

**Identity Questions in the Baltic States –
An Analysis of Estonia, Latvia and
Lithuania regarding their Attitudes
towards a European Identity**

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Mu isamaa, mu õnn ja rõõm,
kui kaunis oled sa!
Ei leia mina iial teal
see suure, laia ilma peal,
mis mul nii armas oleks ka,
kui sa, mu isamaa!



My native land, my joy and delight,
How fair thou art and bright!
And nowhere in the world all round
Can ever such a place be found
So well beloved as I love thee,
My native country dear!

Dievs, svētī Latviju,
Mūs' dārgo tēviju,
Svētī jel Latviju,
Ak, svētī jel to!



God bless Latvia,
Our beloved fatherland,
We beseech thee, bless Latvia,
Oh, we beseech thee to bless it!

Lietuva, Tėvyne mūsų,
Tu didvyrių žeme,
Iš praeities Tavo sūnūs
Te stiprybę semia.



Lithuania, our homeland,
Land of heroes!
Let your sons draw their strength
From our past experience

List of Abbreviations

DK	Don't Know
EE	Estonia (ISO 3166 code)
ESSR	Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IMF	International Monetary Fund
Ls	Latvian lats
Lt	Lithuanian litas
LT	Lithuania (ISO 3166 code)
LTL	Lithuanian litas (ISO 4217 code)
LV	Latvia (ISO 3166 code)
LVL	Latvian lats (ISO 4217 code)
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OSCE	Organization on Security and Cooperation in Europe
SSR	Soviet Socialist Republic
TEU	Treaty on European Union
UN	United Nations
US	United States of America
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

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1. Introduction

Due to their geographical closeness Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania are usually perceived to be similar. In the context of international relations there is often no distinction made between the three countries (Miniotaite, 2003). They are said to be the same and thus treated as one entity, as a whole: the ‘Baltic States’ (Kasekamp, 2011; Worldatlas, 2012). As this connection is made, people also presume that there is a ‘common Baltic identity’ which, outwardly, ties the three countries even more closely to each other. There is no doubt that Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania share a number of characteristics on a historical and cultural level. However, in order to understand to what extent these countries really are alike – especially when it comes to the perception of European ideas – this thesis deals with finding out whether citizens in the three countries recognize a *European identity* and if they perceive it similarly or differently.

1.1. Getting Acquainted with the Topic

The equal treatment is largely justified by pointing to certain historic developments and events of the 20th century which obviously connected the three countries. With the collapse of the great European empires they all started their sovereign existence at the same time, in 1918, but enjoyed only a short period of independence as they were incorporated into the Soviet Union in 1940 (Miniotaite, 2003; Encyclopædia Britannica, 2012). During the Second World War the Nazis succeeded in occupying the Baltic territory but the Soviets took over again in 1944, once more making Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania Soviet republics. Only in 1991 – after the collapse of the Soviet Union – the three countries finally managed to become sovereign nation-states again and, with that, also official members of the international community (Miniotaite, 2003; Encyclopædia Britannica, 2012). Considering their recent past, it is thus not surprising that Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania have similar pro-Western attitudes and are rather careful and suspicious regarding their relations with Russia (Miniotaite, 2003).

In addition, the way research on the Baltic countries is usually conducted reinforces the impression of dealing with one entity and not three single ones as well. For instance, if someone writes about one of them, he or she usually also mentions the other two, or – what happens even more often – scholars directly write about all three of them instead of treating them separately (e.g. see Miniotaite, 2003; Mälksoo, 2009). Hence, this represents another incentive to have a closer look at the actual differences between these countries.

However, despite these circumstances the Baltic States themselves stress their distinctiveness from each other as much as they stress their belonging to Europe (Miniotaite, 2003). With reservation they look at the often used phrase ‘common Baltic identity’ and try to distance themselves from it. As the British historian David Kirby (1998), who was cited by Miniotaite (2003), said ‘Balts’ and ‘Baltics’ are terms “with which none of these states are particularly happy to be associated” (Miniotaite, 2003,

p. 213). They frequently did act as a geopolitical unit and they did cooperate a lot but rivalry among them developed as well which was caused by economic and political competition. Estonia's current President and former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Toomas Hendrik Ilves, even said:

“What these countries do not share is a common identity. [...] It is time that we recognize that we are dealing with three very different countries in the Baltic area, with completely different affinities” (Miniotaite, 2003, p. 212).

So it seems as if Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania themselves prefer to be treated as distinct entities. That is why this study has a closer look at all of them focusing on one special aspect and their individual attitudes towards it: *European identity*.¹

In order to examine the chosen situation, several steps will be taken. After already providing some background information about the topic, it is crucial to state a clear research question. This will be done next with the intention of rounding off the introduction. I will then describe the theoretical framework and present the most important concepts of this study. Afterwards I will add a methodology section, clarifying the operationalization of the main concepts and clearing up the choice of the research design. All these parts are supposed to help the reader understand what this thesis is about and what it involves.

The next two chapters will compare both historical backgrounds and socio-economic features of the three Baltic countries. It is crucial to include this information as the reader needs to understand the countries and possible explanations for the perceptions of a *European identity* there. I will shortly mention what they share but mainly describe in which respects they differ. The main aim is thus to give the reader an idea of the countries' special features – thereby showing that they are not as similar as most people think they are.

As a next step I will turn to the actual description and analysis of the chosen data. Within the descriptive part, data from Eurobarometer on *national identity* and *European identity* will be depicted. The analyzing section will then explicate similarities and (more importantly) differences for both *national* and *European identity* perceptions. The assessment of these previously collected records will be the central point of this study. Last but not least I will try to find an explanation for the present status quo with respect to *European identity* by referring to differences in (a) history, (b) socio-economic characteristics, and (c) *national identity*. This is actually the main reason to include a description or rather an analysis of these three aspects in this thesis. Additionally, I will also take up

¹ Note: The main focus of this thesis lays indeed on *European identity* in the Baltic States. The concept of *national identity* will only be looked at in order to examine *European identity* in more detail and to establish a connection between these two concepts. It is thus right to emphasize the focus “on one special aspect”, as done above.

some arguments made by those scholars referred to within the theoretical framework and relate them to *European identity* in the Baltic States.

Finally, a conclusion will present the main results, the theoretical value of the thesis and limitations of the outcomes. All in all, attention will be drawn to the three countries' unique societies and cultures as well as their independence from each other despite their geographical closeness.

1.2. Research Question

A mainly descriptive research question will be used, as the aim of the thesis is to describe and draw attention to actual differences² between the citizens of the three Baltic States regarding their perception of *European identity* in the year 2010. Hence, the actual research question will be as follows:

To what extent do citizens' perceptions of a European identity differ in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in the year 2010 with respect to each other?

In addition to this main research question, I will also roughly try to explain the differences detected, as this appears particularly interesting. Hence, some possible broad explanations for the variations regarding *European identity* in the three countries will also be proposed (though only descriptively) by considering the differences in (a) history, (b) socio-economic characteristics, and (c) *national identity*. These arguments will not be tested empirically but it will be tried to relate differences in those three aspects (history, socio-economic characteristics and *national identity*) to *European identity*. Therefore, some sub-questions will also be worked with in order to be better able to structure the thesis and to clarify the line of argumentation:

- *Which historical and socio-economic differences between Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania can be identified?*
- *To what extent do citizens' perceptions of national identities differ in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in 2010 compared to each other?*
- *Can differences in national identities as well as historical and socio-economic differences be argued to explain the variation in European identity?*

These questions will probably help finding an explanation for the circumstances discovered. It is thus important to not only look at *European identity* as such, but also at *national identities* and other factors (e.g. history or socio-economic characteristics) which may influence citizens' perceptions of a *European identity*. In this respect, differences will be pointed out as well.

² Note: Looking at differences obviously also includes looking at similarities, though.

2. Theoretical Framework

This section explains the theoretical foundation which the analysis is based on. The main concept used in this study is *European identity*. In the following, I will describe what this notion actually implies. However, in order to understand *European identity* properly, we initially need to clarify what is meant by *European* (or *Europe* respectively) within the scope of this thesis. Furthermore, *identity* as such and also *national identity* need to be explained shortly, as *European identity* rests on these ideas. Hence, there will be a rough examination of the common sociological notion of *identity* to reveal its resources for a more extensive comprehension of both *national* and, finally, *European identity*.

Let us first quickly have a look at the term *European* (as derived from *Europe*), though.

Defining *Europe* and *European* respectively is more complicated than, for instance, describing what Baltic or the term Baltic States stands for. In the simplest way *Europe* is referred to as a continent composed of various nation-states. Certain values and habits, but above all different national features like languages, literatures and histories have formed the contemporary territory *Europe* (Habermas & Derrida, 2003). However, it is hard to define borders for this *Europe*. It is not exactly clear where Asia geographically ends and where *Europe* begins (Guibernau, 2011; Haller & Ressler, 2006; Moes, 2008). Delanty (2005) states plainly that there is “no country called Europe” and that “Europe does not exist as a subject in the sense of a subject that has sovereign power” (p. 11). Due to this difficult definition, many people just refer to (or even really mean) the European Union (EU) when talking about *Europe*. They simply “identify Europe with the EU” and devote everything “European” to the EU (Guibernau, 2011, p. 31-32). As Delanty (2005) puts it, “to be European today is to identify with the EU” (p. 15). The EU itself emphasizes its unique character as a community consisting of diverse countries which together take up a great part of the continent *Europe*. Moreover, it stresses the fact of being based on “the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights” (Art. 2 TEU).

Within the framework of this study, *Europe* and *European* respectively will also merely refer to features connected to the economic and political association known as European Union. By following that common approach it becomes much easier to frame *Europe* than it would be by taking over one of those vague geographical definitions.

Having defined the first part of the main concept, we can now move on to the next step. Although a number of publications on *identity* exist, Timothy J. Owens provides a clear overview and definition of this concept. He describes *identity* as “categories people use to specify who they are and to locate themselves relative to other people” (Owens, 2003, p. 207). This always includes thinking about distinctiveness (I am different and thus not like them) and sameness (I am the same and thus like them) of oneself (Owens, 2003; see also Moes, 2008; Habermas & Derrida, 2003). Moreover, Owens

(2003) distinguishes between three major versions of *identity*: personal, social and collective identity. Personal identities are based on characteristics attributed to an individual, whereas both social and collective identities are based on characteristics attributed to a group (Owens, 2003; see also Kohli, 2000; Kaina & Karolewski, 2009). To be more precise, personal identities emphasize individual uniqueness and are not only attached to personal traits or characteristics but also internalized by them. Social identities, however, are traced back to “the groups, statuses, and categories to which individuals are socially recognized as belonging” (Owens, 2003, p. 224). A collective identity, in turn, is rather built on demographic categories (Owens, 2003; see also Kohli, 2000). Polletta and Jasper (2001), who are cited by Owens (2003), simply describe it as an “individual’s cognitive, moral, and emotional connection with a broader community, category, practice, or institution” and a “perception of a shared status or relation” (p. 227). Interaction is thus an important feature and helps uncovering one’s collective identity.

For the purpose of this study, I will stay with the approach of Owens (2003). *Identity* will thus be understood as a way (or even instrument) to categorize people and compare them to each other. The three different versions of *identity* (personal, social and collective identity) will also be worked with as both *national* and *European identity* can easily be categorized as such (as we will see below).

Turning to the next central aspect, one has to note that there are different concepts of *national identity* in Europe as there are, for instance, various forms of nation-states or beliefs. Naturally a lot of literature deals with this notion as well, so I will only provide a rough overview of the most important characteristics in the following.

Jeroen Moes (2008) refers to *national identity* as a feeling or awareness of belonging to the same society without caring too much about local differences, and Martin Kohli (2000) categorizes it as a form of collective identity based on a reference to a certain territory. Max Haller and Regina Ressler (2006) go a bit further and make a distinction between three components of *national identity*: “1) a self-image, a consciousness of the specific characteristics of one’s own nation, its strengths and weaknesses compared to others [...]; 2) a certain kind of love for and attachment to the nation, including national pride and shame [...]; 3) the readiness to act on behalf of the nation and to support political measures to strengthen and protect the nation [...].” (p. 821).³ Guibernau (2011) stresses this connection with the nation-state as well. He explains “that identification with the nation-state emerged only after a considerably long period involving the linguistic and cultural homogenization of citizens, the fighting of wars, taxation, the establishment of citizenship rights and duties, the construction of a certain image of the nation endowed with its own symbols and rituals (instilled by the state), the existence of common enemies, and the progressive merging of national education and media systems” (p. 36). However, it is interesting to note that in contrast to the widespread assumption that becoming

³ For a similar distinction see also Haller’s (2000) review article on Therborn’s (1995) book *European Modernity and Beyond* (Haller, 2000, p. 539).

more European simultaneously implies becoming less national, Moes (2008) in the end of his analysis claims the opposite: a strong *national identity* does not prevent a strong *European identity* from developing but rather encourages it.

In order to keep it simple, *national identity* in this study implies belonging to a certain nation-state and being aware of this fact. With this it is indeed categorized as a type of collective identity. This conceptualization thus mainly refers to Moes (2008) and Kohli (2000).

To finally identify the whole concept is quite difficult. There are diverse views on *European identity* and scholars detected different dimensions of this notion; there is thus no universal characterization. Since a large body of literature on *European identity* exists, it has to be noted that not every researcher can be taken into account. Therefore, just a few of them will be focused on.

As shown above, the idea of (*political*) *identity* is usually connected with the nation-state (Moes, 2008; Guibernau, 2011). Guibernau (2011) notes that one cannot expect similar features to be present when one analyzes *European identity* – after all, the EU is everything but a nation-state. A *European identity* rather relies on the collective awareness of belonging to an economic and political union which is largely characterized by values like “capitalism, social welfare, liberal democracy, respect for human rights, freedom and the rule of law, prosperity and progress” (Guibernau, 2011, p. 40). Hence, according to Guibernau (2011) “European identity [...] is a top-down institutionally generated identity” (p. 37) and supposed to encourage loyalty to the EU. That is why he calls it “an emergent ‘non-emotional’ identity” which is not comparable to *national identities* creating strong feelings for a certain territory (Guibernau, 2011, p. 41).

Grazina Miniotaite (2003) uses a different approach. She explains (*political*) *identity* construction directly within the context of European integration and conceptualizes it “as a dichotomy of essentialism and constructivism” (Miniotaite, 2003, p. 209). The first defines *identity* as “essential, fundamental, unitary and unchanging”, while the latter underlines that *identity* develops “in political and cultural processes by means of language, emotions and symbols” (Miniotaite, 2003, pp. 209-210). Miniotaite (2003) also emphasizes that a shared *identity* relies on “the capacity of the group to sustain the story of belonging and solidarity” (p. 210). Generally, though, she states that there is no set *European identity*.

Delanty (2005), in turn, notifies an “increase in dual identities” and clearly says that “Europeans share with all other peoples multiple identities” (p. 13). This is particularly important as it shows that *European identity* is by no means supposed to replace *national identities* but simply runs alongside. Just as Miniotaite (2003) he stresses that there is no general *European identity* which merely incorporates all European peoples, distinct as they are. According to his analysis, being European is less connected to culture or politics but more to a cosmopolitan view on the world (Delanty, 2005; see also Haller & Ressler, 2006; Habermas & Derrida, 2003). This means that inhabitants of one country include inhabitants of another one in a common phrase of ‘us’, which implies the “recognition of

living in a world of diversity and a belief in the fundamental virtue of embracing positively the values of the other” (Delanty, 2005, p. 18). Essential is also his finding concerning the link between *identity* and the EU: “the more the EU appears to exist as a real entity, the more identification with it occurs” (Delanty, 2005, p.16).

Another scholar central for the present study is Willfried Spohn. In his article (2005) he describes *identity* as “the mode and extent of shared identifications” (p. 2). With regard to a *European identity* he identifies two fundamental meanings: On the one hand, there is the “attachment, loyalty and identification with the European integration” and on the other hand, there is a “broader cultural and civilizational identity of Europe” (Spohn, 2005, p. 3). Therefore he distinguishes between “a European civilizational identity and a European integrational identity” (p. 3). For the very special case of a shared *European identity* he suggests seeing it as a “triadic model” composed of “a European civilizational identity, a European integrational identity and a European identity anchored in national identities” (Spohn, 2005, p. 3). Moreover, he explains that Europeanization transforms *national identities* but definitely does not dissolve them. In the end, he also underlines that a collective *European identity* is not existent (Spohn, 2005).

Spohn’s argumentation is particularly interesting for the present study and his resolution to make a clear distinction between different dimensions of *European identity* can be found with other scholars as well, for instance Jeroen Moes (2008). As *European identity* is quite an important and topical issue, Moes (2008) distinguishes “between a ‘civic’ and a ‘cultural’ component of European political identity” (Moes, 2008, p. 5). He takes this idea from Michael Bruter (2003, 2004) whom he cites in his article. Civic identity is defined by Bruter as “the degree to which [people] feel that they are citizens of a European political system, whose rules, laws, and rights have an influence on their daily life” (Moes, 2008, p. 5). Cultural identity, though, implies the “perception that fellow Europeans are closer to [oneself] than non-Europeans [...] regardless of the nature of the political system” (Moes, 2008, pp. 5-6). The civic module⁴ can thus basically be understood as support for the EU; the cultural part⁵ is rather built up by a feeling of belonging to Europe, mainly created by shared symbols and images. In general, Moes argues that *European identity* may not be equated with *nation-state identity* due to their totally different origins (Moes, 2008).

Within the framework of this study, *European identity* is defined as that collective consciousness of belonging to the EU which is mentioned by Guibernau (2011). In this sense it is very close to the conceptualization of *national identity*, i.e. the awareness of belonging to a certain nation-state. Consequently, it can be categorized as a type of collective identity as well. The distinctions made by Spohn (2005) and Moes (2008) will also be kept in mind, since both civilizational/civic and integrational/cultural modules will be used for an actual operationalization of *identity* (cf. section 3. about the methodology of this thesis).

⁴ Spohn (2005) calls this ‘civilizational identity’.

⁵ This is mentioned as ‘integrational identity’ by Spohn (2005).

All features presented above underline a rather broad character and different dimensions of both *national* and *European identity*. However, there are evidently some shared ideas on the topic within the literature, leading to several hypotheses (H) for the upcoming research:

- H₁: Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians differ in terms of a *European identity* as there are different ways to perceive this concept.⁶
- H₂: The three countries differ in terms of *national identity* as each nation-state has its very own history and socio-economic characteristics (which, in turn, influence *national identity*).
- H₃: These differences in history, socio-economic characteristics and *national identity* may explain the detected differences regarding a *European identity*.
- H₄: Identities are multiple and overlapping, so a stronger *national identity* also encourages a stronger *European identity* to develop.⁷

In principle, all these assumptions are based on the argumentation of those scholars brought up above. Noticeably, they are also closely related to (or even derived from) the main research question and its official sub-questions.

3. Methodology

The following section explains the research methods used in this study. I will elaborate the chosen research design and explain the case selection. Also the operationalization of the main concepts (*national* and *European identity*) will be dealt with as well as the ways of data collection and data analysis. In this context, I will show how *European identity* (and also *national identity*) can be measured and which items will be used in order to cover it.

3.1. Research Design

For answering the research question(s) a cross-sectional study has been chosen. This implies that findings are based on observations representing a single point in time (Babbie, 2007). Carrying out this particular type of study will help to obtain in-depth knowledge about the three countries, which is

⁶ Although somehow sharing a common history and/or socio-economic characteristics, the three countries still shape their very own perception of a European identity. European identities in the Baltic States can thus look different; there is not one single version.

⁷ Note: As identities are overlapping the countries can in fact have strong national identities that allow them to feel distinct from their neighbours while at the same time their European identities are also far developed (pro-European).

the main intention of this thesis. Moreover, by sticking to John Stuart Mill's most similar approach⁸ I will have a look at how similar countries (the three Baltic States) differ in their respective *European identity* (Seawright & Gerring, 2008). The idea is that this will shed light on the differences that still exist between the countries, which, in turn, will allow explaining the variations regarding the dependent variable (*European identity*).

As the aim of the thesis is to describe and draw attention to differences between the three Baltic States regarding their perception of *European identity*, it is mainly a descriptive study. Due to the fact that I will also roughly try to find some possible explanations for these differences, it contains some explanatory features as well. Threats to both internal and external validity do not harm the chosen research design.

3.2. Case Selection

Individuals in three nations were picked, i.e. citizens of the Baltic countries of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. By having a look at the people and their perception of a *European identity*, I will examine the three countries and finally compare them with each other. Why exactly these cases were chosen has already been hinted at in the introduction (cf. section 1 of this thesis) but it is still important to clarify it once more directly. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania are said to be the same and thus often treated as one entity. This treatment is justified because there are certain commonly known historic developments which obviously connected the three states and a number of similar attitudes towards certain matters (Miniotaite, 2003). Due to this equating it appears particularly interesting to analyze the three countries separately and then point to actual differences regarding their perception of a *European identity*. In addition, historic circumstances (particularly the history of occupations) and certain socio-economic characteristics (for example that ethnic minorities are prevailing in all three nations) make these cases unique.

Furthermore, for this cross-sectional study one point in time was chosen, that is one particular year. As this thesis is supposed to study the state of affairs after those countries joined the European Union, recent data from sources not older than a couple of years need to be used. 2010 appears as a solid choice for the year of investigation because back then 6 years had passed after accession and all countries have had time to adapt to the new situation.⁹

3.3. Operationalization and Data Collection

As shown in the theoretical framework, there are various ways to understand *European identity*. The notion of *identity* is usually used to categorize people and compare them to each other. Accordingly,

⁸ In the most similar systems' design, you merely compare countries which are (or appear) very similar but differ regarding the dependent variable (in this case European identity, as I want to show).

⁹ For a detailed discussion of the year chosen, please have a look at section 8.3 about the limitations of the findings.

national identity regards the awareness of belonging to a certain nation-state, while *European identity* refers to the collective consciousness of belonging to the EU (cf. section 2). But how can *identity* (both *national* and *European*) actually be measured? For the purpose of this research, the concept(s) will be described by several factors based on information found in both the previously mentioned articles and two versions of Eurobarometer, i.e. the normal 2010 spring version (*Eurobarometer 73*) and a special 2010 spring version on New Europeans (*Eurobarometer 73.3*) – an approach which especially follows the lines of argumentation expressed by Spohn (2005) and Moes (2008). Moreover, I will stick even closer to these two scholars by also adopting their suggestion to distinguish between *civilizational/civic* components of *identity* on the one hand and *integrational/cultural* modules on the other hand. To be more precise, factors describing a *national* or *European civic identity* are interest in national/European politics, trust in the national government/the EU and support for EU membership. Factors describing a *national* or *European cultural identity*, however, are attachment to the country/the EU and the personal importance of being European. The following table should make the chosen operationalization clearer:

Figure 1: Operationalization of National and European Identity

Concepts	Factors
<i>National civic identity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ interest in national politics¹⁰ ▪ trust in the national government¹¹
<i>National cultural identity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ attachment to the country¹²
<i>European civic identity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ interest in European politics¹³ ▪ trust in the EU¹⁴ ▪ support for EU membership¹⁵
<i>European cultural identity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ attachment to the EU¹⁶ ▪ personal importance of being European¹⁷

In general, data have been collected from official documents and articles dealing with *identity* questions in the Baltic States. To be more precise, several academic articles on the broad issue of *identity* were used in order to define the main concept, to be better able to understand the whole topic,

¹⁰ Eurobarometer 73.4, question QA2 (European Commission, 2010c)

¹¹ Eurobarometer 73.4, question QA14 (European Commission, 2010c)

¹² Eurobarometer 73.3, question QB13 (European Commission, 2010a)

¹³ Eurobarometer 73.4, question QA2 (European Commission, 2010c)

¹⁴ Eurobarometer 73.4, question QA14 (European Commission, 2010c)

¹⁵ Eurobarometer 73.4, question QA9a (European Commission, 2010c)

¹⁶ Eurobarometer 73.3, question QB13 (European Commission, 2010a)

¹⁷ Eurobarometer 73.3, question QB3 (European Commission, 2010a)

and to support the analysis part by contributing important information to it. Eurobarometer will serve as a main source for concrete data relating to citizens of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. It is important to mention that the individual level data of Eurobarometer will be used so that individuals of one country can directly be compared with those of another one.

Hence, concerning the type of data I will use both qualitative and quantitative records. Therefore, an existing dataset will be accessed (Eurobarometer).

3.4. Data Analysis

Data analysis is based on the original Eurobarometer data collected from people in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. It involves some statistical tests and the usage of the programme SPSS (*IBM SPSS Statistics 20*), since the raw data of Eurobarometer will be used as the primary source of data and this requires an independent analysis. The collected data will include information about citizens' different perceptions of a *European identity*, recorded by certain factors chosen (see figure 1 above). With the help of SPSS, independent tables will be created so that findings can easily be compared with each other and evaluated in order to find differences between the single countries. After the analysis of differences, I will also roughly try to provide possible explanations for these as it appears particularly interesting. This will be done by considering the differences in (a) history, (b) socio-economic characteristics, and (c) *national identity*.

4. History of the Baltic States Compared

The following chapter deals with similarities and differences with respect to the three Baltic States' past. The introduction (section 1 of this thesis) already referred to common events of the 20th century which obviously linked the three countries and thus support the general idea of dealing with one entity. However, when we have a closer look at them, certain dissimilarities can be discovered as well. Andres Kasekamp (2011) explained that "a comparative approach to the histories of the three countries is a worthwhile exercise in that it provides greater insight into the histories of the three", and I can only agree. I will therefore provide a comparison of the three countries' pasts which will emphasize historical differences between Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.¹⁸ On the one hand, this will be done because the reader needs to get an impression of the countries and their features. On the other hand, by considering the differences in history, this section will later on help finding some possible broad explanations for the variations regarding *European identity* in the three nation-states. In order to

¹⁸ For a detailed overview of the most important historical developments of each Baltic State since the Middle Ages, please have a look at the annex (section 9 of this thesis).

secure a clear structure and an appropriate overview, I will chronologically go through medieval and modern history.

All three countries were independent in the beginning of their respective history. During the 11th century Latvia was then occupied by Germans, while Estonia was invaded by both the Danish and the Germans during the 13th century (U.S. Department of State, 2011; Encyclopædia Britannica, 2012). Lithuania, however, formed its own autonomous state during that time: the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was recognized by other nations and even regarded as an “equal member” of the political community (The Official Gateway of Lithuania, 2012). At the end of the 14th century it finally became the largest state in Europe (CIA – The World Factbook, 2012b).

In the course of time, Estonia and Latvia experienced further invasions e.g. by Sweden, whereas Lithuania remained a key player in European politics by developing into the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (Welcome to Estonia, 2012f ; City Paper, 2012; CIA – The World Factbook, 2012c). With the end of the Great Northern War (1700-1721) Estonia and Latvia were directly occupied by Russia (Welcome to Estonia, 2012f; U.S. Department of State, 2011). Lithuania could develop an own constitution in 1791, though, which even was the first one in the whole of Europe (The Official Gateway of Lithuania, 2012). Only afterwards it became a part of tsarist Russia – more than 70 years later than the other two. So while Estonia and Latvia were ruled by other powers from the 16th till the 18th century, Lithuania was already an integral part of Western Europe and an independent nation-state.

The collapse of the German and Russian empires during the First World War then allowed all of them to walk on similar roads to (in the case of Lithuania regained) independence (Encyclopædia Britannica, 2012). They all had become sovereign nations by 1920 and had been accepted as members of the international community as well as the League of Nations by 1922 (Encyclopædia Britannica, 2012).

Though trying to stay neutral during World War II, all Baltic States were shortly ruled by the German Nazis and then officially incorporated into the USSR (Welcome to Estonia, 2012f; U.S. Department of State, 2011; In Your Pocket, 2012). According to the Encyclopædia Britannica (2012), wartime losses in the Baltic countries belonged to the greatest in Europe. Additionally, they suffered numerous mass deportations during the centuries afterwards, when being Soviet republics (Welcome to Estonia, 2012f; The Latvian Institute, 2012a; The Official Gateway of Lithuania, 2012a).

Around 1960, Latvians tried to get rid of Soviet structures and intended to “nativize” the elites but their attempt achieved the opposite. Native elements were deleted or destroyed within the political and administrative apparatus. Consequently, Latvia became more Russian than Estonia and Lithuania (Encyclopædia Britannica, 2012).

Similar in all Baltic States were also the protests, reform movements and demonstrations between the late 1980s and early 1990s. Lithuania was finally the first former Soviet republic to claim

independence in 1990, quickly followed by Estonia and Latvia in 1991 (European Union, 2012c; CIA – The World Factbook, 2012a; The Latvian Institute, 2012a). Nowadays, all of them are members of important organizations and associations. That the Baltic States joined especially NATO and the EU is referred to as the “return to Europe” by Miniotaite (2003, p. 211). She does not only regard this as an attempt from the Baltics to distance themselves from the East (mainly Russia, and in Lithuania’s case also from Poland) but also from each other, as each of them is claiming to be completely self-governing and independent finally (Miniotaite, 2003). This distinctiveness is supported by the fact that they focus on slightly different aspects, though being part of the same organizations. Estonia, for instance, is as the only Baltic State member of the eurozone, Latvia appears to be involved in various NATO missions, and Lithuania serves as donor of aid for a range of countries (Welcome to Estonia, 2012f; U.S. Department of State, 2011; The Official Gateway of Lithuania, 2012a). Hence, all found their very own ways despite their geographical closeness; they are somehow similar but still different.

To put it in a nutshell, this comparison helped to show similarities but also several differences in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania’s past. Estonia and Latvia developed quite similarly; both their statehoods began only in the 20th century. A Lithuanian state, however, developed earlier (already during the 13th century) and much more autonomously. Primarily the common Soviet past connected the three entities. In this respect, Kasekamp (2011) made an interesting statement: “It’s only really as a result of the Second World War that the three Baltic States become ingrained in the public mind, in particular when the Baltic States cooperated closely in their drive for independence. So the image of the three working together, having a common cause, is really from the days of the Singing Revolution against Soviet domination.” This proves to be right when we keep in mind the facts just mentioned.

Generally, when studying the Baltic States one can easily recognize that they experienced a history of occupations and all of them suffered from being overrun and overruled.

Nevertheless, it is important to understand that even though Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania are often put in the same basket with respect to history, they still differ and have to be viewed as three single autonomous nation-states. So how can we expect the revealed differences to affect *identity* ultimately? The following table will provide an overview of exactly this, indicating possible effects of the variation between the Baltic countries regarding their past

Figure 2: Overview of Historical Differences and their Possible Effects

Period	Differences	Expected effects
initial era of independence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Latvia occupied by the Germans during the 11th century Estonia invaded by the Danish and the Germans during the 13th century Lithuania developed as an autonomous state, became a key player in European politics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lithuanians might appear more independent, more interested in national matters and more attached to their country as they experienced a longer period of independence before finally being occupied another possibility: Estonians and Latvians feel more attached to their

		countries as they always had to fight for them or against their oppression respectively
struggling with invaders between the 16th and 18th century	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estonia and Latvia continually ruled by other powers, especially influenced by Northern Europe, finally occupied by tsarist Russia • Lithuania an integral part of Western Europe, established an own constitution, connected to Poland, much later became a part of tsarist Russia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lithuanians should be somewhat more attached to the EU because of their early ties with Western Europe
Soviet Republics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Latvia tried to get rid of Soviet structures but failed and became even more Russian as a consequence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Latvians may show less support for EU membership and less trust in the EU because this again means giving up parts of their sovereignty
regaining sovereignty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lithuania gained independence as the first of the three in 1990 • Estonia and Latvia followed in 1991 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • trust in the national government should be high in Lithuania as they were the first to declare their independence
appearance in international politics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estonia is a member of the eurozone • Latvia is involved in many NATO missions • Lithuania hugely serves as aid donor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estonia may show a high interest in European matters as they have the euro • for Estonians being European should be more important

5. Socio-economic Characteristics of the Baltic States Compared

After having dealt with the three Baltic countries' historical background, I will now shortly deal with the most important¹⁹ socio-economic features of the same and compare them with each other.²⁰ In this way differences also regarding socio-economic characteristics will be identified. This will again be done because of two reasons: firstly, the reader needs to get an impression of the countries' societies and economies; and secondly, by considering the differences regarding socio-economic characteristics, this chapter will in the end probably help to find additional broad explanations for the variations regarding *European identity* in the three nation-states. Let us thus have a look at similarities and differences.

One of the most important characteristics of especially Latvia but also Estonia regards the representation of ethnic minorities. Latvia is the most ethnically diverse country of the three of them, as only 59.3% of all people there are Latvians. They are joined by a lot of Russians (27.8%) and

¹⁹ Note from the author: Of course, I mean "most important" for my intended analysis.

²⁰ For a detailed overview of the most important socio-economic characteristics of each Baltic State, please have a look at the annex (section 9 of this thesis).

several other minorities (CIA – The World Factbook, 2012b). Primarily due to this high minority proportion (and certain historical developments in the 1960s, cf. section 4 or Encyclopædia Britannica, 2012) it can be said that Latvia still experiences much of Russia or Russian influence within its territory – at least more than its two Baltic neighbours. Also in Estonia many Russians can be found (25%) but all in all Estonians still make up a higher percentage (68%) of the entire Estonian population than Latvians do in their country (Welcome to Estonia, 2012e). Lithuania is the most homogeneous one of the three Baltic States and around 84% of the population are ethnical Lithuanians (European Union, 2012c). That is why problems with minority groupings are rather associated with Latvia and Estonia but not really with Lithuania (Grazina Miniotaite, 2003).

These ethnic divisions also explain the languages which are spoken alongside the respective national one. Along with Russian also German and some Scandinavian idioms are quite common in Estonia and Latvia, while people in Lithuania speak Russian or Polish (even though it is the country where the national language is preserved the most). English is of course present in all three (Welcome to Estonia, 2012e; The Latvian Institute, 2012c; CIA – The World Factbook, 2012c).

In terms of the political organization the Baltic States are organized similarly. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania are all three parliamentary democracies (Welcome to Estonia, 2012e; The Latvian Institute, 2012c; The Official Gateway of Lithuania, 2012c). The countries' independence days even have the same background, i.e. celebrating independence from the Soviet Union and date back to 1918. In contrast to Estonia, however, Latvia and Lithuania still have their own national currencies (the lats and the litas), while Estonia introduced the euro in 2011 (The Latvian Institute, 2012c; The Official Gateway of Lithuania, 2012c; CIA – The World Factbook, 2012a).

Regarding their economic development one can generally say that all Baltic States have fairly high GDP growth rates and are among the fastest growing economies in the EU nowadays (CIA – The World Factbook, 2012a; CIA – The World Factbook, 2012c). It is obvious that most people in all three nation-states work in the economic sector of services (75.6% of Estonians, 67.2% of Latvians and 56.9% of Lithuanians) (CIA – The World Factbook, 2012a; CIA – The World Factbook, 2012b; CIA – The World Factbook, 2012c). Nevertheless, Latvia and Lithuania face slightly higher unemployment rates than Estonia. In the northernmost Baltic State the unemployment rate was around 12.5% in 2011, while it was around 15.4% in both other countries in the same year. In Lithuania it is even expected to remain rather high in the upcoming years; in Estonia and Latvia is it on a downward trend fortunately (even though this is more obvious in Estonia than in Latvia) (CIA – The World Factbook, 2012a; CIA – The World Factbook, 2012b; CIA – The World Factbook, 2012c).

All these things considered one needs to realize that also regarding these characteristics we are dealing with three different entities. Although they are often viewed as one socio-economic system, Andres Kasekamp (2011) is right when emphasizing that “they are also competitors, producing similar things for similar markets and vying for the same foreign investments”.

Keeping this in mind we again have to ask ourselves how we can expect the revealed differences to affect *identity* ultimately. The following table will provide another overview, this time indicating possible effects of the variation between the Baltic countries regarding socio-economic characteristics.

Figure 3: Overview of Socio-economic Differences and their Possible Effects

Feature	Differences	Expected effects
ethnic division	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Latvia is the most ethnically diverse country, Russians represent the biggest minority Russians are also the biggest minority in Estonia but generally Estonians still make up a higher percentage of the entire population than Latvians do in Latvia Lithuania is the most homogeneous state 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Estonians and Latvians may show less attachment to their country as many of them have different roots Estonians and Latvians could be less interested in national matters because of the same reason as Lithuanians
foreign languages spoken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Russian, German and Scandinavian idioms common in Estonia and Latvia Russian and Polish common in Lithuania 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Estonians and Latvians may show less attachment to their country; languages connect and there are some foreign languages prevailing Lithuanians could be most interested in national matters; in Latvia and Estonia not everyone might understand/speak the national language (many Russians)
currency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Estonia has the euro Latvia and Lithuania still have their own national currencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Estonians should be very interested in European politics; they need to trust the EU to quite a large extent; they should support EU membership; they could feel more attached to the EU
unemployment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Estonia has the smallest unemployment rate in Estonia and Latvia unemployment is on a downward trend in Lithuania unemployment is expected to remain rather high 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Estonians should trust the EU as unemployment is declining; they should support EU membership in Lithuania trust in the EU might be lower

6. Perceptions of Identity in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania

After having pointed to differences between the three Baltic States regarding history as well as socio-economic features, we will now turn to the data on *identity*. The following chapter will simply describe information about the Baltic citizens found in two spring versions of Eurobarometer, i.e. *Eurobarometer 73.3* and *Eurobarometer 73.4*. As already explained in the section 3, I will use the individual level data so that inhabitants of one country can directly be compared with those of another. The first part of this chapter will deal with data on *national identity*, while the second part will depict data on *European identity*. Just to keep in mind, *national identity* regards the **awareness of belonging to a certain nation-state**, while *European identity* refers to the **collective consciousness of belonging to the EU** (cf. section 2). Following the lines of argumentation expressed by Spohn (2005) and Moes (2008), I will work with several factors in order to describe these concepts.

Before we deal with the actual data, though, let us just quickly have a look at the **sample**. The following two frequency tables provide an overview of the number and distribution of citizens interviewed in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

Figure 4: Sample Eurobarometer 73.3

Statistics				
NATION (SAMPLE)				
N	Valid	3021		
	Missing	0		

NATION (SAMPLE)				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid ESTONIA	1000	33,1	33,1	33,1
LATVIA	1005	33,3	33,3	66,4
LITHUANIA	1016	33,6	33,6	100,0
Total	3021	100,0	100,0	

Figure 5: Sample Eurobarometer 73.4

Statistics				
NATION (SAMPLE)				
N	Valid	3022		
	Missing	0		

NATION (SAMPLE)				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid ESTONIA	1000	33,1	33,1	33,1
LATVIA	1003	33,2	33,2	66,3
LITHUANIA	1019	33,7	33,7	100,0
Total	3022	100,0	100,0	

In both Eurobarometer versions around 1000 people from each Baltic State participated. Values for the three of them are therefore easily comparable.

6.1. Data on National Identity

Since the Baltic States are commonly perceived to be similar and treated as one entity, a ‘common Baltic identity’ is also often claimed to be present. According to Miniotaite (2003), however, such a thing does not exist as “being ‘Baltic’ is not a significant part of the national identities of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania” (p. 212). In the following, we will therefore have a look at the three of them and their specific characteristics separately. In order to recall how the concept of *national identity* was operationalized, here is an overview again (cf. section 3).

Figure 6: Operationalization of National Identity

Concept	Factors
<i>National civic identity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ interest in national politics ▪ trust in the national government
<i>National cultural identity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ attachment to the country

Let us examine these factors one by one in exactly that stated order.

To begin with the first one, people were asked how often they discussed national political matters, thus indicating their **interest in national politics**²¹. The following cross-tabulation shows which kinds of answers were given in each of the three countries.

²¹ Eurobarometer 73.4, question QA2: “When you get together with friends or relatives, would you say you discuss frequently, occasionally or never about national political matters?” Answering categories: “frequently”, “occasionally”, “never” and “don’t know” (European Commission, 2010c).

Figure 7: Cross-tabulation Nation – Interest in National Politics

Case Processing Summary						
	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
NATION (SAMPLE) * QA2 POLITICAL DISCUSSION - NATIONAL MATTERS	3022	100,0%	0	0,0%	3022	100,0%

NATION (SAMPLE) * QA2 POLITICAL DISCUSSION - NATIONAL MATTERS Crosstabulation							
			QA2 POLITICAL DISCUSSION - NATIONAL MATTERS				Total
			Frequently	Occasionally	Never	DK	
NATION (SAMPLE)	ESTONIA	Count	180	640	175	5	1000
		% within NATION (SAMPLE)	18,0%	64,0%	17,5%	0,5%	100,0%
	LATVIA	Count	222	616	165	0	1003
		% within NATION (SAMPLE)	22,1%	61,4%	16,5%	0,0%	100,0%
	LITHUANIA	Count	267	594	156	2	1019
		% within NATION (SAMPLE)	26,2%	58,3%	15,3%	0,2%	100,0%
Total		Count	669	1850	496	7	3022
		% within NATION (SAMPLE)	22,1%	61,2%	16,4%	0,2%	100,0%

We can see that the majority of citizens in all three nation-states “occasionally” discusses national matters. In Estonia this percentage is highest (64%). In Lithuania, however, national matters are discussed the most. 26.2% of the interviewed people there stated that they “frequently” talked about national politics, compared to only 18% in Estonia and 22.1% in Latvia. According to Eurobarometer, respondents in Lithuania are European-wide even among “the most interested in national political matters” (European Commission, 2010e, p. 103).

To continue with the second factor for the *civic* module of *national identity*, inhabitants were asked how much **trust** they had **in their respective national government**²². The following cross-tabulation shows again which kinds of answers were given in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

Figure 8: Cross-tabulation Nation – Trust in the National Government

Case Processing Summary						
	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
NATION (SAMPLE) * QA14 TRUST IN INSTITUTIONS: NAT GOVERNMENT	3022	100,0%	0	0,0%	3022	100,0%

NATION (SAMPLE) * QA14 TRUST IN INSTITUTIONS: NAT GOVERNMENT Crosstabulation							
			QA14 TRUST IN INSTITUTIONS: NAT GOVERNMENT			Total	
			Tend to trust	Tend not to trust	DK		
NATION (SAMPLE)	ESTONIA	Count	524	445	31	1000	
		% within NATION (SAMPLE)	52,4%	44,5%	3,1%	100,0%	
	LATVIA	Count	129	854	20	1003	
		% within NATION (SAMPLE)	12,9%	85,1%	2,0%	100,0%	
	LITHUANIA	Count	128	857	34	1019	
		% within NATION (SAMPLE)	12,6%	84,1%	3,3%	100,0%	
Total		Count	781	2156	85	3022	
		% within NATION (SAMPLE)	25,8%	71,3%	2,8%	100,0%	

²² Eurobarometer 73.4, question QA14: “I would like to ask you a question about how much trust you have in certain institutions. For each of the following institutions, please tell me if you tend to trust it or tend not to trust it.” Institution: “The (NATIONALITY) Government”. Answering categories: “tend to trust”, “tend not to trust” and “don’t know” (European Commission, 2010c).

Here we can observe that the majority in Estonia (52.4%) tends to trust the national government, whereas the majority in both Latvia (85.1%) and Lithuania (84.1%) tends not to trust it. The percentages of people stating that they do not trust their national administration are extremely high in the latter two countries, thus indicating that trust in the national government is particularly low there. While differences between citizens of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were not that obvious regarding the first factor (i.e. interest in national politics), they definitely are regarding this one.

The last factor describing *national identity* (in this case the *cultural* component) is **attachment to the country**²³. Citizens were asked to what extent they felt attached to Estonia, Latvia or Lithuania respectively. The following cross-tabulation shows whether they answered with “very attached”, “fairly attached”, “not very attached” or “not at all attached”.

Figure 9: Cross-tabulation Nation – Attachment to the Country

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
NATION (SAMPLE) * QB13 ATTACHMENT TO: COUNTRY	3021	100,0%	0	0,0%	3021	100,0%

NATION (SAMPLE) * QB13 ATTACHMENT TO: COUNTRY Crosstabulation

		QB13 ATTACHMENT TO: COUNTRY					Total	
		Very attached	Fairly attached	Not very attached	Not at all attached	DK		
NATION (SAMPLE)	ESTONIA	Count	665	303	26	5	1	1000
		% within NATION (SAMPLE)	66,5%	30,3%	2,6%	0,5%	0,1%	100,0%
	LATVIA	Count	702	220	59	20	4	1005
		% within NATION (SAMPLE)	69,9%	21,9%	5,9%	2,0%	0,4%	100,0%
LITHUANIA	Count	599	352	53	6	6	1016	
		% within NATION (SAMPLE)	59,0%	34,6%	5,2%	0,6%	0,6%	100,0%
	Total	Count	1966	875	138	31	11	3021
		% within NATION (SAMPLE)	65,1%	29,0%	4,6%	1,0%	0,4%	100,0%

In general, almost all citizens feel attached (either “very attached” or “fairly attached”) to their home countries. It becomes obvious that the majority in each of them even feels “very attached” to the nation-state. Still, Latvians have the strongest feeling of belonging to their country. 69.9% there answered with “very attached”, in contrast to 66.5% in Estonia and only 59% in Lithuania. This makes the difference particularly between attitudes in Latvia and Lithuania rather high, as the percentages in the two of them vary by more than 10 points.

All in all, we saw that the Baltic States mostly differed with respect to the answers or values given for each factor describing *national identity*. Especially regarding **trust in the national government** there was a huge difference revealed between Estonia on the one hand and Latvia as well as Lithuania on the other hand. In the case of **attachment to the country** there only was a considerable difference between Latvians and Lithuanians. Concerning **interest in national politics**, in turn, Baltic citizens had a rather similar attitude.

²³ Eurobarometer 73.3, question QB13: “People may feel different levels of attachment to their village, town or city, to their region, to their country or to the European Union. Please tell me how attached you feel to (OUR COUNTRY).” Answering categories: “very attached”, “fairly attached”, “not very attached”, “not at all attached” and “don’t know” (European Commission, 2010a).

6.2. Data on European Identity

As we have seen in chapter 2 of this thesis, there has always been (and still is) a huge discussion going on about how to understand *European identity* best. Literature does not provide one universal and clear-cut picture of it; that is why I chose to measure it with the help of certain factors – just like in the case of *national identity*. In order to recall how I operationalized the concept of *European identity*, here is an overview again (also cf. section 3).

Figure 10: Operationalization of European Identity

Concept	Factors
<i>European civic identity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ interest in European politics ▪ trust in the EU ▪ support for EU membership
<i>European cultural identity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ attachment to the EU ▪ personal importance of being European

In the following, I will examine these factors one by one in exactly that stated order. In this way we will again have a look at Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania as well as their specific characteristics separately.

When the first factor was examined, people were asked how often they discussed European political matters. Their answers thus indicated their **interest in European politics**²⁴. The following cross-tabulation shows which kinds of answers were given in each of the three countries.

Figure 11: Cross-tabulation Nation – Interest in European Politics

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
NATION (SAMPLE) * QA2 POLITICAL DISCUSSION - EUROPEAN MATTERS	3022	100,0%	0	0,0%	3022	100,0%

NATION (SAMPLE) * QA2 POLITICAL DISCUSSION - EUROPEAN MATTERS Crosstabulation

			QA2 POLITICAL DISCUSSION - EUROPEAN MATTERS				Total
			Frequently	Occasionally	Never	DK	
NATION (SAMPLE)	ESTONIA	Count	88	585	319	8	1000
		% within NATION (SAMPLE)	8,8%	58,5%	31,9%	0,8%	100,0%
LATVIA	LATVIA	Count	91	610	301	1	1003
		% within NATION (SAMPLE)	9,1%	60,8%	30,0%	0,1%	100,0%
LITHUANIA	LITHUANIA	Count	111	589	313	6	1019
		% within NATION (SAMPLE)	10,9%	57,8%	30,7%	0,6%	100,0%
Total		Count	290	1784	933	15	3022
		% within NATION (SAMPLE)	9,6%	59,0%	30,9%	0,5%	100,0%

²⁴ Eurobarometer 73.4, question QA2: “When you get together with friends or relatives, would you say you discuss frequently, occasionally or never about European political matters?” Answering categories: “frequently”, “occasionally”, “never” and “don’t know” (European Commission, 2010c).

We can see that the majority of citizens in all three nation-states “occasionally” discuss European matters – just like in the case of national matters. Surprisingly, this percentage is highest in Latvia (60.8%). In Lithuania, however, European matters are discussed most frequently. 10.9% of the interviewed people there stated that they “frequently” talked about European politics, compared to 8.8% in Estonia and 9.1% in Latvia. These differences are not very conspicuous, though.

Nearly one third of the respondents in each country said that they “never” discussed such issues. This appears fairly high considering the fact that Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania still belong to the group of newer EU members as they joined only six years before this survey was conducted. One would rather expect such high percentages to be found with older EU member states.

When the second factor for the *civic* component of *European identity* was examined, inhabitants were asked how much **trust** they had **in the European Union**²⁵. The following cross-tabulation shows again which kinds of answers were given in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

Figure 12: Cross-tabulation Nation – Trust in the EU

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
NATION (SAMPLE) * QA14 TRUST IN INSTITUTIONS: EUROPEAN UNION	3022	100,0%	0	0,0%	3022	100,0%

NATION (SAMPLE) * QA14 TRUST IN INSTITUTIONS: EUROPEAN UNION Crosstabulation

		QA14 TRUST IN INSTITUTIONS: EUROPEAN UNION			Total
		Tend to trust	Tend not to trust	DK	
NATION (SAMPLE)	ESTONIA	Count 666 66,6%	229 22,9%	105 10,5%	1000 100,0%
	LATVIA	Count 403 40,2%	511 50,9%	89 8,9%	1003 100,0%
	LITHUANIA	Count 545 53,5%	299 29,3%	175 17,2%	1019 100,0%
Total		Count 1614 53,4%	1039 34,4%	369 12,2%	3022 100,0%

In this case differences between the three Baltic States are quite considerable. About two-thirds and thus a clear majority of citizens in Estonia tend to trust the EU. According to Eurobarometer, Estonia is even the country in which trust in the EU is European-wide greatest (European Commission, 2010e, p. 184). Also in Lithuania a narrow majority (53.5%) rather trusts the EU than distrusts it. In Latvia, however, more than 50% tend not to trust the association, in contrast to only 40.2% which do. Hence, the difference particularly between attitudes in Latvia and Estonia but also between attitudes in Latvia

²⁵ Eurobarometer 73.4, question QA14: “I would like to ask you a question about how much trust you have in certain institutions. For each of the following institutions, please tell me if you tend to trust it or tend not to trust it.” Institution: “The European Union”. Answering categories: “tend to trust”, “tend not to trust” and “don’t know” (European Commission, 2010c).

and Lithuania as well as Lithuania and Estonia are extremely high, as the percentages vary about more than 26 points, 13 points and 13 points respectively.

It is also interesting to mention the fact that 17.2% of Lithuanians answered this question with “don’t know”. Considering that Lithuania is an EU member state for 8 years now, this percentage appears quite high because people actually had enough time to form an opinion about the economic and political association as well as their trust in it.

The last factor describing a European civic identity is **support for EU membership**²⁶. People were asked whether they thought that membership of the EU was “a good thing”, “a bad thing” or “neither good nor bad”. The following cross-tabulation shows the results.

Figure 13: Cross-tabulation Nation – Support for EU Membership

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
NATION (SAMPLE) * QA9A EU MEMBERSHIP - GOOD/BAD	3022	100,0%	0	0,0%	3022	100,0%

NATION (SAMPLE) * QA9A EU MEMBERSHIP - GOOD/BAD Crosstabulation

			QA9A EU MEMBERSHIP - GOOD/BAD				Total
			A good thing	A bad thing	Neither good nor bad	DK	
NATION (SAMPLE)	ESTONIA	Count	507	69	400	24	1000
		% within NATION (SAMPLE)	50,7%	6,9%	40,0%	2,4%	100,0%
	LATVIA	Count	252	200	518	33	1003
		% within NATION (SAMPLE)	25,1%	19,9%	51,6%	3,3%	100,0%
	LITHUANIA	Count	494	141	339	45	1019
		% within NATION (SAMPLE)	48,5%	13,8%	33,3%	4,4%	100,0%
Total		Count	1253	410	1257	102	3022
		% within NATION (SAMPLE)	41,5%	13,6%	41,6%	3,4%	100,0%

Here we can observe that Estonians (50.7%) and Lithuanians (48.5%) mainly regard membership as “a good thing”, while only 25.1% of Latvians agree. They primarily think it is “neither good nor bad” (51.6%). Moreover, they represent the highest percentage of people expressing that membership is “a bad thing”. 19.9% of Latvians consider it as such and only 6.9% of Estonians and 13.6% of Lithuanians do. Still many people in the latter two countries regard membership as “neither good nor bad” as well (33.3% in Lithuania and even 40% in Estonia). Opinions on this issue in the three countries thus differ from each other.

The first factor describing a *European cultural identity* is **attachment to the EU**²⁷. As inhabitants may feel different levels of attachment, they were questioned about the degree to which they felt attached to the European Union. Possible answers again ranged from “very attached” to “not at all attached”.

²⁶ Eurobarometer 73.4, question QA9a: “Generally speaking, do you think that (OUR COUNTRY)’s membership of the European Union is...?” Answering categories: “a good thing”, “a bad thing”, “neither good nor bad” and “don’t know” (European Commission, 2010c).

Figure 14: Cross-tabulation Nation – Attachment to the EU

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
NATION (SAMPLE) * QB13 ATTACHMENT TO: EUROPEAN UNION	3021	100,0%	0	0,0%	3021	100,0%

NATION (SAMPLE) * QB13 ATTACHMENT TO: EUROPEAN UNION Crosstabulation

			QB13 ATTACHMENT TO: EUROPEAN UNION					Total
			Very attached	Fairly attached	Not very attached	Not at all attached	DK	
NATION (SAMPLE)	ESTONIA	Count	47	293	425	215	20	1000
		% within NATION (SAMPLE)	4,7%	29,3%	42,5%	21,5%	2,0%	100,0%
	LATVIA	Count	93	394	315	196	7	1005
		% within NATION (SAMPLE)	9,3%	39,2%	31,3%	19,5%	0,7%	100,0%
	LITHUANIA	Count	65	307	423	199	22	1016
		% within NATION (SAMPLE)	6,4%	30,2%	41,6%	19,6%	2,2%	100,0%
Total		Count	205	994	1163	610	49	3021
		% within NATION (SAMPLE)	6,8%	32,9%	38,5%	20,2%	1,6%	100,0%

Unlike in the case of national attachment, a majority of all three peoples does not really feel attached (either “not very attached” or “not at all attached”) to the EU. Adding up these two answer possibilities 64% of Estonian, 50.8% of Latvian and 61.2% of Lithuanian participants do not truly have a feeling of belonging to the EU. Surprisingly, it is the Latvian society which feels both most fairly attached (39.2%) and very attached (9.3%), while it is the Estonian society which feels both least fairly attached (29.3%) and very attached (4.7%). Percentages between these two peoples thus vary the most. Among all European countries Estonia and Lithuania actually belong to those ones with the lowest proportions of respondents feeling attachment (European Commission, 2011, p. 72).

The last factor chosen to describe a *European identity* (again the *cultural* component) regards the **personal importance of being European**²⁸. Interviewed citizens were asked how important being European was for them personally when thinking about the very fact that they are exactly this: Europeans. They could answer with “matters a lot”, “matters somewhat”, “does not matter much” or “does not matter at all”.

²⁷ Eurobarometer 73.3, question QB13: “People may feel different levels of attachment to their village, town or city, to their region, to their country or to the European Union. Please tell me how attached you feel to the European Union.” Answering categories: “very attached”, “fairly attached”, “not very attached”, “not at all attached” and “don’t know” (European Commission, 2010a).

²⁸ Eurobarometer 73.3, question QB3: “Thinking now about the fact that you are European, how important is being European to you personally? Being European...” Answering categories: “matters a lot to you”, “matters somewhat to you”, “does not matter much to you”, “does not matter at all to you” and “don’t know” (European Commission, 2010a).

Figure 15: Cross-tabulation Nation – Personal Importance of Being European

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
NATION (SAMPLE) * QB3 BEING EUROPEAN - PERSONAL IMPORTANCE	3021	100,0%	0	0,0%	3021	100,0%

NATION (SAMPLE) * QB3 BEING EUROPEAN - PERSONAL IMPORTANCE Crosstabulation

			QB3 BEING EUROPEAN - PERSONAL IMPORTANCE					Total
			Matters a lot to you	Matters somewhat to you	Does not matter much to you	Does not matter at all to you	DK	
NATION (SAMPLE)	ESTONIA	Count	140	402	285	160	13	1000
		% within NATION (SAMPLE)	14,0%	40,2%	28,5%	16,0%	1,3%	100,0%
	LATVIA	Count	98	286	348	260	13	1005
		% within NATION (SAMPLE)	9,8%	28,5%	34,6%	25,9%	1,3%	100,0%
	LITHUANIA	Count	146	352	348	164	6	1016
		% within NATION (SAMPLE)	14,4%	34,6%	34,3%	16,1%	0,6%	100,0%
Total		Count	384	1040	981	584	32	3021
		% within NATION (SAMPLE)	12,7%	34,4%	32,5%	19,3%	1,1%	100,0%

Even though they feel least attached to the EU, Estonians are the ones to whom being European matters the most when we add up the percentages of “matters a lot” (14%) and “matters somewhat” (40.2%). Latvians, however, are the ones to whom this status personally means the least (to 9.8% of Latvians it “matters a lot” and to 28.5% it “matters somewhat”). Also European-wide they belong to those countries in which the lowest percentages were recorded (European Commission, 2011, p. 100). As a consequence, in the table above Latvians simultaneously form the society with the highest percentages in the categories “does not matter much” (34.6%) and “does not matter at all” (29.5%), while Estonians represent the society with the lowest percentage (28.5% said it “does not matter much” and 16% said it “does not matter at all”). Lithuania’s percentages lie always between the other two Baltic States.

All in all, we saw that the Baltic States mostly differed also with respect to the answers or values given for each factor describing *European identity*. Especially regarding **support for EU membership** there was a huge difference revealed between Latvia on the one hand and Estonia as well as Lithuania on the other hand. In the case of **trust in the EU** there was a considerable difference between all three countries. Concerning the remaining factors variations between the Baltic citizens were not that conspicuous at first sight.

To sum it up, in terms of both *national* and *European identity* several variations between Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania could be spotted – against the common approach of simply perceiving the three countries as similar. In the next chapter these differences will further be dealt with and examined as it is important to not only describe but also analyze the data used.

7. Analysis

After having provided a sheer description of the data, we can finally turn to the actual analysis. First of all, the following chapter will explicate similarities and (more importantly) differences regarding both *national* and *European identity* perceptions. Statistical tests via SPSS will help and reveal something about the significance of differences found between the Baltic States of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. The assessment of these previously collected records is in fact the central point of this study. Hence, within this part I will finally be able to answer the main research question about the extent to which citizens' perceptions of a *European identity* differ in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in the year 2010 with respect to each other.

Moreover, at the end of this section I will try to find an explanation for citizens' present perceptions of a *European identity* (only descriptively, though). This will be done by referring to differences in (a) history, (b) socio-economic characteristics, and (c) *national identity*. I assume that these factors can be argued to explain the variation in *European identity*. Additionally, I will take up some arguments made by those scholars referred to within the theoretical framework (section 2 of this thesis).

7.1. Similarities and Differences of Identity Perceptions

Let us start with a comparison of *identity* perceptions in the three Baltic States. I will first deal with *national identity* before tackling the concept of *European identity* afterwards. The main goal of this section is to show similarities and differences between the countries while especially stressing the latter one. In fact, this will be done by using a one-way analysis of variance, also known as one-way ANOVA. This technique will allow us to compare the mean values of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania for each factor describing *identity*. I will thus be able to detect significant differences between the means of these three countries. Graphs of the means plots will additionally help to illustrate the findings.

7.1.1. National Identity

For an analysis of the factors portraying *national identity* I will follow the same order as for the data description of the same concept in the previous section. I will thus tackle all factors separately and compare the outcomes of the countries with each other for each of those aspects.

The first factor for the *civic* component of *national identity* was **interest in national politics**. In the chapter before it was revealed that the majority of citizens in all three Baltic States “occasionally” discuss national matters. In order to have a closer look at the differences between Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, I analyzed these with the help of SPSS. The following figures will show the outcomes of the one-way ANOVA as well as the graph of the means plots.

Figure 16: One-way ANOVA for the Interest in National Politics

Descriptives

Interest in national politics

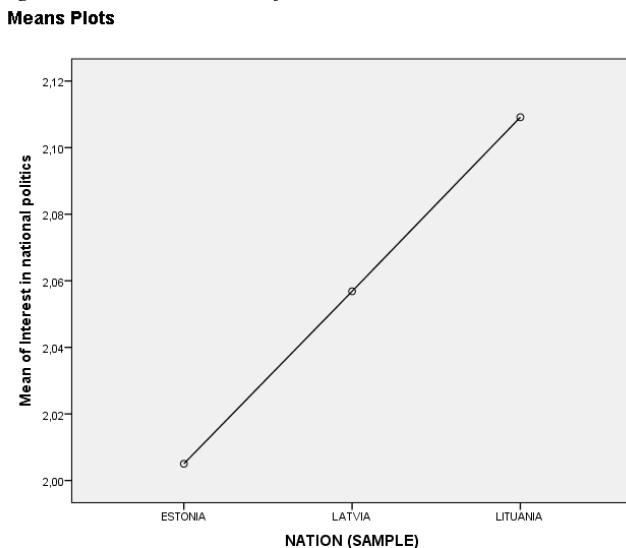
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
ESTONIA	995	2,0050	,59759	,01894	1,9678	2,0422	1,00	3,00
LATVIA	1003	2,0568	,61887	,01954	2,0185	2,0952	1,00	3,00
LITHUANIA	1017	2,1091	,63594	,01994	2,0700	2,1483	1,00	3,00
Total	3015	2,0574	,61906	,01127	2,0353	2,0795	1,00	3,00

ANOVA

Interest in national politics

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	5,453	2	2,726	7,143	,001
Within Groups	1149,621	3012	,382		
Total	1155,073	3014			

Figure 17: Means Plots for the Interest in National Politics



In both the first table and the graph we can see that the mean value for Lithuanians’ interest in national politics is higher than the ones for Estonians’ and Latvians’ interest. This indicates that people in Lithuania are more interested in national politics compared to people in the other two Baltic States. The significance level is 0.001 ($P = .001$) and that is below 0.05. Hence, the outcome is statistically significant, which means that there is a statistically significant variation in the mean values on the interest in national politics between the three countries. This proves that Lithuanians indeed talk about national matters the most, while Estonians do this the least. The means plots should make this even clearer.

The second factor for *national identity* (again for its *civic* component) was **trust in the national government**. In the previous chapter we saw that the majority in Estonia tends to trust the national government, whereas the majority in both Latvia and Lithuania tends not to trust it. The next step is to check these observations. The following figures will show the outcomes of the one-way ANOVA as well as the graph of the means plots.

Figure 18: One-way ANOVA for the Trust in the National Government

Descriptives

Trust in national government

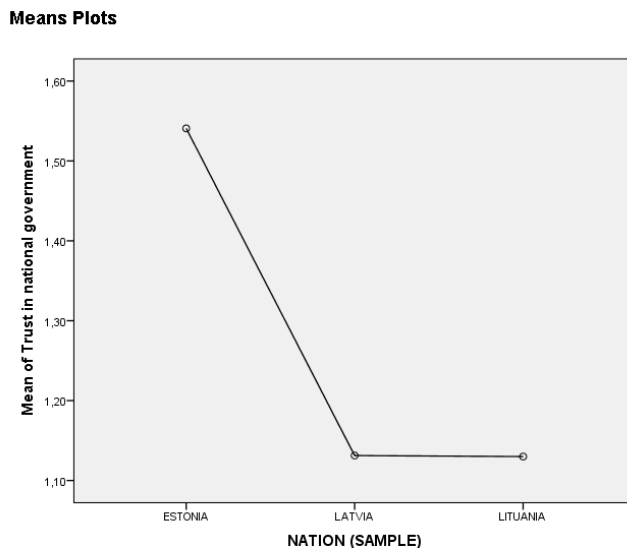
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
ESTONIA	969	1,5408	,49859	,01602	1,5093	1,5722	1,00	2,00
LATVIA	983	1,1312	,33782	,01077	1,1101	1,1524	1,00	2,00
LITHUANIA	985	1,1299	,33642	,01072	1,1089	1,1510	1,00	2,00
Total	2937	1,2659	,44190	,00815	1,2499	1,2819	1,00	2,00

ANOVA

Trust in national government

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	109,241	2	54,620	345,322	,000
Within Groups	464,078	2934	,158		
Total	573,318	2936			

Figure 19: Means Plots for the Trust in the National Government



In this case we can observe that the mean of Estonia is considerably higher than the one of Latvia and Lithuania. This means Estonians tend to trust their national government much more than Latvians and Lithuanians do. With a significance level of 0.000 which is smaller than 0.05 the data are obviously significant in statistical terms. There is in fact a noteworthy variation in the mean values on trust in the national government between the three Baltic States, probably caused by the much higher value of Estonia revealed in the graph of the means plots. This clarifies that trust in the national government is much lower in Latvia and Lithuania than it is in Estonia.

The third and last factor for a *national identity* (this time the *cultural* module, though) was **attachment to the country**. As we have seen before, almost all citizens feel attached to their home countries. A clear majority in every Baltic country even feels “very attached” to the nation-state. Still, we have to check for variation between the three of them. Again the following figures will illustrate the outcomes of the one-way ANOVA as well as the graph of the means plots.

Figure 20: One-way ANOVA for the Attachment to the Country

Descriptives

Attachment to the country

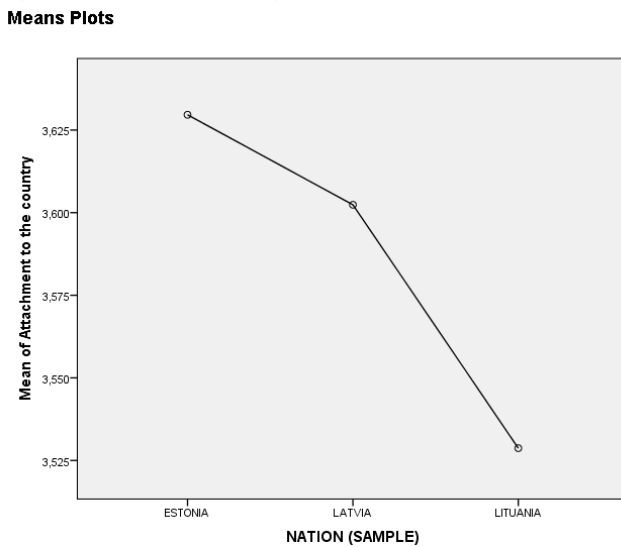
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
ESTONIA	999	3,6296	,56178	,01777	3,5948	3,6645	1,00	4,00
LATVIA	1001	3,6024	,69120	,02185	3,5595	3,6453	1,00	4,00
LITUANIA	1010	3,5287	,62462	,01965	3,4901	3,5673	1,00	4,00
Total	3010	3,5867	,62937	,01147	3,5642	3,6092	1,00	4,00

ANOVA

Attachment to the country

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	5,484	2	2,742	6,950	,001
Within Groups	1186,385	3007	,395		
Total	1191,868	3009			

Figure 21: Means Plots for the Attachment to the Country



The values as well as the graph make clear that Lithuanians feel least attached to their country, as the mean for their feeling of belonging is smallest. Estonia and Latvia, in turn, feature higher numbers so their inhabitants' attachment should be greater. When considering the significance level this turns out to be true. The data are statistically significant as 0.001 is smaller than 0.05. It also proves right that almost all citizens feel attached to their respective country because all mean values are above 3.5 and 4 was actually the highest value possible. However, this one-way ANOVA does not show that Latvians have the strongest feeling of belonging to their country, as indicated in the previous chapter (cf. section 6.1. on the description of identity perceptions), but that Estonians in fact do. The analysis thus revealed the true distribution and proved the first impression to be wrong. This shows that it is not sufficient to only look at the descriptive tables and the values depicted there, but that one should also always include statistical tests when aiming at drawing inferences.

*So how does national identity, operationalized with the mentioned factors, look like? More importantly, to what extent does it differ between the Baltic countries?*²⁹ In summary, the analysis discovered the following circumstances:

- On average, Estonians show the smallest interest in national politics, the greatest trust in their national government and the biggest attachment to their country.
- Latvians take the middle value in each category.
- Lithuanians show the biggest interest in national politics, the lowest trust in their national government and also the lowest attachment to their country.

For all factors chosen the one-way analysis of variance revealed statistically significant differences. Keeping this in mind, we can conclude that Estonians seem to have the strongest national identity of all Baltic peoples as they take the leading role regarding two out of three factors (most **trust in the national government** and strongest **attachment to the country**). Accordingly, Lithuania appears to have the weakest one and Latvia seems to be in between.

Regarding the two components of *national identity*, the *national civic identity* appears to be similar in all three countries. Even though Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians' opinions differ on the two factors describing the *civic* module when we consider these separately (i.e. **interest in national politics** on the one hand and **trust in the national government** on the other hand), the three countries approximately take the same position when seeing these factors as one, as jointly characterizing *national civic identity*.

The *national cultural identity*, in turn, seems to be a bit stronger in Estonia and Latvia compared to Lithuania. Citizens in Estonia show the highest degree of **attachment to their country**, followed close behind by Latvians. It is finally the Lithuanian people that shows the lowest degree of **attachment to its country** compared to the peoples of the other two Baltic States.

When having a closer look at the mean values for the three factors chosen to describe *national identity*, one may in general assume a weak national identity to be present in all Baltic States – simply because the mean values for the first two factors appear rather low. However, when looking at citizens' **attachment to their respective country** I think we should reject that idea. The mean values for all three states are above 3.5 and the highest value possible was actually 4, showing that almost all citizens feel highly attached to their respective country. I assume that inhabitants themselves just do not attach too much value to **national politics** or the **national government** (so the *civic* module of identity) when thinking about or defining their *national identity* but rather feel the *cultural* component of identity (i.e. **attachment to the nation-state**) to be important³⁰. However, it is not a task of this

²⁹ Note from the author: In the following we will answer one of the sub-questions posted in the introduction (section 1.2. of this thesis): *To what extent do citizens' perceptions of national identities differ in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in 2010 compared to each other?* As this is a merely descriptive question, the answer will describe the differences revealed between the three Baltic States regarding national identity.

³⁰ For a general discussion of the reasonableness and suitability of the chosen factors please have a look at section 8.3. about the limitations of the findings.

thesis to further classify the given mean values and thus generally provide an assessment or evaluation of *national identity* in the Baltic States (for instance, saying that *national identity* is high in one country when we analyze the values given). This analysis simply focuses on the description of differences revealed between the Baltic countries of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania³¹.

To sum it up, the following table will provide an overview of the findings mentioned above, therefore clarifying how *national identity* and its components actually look like in the three Baltic States (as compared to each other).

Figure 22: Results of the Analysis Regarding National Identity and its Components

	<i>National civic identity</i>	<i>National cultural identity</i>	<i>Overall national identity</i>
Estonia	similar to Latvia and Lithuania (on the whole)	stronger than in Latvia and Lithuania (generally very strong)	strongest of the three countries (generally also quite strong)
Latvia	similar to Estonia and Lithuania (on the whole)	slightly weaker than in Estonia but stronger than in Lithuania (in general very strong)	weaker than in Estonia but stronger than in Lithuania (in general quite strong)
Lithuania	similar to Estonia and Latvia (on the whole)	lower than in Estonia and Latvia (in general very strong though)	weakest of the three countries (but in general very strong)

After answering the question how *national identity* (generally and its two components) differs between the Baltic States, we need to deal with another question: *how can we expect the revealed differences in national identity to affect European identity ultimately?* The following table will provide an overview of exactly this, indicating possible effects of the variation between the Baltic countries regarding their nation-state identities.

Figure 23: Overview of the Differences in National Identity and their Possible Effects

Concept	Factor	Differences	Expected effects
<i>National civic identity</i>	interest in national politics	Lithuanians more interested in national matters than Latvians and Estonians	Lithuanians may generally have more interest in politics and may thus also be interested in European matters
	trust in the national government	Estonians tend to trust their national government much more than Latvians and Lithuanians	Estonians may generally show more trust in political institutions and therefore also in the EU
<i>National cultural identity</i>	attachment to the country	Estonians have a stronger attachment to their country than Latvians and Lithuanians	Latvians and Lithuanians may feel closer connected with the EU as they are not as attached to their respective countries as Estonians are

³¹ Possibilities for further analyses are introduced in section 8.2. about the theoretical value of this thesis.

Bearing these discoveries in mind, let us now move on to the main concept of this study and an analysis of Baltic citizens' perception of this notion. Do they differ in terms of *European identity* or do they mainly share views on this idea?

7.1.2. European Identity

For an analysis of the factors portraying *European identity* I will also follow the same order as for the data description of the same concept in the previous section. Once more I will tackle all factors separately and compare the outcomes of the countries with each other for each of those aspects.

The first factor for the *civic* component of a *European identity* was **interest in European politics**. In the chapter before it was revealed that the majority of citizens in all three Baltic States “occasionally” discuss European matters. In order to have a closer look at the differences between Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, I analyzed these with the help of SPSS. The following figures will show the outcomes of the one-way ANOVA as well as the graph of the means plots.

Figure 24: One-way ANOVA for the Interest in European Politics

Descriptives

Interest in European politics

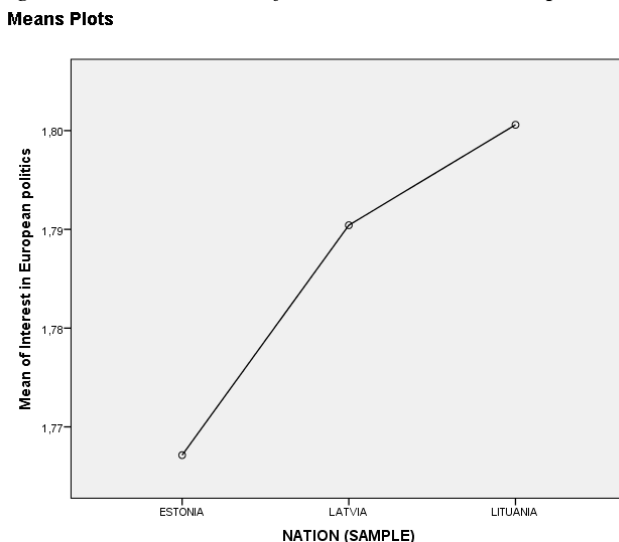
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
ESTONIA	992	1,7671	,59701	,01895	1,7299	1,8043	1,00	3,00
LATVIA	1002	1,7904	,58961	,01863	1,7539	1,8270	1,00	3,00
LITHUANIA	1013	1,8006	,61577	,01935	1,7626	1,8386	1,00	3,00
Total	3007	1,7862	,60093	,01096	1,7647	1,8077	1,00	3,00

ANOVA

Interest in European politics

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	,588	2	,294	,814	,443
Within Groups	1084,916	3004	,361		
Total	1085,504	3006			

Figure 25: Means Plots for the Interest in European Politics



In both the first table and the coordinate system we can see that the mean value of Lithuanians' interest in European politics is higher than the ones of Estonians' and Latvians' interest. One may therefore assume that Lithuanians tend to be more interested in European political matters than the other two Baltic peoples. However, the significance level is with a value of 0.443 not smaller than $\alpha = .05$, meaning that the data are not statistically significant. The comparison of means, though, shows that it is indeed the Lithuanian people which discusses European matters most frequently. Nevertheless, variations between the three countries are not very conspicuous, as already hinted at in the previous chapter (c.f. section 6.2.). That is probably why the outcome is not relevant in statistical terms.

The second factor for a *European identity* (again for its *civic* component) was **trust in the EU**. In the previous chapter we saw that a majority in both Estonia and Lithuania tends to trust the national government, whereas a narrow majority in Latvia tends not to trust it. The next step is to check these observations. The following figures will show both the outcomes of the one-way ANOVA and the graph of the means plots.

Figure 26: One-way ANOVA for the Trust in the EU

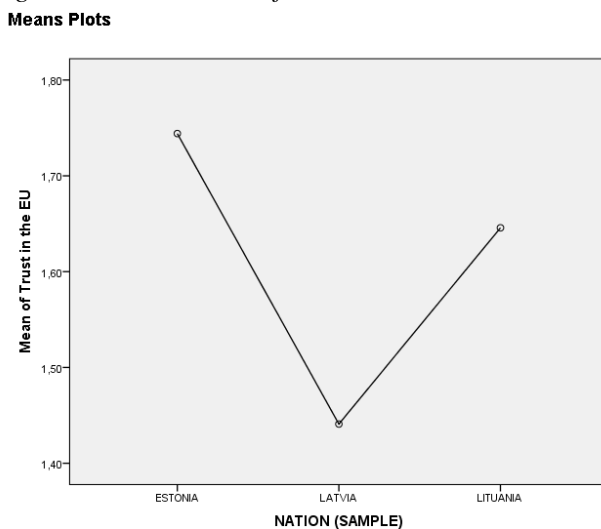
Descriptives

Trust in the EU									
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound			
ESTONIA	895	1,7441	,43659	,01459	1,7155	1,7728	1,00	2,00	
LATVIA	914	1,4409	,49677	,01643	1,4087	1,4732	1,00	2,00	
LITHUANIA	844	1,6457	,47857	,01647	1,6134	1,6781	1,00	2,00	
Total	2653	1,6084	,48821	,00948	1,5898	1,6270	1,00	2,00	

ANOVA

Trust in the EU					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	43,303	2	21,652	97,449	,000
Within Groups	588,791	2650	,222		
Total	632,094	2652			

Figure 27: Means Plots for the Trust in the EU



In this case we can observe that Estonians as well as Lithuanians have much more trust in the European Union than Latvians. Their mean value for this aspect is considerably smaller. There is nothing objectionable about this outcome. The significance level (0.000) is smaller than $\alpha = .05$, so the data are statistically significant. When having a closer look we can also confirm that citizens of Estonia have the largest trust in the EU. Differences between the three Baltic States regarding this factor are indeed quite big and, as proven by the one-way ANOVA, statistically relevant as well. In general, it needs to be mentioned that the given means are very low, all being between 1.44 and 1.74. Taking into consideration that 4 was actually the utmost value, we see that those numbers seem to be everything but high. Hence, there may be great variation between the three Baltic countries for this factor but all in all their trust in the EU is not very big.

The third and last factor for a *European civic identity* was **support for EU membership**. The data description earlier showed that Estonians and Lithuanians mainly regard membership as “a good thing”, while Latvians primarily think it is “neither good nor bad”. Let us check whether we can confirm these findings with the help of SPSS. Outcomes of the one-way ANOVA as well as the graph of the means plots will again be portrayed in the following figures.

Figure 28: One-way ANOVA for the Support for EU Membership

Descriptives

Support for EU membership

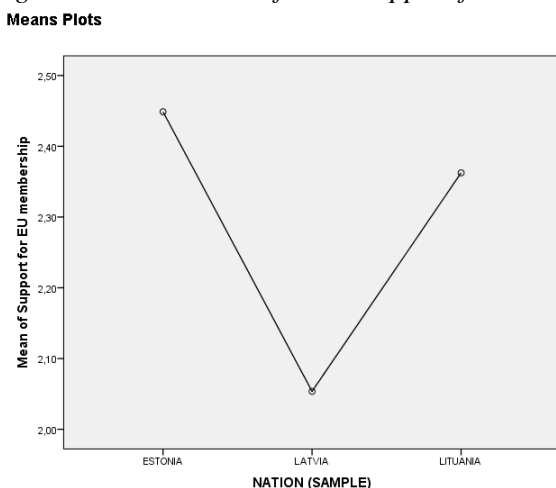
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
ESTONIA	976	2,4488	,62383	,01997	2,4096	2,4880	1,00	3,00
LATVIA	970	2,0536	,68087	,02186	2,0107	2,0965	1,00	3,00
LITUANIA	974	2,3624	,72190	,02313	2,3170	2,4078	1,00	3,00
Total	2920	2,2887	,69738	,01291	2,2634	2,3140	1,00	3,00

ANOVA

Support for EU membership

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	83,911	2	41,956	91,625	,000
Within Groups	1335,716	2917	,458		
Total	1419,627	2919			

Figure 29: Means Plots for the Support for EU Membership



Regarding support for EU membership the mean values for Estonians and Lithuanians are again higher than the mean value for Latvians. The first two groupings apparently show more support for EU membership than the latter one does. Also this outcome is statistically significant as a level of 0.000 is clearly below 0.05. While only describing the data in the previous section of this thesis we have already seen that Estonians and Lithuanians regard membership mainly as a good thing, whereas Latvians do not agree with that. The results found thus prove to be right. The comparison of means shows that Estonians and Lithuanians are indeed more positive about EU membership than Latvians are. To be completely precise, Estonians are even more in favour of membership than Lithuanians.

The first factor portraying a *European cultural identity* was **attachment to the EU**. As we have seen before, almost all citizens do not really feel attached to the EU. The majority in every Baltic country either feels “not very attached” or “not at all attached”. Still, we have to check for variation between the three of them. Let us another time have a look at the outcomes of the one-way ANOVA and the graph of the means plots.

Figure 30: One-way ANOVA for the Attachment to the EU

Descriptives

Attachment to the EU

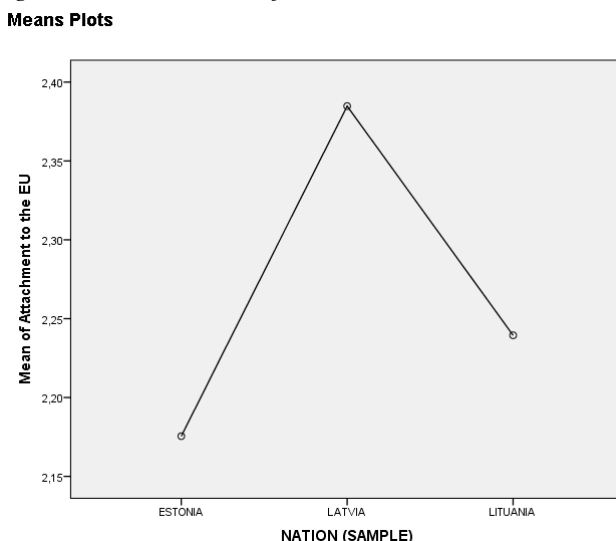
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
ESTONIA	980	2,1755	,82468	,02634	2,1238	2,2272	1,00	4,00
LATVIA	998	2,3848	,90371	,02861	2,3286	2,4409	1,00	4,00
LITHUANIA	994	2,2394	,84499	,02680	2,1868	2,2920	1,00	4,00
Total	2972	2,2672	,86284	,01583	2,2361	2,2982	1,00	4,00

ANOVA

Attachment to the EU

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	22,800	2	11,400	15,462	,000
Within Groups	2189,075	2969	,737		
Total	2211,875	2971			

Figure 31: Means Plots for the Attachment to the EU



These figures reveal exactly the opposite picture than the ones before did. The mean attachment to the EU of Latvians is considerably higher compared to the one of especially Estonians but also Lithuanians. Despite showing the poorest trust in the EU as well as the lowest support for membership, Latvians are the ones with the highest attachment to the EU. With a significance level of 0.000 which is smaller than 0.05 the data are obviously significant in statistical terms. However, all mean values are between 2.15 and 2.4. Considering that 4 was actually the highest value possible, those numbers do not seem to be very high. This, in turn, proves the observation to be right that the majority of all three citizen groupings does not really feel attached to the EU. Still, Latvians feel most attached and Estonians least.

The fifth and last factor for a *European identity* (also for the *cultural* module) was **personal importance of being European**. Earlier we discovered that Estonians are the ones to whom being European matters the most, while Latvians are the ones to whom this status personally means the least. Can SPSS confirm these observations? Once more outcomes of the one-way ANOVA as well as the graph of the means plots will be portrayed in the following figures.

Figure 32: One-way ANOVA for the Personal Importance of Being European

Descriptives

Personal importance of being European

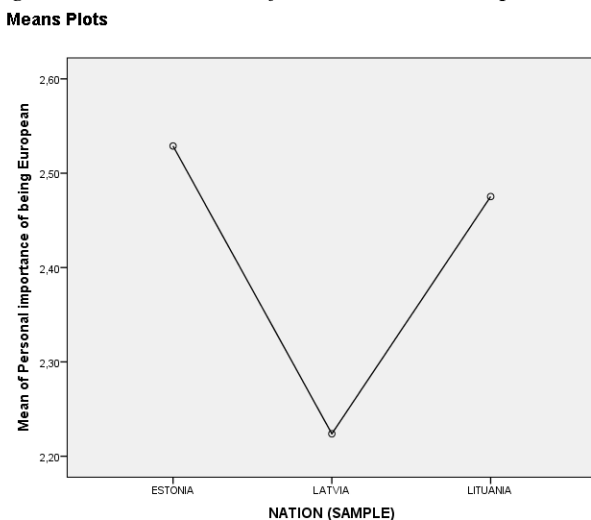
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
ESTONIA	987	2,5289	,92625	,02948	2,4710	2,5867	1,00	4,00
LATVIA	992	2,2238	,94678	,03006	2,1648	2,2828	1,00	4,00
LITUANIA	1010	2,4752	,92957	,02925	2,4179	2,5326	1,00	4,00
Total	2989	2,4095	,94330	,01725	2,3757	2,4433	1,00	4,00

ANOVA

Personal importance of being European

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	52,643	2	26,322	30,158	,000
Within Groups	2606,127	2986	,873		
Total	2658,770	2988			

Figure 33: Means Plots for the Personal Importance of Being European



These figures resemble very much the ones illustrating the distribution of the factors trust in the EU and support for EU membership. The Latvian mean value is lower than the one of Estonia and Lithuania, indicating that being European is not really important in the opinion of Latvians. Also this last outcome and the respective data are statistically significant as 0.000 is clearly below 0.05. While only describing the data in the previous section of this thesis we have already seen that Estonians are the ones to whom being European matters most, and this appears to be correct. To Latvians, though, this status personally has the lowest value.

*So how does European identity, operationalized with the mentioned factors, look like for each of the three countries? More importantly, to what extent does it differ between the Baltic States?*³² In summary, the analysis discovered the following circumstances:

- On average, Estonians show the smallest interest in European politics, the biggest trust in the EU, the biggest support for EU membership, the smallest attachment to the EU and, finally, the biggest personal importance of being European.
- Meanwhile, Latvians take the middle value regarding interest in European politics and show the lowest trust in the EU, the smallest support for EU membership, the highest attachment to the EU and the smallest personal importance of being European.
- Lithuanians, in turn, have the biggest interest in European politics and take the middle values in all remaining categories.

For all factors chosen – except from the first one (i.e. **interest in European politics**) – the one-way analysis of variance revealed statistically significant differences. Keeping this in mind, we can conclude that Estonians have the strongest *European identity* of all Baltic peoples as they take the leading role regarding three out of five factors (most **trust in the EU**, biggest **support for EU membership** and biggest **personal importance of being European**). Accordingly, Latvia appears to have the weakest *European identity* and Lithuania seems to be in between. Latvians actually take the last position (so the lowest values) in three out of five factors; only in the case of **attachment to the EU** they surprisingly show the highest value.

Regarding the two components of *European identity*, the *European civic identity* seems to be quite strong in Estonia and rather weak in Latvia. It was interesting to see that the given mean values for the first two indicators (**interest in national politics** and **trust in the national government**) were overall rather low. Only for the last factor (**support for EU membership**) higher values were found with the citizens – probably because it is the strongest indicator for a *European civic identity*.³³ On the whole,

³² Note from the author: At this point we are finally able to answer the main research question: *To what extent do citizens' perceptions of a European identity differ in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in the year 2010 with respect to each other?* As this is a merely descriptive question, the answer will simply describe the differences revealed between the three Baltic States.

³³ For an actual discussion of the reasonableness and suitability of the chosen factors please have a look at section 8.3. about the limitations of the findings.

the *European civic identity* thus appears a bit stronger than the *national civic identity*, especially when we compare the mean values for the respective factors. Going into detail in these terms, however, is not a task of this thesis.

The *European cultural identity*, in turn, appears to be similar in all three countries. Even though Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians' opinions differ on the two factors describing the *cultural* module when we consider these separately (i.e. **attachment to the EU** on the one hand and **personal importance of being European** on the other hand), the three countries approximately take the same position when seeing these factors as one, as jointly characterizing *European cultural identity*.

What generally becomes obvious is that the mean values for the indicators explaining a *European cultural identity* are higher than those for all factors describing a *European civic identity*. Within the scope of this analysis the *cultural* component of *European identity* thus appears stronger than the *civic* part.

To sum it up, the following table will provide an overview of the findings mentioned above, therefore clarifying how *European identity* and its components actually look like in the three Baltic States (as compared to each other).

Figure 34: Results of the Analysis Regarding European Identity and its Components

	<i>European civic identity</i>	<i>European cultural identity</i>	<i>Overall European identity</i>
Estonia	stronger than in Latvia and Lithuania	similar to Latvia and Lithuania (on the whole)	strongest of the three countries (but still weaker than overall <i>national identity</i>)
Latvia	much weaker than in Estonia and Lithuania	similar to Estonia and Lithuania (on the whole)	weakest of the three countries (in general weaker than overall <i>national identity</i>)
Lithuania	weaker than in Estonia but stronger than in Latvia	similar to Estonia and Latvia (on the whole)	weaker than in Estonia but stronger than in Latvia (still weaker than overall <i>national identity</i>)

The most important finding of this thesis (with both the research question and design chosen) in fact regards the distinct overall *European identity* of the three Baltic States. It was interesting to see that Estonians appeared to have the strongest *European identity* of all Baltic peoples, while Latvians appeared to have the weakest one and Lithuanians seemed to be in between the other two.

Hence, we found out that the three Baltic countries differ with respect to a *European identity*. But why is that so? Why do citizens of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania actually show slightly different perceptions of a *European identity* with respect to each other? Why does Estonia, for instance, appear to have the strongest *European identity*? Can maybe differences in *national identities* as well as historical and socio-economic differences be argued to explain the revealed variation in *European*

identity? It is in fact the objective of the upcoming section to answer exactly this last question (which is simultaneously also one of the sub-questions posted in the introduction of this thesis).

7.2. Trying to Explain the Status Quo

In addition to simply finding differences between the Baltic States of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania with respect to a European identity (and thus answering the main research question), this thesis also aims at trying to explain exactly these. Therefore, I will propose (though only descriptively) some possible broad explanations for the variation regarding the main concept by considering the differences in (a) history, (b) socio-economic characteristics, and (c) national identity. In addition, I will also take up some arguments made by those scholars referred to within the theoretical framework (section 2 of this thesis). Their definitions of both *identity* and *national identity* and, finally, *European identity* will help me to relate all these concepts to each other and thus provide further explanations for what the analysis revealed in the previous section.

In order to recall in which way the Baltic countries actually differ regarding a European identity, please have a look at figure 34 (p. 41) again which summarizes the results of the analysis regarding *European identity* and its components (*European civic identity* and *European cultural identity*).

So let us have a look whether differences in national identities as well as historical and socio-economic differences can be argued to explain why Estonia appears to have the strongest *European identity* of all Baltic States, while Latvia appears to have one and Lithuania seems to be in between the other two.

First of all, Estonia may have the strongest *European identity* because of economic reasons. It obviously gains from EU membership and pan-European trade. The country even managed to foster economic growth by means of these facts. Being a member of the eurozone for sure also contributed to this as it involves Estonia even more in EU businesses, thus reminding citizens of being European. Furthermore, Estonians may generally show more trust in political institutions and therefore also in the EU as they also largely trust their national government as opposed to Latvians and Lithuanians.

Latvians, in turn, may have the weakest *European identity* because many of them have different ethnic backgrounds and thus different roots. They may not always speak the official language and understand newspapers (as I assume to be the case with, for example, many ethnic Russians who stick to their Russian roots), which makes it harder for them to show interest in both national or European matters. Languages tend to connect and there are some foreign languages prevailing in Latvia that are not spoken in the EU – so why should non-ethnic Latvians feel attached to the EU then? If they really have different roots they may rather be interested in or focus on their (non-European) countries of origin than the EU. In addition, Latvians may show less support for the EU because this again means giving up parts of their sovereignty – just like in former periods of foreign rule. I can imagine that they are rather suspicious regarding foreign rulers due to their long history of occupations, and they may

simply see the EU as such and thus a potential threat. Another explanation for the low EU support of Latvians could be dissatisfaction with the functioning of democracy, which may again convey a feeling of being overruled.

Last but not least, Lithuania may take a position between the other two Baltic States because of their past. Lithuanians enjoyed a longer period of independence before finally being occupied by tsarist Russia. They had autonomous power and were more involved with themselves than with other (foreign) powers. The image of being an active actor in the European political system might still be present in many Lithuanian minds and contribute to their formation of a European identity. In this case nationality may simply be more important than belonging to the EU.

However, after considering those possible arguments, I actually think it is rather difficult to relate differences in history as well as socio-economic characteristics to *European identity*. Even though sections 4 and 5 of this thesis revealed some interesting dissimilarities between Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania what regards their pasts and socio-economic circumstances, possible arguments based on those facts appear very weak. This is the case mainly due to the vague ground of causality we are moving on. I think we rather find ourselves speculating about certain connections than really providing empirical evidence for these. After all, there are different possibilities to interpret the consequences and influences of particular events or circumstances. For instance, the fact that Estonia and Latvia have a longer history of occupations than Lithuania might, on the one hand, imply that the first two countries have a weaker national identity than the latter one. They had to struggle with other nations which were trying to force their respective identity on the two Baltic States and thus were not able to develop an own identity to the extent than Lithuania was able to. On the other hand, the longer history of occupations could also result in Estonia and Latvia actually having a stronger national identity than Lithuania as they always had to fight for their countries and cultures or rather against their oppression.

Similarly we can discuss about socio-economic characteristics. Does a higher unemployment rate, for example, make Lithuania trust the EU less? Or the other way around, does a declining unemployment rate make Estonia trust the EU more? The direction of causality and causality in general become very tricky here – just as in the case of all arguments mentioned above.

That is why I think it does not really make sense to make further speculations about such influences and relations between *European identity* and history or socio-economic characteristics. What does make sense, though, is to relate the concepts of *identity* and *national identity* to the broader one of *European identity*, and this is exactly what I will do in the following. By applying this approach I will hopefully be able to find more reasonable and convincing explanations for what the analysis revealed in the previous section. So let us have a look at the theoretical framework again (section 2 of this thesis).

Owens (2003) makes a distinction between personal, social and collective identity and *European identity* can easily be categorized as a type of the latter. About collective identity the scholar says that it involves a “perception of a shared status or relation” as well as interaction (Owens, 2003, p. 227). When considering this we could assume that it is an easier task for Estonians. They were about to become a member of the eurozone (a circumstance which could be seen as the mentioned “shared status or relation”) and consequently were about to adopt the euro as national currency (which definitely involves everyday “interaction”) when the used Eurobarometer versions were established. News probably dealt a lot with these issues and made people draw much attention to the EU and EU businesses. This, in turn, helped citizens to uncover their collective identity and thus identify with the EU more obviously.

Furthermore, Guibernau (2011) characterizes *European identity* as “a top-down institutionally generated identity” (p. 37) which is supposed to encourage loyalty to the EU. In this connection the process of adopting the euro may play an important role for or rather within Estonia again. Based on a “top-down institutionally” made decision it has been introduced as national currency. Estonian authorities have intentionally chosen to strengthen the perception of being European with this symbol. When we consider this it appears only logical that the Estonian people developed a stronger *European identity* than the Latvian or Lithuanian one which both still have their national currencies.

The importance of such a symbol is also mentioned by Miniotaite (2003). She describes *European identity* “as a dichotomy of essentialism and constructivism” (p. 209). Constructivism actually underlines that *identity* develops “in political [...] processes by means of [...] symbols” (Miniotaite, 2003, pp. 209-210). Because there is no set European identity it may be just easier for the Estonian people to identify with the EU when knowing that they use one of its most important symbols day by day.

Moes (2008) also offers a possibility (actually a very interesting one) to explain the fact that Estonia has the strongest *European identity* of all Baltic States. He makes the argument that identities are multiple and overlapping, and that a strong national identity encourages a strong European identity to develop – why can this not be applied here? We have seen that Estonia also has the strongest *national identity* of all Baltic States. From Moes’s (2008) point of view this is no contradiction but simply a logical consequence.

In fact, Delanty (2005) agrees that dual or even multiple identities are increasing and that *European identity* is by no means supposed to replace *national identity*. Hence, also for him it is no contradiction that Estonians have the strongest *European identity* while simultaneously having the strongest *national identity*. Moreover, he says that “the more the EU appears to exist as a real entity, the more identification with it occurs” (Delanty, 2005, p.16). We could, for instance, consider those news and attention mentioned above because of the adoption of the euro as “more EU” and therefore as strengthening the idea and appearance of the EU “as a real entity” – after all those aspects directly

intervened in people's everyday life. According to Delanty (2005) this then allows a stronger identification to happen in Estonia than in Latvia and Lithuania.

In general, however, we have to keep in mind that even though we can compare *national* and *European identity* these concepts may not be equated with each other. This was emphasized by both Guibernau (2011) and Moes (2008).

While it appeared rather difficult and, honestly, way too vague to emphasize relations between a *European identity* and history or socio-economic characteristics, it appeared appropriate to relate the concepts of *identity* and *national identity* to the broader one of *European identity*. By doing so I could underline some general links between the different concepts of identity, thus revealing that it is important to consider *European identity* not only as such but also in relation to *national identity* – after all, these are closely connected. One of the most important connections is for sure the argument made by both Moes (2008) and Delanty (2005): a strong national identity supports also a strong European identity to develop. This seems indeed to be the case in Estonia, as it is the Baltic State with both the strongest national identity and the strongest European identity. Moreover, the euro as one of the most important European symbols and means of identification appears to play an important role in the northernmost located Baltic State. Unfortunately, logical explanations for Latvia having the weakest European identity and Lithuania being in between could not be found. Further analyses are apparently necessary to uncover these circumstances.

A general remark that I would like to make is that it may be the case that the three countries still need time to build up a stronger *European identity*. In terms of nation-state history eight years of EU membership appear as a really short period, so it may be just natural that all of them do not have outstanding *European identities* yet (although exactly these nonetheless differ, making it important to stress the actual distinctiveness of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania once more). Societies may still need to adapt to ongoing changes. For me it will thus be interesting to observe future developments in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania regarding their (both *national* and *European*) *identities*.

8. Conclusion

The last chapter of this Bachelor thesis aims at rounding off the whole study. In this respect I will present the main results found, the theoretical value of the thesis and finally the limitations of the outcomes. All in all, attention will be drawn to the three Baltic States' unique society and culture and their independence from each other despite their geographical closeness.

Let us start with a summary of what we have found out within the scope of this study.

8.1. Results

With my study I intended to answer one main research question as well as various sub-questions. In order to recall what these precisely asked, here is an overview again.

Main research question:

To what extent do citizens' perceptions of a European identity differ in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in the year 2010 with respect to each other?

Helpful sub-questions:

- *Which historical and socio-economic differences between Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania can be identified?*
- *To what extent do citizens' perceptions of national identities differ in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in 2010 compared to each other?*
- *Can differences in national identities as well as historical and socio-economic differences be argued to explain the variation in European identity?*

Basically, all of them asked about certain differences between the Baltic States and their influences on the countries' respective *European identity*. So let us recall which variation could be detected between the three of them, starting with the most important differences in history.

During their pasts, Estonia and Latvia experienced many more invasions than Lithuania. The first two were occupied inter alia by Danish, German and Swedish powers, while Lithuania developed as an autonomous state as well as a key player in European politics and finally became the largest state in the whole of Europe. Even when tsarist Russia took over control it did so directly in Estonia and Latvia but more than 70 years later in Lithuania. As one can see, Estonia and Latvia were more under the influence of Northern Europe, whereas Lithuania was closely connected to Central Europe. Besides, during the course of time Latvia became more Russian than its two Baltic neighbours. So generally speaking, it is primarily the common Soviet past which connects the three entities. Especially the periods before (approximately) 1800, however, went differently.

Also regarding socio-economic characteristics I detected some obvious differences. One of the most important characteristics of especially Latvia and also Estonia regards the representation of ethnic minorities but does not play a big role in Lithuania. Latvia is the most ethnically diverse country of the three of them and still experiences much of Russia or Russian influence within its territory. Lithuania, however, is the most homogeneous one. These circumstances also explain why Russian, German and some Scandinavian idioms are quite common in Estonia and Latvia, whereas people in Lithuania speak only Russian or Polish (besides English, of course). In general, Estonia seems to be closely connected with its Nordic neighbour Finland – in some aspects even closer than with the other two Baltic States. Furthermore, Latvia and Lithuania still have their own national currencies, while Estonia

introduced the euro. The first two also face slightly higher unemployment rates than Estonia and in Lithuania it is even expected to remain quite high in the near future.

After having summarized the identified historical and socio-economic differences between Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, we will move on with *national identities* and to what extent these differ between Baltic citizens. Just to keep in mind, *national identity* regards the awareness of belonging to a certain nation-state. It was operationalized as follows:

Figure 35: Operationalization of National Identity

Concept	Factors
<i>National civic identity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ interest in national politics ▪ trust in the national government
<i>National cultural identity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ attachment to the country

The analysis discovered certain differences. On average, Estonians show the smallest interest in national politics, the greatest trust in their national government and the biggest attachment to their country. Latvians take the middle value in each category. Lithuanians show the biggest interest in national politics, the lowest trust in their national government and also the lowest attachment to their country. Bearing this in mind, we can conclude that Estonians seem to have the strongest *national identity* of all Baltic peoples, while Lithuanians appear to have the weakest one and Latvians seem to be in between. Regarding the two components of *national identity*, the *national civic identity* appears to be similar in all three countries, whereas the *national cultural identity* seems to be a bit stronger in Estonia and Latvia compared to Lithuania. In general, what became obvious or outstanding was that almost all citizens felt highly attached to their respective country. This led me to the assumption that a strong *national identity* is present in all Baltic States.

By finally analyzing the key concept of this study, we were able to answer the main research question. Just to keep in mind, *European identity* refers to the collective consciousness of belonging to the EU. It was operationalized as follows:

Figure 36: Operationalization of European Identity

Concept	Factors
<i>European civic identity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ interest in European politics ▪ trust in the EU ▪ support for EU membership
<i>European cultural identity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ attachment to the EU ▪ personal importance of being European

So to what extent do citizens' perceptions of a European identity now differ in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania with respect to each other? The analysis again discovered the following variation. On average, Estonians show the smallest interest in European politics, the biggest trust in the EU, the biggest support for EU membership, the smallest attachment to the EU and, finally, the biggest personal importance of being European. Meanwhile, Latvians take the middle value regarding interest in European politics and show the lowest trust in the EU, the smallest support for EU membership, the highest attachment to the EU and the smallest personal importance of being European. Lithuanians, in turn, have the biggest interest in European politics and take the middle values in all remaining categories. Keeping this in mind, we can assume that Estonians have the strongest *European identity* of all Baltic peoples. Accordingly, Latvians appear to have the weakest one and Lithuanians seem to be in between. Regarding the two components of *European identity*, the *European civic identity* seems to be quite strong in Estonia and rather weak in Latvia. The *European cultural identity*, in turn, appears to be similar in all three countries. Moreover, the *cultural* component of *European identity* appears stronger than the *civic* part. However, as far as I can say, none of the three countries stuck out with a particularly strong *European identity*.

The last sub-question asked whether differences in national identities as well as historical and socio-economic differences could be (theoretically) argued to explain the variation in European identity. This was actually quite difficult. Even though some interesting dissimilarities between Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania what regards their pasts and socio-economic circumstances were revealed, possible arguments based on those facts appear very weak in terms of causality. We quickly found ourselves speculating than really providing empirical evidence. That is why I applied a different approach. I referred to the theoretical framework of this thesis and related the concepts of *identity* and *national identity* to the broader one of *European identity*. By doing so I was able to find more general but also more appropriate explanations for what the analysis revealed. For instance, it seems to be easier for Estonians to uncover their *European identity* when one regards it as a type of collective identity as introduced by Owens (2003). They joined the eurozone and consequently adopted the euro as national currency, and the whole process helped them to identify with the EU more obviously. Estonian institutions intentionally chose these measures, thus strengthening the perception of being European as argued by Guibernau (2011). Also according to Miniotaite (2003) it may be easier for the Estonian people to identify with the EU when dealing with one of its most important symbols day by day. By referring to Moes (2008), in turn, I pointed to a different explanation for the fact that Estonia has the strongest *European identity* of all Baltic States. Estonia also has the strongest *national identity* of all three countries and this circumstance actually supports a strong *European identity*, as argued by Moes (2008). Delanty (2005) in fact agrees with this. Furthermore, he also explains that a stronger identification happens as soon as the EU appears to a greater extent – and we could use the euro as explanation again here. All in all, this part of the analysis showed that it is important to consider *European identity* not only as such but also in relation to *national identity* or simply the general

sociological notion of *identity*. However, I was only able to provide some possible explanations for the fact that Estonia has the strongest *European identity* of all Baltic States. The question why the other two countries ranked lower could not be answered unfortunately. Further analyses would apparently be necessary to uncover these circumstances.

With all these findings I was not only able to answer the main research question but also the various sub-questions I posed at the beginning of this thesis, as one can see now. The next step is to question the background of this study.

8.2. Theoretical Value of the Thesis

In order to say something about the theoretical value of this thesis we have to ask ourselves what it offers and what it contributes to existing studies or the prevailing literature. Moreover, we can make some suggestions for further possible investigations which may take up arguments of the present study.

As already stated in the introduction, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania are perceived to be similar. In the context of international relations there is often no distinction made between the three countries. They are simply said to be the same and thus treated as one entity. However, it is important to have a closer look at all of them separately in order to understand their different characters and unique societies. One should not just follow the group and continue to put three very distinct countries in the same basket. Distancing oneself from the common picture is rather necessary to point out that countries can still develop and shape differently, although they share a common history and/or background. This study can thus shed light on the fact that the three Baltic States are actually not as similar as people outside of them think they are.

Furthermore, an interesting connection between the common sociological notion of (*national*) *identity* and the much broader concept of *European identity* is made. It is much more difficult to define the latter one because there are different views on it and no set classification exists. However, within the scope of this study Moes (2008) proves to be right when claiming that a strong *national identity* does not prevent a strong *European identity* to develop but rather encourages it – at least this is what I assume after reviewing my analysis. Also Delanty's (2005) argument that "the more the EU appears to exist as a real entity, the more identification with it occurs" (p.16) can be supported after conducting this study.

In addition, this thesis offers a lot of possibilities for further research. It includes a lot of "hidden" issues as certain arguments were incorporated but not further elaborated within the scope of this study. However, aspects that needed to be left out here could easily become issues of other analyses. For example, the chosen research design and research question(s) only asked for differences between the Baltic States with respect to a *European identity*. No general assessment of the strength of the concept within these countries was included. I shortly touched on this issue in the analysis but did not really go

into detail, what actually might have been interesting, though. Not only detecting certain differences regarding both *national* and *European identity* but also analyzing the size and importance of these could be a starting point for another study. Furthermore, it may be interesting to compare the findings valid for the Baltic States of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania with other EU countries or groupings (e.g. the Balkan countries or Western European countries). By doing so one could check if results found for this particular group of countries are unique or if they are comparable to those found elsewhere, too, which may indicate some kind of trend or certain development.

Moreover, it may be interesting to look at the Baltic States again in a couple of years (maybe even in about 50 years), as already indicated in the analysis (section 7.2 of this thesis). This would give them more time to develop a clear European identity so that they ultimately might differ even more or provide more outstanding values.

Besides, Miniotaite (2003) explained that over the course of time “the Baltic countries have been constructing a nation state identity that is historically and logically related to modernity” and “the organizing principle of the modern state system is that of sovereignty” (p. 210). Sovereignty is in fact very important for and within these countries but still they joined the EU, which means giving up parts of their national sovereignty. At this point one could ask whether they are caught between sovereignty (that means the construction of a nation-state identity) and integration (that means globalization and European integration processes) – what again provides us with more ideas for investigations.

All in all, we can see that there is still a lot of room for further questions and analyses. Deepening these thoughts was not the task of the present thesis but it may be the task of upcoming studies. This, in turn, sheds light on the importance of clarifying the borders of an analysis. That is exactly what the following section deals with.

8.3. Limitations of Findings

There are some obvious limitations to the results found. The conclusions we can draw from the done analysis are just valid for one single year (in this case 2010) and for sure only certain facts will be shown but other details left out. We must be aware of the fact that the time selection probably affects the conclusions as these are made on the basis of the Eurobarometer data of 2010 only. If another year had been chosen other results would have been found most certainly – for instance, due to different historical influences or different socio-economic conditions. I can imagine that directly after the time of the Soviet occupation there may have been more **trust in** or **attachment to the EU** because people were looking for alternatives and more open towards international organizations.

Furthermore, I did not distinguish between different kinds of people within the scope of my analysis. There was no distinction made between, for example, old and young citizens, educated and non-educated ones etc. so that findings are rather general. However, *identity* is actually determined by who you are so these characteristics may have an influence on the outcomes regarding both *national* and *European identity*. Moreover, we should ask ourselves who carries *identity*. The section on the Baltic

countries' histories (chapter 4. of this thesis) dates a long time back to the past and those generations are not alive anymore. Can arguments based on historical developments then be convincing as they regard people who are only connected to the past by stories or history books?

Last but not least, we should think about the factors chosen to describe *national* and *European identity*. Were they appropriate? For sure they captured only a small piece of the broad concept of *identity* and for sure not all of them were equally good. At first appearance **interest in politics**, for instance, might be argued to be a rather weak indicator for *national* and *European identity* respectively because it does not say so much about a person's connection with his or her country or the EU. Nevertheless I decided to include this factor since it matches very much the definition of *European civic identity* as mentioned by Moes (2008) in section 2: "the degree to which [people] feel that they are citizens of a European political system, whose rules, laws, and rights have an influence on their daily life" (p. 5).³⁴ **Attachment to the country or the EU**, in turn, can probably said to be a very strong factor describing *identity*. However, when choosing those factors in the beginning I wanted to emphasize the existence of two different components of *identity*: *civic identity* and *cultural identity*. This was definitely achieved. Moreover, it was revealed that the *cultural* component of both *national* and *European identity* is stronger in all Baltic States, which might actually give a hint that this part is more visible and more important for citizens when thinking about or defining their respective *identity*. Although for my purposes the methods chosen were useful, one should nevertheless consider that there may be better ways to capture *European identity*.

All these (and probably many more) aspects should be taken into account when we think about the whole thesis. Hence, conclusions need to be treated with caution. However, my analysis was not supposed to generalize about the whole EU; conclusions were only drawn from and for the Baltic States. That is exactly where this study stops – for now.

³⁴ With the operationalization chosen I actually tried to stick as much as possible to the authors and their approaches mentioned in the theoretical framework. That is one of the reasons why this thesis is quite extensive.

9. Annex

History of the Baltic States

The following sections provide information about the three Baltic States' past and are supposed to present an overview of the most important historical developments since the Middle Ages.

Estonia

Estonia (in Estonian: *Eesti*) – officially known as the Republic of Estonia (in Estonian: *Eesti Vabariik*) – is the northernmost located Baltic State. It is also the smallest and least populous of the three of them. Throughout history, it was controlled and influenced by many other nations (European Union, 2012a).

Estonians were among the first peoples that decided to settle in Europe and live in their territory which is directly located at the Baltic Sea for more than 5000 years now (U.S. Department of State, 2012). Until the 13th century they formed an independent nation. Afterwards, however, Estonia was occupied and governed by many other powers, mainly due to its geopolitical situation (U.S. Department of State, 2012; Ahonen, 2001). The Danish conquered many parts of the northern territory of Estonia during the 13th century and some of their influences last until today; for example they created the Estonian coat of arms including three leopards which is still used today (Encyclopædia Britannica, 2012; Welcome to Estonia, 2012f). They were joined by Germans, though, and the Danish King allowed many Estonian cities (e.g. Tallinn, at that time called “*Reval*”) to be governed by the German city of Lübeck – a condition that persisted until the end of the 19th century (Encyclopædia Britannica, 2012). In this connection, several Estonian cities joined the powerful Hanseatic League, including Tallinn which nowadays is Estonia's capital (Welcome to Estonia, 2012c).

In the 16th century the territory of Estonia was divided between Denmark, Sweden and Poland as a result of the Russian-Livonian War. With that the so-called “age of three kings” began (Welcome to Estonia, 2012f). As a result of the Swedish-Polish Wars between 1600 and 1627, first southern Estonia and later the whole country (except from one little part, the *Seto* region) came under Swedish rule (Welcome to Estonia, 2012f). During that time some Russians belonging to the Russian Orthodox belief escaped from their home country and searched for shelter in Estonia. They settled down and nowadays represent “one of the most traditional cultural minorities” there (Welcome to Estonia, 2012f).

In 1721, as a result of the Great Northern War (1700-1721), Russia managed to defeat the Swedes and gained control over Estonia (U.S. Department of State, 2012; Welcome to Estonia, 2012f). During the following century Estonia experienced two changes. First of all, there was a huge migration flow to the cities. A considerable increase of Estonians living in the city of Tallinn could be identified: the number rose from 51.8 in 1867 to 88.7 in 1897 (Encyclopædia Britannica, 2012). In addition, a national song festival was organized. Out of this an annual tradition developed and it still exists today,

shaping the Estonian high culture to a large extent. That is why the end of the 19th century is called the age of the country's "national awakening" (Welcome to Estonia, 2012f).

After the First World War (1914-1918), which marked the end of the Russian Empire, Estonia finally succeeded in reaching independence (CIA – The World Factbook, 2012a). On February 24, 1918, the country published the "Manifest for all the Peoples of Estonia" and described itself as an independent democratic republic (Welcome to Estonia, 2012f; U.S. Department of State, 2012). In the next couple of months Germany again occupied the territory, leading to the Estonian War of Independence between November 1918 and February 1920. However, with the help of several allies, the country managed to fight against the attacking powers (Welcome to Estonia, 2012f). As a result of the Peace Treaty of Tartu in 1920, Russia announced its recognition of the Estonian independence *de jure*. One year later the nation-state joined the League of Nations (Welcome to Estonia, 2012f). During the next two decades of sovereignty, Estonia respected its minorities and awarded cultural autonomy to all of them, even though developing an authoritarian system. This liberal attitude was quite exceptional at that time in Europe (U.S. Department of State, 2012; Encyclopædia Britannica, 2012). Furthermore, according to Sirkka Ahonen (2001), "Estonia had been a young nation-state in the process of constructing a uniform national identity" throughout that period (p. 182).

When the Second World War (1939-1945) began, Estonia initially stayed neutral. The Soviet Union, however, overran the territory, destroyed the existing national structure, annulled the independent nation-state of Estonia, and incorporated the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic (Estonian SSR or shortly ESSR) into the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) in 1940 (Welcome to Estonia, 2012f; U.S. Department of State, 2012). A period of oppression and Sovietization began for Estonian citizens. Nazi Germany shortly occupied the Estonian land between 1941 and 1944 but the Soviets finally took over again, initiating the first mass deportations of Estonians (Welcome to Estonia, 2012f; Ahonen, 2001). With the end of World War II peace still did not reach Estonia. The Soviet occupation went on, accompanied by post-war deportations and the attempt to impose a Soviet identity on local people (Welcome to Estonia, 2012f; Ahonen, 2001).

After a long period of Russification, Estonian protests against the foreign rule increased and calls for autonomy rose. People did not only launch the "singing revolution" (in which song festivals and other music events were used as a peaceful way to protest against the Soviet occupation) but also created a human chain of almost two million people, stretching from Tallinn over Riga to Vilnius and demanding self-determination for all three Baltic States (Welcome to Estonia, 2012f). Estonia's struggle for independence finally gained success when the country succeeded in achieving freedom and full sovereignty anew in 1991 due to the collapse of the Soviet Union (CIA – The World Factbook, 2012a). Fortunately, this triumph came without bloody fights (U.S. Department of State, 2012). In 1992, a new constitution was established and the first presidential elections were organized (Welcome to Estonia, 2012f).

Since its independence the country improved its relations with the West. In 1991, Estonia became a member of the United Nations (UN), and in 2004, it joined both NATO and the EU (CIA – The World Factbook, 2012a). Finally, it also became a member of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) as well as one of the eurozone. With the latter the Estonian currency (the Estonian kroon) was replaced with the euro (Welcome to Estonia, 2012f).

All in all, Brüggemann and Kasekamp (2008) mention that the past “is still a semantic battlefield sharply dividing Estonia’s population basically on ethnic grounds” (p. 429) (for further information on Estonia’s ethnical division cf. annex).

Latvia

Latvia (in Latvian: *Latvija*) – officially known as the Republic of Latvia (in Latvian: *Latvijas Republika*) – is the Baltic State located in the middle, i.e. between Estonia and Lithuania. Many nations invaded the country because of its strategically advantageous location; that is why people generally regard the nation’s past as written by other powers than by Latvians themselves.

Several Baltic tribes had already settled in the territory which is nowadays commonly known as Latvia before Germans invaded the area in the middle of the 11th century, naming it “*Livonia*” (U.S. Department of State, 2011). A period marked by German influence followed. In 1201, the Germanic Bishop Albert of Livonia founded the city of Riga, Latvia’s present capital. It soon became a center for trade and joined the powerful Hanseatic League in 1282 (The Latvian Institute, 2012a; City Paper, 2012). In this way the city connected itself with other parts of Europe and established important economic as well as cultural relationships (U.S. Department of State, 2011).

The German rule went on until the 16th century. Subsequent to the Livonian War (1558-1584), great parts of today’s territory of Latvia were incorporated into the Polish-Lithuanian Kingdom (City Paper, 2012). This rule, however, was to a great extent again replaced by the Swedes in the 17th century who conquered Northern Latvia (Eastern Latvia stayed under Polish influence, though) and also parts of Estonia. Because Sweden managed to reduce the privileges of the Germans and carried out social reforms, this era is often regarded as the “good Swedish times” (The Latvian Institute, 2012a; City Paper, 2012). The Scandinavian country lost the Latvian territory, though, after being defeated by Russia in the Great Northern War (1700-1721), whose control finally persisted till the 20th century (U.S. Department of State, 2011).

During the 19th century, a national consciousness visibly grew among Latvians. For instance, the establishment of the Young Latvian Movement was intended to protest against various Russification policies and the oppression of local (especially urban) people (U.S. Department of State, 2011; City Paper, 2012). This whole period was referred to as “awakening” (cf. the previous section about Estonia), and led to several developments as, for example, “migration to cities”³⁵, “rising levels of

³⁵ The percentage of Latvians in the city of Riga rose from 23.5 to 41.6 between 1867 and 1897 (Encyclopædia Britannica, 2012).

education” as well as the “emergence of [the] modern Latvian idiom and culture” (The Latvian Institute, 2012a).

Between 1915 and 1917, that is during the First World War, half of Latvia’s land was occupied by the Germans and all of it in 1918 (The Latvian Institute, 2012a). Though still under German occupation, an “independent democratic republic” was declared on November 18, 1918 and an army was formed as well (The Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia, 2012). One month later, however, Soviet troops invaded the country. This ultimately led to a liberation war which Latvians (just like Estonians) won (The Latvian Institute, 2012a). As a result, they signed a peace treaty with Soviet Russia in 1920 in which the latter announced its recognition of the Latvian sovereignty (U.S. Department of State, 2011). An independent Latvian state then joined the League of Nations on September 22, 1921. Its government, led by Prime Minister Kārlis Ulmanis (1877-1942), pronounced “a democratic, parliamentary republic”, emphasized “Latvian as the official language”, and assured cultural autonomy for any minority within the country (U.S. Department of State, 2011). Moreover, an electoral system was set up and included in the Latvian constitution which, in turn, was adopted in February, 1922. From that moment on, only the Latvian people (and no foreign ruler) should be able and allowed to change the circumstance of Latvia enjoying sovereign power (The Latvian Institute, 2012a). This, however, was to change again a couple of years.

The parliamentary republic did not last for a very long time. Many troubles caused by economic depression and political disorder led to the launch of a coup d’état by Prime Minister Ulmanis who dismissed the Parliament on May 15, 1934 (U.S. Department of State, 2011). He also prohibited left-wing political parties and strengthened authoritarian state rule with the intention of controlling both Latvian social life and the country’s economy (U.S. Department of State, 2011).

A couple of years later, Latvia suffered the next defeat. On August 5, 1940, the Soviet Union declared Latvia’s annexation, officially included the Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic (Latvian SSR) in the USSR³⁶, and once more began to rule over the territory (U.S. Department of State, 2011). One year later, Latvian citizens experienced the first forced deportations to far-away parts of the Soviet Union. They were kept in so-called *GULAG* camps where they had to work hard (The Latvian Institute, 2012a). For a short period the Soviets lost the territory to Nazi Germany (in 1941, to be more precise) but they were able to get it back in 1944 (City Paper, 2012).

After World War II, the Soviets remained dominant and carried out further deportations in order to more fully integrate Latvia into the USSR. As a result of this and the past war, exiles and mass murders, the country lost 35% of its population between 1940 and 1949 (City Paper, 2012).

After a long period of Russification, protests against the foreign rule also became visible in Latvia and people increasingly called for greater cultural autonomy. For the first time people publicly carried the national flag and sang the national anthem (The Latvian Institute, 2012a). In July 1989, the Latvian

³⁶ This act has never been recognized de jure by most Western governments, though (The Latvian Institute, 2012).

Supreme Soviet brought through a “Declaration of Sovereignty” (U.S. Department of State, 2011). The constitution was changed in so far as it now declared the supremacy of Latvian laws over Soviet ones. One year later, the Council decided to re-establish full independence after a “transitional” period, and a Latvian Prime Minister was chosen in May 1990 (U.S. Department of State, 2011). Soviet forces intended to overthrow the newly formed governments in all Baltic States and during protests and demonstrations in Riga several people were killed by Soviet security forces (The Latvian Institute, 2012a). This commitment as well as the so-called “singing revolution” and the human chain of about 600km from Tallinn over Riga to Vilnius showed people’s strong support and urge for independence. In the end, the Soviets remained unsuccessful in regaining control over Latvia as their regime collapsed (City Paper, 2012). Latvia’s official sovereignty was announced on August 21, 1991, and quickly gained international recognition (U.S. Department of State, 2011). In 1994, the last Russian troops finally left Latvian territory (The Latvian Institute, 2012a).

Since then the Republic of Latvia has done everything to distance itself from structures and features which the Soviet Union was founded on. It concentrates on strengthening its relations with other nation-states and has become increasingly involved in international affairs (U.S. Department of State, 2011). After regaining independence, the country directly joined the UN and became a signatory to several international agreements like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (U.S. Department of State, 2011). Furthermore, Latvia is a member of the Organization on Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the NATO, and the European Union since 2004 (U.S. Department of State, 2011; The Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia, 2012). It cooperates closely with the US and the EU in order to support strengthening democracy in Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, and Georgia. The country even participated in several NATO missions, revealing its policy of international security cooperation (U.S. Department of State, 2011).

Generally speaking, the overall shape of the Latvian history does not differ much from the Estonian one; they in fact share a lot of traits. They do differ in the details compared to Lithuania, though, as one will see in the following.

Lithuania

Lithuania (in Lithuanian: *Lietuva*) – officially known as the Republic of Lithuania (in Lithuanian: *Lietuvos Respublika*) – is the southernmost located Baltic State. It is also the largest and most populous of the three of them (European Union, 2012c). Compared to Estonia and Latvia, Lithuania started its existence in a different, rather independent way, as one will see below. Nevertheless, it also experienced a number of invasions and occupations in the course of time (In Your Pocket, 2012).

For a long time Lithuanians, who used to live in less-accessible, dense forests and swamplands, succeeded in resisting foreign incursions and remained an independent people (Encyclopædia Britannica, 2012). Hence, several Baltic tribes had already settled in today’s Lithuanian territory long

before they became a target for the missions of the Roman-Catholic Church in the 10th century (The Official Gateway of Lithuania, 2012a).

During the High Middle Ages, the country developed some kind of state, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (The Official Gateway of Lithuania, 2012a). A Lithuanian chieftain called Mindaugas who had united several tribes into that political entity became ruler of this realm in 1236 and even a member of the western political hierarchy in 1253 (Encyclopædia Britannica, 2012). Lithuania was thus acknowledged by the rest of the world and especially by Western Europe as “an equal member of the political system” (The Official Gateway of Lithuania, 2012a). Its ruling practices were mainly based on a policy of wide autonomy and religious toleration (Encyclopædia Britannica, 2012). By agreeing on alliances and conquering surrounding areas, Lithuania managed to enlarge its territory to a great extent and finally became the largest state in Europe at the end of the 14th century (CIA – The World Factbook, 2012c).

In 1385, Lithuania concluded an agreement with Poland. By accepting Roman Catholicism the country clearly moved closer to the West (Encyclopædia Britannica, 2012). In the next couple of years, the written language was spread, schools were immensely supported, and students moved all over Europe to study at various European universities (The Official Gateway of Lithuania, 2012a).

In 1410, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Kingdom of Poland jointly won the Battle of Grunwald (in Lithuanian: *Žalgiris*; in German: *Tannenberg*) against the Order of Teutonic Knights (The Official Gateway of Lithuania, 2012a; In Your Pocket, 2012). Afterwards, Lithuania comprised the greatest area of its history and emerged as a key political power in Eastern and Central Europe. It is interesting to note that this expansion was mainly successful due to Lithuania’s ethnic and religious tolerance with respect to other peoples, even those who were actually regarded as possible enemies (The Official Gateway of Lithuania, 2012a).

In 1569, the two powers which initially formed a rather loose union now officially joined together and formed a Commonwealth of Two Peoples, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (CIA – The World Factbook, 2012c). With this an era of “political glory, prosperity, and cultural development” began (Encyclopædia Britannica, 2012). Moreover, Lithuania approved a constitution in 1791 which was adopted before the French one and thus represented the first constitution in the whole of Europe (The Official Gateway of Lithuania, 2012a). Just a few years later, however, the Lithuanian territory was invaded by and incorporated into tsarist Russia, introducing a long period of Russian occupation (In Your Pocket, 2012).

At the end of the 19th century protests developing into a national movement against the oppression grew also in Lithuania and were seen as a way to preserve national identity. Though occupied by Nazi Germany during the First World War, Lithuania signed an Act of Independence and announced its sovereignty in 1918 (The Official Gateway of Lithuania, 2012a). The Germans withdrew and Poland attacked the Lithuanian land, claiming several areas (e.g. Vilnius) to actually be Polish. From 1920 until 1939 Poland kept these under control (In Your Pocket, 2012). In the meantime, the autonomous

rest of Lithuania benefitted from the authoritarian rule by its nationalist president Antanas Smetona (1874-1944) during the Interbellum, even though this sounds opposing (In Your Pocket, 2012).

The period of independence ended again in 1940 with the Soviet Union occupying the area and carrying out first deportations (CIA – The World Factbook, 2012c). Shortly being ruled by the Nazis during World War II and suffering from numerous mass murders, Lithuania was officially incorporated into the USSR as Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic (Lithuanian SSR) in 1944 (In Your Pocket, 2012). More deportations followed, in the course of which people were taken to Siberia and other distant places (The Official Gateway of Lithuania, 2012a).

In the course of time, protests rose again. In 1988, a Lithuanian reform movement called “Sąjūdis” was set up and the Lithuanian flag was raised in public (In Your Pocket, 2012; The Official Gateway of Lithuania, 2012a). Joining together with Latvians and Estonians, people created a human chain over the Baltics and used it as a way to express their urge for freedom. Finally, on March 11, 1990, Lithuania was the first Soviet republic announcing its autonomy (European Union, 2012c). Russian authorities did not recognize this proclamation and aimed at fighting it (CIA – The World Factbook, 2012c). At the beginning of 1991, Soviet units were sent to Vilnius and several people got killed in fights (In Your Pocket, 2012). After the fall of the Soviet empire Lithuania finally received international recognition and could join the UN. The last Russian troops left the territory in 1993 (CIA – The World Factbook, 2012c).

From then onwards Lithuania moved closer to Western European institutions by acquiring full membership to both NATO and EU in 2004 (CIA – The World Factbook, 2012c). In the context of EU affairs the nation-state took over the position of an official donor, offering aid to Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, South Caucasus, Afghanistan and Iraq (The Official Gateway of Lithuania, 2012a).

In general, Lithuanians regard themselves as “brave and strong-willed” and use these characteristics in order to explain how they managed to deal with problems and hardship during history (The Official Gateway of Lithuania, 2012a).

Socio-economic Characteristics of the Baltic States

The following sections provide information about socio-economic circumstances in the three Baltic States.

Estonia

The northernmost located Baltic State has about 1.3 million inhabitants. Its capital is Tallinn which represents the biggest city in Estonia with around 401 000 inhabitants (Welcome to Estonia, 2012e). These, in turn, make up almost 30% of the total Estonian population. In general, approximately two-thirds of all people (68%) live in cities or towns, while one-third lives in rural areas (32%) (Welcome to Estonia, 2012e).

It is important to mention the representation of ethnic groups within the country: Estonians make up 68% of the entire population and are joined by 25% Russians, 2% Ukrainians, 1% Belarusians, 1% Finns and a few others (Welcome to Estonia, 2012e). It is interesting to note that Estonia actually was a rather homogeneous society before the Second World War, as national minorities represented just 12% of the population (Welcome to Estonia, 2012g). However, the war as well as the following occupations by the Soviets and Germans changed general traits of the Estonian society. At the end of the 1980s, minorities made up around one third of the population – the amount of non-Estonians had thus increased immensely (Welcome to Estonia, 2012g). Estonia itself has always been tolerating the different nationalities living together in the country, making sure that they could adhere to their language as well as cultural distinctiveness. This is, for instance, illustrated by the Law on the Cultural Autonomy for National Minorities which was adopted in 1925 and represented the first of its kind in Europe at that time (Welcome to Estonia, 2012g).

If you bear these facts in mind it is not surprising that especially Russian but also Finnish, English and German are widely spoken and understood by the population – alongside the official language of Estonian, of course (Welcome to Estonia, 2012e). Estonian, however, is only connected with Finnish as both belong to the Finno-Ugric group of languages (European Union, 2012a). Hence, there is no direct relationship between Russian and Estonian as one may assume due to the countries' common past (see section 4.1. on the Estonian history). There is another connection with Estonia's Nordic neighbour Finland, though.³⁷ The Estonian and the Finnish national anthem in fact share the same melody; only their lyrics differ from each other (Welcome to Estonia, 2012h). This probably ties the two of them even closer together.

Coming to an end with social aspects I consider two more things worth mentioning. Regarding religion one can easily recognize that most Estonians belong to the Lutheran church. The next larger confessions are Greek Orthodox, Russian Orthodox, Baptist, Methodist and Roman Catholic (Welcome to Estonia, 2012e). Regarding culture one has to know that an important component of Estonia is its citizens' love of music and singing. Especially folk songs are particularly valuable to Estonians, of which they have one of the biggest collections worldwide (Welcome to Estonia, 2012b).

Let us now have a look at the state and its political as well as economic organization. The Republic of Estonia is a parliamentary democracy (Welcome to Estonia, 2012e). Head of state is the President, currently Toomas Hendrik Ilves; head of government is the Prime Minister, currently Andrus Ansip (Welcome to Estonia, 2012e). One of the most important dates is February 24 – Estonia's Independence Day. In 1918 this was the day on which the country announced its sovereignty and thus escaped from the Soviet Russian guardianship (CIA – The World Factbook, 2012a).

Estonia's economy is generally regarded as very liberal and has "one of the higher per capita income levels in Central Europe and the Baltic region" (CIA – The World Factbook, 2012a). After the

³⁷ By the way, Finland's capital Helsinki is with a distance of around 85 km much closer to Tallinn than, for example, Latvia's capital Riga with 310 km (Welcome to Estonia, 2012d).

collapse of the Soviet Union it first decreased tremendously but liberal economic policies as well as a new orientation (namely towards the West) made the Estonian economy shoot up again from the mid 1990s on (U.S. Department of State, 2012). Between 2000 and 2008, there was an annual average growth of 7%, making Estonia one of the three EU members “with the fastest growing real GDP” (Welcome to Estonia, 2012a). The economy slid into recession afterwards, leading inter alia to decreased private sector investments and smaller export capacities (Welcome to Estonia, 2012a). However, Estonia managed to recover from the economic crisis. In 2011, the annual GDP grew by 7.6%. Nowadays, it even has the highest GDP growth rate throughout Europe due to increasing exports and foreign investments as well as the adoption of the euro as Estonia’s official currency in 2011 (CIA – The World Factbook, 2012a). Furthermore, the state benefits from fast growing information technologies and an increasing telecommunication sector so that Estonia is often referred to as “*E-stonia*” (U.S. Department of State, 2012). Further main industries are engineering, food products, metals, chemicals and wood products (European Union, 2012a).

Nowadays people primarily work in services; the labour force was around 75.6% in this sector in 2010 (CIA – The World Factbook, 2012a). Meanwhile the unemployment rate is decreasing annually. It was around 12.5% in 2011 and is estimated to shrink to less than 8.2% by 2016 (Welcome to Estonia, 2012a). The average monthly wage, in turn, is increasing. It was 839 euro in 2011 and it is expected to grow by 0.5% in 2012 (Welcome to Estonia, 2012a). Nevertheless a great percentage of the population (17.5%) still lives below the poverty line (CIA – The World Factbook, 2012a).

Latvia

Latvia has around 2.2 million citizens (CIA – The World Factbook, 2012b). 20 and even 100 years ago its population was much larger than it is nowadays. During the course of time, though, it decreased rapidly as a result of two world wars, mass deportations, emigration and a demographic crisis (The Latvian Institute, 2012b). The majority of today’s citizens (about 68%) lives in the cities and particularly in Latvia’s capital, the city of Riga. To be more precise approximately one third of the total population (around 730 000 people) lives there and nowhere else in Europe a country’s capital can be regarded as that dominant (The Latvian Institute, 2012b).

An important characteristic of Latvia regards the representation of ethnic groups within the country. Only 59.3% of all people are Latvians. They are joined by Russians (27.8%), Belarusians (3.6%), Ukrainians (2.5%), Poles (2.4%), Lithuanians (1.3%) and some others (3.1%) (CIA – The World Factbook, 2012b). This mix of different ethnicities mainly results from history (war, deportations, emigration etc.), as the percentage of ethnic Latvians within the country decreased from 77% in 1935 to 52% in 1989 (The Latvian Institute, 2012c). That is why ethnicity often plays a bigger role than nationality or religion in Latvia; ethnic consciousness thus often dominates over national or religious consciousness (The Latvian Institute, 2012b).

It is not surprising that Russian is the most commonly spoken foreign language – also because it was the official language during the Soviet occupation. It is then followed by English and German, though French and some Scandinavian languages can also frequently be heard (The Latvian Institute, 2012c). The main language, Latvian, is part of the Indo-European group of languages and even considered to be one of the oldest and least changed ones of this grouping. It is related to its Baltic neighbour Lithuanian (The Latvian Institute, 2012c).

Coming to an end with social aspects I again consider two more things worth mentioning. First of all, many Latvians belong to the Lutheran church which has played an important role in the nation since the 16th century. It is joined by the Russian Orthodox, the Roman Catholic and some other smaller churches (The Latvian Institute, 2012c). However, only 19.6% of the whole population adhere to the first mentioned confession which is thus not dominating. As Latvia has quite a multicultural society with different beliefs represented, no religion can clearly be regarded as the major one (The Latvian Institute, 2012e). Furthermore, Latvians usually mention their love of singing when describing themselves. Similar to Estonians they attach much value to traditional Latvian folksongs known as *dainas*. A huge number of these exists and actually a *daina* can be found for every situation (The Latvian Institute, 2012d).

Now it is time to turn to the state and its political as well as economic organization. The Republic of Latvia is a democratic, parliamentary republic and head of state is the President, currently Andris Bērziņš, while the head of government is the Prime Minister, currently Valdis Dombrovskis (The Latvian Institute, 2012c). One of the most important dates is November 18 – Latvia's Independence Day. Just like in the case of Estonia it was that day in 1918 on which the country announced its independence from Soviet Russia and gained an autonomous statehood (CIA – The World Factbook, 2012b).

The Latvian economy is generally considered as small and open with exports making up a huge amount of the national GDP (CIA – The World Factbook, 2012b). These also helped the economy recover from the economic crisis several years ago. Main production sectors are information technologies, chemical and pharmaceutical industries, electronics, mechanical engineering, timber and construction, food processing, textiles, fishery and agriculture (The Latvian Institute, 2012c). The last sector plays quite a huge role in Latvia compared to the other European countries. That is simply due to the fact that basically the whole land is fertile and the population density quite low (The Latvian Institute, 2012e). Nevertheless, Latvia is also an “old” manufacturing country as it experienced industrialization nearly at the same time as, for instance, Germany (The Latvian Institute, 2012e). Furthermore, Latvia appears as a central international player, promoting peace and democracy throughout the world. Per capita it is even “one of the largest contributors to international military operations” (U.S. Department of State, 2011).

The Latvian nation-state is not a member of the eurozone and consequently still has its own currency. One *lats* (abbreviation: Ls or LVL; plural: *lati*) consists of 100 *santīmi* (singular: *santīms*) (The

Latvian Institute, 2012c). As already mentioned above, exports make up a huge amount of the national GDP. It is interesting to note that EU members represent 72% of Latvia's main trading partners (The Latvian Institute, 2012c).

The unemployment rate is on a downward trend, decreasing from 18.7% in 2010 to 15.4% in 2011. Most Latvians work in the service sector; about 67.2% of the total labour force is situated there (CIA – The World Factbook, 2012b).

Lithuania

The southernmost located Baltic State has around 3.3 million inhabitants (European Union, 2012c). 67% of these live in urban areas. Lithuania's capital Vilnius, for instance, has approximately 548 835 people living in it (The Official Gateway of Lithuania, 2012c).

With regard to the ethnic division, Lithuania is the most homogeneous one of the three Baltic States. Around 84% of the population are Lithuanians who are joined mainly by two minority groupings: just over 6% Poles and about 5% Russians (European Union, 2012c). Furthermore, Belarusians (approximately 1%) and some other ethnicities (4%) can be found there (CIA – The World Factbook, 2012c). It is thus not surprising that Lithuanian as the official language is spoken by nearly everyone in the country, to be more precise by 82%. Only a few people stick to Russian (8%), Polish (5.6%) and other languages (4.4%) (CIA – The World Factbook, 2012c). Surviving foreign domination and occupation, Lithuanian in fact is one of two remaining Baltic languages³⁸ and with this part of the Indo-European group of languages. It is therefore regarded as “a focal point of cultural identity” (Countries and Their Cultures, 2012). It is interesting to mention that there are quite strong dialects prevailing in each region. In border areas, for instance, it is common to incorporate elements of the language of the neighboring country into the Lithuanian one (Countries and Their Cultures, 2012).

In contrast to the other two Baltic States, in Lithuania there is one religious confession obviously predominant. 79% of the population belong to the Roman Catholic church. Besides, the Russian Orthodox, the Protestant as well as some other churches are represented in smaller numbers (CIA – The World Factbook, 2012c). Regarding culture it can be detected that also Lithuanians are fond of folk music and national traditions. Already in school they learn to appreciate and preserve their uniqueness. In addition, they share a special connection to nature (Countries and Their Cultures, 2012).

If we continue with the state and political as well as economic characteristics, we have to keep in mind that also in the case of Lithuania we are dealing with a parliamentary democracy. Head of state is President Dalia Grybauskaitė; head of government is Prime Minister Andrius Kubilius (The Official Gateway of Lithuania, 2012c). Lithuania's Independence Day is celebrated on February 16 – exactly that day in 1918 on which the country proclaimed its sovereignty (CIA – The World Factbook, 2012c).

³⁸ Note: Although there are three Baltic States, only two of them speak actual Baltic languages i.e. Lithuanian and Latvian (The Official Gateway of Lithuania, 2012b).

National currency is the *litas* (abbreviation: Lt or LTL; plural: *litai* or *litu*) which consists of 100 *centai* (plural also: *centu*; singular: *centas*). 3.4528 *litas* are approximately one euro (The Official Gateway of Lithuania, 2012c).

Just like the Estonian and Latvian one, Lithuania's economy grew in the beginning of this century. The economic and financial crisis of 2008 and 2009, however, led the country slide into a deep recession. GDP decreased by 15% in 2009, showing that Lithuania was among those countries in Europe that were hit hardest by the crisis (CIA – The World Factbook, 2012c). Afterwards, the nation was among the fastest growing economies in the EU, though, as it managed to recover quickly. In both 2010 and 2011 GDP increased again (CIA – The World Factbook, 2012c).

The economy is agricultural to a large extent; that is why livestock breeding and dairy farming are significant economic activities there. Major crops are cereals, flax, beets and potatoes (Countries and Their Cultures, 2012). Authorities still try to promote commercial activity like, for example, metalworking or woodworking (Countries and Their Cultures, 2012). Important industries in fact differ from region to region. In the east metalworking, manufacturing, woodworking and the light industry are dominant; in the south water power, metalworking, manufacturing, food processing, farming and livestock rearing are widespread; and in the west shipbuilding, fish processing and tourism are predominant (Countries and Their Cultures, 2012). The north, however, has no main industries. All over the country, however, people face the same economic problems: job insecurity, high unemployment and poor labor protection laws (Countries and Their Cultures, 2012). Actually the unemployment rate was around 15.4% in 2011 and is expected to remain quite high (CIA – The World Factbook, 2012c).

Most Lithuanians work in the service sector, as around 56.9% of the total labour force is situated there. Quite many (29.1%) also work in the industry sector –at least more than in the other two Baltic States in terms of the percentage(CIA – The World Factbook, 2012c). Nevertheless about 4% of the population live below the poverty line (CIA – The World Factbook, 2012c).

In spite of EU membership Lithuania still trades a lot with Central and Eastern European countries, especially Russia. The latter is in fact the main trade partner regarding both imports and exports (CIA – The World Factbook, 2012c).

Some additional facts about the Baltic States

Territories:

Estonia: 45 227 km²

Latvia: 64 589 km²

Lithuania: 65 000 km²

Areas and populations:

Estonia is the smallest Baltic State with respect to both the territory and the inhabitants, while Lithuania is the biggest one (Welcome to Estonia, 2012e; European Union, 2012c). The biggest city in the whole Baltic region, however, belongs to Latvia; its capital Riga has nearly twice as many citizens as, for instance, its Estonian counterpart Tallinn (The Latvian Institute, 2012b). In all three countries the population is mainly urban (68% in Estonia, 68% in Latvia and 67% in Lithuania). Moreover, to a great extent people live in the capital so that each capital's population, in turn, makes up a huge percentage of the total national population (e.g. around 30% in both Estonia and Latvia) (Welcome to Estonia, 2012e; The Latvian Institute, 2012b; The Official Gateway of Lithuania, 2012c). Consequently, other cities are much smaller and less populated.

Estonia's national symbols:

The Estonian flag originates from the days of the national movement (Welcome to Estonia, 2012h). Starting as the colours of a student fraternity blue, black and white soon became Estonia's national colours and were incorporated into the official flag in 1920. Blue is supposed to represent the sky and loyalty to the homeland; black symbolizes the soil and diligence; white stands for simplicity, purity and hope for the future (Welcome to Estonia, 2012h). The appearance of the Estonian coat of arms dates back to the Middle Ages when it was created by the Danish conquerors of Estonia. It even bears a resemblance to the one of Denmark. Not only the anthem but also these two other symbols were forbidden during the latest occupation by the Soviets (Welcome to Estonia, 2012h).

Lithuania's national symbols:

The Lithuanian coat of arms, called *Vytis*, shows a white knight who is sitting on a white horse and raising a sword. It is supposed to indicate the country's past problems of defending itself from foreign intruders (Countries and Their Cultures, 2012). The colours of the national flag represent positive aspects, though. Yellow and green stand for nature (e.g. the sun and trees) and red implies traditional Lithuanian values like solidarity and pride (Countries and Their Cultures, 2012).

Estonia's external trade:

Trade is mainly done with EU members like Finland, Sweden, Latvia and Germany as well as with Russia (Welcome to Estonia, 2012d). Products for export and import do not differ much from each other: Estonia's primary exports are machinery and electrical equipment, wood products, metals and food products, while its major imports are (also) machinery and electrical equipment, mineral products and food preparations (CIA – The World Factbook, 2012a).

Latvia's external trade:

Main export commodities are timber, food, wood, metals, machinery and equipment as well as textiles; main import commodities are machinery and equipment, consumer goods, chemicals, fuels and vehicles (CIA – The World Factbook, 2012b). Major export partners are Russia (17.7%), Lithuania (16.5%) and Estonia (12.9%); major import partners are with Lithuania (17.8%), Germany (11.8%) and Russia 8.4% nearly the same countries (CIA – The World Factbook, 2012b). Generally, EU members represent 72% of Latvia's main trading partners (The Latvian Institute, 2012c).

Lithuania's external trade:

In spite of EU membership Lithuania still trades a lot with Central and Eastern European countries, especially Russia. The latter is with 33% in fact the major supplier of imports to Lithuania, followed by Germany with 9.8% and Poland with 9.2% (CIA – The World Factbook, 2012c). Major goods in this respect are fuel and raw materials. Exports, in the meantime, are increasingly delivered to the west and nearly 50% of these are supplied to the EU (Countries and Their Cultures, 2012). Main partner, though, is still Russia which receives 16.7% of all exports. Other key recipients are Latvia (10.4%), Germany (9.5%), Poland (7.1%) and Estonia (6.8%). Primary export commodities are mineral products (22%), machinery and equipment (10%), chemicals (9%) and textiles 7% (CIA – The World Factbook, 2012c).

Comparison of the Baltic States' foreign trade:

Regarding foreign trade we could see that the Baltic States have connections with each other, several EU members and Russia. Especially Lithuania trades a lot with the latter, whereas Estonia, for instance, rather focuses on Scandinavian countries because of their geographical closeness. All of them still seem to have stable and close partnerships with other EU Member States, which may be an indication or sign for their "return to Europe", as Grazina Miniotaite (2003, p. 209) calls it.

What the EU officially says about cultural diversity

The Union shall contribute to the flowering of the cultures of the Member States, while respecting their national and regional diversity and at the same time bringing the common cultural heritage to the fore (Article 167 TFEU).

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