make sense and within which everyday life has meaning for me (Bergman & Luckmann, 1971: 35 – 36).

Language is seen as a tool and means for people to make others subjective world into objective one. Through language one expresses their understanding, position and experience of reality which is being shared with others. It means that language can be used not only to pass information and communicate information but also to forward symbolic meanings, including stereotypes, which often have this characteristic.

2. Short Comparative Overview of Latvia's and Estonia's Historic Development

Studying the development and creation of both nations it is crucial to look at the six main historical periods: creation or formation of Latvian and Estonian Nation State (18th – beginning of 20th century), Nation State (1918 – 1940), Period of occupations (1940 - 1987), Regaining the Independence (1988 - 1991), Post – communism Transition (1991 – 2003) and Membership in the European Union and NATO (starting 2004). I assume that the view through centuries at the economic, political and cultural development and cooperation will provide more explicit explanation of mutual perception. Further stated periods deliver both the cooperation between Latvia and Estonia throughout the history starting the 18th century. Secondly, I am looking at the individual development peculiarities of each country. It can serve for understanding why Latvia and Estonia along the years have developed as far as they are, showing differences mainly in political and economic features. Below stated periods as well as developments in my viewpoint are the crucial ones unlocking the cooperation, attitude and meaning to each other - country and nation. Also the below described and analysed are the historic moments when new dimensions and developments of social and national identity shaping can be tracked. The historic developments are viewed starting with Latvian and Estonian national identity realisation in 18th century until regaining political and economic independence in beginning of 21st century. Along with that came new building of national identity for the nation itself and finding its place in rest of the world.

2.1. Formation of the Latvian and Estonian Nation State (18th century - beginning of 20th century)

Estonia and Latvia are situated in a region which has witnessed centuries of violent confrontation from various occupations. The independence was restored as the Soviet empire collapsed but it left the society to face new challenges such as providing the regional and wider stability and security along with finding and defining the national identity and assurance. These and other historical events without a doubt shape nations self esteem and identity which further form their international relations and attitudes.

Estonia and Latvia since Medieval times were under the rule of the Teutonic Knights and later under the influence or direct rule of German, Russian, Polish-Lithuanian and Scandinavian rulers.

In 1721, Estonia and Latvia were annexed to the Russian Empire. The struggle against foreign influence was in fact directed not so much against the Russians as against the Baltic German nobility, whose control over the local administration had been guaranteed by the Tsar.

Along with enlightenment, industrial development which included also printing development and that meant spread of literacy and printed communication between Baltic people, raised new nation awareness and later states.

E. Gellner said that philosophy (general thought about man, society and their place in the world...) is about a change, and the essence of change is industrialisation - the transition from agrarian to industrial world. According to him, that change was transforming the nature of the relationship between man and the surrounding world...What is the issue is something far bigger: a wholly new balance between being and knowing." (Hall, 1988: 24)

Smaller groups who used to be under bigger nations and in such a way nationalised to become Germans or Swedes started to realise themselves as united, different group of people. Although German presence at that time called Livland, was seen as an oppression of the Baltic peasants. The Baltic German presence also acted as a conduit for Herderian Romanticism, which evoked a new interest in the hitherto despised culture of the peasant masses. An Estonian language lectureship was established at the newly reopened university of Dorpat (Tartu) at 1803, and Esthiple Germans later established the Estonian Learned Society as a medium for the scholarly investigation of local folklore. In what was an entirely unintended development, this cultural renaissance interacted with ongoing advances in education and agricultural production to bring about the emergence of an Estonian national consciousness (Smith, 2001: 5). Also E. Gellner (1995) notes that for nation to exist it needs to receive education.

In the beginning of 19th century in Estonia, which had not experienced its nation state, developed national movement, promoting that this particular nation is special, its language and traditions should be protected, practised and developed. National awakening and movement was lead and initiated by first Estonian national elite who were first highly educated people. In 1857 the first Estonian newspaper "Pernu Postimees" was printed, promoting the new nation "Estonians" instead of slaves or worker nation. In 1860 - 1880 national movement become more political and it's goals were to develop and promote national culture and education in native (Estonian) language.

In Latvia first national awakening can be dated back with beginning of 18th century for the Bible was translated into local Latvian language by E.Gliks. This happened during the Swedish rule in Baltic Sea Eastern coast.

Similar development of nation awakening as mentioned previously in Estonia happened also in Latvia, when in the beginning of 19th century the first Latvian educated elite called 'Jaunlatviesi' or

the New Latvians started raising the questions of Latvian national identity, culture, literature and education. The main area where new patriotic elite were expressing themselves and influencing rest of the nation was publishing - newspaper as well as writing down and recording all the national and oral traditions (sayings, poems, tales, songs etc.).

As B. Anderson (1991) points out in his book "Imagined Communities", these are essential elements that make people feel the unity and relate to each other, although they have no actual connection with most of the nation that they feel close to. Author proves that national identity mainly has developed along with birth of written and printed language. It can be considered as a new style of media which spreads and communicates information. That was a means how community would communicate the values and ideas to each other at the same time realise and imagine all as one united community. Finally people could relate to others in the society, seeing that there are plenty of people who speak the same language, do and think similar or the same way, creating whole and united community. Development of printing gave society new sense of world and society.

The foundation of a nation is united economic life, territory, language, practising culture and psychological closeness, what B. Anderson (1991) in his book describes as *imagined community*.

Based on which society further is assessing and relating or comparing itself with another (neighbouring) society, group or nation. Perception of one as a group further develops comparison between groups. Which further builds up to stereotyped or generalised view of surrounding world of other social groups.

By the end of the 19th century the ideas of socialism had spread also to Estonia and Latvia and had become very popular mainly because Estonians and Latvians were regarded to as a lower class by the foreign landowners. By 1917 Estonia and Latvia were occupied by the German army which was mainly encouraged by Baltic Germans, who hoped that the presence of German military would help to maintain the privileges in the region. Baltic nationalists by that time had been pushing mainly for greater autonomy within what they hoped would be a reformed, democratically orientated Russian Empire.

Starting with 19th century it can be seen that new nations were born and they called themselves Latvians and Estonians. By this time the national identity was greatly formed by strong awareness of traditions and folklore, ethics and sense of aesthetics of the nation. Although only after the Second World War the Baltic States can be truly labelled as a unit as for example before the events of 1918 only way for local peasants to advance in society was by assimilating into either German culture for the Estonians and Latvians, or Polish culture for the Lithuanians.

2.2. Nation State (1918 – 1940)

Similarly to the developments in rest of the Europe both countries proclaimed independence in 1918 and established democratic regimes. Also in further actions Estonia and Latvia mostly are using the same political and reform strategies while Lithuania usually is taking a different root. For example, for developing economy Estonia and Latvia were following the Scandinavian types while Lithuania relied mostly on its agricultural production.

The parliamentary regimes succumbed to authoritarian leaderships in 1934 largely due to the general perception that the parliaments had acquired too much power and were expediently dissolved. The period of independent statehood between the two World Wars had come to form an important part of national mythology in all three Baltic countries and was made a point of reference for the contemporary process of independence and statehood (Survey..., 1998). Along with gaining their own independence and country, nation gained awareness and assurance as well as strength for their national identity and importance, equality with other nations. Mostly it was thanks to the economic prosperity and expansion of education and culture. Meanwhile on August of 1939, Germany and the Soviet Union signed the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact in which the two agreed on a peace treaty but at the same time divided up Europe in a secret protocol between two superpowers.

2.3. Period of Occupations (1940 - 1987)

As next period of influencing national identity of Baltic nations should be mentioned the occupation period starting in 1940.

In the case of the Baltic States, the Soviet dominance was total in the sense that these countries were incorporated as republics in the Soviet Union. The Communist party-state in time wiped out all traces of historical or inter-war experiences of self-organisation and political independence. The fifty years of Soviet dominance also entailed a conscious effort to destroy the social fabric of the Baltic societies. The two most conspicuous phenomena of this kind were, on the one hand, the substantial reduction of the ethnic Baltic population during and after the Second World war through the loss of lives and emigration and, on the other hand, the intense process of 'Russification' of the population in Latvia and Estonia, mainly by way of deportations of Balts and settlements of Russians" (Survey ..., 1998: 14).

During the Soviet occupation forming and enforcement of new kind of identity on occupied nation states can be followed.

The Soviet Union was constructed around a dual identity: on the one hand ethnic/national identities; on the other, Soviet identity as the foundation of the new society. *Sovetskij narod* (the Soviet people) would be the new cultural identity to be achieved in the historical horizon of Communist construction (Castells, 1997: 38).

To describe the Soviet identity it would be the perfect proletarian, working for the collective good, to ensure equality within the Soviet people. Although the ideals of equality were high the reality often was different. People faced dual attitude, importance of acquaintances for receiving goods and even getting basic things. After the collapse of Soviet Union it takes a whole new generation to be clean from the Soviet identity. Later on, after collapse of Soviet Union in the transition countries individualism was one of the most typical characteristics, people did not want anything to do with common and collective goods. That expanded as a protest against the long years of fake collectivism and forced on Soviet identity, which had not really worked in the reality.

It can be concluded, that if people's national identity was more passive and soviet identity cultivated every day, then people saw that being a good Soviet person (or at least pretending to be one) is more important and relevant than identifying oneself with certain nationality in a Union that did not portray itself as a nation-state. At some point it seems confusing, that national identity can be opposed to Soviet Union identity.

M. Castells (1997) in his book "The Power of Identity" claims that it is possible that nation exists independently from nation - state. Probably, what author means is that national identity still exists and people are aware of their traditions regardless of the country as long as they can communicate the values and practice the traditions within the community. As an example for strong national identity author provides the collapse of Soviet Union, when nations stood against the state. The empty ideology of Soviet identity was replaced with strong national identity, which did not really have a place and part before.

2.4. Regaining the Independence (1988 - 1991)

The process of catalysing the events of the independence in the Baltic's began slowly already back in 1986 with first public concerns of ecological issues specifically the threat of phosphate pollution in the Baltic Sea, which later grew into claims of restoration of national heritage. The first letters of protest can be dated even earlier, for example, from Estonia already in the late 1960s appeared primarily concerning civil rights issues rather than nationalist ones. The issue of the environment involved a key concern of the movement for change – which had the right to make decisions regarding the natural resources, economy, culture, and other aspects of life (Raun, 2001: 223). For Latvia and Estonia the breaking among the liberalization “from above” and grass-root movements

was summer of year 1987. One year before in Latvia the human rights organization “Helsinki -86” was found and on 1987 it organized a symbolic lay down of the flowers in front of the monument of freedom in Riga. This along with similar actions in neighbouring Baltic countries can be considered as the key events unlocking the following mass activities taking place (Bleiere, Butulis, Feldmanis, Stranga, Zunda, 2005). At the same year in August 23 both in Riga and Tallinn the public meetings took place commemorating the Molotov – Ribbentrop Pact's disastrous consequences in three Baltic States gathering several thousand people (Raun, 2001: 223). Meanwhile the political elite of the time started to split in opinions on how to react to the public activities – with confrontation or dialogue (Bleiere, Butulis, Feldmanis, Stranga, Zunda, 2005).

The further chain of events that spurred social activity rebirth was the revival of folk - culture groups (Dreifelds, 1996: 53). The folklore movements became a major part of the struggle and strengthening the national spirit and esteem. Here can be seen parallels to national birth in 19th century, when Latvians and Estonians started realising themselves as nations once again. In the beginning of 90ties people regained missing national identity and identification with a group or society close enough to them.

Folklore had the unique ability to awaken pride in being Latvian (Estonian) and to destroy inferiority complexes by highlighting the fact that Latvians (Estonians) as a nationality also have a significant value (Dreifelds, 1996: 54). After the collapse of Soviet Union people regained the important part of identifying themselves as a nation with history, values and cultural treasures. The trend and promotion of values which was encouraged by first enlightened nationalists back in early 19th century.

At the time the three Baltic States were greatly influenced and supported by each other. In April of 1988 the Popular Front of Estonia was founded and few month later also in Latvia one was formed. The discussions and activities in Estonia and Lithuania of the renewal of national anthem, flag and other national symbols helped to overcome the political conservatism also in Latvia following the example of the neighbours. These were other crucial elements in supporting the re-birth of national identity.

M. D. Kennedy (2002) talks about transition culture which he defines as cultural formation after the collapse of Soviet Union and the year 1989 is the point of its departure.

As the most significant and symbolic moment of people realising and showing not only their Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian identity but raising a new dimension took place in 1989. Baltic national identity was evidenced in the hold hands human chain the "Baltic Way" across three Baltic countries. This event demanding recognition of the secret clauses in the Molotov – Ribbentrop pact and re-establishment of the independence of three Baltic States was fully covered in western media, by which many people across the world for the first time ever heard about Baltic countries at all.

At the same time the Popular Front organizations had become also politically influential putting more pressure on the authorities. Crucial was the cooperation of the Popular Fronts of the Baltic States and close coordination of their actions. Starting year 1989 regular meetings by Baltic Popular Front leaders were held in common Baltic Assembly and the Baltic Council. The new goal of the Popular Fronts was to achieve the independence through the parliament. To do that, organisations had to win in the elections of the local soviets as it had the right to set the judicial status of the state by the law of the time. On 30 March 1990 Estonia declared autonomy and Latvia accepted its' declaration of independence on 3 May of the same year. It was followed by confrontations with the opponents of the independence which had its' victims in Riga and Vilnius events but fortunately no human casualties in Estonia (Bleiere, Butulis, Feldmanis, Stranga, Zunda, 2005). Following the collapse of attempted coup in Moscow, 1991, August 21 was the date when the three Baltic States were declared Independent de facto and received international recognition (Raun, 2001: 245).

At the time becoming independent from the Soviet Union crucial was not only the cultivation of the national identity but also the unity of the three Baltic States both politically as socially. Analysing Baltic identity one comes to conclusion that term „Baltic identity” is very many-sided and ambiguous. It is mainly based on cooperation and solidification of Baltic States which took off at time of regaining the independence. Baltic identity definitely is based on

geographical, political and economic similarity. Uniting element is also the way people from Baltic States interpret and define such terms as „us” and „them” which is mainly based and comes from shared Soviet history which culminated during the so called Singing revolution in early nineties. In general Baltic identity is based both in historical as well as present state actions which are stretching also into the future.

At the same time after regaining independence...there are arguments stated against idea of united Baltic identity mostly appealing to arguments that there is no such thing as Baltic region and Baltic identity as it is a ghost from the Soviet times, when this region was titled as such because of its similar economic and industrial developments. For example, it is argued that three Baltic states each belong to different region, for example, Estonia to Northern European countries while Lithuania to Central Europe. In 1990 Lithuania and Estonia even stated an official protest against labelling them as Baltic States, seeing it as mainly notation from other countries. Crack of Baltic identity could also be explained because of growing competition between three Baltic States. At the same time Latvia is the only state of three Baltic States which still defends the idea of Baltic region and Baltic identity, which is understandable because of its geographical and economic situation (Ahola, 2004: 57).

The analysed historical turning points, changes and developments in national identity of Latvian and Estonian nations have had great impact also on the further mutual cooperation development.

2.5. Post – communist Transition (1991 – 2003)

Describing the period of the time period after the Baltic States regained their independence the term to characterise the processes in the social, political and economic environments is .

“Transition” is the name typically given to the time of radical change following, for example, the fall of communism, connoting a shift from planned to market economy, from dictatorship to democracy (<http://www.upress.umn.edu...>).

P. Sztompka claims - there is no society without change. Ontologically, society is nothing else but change, movement and transformation...becoming rather than stable being (Sztompka, 2004: 115). After regaining its independence the new countries had to set a strategy and find the right and the most effective way how to rebuild the new democratic states. The main goals were to establish democratic constitutional order, to achieve financial sustainability for the country and to gain total control over its' territory (Lauristin & Vihalemm, 2002). The Estonian and Latvian governments along with four other post - communist countries decided to adapt the radical reforms. As an example for radical reform efficiency was Latin American experience in 1989 also known as Washington Consensus which included following policies (Aaslund, 2002):

- Fiscal discipline
- A redirection of public expenditure priorities toward fields offering both high economic returns and the potential to improve income distribution, such as primary health care, primary education, and infrastructure
- Tax reform (to lower marginal rates and broaden the tax base)
- Interest rate liberalization
- A competitive exchange rate
- Trade liberalization
- Liberalization of inflows of foreign direct investment
- Privatization
- Deregulation (to abolish barriers to entry and exit)
- Secure property rights.

As the negative sides of the radical reforms growth of inequality were predicted as well as society not being really ready to make sacrifices for the common good. People have to face total reorganisation of different aspects of social life like poverty within society, competitive employment, and new system of benefits, health care and growth of education importance. Society is more or less divided into ‘winners’ and ‘losers’ (Lauristin, 2003), both in economic and social

sense. ‘Losers’ mainly were older people and ethnic groups, who would be deprived because of not knowing the language or not having the education and needed skills or experience etc., in that way not being able to fully function in the new social order. ‘Winners’ can be characterised as mostly young, ambitious, urban and educated people (Lauristin, 2003), who quickly re-orientated and went along with changes, most of the times as they had not experienced the planned, socialist society order. It brings insecurity, instability and fear about future into society which certainly are symptoms and indicators of social trauma (Sztompka, 2004). Most of the people were not aware of efforts required, the growth of competitiveness and different risks of failure (Lauristin & Vihalemm, 2002). Idea of state always being responsible for people and providing with necessary things for free was still in the air in certain parts of the community.

If there is trauma in society then people try to find different, more or less successful ways to cope with it. There are always people who quickly overcome the new situation and go along with the stream. For example, people dashing into private businesses or into getting education. Educational choice became clearly orientated towards future occupational opportunities, which was opposite during communism (Sztompka, 2004). At the same time there are people who would find different illegitimate ways of adaptation or rent seekers (Aaslund, 2002), often using acquaintanceship and spreading corruption within the country. Tackling the problem of corruption was one of the most crucial criteria for transition countries to become truly democratic and competitive. Also rise of crime can be considered as one of the illegal ways of trying to adapt to the new ways of life, trying to overcome the inequality.

On other hand, there are parts of society who would become rather passive than active, after facing rapid changes. Not only longing for the past times to come back but not actively taking part in the new changes and social life. Alienated parts of society feel insecure; they are passive, mistrustful and bias, mostly with poor knowledge of their rights, possibilities and duties (Pabriks, Abolins, Vebers, 2001).

After applying the radical reform on the development of the countries, in the time period of 1995 - 1999 the first economic results were seen.

Table 1. Dynamics of GDP in Estonia and Latvia (%)

	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
EST	-13.6	-14.2	-9.0	-2.0	4.3	3.9	10.6	4.7	-1.1	6.9	4.5	6.0	4.5
LV	-10.4	-34.9	-14.9	0.6	-0.8	3.3	8.6	3.9	1.1	6.6	7.0	6.1	7.0

(EBRD Transition Reports)

As seen in the Table 1, the GDP growth in Estonia and Latvia was getting stable by 1996. From the numbers it is seen that Estonia generally has been showing better results than Latvia which years of 2000 becomes more even. One of the explanations can be the strong economic ties of Estonia with

Finland and Sweden. The close ties have developed not only because of the geographical reasons but also for Estonia having more liberal investment policy than Latvia in the nineties. That can be seen by looking at the data of inflow of foreign direct investments within the countries at the time period.

Table 2. Inflow of the foreign direct investments, 1993 - 2003

	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Estonia	76	158	132	71	89	397	154	237	252	113	550
Latvia	11	16	15	41	89	249	129	108	126	207	41

(EBRD Transition Reports)

According to the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development by the end of 2003 the direct foreign investments had grown to 557 million USD in Estonia and 365 million USD in Latvia. Liberalization of inflows of foreign direct investment was one of the radical reform policies. From data shown above it is clearly seen that apart from year 1997 Estonia is getting higher foreign investment than Latvia. Again it can be explained by geographical situation of Estonia, although it is seen that Latvian foreign investment politics has been much stricter than Estonia.

Developments in both Estonia and Latvia reached a new clear goal, to join the European Union that has its criteria of development for joining the institution.

The history and development of Estonia and Latvia clearly shows that both countries have and possibly still today at some extent are dealing with the consequences of the post communism transition and social change within both societies. For both regaining independence and following political changes certainly meant not only returning to the Western world but also psychologically moving away from Russia and the oppression of Soviet regime. In different international reports (Freedom House, Nations in Transition and UNDP Human Development Report) it has been noted that societies of Baltic States had to face unusual pressure and transformation because of the big number of Russian speaking minorities. At the same time Estonia and Latvia both had previous experience of being independent countries that eased up the transition process.

2.6. Membership in EU and NATO (2004 – 2008)

The dream of the Western world was one of the driving forces for freedom, the idea of basic freedoms and democracy as well as just higher standards of living (Survey..., 1998). The Baltic societies with regaining their independence have always stressed their return to where they once belonged - the historical European/Western civilisation and attachments to its values. On the other hand, national identity of Baltic States greatly is connected with survival of independent state and

Baltic as ancient nations that have developed in this territory for many centuries. Along with independence came the vision of European Union and it being as a link to the Western world. Now, after 16 years of independence and more than 3 years of being an EU member Baltic States are facing a new turn or concern in development of national identity. There is a fear that European integration may lead to a loss of national identity, historical values and traditions. Similar agenda is examined in A. Touraine's book "Can people live together? Equality and Difference" (2000), where author tries to define the post-modern society and its development in future facing the globalisation. How can cultures and societies exist side by side not losing their uniqueness and difference. Touraine (2000) believes that there are only two possibilities; one is to save the uniqueness of cultures and be introvert or to give up to globalisation and mainstreamness. Author believes that nowadays world nation states have lost their meaning as world has become so multinational. For cultures to survive, one has to be constantly aware of other cultures.

Political Cooperation

Looking at the political space of Latvia and Estonia firstly it can be framed as Baltic countries. It was the most evident when both countries had exactly the same political goals. Firstly, in early nineties when both countries started non-violent fight for regaining independence. (Vihalemm, 1999) Chronologically political cooperation between Latvia and Estonia after regaining the independence starts in 1990 when Baltic Council was established with Declaration on Unity and Co-operation by the Republics of Estonia, Republic of Latvia and Republic of Lithuania. Its goal is ...to improve the mechanism of mutual relations... (Declaration on Unity and Co-operation by the Republics of Estonia, Republic of Latvia and Republic of Lithuania, 1990).

Secondly, working towards joining the EU and NATO until year 2004. On one hand the privileged position of Estonia in the negotiations with the EU caused certain tension between Baltic countries and weakened the spirit of cooperation while others see ones country's better political position as political gain for the rest of the region of three Baltic States (Vihalemm, 1999).

Today governmental and parliament co-operation continues by established the Baltic Assembly (1991) and the Baltic Council of Ministers (1994) with goal of promoting extensive substantial cooperation between three Baltic States.

The Baltic States shall endeavour to develop cooperation in the spheres of foreign and security policy, defence, legislation, social and economic affairs, energy, communication, environment, culture and other fields of mutual interest...(Agreement of Baltic Parliamentary and Governmental Cooperation between the Republic of Estonia, Republic of Latvia and Republic of Lithuania, article 1, 1994).

According to Latvian and Estonian Foreign Ministries the general political dialogue between Latvia and Estonia is described as active and regular. Today politically both countries share interests of Baltic Sea Region, cooperation in EU and NATO. The diplomatic cooperation is considered as positive and active.

Looking back to political line of both countries Estonia's early successes were contrasted with Latvia's struggles with transparency and corruption which both countries had to amend to correspond needed EU standards. So far the biggest failure of Latvia compared to Estonia is the failure of governments and their institutions to serve their people, involving both transparency and load of bureaucracy. While the Estonian government has gone online, making all cabinet documents accessible to the public available in almost real time (Birzulis, 2002).

One of the main aspects in maintaining and developing full democracy are political transparency and corruption.

Table 3. Corruption perception indicates and less corrupted countries, 2004 – 2008

(Average ratings of experts on 7-points scale with 1 representing the highest level and 7 the lowest level of democratic development)

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Estonia	2,50	2,50	2,50	2,50	2,50
Latvia	3,50	3,50	3,25	3,00	3,00

Source: Country Report 2008 (www.freedomhouse.org)

Freedom House report on Estonia gives several explanations why is corruption lower in Estonia than for example Latvia in the earlier period of showed ratings in Table 3. First of all the EU accession process had been a very important factor in shaping Estonia's approach to corruption. Secondly, it was Estonia's approach to economics. It was less bureaucratic than Latvia's economics, which increased the opportunities for corruption. As the third reason is mentioned a much higher degree of intolerance among the general population for official corruption in Estonia.

In 2004 among other countries in the Global Corruption report Estonia places as 31st, while Latvia as 57th within 146 countries. The level of corruptions probably can be explained by the political affairs within the country. Corruption provides state failure which further brings to market failure (Aslund 2002).

The Freedom House report "Nation in Transit 2005, Latvia" concludes that there is some determination to tackle corruption but the accumulated bad habits of exchange of favors from Soviet period is still present in the society. Nevertheless, pressure by the time had grown from EU and different NGO's.

In year 2006 the ratings of Latvian corruption had been slightly lowered which can be connected with the Latvian anti corruption bureau KNAB becoming a greater threat to political corruption, by becoming more active in tackling not just small and middle level corruption but successfully starting to deal with corrupt big range officials. One of the most discussed events was the arrest of the prominent oligarch Aivars Lembergs in mid-March 2007. He was charged with large-scale bribery, blackmail and abuse of authority. Further in year 2007 another Latvian oligarch Andris Skele was charged in a case of 46 million Lats disappearing from the state-controlled Latvian Shipping Company along with third mayor case which drew wide public attention was the officials' bribery attempt in city Jurmala. According to former head of KNAB Aleksajs Loskutovs thanks to the activities of KNAB in recent years there is an increase in public understanding about corruption risk and harm which has been demonstrated by peoples' increase willingness to report corrupt practices (FreedomHouse Report Latvia: 2008).

After the more active actions by KNAB the political elite of Latvia tried to start to resist the anti corruption bureau and not by participating in the fight against the corruption but by trying to dismiss the head of the KNAB which at the time prime minister A. Kalvitis succeeded in year 2008, although along with his own retirement from the office.

As shows the corruption rating of Estonia despite several corruption cases in later years the level of corruption in the country is considered relatively low, remaining at 2.50.

The scandal, which grabbed the most headlines during 2007 involved Villu Reiljan, a former Minister of Environment and leader of the agrarian People's Union party. In October 2006, Reiljan had been forced to resign as both minister and party chairman after officials from the Security Police Board accused him of negligence in having failed to prevent some shady deals carried out by officials at Estonia's Land Board. It was followed by another investigation including Reiljan's party colleague and former Agriculture Minister, Ester Tuiksoo, together with Toomas Annus, the chief executive officer of Merko Ehitus, a prominent construction company and real estate developer. Additional inquires soon revealed that the general secretary of the People's Union had been driving around in a sport-utility vehicle provided to her free-of-charge by a major automobile dealer, while other party leaders lived in apartments rented out far below the market price. All these suspected improprieties brought into the spotlight the issue of party financing, since even though Estonia banned corporate contributions to political parties in 2003, single businessmen have still channeled huge sums of money to parties.

Estonian corruption in this sense appeared to take place most of all in the form of never actually violating the letter of the law, but certainly going against its spirit. Indeed, in 2005 Prime Minister Ansip inadvertently coined a phrase to capture this phenomenon by noting how in many such cases

"Legally everything is above board." ("Juriidiliselt on kõik korrektne.") Soon afterwards the abbreviation of this Estonian-language phrase, "Jokk", became a frequently used expression of political sarcasm (Freedom House Report Estonia: 2008).

At the same time corruption is common or can be tackled based on the social attitude towards it. Quoting Philip Birzulis from his article „Still in deep water: Latvia 10 years later” there is an interesting illustration given: We may well ask why our northern neighbours have a slightly higher rate of car ownership but a much lower number of traffic deaths. Part of the answer may be found in the behaviour of Latvian motorists heading up to Tallinn. They speed before reaching the border, knowing they can easily bribe the Latvian cops with LVL 5, but slow down on the other side because the Estonian police have a reputation for being virtually incorruptible.

Economic Cooperation

Democracy is a vital indicator of the quality of the state and thus important for market reform (Aaslund, 220:443). Economic space is created by mutual trade, investments and common infrastructure. As politically there is a mutual Baltic Sea region then similar tendencies can be noticed also in economic cooperation creating a Baltic economic space. Estonia has a large direct investment outflow to Latvian market (Vihalemm, 1999).

Today Estonia is considered an important economic partner for Latvia. According to Latvian Foreign Ministry in year 2008 Estonia was the second biggest export country for Latvia (~790 million EUR, 13,4% from total), having ahead only Lithuania. And the fourth biggest import partner (~691 million EUR, 6,95% from total) after Germany, Lithuania and Russia. In the third quarter of 2007 Latvian companies with investments in Estonian companies took the fifth place (25,47 million EUR). According to Estonian Embassy in Latvia the intensity of Estonian and Latvian economic cooperation has intensified even more in 2007 compared to years before. Also the data provided by the Latvian Foreign ministry and the Central Statistical Bureau indicates that already from 2001 the economic cooperation between the two countries has increased year by year. Below provided Table 4 represents the dynamics of export and import over the years between Estonia and Latvia. It can be seen that joining the EU has also impacted the intensity of economic cooperation between the two countries, showing a rapid growth in numbers of import and export especially in years 2004 and 2005. To build a tighter economic cooperation and becoming more important investment partners to each other mostly was pressured by the EU policy of common market with free movement of services, goods and people.

Table 4, Export - Import dynamics (thousands LVL)

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008 I-III quarter
Export	72085	84484	108452	180237	312311	412763	587401	454915
Growth	20%	17%	28%	66%	73%	32%	42%	7%
Import	139114	153876	191780	272348	383312	485499	634436	405130
Growth	15%	11%	25%	42%	41%	27%	31%	-15%

The accession to the EU in May 2004 was considered as the milestone, both economically as politically. It marked not just a deeper integration into the EU's single market but also more intense cooperation within Baltic market parallel to common interests of the Baltic region within the EU. The economic relations are as of 1 May 2004 regulated by EU internal market rules and the Baltic States are actively engaged in the defence cooperation as well as mutual environmental projects, for example, Estonia and Latvia both support the banning of single hulled freighters in the Baltic Sea or The Estonian-Latvian bilateral Fishery Commission is trying to approximate the interests and positions of the two states in the protection and administration of its fisheries (www.estemb.lv).

The biggest Latvian company investors in Estonia are – "*Lattelekom*", "*Latvenergo*", "*Grindeks*", "*Parex*", "*Laima*", "*Latvijas Biznesa banka*" mostly representing the wholesale and retail business and manufacturing industry. As the biggest Estonian investors in Latvia are A/S "*Hansapank*", "*A. Le Coq*", "*Rakvere Lihakombinaat*" and A/S "*Merko Ehitus*" mainly with financial brokerage. According to Lursoft around 33 Estonian companies have invested more than 0,711 million EUR in the stock capital of Latvian companies. Also by March 27, 2008 there are 1409 Latvian and Estonian joint ventures (www.mfa.gov.lv, 30.06.2008).

By the end of 2008 the world has been shattered with the financial crisis. It has left certain consequences also in the markets of Baltic States. And surprisingly they are very different. While Latvia was struggling to receive the financial support from the International Monetary Fund Estonia had offered its financial support to Latvia. Falling consumer spending and property investments, exacerbated by the global financial crisis, has pushed also Estonia into a recession in the second quarter, leading to events that also Estonia might need to borrow as much as 5 billion Krooni or 2 percent of gross domestic product, to cover investment needs during the economy's worst recession in a decade (Ummelas: 2008). The main reasons why the financial differences are so major firstly can be explained by Estonia for 7 years having a non - deficit state budget with building

government reserves. While Latvian government had ignored and not taken into consideration any warnings done by international monetary organizations and the State Bank about the need to cut the spending and start saving funds which had become more intense by 2004 predicting a rapid economic fall.

J. Dreifelds, a professor of political science at Brock University, mentions that Latvia should adopt a "watch Estonia" plan, and copy many of the reforms the country had implemented. On other hand P. Birzulis once again in his article notes that the Latvians could certainly learn a great deal about how to, for example, market themselves as a tourist destination.

Cultural Cooperation

The main factors creating a common cultural space are related to language, religion, historical memories, common symbolic power, media and more or less intensive culture contacts and exchange. In case of language and folklore as the closest neighbour for Estonia definitely is Finland while for Latvia more the third Baltic country – Lithuania. In the context of religion, architecture and educational system German influence can be mentioned for both Estonia and Latvia due to history. At the same time the fifty years of the Soviet occupation have left its own cultural traces (Vihalemm, 1999).

Latvian and Estonian cooperation within fields of culture and education take place reposing on triangular Baltic State cooperation agreements, Baltic – Nordic State, Baltic Sea State, EU and European Parliament education programs and projects.

In educational sphere Latvia and Estonia has an active cooperation between universities. For example, in autumn of 2005, in Valka a branch of the Latvian University was opened. The Stockholm School of Economics in Riga has developed into one of the most popular educational institutions for Estonians (http://www.estemb.lv/estonia_and_latvia).

Since 1989 there is Riga Estonian Secondary school. The same can be observed in culture sphere, noting that in last years it has become even more active and open, having regular Latvian and Estonian artist exhibitions, cooperation in film industry, concerts and theatres.

3. The Print Media of Latvia and Estonia in Transition

Here I would like to look at the development process of printed media, focusing on the biggest daily newspapers „Diena” and „Postimees”, in Latvia and Estonia after regaining their independence in 1991. Of course the media development can be traced back already few years before actual political freedom from Soviet Union as media played a very important role in inspiring, coordinating and maintaining national unity. But mostly I would like to reflect what similarities and differences both countries had to face to change from one market structure to other.

The democratization of media content more or less started to become more liberal at very beginning of perestroika (1885 – 1987). The new role of media was crucial in 1991 during the political freedom process. It was gradual process, firstly drawing attention to environmental issues, then to sovereignty and only later on talks about independence arise.

By the beginning of 1987, the Baltic countries had reached the first stage in the formation of a new public sphere, the stage of growing freedom of information through public communication channels. (Hoyer, Lauk, Vihalemm, 1993: 223)

Studying both countries separately there can be seen differences in circumstances of media development both in Estonia and Latvia.

3.1. The Print Media in Latvia

The period after regaining independence in media development in Latvia can be separated in several time periods which have their significant factors and characteristics of democracy development (Brikše, Duze, Šulmane, 1993):

- 1985 – 1987 – beginning of democratization of media content
- 1988 – 1990 – media obtaining it communication channel purpose between state and society
- January – August 1991 – transformation in the national media system along with first traces of competition among media (economic collapse, inflation, deteriorating purchase)
- 1991 – 1992 – narrowing in the media market
- 1993 – early 21st century – commercialization and consolidation in the media

The beginning of new, independent and legal press in Latvia can be considered October 7, 1988. This is the date of establishment of the Popular Front of Latvia and in few months followed its weekly newspaper “Atmoda” (Awakening). Before, during 1987 there had been several papers,

although distributed illegally, that provided some uncensored information giving alternative information coming from the west to one in official and legal newspapers under censorship. Although characterizing these papers it can be seen that they did not orientate so much on facts as rather on emotional rise and involvement. That probably at the time was more acceptable and understandable as well as important for the nation to become whole and united, that hadn't consumed uncensored media for such a long time. One of the characteristics of people consuming media in all Baltic States in the beginning of 90ties was total lack of criticism of media content. Information that had not been available because of Soviet censorship was automatically assumed now to be true and objective (Vihalemm, 2002: 70). That is why media had to present very strong public opinion leaders who would more or less direct the social opinion and interpretation of events or clearly represent sides and attitudes towards events and happenings.

The January 1991 occupation of Press House in Riga by Soviet troops had a strong impact on print media development process that had started its pace in society.

Newspapers returned to normal printing techniques only by the end of April and May when dailies restored their formats, frequency and number of pages published (Hoyer, Lauk, Vihalemm, 1993: 237). During the vacuum of printed media society received different information about events which certainly created big confusion as electronic media was also under the pressure and eventually was occupied.

Beginning of 1991 was also tough both for society and media market with the sharp rise of living costs which critically decreased high consumption of media and increased costs of publishing and printing publications:

- 1990 ~ 397 publications,
- 1991 ~ 389 publications. (Hoyer, Lauk, Vihalemm, 1993: 233)

That made the competition between existing publishers' very tough. Field of journalism had just started to develop; there was lack of professionals both in journalism, advertisement as well as in market research who could target their audience. On other hand, society itself had to get used to the new system of free market and freedom of speech. Time was needed for society to understand that different groups with different views can exist side by side.

The task of the media is to reveal how different ideas are disseminated in society and demonstrate openly how decisions are made. (Hoyer, Lauk, Vihalemm, 1993: 229)

By 1995 daily newspapers, publishing 6 times a week compared to 1990 had increased in number to almost 2 times.

This suggested there were quality-related transformations in the content and form of newspapers, as well as an audience that was starting to form new habits in terms of media choice. (Vihalemm, 2002: 72)

One of the most successful and fast growing newspapers was daily newspaper „Diena”. It can be brought out as a good example of publisher that started as a state owned media in early nineties and by today has grown into one of the biggest media concerns in Latvia. It was firstly founded by the Supreme Council and Council of Ministers in 1990 as daily newspaper to publish latest laws, resolutions and regulations adopted by the parliament. Along with privatization in 1991 also this newspaper was put for public privatization. The result of the privatization was that employees of the newspaper decided to establish their own shareholding company and attract foreign investment. It succeeded by June 30, 1992 when a joint stock company was established of which 49% of the shares belonged to Swedish “Expressen”. The newspaper attracted its audience by new, western style quality morning paper, with wide variety of information and different topics, clearly separating viewpoints from facts...producing the structure and style of the newspaper very successfully so as to attract those audience groups which had previously read the newspapers of the Communist Party and its youth organization. (Vihalemm, 2002: 72) Along with successful audience targeting there are several more steps that „Diena” managed to do to stay in the market.

During Soviet times, the main source of income was through newspaper sales as a socialistic economy did not recognize the commercial market advertising. (Hoyer, Lauk, Vihalemm, 1993: 244) Due to that also in 1991 society and media didn't accept advertisement as part of media environment seeing it as waste of media time and space.

In 1992, almost half of all advertisements in the Latvian press were published by „Diena”...40 – 60% of the total volume. That is why „Diena” can enlarge editions while preserving similar prices charged by other dailies. (Hoyer, Lauk, Vihalemm, 1993: 245)

Secondly, in early nineties „Diena” started series of self-promotion and positioning in media market which no other newspaper had done before in Latvia. Still today “„Diena”” is the biggest daily in Latvia publishing 6 times a week with different additional supplements.

3.2. The Print Media in Estonia

In comparison with Latvia Estonia's media development between 1987 and 1993 was been relatively peaceful and stable although it has faced its difficulties along the time.

K. Saks (2002) divides development of Estonia's media into three development phases:

- 1) 1988 – 1991 – soviet remnant phase

- 2) 1992 – 1995 – the phase of confusion and search
- 3) 1996 - early 21st century – phase of stabilization

Already by eighties people in Estonia could receive signals from Finish and Swedish TV and radio, providing with alternative information than Soviet Union propaganda.

One of the most interesting features of media development in Estonia as well as in Latvia is that government leaders and also in some way society after regaining the state independence was expecting media to continue supporting government in all its actions and help government leaders to mobilize the people. First contradictions and differences or critics from media towards politics in some way were taken as surprise.

Many people did not understand why journalists who supported the independence drive were now criticizing the government. Wasn't it the same government that the same publications urged people to guard and defend in January 1991 (Hoyer, Lauk, Vihalemm, 1993: 240)?

The same as in other Baltic countries, also in Estonia society now had to mentally understand what does democracy and freedom of speech stand for and represent.

Unlike Latvia, Estonia had practically no publications issued by Popular Front. This was because from the outset, the Popular Front was able to air its views comparatively freely in the existing channels of mass communication (Hoyer, Lauk, Vihalemm, 1993: 263). At the same time from 1987 to 1989, the mass media helped shape and maintain national unity, coordinate society and explain happenings.

The first so called western style periodicals started in 1989 with "Eesti Express" and business newspaper "Äripäev" which was launched in cooperation with Swedish newspaper. The quicker change from Soviet style newspapers to Western-style clear, well-illustrated articles could be tied with much more liberal foreign investment policy of the state and close relations to Scandinavian countries, such as Finland and Sweden.

In the beginning of nineties the same as in Latvia media and publishing sphere was hit by inflation inter alia growing printing costs. If in early 1993 living costs rose about 90 times then salaries only 30 times. On one hand it was more expensive to print but on other hand society was neither ready nor able to pay. That made the newspaper circulation fall, as now one family could afford only one or none periodical and mainly consuming electronic media (radio, TV) as information source.

Secondly, confusion was created during 1992 - 1995 by the beginning of privatization process, introduction to new journalism standards and work routines as well as marked market orientation.

The radical changes in social and market environment greatly divided society into "losers" and "winners", growing polarization between those who had not been able to partake in the economic changes and ones who could. "Losers" mainly were older people and ethnic groups, who would be deprived because of not knowing the language or not having the education and needed skills or

experience etc., in that way not being able to fully function in the new social order. “Winners” can be characterised as mostly young, ambitious, urban and educated people (Lauristin, 2003), who quickly re-orientated and went along with changes.

People expected that the media would accept a socially active role and defend their interests or at least help to understand what was going on in society. The media, driven by market forces, clearly took the side of the “winners”. The main democratization of society in this stage was the slow and not yet developed civic society (Vihalemm, 2002: 30). The most drastic changes appeared up to 1996, when by then the former Soviet Estonian newspapers had changed to such extent that they became interesting to foreign owners (Vihalemm, 2002: 193). By now Estonian media and economic market in general was appealing to foreign investments for its economic liberalization and freedom along with lowest corruption from all post-communist countries.

The dominating features of Estonian media development during the third period of transition are the continuing commercialization and consolidation of the media, and the rapid spread of new communication technologies (Vihalemm, 2002: 40).

Till today Estonian largest national daily by readership is „Postimees”. The newspaper was founded in 1857 and comes originally from Tartu, but after the takeover by Schibsted it was moved to the capital, Tallinn, while still publishing a special Tartu edition (www.eestimeedia.ee, 16.07.2008). In 1991 it restarted its existence under previous name that it had before Soviet Union. „Postimees” was fully privatized in 1991 November – 1992 March. Similarly as „Diena” employees of the paper could purchase shares but most of them were bought by Estonian businessman from Switzerland. Similarly to Latvian example also „Postimees” has become a typical western daily, publishing 6 times a week with different theme supplements, focusing on politics, news, business and culture which make it very popular among the well educated part of the Estonian population. At the same time currently both newspapers are active and popular as Internet news portals (www.diena.lv and www.postimees.ee).

3.3. Comparison of „Diena” and „Postimees”

Although along with the essential newspapers of „Diena” and „Postimees” there are a wide variety of different supplements, comparing and analysing the press issues, mostly I am going to focus on the structure and offered subjects of main papers which also further have served as sources of discourse and content analysis. In that way, generally over viewing the offered supplements and the topics that newspapers are focusing on.

In this newspaper research the additional supplements are not taken under analysis.

Analysing the audience and number of copies, it can be concluded that data is similar for both newspapers. According to data of TNS Latvia National Readership Survey of year 2007 the average audience of „Diena” is 207 000 readers, out of them 56% women and 44% men. So called “golden target group” of the daily: men and women, aged 25 – 59, with family language – Latvian, income – medium and high, and region – Riga and other cities reaches 94 000 readers. Allocation by education it is 41% with higher, 43% with secondary and 16% with primary education. According to occupation most „Diena” readers are specialists (60 000 readers), clerks (26 000 readers) and so called blue-collars (26 000 readers). By personal income: with high (121 – 200 Ls – 35 000 readers) to higher (200 - ... Ls - 51 000 readers) (Data of TNS Latvia National Readership Survey 2007). According to „Diena” homepage (www.asdiena.lv), average number of editions of the daily is 58 000 that is 73 000 copies.

According to „Postimees” its readers are ...vital, thirsty for knowledge, ambitious, and politically and culturally active. The „Postimees” offers its readers reliable coverage of all spheres of life; it is always in the midst of what is happening and writes about events that people relate to and talk about (<http://reklaam.postimees.ee/?op=body&id=91>, 16.08.2008). The main target group of „Postimees” is almost identical to one of „Diena”, 44.4% men and 55.6% women, in age of 20 – 49, mainly from cities (Tartu area and Tallinn), with high (5001 – 8000 EEK) and higher (8000 - ... EEK) personal incomes, with family language – Estonian. Allocation by the education it is 34.4% with higher, 51.9% with secondary and 13.7% with primary education. According to occupation most of “Postimees” readers are specialists (50.6%), blue - collars (16.8%) and currently non-working (32.6%). The average number of editions of „Postimees” in year 2007 is 67 000 copies (www.eall.ee, 16.07.2008). According to the latest data on readership of 1st quarter of 2008, total number of “Postimees” readers is 332 000 (TNS Emor, 2008).

As both dailies have very similar printing amount and readers’ profile, it is also interesting to compare the structure and offered topics and visual appearance of both papers. It is important to note that in 2008 „Diena” slightly changed its layout style, on one hand becoming more visual and with up to date design. On other hand reducing its size due to economical reasons. Also the electronic version www.diena.lv fitted a new look, including such features as blogging and watching news in video format.

First impression of both papers is very similar as the structure and visual aids are used in the same way. M. Garcia stresses that newspaper design tradition is using conventions of newspaper layouts with symbol, visual and text placement elements, which are repeated until they become stereotyped, that further creates the understanding in cultures how newspaper should look like (Garcia, 1993). That is essential in the way newspapers are being designed and built up, so a reader can reasonably expect the structure and where to find what – important news in the front, opinion further back,

sports, leisure and entertainment even further back. Also each page is laid out to reflect the natural gravity of reading, which is left-to-right and top-to-bottom. That means, for example, that all the main headings are always on top. Looking back at the history of newspaper layout, the beginning of newspapers the way they are today started in the early 20th century. That is when headlines became bigger, news were departmentalized and brighten up with pictures. By 60ties more and bigger photos were being used, column standardization was introduced.

For analysing both newspapers, I have compared one week issues of „Diena” and „Postimees”, mainly paying attention to the layout and space allowed to different topics.

First page – Main news of the day. Head cover picture, usually covering the event of the day. It is accompanied with main headline, quotation and under picture text. Full text of the article is provided further pages, according to its topic. Although most often theme of the main event and the picture is of the local news, apart if there has taken place a global event, for example, tragedy or catastrophe. First page is also filled with beginnings or so called summary paragraphs with shorter other news usually continuing in further pages or reference to a related story elsewhere in the issue. The first page gives a general overview of what the newspaper is offering, what is happening today both in the country as well as in the rest of the world. Usually, also by newspaper standards first page offers approximately 2 - 4 other shorter articles in the first page. On top of the main page are few (usually 2) teasers of the best or most interesting stories of the issue.

Commentaries and Opinions. Both papers offer identical structure of the second page. On the left hand there is a commentary of newspaper’s commentator on questions of domestic issues. There is also second commentary of the day of specialist on certain issues which have taken place in latest days, changes, problems or discussions in society. This opinion column is usually emphasized with a sarcastic illustration or cartoon which illustrates the main direction of the article. Place of reader’s letters and opinions.

State (Local) news. Amount of pages dedicated to Latvian or Estonian local news differ from 2 to 5 pages. Here are different news concerning state and its events and also foreign news concerning Latvia or Estonia. On the sides of the main articles are shorter columns with summary events. “Diena” continues with whole page for Riga news. While “Postimees” has its Tallinn page following the business and foreign news. It doesn’t seem to continue the inner country topic but rather differs with a red heading TALLINN, while other pages have constant blue heading of each theme.

8-9. page – Foreign news usually take up 2 pages in both newspapers. They are usually covered with latest world news that can be found in press all over the Europe. Accents of chosen topics are very similar for both countries.

Business news in “Postimees” comes before foreign news. It constantly has 2 pages of space, while „Diena” varies from 1 to 2 pages but mostly has only 1 page for economy topic. As „Diena” is offering special supplement Business „Diena”, then most likely too specific and concentrated information is not provided under this topic. Usually there is one main article and several shorter ones. At the same time „Postimees” offers two bigger articles and few short summaries.

Opinion, culture, leisure time is offered by „Postimees” wider than „Diena”. Although both newspapers provide similar kind of information – articles of culture events, issues of private life, home and family, TV program and crosswords. Both newspapers depending on the issue have an additional page called Opinion. Here specialists in their field give an opinion to wide range of topics.

Sports section is another essential part of the newspaper which is covered in every issue, offering both local and world news. In addition, it always provides with score, records and team history information, so called statistics of sports. Also providing information of upcoming events.

Last page – „Diena” always has its topic The Other Side where is an interview or article with person of the day, while „Postimees” offers only weather news.

Both „Diena” and „Postimees” offer range of different supplement topics which vary each day, for example, life style, tourism, and pets. Greatly orientating on personal stories of people, their way of life and tackling problems, illnesses or bringing up children and caring for their animals or organizing their everyday life. These sections become more popular which can be seen by variety of different additional supplements that newspapers offer. The variety of themes offered by newspapers covers most of different readers’ interests.

Looking at the magazines and TV programs that huge variety of specialization on audience’s interests can be noticed. Similarly newspapers try to involve as many and different people into their readership.

Overview of „Diena” supplements (www.diena.lv):

Mondays – “Business Diena”. Newspaper offers wide analysis and reflection of macroeconomic and business processes which are important and significant for Latvian market. It includes commentaries of experts and the most recent economic parameters and indicators. As newspaper states it: “Business Diena” provides conceptual analysis, actual and essential information of economy and business processes both of Latvia, Europe and world in general for economically active people.” Image of the supplement greatly reminds the one of “Dienas Bizness” or “Aripaev” in Estonia. It also has the pink design and could be considered as somehow competition of mentioned newspaper as information provided here often is very specific and targeted to narrow audience although not as narrow as “Dienas Bizness” and “Aripaev”.

Tuesdays, Saturdays – “Career Diena”. One of the most popular career papers in Latvia both between job hunters and tenders. It provides wide range of information about job market and possibilities to study. Also there are different articles of professional development including further studying and personal profiles of successful individuals.

Wednesdays – “Home & Car”. Supplement of practical advices on transactions and tendencies of real-estate and car market. Information on buying and selling and mastering properties. For entertainment close-ups of properties and design of celebrity homes.

Wednesday – “Market Diena”. Supplement with wide range of advertisements in different fields.

Thursdays – “TV Diena”. TV program for coming week, including 5 Latvian channels, 7 Russian channels and 27 cable TV and satellite TV channel and 5 radio channel programs. Supplement is distributed also with regional newspapers. This supplement has the biggest circulation within Latvian press – 125 000 copies.

Fridays – “Entertainment Diena”. It is a weekly magazine/newspaper. It is the most popular guide of entertainment, happenings and culture events in the country, mostly in the capital. It offers critiques and descriptions of latest movies, exhibitions, concerts, restaurants, literature and etc.

Saturdays – “Saturday Diena”. 60 page colourful, informative and entertaining weekly magazine of „Diena”. It is providing wide range of different topics and analytical articles. It covers such genres

as interview with a relevant person of the week, report, world, fashion, travel, crosswords, media and humour. Magazine is more orientated on photos and different visuals.

Overview of „Postimees” supplements (www.postimees.ee):

Monday – “Car & Technology”. It offers professional information about new and used cars, covers changes and problems in the traffic scheme, gives driving and car maintenance tips, brings car news from abroad and interviews well-known people about their cars.

Tuesday – “Recruitment” (Tegija) is a career and education section of the „Postimees”. “Tegija” has the purpose of helping people manage at work and find the best self-development opportunities. It has pages of job offers and information about what is going on in the labour and training market. In addition to this supplement, job offers are also published in Saturday „Postimees”.

Wednesday – “Health” (Tervis). “Tervis” writes about health and medical topics: recommendations by family doctors and medical specialists on disease prevention and treatment, comments by doctors, answers to readers’ questions.

Wednesday – “Property”. It covers information in the sphere of real estate. Property classifieds form a large part of the supplement, but there is also room for introducing new residential areas and tips on how to choose a home, how to insure one’s property, etc.

Thursday – “Consumer”. Introduces new products, visits new restaurants, and tests the services on the market to help readers make their decisions.

Friday – “Travel”. Information and other people experience of travelling and exotic and interesting travel destinations.

Saturday – „Postimees Extra”. „Postimees Extra” has 40 pages. The layout is more spacious and vivid, and person-orientated genres (portraits, interviews, reports) and topics of general interest prevail; the Saturday youth special “Hip!” which covers club and youth culture, a restaurant review, a letter from a foreign metropolis. „Postimees Extra” also has weekly author’s pages from Enno Tammer and Mart Juur; Tiiu Põld reports regularly on court cases. The business pages of „Postimees Extra” feature personal stories about businessmen; the foreign news includes popular scientific articles and softer world stories; the opinion page continues the article on the person of the week, by Hannes Rumm.

Saturday – “Arter” is a lifestyle and entertainment magazine. “Arter” has following sections: an interview with a relevant person, report, world, nature, pets, fashion, beauty, health, travel, fitness sports, video and music review, crosswords for children and adults, children’s quiz, media, humour, and TV schedule.

Comparing both newspapers it can be concluded that the structure, layout and offered fields of topics are very similar and followed by the same rules of most Anglo – Saxon press traditions. At the same time „Postimees”, seems more colourful. Proportion on viewed topics of local and global news is very similar. That makes one see that press development towards the western model in both countries has happened successfully. Both dailies successfully separate news from opinions. Also they focus on a wide range of topics in that way satisfying diverse interests of their readers. Profile of audience of both newspapers shows that social awareness and activity is attendant in the society and also asked from the media.

4. Research Questions and Hypothesis

With current work I am planning to find out and clarify what are the main stereotypes of Latvia and Latvians in Estonian media versus interviewed individuals and vice versa – the stereotypes of Estonia and Estonians in Latvian media and amongst the individuals. I would like to research both the stereotyped image of the state as well as the nation, as I believe there could be certain distinctions and even contradictions in both.

It is clear that the reflected image and formed stereotypes of both countries and nations are comparatively extensive considering geographical position, close historical development, and economic, political and cultural cooperation between both countries. For stating the hypotheses as base material I have used pilot researches conducted during my studies in Tartu University. Firstly, it is a pilot focus group conducted amongst Latvians in Riga in year 2005, which consisted of four participants with the same selection criterion as for the focus group of this thesis, on a topic of stereotypes amongst Latvians about Estonia and Estonians. Secondly, there were pilot in-depth interviews conducted in Estonia, Tartu, in year 2005. There were three people interviewed in age group 20 to 30, representing the possible trend of stereotypes towards Latvia and Latvians taking into account the individual experience and attitude. I believe that the time gap between the pilot and current research will highlight any possible shifts of attitudes and the impact of social environment change to the existing attitudes towards the other nation and state.

Research questions:

1. What are the stereotypes of Estonians and Estonia in the print media and amongst individuals in Latvia?
2. What are the stereotypes of Latvians and Latvia in the print media and amongst individuals in Estonia?
3. Is there a difference of intensity between the stereotypes that one holds regarding the other, and if so, why?
4. Is the change of social, political and economic environment also reflected as a shift of the stereotypes?

Research hypothesis:

1. Based on pilot focus groups, stereotypes of Estonians and Estonia in Latvia are:

- Estonians - slow, quite, weird and successful, goal-orientated (based on associations, jokes, personal experience);
- Estonia – successful, goal-orientated (based on the economic development of the state)

There are partly contradicting stereotypical attitudes towards Estonia as a country and Estonians as a nation, both in printed media and in individual opinion in Latvia.

2. Based on pilot in-depth interviews, stereotypes of Latvians and Latvia in Estonia are:

- Latvians – more open, outgoing, more Slavic, less tolerant and arrogant at the same time stereotypes are less distinct.
- Latvia – similar to Estonia, fast developing at the same time being considered to be a bit behind in its development and achievements than Estonia.

3. Stereotypes Latvians hold against Estonians and Estonia are stronger and more distinct than vice versa.

4. The stereotypes are formed by personal experience, historical events, economic, political co-operation between states and cultural closeness and heritage.

5. Research Methods

In my research I have used both Qualitative and Quantitative research methods to draw as clear and objective conclusions as possible.

To clarify the stereotypical and most frequent attitudes towards the nation and state amongst individuals I have conducted focus group in Latvia (about Estonia and Estonians) and in Estonia (about Latvia and Latvians). The Focus group in Estonia consisted of 4 people (due to absence of two invited participants) while the one in Latvia of 6 people. Selection of participants consisted of following preconditions: aged 20 – 30, previously have been in Estonia or Latvia, consuming printed press (“Diena” or “Postimees”), with higher education.

To establish the created image of Estonia and Latvia in printed media I have conducted content analysis of the biggest daily newspaper in Latvia (“Diena”) and Estonia (“Postimees”). Current newspapers have been chosen based on both being the biggest dailies in each country with widest readers circle as well considered as main opinion setters in society. The content analysis has been conducted of two periods: year 2003 and 2007. The specific years were chosen based on systematic sampling method leaving two year gap in between, to possibly monitor the drift or change of the opinion based on such events as joining the European Union in year 2004. The content analysis is conducted to reveal the intensity of publications, the main topics/sections and most importantly to provide with dominant terms and the emotional connotations used in connection with both the state and nation.

Thirdly, based on the results of the content analysis, in total of 22 articles (12 “Diena” and 10 “Postimees” articles) have been selected for discourse analysis. Here has been studied language usage, historical background, creation of image of the country and the nation and possible stereotype shaping.

As pilot focus groups and interviews took place in year 2005, the media analysis is covering years 2003 and 2007 and the later focus groups are conducted at the early beginning of the year 2009, I assume that all the researched methods will provide a wider overview of the period of time starting 2003 to 2009 of possible stereotype shaping, strengthening/weakening and changing due to political, economic and social developments.

5.1. Content Analysis

To understand and reveal what are the most common and main terms used in printed media in Latvia and Estonia regarding each other's country and nation I have chosen to use quantitative research method – content analysis.

I believe it is an adequate research tool to determine the presence of certain key words, concepts and assumptions within the texts of biggest dailies “Postimees” and “Diena”. The content research later supplemented with discourse analysis and focus groups are going to bring out and strengthen the meanings and messages that are in the studied texts brought to the audience and even the culture of the time.

Looking at the development of the content analysis, mostly the research method has been developed and influenced at beginning of 20th century by expansion and formation of mass media and international politics. The content analysis is one of quantitative methods which reveal the content of communication in systematic way (Berelson, 1952). Usually in content analysis it is looked upon statements and signs as raw materials which by summarizing bring out the impact of content upon audience.

The Goal of the Content Analysis is:

Firstly, to determine which are the most used sections and themes where *Latvia/Latvians* and *Estonia/Estonians* are represented in both newspapers. Secondly, to find out and define what are the most used words and expressions regarding *Latvians* and *Latvia* in the newspaper “Postimees” and *Estonians, Estonia* in the newspaper “Diena”. Thirdly, to define positive, negative or neutral connotations towards the defined keywords. And finally to confirm the received assumptions in the focus groups and discourse analysis.

The Structure and Coding for the Content Analysis

Taking into account the geographical, economic and cultural importance of both countries and closeness of nations I assume that the amount of articles devoted to and mentioning of both nations and states is comparatively high. That is why, to narrow down the number of articles analysed I have chosen two years between the period of time of years 2000 and 2008. The choice of the articles is based on the systematic sampling method. The method used was as follows: two separate years were chosen (2003 and 2007) leaving in between such important event for both countries as joining the EU in year 2004. By choice of these two years before and after joining the EU, I assume that it will give an overview and show if there are any changes in coverage intensity and political, economic and social relation after and before the enlargement of EU.

For each year all articles of the newspaper archive were searched in the Internet database of “Lursoft” (www.lursoft.lv) and “Postimees” (www.postimees.ee). The key words used for “Diena” articles were: Estonia, Estonians, Estonian (*in Latvian: Igaunija, Igauni, igaunis*), and for “Postimees” articles: Latvia, Latvians, Latvian (*in Estonian: Lāti, lātlased, lātlane*). The search criteria were that keywords should appear in the title of the article and at least twice in the text of the article. Out of all the provided articles following ones were left out of the analysis: interviews with Estonian or Latvian representative in the other countries newspaper and short sports or culture reports, providing only basic result or event information. All the expressions, terms and keywords were translated and coded in English. The translations were provided by the author of this paper.

As mentioned earlier, early 21st century is considered as phase of stabilization and consolidation within media market. It means that both media as well as the readers had taken into account and understood the role of the media compared to earlier years during the political and economic awakening when media was expected more to take sides. While further years up till 2007 would reveal the possible dynamics, change or in contrast cultivation of the same denominations. To receive needed information I have singled out following units of data which are included in the coding scheme:

1. **Section** – it is subdivided in following 6 categories, based on sections of both newspapers, described earlier:
 - *News* (1) – coded under the terms that the article is presenting main news (fresh, current)
 - *Commentaries, opinion* (2) – coded under the terms that the author is giving opinion, commentary and judgement of certain topic.
 - *State (local) news* (3) – coded under the terms that the news are considering mostly the State itself (Latvia, Estonia), describing local events
 - *Foreign news* (4) – coded under the terms that the news are mainly considering events of other state
 - *Business news* (5) – coded under the terms that the news are covering business topic
 - *Culture, Leisure, Sports* (6) – coded under the terms that the news are covering mentioned topics.

2. **Emotional evaluation of the article:**
 - Positive
 - Rather positive
 - Negative
 - Rather negative

- Neutral
- Non-defined

3. To list the used terms and connotations to predefined keywords: *Latvia, Latvians, Latvian* (in “Postimees”) and *Estonia, Estonians, Estonian* (in “Diena”).

4. Emotional evaluation of the used terms in connection with predefined keywords: *Latvia, Latvians, Latvian* (in “Postimees”) and *Estonia, Estonians, Estonian* (in “Diena”).

- Positive
- Rather positive
- Negative
- Rather negative
- Neutral
- Non-defined

The number of articles:

The total number of selected articles which were included into the content analysis based on the key words are:

“Postimees” – 268 articles (2003 – 36 articles, 2007 – 232 articles)

“Diena” – 318 articles (2003 – 198 articles, 2007 – 120 articles)

After summarizing the total number of articles to analyse it can be seen that there is a significant distinction in numbers of analysed articles of “Postimees” in years 2003 and 2007. The main reasons, why in year 2003 there are so few articles compared to the second year, could be explained, firstly, with less internationally and regionally significant events taking place at that time. Secondly, as mentioned before, after regaining independence Estonia was more focused politically and with economic policy on approaching and cooperating with the Nordic states, so it can be assumed that the load of information could be more focused to news about Scandinavia.

Overall both “Diena” and “Postimees” closely follow and cover the main political and economic events and processes in the neighbouring country; secondly, issues regarding the whole Baltic region are discussed, for example building of the Ignalina nuclear plant. Overall the representation of both countries can be considered as high in numbers and keeping the track of in mostly foreign and local news sections.

5.2. Discourse Analysis

The discourse analysis is a way how to analyse social reality through language in a written or spoken form taking into account the development of background. Van Dijk (1977) defines discourse rather generally as text in context, and as evidence to be described empirically. According to R. Wodak discourse is described as social practice which implies a dialectical relationship between a particular discursive event and situation(s), institution(s) and social structure(s) which frame it: the discursive event is shaped by them, but it also shapes them.

That is, discourse is socially constituted, as well as socially conditioned – it constitutes situations, objects of knowledge, and the social identities of and relationships between people and groups of people. It is constitutive both in the sense that it helps sustain and reproduce the social status quo, and in the sense that it contributes to transforming it (Wodak, 1996:5).

Discourse analysis posits that media not only sets the news agenda of the day but also provides readers (society) schemes of interpretation (Šulmane & Kruks, 2001).

For the discourse analysis of the articles I have used historical method of R. Wodak and M. Reisigl, where aspects of particular topic, argumentation strategies, linguistic and text means, socio-political context and historical background receive special attention (Wodak & Meyer, 2001).

As Estonia and Latvia historically have been connected cultural, social as well as historical background are very purposeful.

Research process:

- Historical reference (context of the text)
- Interdisciplinary (socio-political context)
- Themes, used categories, given evaluations
- Comparisons
- Self- and other presentation

The number of articles:

12 “Diena” and 10 “Postimees” articles, based on the results of the content analysis, have been selected for discourse analysis. The articles taken under discourse analysis during the content analysis were grouped under the section of Commentaries and Opinions. Choice of these articles are

based on Commentaries usually using more free representation of information, stating certain opinion as well as using different connotations used in communication. All the quotations and represented expressions of the discourse analysis were translated into English by the author of this paper.

5.3. Focus Groups

The focus group or group interviewing is usually used to understand and clarify the audience's attitudes and behaviour towards a product or idea (broadly used in Marketing and product development area) (Wimmer & Dominick, 1994).

The focus groups I see as a very good mean to reveal general assumptions that people (individuals) have towards *Estonia and Estonians* (in Latvia) and *Latvia and Latvians* (in Estonia). It serves this research as a base of carrying out and determining the main stereotypes towards the other nation and country between individuals in contradiction to media and to determine the main sources of influence. Discussions between participants as well as individual work in the group greatly reveal one's beliefs and stereotypes. This individual attitude later can be opposed and compared with the findings and conclusions of the print media analysis. At the same time the used language during the group discussion will open up more vivid understanding of language and connotation usage in communication about the neighbouring state and nation.

As the base material I use obtained keywords from the media content analysis which help me to strengthen or receive new stereotypical connotations towards the state and nation. Also in the conducting of the focus group discussion the previously prepared structure with main questions and tasks is used. The structure of the focus group was made identical to previously done pilot-focus group which would enable me to compare any shifts of assumptions and determine what is the impact of social, political and economic developments to given stereotypes.

The questions as well as the discussion are divided into two main parts: about the state (*Latvia, Estonia*) and about the society or nation (*Latvians, Estonians*). The discussion included mainly the group discussion although in the beginning of it each participant was asked to carry out an individual association work. While all the group members arrived each participant was asked to cut out images of provided random magazines. The cut out images had to be connected with any associations with Latvia/Estonia or Latvians/Estonians. Starting the discussion each participant had to present the cut out images and explain why they have chosen the specific images and what associations it rose. The method was used to determine the individual associations with the state and nation without being influenced by the other members of the group. At the same time it helped to determine if any individual associations reduplicated in opinions of other participants. In a way it served as a mean to identify the intensity of stated associations and stereotypes.

Both focus groups occurred in the according native language (Latvian or Estonian) and after the transcripts of the discussions were translated into English by the author of this paper. The length of each focus group was approximately two hours.

For the participants of the group people of the age group 20 – 30 were chosen. At this age people are most socially and economically active, they travel and are open to meet new people from different countries. At the same time this is the main target audience also of the newspapers analysed in the content and discourse analysis. Thirdly, the specific age group mostly had not actively taken place in such historic periods as time of occupation and regaining of the independence in the 90'ties. In that sense, the main general attitude and identity influencer towards the neighbouring country can be considered the current media and their own experience, bringing forward the importance of the more recent events. At the same time, it can be assumed that there is not one predominant common identity for example, unity of the Baltic States, which was very active while regaining the independence. And as the last factor can be mentioned that the younger generation which are both economically and socially active at the same time have the tendency to be more open to adapting different social identities and associate themselves with numerous social groups and liabilities.

The main criterion of the group participants apart from age limit and consumption of “Diena” or “Postimees” was also previous visit to Estonia or Latvia. The time when the country had been visited was not set, as different time spent in Estonia or Latvia and experiences there and meeting the local people might provide with distinctions in attitudes. The focus group in Latvia took place in Riga, year 2009, consisting of 6 people. The focus group in Estonia took place in Tartu, year 2009, consisting of 4 people.

The Goal of the Focus Groups is to Determine:

1. What are the stereotypes of Estonians and Estonia amongst the interviewed individuals in Latvia?
2. What are the stereotypes of Latvians and Latvia amongst the interviewed individuals in Estonia?
3. What kind of impact does the social, economic and political environment have on their evaluation?

6. Results of the Content Analysis

6.1. “Postimees”

The total number of articles analysed in newspaper “Postimees” is 268 articles (2003 – 36 articles, 2007 – 232 articles). Articles for analysis were searched in www.postimees.ee archive by inserting the key words and timing. As www.postimees.ee is not just online version of the newspaper but more of a news portal, then in the selection there are also articles published just in the “Postimees” electronic version. “Diena” developed its web page into a news portal similar to “Postimees” only beginning of year 2008.

1) Sections

The sections of the analysed articles were based on the general division of article sections and themes as it appears in both newspapers. This type of section selection is going to provide overview of the fields which have been covered the most. At the same time it cannot be assumed that this data gives total overview of covered themes as the key words for finding the articles were only *Latvia, Latvian, Latvians*, excluding other search keywords, such as, for example, *Baltic States, neighbour states*, names of the politicians etc., which would give bigger number and wider overview of different articles.

Looking at the figures of the section under which most of the articles have been covered in both years, as it was expected most of the pieces can be categorized under foreign news – covering the events of the other country. It is followed with local news, culture and business news and as smallest group are commentaries.

Looking at the category of the local news it can be seen that the number of the articles have comparatively grown in year 2007 (17%) compared with year 2003 (8%). On one hand it can be explained with growth of travelling of people to the neighbouring countries and at the same time getting in the news. Secondly, the role of EU, NATO and tighter cooperation within Baltic region can also be as stimulus for Local news section growth.

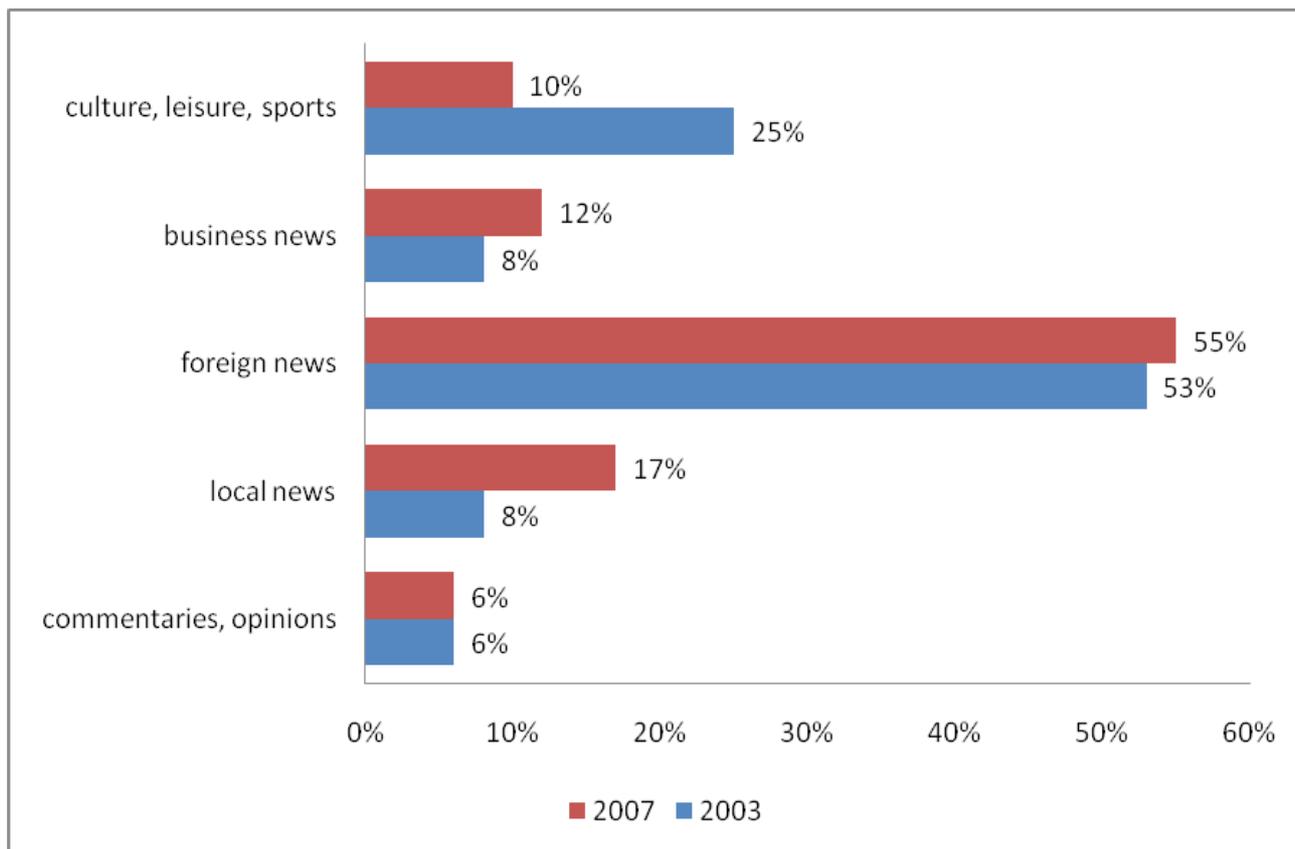
Comparing the culture, leisure and sports news coverage it can be seen that with years it is decreasing (2003 – 25%, 2007 – 10%). At the same time it partly contradicts the more tight cultural and sports cooperation which is reflected in state data, given previously.

As both countries are commercially close only slight business news growth can be indicated (2003 – 8%, 2007 – 12%). Although most likely only major and important business events are covered in the daily newspaper as it is assumed that most of the economic cooperation news are over viewed in specialized newspapers such as “Aripäev” in Estonia and “Dienas Bizness” in Latvia. Overall it can

be seen that the intensity of articles along the years has grown covering the main areas of the cooperation of both states.

Summarizing the number of articles of year 2003 and 2007 the division of covered sections is illustrated in the Figure 1.

Figure 1. Section categories of “Postimees”, 2003/2007



	Culture, leisure, sports	Business news	Foreign news	Local news	Commentaries, opinions	Total nr.
2003	9	3	19	3	2	36
2007	24	28	127	40	13	232

(Section categories of “Postimees” 2003/2007, number of articles)

2) Emotional evaluation of the article

Looking at the emotional evaluation of the articles it can be concluded that half of the articles in both years are neutral. Surprisingly that the next biggest group of articles is with negative emotional load while positively evaluated articles make only around 10% in total.

In both years there are articles evaluated as non-defined. I would like to single out the particular evaluation of the articles because the article itself is presented and written positively at the same time author is using connotations which can be received also as negative or as message with double meaning. Most of the time these kind of articles deal with comparison of both countries and nations, for example, in a sports event or activity that both countries are doing at the same time in economic, political or cultural field. These kinds of articles can be considered as good material for further discourse analysis as it includes more or less strong connotations.

If in year 2003 there is 11% of articles which cannot be defined or can be labelled as both negative/positive then in year 2007 the comparison and double meaningfulness is used much less, only in 1% of articles. On one hand it can be explained as due to growth of political and economic tension in Latvia.

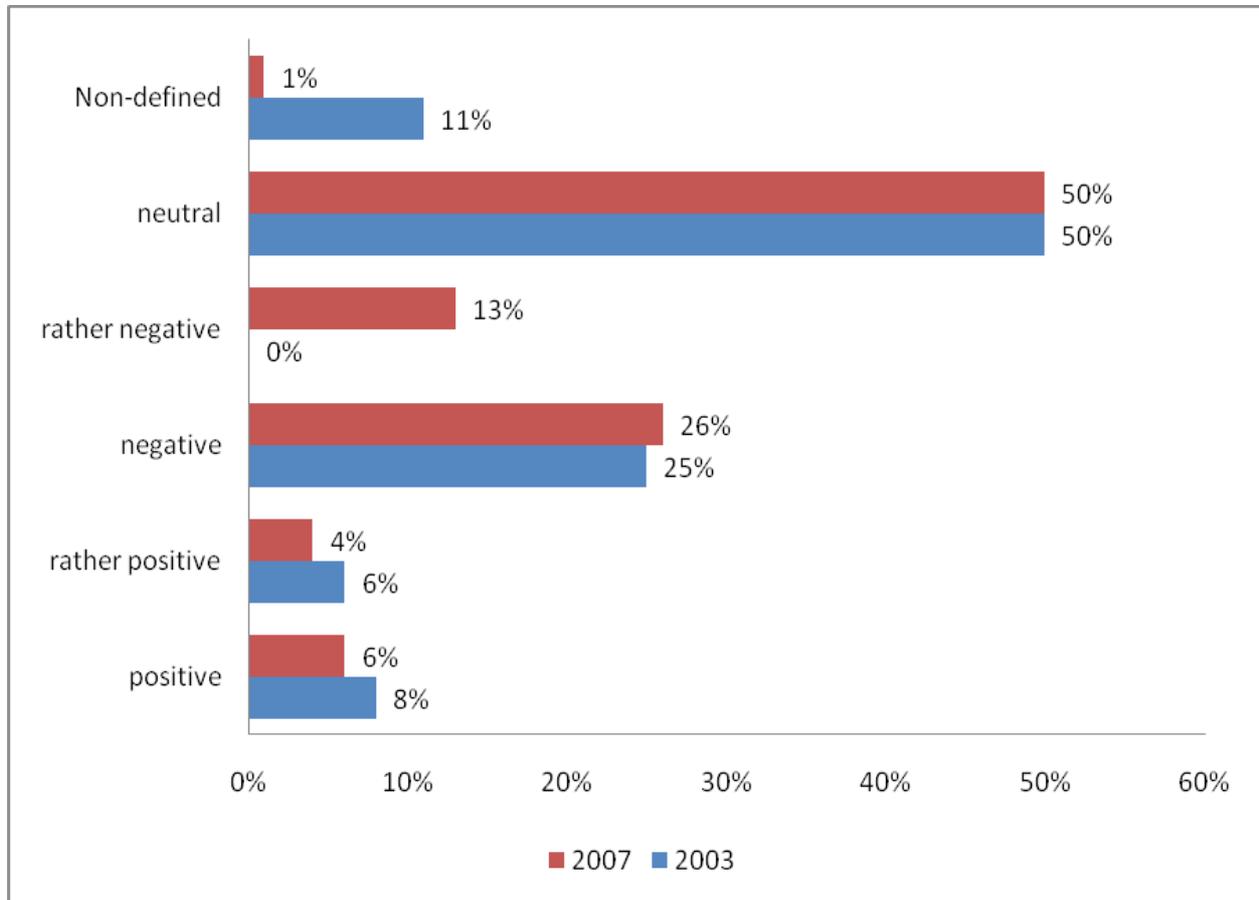
Looking at the differences of positive and negative articles then negative (negative and rather negative) articles have grown almost on half in year 2007 (2003 – 25%, 2007 – 39%) while articles with positive connotation (positive and rather positive) are slightly decreasing (2003 – 14%, 2007 – 10%).

Here I would like to emphasize to take into consideration the specifics of current events during analysed years. For example, in year 2007 in Latvia there were several economic and political events with more negative aspect. Such as, economically - decrease of economic stabilization and high inflation, politically – very high social negations towards ruling position and not transparent, controversial election of the new president of Latvia Valdis Zatlers.

As observed during the analysis then often “Postimees” is quoting information from “Diena” and other Latvian media and vice versa. That leads to conclusion that often inner political, economic processes are handed over with the same, in this case negative, connotations. Often possible threats, developments, influences of the situation for Estonia according to the issue are attached.

Diversity of emotional evaluation of the analysed “Postimees” articles is showed further in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Emotional evaluation of “Postimees” articles, 2003/2007



	Non-defined	Neutral	Rather negative	Negative	Rather positive	Positive	Total nr.
2003	4	18	0	9	2	3	36
2007	3	117	31	60	8	13	232

(Emotional evaluation of “Postimees” articles, 2003/2007, number of articles)

3) The used terms and connotations to keywords:

To define the articles following emotional evaluations were set prior the analysis: neutral, positive, rather positive, negative, rather negative, and non-definable. Evaluation was based on reflection and image of Latvia and Latvians in the particular articles as well as the character of the situation or event. Emotional connotation of the title was not considered separately.

Analysing the articles for finding the possible terms describing the keywords “Latvia” and “Latvians” it can be concluded that most frequently used terms are: *Neighbours* (8 articles) and *Southern neighbours* (12 articles). Considering each keyword separately the most used terms are following:

- **Latvians** – *smarter* (1 article), *impatient*, *disrespectful* (1 article), *hard working*, *close to the land* (1 article), with *different mentality* and *more difficult to cooperate/communicate* (1 article each)
- **Latvia** – *cooperation partners* (6 articles), has *political problems* (9 articles), *economic crisis*, (7 articles) *influence of Russia* (4 articles), *Riga* (3 articles), *good relations* with Estonia (2 articles), *weaker* than Estonia, considered *the weakest link between Baltic States* (2 articles each).

Looking at the emotional connotation of the terms towards Latvians, there cannot be singled out any specific terms which are repeatedly used to label Latvians with. Rather interesting are: lack of ability to cooperate and different mentality mentioning setting Latvians and Estonians apart.

Going over the context of the texts and also overall text emotional evaluation, it can be noted that also some terms are used in rather non-defined way, using double meaningfulness. For example, terms as *smarter* or *makes envious* used regarding Latvia. On one hand it can be considered as positive (happy for the neighbouring country) but at the same time comparing brings forward the message (we should had been there).

As important terms towards Latvia can be considered the: *cooperation* and *good relations*. This underlines the importance and existence of Baltic unity, Baltic identity and cooperation within Baltic region.

Of course the *influence of Russia* mostly is mentioned with negative emotional connotation especially in the economic field and political influence. Although, shared problems of Russian speaking minorities and political ties with Russia can be considered also as a shared Baltic agenda. Interesting that another term closely connected with the keyword Latvia is *Riga* and not only as the capital of Latvia but also used in connection as capital of Baltic States.

Such terms as – *inflation*, *influence of oligarchs* appears due to inner political and economic problems which rose in Latvia during year 2007. Also reference to Latvia being *weakest link* most often is mentioned within content of economic or political processes. As Latvia and Estonia being

united geographically as Baltic Region which is crucial both in the context of joining EU in 2004 as well as attracting foreign investments after joining the EU.

Table 5, Used keywords about Latvia and Latvians in “Postimees” 2003/2007

Emotional evaluation	Nr articles used in	Latvia	Latvians
Neutral	12	Southern neighbours	Southern neighbours
	8	Neighbours	Neighbours
Positive	6	Cooperation partners	
	3	Riga - capital of Baltic's	
	1	Fast development	
	1	Similar (to Estonia)	
	2	Good relations (with Estonia)	
Rather positive	1		Smarter (than Estonians)
	1	(Estonia) cannot without Latvia	
	2	Common history/future	
Rather negative	1	Poor knowledge of Latvia (compared to Scandinavia)	
	1		Different mentality
	2	Weaker (than Estonia)	
Negative	2	Considered the weakest link between Baltic states	
	4	Influence of Russia	
	1		More difficult to cooperate/communicate (compared to Finns)
	7	economic crisis (expensive, inflation)	
	9	Political problems (corruption, influence of oligarchs)	
	1		Impatient, disrespectful (towards opposing opinions)
Non-defined	1	Makes envious	
	1	Step forward (than Estonia)	
	1		Hard working, close to the land

6.2. “Diena”

In total under analysis of “Diena” in years 2003 and 2007 were taken 318 articles (2003 – 198 articles, 2007 –120 articles). Generally describing the content analysis of newspaper “Diena” first obvious significance can be noted the big difference in number of articles in year 2003. If in “Postimees” in year 2003 there are over 30 articles to analyse according to the set criteria then in “Diena” there are almost 200 articles where search words “Estonia” or “Estonian” appears. On one hand it can be interpreted as a significant indication of Estonia being more important cooperation partner and considered as an example to look up for Latvia politically and economically in so called economic and political progress period. Foreign news – mainly talking about political affairs of Estonia and Business news - as second section where Estonia is being mentioned and discussed in the most. The main sections of the discussed topics are delivered and explained more in detail further on.

On other hand the significance of “Diena” sections should be taken into account which appeared in the process of the analysis. As big number of the articles is featured as short fact pieces along with other main topics featuring Estonia as well as other countries and their main events of the day received from different news agencies. Such stories include different topics (politics, business, culture etc.) and were mostly evaluated as neutral in their nature of appearance.

1) Sections

Identically as in analysis of “Postimees” the sections of the analyzed “Diena” articles were based on the general division of sections and themes as it appears in the newspaper. The used key words for the search of the articles were used “Estonia”, “Estonian”, “Estonians” in all the grammatical forms, excluding other search keywords, such as, for example, “Baltic states”, “neighbour states” etc.

Firstly looking at the overall figures of the section under which most of the articles have been covered, as it was expected most of the information can be categorized under Foreign news – covering the events of the other country (total: 2003: 131, 2007: 49 articles), which is more than a half of the total number of the articles analysed.

Secondly, the most covered section is the Business or the Economy. The intensity can be explained by both countries being close and important investment partners, shown also earlier by the numbers provided by Foreign ministries.

Closely follow also articles covering leisure and sports topics and mentioning in the connection with local news. It can be expected as of both countries being close neighbours, keeping cooperation and interconnection within culture and sports field.

Commentaries and Opinions section mostly is covering the main events in Estonia. As an interesting observation can be noted that most of the Opinion pieces are written in the manner of comparison of both countries. They are usually pointing out the cons and pros of certain topic in connection of political, economic and cultural background. Often the same trend of comparison writing is noted also in the other analysed sections. It brings to consideration that often used comparison in media cultivates the idea in society that Estonia is more developed and always one step ahead of Latvia, which is one of the hypotheses put forward in this work, although the opinion is still going to be confirmed by focus group discussion analysis data.

Estonia or Estonians being mentioned in the section of the main daily News creates 3% of all analysed articles in both years. In the main news headlines usually are discussed the current local or global actual events. In case of Estonia and Estonians those are mostly connected with, for example, Estonia – Russia relations and conflicts (mainly in year 2007 the riots tied to the Bronze statue and following economic and political pressure from Russia) as Latvia is experiencing very similar foreign policy relations and issues with neighbouring Russia. So very often this agenda is seen as common threat or issue.

Overall it can be seen that the intensity of articles along the years has grown accordingly to the main areas of the cooperation of both states.

Firstly the number of articles covered in Foreign news section is higher in year 2003 (66%) than in year 2007 (41%). It can be commented as spread of covered articles in other sections, for example growth of the Business section proportion (2003 – 8%, 2007 – 22%). The Business section proportion changes can be explained as growth of commercial and business cooperation between both countries between the analysed years.

Local news section in year 2003 is covered in 6% of articles while in 2007 it grows to 16%. Joining the EU and NATO can be assumed as one of the explanations, as both countries more or less face similar or the same political, economic and cooperation processes. Also joining the Schengen Agreement in 2007 brought up several articles regarding the mutual border issue.

Comparing the culture, leisure and sports news coverage it can be seen that in 2007 it has decreased (2003 - 15%, 2007- 7%), similarly as in case of “Postimees”.

In connection with this section data the selection of the articles for analysis should be stressed once again. Mainly as the number of culture, leisure and sports section has decreased while the culture, sports and tourism cooperation between both countries along the years have grown.

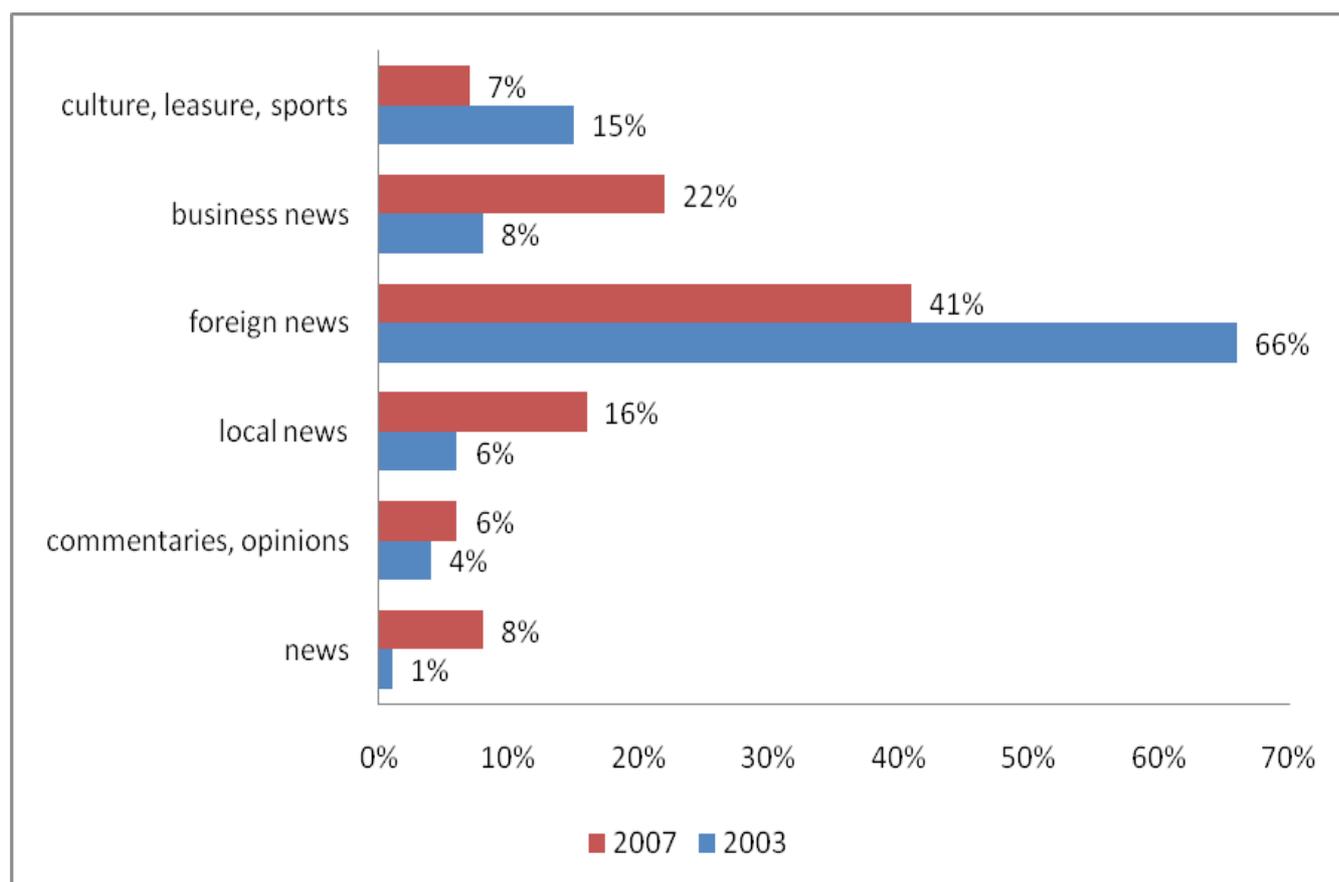
Firstly, as mentioned above in the selection of the articles for analysis the keywords should appear in the title as well at least twice in the text. In that matter number of short sports events and results were not taken into account.

Secondly, only the main newspaper of “Diena” was taken under analysis and not the different specific supplements. As only after year 2003 “Diena” started developing more specific supplements covering topics such as Tourism, Culture, Sports, and Business. In that matter it can be assumed that more widely Estonia and Estonians are mentioned in these supplements in connection with the certain topics.

The section News in year 2007 has featured more articles (8%) than in year 2003 (1%). The specific intensity of the events should be taken into account. Firstly, the Bronze statue conflict in Tallinn which was reflected as main news headlines in most of the news agencies around the world. Secondly, the relations with Russia which is an important topic for both Estonia and Latvia. Thirdly, issues considering the Baltic region as such in connection with EU and NATO.

Summarizing the number of articles of year 2003 and 2007 the division of covered sections is illustrated in the Figure 3.

Figure 3. Section categories of “Diena”, 2003/2007



	Culture, leisure, sports	Business news	Foreign news	Local news	Commentaries, opinions	News	Total nr.
2003	30	16	131	12	8	1	198
2007	8	26	49	19	8	10	120

(Section categories of “Diena”, 2003/2007, numbers of articles)

2) Emotional evaluation of the articles

To define the articles following emotional evaluations were set prior the analysis: neutral, positive, rather positive, negative, rather negative, and non-definable. Evaluation was based on reflection and image of Estonia and Estonians in the particular articles as well as the character of the situation or event. Emotional connotation of the title was not considered separately.

Looking at the emotional evaluation of the analysed articles in “Diena” it can be seen that most of the articles are categorized as neutral, 54% out of total number of articles in both years. Neutrality of articles links with represented sections - mainly foreign and business news.

The negative articles are in total 25% (negative – 16%, rather negative – 9%) while positive articles are a bit less, in total 20% (positive – 16%, rather positive – 4%). Mostly the negative articles were connected with inner political and economic scandals and secondly the bad relations with Russia and integration issues.

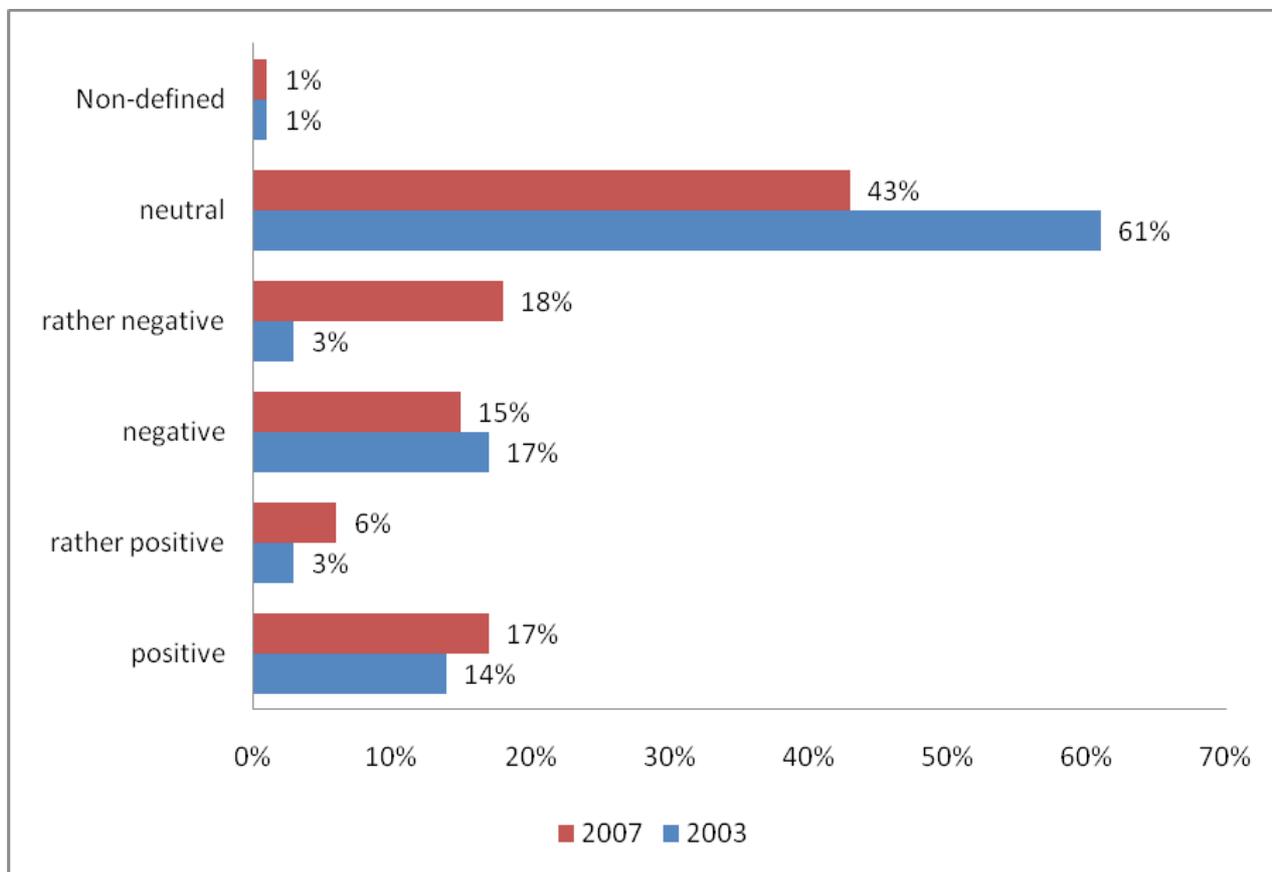
According to I.Šulmane and S.Kruks research on Stereotypes in printed media in Latvia (2001) in Latvian press there is high correlation of negative auto – stereotypes. The authors put forward conclusion that it presents collective identity crisis in Latvia, which is caused by disparity of traditional perceptions (such as working habits, beauty sense, relation towards work) to new social circumstances. In case of talking about other groups (in this case Estonia and Estonians) the comparisons are often used. If it is not positive (Latvians and Latvia do not look good vs. Estonians and Estonia) society needs new positive information to identify with. This information is usually provided by politicians, intelligence, which has most access to public information through media. This according to I.Šulmane and S.Kruks lacks in Latvian press resulting in negative homo – stereotyping (Šulmane, Kruks, 2001).

The positively categorized articles mostly feature Estonia and its technological and economic development. In general comparing both analysed years it can be noted that current events of the year have big impact on evaluation results.

Comparing the changes between 2003 and 2007 the amount of neutrally categorized articles reduce (2003 – 61%, 2007 – 43%). In year 2007 the number of positive articles increase (2003 – 17%, 2007 – 23%) the same as the negative ones (2003 – 21%, 2007 – 33%). The rise of positive articles can be linked with successful performance of Estonia in its economics the same as international politics. At the same time in year 2007 the relations between Estonia and Russia had become tense producing rising both negative issues and reactions from both countries.

The diversions of emotional evaluations of analysed “Diena” article is provided below in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Emotional evaluation of “Diena” articles, 2003/2007



	Non-defined	Neutral	Rather negative	Negative	Rather positive	Positive	Total nr.
2003	2	121	7	34	6	28	198
2007	1	52	21	18	7	21	120

3) The used terms and connotations to keywords:

As most used term with neutral connotation for both state as well as nation are:

neighbour/neighbouring country (14 articles) or *Northern neighbour* (10 articles). Although used determinative “northern” can be interpreted also as reference to being different, more distant.

For example, As Lithuania is more to be part to Central Europe and Estonia in its turn to Northern Europe, the only real and “most Baltic” country is Latvia (Diena, Lāti mārķ ja Eesti vārķ: Latvijas zāme un Igaunijas lieta, 15.12.2003.).

As another term with neutral evaluation but which can be seen as differentiation is the portrayal Estonia and Estonians as *closer to, following Finland and Finns* (3 articles).

Estonia in negative connotation mostly is mentioned in connection with Russia or integration of the Russian speaking part of the society in Estonia, similarly as in evaluation of articles in general. For example: *Estonia – Russia’s whipping boy, integration process is not successful, main Russia’s enemy*.

At the same time most of the terms used towards Estonia can be considered with positive or rather positive connotation. Partly it can be attributed also to so called Russia related topics where Estonia is featured as *unbending/recalcitrant, has spine*.

Often appraisal of Estonia is used in comparison to Latvia: *more successful/ahead of Latvia* (9 articles), *example to Latvia* (3 articles). Although positive reference to Estonia is made also in Baltic and more global sense being featured as *growth in economy and living standards* (3 articles), *has proven itself* (3 articles) and *the first/the pioneer* (6 articles). The last is related to technology development.

Summing up the terms used for Estonians (as nation) there are also more positive connotations: *determined, skilful, proud, more critical* although once again terms which can be categorized as non-defined should be pointed out. For example, the term *hot* or *hot – blooded* which is used to reference of Estonians. This can be categorized as a connotation with strong and apparent double meaning which is often used in everyday communication in Latvia sarcastically characterizing Estonians as Northern nation.

The obtained keywords in the Content analysis further are going to be tested in the Focus groups to conclude, how much do the ones mentioned in the printed press overlap with the terms that individuals use in their everyday viewpoints about the other country and nation. At this point there can be noted a clear tendency of Estonia (the state) being portrayed mostly as positive, successful and an example to Latvia.

The most used terms describing the keywords “Estonia” and “Estonians” in “Diena” are placed below in the Table 5.

Table 5. Used keywords about Latvia and Latvians in “Diena” 2003/2007

Emotional evaluation	Nr articles used in	Estonia	Estonians
Neutral	14	Neighbour/neighbouring country	neighbour
	10	Northern neighbour	
	1		Similar problems to Latvians
	3	Closer to Finland	Closer to Finns
Positive	4	more successful processes (than in Latvia)	
	6	The first (in the world regarding technology)	
	5	Ahead (of Latvia)	
	3	Growth in economy and living standard	
	1	has spine	
	3	example (to Latvia)	
	1		in the first place
	1	Helping Latvia	
	1	Pride of Baltic's	
	2	Has proven itself	
	1		determined
	1		skilful
Rather positive	1	Unbending/recalcitrant	
	1		Proud
	1		More critical (than Latvians)
Rather negative	1		stubborn
	1	Main Russia's enemy	
	1	small and greedy country	
Negative	1	Russia's whipping boy	
	3	Integration not successful	
	1		naive
Non-defined	2		Envy (over Latvians)
	1		Angry at Latvians
	1		attentive
	1		hot; hot-blooded

7. Results of the Discourse Analysis

12 “Diena” and 10 “Postimees” articles, based on the results of the content analysis, have been selected for discourse analysis. These articles taken under discourse analysis were grouped under the section of Commentaries and Opinions during content analysis. Choice of these articles are based on Commentaries usually using more free representation of information, stating certain opinion as well as using different connotations used in communication. Often comparison between both countries is used. Another element worth mentioning is the shift between usage of “us” versus “them” as well as “Baltic States” and ‘Baltic region’ including Latvia and Estonia together.

7.1. “Diena”

In total there were 12 articles analysed which were published in “Diena” (2003 – 5 articles, 2007 – 7 articles).

Following “Diena” articles were taken for analysis:

04.03.2003., Igaunī balso par “Repši” (*Estonians are voting for “Repše”- Latvian politician*)

15.09.2003., Igaunī saka pārliecinošu jā ES (*Estonians say convincing yes to EU*)

13.09.2003., Igaunija nepaliks malā (*Estonia will not stay aside*)

16.09.2003., Igaunī aizgāja (*Estonians left*)

15.09.2003., Igaunū “jā” ir arguments (*Estonian “yes” is an argument*)

18.01.2007., Igaunijas kārtā (*Estonia’s turn*)

03.03.2007., Igaunijas vēlēšanu pragmatisms? (*Pragmatism of elections in Estonia*)

06.03.2007., Kā Igaunijā? (*How is it in Estonia?*)

31.03.2007., Igaunijai jauna valdība (*Estonia has new government*)

03.05.2007., Kāda ir Igaunijas notikumu mācība Latvijai? (*What is the lesson for Latvia from events in Estonia?*)

24.09.2007., Igaunijas pateikusi nē (*Estonia has said no*)

12.12.2007., Igaunijas diplomāti pārceļas uz dzīvi internet (*Diplomats of Estonia move to live in the Internet*).

The themes of the covered topics can be grouped following:

- 1) Year 2003:
 - Referendum of joining the EU (year 2003, 4 articles)
 - Parliament elections in Estonia (year 2003, 1 articles)
- 2) Year 2007:
 - Parliament elections in Estonia (year 2007, 3 articles)
 - Estonia's relations with Russia (year 2007, 3 articles)
 - Estonia and technology (year 2007, 1 article)

Referendum of joining the EU

In year 2004 all three Baltic States joined the European Union which was the main political goal of Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania since regaining independence from Soviet Union in 1991. Although this was a common goal of all three countries at the same time each country gained the needed economic and political standards at their own pace. For example, before joining the European Union questions such as of minorities, corruption, inflation and other were of the issues that international organisations were paying their attention to. Despite the quite similar starting points and problems faced in Estonia and Latvia, the Commission seemed to be less critical to the situation in Estonia. Consequently on 1997 followed the recommendation to start accession negotiations with Estonia together with four other Central and Eastern European countries and not with Latvia (Van Elsuwege, 2002).

At some point this can be considered as a breaking point of the common Baltic identity which was so important at the time of declaring the independence in the nineties.

At 2002 both Latvia and Estonia along with other 10 countries were invited to join the European Union. After the official invite the local referendums took place also in Latvia and Estonia. In both countries there was a wide "pro-EU" communication campaign taking place. At the time majority of the political and social elite the same as the main newspapers mostly were united in supporting the joining to the EU as the way forward for Baltic region.

As the referendum in Estonia took place beforehand Latvia then the event was widely represented also in Latvian media. Not only as the reflection of foreign news but also as opinion pieces: the results and the activity of Estonians were presented often as an example and the right way of behaviour for citizens of Latvia in the forthcoming referendum.

"Ex-president Lennart Meri appeals to Latvians to follow the example of Estonians."

„J. Parts also said that he hopes to positive voting results not only in Estonia but also in Latvia, as „to EU we as neighbours have common road to take.””

(Diena, Igaunī saka pārliecinošu jā ES, 15.09.2003.)

It can be assumed that to strengthen the idea of joining the EU and to do “the right choice” often the so called common and positive categories are used in connection with Estonia, such as: “friends Latvians”, “Common way to go”, “us – the neighbours”.

As the issue of joining the EU was considered and communicated at that time as crucial step to take for Estonia as well as Latvia then publications reflecting the referendum in Estonia can be interpreted as often dramatised in categories of “us” and „them”, meaning, „them” - who have already joined the EU and „us” – who are still not there. At the same time it can be put into category: “them” – Estonians, step forward, “us” – Latvians, following.

This observation serves to confirm the hypothesis stating that Estonians are presented as successful, goal – oriented while Latvia being bit behind in its development and achievements. Although it is interesting that Latvian media is also the one cultivating the stereotype among Latvian society.

„Now they (the Estonians) have left.”

„For a short period of time we have remained, to do the hard job – to arrive as the last.”

(Diena, Igaunī aizgāja, 16.09.2003.)

The argumentation of putting forward the connotation “they” – who have joined the EU – the winners, “us” – if won’t join – the losers.

“Agency AFP cited A.Rutel:”We have the choice – to draw the outside border of EU with Russia or Latvia and Lithuania will do it for us.”

(Diena, Igaunī saka pārliecinošu jā ES, 15.09.2003.)

“And if we do not do it, the anecdotes which Estonians and other Europeans will tell about us will be the only reason for the country with Europe in back of its head to smile.”

(Diena, Igaunī aizgāja, 16.09.2003.)

Of course also the categorisation of “us” and “them” in sense of “us”- Latvians and “them” – Estonians necessarily is used, which additionally strengthens the previously mentioned categorisations and connotations. It is often appealing to the common stereotypes and viewpoints that Latvians hold towards Estonians, for example, Estonia being one step ahead of Latvia or telling jokes and anecdotes about Estonians. Here the attribution of the failures of my group to the particular situation vs. attributing the abilities of other group is used, which according to theoretical studies is one of the ways how the stereotypes are formed.

“On Sunday I wanted to be Estonian. So that Latvians tell anecdotes about me with envy...I watched how they (Estonians) come to voting polls and how calmly, consistently and independently they leave to Europe.”

(Diena, Igaunī aizgāja, 16.09.2003.)

Here I would like to draw attention also to the used expression of *envy* and telling of *anecdotes*. These two turns of speech can be considered as strong connotations as they carry often used ways of communication about Estonians between Latvians.

Firstly in Latvian society it is very common to tell jokes and anecdotes where main characters usually are Latvian and Estonian. The given quotation can be seen as a reference to it. In the anecdotes the Estonian is usually portrayed as slow, inadequate and the silly one, the one that resolves the joke around. Further the same kinds of connotations are used also in everyday communications towards Estonians. This is one of the examples of the way how particular connotations are accepted and adapted in consensus and further included in a way how to view another group. Other group, in this case Estonians, are seen and characterised as homogeneous group acting in one particular way which is joked about and to feel envy about.

Secondly, through term *envy* the auto-stereotype (stereotype of one's group) is represented. There is an old common saying that Latvians are an envious nation. This is often referred along with communication about the neighbouring countries and nations and their success.

According to Market Data research, carried out in spring of year 2008 via internet questionnaire (total number of respondents 1245, age 15 -74) on how Latvians associate themselves and Latvia, 61% of respondents characterize Latvians (themselves) as envious nation (while 65% - as hardworking, 41% - as reserved and 37% - as prejudicial) (www.marketdata.lv, 06.01.2009.).

Here it can be brought back to the idea of P. Bourdieu that by expressing any evaluation or characterizing other nation or member of it, speaker uses symbols, which are known and recognized by other members of society, in such way creating and cultivating stereotype.

“We do not admit it but Estonians often have served us as a certain criterion, Lithuanians have influenced us less. We gaze at each other – us at Estonians even more than they at us. That is why Estonian “yes” is argumentation also in Latvia.”

(Diena, Igaunū “jā” ir arguments, 15.09.2003.)

“And also Estonian Foreign Affair minister threatens – if Estonians voted against and after some time changed their mind – Latvians, Imagine!, would be the ones who would vote in their referendum about welcoming Estonia in EU.”

(Diena, Igaunija nepaliks malā, 13.09.2003.)

Another often used way of communication regarding the neighbouring countries in media can be mentioned the comparison of both countries. It is also used in the case of EU agenda.

“Before referendum in Estonia it is almost the same as in Latvia...Otherwise it is the same there as here – everyone inveighs advertisements and political propaganda and doubts the results of polling.”

(Diena, Igaunija nepaliks malā, 13.09.2003.)

Greatly the comparison communication can be observed in articles dealing with and talking about parliament elections in Estonia, both in 2003 and then 2007 which are going to be analysed further.

Parliament Elections in Estonia (2003, 2007)

Estonian parliamentary election in 2003 was held on 2nd March while elections in Latvia took place in 2002 on 5th October. These both elections in Estonia and Latvia can be featured as ones where new political parties came into the political scene, greatly indicating the weariness of existing power. In Latvia two new parties were formed and elected into the new parliament: the Conservative New Era party with the party leader Einars Repše who later formed the government and the Christian Democratic Latvia's First Party. In Estonia adequately in year 2003 Party Res Publica (self-identified as the Conservative party) received the most (28) mandates in the parliament. The results were commented as rather surprising due to the big number of seats. While in comparison to Latvian political development similar evaluations were expected.

In March 4, 2007 the 10th Riigikogu of Estonia was elected while in Latvia the elections of the 9th Saeima took place in October 7, 2006. Accordingly in “Diena” the elections of year 2007 were discussed and covered. According to the Riigikogu webpage (www.riigikogu.ee) the majority of the votes were cast in favour of the Estonian Reform Party and Estonian Centre party. In Latvia the main winning parties were the conservative People's party and the Green party. In 2007 elections compared with the 2003 ones the political succession of the parties was observed.

The analysed articles of the domestic policy topic can be considered as a good example of previously mentioned comparison manner between Estonia and Latvia used in printed media as well as day to day communication within members of society. Mainly covered events are using three main manners: categorisation (us – Latvians, Latvia; them - Estonians, Estonia) identification (association of differences in development of events in Estonia to demonstrate and bring out the distinction of processes in Latvia) and comparison (comparing the developments in Estonia and

Latvia, highlighting the differences and similarities). According to Tajfel & Turner (1979) these are the three main categories which are crucial in shaping the social identity in relation to (international) social space. At some point it shapes the attitude and relation to neighbouring nation and state, which is studied here.

Both countries being close political as well as economic partners attentively follow the events taking place in neighbouring countries. The same can be related to Parliament elections in Estonia in 2003 and 2007.

“After the collapse of USSR in Estonia the politics of the democrats, former soviets and traditional populists did not differ much from Latvia or other post – soviet countries.”

(Diena, Igaunijas vēlēšanu pragmatisms?, 03.03.2007.)

“Although there are issues in Estonian elections which are similar to our 8th Saeima elections.”

(Diena, Igaunī balso par “Repši”, 04.03.2003.)

The structures of the articles in general are constructed as a face to face comparison with political parties in Latvia. It greatly helps to understand the political developments in Estonia due to the clear simile. According to Berger & Luckmann face - to - face situations is one of the ways how ones attitude and way of seeing and explaining social reality or space.

For example, the analysis of the title of the article of 04.03.2003.: “Estonians vote for “Repše”” (reference that the conservative party has won in Estonia) and also comparison of each political force. It is indicating and drawing a picture of the political force and their strategy towards the further political course.

“Estonia has its own “New Era”...Estonia has its “Jurkāns” (name of Latvian politician) – leader of the Centre Party Edgar Savisaar....Estonia has its “Fatherland party” (TB/LNNK in Latvia, the Party of Isamaliit in Estonia).”

(Diena, Igaunī balso par “Repši”, 04.03.2003.)

As noticed also before, this kind of direct comparison is often used in communication regarding Estonia in Latvian printed media. Not only in political but often covering economic issues. At the same time accounting the similarities the differences are put forward. This is often used to indicate the different solutions of commonly faced problems and situations, for example, Russian speaking minorities.

“The most essential distinction between Latvia and Estonia – non-Estonians who have received citizenship have stopped to vote for ethnically tended parties (it was noted already observed in municipal elections of 2001).”

(Diena, Igaunī balso par “Repši”, 04.03.2003.)

“In this manner unlike Latvia, where right wing politics are represented by ethnic Latvians and left wing politics – by foreign parties, thanks to the role of the political elite and the political skill of the Centre party none of the political wings in Estonia are not dominated by certain ethnic group.”

(Diena, Igaunijas vēlēšanu pragmatisms?, 03.03.2007.)

This is one of the manners how the distinctions and comparisons are highlighted also in the everyday communications between people. Bringing forward not only the similarities but also the differences, which is one of the ways how in more general communication the stereotypes are slowly formed.

Differences put in the categorisation of better/worse are often used when failures or abilities are highlighted.

“Although unlike Latvia in Estonia the transition from traditional authority system to rationally judicial authority has happened more successfully...”

(Diena, Igaunijas vēlēšanu pragmatisms?, 03.03.2007.)

“To explain the growth of the voting enthusiasm with ability to vote in internet probably would be too simplified...on this score us considerably are behind the neighbours and we should start...from 0, while in Estonia 90 % of the population have electronic ID cards with electronic signature.”

(Diena, Kā Igaunijā? 06.03.2007.)

The so called identification or contradiction of “us” – as positive and “them” – as negative is the aspect which helps to cultivate preoccupation, economic status, political powers and self-esteem of a group. In this matter in Latvian media the opposite contradiction (“us” – as negative, “them” – as positive) is often used in reference to Estonia as stated in the example above. This greatly helps as evidence to understand the comparatively low self-esteem of Latvians towards Estonia and seeing it as more advanced and ahead.

Analysing the terms used towards Estonians and Estonia along with the more specific parallels between political parties and the politicians also the term “northern neighbours” is used.

*“The results of the parliament elections in Estonia allege that **northern neighbours** are awaiting roughly the same from the authorities as voters in Latvia.”*

(Diena, Igaunī balso par “Repši”, 04.03.2003.)

Breaking it more down, on one hand the geographical “northern” – can be seen as more indicating on polarisation of “them”, situated somewhere further north from “us” – Latvians. Also as previously indicated, then along with regaining the independence in late nineties Estonia has been positioning itself more as a Nordic country which often is also reproduced and positioned so in Latvian printed media communication. More often designation of “northern” is used rather than for example “Baltic neighbour”. As listed in the content analysis of “Diena” in total there are 10 articles using the “northern neighbour”, while none describing neighbour as “Baltic” etc., which, for example, was more used as identification in the nineties of the three Baltic States. At the same time term “neighbour” can be interpreted as indication on closer relations, still being linked in geographical, economic, political and cultural way. Also the content analysis proves that term “neighbour” is the most often used one (14 articles) and can be featured as rather positive or neutral, never carrying a negative connotation.

Estonia’s relations with Russia

In the content analysis of “Diena” sections the News section in year 2007 (8%) grew comparatively to year 2003 (1%). One of the events that took the attention of not just Latvian media but also the news headlines of the biggest news agencies around the world was the Bronze statue conflict in Tallinn in April 27, 2007.

As Latvia is experiencing very similar foreign political relations and issues with neighbouring Russia and Russian speaking minorities then also this issue is mostly looked at in comparative and identification way. A. Rodins in his article “Igaunijas kārta” (Estonia’s turn) vividly describes the relations of Latvia and Estonia with Russia after regaining independence from the Soviet Union:

“In the relations of Kremlin with Estonia and Latvia exists almost a regularity: when “the good neighbour” is Estonia, Latvia gets the role of “the bad” one. Currently it is opposite, though it is not something to be happy about.”

(Diena, Igaunijas kārta, 18.01.2007.)

In communication regarding relations with Russia there is a tendency to look at the issue not just as foreign news but often also as a common and shared problem and agenda. It is something that Baltic States are or will be facing together or one after another. It means that issues are presented not just

as facts but again as comparison and already identification of how the neighbour has ended up with the situation and how dealing with it.

“The main lesson for us is to be very careful in issues handling the historical symbols...Another lesson is that Baltic States are not immune against such incidents, Estonians had made themselves and rest of the world believe that they have reached relatively high integration level. But one should not be under the illusions the same as in the rest of the Europe, this process is hard.”

(Diena, Kāda ir Igaunijas motikumumu mācība Latvijai?, 03.05.2007.)

It includes all: identification with the faced issue, highlighting the diversity of situation in Latvia and Estonia and the way of dealing with it, giving good and bad examples in comparison of Estonia and Latvia, attributing the failures or abilities. For example, different political and social experts state it in their opinions commenting the Bronze statue events in Estonia in “Diena” article of 03.05.2007. “Kāda ir Igaunijas notikumumu mācība Latvijai?” (What is the lesson for Latvia from events in Estonia?)

“Although most of the people and also politicians will comprehend the events in Estonia as good lesson – how we should not act.”

(Boriss Cilevičs, Parliament deputy)

“All this time Estonia was praised as political example of integration. But now it can be seen that the main role is played by the proximal country.”

(Ainars Latkovskis, Parliament deputy, former Integration minister)

“In the example of Estonia it is well seen that they lack ability to manage conflicts, they cannot be solved just from the position of force.”

(Roberts Ķīlis, socio-anthropologist)

“I think that our integration politics were more far-sighted than Estonian one, that is why I hope that this (the conflict) has not created any consequences for us.”

(Aija Priedīte, director of The National Language Training Agency)

“...also we should go over our integration politics, taking into account the bitter experience of Estonia.”

(Romāns Apsītis, Ombudsman)

Also I.Šulmane and S.Kruks confirm that in case of talking about other groups the comparisons serve as means of identifying with its own group. Depending on the ways of cultivation of the collective identity or the auto - stereotype the attitude towards the other group or the homo - stereotype shapes (Šulmane, Kruks, 2001). While Tajfel & Turner state these stages as main social reality setters which are substantial both in realising self social identity as well as creating the attitude towards the other social group.

As mentioned above then relations with Russia and Russian speaking minorities and their integration is greatly seen as the common Baltic agenda and frequent problem. The shared issue in a way in the communication brings the two countries much closer. In issues as this the common support and understanding in press and society is always seen as very crucial and important. In case of any delays or hesitation of the political elite it is greatly criticized and seen as betrayal to the Baltic unity and coalition of the neighbours. In some way it indicates on strong presence of the identity of Baltic unity and solidarity being still alive from the early nineties and the Baltic Way which appears in certain issues and situations.

*“Estonia has spine and we **must express support**. Next to Estonia we look very weak. It looks like in the moment of the love upswing towards Russia Aigars Kalvītis (the prime minister) is ready to sacrifice the relations with Estonia.”*

(Ainārs Latkovskis, Parliament deputy, former Integration minister)

At the same time not just covering the particular event, in the relations with Russia, Estonia has often showed very strong and convincing standing point unlike Latvia. In “Diena” it is reflected positively as Estonia being convinced in its foreign affairs and policies, such terms as “having the spine”, “being the example” etc. are used. For example, in the article “Igaunijas pateikusi nē” (Estonia has said no) on Nord Stream intention on locating the gas pipe in the Baltic Sea. Here Estonia had showed a strict foreign political move by blocking any investigation of the Russian company works in the Baltic Sea.

The above mentioned can serve as a good example on one way of drawing portray of Estonia in Latvian printed media.

“On Thursday the government of Estonia drew a line.”

(Diena, Igaunija pateikusi nē, 24.08.2007.)

“...the step of Estonia is evaluated as breakthrough...”

(Diena, Igaunijas, diplomāti pārceļas uz dzīvi internetā, 12.12.2007.)

Estonia and Technology

As described in the content analysis overall the articles of “Diena” picturing Estonia were categorised as neutral, while positive and negative coverage had equal percentage share. The content analysis emotional evaluation results can be interpreted not only as built attitude towards Estonia and Estonians but is also greatly dependent on emotional basis of the covered topic as such. The positively categorized articles mostly featured Estonia and its technological and economic development. As one of such examples can be mentioned the “Diena” article “Igaunijas diplomāti pārceļas uz dzīvi internetā”, 12.12.2007 (Diplomats of Estonia move to live in the Internet).

“The flagman of the new technologies in Baltic’s – Estonia once again has confirmed that it is the most progressive country in the region. Northern neighbours following the example of Sweden in the beginning of December have opened virtual embassy in the fantasy land of the Internet Second Life...”

(Diena, Igaunijas, diplomāti pārceļas uz dzīvi internetā, 12.12.2007.)

It can be assumed that connotations and way how Estonia is building its image is re-represented also in the printed media of Latvia. For example, Estonia being the Nordic state reflects as the “northern neighbour”, Estonia – technology and E-country results as IT leader of the Baltic region. Although often advancement of other country is seen as positive it is related with its dose of sarcasm, excuse and admonishment of the local political elite.

7.2. “Postimees”

In total there were 10 articles analysed which were published in “Postimees” (2003 – 2 articles, 2007 – 8 articles).

Following “Postimees” articles were taken under analysis:

11.10.2003., Kuldvõtmeke Lāti, (*Latvia – the golden key*)

14.10.2003., Lāti vōttis vōtmed, (*Latvia took the keys*)

20.10.2007., Kas ainult Lāti? (*Is it just Latvia?*)

31.10.2007., Oligarhid rebivad Lāti lōhki (*The oligarhs will tear Latvia apart*)

04.11.2007., Tere taas, Lāti kodanikuūhiskond! (*Hello once again society of the state of Latvia*)

05.11.2007. Mis toimub Lātis? (*What is happening in Latvia?*)

09.11.2007., Lāti kriis olgu Eestile hoiatuseks (*Let the crisis of Latvia be warning for Estonia*)

21.11.2007., Lāti hoiatus (*Warning of Latvia*)

18.12.2007., Lāti ja Leedu nādala oostuses (*Awaiting the week of Latvia and Lithuania*)

01.12.2007., Lāti õrnkõrn lootus (*Vague hope of Latvia*)

Categorising the covered topics of the analysed articles in 2003 the two articles are covering the new brand of Latvia of the year. While most of the articles in 2007 discuss the economic and consequential political crisis of Latvia as well as one article discussing the 90th birthday of Latvian Independence day celebration in Estonia.

According to the Content analysis the articles with negative connotation had grown almost on half in year 2007 (2003 – 25%, 2007 – 39%). It greatly reflects also in the majority of topics in the Discourse analysis of “Postimees” articles in year 2007. In year 2007 in Latvia there were several economic and political events with more negative aspect. Such as, economically - decrease of economic stabilization and high inflation, politically – very high social negations towards ruling position.

The same as in the case of analysis of “Diena” talking about two countries (Latvia and Estonia) categorization, identification and comparison is mostly used to bring forward and to highlight the differences and to distinction one group from another. That can be understood as both groups being close enough politically, economically, culturally as well as geographically. Although in the articles mostly the negative connotation towards the other group (Latvia) is used there are also examples of positive ones, for example, when both countries have addressed similar agenda in different ways.

Brand of Latvia

In year 2003 the Institute of Latvia decided to develop the country brand, inviting researchers from Oxford University, realizing that country needs awareness to attract foreign investments, tourists and to raise positive image of the country as such. Main conclusions to the capacious study were that Latvia should mainly work towards the Russian market, branding itself mainly as the keystone, centre and key to the Baltic region. So far out of Baltic States only Estonia had brought forward more recognizable and noticeable campaign and brand development of “Welcome to ESTonia” in year 2002.

Although often the investments and tourism is attracted to the Baltic region as whole at the same time each country is competing, working and “fighting” for its own attractiveness and favour of market and services to both foreign investments and tourists. It means that new positioning of Latvia is current also for Estonia and being appealing also to the investors and tourists from Estonia.

“Now Latvians come out with their slogan „Latvia is the key to the Baltic’s”. And I think that Latvians are cleverer than we are. Why? ...Riga is the capital of the Baltic States already for years, what is there to hide?”

(Postimees, Lāti võttis võtmed, 14.10.2003.)

Looking at the emotional connotation of such term as „*cleverer*” towards Latvians in provided quotation it can be noted that the word is used in double meaningfulness. On one hand it can be considered as positive (happy for the neighbouring country) but at the same time comparing brings forward the message (we should had been there).

The importance of branding but mostly the image of each country can greatly be referred also to negative connotation of any country out of Baltic States, mostly referring here to the main discussed topic of 2007.

Political and economic fall down and rise of corruption in Latvia

“Most of all worry and fear of speech of ambassador of United States of America caused that on-lookers might see the three Baltic States not as three countries but as one unit, so bad image can deteriorate also interests of Estonia and Lithuania.”

(Postimees, Mis toimub Lātis?, 05.11.2007.)

The historical context of the quotation goes back not just to the speech of Catherine Todd Bailey the ambassador of USA in Latvia at the time but this can be considered as a peak of the economic and political turmoil in Latvia in October of 2007. The great ignorance of political elite and coalition for the last year in Latvia, growth of corruption, increasing economic problems, such as high inflation (2007 – approx. fluctuations from 11 - 14%), had not only challenged the frustration of the Latvian society but already drawn attention of major international partners.

“The alienation of the society from the politics enabled the ones at the power and the moneyed oligarchs to be free handed for years, that in the end ambassador of USA was forced to make a precedent step and to remind our south neighbours that they should not keep the democratic values if they are not taken care of.”

(Postimees, Tere taas, Lāti kodanikuühiskond!, 04.11.2007.)

“The establishment is like a fortress with a stone wall around, where simple people do not have any business.”

(Postimees, Lāti kriis olgu Eestile hoiakuseks, 09.11.2007.)

Connotations and representation of Latvia in the case are strong and greatly shown as something Estonia itself in general does not associate with and wants to stand apart of.

“Latvia is the state where the rich businessmen buy preferable laws, politicians walk around with briefcases full of cash and president is under enquiry of taking bribes.”

(Postimees, Oligarhid rebivad Lāti lõhki, 31.10.2007.)

Over viewing the articles of the covered topic on political crisis in Latvia it can be concluded that the political ignorance and social dissatisfaction had greatly alienated Latvia from Estonia creating negative image of the state.

“...Latvia is not sliding back. There it has always been like that.”

(Postimees, Mis toimub Lātis?, 05.11.2007.)

At the same time, identification of the situation also can be noted, for example, referring to the local politicians regarding the agenda or as an appeal or possibility to learn from the bad experience of the neighbours, although positioning Latvia negatively. The problems are referred to the Baltic region as such.

“The exploded state crisis in the neighbour country Latvia cannot leave us indifferent, as the coincidence of the circumstances after this scenario could repeat also in Estonia. Estonia similarly to Latvia in the past years has made very fast economic development, which has raised the wealth of the country at the same time bringing several serious trouble signs with it...this is the latest when Estonian government should make serious conclusions out of mistakes of the southern neighbours.”

(Postimees, Lāti kriis olgu Eestile hoiakuseks, 09.11.2007.)

“The rebirth of interest in politics amongst Latvians will hopefully give a signal also to the local carriers of the power and businessmen, that sometimes some people can be fooled but you cannot do it all the time and to everyone.”

(Postimees, Tere taas, Lāti koanikuühiskond!, 04.11.2007.)

Interesting is to mention the article by E. Bahovski where author mentions that problems and situation of Latvia is not just case of the particular country but at the same time problem in all three Baltic States. In that way the agenda is not just directed towards Latvia but identification with the situation and the group (Latvia, Latvians) is communicated.

“The speech of Catherine Todd Bailey, the ambassador of USA on Tuesday in Latvian University... is not of course just a message towards Latvia but also to Estonia and Lithuania and maybe even to all Mid- and Eastern Europe.”

(Postimees, Kas ainult Lāti?, 20.10.2007.)

It cannot be denied that the particulate political processes had greatly been the cause of wave of negative information in “Postimees” creating very concentrated and negative image in very short time. At the same time the importance of and close cooperation of both countries economically is stated.

“We cannot without Latvia...Estonians businesses have invested in Latvia very much, in total 36.9% out of foreign investments of Estonia create the market of the southern neighbours.”

(Postimees, Lāti hoiatus, 21.11.2007.)

At the same time the identity of the Baltic States is also communicated. Although author E. Bahovski admits that Finland is much closer to Estonia and Estonians know comparatively little about culture of their Baltic neighbours.

“How much do we know something about Latvian or Lithuanian documentaries, newest literature etc. In one word - all that what we know about Finland.”

(Postimees, Lāti ja Leedu nādala ootuses, 18.12.2007.)

Author also gives partial explanation why Finland has been more appealing and important to Estonia historically. Finland in all times has been the country to look up for. Taking into account the communication of “Diena” when Estonia is mentioned, for instance, as an example to Latvia, it can be assumed that Estonia is taking this particular “looking up for” place for Latvia.

“Of course, diverse history plays its part. We did not have any reason in Soviet times to look up to Latvia or Lithuania the same way as we did to Finland. There was a lack of motivation, although at the same time Estonians often visited Latvia and Lithuania for excursions.”

(Postimees, Lāti ja Leedu nādala ootuses, 18.12.2007.)

At the same time the idea of the Baltic unity has been lost fully and although is becoming less current compared to the early nineties. It can be assumed that Estonians and Latvians associate less and less with each other in developing mutual identity.

“However, events of singing revolution and Baltic way brought together Baltic States more than ever before...Although what is left of that time?...where has the feeling of unity developed?”

(Postimees, Lāti ja Leedu nādala ootuses, 18.12.2007.)

8. Results of the Focus Groups

Stated questions in the pilot focus group the same as later in the focus group held in Estonia and Latvia were generally divided into two parts: firstly about the nation (Estonians and Latvians) and in the second part about the state (Estonia and Latvia). At the same time, of course, both themes overlapped although terms Estonia, Estonians and Latvians, Latvia were not used as synonyms. The main questions for the group were stated so, that people would use different descriptions, tell their experience, believes, things they have heard.

8.1. Focus Group in Estonia

The Focus group held in Estonia was taking place in Tartu and it consisted of 4 participants – two females aged 20 and 22 and two men aged 24 and 25. At the time they all were working or working and studying, being readers of “Postimees” and previously had visited Latvia.

The individual assignment of making a collage and naming the key terms or associations served to uncover the basic associations and first impressions regarding Latvia and Latvians without the influence of other participants.

The keywords which were mentioned are listed below in the Table 7.

Table 7, First associations with words “Latvia” and “Latvians”

Latvia	Latvians
Riga	6 toes – <i>reference to strange</i>
Bad roads	Love fish
There are no islands	We love them – <i>through laughing</i>
Ventspils	They are like uncle's sons – strange but we love them
“Saldējums”	
“Kārums”	You do not choose your relatives

The main associations are mostly linked with each personal experience, specific working area and knowledge about the country. For example, Latvia having worse roads than Estonia or recognizable companies which import to Estonia, such as sweets producer “Laima” and “Kārums” were mentioned.

“Firstly, the picture with two pikes...but in Latvia there is no fish...all Latvians come to Estonia to catch fish. Then, the picture with a car and a landscape...outside Riga all the roads are with holes and uneven...there is “Laima” which also everyone knows.” (Toomas)

As mentioned above then discussion was basically divided into two parts, firstly talking about the nation – Latvians and then the state – Latvia. Although there were moments in the discussion when both terms *country* and *people* overlapped and were used to signify assumptions as such.

Latvians

As interesting often mentioned associations about Latvians as the nation where neighbourly closeness and togetherness.

“...it is not even that they (Latvians) are weird, they simply have 6 toes...Latvians are like sons of an uncle. A bit strange but you still love them as they are the family. And then I was thinking if I should cut out the picture saying “Moka – Moka” because Latvians are strange.”(Peeter)

“I have with Latvians very warm connections, they seem like more own people...” (Suzanna)

The humorous comparisons such as Latvians being the relatives that one cannot choose or Latvians having 6 toes are notable examples of comprehending to Latvians as well as to neighbours.

“That is simply when you have countries around; neighbouring countries then you have to give to these entire countries one classical adjective. Like Americans think that Canadians are slow or Swedes say about Finns the same thing. While we do not use it towards Latvians but about Finns.” (Peeter)

On one hand it is the strangeness and being different while on other hand closeness and seeing both nations as from one Baltic family. The closeness of the nations was noted not primarily as geographical one but more as cultural and historical with collective memories.

“...the temperament of Latvians and Estonians. They fit together much better.” (Suzanna)

“I think that our cultures are basically the same. Our history is the same. Their (Latvian) resurrection is almost the same as in Estonia. Their novels which talk about national resurrection are even better than Estonian ones. But mainly content is the same. Well, I think that culture more depends on the history.” (Peeter)

“I think that with Latvia we have more mutual memories.” (Siiri)

The mutual historical events such as regaining independence in early nineties as well as events of both World Wars are mentioned as crucial time elements in mutual identity building. These time periods were also analysed earlier in the historic overview of the both countries. Even if the age group of the interviewed people had not experienced the events fully themselves it can be seen that idea of Baltic identity had been passed through.

“I have the feeling that for our parents and grandparents the unity thing was the second world war when they all together were oppressed and there was communism. Then today, I mean for our generation it is not so, for us it is more the Baltic Way, together...” (Toomas)

During the discussions the two nations were often described in a comparison and better/worse categories. For example, interesting labelling for Latvians could be named for being envious or lacking something that Estonians have. For example, the topic of having and not having islands was one of the few to come back in the conversations which can be interpreted as a try to set kind of difference between the two. Similar categorisation and comparison is also used in analysed print media communication.

“They want our islands.” (Toomas)

“The only thing that Latvians have better than Estonians are the neighbours.” (Siiri)

“I think in some way that Latvians are behind that we are somehow better.” (Peeter)

The comparisons develop further to the question of national self-awareness and confidence. The “Diena” discourse analysis had brought to light the conclusion that Latvian national self-confidence is comparatively low.

“Estonian is full of oneself. Yes, and we think that we are better than Latvians. Well, I mean...if we are talking about it...that they (Latvians) do not have islands and so on.” (Peeter)

“I have grown up in such times with all the singing festivals and things... I value that I am Estonian. But not in the sense that I think Latvians think less of themselves as Latvians, taking into consideration all the scandals that there are.” (Suzanna)

“I have the feeling that if Estonians are trying to become Finns then Latvians are trying to become Estonians.” (Toomas)

The focus group discussion showed that the idea of self-awareness is not so much seen as one being more proud and other less. The way of being proud can be more interpreted as confidence of state achievements which further builds up the awareness of the nation through realisation of social reality. It can be confirmed that Estonian group participants strongly identify with the state (Estonia) and its recent events and developments.

As noted in the discourse analysis then integration of the Russian speaking minority in Latvia and Estonia is seen as mutual and shared agenda. If in the observed press the issue is discussed as more or less successful integration programme implementation or political relations with Russia then within the focus group discussion it is predominantly looked more as an everyday communication.

“I think what is better or rather useful is that in Latvia there are so many Russians. And that Latvians can speak Russian. We have many Russians and my generations, well I cannot speak Russian. And so it is difficult to understand them. Of course I give a credit to the fact that we have less Russians. But maybe in Latvia it is better to communicate, at least you can communicate with these people, because you can speak Russian.” (Suzanna)

“... if you have such society then it is easier for you to learn Russian than to us. As, for example, I come from a small town in Estonia and we had a Russian school but we never communicated with any Russians. And now my Russian is as it is.” (Toomas)

“But in that sense Latvia is the most Russian like, when in the nineties Russia tried to provoke then they always went after Latvia, always talked that in Latvia Russians are discriminated...as they feel that it is the way to solve it as there are so many Russians.” (Peeter)

Latvia

Associations with Latvia as the state revealed groups' orientation and knowledge about the country (different Latvian products, cities of Latvia – Riga, Ventspils) although not too wide. The knowledge of the more recent events taking place in Latvia can be seen, for example, participant picking out a picture of “Parex Bank” which has been discussed widely in media due to economic regression in Latvia. Probably without the awareness of latest economic developments in Latvia it would not have been noticed.

The very typical and well known associations and differences of the Latvian language were mentioned. The further showed language connotation and association should be noted also for it's historic background. As “saldejums” (ice cream in Latvian) is one of the words which almost any adult Estonian knows, mainly linking it to the time of Soviet Union, making a trip to Riga and having an ice cream.

“And what else comes into my mind regarding Riga is...we went to McDonald and bought a “saldejums”.” (Suzanna)

“I also wanted to find an ice-cream picture but I did not find one.” (Peeter)

“Here is a letter “S” in the end that is important...as every word ends with “S”” (Toomas)

As one of the ground national stereotype elements is the difference of the culture, for example, language which is represented in above examples.

Similarly as later nations are looked in a competitive and comparative frame it is explicit when talked about both countries - Estonia and Latvia.

“I have the feeling that we want to be the first out of the Baltic States. That we want to stress when Baltic States gained the independence from the Soviet Union...that it is based in that Estonia started doing something...we are trying to justify and bring forward the role of Estonia. That Estonia is the first. When we talk...that Estonian military went to help Latvians.” (Peeter)

Very crucial shift regarding past/future and better/worse as well as development of the states can be mentioned talking about both countries in the terms of Baltic and Nordic identity/country.

“On one hand we are close to the Nordic countries but at the same time we are one of the Baltic States. And the thing that many consider us a Nordic State means that partly we are. But I do not know...we are still Baltic States.” (Toomas)

“About Finland we say more that we want to become Finland as we want to be exactly the same good as them....but there is not the unity feeling.” (Siiri)

“Regarding the Nordic States it is true that Estonia is trying to get there. But the social system of Sweden or allowances and education system are so different then in Estonia. So in reality we are

not Scandinavian...we strive that. But for example many foreigners do not know what Estonia is but they know what Baltic States are. “(Suzanna)

Both in media as well as in everyday communication Estonia has been portrayed and striving to gain the image of Nordic state. This was illustrated also in the results of the content analysis when the second most used term to describe Estonia was Northern neighbour (10 articles). Also in the answers of the focus group participants the idea is being reflected very vividly. If Baltic identity of Latvia and Estonia is seen as somewhat historic unity base then being Nordic is the goal to reach of political and economic welfare.

“If we talk that Latvia and Lithuania are Baltic States then we are almost Nordic State...we are in the same level. They have stayed as Baltic States, we started all together but we have already gone to the Nordic States.” (Peeter)

“Maybe that we are not Nordic country but we are more on the way there.” (Suzanna)

In this category Estonia is definitely seen as ahead of Latvia. Although another aspect is brought forward that the so called geographical categorisation of Baltic and Nordic is often used according to the situation and cannot be always seen as one – sided.

“I think that Nordic States see us as such only when it is suitable for them...yes, the surrounds of Tallinn and so on is more as part of Nordic States...well, and when it does not suit them we are part of Baltic States. So in the end we are like no fish no meat. It depends on what is comfortable at that time. But we are more united with Baltic's. I think it is as we are not still at the level with other Nordic States then we are now still in Baltic's.” (Siiri)

“But we do not have a problem with it if we are called Baltic State.” (Peeter)

In the context, once again, it can be seen that being Baltic greatly is seen with more emotional and historical unity connotation while the term Nordic state has context of strive to economic development and general social welfare system.

The participants of the Estonian focus group also affirmed the negative portrayal of Latvia in Estonian media which firstly was previously concluded in the content analysis of “Postimees”. At the same time the communication of individuals about Latvia and Latvians cannot be categorised or

seen as negative. It is rather neutral or rather positive as it is based not just in information gained from media but also due to personal experience.

“Mostly there is just negative news...But I think that positive news regarding Latvia are very seldom. Only when there was the Independence Day celebration then it was more positive. To compare with Finland...we get news about Finland the same. But about Finland there come also news that talk about positive things. About Latvia there are none. ” (Peeter)

“About the economic crisis and then now about the riots.” (Siiri)

Meanwhile it is not underestimated that each Baltic state has its own stand point and positioning the same as economic development pace.

“I think there was a time when there was a trend to consider Estonia the new economic force, the new Argentina.” (Peeter)

“We watched the introductory films about Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. And there was really a difference, for example, about Lithuania they showed churches and old believers, very religious people, when about Latvian – building houses, like the industrial Riga and then about Estonia it was E-government. So there is a difference, at least in the introductory films how they are positioned.” (Suzanna)

8.2 Focus Group in Latvia

The Focus group held in Latvia was taking place in Riga and it consisted of 6 participants – two females aged 27 and 30 and four men aged between 22 and 30.

Overall in the style of the discussion form using the comparison between the two states and nations is mainly dominating. Compared to Estonians group in the discussion taking place in Latvia almost in all topics the question is turned into comparison and categorisation form. In that way, more vividly highlighting the differences and attitudes towards the other group, talking about Estonians as one homogeneous group with certain characteristics. This is one of the main forms how individuals tend to create and cultivate stereotypes about the other group.

Starting the research of the agenda one of the hypotheses which was put forward was that stereotypes Latvians hold against Estonians and Estonia are stronger and more distinct than vice

versa. Already in the first assignment of the individual work of – looking at the stated impressions that associate with words Estonians and Estonia most of the participants come up with very similar and repetitive terms greatly uniting and supplementing each other.

“..IT sphere that is why a picture of computer...enterprises, business...some are succesful some are not, but that is that. And little bit with the ferries.” (Sabine)

“...manufacturing and also business what already was mentioned by Sabine...I guess they have it more developed in general.” (Gunita)

“Well, I have two pictures and maybe something has been mentioned already before. One is the ferries...what Estonians do associate to us with. They have outspaced us.” (Matiss)

All the key words (both the ones from the individual association assignment and listed during the discussions) are stated below in the Table 8.

Table 8, First associations with words “Estonia” and “Estonians”

Estonia	Estonians
Successful business/manufacturing More developed social and medical system Ferry traffic IT sphere SPA's Islands Munamāgi Narva – lot's of Russian speaking Tartu University Memories from Soviet Union times “Vana Tallinn” Biathlon Kama “Hansabank” Management State gives more safety feeling Northern country (close to Finland) More successful than Latvia	Blond, light hair Uncommunicative Slow (to make the first contact) Rational Farsighted Strategic Patriotic Cautious Determined Sexy Eesti poiss Better (than Latvians), more constructive in forming relationships More Scandinavian

Both the repeating of the characteristics and mentioning them in a convincing way can be assumed as factor showing that assumptions towards Estonians and Estonia are more explicit than vice versa.

Estonians

I would like to mention that although the discussion was mainly divided into two parts, firstly talking about Estonians the nation and then about Estonia – the state, participants of the group often used both terms as synonyms while at other times distinguishing the two. It leads to think that the stereotypes towards the state and the nation were more or less overlapping, leaving out only few aspects which would be attributed to Estonians as the nation only.

For example, giving description to Estonians the physical looks were mentioned – looking more Scandinavian. This is another trait of national stereotype. If in Estonian focus group mainly the differences between the languages was noted then in Latvian group also the appearance is specified. It can be assumed that the Estonians from Latvian point of view are seen as more different culture group, connecting with the idea that Estonians are more Nordic and Scandinavian.

“Estonians...associate with...I have...blonde hair, light hair...” (Sabine)

“The second picture...it is a man, maybe the way he is dressed is more scandinavian than Latvian...something to do with skiing and maybe the hair are more light, more scandinavian.”

(Matiss)

All of the participants admit that there is one main stereotype about Estonians – being slow. Although, at the same time, most of the people in the group admit that it can be seen more as a generalised illustration rather than direct personal experiences.

“The most typical about Estonians, at least in the anecdotes it is that Estonians are slow. But I am convinced that you can not say it about all of them.” (Sabine)

Further the characterization is broken down, which helps to understand more where the stereotype of being slow could come from and how it is rather understood. Such personal experiences as making the first contact are mentioned.

“Maybe they are slow regarding the first contact. Because I have had an experience that at the moment when you have made a contact they are actually very open and helpful.” (Gunita)

“Yes, exactly..that there is the seculsion at first. It is maybe not even seculsion but rather opening up to have a communication.” (Ralfs)

“Well, slower could be as unhurried, colder and a bit more rational.” (Didzis)

The discussion between the participants shows that the impression that is very widely cultivated and used in daily communication and jokes about Estonians - being slow, for example, could be rooted in the specifics of the first contact which is mostly experienced personally but later being generalized and highlighted as more of a negative aspect of the group.

Association of Estonians being slow as inadequate, which is the form how it is used usually in jokes, is mentioned vaguely by few participants describing their first associations.

“... a picture of a man falling out of the ski lift. I guess Estonians could do that. This picture associates to me that this person could be Estonian. Well, it is like...he is a normal person but he could do something non-ordinary and clumsy.” (Kristis)

“...there is small, gray; confused animated character....what I found in this picture common with Estonia is the face expression...” (Didzis)

Also totally different dimension of the characteristic - rational and cautious is put forward widening the main stereotype – slow.

“I have had to do business with one Estonian customer and I could say that he was...what was mentioned rationality and also more cautious. That all the decisions...when they make a decision then they stick to it.” (Matiss)

The quality – rationality, being farsighted and goal - orientated is mentioned also when Estonian economic success is discussed further on. So in a way, it makes one think that previously mentioned slowness that is the most used characteristic for Estonians in Latvia is in a way tied to slow but clear goal-orientation, rationality and strategic approach which further assures success.

“I think about farsighted...that they are thinking more strategically, to supplement the term of farsighted.” (Gunita)

“They are disposed and also determined. Many who I have met if they have a goal, if they do something then they are totally in it, but that is as much as I have had any connection...I think business is bound with rationality, prudentials and being farsighted.” (Sabine)

“With money I think they are rational, know how to use it.” (Ralfs)

“Probably one of the signals is that differently from us they do not have such a budget deficite which means that they have approached it more rationally and strategically.” (Gunita)

Another aspect which is mentioned characterizing Estonians is being patriotic and with high self-confidence. The topic was briefly touched upon also in the media content analysis where comparatively low self-esteem of Latvians compared to Estonians was noted.

“Yes, and also Estonians more evaluate and stick to their national identity. They are more patriotic than we are.” (Didzis)

“I think, if we talk about being patriotic then Estonians had it from the beginning of time...already in the Soviet times. When Russians or Russian speakers came to Latvia and went to the meat shop then Latvians were talking Russian. But going to Estonia to buy sausage...if you talk Russian...well, talk in Russian. I think, they wanted to maintain the language more.” (Gunita)

“...they know that they are step ahead to us.” (Krists)

“We lack the justification, that we are so good because...our self-assurance is high but we cannot justify with anything, like, yeah, we have Riga...but neither I built it nor you did. As they have already achieved something themselves in last 15 years.” (Ralfs)

The self-assurance is seen high not just in comparison but rather as justified, which is based in economic and social success as well as historical development. Estonia has economically, politically and socially developed further than Latvia and Estonians have reason to be proud about it. If state is considered as social space or united community with common values then it can be assumed that national self-assurance and auto-stereotype is greatly dependent on it. This reflects in the answers of few participants singling out in comparison to Estonia lack of feeling taken care of by the state. It shows that individuals become more distant from the state as a common community and have vaguer sense of social identity which is connected with social space – the state.

“...the last picture of hat with slogan “feeling of safety”... because in reality they have...I guess that state gives them more safety feeling than we do.” (Gunita)

“In one picture there are two smiling children because, I do not know why, in Estonia they try to think not just about the ones who are 20 or 30 years old that they are OK but also try to think about children more.” (Didzis)

Historic events, such as 2nd World War and Soviet Occupation or close economic relations of Estonia and Finland in early 90ties are often mentioned as reason of both nations and states (Latvia and Estonia) being in different positions.

“I would like to say that firstly I think we have historical differences. History of Estonia is different from Latvian one. I am not such a big expert on deportations but I think Latvia was cleansed a bit more than Estonia. And Latvian is scared, if we just take how Latvians were killed after the Second World War, of course, it is being inherited to the next generations. And also historical traditions. I think that Latvians are more individual they will defend themselves more, while Estonians are more

family orientated...they have a bit different traditions, I think. The feeling of unity I think there is bigger. But mostly I think it is historically based.” (Gunita)

“I defiantly think that the help from Finland was critical for state health so that there would not be two wealthy men starting their business in the level of the state. So that they had the assistance at once after the changes. I think it greatly influenced both, their moral health...as I think you do require assistance to stand up. We were left more on our own, so we tried to get out of our crazy experience on our own. It was good not just because they got financial investments but also Finland was as a healthy example and the cooperation helped them to find it as a healthy model. Leaving such a traumatic period it is difficult suddenly, just to take some Latvians from outside...everyone had had such a bad experience that no one knew what and how to do. So I think for Estonia it was the most crucial moment that Estonia had the big brother who adopted them.” (Sabine)

At some point the self-assurance is also seen as arrogance in the attitude towards Latvians, although once again the comparison and categorization of better/worse between the two is used.

“I think they look at us...well...they do not take us seriously. As...What those Latvians...have made up something again...farmers...something like that. I have such impression as: “we (Estonians) were listening the news and your parliament...and corruption...what is that?” It is exactly opposite to the rationality, prudentials and I guess they very well know that they are like that. When you have a chance to talk to them...you cannot understand fully.” (Ralfs)

“I think there is a bit view from above...yes...like, where did you run, running after the example of Europe. We rather calmly think and try to understand what fits Estonia not just grasp as Latvians and Lithuanians do.” (Didzis)

Estonia

Associations with Estonia as the state greatly revealed not only groups' first impressions (mainly as progressive, orientated to new technologies, IT, successful, business orientated, developed social system) but at the same time orientation and knowledge about the country (different Estonian products, companies, places). All of the participants had also often visited Estonia for work or leisure purposes. Participants were also here using the comparison mentioning both similarities as well as differences stressing Estonia being step ahead, for example, tackling the social or economic issues or environmental agenda. As mentioned earlier the success of Estonia in such areas as economy or sports is mainly explained as clear, goal-orientated and strategic thinking – as a characteristic of the nation.

“I think we have similar problems in social and economic spheres and the solutions which we are looking for. Although, when I talk about the philanthropy programs Estonia is usually one or two years ahead. But at the same time the problems are similar which we are tackling.” (Sabine)

“It is also connected with rationality. For example, the biathlon they had it also before but it has raised into world level only in recent years...they concentrate just on skiing and do everything to have it in high level.” (Ralfs)

As uniting element of Baltic identity was not singled out as most significant element, only when the participants were specifically asked about Baltic Unity and also as an elements playing role mainly in specific moments, such as, traveling or as identification for foreigners who have less knowledge about the region.

“Yes, also that but when I am traveling then if there is someone from Baltic States it is more conjunctive.” (Matiss)

“Yes, people do not know Latvia, Lithuania separately, if you say Baltic States, then they know. While you are in Latvia, Lithuania or Estonia the differences among the Baltic States are more explicit. As soon as you are outside these countries, then Baltic States are as common element. But while I am in Latvia I do not feel the Baltic unity, I rather feel Estonia being the Northern country, the cold, economically developed, stable state while Latvia and Lithuania unsuccessful European countries.” (Didzis)

The unity of Baltic States is not apparent within the discussion group which, for example, in Estonian group was mentioned more often.

The differences and competing between the countries is rather explicit. Similar to Estonian group the sense of family and unity between Estonia and Latvia was also mentioned.

“I think also historical Baltic States have never had any real cooperation.” (Matiss)

“But if you think of it, all three of us do not have anything in common just the fact that we were beaten by Russians.” (Ralfs)

“The cultures are totally different and also the sense of values is different.” (Didzis)

Within the context of three Baltic States, Estonia being Nordic is mentioned mostly as example setting for development and rather image of prestige and lifting of national self-confidence than national difference as such. Although in a way it contradicts to previous statements when appearance of Estonians was pointed out.

“I think Estonians want to be more Nordic country as it is more prestige if you say that you are a Nordic State or Scandinavia, together with more developed countries such as Sweden and Finland. I think it just lifts the self-confidence of Estonians. As what is Baltic's – Baltic's are just a stepchild left by Russia.” (Kriists)

On other hand one of the participants of the discussion sees the Nordic identity rather as determined political course and strategy, which is featuring the characteristics of Estonians as nation which in a way overlaps the opinions given in Estonian focus group discussion about the same topic. Nordic or Scandinavian way is the economic, political and social system to strive for.

“But that is the thing that they took it as a strategy starting from the nineties, to be similar to the Nordic States and they are consequently following the root.” (Ralfs)

At the same time I would like to take into account also the first impressions that participants were mentioning regarding Estonia and Estonians. Several participants put forward the following associations, that Estonia is cold, more to North, and Estonians – more Scandinavian, which once again leads to an assumption that Estonians as well as Estonia are seen more as Nordic.

Meanwhile although no explicit close cultural connection to the third Baltic country – Lithuania is mentioned a distinction between social and business relations amongst Latvians and Lithuanians and Latvians vs. Estonians is made. Although not very explicit, but Lithuanians are described as culturally closer to Latvians while Estonians – more as better business partners.

“I think we can separate the business relations and informal ones. As I think informal relations are better with Lithuanians – it is more fun and so but work relations – really productive ones have been mostly with Estonians.” (Sabine)

9. Discussion and Conclusions

The conducted research has provided not only features of stereotypes in Latvia and Estonia about each other but also the emotional connotations and significance of historic traits to it. The study of historic periods, starting 18th century with self-realisation of Latvian and Estonian nations through Occupations up to economic and political re-independence and democracy in early nineties has marked various dimensions of mutual relations of identification between the two countries and nations.

Along the years due to historic events Latvia (Latvians) and Estonia (Estonians) have developed several social identities, which help the individuals as well as group (the nation) in general to belong and to relate to groups (other nations) around them. The social identities for Estonians and Latvians can be divided as independent national identities as well as shared ones such as Baltic States, Baltic Nations and Baltic Region. The unity of Baltic States was formed mostly in the time period of early nineties along with singing revolution and restoration of the independence. Today Baltic States mostly cooperate in economic and political space within the region of European Union. At the same time, the early and quick political and economic reforms of Estonia helped to fashion an independent identity for itself – the Nordic State which is still apparent both in the communication about Estonia (Estonians), as self-representation as well as political and economic course.

These two identities have been dominating in the communication regarding both countries in the media as well in individual attitude. The mentioned social identities can be seen as the background setters for further attitudes and formed stereotypes.

The analysis showed that the main keywords used towards both states and nations are *neighbour/neighbouring country* and *Southern neighbours/Northern neighbour*. Of course the keywords are connected with geographical situation at the same time, for example, in the focus groups the word *neighbour* was tied with words: *family*, *closeness* and *similarity*, all having rather positive connotations. Used determinative “northern” and “southern” can be interpreted as reference to being different, more distant and to different social identifications of the two nations. In “Postimees” communication used terms towards Latvia such as *cooperation* and *good relations* underline the importance and existence of Baltic unity, Baltic identity and economic and political cooperation within Baltic region.

After the media analysis and focus group discussions it appeared that the unity of Baltic region and the Baltic identity is communicated but it can be assumed that Latvians and Estonians associate less and less with each other in mutual – Baltic identity.

The understanding of these two social identity dimensions was touched upon in focus groups. The united Baltic identity mainly was seen as historically emotional events and identification for rest of the world. One of such historical remnants can be mentioned the shared issue and relations with common neighbour Russia.

The Estonian group expressed more significance to describing Latvia and Estonia as a family (Latvia being the weird brother in law, you cannot choose your relatives). In Latvian focus group Estonia was greatly seen as a Nordic State (slightly also Estonians as nation – more Scandinavian). Nordic State in both groups definitely is understood as reaching the level of Scandinavian state welfare. In such context Estonia was seen as more developed. It can be concluded that Nordic identity of Estonia and Estonians is one of the reasons why Latvian media and interviewed individuals see Estonia as more different, more developed, delivering more distinct viewpoints towards it. At the same time commonly shared Baltic identity serves as a source of strong comparison.

According to Tajfel & Turner (1979) social identities are formed and cultivated by categorising, identifying and comparing one group with another in that way creating a social space and understanding. It is a process in which an individual uses material and symbolic resources (such as language) creating a relation to the world around (Masso, 2008).

The form of the articles in both analysed newspapers mostly deals with comparison of both countries and nations, similarly as in the focus group discussions. Usually there is pointing out the cons and pros of certain topic in connection of political, economic and cultural or sports events. It shows that often used comparison in media cultivates the tendency of comparing one group with the other, which further can be seen also in the individual opinion, for example, in “Diena” often appraisal of Estonia is used in comparison to Latvia: *more successful/ahead of Latvia, example to Latvia*. The positive reference to Estonia is made not just in Baltic but also in more global sense being featured as *growth in economy and living standards, has proven itself and the first/the pioneer*. Similar keywords in focus group held in Latvia were mentioned about Estonia as the state – *successful business, developed in IT sphere, good ferry traffic*.

On other hand the representation of Latvia in “Postimees” is greatly shown as something Estonia itself in general is not or does not want to be associated with, the bad example to be aware of or not to follow its steps. Identification of the situation can be noted, for example, referring to the local politicians or as an appeal or possibility to learn from the bad experience of the neighbours. In the context of the newspaper analysis it is important to take into consideration the specifics of the current events taking place in the analysed years. For example, in year 2007 in Latvia there were several economic and political events with more negative aspect.

Any kind of categorisation and comparison comes along with emotional evaluations. Latvia in “Postimees” is mostly represented as neutral which links with sections which were most dominant - foreign and business news. Those usually represent information in more neutral manner than, for example, opinion pieces. The next biggest group of articles are with negative emotional load.

Overall Estonia (and Estonians) is represented positively in analysed articles, for example, as having convincing foreign policy, or being pioneer in technology. This leads to a conclusion that greatly the way of Estonia representing itself is reproduced also in Latvian printed media.

At the same time it can be seen that there is comparatively low evaluation of own group (Latvians) or so called auto – stereotype. The stereotypes towards others are greatly linked to consideration of one’s own group and relation to the social space one belongs to. If the basis of forming the stereotype is repeating the same patterns such as favouring my group to the other, highlighting the diversity of my group vs. the other, highlighting the good examples of my group to the bad ones of the other or attributing the failures of my group to the particular situations while the failures of the other group to their abilities, then Latvian focus group (similarly to media analysis) showed that the process towards Estonia is built the opposite. Estonia and Estonians as a group are being favoured to their own. This can be explained as comparatively low auto-stereotype or self-assurance of Latvians comparatively to Estonians which in this case is greatly linked to the success of the state. B. Anderson proved that national identity is based in the language, communicated values and ideas in that way creating an imagined and united community. The reason of less apparent association with the social space – the state – in Latvia can be based in the low self-assurance provided by media. Based on which society further is assessing and relating or comparing itself with another (neighbouring) nation. Due to this in the focus group Estonians were evaluated also as *more arrogant* and *proud* as well as very much *aware of their success* and of what the nation is. The success of the state was seen as the justification for the nation to be proud of what it is. Meaning that Latvians have less positive connection with Latvia as their social reality which is tied with political and economic events of the state. This greatly confirms previously put forward hypotheses that Estonia is represented (stereotyped) as successful, goal-oriented (mainly based on economic development of the state).

Language and its symbolic meanings are one of the major aspects in creating social reality, mutual relations and connotations (Bordieu, 1991). In that manner expressing evaluations, giving characteristics and using language symbols the possible stereotypes are created and cultivated. As mentioned before then in media analysis Estonia (the state) is represented in positive light, usually in comparison to Latvia. Summing up the **terms used for Estonians (as nation)** there are following connotations: *determined*, *skilful*, *proud*, *more critical* although there are also terms

which can be categorized as non-defined. For example, the term *hot* or *hot – blooded* which is used in reference to Estonians. This can be categorized as a connotation with strong symbolic and apparent double meaning and which is often used in everyday communication in Latvia sarcastically characterizing Estonians as Northern nation.

Summarizing the focus group taking place in Latvia about Estonians and Estonia it was concluded that stereotypes towards Estonia as a state are positive, as expected, mainly connected with economic and political developments as well taking into account the personal experience. The first and most general association towards Estonians in focus group was describing the nation as *slow*. The discussion further reviled possible explanations where the basic association could come from. Participants mention slowness in different dimensions, for example, *being uncommunicative* (at first contact), *colder*, *unhurried*. Although being slow was the dominant perception about Estonians at the same time success of Estonia and being more developed was often mixed with Estonians as nation characteristic. For example, the characteristic connected with economic development was mentioned: *goal-orientated*, *rational*, and *farsighted*. This aspect was seen as Estonians (and Estonia) *slowly but surely reaching the set target, not getting off the set way*. It cannot be said that association with nation was strictly negative and state positive or vice versa. Rather state has left very positive impression because of economic development and upswing of different industries. These explanatory words greatly complied with the given description and found keywords in media.

In comparison to the pilot focus group carried out in Latvia, year 2005, it can be noted and assumed that according to social, economic and political event background the dimension or explanation of stereotype can shift and change. If stereotype of the *slow* and *weird* Estonians in focus group conducted in 2005 was more seen as what is believed in society in general. Then in 2008 the slowness was evidently seen as *strategic*, *goal-orientated* and *reaching the target*. The same connotation was also apparent in pilot focus group, although it did not dominate. The slow Estonians were more separated from the successful Estonia. This serves as evidence that the social, economic and political developments serve in shifting and providing justification of certain stereotype.

Keywords about Latvians in “Postimees” that could be singled are: *more difficult to cooperate/communicate* (compared to Finns), *impatient*, *disrespectful* (towards opposing opinions), mainly indicating cultural differences.

Looking at the individual level in focus group taking place in Estonia there were no specific stereotyped terms or words used about Latvians and Latvia. Rather all the mentioned features were more neutral. Although if in media analysis emotional evaluation towards Latvia (Latvians) was categorised as neutral/rather negative then focus group representatives gave more neutral/rather positive connotations. Here the difference between media generalised image and personal

experience can be noted. Also Berger and Luckmann (1971) as the most important relation within society see the face – to – face experience. At the same time not only individual experience plays a role, but as well the knowledge that one takes over from others or share between groups (Masso, 2008). In this way media is setting the general agenda while personal or face – to – face experience strengthens or weakens the belief in the individual level.

The main conclusions of the paper are based on four core research questions:

1. What are the stereotypes of Estonians and Estonia in the print media and amongst individuals in Latvia?

- The most distinct stereotype or characterisation during the research was revealed towards Estonians which mainly was singled out in the focus group. As assumed in the put forward hypothesis Estonians were characterised with one term *slow*. At the same time dimensions of the stereotyped characteristic were described following: *reserved at the first contact, introvert, cold, unhurried*. The assumption of negative connotation as *being weird* which was put forward was touched upon vaguely although it did appear in focus group discussion.
- Additionally Estonians were described as *goal – orientated, rational and far sighted* both in media analysis and focus group. In some way this also connects with the previously put forward stereotype of being *slow*. Meaning, that Estonians reach their goal slowly but surely. This characteristic, as assumed, covered both nation- Estonians and state - Estonia, mainly referring to the economic development of Estonia in comparison to Latvia.
- Overall attitude towards Estonians and Estonia can be evaluated as positive both in media analysis and focus group discussion. Estonia is looked upon as step ahead and an example to Latvia mainly thanks to the economic development and consequent attitudes and actions delivered by state politics. This lead to the assumption of self-assurance of both nations. Estonians are seen as proud and having a reason to be, thanks to the achievements of the state.

2. What are the stereotypes of Latvians and Latvia in the print media and amongst individuals in Estonia?

- As assumed stereotypes that are held towards Latvians in Estonia are less distinct. There is no one specific characteristic which would have been applied towards Latvians according to discussion group and media analysis, as expected.

- Latvians were mostly seen as neighbours and *part of the Baltic family* (which you cannot choose). On one hand it can be interpreted as positive connotation while on other hand it brings along its negative aspects. The feeling of closeness and family is mainly connected with the Baltic historic heritage and Baltic identity which was especially explicit in early 90ties.
- Latvia mostly is communicated as geographically *neighbour country*. The image of Latvia as a state can be described as neutral/rather negative. More negatively it is reflected in the media analysis taking into account the political and economic events of the time while focus group results reveal more neutral to rather positive attitude mainly based on personal experience.

3. Is there a difference of intensity between the stereotypes that one holds regarding the other, and if so, why?

- As assumed stereotypes that Latvians hold against Estonians and Estonia are stronger and more distinct than vice versa. It can be assumed that the intensity of stereotyping is based in common welfare and solidarity to social reality and shared common space. As result of comparison with neighbouring country dimensions of stereotype are brought to light depending on certain political and economic situation.
- Results of carried out analyses bring forward the conclusion that the nation which is looking up to the other state produces more intense stereotypes. The group feeling less assure of oneself, based on the shared community created by the state, in comparison to the other group, projects more intense stereotypes towards the other group. In this case Latvians hold more intense stereotypes towards Estonians and Estonia.

4. Is the change of social, political and economic environment also reflected as a shift of the stereotypes?

- Main factors' shaping the stereotypes is social attitude and believes as well as representations given by media. Such social perceptions create background or tone how certain agenda is being discussed in general. On other hand, people's personal and social contact with other nation and experience with state strengthens or weakens these believes.
- There can be made a distinction between "what people are talking about" and "what I have experienced". At the same time these two perceptions can exist side by side when people reveal their attitudes.

- The stereotypes mainly develop from the areas of cooperation between members of both countries. Bits of experienced information are generated over in social communication where it becomes generalized, singling out the most common and uniting characteristics.
- According to the changes in social, political and economic environment also the main stereotypes are being adapted or justified. Slow Estonians are not just seen as introvert Northern neighbours but rather with a goal orientated and strategic slowness which justifies their progress.

Summary

In my master studies I have tried to establish the main stereotypes of Latvia and Latvians in Estonian print media and amongst the individuals and vice versa – the stereotypes of Estonia and Estonians in Latvian print media and amongst the individuals. I have researched both the stereotypes of the state as well as the nation, to draw the certain distinctions and even contradictions in both.

Starting the research it was clear that the reflected information and formed stereotypes of both countries and nations should be comparatively extensive considering geographical position, close historical development, and economic, political and cultural cooperation between both countries at all times. To do so I have followed the main five research steps:

- 1) defining the main terms such as social stereotype, social identity and social space, including the international space and its' construction. Meanwhile researching the literature about the process of stereotype shaping;
- 2) studying the historical developments of both states, emphasizing the time periods significant to formation of state and national identity as well as mutual cooperation;
- 3) reviewing the transition of the print media in both countries, taking into consideration the role of the media in creating the social reality as well as the symbolic power of the used language;
- 4) conducting content and discourse analyses within the biggest printed daily newspapers “Postimees” in Estonia and “Diena” in Latvia in years 2003 and 2007, leaving a 3 year gap to monitor any changes in the coverage intensity and style, taking into account such an important event as both countries joining the EU in 2004;
- 5) organizing focus group discussions in Estonia and Latvia to form an image of stereotypes and assumptions living amongst the individuals of both countries.

The basic definition of stereotype shaping is that everyday field of information is so large and wide while human cognitive process is limited. That is why so called “simplified pictures” help to narrow down the world and information in it. The information is being generalized, often leaving out the details and exceptions (Lippmann, 1922). It was apparent when, for example, Latvians label Estonians as *slow* but questioned more about it in the focus group discussions dimensions of term *slow* were widened, revealing different possible reasons how all the experiences are grouped under one stereotype.

Stereotypes can also be grouped as hetero- (stereotypes of another group) and auto- (stereotypes of one's group) (Šulmane, Kruks, 2001). These two groups of stereotypes were taken into consideration further in the work as the stereotype of one's own groups greatly influences the stereotype which is formed about the other group. Creating stereotypes about ones' own nations the context of state and its achievements are taken into consideration. It made me realise that less political, cultural and economic achievements by the state the less self – confidence of being part of the group in this case the nation. It further leads to comparisons with neighbouring nations and states bringing out the elements lacking in their own group. There are authors (Katz and Barley: 1933) who view stereotypes as mostly incorrect and contradicting the reality. At some point it could be agreed upon based on above mentioned example, that one stereotype can have many dimensions, giving more rational explanation how people label and understand the certain stereotype.

Stereotypes are adapted in two general ways: one's own experience and through other people or sources. According to Tajfel & Turner (1986) the substance of stereotypes is not too multi-formed and keeps repeating the same patterns such as favouring my group to the other, highlighting the diversity of my group vs. the other, highlighting the good examples of my group to the bad ones of the other or attributing the failures of my group to the particular situations while the failures of the other group to their abilities.

Doing the media analysis as well as the group discussions, it was noticed that the mentioned patterns were used both in printed media as well as conversations of the group participants when talking about the other country or nation. At the same time, it was noticed that the mentioned ways of polarization of my group vs. other group can counter change according to auto- stereotype or perception of one owns group and ones' social identity or belonging to a group.

For people to develop a social identity and see themselves as a part of a group they also need to categorise, identify and compare one group with another (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

To understand the history of creating the social reality and to provide more explicit explanation of mutual perception, economic, political and cultural developments and cooperation of Estonia and Latvia following time periods of history were studied:

- 1) **Formation of Latvian and Estonian Nation State** (18th – beginning of 20th century) – this period of time is significant with industrial development which included printing development and spreading literacy and printed communication between Baltic people, rose new nation awareness, self realisation and later states. These are essential elements to make people feel the unity and relate to each other, developing the national identity and communicating essential information such as common values and perceptions.
- 2) **Nation State** (1918 – 1940) - the period of independent statehood formed an important part of national mythology in the Baltic countries. Along with gaining the independence and

country, nation strengthened their national identity and importance, equality with other nations.

- 3) **Period of Occupations** (1940 – 1987) – during the Soviet occupation there was a forming and enforcement of new kind of identity. The Soviet Union was constructed around a dual identity: on the one hand ethnic/national identities; on the other, Soviet identity as the foundation of the new society (Castells,1997). This was the most traumatic period of time for the Baltic national identity which consequences can be followed later in the post-communism transition period. At the same time it should be mentioned that the closeness between the Baltic countries rooting in the events of establishing their national identity and relating to each other through common history is still present.
- 4) **Regaining the Independence** (1988 – 1991) – in some way events of the regaining the independence for Latvia and Estonia can be put as parallels to the performance of the enlightened nationalists back in the early 19th century, mainly cultivating the national pride, history, values and cultural treasures of the nation. This can be seen as the moment when the Baltic identity has played one of its most important roles in bringing together the Latvian and Estonian nations and it is still present in peoples' attitudes towards each other's nations.
- 5) **Post - communism Transition** (1991 – 2003) - after regaining the independence Estonia and Latvia were on the pace of finding the most effective way how to rebuild the new democratic states. At the same time it can be mentioned that the Baltic identity became less united both countries starting to develop their own states as well as competing to be attractive investment market within Baltic region. This was also the time when Estonia started to position itself as a Nordic State building a close, cultural (Finno-Ugric), economic as well as political relations with Finland and Sweden claiming that so called Baltic identity was more of a leftover from the Soviet Union and is just a geographical place.
- 6) **Membership in the EU and NATO** (starting 2004) – along with the independence came the vision of the Western world and European Union. Both countries set mutual political priorities working towards joining the EU and NATO on 2004. On one hand the privileged position of Estonia in the negotiations with the EU caused certain tension between Baltic countries and weakened the spirit of cooperation while, on other hand the cooperation between Estonia and Latvia along the years has only become more strong, being both political partners within the region as well as major economic investors in both countries.

As media, language and society can be grouped as three main social reality and communication creators, it was important to study the printed media transition and its role in creating the social attitudes. The media in early nineties at the time of regaining the independence played an important

part in creating the social opinion. The same as society also the media market went through its transitional phases finding its place and role in democratic society. Media more or less in indirect way forms perceptions of groups and cultures to which we, ourselves might not belong (Mcquail, 1994). It is done by using certain words and meanings with language or, for example, often using comparisons.

In media research content (total number of “Postimees” articles - 268, “Diena” articles – 318) and discourse (total number of “Postimees” articles – 10, “Diena” articles – 12) analysis were conducted of newspapers “Diena” and “Postimees” articles of years 2003 and 2007. The current newspapers were analysed based on both being the leading daily newspapers in Latvia and Estonia with almost identical newspaper structure, readership profile and amount. The specific years were chosen to monitor any change in intensity, style and topics between the both years, taking into account such significant events as both countries joining the EU in 2004. Also the year 2003 can be considered as the time when printed media in Baltic's had strengthen its role, market and overcome the transition period.

The content and discourse analysis have served to define the most used keywords and expressions regarding Latvians and Latvia in the newspaper “Postimees” and Estonians, Estonia in the newspaper “Diena”. Secondly, to define positive, negative or neutral connotations towards the keywords. And finally to see how the reflected events correlate to expressed assumptions made by individuals in the focus groups.

By the time I am writing the conclusions it is year 2009. The world has been shattered with the financial crisis. It has left certain consequences also in the markets of Baltic States. And surprisingly they are very different. While Latvia was struggling to receive the financial support from the International Monetary Fund Estonia had offered its financial support to Latvia. In Latvian media it is reflected and discussed as one of the most humiliating experiences for Latvia and once again Latvian opinion of self group has been lowered.

Latvians seem to have an inferiority complex toward the Estonians, believing and by year 2009 for sure knowing that Estonia is doing much better (Birzulis, 2002). Some explanations as to why this is so include the large amount of foreign investment Estonia had received from Scandinavia after regaining the independence, or its longer exposure to Western influences (for example, people in Tallinn were able to watch Finnish television long before the Soviet collapse). But instead of blaming geography or historical determinism, Latvia would be better served by learning from Estonia in a number of policy areas, such as goal-orientated state economy planning, bigger transparency of political events or strategic planning on how to overcome the economic crisis.

Summary in Estonian

Oma magistriõpingutes olen püüdnud luua peamisi stereotüüpe Läti ja lätlaste kohta Eesti trükimeedias ja inimeste suhtumises ning vastupidi - stereotüüpe Eesti ja eestlaste kohta Läti trükimeedias ja inimeste suhtumises. Ma olen uurinud mõlema maa ja rahvuse stereotüüpe, et tuua välja kindlad erinevused ning lahknevused ning vasturääkivused mõlema kohta.

Uurimust alustades oli selge, et kajastatud informatsioon ja mõlema maa ning rahva kohta väljakujunenud stereotüübid peaksid olema võrreldava ulatusega võttes arvesse geograafilist asukohta, lähedast ajaloolist arengut ja majandust, pidevat poliitilist ja kultuurilist koostööd mõlema maa vahel. Selleks jälgisin ma viit peamist uurimuse etappi:

defineerida põhiterminid nagu sotsiaalne stereotüüp, sotsiaalne identiteet ja sotsiaalruum, kaasaratud rahvusvaheline ruum ning selle ülesehitus. Uurida kirjandust stereotüübi kujunemise protsessi kohta;

uurida ajaloolist arengut mõlemas riigis, rõhutades ajaperioodide tähtsust riigi ja rahva identiteedi kujunemisele nii terviklikult kui vastastikuliselt;

vaadata läbi muutused mõlema maa trükimeedias, võttes nii arvesse meedia rolli ühiskondliku reaalsuse loomisel, samuti ka kasutatava keele sümboolse jõu;

analüüsida artiklite sisu ja arutelusid suurimates päevalehtedes "Postimees" Eestis ja "Diena" Lätis aastatel 2003 ja 2007, jättes jälgimisse 3-aastase vahe, et vaadelda muudatusi kattumiste intensiivsuses ja stiilis, võttes arvesse jaoks nii tähtsa sündmuse kui liitumise EL-ga 2004. aastal;

organiseerida fookusgruppide arutelud Eestis ja Lätis, et kujundada stereotüüpide kujund ja selle omaksvõtmine inimeste poolt mõlemal maal.

Stereotüübi kujunemise põhidefinitsiooniks on see, et igapäevane infotulv on nii suur ja lai samas kui inimese teadvustusprotsess on limiteeritud. Selletõttu niinimetatud "lihtsustatud pilt" aitab kaasa maailma ja selles peitua informatsiooni kitsendamisele. Üldistatud informatsioon jätab tihti endast välja üksikasjad ja erandid (Lippmann, 1922). See on nähtav näiteks siis, kui lätlased loevad eestlasi *aeglasteks*, aga küsides fookusgrupi aruteludel selle kohta täpsemalt, laieneb mõiste *aeglane* oma mõõtmetelt paljastades erinevad võimalikud põhjused selle kohta, kuidas on kogemused grupeeritud üheks stereotüübiks.

Stereotüüpe saab grupeerida kui hetero- (teise grupi stereotüüp) ja auto- (sama grupi stereotüüp) (Šulmane, Kruks, 2001). Need kaks stereotüübi gruppi on võetud edaspidises töös vaatluse alla kui kindla grupi stereotüüp mõjutab tugevalt stereotüüpi, mis on kujunenud teise grupi kohta. Vaatluse alla on võetud stereotüübi loomine kindla rahva kohta riigi ja selle edukuse kontekstis. See pani mu

mõistma, et mida väiksemad on riigi poliitilised, kultuurilised ja majanduslikud saavutused, seda väiksem enesekindlus olles selle grupi, antud juhul rahva, osa. See viib naaberrahvaste ja –riikide võrdlemise juurde tuues välja oma enda grupi puudused. On autoreid (Katz ja Barley: 1933), kes vaatlevad stereotüüpe peamiselt ebaõiget ja vastuolulist reaalsust. Mõnes punktis võiks sellega nõustuda baseerudes ülaltoodud näitele, et üks stereotüüp võib omada mitmeid mõtteid, andes ratsionaalsema seletuse selle kohta, kuidas inimesed märgistavad ja mõistavad kindlaid stereotüüpe. Stereotüüpe kohandatakse kahel üldisel viisil: personaalse kogemuse läbi ja teiste inimeste või allikate läbi. Vastavalt Tajfel&Turner-le (1986) ei ole stereotüüpide sisu nii mitmekujuline ja kordab samu mudeleid nagu oma grupi eelistamine teisele, oma grupi erilise rõhutamine teisega võrreldes, oma grupi heade näidete esiletõstmine teise grupi halbade mõjul või oma grupi nurjumiste omastamine situatsioonile samas teise grupi puhul nende võimetele.

Analüüsides meediat ja grupi arutelusid, oli märgatav, et mainitud mudeleid kasutatakse nii trükimeedias kui grupivestlustes kui räägitakse teisest maast või rahvusest. Samal ajal oli märgatav, et mainitud viisil ühe grupi vastandamine teise grupiga võib muuta auto-stereotüüpset või personaalset grupi arvamust ja personaalset ühiskondlikku identiteeti või kuulumist gruppi. Inimesed vajavad ühiskondliku identiteedi arendamiseks ja enda nägemiseks grupi osana liigitamist, identifitseerimist ja ühe grupi võrdlemist teisega (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

Mõistmaks ühiskondliku reaalsuse loomise ajalugu ja pakkumaks selgesõnalisemat seletust Eesti ja Läti vastastikuse mõistmise, majanduse, poliitiliste ja kultuuriliste arengute ning koostöö kohta järgnevatel ajalooperioodidel olen uurinud:

1) Läti ja Eesti rahvusriigi formeerumist (18. saj.-20.saj algus) – see periood on märkimisväärsete tööstuslike arengute aeg, mis hõlmab ka trükitoöstuse arengut ja kirjanduse ning trükimeedia levikut Balti rahvaste vahel, rahvusliku teadlikkuse tõusu, eneseteostust ja hiljem ka riike. Need on hädavajalikud elemendid, et panna inimesi tunnetama ühtsust ja tunnetama teisi, arendades rahvuslikku identiteeti ning jagades vajalikku informatsiooni nagu tavaväärtused ja tunnetused.

2) Rahvusriik (1918-1940) – sõltumatu omariikluse periood, mis kujunes rahvusliku mütoloogia tähtsaks osaks Balti riikides. Koos vabaduse saavutamise ja riigi loomisega laiendas rahvas oma rahvuslikku identiteeti ja tähtsust, võrdsust teiste rahvastega.

3) Okupatsiooniperiood (1940 – 1987) – Nõukogude okupatsiooni vältel kujunes ja tugevnes uut liiki identiteet. Nõukogude Liit rajas topelt identiteedi: ühest küljest etniline/rahvuslik identiteet; teisest küljest Nõukogude identiteet kui uue ühiskonna aluskivi (Castells, 1997). See oli Balti rahvusliku identiteedi kõige dramaatilisem periood, mille tagajärgi saame jälgida hilisemal post-kommunistlikul ülemineku perioodil. Samal ajal peab mainima, et Balti riikide lähedus on

juurdunud nende rahvusliku identiteedi loomise lõpptulemusena ja sidunud nad üksteise külge läbi üldajaloo kuni tänaseni.

4) Vabaduse saavutamine (1988 – 1991) - mõnel viisil võib Läti ja Eesti vabaduse saavutamise sündmusi vaadelda kui paralleele 19. sajandi valgustatud rahvuslaste tegevusele, peamiselt rahvusliku uhkuse, rahvusajaloo, -väärtuste ja –hinnangute väljaarendamisel. Seda saab vaadelda kui momenti, mil Balti identiteet võttis endale ühe oma kõige tähtsama rolli ühendades Läti ja Eesti rahvused ning see väljendub siiani inimeste vastastikusel arvamuses teineteise kohta.

5) Üleminek post-kommunismile (1991 – 2003) – peale Eesti ja Läti iseseisvuse saavutamist oli järgmiseks sammuks leida kõige efektiivsem viis uute demokraatlike riikide ülesehitamiseks. Samal ajal saab ära märkida, et Balti identiteet muutus mõlemat maad vähem ühendavaks kui nad alustasid oma riikide arendamist ja konkureerimist investeringute ligitõmbamiseks Balti regioonis. See on ka aeg, kui Eesti hakkas end positsioneerima Põhjamaade hulka luues lähedased, kultuurilised (soome-ugri), majanduslikud ja ka poliitilised suhted Soome ja Rootsi väites, et Balti identiteet on pigem jäänud Nõukogude Liidust ja tingitud geograafilisest asendist.

6) EL ja NATO liikmelisus (alates 2004) – koos iseseisvusega tekkis ka visioon Läänemaailmast ja Euroopa Liidust. Mõlemad riigid löid vastastikusel poliitilised prioriteedid töötades EL ja NATO-ga liitumise suunas. Ühest küljest oli Eesti privilegieritud positsioon EL läbirääkimistel tingitud pingetest Balti riikide vahel ja nõrgenenud koostöö vaimust, teisest küljest on muutunud jällegi Eesti ja Läti vaheline koostöö aastatega üha tugevamaks, olles nii poliitilised partnerid regioonis, samuti ka peamised majandusinvestorid mõlemas riigis.

Kuna meediat, keelt ja ühiskonda saab grupeerida kui kolme peamist ühiskondliku reaalsuse ja kommunikatsiooni kujundajat, on tähtis õppida tundma trükimeedia muutumist ning selle rolli ühiskondlikus arvamuses. Meedial oli suur osa sotsiaalse arvamuse kujundamisel üheksakümnendate alguses vabaduse saavutamise ajal. Nii ühiskond kui meediaturg läbisid need üleminekufaasid leides oma koha ja rolli demokraatlikus ühiskonnas. Meedia on rohkem või vähem kaudsel teel kujundanud gruppide ja kultuuride kontseptsioone, kuhu meie võime mitte kuuluda (Mcquail, 1994). See on toimunud kasutades kindlaid sõnu ja tähendusi keeleliselt või näiteks kasutades tihti võrdlusi.

Meedia uuringu sisu (kokku “Postimehe” artiklid 268, “Diena” artikleid 318) ja arutelude (kokku “Postimehe” artikleid 10, “Diena” artikleid 12) analüüs on toimunud ajalehtede “Diena” ja “Postimees” aastate 2003 ja 2007 artiklite põhjal. Need ajalehed on võetud analüüsi aluseks kuna need mõlemad Läti ja Eesti juhtivad ajalehed on oma ülesehituselt, lugejaskonna profiili ja arvu poolest peaaegu identsed. Need aastad on valitud jälgimaks muutusi pingetes, stiilis ja teemades

kahel erineval aastal, võttes vaatluse alla sellise tähelepanuväärse sündmuse nagu mõlema riigi ühinemine EL-ga 2004 aastal. Samuti peab aastat 2003 vaatlema kui aega, mil Balti riikide trükimeedia tugevdas oma rolli, turgu ja lõppes üleminekuajaga.

Sisu ja arutelude analüüs täidab oma ülesannet määratlemaks enamkasutatud Läti ja lätlaste seotud võtmesõnu ja väljendeid ajalehes "Postimees" ja Eesti ja eestlastega seotuid ajalehes "Diena". Teiseks defineerimaks positiivseid, negatiivseid ja neutraalseid tähendusi võtmesõnade jaoks. Ja lõpetuseks nägemaks kuidas kajastatavad sündmused on vastavuses fookusgrupi isikute väljendatud oletustega.

Töö peamised järeldused põhinevad neljal uurimuse põhiküsimusel:

1) Millised on eestlaste ja Eesti stereotüübid Läti trükimeedias ning üksikisikute arvamuses?

- Kõige selgem stereotüüp või iseloomustus eestlaste kohta tuli uurimuse jooksul välja fookusgrupis. Esitatud sai hüpotees, et eestlasi iseloomustatakse sõnaga *aeglane*. Samal ajal kirjeldati stereotüüpset iseloomustust järgnevalt: *esmakohatumisel reserveeritud, endassetõmbunud, külm, pikaldane*. Eelduse negatiivset varjundit nagu *veider olemine*, mida esitati ähmaselt, puudutati vähe isegi siis, kui see tuli kõne alla fookusgrupi arutelul.
- Lisaks kirjeldati eestlasi kui *eesmärgikindlad, ratsionaalsed ja kaugelvaatavad* nii meediaanalüüsis kui fookusgrupis. Mingil määral see on ühendatud eelnevalt väljatoodud stereotüübiga *aeglane*. See tähendab, et eestlased jõuavad eesmärgile aeglaselt, aga kindlalt. See iseloomustud hõlmab nii rahvast – eestlased, kui riiki – Eesti, peamiselt viidates Eesti majanduslikule arengule võrrelduna Lätiga.
- Üleüldine arvamus eestlaste ja Eesti kohta on pigem positiivne nii meedia analüüsis kui ka fookusgrupi aruteludes. Eesti näib olevat sammukese eespool Lätist tänu majanduslikule arengule ja sihikindlale suhtumisele ning poliitikute saavutatule. Sellest võib oletada mõlema rahvuse enesekindlust. Eestlasi nähakse uhketena ja seda põhjendatult tänu riigi saavutustele.

2) Millised on lätlaste ja Läti stereotüübid Eesti trükimeedias ning üksikisikute arvamuses?

- Lätlastele eestlaste poolt omistatud stereotüüp on vähemselge. Nagu oodatud, ei ole vastavalt meedia analüüsile ja grupi aruteludele ühte üldistavat iseloomujoont, mida saaks rakendada kõigile lätlastele.

- Lätlasi nähakse kui *naabreid* ja *osana Balti perest* (mida ei saa valida). Ühest küljest saab seda võtta positiivsena, kuid samas teisest küljest toob see välja negatiivsed aspektid. Lähedus ja perena tunnetamine on peamiselt seotud Balti ajaloolise pärandi ja Balti identiteediga, mis eriti seletatav 90ndate alguses.
- Lätiga suheldakse peamiselt kui *geograafilise naabriga*. Läti kui riigi imago kirjeldatakse neutraalsena/pigem negatiivsena. Negatiivsemalt on seda kajastatud meedias võttes arvesse poliitilisi ja majanduslikke sündmusi samas kui fookusgrupi arvamus paljastab neutraalse ja pigem positiivse suhtumise, mis põhineb isiklikul kogemusel.

3) Kas stereotüüpide tugevuse vahel on erinevused ja kui on, siis miks?

- Eelduseks on, et lätlaste stereotüübid eestlaste ja Eesti kohta on tugevamad ja erinevamad kui vastupidises suunas. Võib eeldada, et stereotüüp on sõltuv üldisest heaolust ja solidaarsusest ühiskondliku reaalsuse ja jagamisruumi suhtes. Naabermaade stereotüüpide võrdluse tulemusena on väljatoodud kerge sõltuvus kindlatest poliitilistest ja majanduslikest situatsioonidest.
- Analüüsi tulemused tõid välja järelduse, et rahvas, kes austab teist riiki, loob tugevamad stereotüübid. Grupp, kes on vähem endas kindel riigi poolt jagatud kogukondade tõttu võrdluses teise grupiga, loob tugevamad stereotüübid teise grupi suhtes. Selle juhtumi puhul on lätlastel tugevamad stereotüübid eestlaste ja Eesti suhtes.

4) Kas muutused sotsiaalses, poliitilises ja majanduslikus keskkonnas peegelduvad ka stereotüüpide muutumises?

- Peamised stereotüüpe kujundavad faktorid on ühiskondlik suhtumine ja arvamused, samuti ka meediakajastused. Need ühiskondlikud kontseptsioonid kujundavad tausta või tooni kuidas kindlat päevakorda üldiselt arutatakse. Teisest küljest tugevdavad või nõrgendavad neid arvamusi isiklikud ja ühiskondlikud kontaktid teise rahvusega ning kogemused teise riigiga.
- Võib esineda lahknevus selle vahel “mis inimesed räägivad” ja “mida mina olen kogunud”. Samal ajal võivad need kaks arvamust eksisteerida kõrvuti, kui inimesed avaldavad oma arvamust.

- Stereotüübid arenevad välja peamiselt mõlema maa vahelistel koostööaladel. Osa praktilisest informatsioonist on esile kutsutud ühiskondliku suhtlusega, kus see muutub üldistuseks valides välja kõige üldisemad ja ühendavad iseloomujooned.
- Vastavalt ühiskondliku, poliitilise ja majandusliku keskkonna muutustele kohandatakse või õigustatakse peamisi stereotüüpe. Aeglaselt ei nähta mitte kui introvertseid põhjanaabreid, aga pigem eesmärgile orienteerituna ja strateegiliselt aeglasena, mis on õigustatud nende progressiga.

Aeg, kui ma järeltõlke kirja panen, on aasta 2009. Maailm on haaratud majanduskriisist. See on jätnud oma tagajärjed ka Balti riikide turgudele. Ja üllatuslikult on need väga erinevad. Samas kui Läti pingutab finantsilise toetuse saamiseks Rahvusvaheliselt Valuutafondilt, on Eesti pakkunud oma finantsabi Lätile. Seda on Läti meedias kajastatud ja arutatud kui ühte kõige alandavat kogemust Läti jaoks ning taas on Läti eneseearvamus langenud.

Lätlastel tundub olevat alaväärsuskompleks eestlaste suhtes, uskudes, et aastal 2009 läheb eestlastel palju paremini. Üks seletus võib olla see, et Eesti on saanud peale vabaduse saavutamist palju välisinvesteeringuid Skandinaaviast või nende suurem avatus Lääne mõjudele (näiteks Tallinna elanikud said vaadata Soome televisiooni ammu enne Nõukogude Liidu lagunemist) (Birzulis, 2002). Aga selle asemel, et süüdistada geograafilist või ajaloolist determinismi, peaks Läti Eestilt õppima mitmeid poliitikavaldkondi nagu eesmärgile orienteeritud riiklik majanduse planeerimine, suurem läbipaistvus poliitikas või majanduskriisi üleelamise strateegiline planeerimine.

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Appendixes

Appendix 1. Transcript of the Focus Group discussion on Latvia and Latvians

Tartu, 18.01.2009.

While all the group discussion participants are arriving, the first assignment is given. Out of different magazines to cut out pictures which the participant associates with Latvia or Latvians. Later participants will comment on the chosen pictures.

Please, one by one say your name, your occupation, age and shortly something about yourself.

Suzanna (Su): My name is Suzann, Im 20 years old and I study law in second year in Tartu University.

Toomas (T): Im Toomas, 24, and I work for in public sector.

Siiri (Si): Siiri, 22, studying in Tartu University and at the same time I work as an administrator in a hotel.

Peeter (P): *(starts introduction in Latvian)* Im Peeter, I am 25 years old. And i work in the advertising field.

First assignment that you had was to cut out different pictures. Please show us the pictures and shortly explain why did you cut them out and what associations did you have. Who will start?

(Si): So, before Riga there is a long, empty space. Well, basically, because of the Riga sign as Riga links with Latvia. Although, when you drive into Riga there is a long way between Estonia and Riga of nothing. Then picture of spices as I know that, for example, potatoe waffle spices are made in Latvia. In Latvia there is some special farm producing it...In the old town i guess there were colomns with such upper part, that is why...and this picture just somehow links to Latvia...how dogs drink beer...latvians are crazy...well, it just drew attention.

(T): Firstly the picture with two pikes...but in Latvia there is no fish...all Latvians come to Estonia to catch fish. Then, the picture with a car and a landscape...outside Riga all the roads are with holes and uneven. Here is a letter "S" in the end, that is important.

In what way? Something to do with Latvian language?

(T): Yes, as every word ends with "S".

Then, beer and food. Beer is not bad and when I visited a friend we got some good food. And then there is “Laima” which also everyone knows. Here is a picture of emu's, I dont know, in Estonia they are breded as well then in Latvia also.

(Su): I did not find many pictures regarding Latvia. But in summer when we went there, there was a nature place and there were cows. Then there are sweets. And this picture of cow is not because of cows but because of Ventspils. I went there and it was very beautiful place. The boat trip that they have is very senseless but there are lots of flowers and nice place. And what else comes into my mind regarding Riga is the port, the “Orange” bar and the dome church. Ofcourse we went to McDonals and bought a “*saldejums*”. That was great.

(P): I also wanted to find an icecream picture but i did not find one. But I found “Parex” bank. Then I found a picture of the strange money that you have. As it is very difficult to understand how much it is. As everywhere else there are Euro and it is normal but with this I can never remember what it is...then the slogan “Made in Latvia” which came along with the other picture of half naked girls which actually is true. And then i was thinking if I should cut out the picture saying “Moka – Moka” because Latvians are strange. And i did not find the 6th toe.

Please, name the first associations and impressions, words with you have regarding Latvia and Latvians.

Latvia	Latvians
Riga	6 toes – <i>reference to strange</i>
Bad roads	Love fish
There are no islands	We love them – <i>through laughing</i>
Ventspils	They are like uncle's sons – strange but we
“Saldējums”	love them
“Kārums”	You do not choose your relatives

What do you mean by saying that Latvians have 6 toes? It is meant as Latvians being weird?

(P): No, it is not even that they are weird, they simply have 6 toes.

(Si): It is a fact...ha-ha

(P): Latvians are like son of an uncle. A bit strange but you still love them as they are the family.

What do you mean by family?

(P): Baltic states...well, it is Latvia...Latvia simply.

(Si): Well, yes, you do not chose your relatives.

Have you heard any lables or characteristics that Latvians say about Estonians?

(T): Well, that we are slow.

(Si): When two Estonians get together then time stopps.

What is your opinion, why people think so, where the opinion comes from?

(P): That is simply when you have countries around, neighboring countries then you have to give to all these countries one classical adjective. Like Americans think that Canadians are slow or Sweeds say about Finns the same thing. While we do not use it towards Latvians but about Finns.

But what words or expressions do Estonians say about Latvians?

(Si): Well, the 6 toe thing.

(T): Secret fishermen. They are coming secretly to catch fish. They want our islands.

(Si): But it is not working.

(P): I think we could give them one island.

Do you have any friends or acquaintances in Latvia?

(T): Well, that female president...well, I mean, she is not my acquaintance. But friends I used to have who I knew from camps. But we are not in contact.

(Su): No, I do not know anyone, similarrly just from camps.

(P): Yes, my girlfriend was studying in Latvian University then I knew some people from Latvia.

When you visit or go to some camp of so on, would you say that you contact with Latvains more than other nationalities?

(Si): All the same.

(T): Yes, equal.

(Su): I do not know, I have with Latvains very war connections, they seam like more own people...more...even when we had Finns, Germans, Latvians and Estonians. Then Germans were strange, Finns were more relaxed and Latvians were the ones who always were up to do things and with them it was crazilly fun.

Then now more about Latvia. When was the last time that you visited Latvia?

(P): I was before spring in Riga. Landed there with airplane. So I was there for 2 days.

But you were in Riga because the plane landed there?

(P): No, I bought a ticket to Riga on purpose. To visit Riga. But otherwise I have not been lately.

(Si): I dont know, something one or two years ago. But it was basically because of one conference. But I did not go there for touristic purposes. Of course, when I was little then we went to Riga. But

more as on a tourist trip I have not been in Latvia...then we went to some biology museum. With our secondary school teacher. We went to see some botanic things.

And now, when you went 2 years ago?

(Si): Then we went to Ventspils. We had a conference there. So mostly we were with our own group...we did not spend time with Latvians. As the Latvians who were there were with us.

(T): I went at the end of last year. For the first time drove to Riga by car. We went to a friend. We went in the morning and came back in the evening. So we visited the friends and went to the airport and somewhere to a shop.

But you did not visit, for example, Freedom monument or Occupation museum?

(T): No, some 3 or 4 years ago...then I took an excursion around the Old Town and went to "Lido".

(P): When I went to Riga in year 2005. We were going by bus to Italy. Then first I went to Riga. I had time till my bus and I walked around the Old Town and there in the dome square was a tourist group and the guide just started telling about history of Latvia. And so I joined the group. And I thought, well, Riga most likely is such a pleasant town that I should join the tourist excursion...and then when the excursion ended the guide said, so, please pay 15 lats or something like that...or 5, I do not remember now.

(Su): I was about 5 years ago. Then we went around the town a lot. But I am going, for example, to Riga in May, to a concert of "Depeche Mode". And I have been to Ventspils.

Suzanne mentioned concerts and there are also music festivals taking place in Latvia, do you attend them?

(Su): My friends go a lot. But if the artist does not come to Estonia or one has not heard it here then they always go.

What places, things or people do you know in Latvia?

(P): Prāta Vētra.

(Su): Jūrmala and there is also the water park, which comes into my mind.

Maybe some politicians except previously mentioned Vaira Vīķe – Freiberga?

(Si): No, I do not know any.

(T): I read about that president but I do not remember his name.

What about events in Latvia? Do you follow the news about Latvia?

(P): Yes, for sure. What our journalism offers. About the riots.

(Si): It was just a picket...ha-ha...but when In Estonia there was a riot then in Latvia they also need to have one.

(P): No, it was about totally different issue.

How much information about Latvia do you notice in Estonian media?

(P): Mostly there are just negative news. Mostly...

(Si): About the economic crisis and then now about the riots.

(P): Lately it has been about some murder of 3 or 4 people...when there are some big car crashes...that kind of news come a lot.

(T): Today was in the news that the Victory day will be held in Cēsis.

Would you then say that most of the news covering Latvia are mostly negative?

(Si): There are about economic problems.

(P): Yes, but that is mostly lately. But I think that positive news regarding Latvia are very seldom. Only when there was the independence day celebration then it was more positive. To compare with Finland...we get news about Finland the same. But about Finland there come also news that talk about positive things. About Latvia there are none. About Lithuania there are no news at all. Well, ok they talked now about Lithuania, but for past half a year there have not been any other news.

(T): Yes, surely about Latvia there are more news than about Lithuania.

What do you think is similar and different in culture of Latvia and Estonia?

(P): I think that our cultures are basically the same. Our history is the same. Their (Latvian) resurrection is almost the same as in Estonia. Their novels which talk about national resurrection are even better than Estonian ones. But mainly content is the same. Well, I think that culture more depends on the history. It is not linked with the fact that our languages are different.

(T): I agree.

(Su): Yes, regarding the culture to compare Finland and Latvia...with Latvia we are the closest...more than Finland. Not in the sense of language but regarding everything else. I do not know, for example, the temperament of Latvians and Estonians. They fit together much better. Really about Finns you can say that they are slow.

I wonder if everyone is saying about their neighbouring country that they are slow, which country is the slowest one in the world?

(P): I guess we can all agree that it is Finland.

(Si): I think that with Latvia we have more mutual memories. About Finland we say more that we want to become Finland as we want and want exactly the same good as them....but there is not the

unity feeling. There are no mutual memories so much. As time to time Finland has helped something...it is the only thing that has come through the history.

(T): I have the feeling that if Estonians are trying to become Finns then Latvians are trying to become Estonians.

Estonia in newspapers is often represented as a Nordic country. What do you think about it, do you see Estonia more as Nordic or Baltic State?

(P): I personally see us more as Nordic. And I think that it is a big problem that Estonia is in this place. Because we are basically in the Baltic market but we get all the goods sent from Scandinavia. It is that you do not want to put your many for marketing to any of the markets. As on one hand there is no accountability and on other hand there is no need for it. And I think it is a problem, as in that way we are more Baltic than Nordic.

(T): I think we are exactly on the border. On one hand we are close to the Nordic countries but at the same time we are one of the Baltic States. And the thing that many consider us a Nordic State means that partly we are. But I do not know...we are still Baltic States.

(Si): I think that Nordic States see us as such only when it is suitable for them. And then we are like that...quoting others...yes, the surrounds of Tallinn and so on is more as part of Nordic States...well, and when it does not suit them we are part of Baltic States. So in the end we are like no fish nor meat. It depends on what is comfortable at that time. If we take also Russia into consideration, then you tell me where and who we are. But we are more united with Baltics'. I think it is as we are not still at the level with other Nordic States then we are now still in Baltics'.

(P): But we do not have a problem with it if we are called Baltic State. There is more of a problem if America...when others think that we are close to Russia...with that I have a problem. But the fact if we are Scandinavia or Baltic State it is not a problem or important.

(Su): Regarding the Nordic States it is true that Estonia is trying to get there. But the social system of Sweden or allowances and education system are so different then in Estonia. So in reality we are not Scandinavian...we strive that. But for example many foreigners do not know what is Estonia but they know what is Baltic States.

But for example, you mentioned that about Latvia mostly there is negative information in the media. Which in other countries can be reduced as referring to all Baltic States.

(Si): Well, we have our own killers and drug dealers making bad image.

(P): But we get lots of good publications about IT progress, that we organize the E-elections. I don't know, I think there was a time when there was a trend to consider Estonia the new economic force, the new Argentina.

(Su): But what is very interesting...I had it in my French class. We watched the introductory films about Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. And there was really difference, for example, about Lithuania they showed churches and old believers, very religious people, when about Latvian – building houses, like the industrial Riga and then about Estonia it was E-government. So there is a difference, at least in the introductory films how they are positioned.

What about self – awareness? Would you describe Estonians as proud and self - aware?

(T): I think we are. Estonian is full of oneself. Yes, and we think that we are better than Latvians. Well, I mean...if we are talking about it...that they (Latvians) do not have islands and so on.

(Si): The only thing that Latvians have better than Estonians are the neighbours. Well, you get the idea.

(P): I think in some way that Latvians are behind that we are somehow better...not talking about Lithuanians at all, but Latvians are better than Lithuanians.If we talk that Latvia and Lithuania are Baltic States then we are almost Nordic State...we are in the same level. They have stayed as Baltic States, we started all together but we have already gone to the Nordic States.

(Su): Maybe that we are not Nordic country but we are more on the way there.

But do you think that Estonian self – awareness and self-confidence is higher than Latvian?

(Su): I don't know, I think that Estonians are self-confident. I mean, I am patriotic. As I have grown up in such times with all the singing festivals and things then I value that I am Estonian. But not in the sence that I think Latvians think less of themselves as Latvians taking into consideration all the scandals that there are.

(P): Talking about Lithuania and Latvia...I have the feeling that we want to be the first out of the Baltic States. That we want to maintain when Baltic States gained the independence from the Soviet Union...that it is based in that Estonia started doing something...actually it is the opposite. We have, I think, we have even envy over it. I mean, if tanks would had come into Estonia that something would have happened. Well, that if in Latvia and Lithuania...the events which took place in Vilnius and Riga that they were the real thing and we did not get any. And because of that we are trying to justify and bring forward the role of Estonia. That Estonia is the firts. When we talk...that Estonian military went to help Latvians.

(Si): We sent our one tank.

(P): Also against Germans. That we liberated Latvia. We are trying to make our history too important. We want to be the most important one out of the Baltic States even in those events although I think to be more important than Lithuania in that sence is difficult.

You mention the times when Baltic States became independent. Do you consider these events as important for Latvians and Estonians, bringing them together still today? That we still stand together in the Baltic Chain.

(T): I have the feeling that for our parents and grandparents the unity thing was the second world war when they all together were oppressed and there was communism. Then today, I mean for our generation it is not so, for us it is more the Baltic Way, together...that is why there is the unity between Baltic States. But I think it will disappear very quickly.

(Su): I think that even if not concessly then unawearly is the Baltic Way important. Maybe not so much with Lithuania, I don't know why.

(P): Because it is far. It is the same as Poland.

If you should compare Estonia and Latvia, what do you find better in Estonia and vice versa?

(Si): Well, in Latvia there are different kind of shops. In Estonia everything has become very similar. It does not matter where you go Viljandi, Rakvere everything is exactly the same. In Latvia there is bigger choice, something is different, which is better.

(T): But beer is worse.

(P): You see, they can't even make their own beer.

But actually, I do not know why I have the feeling, but I have it, that in Latvia it is better to live than in Estonia. I have this feeling that despite the Latvian state has the economic problems and so on I think in Latvia is better to live. In Estonia everything is kind of broken.

(Su): I think what is better or rather useful is that in Latvia there are so many Russians. And that Latvians can speak Russian. We have many Russians and my generations, well I can not speak Russian. And so it is difficult to understand them. Of course I give a credit to the fact that we have less Russians. But maybe in Latvia it is better to communicate, at least you can't communicate with these people, because you can speak Russian.

But Latvians themselves seem to be more slavic?

(P): Well, Lithuanians are even more.

(T): Yes, that's what I thought, that you have a lot of Russians. Maybe also the language has been forced upon more. And then if you have such society then it is easier for you to learn Russian than to us. As, for example, I come from a small town in Estonia and we had a Russian school but we never communicated with any Russians. And now my Russian is as it is.

(Si): But at the same time Lithuanian and Latvian are very similar languages, right? And Estonian is totally apart from them.

(P): It is very strange, that Lithuanians and Latvians have the same language. And it is strange there are two different language groups and they all have to somehow fit together. But in that sense

Latvia is the most Russian like, when in the nineties Russia tried to provoke then they always went after Latvia, always talked that in Latvia Russians are discriminated...as they feel that it is the way to solve it as there are so many Russians.

(T): Latvian language is very different.

(P): Well it is very strange that Latvians themselves are not slavic. When you go further to Poland, Czech – there are slavs. But Latvians and Lithuanians are not they are Balts.

What about working with Latvians, do you have any experience, any comments?

(P): Well, we do quite a lot of business with Latvians and I must say that it is very easy to work with them. They make their decision very quickly and sharply

(T): I don't know. I work in fishing industry and Latvians always come to arrange the premissions. While often Estonians fish without ones.

The association collages

Siiri



SABIEDRĪBA | STARPTAUTISKĀS ORGANIZĀCIJAS

PASAULES DABAS FONDA RŪPJU BĒRNI:
Savulaik tauri brīvi ganījās Latvijas laukos.
Tagad viņi pēc vairākiem gadu simtiem,
pateicoties Pasaules Dabas fonda iniciatīvai,
ieraugāmi Papes dabas parkā.



FOTO: AFI





Sekss

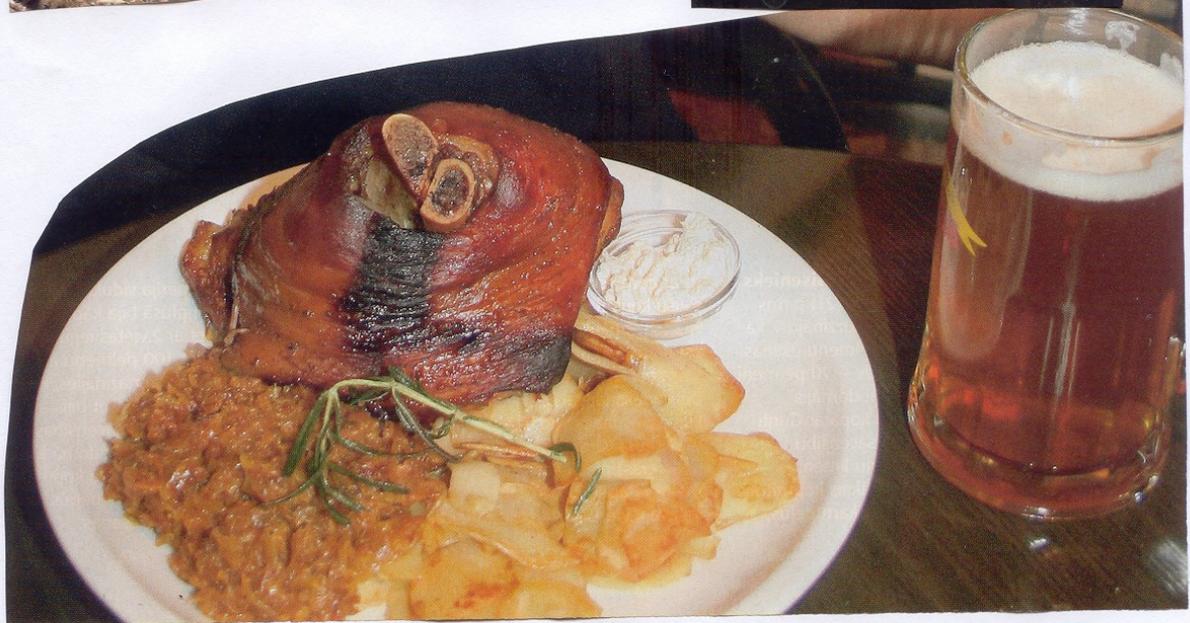




Hip-Hops



ELTONS
DŽONS





upyeru...
«Made in Latvia»
brēl...

Appendix 2. Transcript of the Focus Group discussion on Estonia and Estonians

Riga, 26.01.2009.

While all the group discussion participants are arriving, the first assignment is given. Every participant individually is asked to cut pictures from different magazines which bring any associations with Latvia or Latvians.

Later each participant is asked to comment and on the chosen pictures.

Please, one by one say your name, your occupation, age and shortly something about yourself.

Sabine (S): My name is Sabine Sile. I work in a charity foundations. I really like music. And I am 27 years old.

Gunita (G): My name is Gunita. I work in a consultation company which works with Funds of EU. I have had previous cooperation with Estonia. I am 30 years old.

Matiss (M): Ok, my name is Matiss Zemitis, Im 25 years old and I am an architect, work in my own office together with another college. My relationship to Estonia...few times I have been in Estonia...do not have any other relations with Estonia.

Didzis (D): My name is Didzis. I am 24 years old. And I work in tea business...in teashop...and with such things...well...The products of intelligent relaxations...And healthy. Relation with Estonia is minimal.

Ralfs (R): My name is Ralfs Šmīdbergs, I am 30. I work in 4 work places...all of them related to music.

Krists (K): My name is Kristis, I am 22, and currently I am unemployed.

First assignment that you had was to cut out different pictures for associations. Please show us the pictures and one by one shortly explain why you cut them out. Who will start?

(S): Ok I will start...Estonia or Estonians? Estonians...Associate with...I have...blond hair, light hair...IT sphere that is why a picture of computer...enterprises, business...some are successful some are not, but that is that. And little bit with the ferries.

But why with IT and business spheres?

(S): IT...it is Skype and yes.

(G): I cut out 5 pictures. First picture associates with the joke about “sexy Eesti poiss”. That was one association. That was more of a joke, other pictures are serious ones. I guess that Estonians somehow know better how to use relationships...i guess in the communication their motivation is

better. They do not nag with each other while Latvians very much pick on each other. So I guess Estonians are more constructive...I do not know...I have had such an experience.

Where have you had the experience?

(G): At work...on how the talks are...at the table there is Estonian and Latvian side, Estonians very constructively drive everything forward while Latvians just sit and gape, can not make any decisions, jab at each other and then if they are from different places then also try to upset each other. But Estonians probably upset each other but they do not do it in public.

Then the third picture is...it is meant to associate manufacturing...those are sweets on the factory band...manufacturing and also business what already was mentioned by Sabine...I guess they have it more developed in general.

Next picture, I guess, that Estonians have mastered to put in order the social and medical system more than Latvians. That is if we compare the two nations and states.

And the last picture of hat with slogan “feeling of safety”...not because they are more to North and it is more cold there and you need a hat but because in reality they have...I guess that state gives them more safety feeling than we do.

What makes you think so?

(R): Well, they are ready to help us.

(G): Yes, they are ready to help us and they have managed all the things more masterly. Well, for example, talking to the Estonian acquaintances, well, they, as I have understood, in general, they do not have such a stress about crisis although their situation is not so brilliant compared to us. While I think all the Latvians are terrified twitching around the streets.

(M): Well, I have two pictures and maybe something has been mentioned already before. One is the ferries...what Estonians do associate to us with. They have outpaced us.

(S): Real Vikings!

(M): The second it is a man, maybe the way he is dressed is more Scandinavian than Latvian...something to do with skiing and maybe the hair are lighter, more Scandinavian.

(D): I have cut out 4 pictures. In one picture there are two smiling children because, I do not know why, in Estonia they try to think not just about the ones who are 20 or 30 years old that they are ok but also try to think about children more.

Then a picture of knitted socks. That is: cold, north, close to Finland.

The third picture is of big business center or small Wall Street because somehow the Estonia both in economic and social way, I guess, is more successful than Latvia. Although the crisis is all over the world the crazy demonstrations took place in Latvia and Lithuania, well, maybe in Estonia there will be a bit later.

And then there is small, grey, confused anime character....what I found in this picture common with Estonia is the face expression...that there are some elementary things...which just pointing at...you can not explain...that you can not distinguish one from another...from my personal experience, that I have had some more fierce debate and people get upset just because they have misunderstood something.

I did not really understand what was the association with Estonians or Estonia?

(D): The association is that in the moment when there is some misunderstanding and when you try to explain the situation often they do not want to except it and look aslant at you and do not take it as an explanation but you just trying to get out of the situation. Well, that Estonians take explanations not as explanations but as trying to get away from them.

(R): I found two...Well, they are not the most typical ones but anyway. One is, as I am bound with music then here is a title "Classical music". Well, here also things happen and so but in that country I can name two concert halls which have been built as concert halls. In Latvia we do not have any.

(G): We will also have

(R): Well yes, but they had it built already 10 years ago, in Tartu totally new building for the purposes and, for example, in Parnu as well, very rational, simple, takes up very little space but at the same time, I do not understand much from the architecture but it can be assumed as enough stylish...I don't know...well they have pushed enough on the functionality of the idea, no idea, music is playing and everyone is happy. That is one aspect which of course maddens me, than in Latvia we do not have one and in future 10 years I am totally convinced that it is not going to be built. And that is one of the things that illustrates that they know how to live rationally. Well, they do not have so explicit inferiority complex. Latvians do not have it...they (Estonians) spend money more rationally.

The second title is "Art", there (in Estonia) is also a new museum built already some three or four years ago, the modern art museum which we do not have in Latvia and I assume in future 10 years, I will be very depressive, we will not have it. Well, that is how it is.

(K): I have just two. One picture is with a polar bear. I think only there you can meet one, in Latvia you will not. The polar bear is white and around it there is black and there is blue sky in the picture, so those are the colours of Estonian flag. And then picture of Krone...it is not Estonian but Swedish but if I hear Krone then the first thing that comes into my mind is the Estonian Krone. Then there is a picture of Štokenbergs (Latvian politician), but the picture reminds me of the Bronze statue that was removed last year.

(R): Yes, very typical...Aljosha!

(K): And then a picture of a man falling out of the ski lift. I guess Estonians could do that. This picture associates to me that this person could be Estonian. Well, it is like...he is a normal person

but he could do something non-ordinary and clumsy. Well, that's what I guess could happen...and also the previously mentioned telecommunications that they can vote with one sms or in teh Internet. So, yeah...telecommunications which Estonia is world wide known for.

The next thing that I would like you to do, is list the impressions, first things that come into your mind, associations which you did not find in the magazines, what you have heard, what people say about Estonians.

(R): Uncommunicative.

(S): The most typical about Estonians, at least in the anectdotes it is that Estonians are slow. But I am convinced that you can not say it about all of them. But not in general.

You mean, not in general people think so, or not in general Estonians are slow?

(S): I mean, not all Estonians.

Ok, what else? It was mentioned that Estonians are uncommunicative? Would everyone agree?

(K): I have met communicative Estonians, open.

(G): Yes, me too. I have also met quick Estonians.

(R): Well, uncommunicative, for example, if there is some group...I don't know some symposium, seminar, outside Estonia and Latvia. And group of Latvians, Lithuanians meet then group of Estonians will be the last ones who come up to Latvians or Lithuanians. Well, in any case they will be the last ones to wake up...like, ok...well, what. So you can not understand if they are arogante or that is how they are. It is not even arogance but it is that they are not too tensed. They do not run up and go..whohooo...well, it is like some kind of seclusion of the cold countries. As, if there will be an italian then it is...chau...he will be among all the Latvian women going...yuhuhuuu. Well there have been some European Academy projects where always Estonians are like if you do not ask first he will not even say hello to you and you will not know where he is from.

(G): Maybe I can add...maybe they are slow regarding the first contact. Because I have had an experience that at the moment when you have made a contact they are actually very open and helpful. That is my experience.

(R): Yes, exactly...That there is the seculsion at first. It is maybe not even seculsion but rather opening up to have a communication. Later everyone has a drink and everyone is happy.

(G): And in that sence, probably relations with such Estonian would last evern longer than than mentioned Italian. Because he probably the next day does not remember who you are anymore while Estonian will continue comuniation, saying see, how nice was yesterday...come to me to Saaremaa.

(D): I think their thinking is a bit slower and cold. But slower not in the sense of...eeeeee...but slower, colder.

(G): Maybe unhurried?

(D): Well, slower could be as unhurried, colder and a bit more rational.

(G): I think about farsighted...that they are thinking more strategically, to supplement the term of farsighted.

(D): Yes, and also Estonians more evaluate and stick to their national identity. To be more precise, as in some anecdote Latvians have sold out everything to Europe, Lithuanians partly are under control of Europe then Estonians maximally try to keep their country as Estonian as possible.

Do you mean that they are patriotic?

(D): They are more patriotic than we are.

(G): Yes, definitely.

(D): And they maintain their culture more Estonian than Latvia and Lithuania, where it is more...yeah...western popculture, that is super.

(K): Yes, running after it.

(R): Is it not more related with that they have the support from Finland and they rather in the very beginning at the regaining the independence that they strived a way proclaimed that they are finno-ugric rather...not Estonians. So all the basic investments were at least in the beginning from Finland. So it is not mixing up, everything goes in one direction...I do not understand much from economy, but that it is more or less arranged.

(K): They, definitely have arranged better than we do.

(R): That is why, the identity not so much as Estonians but that we belong to something else. So they dispart themselves from other Baltic States.

(G): I think, if we talk about being patriotic then Estonians had it from the beginning of time...already in the Soviet times. When Russians or Russian speakers came to Latvia and went to the meat shop then Latvians were talking Russian. But going to Estonia to buy sausage...if you talk Russian...well, talk in Russian. I think, they wanted to maintain the language more.

(K): Yes, I agree.

(G): That is how they are more patriotic and I think it is still kept to show their Estonian identity.

(K): Yes, I totally agree, as they would rather speak English than Russian to you. Maybe it is not...well, they are becoming more European.

(R): Yes, that they dispart cut any connection with old Soviet Union.

(G): At the same time I think they do not lean where the wind blows. They are Estonians and they know that they are Estonians.

(M): I have had to do business with one Estonian customer and I could say that he was...what was mentioned rationality and also more cautious. That all the decisions...when they make a decision then they stick to it.

When you say that Estonians are slow and unsociable, I am interested to hear where do you think these arguments come from?

(S): I think business is bound with rationality, prudentials and being farsighted. But about the first impression, I am not sure.

(R): With money I think they are rational, know how to use it.

(G): Probably one of the signals is that differently from us they do not have such a budget deficite which means that they have approched it more rationally and strategically. As everyone is in the same shoes, as in America market fell down so it fell down. Thank God we are not Iceland. We do not have anything happy to say.

(S): They are disposed and also determined. Many who I have met if they have a goal, if they do something then they are totally in it, but that is as much as I have had any connection. But they have a smalled Old Town.

(R): In their Old Town there are not such expencive cars almost none compared to Riga. Meaning that you can walk freely and not think...I can guarantee that there will not be so that the footpath full of cars.

(K): But in Riga I have seen may fancy cars with Estonian number plates.

(R): At least last year you could walk around teh Old Town and there was not such blatant traffic.

(S): In Old Town I think they know how to preserve the values not just the language. For exaple, there are no plastic windows, well, as much as I noticed.

(R): They are not so showy.

(S): It is more preserved as it was and no big shops are let in with big displays. It alleges that they do not strive to or they purposfully want to sustain it as it is.

(G): But I have heard from the Estonians that they like coming to do shopping in Riga.

Have you heard anything what Estonians think or say about Latvians?

(G): They think that we have nicer shops.

(S): I think they think that we are unrestrained.

(R): I think they look at us...well...they do not take us seriously. As...what those Latvians...have made up something again...farmers...something like that. I have such impression as we were listening the news and your parliament...and corruption...what is that? It is exactly opposite to the rationality, prudentials and I guess they very well know that they are like that. When you have a chance to talk to them...you can not understand fully. That is my personal opinion.

(K): I do not know, I have not had much of communication.

(M): When there have been people of different nationalities with Estonians I have not had much contact. Rather with Lithuanians there is contact immediately.

Then you can say that you do not really know what Estonians think about Latvians or maybe there is something you might see?

(G): "Saldējums" (Ice cream in Latvians, expression, which most of the Estonians know).

(S): I had a situation when there was me, and Estonian and Lithuanian and we talked about these things and it was interesting that Estonians do not have any jokes about Latvians or Lithuanians.

Lithuanians had most jokes about the two others. Latvians had few. But Estonians about Latvia and Lithuania...they do not focus on that, they did not have any. Maybe they have jokes about Finland?

(R): They love Finns but at the same time they do not. When especially Finns had the tours to Estonia, when they went there to drink in Tallinn. Then in the hotels there are Finnish alcohol groups...there is Alcho-tourism. Where on purpose in front of the hotel just because of that there is a shop working all night, but for example, there is a twenty four hour working alcohol shop so Finns can go there if they run short of alcohol. Then they (Estonians) are like...those Finns are pigs...because they drink in Estonia like pigs.

(D): I wanted to take it back to the aspect of Latvians being hasty and impetuous...I think there is a bit view from above...yes...like, where did you run, running after the example of Europe. We rather calmly think and try to understand what fits Estonia not just grasp as Latvians and Lithuanians do.

(S): I think the view from above...I do not feel it as negative it is more as older brother or sister who try to help.

(K): You mean Estonians to Latvians?

(S): Yes, I have had such experience.

(K): I guess, they are envious that we have Riga.

(R): Yes, that could be the only thing.

(K): I do not know, but that is what seems to me. That they know that they are step ahead to us but regarding cities and Riga. They would want Riga to be in Estonia and not in Latvia.

Estonian self-confidence is high?

(R): Yes, definitely and they can justify it.

(S): I would say that their self-confidence is healthier rather than it can be justified.

(R): We lack the justification that we are so good because...our self-assurance is high but we can not justify with anything, like, yeah, we have Riga...but neither I built it nor you did. As they have already achieved something themselves in last 15 years.

And Latvians?

(R): Yes, like we have it but mostly it is more laborious.

(G): I think also there are some things with what we have overtaken Estonians. For example, Riga as the city, its location in three Baltic States. Secondly, our airport is developed the most compared the three Baltic States and Estonia being as one part of it. Of course, Estonia has the ferry traffic and we are still infants in that area.

(K): But if you think Lithuania has roads, we have airport and Estonia water.

(R): But the ferries, it is also...it is the heritage from the Soviet Union when the terminals were built already. I was going in nineties to Sweden and then there were already European standard terminals. And imagine what was our port like at that time, you had to walk up the out of date ramp.

(M): I think there it is still the same also now. Nothing has changed.

(R): So in some way, they do not really need the airport so much.

(G): Yeah, it is better to go to Finland with the ferry than the airplane.

(D): Aren't they more ecological and greener? And they try to use more alternative and new technologies, for example, for electro energy.

(G): I do not agree about the greenness. I think currently Latvia is focusing on eco-products and biological products.

(S): But Estonia is further with it.

(D): Waste recovery.

(K): Yes, I saw on TV about waste recovery they showed that in Estonia they have many points while in Latvia two or one. The waste sorting, I know just one place like that where you can hand over TV set or tires but there are very few places like that in Latvia and first you have to recycle them. In Estonia it is developed.

(D): Estonians take it more serious than in Latvia and Lithuania. If in Latvia there is the waste sorting and there are three containers at the house and comes one scavenger and throws the three containers into one car.

(S): I think that Estonians could have an impression about Latvians that we are such sloven, slipshod. As we are trying to get through things quicker.

(K): Practical Latvian.

(G): I also think that Latvians, I am not sure if that is exactly what Estonians think about Latvians, but about the same waste recycling; somehow Estonians again are more rational. They are more goals orientated. But Latvians, oh, we three hear something that there is such a possibility and then we are picking on each other who will get the great agreement to make the most money.

(K): They care more about social good rather than personal one. While Latvians try to pull to their own side not do it together.

(D): If in Latvia first it is said out loud what we are planning to do with Estonians without big public information sharing, they just do it and then see that Estonia has outpaced someone again.

If mostly beforehand we were talking about Estonians as a nation then let us now focus more to the state. What are the things that come to your mind when asked about Estonia as a state?

(R): We keep mixing the two together anyway.

(S): A bear.

(K): SPA's, Estonia came up with it, but anyhow it associates with Estonia. I cannot, we will go home all very depressed as we keep praising Estonians all the time.

(G): Islands.

(R): Yes, they took away our Roņu (Ruhnu) island.

(G): It was never in Latvian territory. I always thought so until I went there on an excursion.

(K): Yes, of course, just because Estonians were telling the story. Latvians would be telling you a different story.

(G): No, no, they were fighting with Sweden about it not with us. It is that Roņu island is closer to Latvian territory but it has never been owned by Latvia. And I was shocked when I found it out. It is just a stereotype.

(M): Munamāgi, Narva.

(R): Yes, Narva is full of Russians. The same as in Latvia is Daugavpils versus Russians.

(M): Tartu University.

(R): Yes, Terbata, Terbatas street in Riga.

(D): There is the food called Kama, I guess. It is similar to kite flakes but it is grinded into a powder. It also comes from Estonia.

(M): I have never heard of it.

(G): Me neither.

(D): It is very strange and infrequent to see in Latvia.

(S): Where did you see that?

(D): I bought it in Rimi. It was very popular before independence.

(R): I remember the deficit in Soviet times, the chewing gums, "Kalev"!

(G): Yes, "Kalev", I also just remembered

(R): The only Soviet chewing gums.

(G): And you could get them only in Estonia.

(K): "Vana Tallinn"

(G): Yes the liqueur.

(D): The strange gum candies.

(G): And also there were candies with marmelade inside. Sometime in Latvia there were not such sweets.

(M): They also have much better roads than in Latvia although it is said that there is one road going through.

(R): Yes, I also went in Ottepeaa and before Valka there are so many holes. And suddenly you drive into Valga and simply everything is nicely arranged, everything is marked, new. Drive further and it is the same borderland as our's but there everything so nice, marked middle line and reflectors on the side.

(G): Actually, returning to the previous questions, what do Estonians think about Latvians, they actually do think that we have bad roads.

(M): Yes, but it is valid.

(G): As they have said it themselves that as soon as you come into Latvia it is like...nothing better up till Riga. Yes it is just because our Via – Baltica money has been wasted thanks to... (*showing the picture of the Minister of Transport A. Šlesers*).

(K): I have another association with biathlon.

(S): I have another association: good management. Not just on the government level but also about traffic, that they have high penalties. That they not just come up with laws but they also establish them.

(D): Yes, they think all the things through.

(G): Yes, they do the things through. Not just come up with something.

(R): It is also connected with rationality. For example, the biathlon they had it also before but it has raised into world level only in recent years...that they have golden medals, the two last Olympics that they are the leaders, that they know that there will be medals. And they have thought like that...what we have, where we invest the money. We have snow and we have a base where we can make tracks and all that. Let's develop skiing. But in Latvia we invest in all the sports. Team sports they have in quite a low level but at the same time it is sports which needs the most investments. For example, the hockey, it is an expensive sport. We have a bobsleigh base from Soviet times, so we should invest in that. Not that we invest in all the sports in the row, as we want all of it, which seems un-rational in the country with 2.5 people living in it. While they concentrate just on skiing and do everything to have it in high level.

(G): And that is the determination which we talked about earlier.

(D): Yes, the fact that they can structure better their priorities than the neighbouring countries and they focus on an individual more. In that way they they make the welfare. Not that to the whole nation in general but that they want that this pensioner and this teacher live better. And thinking about these single units...

(S): Another association with Estonia is Hansabaka.

(R): It is Hansapank.

(M): Why with Estonia?

(G): Because Hansapank was firstly from Estonia.

Do you have any explanation to your assumptions that Estonians are more rational, better management, why do they think more about society?

(D): It is because they do not try to accommodate some existing, popular accepted in States or Western Europe model, to take some ready model and slightly change it and then think that the state will work. They look and try to make everything from zero. They do not use very popular previously adopted systems.

But could it be said that their actions are so different because they are more Northern and Latvians – Baltic?

(D): Yes, it is...after all the peregrination of the nations and languages and cultures. The cultures are totally different and also the sense of values is different.

So would you say that you seeing Estonians as slightly different is mainly because of culture differences?

(S): I definitely think that the help from Finland was critical for state health so that there would not be two wealthy men starting their business in the level of the state. So that they had the assistance at once after the changes. I think it greatly influenced both their moral health...as I think you do require assistance to stand up. We were left more on our own, so we tried to get out of our crazy experience on our own. It was good not just because they got financial investments but also Finland was as a healthy example and the cooperation helped them to find it as a healthy model. Leaving such a traumatic period it is difficult suddenly, just to take some Latvians from outside...everyone had had such a bad experience that no one knew what and how to do. So I think for Estonia it was the most crucial moment that Estonia had the big brother who adopted them.

(M): I guess also in the Soviet times they already had some cooperation, so Estonia was closer with Finland.

(K): Yes, but theoretically we could not have any cooperation, as on one side there was the same and on other side as well - the same as us.

(R): I think the unity...for example, in the Soviet times...the massive difference between languages, that in for Estonians other languages come more difficult. In all the languages they speak the same. That they have always talked Russian so badly, in some way it has united them. They have been more united already in the Soviet times. My intuition says to me, that it was easier to Russify Latvians but Estonians...they can not be russified so simply. Their identity, the specifics of language

and also imagine a situation...when in the office the cleaning lady is Russian and the three other people working there are Latvians. And they flirting with her will talk Russian between themselves...do you understand? And that is how it is...that is how the society forms to be much more united. Well, ok in the 88, 87 we became more united but before there has been very big division. That could be the reason why in the 90'ties they did not have to pull everything to their own side. Not like Latvians, like dogs run all around one thing.

(S): We are too hospitable.

(R): We are too tolerant. That is again some culture difference that they are not afraid, they feel ok to make someone upset, for example, Russians, as Estonians do not care what will anyone think.

(G): I would like to say that firstly I think we have historical differences. History of Estonia is different from Latvian one. I am not such a big expert on deportations but I think Latvia was cleansed a bit more than Estonia. Which in general, I once talked with my friends, that actually we all are like leftovers as all the intelligence was sent away or killed. Anyway, I think Estonians were not killed in so big numbers which means with each ethnic cleansing you scare the nation. And Latvian is scared, if we just take how Latvians were killed after the Second World War, of course, it is being inherited to the next generations. And also historical traditions. I think that Latvians are more individual they will defend themselves more, while Estonians are more family orientated...they have a bit different traditions, I think. The feeling of unity I think there is bigger. But mostly I think it is historically based.

Maybe you can mention what is common for both nations and countries as we have been mostly talking about differences?

(M): Baltic Way.

(R): Yes, Estonians came to help us in Independence fights on 1919. Although they wanted us to hand over Ainaži for that.

(G): But that is ok.

(R): Yes, but they had planned it all out, they wanted a lot for this joke...well, that they helped us. And since then...that was the first moment when we were united and it was also the last.

(M): They wanted to lend us some money. We both have singing festivals.

(S): I think we have similar problems in social and economic spheres and the solutions which we are looking for. Although, when I talk about the philanthropy programs Estonia is usually one or two years ahead. But at the same time the problems are similar which we are tackling.

Do you feel the unity of Baltic States?

(K): Yes, I think maybe currently not so much but if you are somewhere else then there is.

(R): At least they know where you come from.

(M): Yes, also that but when I am traveling then if there is someone from Baltic States it is more conjunctive.

(D): Yes, people do not know Latvia, Lithuania separately, if you say Baltic States, then they know. And I think from the Baltic States most often they know Eesti.

(M): No, I would say Lithuania is the most popular.

(R): No, But Estonians as well, as their previous Foreign Affair minister, current president worked very well with PR of Estonia. Also V.V. Freiberga later as well, but before that he was very bright. It just proves that in such posts you should put people who have lived outside...I mean immigrants.

We talked very briefly about it previously, but I would like to return to the terms as Estonia – the Northern country.

(D): While you are in Latvia, Lithuania or Estonia the differences among the Baltic States are more explicit. As soon as you are outside these countries, then Baltic States are as common element. But while I am in Latvia I do not feel the Baltic unity, I rather feel Estonia being the Northern country, the cold, economically developed, stable state while Latvia and Lithuania unsuccessful European countries.

(S): At the same time from my work experience and also the ex Hansabanka president Ingrida Bluma was saying that often Latvians and Estonians agree on something at the same time Lithuanians do totally something different, which is not even economically beneficial. But that often Latvians and Estonians could agree upon something. I do not say that it is always like that.

(G): Probably this example is unique but I also think that Latvia and Estonia can cooperate much better, for example, the banks than with Lithuania.

(S): Lithuanians seem to be more on their own.

(M): I do not really feel any unity between Baltic States. I have never had with Estonians...as much as I have worked with Lithuanians it has been very simple and easy. I think also historical Baltic States have never had any real cooperation. There is also no real need. One is a small country and the other one is the same small country.

(S): I think we can separate the business relations and informal ones. As I think informal relations are better with Lithuanians – it is more fun and so but work relations – really productive ones have been mostly with Estonians.

(D): Currently Estonians are trying to get Latvian doctors to Estonia. They have funding from the government, so there are courses for the Latvian doctors.

(G): Well, at this point, I do not think it should be very difficult to get the doctors to Finland.

(R): Yeah, but most likely most of the Estonian doctors have gone to Finland to work and now government...because there really is the campaign calling the doctors to go to Estonia to work, as it

is close and they pay all your travel expenses, twice a year you get to fly back home....everything has been worked out.

But if you think of it, all three of us do not have anything in common just the fact that we were beaten by Russians. Estonians are Finno - Ugric, also they look slightly different.

(S): But at the same time compared to Spanish or Italians...or Africa...we are very similar.

(R): Lithuanians...imagine, they are actually Polish, different cultural roots.

(M): But language is similar.

(K): I think Estonians want to be more Nordic country as it is more prestige if you say that you are a Nordic State or Scandinavia, together with more developed countries such as Sweden and Finland. I think it just lifts the self-confidence of Estonians. As what is Baltic's – Baltic's are just a stepchild left by Russia.

(R): But you see self-suggestion works! They were thinking that they are Finns and became Finns.

(S): I think Latvia can be Nordic State the same as Estonia. As ok, you say you are from Latvia, do not know where that is, do not know where is Baltic States so the next thing you say is across the sea from Sweden. Well, at least that is how I say. I do not associate with Belarus or that we have border with Russia.

(D): It is strange as Estonians have followed the Scandinavian example with their social, medical and political system.

(R): But that is the thing that they took it as a strategy starting from the nineties, to be similar to the Nordic States and they are consequently following the root. But we are shaking and...But there they say, let's take Aljoshka down and they do not care if Russia does not give gas after that. While we are thinking...

Do you follow the news and information in media about Estonia.

(K): Well the main events but not very deeply.

(G): I was following the story about the story about the bear from Ruhnu.

(R): Only if there are elections, then Estonia is mentioned.

(M): Only if there are big events.

(K): If there is something on Internet site tvnet.lv or in the newspaper “Diena”.

(R): But can you mention any big stories which were in the Internet lately? I do not remember anything.

(S): Only as much as there are in the news.

(K): Well, last year the statue issue.

(R): Yes, that can be as an example. Yes, when there was the taking off of the statue then everyone was following that.

But in general could you evaluate the information about Estonia, is it positive, negative or neutral?

(K): Those are the important news. The same as about rest of the world. More global or something very specific as the story on the bear. The news as such as just clamor about something.

(M): Yes, the weather and sport news are every day about Estonia.

Could you list places popular people which you know in Estonia?

(S): Lennart Meri.

(G): Anne Veski.

(K): Well known ones...I know Smiguna the skier.

(D): Vanilla Ninja or something, they had some strange girl band. From the places Neering. I do not know.

(M): No it is in Lithuania.

(K): I could name some sportsmen but i have forgotten them all.

(R): Tormis, Ernesaks. A popular choir conductor. It is professional men choir the only one in Baltic States.

(G): I can name different towns: Kurresaare, Valga, Tartu, Narva, Voru, Leigo.

(D): I do not know any geographical places or people.

(M): I just know Estonian male name Heiki.

When was the last time you were in Estonia?

(G): Last year. I went there for work, in Saaremaa, I guess it was February.

(K): I was in 2006, at Christmas. We went hitchhiking there to Tallinn...it was spontaneous trip. Three or four days, it was very nice.

(D): I was going through Tallinn, as I was going to Sweden. In an excursion I have been some 2 or 3 years ago. We just visited few towns.

(M): I went at this New Year. We went not far across the border, we wanted to go skiing but the hill was closed. So we just came back.

(R): During the year I go to Estonia approximately ten times because of work then usually we go Tallin, Tartu or Parnu. Then I do not see any reason to go in an excursion in addition.

(S): I guess I went in the end of summer or autumn and I went to Tallinn. I just remember a very nice cafe in Tallinn old city. I could go there just because of the cafe.

(D): I wanted to mention that when I went to Estonia it was cleaner and spruced up.

(M): Yes, i could say the same, although the skiing place was closed but it looked very neat. You could say it is not Latvia. It looked very nice.

(G): I guess what is obvious usually is what we mentioned already before are the good roads.

(R): Yes, there is something more European.

(G): You can also see where you are driving, not like in Latvia you just drive down dark field.

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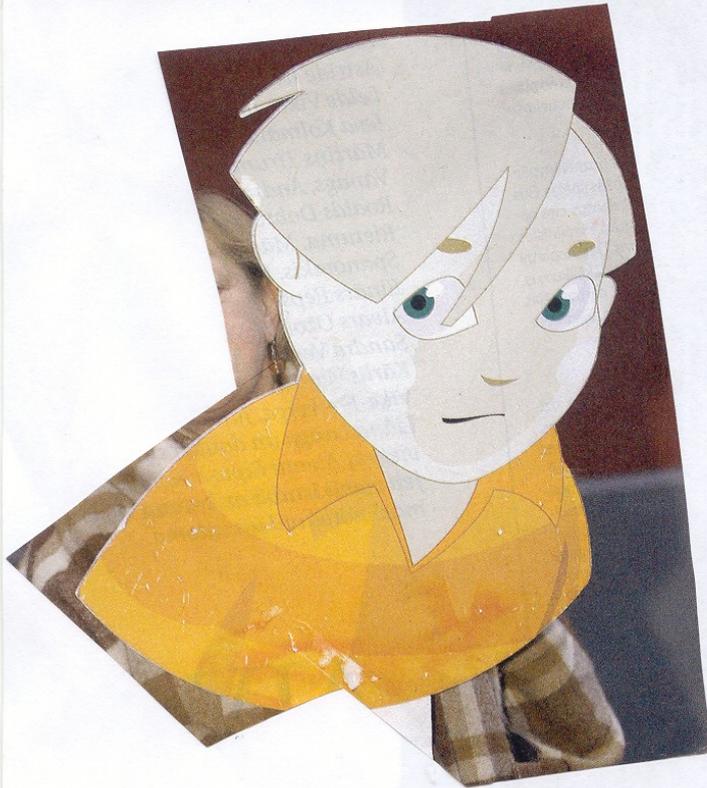
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Appendix 3. Analysis of Pilot Focus group

Riga, 2005

With the focus group I was planning to find out answers to following questions:

- 1) Which are the stereotypical attitudes Latvians hold towards Estonians and Estonia?
- 2) What are the main influence sources for people's attitudes?
- 3) What kind of impact does the respondents' social environment (attitude towards Estonia among family members, friends and media) have on their evaluation?

Putting together the group there are certain criteria of participants which are following:

- 1) Age: 20 – 30 years old (socially, economically active)
- 2) Sex: 2 men, 2 women
- 3) Education: at least secondary education
- 4) Additional requirements: have been in Estonia and consumes printed media.

For the participants of the group I have chosen socially and economically active people in age group from 20 – 30. At this age people most often travel and meet new people from different countries, create perceptions of other nations and cultures mostly based on their personal experience. The main criterion of the group participants apart from age limit was also previous visit to Estonia. The time when Estonia had been visited wasn't set, as different time spent in Estonia and experiences there and meeting Estonians might provide with distinctions in attitudes. Group consisted of 4 participants – two girls aged 25 and 26 and two men aged 30 and 20. All participants were from capital of Latvia Riga, working and two of them in addition studying in university.

Stated questions in the group were generally divided into two parts: ones about Estonians and other about Estonia. Participants of the group were also informed by moderator, that firstly there is going to be discussion about Estonians as nation and secondly about Estonia as country. At the same time, of course both themes overlapped although terms Estonia and Estonians were not used as synonyms. The main questions for the group were stated so, that people would use different descriptions, tell their experience, believes, things they have heard.

Estonians

Already in the first assignment of the group – telling the impressions that associate with word ESTONIAN came out the most used and typical descriptions heard between people and in media of Latvians about Estonians.

“Slow, pale, considerate, blond, quite, skiers” (all participants)

There were also participant, who later strictly distinguished public opinion from her own experience.

“Maybe Estonians associate to me in some way with good luck and success....” (Ieva)

Although dominant perception was that Estonians are slow and inadequate at the same time success of Estonia and being more developed (which is going to be discussed later) was often mixed with Estonian as nation characteristic.

“...Estonians consider themselves as one step further and more developed than Latvians... Estonians are always self-confident about themselves.” (Mareks)

“...I would also say that Estonians are more arrogant...” (Kristaps)

This brings in a new aspect of how group participants representing Latvians see Estonians. Not only as unsuccessful, slow and inadequate, but totally opposite characteristics – more developed and arrogant, being proud. In the process of the group this assumption greatly was connected with economic development and success of Estonian state. Estonia has economically developed further than Latvia and Estonians have reason to be proud. This association, for me personally, seems also more logical as it seems clearly tied to the image of the state.

Another interesting cultural characteristic that was mentioned is that Estonians are goal-directed.

“Yes, Latvians and Lithuanians are quicker...here and there...they more brisk about. If things don't go as planned they can quickly do it some other way. But Estonians, if they have a vision or idea how the things are supposed to be then that's the way they will move...it is very difficult or even...to convince them...they don't change their opinion and motion., (Mareks)

This quality is mentioned again, when discussed Estonian economic success. So in the way, it makes one think that slowness that is the most used characteristic for Estonians in Latvia is in a way tied to their slow but clear goal-orientation which assures success.

“...we can see that there are Lithuanians forcing into our market with “Maxima” and from other side also Estonians. I don’t have very specific knowledge where Latvians...although we have quite big companies. There are separate companies...but there isn’t a big network. But they (Estonians) cover certain departments.” (Mareks)

At the same time, asked, of cultural closeness, all the members of the group considered that Estonian culture seems closer to Latvians than for example Lithuanian. Difference of language, which I expected would be considered, in this context wasn’t mentioned at all.

“We are three, Latvians, Lithuanians and Estonians. Latvians, we are in the middle, geographically, then Latvians are in a surrounding where is a little bit something from Lithuanians and Estonians. But more tendencies are towards to Estonians, more alike with Estonians rather than to Lithuanians. ., (Mareks)

„I think, Latvians are much closer to Estonians. I wouldn’t call Lithuanians Northerners. Latvians could be reckoned as northerners.” (Ieva)

If Estonians are considered as more successful then Lithuanians less developed, or as Mareks calls them “bazaar people”. Latvians being left in the middle, but anyway, rather sticking together with the more successful ones than the opposite.

Interesting distinction is that so called “weird Estonians” are not the same as the “successful” ones. The latter ones are usually personally known, friends from Estonia. Interesting was the distinction between “what I think personally” and “what is believed by society”.

“I guess that there is a public concept about Estonians as quite strange and weird people. Exactly as we described before, that they are slow and silent and like that a bit backwards. But personal perception is quite opposite to that... all the Estonians that I have met are very clever, active and totally not weird or backwards but very politically correct or accurate. And all of them have been very successful. That is one thing and other that they are very united and solid and keeping together.” (Ieva)

This can be considered as given reason or explanation for such variant associations towards Estonians. The image of strange and slow Estonians is greatly cultivated by jokes. When asked to tell a joke about Estonians, all the participants were able to tell at least one. And they all had the same characteristic – Estonians as slow. Jokes which greatly are distributed not only among people but also from media are seen as the main source of creating this particular image of Estonians.

“...it’s probably from the anecdotes that they (Estonians) are always joked about and made fun of that they are slow and don’t ever get the point. I laugh about it myself but I don’t feel it in contact with Estonians although in conversations like that and jokes I take part and cultivate this perception about Estonians but it is rather what people are talking about but from my personal experience I can’t really agree with this perception.” (Ieva)

“...I think all the neighboring nations have jokes of a nation next to them. I have heard that in America they have jokes about Canadians...that they call them; I don’t know what...and so on. But, that Estonians don’t tell jokes about us...well, they are telling jokes about Finns.” (Mareks)

Estonia

Associations with Estonia as the state greatly revealed not only groups’ first impressions (mainly as progressive, orientated to new technologies, IT, successful and erudite) but at the same time orientation and knowledge about the country (different Estonian products, companies, people).

„I cut out different logos and melody images for mobile phones. This associates with Estonia...all the internet and mobile technologies...I cut out crossword, I think it is an erudition and knowledge...and it is also what associates to me with Estonia...” (Ieva)

„So, I have rally car, Estonian rally, Marko Martin... Then ferry, Estonia is the biggest sea country, in passenger transport field. Then computers, internet, HansaBanka, and company “Cesu Alus”.” (Mareks)

„I cut out “Spilve” ketchup and “Aura” juice, because I think these are Estonian companies. And then I cut out Finish flag as I believe Estonia has very close collaboration with Finland. And this is “gorjachij Estonskij parenj” (the hot Estonian guy).” (Elina)

Estonia was mostly associated with different places and company names, which can greatly be connected with the associations that are brought forward later of success and economic development of the state.

If participants were asked to compare what is better or worse in both countries then mainly economic development and standards of living was mentioned.

“I think that Tallinn has developed much faster than Riga. The same ferry traffic...” (Elina)

„Development isn't, maybe standard of living.” (Kristaps)

“...in Tallinn there are some industries that have markedly developed much faster than in Latvia. For example, internet or media, all the internet sites or reality shows firstly happen in Estonia and only after some time in Latvia. I think, there are some definite spheres, for example IT where they are ahead, media.” (Ieva)

The assumption of Estonia having higher living standards cleared out also through drawings of Latvian and Estonian families that people were asked to draw. If no cultural differences were put forward then most participants (except one) drew bigger Estonian family than Latvian one. One participant stressed out that Estonians have not only bigger families but it has a greater meaning and value to them as well.

“I guess that Estonian families are bigger and I think the meaning of family is greater for Estonians...I don't know why I think so...but more than Latvians. And they have more children...I think.” (Kristaps)

“And I also have the feeling that in Estonia they have more children and that in Latvia everyone is more flashy, with cars and overdone, so called eccentric.” (Elina)

“I don't know...mum, dad and two children. Latvian family – mum dad and one child.” (Mareks)

“...Latvians and Estonians...that family is usually with one or two children and so on. But it isn't also as in Scandinavia...where it is more popular that there is only one parent. That family is quite classical, but, yes, I think there aren't any differences.” (Ieva)

Conclusions

Before carrying out the group I had put forward following questions that I wanted to receive answers to:

1. Which are the stereotypical attitudes Latvians hold towards Estonians and Estonia?

Answer to this question clearly came out through the entire group. Mainly question about associations, jokes and stories about Estonians revealed main stereotypes which described mostly Estonians as slow, quite and weird.

Although this was the dominant perception about Estonians at the same time success of Estonia and being more developed was often mixed also with Estonian as nation characteristic. Interesting distinction is that so called “weird Estonians” are not the same as the “successful” ones. The latter ones are usually personally known, friends from Estonia. Important was the distinction between “what I think personally” and “what is believed by society”.

As another characteristic connected with economic development was mentioned goal-orientated. This aspect was seen as one of the aspects of being slow but reaching the target, not getting of the set way.

2. What are the main influence sources for people’s attitudes? What kind of impact does the respondents’ social environment (attitude towards Estonia among family members, friends and media) have on their evaluation?

Concluding from the answers it can be seen that mostly peoples general attitude in greater perspective is created by social believes and cultivated perceptions, for example, jokes. Such social perceptions create background or tone how certain nation is being discussed in general. On other hand, people’s personal and social contact with other nation strengthens or weakens these believes. Personal contact with Estonians is not always automatically generalized to whole nation. There is distinction between “what people are talking about” and “what I have experienced”. At the same time these two perceptions exist side by side when people reveal their attitudes.

I had put forward two hypotheses, from which one was proven and other partly proven.

1) Image of state differs from the one about nation.

Question has been answered positively although several times positive and successful image of state was carried over and connected to nation. I can’t say that image of nation was strictly negative and

state positive or vice versa. Rather state has left very positive impression because of economic development and upswing of different industries. At the same time image of Estonians has been cultivated very strongly by media, jokes and stories, creating quite opposite perception. Also Estonians were evaluated as arrogant and very much aware of their success and sharp development. In some way both perceptions come together and cover each other although being quite contradictory.

2) Latvia and Estonia have different cultural heritage to compare and bring out the distinctions.

Group revealed that they don't see great differences in Latvian and Estonian cultures. Only once was mentioned different language and also that was done to show Estonian and Finnish close relations and not Latvian and Estonian differences. Although Baltic States were considered mainly as geographical name, connection between three countries was mentioned and it seems culturally stronger with Estonia than Lithuania.

In conclusion, I can assume that Latvians have strong and shared stereotypical perception about Estonians and Estonia. At the same time it can't be categorized strictly only as positive or negative but more mixed. The paradox rises that from one hand Estonians are seen as slow, quite, weird and strange but at the same time as proud, even arrogant and successful. Positive evaluation mainly comes from the successes and development of the country. In this so called "successful" category include people who participants know personally. Definitely image of Estonians as slow is very strong. It is mainly cultivated through jokes in media and by people telling stories to each other. It is interesting to stress out that more negative stereotypes are not coherent to personally known people. Slow Estonians mostly talked about in jokes is seen as some group of people where personally known ones don't often include. These are Estonians met by chance. At the same time slowness in some aspect is seen as a cultural feature – being more Nordic and on other hand as economic strategy – being goal-orientated.

Appendix 4. Analysis of Pilot In-depth Interviews

Tartu, 2005

Target group

1. Put forward target group was following:
2. Age: 20 – 30 years old
3. With at least secondary education
4. Have visited Latvia before
5. Reader of newspaper “Postimees”

Target group was chosen to be more homogenous. That would ensure to make more generalized conclusions. At the same time people aged 20 – 30 are usually active consumers and readers of media and printed press and being economically and socially active.

Together I have interviewed 3 people, out of them 2 women and one man.

L1.

„Minu nimi on L., olen 20 aastane, õpin materjali teadused, keemia suunas. Mind kindlasti huvitab reisimine, sport, tervislik sport, selle alla käib suusatamine, ujumine ja nii edasi, kindlasti lugemine, uute inimestega suhtlemine ja nii edasi.”

L2.

„Minu nimi on L. Olen 23, õpin Tartu Ülikoolis õigusteadust ja töötan Õiguskeskuses, tegelen oma erialaga, nii öelda. Vabal ajal käin suusatamas ja ujumine, olen üsna sportlane.”

K.

„K. olen, töötan, IT tugi ühes era firmas. Olen 22 aastat vana. Mind huvitavad ainult arvutid.”

Before carrying out the interviews I had put forward following research questions that I tried to receive answers to:

- 1) What is the attitude and relation towards Latvia and Latvians?
- 2) What are the main sources of attitudes and stereotypes?
- 3) How much social environment influences peoples’ attitudes?

Analyzing interviews following themes or angles of conversation came forward, which should bring out answers to above stated research questions.

- 1) Latvia
- 2) Latvia versus Estonia
- 3) Baltic States (together, separate)
- 4) Latvians versus Estonians
- 5) Main sources of influence

6) General usage of language

Latvia

If asked about associations towards Latvia then mostly people know the capital of the country Riga, where all of them have been before and have heard from other people or media. Riga as capital is main place where wider events take place, where most of the information comes from and greatest tourism attraction place in the country. At the same time popular tourism places such as Jurmala, Sigulda and others are associated with Latvia.

Iseloomusta Lätit, mis asotsiatsioonid tulevad meelde?

“Riigiga kindlasti tuleb meelde kohe Riia linn...pealinnaga meenub mulle see, et see on väga tore pidutsemiskoht ja shoppamiskoht. Seal on palju odavamaid asju kui meil...ja seal ülikoolid on, et Riia ülikool ja siis on ka selline filiaal Stokholmi Ülikool Riias.. Ja, siis Sigulda on mul ajaloost tuttav. Seal oli suured võistlused või oli Sigulda pealik nadu meil oli...meil oli...Lembitu, oli teil keegi teil selline ka.” (L1.)

“Sigulad, Jurmala, minu jaoks ja Riia loomaaed, aga nad ei ole rahvusvahelised. Minu jaoks, mis minule kohe tuleb meelde...” (L2.)

“...hall ja suur...Suur just Riia pärast. Täitsa hullu maja...minul on alati meeldinud see suur jõgi, Riia keskel. Eestis ei ole nii suurt.” (K.)

Latvia is seen as interesting for tourism and visiting place. Two of the interviewed had spent some holidays and vacations in Latvia before.

Kas Läti sind huvitab kui turismi koht?

“Ma tahtsin minna sellel talvel Riiga ja tutvuta selle kultuuriga. Kuna ma telekast olen näinud, et Riia linn on palju kiidetud kui turismi-tipp kohane ja turism seal on väga kõrge, turismist tuleb palju raha see on niigi nagu Tallinnas.” (L1.)

“Kindlasti, just see suvel selle liiva ranna ja mere pärast huvitab.” (L2.)

“Sigulda...see on üks asula, linn isegi, kus on väga huvitav. Seal on palju asju mida vaadata, ja palju mida huvitavat teha...Jah huvitab, mina juba käisin oma sõbrannaga ja lähäks veel, aga nüüd lähäks midagi muud vaatama. Just suvel käisime Siguldas ja Cesis, ja kalalinna vaatamas.” (K.)

Both women as strong association with country mentioned Latvian president Vaira Vīķe – Freiberga. She was seen as successful, with strict and strong character and as a good leader, creating positive image and attitude also towards the state represented.

„...president on naisterahvas, väga tugeva iseloomuga, mis mulle meeldib...ma olen joonistanud niisuguse tugeva naispresidenti, mis võimust juhtida riiki koos parlamentiga, kuigi ma kardan, et parlament seda riiki ei juhi või valitsus.“ (L1.)

„...minul on praegu väga hästi positiivsed mälestused teie presidendi tõttu, sest ma leian, et teie president on üks parimaid riigipäid maailmas hetkel. Et, sellepärast ma olen kohutavas vaimustuses Lätist ja sellest suulisest, mis ma olen teie presidenti käest, olen just läbi tema kõnede või tõguvuste tunda saanud.“ (L2)

As also noted by L2. politicians, their decisions and acts represented in media can be considered as important indicator of attitude and information level about the country and they do influence relation.

„Meedia, kahjuks, sellega me puutume kohe kokku ja sealt ma tõmban oma järeldused. Ja teie poliitikud. Mind ennast huvitab väga välispoliitika, sest mina hinndan alati sellest, mis seal toimub teie ühiskonnas, kuidas te lahendate probleeme, probleemid vene rahvusega ja niisugused asjad.“ (L2.)

Latvia vs Estonia

More general description or characteristic of Latvia provided by answers, that Latvia is seen as very similar to Estonia, that it is competitive and fastly developing. This greatly comes to comparisons of two countries.

„Ma arvan, et Läti on väga sarnane Eestiga.“ (L1.)

„Et, ma arvan iseloomustan Lättit, jaa, et on väga võistlik üksus, et on kiirseti arenenud riik...Riias käies nägin ma, et Riia on ikkagi võrreldes Tallinnaga metropol ja suurlinn, baltikumi keskus...Miks ma arvan, et on väga tugeva majandusega riik on see, et mu isa räägib, et Riias on see, kuidas majandus areneb ja mis kompanid sinna tulevad... Kõik need assotsiatsioonid mis Lätis mul on, et Läti on nii palju suurem.“ (L2.)

„Suur just Riia pärast. Täitsa hullu maja...minul on alati meeldinud see suur jõgi, Riia keskel. Eestis ei ole nii suurt. Noh see, nii palju kui mina seal olen käinud kogu aeg kõik on niisugune hall. Noh, see ei ole halvem, aga lihtsalt kui iseloomustada värviga siis on hall, Eesti on rohkem niisugune rohakas ja kollakas, minu jaoks, aga Läti on hall.“ (K.)

Two interviewed characterised Latvia with word „big“ and one with colour comparison - „grey“. If big is mostly meant for Latvia and Riga being geographically bigger than Estonia and Tallinn, then association „grey“ can be considered with more negative connotation, although interviewed himself denied it. Colour grey could be interpreted as something not exciting, more depressing and dull. Another interesting aspect how Latvia is seen and which further is being carried over also to Latvian mentality is bigger number of Russian speakers living in Latvia.

„Ja minule tundub tegelikult veel, et Lätis on rohkem venelasi kui Eestis. Ma ei tea kas see vastab statistiliselt ka, aga see on minu arusaamisest...mina olen nii arusaanud, et rohkem räägitakse ja televisioonis, kui näidatakse midagi siis näidatakse vene keeles, ei räägita nii palju Läti keeles.“ (L1.)

„...erineb see, et kõik räägivad vene keelt ja, et töö keel ei ole inglise keel ja rahvusvaheline seltskond, näiteks, et Eestis oleks see inglise keel aga seal on vene keel.“ (L2.)

Asked to compare and evaluate relations between two countries respondents admitted that Latvia and Estonia rather compete between each other economically than do cooperation.

„Ma arvan, et kindlasti on konkurents just majanduslikkus mõttes. Nii nagu Lätis kirjutatakse hirmuga või alati võrreldatakse kõike. Ma arvan, et, jah, niimodi valitsuse tasandil. Väga võimalik, et meelitame selle firma Eestisse oopis...Mina ei taha öelda, et te olete paremad meist, ma ei saa öelda midagi halba.“ (L2.)

„Ma arvan, et kindlasti konkureerivad. See on kindel, et ikka tahatakse olla parem kui naaber, onju. Seda kindlasti.“ (K.)

„Kindlasti on konkurents, rohkem on konkurents kui koostöö.“ (L1.)

That appeared also in most of the answers when often such categories as better/worse, ahead/behind were used referring to both countries. Interesting example is answers of K. when asked to comment his drawing of Latvian and Estonian and Latvia and Estonia.

„Suu lahti (eestlasel) sellepärast, et Eesti on laulu rahvas. Tegelikult lätlased arvavad, et ka on laulu rahvas. Aga ma ei kuule neid laulmas... Olen kirjutanud siin, et Lätis on odav suits ja nad kopeerivad õlut. Sellest kopeermisest ma nüüd ei saa aru, et kes siis kellelt seda õlut kopeerib. Eestis tuleb uus õlu, seda reklaamitakse, ilus, uus pudel, onju. Lähed Läti, teine kiri peal, samasugune pudel. Sisu on ka sama maitsega veel. Nüüd ei saa arugi, teil teeb seda Cesis, meil teeb Saku. Kumb siis mida teeb? Kas Cesis teeb õlut ja importib seda Eestisse või vastupidi...“ (K.)

Possibly that comparison between one's own home country and neighbouring country is not very objective but on the other hand this kind of comparison and competition is quite often represented also in media. Although countries are seen as competitors, at the same time Latvia is considered as lacking a bit behind. It might somehow correspond with previously provided comparison with colour, that Latvia is still grey, while Estonia is already blooming in green and yellow colours.

„Mina kui eestlane arvan, et Eesti on natukene eespool. Aga, ma pole kindel selles. Näiteks kui vaadata, kui võrrelda seda asja, et... kuidas vaadatakse milline on riik eespool ja milline tagapool, siis kindlasti hinnad. Näiteks, Lätis saaks praeguse palgaga paremini läbi kui Eestis saab... majanduslikult. Et võibolla sellest, see, et võibolla, et Läti keskmine palk on väiksem ja hinnad on ka sellepärast väiksemad. Aga mite oluliselt. „ (K.)

„...et võibolla see ongi nii, et me eestlased alame Lätit, nagu majanduse poolelt, et te tulete väga kiirest järgi, väga kiiresti, me võibolla tunneme ennast natuke liiga kindlalt seal ees, kuigi me ei tohiks tunda. Ma arvan, et jõuab kohe järgi, kui ei ole juba sama.“ (L1.)

On the other hand political and economic closeness of both countries is seen as uniting and reason for cooperation.

„...mis Lätis toimub samamoodi asjas huvipakkuvast plaanis, meie selline sotsiaalne taust on sama ja Eestis oma arengus on sama ja me võiksime ju Eestis teada mis teil seal toimub, et teha teatud koostööd, aga kahjuks kui meil juba meedia ei kajasta piisavalt, miks siis me poliitilist koostööd ei tee...teie ju olete meile nii sarnased, ajaloolises plaanis ja arengu aspektis“ (L2.)

Mis riik on Eesti jaoks kõige lähedam?

„Läti ongi kõige sarnasem.“

Aga Soome?

„Soome on väga kaugel.“

On ju sarnane keel...

„Noh, keel, üks asi on keel onju, aga teine asi on just see majandus ja poliitika ja selline...poliitikat võibolla ei anna võtta niimodi aga majandus, majandus määrab väga palju.“ (K.)

Talking about the closeness or relation of countries as closest to Estonia mostly was mentioned Finland. One of the reasons why, is similar language and culture.

Mis on Eesti jaoks kõige lähedasem?

„Rahvusele on Soome, aga sellepärast sarnane, et meie keel on sarnane. Aga mina seda niimodi ei jaga, kuna mina ei ole kasvanud üles selle Soome televisiooniga. Eestlastel on niisugune roosa maa unistus on olnud kogu, huvitab mis Soomes toimub koguaeg, ise on raud eesriide taga vangis. Et see põhjaeestlaste jaoks on see, miks nad ütlevad, et, oh, Soome, sest nad olid kursis, nad nägid Soome talk shows'id, kõik nad teadsid mis seal ühiskonnas toimus. Läätti asju ju me ei ole näinud.“ (L2.)

„Sakslased ja soomlased. Soomlased eelkõige keele tõttu, sakslased eelkõige kultuuri kaudu. Et see kultuuriline, taust, need toidud mis meil on, on eelkõige tulnud Saksamaalt... jah, ma eestlasi näen soomlaste juurde. Kuna meie eesmärk on alati iseseisvust saati on olnud jõuda järele soomlastele. Et me oleme loonud endale sellise mulje, et tahame olla nagu põhjamaa.“ (L1.)

Baltic States (together or separate)

The aspect of closeness and relation to other nations and countries brings forward question of national identity. Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania before, during Soviet Union and after regaining their independence have been considered as one region – Baltic States. If identity of Balts was very alive and vivid in 90'ties, during fights for independence, then by now three Baltic States are more independent and unique in their national identity. Although, questioned people still referred to Baltic States as one unity, it was noted, that compared to 15 years ago this unity has weakened and lost its that time meaning.

Kas sa näed kolm Balti riiki kui üksust, ühte regiooni?

„Jah, aga varem see võibolla oli rohkem, eriti siis kui me baltikettis seisime. Aga nüüd iga üks võitleb ise enda eest. Nagu Eesti ei ole nagu üks, ja siis ei saa ka rääkida Balti riikidest, küll me oleme üks välisriikidele, suurtele, Ühisriikidele, Inglismaale või Saksamaale või Prantsusmaale. Nemad võtavad kindlasti meid kui ühte regiooni. Mina nii ei mõtle.“ (L1.)

„Ma tunnen seda väga tugevalt, see tõttu, et meil on ühine vaenlane, eksole.“ (L2.)

„Minul on rohkem küll niisugune kokkuhoiju tunne Balti riikide kohta. Ma just mõtlen selles mõttes, et õudsalt hea on kuulda, et jälle mingi, kuskil räägitakse Balti riikidest ühtsalt, mitte niimodi, et see, see ja see. „

Kas sa näed kolm Balti riiki koos, kui üksust, ühte regiooni?

„Mulle, tegelikult, Lätti ja Leedu jäävad kokku.“

Aga Eesti?

„Eesti üks.“ (K.)

Very interesting is aspect mentioned by L2., element that still keeps Baltic States also in their identity together is united enemy, in this sense Russia. Russian language and Russia is often mentioned both as uniting and at the same time with more negative feeling. That is going to be touched upon more also later. At the same time idea of Baltics as region for bigger countries is put forward and also one more time question of culture and language is touched upon. K. admits that Latvia and Lithuania seem very similar.

Kui pead võrdlema Lätti ja Leedut?

„Väga raske... võrrelda neid. Nad hoiavad nii kokku, et nad tunduvad ühesugused. Olen küll Leedus käinud läbisõidule. Nii, et ma leedust ei te praktiliselt midagi. „ (K.)

„Noh, meil koolis on natuke välja toodud, et me oleme rohkem nagu soomlased, põhjamaalased aga ei ma tegelikult, jah, ma eestlasi näen soomlaste juurde.“ (L1.)

„See kindlasti tuleneb sellest, et meil on keel sarnane ja me oleme oma arvates väga rahulik rahvas. Me tahame olla sarnased, ma tahaks olla skandinaaviliku riigi kodanik ja ma loodan, et me jõuame sinna aga see ju ei tähenda, ei väljusta seda, et me Lättiga ei saa läbi või ei tea, et Lätti ei võiks olla samasugune riik, skandinaavuslike väärtustega.“ (L2.)

After regaining independence in 1991 Estonia both economically as well as ideologically became more connected to Scandinavia, especially Finland. That shows also in above quoted answers, that in some way Estonia is seen as more scandinavian and nordic, or as that is the ideal where Estonia would like to be. While Latvia doesn't have such distinct self-representation.

Relationship between Latvia and Estonia in more figurative style was revealed also answering to question about what animal does Latvia and Estonia associate with.

Kui eestlan ja lätlane oleks loomad, kes nad oleksid?

„Kass ja koer.“

Kes oleks kes?

„Oleneb olukorrast, kes tahab kellele ära teha. Eestlane on rohkem kass. Lätti ajab taga Eestit.“ (K.)

„Eesti... rebane, niisugune habras, väike aga samas väga kaval ja suudab enda eet seista.“

Aga Lätti?

„oo... nii raske öelda, nii sarnane ju. Ta ka on mingi kasslane, kes ei ole kõige võimsam kasslane, mitte lõvi ega tiiger aga samas selline väga...paindlik, puuma või keegi.“ (L2.)

„Eestlane..hmm...koer. Koer võib olla töökas, koer võib olla alalhoidlik, magada maas nagu ma ei tea kes, temal on võimalik pikutada sinna ja tänna. Lätlane on pigem kass...kaval, selline...aga samas intelligentne, selline õrnake, kohati, hästi valiv.“ (L1.)

Comparisons given above from one side show that both countries are seen very similar (when seen as cattish or crafty). Given names can be connected with quick ability to develop and stand up economically after collapse of Soviet Union. On other hand contradiction as cat and dog once again shows competition between two countries, which was noted also beforehand.

Latvians vs Estonians

As next category of themes I would like to describe attitudes and viewpoints concerning nationality – Latvians. I assume that in some way it might differ from attitude towards state. As very important aspect I see personal contact or acquaintanence with members of particular nation. I assume that this is also one of the biggest attitude influencers which is going to be discussed further on.

„Jah, on minul sugulased Lätis, tädi ja tema perekond. Tädi abiellus lätlasega ja nad elavad Riias.“ (K.)

„Jaa, minul on seal üks sõbranna, kellega ma kohtusin seal suvel Lättis. Ma kohtan vahepealt suve laagrites poliitika teemalistes ja siis ma saan paljude lätlastega tutavaks... eelmine aasta ma elasin naabrina koos kahe Läti tüdrukuga.“

Kas Concordias lätlastega sõbrustasid?

„Jah, oli küll, meil oli läti tüdrukud väga toredad. Nad õpivad eesti keelt ära, ma ei...uskumatu.“ (L2.)

„Otseselt sõbrannasid või sõpru ei ole. Ainult minu sõbranna isa töötab Riias, aga minule lähemalt ei ole keegi, ma mõtlen noori inimesi, kes on töötanud...“ (L1.)

Characteristics to nation is usually given in comparison to their own or other nation.

„Ma selle peale mõtlesin varem ka, aga ma ikkagi arvan, et nad on väga sarnased meile eestlastele. Et, kui siis ainult selline streotüüp, et lätlased on natukene rohkem avatumad või emotsionaalsemad, sest nad elavad nattuke lõuna poole.“ (L2.)

„Lätlased on rohkem niisugused, et nad näitavad enda emotsioone välja, ja nendel on nii nagu ka leedukatel, tundub et nendel on slaavi hinge rohkem, et leedukad jäävad rohkem nende poolakate kanti, kuigi poolakad on ka hästi slaavikad. Pigem, leedukad tunduvad väga alalhoidlikud ja

tagasihoidlikud nagu eestlased aga lätlased on minuarvust tugevamad isiksused...see lihtsalt on mulje mis on minul jäänud... Et meie rahvused on täiesti erinevad, täiesti, iseloomud ka on erinevad.“ (L1.)

Interesting factor is noting the emotionality and openness of Latvians compared to Estonians, which is also labeled as being more Slavic by L1. That can be implied to earlier mentioned fact that in Latvia and Riga live more Russian speaking so called slavic people.

„...Ma arvan et nad (lätlased) kindlasti on sarnased eestlastega aga minul on niisugune mulje, et miks nad on äkki avatumavad, et tuleneb sellest, et Riias on nii palju venelasi.“ (L2.)

I believe that differences between nations can not be evaluated in categories better or worse. At the same time I would like to speculate that characteristic „slavic“in this context might have some negative meaning. On one hand it is because of historical events and Soviet Occupation after which tolerance and anything to do with Russian or Slavic was meant more negative than positive. On other hand, quotation by L2 about her father might represent that in speaking russian it is important that others in Latvia know that he is not russian speaking but foreigner using russian language to communicate.

„...tal on kindel koht, kus ta alati käeb, kus siis teenindajad juba teavad seda, et ta ei ole venelane, aga räägivad rõõmuga temaga vene keelt.“ (L2.)

Commenting on drawings made by respondents, both girls L1. and L2. noted similar characteristics of Latvian women, that they seem more outgoing, more feminine, using more make-up than estonian women. Possibly that is another element, how Latvians are more emotional and open and expressive.

„Ja välimuselt Lätist ma unustasin üelda, et mis on küll mida ma panin tähele Concordias, et Läti naine on väga julgelt naiselik, väga mini on popp ja ma ei tea kas nii on aga, selle ma panin tähele. Ja meikimine oli teistsugune, kui eestlastel. Et on tugev punane uulepulk ja kui meie kasutame bruuni uulepulka, nemad kasutavad punast. Selleks ma joonistasin ka, et üks on hullult mingitud ja suured soengud. Just soengud tavaliselt olid lokkilised ja...aga eestlane on niisugune...noh tead niisugune, tavaline, sirged juuksed, ilusti kammitud, siis meiki eriti näo peale ei pane, sest, noh ma ei tea, mis siin ikka meikida, variigi päeval siis meikib. See on vahe mida ma panin tähele, kui ma meenutan.“ (L2.)

„Aga lätlaste puhul, ma arvan, et on sellist naiselikust rohkem kuigi, jah, ok, räägitakse, et Eesti naised on ilusad ja nii edasi aga sellist sügavamalt intelligentsust ja naiselikkust on natuke rohkem.“ (L1.)

Interesting aspect characterising latvians is said by K. In some way aspect of competition is being touched again, as Latvians are labeled with word „envy“. On other hand characteristic "less tolerant" and „arrogant“ can be connected with also previously mentioned emotionality, although none of them are meant in positive sense.

Mis on kolm asja, mis tulevad meelde kuulde sõnu: lätlane?

„Ülbed....rassistid...tegelikult on ka“

Miks sa nii arvad?

„Ma räägin miks...selle homo paraadi pärast. Lätis tegid suur sõda selle vastu loobiti salatid ja asju...aga mitte selles mõttes, et rassistid, aga mitte nii tolerantsed kui on näiteks eestlased nende koha peal. Kuigi ka eestlased ei ole, on ju, aga sellest asja ei tounud, et loobiti seal munadega ja tortidega, ja selles mõttes.“

Miks ütlesid, et lätlased on ülbed?

„Selles mõttes, et nad väga palju munitavad eestlasi, aga ma ei pea silmas oma sugulasi, selles mõttes, et ma mõtlen üldiselt.“

„...aga lätlaste kohta, nii palju, et ülbe ja rassist võibolla ei ole täiesti õiged sõnad. Ei ole nii tolerantsed, on ju, ja ülbed. Aga see ei ole ülbus, aga äkki on kadetus.“ (K.)

L1 commenting her drawing of Latvian says that she sees Latvians more as tiny urban people, while Estonians as more rural people. In some aspect that can be seen as adequate to characteristics such as "arrogant" what K. mentioned.

„See on mingil määral see, et eestlane on see tugev maamees ja lätlane on selline pisike linna pois.“ (L1.)

L1 also mentions that both Estonian and Latvian she sees as leaders and intelligent. Here again I see link to competition for success and development, which was discussed earlier on.

„Kindlasti on nad liiderlikud. (Lätlane) hoolitsetud iseenda eest, ja pigem korrektne kui eestlane.“ (L1.)

Here L1. provides with some controversial characteristic such as Latvian being more „correct“, to what, for example, K. said before. Although I do not think that these contradictions can be generalised too much and translated too stright forward.

Also question of mutual (Latvian – Estonian) communication developes further theme of closeness of both nations. For me personally usage of Russian seems more natural in communication with other Baltic nations. In some way it reminds of past that three countries went through and many people in Latvia know Russian better than, for example, English. In early 90' ties for Latvians Estonia was known as non-Russian speaking country, which in some way still is remembered as some sort of stereotype towards it. Respondents admit, that today's younger generation can't speak Russian anymore and that might create new barrier in mutual communication. Although L2. admits that English is more international and widely spread language, which is seen as good resolution for communication.

„Ma arvan et meie vahel on keele barjäär, mingil määral. On inimesi, kes räägivad väga head vene keelt, aga ma mõtlen nooremat generatsiooni, et kuna me - noorem generatsioon ei räägi vene keelt, läti keelt hammuki mitte, siis ainukeseks võimaluseks on inglise keel, aga see nagu mingil määral aitab, aga minul on natuke barjäär, sellepärast, et ma tean et nad on nii ja naa, aga kuidas ma lähen nendega suhtlema, ja samas ma näen et nad on meile sarnased aga me ei suuda, raske rääkida.“

Mina alati leian seda imelikuks, et eestlased ja lätlased oma vahel räägivad inglise keelt, aga inglise keel ei tea kust tuleb...

„Jaa, see on väga imelik, et keeled on täiesti erinevad.“ (L1.)

Siis kui sina suhtled lätlastega, kas te rääkide vene keelt või inglise keelt?

„Ei mina räägin inglise keelt. Mina ka ei räägi vene keelt.“

Kas see mingil viisil ei tekkita distantssi teie vahel?

„Ei, pigem inglise keel on kaasaegne ainus niisugune totaalselt rahvusvaheline keel mida me kõik kuuleme pidevalt telekas ja muusikast. See on niisugune lahendav faktor.“ (L1.)

Main sources of influence

As I mentioned before and how several quotations have showed there can be marked off two main sources of influence. One of them is friends and relatives as well as personal experience and second is media.

Relatives and friends have great influence both in creating attitude, by passing information gained or experienced by them further and making one pay attention to certain events or themes, which might not interest one otherwise.

„Tähendab, ma arvan, et...siis kui minul ei oleks seal sugulasi, siis ma arvaksin teist moodi Lätti kohta. Kuigi algus ei olnud nii positiivne, nagu rääkisin. Ma arvan, et mind siis Lätti ei huvitaks üldse. Mind näiteks eriti ei huvita Soome või Rootsi. Vahepeal kuuled, et midagi toimub, aga mitte niimodi, et ma istun ja vaatan Soome kohta kõike uudiseid.“ (K.)

„Aga, see, et ta (isa) suhtub positiivselt ja tal ei ole mingeid kokku põrkeid ja talle meeldib seal see aitab ja kasvatab positiivset suhtumist pigem minust.“ (L2.)

Mis on sinu suhtumise pea mõjutajad?

„Riia linna kohta kindlasti sõprade arvamused, et nad minule annavad seda esma mulje, millest tulevad minu arvamused... Kuigi minu sõprade hulgas kõik kiidavad Riia ööelu.“ (L1.)

As second biggest information giver and attitude influencer undisputably is media. Media today is greatest information provider and at the same time stereotype and attitude creator. As good example can serve already above used K. quotation describing Latvians. Where he is using quite strong characteristics such as „rasist“ and „arrogant“, which mainly come from one event that he had seen in TV.

Mis on kolm asja, mis tulevad meelde kuulde sõnu: lätlane?

„Ülbed...rassistid...tegelikult on ka...“

Miks sa nii arvad?

„Ma räägin miks...selle homo paraadi pärast. Lätis tegid suur sõda selle vastu loobiti salatid ja asju...aga mitte selles mõttes, et rassistid, aga mitte nii tolerantset kui on näiteks eestlased nende koha peal. Kuigi ka eestlased ei ole, on ju, aga sellest asja ei tomunud, et loobiti seal munadega ja tortidega, ja selles mõttes.“ (K.)

Also other answers show that many opinions and attitudes are coming from information provided by media.

„Kuna ma telekast olen näinud, et Riia linn on palju kiidetud kui turismi-tipp kohane ja turism seal on väga kõrge, turismist tuleb palju raha see on niigi nagu Tallinnas... Kindlasti meedia mõjutab, seda veel enam, kui ei ole otseselt kokku puutunud“ (L1.)

„Meedia, kahjuks, sellega me puutume kohe kokku ja sealt ma tõmban oma järeldused.“ (L2.)

Võibolla lätlastele tundub, et Eestis elu on parem?

„Mina ei ütleks, et paremini läheks, sellepärast, et tegelikult mina isiklikult seda ei märka aga nii palju kui meedia räägib selle kohta. Meedias ikkagi räägitakse, vaadake kui hästi läheb Eestil, on

ju, samas võibolla on Lätis samamoodi, et vaadake kui hästi meil läheb ja kui halvasti Eestil läheb.” (K.)

At the same time respondents think that there is not a lot of information about neighboring country.

„Kuna praegu mingeid luguseid ei ole, aga kahjuks on väga vähä neid. Ma arvan see on keel pärast, et me ei räägi lätti keelt. Sest meil on rohkem infot Soomest, onju, Skandinaaviast kui Lättist. Ja ma olen selle kohta mõelnud ka, et nii huvitaks väga palju teie riigi kohta, teie ju olete meile nii sarnased, ajaloolises plaanis ja arengu aspektist. Sellest on kahju veidikene. Meil on üks Lättis elav korespondent, kes ma tean raadios komenterib Lättis toimuvat. Aga samal ainuke, ta ei räägi lätti keelt, ta räägib eesti keelt.“ (L2.)

„Meie ajakirjanduses vist oli kõige rohkem juttu Läti kohta, selle Venemaa käigu kohta. Üldiselt meie ajakirjanduses on väga, minu arvus, Läti teema vähe peegeldatud.“ (L1.)

In reading articles or consuming information about Latvia comes forward another aspect. Again personal connection to people from the state and personal experience plays important role in actually showing interest in news about other country and nation. On other hand, ofcourse personal interest of each individual are important and elements that media is using for attracting its readers to certain articles, for instance, big pictures, funny title etc.

Kui palju paned tähele artikleid välismaa uudistega, selle vahel ka Lättist?

„Välisriikidest, ikka, mis päeva kajastuse teemad on. Lättist uudised tulevad ikka, tähendab, selles mõttes, et tänu sellele, et minul sugulased seal Lättis elavad, sellele, ma juba loen neid Lätti uudiseid, rohkem kui loen näiteks Leedust. Et Leedus suri see ja see peaminister, ta oli nii vanaks jäänud, see mind eriti ei huvita, aga kui Lättis midagi sellist toimub siis ikka, ikka loed läbi ja... noh.“ (K.)

„Jaa, mina alati panen tähele, kui on Saksamaa, sellepärast, et kui oled riigis elanud. Välispoliitika ka...Läti kohta on nii ja naa. Kui on näiteks suur pilt teie presidentiga, siis ma loen, eriti siis kui siin oli see, et kas Eesti president peaks minema Moskvasse, et siis mina lugesin ja jälgisin, mis nagu Läti ja nii edasi, ja nii edasi...Mina panen tähele uudistele mille kohta ma midagi tean, või ma tean seda inimest, aga nii sama, ma ei paneks küll tähele.“ (L1.)

General usage of the language

Analyzing the way language is used talking about other nation, stereotypes and assumptions about it, there are several elements and details that can be noticed. Firstly us and them usage obviously divides in Us – Estonians and them – Latvians.

„...nad (lätlased) on väga sarnased meile eestlastele...” (L2.)

Another aspect of division is when talking about US - Baltic States and THEM - rest of the world, Scandinavia or Russia. Especially it could be noticed in above quoted sentence of L2. of collective enemy – Russia.

„Me tahame olla sarnased, ma tahks olla skandinaaviliku riigi kodanik ja ma loodan, et me jüuame sinna... Ma tunnen seda väga tugevalt, see tõttu, et meil on ühine vaenlane, eks ole.“ (L2.)

„Et meie rahvused on täiesti erinevad, täiesti, iseloomud ka on erinevad... kuna meid ikkagi loetakse selliseks regiooniks... Mulle tundus, jäi mulje, et Läti president peab alt nagu ülejäänud Balti riigid, et nüüd ütleb, et ma ikka lähen sinna ja et peaks ju koos otsustama.“ (L1.)

Thirdly, people tend to part assumptions and general beliefs that they make as not theirs. For example, L1. during interview assumes and says that she thinks Latvians are more Slavic, but in the end of the interview she admits, that she has heard it from other people.

„Seda tean, et lätlased on rohkem sarnased venelastega kui eestlased. See on nagu see mida mina olen kuulnud.“ (L1.)

“Et, kui siis ainult selline streotüüp, et lätlased on natukene rohkem avatumad või emotsionaalsemad, sest nad elavad nattuke lõuna poole. Sellesse mina ise ei usu, aga niimodi inimesed räägivad.“ (L2.)

Conclusions

Before carrying out the interviews I had put forward following research questions that I tried to receive answers to:

1) What is the attitude and relation towards Latvia and Latvians?

Respondents in general show interest towards Latvia and especially Riga as tourism and visiting place. Latvia and Estonia are seen as similar, fast developing countries although Latvia is considered to be a bit behind in its development and achievements. All interviewed thought that between both countries there should be more cooperation as now dominant is competition mainly in economic field.

Latvians compared to Estonians were characterized mostly as more open, showing their emotions, less tolerant and even arrogant and Slavic. Emotionality in some way is seen as Latvians living more to south. While Slavic, because there are more Russian speaking people living in Latvia and

there is more contact with this culture. At the same time it was noted that Latvians and Estonians generally are similar. Although words as “arrogant”, “less tolerant” are not with good meaning, no specifically negative aspect or experience was mentioned. It was tied more to events happening in Latvia reflected and shown by media in Estonia.

Another aspect that was touched upon in interview was Baltic identity. Although respondents admitted, that in some way they feel closeness of Baltic States, it is not as crucial and important today as it was, for example in 90'ties.

2) What are the main sources of attitudes and stereotypes?

Interview analysis revealed that there are two main influence or attitude creating sources. Firstly it is personal contacts and acquaintances in Latvia or within Latvians. Some respondent even admitted that if he would not personally know any people in Latvia their attitude might be colder or there would be less interest, not meaning that it would be more negative. Many evaluations and thoughts about Latvia or Latvians that were put forward were heard from other people stories and their experiences.

Secondly, the biggest information source of course is media. Attitudes and level of information is greatly dependant on how much and what and how information is provided in Estonian media. Respondents admitted that there is not much information and news covering happenings in Latvia. There would be rather news from Scandinavian countries, but explanation to that could be close relation to Scandinavian economy as well as Scandinavia as example for Estonia.

3) How much social environment influences peoples' attitudes?

According to preciously mentioned source of influence – friends, relative and acquaintances, it can be concluded that social environment has very important role in creating peoples' assumptions, attitudes and stereotypes in long term. If some friend or close person has had good experience in other country one will tell it further to friends who will receive it as positive information.

On other hand joking and story telling between neighboring countries is known cross-cultural phenomenon. Stories and jokes within certain society and their cultivation also through media create and keep stereotypes in peoples minds. People having actual connection or experience with other nation might break the ice and provide with alternative experience.

Appendix 5. “Diena” articles for the Discourse analysis

Igauni balso par “Repši”

(Estonians are voting for “Repše”- Latvian politician)

Author: Askolds Rodins

Publication date: 04.03.2003.

Igaunijā vēlēšanās uzvarēja nesen izveidotā partija Res Publica

Svētdien Igaunijā notika Rīgikogu (parlamenta) vēlēšanas. Uz 101 parlamenta deputāta vietu savus kandidātus pieteica 11 partijas. 5% barjeru pārvarēja sešas. Trīs no tām — Res Publica (28 mandāti), Reformu partija (19 mandātu), Tēvzemes savienība (7 mandāti) — definē sevi kā labējas vai labēji centriskas. Mērenā partija (6 mandāti) dēvē sevi par sociāldemokrātisku, taču tas neliedza partijai strādāt labējo valdībā. Abas atlikušās — Centra partija (28 mandāti) un Tautas savienība (13 mandātu) — ir kreisi centriskas. Atšķirībā no 1999.gada vēlēšanām parlamentā neiekluva neviena no divām t.s. krievu partijām.

Šīs ir pēc kārtas otrās Igaunijas parlamenta vēlēšanas, kurās piedalās aptuveni 58% balsstiesīgo iedzīvotāju. Latvijā Saeimas vēlēšanās šis rādītājs bija krietni augstāks — 69%. Taču ir lietas, kurās Igaunijas vēlēšanās saskatāma līdzība ar mūsu 8.Saeimas vēlēšanām.

Igaunijā ir savs [Jaunais laiks](#) — 2001.gadā dibinātā Res Publica, kuru vada bijušais galvenais Valsts kontrolieris. Ambiciozā un agresīvā partija solīja ētiskāku, caurskatāmāku un atbildīgāku politiku, korupcijas izskaušanu un noziedzības apkarošanu. Tā neapšaubāmi ir uzvarētāju partija, savās pirmajās parlamentārajās vēlēšanās kļūstot par līderi pēc mandātu skaita.

Igaunijā ir savs «[Jurkāns](#)» — Centra partijas līderis Edgars Savisārs, politiskā kraupainā avs, no kura dažas labējās partijas norobežojās jau vēlēšanu kampaņas gaitā. Interesanti, ka viens no viņa galvenajiem priekšvēlēšanu solījumiem bija progresīvā ienākumu nodokļa ieviešana — par to pašu runā arī priekšvēlēšanu [PCTVL](#) dokumenti. Šīs ir jau otrās parlamenta vēlēšanas, kurās Edgara Savisāra vadītā Centra partija ieguvusi vislielāko balsu skaitu (Res Publica apsteigta par 0,8%). 1995.gada vēlēšanās tā ieguva 29 mandātus, t.i., partija sasniegusi savu iespēju griestus. Patlaban arī nešķiet, ka to varētu iesaistīt jaunajā valdībā.

Igaunijā ir sava «Tēvzemīte» — no demisionējušā (pēc neveiksmes pašvaldību vēlēšanās) partijas līdera Marta Lāra vārda grūti atdalāmā Tēvzemes savienība, kas, tāpat kā radniecīgā Latvijas partija, teju nepalika aiz borta. Atšķirībā no mūsu TB/LLNK Lāram un Co ir arī vēra ņemami pozitīvi sasniegumi valdības darbā. Tomēr viņi, tāpat kā mērenie, uzskatāmi par šo vēlēšanu zaudētājiem, jo spējuši saglabāt tikai aptuveni trešo daļu no tā mandātu skaita, kas tiem bija iepriekšējā parlamentā.

Būtiskākā Latvijas un Igaunijas atšķirība — pilsonību ieguvušie neigauņi pārstājuši balsot (tas bija vērojams jau 2001.gada pašvaldību vēlēšanās) par etniskas ievirzes partijām. Savi nopelni te ir arī Savisāram, taču neapšaubāmi visvairāk to ietekmējusi krievu frakcijas izveidošana Sīma Kallasa vadītajā liberālajā Reformu partijā. Tas bija nopietns solis sabiedrības politiskās integrācijas virzienā un ir devis pozitīvus rezultātus. Perspektīviem krievu politiķiem radās iespēja tikt pie rezultatīvas darbības, savukārt vēlētajiem — uzgriezti muguru partijām, kas gaudulīgi aicināja balsot tikai par krievu politiķiem. Neko tamlīdzīgu diemžēl nav uzdrošinājusies izdarīt neviena Latvijas partija, pat [Latvijas ceļš](#), kuram bija daudzi priekšnoteikumi krievu vēlētajū uzticības iegūšanai.

Igaunijas parlamenta vēlēšanu rezultāti liecina, ka ziemeļu kaimiņi gaida no varas aptuveni to pašu, ko vēlētajū Latvijā. Res Publica panākumi liecina, ka krietnai vēlētajū daļai apnikusi «vecā vara» — pārāk daudz bijis skandālu, tika gaidīts vairāk, nekā tas reāli bija iespējams, it īpaši jau sociālajā jomā.

Labējo partiju pārsvars parlamentā faktiski nozīmē to, ka vēlētajū vairākums atbalsta Igaunijas iestāšanos Eiropas Savienībā (ES) un [NATO](#). Savisāra partijai nav noteiktas nostājas jautājumā par iestāšanos ES.

Turklāt nesens prominents Centra partijas biedrs publiski ieminējās, ka par dalību NATO būtu jārīko referendums. Tāpēc Latvijai būtu labāk, ja valdību veidotu labējās partijas, bet Savisārs paliktu bešā.

Jaunais Igaunijas parlaments ir tādā pašā situācijā, kādā rudenī bija mūsu 8.Saeima, — vēlētāji pateikuši priekšā savu gribu un tagad gaida atbildi. Jaunajam Igaunijas parlamentam, tāpat kā 8.Saeimas deputātiem Latvijā, būs jāveido koalīcijas, jāatrod kompromisi, jāizskaidro, kāpēc tomēr, kā izrādās, nav izpildāmi, vismaz ne tik drīz, visi pirms vēlēšanām dāsni bārstītie solījumi. Visbeidzot — neizbēgami nāksies likt vilties vēlētāju vientiesīgākajai daļai.

Igaunijai saka pārliecinošu jā ES

(Estonians say convincing yes to EU)

Author: Kristaps Pētersons

Publication date: 15.09.2003.

Tallinas krodziņš Scotlandyard svētdien bija pārvērties par neoficiālu Igaunijas premjera Juhana Partsa (centrā) vadītās partijas Res Publika štābu. Tajā Res Publika biedri un viņu atbalstītāji svētdienas vakarā sagaidīja referendumu rezultātus.

(foto: ULDIS BRIEDIS, DIENA)

Eksprezidents Lennarts Meri aicina latviešus sekot igauņu priekšzīmei

Igaunija, priekšpēdējā no kandidātvalstīm, kas svētdien balsoja referendumā par pievienošanos Eiropas Savienībai, 67% vēlētāju sakot jā, nobalsoja par iestāšanos ES un grozījumiem konstitūcijā, kas juridiski to Igaunijai atļaus izdarīt 2004.gada maijā, liecina īsi pirms pusnakts saskaitītās balsis. Pret dalību ES balsoja 33% vēlētāju. Igaunijas nacionālā TV pēdējos rezultātus sagaidīja jau ar ES himnas atskaņojumu.

Plkst.22 Igaunijas sabiedriskajā TV uzrunu tautai teica bijušais prezidents Lennarts Meri. Viņš atzinīgi novērtēja tautiešu balsojumu un vērsās pie «draugiem latviešiem» ar aicinājumu sekot igauņu priekšzīmei.

Eiroskeptiķi sakāvi atzina jau svētdienas rītā, taču uzsvēra, ka neatkāpjās no saviem uzskatiem par ES. Centra partijas priekšsēdētāja vietnieks eiroompimists Pēters Kreicbergs sestdien teica, ka Igaunijas eiropesimisti ir cilvēki, kas «dažādiem līdzekļiem meklē savu nišu politikā» un viņi nebūtu jāuztver par nopietnu opozīciju.

Igauņu politologs Andress Kesekamps sarunā ar Dienu pastāstīja, ka viņš bija prognozējis mazāku ES atbalstītāju skaitu, bet lielāku vēlētāju aktivitāti. «Laiks bija labs, tāpēc daudzi izvēlējās neiet balsot,» spriež politologs.

Līdz iecirkņu slēgšanai bija nobalsojuši 63,4% balsstiesīgo iedzīvotāju.

Diena svētdien apmeklēja 70.vēlēšanu iecirkni galvenokārt krievu apdzīvotajā Tallinas rajonā Lasnamē, kas iekārtots krievu licejā, un sastapa tur 21 gadu veco igauņu Kertu Harasmu. Viņš atzina, ka balsojis par Igaunijas iestāšanos ES, jo cer uz ekonomikas un valsts iedzīvotāju labklājības līmeņa uzlabošanu. K.Harasmis uzskata, ka valdība darījusi labu darbu, sniedzot cilvēkiem nepieciešamo informāciju par ES. Plkst.12 vēlēšanu iecirknī bija maz cilvēku, un tieši tobrīd pirmo reizi apkopoja vēlētāju aktivitāti visā valstī. Līdz pusdienlaikam bija nobalsojuši 35% balsstiesīgo vēlētāju. Aktīvākie rīta pusē bija Hījumā un Jerves apriņķu iedzīvotāji, sasniedzot pat 43% aktivitāti, taču vispasīvākie izrādījās krievu apdzīvotā Idas–Viru apriņķa iedzīvotāji — tikai 29,4%. Pēcpusdienā situācija īpaši nemainījās un aktivitāti saglabāja Hījumā un Hārjumā apriņķi.

Tallinas ielās visu svētdienu bija redzamas ģimenes, kas devās uz vēlēšanu iecirkņiem. Skaļa aģitācija un demonstrācijas nenotika, vienīgi eiroskeptiski jaunieši ar krāsu flakoniņiem pie Viru viesnīcas aizkrāsoja partijas Res Publica «jā» kampaņas plakātus. Referenduma rezultātus cilvēki pulcējās sagaidīt Rātslaukumā un Vectallinas krodziņos, kur uz ekrāna ik pa brīdim tika parādīta balsu skaitīšanas gaita. Igaunijas sabiedriskā TV un privātā televīzija Kanal2 bija sarūpējušas īpašas programmas ar tiešo pieslēgšanos no vietām, kur rezultātus gaidīja partijas, valdība un žurnālisti.

Gaisotne Ārlietu ministrijā vakarā bija diezgan nervoza. Žurnālisti līdz pusnaktij ekrānos sekoja līdzī balsu skaitīšanai, un pie katras izmaiņas atskanēja dažādi komentāri.

Kopīgs ceļš ejams

Svētdienas rītā, atgriezies no vēlēšanu iecirkņa, Igaunijas prezidents Arnolds Rītels žurnālistus no Latvijas uzņēma Kadriorgas pilī. «Esmu priecīgs, ka jūs atbraucāt.» A.Rītels smaidot iznāca pils dārzā. Pirms balsošanas vietējā un ārvalstu prese, kas interesējās par referendumu Igaunijā, pieminēja, ka 74 gadus vecais prezidents izvērsis apjomīgu ES kampaņu, ticot, ka iedzīvotāji nobalsos par iestāšanos ES. Arī sestdien uzrunā tautai viņš to neaizmirsā piebilst.

Premjers Juhans Partss gan savos izteikumos bija daudz pieticīgāks, norādot, ka komentārus par Igaunijas turpmāko virzību viņš sniegs vakarā, taču viņš ticot, ka cilvēki nobalsos pareizi. J.Partss nevarēja atbildēt, cik naudas reklāmas kampaņā par ES ieguldījusi viņa vadītā partija Res Publica, aptuveni minot skaitļus no viena līdz diviem miljoniem kronu. J.Partss arī sacīja, ka cer uz pozitīvu balsojumu ne tikai Igaunijā, bet arī Latvijā, jo uz «ES mums kā kaimiņiem ir ejams kopīgs ceļš».

Bijušais Igaunijas prezidents Lennarts Meri uzskata, ka igauņi ir sapratuši, kas ir ES. Balsojot parlamenta vēlēšanās, cilvēki atskatās uz pēdējiem četriem gadiem, taču šajā referendumā mēs redzēsim, ko cilvēki ir domājuši par pēdējiem 13 gadiem, uzskata L.Meri. Viņš izteica lepnumu, ka bijis pirmais no valstsvīriem atjaunotajā Igaunijā, kurš 1991.gadā devies komandējumā uz Briseli un kopš tā laika «būvējis tiltu» starp Igauniju un ES. L.Meri arī uzsvēra, ka ir pret konstitūcijas grozījumiem, ko veicis parlaments un kam atbalsts vai pretestība vienlaikus ar balsojumu par ES bija jāizsaka igauņiem. Bijušais prezidents uzskata, ka «juristiem tas likās interesanti» — ieviest izmaiņas konstitūcijā, taču, viņaprāt, tas neesot nepieciešams.

Intervijā Dienai bijušais ārlietu ministrs Tomass Hendriks Ilvess stāsta, ka pēdējos desmit gadus Igaunija centusies atbrīvoties no bijušās padomju republikas zīmoga un iegūt Eiropas atzinību, taču viņam esot pārliecība, ka igauņi nav «paveikuši mājas darbu» pietiekami labi. «Īstā mācība būtu tāda, ka mēs nacionālās intereses turam augstāk par personīgajām. Diemžēl tādu līmeni vēl neesam sasnieguši,» uzskata T.Ilvess. Par Igaunijas piemēru ES bijušais ārlietu ministrs teic: «Tā nav taisnība, ka mēs esam sliktāki par Itāliju vai Beļģiju. Mums ir jābūt vēl labākiem. Igauņiem jādara tā kā somiem, kas savas intereses liek otrajā vietā aiz nacionālajām interesēm.»

Ārvalstu prese seko referendumam

Igaunijas Ārlietu ministrijā līdz svētdienai akreditējās vairāk nekā 300 žurnālistu, no tiem 50 bija no Latvijas. Plaši pārstāvēti bija reģionālie laikraksti, kuru ceļojumu uz Tallinu apmaksāja valdības grupa Latvija Eiropā. Daudz žurnālistu Igaunijā viesojās no Somijas, Zviedrijas un Krievijas. Par Igauniju interesi pagājušajā nedēļā izrādīja ietekmīgais laikraksts The Financial Times, kas citē arī [Latvijas institūta](#) direktoru [Ojāru Kalniņu](#). Laikraksts uzklauzījis gan Eiropas pretinieku, gan piekritēju argumentus par valsts ekonomikas iespējamo attīstību pēc iestāšanos ES. Aģentūra AFP atsaucās uz A.Rītela teikto: «Mums ir izvēle — vai nu novilkt ES ārējo robežu ar Krieviju, vai Latvija un Lietuva to izdarīs ar Krieviju un mums.»

Somu prese uzmanību vērsa uz neseno prezidentes Tarjas Halonenas vizīti Igaunijā un viņas aicinājumu igauņiem referendumā balsot par valsts iestāšanos ES. «Mūsu domāšanas veids diezgan bieži ir ļoti līdzīgs, tāpēc mēs labāk varētu sadarboties, ja Igaunija būtu ES dalībvalsts,» Helsingin Sanomat citē T.Halonenu.

Igaunija nepaliks malā (*Estonia will not stay aside*)

Author: Kristaps Pētersons

Publication date: 13.09.2003.

Pirms referendumu Igaunijā iet gandrīz tāpat kā Latvijā, tikai tur ir arī Edgars Savisārs. Viņa Centra partija, kas vēlēšanās ieguva visvairāk balsu, taču palika opozīcijā, augustā nolēma, ka būs pret ES, un uzreiz ES atbalstītāju skaits krasi pieauga (bet partijas popularitāte strauji krītas). Latvijā nav tik iespaidīga bezatbildības parauga, ka būtu bail to atdarināt. Rubiks ar Borovkovu un Paideru piekabē ir par smieklīgu, lai iedarbinātu «sirdsapziņas faktoru», kas liktu «skeptiķiem» nopietni domāt, kā būtu, ja Latvija tiešām paliktu «mālā».

Citādi tur ir kā šeit — visi lamā reklāmas un politiķu propagandu un šaubās par aptauju rezultātiem. (Tie gan ir citādi nekā Latvijā — starp 60 un 80 procentiem par.) ES pretinieki, kuru kampaņu finansē Krievijas uzņēmumi, vaid par neatkarības zaudēšanu. Vairākums krievu skolu audzēkņu (pie mums — krievu studentu) ir pret.

Dažā ziņā tur ir jautrāk. Piemēram, reklāmas plakāti, ka ES ir vairāk seksīgu vīriešu, Iekšā būt ir labāk (prezervatīvs) un Vai somi ir stulbeņi? Un vēl Igaunijas ārlietu ministre biedē — ja igauņi balsotu pret, bet pēc kāda laika pārdomātu, par viņu uzņemšanu ES tad lemtu — iedomājieties! — latvieši, ja tie savā referendumā balsotu par.

Igauņi svētdien nobalsos par ES.

Igauņi aizgāja (*Estonians left*)

Author: Laila Pakalniņa

Publication date: 16.09.2003.

Vai Latvija paliks viena ar Eiropu pakausī?

Svētdien gribējās būt igauņim. Un lai latvieši aiz skaudības stāsta par mani anekdotes. Cerams, ka sestdien šī vēlme pāries.

Es skatījos, kā viņi nāk uz balsošanas iecirkņiem un cik mierīgi, konsekventi un patstāvīgi viņi aiziet uz Eiropu. Jauna ģimene no žigulīša izcēla savas dvīnītes — uz katru rozā kleitiņā tērpto meiteni pa vienam «jā». Pūsis ar acīm redzami sestdienas vakarā iestrādātām veselības problēmām balsoja, turoties pie alus pudeles, — Eiropa nozīmīgāka par pohām. Viņš gan savai draudzenei vēlāk teica, ka esot ievilcis divus krustiņus, taču, sapratis, ka joks tiek uztverts nopietni, atzinās, ka savu pienākumu izpildījis, lai cik tas grūti nācās.

Lēni, lēni, lēni mājās gāja kundze ar nūjiņu. Inteliģenti rimta seja liecināja par pārliecību. Bet kādu? Vai par to, ka maize un zāles kļūs dārgākas?

— Atvainojiet, par ko jūs balsojāt?

— Tas ir noslēpums.

— Es esmu no Latvijas. Pasakiet, lūdzu.

— Par ko mēs balsojām, būs zināms drīz. Es esmu par.

Vēlāk igauņi stāsta, ka viskonsekventākais jās pieder tieši gados veciem un ļoti veciem cilvēkiem. Tiem, kas ir pieredzējuši, ka vēsture nekoķetē ar cilvēkiem, un tāpēc arī cilvēki nedrīkst koķetēt ar vēsturi.

Jauniešu vidū teikt nē nebija populāri, jo šajā gadījumā noliegums neapliecināja ne mūsdienīgumu, ne prāta kritiskās domāšanas spējas. Nozīmītes ar uzrakstu «Jā» varēja nopirkt ļoti modernos, pat ekstrēmi modernos jauniešu un tīņu apģērbu un aksesuāru veikalos. Publisku nē paužot tikai traki mākslinieki, kas nespējot kļūt slaveni ar saviem darbiem. Bet tikai daži. Kas tad tomēr ir šis katrs trešais, kurš nevēlas dzīvot Eiropā. Kāds svētdienas vakara Igaunijas televīzijas raidījuma dalībnieks izteicās, kas tas esot labs rādītājs tautai: «Muļķis — tikai katrs trešais.» Mani igauņu draugi stāsta, ka, pēc subjektīvās sajūtas, no vecuma viedokļa visriskantākā bijusi grupa virs piecdesmit, jo no daudziem šā vecuma cilvēkiem joprojām varot dzirdēt, ka PSRS laikos dzīve bijusi labāka. Arī prezidents Meri (Igaunijas televīzijā saka — prezidents, nevis eksprezidents) teica, ka balsojums norāda uz zināmu nespēju atbrīvoties no padomju laiku domāšanas veida, taču «vai nav vienalga, cik ilgi slimo ar angīnu — četras vai piecas dienas», igauņi ļoti pārliecinoši (divas trešdaļas) ir parādījuši, ko viņi grib.

Vēlā svētdienas vakarā mans igauņu kolēģis teica: «Man tagad ir tāda sajūta, it kā es pēkšņi būtu nokļuvis Ņujorkas ielās — tu esi tik mazs, bet ir tik daudz iespēju. Gan labu, gan sliktu. Un citu alternatīvu nemaz nav, kā nonākt šajā plašajā pasaulē, kur pašam jādomā.»

Es, protams, varu pretendēt tikai uz to izjūtu izklāstu, kuras man izdevās Igaunijā uztvert pirmsreferenduma un referendumu dienās. Ja no šo izjūtu viedokļa man jāatbild uz jautājumu, kas izšķir balsojuma rezultātu, tad lai cik asprātīga būtu reklāmas kampaņa Igaunijas televīzijā (un ir labi, ka tāda bija), lai cik tiktu stāstīts par Eiropas piedāvātajām iespējām (un ir labi, ka tas viss tika stāstīts), igauņi stātos Eiropā arī tad, ja visa tā nebūtu bijis. Manuprāt, jā igauņiem bija vienīgās alternatīvas balsojums. Kā teica kāds cilvēks: «Vajag atskatīties uz austrumiem, pagriezies un iet balsot.» Tādējādi tas bija politisks balsojums par neatkarību, ļoti konsekventi atstājot, bet joprojām atceroties austrumus pakausī.

Igaunijas pilsētu stabus pirms referendumu rotāja salīdzinoši neliels kvadrātveida plakātiņš, kur redzams, ka bezdelīga (Igaunijas simbols, t.s. nacionālais putns) tiecas pēc zvaigznītes, un izlasāms teksts: «Jā. Mēs atnāksim!» Nu viņi ir aizgājuši. Nevis aizmānīti, aizvesti, bet paši aizgājuši. Pirmdienas rītā dusmīgais, Keidžam līdzīgais igauņi pie viesnīcas kafijas automāta beidzot pasmaidīja.

Uz īsu brīdi mēs esam palikuši, lai padarītu šo grūto darbu — atnākt pēdējiem. Un ja mēs to neizdarīsim, tad anekdotes, kuras par mums stāstīs igauņi un citi eiropieši, būs vienīgais iemesls smaidam valstij ar Eiropu pakausī.

Igauņu “jā” ir arguments (*Estonian “yes” is an argument*)

Author: Guntars Krasts

Publication date: 15.09.2003.

Šāds rezultāts bija gaidāms — pēdējās aptaujas liecināja, ka sabiedriskā doma ir krietni uzlabojusies par labu Eiropas Savienībai. Protams, tas labvēlīgi ietekmēs arī Latvijas referendumu rezultātu — tā grupa, kas vēl nav izlēmusi, uzdos sev jautājumu: kāpēc lietuvieši un igauņi ir par? Mēs paši to neatzīstam, bet igauņi mums bieži kalpojuši par zināmu mērauklu, lietuvieši mūs ietekmējuši mazāk. Mēs skatāmies viens uz otru — mēs uz igauņiem pat vairāk, nekā viņi uz mums. Tāpēc igauņu «jā» ir arguments arī Latvijā.

Igaunijas kārtā (*Estonia's turn*)

Author: Askolds Rodins

Publication date: 18.01.2007.

Ekonomisko sankciju nebūs. Vismaz pagaidām. Vakar Krievijas Valsts dome pieņēma niknu paziņojumu sakarā ar grozījumiem Igaunijas likumdošanā, kas paver iespēju pārapbedīt Tallinas centrā apglabātos (ja izrādīsies, ka tādi tur ir) Sarkanās armijas karavīrus un aizvākt no vecpilsētas t.s. atbrīvotāja bronzas pieminekli.

Domes deputāti aicina veidot abu valstu attiecības atkarībā no pieminekļa tālākā likteņa: ja monumentu pārvietos, Dome lūgšot prezidentu likt lietā viņam ar speciālu likumu dotās pilnvaras un noteikt Igaunijai ekonomiskās sankcijas. Igaunijas premjers Andrus Ansips jau paziņojis, ka izpētes darbi pie pieminekļa sāksies ne ātrāk kā maijā.

Var būt atšķirīgi viedokļi gan par bronzas skulptūras nozīmi, gan iespējamo atrašanās vietu, taču lēmuma pieņemšana tomēr ir Igaunijas iekšējā lieta. Krievija droši vien justos stipri pārsteigta, ja kāda valsts "attiecības" ar Maskavu kategoriskā formā saistītu ar prasību aprakt Ļeņinu, nojaukt Sarkanajā laukumā mauzoleju un tā vietā izveidot grandiozu puķu dobi.

Kremļa attiecībās ar Igauniju un Latviju pastāv gandrīz vai likumsakarība: kad "labais kaimiņš" ir Igaunija, "sliktā" loma tiek Latvijai. Pašlaik ir otrādi, taču par to nav jāpriecājas.

Igaunijas vēlēšanu pragmatisms? (*Pragmatism of elections in Estonia*)

Author: Veiko Spolītis

Publication date: 03.03.2007.

Pēc pagājušā gada rudens prezidenta vēlēšanu batalijām, kad valdošās koalīcijas divu partneru Centra partijas un Tautas savienības atbalstītais prezidenta kandidāts Arnolds Rītels neguva vairākuma atbalstu, tika paredzēti pārsteigumi Igaunijas 2007. gada 4. marta parlamenta vēlēšanu rezultātos. Vēl pirms mēneša socioloģiskās aptaujas par iedzīvotāju attieksmi pret jaunievēlētajiem tautas priekšstāvjiem rādīja prezidenta vēlēšanās Tomasi H. Ilvesu atbalstošo Tēvzemes un Republikas savienības (IRS), Sociāldemokrātu, kā arī Igaunijas politikas jaunpienācēja Zaļās partijas (ZP) 60% atbalstu aptaujās. Priekšvēlēšanu politiskās diskusijas, vēlēšanu kampaņa un vēlēšanu apātija sakarā ar neskaitāmajiem korupcijas skandāliem šo atbalstu ir sadeldējusi. Patlaban EMOR socioloģiskās aptaujas rāda, ka noteikti vēlēt dosies 50% balsstiesīgo vēlēšanu, 45% noteikti nedosies pie urnām un neizlēmušo ir tikai 5% vēlēšanu. Šādos apstākļos vislojālākie ir tieši Centra partijas atbalstītāji, kuriem seko valdības vadītāja Andrusa Ansipa Reformu partija (RP), IRS un zaļie. Zemas vēlēšanu aktivitātes apstākļos var paredzēt, ka pēc vēlēšanām valdības koalīcijā esošās Centra un Reformu partijas varētu veidot kopēju valdību, kas savukārt varētu iegūt vairāk nekā 60 mandātus — 101 vietu Igaunijas parlamentā (Riigikogu). Netradicionāli mierīgs vēlēšanu kampaņas laikā ir bijis Centra partijas dibinātājs Edgars Savisārs, un prezidents Tomass H. Ilvess ir apsolījis valdības grožus uzticēt visvairāk balsu ieguvušās partijas vadītājam. Šāda scenārija gadījumā Igaunija sekotu Latvijas valdošās koalīcijas pārmantojamības politikai. Tāpēc turpmākajā rakstā autors centīsies atklāt Igaunijas partiju koalīcijas politikas īpatnības.

Valdošā elite

Demokrātu, bijušo komunistu un tradicionālo populistu politika Igaunijā pēc PSRS sabrukuma sevišķi neatšķirās no Latvijas vai citām postkomunisma valstīm. Tam par galveno nosacījumu bija un joprojām ir šo valstu konstitūcijā noteiktais varas līdzsvara sadalījums un 1990. gadu Centrāleiropas un Austrumeiropas valstu politisko elišu vēlme iestāties ES un [NATO](#). Tomēr atšķirībā no Latvijas pāreja no tradicionālas autoritātes sistēmas uz racionāli tiesisku autoritāti Igaunijā ir notikusi veiksmīgāk, jo sevišķi pateicoties 1992. gadā apstiprinātajam valsts Tiesībsarga birojam, un no Latvijas viedokļa tālajā 1991. gadā pieņemtajam vispārējam nodokļu deklarēšanas likumam, kas kopš 2002. gada Igaunijas budžetā ir radījis tradicionālu rezervi. Šie politikas jaunievedumi palīdzēja padarīt valsts finanses ilgtermiņā caurskatāmas un arī nostiprināt valsts varas leģitimitāti (piemēram, salīdzinot ar Latviju) vēlēšanu acīs, ko pierāda pēdējo piecu gadu Eurobarometer dati. Ekonomisku pārmaiņu laikā neizbēgami cieš dažādas iedzīvotāju grupas. Atšķirībā no [Māra Gaiļa](#) vadītās valdības Marta Lāra politika atšķirās ar uzsvērtāku radikālismu ne tikai ekonomiskās sistēmas liberalizēšanā, bet arī padomju ierēdņu atļaišanā.

Šāds Marta Lāra politikas radikālisms nevarēja turpināties, un 1994. gadā viņa valdība tika gāzta. Marta Lāra valdības gāšanas gadā bijušais Igaunijas Bankas prezidents Sīms Kallass un domubiedri dibināja liberālo Reformu partiju, tā atbildot uz centriski kreiso Savienības partijas ekonomisko politiku. Tam sekojošajā vēlēšanu 1995. gadā Igaunijas politikā notika iekšlietu ministra Edgara Savisāra (Centra partija) t.s. kasešu skandāls, proti, Savisārs, izmantojot savu dienesta stāvokli, ieskaņoja sarunas ar saviem koalīcijas partneriem. Pēc šī incidenta Igaunijas politikas smagsvars krita nežēlastībā un pievērsās tradicionāli nepārstāvētajiem vēlētajiem, un pārējā Igaunijas politiskajā spektrā tas iezīmēja jauna laikmeta sākšanos — koalīciju politiku, kura nepieļautu "neliberālā" Savisāra pietuvošanos premjera krēslam.

Labējā un kreisā politika

Savisārs uzstāja uz tādu Igaunijas politiku, kas uzlabotu attiecības ar Maskavu. Pirms 2004. gada 1. maija tas ļāva Igaunijas liberālajai un reformkomunistiskajai koalīcijai (Reformu partija, Tēvzeme un sociāldemokrātiskie mērenie) pozicionēt sevi kā rietumnieciskas un liberālas Igaunijas aizstāvjus, šādi liekot Centra partijai un Igaunijas politikas smagsvaram doties atbalsta meklējumos pie neigauņu un populistiska elektorāta. Tāpēc zīmīgi, ka laikā, kad Marts Lārs bija triumfāli atgriezies premjera krēslā no 1999. līdz 2002. gadam, Centra partija spēja gan 1999., gan 2003. gadā, pakāpeniski palielinot savu vēlēšanu skaitu, stabili nodrošināt lielāko deputātu (28) pārstāvniecību Riigikogu. Tieši 2002. gads aizsāka Igaunijā arī t.s. divu Igauniju diskusiju, kad pēc M. Lāra valdības plānotās Narvas elektrostacijas privatizācijas akademiķu kopa pretnostatīja augsti urbanizēto un liberālo Igauniju lauku rajonos dzīvojošo nožēlojamajai eksistencei.

Šādi atšķirībā no Latvijas, kur labējo politiku pārstāv etnisko latviešu un kreiso politiku cittautiešu partijas, Igaunijā, pateicoties valdošās politiskās elites lomai un Centra partijas politiskajai izveicībai, nevienā politiskajā spārnā Igaunijā nedominē noteikta etniska kopiena. Centra partijas atbalstītāji uzsver, ka Igaunijas kreisais vēlētais ir noguris no nepārtrauktajām visu dzīves sfēru reformām un darbaspējīgu iedzīvotāju aizplūšanas, tāpēc valdībai ir jāpalielina algas un jāpievēršas mājokļu un bērnu darbu celtniecībai.

Zaļās partijas izveide vēl pirms pāris mēnešiem varēja liecināt par Ronalda Ingelhārta postmoderno vērtību prevalēšanu Igaunijas politikā, bet šodienas socioloģisko aptauju rezultāti drīzāk liecina par to, ka zaļie varētu atņemt balsis tradicionālajiem Tēvzemes un Republikas savienības liberālajiem vēlētājiem. Patiesībā par postmoderno vērtību ienākšanu Igaunijas politikā drīzāk liecina 45% vēlētāju, kuri nevēlas piedalīties 2007.gada vēlēšanās un šādi pastarpināti izrāda atbalstu valdības piekoptajai politikai. Sociāldemokrāti Igaunijā tiek uztverti kā Eiropas liberāļi, un viņu redzamākie spēki ir pārstāvēti Eiroparlamentā un prezidenta krēslā. Tāpēc sociāldemokrātu solījumi nav tik populistiski kā Savisāra Centra partijai, kura atbalsts meklējams tieši maznodrošinātajos.

Igaunijas lielākā pēcvēlēšanu diskusija būs par to, kādu kompromisu radīs Centra partija un Reformu partija gadījumā, ja šīs koalīcijas partneres veidos jauno valdību. Redzot Reformu partijas relatīvi lielo atbalstu aptaujās un pārējā liberāli demokrātiskā spārna atbalsta samazinājumu, Igaunijas vēlētājs var nosliekties par labu tieši premjera Andrusa Ansipa Reformu partijai, šādi radot pretsvaru Edgaram Savisāram. Centra partijas vadītāja tradicionāls jājamzirdziņš ir bijis progresīvā nodokļu sistēma, kuru Savisārs šogad gandrīz vai nepiemin. Reformu partijas lielākais solījums ir iedzīvotāju ienākuma nodokļa samazinājums, bet nevar aizmirst, ka premjeram Ansipam sava tēla spodrināšanai pieder varas pozīcijas. Iespējams, ka pēc Igaunijas iestāšanās ES ir mainījusies liberāli demokrātiskās koalīcijas nostāja par Savisāra nelaišanu premjera krēslā.

Varas noturēšanās vārdā notiks politiskā kaulēšanās, kuras rezultātā Igaunijai nepieciešamās izglītības un veselības aizsardzības reformas var tikt ātrāk atrisinātas vai pretēji — palēninātas. No šo divu reformu veiksmes atkarīga ne tikai Igaunijas iestāja eirozonā, bet arī Igaunijas neatgriezeniska nostiprināšanās industriāli attīstīto valstu saimē un neatkrišana uz divātumu Eiropas perifēriju.

Kā Igaunijā? (*How is it in Estonia?*)

Author: Veiko Spolītis

Publication date: 06.03.2007.

Igaunijas parlamenta jeb Rīgikogu vēlēšanās svētdien, tāpat kā Saeimas vēlēšanās pērnruuden Latvijā, uzvarēja un jauno valdību veidos valdības vadītāja partija. Taču atšķirībā no Latvijas, kur, kā pati pavēstīja, uzvarējusi valdošā koalīcija, Igaunijā galvenā ziņa ir "labējo spēku uzvara". Proti, atšķirībā no šejienes varas korporācijas mērķa atražot sevi, igauņu politiķiem svarīgāka šķiet iespēja izveidot ideoloģiski viendabīgāku valdību.

Uzvarētāja Reformu partija, kurai būs 31 no 101 vietas parlamentā, varētu kopā ar pašreizējo koalīcijas partneri — Centra partiju —, kura ieguvusi 29 vietas, izveidot pārliecinoša vairākuma valdību pat vienkāršāk, nekā tas bija Tautas partijai ar diviem saviem partneriem. Taču Latvijā triju pie varas esošo partiju bloks jau vēlēšanu naktī, kad vēl nebija zināmi galīgie rezultāti, pasludināja, ka tās esot bijušas "referendums" par valdošo koalīciju. Igaunijā uzvarējušās partijas vadītājs, premjerministrs Andrus Ansips svētdien, kad galīgie rezultāti vēl nebija zināmi, pateica, ka programmatiski tuvāka viņa partijai ir 19 vietas ieguvuši labējo spēku — Tēvzemes savienības un Res Publica — apvienība. "Ir skaidrs, ka labējie spēki ir guvuši labu uzvaru," Ansips teica Igaunijas radio.

Līdzīgi kā [Aigaram Kalvītim](#) pēc uzvaras [Saeimas](#) vēlēšanās Ansipam tagad ir visai plašas manevra iespējas. Taču [Tautas partija](#) bija pati atņēmusi sev jēdzīgas izvēles iespējas, uzreiz piekrizdama esošajai koalīcijai, izslēgdama sadarbību ar [Jauno laiku](#) un atstādama sev tikai vienu, maz ticamu alternatīvu — [PCTVL](#) filiāli [Saskaņas centru](#). Ansipam koalīcija ar labējo apvienību, paņemot klāt kādu no "mazajiem" — sociāldemokrātus, kuri ieguvuši 10 mandātus, Tautas savienību ar tās 6 vietām, vai zaļos, kam arī 6 vietas, — būtu ērtāka nekā ar parlamentā gandrīz tikpat ietekmīgo, programmatiski atšķirīgo Igaunijas politikas ilgdzīvotāja Edgara Savisāra Centra partiju, taču iespēja atražot to pašu koalīciju būs trumpis sarunās ar iespējamajiem jaunajiem partneriem. Kaut gan premjerministrs teic, ka sarunas par jauno valdību būšot grūtas un varot ilgt pat mēnesi, jau tagad ir redzams, ka rezultātā būs viens no diviem variantiem — vai nu pašreizējā valdības koalīcija, vai nu reformistu vadīta koalīcija bez Savisāra.

Pēc divu gadu "pragmatiskas" kopdzīves valdībā Ansipa liberālo reformistu un Savisāra kreisi prokrievisko populistu partijas bija nīknākās sāncenses priekšvēlēšanu cīņā. Centra partijas solījumu pildīšana sagrautu Igaunijas ekonomikas pēdējo gadu sasniegumus, Ansips uzsver arī pēc vēlēšanām. Abām partijām ir pilnīgi pretēji uzskati par nodokļiem — Reformu partija vēlas vēl samazināt ienākuma nodokli, Savisāra "centristi"

gribētu ieviest progresīvo nodokli. Tie solīja arī palielināt valsts sektorā strādājošo algas ik gadu gandrīz par ceturto daļu, ko reformisti dēvē par utopisku ideju. Bet abu partiju domstarpības ārpolitikā īpaši krasi izpaudās vārdu kaujās par tā dēvētā Bronzas kareivja, pieminekļa "padomju atbrīvotājiem", pārvietošanu — Ansipa partija bija radikāli "par", Savisāra "centristi" piebalsoja Maskavas sašutumam.

Latvijā un Igaunijā pēdējās parlamenta vēlēšanās bijusi līdzīga vēlēšanu aktivitāte — apmēram 61 procenti. Taču Latvijā tas bija ievērojams kritums, salīdzinot ar iepriekšējām vēlēšanām, kad balsot devās 72 procenti pilsoņu, turpretī Igaunijā, kur iepriekšējās vēlēšanās piedalījās tikai 58 procenti, — negaidīts kāpums.

Skaidrot vēlēšanu entuziasma pieaugumu ar iespēju balsot internetā laikam gan būtu pārāk vienkāršoti. Bet pārņemt šo igaunu pieredzi, kā tagad sarosījušies daži Latvijā, diez vai vajadzētu. Ne tikai tāpēc, ka arī šajā ziņā krietni atpaliekam no kaimiņiem, un būtu, kā atzīst idejas entuziaste, elietu ministre [Ina Gudele](#), jāsāk "no nulles", kamēr Igaunijā 90% iedzīvotāju jau ir elektroniskās identifikācijas kartes, kurās iestrādāts eparaksts. Pirmām kārtām tāpēc, ka nevienai valstij nav izdevies (un, iespējams, neizdosies) radīt pilnīgi drošu interneta balsošanas sistēmu, kas būtu pasargāta no hakeru uzbrukumiem, nepieļautu identitātes viltošanu un izslēgtu iespējas manipulēt ar balstu skaitīšanu. Taču, pat ja izdotos tādu radīt, arvien paliktu iespēja to apšaubīt, un tas mazinātu uzticēšanos vēlēšanu rezultātiem — demokrātijai daudz svarīgākam faktoram nekā iespējai arī vēlēšanu dienu nosēdēt pie interneta.

Vairāk nekā interneta balsošana vēlēšanu varētu būt aktivizējušas prezidenta vēlēšanas pērnā rudenī, kurās bijušo komunistu nomenklatūras pārstāvi, Savisāra atbalstīto Arnoldu Rītelu nomainīja dinamiski rietumnieciskais Tomass Hendriks Ilvess. (To netieši apstiprina arī Ilvesa bijušās partijas — iepriekšējā parlamentā vispār nepārstāvēto sociāldemokrātu panākumi šajās vēlēšanās.) Izšķiroša nozīme viņa ievēlēšanā bija plašam sabiedrības atbalstam. Ja nu kādu pieredzi vajadzētu no igauniem pārņemt, tad noteikti prezidenta amata kandidātu izcelšanu no sasmakušajām politiskajām aizkulisēm un plašu un pamatīgu izvērtēšanu sabiedrībā.

Igaunijai jauna valdība (*Estonia has new government*)

Author: Askolds Rodins

Publication date: 31.03.2007.

Bija četri, palika trīs. Koalīcijas līgums parakstīts, un trīs dienas pirms jaunā sasaukuma parlamenta pirmās sēdes Igaunija tikusi pie jaunas valdības. Tūlīt pēc 4.marta vēlēšanām bija domāts, koalīcijā iesaistīsies arī lielās politikas jaunpienācējs Zaļo partija. Nesanāca. Koalīciju izveidoja trīs pietiekami labi pazīstamas partijas: Reformu partija (31 mandāts), Tēvzemes savienības un partijas Res Publica apvienība (19 mandāti) un sociāldemokrāti (10 mandāti). Parlamentā, kurā ir 101 deputāta vieta, 60 mandātu ir pietiekami pārliecinošs vairākums.

Opozīcijā palikusi otra parlamenta skaitliski lielākā frakcija — Edgara Savisāra vadītā Centra partija (29 mandāti). Pats Savisārs plānojis atgriezties Tallinas mēra krēslā.

Gluži tāpat kā [Aigars Kalvītis](#) Latvijā, Igaunijā par otra termiņa premjeru kļuvis Andruss Ansips — kā jau klājas lielākās frakcijas pārstāvim. Zaļie (Igaunijā — bez zemniekiem), kas parlamentā nonākuši pirmo reizi, palaida garām iespēju paskatīties, kā funkcionē valdības "ķēķis". Ansips viņiem valdībā piedāvāja ministra bez portfeļa vietu, un tas patiesībā nav maz, ja paturam prātā, ka zaļo frakcijai ir tikai seši mandāti, tikpat, cik uzreiz opozīcijā atstātajai bijušā prezidenta Arnolda Rītela Tautas savienībai. Zaļie gribēja vides ministra amatu. Mēģinājumi vienoties nevedās, zaļie paziņoja, ka partneriem ir "komunistiska vadības kultūra", un izstājās no spēles.

Sarežģījumi radās arī ar deviņdesmito gadu pirmās puses reformu galveno īstenotāju, Tēvzemes savienības līderi Martu Lāru. Lārs gribēja kļūt par ārlietu ministru, viņam piedāvāja vadīt Aizsardzības ministriju. Galu galā Igaunijas politikas smagsvars atteicās no darba valdībā. Viņš "koncentrēties" darbam partijā. Tēvzemes savienība un Res Publica gatavojas apvienoties, lai izveidotu spēcīgu labējo partiju, un Lārs patiešām grib kļūt par tās priekšsēdētāju. Taču diez vai viņš tik ļoti gribētu "koncentrēties" darbam partijā, ja būtu saņēmis savā pārziņā Ārlietu ministriju.

Tēvzemietis ārlietu resora galvgalī — uz to kā vērsis uz sarkanu lupatu skatītos Krievija, ar kuru Igaunijai jau tāpat ir stipri saspīlētas attiecības. Jaunā valdība, starp citu, negrasās atteikties no nodoma pārvietot t.s. padomju karavīra atbrīvotāja pieminekli no galvaspilsētas centra uz brāļu kapiem.

Igaunija tikusi pie kārtējās labēji centriskās valdības, kurai, ja nenotiks nekas ārkārtējs, var prognozēt saules mūžu — cik nu to atļauj Igaunijas konstitūcija.

Līdzīgi vārdi dzirdēti arī par Latviju, taču ir kāda mums visai neglaimojoša atšķirība. Igaunijā nevienam pat prātā nav nācis, ka par premjera amata kandidātu varētu nosaukt cilvēku, kas apsūdzēts vairāku smagu kriminālnozieģumu izdarīšanā. Var jau būt, ka igauņiem ir "savs [Lembergs](#)", par kura

eksistenci mēs vienkārši nezinām. Tomēr puslīdz droši var teikt, ka Igaunijā nav "savas [Zaļo un zemnieku savienības](#)", kas nenodalītu kriminālatbildību no politiskās atbildības.

Kāda ir Igaunijas notikumu mācība Latvijai? (*What is the lesson for Latvia from events in Estonia?*)

Publication date: 03.05.2007.,

[Oskars Kastēns](#) ([LPP](#)), sabiedrības integrācijas lietu ministrs

Tallinā pieredzētais ir vēsturisko notikumu sekas, kad redzams — dažādas etniskās grupas vēsturi uztver citādi. Jebkura grupa var izteikt protestu, bet Igaunijā šie protesti bija atbrīvojuši agresivitāti. Jāsaprot, ka vēsturiskā atmiņa ir viena no etniskās identitātes nesējiem un to ir grūti īsā laika posmā pārveidot. Ir jāizvairās no nepārdomātu lēmumu pieņemšanas. Latvijā gan uz draudzības dienu fona etniskā integrācija ir palikusi novārtā, bet šis jautājums var jebkurā mirklī kļūt aktuāls, līdz ko ir runa par vēstures notikumiem.

[Boriss Čilevičs](#) ([SC](#)), [Saeimas](#) deputāts

Igaunijas notikumu ietekme var būt divējāda. Radikāli noskaņotie to var uztvert kā paraugu, lai uztaisītu līdzīgu provokāciju, kas var notikt jau 9.maijā. Tas, ka pie Uzvaras pieminekļa Rīgas dome ir atļāvusi arī [Nacionālo spēku savienības](#) piketu, rada bažas, un būtu jānodrošina, lai šie spēki nesatiktos ar veterāniem. Taču vairākums cilvēku un arī politiķu Igaunijas notikumus uztvers kā labu mācību stundu — kā mums nevajag rīkoties. Gods kam gods — Latvijas valdības ir centušās izvairīties no lēmumiem, kas var aizskart kādas sabiedrības grupas jūtas, un ceru, ka Latvijā nekas tamlīdzīgs nenotiks.

[Ainars Latkovskis](#) ([JL](#)), Saeimas deputāts, bijušais integrācijas ministrs

Visu laiku Igaunija tika uzteikta kā integrācijas piemērs politikā. Taču tagad redzam, ka galveno lomu spēlē blakus esošā valsts. Ja tā ir gatava ieguldīt līdzekļus, lai ar naidīgu informāciju mediju telpā iestāstītu cilvēkiem, ka zeme, kurā viņi dzīvo, ir slikta, tad nekādi sabiedrības integrācijas pasākumi nepalīdzēs. Viss atkarīgs no pašas valsts stingrās stājas. Igaunijai ir mugurkauls, un mums tai jāpauž atbalsts. Igaunijai blakus mēs izskatāmies ļoti vāji. Izskatās, ka mīlas uzplaukuma brīdī ar Krieviju [Aigars Kalvītis](#) ir gatavs ziedot attiecības ar Igauniju.

Ilze Brands-Kehre, Latvijas Cilvēktiesību centra direktore

Šis gadījums ir atgādinājums, ka mums ir jāpievērš pastiprināta uzmanību integrācijai. Tai ir jābūt prioritātei, un nevajag domāt, ka mums ar integrāciju viss ir kārtībā un šis, kā arī krievu skolu reforma, kas ir līdzīgs piemērs arī pie mums, ir tikai kaut kādi atsevišķi gadījumi. Ir neizbēgami, ka arī Latvijā būs protesti, kas nebūs tik miermīlīgi, kā līdz šim pie mums ir bijuši. Tāpēc iedzīvotājiem ir jābūt tam gataviem.

Roberts Ķīlis, sociālantropologs

Mums jāreķinās, ka cilvēki aizvien vairāk izmantos tiesības paust savu viedokli dažādās konfrontācijās, un to var izskaidrot ar vienu fenomenu — urbanizāciju. Tāpēc viena mācība — mums ir jābūt tam gataviem, otra mācība — jāgatavo spēki konfliktu menedžēšanai. Igaunijas piemērā ir labi redzams, ka viņiem trūkst spējas menedžēt konfliktus, tos nevar risināt tikai no varas pozīcijām. Taču jāuzsver, ka es šos konfliktus izvairos

skaidrot no Latvijas un Krievijas vai Igaunijas un Krievijas attiecību aspekta, jo tas ir bezjēdzīgi. Šis nav stāsts par krieviem un igauņiem, bet gan par identifikācijas formātiem. Piemiņas vietas ir vienas grupas identifikācijas totēmi, un mēs redzam, kas notiek, ja šādu totēmu iznīcina.

[Nils Muižnieks](#), politologs

Senāk uzskatīja, ka ar valodu var manipulēt un mobilizēt krievus. Taču ar vēstures jautājumiem arī var, un paaudžu maiņa to nav mazinājusi, drīzāk otrādi. Galvenā mācība mums ir ļoti uzmanīgi apieties ar vēstures simboliem, it īpaši ar Otrā pasaules kara, jo dažiem cilvēkiem tie ļoti daudz nozīmē. Profesionāls policijas darbs arī ir ārkārtīgi svarīgs. Rīgas policija ir etniski ļoti raiba, un tas šādos gadījumos ir ļoti liels pluss, tas ir būtiski — policijas attiecības ar dažādiem slāņiem un komunikācija. Vēl mācība ir, ka Baltijas valstis nav imūnas pret šādiem incidentiem. Igauņi bija sev un pasaulei iestāstījuši, ka sasnieguši samērā lielu integrācijas pakāpi. Taču nevajag lolot ilūzijas, jo, tāpat kā visā Eiropā, šis process ir smags.

Rasma Kārkliņa, politoloģe

Vispirms jāsaka, ka politikā simbolikai ir ļoti liela nozīme un bieži vien cilvēki to pārāk zemu novērtē. Simboli iedarbojas tieši uz emocijām, tāpēc nav pārsteidzoša reakcija gan no Igaunijas, gan Krievijas puses. Tātad pirmā mācība — ir jābūt ļoti uzmanīgiem ar simboliku. Otrkārt, šis ir kārtējais apliecinājums, ka Krievijas mediji izmanto katru iespēju, lai sabiedrību uzkūdinātu pret kaimiņvalstīm, tāpēc būtu svarīgi, lai Igaunijas un starptautiskie mediji vairāk skaidrotu situāciju. Lai mēs no tā izvairītos, vispirms jāapzinās, ka mēs nedrīkstam viņiem veltīgi piespēlēt kādu starpgadījumu, ko varētu lietot vienādi vai otrādi.

Rolands Rikards, RTU profesors

Mums ir jābūt ļoti uzmanīgiem, jo Latvijā stāvoklis ir daudz saspīlētais, tāpēc pie mums trācis būtu vēl lielāks nekā Igaunijā. Latvijā ir izveidojusies divkopienu valsts, un tās eksistence ir liels Krievijas nopelns, jo tās interesēs ir uzturēt šeit nepārtrauktu spriedzi. Mūsu valdībai ir jābūt ļoti uzmanīgai, taču tajā pašā laikā tas nenozīmē, ka mums jādanco pēc Krievijas stabules. Ir jautājumi, uz kuriem mums tik un tā ir stingri jāuzstāj, piemēram, viens no tādiem ir latviešu valodas statusa nostiprināšana.

Aija Priedīte, Latviešu valodas apguves valsts aģentūras direktore

Es domāju, ka nekad nedrīkst pārvērtēt, cik svarīgi var būt šādi simboli, turklāt jāatceras, ka ir ne tikai cilvēki, kas gatavi šādus simbolus aizstāvēt, bet arī tādi, kas gatavi tos izmantot politisku mērķu sasniegšanā. Tāpēc, manuprāt, tas nebija pārdomāts solis, jo, ja ko tādu paredz, tiek radīta iespēja adekvāti reaģēt. Es domāju, ka mūsu integrācijas politika bijusi tālredzīgāka nekā Igaunijā, tāpēc ceru, ka tas nav mums radījis konsekvences.

Marina Kosteņecka, rakstniece

Mūsu mācība ir tāda: nevar paļauties uz to, ka atriebība ir salda. Naidu uzvarēt var tikai ar mīlestību. Šajā situācijā ļoti piemērots ir Mahatmas Gandija teiciens, ka piedot var tikai stiprais, tātad tikai stipra tauta. Šie vārdi ir ar dziļu, dziļu jēgu un parāda atslēgu — mums jābūt stipriem. Tāpēc kā dzirkstele pulvera mucā bija žurnālista teiktais raidījumā Top 10, ka arī mums Latvijā ir tāds piemineklis. Ir jāprot cienīt to cilvēku jūtas, kam šis piemineklis ir svēts. Nevienam tur neliek iet dziedāt slavas dziesmas, bet vienkārši cienīt cilvēkus.

[Artis Pabriks \(TP\)](#), ārlietu ministrs

Varu minēt vairākas lietas, ko var mācīties. Pirmā lieta ir tā, ka pamatā Krievijas attieksme pret Baltijas valstīm nav mainījusies. Otrais — joprojām ir jāsaprot, ka politiskās integrācijas process būs aktuāls vēl vienu paaudzi. Arī Igaunijas jaunā krievvalodīgo paaudze nejūtas politiski piederīga tai valstij, kurā viņi dzīvo. Ir skaidrs, ka Krievija joprojām ir savas identitātes un ideoloģijas meklējumos, un tādēļ to joprojām cieši saista ar Otrā pasaules kara notikumiem un tos izmanto.

[Romāns Apsītis](#), tiesībsargs

Es domāju, ka tiešu seku no Igaunijas notikumiem mums nav, taču līdzības ir ļoti lielas. Šie notikumi skaidri parāda integrācijas problēmas — mēs gribam ticēt, ka viss ir labi, gludi un skaisti, bet redzam, cik daudzi iebrucēji stāv tālu no pamattautas interesēm. Tāpēc es uzskatu, ka arī mums būtu jāpārskata mūsu

integrācijas politika, ņemot vērā Igaunijas rūgto pieredzi. Tas gan nenozīmē, ka mums jābūt pārāk bailīgiem, jo priekšplānā tomēr jānostāda latviešu tautas intereses.

Igaunijas pateikusi nē (*Estonia has said no*)

Author: Askolds Rodins

Publication date: 24.09.2007.

Igaunijas valdība ceturtdien pārvilka svītru Krievijas un Vācijas kopuzņēmuma Nord Stream vēlmei veikt izpētes darbus Igaunijas teritoriālajos ūdeņos, lai noskaidrotu, vai tur iespējams izvietot gāzes vada caurules. Uzņēmums iecerējis izbūvēt Baltijas jūras dzīlēs gāzes vadu, kas savienotu Vīborgu (Krievija) un Greifsvaldi (Vācija).

51% Nord Stream akciju pieder valsts kontrolētajam Krievijas gāzes ieguves monopolistam Gazprom. Kā atteikuma cēloni Igaunija min galvenokārt ekoloģiskus apsvērumus. Uzņēmums pie Igaunijas vērsās maijā, kad bija kļuvis skaidrs, ka liča Somijas daļa gāzes vada izbūvei nav piemērota.

No Krievijas augstākajām amatpersonām pirmais reaģējis ārlietu ministra p.i. Sergejs Lavrovs, kas paudis, ka atteikums nācis "politizētu motīvu dēļ".

Te gan derētu atcerēties citu, pirms diviem gadiem pieņemtu patiešām politisku lēmumu, proti, būvēt gāzes vadu jūrā. Pastāvēja trīs reizes lētāka un no ekspluatācijas viedokļa drošāka alternatīva — gāzes vads pa sauszemi. Tikai tas stieptos cauri "slikto kaimiņu" Baltijas valstu un vēl "sliktākās" Polijas teritorijai. Nu Krievijai atkal "iznācis kā vienmēr".

Igaunijas diplomāti pārceļas uz dzīvi internetā (*Diplomats of Estonia move to live in the Internet*).

Author: Jānis Vēvers

Publication date: 12.12.2007.

Interneta fantāziju pasaulē var klausīties lekcijas par Igauniju, apmeklēt izstādes un koncertus

Baltijas jauno tehnoloģiju flagmane Igaunija kārtējo reizi apliecinājusi, ka ir visprogresīvākā valsts reģionā. Ziemeļu kaimiņi, sekojot Zviedrijas piemēram, decembra sākumā interneta fantāziju pasaulē Second Life atklāja virtuālo vēstniecību, kas ļaus ārzemniekiem vairāk uzzināt par 1,3 miljonu cilvēku apdzīvoto zemi, kā arī dos iespēju igauņu diplomātiem vienkāršāk kontaktēties ar ārvalstu kolēģiem.

Tieši Zviedrijas iesaistīšanās šķietami nenopietnajā projektā iznīdēja igauņu aizspriedumus un piesardzību un pamudināja Ārlietu ministriju pievērsties "paralēlajai pasaulei". Igaunijas ārlietu ministrs Urmas Paets uzsver, ka aizvien vairāk komunikācijas notiek internetā, tādēļ igauņi nedrīkst atpalikt no globālās tendences. "Second Life kā alternatīvas saskarsmes vides popularitāte trauji aug, tādēļ mēs nolēmām tur izveidot savu vēstniecību," vēstniecības atklāšanas dienā paskaidroja ministrs. Igauņi šo "pasauli" atzinuši par piemērotāko, jo tā esot bagātīgākā kultūras ziņā. Tajā varot sastapt gudrus un radošus lietotājus.

Igaunijas virtuālajai vēstniecībai ir izstāžu telpa, kas veltīta valsts 90. neatkarības gadadienai, kā arī telpa interneta preses konferencēm un lekcijām. Pirmā lekcija būs par tēmu Atpakaļ nākotnē un to janvārī nolasīs Igaunijas sūtnis Lielbritānijā Marguss Laidre.

"Mēs sagaidām, ka pasākumus vēstniecībā apmeklēs cilvēki, kurus interesē Igaunija, ārlietas un starptautiskās attiecības," potenciālo viesu pulku iezīmēja Igaunijas Ārlietu ministrijas ģenerālsēkretārs Mati Māsikas. Viņš ir pārliecināts, ka tuvākajos mēnešos arī vairākas citas valstis atvērsot virtuālo vēstniecību.

Vēstniecībā ir arī ziņu zona, kuras moderators ir tradicionālās Eesti hagijs šķirnes suns. Tur ir arī pieņemšanas telpa un tehnoloģiju istaba. Ar pārstāvniecības palīdzību igauņi plāno sasniegt arī to valstu iedzīvotājus, kurās tai nav īstu vēstnieku. Pašlaik ziemeļvalsts diplomāti strādā 40 valstīs. Parasti valsts

iestādes attiecībā uz sociālo portālu un interneta spēļu izmantošanu izvēlas konservatīvu nostāju. Politologi skaidro, ka tās baidās zaudēt nopietnu institūciju tēlu, tādēļ neiesaistās plašas sabiedrības apmeklētās interneta lapās. Dzirdēti nostāsti, ka atbildīgajām amatpersonām dots mājiens, ka nav piedienīgi veidot profilu socializācijas portālos. Šajā ziņā Igaunijas solis vērtējams kā izrāviens, kas varētu "atraut slūžas" un pamudināt arī citu valstu oficiālās iestādes intensīvāk izmantot interneta sniegtās iespējas komunikācijā ar pavalstniekiem.

Pati Ārlietu ministrija savā interneta mājaslapā nenoliedz, ka šis ir viens no eksperimentiem, mācoties izmantot netradicionālas iespējas. Mācību izmaksas līdz galam nav zināmas. Ēkas ārienes konstruēšana izmaksājusi 6400 eiro, bet par iekštelu "iekārtošanu" datu vēl nav.

Interneta tiešsaistes spēle Second Life (Otrā dzīve) ir virtuāla pasaule, kurā katrs cilvēks var izveidot sev animētu varoni jeb tā dēvēto avatāru. Fantāziju tēls dzīvo "pilnvērtīgu dzīvi". Tas iesaistās dažādās sociālajās aktivitātēs, tiekas ar citiem varoņiem un iet iepirkties. Kopš dibināšanas 2003.gadā Sanfrancisko kompānijai Linden Lab izdevies piesaistīt miljoniem interesentu, kuri internetā dzīvo paralēlu dzīvi reālajai.

Pēdējos gados Second Life izpelnījusies popularitāti arī uzņēmumu, universitāšu un politisko partiju vidū, jo tās saskatījušas iespēju ar spēli popularizēt savu vārdu, vēsta ziņu aģentūra AFP.

Appendix 6. “Postimees”articles for the Discourse analysis

Kuldvõtmeke Lāti (Latvia – the golden key)

Author: Erki Erilaid

Publication date: 11.10.2003.

Eesti ja Leedu on lukku pandud ning seda rasket taba saavad avada vaid töökad ja maalähedased lätlased. Kuidas kõlab? Tundub pisut naljakas, kuid siiski näib, et Lāti tegi esmapilgul väga hea valiku, kui võttis oma riigi kuvandi aluseks tunnuslause «Lāti on võti Baltimaadesse». Ehkki mainekujunduse eksperdid minu seisukohta ei jaga, näib mulle siiski, et lätlased tabasid otse naelapea pihta. Võti Baltimaadesse on kahtlemata konkreetsem ja kindlasti iseloomustavam kui meie küllaltki ebamäärane logo «Welcome to ESTonia» ning tunnuslause «Paremaks muutumise maa».

Lätit iseloomustavad kiire areng, maalähedus ja rohelus ning hea geograafiline asukoht, mis on just olulisim välisinvestorite riiki meelitamisel. Motoga, mis näitab kõige täpsemalt, mida on Lätil tegelikult pakkuda, on neil väga hea välisinvestoritega lobby teha - lätlaste sõnum on selge ja ühene. Peale selle, et Riia paikneb Baltimaade südames, on Lätil sarnaselt Eestiga lisaks pakkuda ka vahendaja roll kauplemisel Venemaaga. Välisfirmad ongi juba asunud üha enam oma Baltimaade peakortereid Riiga rajama. Kui varem vaadeldi kolme riiki kui erinevaid turge, siis nüüd, pärast euroreferendumite jah-sõnu võivad investorid arvestada ühtse Balti turuga, ja siin on lätlased tõepoolest võtmepositsioonil.

Lāti võttis võtmed (Latvia took the keys)

Author: Janek Mäggi

Publication date: 14.10.2003.

Eesti imagomeistrid muretsevad, mida meist mõeldakse Londonis ja Pariisis, ning teevad märgi «Welcome to ESTonia». Vaatan Londoni hotellitoas telekat klõpsides reklaami «Welcome to Malaysia» ja mõtlen, keda võiks huvitada minu Eesti? Malaisia küll. Soe, eksootiline, särav. Aasta on 2002, sügis. Eurovisioon on ajalugu. Mis edasi??? Mis on meie sõnum??? Kas see läheb kellelegi korda??? Nüüd tulevad lätlased välja oma sloganiga «Lāti on võti Baltimaadesse». Ja ma mõtlen, et lätlased on meist targemad. Miks? Eestlased mõtlevad, et kuidas müüa Eestimaad (puhke)turistidele. Aga turistid, kes Eestisse tulevad, ei ole hamburgerinäljas ameeriklased ega Kuveidi naftasheigid. Need on lihtsad soomlased, rootslased eelkõige ja siis venelased, lätlased ja leedulased. Teised juba vähem.

Paraku ei tõmba meie põhilist sihtrühma sõnum, mis ei anna meie tootele uut sisu. Külalislahke eestlane ju oma loomult ei ole. Venelaste või hispaanlastega võrreldes kindlasti mitte. Eestisse võib kutsuda küll, aga uusi turge see ei valluta ja vanu ei eruta.

Lāti tõi aga peamiseks argumendiks, miks Lätti tulla, mitte keskmisest vaesema puhketuristi (kui Kanaaride ja Itaalia jaoks raha ei jätku, sõida Tallinna!), vaid ärituristi. Tule tee Baltimaades äri ja tee selleks on Lāti, täpsemalt öeldes Riia! Riia on Baltimaade pealinn juba aastaid, mis siin salata. Kotlerilikest turundusalustest lähtudes on Riial lihtsalt suurepärase asukoht. Tallinna ca 300 km, Vilniusesse ca 300 km. Toode on ka hea, sest Lāti on tõepoolest rohkem üks Venemaale kui Eesti või Leedu, just rahavastiku jagunemise järgi.

Venelastel on venelastega lihtsam äri ajada ja neid on Lätis kõige rohkem. Lāti on Baltimaade võti enamiku rahvusvaheliste suurkorporatsioonide jaoks, kes hea meelega 175 000 ruutkilomeeril äri ajavad. Pindalalt on Baltimaad pool Saksamaad!

Miks ärivärk nii tähtis on? Ärituristid toovad kohale ka palju puhketuriste. Kui ettevõttel on Baltimaades jalg maas, tehakse siin ka aeg-ajalt mõni konverents või juhatuse koosolek. Muidu ei satuks need inimesed Baltimaadesse võib-olla kunagi, aga siis võetakse ka naine ja lapsed kaasa, kuna nendega tippjuhid muidu suhelda ei saagi. Ja kui juba Baltimaadesse tulla, siis ikka Riiga. Kui igav hakkab, sõidavad Tallinna. Kui see ka ei sobi, tõmbavad Vilniusesse.

Me räägime küll, et ei saa me läbi Lätita, aga tegelikult võttis Lāti meilt taas kord võtmed käest ära. Soome TV aitas eestlased kõige kiiremini jalule, aga meil oli kaunis vähe võhma, et liidrirolli haarata. Meie üritame

müta ikka seda, mis meil parasjagu on, mitte seda, mida tahetakse osta. Lätlased mõtlesid paremini läbi, kes on klient ja mida tal vaja on.

Eesti jaoks on moraal veel selles, et Leedu võimalused on paljuski Minski ja Varssavi suunal suuremad kui n-ö Balti kett, neid Läti agressiivsus ei häiri. Eestlane on aga kogu aeg üritanud olla soomlastele-rootslastele vahendajaks Läti ja Leetu. Aga ainult vahendusest ei ela, keegi peab ju tootma ka. Kõigepealt sõnumit, siis raha.

Kas ainult Läti? (Is it just Latvia?)

Author: Erkki Bahovski

Publication date: 20.10.2007.

USA Läti suursaadiku Catherine Todd Bailey teisipäevane kõne Läti Ülikoolis, mis on avaldatud tänases AKs, ei ole loomulikult mitte ainult sõnum Lätile, vaid ka Eestile ja Leedule ning võib-olla isegi kõigile Kesk- ja Ida-Euroopa riikidele.

Bailey kritiseeris Lätit USAga ühiste väärtuste hajumise eest. «Kas me võime loota, et Läti jätkab rasket tööd institutsioonide ja õigussüsteemi rajamisel, mida on vaja Läti elanike demokraatliku ja õitsva tuleviku tagamiseks, või on võimalik, et Läti libiseb tagasi ja hakkab meenutama neid riike, kes ei ole ette võtnud ulatuslikke reforme?» küsis suursaadik.

Vestlesin üleeile ühe Läti ajakirjanikuga ja küsisin, mis Lätis toimub. Parteid teevad, mis tahavad ega kuula kedagi ning parlament on muutunud lihtsalt valitsuse käepikenduseks, ütles ta. Huvitav, mis riigist ta ikka rääkis? Ning kas USA Läti suursaadik pidas silmas ainult Lätit?

Formaalselt käib jutt muidugi ainult Lätist, kuid tõlgendada annab seda kõnet mitmeti. Kui säärase kõne peaks Vene Läti suursaadik, oleks lärm taevani. On ju Venemaa süüdistanud Lätit mitu korda ebademokraatlikkuses ja inimõiguste rikkumises. Nüüd tuli sisuliselt süüdistus ebademokraatlikkuses ka USA-lt.

Õigusriik ja jätkuvad reformid saavad olla Baltimaade vastus ning lootused, nagu tähendaks Euroopa Liit ja NATO siinses regioonis ajaloo lõppu, muutuvad Bailey kõne valguses eriti tragikoomiliseks. Veel selgemaks saab, miks ikkagi Eesti pingutas majandusreformidega 1990. aastail saamaks Euroopa Liitu. Sest NATOsse saamise väljavaade oli nõrk ja ainus julgeolekugarant paistis olevat EL. Seega ei andnud julgeolekutagatise mitte relvajõud, vaid majandusreformid ja järjekindel õigusriigi kehtestamine.

Bailey avaldus näitab, et sama skeem kehtib Baltimaade puhul endiselt. Seda peaks arvestama ka Iraagi missiooni silmas pidades. Kindlasti ei tohiks arvata, et kui oleme saatnud Bagdadi rühma mehi, saame USA-lt automaatselt toetuse ja võime siin isekeskis edasi sahkerdada. Kas maade, autode või korteritega, kiskudes kogu aeg maha riiklike institutsioonide usaldusväärst.

Eesti, Läti ja Leedu julgeolekutagatise algavad eelkõige kodumaalt. See, kas meil on välismissioonid, on siiski kõrvalise tähtsusega õigusriigi ja demokraatlike väärtuste kõrval. Sõdurite saatmine Iraaki ja Afganistani ei aseta meid automaatselt lääne tsivilisatsiooni. Eesti, Läti ja Leedu on rõhunud väärtuspõhisele välispoliitikale, aga seda ei ole ju võimalik teostada, kui me ise neid väärtusi ei austa.

Oligarhid rebivad Läti lõhki (The oligarchs will tear Latvia apart)

Author: Vahur Koorits

Publication date: 31.10.2007.

Läti on riik, kus rikkad ärimehed ostavad endale sobivaid seadusi, poliitikud käivad ringi sularaha täis portfelliidega ja president on altkäemaksuvõtmise kahtlusega uurimise all. Nüüd on aga rahval valitsevast korrupsioonist kõrini saanud.

Läti on pärast taasiseseisvumist paljuski arenenud Eestist erinevat teed pidi. Täna Läti hädade juured ulatuvad kõiki ülejäänud Nõukogude okupatsiooni probleeme kõrvale jättes aastasse 1988, mil Läti kommunistlik partei saatis oma liikme Aivars Lembergsi juhtima Ventspils linna. Pärast taasiseseisvumist jäi Lembergs võimule ja valiti viis korda ametisse tagasi.

Sadamakuningas

Nii nagu Eestit tabas Lätit 1990ndate alguses järsk majanduslangus, mis mängis kaardid lihtsalt Lembergsi kätte. Ventspils sadama kaudu liikus suur hulk Vene naftat välismaale, mis tagas sadamale püsiva sissetuleku. See võimaldas Lembergsil ka Ventspilsist väljaspool oma mõju lihtsate vahenditega laiendada. Lätis räägitakse üsna avalikult, et Lembergsile kuuluvad mitmed Ventspils sadamaga seotud firmad läbi Hollandi riulifirma Yelverton Investment, mille omanike nimekiri pole avalik.

Samas pole Lembergs kitsi, vaid on sadamatulu jaganud ka Ventspils linnarahvaga, mistõttu tema juhitav kohalik partei on saanud pärast 1997. aastat kõikidel kohalikel valimistel üle 73 protsendi häältest.

Lillemüüjast miljonäriks

Sellal, kui Lembergs juba Ventspils valitses, tegeles teine tulevane oligarh, Andris Škele, veel turul lillede müümisega. Suurte erastamiste ajal töötas ta aga põllumajandusministeeriumis ja justkui imevael sattusid Läti toiduainetööstused järjest tema sõprade kätte. Pärast põllumajandusministeeriumist lahkumist vormistas Škele ettevõtte oma nimele.

Möödunud kümnendi teisel poolel oli Škele ka Läti peaminister, kuid selles ametis ei pidanud ta väga kaua vastu. See-eest aga õnnestus tal veelgi rikkamaks saada. Praegu hindab ajaleht The Baltic Times tema varanduse koguväärtuseks umbes 900 miljonit krooni.

Läti Raadio ajakirjaniku Aidis Tomsoni sõnul käis 1990ndatel nende riigis sisuliselt sõda Škele ja Lembergsi vahel. Leppimine toimus väidetavalt aastal 2001, selle käigus jaotasid mehed lihtsalt mõjusfäärid ära ja leppisid kokku, kuidas jagada erastamisele minevaid väärtuslikke ettevõtteid.

Kolmanda oligarhi tulek

1990ndate lõpus lisandus kahele eelmainitud oligarhile veel kolmaski ärimees, Norra firmade kohaliku partnerina jõukaks saanud Ainars Šlesers, kes tuli poliitikasse, et koguda võimu ja veel suuremat rikkust. Praeguses Läti valitsuses töötab Šlesers transpordiministrina, kes on teeninud kiitust energilise tegevuse eest tee-ehituses ja Riia lennuvälja laiendamisel. Ta kuulub Läti Esimese Partei ja Läti Tee ühendpartei, mis omab sajaliikmelises parlamendis kümnet kohta ja kuulub ka valitsusliitu.

Škele seisab aga omakorda Rahvaerakonna taga: sel parteil on parlamendis 23 mandaati ja Aigars Kalvītise näol ka peaminister. Škele on Rahvaerakonna looja ja suurrahastaja, väidetavalt ka kõikvõimas telgitagune niiditõmbaja.

Lembergsist aga sõltub rahaliselt kolmas koalitsioonipartei, Roheliste ja Põllumeeste Liit. Samuti kuulub Lembergsile osa Läti meediast, näiteks ajaleht Neatkariga. Oma oligarhi pole koalitsioonierakondadest vaid rahvuslikul parteil Isamaale ja Vabadusele.

Nii oligarhidel kui poliitikutel oli elu ilus seni, kuni tekkis vajadus liituda Euroopa Liidu ja NATOga. Riia Stradinsi ülikooli politoloogiaõppejõu Veiko Spolitise sõnul oli lätlastele esimene šokk aasta 1997, kui Eesti kutsuti ühinemisläbirääkimistele Euroopa Liiduga, aga Läti ja Leedu jäeti veel kolmeks aastaks ukse taha ootama.

Kui enne aastat 2004 muutus liitumine mõlema organisatsiooniga aga järjest tõenäolisemaks, siis suurenes ka Lääne surve tõhustada võitlust korruptsiooniga, mida seni olid nii poliitikud kui ärimehed täiesti normaalseks pidanud.

Ka tavalised inimesed ei soovinud valitseva korruptsiooni vastu häält tõsta, sest esiteks peeti seda mõttetuks ja teiseks muutus elu eriti pärast Euroopa Liiduga liitumist märgatavalt paremaks.

Aga USA surve loodi Lätis korruptsiooniga võitlemiseks laialdaste volitustega korruptsioonitõrjebüroo (KNAB).

Koostöös prokuratuuriga on see organisatsioon tegelenud aktiivselt korruptantide tagaajamisega kõikjal, kust neid on leitud.

Näiteks jäi hiljuti oma ametist ilma parlamendispiiker Indulis Emsis, kelle portfelligi varastati 10 000 USA dollarit (umbes 111 000 krooni), mille eest ta kavatses oma sõnade kohaselt traktori osta. Hiljem tunnistas ta end aga valevandumises süüdi ja sai selle eest üle 100 000 krooni trahvi.

Eelmisel aastal vahistati aga rahapesu ja altkäemaksude andmise eest Ventspils kuningas Lembergs, kes praegu viibib koduarestis. Tomsoni sõnul pani teda imestama Lembergsi tegude kohmakus. Just seetõttu usuvad nii tema kui Spolitise, et Lembergs läheb tõenäoliselt vangi. Škele on Spolitise sõnul aga palju

kavalam mees, kes on suutnud jälgi paremini peita. Samas on ta kindel, et ühel päeval on ka Škele ja Šlesers kohtu ees.

KNABi haardesse on sattunud isegi praegune president Valdis Zatlers, kes enne presidendiks saamist töötas arstina ja võttis raha operatsioonide eest, mida ta tegelikult oleks pidanud tegema tasuta. KNAB uurib nüüd, kas tegemist on ebaseadusliku tegevusega või ei.

Zatlersi ametisessaamisest rääkides tuleb mainida kuulujutte, mille kohaselt polnud mõned koalitsioonisaadikud nõustuma poolt hääletama ja vajalikud hääled osteti opositsioonis olevatelt vene saadikutelt.

Tomsonsi väitel olevat ühe vene saadiku hääle hind üheks hääletuseks 25 000 latti ehk üle poole miljoni krooni.

Läti poliitiline eliit ei talunud korruptsioonivastast võitlust aga vastu hakkamata, vaid asus rünnakule. Eelmise aasta lõpus lisas parlament julgeolekuasutuste tegevust korraldavale seaduseelnõule vargsi punkti, mis oleks võimaldanud mõningatel parlamendiliikmetel tutvuda julgeolekuasutuste kogutud infoga. Spolitis kahtlustab, et selle eesmärgiks oli võidelda prokuratuuri ja KNABi korruptsioonivastaste ettevõtmistega.

Rahva kannatus katkes

Sellele ideele pani veto ametist lahkunud president Vaira Vike-Freiberga, kuid seejärel asus peaminister Kalvitis vasturünnakule.

Et KNABi raamatupidamisest avastati väikseid ebareeglipärasusi, siis vallandas valitsus selle juhi Aleksejs Loskutovski, kuigi väidetavalt pole see üldsegi valitsuse võimuses. Loskutovs on praeguseks vallandamise kohtus vaidlustanud.

Loskutovski vallandamise peale hakkasid mässama seni kõike kannatlikult talunud lätlased. 18. oktoobril kogunes Läti parlamendihoone ette meelt avaldama 5000 inimest, mis oli taasiseseisvunud Läti kõige suurem meeleväljendus.

Sellel meeleväljendusel käis ka 26-aastane Riia jurist Rolands Irklis. Keskkooliajal oli Irklis poliitiliselt aktiivne ja kaalus isegi ühte parteisse astumist, kuid otsustas hiljem, et teeb parem karjääri advokaadina.

Poliitikute ülbus ja kohtusüsteemis valitsev korruptsioon aga taastas temas huvi poliitika vastu.

«Ma mäletan kohtuotsust, kus motivatsiooniosa ehk kõige olulisem lõik kohtuotsusest oli üks ühele võetud minu oponenti sõnavõttust. Isegi kirjavead olid samad,» meenutas Irklis. «On ka ausaid kohtunikke, kuid korruptsioon kohtusüsteemis teeb teda siiski haigeks,» lausus ta.

Kasvav krahhiolt

Irklis loodab, et sel laupäeval tuleb Riiga valitsuse vastu meelt avaldama eelmise meeleväljenduse 5000 inimese asemel 50 000 inimest ning et valitsus kukub.

Viimaste arvamusküsitluste järgi ei saaks peaminister Kalviti juhitud Rahvapartei kätte parlamenti pääsemiseks vajalikku viit protsenti valijate häältest, mistõttu nii Spolitis kui Tomsons arvavad, et Kalviti valitsus ei pea pärast uue eelarve vastuvõtmist tegelikult kuigi kaua vastu.

Lisaks korruptsioonile on Lätis ka majandusprobleemid, nagu inflatsioon.

Tarbijahinnaindeksi tõus on Lätis kasvanud viimastel andmetel juba 11,4 protsendini ja analüütikud ähvardavad järjest tõsisemalt majandusbuumile järgneva krahhi eest. Inflatsiooni pidurdamiseks on valitsus võtnud nõuks teha ülejäägiga eelarve, et võtta hõõgavast majandusest raha ära ja hoida seda halvemate aegade jaoks.

See omakorda on ajanud valitsuse vastu mässama riigiteenistujad, kes nõuavad kõrgele inflatsioonile viidates rohkem raha juurde, kui valitsus on valmis andma.

Irklise hinnangul on valitsuse kokkuhoiukava hale, sest kokku hoitakse just sotsiaalkuludeks mõeldud eelarve pealt, sellal kui sama rahasumma saaks säästa riigisektori muid kulutusi efektiivsemaks muutes

Tere taas, Läti kodanikuühiskond! (Hello once again society of the state of Latvia)

Editors letter

Publication date: 04.11.2007.

Kuigi tänapäevane demokraatiatõlgendus näeb rahva rolli neile antud kõrgeima võimu teostamises ennekõike läbi vabadel ja regulaarsetel osalemise, peab iga kodanik siiski olema valmis ka enamaks. Näiteks siis, kui

tundub, et valimistelt mandaadi saanud ei kasuta oma võimu enam mitte niivõrd rahva, kuivõrd iseene huvides.

Nii mõnigi politoloog ja lääne vaatleja oli selles mõttes lätlased juba maha kandnud. Sealse rahva võõrandumine poliitikast andis võimukandjatele ja neid rahastavatele oligarhidele aastaid nii vabad käed, et lõpuks oli Ameerika Ühendriikide suursaadik sunnitud astuma pretsedenditu sammu ja meie lõunanaabritele meenutama, et demokraatlikud väärtused ei pruugi püsida, kui neid üldse ei hoita.

Nagu mitmed meeleavaldused ja ametiühingute algatatud allkirjade kogumine tõestavad, on need, kes Läti kodanikuühiskonna maha kandsid, siiski eksinud. Lätlaste taasarganud huvi poliitika vastu annab loodetavasti ka siinsetele võimukandjatele ja ärimeestele signaali, et kuigi mõnda inimest võib mõnikord lollitada, ei saa siiski lollitada kõiki ja kogu aeg.

Mis toimub Lätis? (What is happening in Latvia?)

Author: Kaspar Nāf

Publication date: 05.10.2007.

Oktoobri keskel vihjas Ameerika Ühendriikide saadik Catherine Todd Bailey Läti Ülikoolis peetud kõnes Läti problemaatilistele arengutele, mis võivad viia tagasi mittedemokraatlikku riiki iseloomustava tegutsemis- ja majandamismudelini.

Sellele järgnes korruptsiooni vastu võitleva ühingu KNABi juhi Aleksejs Loskutovski vallandamine, mis omakorda tõi kaasa nii välisministri Artis Pabriksi tagasiastumise ning regionaalministri Aigars Štokenbergši tagandamise ja Rahvaparteist väljaheitmise. Paljud eestlased küsisid endalt: mis Lätis toimub?

Kõige enam muret valmistas Ameerika Ühendriikide saadiku kõne ning kartus, et eemalt vaadatuna võidakse Balti riike näha mitte kolme eri riigina, vaid ühe üksusena, ning Läti halb maine võib kahjustada ka Eesti ja Leedu huve.

Suured muutused

Kuid toimusid veel mõned tähtsad muutused, mis erilist tähelepanu endale ei tõmmanud. Esimene oli septembri keskel aset leidnud majandusminister Jānis Strodsi ametist lahkumine, kes põhjendas seda ise perekondlike põhjustega.

Kuigi majandusministri koht on üks kahest ministrikohast, mis kuuluvad liitlasele Isamaale ja Vabadusele (TB/LNNK), lükkas Rahvaparteisse (TP) kuuluv peaminister Aigars Kalvītis tagasi sellele kohale esitatud TB/LNNK kandidaadi.

Ajal, mil inflatsioon suureneb, krediidi- ja kinnisvaraturul on olukorra parandamiseks vaja palju ära teha ning Läti majanduslaevale ennustatakse tormilist merd, on raske aru saada, miks peaminister sellise otsuse tegi.

Teine muudatus oli seimi spiikri väljavahetamine. Kui endine spiiker, Põllumeeste ja Roheliste Ühendusse (ZZS) kuuluv Indulis Emsis astus välja prokuratuuri uksest, kuhu teda oli kutsutud ühe kriminaalasja pärast ülekuulamisele, hakkas ta kohe rääkima seimist lahkumisest.

Oletatavasti ei kogunud ülekuulamisel vajalikku informatsiooni üksnes prokuratuur, vaid ka Emsis ise, kes taipas arvatavasti kohe, kui palju seal temast juba teatakse. Ta asendati Gundars Daudzega, kes oli poliitikas eikeegi.

Et fraktsioonis on midagi mäda, tõestas kolmas juhtum – endise SS-leegionäri Visvaldis Lācis väljaastumine. Koos Štokenbergši TPst väljaheitmisega on koalitsiooni tuumik, kuhu kuulub peale TP ja ZZS ka Läti Esimene Partei (LPP), seimis oma enamuse kaotanud ning sõltub nüüd TB/LNNKst. Nii on mõistetav, et sel nädalal on ZZSi sotsiaalminister Dagnija Staņa laevast lahkunud.

Ei midagi uut

Kui küsida lätlaste käest, mis nende kallil kodumaal toimub, siis saab vastuse, et kolm oligarhi domineerivat Läti poliitilises elus täielikult ning suruvat oma tahte seimis koduparteide abil – Põllumeeste ja Roheliste Ühendus (Aivars Lembergs), Rahvapartei (Andris Šķēde), Läti Esimene Partei (Ainars Šlesers) – läbi. Rahva tahet ei võtvat nad aga üldse arvesse. Tõsi, neil on nüüd juba aasta aega olnud seimis enamus. Kuid minu arvates see vastus siiski lonkab.

Esiteks on ju normaalne, et valitsus parlamendis oma tahte läbi surub ning saadikud teevad, mida neil kästakse. Näiteks võidab ka Saksamaal parlamendis toimuvad presidendivalimised alati valitsuse kandidaat.

Ka Ühendkuningriigi saadikud hoiduvad fraktsioonidistsipliini vastu põiklemisest, kuna see viiks nad tagapinki, mis omakorda tähendaks poliitilise karjääri lõppu.

Teiseks pole rahvale meeldiva poliitika tegemine alati õige lahendus. Seda nimetatakse pigem populismiks. Kolmandaks pole oligarhide tegutsemine Lätis mingi uus nähtus. Näiteks on Ainars Šlesers, kelle Vilis Krištopans tollal (oletatavasti Lembergsi algatusel) oma valitsusest tagandas, 1999. aasta varakevadel väitnud, et tegelikult juhib valitsust Ainars Lembergs. Teisigi näited oleks küllalt, ning oleks sinisilmne arvata, et Lembergs ja teised oligarhid oleksid oma majandamiskultuuri Euroopa Liitu ja NATOsse astumise pärast ajutiselt muutnud. USA saadikule vastates – Läti ei libise tagasi. Seal on ikka nii olnud.

Parandada suhteid Moskvaga

Et leida vastust küsimusele, mis Lätis toimub, peab otsima teist teed. Ühest küljest oleks tähtis selgusele jõuda, kes need kolm oligarhi on. Piisab mainimisest, et Lembergs oli esimene, ŠĀ·Ā“le teine ning Šlesers kolmas, kes sellesse liigasse tõusis. Lembergs (ning tema toetatud partei ZZS) on nendest kindlasti kõige rahvuslikumalt meelestatud ning Šlesers kõige venesõbralikum.

Lembergs on seotud Ventspils Naftaga, ŠĀ·Ā“le digitaaltelevisiooniga ning tema perekond on Riia prügiäris tegutsev. Šlesers on Läti poliitikasse sattunud Norra investorite rühma kohaliku esindajana ning on nendest ainukesena aktiivne riigi poliitikas. Ideoloogiliselt on teda raske määrata. Eelmise legislatuuri ajal õnnestus tal sotsialistlikult meelestatud venelaste erakonnast viis saadikut oma parteisse tõmmata. Praegu teeb tema partei koostööd liberaalse Läti Teega (LC). Jaanuaris toimusid ühinemiskõnelused vene-sotsialistliku Harmoonia Keskusega (SC).

Teisest küljest peab küsima, mis on kõige silmapaistvam muutus Lätis? Läti sõlmis piirilepingu Venemaaga – lepingu, mille mõlemad pooled on ratifitseerinud. Lätis on toimunud nihe Vene suunas.

Peaküsimus on, miks vahetas valitsus oma seisukohta? Peaaegu sama valitsus, kes 2005. aastal Abrene piirkonnast loobumist nimetas põhiseadusega mitte kooskõlastatavaks, oli selleks 2007. aasta alguses valmis. Kuid praeguse valitsuse koosseis on ju rahvuslikum kui 2005. aastal: TB/LNNK asendas Uut Aega (JL). Märtsi keskel (enne lepingu allakirjutamist) võeti Lembergs kinni. Tema takistas Ventspils Nafta müümist Vene firmale Transneft, riskis 2003. aastal naftasõjaga Venemaaga, mis maksis Lembergsi sõnul Venemaale üks miljard dollarit.

Lembergsi arreteerimine pole Moskva tellitud, kuid nagu Venemaa strateegilise nõukogu president Stanislav Belkovski Läti telekanalile LNT tunnistas, «väljenduvad selles ka Venemaa huvid». Igatahes on sel aastal nafta ning naftatoodete transiit läbi Ventspils jaanuarist septembrini kasvanud 6,2 miljonilt tonnilt 10,1 miljonile.

Ventspilsisse viiva toru ning Ventspils sadama tähtsust venelaste silmis rõhutab tõik, et Venemaa saadik Lätis Viktor Kaljužnõi on naftaärist pärit. Tema rääkis maikuu ühele ajalehele antud intervjuus konstruktiivsest ajajärgust Vene-Läti suhetes, mis on alguse saanud piirilepingu allakirjutamisega.

Kas peaminister Aigars Kalvītis tahtis seda konstruktiivset ajajärku ka majanduse alal jätkata? Ehk soovis ta sellepärast majandusministeeriumi TB/LNNK käest ära võtta? Rahvuslasega sellel kohal pole majandussuhteid Venemaaga kerge parandada.

Läti kriis olgu Eestile hoiatuseks (Let the crisis of Latvia be warning for Estonia)

Author: Kaspar Nāf

Publication date: 09.11.2007.

Naaberriigis Lätis lahvatanud valitsuskriis ei saa meid ükskõikseks jätta, sest halbade asjaolude kokkulangemisel pole välistatud selle stsenaariumi kordumine ka Eestis. Eesti on sarnaselt Lätiga teinud viimastel aastatel läbi väga kiire majandusarengu, mis on küll kasvatanud riigi rikkust, kuid toonud kaasa ka mitmeid tõsiseid ohumärke.

Enne soodsa majandustsükli pöördumist on Eesti valitsusel viimane aeg teha lõunanaabrite vigadest tõsised järeldused.

Eile Riia tänavail meelt avaldanud inimeste sõnul lõhestab Läti ühiskonda kõige rohkem see, et valitsus on rahvast lootusetult kaugenenu ega ilmuta isegi mingit soovi nende probleemidega tegeleda.

Kui valitsus mingis otsuses ka üksmeelele jõuab, siis sellega seonduvat ei vaevuta rahvale selgitama. Valitsev eliit kujundab endast müüriga kaitstud kindlust, kuhu lihtrahval asja pole. Nii kaob usk demokraatia toimimisse ja kasvab ihalus karmi, ent õiglase käe järele. Seda ohtu mõistnud Läti ministrid on tänaseks oma ameti juba maha pannud.

Läti hoiatus (Warning of Latvia)

Publication date: 21.11.2007.

Lõunanaabrite kinnisvaraturu kasv aeglustub

Ei saa me läbi Lätita – Läti kinnisvaraturu kasvu aeglustumine võib anda Eesti ettevõtetele hoobi mitte koduturul, vaid hoopis lõunanaabrite juurest, sest just seal on meie ettevõtlus kõige haavatavam. Samas on Lätis toimuv ehk ka kaine hoiatus ja võimalus, et seda kõike Eestis ära hoida või hoolitseda selle eest, et paratamatu langus leiaks aset siin pehmemalt.

Nimelt toimub Lätis praegu see, mida kardetakse/ennustatakse ka Eestis: kinnisvaraturu kokkukuivamine. Nii on Läti uute korterite hinnad stabiliseerinud ja kasvanud oktoobris võrreldes septembriga vaid 0,6 protsenti.

Eesti ettevõtted on investeerinud Lätti väga palju, tervelt 36,9 protsenti Eesti välisinvesteeringuist moodustab lõunanaabrite turg. Raskused kinnisvaraturul tähendavadki eelkõige probleeme Eesti kinnisvaraarendajale.

Seega oleks võib-olla mõneti ennatlik tõmmata täielikult paralleele 1998. aasta Vene kriisiga. Sarnasusi on samas küll: kasum hakkab asenduma kahjumiga, väga paljud ettevõtted on seotud naaberturuga ning sarnaselt üheksa aasta taguse ajaga kõneletakse ka praegu raha devalveerimisest.

Ent ka erinevused 1998. aasta Vene kriisist on märkimisväärsed. Keegi ei räägi veel krahhist Läti majanduses, pealegi näitavad ennustused, et Läti majanduskasv on kuus kuni seitse protsenti aastas. Liiatigi on nii Eesti kui ka Läti nüüd Euroopa Liidu ja selle siseturu liikmed, missugune fakt peaks iseenesest lisama stabiilsust.

Kuid suurim erinevus seisneb selles, et kui Vene kriis puudutas peamiselt Eesti eksportijaid, siis midagi sellist Lätiga seoses ei toimu. Jutt käib seni ainult ühest majandusvaldkonnast – kinnisvarast.

Asjatu oleks ka Eesti kinnisvaraettevõtjaid rumaluses süüdistada, sest Läti majanduskasv ületas eelmisel aastal koguni Eesti oma ja miks mitte investeerida nii kiiresti kasvavasse majandusse. Kuid tuleb silmas pidada, et hoolimata ELi-liikmesusest on Läti näol tegemist tüüpilise Ida-Euroopa turuga, kus kiire tõus võib asenduda äkilise langusega. Lisatagu veel vinduv poliitiline kriis ja korrupsioon, mis ei soodusta mis tahes välisinvesteeringuid.

Vaatamata erinevustele Eesti ja Läti vahel võib kinnisvaraturu kasvu aeglustumine Lätis olla heaks õppetunniks, et midagi sellist võib juhtuda varsti ka Eestis. Ning Läti näitel saab teha ettevalmistusi pehmemaks maandumiseks Eestis. Pealegi ei ole ka Lätile kui välisturule suuri alternatiive, seega tuleb osata Läti kinnisvaraturu kasvu aeglustumine üle elada.

Läti ja Leedu nädala oostuses (Awaiting the week of Latvia and Lithuania)

Author: Erkki Bahovski

Publication date: 18.12.2007.

Soome Vabariigi 90. sünnipäev 6. detsembril möödus Eestis igati suurejooneliselt – Soome riigi tekkimist ja suhteid Eestiga lahkasid suurimad päevalehed, radiojaamad ning ETV suutis koguni eetrisse paisata Soome nädala. Ka eratelekanalid näitasid Soomele pühendatud saateid. Tõepoolest. Soomega seob Eestit palju, meil on lähedane keel, paljudel on Soomes tuttavad ja järjest vähemaks jääb siin inimesi, kes polegi Soomes käinud.

Ent pöörakem pilk põhjast lõunasse. Sarnaselt Eestiga tähistavad järgmisel aastal oma 90. sünnipäeva nii Läti (18. november) kui ka Leedu (16. veebruar). Kusjuures meie oleme nendel päevadel oma lipud heisanud ja nemad oma lipud meie iseseisvuspäeval. Soome iseseisvuspäeval Eesti lipud ei lehvi.

Kas ei tuleks säärasest lipundusest järeldada, et Eestis tuleks Läti ja Leedu iseseisvuspäeva tähistada veelgi suurejoonelisemalt kui Soome oma? Et ETVs peaks tulema nii Läti kui ka Leedu nädal? Või midagi veel?

Kui Soome nädala raames sai näha kümnekonda Soome filmi, esinesid fennofiilid, kes soome keelest tõlkinud, ja estofiilid, kes tõlkinud eesti keelest soome keelde, siis kas midagi sellist on üldse võimalik kokku saada Läti ja Leedu puhul?

Võib-olla on ETV või eratelekanalid nii tublid, et suudavad meieni organiseerida Läti viimase ajaloofilmi «Riigi kaitsjad», kuid mis edasi. Palju me teame midagi Läti või Leedu dokumentalistikast, uusimast kirjandusest jne. Ühesõnaga, kõike seda, mida teame Soome puhul.

Muidugi, erinev ajalugu mängis oma osa. Meil polnud nõukaajal põhjust vaadata Läti või Leedu poole samal viisil nagu Soome poole. Motivatsioon puudus, kuid samas käisid eestlased tihedalt Lätis ja Leedus ekskursioonidel.

Ent laulva revolutsiooni sündmused ja Balti kett liitsid Balti riike rohkem ühte kui kunagi varem. Lippe oli tõega põhjust lehitada. Kuid mis on sellest ajast alles jäänud? Või küsigem niiviisi: kuhu on see ühtne tunne arenenud? Siia maani pole meil korralikku läti-eesti-läti ega leedu-eesti-leedu sõnaraamatut, samas on olemas näiteks... korea sõnaraamat.

On samas selge, et kui 1918. aastal poleks iseseisvunud ei Läti ega Leedu, võinuks Eesti ajalugu hoopis teistsugune välja näha. Meil on mõtet tähistada Läti ja Leedu iseseisvumist ja ennast lõunanaabrite ajaloo, kultuuri ja poliitika osas natuke harida.

Lõppu ka üks kiuslik küsimus: kas Soome tähistab Eesti 90. sünnipäeva sama suurejooneliselt kui meie Soome oma?

Läti õrnkõrn lootus (Vague hope of Latvia)

Publication date: 01.12.2007.

Hoolimata kõigist kiidusõnadest tõenäoliselt Läti järgmiseks peaministriks tõusva Edgars Zālansi aadressil jääb õhku siiski küsimus, kas üks mees ikka suudab kogu ummikusse jooksnud poliitilise süsteemi korraga õigele rajale pöörata.

Eriti kui arvesse võtta seda, et jõujooned seimis ja valitsuses sisuliselt ju ei muutu. Uue Aja võimalik lisandumine koalitsiooni näib omavat pigem kosmeetilist mõju. Praegustel valitsusparteidel on parlamendienamus käes Uue Ajatagi, mis tähendab, et uustulnukas ei saa eriti omi tingimusi esitada ja peab pigem mänguvõtmise eest tänulik olema.

Samas ei tasu unustada kahte asja. Esiteks, paari kuu eest leidsid lihtsad lätlased endas tahet tulla tänavatele ja avaldada meelt senise hapuksläinud süsteemi vastu. Ning teiseks, peaminister Aigars Kalvītis võttis end seepeale kokku, lubas tagasi astuda ja sel kolmapäeval täitiski lubaduse. Nüüd jääb vaid loota, et läti rahvas ei unusta oma jõudu ja jätkab poliitikutelt muutumise nõudmist ning viimased omakorda austavad kodanike õigust elada ausas õigusriigis.