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BALTIC SEA REGION IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION IN POLITICAL  
ELITES DISCOURSE

Master's Thesis

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## **ABSTRACT**

This Master's Thesis aims to see the Baltic Sea Region Identity in political elites discourse. The Baltic Sea Region is a heterogeneous region and a recent phenomenon which attracts academics, politicians and international organizations such as European Union and OSCE attention. Heterogeneity in the region creates challenges to common identity construction. Nation-states are main actors in the Baltic Sea Region and they are building a set of ideas to identify themselves in contrast to the other. These sets of ideas can be found in nation-states political discourse. Political elites are directly linked to the political discourse and they have a major role in identity construction process. Political elites discourse gives the option to research main denominators of regional identity construction. The theoretical model introduced in this thesis is to research regional identity construction. The research contributes to the Baltic Sea Region identity studies by focusing on the all region countries discourse to create a map of the nation-state identity construction and to see the relationship with regional identity construction process. The analysis relies on qualitative method (Discourse Analysis) within the timeframe of 2000-2012 which includes major changes in the region. This research is carried out to identify main denominators of nation-state and Baltic Sea Region identity in Latvian, Finnish, Estonian, Swedish, Russian, Lithuanian, Danish, Polish and German regional countries political elites discourse and relationship between nation-state and regional identity.

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## **ABBREVIATIONS**

BSR	Baltic Sea Region
CBSS	Council of the Baltic Sea States
EU	European Union
HELCOM	Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission
IT	Information Technology
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The construction of a region is based on political-economic and cultural-historical factors. The Baltic Sea Region is regarded as the outcome of political-economic interests, which is mainly an elite driven project. It is a recent phenomenon and a region in building. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the elimination of the 'east' and 'west' classic phenomena triggered cooperation and led to active interaction in the Baltic Sea Region. The role of organizations such as European Union, HELCOM and the Council of Baltic Sea States in regional cooperation is considerable and gives opportunity to see regional identity as a top-down construction. The European Union Eastern Enlargement fostered cooperation in the region and led to a move from being a distinct entity to the European Union region.

Political-economic interaction in national and regional level poses an increase in attention from scholars towards this topic. The cultural-historical tie provides a close affinity feeling in the public and creates identification denominators for the region. The political-economic framework refers to cultural-historical factors that create a common identification in the identity construction process. The Baltic Sea Region identity is a contested term which is attributed with heterogeneous character. Different denominators of regional identity construction are apparent among the nation states. The identification of nation-states in contrast to regions creates a different understanding of political-economic and cultural-historical factors.

Considering these factors the Baltic Sea Region identity construction becomes a compelling case to study. Previous studies drive attention to these factors which makes the topic relevant to the current study. Ole Waever's (2002) theoretical model to study the identity process of the Nordic Countries in European Union integration is applied in this thesis. In this model Waever produces a discursive approach towards the relations between the nation-state and regional identity. Using the same model with refinements and introducing the Baltic Sea Region as a new case will help to test a new case that has not been tested before. More about this topic can be found in the section that concerns the methodology of the thesis.



While considering the Baltic Sea Region's identity, the concept of the 'collective identity' is introduced to drive social-psychology, self-categorization and social-identity theories into this topic. With the help of these theories and of the collective identity term, it is possible to see the nation-states relations towards regional identity. Nation-states are building set of ideas to identify themselves in contrast to other groups. It has been argued that identity is the outcome of social interaction. In this interaction groups tend to build a set of shared common features in the self construction and this self construction demonstrates closeness within the group. These shared features can be found in the political discourse of nation-states. Political elites are directly linked with the political discourse and they have a crucial role in the construction of identity. Nation-states are the main actors in the Baltic Sea Region. Considering this argument, political elites discourse provides the opportunity to research regional identity construction.

In this Master thesis my aim is to study the Baltic Sea Region identity construction from the discourse of political elites. This study aims to find out the nation-states, regional identity construction and the relation between these two phenomena.

There are significant studies in the Baltic Sea Region identity, both qualitatively and quantitatively, but studies that consider the region as complete set of nine states and focusing on political elites discourse are scarce. Issuing this approach analysis of nation level discourse creates an overall map of identity in the Baltic Sea Region. The main research questions are:

**How is Baltic Sea Region identity constructed through the political elites discourse?**

**What is the relationship between national and regional identity through the political elites discourse?**

Data is collected from Latvian, Lithuanian, Estonian, Swedish, Danish, Polish, Finnish, Russian and German political elites' official speeches. The time frame selected is 2000-2012. This time period includes the main political and economic changes in the

region such as European Enlargement and the European Union Baltic Sea Region Strategy, which I believe have had an effect on the political elites' attitude and that the difference is observable in this time period. The methodological framework is introduced in order to analyze the speeches. The language barriers in the region make English language texts the most appropriate to analyze. In depth consideration of the methodological approach can be found in Section 3.

My work starts with an analysis of the general theories and notions that are used in thesis. In Section 3 the proper framework is presented in order to analyze the data. In this part the methodology will be provided. In Section 4 the analysis of the qualitative data is viewed.

I want to mention that identity is a fluid term and a changeable notion over time. The 12 year period may not be long enough to observe significant changes. The main goal will be to analyze tendencies.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **2.1.THE NOTION OF IDENTITY**

The studies related to the identity as notion have not been monolithic. It has been mainly connected to the authors' attitude and their consideration towards identity. Identity has been considered in sociology, philosophy, anthropology and political science. As in the works of the Erik Eriksen (1968; 283), identity is used as a term inside the identity crisis context. However the entrance of identity to the political science related to the behavioralist movement in 1960, the usage of the identity has been limited in that period. Mainly it has been used only in the 'national role' notion with limited features. In 1990 with the rise in critical thinking and constructivist approach identity started to be used in a broader sense (Reus-Smit, 2002; 487). The last decade of the twentieth century followed with a considerable rise in identity studies and with Horowitz's (1991) and Wendt's (1999) works it became a complex issue to be considered in political science. Philosophically, identity defines a subject to be someone or something and it is an inevitable dimension of entity (Horowitz, 1991). Calhoun mentions that this does not mean that identity is given, but a social entity which is constructed in the relationship with 'other' (1994: 13). In this point 'other' enters inside of the identity logic. Connelly mentions that somewhere 'other' enters to the general logic of identity to become more precise entity (1995; 24).

Focusing on identity as a notion it comes closer to the Delanty's words: "Identity is contested and much abused term" (2005; 51). Considering this, it is beneficial to mention that identity as a term has been used in various meanings. Philip Gelson mentions:

"Identity had reached the level of generality and diffuseness that A.O. Lovejoy complained of many years earlier in respect to the world romantic: it had 'come to mean so many things that, by itself, it means nothing. It has ceased to perform the function of a verbal sign.' There is little point in asking what identity 'really means', when matters have reached this pass" (Quoted in Henningsen, 2011; 17)

Identity is a contested term which drives debates to determine it as an entity. My idea is not to dive into using a debate as to whether identity is a category of analysis or a social phenomenon but to focus on unambiguous term of the identity issued by Delanty

(2005). In order to consider the institutions and political forces in the Baltic Sea Region's identity construction process, it is crucial to make a refinement to Delanty's definition.

- Identities are the outcome of the social interaction and are processual or constructed.
- Identity has a narrative dimension.
- Identity is forming in relations between the self and the other. It is not simply a given, but is constructed by social actors on the existing cultural sources.
- Identities do not exist in zero sum relations. They may be overlapping, nested, cross-cutting, mixed or co-existing.(Delanty, 2005; 51).
- Identities are not only culturally constructed but are also politically sanctioned (Lane, 2011; 925).

## **2.2. COLLECTIVE IDENTITY**

Identity is regarded as the individual, social and social psychology topic. It has two dimensions: individual and collective. In this thesis, the collective identity notion is used. Cerulo calls collective identity as a concept grounded on Durkheim's collective consciousness, Marx's class consciousness, Weber's Verstehen and Tonnies' Gemeinschaft (1997; 386). Collective identity is the consciousness or feeling of belonging to a particular human group that has 'self' (Smith, 1992; 57). The notion reflects that self recognition and self identification derive not only from internal but also external construction. Collective identity is constructed over time with social interaction. It is both pervasive and persistent (Smith, 1992; 58).

Eder suggests that groups represent identity in the process of positioning themselves vis-à-vis others. Further he provides an understanding of identity as a notion with the belief that it should be stable over time (Eder, 2009; 428). Stråth mentions that collective identity is not the outcome of various personal identities, but represents a distinctive social groups' identity and requires an institutionalized approach (Stråth, 2000; 27). The group (collective) identity is based on continuity and therefore it cannot mysteriously materialize or be

invented. Otherwise absurdity in the character of the group (collective) identity would be inevitable. Eder mentions that:

“Collective identity represent linkage between past and present, and also it includes future in the terms” (Eder, 2009; 428)

In international relations and political science, national identities are also considered as part of collective identities. It is related to the transformation in the societies. Smith argues that transformation occurs in relation to modernism. When societies become modernist transformation from group identity to the national identity becomes an evident factor (Smith, 1992; 58).

As a topic of study related to the Baltic Sea Region identity, it is worth mentioning that identity can be constructed regionally. A. Wendt mentions; “collective identities may vary by issue, time and place and whether they are bilateral, regional or global”(1994; 388). O. Waever gives definition of a region as spatial entity with various level of ‘aggregation’ (1997; 278-279). Referring to the region as a spatial entity, it is necessary to define regional identity. Jones defines regional identity as a sense of belonging to a place or an idea that a certain place is different from another place (2008; 11).Regions become increasingly salient and definitions of regions moved from being not only an entity defined by socio-economic terms but also defined by possessing a distinct identity. In this sense, European Union played a critical role in the region concept and moved this concept to more complex issue (Waever; 1997; 298).

Delanty’s definition provides insight to see the existence of identities as not originating from zero-sum relation. This argument leads to the multiple character of identity. Risse argues that individuals hold multiple identities and that there is not any necessity for these identities to be overlapped (2003; 488). Smith defines the multiple character of identity as a factor of the societal transformation. He mentions in particular that as the transforming of societies from agrarian to industrialized, the number of identities increases (Smith, 1992; 58). He argues that the amount of identities starts multiplying from the local tribal base to more city, nation, and regional identities. It is assumed that national

identities also represent the level of the multiple identities. In regards to my topic it is helpful to consider that multiple identities provide insight to see the 'self' from a differentiated approach (Stryker, 1994; 16). In my research multiple identities are used to create the possibility in the regional level, there are identities simultaneously exist: the Baltic Sea Region, Nordic and European identity.

Risse argues that there are three models of collective identity determination process. In his 'marble cake' model, he claims that identities are dependent on each other within the context of a dependent way (Risse, 2003; 492). Identities influence and flow one other. In the transformation process of the in-group values to out-group more sedimented identity might be stronger than other identities (Risse, 2003; 493). This model also provides insight to see the interrelation of intergroup identities with regional identity. This is particularly evident in the Baltic Sea Region where the region constructed differently by the nation-states. It is constructed on geographical, historical, economic, political, environmental entities or a combination of sorts (Kivikari, 2004; 5). This eliminates a zero-sum existence of identity and gives basis to consider the Baltic Sea Region as an interrelated entity. Considering the pluralistic characteristic of identity, the Baltic Sea Region represents a macro region which has an umbrella function over the national identities. From the discussion above several assumptions occurs:

1. The Baltic Sea Region has an umbrella function which involves national identities itself and rejects zero-sum relations.
2. National and regional identities influence and embed each other. The regional identity may be influenced by national identity. Also, the interaction sum-ups on the influence in the national identity.
3. Collective identities assisted by institutions such as national-states.

### **2.3..IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION**

Social constructivists discovered that every identity as a result of social interaction has distinct characteristics (Ruggie, 1998: 873). In this thesis the Baltic Sea Region identity

is referred to as a collective identity. In regards to collective identity it is crucial to mention that collective identity is the notion that is shaped, reconstructed and mobilized in consideration of cultural existence and centers of power (Cerulo, 1997; 387). Cerulo mentions that:

“So rooted, the notion addresses the ‘we-ness’ of a group, stressing the similarities or shared attributes around which group member coalesce.”  
(Cerulo, 1997; 387)

The construction of collective identity is based on continuity. As connecting the past with the present and including the future, it gives the continuity and constructability character. Actors in this process are positioning themselves in contrast to other actors. This positioning can be understood as outcome of the ‘self’ and ‘other’ interaction. Interaction of ‘self’ and ‘other’ can be considered from positive or negative features (Wendt: 1994: 385). When ‘other’ becomes a target of manipulation to satisfy ‘self’, the process acquires negative features. In other words, the ‘other’ recognizes ‘self’ as a cognitive continuity (Wendt: 1994: 386). In relation to the thesis it is crucial to mention that the Baltic Sea Region identity is a process which presents both creating common we-ness and ‘self’ and ‘other’ interaction process. Cultural-historical similarities and shared attributes are helpful to create a common sense and understanding of the regional identity.

Besides the mentioned argument there is a narrative dimension in identity construction. Developments in social theory and social construction of identity create the need to consider the narrative dimension of identity. The definition of identity by Delanty provides ground for the consideration of this dimension, Margaret Somers argues that in order to overcome the limitations and problems posed by developing social theory and social construction of identity it is a necessity to consider reconfiguration of the narrative identity (Somers, 1994; 605). Somers also drives attention towards the destabilization of the time, space and relationality. Issuing this notion should not only be considered as the storytelling by historians but also it can be considered political elites role in identity construction. Narratives are representing written or spoken text and symbolic performances, in which transformation from an initial to a final state is recounted. (Linde 1993; Labov and

Waletzky, 1997). The narrative dimension in the Baltic Sea Region identity is helpful to create national stories and a 'we' consciousness.

## **2.4.POLITICAL ELITES IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF COLLECTIVE IDENTITY**

Giddens (1991) focuses on the individuals' role in identity construction process. He claims that self-identity is constructed from below which gives option to see self-identity as an entity formed by the individuals. This approach claims that individuals are becoming political in the process of identification but it dismisses the role of institutions and political forces. Lane claimed that "identities are not only socially constructed but also politically sanctioned" (2011; 925). This definition gives insight to see the relation between political forces and identities. The relationship between individual identity and political forces characterized as political forces affect the individual in the identity construction process (Lane, 2011; 924). Constructivism gives importance to the elites with stressing the role of elites in implying the sameness to lower level of society. In the self-categorization and social identity theories role of elites is considered as an important factor (Marcussen, 1999; 102). Marcussen mentions that elites can construct, reconstruct and deconstruct identity (1999; 103). In collective identity the construction process of a group may influence the other group or process. This influence over process gives ground to assume that political elites have central role in identity construction. Political elites are defined by David Lane as:

"Political Elites are made up of people who makes the rules , those who occupy top positions, or decisively influence the making of decisions which are national in scope" (Lane, 2011; 926).

It is also should be mentioned that identity cannot be found from nowhere and be imposed upon the masses. Elites are not constructing new identities at their own initiative. The idea of sameness should resonate with previous constructions and it should be based on



existing notions (Marcussen, 1999; 102). In the interaction and identity (re)creating process the masses should be considered as well (Lane, 2011; 926). In relation to other elites such as academic, cultural and economic, political elites have a central role in the identity formation process, yet political elites are more dependent on electorates and need to justify their process in order to gain more support.

These arguments underline the importance of the political elites in identity creation process. Their direct involvement in the political discourse of countries and contribution to political agenda make them an important in identity construction process.

## **2.5.PREVIOUS WORKS ON BALTIC SEA REGION IDENTITY**

The Baltic Sea Region has gained a relatively prominent place in the last two decades. The Baltic Sea Region depicts cooperation not only on the societal base but also on the state base, which has been able to get attention from the international organizations such as European Union and OSCE. Several scholars have been interested in referring Baltic Sea Region as a common entity that poses an identity. The idea of region making and characteristics of region building are ambiguous. Baltic Sea Region may have various meanings: Baltic Sea considered as drainage basin, political, geographical, cultural, historical, economic or environmental entities. Hackmann (2008) focuses on the historical characteristics of the region and emphasizing 'New Hansa' may have built a strong relationship and commonsense in the Baltic Sea Region. Lehti mentions that the Baltic Sea Region is not only outcome of the historical processes, but there is a significant role of the political processes (Lehti; 2003 11). Paasi (2009) in his works refers to the new regionalism ideas showing heterogeneous character for the Baltic Sea Region. Bernd Henningsen mentions that the Baltic Sea Region identity would be an artificial construct, made up for political purposes (2011). Referring to the Henningsen's words Baltic Sea Region is the artificial top-down constructed region. Berd Henningsen in his "On identity-No identity" essay poses a question which identifies main problems in Baltic Sea Region identity.

“How can a region have something in common - an ‘identity’ – or be regarded as homogeneous, when nine different languages are spoken within it, it contains more than nine ethnicities, uses eight different currencies, practices three different forms of Christianity, Judaism was once a powerful force, and, last but not least, which fosters relatively different political cultures?” (Henningsen, 2011; 17)

## **2.6.LAYERED DISCURSIVE STRUCTURE**

Ole Waever’s three layered structure is based on the discursive construction of the national and European identity. Particularly, this is a prevalent model for analyzing Nordic States perspective and European Union debates. But, this model is not limited to explain Nordic countries; it may apply to other countries. Using the same framework with refinements and putting Baltic Sea Region instead of the Europe will be the new case and contribution to this construction. More on implementation of the model can be found in Section 3.

Ole Waever (2002; 33) argues that the constellation of the discourses and construction of regional identity is not only limited to one level of discourse it may found itself in other layers as well. He mentions:

“The three layered discourse should not be understood as implying that distinct discourses are located on any of the three different levels: that some discourses on Europe are located on the first, most basic, level while others are to be found on levels 2 or 3.”(Waever, 2002; 33)

First layer reflects the relation of the nation and state. Two ideal types of nation-states French and German provided the ground for further analysis in discourses. French model represents “Western” or ‘political or civic” national identity (Waever, 2002; 33). Also, it favors nation and states inseparable existence idea. There is no difference in the consideration of the nation and state notions in these terms. Within French model it is

possible to view attachments given to the state (both internally and externally) and attachment given to the nation. Apart from classical Kulturnaation, post-war German construction of the nation favors the idea that existence of the nation and state not necessarily should be based on the same line. The existence of the German state and nation can be on separate terms. It also underlines separable existence of 'regional' identity. These two ideal types of the nation cannot be referred as an absolute limit or pre-determined constructions. It is a path to build a framework to analyze other states construction. Waever gives 5 general principles to consider the nation states relation (2002; 35-36).

1. Analyzing the relation between state and national identity. Here, aim is to look whether the relationship between state and nation exist together as in French construction or their existence is on the separate terms.
2. Second general principle is looking through the construction of the nation.
3. The presentation of state idea both externally and internally. I will focus on the presentation of the state externally due to the language barriers.
4. In the fourth principle, it is crucial to look for the attachments given to state which represent the link between nation and state.
5. Linkages between nation and state will be analyzed as fifth principle.

The 5 general principles provide the ground to build the discursive construction of the first layer. More about this topic can be found in Section 3.

In the second layer the regional identity construction is viewed. As I am not going the research Europe, the idea will be based on the Baltic Sea Region identity. In German kulturation, existence of nation-state and regional identity can be in separate terms. Also, it is possible to view the cultural nation existence with(out) the regional identity. In French construction, the relation between state and nation is tight coupled. But, in this case the main notion is to analyze regional identity. Defining the Baltic Sea Region identity as 'collective identity' notion will give the frame of the Baltic Sea Region identity.

Third layer explains the key idea of the thesis. In this layer relation of nation-state to the Baltic Sea Region identity will be viewed. The perception of the Baltic Sea Region

identity will be analyzed through political elites' discourse. Political elites are directly involved into the debate inside the country. Looking through speeches, it will be possible to see the trends in the Baltic Sea Region identity. In the third layer, the regional identity perception does not have to be same in various countries. In different countries, various positions and understandings may process different outcomes. For Europe Waever gives the idea that scholars tend to define the European identity concept identically, but there is also compatibility character as well (Waever; 2002).

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1. Methods**

Discourse analysis introduced a new analytical approach towards identity and selected as the method of analysis. Discourse analysis presented rules and meanings to consider the construction of social, political and cultural identities (Torfing: 2008; 1). Choosing discourse analysis, main aim is to look Baltic Sea Region identity construction through political elites' speeches. Discourse analysis provides the ground to see the casual relationship in the form of presentation. It gives a degree of regularity in social relations. However, this regularity does not intend to see the actors' action but it gives the precondition to see the action. Waever mentions "Discourse analysis explains how political thoughts make sense"(2002; 26).

Discourse analysis does not intend to build a general theory to measure the political problems; rather it develops an analytical toolkit to answer the research questions that pose problems. The main aim of the discourse analysis is to find solutions for the 'empirical, analytical and social puzzles' (Torfing; 2005; 22). Starting from this perspective it emphasizes social phenomenon as being a 'contingent formation' (Torfing; 2005; 22). However refusing the pre-given structures and subjective interests, it provides with contingent formation assumption which leads to analyze institutions, structures and interests of social actors.

Discourse analysis focuses on the semantic, pragmatic and rhetorical aspects. Dominant theories pay attention to the language and action relation, but discourse analysis provides the basis for social structures and identities with looking to the interdependency between different language features. Language in the process of the time becomes institutionalized and normalized (Neumann; 2008; 61). Time is an effective feature in the discourse which discourse analysis includes continuity and change to itself. With this particular characteristic analysis moves from dialectical unfolding to the progressive realization. It includes itself 'discursive path shaping and discursive path dependency' (Torfing, 2005; 23).

Discourse analysis focuses on the driving forces in the formation of the social constructions and communities (Torfing, 2005; 23). Analysis refuses the taken-for-granted approach and argues that formation of the communities is a response to dislocation. Also, it claims that communities are sticking together with the resonating identity, vocabulary and narrative in which it seems both inclusive and exclusive characteristics. Besides, the mentioned arguments it gives the social constructible character to the identity.

Identity is a flux category and analysis requires contingent formation. By social constructivist definition of identity, it refuses taken-for-granted view and claims to be a constructible phenomenon. Discourse analysis ensures this dimension. Political elites containing a community in a sense that they foster the social construction process of identity, and they play a role.

### **3.2. Research Questions**

My main research questions are:

**How is the Baltic Sea Region identity constructed through the political elites discourse?**

**What is the relationship between national and regional identity through the political elites discourse?**

Baltic Sea Region identity is considered as ‘collective identity’ a ‘contingent formation’ which excludes either/or understanding of the identity. It is a fluid category which is subject to change and continuity. The description of the region is not strictly structured. Mentioning this argument my aim is to look nation-states understanding and construction of the Baltic Sea Region identity. The construction of Baltic Sea Region identity from one country may differ from the other one. The construction of the regional identity and outcomes could be different.

It is vital to formulate the notions in the layered framework to build appropriate model. Discourse analysis works on the speeches which mean there is no intention to see

the political elites' thoughts and motives, but which codes, depictions and correlation used in the Baltic Sea Region identity construction. In the theoretical framework mentioned the (in)separability of identity in the levels of the nation-state, nation-state and regional identity relations which issues three layered methodological framework to look discourse to find out this role. Maintaining the link between domestic and international level of identity urges three layered framework. The existence of the regional identity does not remain on the level of the international arena but it can influence national identity. As discourse analysis includes itself change and continuity, it becomes advantage of the layered discursive construction (Waever; 2001; 31). Layered discourse shares the dominant argumentation in the regional identity construction; it focuses on the codes that are started from the lower discourse. This argument brings depth of the layers into agenda. This does not mean that deeper level is truer or layers cannot overlap. But as Waever mentions: "Rather it refers to the degree of sedimentation" (2001; 32). The deeper levels constitute more sedimented than the other levels, but change is possible as all of them socially constructed. In the critical junctures firstly surface level changes, but as the system does not works the change goes through the more sedimented layers. More precisely, if the dominant discourse is functioning well, the first level can be taken as a basis to built precise preconditions. As system facing pressure, discourse moves one level down to find the other possible ways that can be reformulate from this level.

As mentioned in the Table 1, certain categories are implied to analyze the speeches. In the first level, the main goal is to look the national identity and nation- state discourse construction. First level provides the ground to see the basic consideration of the national identity and nation-state relationship. Looking through the speeches in the first layer gives the outlook of the core construction of the national identity. It sheds light on sedimented layer of analysis. Certain categories selected in order to see this level. First of all, fusion is selected between state and nation to look through the relation between state and national identity. Here, aim is to look whether the relationship between state and nation exists together as in French construction or their existence is on the separate terms. Second category refers to construction of nation. Third category looks idea of the state. External

and internal presentation of the idea of state defines the basic notions in here. In the fourth category, it is essential to see it the attachments given the nation. Second layer aims to analyze the Baltic Sea Region Identity construction. Three categories in here regional identity construction, (re)presentation of this construction and linking the Baltic Sea Region with the nation constitute the second layer. Third layer consists of the correlation of the nation-state and the regional identity.

This toolbox does not mean that it is a predetermined structure which can be applied to any country in the region. Waever draws attention to the creative character of toolbox mentioning ‘the content of the each case cannot be gathered from the same kind of elements in the model’ (2002; 33). Each country includes the creative character. Also, the layers of discourse do not contain the strict rule. The discourse that belongs to the first level may found in the third level, and the third level may contain in the second level. Applying these arguments gives the creativity to the toolbox. Also, these measurements diminish the differences in the various countries (Waever, 2002; 33).

Layers	Categories	Elements
First Layer	Fusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whether there is a tight coupling between nation and state or not</li> <li>• The linkage that combines nation and state</li> </ul>
	Construction of a nation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural-Historic</li> </ul>
	Idea of State	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• External</li> <li>• Internal</li> </ul>
	Attachments given to the nation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emotional bounds to the culture and history</li> </ul>



Second layer	Regional identity construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Historical, cultural, and political construction</li> </ul>
	(Re)presentation of regional identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Political-Economic</li> <li>• Cultural-Historic</li> </ul>
	Linkage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Linkage between regional identity and the nation-state</li> </ul>
Third layer	Existence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whether there is and existence of the upper identity and nation-state or not</li> </ul>
	Integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whether there is integration of the nation level to upper identity or conflict</li> </ul>

Table 1

### 3.3.Data Collection

My methodology is qualitative and will employ collection of the speeches as the data collection. Selection of the speeches employs two distinctive characteristics. First these speeches are first hand delivery of the primary data, focusing on the speeches gives the undisrupted and cohesive source. Secondly, speeches are selected from the primary target of analysis like high level politicians, political elites. Thirdly, these speeches are reflecting current debate and junctures in the country's agenda. The analysis will employ political elites' discourse of Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Finland, Poland, Sweden, Denmark, Germany and Russia. Material contains the official speeches that are either delivered or translated to English and available to public.

Considering the choices of speeches all available speeches are considered. The terms 'Baltic', 'Baltic Sea', 'Baltic Sea Region' are applied in the search. The speeches that these terms observed less than twice is automatically excluded. Amount of speeches are represented in the Table 2. In Baltic States amount of the speeches constitute relatively higher in comparison with other countries. Relatively small amount of the speeches is evident in the German and Danish cases.

Latvia	150
Finland	180
Estonia	140
Sweden	50
Russia	60
Lithuania	130
Denmark	45
Poland	60
Germany	30

Table 2

It is important to mention that not all of the speeches are used in the data analysis. Speeches are mainly selected on the criteria of outlining the repeated terms in the discourses. These speeches are monument speeches which build the general map of the data and side speeches are used to enforce the arguments.

Time frame is applied as 2000-2012 which is useful to see the contemporary period and foremost political events in the region such as European Union Eastern Enlargement, European Union Baltic Sea Region strategy and etc.

#### **3.4.The limitation of research method**

Within the context of discourse analysis, it is impossible to cover all national discursive space. This main limitation of research design is referred to the unavailability of reading and analyzing of all discursive material. Focusing on the political elites speeches, it is limited in a sense that challenging opinions from public and political parties to the dominant discourse will be out of consideration. Second main drawback of the qualitative methods is openness to the authors' interpretation. Discourse analysis as limited to the authors' model and interpretation it is highly likely to be one-sided.

Neumann gives the understanding about the last drawback of discourse analysis. He draws attention to the in case of the unavailability of the reaching all discursive space it is possible to read other texts. "If you show me a text that I have not included, it should be possible to me to read this text through the structure I have constructed. If not, my reading should be revised"(Waever; 2002; 33). In order to avoided one-side approach and over interpretation, structure introduced by the Waever used as the ground.

## **4. DATA ANALYSIS**

### **4.1.LATVIA**

#### **4.1.1. Latvian National Identity Construction**

The construction of Latvian national identity reflects the new and old European notion. Auers mentions that after the collapse of Soviet Union European identity required a domestic reconstruction of the Baltic identities to include Europeans (2013; 128). On one hand this representation provides the option to see Latvia as a new entity, a newcomer to the Europe, on the other hand, it diminishes the gap and gives the ground to consider it as European civilization. In a speech Andres Berzins mentions "...I have the honor to address to this distinguished audience as a representative of an old at the same time very young nation" (14-15. 03.2002).

The other main bound is the language and peasant culture which were reportedly mentioned as being part of the nation and state. In regards to the integrated society and state- nation relationship Berzins mentions the basic goal is "supporting Latvian culture and the state language Latvian with provision of funding and support for teachers and improved literature"(18.09.2000). Peasant culture and language are indispensable part in the Latvian national identity. Latvian national identity is based on the distinct language which built a respective difference over thousand years (Taagepera, 2011; 125). Importance of the peasant culture originates to national awakening. Latvian nation roots go back to the peasant who educated in Russian empire after modernizing efforts (Zake,2007;8). "Latvian peasant culture, besides preserving one of the most conservative and archaic of Indo-European languages, has preserved a great wealth of oral traditions" (Vīķe-Freiberga, 21.03.2002).

Historical construction of the Latvian national identity is based on cooperation with Baltic States and quest for historical sufferings (Cheskin, 2012; 561). Particularly, in a visit to Norway Vīķe-Freiberga underlines cooperation between cities as "beginning in the 13th century, both Riga and Bergen became important port cities and trading centers of the Hanseatic League"(Vīķe-Freiberga 21.09.2000). This historical reasoning, the bind, 'Hanseatic league' shows importance of history in the historical cooperation between the

states. Cooperation and suffering also became an inseparable part of the identity. In a visit to the Finland Vīķe-Freiberga mentions “both of our nations have at times been under the occupation of the same foreign powers. Both of our nations simultaneously experienced a national revival at the end of the 19th century”(21.04.2006). Also, referring to the independence and return to Europe “...in 1940, we lost our independence and were occupied for 50 long years by Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia. For half a century, Latvia was cut off from the free world and from developing at the same pace as its Western neighbours” (Vīķe-Freiberga, 21.04.2006). This general trend of the historical construction includes both cooperation and sufferings.

There are several depictions of Latvia. Adres Berzins gives “the centre of the Baltic Sea region”, “a country sandwiched between Estonia and Lithuania”, “a country to the west of Russia and east of Sweden” and “a country that in a few years time will be safeguarding the security of nearly half a billion EU citizens because Latvia will become the eastern border of the EU and NATO” depictions (Bērziņš, 14-15.03.2002). Beside these depictions, there are also other notions used in the discourse such as ‘small country’, ‘European country’, and ‘Baltic States’.

Besides the geographical understanding there are other notions that attached to the Latvian nation. President Vīķe-Freiberga mentions “Once a year a dwarf emerges from the Daugava River and addresses the masons and carpenters working on the buildings of Riga. He asks a simple question: is Riga already built? The workers always answer NOT YET, because on the day when the construction of Riga deemed to be finished the city will sink into waters of the river” (27.03.2002). Innovative and developing characters are other attachments that are given to the Latvian nation. These elements give the understanding of Riga/ Latvia is an entity that grows and eternally continues to be built.

The relation between state and nation in Latvia is not separable. The correlation between these terms is posing understanding that the political actions should be based on national culture. As, Latvia is depicted European state, it is mentioned “our inherited identity, having evolved into a Latvian identity, has also become a European identity”

(Kalniete, 19.11.2003). “Europe is the other side of the coin of Latvian identity”(Kalniete, 19.11.2003). It is worth to mention in consolidation of the Latvian language, history and culture state consist an important role in the state and nation relationship. “Dealing with the past; this means seeking reconciliation and forgiveness through an honest accounting of what happened on Latvia's territory during the Second World War and the occupation” (Berzins I., 15.03.2000).

There are several outcomes from the arguments mentioned above. First of all, Latvian national identity is constructed on the basis of the distinctive language, seeking reconciliation of history and unique at the same time European culture. Secondly, Latvian state and nation is inseparable. The political-economic and social-cultural values are consolidating each other. Thirdly, there are several attachments and description given to Latvia which reflects Latvia is Europe, Baltic Sea Region and Baltic state. Finally, from the myth construction Latvia is depicted as innovative nation.

#### **4.1.2. Second and Third Layer Discourse**

Latvia’s relation towards Baltic Sea Region is a decisive factor. This factor provides the ground to view national-state and regional identity relation. Several factors from the first part give the basic understanding of the national identity construction. In here same notions could be understood in regional identity context.

In the Latvian discourses one of the main ideas towards Baltic Sea region is to see it as integral part of Europe and European Union. “The Baltic Sea is truly becoming an internal "lake" of the Europe Union, and that is as essential moment in history that it bestows upon the Forum particular meaning and significance” (Bērziņš, 18.09.2000). Latvian understanding towards Baltic Sea refers to Europe and European Union and it is a dominant trend in the Latvian view towards region (Kvikavari, 2004; 8). In 2002 and 2006 the same quotes used from Mr. Elleman-Jensen who “was among those who already a decade ago had a clear vision of the Baltic Sea Region as prosperous and stable part of a united Europe.” (Vīķe-Freiberga,13.10.2002). The understanding of the Baltic Sea as “sea connects us” which started to appear after collapse of Soviet Union changed after accession

to European Union accession towards “today, the Baltic Sea is no longer a sea that divides us” (Zatlers (24.08.2010). Also, the relationship between political and economic Europe is perceived as inseparable entity “Therefore I would really like to stress that political Europe and economic Europe do not live in separate rooms”(Zatlers, 03.06.2008).

One of the main drivers in the understanding of region is revival of the historical and cultural ties. This process becomes one of basic nuances during 2000-2012. This is observable in the economic relationship “For centuries Latvia has been a vital commercial hub between West and East, and the centre of the Hanseatic League, the World's "first" Free Trade Area”(Berzins, I.,15.06.2000). Religious ties are perceived to have importance in regional cooperation, more precisely with Nordic countries and Germany. “Together with their neighbors in Estonia, Sweden, Denmark, Norway and Germany, the Latvians and the Finns have been heavily influenced by the Protestant code of ethics, which is based on the principles of thrift, discipline, hard work and individualism” (Viķe-Freiberga, 21.03.2002). Sharing common history and cooperation is highly valued. The closer ties between Baltic Countries are underlined as outcome of the common history such as suffering from Soviet and Nazi occupation (Puga, 1992; 162). Freiberga mentions “Finnish volunteers assistance during Latvia’s War of Liberation, which lasted from 1918 to 1920.” (21 March 2002). In the relation towards Nordic countries, the sameness becomes a significant factor “from a cultural-historical perspective Latvia belongs to Northern Europe, just as Denmark, Finland or Northern Germany” (Kalniete, 27.01.2004).

In relation towards region diversity and sameness are key factors in the regional identity construction. “We do not look alike, we do not speak one language, we do not live in one country, and we do not have a joint team in world ice hockey championship” (Pabriks, 27.08.2007). Scierbinskis emphasizes that Latvian intellectuals and elites are creating a spatial image, a dreamed location and a region that they intend to belong in (2003; 157). This notion paves the way to see the similarities in the region as mentioned “we share the Baltic Sea, a common history, values and spirit of dynamism, skillfulness and creativity”(Pabriks, 27.08.2007). The depiction of these similarities is one of the main factors in constructing common Baltic Sea Region identity. But, salient factor for the

regional identity is the sharing common goals and dreams about the region as creating “competitive, stable, advanced and always a developing region”(Pabriks, 27.08.2007).

Economic interest in the Baltic Sea Region is based on the improving ties with European Union member and attracting more investments in order to convert region into a place that profitable to do business. “Baltic Sea States agree on common strategies to face challenges and to seek profit. We work together to make the region more attractive, but we collect the dividends individually” (Berzins, I., 13.06.2000). Economic construction of Latvian discourse is mainly based on the additional involvement of European Union. Baltic Sea Region is becoming “formidable force within the European economic market” (Vīķe-Freiberga, 20.09.2000). These early thoughts about the region economy followed with the Northern dimension which particularly involved the other CBSS countries and between Russia and European Union. “The involvement of Russia in regional projects in the field of energy, transport, logistics, environment protection and many others serves the interests of all countries in the region.” (Berzins, I, 07.06.2001). In the framework of the CBSS, the economy and sustainability of the region increased and plans were established to develop these aspects. “We strongly believe that the overall goal of regional cooperation should be to enhance competitiveness and sustainability of the region. Not surprisingly, on top of the list there are 4 E's: environment, energy, economics and education” (Riekstins, 03.07.2008). Economic interest and view towards the region are mainly based on the European, Nordic and cooperation with Russia which has the role to increase the attractiveness and competitiveness of the region.

The relationship between the nation-state and Baltic Sea Region is based on the several different factors. As, the nation-state is inseparable it overlaps with the regional identity construction. The internal and external description of the nation is regarded to the Europeanness notion. At the same time, Europeanness is similar to the Baltic Sea Region understanding which refers to European Union internal sea. Secondly, the revivals of the historical and cultural ties are apparent in the nation-state and Baltic Sea Region construction. Economic construction underlines the importance of the Nordic countries, and



European Union. Latvian discourse consolidates with nation-states and regional identity level.

## **4.2. FINLAND**

### **4.2.1. Finnish National Identity Construction**

While depicting Finland and Finnish national identity one of the basic notions is the Northernness. Nordic was a popular notion starting from 19<sup>th</sup> century. Finland became part of this entity after other Scandinavian countries (Gotz, 2003; 324). This notion presents key factor for the Finnish society. Being part of Northern determines Finnish discourses. In a speech given by Sauli Niinistö to ambassador seminar he mentions: “The Nordic countries form Finland’s nuclear family in terms of history, society and economy” (Niinistö; 21.09.2012). Joenniemi and Lehti mention that Nordicity does not only possess a cultural and societal tie to the nation but also it reflects the political-economic affinity (2003; 138). Close affinity with the other Nordic states poses an important part of national identity. “We in Finland have traditionally experienced the other Nordic countries close to us, and we value the importance of Nordic cooperation” (Halonen; 24.05.2011).

Welfare system and people are important factors in Finnish national identity construction. Welfare system becomes part of Nordic self-image and triggering factor in identity construction. Also it represents cohesive link between state and nation (Mouritzen, 1995; 11). “The Nordic welfare state model has allowed our country to become one of the most equal and also one of the most competitive societies in the world” (Halonen; 28.04.2011). Main denominators of the “...welfare model is based on strong democracy, joint responsibility and social justice” (Halonen; 15.01.2009). Nature is also perceived as main factor in the Finnish national identity. The inseparability of this factor can be found in 2000-2012 years. The idea of living close to the nature is evident in this sense. Tarja Halonen in her speech mentions “...we are also united by a close relationship with nature. Future generations must be able to enjoy living forests and clean lakes”(Halonen; 15.01.2009). Besides mentioning importance of the nature it also highlights saving Finland for future generations. Additionally, being a savior of the nation culture has a decisive role

in the Finnish national identity formation. “In those difficult times, the national awakening prompted a flourishing of culture, specifically in the fine arts, music and literature” (Halonen; 10.04.2008).

Historical construction of the Finnish identity represents close relation with Russia and Nordic countries. Russia is perceived to have the role in the Finnish national identity formation. “The building of the Finnish nation proceeded favorably particularly during the reign of Emperor Alexander II. His statue is located in an important place in Helsinki, in the centre of the Senate Square”(Halonen: 29.03.2009). Besides mentioning Czarist Russia’s role it is also important to mention that Soviet period and Cold War are important factors. “The Cold war was a traumatic time for Europe. A sharp, unnatural dividing line separated Europe” (Niinistö; 21.09.2012). Neutrality during Cold War is justified in Finnish discourses. Finlandization is referred as Finnish leaders’ dependence of Soviet Union in foreign policy means (Halmesvirta, 2009; 415). In regards to the Finlandisation phenomenon the relation is “...Finlandisation was the ill-fated word used by some in the West to indicate Soviet influence on countries without the skill and will to resist” (Torstilla; 28.10.2009). Sweden also plays an important role in national identity construction. “Finland and Sweden were parts of the same Kingdom for some 600 years - perhaps two people, but one nation” (Niinistö; 17.04.2012). The quote reflects the positive historic tie between two nations. Finnish historical representation reflects cooperation through history.

The relationship between the Finnish state and nation underlines the importance of “people”(Strath, 2000; 519). The people has the leading role in the nation and state relationship precisely, people defines the state. “We Finns are not just any group of people. Our sense of community makes us a nation”(Halonen; 01.01.2008). This dimension ensures the role of the inclusiveness character of the nation. “Our countries' most important resource is people and their abilities, and we must know how to take care of them”(Halonen; 04.05.2010). Finnish discourse refers to the state as the institute which should ensure interest of the people. Welfare notion is a triggering factor to create same opportunity to overall population. “The Nordic welfare state model has allowed our country to become one of the most equal and also one of the most competitive societies in the

world” (Halonen; 28.04.2011). Welfare notion is the key factor in nation and state relationship and it ensures equal opportunities to all population.

Geographical terms such as East, West and North play an important role in Finnish national identity construction (Antonsich, 2005; 290). Finland is depicted as Northern Europe, Nordic, and Baltic Sea Region country. European notion is understood as the core of the Finnish national identity. In a speech Halonen mentioned: “Finland is a thoroughly European country. We no longer need to keep proving this.” But besides being European being Nordic and Baltic is an also important factor in this respect. “We are Europeans and of course citizens of our countries. But I believe that the Baltic Sea Region is also part of our identity” (Halonen; 14.06.2006). These depictions reflect the basic attachments given to Finland. Besides these factors there are other attachments such as like ‘innovative’ and ‘prosperous’ can be found in the discourse.

From the analysis it is possible to draw several outcomes. First of all Finnish national identity is constructed on the basis of culture, welfare system, history. Secondly, Finnish state and nation relationship underlines the importance of the nation. The political-economic and cultural-historical relationship is consolidating each other, a great importance given to the nation. Thirdly attachments given to the nation reflects Nordic, Baltic Sea Region, and European notions. Also from the historical construction Finland presented as country that developed from the hardships to innovative and prosperous country.

#### **4.2.2. Second and Third Layer Discourse**

The relationship between nation-state and Baltic Sea Region identity is depended on the several factors.

Baltic Sea Region is constructed in Finnish discourse as an entity not only belongs to the European Union but also all sea shore countries. “One could almost describe the Baltic Sea as an internal lake surrounded by the European Union Member States. But not quite. In addition to our long land border we share our fishing waters with Russia”(Kanerva; 11.02.2008). Smith, E. K. points out that European Union Eastern

Enlargement have the effect on sub-regional cooperation. There are two options either outsider is excluded or involved into cooperation with building 'bridges' among them (2005; 356). Building 'bridge' and including Russia is a decisive factor for the Baltic Sea Region construction. This understanding provides the geographical construction of Baltic Sea Region Identity. Mentioning "geography is a fact that will not change"(Kanerva; 11.01.2007) in relation to the region shows the importance of this factor. Besides geographical understanding, the sea is perceived as a part of daily life. "Our common sea is and has always been close to our hearts. It is a route for travel, trade and culture"(Halonen; 10.02.2010). This argument presents the basic understanding of the region. In regards to Baltic Sea Region Strategy they emphasize the importance of the Nordic, Northern Dimension, in this perspective. "The European Union's Northern Dimension policy provides ideal opportunities to promote both cooperation embracing the whole of the Baltic Sea region and prosperity"(Halonen; 09.05.2001). Northern Dimension is perceived as an opportunity to include external, non- European Union member countries. "Although we are drafting an internal EU Strategy, it needs to have an external dimension to it. When the European Council mandated to Commission to draft the Baltic Sea Strategy, it marked that the Northern Dimension framework provides the basis for the external aspects of cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region"(Stubb; 09.12.2008). Northern dimension endeavors the Nordic/Northern flavor into the region and provides a leeway to cooperate not only inside European Union but also outside of the European Union.

Baltic Sea is characterized as environmentally unstable and endangered. Pollution reached a critical level, and it could be resulted with destruction of ecosystem (Boleslaw, 1978; 783). One of the main constructions of the regional identity reflects environmental protection issue. Finland is concerned about the current situation in the sea. Critical situation in the sea requires protection which is one of the main concerns in Finnish discourse. "The Press Photo of the Year in Finland last year was a shot of a single sailboat winding its way through the Baltic Sea, leaving a blue trail in a mass of blue-green algae. This picture is a concrete indication of the alarming state of the Baltic Sea"(Halonen; 08.05.2008). Environment is the main concern in Finnish discourse. "The Baltic Sea region

requires attention from all of its neighbouring countries. It is one of the most polluted seas and its condition is getting worse”(Kanevra; 22.01.2008). The main goal in environmental approach is to preserve the sea for future generations. “...in Northern Europe, saving the Baltic Sea for future generations is a priority” (Halonen; 18.05.2009).

In the discourses economy is perceived as a vital factor and main driver. “More than 80% of Finland’s foreign trade is shipped across the Baltic Sea” (Torstilla; 14.05.2008). the innovation, sustainable development, welfare and prosperity are main notions in economic constructions. “For us the Baltic Sea nations, sustainable development is easily identified with the state of the Baltic Sea. “...Our common sea is part of our identity, and the development of the region is vital for our welfare and security” (Halonen; 27.08.2008).

Cultural ties are an intrinsic part of the Baltic Sea Region identity construction. In relation to region common cultural ties and shared past are considered as a decisive factor. In a visit to Latvia Halonen underlines cultural ties as an important factor in the regional construction: “we have similar words such as ship, forest, hut and community effort as well as the verb pay, which is crucial in trade. We also share a vibrant sauna culture”(Halonen; 07.06.2010). The basic attachment given to the sea reflects “Mare Nostrum” in translation from Latin “our sea”. “It is our joint responsibility to take action to save the Baltic Sea – the ‘Mare Nostrum’(Halonen; 01.12.2008). It is also beneficial to mention there is an intrinsic relation with the ‘our Sea’, ‘people’ and ‘our identity’ in the discourse. “Another common factor of the Baltic Sea Region countries is that our most valuable resource is our people”. (Tuomioja; 25.10.2012). Foreign minister Stabb also underlined the importance of the people in the region with “you could say that the Baltic Sea is an inextricable part of the Finnish identity.” (Stubb; 10.11.2009).

The consolidation of the discourse shows the general pattern in the Baltic Sea Region identity construction. It consolidates with the Finnish nation-state. From the Finnish political elites discourse in nation-state and regional identity several outcomes can be driven. First of all, Finland is perceived a European country, but there is a strong affinity towards Nordics and Baltic Sea. However, Finland favors European Union role in the

region but also importance Russian involvement into regional cooperation. Secondly, nature is depicted as an inseparable part of the Finnish state-nation relationship whereas same tendency is occurred in the Baltic Sea Region identity construction. Thirdly, the basic notion 'people' which is determined the Finnish nation-state relationship and also evident in the Baltic Sea Region identity construction. One of the most formidable and observed tendency is to build Baltic Sea Region identity on the basis of the 'sea'. Finally, from the economic aspect the region it represent innovative, prosperous and welfare notions, which are the core values of the national identity.

### **4.3. ESTONIA**

#### **4.3.1. Estonian National Identity Construction**

In this part relation of Estonian national identity construction and state will be analyzed. Estonian national identity is based on several factors.

From the discourses Estonia is depicted as Baltic, European and Northern Europe. Veenema mentions that Baltic States solidarity date back to early 20<sup>th</sup> century which related to the critical formation of regional identity among Baltic states (Veenema, 2010; 73). Being Baltic and sharing common experiences is one of the main factors that can be found in the Estonian discourse. "Today, the three countries are viewed all too often as a single state, but let's face it we share much" (Ilves; 22.04.2009). Common battle in order to gain independence, suffering and seeking reconciliation are also character of being Baltic. Representing Northern Europe and close relations with this geography in cultural term have significant place in the Estonian national discourse. Mentioning "Estonia is a small country in Northern Europe" (Ojuland; 25.01.2005) depicts this dimension. Being European and belonging to Europe is other important factor in the Estonian national identity construction. It is also possible to see it only from state dimension. "Europe is deep in our hearts"(Paet; 07.04.2008) shows cohesion of the national identity with the Europeanness notion. European Union Eastern Enlargement facilitated reconstructing of social space which included newcomers, old Europeans and outsiders notions (Vihalemm, 2007; 778).

Returning to Europe and fading differences is also other important understanding: “The previously segregating terms of “us” and “them” are losing their meaning.” Cultural closeness to the Europe finds itself in the quotes from Estonian writer Friedebert Tuglas “... even now we are reinforcing our national-European culture and filling in the gaps.”(Ojuland; 2003).

Language and culture play another important factor in the national identity construction. Taagapera mentions that Estonia is the small nation with modern high culture based on language (Taagapera, 2011; 126). Several distinctive features are included in here such as European and Finno-Ugric culture and language “...if cultures spring from the same root as the idea that it is possible to become a nation in one’s mother tongue” (Paet; 11.02.2010). European dimension in the culture fosters the coherent constellation of the national and European construction “the sharing of common values is an inevitable prerequisite for integration with the West” (Ilves; 14.03.2007)

Historical construction of Estonian identity represents suffering, historical reconciliation and cooperation. Soviet Union period is considered in Estonian discourse as illegal Soviet occupation and collapse is attributed with the return to Europe (Fein, 2005; 333). Main idea of the historical construction of the Estonian national identity is the seeking historical reconciliation Particularly, Soviet time is regarded occupation and unjust treatment and it occupies a central role in this sense. “It is noteworthy, that in the international arena, the history of the Baltic States is being ever more talked and written about in a manner respecting historical truth. The reinforcing of this trend continues to be one of our foreign policy commitments” (Ojuland;2004). This trend is evident in all years which had a crucial place in the national identity construction. “Although Estonia was occupied first occupied by Nazi Germany and as a result of WW II by the Soviet Union, the wish to return to Europe and be part of the Free World never died. The Soviet occupation, that lasted half a century finally ended in 1991, leaving us with the need to build up essential state institutions from scratch” (Paet; 07.06.2005). Moving from same dimension gaining independence and returning to the Europe are other crucial side of this dimension. In the quote of the Former Forest Brothers member Eerik represent this idea: ““Look, look

around you, the time of independence did come back, and I am – once again – a free man.” (Ojuland; 25.01.2005) Besides the mentioned factor cooperation also occupies an important place in this construction. The reference to the Hanseatic League shows the importance. Particularly mentioning “...during the Middle Ages, the Hanseatic League – consisting of 70 Baltic Sea cities, including the Estonian capital of Tallinn, then Reval - formed the most dynamic trading bloc in the world” (Ojuland; 25.01.2005) it gives the ground to understand the cooperation. Swedish Empire and Baltic cooperation are other important factors in cooperation.

The constellation between nation and state in case of Estonia is depicted as inseparable unity. “The nature of the Estonian Republic’s foreign policy is determined by our history, culture, and geographic location” (Ojuland; 25.01.2005). The quote underlines the national settings factor. The coherence of the society is also included in respect to the different minorities living in the country. “The Government has accepted the challenge of integrating all persons living in Estonia irrespective of their nationality, language or belief.” (Ojuland; 25.01.2005).

Estonian representation in the discourses mainly focuses on the terms of small and innovative nation (IT). Being small is not perceived as negative feature but it is understood as advantage. In regards to Estonia the references is mainly based on the “Estonia is a small state”, Estonian philosopher Uku Masing words “... small nations already have a wider scope of the world, since they cannot ignore the existence of larger nations” (Ojuland; 2004) attaches the advantage to being a small state. Estonia is regarded as innovative and IT technology is depicted as trademark and attachment given to nation and state. “New technologies are taking Estonia to the leading position of the information society and Estonian trademark-IT technology.”(Paet; 08.06.2009).

From the nation level discourses several outcomes can be driven. First of all Estonian national identity is based on the reconciliation and cooperation of history. Also European and Finno-Ugric culture play a decisive role. Secondly Estonian nation-state represents the importance of minorities’ participation in the nation Thirdly Estonia is



depicted as European, Baltic state and Northern Europe. Among these notions Northern Europe represent a low tendency in comparison to the European and Baltic state. Additionally small and innovative feature is other determining factor in this relationship.

#### **4.3.2. Second and Third Layer Discourse**

The construction of the Baltic Sea Region identity in Estonia bases on the several factors.

Estonian understanding of the Baltic Sea Region is based on the European Union dimension, mainly ‘Mare Nostrum’ within the European Union framework. Discourses through the years are based on this notion. Before European Union accession the trend represent Baltic Sea “will soon become an EU inner lake and inland waterway, no longer a natural border”(Ilves; 31.08-01.09.2000). It is evident to refer Baltic Sea as ‘Mare Nostrum’ of the European Union and this idea represents exclusiveness itself “.. a relatively small part of the Baltic seaboard is not in the EU, that being the eastern shore of the Gulf of Finland and the exclave of Kaliningrad, which together produce a disproportionate amount of the pollution threatening our sea” (Ilves; 18.09.2009). The relation is evident in this quote which includes a clear understanding of the regional view. Construction of the Baltic Sea Region is based on the European Union approach. Building a regional view also includes European Union Baltic Sea Region strategy which is perceived an utmost way to combine efforts. “Co-operation with the European Union within the framework of the Baltic Sea Strategy would be an optimal way to utilize this opportunity” (Paet; 2005).

Historical construction towards Baltic Sea Region identity is based on the cooperation and traumatic past. Hanseatic League shapes cultural identity and plays an important role in creating new understanding of the Baltic Sea Region (Gaimster, 2005; 410). “Here we are taking, curiously enough, a step back in History, to the time when a large part of the geographic area we are talking about today was united by the Hanseatic League” (Ilves; 31.08-01.09.2000). Mentioning the historical ties evokes the potential of the Baltic Sea Region Identity and gives impetus to combine countries effort. Kalmar Union is also other main issue in this perspective. “Co-operation in our region has not been

this close and extensive at least since the Kalmar Union.” (Paet; 2005). Also referring to the maritime accessibility and agreements are another main issue in the discourse. In a visit to Denmark Urmas Paet mentions: “six hundred years ago, all ships traveling near Elsinore from the Danish Straits to the Baltic Sea or in the opposite direction had to pay dues to the King of Denmark” (Paet; 04.06.2009). In respect to the Helsinki convention which is regarded as first convention that drawn by Baltic Sea Region countries Paet mentions: “now we have the Helsinki Convention, which is governed by the Helsinki Committee (Helcom), the first co-operation body in the Baltic Sea area” (Paet; 04.06.2009).

Economic construction is also main driver in the consideration of the Baltic Sea Region identity. Economic interests and vision towards region is based on the diverse competitive market and innovative characteristic. “...whole Baltic Sea Region is an interesting market. The three Baltic states – Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania – and the four Nordic countries – Finland, Denmark, Sweden, Norway – all have, compared to the rest of Europe, relatively high growth rates.” (Paet; 2007). Focusing on the economic interests and locating in this market give an advantage to the Baltic Sea Region perception as “fastest growing economies in the European Union” (Paet; 28.04.2005). Reference to the Mr. Uffe Ellemann-Jensen in different speech ensures this characteristic. Also attaching innovative character to the Baltic Sea Region can be seen in the discourses. This particular characteristic based on building an innovative and information technology based infrastructure to enhance competitiveness of the region: “in the 21<sup>st</sup> century the capability to create an innovative business environment is necessary for any region to compete successfully”(Ilves; 04.11.2007).

One of the main visions towards Baltic Sea region is the necessity of protecting the environment of the sea. The continuing emphasis on this feature creates the basic understanding on this issue: “The Baltic Sea remains one of the most vulnerable marine environments in the world” (Ojuland; 01-02.12.2003). Coping against oil spillovers and energy security are main environmental concerns. “Special attention was focused upon the problems that are associated with the ever-increasing transport of oil and oil products, as well as of shipping generally, in the Baltic Sea” (Paet; 23.11.2007). The second main

emphasis is given to the maritime and navigation sphere which is seen as damaging and excavating problem in Baltic Sea Region environment. “The ever-increasing traffic of tankers shipping oil and chemicals in the Baltic Sea is, without a doubt, a constantly growing threat”(Paet; 10.07.2008).

Cultural presentation of Baltic Sea Region is also perceived as devastating factor in the Baltic Sea Region identity construction. Driving attention towards ‘Mare Nostrum’ and focusing on the cultural features give insight to the Baltic Sea region identity construction. “The Baltic Sea was Europe’s true mare nostrum during the times of the Hanseatic League – a unifying, not dividing sea – and is becoming one again.” (Ojuland: 05.2003). The festivals are combining elements in the regional identity construction which is perceived as common sense creation. “The festival demonstrated that people from different sectors of society are ready to work together to protect the fragile Baltic Sea” (Ojuland; 2004).

The consideration of discourse gives several outcomes to see the regional identity construction and consolidation between state-nation and regional identity. First of all, Estonia symbolizes Baltic state and European country. Baltic Sea is considered as integral part of the European Union and it is conceived as inseparable part of Europe. The consolidation is apparent in both state-nation level and regional identity level. Secondly, innovativeness and information technology were recognized as the part of the Estonian nation-state consolidation which is apparent in the regional identity construction. Thirdly, beside historical construction, economic interest is also evident in the nation-state and regional identity presentation. The environmental awareness emphasize on the oil spillovers. This dimension exists as a separate category.

## **4.4.SWEDEN**

### **4.4.1. Swedish National Identity Construction**

From the discourses Swedish nation level identity is based on the several factors.

The construction of the Sweden's reflects a European notion. Belonging to Europe is seen as the utmost necessity of the history, a historical phase that achieved during that period. "Gustav II Adolf landed on Usedom, in northern Germany, and ushered in a period that transformed the barren and sparsely inhabited border state on the periphery of Europe into a self-assured European actor"(Bildt; 20.11.2010). This historical step changed role of the Sweden to be a European entity. It is also evident in reference to the Europe which is focused on common self, "our Europe". Besides being European Sweden is also represented as being Northern. North poses an important part of the Swedish discourse. Nordic identity construction includes a sense of superiority in itself, an idealized state which includes welfare itself (Hansen, 2002). The characteristic of the North is an evident in the Swedish discourses. Referring to the Sweden's national anthem with "...thou ancient, thou free, thou mountainous North"(Bildt: 17.05.2012) gives both dimension of the nature and also at the same time emphasize Northern dimension of the identity.

The notion of the nature and environment are important factors in the Swedish national level discourse. This environment and nature attachments define one of the pillars of the identity. Carl Bildt in respect to the nature mentions: "we have a tradition of strong attachment to nature" (Bildt: 17.05.2012). This is on one hand gives the importance of the nature as a factor and on the other hand it depicts the traditional character of identity. Welfare is another attachment which depicts the country. Pursuing welfare not only inside of the country but also continuing the same notion in the Europe is other main bound in Swedish discourses which seen as the "entrepreneurial spirit that refused to accept former barriers lay the foundation for a unique development of welfare"(Bildt; 17.04.2009).

One of the factors that define the Swedish identity is the historical construction. Swedish imperial past depicted as the good old times in the discourses. Regarding to the

period after Swedish empire it is depicted as “It had lost its Baltic empire, could only dream about the "days of glory" and was still not anywhere near acquiring a new role for itself” (Bildt; 17.04.2009). This depiction alongside with the rebirth of the nation is important in the Swedish historical construction. Swedish welfare system was a clinical factor in this transformation. Welfare system started to develop from 1940s and the growth followed till 1970 (Boje, 1993; 73). “From around 1870 to around 1970 Sweden went from being one of Europe's poorest countries to one of the worlds richest” (Bildt; 17.04.2009). The perception of the World War II in the Swedish discourse represent as destruction, genocide, oppression and division. The unjust division of Europe is perceived as one of the main factors of Cold War which is described as “two decades ago when that Soviet empire that extended right into the heart of Europe come crushing down”(Bildt; 24.09.2009) This period is depicted as “that dark phase of Europe's history”(Bildt; 04.04 2010). European Union accession which is seen as the new paradigm of the history perceived as returning to the century’s reality of the participating in the European order. “We became part of a greater community with the distinct task of ensuring freedom, safeguarding peace and developing welfare”(Bildt; 20.11.2010).

State-nation relationship in the Swedish discourses is based on the society notion which ensures the common conditions for the all population to preserve and participate in the country’s political and economic life. “The indigenous population - the Saami in Sweden - must have the possibility to maintain and develop their identity. Culture, knowledge transfer and traditional living such as reindeer herding must be upheld” "(Bildt: 17.05.2012).

From the Swedish nation level discourses several outcomes can be driven. First of all, Sweden is depicted as truly European and Nordic country. Secondly, historical construction includes the imperial legacy, welfare system building, dark times in Europe and elimination of the separating lines in Europe. The political-economic and social-cultural values are based on the Nordic welfare system which is a clear representation of the Nordic model.

#### 4.4.2. Second and Third Layer Discourse

Sweden's understanding of the Baltic Sea Region depicts a clear relation with the European inland lake notion. This presentation depicts a decisive role in the economic-political and cultural-historical ties. "Since the Baltic countries and Poland joined the Union in 2004, the Baltic has virtually become an EU inland sea" (Ohlsson; 07.02.2011). This dimension combines unifying character which particularly underlines the importance of the perception of towards the region. "Today, the Baltic Sea has regained its historic role as a unifying body of water" (Reinfeldt, 05.10.2009). Unifying character it also includes bond that creates among the European countries. "Developments in the Baltic Sea region are a European concern. Eight out of nine countries round the Baltic are members of the EU" (Reinfeldt, 19.02.2008). Baltic Sea Region growth is an impetus for the other countries. "We are part of a "Europe of regions". And it is my firm belief that the Baltic Sea region can develop into a model for other parts of Europe by proving that high growth levels and being in the forefront of globalization are compatible with the highest environmental standards and sustainable development"(Bildt; 12.06.2007). Sweden's understanding of the region is not only restricted to this perspective but also it is perceived as innovative locomotive of European Union. "This, together with capital and market access, will not only lead to a more prosperous Baltic Sea region; it will also create a more prosperous European Union" (Reinfeldt, 05.10.2009).

East-west division alongside with the cooperation is primary historical construction. "When I was a high school student gazing over the Baltic Sea was like looking for the moon. It was such a mental distance to the eastern countries behind the iron curtain"(Ohlsson; 26.01.2011) Similar construction can be found in the discourse. "The Baltic Sea - in Soviet times a moat between East and West - has regained its historical role as a waterway for trade and human interaction"(Reinfeldt; 15.09.2011). This understanding gives the ground to see Baltic Sea as a sea meant to be for cooperation and trade. A glorious time during the Hanseatic League is other factor which enforces the argument of 'sea of cooperation'. During Hanseatic time Swedish cities regarded as most substantial group of exotic imports which was the outcome of the trade with other Hanseatic cities

(Gaimster, 2005; 416). “The Baltic Sea has, during these last fifteen years, regained its role as an important trading route. As in the days of the Vikings and the 400 prosperous years of the Hanseatic era, our region is experiencing a boom of commercial activities”(Bildt; 12.06.2007). The cooperation and coexistence shows how far region achieved to create common feelings. Regarding to this common feeling the historical ties and cooperation is depicted as an important factor. “Step by step, we have re-established the historical ties between Sweden and Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania”(Reinfeldt; 15.09.2011). With simple example it is possible to reinforce this understanding. “Fifteen years ago there was only one daily flight between Stockholm and Tallinn. Today there are six flights every day”(Bildt; 12.06.2007). While discovering regional history, Sweden rediscovered itself. “With the process that led up to the restoration of independence in the Baltic countries, in a way, Sweden rediscovered some of its own history. The bonds between our countries go back a long way”(Reinfeldt; 18.02.2011).

Other main factor in the Swedish discourse is environmental protection of the region. The concern is mainly related to endangered sea by the human interaction and lack of appropriate treatment. “In Sweden, a most pressing environmental concern is the pollution of the Baltic Sea. In the summer, the effects of eutrophication are there for everyone to see off and on along the Baltic Sea coast”(Bildt; 28.10.2008). Regarding to this relation it has been perceived as high priority and alarming situation by Swedish elites. “According to the UN, the Baltic Sea is one of the ten most sensitive maritime environments in the world. 25% of its bottom is dead, and up to 80% is dying”(Bildt; 12.06.2007). The consideration of the problem and adequate relation to this problem paves the way to the take the action. “But it is also our responsibility to find solutions to those problems which still threaten our societies and their people”(Bildt; 12.06.2007).

Economic relations occupy core in the Baltic Sea Region construction. In regards to the economic cooperation it gives insight towards region. “History has taught us the importance of extending free trade and economic integration”(Reinfeldt; 04.06.2008). Beside this factor the Baltic Sea Region is a place where to build a competitive economic market which will end with the win-win conclusion. The goal is “...to contribute to a

strengthened Baltic Sea region and to enhanced possibilities for sustainable growth, well-being and competitiveness”(Bildt; 28.10.2008). The measurements are give the outcomes such as “it certainly has its problems in the South, but in the North and around the Baltic Sea - Germany, Poland, Sweden, Estonia, Finland - we are booming”(Bildt; 21.05.2011). Sweden outlines the importance of the European Union but in the economic relation it gives the attention towards Russia within Northern dimension context. “I say the whole region, because it is of utmost importance that the strategy will need to take into consideration both the region’s EES countries which form the part of the internal market, and also Russia in connection with the Northern Dimension”(Bildt; 12.06.2007). Russia is perceived as an important trade partner. There is need for further cooperation. “There is also need for political leadership to stimulate and facilitate trade and investment between Russia and the other countries of the Baltic Sea Region”(Reinfeldt; 04.06.2008).

From the discourse first outcome is Swedish perception of the Baltic Sea Region is consolidated with nation-state discourses. Sweden is European country and the view towards Baltic Sea Region as a European Union entity occupies a central role. Second main outcome is about nature and environment protection. The nature in the nation level discourses had an important role which is perceived as main denominator of the identity construction. The same importance was given to the regional discourses.

## **4.5.RUSSIA**

### **4.5.1. Russian National Identity Construction**

From the discourse one of the main terms that define Russian national identity is people living in the Russian territory. Semenenko underlines the importance of the Russian imperial background in respect to its predominant and multiethnic approach towards identity (Semenenko, 2013; 103). This is on one hand it gives option to see the Russia not only from ethnic based society but also concentration of the impurities, on the other hand it defines the Russian nation from the perspective of the inclusiveness. There is a phrase that mentioned in the discourses repeatedly: “If you scratch a Russian you’ll find a Tatar”



(Putin; 18.05.2007). This notion gives the urge of constructing Russian national identity. “We also need to move toward the creation of a full-fledged Russian identity that includes all our peoples”(Putin; 19.05.2000). In the opening address to Russians abroad President Putin mentions; “You represent the multinational and multifaceted world of the Russian diaspora, the interests of millions of people who are intrinsically linked to Russia and whose identity is firmly connected with Russia’s history, culture and language” (Putin; 24.10.2006). These notions particularly define the basic understanding of the Russian national construction. It is based on the inclusive characteristics of the multiethnic nation that represent common history, language and culture which is an important factor in the Russian identity construction.

Historical construction of the Russia is based on the glory of the past. This notion is very important in a sense of being glorious nation that defines the character of the Russia. One of the famous quotes in the Russian discourse is “Russia is huge but there is nowhere to retreat: Moscow is behind us!” (Medvedev; 04.05.2010). This phrase refers to the nation’s character which is battle hardened during the challenges of the history. One of the most prominent constructions of the history is related to the World War II which takes an important place in this regard. “The war is certainly part of history, but it is part of recent history, and this is something I want to emphasis” (Medvedev; 07.05.2010). In relation towards World War II it depicts the crucial joint war. “Generations and the decades pass, but this historic date remains sacred for each nation, each country that holds the ideals of freedom and humanism dear. Dedication to these values brought our nations together in the joint fight against Nazism, against the ideology of violence, aggression and racial supremacy”(Putin; 07.05.2005). In Russian historical construction Baranovsky mentions that Russia ‘saved’ Europe from Napoleon, played gendarme role in Europe and ‘saved’ Europe from Nazis which show the ‘true’ construction of history from Russian side (Baranovsky, 2000: 445). This heroic presentation of history underlines the ability of the Russian nation over the aggressor. Beside this representation it is also important to mention cooperation through history which is evident in example of the Messina: “...in Messina to

honour the sailors from Russia's Baltic Squadron, who in 1908 saved more than 1,000 Italians during the terrible earthquake that struck the town" (Putin; 13.02.2006).

Depiction of the Russia from the discourses is related with the Russia belongs to Europe. But this term is used not in the political meaning. Prozorov characterizes the European and Russian relations as 'exclusion' and 'self-exclusion', the exclusion part of the political entity by the European Union starts with the acceptance of the standardized values and norms which is started in the Copenhagen (Prozorov, 2009). Morozov also mentions that construction of Europeanness often defined with a negative reference to Russia (Morozov, 2012; 40). In discourses it is used in civilization character. "...Europe, the whole Euro-Atlantic region, and therefore the future of European civilization in its entirety"(Medvedev; 05.06.2008). The understanding and presentation of the European civilization is based on the non political meaning. According to the discourses one of the main problems is the relation from European countries. "But looking at the future construction of relations between the countries of Europe, we see a worrying tendency to take a selective and politicized approach to our common history" (Medvedev; 05.06.2008). It is not only limited in depicting the problem but also it includes the view towards Europe. "That is why today as in the past the real challenge involves strengthening the values that are fundamental for all of us who live in Europe, namely: adherence to international law, non-use of force, respect for sovereignty, commitment to peaceful methods of conflict resolution and the principles of arms control" (Medvedev; 20.04.2009). The common values decoupling with the necessity of the common understanding towards Europe is main presentation of the history in the Russian discourses. "We need to talk today about unity between the whole Euro-Atlantic area from Vancouver to Vladivostok. Life itself dictates the need for this kind of cooperation"(Medvedev; 05.06.2008).

Nation state relationship in the Russian discourses is based on the integrating all members of the society to the common Russian state. This basically can be found in discourse with referring to the nation as citizens. "We will talk about protecting the environment and improving the quality of life of Russian citizens" (Putin; 30.06.2008). Also beside this understanding there is an inclusive characteristic. In relation towards the

citizen the integration is a necessity. "...Caucasus needs to be integrated as full-fledged members of Russian society. This may sound bookish, but it's true" (Medvedev; 19.05.2010).

Russian discourse on nation level is based on the several factors. First of all, Russia is depicted as the civilizational Europe which is constructed on common understanding of history and values. Secondly, Russian national identity refers to the inclusive character. In this regard the construction of the identity involves the citizens living in the territory of the Russia. Historical construction of the Russia refers to the glorious past and cooperation. Finally Russian nation-state exists in inseparable terms which are showing the importance of the participation of the all citizens and possibility of acquiring the common (Russian) language, history and culture.

#### **4.5.2. Second and Third Layer Discourse**

One of these factors is Kaliningrad which took a huge role in the Baltic Sea Region consideration. Regarding to the situation restriction of the movement is main determinant. "The current situation is such that freedom of movement for Russian citizens residing in the Kaliningrad Region – the freedom to travel and interact within the Russian Federation – is severely restricted"(Medvedev; 23.11.2009). Prozorov also underlines the importance of this issue mentioning this restriction of freedom of movement is an exclusionary gesture (Prozorov, 2009, 136). Kaliningrad is perceived as internal issue for the Russia. "In fact, we organized the celebration of the 750th anniversary of Kaliningrad-Koenigsberg as a purely internal political Russian event" (Putin; 03.07.2005). This issue is evident when the visa regime problem occurred. The Russian discourse presents continuity in this topic which considers seeing it as whole integral matter of Russia. "My position is that the visa regime should be the same for all citizens of the Russian Federation, both the citizens of Kaliningrad and those living in other territories" (Putin; 24.06.2002).

Economic interest is also an important factor. Baltic Sea is the way out to Europe and the importance of the economic interests dominate relations in this sense. "Total investment by EU countries in Russia's economy comes to 30 billion euros. I do not know

if this is a big figure or not, but in my opinion it is not a very big figure” (Putin; 26.10.2007). Regarding to this topic it is crucial to consider the common relationship in order to achieve better ties. “We have rich experience of cooperation in a wide range of areas. This is a valuable asset, and we need to use it to build a climate of mutual understanding and good-neighborliness in the Baltic region” (Medvedev; 29.05.2009). One of the main aspects of the economic factor is the Nord Stream gas pipeline (Kaveshnikov, 2010; 601). “We are only speaking about the fact that in the future we are going to send the 60 billion cubic meters that have been contracted for and perhaps even more along this new route” (Putin; 09.09.2006). The project occupies a central role in the economic relations with Baltic Sea Region countries. “We value the Swedish Government’s decision to authorize the Nord Stream pipeline to be laid across Sweden’s economic zone”(Medvedev; 18.11.2009). Also it underlines the importance of mutual understanding in the project. “This project is mutually advantageous and that Europe has an interest in it, because it will ultimately make Europe’s energy security more universal”(Medvedev; 18.11.2009). Besides the economic interests, environmental factors are also considered. “It is absolutely clear that such project in general and Nord Stream in particular must be undertaken only after a proper environmental impact assessment, since it will affect all countries that border on the Baltic Sea, and in this regard we are obliged to work together” (Medvedev; 20.04.2009).

Historical construction has diverse reaction to Baltic States and other Baltic Sea Region countries. “I just want to say that in this respect the Germans behave with far greater dignity than do some representatives of the Baltic States, although for Germany this is all a very painful issue” (Medvedev; 07.05.2010). In relation to Estonian-Russian border treaty Vladimir Putin mentions: “We withdrew our signature from this treaty and acted, I believe, quite correctly. Because if we abstract ourselves from a political evaluation of the past which could be debated, even if this remained in the ratification documents of the Estonian side, we consider it completely unacceptable for any kind of juridical justification of territorial claims of one country to another country in today’s Europe” (Putin; 03.07.2005). Besides that fact other main trend in the Russian discourse is to be able to

cooperate pragmatically. “If there is to be a link between these two approaches (the pragmatic or economic, on the one hand, and the ideological or moral – if you like – on the other), then everything will be fine, and our relations will move to a much higher level” (Medvedev; 09.12.2009).

Environment is occupying a central role towards the Baltic Sea Region. It is most evident factor in the understanding of the Baltic Sea Region. “We live alongside the Baltic Sea and have an interest in seeing it clean, so as to make our own lives along its shores more comfortable” (Medvedev; 18.11.2009). Saving Baltic Sea is perceived as saving the nation’s future with protecting it for future generations. “We will talk about protecting the environment and improving the quality of life of Russian citizens. The quality of the environment directly influences the nation's health and demographic potential, and reflects our respect for the future of our country, for current and future generations” (Putin; 30.01.2008). The importance of the environmental concerns represents the constant monitoring necessity in the Russian discourse and cooperation in this area is vital. “Scientists are constantly monitoring what is happening there. So far there is no threat of environmental disaster. But since the problem exists, it must be solved. We are negotiating it with our colleagues and I hope a decision will be found”(Putin; 27.06.2003).

Russian minority living in the Baltic States draw a regular attention from the Russian elites. This is perceived as a vital problem and a necessary factor to be concerned about. “We are talking about the tragedy of the people, of these 25 million who became foreigners overnight, who woke up and learned all of a sudden that they had nothing to do with Russia anymore. They live in other countries and have to adapt to local life as a national minority”(Putin; 09.05.2005). Also there is a clear tendency over the concentration on the double standards that applied to Russian speaking minority. Morozov mentions that Latvian and Estonian governments attitude towards Russian speaking evoked disenchantment in the Russian side (Morozov, 2002; 223).“But there are some standards that are applied in Western Europe, including in areas that we would call hot spots, and that should also be applied to the Baltic States with regard to the Russian-speaking population in these countries” (Putin; 18.12.2003). In this regard there is concentration on the positive

characteristic of the Nordic side in contrast to negative attitude of the Baltic States. “You have just mentioned the importance of minority languages, and I would again like to bring up the positive experience of Scandinavian countries and Finland in terms of supporting the languages of ethnic minorities. This experience and these standards must be applied to the Russian-speaking population in the Baltic countries”(Putin; 01.09.2001).

From the Russian discourse it is evident that there is not complete regional identity but several factors determine the view towards Baltic Sea. Economic interests are perceived as the main factor and it occupies a central role in discourses. Baltic Sea is playing window role towards Europe. Nord stream is main energy project which aim to increase Russian export to the Europe. Historical construction towards Baltic Sea has two diverse relations towards region countries. Baltic States and Russia have different presentation of the history which differs in the World War II understanding. Russia tends to see Baltic Sea clean as the other part of the Russian territories and Russian water ways. There is attention given to this feature but it is not only limited to Baltic Sea. One of the major factors in relation to Baltic States present the understanding of the Russian speaking minority role in these countries which is according to discourses double standards applied. Russian relation towards Baltic Sea Region is sedimented in the nation-state level discourse. The relation mainly perceived as the extension of the nation-state discourses.

## **4.6.LITHUANIA**

### **4.6.1. Lithuanian National Identity Construction**

Lithuania is depicted as the European and Baltic in the discourse. Rindzeviciute underlines the importance of the ‘European’ notion in the discourse mentions that this notion is helpful to strengthen positive valuations of national identity (2003; 78). In a visit to United Arab Emirates Audronius Azubalis mentions: “I am sure you are aware where Lithuania is situated, but you may not know that French National Geographic Institute in 1989 determined the geographical centre of continental Europe and it is in Lithuania, near our capital Vilnius”(Azubalis; 07.05.2012). Also this notion is crucial part of the

Lithuanian national identity. Referring to idea Andres Azubalis mentions: “this cooperation in Europe is not something we can take for granted”(Azubalis; 23.08.2012). Beside European factor there is also Baltic State presentation of the Lithuanian discourse. It is a vital point to show the affinity of the three states sharing common fate. “It is the same nature of solidarity that we, the Baltic States, benefit from in other areas”(Vaitekunas: 07.07.2007).

One of the main factors of historical construction reflects the importance of the Grand duchy of Lithuania. “No person can tell you better than the local people what it means today to be a Polish, Lithuanian and/or Belarusian-speaking descendant of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. I think people should take be proud of this role” (Azubalis; 16.01.2012). Continuing this argument it constitutes an important part of the historical construction. “It is said that nations establish themselves only historically. But let us not forget that this is possible only when history itself is enshrined in the nation’s memory. Among the most meaningful things for Lithuanians today there is the shining crown of our King Mindaugas, Curonian and Samogitian swamps...”(Azubalis; 24.05.2012). In the presentation of the Lithuanian state, Grand Duchy and glory times are considered as the inseparable part of the identity. This sense of common past also enlightens the closeness idea of the Lithuanian nation. “Perhaps not all of you are aware that Lithuania was once the largest state in Europe? By the end of the 14th century Lithuania consisted of vast territories of nowadays Belarus, Ukraine and Russia”(Azubalis; 07.05.2012). Also Hanseatic League plays a decisive role in this common history construction. It underlines the importance of the shared values and trade that made nations to come closer. “This harks back to the open-minded cooperation which had been linking our ancestors for centuries way back in the heyday of the Hanseatic League. It is firmly based on the strength of shared values, not on the questionable law of the strongest” (Azubalis; 23.08.2012). Klumbyte mentions that nations’ historical remembering is “revived from Soviet Rule through memories and history’ (2003; 282).

Beside this presentation historical sufferings is underlined. This sufferings is involves the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact which in discourses mentioned as the injustice. ”It

paved the way for the policy of injustice and inhumanity which brought disaster of a catastrophic scale on Europe” (Azubalis; 23.08.2012).

Language and cultural construction of the Lithuanian identity is depicted as the character and spirit of the nation. De Munch mentions that Lithuanian language is connected with national identity in traditions and home life (de Munch, 2005; 216). “However, to quote the great Nobel-Prize-winning author Czeslaw Milosz, who was born a hundred years ago this year: ‘...language is the only homeland”” (Azubalis; 24.01.2012). Preserving ancient language is primary trend in the Lithuanian national construction. “Scientists of historical-comparative linguistics of Indo-European languages confirmed that Lithuanian retained archaic sounds, morphology, shifting stress” (Liauskiene; 11.11.2011). This trend gives the necessity and importance of the Language. “To quote a famous American educator [Benjamin W. Dwight], “if the value of a nation in the total sum humanity were to be measured by the beauty of its language, the Lithuanian ought to have the first place among the nations of Europe” (Azubalis; 07.05.2012). Beside the linguistic factor multiculturalism and Lithuanian culture have considerable importance in the discourses. It is also reflected and combined with the historical predecessor idea. “Tolerance, culture, trade and knowledge exchange, and especially respect for the ethnic and religious diversity, constitute the most precious heritage of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania that we cherish and want to pass on to the younger generations” (Azubalis; 20.04.2012). Also regarding to Vilnius multiculturalism is considered as inseparable factor. “Multiculturalism, ethnic diversity and constant dialogue among communities is an inseparable part of Vilnius’ DNA. Vilnius has always been unique in the sense that in its history it sheltered various nations”(Azubalis; 18.02.2010).

Nation state construction of Lithuanian identity reflects the participation of every citizen in itself. As mentioned before it is considered as multicultural society. “Lithuania has always been diverse and tolerant. Even now, Ukrainians jokingly call us their best occupying power” (Azubalis; 07.05.2012). In this quote main idea is the inclusive characteristic of the national identity which finds its historical roots coming from the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. “I feel free here. Here I am independent”. These are the words told by



Anastasia, a Belorussian student of European Humanities University here in Vilnius. It is the faith in these telling words that led us all to establish and support this institution during the last 20 years” (Azubalis; 05.07.2012).

Concluding arguments from the nation level discourse it is possible to define several outcomes. First of all Lithuania is depicted as the European and Baltic State which considers the importance of these factors that defines the nation-states relationship. Secondly, historical construction of the Lithuanian discourses is based on the glory and sufferings. The glory presents the ancient Lithuanian nation and sufferings give the understanding of the nation’s character which involves intention to freedom. Thirdly, Lithuanian language and culture is depicted as one of the oldest in Europe which is understandably involves multiculturalism character. This character also underlines the state-nation relationship which is inseparable.

#### **4.6.2. Second and Third Layer Discourse**

Lithuanian perception of the Baltic Sea Region is based on the several factors. One of them is Baltic States. Baltic States from the discourses constitute the nucleus of the regional identity construction. “From the Lithuanian perspective, the solidarity and bond of the three Baltic states constitutes the nucleus of our country’s regional identity. This special bond of the Baltic States was embodied in the Baltic Way” (Azubalis; 10.05.2010). Beside this factor European Union’s role is also mentioned in the discourses. “The Baltic regional entity by strengthening its organizational and institutional capacities might find a niche for its activities where it ensures the maximum added value within the new European political architecture”(Usackas; 12.06.2009). It is important to mention that it is important to involve other countries to this cooperation. “A strong Baltic region would also encourage closer and more effective cooperation with nearby countries - Poland, Finland and Sweden”(Usackas; 12.06.2009). Beside these countries Lithuania is in favor of the Russian involvement in the regional cooperation. “I am convinced that cooperation in the Baltic Sea region with a full-fledged participation of Russia is both possible and desirable. (Usackas; 10.09.2009)”

Environmental concerns present an important factor in the Baltic Sea Region construction. Pollution of the sea attracts attention in the Lithuanian discourse. “Our second priority, to which we will devote much attention during our presidency, is a clean and safe environment. The Baltic Sea Region, one of the most dynamic and modern in Europe, is also one of the most vulnerable. Close attention must be paid to the complicated situation of the Baltic Sea” (Usackas; 15.05.2009). Also cooperation in this term is considered as vital and inevitable issue. “Baltic Sea region countries share the same concern on the Baltic Sea environmental condition – it matters to all of us, including Germany, Poland, and Russia” (Azubalis; 10.05.2012). It is emphasized in the Lithuanian chairmanship in Baltic Development summit which shows the importance of the issue in the Baltic Sea Region construction. “As a chairman of this body, Lithuania focused attention and efforts on the issues such as innovations, cross – border cooperation, clean environment and safe living conditions in the Baltic Sea region” (Azubalis; 06.07.2010).

Economic interests play a crucial role in the Baltic Sea Region construction. This construction is considered within the framework of the European Union. Also beside this factor the construction includes itself the innovativeness and sustainability. “It has been widely acknowledged that the Baltic Sea Region today is one of the most integrated and dynamically developing regions in Europe, which demonstrated considerable economic stability even in the times of the recent economic and financial challenges” (Azubalis; 23.02.2012). Also same notions can be found in the relations towards Baltic Sea Region Strategy. “The Baltic Sea strategy is not only about solving problems and challenges but also about opportunities. The creation of an economically strong and competitive Baltic Sea region which is also a leader in innovations is among the top priorities of the Strategy”(Usackas; 06.10.2012). Beside this factor it is also worth to mention that Lithuania perceives Russian participation as vital issue which involves the idea that Baltic Sea Region can be a place where the European Union and Russia. “The Baltic Sea Region has always been an important area of cooperation between the EU and Russia. In fact, cooperation with Russia in the Baltic Sea Region can be seen as a litmus-test for the development of overall EU-Russia relations”(Usackas; 06.10.2012).

Kaliningrad plays a decisive factor in the regional cooperation which is not only perceived as problematic issue but also as an opportunity to build a integrated Baltic Sea Region. “Kaliningrad Region has a very important role for the future of an integrated and competitive Baltic Sea area. Given its geographic and geopolitical situation, Kaliningrad Region has a natural potential for cooperation with the EU and can become a model for developing overall EU-Russia relations” (Usackas; 06.10.2009). Also inside the organizations like CBSS the cooperation with Kaliningrad is perceived as important issue for the Lithuania. “We regard the Kaliningrad District of Russia and Belarus as inseparable parts of the Baltic Sea regional cooperation. While the Kaliningrad District has been a partner for co-operation with the CBSS, we strongly wish to extend similar cooperative ties with Belarus”(Usackas; 22.10.2009). Beside the Kaliningrad participation of the Belarus in the regional cooperation is underlined. This derives from the historical affinity with the Belarus inside Grand Duchy of Lithuanian. In relation towards visa regime it is clearly described. “That is, we need to go beyond visa facilitation for the Kaliningrad region and Belarus towards the creation of a visa-free regime, starting with Kaliningrad and moving towards a visa-free area around the Baltic” (Usackas; 10.09.2009).

Solidarity among the Baltic Sea region is other main issue in the Lithuanian discourses. Lithuania emphasizes the importance of the people to people and sub-regional cooperation. “The Baltic Region is by no means a simple formation; it is a hub of overlapping identities, cooperation frameworks, unique challenges and unique solutions as well as overlapping frameworks of solidarity” (Azubalis; 10.05.2012). This argument is evident in relation towards the Baltic Sea which is mentioned as “common home for which we all are responsible”(Meilunas; 08.06.2011).

From the regional discourses several outcomes can be driven. First of all, Baltic Sea Region is perceived as an entity inside the European Union. Besides this depiction it underlined the importance of the other regional countries involvement. Secondly, basis of the regional identity is constructed on the close nucleus of the Baltic States. Environmental issue alongside with economic interest is a demanding factor that drives attention from the Lithuanian discourse. The link between nation-state and regional identity is evident in the

consideration of the close cooperation with Kaliningrad and Belarus which drives attention towards historical construction of the national identity, particularly Grand Duchy of Lithuania. The multiculturalism characteristic towards Baltic Sea Region is also evident in the nation-state construction which is based on inclusive characteristic.

## **4.7.DENMARK**

### **4.7.1. Danish National Identity Construction**

Danish depiction of the nation reflects the Northern and European notions. Northernness is the intrinsic part of the Danish national identity. 'Norden' appears to be romantic construction which entitles with Danish national identity (Hansen, 2001; 68). It defines nations' character and close affinity with other Nordic countries. In relation towards Greenland prime minister mentions: "The Greenland flag differs from the flags of the other Nordic countries. But the colors are those of the Dannebrog – the Danish flag – red and white – and show the association with Denmark and the North"(Rasmussen. F. A; 21.06.2004). This quote not only reveals the characteristics of the Denmark, but also it combines Greenland as part of Nordic closeness. Beside the mentioned factor Europeaness is also an evident factor in the discourses. " Together we will create "One Europe". To the benefit of all Europeans" (Rasmussen. F. A; 03.07.2002). Europeaness is considered in the discourse in the frame of the European Union which enlightens the political construction of the Europe. "And by "the future of the EU" I mean "our future". We are all in this together" (Rasmussen. F. A; 2004). These two issues are major trends in the discourse which gives the nations depiction.

Welfare state and Danish model of economy are other major issues in the discourses. These features are intrinsically placed in the heart of Danish national identity. It includes development from the agricultural based to one of the worlds' richest country. This transformation and building a profound society occupies a central role in the discourses. "Their names do not appear in the records of history, but the fruit of their labour is the society we know today. We are stewards of their inheritance. And it is our task

to maintain the welfare society that is everywhere regarded as the best in the world” (Rasmussen. N. P: 01.01.2000). It is also important to mention the welfare society is not perceived as single sided. This includes the problems, challenges and reforms of some elements. “Denmark is in a strong position. We are one of the world’s most well-functioning societies. We are respected throughout the world. We have much to be proud of. Yet, there are also many challenges facing us ahead. There is broad agreement on preserving and developing the Danish welfare state. At the same time, however, we must be ready to innovate, modernise and reform” (Rasmussen. F. A; 07.10.2003). Beside this factor Danish economic model is also underlined as the main denominator of the nation and state. “Whether this is so is not for me to say but I would like to sketch a brief outline of the economic situation in Denmark. And I would like to explain what I believe to be the reasons for the success of the ‘Danish model’” (Rasmussen. F. A; 07.09.2005). The consideration of this model includes important success story which occupies a role in the Danish identity. “One of them declared that Denmark has the World’s best business climate. Another report proclaimed that Denmark operates the World’s best international assistance when considered as a whole.” (Rasmussen. F. A; 01.01.2006).

Historical construction of the Danish national identity is based on the “ancient” nation idea. “Denmark, which is one of the few countries have existed for more than a thousand years” (Rasmussen. N. P: 01.01.2000). Besides this factor other main issues in the discourse are the division of Europe and Cold war. Regarding to the end of the Cold War Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen mentions: “Today we have closed one of the bloodiest and darkest chapters in European history” (Rasmussen. F. A; 13.12.2002). Also it is possible to draw the trend of the similarity between the Berlin wall and 1864 defeat to Germany. “The fall of the Berlin Wall meant that Denmark was able to emerge from the shadow of 1864. For more than a century, small state and adaptation policies characterized Danish foreign policy vis-à-vis Germany and later the Soviet Union”(Rasmussen. F. A; 04.2004). Continuing the argument in the same speech changing role of the Denmark is outlined. “Denmark has exchanged its position as a front-line state in the conflict between

East and West for a place at the centre of the new co-operating Europe” (Rasmussen. F. A; 04.2004).

Nation-state relationship in the discourses is mentioned as the people playing a central role in this respect. Starth mentions that Nordic identity is based on the individual values and role of people in the society (2000; 364). “People before the system, respect for the individual and the individual’s right to self-determination. This has been the guiding principle of the Government from the start, and will remain so in future” (Rasmussen. F. A; 01.10.2002). This can be found in the discourses with true equality among the citizens. “We have done away with class barriers, so that we Danes make up a united people, a society built on freedom, liberal-mindedness and community”(Rasmussen. F. A; 01.01.2004). This is also involves the inclusive characteristic of the nation-state. “About a respectful and tolerant Denmark where there is room for every individual. On the individual’s own terms” (Rasmussen. L. L; 01.01.2010).

From the national level discourse several outcomes can be driven. First of all Denmark depicted as the European and Northern country which reflects the intrinsic part of the national identity. Particularly Northerness is located in the nucleus of the national identity. Secondly historical construction of the Denmark is based on the old nation understanding which is enforced with the division of the Europe idea and elimination of the walls among the nations. Thirdly Danish state-nation has the inclusiveness character which emphasizes the importance of the close relationship between the nation and state, particularly state has to serve to nation.

#### **4.7.2. Second and Third Layer Discourse**

Baltic Sea Region identity construction in the Denmark’s discourse represents European Union dimension. This representation reflects the understanding of the future cooperation in the region and triggering factor for the multidimensional role inside the European Union. “For the Baltic Sea Region the enlargement presents great opportunities. Wider European integration will not render regional co-operation superfluous. On the contrary, regional co-operation is the very building block on which a stronger and wider

Europe rests. It is the regional networks that make the larger European framework” (Rasmussen. N. P: 23.09.2001). During Baltic States and Poland enlargement this dimension gained an important role in the discourses. “A successful conclusion will lead to the expansion of our European family, with the new members joining us in 2004. Such a historic event will result in fundamental changes affecting not only Europe as a whole but the entire future of the Baltic region”(Rasmussen. F. A; 13.10.2002). But beside this factor, involvement of the Russia is also perceived as an important factor. Quoting the Pushkins word which is used in reflection to the Baltic Sea as the window to Europe Rasmussen underline the importance of the cooperation with Russia. “Let us open that window to Europe all of us the Russian federation, the three Baltic countries and Poland. And let us make this region the most promising and flourishing region of the world. (Rasmussen. N. P: 23.09.2001)” But the cooperation among the region countries and Russia is perceived within the borders of the European Union. “We will also have to address the specific issues pertaining to Kaliningrad. After enlargement of the European Union with Poland and Lithuania, Kaliningrad will be an enclave in the Union. This raises questions concerning transit of persons and goods. The European Union and Russia have a visa-regime in place vis-à-vis each other.”(Rasmussen. F. A; 14.06.2002).

Economic construction of the Baltic Sea Region depends on the notions of economic growth, sustainable and innovative region. “I see great opportunities in the Baltic Sea Region. I would like us to develop a vision of the Baltic Sea Region as an even stronger beacon of growth and prosperity “on the top” of Europe.” (Rasmussen. F. A; 30.11.2008). Also in order to ensure the economic growth Denmark underlines the importance of the removal of the trade barriers which is achieved with involvement of the Baltic States and Poland to European Union. “...we must remove all unnecessary barriers to trade, travel and investment. For those of us who are members of the EU, the Internal Market will ensure this.”(Rasmussen. F. A; 13.09.2004). Danish economic view towards region involves the dynamic region idea which is evident referring to the Mr. Uffe Ellemann-Jensen. “Uffe Ellemann-Jensen once told us of his vision of the Baltic Sea Region as the most dynamic region in the world. I can only subscribe to that vision. And

we are lucky in having every opportunity to make this vision come true. The Baltic Sea Region has the potential for being the new centre of European growth – the powerful engine pulling Europe’s economy forward.” (Rasmussen. F. A; 13.10.2002). Also involvement of the Russia and Kaliningrad region seem to play an important role in the discourses which according to Danish discourse can be undergone within framework of the European Union and Northern dimension. “However, we have a common interest in ensuring that the major Russian centres bordering the Baltic Sea; Saint Petersburg and Kaliningrad, become involved in the increasingly integrated Baltic economic system.”(Rasmussen. F. A; 13.09.2004).

Environmental concerns as other states in the region occupy a vital role in the Danish discourses. Cooperation in this sense is important in the discourses. “For obvious reasons we should expand our cooperation on the Environment. To put it bluntly we are polluting our own pond and it has to stop.” (Rasmussen. N. P: 23.09.2001). It is also an important factor in the consideration of the organizations: “one of the most important priorities during the Danish presidency next year will be the environmental dimension and Northern dimension. And I foresee an even stronger co-operation, which will develop in the coming month and years.” (Rasmussen. F. A; 13.09.2004). the problem of the agricultural waste and fertilizers in the environmental consideration of the Baltic Sea region plays a crucial role. “The Baltic Sea is also struggling to overcome large amounts of waste and residue from fertilizer. It is suffering from a severe case of indigestion. Local, regional solutions are no longer enough. Our vision should be to make our waterways as clean and clear as a Norwegian “foss”. What we need is a Baltic Clean Water Action Plan. Another area in which we can work together.” (Rasmussen. F. A; 13.10.2002).

Cultural historical presentation of the Baltic Sea region represent the common past and shared values that enriches the opportunity of the cooperation and commonsense creation. “Being here in Hamburg, one of the old Hanseatic towns, one cannot fail to be inspired by the Hanseatic League - a unique commercial organization and part of our history. Centuries ago the Hanseatic League succeeded creating an integrated economy in the Baltic Sea Region. Something, which we aspire to emulate today”(Rasmussen. F. A;



13.09.2004). Also it is important to mention in the discourse Baltic Sea is reflected as the crucial issue in the hearts of the Danes. “Historically, Denmark has always had the interests of the Baltic region at heart. And this is no different today. The promotion of good relationships between all the nations of the region remains one of our major priorities”(Rasmussen. F. A; 13.10.2002).

From the discourse it is possible to draw several outcomes. First of all, Denmark tends to see Baltic Sea Region inside the European Union. But beside this factor it is also willing to cooperate with Russia in European Union (North Dimension) framework. Secondly, Denmark’s interest is to cooperate in the economic and environmental issues in order to build a prosperous and environmentally sustainable region. Cultural –historical ties reflects the understanding of this idea which is based on the cooperation inside the region during Hanseatic League. The relationship between nation-state and regional identity in this respect represent overlaps.

## **4.8.POLAND**

### **4.8.1. Polish National Identity Construction**

Depiction of Poland mainly refers to European notion in the discourses. This notion plays an important role in determination of the nation’s characteristics. Pole’s are European and this Europeanness is not only limited with acquisition of European values it also involves a central role which Poland played. “The Polish people played a decisive role in triggering the great changes in Europe” (Kwaśniewski A, 19.05.2003). However in the process of this determination Central and Eastern Europe plays important role as being central part. “Without our accomplishments there would be no Europe of today, Europe that is open, Europe that is uniting. We have made our contribution towards European stability, cooperation, towards the cause of reconciliation between nations painfully experienced by history” (Kwaśniewski A, 19.10.2005). This proud depiction of the Poles and putting nation in the center of Europe is followed with the contribution to political institution; European Union. In this respect the understanding moves from being a complete Europe to

Central and Eastern Europe. Polish president mentions: “..It is also worthwhile to analyze the achievements and challenges of our whole region of Central and Eastern Europe” (Kwaśniewski A, 15.09.2005)

Historical presentation of Poland includes several important events that shaped Polish nation. One of the main factors is the Polish-Lithuanian commonwealth. This is particularly referred as the first Polish republic and reference a central player in Europe. President Lech Kaczyński in quoting words of Pope II John Paul “From the Union of Lublin to the European Union” (Kaczyński L, 01.07.2009) reflects this characteristic. Additionally, this period is also regarded as the equality notion that provided common base for all nations to live together. Besides this notion and understanding it is also important to mention resistance of Polish nation. “...the history of those 123 years, one is aware that this was a history of struggle, of clandestine resistance, of uprisings followed by more clandestine resistance; that we had three great national uprisings; that we were involved in an epic struggle related to Napoleon Bonaparte” (Kaczyński L. 11.11.2008). Presentation of the World War II is one of the most touchy and important factor in the construction. In regard to World War II President mentions: “We were the first country to resist the aggressor in open combat spurning the shameful and short-sighted policy of acquiescence to the demand of Nazis, the policy epitomized by the Munich Treaty” (Kwaśniewski A, 08.05.2005) Soviet Period is also regarded as center controlled country which is not a characteristic of the nation. “Poland, though not a fully sovereign country, did function as an autonomous entity of international law and could build her statehood. Moreover, Poland emerged from the war within territorial frontiers much changed in consequence of post-war arrangements” (Kwaśniewski A, 09.03.2005)

Apart from historical presentation of Poland, Solidarity movement occupies an intense role as a characteristics Polish nation.” Twenty five years ago, the “Solidarity” (Solidarność) movement was born in Poland. It was a unique phenomenon for the entire Eastern Block, which was subjected to Soviet domination. The movement, numbering some ten million people, independent of the authoritarian regime, raised the demands for liberty, personal dignity and respect for human rights” (Kwaśniewski A,15.09.2005) The

importance of this movement underlined with a collective act that combined and restored the belief towards democratic values. “It gave ordinary people renewed hope and confidence in the power of their action and it asserted their dignity. Solidarity proved to be the way to freedom” (Kwaśniewski A, 31.08.2005). This event plays a crucial role and important determinant in national identity construction. It embodies a combined feature of the nation. “I believe that the essence of that hope , so deeply imbued in the minds of Poles, can be expressed with the words “ justice, solidarity, honesty”. The sense of these words, as related to social life, to inter-human relations, is interconnected” (Kaczyński L, 23.12.2005).

Cultural construction of Poland refers to the multiculturalism notion which a sincere understanding of the existence of various cultures under same roof. “Our region, and especially Polish territory, has always been a melting pot of mutual penetration of various different cultures, religions, traditions, civilizations. It was there that the West met with the East, the currents of Latin culture encountered the Orthodox one. When such meetings were open minded – they enriched and reinforced peace and development”( Kwaśniewski A, 15.09.2005). Also, catholic religion plays an important role in Polish discourse. Particularly, Pope John Paul II is considered as an important figure in the discourses and religion. “Like all the Polish people moved by this experience, I want to believe that the spiritual good of those days will not be squandered; that the seeds then sown will continue to yield a crop” (Kwaśniewski A, 15.09.2005).

From the Polish discourses it is possible to draw several outcomes. First of all, European nation plays an important role in the national identity construction. This is also includes itself more Central and Eastern Europe which involves Polish national understanding itself. Secondly state-nation relationship reflects a unifying character with embodying multicultural characteristics. Religion also plays a crucial role in this construct. Historical construction of Polish discourses presents Polish-Lithuanian commonwealth, national resistance and World War II tragedy notion. Solidarity movement plays both historic and cultural characteristics.

#### **4.8.2. Second and Third Layer discourse**

One of the major presentation of the Baltic Sea Region in the Polish discourse underlines the importance of the European Union, precisely Central and Eastern Europe. European Union and Europe dominates the discourse which draws attention towards Baltic Sea Region as being a European Union entity. “The pursuit of active regional policy and cooperation within different organizations across the vast segment of Europe stretching between the Baltic, the Adriatic and the Black Sea, remains our priority” (Kwaśniewski A, 15.01.2003). The internal sea of European Union is other main determinant in this sense. Attaching Baltic Sea Region with this notion it provides dominance in the nation’s agenda. “Following EU enlargement to include Poland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, the Baltic will practically become the Union’s internal sea. Today is the time for us to think how to make use of the potential that is here, how to transform the Baltic Sea region into an area of economic growth and stability, an area to radiate over the entire continent”(Kwaśniewski A, 25-26.04.2001). Inside the European Union notion Poland will to cooperate with the other parts such as Central and Eastern European and to build a bridge between Baltic Sea and Black sea. “We are interested in joining the links of regional cooperation in Central and Eastern Europe, in building an extensive area of cooperation from the Baltic Sea through Central Europe to the Black Sea, Caucasus and the Caspian Sea.” (Kwaśniewski A, 14.04.2000).

Economic interest is the second major construct in relation towards Baltic Sea Region. “The Baltic Sea as an area of intensive international co-operation can serve as an exemplary model for Europe that tries to merge itself into one organism and desires to breathe freely with both its lungs: the Western and Eastern. I am pleased to note that the countries of the Baltic Sea basin show an interest in this co-operation” (Kwaśniewski, 24.04.2002). Particularly energy sector draws attention in discourse. Dependency on the Russian energy market and North stream occupies an important role in this relation. “We encourage the establishment of a transport and energy supply network to connect the Baltic,

through Central Europe, with regions on the Black Sea coasts” (Kwaśniewski, 24.04.2002). The environmental concern is also vital in the discourses. “We know that environmental issues remain unresolved and the bottom of the Baltic looks terrible already now and any thought about what the implications may be of a potential disaster is itself appalling” (Krawczyk A, 06.10.2006):

Historical construction of the Baltic Sea Region mainly related to the deeper sameness inside the regional countries. “Our nations fell victim to the ominous alliance of two dictators, Hitler and Stalin. Among the many attitudes and practices shared by these two dictatorships one in particular was conspicuous: the extremely effective application of the principle: Divide et impera, Divide and rule. The tyrannies not only divided the spheres of influence between themselves over the heads of Central and Eastern European nations. They could also with cynical skill use and consolidate all divisions existing between these nations” (Kwaśniewski A, 09.03.2005). Importance of the breakup of Soviet Union also underlined and perceived the region as place of stability. “There can be no doubt that from the very onset of the big changes, the changes that have been taking place here ever since 1989, and in Poland since 1990, the Baltic Sea region was one that pushed out the frontiers of stability” (Kwaśniewski, 06.07.2005)

Relation towards Russia occupies an important part of the discourses.”I am confident that Polish-Estonian cooperation shall serve to build both our position in the Baltic Sea region and in the European Union as well as with our neighbors that remain outside the Community structures – foremost in our relations with the Russian Federation” (Kwaśniewski A, 05.07.2005). Cooperation with Kaliningrad and involvement of the Russia is one of the main concerns for Poland. “The Kaliningrad District and the whole Baltic Region can become an area of special co-operation. The increasingly better relations between Poland and Russia do not mean that contacts with other neighbor-countries, especially Lithuania, Ukraine, and Belarus, are going down” (Kwaśniewski, 16.01.2002). Also in the discourse it is a unified matter about North Stream which is perceived as environmental concern and energy issue.

Polish nation-state and Baltic Sea region identity is based on several factors. First of all, as in national discourse in Baltic Sea Region understanding refers to the European notion. Inside the European Union notion it is important to distinguish Central and Eastern Europe construction which occupies a top position in this relationship. Secondly, economic interest are playing central role in this respect. Baltic Sea Region is perceived as option to involve and participate in further economic relations. Historical construction also consolidates with national approach which enforces common suffering from Nazis and Soviet Union. Relation towards Russia occupies a central role in this respect which aims to include Russia as partner in economic cooperation.

## **4.9.GERMANY**

### **4.9.1. German National level discourse**

One of the main factors in German construction is European notion. Kohli mentions that belonging to national identity is rather weak in Germany which is intrinsically related with high European focus (2000; 122). “Germany is a big fish in Europe. In the world, however, it’s quite a small fish. Even an economically strong country like Germany cannot compete with new players on its own. That’s why we need an economically strong and politically united Europe. That’s why we need more Europe and not less Europe” (Westerwelle G, 24.04.2012).

Historical construction of German identity reflects dealing with the past crimes committed by Nazi Regime. Thompson mentions that Germany has gone serious changes in this sense to become a civilian power. It is also mentioned by him that Germany’s main tool for foreign policy and part of identity is evolved into free trade and security (Thompson, 2001; 922). This is particularly characterized in relation towards crimes in the World War II. Merkel mentions that: “crimes committed by the Nazi regime robbed Germany of an important part of its culture and identity. Mindful of its past, Germany will always be under obligation to promote peace, freedom, and democracy in the world. This includes working against any form of anti-Semitism and racism” (Merkel,05. 05.2006) .

Holocaust posted a litmus test of national identity after reunification. It is evident that after reunification Third Reich memories are become contested matter by two German societies, which can be found in Western Germany as ideological struggle to legitimate political actions (Loewy, 2002; 4). Second main consideration in historical construction refers to the removal of Berlin wall which is considered as unnatural divide in Europe.”A few weeks ago we celebrated in Berlin what was truly a watershed event. The fall of the Berlin Wall on 9 November 1989 marked the culmination of the policy of East-West détente. As our then foreign minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher recently put it in Vienna, 1989 was a year in which the nations of Europe felt perhaps a closer bond than ever before in their history” (Hoyer, 01.12.2009).

Economic interest and construction occupies a central role in German discourses. It is particularly mentioned as new manner of influence and can be found inside the German construction. “When Germany’s economy is thriving, that’s also good news for German foreign policy. Germany’s influence in the world has nothing to do with the size of our armed forces. Our influence is rooted in astute diplomacy, humanitarian engagement and economic strength. That is why external economic promotion is a key concern of German foreign policy (Westerwelle, 24.04.2012). Economic interests play a key role in relation towards other countries. “Of course in our dealings with Russia the legacy of European history will always make itself felt. Central and Eastern European countries continue to have reservations vis-à-vis Russia’s rising economic power based on fossil fuels, because they have such a strategic value. Nevertheless it is important that we set our sights to the future. Russia and Europe are economically dependent on each other. Russia needs the income from fossil fuels exports to the EU and the EU needs secure and stable energy supplies from Russia”( Steinmeier, 01.02.2008)

German nation and state relationship is based on the Kulturnaation understanding. Waever mentions that “the original German nation differs from the political nation of the French lineage by its emphasis on culture, language and blood”(2001; 34). Additionally Waever argues after post-war era it is reversed with mentioning power state and non power state can be combined inside Kulturnation or it is possible to consider absence of the

Kulturation (2001; 35). In relation to nation state understanding Merkel mentions: “We are one country, one society. And people who come to us from the many different countries on this planet aren’t just immigrants either. Like everyone else, they too display variety and difference. All us of together make up the face of Germany, our identity in the globalized world of the 21st century – grounded in our Basic Law and the values it contains, our free democratic constitutional order, expressed in our language“ (Merkel 23.02.2012).

German nation-state relation reflects European nation understanding, but also it is important to mention that Germany posses more global view. Secondly, historical construction seeks to deal with past crimes committed by Nazi Regime and unification of Germany which is derived from unnatural divide of Europe. Also economic interests are quite important in this construction starting from inside of the European Union and cooperation with other countries seemed a vital factor. German nation-state relationship presents post-war Kulturation construction.

#### **4.9.2. Second and Third layer discourse**

German understanding towards Baltic Sea Region consists of Russian involvement into regional cooperation. Russia is perceived an important trade partner and major player to consider in the regional cooperation. While focusing on the CBSS and underlying importance of the organization Germany mainly draw attention to the cooperation with Russia. “The Baltic Sea is an inland sea within Europe, but not all the Baltic Sea states are EU members. The CBSS, in bringing together the EU and all the Baltic Sea states as equal partners, has taken on the role of a platform for cooperation. The CBSS-Secretariat now oversees projects within the EU’s Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region in fields such as maritime disaster relief, with Russia participating on equal terms” (Pieper, 18.06.2012). Also besides this understanding Germany tends to see region as a place of cooperation which involves political and economic interests. “The Baltic Sea connects us in a host of different ways. Close ties at the political, economic, cultural and personal level criss-cross the Region, bringing benefits to us all” (Westerwelle, 05.02.2012). Baltic Sea is also



perceived as sea of cooperation. “What has made the Baltic a sea of freedom is cooperation, not confrontation” (Westerwelle, 05.02.2012).

The cooperation of the federal states started in 1980s and connected with the ‘New Hansa’ idea. The involvement to the Baltic Sea Region strategy relatively occupied considerable attention from the federal states and less attention from the central government. “Right up to 1989 the Baltic was a sea divided by the Iron Curtain, a part of Europe increasingly marginalized by Cold War tensions. Not until the achievement of German unity and European unification was the Baltic transformed from a sea of confrontation to a sea of freedom and cooperation”( Westerwelle, 24.04.2012). Collapse of Soviet period is underlined as the sea returning to ‘the sea of cooperation’. “In the last two decades, the Baltic Sea region has completely changed: the former sea of confrontation, split by the Iron Curtain, has become a sea of freedom and opportunity. In this context the crucial role of the city of Gdansk, where the Solidarność movement emerged already in 1980, triggering off a process of increasing resistance against the Soviet-type regimes, has to be underlined”(Hoyers, 25.10.2011).

Approach towards Baltic Sea Region strategy from the German position is multifaceted, but most notably it includes the partnership in the level of the federal states. Three federal states participate in the Baltic Sea Region strategy are Hamburg, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and Schleswig-Holstein. “Germany’s northern Länder (federal states), and Schleswig-Holstein in particular, have from the start contributed in a major way to this revival of cooperation around the Baltic Sea. Here in Schleswig-Holstein it’s obvious in all kinds of ways that Baltic Sea cooperation is very much an affair of the heart”(Westerwelle,05.02.2012). According to the German point of view Baltic Sea Region is not considered as the key focus area of the European Union. Involvement of northern federal states is appreciated because it is perceived as involvement into the trade, economic engagement and collaboration to develop ongoing economic situation. “Ars Baltica, the CBSS cultural network based in Schleswig-Holstein, plans to increase its input into the EU’s Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and to work with the Northern Dimension’s

Partnership on Culture to ensure that culture achieves higher priority in Baltic Sea Region cooperation” (Almer, 27.08.2012).

One of the main factors in German view towards considers Baltic Sea Region is to build a bottom-up identity. Underlying the importance of the people in the region and building this relationship consist a vital part of the German consideration. “What makes the CBSS so unique is “bottom-up” cooperation, something that has done much to ensure that the Baltic Sea Region’s inhabitants identify with their region as well as its history and culture” (Almer, 27.08.2012). Involving youth generation in this cooperation is one of the important problems in this level. “Germany has attached great importance, too, to cooperation in the field of education and culture. We’ve been keen to involve the young generation in this work, our aim is to make the Baltic Sea Region a region of knowledge and education in the fullest sense.” (Almer, 27.08.2012). Central government’s attention towards region diminished with the not involving Russia to the Baltic Sea Region. Russia is perceived a key reason from the German perspectives to involve in the Baltic Sea Region. That is why central government of the Germany intended to establish a solid cooperation roots through Northern Dimension which guarantees the participation of Russia. “The CBSS has played a key role in this successful transformation process from the very beginning. Today, eight of the Baltic Sea States are members of the European Union; Norway and Iceland are part of the European Economic Area and Russia, including the Kaliningrad region, is more and more open to European cooperation. Moreover, numerous new fora for cooperation have emerged in the Baltic Sea Region and created a new dynamism for Baltic cooperation”(Hoyers, 25.10.2011).

Cooperation with Norway and Belarus is not perceived by the German authorities as a priority. Cooperation with Norway is ensured with the other bodies while Belarus is not a trustworthy partner. Out of three federal states Mecklenburg-Vorpommern is the most active. This is well connected with the idea that this state is a late comer and least improved German federal state, and it seeks to improve own infrastructure and attractiveness. “At our conference here today, we want to pick up where those discussions left off and work together on a shared concept of Baltic Sea tourism which does more than showcase one

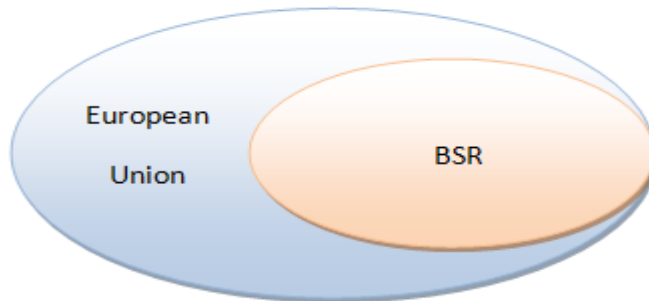
town like Rostock-Warnemünde or one region like the Curonian Lagoon. No, what we want to highlight is what unites us, what we all – from Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania via Gdansk, Kaliningrad, Kaunas and Tallinn to St Petersburg and Helsinki – have in common” (Pieper, 03.05.2012).

From the German construction it is possible to draw several outcomes. Germany is interested in Russian participation in regional cooperation. Baltic Sea Region is perceived a common place where this participation can be achieved. Additionally, in lack of the Russian participation German central government cease from active participation. Nation-state and Regional identity are regarded to Kulturnaation approach where it is possible to see the federal states involvement can be without central government.

## 5. CONCLUSION

This thesis aimed to research the Baltic Sea Region identity construction in political elites' discourse. In order to achieve this goal two research questions were posed. How the regional identity is constructed through the political elites discourse and what is the relationship between national and regional identity through the political elites discourse? To answer the first research question with the help of the methodological framework the discourse analysis gave the main denominators of the Baltic Sea Region identity.

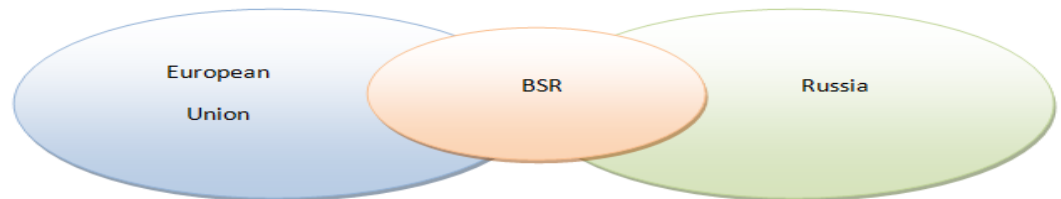
One of these denominators of regional identity is to create an understanding of the Baltic Sea Region. Out of the discourse there are two main outcomes: the European Union Region and a Region that involves all sea shore countries. As depicted in Figure 1, the first understanding refers to see the region inside of the European Union. This construct is a leading trend in Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Poland, Sweden, and Denmark.



**Figure 1**

As depicted in Figure 2, the second understanding towards region refers to an inclusiveness character which aims to see Baltic Sea Region as a 'bridge' between European Union and non-European Union members. This understanding poses an important role in Finland, Russia and Germany. Germany and Finland are in favor of Russia's participation in regional cooperation. Also, Russia seeks to participate in cooperation in economic terms. Since Russia and Germany are participating in the Baltic Sea Region it is also should be mentioned that these states are territorially larger in comparison with other Baltic Sea Region countries and therefore their participation in

macro region cooperation is mainly based on that their ‘regions’ have shores to the Baltic Sea.



**Figure 2**

Besides these two understandings as depicted in Figure 3, the Northern Dimension is another trend that is building a relationship with non- European Union member states. This trend is evident in Sweden, Germany, Lithuania and Finland. Finland is leading among the Baltic Sea Region countries to favor cooperation with Russia which is derived from good historical, economic and political relations. The Northern Dimension involves Nordic flavor in this cooperation and that is why many Nordic countries are in favor of sustaining this cooperation. Germany is also in a leading position in this sense. The German economic tool is perceived as a main foreign policy instrument in discourse and the involvement of Russia boosts interest in cooperation and while Russia’s absence is detrimental to the central government.



**Figure 3**

Several attachments are given to the Baltic Sea Region which is one of the denominators in understand the region. The main trend is to see Baltic Sea Region as 'European Union inland sea'. However this understanding and construction is particularly evident among European Union members, several countries are remaining out of this attachment. Countries which are a part of this attachment to the Baltic Sea mainly are Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and Denmark. Out of several attachments the most significant differences can be observed in the Finnish and Estonian case. A Latin word that described Mediterranean Sea 'Mare Nostrum' is used by two countries elites in different ways. However, 'Mare Nostrum' is translated as 'our sea' in the Finnish case, it is perceived as it is 'our sea' all countries that have a shore in Baltic Sea. In the Estonian case it is perceived as 'our sea' as in belonging to all of the European Union members. This depicts a distinction in the thoughts and construction of different understandings of the Baltic Sea Region identity. Besides this other attachments are also evident in consideration of the historical construction of the Baltic Sea. "Sea that divided us" is one of the main understandings in this sense. This is particularly related to the Cold War understanding and was prominent among European Union member states. While considering the Hanseatic League and modern consideration of the Baltic Sea, 'Sea that connects us' attachment becomes more evident and is an underlined trend among countries.

Russia determines its own economic interests and economic construction of the Baltic Sea Region. The Baltic States mainly view economic opportunities for the region within the European Union. This understanding is also fostered with gaining future cooperation with Nordic countries as well. Additionally, the view refers to the building of a high-tech and innovative region. This is also apparent to the periods that occurred before and after the European Union Eastern Enlargement and this trend continues to be important among these countries. Poland tends to play vital role in combining the Baltic and Black Sea. This understanding derives from the country's nation-state understanding. Polish construction of nation-state mainly refers to Central and Eastern European Country and the country's position to build a bridge between the Black and Baltic Sea, consolidating with nation-state understanding. Also, due to Nord Stream Poland was concerned with losing its

vantage point and bypassed this project. Polish construction underlines the importance of the energy projects to pass from their territory. Finland, Sweden, Denmark and Germany are keen on building further economic cooperation with Russia. Particularly, underlying the importance of the economic interests Finland and Germany are in favor of economic cooperation. Sweden and Denmark are also seeking to enlarge their economic presence in the region and Russia appears to be good market for cooperation. Russia seeks equal terms in cooperation with European Union countries and underlines the importance of the energy projects. The Baltic Sea is the way through for Russia which also underlines the importance of economic cooperation.

The historical construction of the region reflects cooperation and contradiction. One of the main denominators of the historical construction is the Hanseatic League. The Hanseatic League is perceived to be an ideal model of historical cooperation which can be achieved today. The Hanseatic League is highly regarded by most of the countries and the importance of this historical presentation is connected to this idea. Besides the Hanseatic League, Sweden emphasizes the glorious historical ties in the region with underlining towards the Vikings, Kalmar Union and Swedish empire. The Lithuanian discourse mainly reflects the understanding of the Grand Duchy of the Lithuania, underlying a multi ethnic state and way of cooperation. The Lithuanian position is mainly based on the feelings of history of the nation which was a crucial player. Apart from cooperation and links in the historical construction there are also contradictions among states. The more evident contradiction is in the Russian and Baltic states. The Baltic States understanding towards history is based on the seeking of reconciliation of World War II and the invasion of Soviet Union. The Russian understanding is important as it differs from the Baltic States which are related to liberating Europe from Nazi invaders. The Russian historical construction reflects the equality notion which is very crucial in the discourses. The presentation of the historical construction saving from the Nazis is perceived by the Russian side as forgotten and in some cases the surpassed with the crimes of the Soviet Union. This is the main issue in the historical presentation among these states. Finland poses relatively different approach towards history, somewhat romanticizing the resistance which gave them an advantageous

position during the Winter War. The Russian czarist regime was reflected as an important factor in the Finnish identity construction. Kaliningrad is a vital issue for the Russian and Lithuanian discourses. Denmark's consideration of the region is very close with that of Sweden, which emphasizes the unnatural divide of Europe and after the collapse of the Soviet Union the unification of the region. Polish historical construction underlined the importance of the Solidarnosc movement and the sufferings during the World War II. More prominent is that of Germany and its dealing with crimes committed by the Nazi regime. Overall there are several notions that can be considered as the triggering factor of economic cooperation and there are also several differences in the views towards historical construction.

Concern over the environment is the main common understanding of the all countries. This is a crucial issue in the discourse and a matter that needs to be solved. The relation towards the Baltic Sea involves the demand for its preservation for future generations. There are different approaches towards solving environmental issues but it is also evident that the alarming situation of the sea is a common goal for all the countries. Relations towards Nord Stream present a clear distinction of views. On one hand the Russian and Finnish discourse underlines the necessary measures taken before the project, which claims that there is no threat to the sea. On the other hand the Estonian and Latvian discourse presents a potential danger to nature by this project. From this outcome it is possible to say that environmental preservation is the only common trend in the discourse.

Based on the results it is possible to answer the second research question. The relationship between nation-states and regional identity consolidates with each other. Regional identity is an extension of the nation-states general constructions. The result for Latvia (page 31-32), Finland (page 36-37), Estonia (page 42), Sweden (page 47), Russia (page 53), Lithuania (page 58-59), Denmark (page 64), Poland (page 69) and Germany (page 74) have all been documented and presented.

Considering all of the denominators in the Baltic Sea Region identity construction provides insight to answer the research questions. The results suggest that the Baltic Sea



Region identity poses an umbrella function which includes several different understandings towards regional identity. Regional identity is sedimented in nation-state identities which can be found in deeper layers of discourse and affects the regional identity construction process. Out of all the constructions environmental concerns appears to be common issue in the discourses. In various views towards the Baltic Sea Region it is a slow process to build common collective identity in the region. Outcomes of this thesis may be considered as a sign of development in academic interests to foster political factors to more actively participate in the Baltic Sea Region Identity construction process.

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