TOWARDS AN INCLUSIVE NATIONAL IDENTITY?

The development of national identity in Estonia, 1991-present

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Introduction

Looking at the media coverage on current day issues, one could not help but wonder whether the world is once again facing a pinnacle of nationalism. Open up a newspaper, once designated by Benedict Anderson as the medium par excellence for imagining the nation[1], and it will be full of articles and opinion pieces on how nationalism has returned to Europe. Ranging from the victory of Eurosceptic, populist parties in the European Parliament elections of May 2014 in countries such as England and France to the crisis in Ukraine and Russia's role in this; often it is explained as a rise of nationalism. Some commentators even go so far as to imply that such events evoke comparisons with the interwar period.[2] What strikes out is that it is the general trend within the news to portray nationalism as something inherently bad, as a threat to the peaceful status quo. Sure, considering the fact that nationalism has played its fair share in a number of the largest tragedies of the twentieth century, this is not entirely surprising. It accompanied millions of young men to the trenches and their subsequent ill-fated deaths in 1914, it spread across Europe with the conquests of Nazi Germany from 1939 to 1945, and it wandered around the Western Balkans as recently as the 1990s during the violent breakup of Yugoslavia. In using these metaphors, which is not uncommon in media coverage as well, nationalism is portrayed as an abstract entity, something that is out there. Miroslav Hroch has addressed this inclination, stating that nationalism often is perceived "as some kind of [an] epidemic disease, which can be and has to be treated".[3] In rejecting this view, Hroch argues that nationalism is "a state of mind of actual human beings".[4] Furthermore, he discards the idea that nationalism can be treated, stating that it rather will continue to exist as long as nations exist, as a possible answer to problems.[5] When one reflects on these notions some big questions concerning nationalism arise. Is the ideology inherently bad, a disease that has to be terminated at all costs? Is nationalism bound to divide people, destined to cause violence? Does the apparent return of the ideology pose serious threats to peace on the European continent? These questions, however vast they may be, might be answered by zooming in on a particular case. The recent history of the small republic of Estonia, home to just over 1.3 million people, might provide some far-reaching insights into these problems.

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[1] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 35.
[2] René Cuperus, 'Het begint naar Interbellum te ruiken' in *De Volkskrant* 10-06-2014.
[3] Miroslav Hroch, 'Nationalism and national movements: comparing the past and the present of Central and Eastern Europe', *Nations and Nationalism* 2/1 (1996) 36.
[4] Hroch, 'Nationalism and national movements', 42.
[5] Hroch, 'Nationalism and national movements', 43.

The case of Estonia forms an interesting point of departure for several reasons. In the first place, some of the specific characteristics of the country make that it is a thought-provoking example in dealing with questions of nationalism and national identity. During the period in which Estonia was incorporated in the Soviet Union, the ethnic composition changed drastically. Forced industrialization and accompanying migration meant that the share of the population made up by ethnic Russians went up from 8,2% in 1934 to 30,3% in 1989.[6] Claims for self-determination in the late 1980s and early 1990s went in large part along nationalist lines, which is not uncommon and can be seen throughout history during break-ups of large multi-national empires. When Estonia eventually succeeded in seizing independence, the ethnic Estonians, having lived as a tiny minority within the vast Soviet Union for half a century, all of a sudden found themselves to be the ethnic majority in their reinstated republic. The ethnic Russians living in the region on the other hand, overnight became an ethnic minority in the lands they called their home. This abrupt change raised several questions for the newly formed states and their population. Questions regarding themes such as how to deal with the large ethnic Russian minority living in the country and how the national identity should be defined have popped up on a regular basis during the last twenty-five years. Since the independence movement was of a nationalist character, such questions are particularly poignant. The current situation in Ukraine has brought the issue to the fore once more. The fact that in Ukraine separatist claims have been made making use of ethnicity has led to questions whether or not something similar could occur in Estonia. Furthermore, fears for Russian interference in Estonia's domestic sphere have risen.

An assessment of the developments in the Estonian national identity during the time of the republic's independence might thus provide answers to the questions posed above. In order to do this, the main question of the thesis will be the following:

Did the national identity of Estonia change in the period from 1991 to 2014 to a more common national identity in which all inhabitants of the republic are included, and if so, what is the cause of these changes?

Before this question can be answered some other things need to be addressed. In Chapter 1, a literature report on earlier research that has been conducted on the subject will be provided. What strikes out is that there is no true consensus on the topic. The Lithuanian political

[6] Dovile Budryte, *Taming nationalism?: political community building in the post-Soviet Baltic States* (Aldershot 2005) 5.

scientist Dovile Budryte argued in 2005 that there is more or less a development visible towards attempts to create a common national identity. In particular, the rights of the ethnic Russian minorities, which have been improved under pressure from international organizations, are emphasized in this regard.[7] A more recent publication by the IMISCOE research network, in 2011, concluded that second generation ethnic Russians living in Estonia are ethnically segmented and possess an unequal social status.[8] A possible explanation for the divergent conclusions might be found in the fact that in 2007 violent inter-ethnic riots broke out in the capital of Tallinn. The lack of consensus and the fact that recent events such as the global financial crisis and the Ukraine crisis might be of influence on the process, justify further investigation of the development of the Estonian national identity. The research will challenge some conclusions drawn by earlier studies, which are based on arguments that are perhaps too myopic. The study thus will contribute to a better understanding of the development of the national identity in the republic of Estonia and the underlying patterns and mechanisms.
Furthermore, the research might contribute to other, more general academic debates. For example, the approach taken in the study might provide new insights in studying national identity.

Obviously, for one to be able to draw conclusions on the development of a national identity, a clear and delimited definition of what a national identity entails, is needed. This will be the subject of Chapter 2, in which theories of national identity, nationalism and nations will be addressed. By means of describing the work of some of the more famous scholars of nationalism, a working definition will be composed.
In Chapter 3 the developments of the Estonian national identity will be scrutinized. Based on government statistics, government reports, and secondary literature five different elements that according to Anthony D. Smith make up a national identity will be researched in the period from 1991 to 2014. In dealing with the sources, qualitative methods will mainly be used. A short background of the years prior to Estonia's independence in 1991 will also be provided and, where necessary, older events and developments will be addressed as well. The chapter will be concluded with an evaluation on whether or not one can speak of a development towards an inclusive, common national identity in post-Soviet Estonia.

[7] Budryte, *Taming nationalism?*, 198
[8] Raivo Vetik and Jelena Helemäe (eds.), *The Russian Second Generation in Tallinn and Kohtla-Järve: The TIES Study in Estonia*, (Amsterdam, 2011), 236.

Furthermore, it is important to assess the extent to which the residents of Estonia actually perceive themselves as members of the Estonian nation.

As it will turn out, the findings of Chapter 3 cannot explain all questions relating to the Estonian national identity and nation. To answer these questions, it is necessary to turn attention to the interests of the Estonian state and of the inhabitants of Estonia. This will be the subject of Chapter 4.

In the final part of the thesis, Chapter 5, conclusions will be drawn. The specific case of Estonia will be addressed, as well as the broader questions relating to nationalism that were posed at the start of the introduction.

1. Literature report

A good starting point in reviewing earlier research that has been conducted on national identities in the Baltic states is the book *Identity in Formation: The Russian-speaking Populations in the Near Abroad* by the American political scientist David Laitin, published in 1998. In this book Laitin takes an eclectic approach, combining qualitative and quantitative methods to look at Russian minorities in the newly formed states that emerged following the dissolution of the Soviet Union. He portrays these groups as 'beached diaspora', referring to the fact that they did not cross a border but found themselves beached within a new country due to the collapse of the Soviet Union instead.[9] In his work the author addresses the role of language extensively. Even though Laitin looks at all three Baltic states in his book and pays great attention to identity formation, the book is only of limited use for this study, since the thesis is dealing with changes in national identity in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in the period from 1991 up until 2014. The fact that the book from Laitin dates from 1998 means that many events and processes that are of importance for the study are not yet incorporated within this work. Which events these are, will follow in the remainder of this literature report. It must be noted however, that the eclectic method used by Laitin, in which he uses both qualitative and quantitative methods in dealing with questions of identity is very useful.

The book *Taming Nationalism? Political community building in the post-soviet Baltic states*, written by the Lithuanian political scientist Dovile Budryte in 2005, serves as a more practical starting point for this literature report, because it does incorporate some of the events and processes that were missing in the work of David Laitin. In the book, Budryte tests three hypotheses that she has distilled from previous research. First, it is hypothesized that nationalism in the Baltic states has transformed since 1991, moving from 'illiberal' nationalism to 'liberal' nationalism. With an illiberal nationalism is meant a nationalism in which one group is held to be superior, whereas in a liberal form of nationalism individual rights are protected and differences tolerated. Second, the changes are the result of the influence of Western actors. Third, the Western involvement may have had consequences that were not intended.[10] In the remainder of the book, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania are treated as individual case studies. In the conclusion she states that these case studies suggest that the first hypothesis is correct. Budryte particularly points towards laws regarding minorities that

[9] David Laitin, *Identity in formation: The Russian-speaking populations in the near abroad.* Vol.22. (New York 1998) 29.
[10] Budryte, *Taming nationalism?,* 34.

were changed under pressure from international organizations. However, she does concede that there still are remaining issues in ethnic relations and political community building, for example regarding historical perceptions.[11] Historical memories and memory politics also play a role in shaping the national identity.[12] The second and third hypotheses also turn out to be true. Membership conditionality has had a strong influence on the policies of the three republics.[13] Budryte also notes that "international influence can affect government policies and legislation, but it is unrealistic to expect that the international actors pursuing 'Europeanization' are going to re-shape the identities of nation-states and affect societal norms and prevalent attitudes."[14] This statement appears to be quite contradictory in relation to the other conclusions she is drawing. Finally, Budryte points at historical self-reflection, that is re-visiting and re-thinking painful moments of the past. According to her, this also is important in shaping the national identity and taming nationalism.[15] This recommendation is opposed to the idea that forgetting is an important, if not essential, element in shaping a nation, first posed by Ernest Renan.[16]

As said, the book by Budryte serves as an interesting starting point because it addresses some particular issues that are of interest. Other researchers have written on some of these issues as well. The influence of international organizations on minority policies is also described by the American political scientist Judith Kelley in her 2004 article 'International actors on the domestic scene: membership conditionality and socialization by international institutions'. In this article she emphasizes the importance of membership conditionality of institutions such as the European Union (EU), Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and the Council of Europe (CE).[17]

Others, such as the Polish political scientist Magdalena Solska, have also written on this specific subject, dealing with all three Baltic states and coming to similar conclusions. In her article 'Citizenship, collective identity and the international impact on integration policy in

[11] Budryte, *Taming nationalism?*, 198.
[12] Budryte, *Taming nationalism?*, 199.
[13] Budryte, *Taming nationalism?*, 202.
[14] Budryte, *Taming nationalism?*, 202.
[15] Budryte, *Taming nationalism?*, 206.
[16] Ernest Renan, 'What is a nation' (Sorbonne 1882): http://www.google.nl/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&ved=0CEAQFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fig.cs.tu-berlin.de%2Foldstatic%2Fw2001%2Feu1%2Fdokumente%2FBasistexte%2FRenan1882EN-Nation.pdf&ei=TbtvUpO3PM6c0wXPz4DYCA&usg=AFQjCNGCO5VsxYSnME8hpdSCf10CWVXkaA&sig2=9EcUfb99np6jeSO047TXIA&bvm=bv.55123115,d.d2k, (29-12-2013) 2.
[17] Judith Kelley, 'International actors on the domestic scene: membership conditionality and socialization by international institutions.' *International Organization* 58 (2004) 447.

Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania', published in 2011, Solska also states that the membership conditionality strategy pursued by international organizations was successful in spurring on the governments to adjust to European norms. She adds that the identity of minorities in all three republics are primarily ethnic and regional, and that a vertical collective identity has yet to be constructed. She concludes that besides citizenship, there are other factors that make up the creation of a collective identity. She stresses the importance of elites abandoning the divisive ethnical discourse in order to achieve this.[18] Solska thus states that changes in citizenship policy alone do not lead to a common national identity. This is in line with the argument that will be made in this thesis. However, it can be questioned whether her strong emphasis on the discourse of political elites is enough to explain changes in national identity. Other factors appear to influence national identities as well.

The British professor of international security David Galbreath and Joanne McEvoy, a specialist on ethnic conflict, have also addressed the influence of international organizations on the minority policy of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. In their 2010 article 'European Integration and the Geopolitics of National Minorities' they research whether European integration leads to a better relation between host states and kin states of ethnic minorities. In doing this, they assume that European integration and nationalism are inversely related.[19] This assumption is opposite to the idea of Hroch that nationalism is not something that can be cured and that nationalism and democracy are not mutually exclusive. With regard to the Baltic states, the authors conclude that European integration suppressed nationalism in the geopolitics of national minorities. They argue that the changes in minority policy can be explained in terms of regional security.[20]

The Swedish international relations theorists Erik Noreen and Roxanna Sjöstedt have focused on similar questions, but they have singled out the role of international organizations on Estonia as their main object of research. Contrary to the conclusion of Galbreath and McEvoy, these two scholars state that Estonian integration in Europe is not only driven by a perceived threat by Russia, but also by the wish to re-establish earlier bonds with the political culture of the West. Furthermore, they question the assumption that Estonia has an antagonistic relationship with its Russian minority. They portray certain developments in Estonia as a process of socialization, in which the Russian minority is gradually becoming

[18] Magdalena Solska. 'Citizenship, collective identity and the international impact on integration policy in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania', *Europe-Asia Studies* 63.6 (2011) 1105-1106.
[19] Galbreath, David J. and Joanne McEvoy, 'European integration and the geopolitics of national minorities', *Ethnopolitics: Formerly Global Review of Ethnopolitics*, 9:3-4 (2010) 360.
[20] Galbreath e.a., 'European Integration', 375.

part of the Estonian nation through a program in which language is being learned and used.[21] One could question whether this is not a case of nuanced ethnic cleansing Michael Mann has written about: the abandoning of identity through language adaptation. He has provided a framework specifying different gradations of ethnic cleansing. In this he describes the partial abandoning of identity by means of voluntarily adopting the official language as a form of non-violent, partial ethnic cleansing. The denial of citizenship based on language can be seen as partial ethnic cleansing that is effected by institutional coercion. [22] Even though the official goal of the State Integration Program is "the adaptation of different ethnic minority cultures existing in Estonia, *not* their assimilation into (ethnic) Estonian culture"[23], as Noreen and Sjöstedt point out, it may actually be such a form of nuanced ethnic cleansing.
The British professor of Baltic history and politics David J. Smith[24] has also focused on the influence of international organizations on Estonia. In one of the articles that he has written on the subject, 'Framing the national question in Central and Eastern Europe: A quadratic nexus?', published in 2008, he talks of a quadratic nexus with regard to questions concerning national identity in Estonia. In doing this, he draws upon Rogers Brubaker's theory of linking nationalizing states, national minorities, and external national homelands, adding to the mix the international institutions mentioned earlier as the fourth element.[25] In this article he pleads, like others have done, that the distinction made between civic Western nationalism and Eastern ethnic nationalism is severely overdrawn. Furthermore, he agrees with Brubaker that nationalism is a set of idioms and practices that are available in modern political life.[26] The author thereby also appears to agree with the belief held by Hroch that nationalism is not a malady that needs to be, and can be, healed.

One other element Budryte addressed, that of historical memory, has also been scrutinized extensively in recent years. In part, this can be explained by the fact that in 2007, two years after the publication of Budryte's book, large scale ethnic riots broke out in Estonia due to a relocation of a monument commemorating Second World War victims. This monument is called the 'Bronze Soldier' and is located in the Estonian capital of Tallinn. An important

[21] Noreen, Erik and Roxanna Sjöstedt, 'Estonian identity formations and threat framing in the post-cold war era', *Journal of Peace Research* 41.6 (2004) 747.
[22] Mann, 'Explaining murderous ethnic cleansing', 210-211.
[23] Noreen e.a., 'Estonian identity formations', 747.
[24] Throughout the thesis I will refer to work of both David J. Smith and Anthony D. Smith. In order to avoid confusion, I will include first names in the text and footnotes.
[25] David J. Smith, 'Framing the national question in Central and Eastern Europe: A quadratic nexus?', *The Global Review of Ethnopolitics* 2.1 (2002) 3.
[26] David J. Smith, 'Framing the national question', 14.

element leading to the outbreak of violence is the fact that the historical meaning and value attached to the statue is different for ethnic Estonians and ethnic Russians. Several articles on the relocation of this 'Bronze Soldier' monument and its meaning have been published. David J. Smith also has written an article on this subject, published in 2008. In this article he focuses on the so-called 'war of monuments', in which public monuments played a role in amplifying socio-political tensions in Estonia and international disputes between Estonia and Russia between 2004 and 2007. Furthermore, David Smith assesses to which extent the crisis of the 'Bronze Soldier' has influenced the process of forming an integrated multicultural democracy in the country.[27] In his article, he points to the problematic fact that within Estonia there exist two different collective memories of the Second World War. On the one hand, most Estonians perceive the period as a time in which they became victims of the Soviets. On the other hand, the ethnic Russian minority sees the Second World War as a period in which the Nazis were beaten by the USSR.[28] They thus have a more positive perception of the Soviet Union. In conclusion, David Smith states that the crisis surrounding the 'Bronze Soldier' has polarized public opinion along ethnic lines, but at the same time has triggered a debate on how to deal with multicultural integration.[29] In search of a possible solution, he pleads for a form of 'negotiated memory', with a big tolerance of different viewpoints of the past.[30] This recommendation is not unlike the one made by Dovile Budryte in her book regarding this topic. Another similarity between the two is that in doing this, they both reject the point made by Renan that forgetting is an essential element in the formation of a nation. On the other hand, one could argue in favor of the two; perhaps the events of the Second World War are too recent to be forgotten. If this is the case, a more open dialogue in which the two different collective memories tolerate the different viewpoints of each other might prove useful in forming a more common identity. The fact is that common memories and myths, be it remembered or forgotten, form an important element of a national identity.

The German historian Karsten Brüggeman and Canadian professor of Baltic politics Andres Kasekamp, both working in Estonia, make a recommendation similar to that of David Smith in their 2008 article 'The Politics of History and the "War of Monuments" in Estonia'. They argue that for the society to integrate, the discourses of history of the ethnic Estonians and

[27] David J. Smith, ''Woe from stones': Commemoration, identity politics and Estonia's 'war of monuments'', *Journal of Baltic Studies* 39.4 (2008) 419-420.
[28] David J. Smith, 'Woe from stones', 420.
[29] David J. Smith, 'Woe from stones', 426.
[30] David J. Smith, 'Woe from stones', 426.

ethnic Russians need a "democratization of memory".[31] In their assessment of the 'war of monuments', in which they point to the 'Bronze Soldier' and another monument called the Lihula monument, they say that the controversies around these should be seen in the light of a debate about the crimes of communism.[32] In conclusion they state that as long as Estonians see themselves as a weak minority, and Russia as a dangerous majority (including the Russians in Estonia), ethnic tension remains possible. Like Budryte and David Smith, they plea for dialogue and debate about the collective memory.[33]

In his article 'The Bronze Soldier: Identity Threat and Maintenance in Estonia', published in 2009, the Estonian linguistics scientist Martin Ehala also goes into the controversy surrounding the 'Bronze Solider'. In the article he analyzes shifts and changes in ethnic identities in Estonia in order to find out why the 'Bronze Soldier' all of a sudden led to tension.[34] What follows is a clear overview of changes in identity since Estonia's independence. The early 1990s were characterized by a reaffirmation and privatization of an own Estonian identity.[35] The late 1990s was a time in which inter-ethnic attitudes were good. A lot of Estonians were tolerant of the Russian speaking minority.[36] Ehala, studying linguistics, strongly bases this view on the numbers concerning language. The first half of the first decade of the twenty-first century was characterized by further integration based on certain values that came from the West; consumerism and individualism.[37] This further integration meant the weakening of ethnic identity and vaguer boundaries between Estonians and the ethnic Russian minority. In the years from 2004 to 2007 these processes actually led to increased ethnic mobilization, with the 'Bronze Soldier' crisis as its pinnacle.[38] What is interesting in the work of Ehala is its strong focus on language, whereby his approach is quite different from the researchers mentioned earlier. His work can be placed in the framework of Anderson's *Imagined Communities* in which the role of language is also held to be crucial in dealing with nations, nationalism and national identity. However, as we have seen, there certainly are other factors that influence the dynamics of national identity. Although he names

[31] Brüggemann, Karsten & Andres Kasekamp, 'The politics of history and the "war of monuments" in Estonia', *Nationalities Papers: The Journal of Nationalism and Ethnicity* 36:3 (2008) 427.
[32] Brüggemann e.a., 'Politics of history', 437.
[33] Brüggemann e.a., 'Politics of history', 441-442.
[34] Martin Ehala, 'The bronze soldier: identity threat and maintenance in Estonia.' *Journal of Baltic Studies* 40.1 (2009) 139.
[35] Ehala, 'The bronze soldier', 147-149.
[36] Ehala, 'The bronze soldier', 149.
[37] Ehala, 'The bronze soldier', 151.
[38] Ehala, 'The bronze soldier', 152.

the EU on some occasions, he neglects the influence of EU conditionality on the policies of the Estonian government for example.

The British academic Stuart Burch, specialized in museums and heritage, and David J. Smith have published an article called 'Empty Spaces and the Value of Symbols: Estonia's 'War of Monuments' from Another Angle' in 2008, in which they decided to look at other statues to address the issue of memory politics and the 'war of monuments' in Estonia. In the article they go into the cases of a 'Swedish Lion' monument and a proposed statue of Peter the Great, both in the eastern border city of Narva. They state that these two statues are examples of 'democratizing history' and the still charged symbolic nature of public monuments, respectively.[39] The example of the Estonian 'Bronze Soldier' shows that tension along ethnic lines has flared as recently as 2007, potentially nullifying claims about a 'tamed' nationalism and inclusive national identity. Furthermore, it shows that apart from minority rights, history also plays an important role in national identity dynamics.

The Lithuanian anthropologist Neringa Klumbyté has written articles on post-Soviet identity that specifically deal with Lithuania. In her article 'Memory, Identity, and Citizenship in Lithuania', published in 2010, she discusses memories of socialism among Lithuanians.[40] She concludes that the way in which things are remembered and forgotten in Lithuania shows how memories, identities and citizenship have been created. In practice the positive memories that Lithuanians have of the Soviet period are stigmatized, criminalized and banned from public. She calls this memory-nationalism, which is a response to ethnic conflicts, among others. Furthermore, she adds that this is also the case in Estonia and Latvia and that forgetting positive aspects of rule under the Soviet regime is an element of good citizenship.[41]

Klumbyté's findings on how Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia deal with their collective memory thus stand in stark contrast to certain recommendations that have been made by some of the authors mentioned above. Budryte, David Smith, Brüggemann and Kasekamp stressed the importance of coming to terms with history and argued that open dialogue between the different ethnic groups would serve a more inclusive national identity. However, the work of Klumbyté suggests that in reality this is not what is happening. Forgetting, already deemed of the utmost importance in forming nations as early as 1882 by Ernest Renan, seems to be common practice in all three Baltic republics. Positive memories that are hard to combine

[39] Burch, Stuart and David J. Smith, 'Empty spaces and the value of symbols: Estonia's 'war of monuments' from another angle', *Europe-Asia Studies* 59:6 (2007) 932-934.
[40] Neringa Klumbytė, 'Memory, identity, and citizenship in Lithuania', *Journal of Baltic Studies* 41:3 (2010) 296.
[41] Klumbyté, 'Memory, identity', 307.

with the overall picture of the Soviet Union as an aggressor that brought suffering upon Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania are to be forgotten. In similar vein, negative aspects of the role the Baltic states played during the Second World War are also likely to be 'forgotten'. With regard to Lithuania, the relationship with Poland also plays a role in the formation of identities and is a source of tension within and between the two countries due to their shared history and the fact that there is a Polish minority living in Lithuania.

Further proof of the strong tendency to forget certain periods is the fact that Latvia declared two Russian historians, Aleksandr Dyukov and Vladimir Simindey, persona non grata as recently as 2012. The two historians opened an exhibition on war crimes by Nazis and Latvian collaborators. According to Latvian officials the two men were declared persona non grata because they were a threat to Latvian security and its citizens.[42] However, it seems to be the case that their views did not rhyme with the official viewpoint of how the Second World War is to be remembered in Latvia. Again, this shows how important forgetting is in the creation of a national identity. In Estonia, such a clear case is not perceivable, but World War II commemorations and honoring former SS men shows that in the country the memory of the Second World War is biased as well.

An article that deals with national identity in Latvia is 'Identity Construction in Latvia's "Singing Revolution": Why Inter-ethnic Conflict Failed to Occur', published in 2002, by the American social scientist John Ginkel. Even though this article mainly deals with the formation of a national identity surrounding the period in which Latvia became independent, it offers some important insights that may be relevant for this thesis. In the article Ginkel argues that in forming a national identity for the 'new' Latvia, reference was made to historical events that reassured the Russian minority living in the republic.[43] The historical period that was mostly referred to was the interwar period, during which Latvia was an independent republic. In that republic there were equal rights for all citizens, minorities had a say in government affairs and all inhabitants were granted citizenship. This time period thus formed a good basis for comparison with the new Latvia that was to be formed and promised minorities equal rights.[44] According to Ginkel, this was done in order to come to an inclusive, non-threatening national identity which gained support from all ethnic groups and mitigated

[42] 'Latvia threatened with retaliation after Russian historians refused entry': http://hnn.us/article/144970 (2-1-2014).
[43] John Ginkel, 'Identity construction in Latvia's "singing revolution": Why inter-ethnic conflict failed to occur', *Nationalities Papers* 30.3 (2002) 415.
[44] Ginkel, 'Identity construction', 416.

the potential conflict between ethnic Latvians and ethnic Russians.[45] Although he does not go into it in great detail, Ginkel also points to the fact that after independence was secured the national identity took on a more exclusive character, in which ethnic Russians were excluded.[46] What Ginkel's article especially shows is that national identities and nationalism are not fixed entities, but that they are of a dynamic character and always in flux..
Furthermore, the article by Ginkel shows the importance of history in the creation of a national identity. In some of the other articles and books discussed in this section there was a strong focus on some of the problems that history and memory is posing in the formation of an inclusive national identity. The example of the Latvian national identity created during the time of its transition to independence shows that history can also be of great help in this.
As the literature mentioned above shows, there has been a fair amount of research conducted on questions dealing with the national identity of Estonia in the period from 1991 until 2014. A large number of these studies focus on rather specific elements relating to this topic. A reasonable number of articles and books have been written on the influence of international organizations on the minority policies of the three Baltic states. It can be argued that this in turn has influenced the dynamics of the national identities of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. Another body of research focused on the role of history and memory in relation to the national identities. The 'War of Monuments' in Estonia forms a good basis for studies regarding identity in Estonia. What is striking is that most of the authors agreed on the path that has to be taken regarding collective memory in coming to a more inclusive national identity. Budryte, David Smith, and Brüggemann and Kasekamp all argued that it would be in the best interest if there were to be open discussions on, and mutual toleration of, different forms of collective memory. The article by Klumbyté showed that in reality such things have rarely occurred in all three countries.
Now that earlier research dealing with the Estonian national identity has been addressed, it is time to turn the attention towards the theoretical framework on national identity, nations and nationalism that will be used in this thesis. This will be done in the next chapter.

[45] Ginkel, 'Identity construction', 426.
[46] Ginkel, 'Identity construction', 415.

2. National identity, nations and nationalism

For one to be able to pose questions about changing national identities, obviously a lucid conception of what such a national identity actually entails is of the utmost importance. Providing a workable definition of national identity, and of the related concepts of nation and nationalism, is the main goal of this chapter. As the plethora of literature that has been written on these subjects shows, the concepts of national identity, nation, and nationalism are difficult to grasp and there has been serious debate about their meanings. As a starting point, Anthony D. Smith's definition of a national identity will be used. According to him the five fundamental features of a national identity are:

1. An historic territory, or homeland
2. Common myths and historical memories
3. A common, mass public culture
4. Common legal rights and duties for all members
5. A common economy with territorial mobility for members.[47]

With this definition Anthony Smith points out several aspects that contribute to a national identity, thereby combining elements from earlier research on national identity, nations and nationalism. Throughout the remainder of this chapter, some of this earlier research will be addressed. In doing this, and by combining these ideas with the work of Anthony Smith, a working definition of national identity that will be used in this thesis will be made.

Within the study of nations, nationalism and national identities, two questions have occupied scholars who specialize on the subject to a great extent. The first of these is whether nations either are socially constructed during a certain period or always have been there. The second debate is related to the question whether eastern and western European nationalism are of a significantly different character. To start with the first debate, this mainly focuses on answering the question when nations came into existence. The notion that nations are phenomena of modern times is an old one. Ernest Renan already wrote in 1882 that nations were fairly new phenomena.[48] In 1939 Hans Kohn argued that nationalism dates from the

[47] Anthony D. Smith, *National identity*. (London 1991), 14.
[48] Ernest Renan, 'What is a nation' (Sorbonne 1882): http://www.google.nl/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&ved=0CEAQFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fig.cs.tu-berlin.de%2Foldstatic%2Fw2001%2Feu1%2Fdokumente%2FBasistexte%2FRenan1882EN-Nation.pdf&ei=TbtvUpO3PM6c0wXPz4DYCA&usg=AFQjCNGCO5VsxYSnME8hpdSCf10CWVXkaA&sig2=9EcUfb99np6jeSO047TXIA&bvm=bv.55123115,d.d2k, (29-12-2013) 1.

second half of the eighteenth century.[49] This is not the only similarity between these two authors. In a way, they both argue that nationalism is basically an attitude and they emphasize the importance of will. In the work of Renan this becomes clearest in the notion that a nation is in part a result of the will of people to actually live together, to form a nation. Renan compares the existence of a nation with a daily plebiscite.[50] Hans Kohn states that "nationalism is first and foremost a state of mind, an act of consciousness."[51] When talking about nationalities, Kohn names a few attributes that are not unlike those posed by Anthony Smith. He speaks of territory, customs and traditions, and common descent for example. However he stresses that the actual will to form a nationality is the most decisive factor.[52]

During the early 1980's a range of influential works on nationalism was published that argued that nations were modern phenomena and, besides, socially constructed. In a large part, this can be seen as an attempt to definitively dismiss the notions of nations as primordial, that is a nation as something natural that always has been there, and of nations as perennial, which is the idea that nations have been existing for a very long time. Among the authors who argued that nations were modern and socially constructed were Ernest Gellner, Eric Hobsbawm and Benedict Anderson. Even though these authors agree that nations came into existence in modern times and their theories hold several elements in common, there also are differences.

The discussion on when the first nations came into being and an overview of nations throughout history is of little concern for the issue at hand in this thesis. However, some of the ideas on nations, nationalism and national identity that have been set forth in this debate may be of use in studying the changes in the national identity of Estonia in the last two decades. Therefore, without elaborating extensively on the creation of the first nations, the works of Ernest Gellner, Benedict Anderson and Eric Hobsbawm will be addressed first. Assessing how they define nations, nationalism and national identity and focusing on some of their more important ideas can help in building the framework that will be used throughout the remainder of this thesis. To start, there will be looked at the concept of nations.

The perspective of Ernest Gellner on nations and nationalism differs starkly from the views of Renan and Kohn. Whereas these two authors stress the importance of will in the creation of

[49] Hans Kohn, 'The nature of nationalism', *American political science review*, 33 (1939) 1001.
[50] Renan, 'What is a nation?', 7.
[51] Kohn, 'The nature of nationalism', 9.
[52] Kohn, 'The nature of nationalism', 14.

nations, Gellner argues that nationalism inevitably accompanies modern societies.[53] As said, the actual question regarding the birth of nations is not of particular concern for this thesis. However, it is important to address the work of Gellner, since he influenced other authors and has come up with some interesting insights. An example of this is the emphasis of Gellner on the role of education and language. He argues that the linguistic and cultural medium in which education are given are very salient.[54] The role of language in nations and nationalism has later been put forward by Benedict Anderson. Furthermore, Gellner has argued that with modern times it became possible for elites to spread their culture to the masses by means of nationalism.[55] This idea was later implemented by others, such as Hobsbawm, in their ideas on nations and nationalism.

Benedict Anderson published his influential work on nations and nationalism, *Imagined communities* in 1983. In this book, he presented the idea of the nation as an imagined political community. First, it is imagined because the members of a nation will never know all other members. Yet, they perceive themselves as a community. Second, it is imagined as limited because nations have borders and are sovereign, because nations stem from an age in which the legitimacy of dynastic realms was destroyed. Third, the nation is imagined as a community because it is seen as a far reaching, horizontal comradeship.[56] According to Anderson, the nation as an imagined community only became possible when certain ideas changed. When it no longer was believed that certain languages where sacred, when the legitimacy of dynasties began to fade and when the conception of time changed, making it possible to distinguish past, present and future, the nation could be imagined.[57] The convergence of capitalism and print technology, what Anderson dubs print-capitalism, created fields of communication, a fixity to language and languages-of-power, which formed the basis of national consciousness.[58]

Another famous proponent of the idea that nations are modern, social constructs was the historian Eric Hobsbawm. Hobsbawm wrote several works dealing with the subject. In his book *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*, published in 1990 , he concedes that it is difficult to define what a nation is. As a working definition Hobsbawm uses "any sufficiently large

[53] Ernest Gellner, 'Nationalism', *Theory and society*, 10 (1981) 753.
[54] Gellner, 'Nationalism', 761.
[55] Anthony D. Smith, *The nation in history*. (Cambridge 2000) 29.
[56] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, (London 2006, revised edition) 6-7.
[57] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 36.
[58] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 44-45.

body of people whose members regard themselves as members of a 'nation'."[59] He argues that nations are not primary and unchanging. Furthermore, in this book he agrees with Ernest Gellner that the elements of artefact, invention and social engineering play an important role in nations.[60] This notion also is very clear in the term 'invented tradition' , which he coined together with Terence Ranger, in their 1983 book *The invention of tradition*. With an invented tradition is meant "a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behavior by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past. They normally attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historic past."[61] Ranger and Hobsbawm distinguish three types of invented traditions. The first type establishes or symbolizes social cohesion or the membership of groups and communities, either real or artificial. The second type establishes or legitimizes institutions, status or relations of authority. The third type of invented traditions can be used for socialization, the inculcation of beliefs, value systems and conventions of behavior. All three types make use of history as means of legitimization.[62]

In the 1990's Anthony D. Smith wrote several works arguing that nations are preceded by so-called *ethnies*. These *ethnies* share some of the characteristics of nations but do not possess all elements to be termed a nation.[63] He thus implies that there are certain structures in existence that eventually form nations in the course of history. In his book *The Nation in History*, published in 2000, he defines the nation as "a named human population occupying a historic territory or homeland and sharing common myths and memories; a mass public culture; a single economy; and common rights and duties for all members."[64] In this definition, there is thus a strong overlap with his definition of a national identity. Unlike Hobsbawm and Anderson, Anthony Smith is of the belief that nations are not merely conceivable in relation to modern times, but that they have links with cultural identities and sentiments of the past.[65] An example of such an earlier cultural identity is what he calls an *ethnie.* According to him, an *ethnie* is "a named human population with myths of common ancestry, shared historical memories, one or more elements of shared culture, a link with a homeland, and a measure of solidarity, at least among elites."[66] Basically, an *ethnie* possesses some of the components of a

[59] Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*, (Cambridge 1990) 8
[60] Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism*, 9-10.
[61] Hobsbawm, Eric and Terence Ranger, *The invention of tradition,* (Cambridge 1983) 1.
[62] Hobsbawm and Ranger, *Invention of tradition,* 9, 12.
[63] Anthony D. Smith, *Nation in history,* 65-66.
[64] Anthony D. Smith, *Nation in history*, 3.
[65] Anthony D. Smith, *Nation in history,* 62-63.
[66] Anthony D. Smith, *Nation in history,* 65.

nation, but it does not possess them all. He states that nations can be perceived as modern outgrowths of ancient or medieval *ethnies.*[67] One could argue that Anthony Smith does not want to discard the ideas of Hobsbawm and Anderson altogether, but that he wants to incorporate them into a broader framework.

This broader framework is also visible in Anthony Smith's definition of nationalism. Whereas Hobsbawm follows Gellner in stating that nationalism is "primarily a principle which holds that the political and national unit should be congruent"[68], he defines nationalism as "an ideological movement for the attainment and maintenance of autonomy, unity, and identity on behalf of a population deemed by some of its members to constitute an actual or potential 'nation'".[69] Apart from the political element, he thus also emphasizes the role of identity.

Anderson argues that throughout history one could find two forms of nationalism. Print-capitalism led to a type of bottom-up nationalism, which started with the reading public. Anderson calls this popular nationalism. A top-down form of nationalism came into being in from the middle of the nineteenth century onwards. This official nationalism, as Anderson calls it, originated from power groups who, in some cases, were afraid to lose their privileged positions within the newly formed popular communities or, in other cases, aimed to strengthen their positions.[70] According to Anderson, the more recent nation-states blend these two types of nationalism, which is why in the nation-building policies of post WWII nation-states "one sees both genuine, popular nationalist enthusiasm and a systematic, even Machiavellian, instilling of nationalist ideology through mass media, the educational system, administrative regulations, and so forth."[71]

The classification of different types of nationalism also takes center stage in another debate that has recurred throughout time in the field of nationalism studies. This debate deals with the question whether or not there is a clear difference between Western European and Eastern European nationalism. Hans Kohn for example has argued that there is a difference between the two regions. He stated that nationalism was mainly expressed in political and economic changes in places were during the eighteenth century the bourgeoisie became powerful. According to him this was the case in Western European countries such as Great Britain and France. In places were the bourgeoisie was not powerful, nationalism was mainly expressed in

[67] Anthony D. Smith, *Nation in history*, 65-66.
[68] Hobsbawm, *Nations and nationalism*, 9.
[69] Smith, *Nation in history*, 3.
[70] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 109-110.
[71] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*,113-114.

cultural terms. According to Kohn, this happened for example among Slavonic peoples, thus in Eastern Europe.[72] So, he argued that in Western Europe nationalism has traditionally been expressed along civic lines, whereas in Eastern Europe there has been a propensity towards nationalism along cultural or ethnic lines.

Miroslav Hroch, on the other hand, argues that there does not really exist such a strong dichotomy between Eastern and Western Europe. Rather, he argues that there are four different types of national movement perceivable throughout Europe. Central in his theory are three different phases. Phase A refers to the period in which the activists of the national movement were mostly preoccupied with studying the awareness of specific attributes of their group. Phase B is the phase in which the activist tried to mobilize people of their group for the creation of a nation. Phase C is when this has occurred and when a mass movement has been formed. The four different types of national movement relate to the timing of these three particular phases.[73] Hroch sees the 'new nationalisms' that emerged in times of the fall of the Soviet-Union as 'new national movements', sharing some similarities with the nineteenth century nationalist movements. He emphasizes that there are some important differences as well. In terms of analogies, he stresses linguistic and cultural demands and the will to change the social structure.[74] The new movements differ from the ones in the nineteenth century in the field of social conflicts. Furthermore, Hroch argues that these social conflicts were happening in times of economic decline, which was not the case in the nineteenth century. Moreover, the possibilities of social communication have increased with new technologies.[75] Hroch thus tries to approach the process of nation-formation from a broad viewpoint, and he dismisses the notion of clearly distinctive forms of nationalism in Eastern and Western Europe. This also becomes clear in another article from his hand, 'Nationalism and national movements: comparing the past and the present of Central and Eastern Europe', in which he strongly rejects the idea that nationalism is a disease that can be cured. Instead, he believes that "nationalism is a potential function and product of actually existing national identities. As long as nations exist, nationalism will remain as a latent answer to problems and challenges."[76] So instead of perceiving nationalism as external factor, a given structure, he argues that there is in fact a degree of agency involved. This notion is of particular interest

[72] Kohn, 'The nature of nationalism', 1001-1002.
[73] Miroslav Hroch, 'From national movement to the fully-formed nation. The nation-building process in Europe', *New Left Review* 198, nr. 3 (1993) 6-8.
[74] Hroch, 'From national movement', 14-15.
[75] Hroch, 'From national movement', 17-18.
[76] Miroslav Hroch, 'Nationalism and national movements', 43.

since it has been argued by some that nationalism in Estonia must, can and, to some extent, has been tamed. If one agrees with Hroch, this idea is thus questionable.

Now that some of the most important insights of influential theorists on nations and nationalism have been addressed, working definitions of national identity and nationalism that will be used throughout this thesis can be given. The definition of a national identity by Anthony Smith, consisting of an historic homeland, common myths and historical memories, a common mass public culture, common rights and duties and a common economy, will function as the basis. The fact that this definition is very broad and includes historical, cultural, symbolic, legal and economic facets means that the influence of all these factors can be taken into account when scrutinizing the national identity of Estonia in the last two and a half decade. In doing so, the full gamut of factors can be taken into consideration, which may prevent conclusions that would be too short-sighted. As for nationalism, again the definition given by Anthony Smith is very useful. He sees nationalism as "an ideological movement for the attainment and maintenance of autonomy, unity, and identity on behalf of a population deemed by some of its members to constitute an actual or potential 'nation'".[77] Furthermore, the ideas by Miroslav Hroch on nationalism need to be incorporated. Nationalism is not a malady that can and should be healed. Nationalism is not something inherently bad that can and must be 'tamed'. Also, the notion by Anderson that modern nationalism is often a combination of popular and official nationalism might also prove to be very useful. With the working definitions specified, the developments of the Estonian national identity can be scrutinized. This will be done in the next chapter, by looking at the processes in the years from 1991 until present of the five different elements of a national identity as defined by Anthony Smith.

[77] Anthony D. Smith, *Nation in history*, 3.

3. Estonia's national identity 1991-present

In the process of the Soviet Union's disintegration numerous new states were created. Furthermore, several polities that had existed as autonomous entities in earlier times were reinstated. Among these was the Republic of Estonia, which had enjoyed a 22-year spell of independence running from 1918 to 1940, before it became part of the Soviet Union, was occupied by Nazi Germany and was incorporated into Soviet Union again until its independence was restored in 1991. With the newfound independence arose questions relating to the national identity of Estonia. How was the national identity to be defined, and was it actually possible to speak of a single national identity? These questions were particularly salient because the demographics of Estonia had changed significantly during the Soviet era. A census held in 1934, so at a time when Estonia was an independent republic, showed that 88,1% of the inhabitants were ethnic Estonians. Only 8,2% of the people counted were ethnic Russians.[78] A census held in 1989, so two years prior to the restored independence, clearly shows how much the ethnic composition had changed. The number of ethnic Estonians had declined to 61,5%, whereas the percentage of ethnic Russians had gone up to 30,3%.[79] The remaining 8,2% of the population was made up out of other small minority groups, of which Ukrainians, Belarusians and Finns were the largest. The exceptional growth of ethnic Russians living in the region was mainly the result of Soviet industrialization and accompanying migration policy. The "nation-state" Estonia thus was far from homogenous and had to find ways to incorporate the large ethnic Russian minority. Just how this was done will be addressed in this chapter. This will be done by examining the national identity and its dynamics by making use of Anthony D. Smith's five fundamental features that constitute a national identity. First, there will looked at whether or not there is such a thing as an historic Estonian territory. Second, it will be scrutinized to what extent there are historical memories and myths shared by the entire population. Third, a view on culture will be provided. To what extent is there a common public culture? And what is the significance of symbols in this? Fourth, there will be focused on the rights and duties of the inhabitants. Fifth, it will be assessed if one can speak of a common economy. In order to establish if it is justifiable to speak of a move towards a more inclusive national identity, these five aspects will be traced in the period from 1991 until 2014. Certain developments may be indicators of a change in national identity. Obviously, history also plays a crucial role in the formation and dynamics of

[78] Budryte, *Taming nationalism?*, 5.
[79] Budryte, *Taming nationalism?*, 5.

national identity. Where it is deemed necessary, events and processes that predate the specified period will therefore also be addressed. Furthermore, it is interesting to see whether historical memories have undergone changes in the period from 1991 up until present. The chapter will be concluded with an evaluation of whether or not one can speak of a development towards an inclusive Estonian national identity. As will become clear, based on Anthony Smith's features it would be difficult to draw such a conclusion. More particular, language has been an impeding factor in effecting such a change. However, feelings of belonging to Estonia among non-ethnic Estonians have increased, which raises new questions. Before addressing this and before looking at the national identity after independence, it might be of use to provide a short history of Estonia's route to independence.

3.1. Estonia's Singing Revolution

With the introduction of *glasnost* and *perestroika* in the mid-1980s Gorbachev paved the way for a new national awakening in Estonia. In essence, *perestroika* was a condemnation of Stalinism and a plea for the return to Lenin's ideas.[80] Furthermore, Nikolai Bukharin was rehabilitated, because his ideas on the economy could serve as a model for Gorbachev.[81] Because Estonia had been incorporated in the Soviet Union during the Stalin era, this rejection of Stalin's policies had serious repercussions for the position of Estonia in the USSR. According to Marju Lauristin, from the moment that it could publicly be expressed that Estonia was illegally annexed and occupied by the Soviet Union, the Estonian nation was reborn.[82] Several instances were Gorbachev appeared rather tactless in dealing with nationalist sentiments occurred. Furthermore, a plan was made to open a new phosphate mine in Estonia, which would destroy the environment and would mean another large influx of ethnic Russians to the area. This plan led to several protests in different cities. *Glasnost*, in turn, made it possible that several groups of intellectuals advocating independence could be set up.[83] In 1988, more and more demonstrations were being held. Although a demonstration on 2 February of that year commemorating the signing of the 1920 peace treaty was beaten down by riot police, the police stopped using such matters later that year. The term 'Singing Revolution' was coined by Heinz Valk during a music festival held in Tallinn in June 1988, attracting some 60000 participants. In September a rally organized by the political

[80]David J. Smith, 'Estonia: Independence and European Integration' in Lane, Thomas, Artis Pabriks, Aldis Purs and David J. Smith, *The Baltic States: Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania*, (London 2002) 43.
[81] John E. Elliott, 'Gorbachev's Perestroika'. *Contemporary Economic Policy* 7.1 (1989) 47-48.
[82] Marju Lauristin, 'Estonia: A Popular Front looks to the west' in *Towards independence: The Baltic Popular Movements*, Jan Arveds Trapans (ed.) (Boulder 1991) 46.
[83] David J. Smih, 'Estonia: Independence', 44-45.

organization Popular Front saw a staggering crowd of 300000 people. [84] Counter-demonstrations by ethnic Russians fearing discrimination were also held in those years, with a demonstration organized by the Intermovement in March 1989 drawing between 30000 and 50000 protesters.[85] Whereas the initial aim of the Popular Front movement had been to achieve autonomy within the structure of the Soviet Union, it eventually changed its goal to full independence from the Soviet Union. This was effected by the popularity of other organizations proposing this and the limited rapprochement of Mosow. On 23 August 1989 the so-called 'Baltic Way' was formed, with 2 million people forming a 600 kilometers-long human chain running from Estonia's capital Tallinn to Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania. The participants called for peaceful restoration of independence of the three Baltic republics. In response, Gorbachev granted approval to some earlier demands, such as a 'Leninist' federation and economic autonomy.[86] The ghost of complete independence was out of the bottle however, and this was met with limited enthusiasm. On 30 March 1990 the Estonian parliament declared that it would eventually become independent. Gorbachev in response repudiated the declaration as "illegal and invalid".[87] Despite some tensions and close shaves, Estonia managed to avoid bloodshed in 1991. In March 1991 a poll was held on the question whether people wanted restoration of Estonian independence, obtaining 78% of votes in favor. It is estimated that 25 to 40% of non-Estonian residents voted in approval.[88] The event that effected the actual declaration was a failed coup in August 1991, which did not succeed in gaining support from the ethnic Russians living in Estonia. In order to respond to this crisis, moderate and radical nationalists ironed out their quarrels and parliament declared independence. Russia recognized Estonian independence on the 24th of August.[89] The form of nationalism that can be perceived in the run-up to Estonian independence appears to be a mixture of what Benedict Anderson has called official nationalism and popular nationalism. On the one hand, it were the political and intellectual elites that set the goals and organized the rallies. On the other hand, this was supported by a large part of the people. It can thus be argued that both a top-down and a bottom-up form of nationalism were at work. Now that the period preceding independence has shortly been addressed, it is time to go into the five elements that Anthony Smith has signified as constituting a national identity.

[84] David J Smith, 'Estonia: Independence', 46-47.
[85] David J. Smith, *Estonia: Independence*, 49.
[86] David J. Smith, *Estonia: Independence*, 52-53.
[87] David J. Smith, *Estonia: Independence*, 56.
[88] David J. Smith, *Estonia: Independence*, 59.
[89] David J. Smith, *Estonia: Independence*, 60.

3.2. Homeland Estonia?

As was mentioned above, Estonia was an independent state during the interwar years. In the run-up to and during its Post-Soviet independence, this period of independence served as an important point of reference. The period ran from 1918, after the Tsarist Russian empire had disintegrated, until the country was incorporated within the Soviet Union for a short time in 1940. From 1941 until 1944 it was occupied by Nazi Germany. After the Soviet forces had ousted the Germans, Estonia once again became part of the Soviet Union. Even though this period has been much used in Estonia's Post-Soviet identity formation and the dynamics of Estonia's national identity in the following years, as will become clearer in the part dealing with history and myths and the section on rights and duties, it hardly can be seen as the ancient homeland or historical territory Anthony D. Smith sees as one of the main aspects of a national identity.

If this is the case, can we than speak of an Estonian homeland? In order to answer this question it is useful to look at the nationalist movement that preceded Estonia's first independent term. According to David J. Smith this movement resulted from the so-called *Ärkämisaeg*¸ or national awakening, in the years from 1860 to 1917.[90] Unlike their successors during the 1980s and 1990s, the nationalists of the national awakening could not refer to an earlier spell of Estonian statehood. Therefore, they mainly based their national identity on the Finnish-Ugric language and folk culture of tribes that had settled in the region now known as Estonia 5000 years ago.[91] The fact that the identity is based on this particular language being spoken suggest that there is a bond between Estonia and Finland. Another example of this is the similarities of folk songs in these two countries. One of these songs became the national anthem of both Finland and Estonia, albeit with different lyrics. Throughout history the territory saw a plethora of rulers come and go. During the 13th century the tribes living there were conquered by Danes and Germans. In 1346, the King of Denmark sold the lands he possessed to the Teutonic Order. After the Livonian Wars of 1558 until 1561, the northern part of current day Estonia fell under Swedish control, whereas the southern part was incorporated in Poland-Lithuania. Eventually, during the 1620s the Southern part also went to the Swedes. Finally, the territory was conquered by the Russian empire during the first part of the 18th century and remained under Russian rule until 1917.

[90] David J. Smith, *Estonia: Independence*, 2.

[91] David J. Smith, *Estonia: Independence*, 3.

During the centuries of foreign dominance the language of the 'indigenous' people in a sense was retained, it continued to be spoken and later it developed into a written Estonian language.[92] The fact that Estonian, or an older form of it that eventually developed into the Estonian language, was spoken within the region thus appears to be the main factor for seeing this region as the homeland. As will become clear in the section dealing with the cultural component of the Estonian national identity, language also has been of great importance in the period from 1991 until 2014.

The fact that a form of the Estonian language has been spoken in the region can explain why Estonians who speak this language perceive the territory as their homeland. However, apart from these ethnic Estonians, the republic also is inhabited by a significant ethnic Russian minority. As we saw, the number of Russians living in the country grew rapidly during the Soviet period. In 1934, 8,2% of the population were ethnic Russians. The number had risen to 30,3% in 1989.[93] Despite the fact that out-migration of ethnic Russians in the Post-Soviet era has led to a decline in their numbers, they still make up a significant share of the total population. The latest census held in Estonia, in 2011, shows that there were 321,198 ethnic Russians living within the country, amounting to 24,8% of the population.[94] Especially in the northeastern region of Ida-Viru, around the city of Narva, the number of Russian speakers is very high. The major part of them arrived there in the 1960s and 1970s as a result of forced industrialization accompanied by mass migration.[95]

Do these ethnic Russians also identify with Estonia as a homeland, and if so, for what reasons? Shortly before Estonian independence this hardly seemed to be the case. A vote organized by the Estonian Interregional Soviet, an organization mainly consisting of Russian speakers, led to 92% to 96% of voters voicing their preference for remaining a part of the Soviet Union.[96] This indicates a very negative stance towards an independent Estonian state and, furthermore, a strong association with the Soviet Union. During the mid-1990s, after Estonia had regained its independence and several laws relating to citizenship (which will be addressed in the section on rights) had been introduced, a number of Russian speakers chose to emigrate.[97] Budryte points to the fact that the Russian speakers who had chosen to stay in

[92] David J. Smith, *Estonia: Independence*, 3-4.
[93] Budryte, *Taming nationalism*, 5.
[94] *PHC 2011: people of 192 ethnic nationalities live in Estonia*: http://www.stat.ee/64310?parent_id=39113 (18-4-2014).
[95] Budryte, *Taming nationalism*, 49.
[96] Budryte, *Taming nationalism*, 70.
[97] Budryte, *Taming nationalism*, 73.

Estonia did not form a homogenous group. The ethnic Russians who enjoyed a higher social status were mostly those that had lived in Estonia for a longer time and also had knowledge of the Estonian language. They were quite likely to support Estonia's independence and tried to become Estonian citizens. Ethnic Russians of a lower social status, who in large part were those that had come to work in the industry sector, were usually negative or neutral to the Estonian state and did not aim for citizenship.[98]

A study by the Estonian social scientist Gerli Nimmerfeldt on second generation Russians in Estonia shows that 66% of Russian respondents with Estonian citizenship considered Estonia as their homeland in 2008, whereas 14% of this group perceived Russia as their homeland. The remaining 20% sees both Estonia and Russia as their homelands.[99] Estonia is also considered as a homeland by 48% of people who do not hold Estonian citizenship and by 20% of the people living in Estonia holding Russian citizenship.[100] Nimmerfeldt based these conclusions on the Estonian Integration Monitoring of 2008, carried out by the Ministry of Culture. In the Estonian Integration Monitoring 2011 report an increase of these percentages is discernible. Non-ethnic Estonians indicating Estonia as their homeland rose to 76%, while the percentages of non-citizens and citizens of Russia rose to 48% and 68% respectively.[101] These numbers show that a fair share of ethnic Russians nowadays perceive Estonia as their homeland, even though they lack the ties that ethnic Estonians hold. It must be noted however, that the numbers also show that there also still is a strong tie with Russia among some ethnic Russians living in Estonia. As it already became clear, history plays a role in the perception of Estonia as the homeland. In the following part, historical myths and memories that are essential in the national identity of Estonia will be addressed.

3.3. Historical myths and memories in Estonia

The Estonian nationalist movement of the 1980s and 1990s could refer to the previous period of Estonian independence, and they did. This is clearest in the fact that, after independence had been secured, the Citizenship Act of 1938 was reintroduced in 1992. Only the persons who possessed Estonian citizenship prior to 16 June 1940, and their descendants, were granted citizenship in the 'new' Estonia. This decision had severe consequences, denying

[98] Budryte, *Taming nationalism*, 74.
[99] Gerli Nimmerfeldt, 'Sense of belonging to Estonia', in Raivo Vetik and Jelena Helemäe (eds.), *The Russian Second Generation in Tallinn and Kohtla-Järve: The TIES Study in Estonia*, (Amsterdam, 2011), 217.
[100] Vetik and Helemäe, *The Russian Second Generation*, 217.
[101] Marju Lauristin et al., *Estonian Integration Monitoring 2011*, 7: http://www.kul.ee/webeditor/files/integratsioon/Integratsiooni_monitooring_2011_ENG_lyhiversioon.pdf (18-04-2014).

454000 persons, almost one third of the population, Estonian citizenship, and thus the Estonian nationality.[102] Among them, the most significant group were the ethnic Russians who had migrated to Estonia during Soviet rule. In the following years, several developments relating to citizenship legislation were visible. These developments will be addressed in the section dealing with rights and duties. For this particular part, the question why it was decided to reinstate the 1938 Citizenship Act and especially the role history and myths played in this, are the main concern.

Crucial for understanding the decision of readopting the 1938 Citizenship Act is the way in which the history of the Soviet period is perceived. More specifically, the memories of the Second World War and of Soviet policies regarding to population play an important role in the Estonian national identity. As was already shortly mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, Estonia lost its independence in 1940. It was annexed by the Soviet Union in June 1940 by means of military occupation after it was already forced to house Soviet troops on its soil for almost a year as was agreed in a 'mutual assistance pact' that was signed by the Soviet Union and Estonia in September 1939. The pact had been signed because the Soviet Union had vastly increased its military presence on Estonia's eastern border. The eventual annexation was in accordance with the secret Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of 23 August 1939 signed by Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. In this pact, the Nazis and the Soviets had made agreements on their spheres of influence, determining that the northern border of Lithuania would demarcate their spheres of influence.[103] Lying north of Lithuania, this meant that Estonia thus was to fall within the Soviet sphere. The Soviet annexation of Estonia thus went down without excessive violence or war. In a sense, the Estonian government was rather passive in the way it dealt with the situation. However, it must be said that the vast difference in military power between the Soviet Union and Estonia of course played a role in this. In July 1940 Molotov declared that Estonia was to be incorporated into the Soviet Union, since there was no future for small states in the modern world.[104] This particular statement relates closely to a fear that has been often expressed in Estonian nationalist rhetoric and pleas for certain policies ever since; the fear that the Estonian nation is in danger of being exterminated. In a Soviet historiography of these events, the annexation was portrayed as the

[102] Priit Järve, 'Estonian citizenship: Between ethnic preferences and democratic obligations', in Rainer Bauböck, Bernhard Perchinig and Wiebke Sievers (eds.), *Citizenship Policies in the New Europe* (Amsterdam 2007) 46.
[103] David J. Smith, *Estonia: Independence*, 23.
[104] David J. Smith, *Estonia: Independence*, 28.

will of the people, in which they took stance against the 'fascist' regime of the Estonian president Konstantin Päts.[105]

The first stint of Soviet rule in Estonia was only short-lived. Hitler broke the agreements made in the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact by invading the Soviet Union in June 1941. Estonia fell prey to the Nazi invasion in October of the same year. The German occupation and the ensuing Soviet reconquest of 1944 have been the subject within Estonian society of what the German historian Wulf Kansteiner has called the politics of memory. With this he means a competitive arena where the battle is fought over which new collective memories are created.[106] As the term suggests, this indicates that there hardly has been consensus on the memories of these events within Post Soviet Estonia, something that is deemed of the utmost importance for a common national identity by Anthony Smith. David J. Smith argues that rather than one collective memory of WWII, there are actually two; ethnic Russians generally perceive the Soviet reconquest of Estonia as a liberalization from German oppression, whereas ethnic Estonians believe that Estonia was a victim of Soviet aggression at that time.[107] Kasekamp and Brüggemann argue that this view excluded the Russian speakers from the dominant state-building memory community.[108] The strong contradiction between these two collective memories also holds true for the period of German occupation. A good example of this is the uncomfortable way in which is dealt with the Holocaust within the official collective memory. Research has shown that collaboration with the Nazis was not uncommon and was carried out on a voluntarily basis. Cases of Estonian resistance to the Holocaust on the other hand, are unknown.[109] This particular episode turns out to be a period that rather would be forgotten. However, under pressure from international actors the commemoration of the Holocaust was introduced within Estonia and education on the topic was introduced in schools.[110] However, at the same time attempts to negotiate the meaning of

[105] David J. Smith, *Estonia: Independence, 28.*
[106] Wulf Kansteiner, 'Finding meaning in memory: a methodological critique of collective memory studies', *History and Theory* 41 (2002), 179.
[107] David J. Smith, ''Woe from stones': Commemoration, identity politics and Estonia's 'war of monuments'', *Journal of Baltic Studies* 39.4 (2008) 419-420.
[108] Brüggemann, Karsten & Andres Kasekamp, 'The politics of history and the "war of monuments" in Estonia', *Nationalities Papers: The Journal of Nationalism and Ethnicity* 36:3 (2008) 426.
[109] Gerard P. Bassler, 'Review of '*Collaboration and Resistance during the Holocaust: Belarus, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania* by David Gaunt et. al', *The Slavonic and East European Review*, 84.2 (2006) 365.
[110] Doyle E. Stevick, 'Education policy as normative discourse and negotiated meanings: Engaging the Holocaust in Estonia', *Prospects* 40.2 (2010) 243.

the Holocaust have been made, with some attempting to argue that the suffering of Jews and that of the Baltic people are comparable.[111]

Two controversies that have occurred in the last decade, both relating to monuments, are a case in point of these diverging collective memories. On 2 September 2004, riots broke out in the small town of Lihula when a monument commemorating Estonians who had fought alongside the Germans against the Soviet Union was to be removed. Nearly three years later, on 26 April 2007 the planned relocation of another monument, located in the capital Tallinn, led to riots. This statue, called the 'Bronze Soldier', commemorates Red Army soldiers who fought against Nazi Germany. According to Brüggemann and Kasekamp, this so-called 'war of monuments' is in essence a conflict of memories driven by low levels of acceptance of divergent historical memories among both ethnic Estonians and ethnic Russians.[112] Both incidents generated large amounts of media coverage, especially because the outbreaks of violence were rare in the generally peaceful Post-Soviet Estonian society. Furthermore, the incidents attracted the attention of scholars. Brüggemann and Kasekamp argue that the controversy must be seen in the broader context of the debate on the crimes of communism. The official Estonian viewpoint is that communism was not better or worse than Nazism. However, they have often been pressured by the West to address the Holocoaust, while at the same time the reemergence of Russian nationalism under Vladimir Putin also influences Estonia.[113] This will be dealt with in more detail in the part on the involvement of Western international organizations and Russian influence in the next chapter. Brüggemann and Kasekamp suggest that the 'democratization of memory', that is respecting different views on history, is a possible solution for the problem of these two conflicting collective memories.[114] David J. Smith comes to a similar recommendation in an article about the 'Bronze Soldier', speaking of 'negotiated memory' instead. He believes that even though the incident of the 'Bronze Soldier' polarized opinion along ethnic lines, at the same time it triggered a debate on how to deal with multicultural integration and set the stage for solving the problems.[115] It is interesting to see that Dovile Budryte already spoke of the need for a 'democratization of history' in her book that was published two years before the 'Bronze Soldier' crisis, and even

[111] Stevick, 'Education policy', 253.
[112] Brüggemann & Kasekamp, 'The politics of history', 426.
[113] Brüggemann & Kasekamp, 'The politics of history', 437.
[114] Brüggemann & Kasekamp, 'The politics of history', 441.
[115] [115] David J. Smith, ''Woe from stones': Commemoration, identity politics and Estonia's 'war of monuments'', *Journal of Baltic Studies* 39.4 (2008) 419-420.

that this was to some extent already going on.[116] The 'Bronze Soldier' crisis showed that by 2007 this process had not been completed.

Assessing to what extent such a 'democratization of history' has taken place in the years following the 'war of monuments' might tell something about the degree of common historical memories and myths in Estonia. As Brüggemann and Kasekamp put it, around the time of the 'Bronze Soldier' crisis Estonia's ethnic Russians discovered alternative histories that diverged from the official version. In other words, it is a matter of "history taught at school versus history discovered at home."[117] Is there a process discernible in Estonian history education that can indicate that a 'democratization of history' is taking place? In the second half of the 1980s, a period characterized by *glasnost* and *perestroika* and emerging Estonian nationalism, plans for a change in the history curricula appeared. After the 'Singing Revolution' of 1988 this was carried out, even though Moscow did not approve. The main goal of the new narrative was to portray Estonia as a nation, while there was no room for minority narratives. Furthermore, Estonia's intention to join the EU led them to incorporate within their narrative a historical borderline between East and West, running exactly on Estonia's eastern border.[118] The period of Soviet rule was conceived of as an era of oppression. The narrative clearly excluded the ethnic Russian minority, for whom it was still common practice to relate to the official Soviet history.

Initiatives to correct this have been set up however. An example of this is the EUROCLIO project 'Integration of Society in Estonia' in cooperation with the Estonian History Teachers' Association, which ran from 2001 to 2004. In reaction to claims that ethnic Russians had difficulties rhyming the official history they learned at school with stories they heard from family and Russian media at home. Among the aims were increasing the students' understanding of history and help them to deal with different sources, the promotion of mutual understanding and tolerance and fighting against stereotypes, prejudices and myths.[119] Although the project was seen as a success, the Lihula and 'Bronze Soldier' crises can be perceived as events suggesting something different: it were many young people that were

[116] Budryte, *Taming nationalism*, 205.
[117] Brüggemann & Kasekamp, 'The politics of history', 440.
[118] Sirkka Ahonen, 'Politics of identity through history curriculum: Narratives of the past for social exclusion – or inclusion?', *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 33.2 (2001) 182-183.
[119] Mare Oja, 'New ways to the past: changing history education in Estonia', in: Dean Smart (ed.), *Making a difference: Fifteen years of EUROCLIO Bulletin 26* (The Hague, 2007) 59.

involved in the riots.[120] However, effecting such changes is not something that happens overnight, but is much more a process of the long run.

It appears that the Estonian government has decided to continue to follow the path that has been taken with the EUROCLIO project. In the 'National Curriculum for Basic Schools 2011' one of the stated learning and educational objectives is that students "value cultural diversity and their role in preserving and carrying cultural heritage and define themselves as members of their nation". Another stated objective is that students "acknowledge that people, opinions and situations are different, formulate and explain their opinions, analyze and assess their activities and note and correct their mistakes".[121] The encouragement to acknowledge differences seems a step in the right direction to the 'democratization of history'. When looking at the parts of the curriculum dealing with the Soviet past, which is the main area of contestation, it appears that the authors of the text have tried to use neutral terminology as much as possible. Nevertheless, there is spoken of the Soviet occupation of Estonia in two instances.[122] This indicates that at least some of the parts that generate discussion of the official narrative that originated in the 1980s and 1990s have not yet been discarded. In the 'National Curriculum for Upper Secondary Schools 2011' something similar is discernible. In the part dealing with Estonia in the Second World War the word 'occupations' is used.[123] The plurality indicates that in the official view both the Soviet period of 1940-1941 and the German period of 1941-1944 are seen as times of occupation. Furthermore, the term Soviet occupation is also used for the postwar period.[124] Although steps have been made in history education towards a 'democratization of history', the national curricula show that potentially dividing issues remain to be a part of the study material for children in Estonia. As long as ethnic Russians learn this on school, while hearing different stories from family and friends from an older generation, and through Russian media, it is difficult to conclude that one can speak of common historical memories and myths within Estonia.

[120] Brüggeman and Kasekamp, 'The politics of history, 443.
[121] National Curriculum for Basic Schools 2011 Appendix 5: Social Studies, http://www.hm.ee/index.php?1512622 (21-04-2014) 22.
[122] National Curriculum for Basic Schools 2011 Appendix 5: Social Studies, 32.

[123] National Curriculum for Upper Secondary Schools 2011 Appendix 5: Social Studies, http://www.hm.ee/index.php?1512619 (21-04-2014) 16.
[124] National Curriculum for Upper Secondary Schools 2011 Appendix 5: Social Studies, 17.

3.4. The public culture of Estonia

The third feature of a national identity described by Anthony D. Smith is the existence of a common mass public culture. In this, the influence of Benedict Anderson's work clearly rings through. Anderson held that it only became possible to imagine the nation with the emergence of print-capitalism, which was necessary for a mass public culture.[125] In Anderson's argumentation is a strong emphasis on language takes a central place. In the case of Estonia, the salience of language can also not be underestimated. In the first place, as already mentioned, the notion that a form of the Estonian language has been spoken in the region for a very long time plays an important role in classifying current day Estonia as the historical homeland. Second, the legacy of Soviet migration imposed an enormous problem on independent Post-Soviet Estonia. Due to the active population policies of the Soviet Union, the share of ethnic Russians living in Estonia had skyrocketed to 30,3% in 1989. These policies were perceived as an attempt to kill the Estonian nation, and the large number of Russophones was seen as a danger.[126] This played an important role in the decision to reintroduce the 1938 Citizenship Law, only granting citizenship to those that had been residents of Estonia before 16 June 1940 and their descendants.[127] The 454000 people, of whom the majority where ethnic Russians, that were left stateless by this decision could attempt to naturalize. One of the requirements for naturalization was knowledge of the Estonian language. In order to prove their proficiency, applicants had to make a test consisting of 1500 words and questions on Estonian culture and history. Since only 9 to 15% of Russophones spoke Estonian, this was a difficult task.[128] This is especially the case because the Estonian language is rather hard to master. Being part of the family of Finno-Ugric languages, it bears little resemblance with the Russian language, or most other European languages for that matter. Languages of the Uralic family are generally considered to be among the most difficult languages to learn. The fact that the largest part of ethnic Russians that moved to Estonia did so in order to work in the new industries, and thus in general were persons with little education, makes it even clearer that for most of them it was daunting task to acquire knowledge of the Estonian language.

Even though the laws on citizenship have changed over the last two and a half decades, which will be explained in greater detail in the part on common rights, and the difficulty of

[125] Anderson, *Imagined communities*, 44-45.
[126] Budryte, *Taming nationalism*, 56-57.
[127] Budryte, *Taming nationalism*, 69-70.
[128] Budryte, *Taming nationalism*, 71.

mastering Estonian, the government has been very active in promoting the Estonian language. A good example of this promotion can be seen in the main aims of the 'Integration in Estonian Society 2000-2007' state programme. The programme speaks of two processes: the "*enabling of the maintenance of* ethnic *differences* on the basis of the recognition of the cultural rights of ethnic minorities", while at the same time aiming for a "*harmonization* of society on the basis of knowledge of the Estonian language and the possession of Estonian citizenship".[129] According to Budryte, in 2000 an astonishing 81% of the programme budget was spent on language education.[130] This indicates that the harmonization of society is considered to be more important. Even though the programme speaks of the maintenance of ethnic differences, the promotion of the Estonian language can be seen as a subtle form of ethnic cleansing as described by Michael Mann. Both non-violent, partial ethnic cleansing, in the form of partially abandoning the identity by means of voluntarily adopting the official language, can be seen, as well as the denial of citizenship based on language; a form of partial ethnic cleansing that is effected by institutional coercion.[131] In the 'Estonian Integration Strategy 2008-2013' the emphasis on the stimulation of the use of the Estonian language is continued, stating that "the long-term objective of language integration is the situation when all permanent residents of Estonia are able to communicate in the official language."[132] In the most recent programme, improving the skills in the official language is again named as an important goal.[133] The fact that the encouragement of learning the Estonian language is a returning policy goal suggests that it is a process where improvements are being made very slowly. This suggestion is supported by figures for the period of 2000 to 2010 in the 'Estonian Integration Monitoring 2011' that show the self-estimation of language skills by those who speak Estonian as a second language. Only very gradual improvements are discernible, with percentages of people indicating that they possess no reading, speaking and understanding skills of the Estonian language dropping from 20 to 16%, 28 to 21% and 18% to 13% respectively. In terms of writing skills no progress in this sense has been made at all.[134] Particularly among the older generation of Russophones the knowledge of Estonian is very

[129] Integration in Estonian Society 2000-2007 (2000), http://www.kul.ee/webeditor/files/integratsioon/state_programme111.pdf (24-04-2014) 17. Italics in the original.
[130] Budryte, *Taming nationalism*, 86.
[131] Michael Mann, 'Explaining murderous ethnic cleansing: the macro-level', in Montserrat Guibernau and John Hutchinson (eds.), *Understanding Nationalism* (Cambridge 2005) 209-210.
[132] Estonian Integration Strategy 2008-2013 (2008), http://www.kul.ee/webeditor/files/integratsioon/Loimumiskava_2008_2013_ENG.pdf (24-04-2014) 4.
[133] The Strategy of Integration and Social Cohesion in Estonia "Lõimuv Eesti 2020" (2012), http://www.kul.ee/webeditor/files/integratsioon/LYIMUV_EESTI_2020(23_08)_ENG.pdf (24-04-2014) 10.
[134] Lauristin et al., *Integration Monitoring 2011*, 30.

limited. Of people aged 30 to 64, only 20% commanded the Estonian language in 2005. The percentage of people aged over 65 being able to speak Estonian was even lower. The percentage for people aged between 15 and 29 is between 50 and 60%.[135] The fact that Estonian is a Finno-Ugric language and thus unrelated to Russian means that learning the language is generally perceived as very difficult.

The implications of this slow development are clear in the existence of a mass, public culture, or perhaps better put, a lack thereof. A closer look at the Estonian media landscape and the consumption of media by residents and how these have developed in the period of independence can clarify this. After independence had been regained a process of liberalization of the press was set in motion, which led to numerous new magazines and papers, which effected a diversification and fragmentation of the media landscape. In 1999, newspaper reading had declined, while radio listening and TV viewing increased significantly in comparison with 1984.[136] A sample held in 2004 shows that newspaper reading was less common among non-Estonians than ethnic Estonians.[137] The lack of a mass public culture perhaps most evidently strikes out in the differing preference of TV channels of ethnic Estonians on the one hand and ethnic Russians on the other. Among ethnic Estonians the Estonian language public channels of ETV, Kanal2 and TV3 have enjoyed and still are enjoying the greatest popularity.[138] Among Russian speakers however, this is not the case. In 1999, only 5 to 15% of Russophones indicated that they watched TV channels in the Estonian language at times, preferring Russian language TV instead.[139] In 2011, the Russian language Pervõi Baltiiski Kanal (PBK) was the most popular channel among ethnic Russians, followed by channels from Russia and international programmes that are being subtitled in Russian.[140] The emergence of the Internet and, more recently, of the social media mean that the position of the TV as the main media source is waning. Nevertheless, it is still considered to have great influence, as is shown by the recent decision of the other two Baltic states, Lithuania and Latvia, to ban Russian state TV broadcasts. They considered the coverage on the Ukraine crisis to be dubious and dangerous for the national security of the Baltic states.[141]

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[135] Integration Strategy 2008-2013, 7.
[136] Peeter Vihalemm, 'Media Use in Estonia: trends and patterns', *Nordicom Review* 27.1 (2006) 44.
[137] Vihalemm, 'Media Use in Estonia', 48.
[138] Peeter Vihalemm, Lauristin, Marju and Köuts, Ragne, 'Trends in Estonian media landscape in 2000-2012', *Media Transformations* 6 (2012) 24-25.
[139] Budryte, *Taming nationalism*, 84.
[140] Vihalemm et al., 'Trends in media landscape', 25-26.
[141] 'Baltische staten doen Russische tv in de ban', 07-04-2014, http://www.trouw.nl/tr/nl/30340/Onrust-in-Oekraine/article/detail/3630460/2014/04/07/Baltische-staten-doen-Russische-tv-in-de-ban.dhtml (08-04-2014).

As said, the importance of the Internet as a media source is growing in Estonia, following a worldwide trend. In the last five years, new users of the Internet in Estonia were mainly middle-aged and elderly people, with 90% of persons aged up to 45 already using the Internet. This has led to a decrease in the reading of printed newspapers. Social media is being used by almost half of the population, while among youth the number is 80%.[142] The increasing salience of social media might indicate a move towards a pattern of media consumption shared by the population. Vihalemm et al. state that the most popular of the social media is Facebook, which is used by 83% of social media users.[143] A 2012 report by the software company Opera, however, shows great diversity in the use of social media in Estonia. In this report, based on data from the servers of their mobile web browser, it becomes clear that not only Facebook is used very often in Estonia, with 33% of unique users browsing to this page, but that the Russian social networks of Odnoklassniki and vKontakte are also popular with 8% and 18% of unique users respectively.[144] This indicates that even in the realm of the new media, preferences for channels in the mother tongue remain firmly grounded.

Thus, when looking at language, forming an essential part of culture, progress towards a commonly shared public culture is at best very slow. Another example of the difficulties surrounding language is the national anthem of Estonia. On the official website of the Estonian president it is specified as one of the three national symbols of Estonia, accompanied by the blue-black-white state flag and the state coat of arms. It was sung at the first Estonian song festival in 1869 and already the national anthem during Estonia's first spell of independence. During Soviet times, singing the anthem or humming the melody was strongly forbidden. The fact that the Finnish national anthem has the same melody, meant that during the Soviet period the song could still be heard over Finnish radio.[145] Taking this into consideration, it is not unthinkable that the anthem evokes strong feelings among ethnic Estonians. At the same time, it is perfectly understandable that for a Russophone not proficient in the Estonian language such symbolism is less apparent.

There are however other elements of culture where a congregating trend is visible. The Estonian linguist Martin Ehala has argued that the since 2000 there has been a certain shift visible, especially among younger residents, in which prosperity and quality of life became

[142] Vihalemm et al., 'Trends in media landscape', 29-30.
[143] Vihalemm et al., 'Trends in media landscape', 30.
[144] Opera software state of the mobile web, October 2012 (2012), http://www.operasoftware.com/archive/media/smw/2012/smw102012.pdf (27-04-2014), 4.
[145] 'National symbols', http://president.ee/en/republic-of-estonia/symbols/index.html (11-06-2014).

important goals. This trend has been visible amongst both ethnic Estonians and Russians. Ehala even goes so far as to argue that a new identity was taking shape, with the elements of individualism and consumerism displacing those of ethnicity and tradition.[146] The crises of the Lihula and 'Bronze Soldier' monuments could indicate that this was not the case, but according to Ehala these were in large part the result of mobilization along ethnic lines by nationalist activists and the ensuing reinforcement of undue media coverage.[147] Just like it is the case with the level of shared historical memories and myths, it is difficult to speak of a common, mass public culture in Estonia. The country remains divided along linguistic lines, which in turn leads to people depending on different news sources. It must be noted however, that among the younger generations steps are being taken into the direction of a more common public culture.

3.5. Common rights and duties in Estonia

In this part the developments of common rights and duties of persons living in Estonia will be scrutinized. As was already mentioned, the reinstatement of the 1938 Citizenship Act in 1992 left 454000 people, almost a third of persons residing in Estonia, stateless. A quick glance at the most recent figures demonstrates that enormous progress has been made in this field. As of 1 March 2014, the number of people with undetermined citizenship living in Estonia is down to 87833.[148] How this has been effected will be addressed in this section. The reintroduction of the Citizenship Law was in large part the result of the perception of ethnic Russians as a threat to the survival of the Estonian nation. The immigration and population policies of the Soviet Union had been seen as an attempt to kill the Estonian nation. According to Budryte, this notion continued to play a very important role in the process of political community building in independent Estonia. She has described this process as an interaction between international actors promoting minority rights on the one hand and attempts by Estonia to secure its national identity on the other.[149] In pursuing membership of organizations such as the EU and NATO (also being means of securing the Estonian nation), Estonia had to adjust their policies relating to minority rights. Such changed policies were perceived as threatening the national identity, resulting in the creation of new laws preserving the identity. In turn, these laws were then condemned by international organizations as

[146] Martin Ehala, 'The birth of the Russian-speaking minority in Estonia', *Eurozine* (2008), http://www.eurozine.com/articles/2008-09-11-ehala-en.html (23-12-2013) 4-5.
[147] Ehala, 'The birth of minority', 6.
[148] Citizenship factsheet Police- and Border Guard Board (7 March 2014), http://estonia.eu/about-estonia/society/citizenship.html (20-04-2014).
[149] Budryte, *Taming nationalism*, 78.

threatening minority rights, resulting yet again in the laws being changed. In response, new laws protecting the national identity would then be adopted, after which the process would repeat itself again. This process was begun as soon as Estonia regained its independence, with several human rights missions carried out by international organizations taking place in the period from 1991 to 1994. Further influence on Estonia was exercised by international organizations by means of membership conditionality in the following years. Besides, Russia started to make use of the ethnic Russian minority living in Estonia in negotiations with the Estonian government.[150] The influence of Western international organizations and Russia on the dynamics of Estonia's minority rights policy in particular, and its national identity in general will be addressed in more detail in the following chapter. For now, it suffices to focus on the development of the actual common rights and duties during the period of 1991-1994.

The reinstatement of the Citizenship Act in 1992 and the related rules regarding naturalization for those who were denied the Estonian nationality had far reaching consequences for the initial phase of post-Soviet political community building. In order to naturalize one had to have resided in the territory of Estonia for at least the last two years. Furthermore, a waiting period of a year was included in the prerequisites.[151] Since the earliest date for establishing residency was set at 30 March 1990, the two years residency requirement and one year waiting period meant that the earliest date possible for naturalization was 30 March 1993. It therefore was impossible for the lion's share of ethnic Russians to participate in the 1992 parliamentary election.[152] Although the Constitution of 1992 did grant some basic civil rights to all residents, such as the freedom of expression, court access and a limited participation in the political process in terms of the possibility to vote in local elections[153], Estonia's juridical climate of the early 1990s was in essence unfriendly towards the ethnic Russian minority. The 1993 Aliens Act and the amendment of the Citizenship Act and Language Law, both legislated in 1995 are a case in point. The Aliens Act required residents with either a Soviet or Russian passport to apply for residency and work permits again within a year. Russophones viewed this legislation as an attempt of ethnic cleansing. Only after international pressure the law was amended, granting residency and work permits to everybody who had settled in Estonia before 1 July 1990.[154] The 1995 amendment of the Citizenship Act made the rules on

[150] Budryte, *Taming nationalism*, 71-72.
[151] Budryte, *Taming nationalism*, 71.
[152] Järve, 'Estonian Citizenship', 46.
[153] Budryte, *Taming nationalism*, 73, 77.
[154] Budryte, *Taming nationalism*, 72.

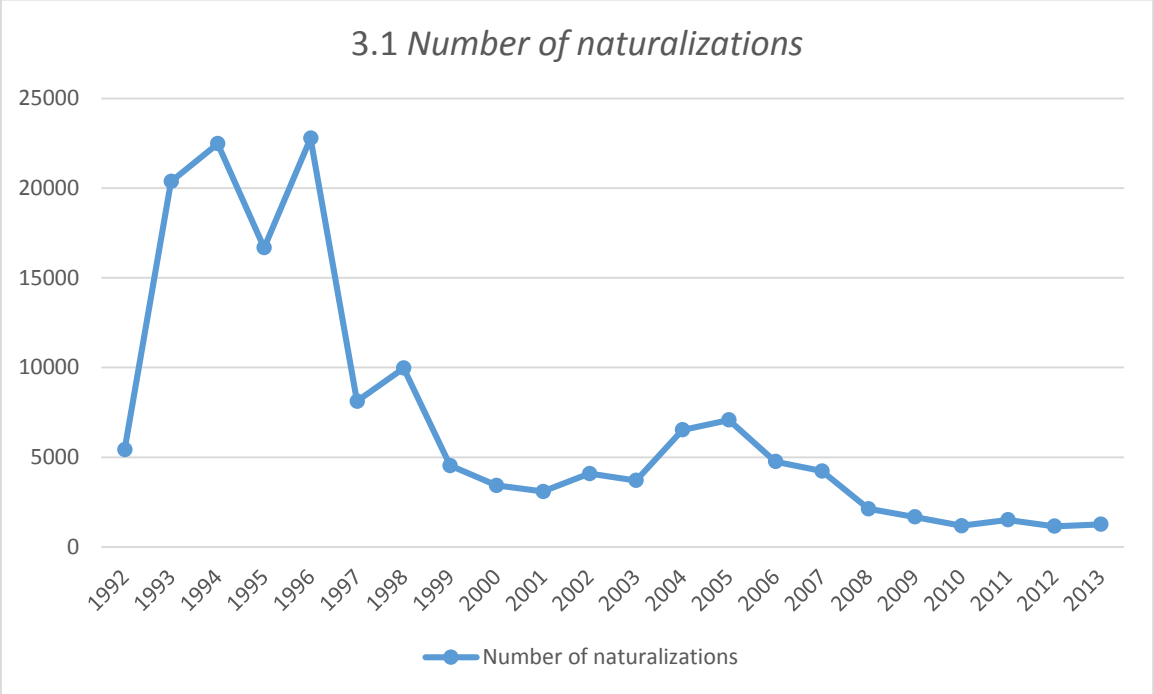
naturalization even stricter. From then on, applicants had to prove they had knowledge of the Constitution and Citizenship Act. Furthermore, the required time of residence went up from two to five years.[155] The Language Law specified Estonian as the only official language.[156] Despite the strict laws on naturalization, the first half of the 1990s saw the highest number of naturalizations, with yearly averages ranging around 20000 between 1993 and 1996.

So far, the developments of Estonia's legal system can hardly be characterized as distributing common rights and duties to all residents. However, the restrictive years of the early and mid-1990s were followed by a period in which rights for the ethnic Russian minority were gradually increased. Perhaps the most telling action taken in this respect is the 1998 amendment of the Citizenship Act dealing with the naturalization of minors aged under fifteen years. This law made it possible for children younger than fifteen years who were born in Estonia to stateless parents to naturalize.[157] The amendment was made after it was suggested by the OSCE in 1997, with the possible inclusion within the EU as an important driving factor. Completely in line with the interactive pattern between international organizations championing minority rights and identity protecting policies mentioned earlier, the amendment was followed by laws defending the Estonian language. A law was drafted that required members of parliament and officials in local governments to have fluency in Estonian. Again this law was amended in 2001 under pressure from international organizations, this time the OSCE. Despite the amendment, Estonian continued to be the official language of Parliament.[158] Some further amendments to the Citizenship Act have been made in the following years, the most notable being the simplification of the naturalization process for disabled persons, the reduced time required for obtaining citizenship and the fact that expenses made on language courses are compensated if one successfully completes the exams necessary for the acquisition of citizenship.[159]

All these laws and amendments facilitating naturalization have led to the steady decline of persons with undetermined citizenship living in Estonia, from 32% of the total population in 1992 to 6,5% in March 2014, even though part of this decline can be explained by the 'return'

[155] 'Citizenship Act of Estonia' (1995), http://www.legislationline.org/documents/action/popup/id/5727, (21-03-2014) §6.
[156] Järve, 'Estonian Citizenship', 58.
[157] 'Citizenship Act' (1995, amended 2013), http://www.legislationline.org/topics/country/33/topic/2 (21-03-2014), §13.4.
[158] Budryte, *Taming nationalism*, 80-83.
[159] Citizenship factsheet Police- and Border Guard Board (7 March 2014), http://estonia.eu/about-estonia/society/citizenship.html (20-04-2014).

of ethnic Russians to Russia As mentioned, the highest rates of naturalization were seen in the period from 1993 to 1995. Another peak is discernible in 2004 and 2005, with 6523 and 7072 persons acquiring Estonian citizenship. This is the direct result of Estonia's accession to the European Union in 2004. From then on, being an Estonian citizen meant being a EU citizen, which obviously brought advantages.[160]



"Source": Citizenship factsheet Police- and Border Guard Board (7 March 2014), http://estonia.eu/about-estonia/society/citizenship.html (20-04-2014).

In conclusion, great progress has been made in terms of common rights and duties within Estonia during the period from 1991 until 2014. The number of stateless residents has drastically been reduced by making changes to the Citizenship Act, a law that at its inception was very exclusive. However, it must be noted that at the same time a process of strengthening the position of the Estonian language, and undermining the Russian language, has been going on. Making use of Michael Mann's framework on ethnic cleansing, this could be perceived as a very subtle, non-violent way of ethnic cleansing. Nevertheless, the sharing of common rights and duties appears to be one of the strongest developed pillars of what Anthony Smith deems necessary for a common national identity.

[160] Citizenship factsheet Police- and Border Guard Board (7 March 2014), http://estonia.eu/about-estonia/society/citizenship.html (20-04-2014).

3.6. Estonia's economy

The final element of Anthony Smith's definition of a national identity is a shared economy, in which the members are able to move around freely. Two questions regarding the economy arise that will be answered in this section. First, can we speak we of a common Estonian economy, or do ethnic Russians and Estonians have separate economies and is there such a thing as territorial mobility? Relating to this, the second question is whether or not ethnic Russians and ethnic Estonians are equally represented in different sectors of the economy. The influence of the migration and population policies during the Soviet era cannot be underestimated in answering both the former and the latter question. As was already shortly addressed, the rapid rise of the ethnic Russian population during the Soviet Union period was in large part due to the forced industrialization of the Ida-Virumaa region and the ensuing migration to bring in laborers to work in the plants during the 1960s and 1970s. At its zenith, some 20000 to 30000 Russians arrived per year.[161] These migrants generally came to work in the chemical, mining, and textile industries of the region, whereas another large number of Russians went to Tallinn to work in metal, machine-building and light industries.[162] Throughout the Soviet era, ethnic Russians in general thus have been working mainly in the industrial sector. The ethnic Estonians that worked in industry on the other hand, were mainly active in factories producing for the local area. Furthermore, since the Russians migrants mainly settled in cities, they hardly worked in the agricultural sector. The educational, academic and cultural sectors were also dominated by ethnic Estonians in those years. Roughly said, one can thus speak of a division of labor along ethnic lines during the Soviet era, with Russians working in industry and Estonians mainly being active in the other sectors.

To a large extent, a similar pattern of labor division is discernible in post-Soviet Estonia. The dominance of ethnic Russians in industry has remained, as is shown by figures in the 'Integration of Estonian Society Monitoring 2000', revealing that in 1999, for every ethnic Estonian working in industry there were three non-Estonians active in the sector (of which the largest part is composed of ethnic Russians).[163] Estonia's independence and the ensuing repudiation of communism and introduction of a market-based economy however, had far reaching consequences for the industries in which these ethnic Russians were involved.

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[161] Budryte, *Taming nationalism?*, 49.
[162] Kristina Lindemann, 'Explaining different returns from human capital in the labour market', in Raivo Vetik and Jelena Helemäe (eds.), *The Russian Second Generation in Tallinn and Kohtla-Järve: The TIES Study in Estonia*, (Amsterdam, 2011), 94.
[163] Marje Pavelson, 'Socio-economic integration: employment and incomes' in Marju Laurisitin, *Integration of Estonian Society Monitoring 2000* (2000).

Within the newly independent state, the economy was restructured and a large number of the factories were shut down, since they were no longer part of the Soviet command economy and thus were not able to produce in large numbers for the entire Soviet Union anymore.[164] The Ida-Virumaa region especially, was hit very hard by these reforms. Just how far-reaching this change has been can be expressed by the share of the gross domestic product (GDP) of the different sectors. Whereas in 1989 35.1% of the GDP was generated in the manufacturing sector, it had plummeted to 13.7% in 1999. The share of trade and of transport and communications of the GDP on the other hand, grew in the same period from 7.0% to 14.5% and from 6.9% to 13.2% respectively.[165] As of 2012, the share of manufacturing is 16.0%.[166] In particular, the services sector has taken a leap, with a GDP share of 66.2% in 2013. Even though the share of industry is still at 30% in 2013, the salience of manufacturing has thus declined, while the importance of sectors such as electronics, telecommunications and information technology has grown.[167] The decreased importance of industry is also shown by the pattern of foreign direct investment (FDI) in Estonia. FDI has grown with very high rates in the years of independence, with the financial sector attracting the largest amount.[168] By far the largest part of FDI went to the Tallinn region, amounting 78,9% of the total in 2005. In comparison, the Narva region only attracted 0,4%.[169] The adoption of an open-market economy was rather successful, with the GDP in general, apart from two periods, growing each year. Measured in current prices, the GDP rose from $1,713 billion in 1993 to $12,044 billion in 2013.[170]

The diminished role of the manufacturing industry in the restructured economy of independent Estonia and the ongoing traditional dominance of ethnic Russians in this sector meant fewer employment options for them. This is also addressed by the Estonian social scientist Marje Pavelson in the 'Integration of Estonian Society Monitoring 2005', in which

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[164] Pavelson, 'Socio-economic integration'.
[165] 'Changes in the economic structure', Eesti Instituut, http://www.estonica.org/en/Economy/Transformations_in_the_Estonian_economy_in_the_1990s/Changes_in_the_economic_structure/ (29-04-2014).
[166] 'Economy in numbers', (April 14 2014), http://estonia.eu/about-estonia/economy-a-it/economy-in-numbers.html (29-04-2014).
[167] CIA World Factbook (April 15 2014), https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/en.html (29-04-2014).
[168] Siren Skråmestø Juliussen, 'Foreign direct investment in Estonia: Local outcomes of global processes' (Bergen 2008), 45-46.
[169] Juliussen, 'Foreign direct investment', 50.
[170] World Economic Outlook Database, April 2014, IMF, http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2014/01/weodata/weorept.aspx?pr.x=86&pr.y=5&sy=1992&ey=2013&scsm=1&ssd=1&sort=country&ds=.&br=1&c=922%2C939%2C926&s=NGDP_RPCH%2CNGDPD%2CNGDPDPC%2CPPPGDP&grp=0&a= (1-6-2014).

she indicates that an increasing number of ethnic Russians were moving out of industry and into the construction and transportation sectors.[171] At the same time, she concedes that there are insufficient employment opportunities in the Eastern Ida-Viruuma region, which according to her mainly results from an ineffective labor policy, rather than linguistic or nationalities policies.[172] The fact that economic performances have stagnated is neither due to its geographical location or infrastructure. The region is connected by highways and railways and the city of Sillamäe houses the fifth largest port in the Baltic states. The problem of high unemployment rates in the region is still present. In the latest monitoring of Estonian integration that has been carried out in 2011, the long-term unemployment in the area is characterized as one of the two main problems in relation to the labor market. The consequences of the global economic crisis were direst for non-Estonians. What strikes out in comparison to Pavelson's evaluation of six years earlier, is that in this case language is deemed to be one of the factors of the unemployment problem. The other main problem the authors identify is also related to language. According to the authors young Russophones who have enjoyed a good education tend to have a harder time making the most out of their career than ethnic Estonians do. In specifying language as the most salient problem, it is not surprising that the authors propose that a possible solution can be found in better language education.[173] In general, it can thus be argued that a division of labor originating from the Soviet period and the language barrier function as hindrances in achieving a fully integrated common economy with free movement of persons.

Apart from the patterns of employment within Estonia, it is also interesting to take a look at the developments in Estonia's trade since its independence. As was already mentioned, the part of the GDP generated through trade has risen significantly. The changes in the geographical distribution might provide further insight in the policies pursued by the Estonian government. In 1990, a staggering 95,5% of exports and 88,9% of imports were composed of intraregional trade, that is trade with the Soviet Union and the socialist countries in Eastern and Central Europe. The trade with Russia decreased rapidly in the first decade of independence, with exports falling from 22.6% in 1993 to 9.3% in 1999 and imports from 17.2% to 13.5% in the same period. At the same time, trade with countries such as Sweden,

[171] Marje Pavelson, 'The socio-economic condition of Estonians and Estonian Russians: expectations and changes ' in Raivo Vetik, *Integration of Estonian Society Monitoring 2005* (2005).
[172] Pavelson, 'Socio-economic condition'.
[173] Lauristin et al, *Integration monitoring 2011*, 12.

Finland and Germany increased.[174] It would be tempting to explain this as an active measure by the Estonian government to decrease dependency on Russia and protect itself against Russian influence. As said earlier, fear of extinction of the Estonian nation was widespread during the 1990s and Russia was obviously the most present danger. The main reason for the strong decline in Estonian-Russian trade however, is to be found in Russia. The Russian government had decided to raise double tariffs on Estonian goods in 1997 to punish Estonia for its policy regarding citizenship of ethnic Russians.[175] In recent years, trade between Russia and Estonia has grown again. Estonia's accession to the European Union played a pivotal role in this, since Russia had agreements with the EU on common tariffs for all of its members.[176] This meant that double tariffs could no longer be upheld. Recent figures on export support this. In 2012, 12,1% of Estonian exports went to Russia, making Russia the third most important export market for Estonian goods after Sweden and Finland. Imports from Russia however, have gone down even further in comparison to 1999. In 2012, only 6,8% of imports came from Russia, with Russia ranking sixth in the list of main import partners.[177]

Since protecting the Estonian nation from extermination played an important role in Estonian political rhetoric and policy, it is equally interesting to look into the energy security of the country. As the recent crisis in Ukraine has shown, a large dependency on Russian gas can have severe consequences. Do the same terms apply for Estonia? In short, the answer is no. Even though Russia is the sole supplier of natural gas to Estonia, the government goes at great lengths to decrease its dependency on this source. As of 2012, around 15% of the total energy consumed in Estonia was generated by Russian gas. In comparison, in 1991 the figure was around 22.5%.[178] Estonia is domestically producing oil shale, and in 2010 around 60% of the total energy consumption was fueled by this source.[179] However, the use of oil shale does not come without problems. Oil shale is a rather polluting energy source, with high levels of CO_2 gas and ash being released in the process. EU rules dictate that either the process should get cleaner or the use of oil shale should be reduced.[180] In line with limiting dependency on Russian gas, Estonia is investing in new technologies to produce oil shale in a more

[174] Tiiu Paas, *Gravity Approach for modeling trade flows between Estonia and the main trading partners* (Tartu 2000) 22.
[175] Ole Nørgaard (ed.), *The Baltic States after independence* (Cheltenham 1999) 167.
[176] Alari Purju, 'Foreign trade between the Baltic states and Russia: trends, institutional settings and impact of the EU enlargement, *Turku School of Economics and Business Administration* (2004) 25.
[177] 'Economy in numbers'.
[178] Triinu Tarus and Crandall, Matthew, 'Is Russia a threat to Estonian energy security?', *Baltic Journal of Political Science* 1 (2012) 86.
[179] Tarus, 'Is Russia a threat?', 81.
[180] Tarus, 'Is Russia a threat?', 81.

sustainable way. Furthermore, they are investing a lot in wind energy and a LNG (liquid natural gas) terminal in the Baltics.[181]

In conclusion, Estonia's economy has transformed significantly in the years of independence. The repudiation of communism and the far-reaching acceptance of an open-market economy has led to serious changes. Trade and transport has grown in importance and the general direction of these has moved from former communist countries towards the EU. Furthermore, the importance of industry within the economy has decreased, while the salience of the services sector has grown. This brings us back to Anthony Smith's notion of a single, common economy with free movement of people as an important element of a national identity. As it turns out, one can hardly speak of this. Ethnic Russians remain primarily active in the industrial sector. Declining job opportunities in the industry mean that ethnic Russians are also overrepresented in the unemployed population. Again, language turns out to be an important barrier to further integration. To what extent than, can we speak of a common national Estonian identity? This will be explicated in the concluding part of this chapter.

3.7. A national identity?

Now that the five individual components that, according to Anthony Smith, make up a national identity have been addressed, it is possible to determine whether or not one can actually speak of a common national identity in Estonia. The Soviet migration and population policy, resulting in a large influx of ethnic Russians, proved to be a problematic legacy and meant a difficult start for independent Estonia. The strict Citizenship Act that was imposed in 1992 and difficult naturalization process basically dissected the population, granting only citizenship to those who had resided in Estonia before June 1940 and their offspring. In essence, this meant that only ethnic Estonians were members of the Estonian nation and state. However, as was mentioned, huge progress has been made in this field. Just how big the steps are, can be illustrated by the decline of persons with undetermined statehood from 454000 in 1992 to only 87833 in 2014. This means that in terms of common rights, a move towards inclusivity is clearly visible.

When looking at the other components ascribed to a national identity by Anthony Smith, such a development is less evident. In spite of well-intended education programmes set up by the government and pleas for a 'democratization of history' by academics and commentators alike, the memories of the Second World War and the era under Soviet rule remain a dividing

[181] Tarus, 'Is Russia a threat? ', 89.

factor frustrating the creation of a common history. The polarizing potential of historical memory has been exemplified by the riots and the ensuing debate over the Lihula and 'Bronze Soldier' monuments in 2004 and 2007. In more recent years, several marches honoring the Estonian division of the Waffen SS and the burial with military honors of the decorated SS-man Harald Nugiseks in January 2014 attracted criticism and stirred up some controversy, particularly in the Russian media.[182] This brings us to another point, that of media use. As it turns out, the patterns of media consumption among ethnic Estonians and ethnic Russians differs significantly. Ethnic Russians rely in large part on Russian language media, with both media from Estonia and Russia being consumed. Ethnic Estonians on the other hand prefer Estonian language media. A similar pattern is discernible in the usage of new media. Both Facebook and its Russian equivalent Vkontakte are popular in Estonia, indicating that news channels in the mother tongue enjoy preference. Benedict Anderson stresses the importance of newspapers, or 'one-day best-sellers' as he calls them, in imagining the nation. The knowledge that thousands of others are reading the same paper at the same time contributes to the feeling of belonging.[183] He thus greatly emphasizes the salience of language in imagining the nation. In the case of Estonia, language seems be the most important barrier obstructing the population to consume the same newspapers (and its modern day equivalents of radio, TV and social media). Therefore, one can hardly speak of a mass, public culture. Language plays an equally impeding role in the development towards a common economy. The division of labor that originates from the Soviet period, with ethnic Russians working in industry and ethnic Estonians in the other sectors has remained largely in place during the years of independence. In large part, this can be explained by the fact that knowledge of the Estonian language is necessary to be successful in the other sectors. The diminished role of industry within the Estonian economy means a higher level of unemployment among ethnic Russians. Thus, it is hard to speak of a truly common economy with territorial mobility for all its members.

So far, it appears that between 1991 and 2014 one can hardly speak of a development towards a common Estonian national identity that includes all residents of Estonia. Despite the great steps forward that have been made in terms of legal rights, the lack of progression in the cultural and economic dimensions is evident. The disruptive role of language in thwarting

[182] 'Nazi veteran buried with full honors in Estonia', 10-01-2014, http://en.ria.ru/world/20140110/186407187/Nazi-Veteran-Buried-with-Full-Honors-in-Estonia.html (24-05-2014).
[183] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 35.

improvements in these two fields is striking. This insight, combined with the figures that show that knowledge of the Estonian language among ethnic Russians has hardly improved, provides a grim image of the current state and prospect of an inclusive Estonian national identity. Based on these findings it would be tempting to conclude that there is no such thing as a common Estonian national identity. Returning to Anderson's ideas on the nation as an imagined community and the importance of language in this imagining, one could argue that the lack of a common language in Estonia has resulted in the inability to imagine an Estonian nation including all residents, and therefore in the absence of a common national identity. However, this conclusion would be premature. Despite the lack of a common economy and culture, a significant number of 76% of non-ethnic Estonians perceived Estonia as their only homeland in 2011. The number has risen with 10% within three years.[184] Furthermore, among residents that do not hold Estonian citizenship, the feeling of belonging to the Estonian nation in a constitutional sense has risen from 34% in 2008 to 52% in 2011. Of non-ethnic Estonians holding Estonian citizenship, the figure was 65% in 2011.[185] These findings stand in stark contrast with the 92% to 96% of ethnic Russians voting to stay in the Soviet Union just prior to Estonian independence[186], and clearly indicate a development among ethnic Russians in Estonia towards embracing the Estonian nation and the feeling that they are a part of it. A similar pattern appears among ethnic Estonians. Where in 2008, 64% agreed with the statement that "including non-Estonians in managing the Estonian economy and the state is beneficial for Estonia", this number had risen to 70% by 2011.[187]

So in spite of the lack of a common culture, the feeling of belonging has steadily increased and more and more ethnic Russians are successfully integrated within society. One could argue that Estonia is in fact a multicultural society which shows that loyalty to the nation is not merely defined by the five features of national identity brought forward by Anthony Smith. To illustrate this, reactions in Estonia to the recent turmoil in Ukraine are a case in point. A demonstration held in Tallinn on April 12 2014 supporting ethnic Russians in the Crimea and eastern Ukraine, and hinting at possibly holding a separatist referendum in northeastern Estonia attracted only forty persons.[188] When this demonstration was announced,

[184] Lauristin et al, *Integration monitoring 2011*, 7.
[185] Lauristin et al, *Integration monitoring 2011*, 7.
[186] Budryte, *Taming nationalism*, 70.
[187] Lauristin et al, *Integration monitoring 2011*, 8.
[188] 'First pro-Kremlin protest attracts 40', 14-04-2014, http://news.err.ee/v/politics/9307203d-2534-4587-9fe8-61f86f8166d5 (25-05-2014).

non-Estonian activists and public figures started a petition called Memorandum 14, stating the following:

> *"We, signatories and Estonian residents - citizens of Estonia as well as other countries, and also permanent residents without a citizenship - watch the events in Ukraine with pain and concern.*
>
> *We would like to say with all responsibility that our wish is to solve all the problems of Estonian society with the legal authorities of the Republic of Estonia. We do not need protecting from the outside; we think intervening with Estonian politics by third countries is unacceptable.*
>
> *We do not support separatist feeling and statements made on the behalf of the Russian-speaking community of Estonia. All issues regarding the development of our society, including education, language and citizenship policies, must be resolved according to the principle of the sovereignty of the state.*
>
> *Regardless of mother tongue and nationality, the majority of people living here consider Estonia their homeland. We think it is valuable that although we stand on separate sides of the ideological barrier, we consider it our duty to say collectively: our home is an independent and free Estonia!"*[189]

The low turnout at the rally and the counter-initiative of the petition indicate that sentiments of belonging to Estonia thus appear stronger than the idea that ethnic Russians should belong to Russia. Implying that the five features described by Anthony Smith are not sufficient to explain why and how a form of common national identity has developed within Estonia, poses new questions. If these elements cannot fully explain the feeling of belonging and loyalty to the Estonian nation held by its residents, what then can? And why has the Estonian state gone to great lengths to meet the ethnic Russian population while the survival of the Estonian nation has always been one of its main concerns? An assessment of what could be gained and lost in the period from 1991 to 2014, both for Estonia as a nation-state and for an individual Estonian resident, might provide answers to these questions. In addition, the influence of international organizations and Russia deserve further scrutiny, since their roles in this cannot be underestimated. These matters will be addressed in the following chapter.

[189] 'Estonian Russian speakers petition against separatism', 10-04-2014, http://news.err.ee/v/politics/6b73690d-77b8-4073-b942-7636c694e1d6 (27-05-2014).

4. Interests of the Estonian nation, interests of the people

"With unwavering faith and a steadfast will to strengthen and develop the state, […] which shall guarantee the preservation of the Estonian nation, language and culture through the ages […] the people of Estonia […] adopted the following Constitution".[190]

Thus are the opening lines of the Constitution of the Estonian Republic that entered into force 3 July 1992. In the previous chapter it was established that in spite of the fact that a common national identity failed to develop in post-communist Estonia, feelings of belonging to the Estonian nation in a constitutional sense and the perception of Estonia as a homeland have grown steadily. This observation, combined with the opening text of the Estonian constitution, presents two paradoxes. In the first place, if one of the purposes of the Estonian state is to preserve the Estonian nation, language and culture, why than has it tried to include the ethnic Russians, persons that at first were excluded from that state and nation precisely because of their language and culture? And second, why has this feeling of belonging to the Estonian nation grown among ethnic Russians, despite the lack of a common national identity and considering the statement in the Estonian Constitution mentioned above? Commenting on the upsurge of nationalist rhetoric in the run-up to the First World War, Lenin said "put no faith in phrase-mongering, it is better to see *who stands to gain*!*"*, arguing that it were capitalist arms-manufacturing firms who benefited most from these developments.[191] A century later, without insinuating a capitalist scheme and without merely focusing on financial gain, I think Lenin's advice to look at those that benefit (and at what those benefits actually are) in dealing with questions of nationalism and national identity still is very useful.

To start with the former question, the ideas of Miroslav Hroch can be of use to explain this. Whereas Anthony Smith defines nationalism as "an ideological movement for the attainment and maintenance of autonomy, unity, and identity on behalf of a population deemed by some of its members to constitute an actual or potential 'nation'"[192], Hroch makes a distinction between nationalism and a national movement. According to Hroch, nationalism is "a state of mind (collective mentality), that gives priority to the interests and values of one's own nation

[190] 'Constitution of the Republic of Estonia' (1992), http://www.president.ee/en/republic-of-estonia/the-constitution/ (28-05-2014).
[191] Vladimir Lenin, 'Who stands to gain' (1913): https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1913/apr/11.htm (12-6-2014) (italics in original).
[192] Smith, *Nation in history*, 3.

over all other interests and values".[193] He defines a national movement as "organized efforts to achieve all the attributes of a 'fully fledged' nation, i.e. to obtain all attributes characterizing already existing nation-states".[194] Furthermore, he specifies three types of goals that are characteristic of these national movements. In the first place, national movements often have political demands. According to Hroch, in contemporary national movements the emphasis is on independence.[195] This also holds true for the case of Estonia, which tried to and succeeded in gaining independence from the Soviet Union. Second, national movements express cultural demands. Hroch points to the establishment and strengthening of an own culture and literary language.[196] Again, the Estonian case contains these elements, even in a very strong degree. In the previous chapter it became clear that especially language plays a crucial role in Estonian culture and national identity. Third, national movements often put forward social demands.[197] This aspect is less visible in the case of Estonia. Thus, in the initial phase of Estonian post-Soviet independence, and the short period preceding it, we can speak of a national movement being active. However, since the period of interest in this thesis runs from 1991 until present, merely looking at the national movement is not enough. Since the national movement succeeded and Estonia attained the attributes of a nation-state, it is more useful to look at nationalism for the remainder of the period.

In doing this, both the conception of nationalism of Anthony Smith and that of Miroslav Hroch may be of use. Hroch's definition emphasizes the preponderance of the interests of the nation over all other interests. Smith's definition specifies some of these interests, stressing the importance of maintaining the autonomy, identity and unity of the nation. In the next part, some of the decisions made by the Estonian state that at first sight appear rather paradoxical will be scrutinized. As it turns out, the majority of these decisions can be explained as measures to defend the interests of the Estonian nation.

The latter paradox, the fact that the feeling of belonging to the Estonian nation has grown among ethnic Russians, despite the lack of a common national identity, also can be explained by taking interests into account. Rather than looking at state or national interests, the concerns of individuals might provide an answer to why this pattern is visible. In doing this, aspects such as the increase in common rights and the excessive growth of Estonia's economy play an

[193] Hroch, 'Nationalism and national movements', 36.
[194] Hroch, 'Nationalism and national movements', 36.
[195] Hroch, 'Nationalism and national movements', 38.
[196] Hroch, 'Nationalism and national movements', 38.
[197] Hroch, 'Nationalism and national movements', 38.

important role. But, first the national and state interests will be addressed in the following part.

4.1. Estonia's national interests

A quick glance at Estonia's history reveals how often the territory has been ruled by foreign powers. From the thirteenth century onwards the area was ruled by Danes, Germans, Swedes, Poles and Russians, until this regime fell in 1917. Having spent the interwar years as an independent nation-state, which was actually the first independent period of Estonia, it was incorporated within the Soviet Union during the Second World War. Memories of foreign occupation, both of days long gone and of the more recent Soviet period, has elicited a strong feeling among Estonians that the nation must be protected from extermination. This particular sentiment is not merely expressed, but has also found its way in the official policy of the Estonian state, the opening statement of the constitution is a case in point. The fact that this is actually a dynamic political stance has led Rogers Brubaker in his book *Nationalism reframed: Nationhood and the national question in the new Europe* to define such a state as a nationalizing state rather than a nation-state.[198] In this book he argues that the national question that was apparent in Eastern Europe in times of the great multi-ethnic empires has been recast with the fall of the Soviet Union and that three elements play a role in this. The first is the nationalizing state just mentioned, whereas the second and third are external national homelands and national minorities respectively.[199] According to Brubaker, the nationalizing state policies in relation to the national minorities are either assimilative, trying to include the minority linguistically and culturally in the nation, or dissimilative, excluding the minority from important positions and in this way reducing its influence on politics, culture and economy.[200] Even though Brubaker's theory is helpful in explaining a part of the developments relating the national question in post-Soviet Estonia, the role of international organizations should not be underestimated. As David J. Smith has argued, joining European institutions played a role in shedding the eastern image, while at the same time the membership conditionality of these institutions played a significant part in state-building processes and dealings with ethnic minorities, and therefore they should be included within Brubaker's framework.[201] Now, defining the survival of the Estonian nation as one the leading

[198] Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism reframed: Nationhood and the national question in the new Europe*. (Cambridge 1996) 63.
[199] Brubaker, *Nationalism reframed*, 4-5.
[200] Brubaker, *Nationalism reframed*, 79-106.
[201] David J. Smith, 'Framing the national question',

national interests and taking into account the interaction between the nationalizing state, national minority, external homeland and international organizations, nationalism as defined by Hroch can explain a large number of policy developments, some of them that at first might seem at odds with the Estonian national interest, during the post-Soviet period.

Probably the most apparent example of this is the Citizenship Act and the amendments made to it since it was entered into force in 1992. As was already mentioned in the previous chapter, the Citizenship Act was of a very restrictive character, only granting citizenship to persons who had lived in Estonia before 16 June 1940, as well as their offspring. For the largest part of the ethnic Russian population, most of them having arrived in the 1960s and 1970s, this meant that they were rendered stateless. Furthermore, the harsh requirements for naturalization made it literally impossible for almost all ethnic Russians to participate in the first parliamentary elections held in 1992. This particular policy of the nationalizing Estonian state is a clear example of dissimilation. By denying the ethnic Russian minority Estonian citizenship, and thus the option to participate in elections, the state defended the Estonian nation from the potentially harmful political influence of the Russian minority. The 1993 Aliens Act, the 1995 amendment of the Citizenship Act and the Language Law of the same year can be equally seen as measures of the Estonian nationalizing state to dissimilate the ethnic Russian minority. The fact that just prior to independence a poll organized by the predominantly Russian organization of the Estonian Interregional Soviet led to 92 to 96% of voters choosing to remain within the Soviet Union can help in explaining why the path of dissimilation was chosen at first. Although this outcome must be nuanced to some extent, because of the fact that it was held among the members of the organization and therefore it does not show the sentiment of all ethnic Russians, it shows that at least among a significant part the will to remain part of the Soviet Union was very strong. Furthermore, divisions of the Russian army were stationed within Estonia until 1994.[202] The military presence of the external homeland of the ethnic Russian minority clarifies the strong inclination of the nationalizing Estonian state to keep the political influence of ethnic Russians at a low level. In later years, more assimilative measures of the state could be seen, in particular in the field of education. The Estonian government has been very active in promoting the education of the Estonian language and some steps in the field of history education have also been made.

[202] Brubaker, *Nationalism reframed*, 47.

However, measures that have been taken by the government that appear at odds with the national interest of survival can also be seen. Such policies, that neither seem to be aimed at assimilating nor at dissimilating the ethnic Russian minority in the definition of Brubaker, therefore pose the question of why they were taken. A good example of this is the 1998 amendment of the Citizenship Act that deals with the naturalization of children aged under fifteen. This particular amendment made it possible for these children to apply for Estonian citizenship without the strict requirements that are usually involved, thus for example regardless of the fact whether or not they are able to speak Estonian. As it turns out, this amendment was first proposed by the OSCE in 1997. When the EU also recommended to address the issue, the Estonian government passed the amendment in December 1998, just in time before the EU was to decide on which countries would be invited to talk about EU accession. Despite strong domestic opposition the amendment was eventually implemented.[203] Meeting the requirements of the European Union was the most important argument used by politicians in favor of the amendment.[204] So, apart from assimilating and dissimilating policies of the nationalizing state, we can also speak of policies directed at joining international organizations that serve the national interests. The international relations theory of neoliberal institutionalism can be used to clarify this. Drawing on ideas from both the traditional schools of realism and liberalism, proponents of neoliberal institutionalism are of the belief that international institutions are self-interested creations of states, which are designed to solve problems of coordination and cooperation and to reduce cost of governance.[205] Joining organizations such as the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe in 1991, Council of Europe in 1993, and the European Union and NATO in 2004 can be seen as self-interested measures taken in order to ensure the survival of the Estonian nation. The fact that certain measures and policy changes had to be taken that actually seem to oppose this same interest can thus be explained by the eventual gain of membership, the end justifying the means. The 1998 amendment of the Citizenship Act is not the only instance were international organizations influenced Estonian policies. In 1997 the CE for example demanded that it would become easier for ethnic Russians to learn Estonian, whereas the OSCE demanded the elimination of the Language Law in 2001, promising to end its mission investigating ethnic tension within Estonia in return.[206] Just how important membership of

[203] Kelley 'International actors', 446-447.
[204] Budryte, 81.
[205] Arthur A. Stein in Christian Reus-Smit and Duncan Snidal (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations* (Oxford 2008), 204-205.
[206] Budryte, *Taming nationalism*, 79, 83.

these organizations was can be stressed by the fact that throughout the years the presence and interference of Russia loomed every now and then. Effecting its influence on the ethnic Russian minority within Estonia, the Russian government addressed the issue of minority rights during negotiations on borders, talks on the withdrawal of Russian troops from Estonian soil and in complaints made to the international community and continued to do this for a long time.[207]

The turmoil in Ukraine, which started in 2013 and still is going on at the time of writing this thesis has once again shown the importance ascribed in Estonia to the membership of the mentioned international organizations. The tension among the Ukrainian population and, in particular, the annexation of the Crimea by Russia has flared up the Estonian fear of extinction once more. Despite the fact that by far the largest part of the ethnic Russian minority has not got the intention to secede and join Russia, fears for some kind of grand design in Moscow are present. NATO has increased its presence within Estonia in April and May 2014, by both sending personnel and military aircrafts. This move has been warmly welcomed in the Estonia, which does not possess any jet fighters itself.[208] Another indication of the salience of membership of international organizations can be perceived in the results of the European Parliament elections from 22 to 25 May 2014. In several countries throughout Europe, anti-EU parties won a significant number of seats. Among these parties were both groups from the right side of the political spectrum, such as UKIP in the United Kingdom and Front National in France, as well as more leftist groups. Particularly the rightwing parties are often identified with nationalism in a narrow sense by commentators and in the media. The Estonian equivalent of such parties, the Conservative People's Party, failed to gain a seat, winning just over 4% of the votes.[209] The major parties of the country are in fact primarily pro-EU.[210] Making use of Anthony Smith's definition of nationalism, both the position of the Estonian parties and the result can be seen as nationalistic. Given the perceived Russian threat to Estonian autonomy and unity, a strong backing of the European project can be perceived as a surefire means to counter this menace. Furthermore, the fact that Estonia is a net recipient of EU funds should also be taken into account.[211] The energy policy of the Estonian government,

[207] Budryte, *Taming nationalism,* 72.
[208] Jan Hunin, 'In Estland zijn ze maar wat blij met de steun van de NAVO' in *De Volkskrant* 26-04-2012.
[209] 'Ruling party wins European elections, picking up 2 of 6 seats, 26 May 2014, http://news.err.ee/v/europeanparliament/762c42b5-ca35-4d32-84eb-394b42e72a81, (27-05-2014).
[210] 'Estonia goes to polls to choose its 6 members of European Parliament', 25 May 2014, http://news.err.ee/v/europeanparliament/59fd8f6f-1782-4822-adfd-cd920ddcd020, (27-05-2014).
[211] 'Estonia goes to polls'.

already shortly addressed in the previous chapter, is a further example of the state's preoccupation with attaining and maintaining autonomy. The fact that Estonia goes at great lengths to renew its oil shale production facilities in a more durable fashion and the intention to open a liquid gas terminal can be seen as measures to decrease the dependency on imported Russian gas. The Ukrainian crisis has shown just how much influence this can have on the autonomy, unity and identity of a state.

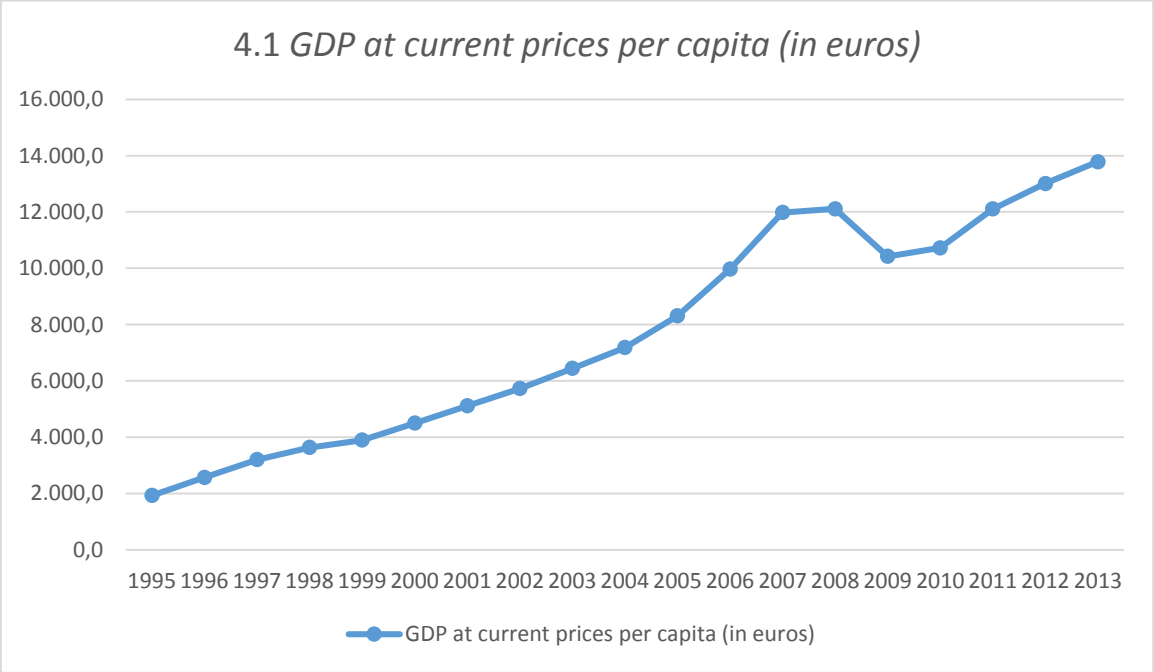
Thus, in conclusion it can be argued that the Estonian government throughout the years of independence has been very active in attaining and maintaining autonomy, unity and identity for the Estonian nation. In this sense, a lot of policy decisions that have been taken can be explained as a form of nationalism as defined by Anthony Smith. Some of them are quite obvious measures to protect the national identity, such as the moves taken to either assimilate or dissimilate the ethnic Russian minority and for example the attempts to secure independence from Russia in the energy sector. Policies aimed at improving rights of the ethnic minority, although at first sight appearing at odds with maintaining the national identity, can also be explained from the same framework. The majority of these decisions were taken in order to meet the membership conditions posed by international organizations. Although the actual policies may have been counterproductive to the national identity, the membership of organizations such as NATO and the EU were in fact means to assure the survival of the Estonian nation. Recent NATO troop movements and the Estonian result of the European Parliament elections are a case in point. So, now that the interests of the state have been addressed it is time to turn the attention to the interests of the people. Why does the lack in progress towards a more inclusive national identity, as was established in the previous chapter, has not lead to more tension between ethnic Estonians and ethnic Russians? Why do they want to remain part of Estonia? This will be addressed in the following part.

4.2. Interests of the people

In the previous chapter it was established that a common national identity hardly has developed during the years of independence from 1991 until now. That being said, it is striking that the number of ethnic Russians perceiving Estonia as their homeland has grown and that more and more of them feel that they belong to the Estonian nation. This shows that it is possible for people to perceive the country that they live in as their homeland, even when an imagined community of all the inhabitants exists. In order to explain this process, it is helpful to take into account the interests of the Estonian population. More specifically, the question of what is to be lost or gained by either accepting or disapproving the fact that ethnic

Russians belong to Estonia should be addressed. It is interesting to take into account the interests of both sides, so those of the ethnic Estonian majority as well as those of the ethnic Russian minority. As it will turn out, both economic and social factors play an important role in this trend.

In terms of economic factors, the sound performance of the Estonian economy since 1991 cannot be stressed enough. After some initial problems during the first years of independence, in which the difficult transition from the planned communist economy to a liberal open market economy had to be made, the Estonian economy started to grow from 1995 onwards.



"Source": 'GDP at current prices per capita, per year', statistics Estonia, http://www.stat.ee/68594 (20-6-2014).

In the period from 1995 until 1999, the yearly average growth of the GDP was 9,35%.[212] In 1999, there was a minor setback with the GDP only growing 0,7%, due to the 1998 Russian financial crisis. This was felt most in the sectors that exported to Russia, which was primarily the food sector. [213] However, from 2000 until 2007, the annual GDP growth was high again, averaging 8,25% per year.[214] These figures are amongst the highest within Europe. The global financial crisis that peaked in 2008 hit Estonia very hard. For the first time since 1995, the GDP shrank by 4,0% in 2008. The following year, the damage was even larger, with the GDP

[212] 'Real GDP per capita, growth rate and totals', statistics Estonia, http://www.stat.ee/29958 (1-6-2014).
[213] 'Changes in the economic structure', Eesti Instituut.
[214] Real GDP per capicta', statistics Estonia.

shrinking 14,3%. These figures show that Estonia was among the three countries in the EU hit hardest by the recession, the other two being the Baltic states of Latvia and Lithuania. Former Prime Minister and Minister of Economic Affairs and Communications Juhan Parts points to the fact that Estonia is a very small and very open economy, making it vulnerable to international influence on its economy. Furthermore, he stresses the emergence of a credit and property bubble during the preceding years of prosperity in explaining that when the crisis hit, it hit severe.[215] Successful austerity measures and the influx of Structural Funds and the Cohesion fund of the EU however, mean that the GDP has started to grow again in recent years.[216] This means that GDP measured at current prices per capita grew from 1926,3 euro in 1995 to 13784,2 euro in 2013.[217] So, despite the minor setback due to the 1998 Russian financial crisis and the serious recession resulting from the global financial crisis of 2008 and 2009, Estonia's economy has performed very well in the last two decades.

Now, what has the economic performance to do with the interests of people and the question of belonging to the nation? A quick sidestep to the recent Ukrainian crisis might be of use. The annexation of the Crimea and the separatist movements in eastern Ukraine seem to indicate that the Ukrainian nation and national identity have failed to incorporate all residents. Even if one wants to perceive the transfer of power in the Crimea as cold *realpolitik* by Putin, one has to concede that in order to pull this off some ground in the form of popular support is needed. Even though there obviously were people against the annexation, the images of people expressing their will to join Russia are a case in point. Reporter Tim Judah, who also has written on the breakup of Yugoslavia, wrote in an essay on the events in eastern Ukraine that there was a class-element involved. He stated that the more working-class people are, the more likely they are to hold grudge for loosing status, security and standard of living, and thus the more likely to support secession or joining Russia.[218] A quick glance at the Ukrainian GDP development since its independence from the Soviet Union in 1991 shows some similarities with that of Estonia. Like the Estonian GDP, Ukrainian GDP grew in the years from 2000 to 2007, albeit less spectacular. Furthermore, the global financial crisis was felt heavily in Ukraine as well, with a similar percentage of decline in GDP in 2009 followed by slight a recovery since 2010. There is also one major difference though. Whereas the Estonian

[215] Juhan Parts, 'Estonia and the European Debt Crisis', *Cato Journal* 33.*2* (2013) 269-270.
[216] Sascha Kraus, 'The Estonian tiger fighting the the European debt and economic crisis: interview with Annely Akkermann MP', Konrad Adenauer Stiftung event publication, 15 April 2013, http://www.kas.de/wf/doc/kas_34071-1522-2-30.pdf?130416114154 (1-6-2014).
[217] 'GDP at current prices per capita, year', statistics Estonia, http://www.stat.ee/68594 (1-6-2014).
[218] Tim Judah, 'Ukraine: The phony war?', *The New York Review of Books* 61.9 (May 22, 2014)

economy grew steadily in the first decade of independence, Ukraine's economy slumped. In particular, the years of 1993 until 1996 saw a drastic decline in GDP, averaging -14,9% per year. This means that, according to IMF data, the GDP per capita in current prices over 2013 stood at $3919,41 for Ukraine, as opposed to $19031,94 in Estonia. The figure for Russia stands at $14818,64.[219] The comparison shows that it is not unlikely that a feeling of relative deprivation is present among the ethnic Russian minority within Ukraine. Comparing themselves with their counterparts within the Russian Federation, it is understandable that the belief is held that they are better off if they were to join Russia. For the ethnic Russian minority living in Estonia, the fact that the GPD per capita in fact is higher than in Russia means that such an incentive is less likely. Merely looking at the GDP per capita, however, does not tell the entire story. It is also important to have some insight in whether or not there is an equal distribution of income. The GINI index can provide this insight. A score of 0 on this index would mean perfect income equality, a score of 100 inequality. In 1999, scored 37 on the index. In 2010, the number had decreased to 31,3, which means that income equality has risen. In Ukraine, the figure state more or less the same in these years, numbering 29 in 1999 and 28,2 in 2009. In Russia, the figure stood at 42 in 2012.[220] In the more recent years, the GINI coefficient of Estonia and Ukraine is thus more or less the same, whereas the inequality in Russia is higher. Again, this could indicate that for lower class ethnic Russians living in Estonia, the economic incentive to secede and join Russia is lacking.

Such claims however, do need some nuance; GDP is not the sole indicator of economic success. Looking at the unemployment rate of Estonia for example, tells another story. Since the global financial crisis, the number of people without employment has risen. In 2008, 5,45% of the total labor population did not have a job. The unemployment rate reached its apogee in 2010, when it had risen to 16,7%. Since then, the number has fallen to 8,6% in 2013. In comparison, Russian and Ukrainian unemployment rates in 2013 stood at 5,5% and 7,4% respectively.[221] Combining these figures with the fact that ethnic Russians are overrepresented in sectors where unemployment is most widespread, could potentially

[219] World Economic Outlook Database, April 2014, IMF, http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2014/01/weodata/weorept.aspx?pr.x=86&pr.y=5&sy=1992&ey=2013&scsm=1&ssd=1&sort=country&ds=.&br=1&c=922%2C939%2C926&s=NGDP_RPCH%2CNGDPD%2CNGDPDPC%2CPPPGDP&grp=0&a= (1-6-2014).
[220] CIA World Factbook, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2172.html (20-6-2014).
[221] World Economic Outlook Database, IMF, http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2014/01/weodata/weorept.aspx?pr.x=56&pr.y=5&sy=1992&ey=2013&scsm=1&ssd=1&sort=country&ds=.&br=1&c=922%2C939%2C926&s=LUR%2CLE&grp=0&a= (1-6-2014).

contradict the claim that there hardy is an economic incentive for ethnic Russians to opt out of the Estonian nation. When the unemployment rate was at its highest in 2010, 23% of ethnic Russians were unemployed, as opposed to 13% of ethnic Estonians.[222] If one adds the fact that the welfare and labor market policies in Estonia are rather modest, this idea appears even stronger. In comparison with other EU countries, the unemployment benefits system of Estonia is among the least generous.[223] So, in itself this is not an incentive for staying within Estonia, which brings us to another point; that of emigration.

As was already mentioned in the previous chapter, the accession of Estonia in the European Union in 2004 led to an increase in the number of naturalizations. The possibility to freely move to other EU countries thus appears to have been a strong incentive for ethnic Russians to apply for citizenship. Figures on Estonian emigration confirm this notion. Especially since the 2008 financial crisis, the number of emigrants has risen sharply with a large number of persons moving to the Nordic countries, with Finland as a close neighbor sharing some cultural and linguistic elements attracting the lion's share. Among these emigrants, the share of Russophones seems to be on the rise.[224] Another study has shown that the average Estonian migrant typically is a young, working-class male.[225] Keeping in mind the division of labor, in which Russians are mainly active in the industrial sector, these findings are in line with each other. This indicates that the high unemployment rate and the modest benefits for those without a job hardly increase sentiments to secede from Estonia and to join Russia among ethnic Russians. In fact, in times of personal economic misfortune ethnic Russians are more likely to make use of the possibility to move to another EU country, in particular the Scandinavian countries. Considering the fact that standards of living, wages and welfare benefits are generally higher in those countries than in both Estonia and Russia, this does not come as a surprise. Pragmatic considerations thus appear to overrule national and ethnic sentiments. As an ethnic Russian inhabitant of the city of Narva aptly put it in a recently held interview relating to the possible implications of the Ukrainian crisis for Estonia: "If life is good, and if you have a job, why would you want change?".[226]

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[222] Tiit Tammaru & Marksoo, Ülle, 'Long term unemployment in economic boom and bust: the case of Estonia', *Trames* 3 (2011) 227.
[223] Klara Stovicek & Turrini, Alessandro, 'Benchmarking unemployment benefits in the EU', *IZA Policy Papers* 43 (2012) 11.
[224] Mihails Hazans, 'Migration experience of the Baltic countries during and after the economic crisis', presentation at the conference *Coping with emigration in the Baltic States and East European Countries* (2-4-2014, http://www.sseriga.edu/download.php?file=/files/events/hazans_oecd_mfa_april2_2014.pdf (1-6-2014).
[225] OECD, *Coping with emigration in Baltic and East European Countries* (2013) 32.
[226] Jan Hunin, 'Mijn hart is Russisch, mijn hoofd is Ests' in *De Volkskrant* 24-4-2014.

4.3. Who gains?

Thus, taking into account who gains what in relation to questions on nationalism and national identity is very important. As we saw, both the political elite and the common man exert a certain amount of pragmatism in their considerations and decisions on this subject. Policy measures taken by politicians that at first sight appear illogical and opposed to the interests of the Estonian nation can be explained from the pursuit of increased security that international organizations could provide. Despite the fact that the language policies at times can feel as discrimination, the common man of ethnic Russian origin tends to remain loyal to Estonia, because economic factors and the free access to the European Union are seen as advantages that outweigh the disadvantages of living in Estonia. In a volume on second-generation Russians living in Estonia, published by the IMISCOE research network in 2011, very grim expectations were sketched. The authors concluded that the Russian second generation is ethnically segmented and that they hold an unequal status, and that therefore there is the potential for ethnic conflict. They point to the riots that broke out because of the Bronze Soldier crisis to illustrate their argument. Furthermore, they warn for the attempts of Russia to exert their influence by intervening in matters of other states.[227] Recent events, however, show that such claims perhaps should be mitigated. To start with, the global financial crisis (which strangely is not mentioned in the volume, despite its publication in 2011) that was felt very seriously in Estonia, and in particular among the ethnic Russian, failed to spark ethnic tension. Besides, the Ukraine crisis is an actual example of Russia flexing its muscles and intervening in a neighboring country. Subsequent claims for a separatist movement within Estonia were welcomed in a very lackluster fashion by a very tiny minority. These two recent developments thus appear to be further proof of the fact that in assessing loyalties of persons, it is not enough to merely look at the existence of a common national identity. Similar interests appear among ethnic Estonians, as shown by the fact that in the Integration monitoring 2011, 70% of ethnic Estonians interviewed agreed that "including non-Estonians in managing the Estonian economy and the state is beneficial for Estonia."[228] As it turns out, pragmatic considerations are thus at least equally important. This brings us back to what Renan wrote on nations more than 130 years ago: "a nation's existence is […] a daily plebiscite, just as an individual's existence is a perpetual affirmation of life."[229] Obviously,

[227] Raivo Vetik and Jelena Helemäe (eds.), *The Russian Second Generation in Tallinn and Kohtla-Järve: The TIES Study in Estonia*, (Amsterdam, 2011), 236.
[228] Lauristin et al, *Integration monitoring*, 8.
[229] Renan, 'What is a nation?', 7.

the elements designated by Anthony Smith are essential in shaping a national identity. Of course, the more of these elements people have in common, the more likely they are to share feelings of belonging. But as the case of Estonia shows, the degree of human agency involved appears to be equally important. Despite the fact that certain of Anthony Smith's elements failed to develop in independent Estonia, it is the will of Estonia's residents to actually continue to share a common life that trumps these defects.

5. Conclusions

If one is to use Anthony Smith's definition of a national identity, it can be concluded that a common, inclusive national identity in the independent republic of Estonia failed to develop. The decisions made by the political elite during the initial stage of independence had far-reaching consequences for the eventual development of the national identity. In particular the strong tendency to protect the Estonian language, culture and nation, as illustrated by the opening lines of the constitution, proved to raise serious barriers in accomplishing the development of a common national identity. The 1992 Citizenship Act basically excluded the ethnic Russians living in Estonia from the nation. In a sense, this decision defined the Estonian nation in ethnic terms. Only an ethnic Estonian was to be a part of the Estonian nation. In the term used by Rogers Brubaker, the reinstatement of the old act is a clear example of an attempt to dissimilate the ethnic Russian minority. Even despite the amendments that have been made to Citizenship Act in the course of time, the notion continues to loom over the matter. In a similar fashion, the strong emphasis that the government places on the use of the Estonian language remains an issue. The introduction of the 1995 Language Law is a case in point. The enormous effort that throughout the years has been put in stimulating Russophones to learn the Estonian language is another good example. Both large budgets for education programmes and further restrictive measures show just how important policymakers believe this to be. To make use of Brubaker's framework once again, such developments can clearly be described as efforts to assimilate the ethnic Russians. Making use of Michael Mann's ideas, one can come to a less friendly term. The language politics can also be described as a mild and subtle form of ethnic cleansing. It thus strikes out that the Estonian government has been trying to dissimilate the ethnic Russian minority, while at the same time undertaking actions to assimilate them.

In spite of the elaborate education programmes and imposed restrictions on the use of language, the increase in proficiency in Estonian among ethnic Russians has at best been little. The figures showed that a lot of Russophones still feel that their knowledge of the Estonian language is insufficient. This lack of progress has had serious repercussions for the development for some of the elements of a national identity. The incomprehension of Estonian among ethnic Russians remains a barrier for the creation of shared common culture that is hard to surmount. The significant differences in the media usage of ethnic Estonians and ethnic Russians is a good example. Another point were the disruptive function of language can be seen is in such an important cultural marker as the national anthem. The fact

that the lyrics are in Estonian makes it likely that it loses some of its symbolic power for those who cannot understand it. Apart from the cultural field, the issue of language bears consequences for the integration of Estonian economy as well. Independent Estonia inherited a division of labor from Soviet times, with ethnic Russians mainly being active in the industrial sector and ethnic Estonians in the others. The fact that for a lot of jobs a good knowledge of Estonian is required means that it is difficult for ethnic Russians to break this pattern. Because the industrial sector lost its significance in the wake of the transformation to an open market economy and because it was hit hardest by the 2008 global financial crisis, ethnic Russians are overrepresented in unemployment. Combined with the fact that the language issue means that it would be difficult to change this situation, one can hardly speak of a common economy.

Legacies dating from the Soviet era also play a role in the difficulties in achieving common historical memories and myths. For ethnic Russians it is hard to cope with the fact that the official history that is being taught at school differs from the stories they hear at home from family and through Russian-language media. Questions dealing with the role of the Soviet Union during the Second World War and the ensuing annexation remain a divisive element. Russians made huge sacrifices during the Second World War, making it difficult for ethnic Russians to accept the general Estonian narrative that depicts the Soviet Union and Russians as aggressors. Despite efforts to 'democratize' history the explosive potential of history and myths should not be underestimated. The outbreaks of violence during the controversies on the Lihula monument in 2004 and the 'Bronze Soldier' monument in 2007 are a case in point. Historical memories and myths also are important in delineating the homeland. Recollection of the first run of Estonian independence between 1918 and 1940 and the fact that a form of the Estonian language has been spoken in the area are important markers. Such markers are less axiomatic for ethnic Russian inhabitants however.

Based on the evidence and making use of Anthony Smith's framework, one cannot help but conclude that the national identity of Estonia did not change to a more common national identity in which all inhabitants of the republic are included in the period from 1991 to 2014. These findings, and in particular the salience of language, also seem to confirm the idea of Benedict Anderson that language plays a crucial role in the imagining of nations. One would expect that the absence of a development towards a common national identity should also mean that ethnic Russians are not likely to hold feelings of belonging to Estonia. The figures in the governmental 'Integration monitoring'-reports however, show that that this is not the

case. In recent years, feelings of belonging to the Estonian nation have steadily increased. More and more ethnic Russians are also indicating that they perceive Estonia as their only ethnic homeland. Among ethnic Estonians, more positive sentiments on ethnic Russians are also perceivable. The lack of a serious separatist movement within Estonia appears to confirm the results from the government reports. Thus, these findings stand in stark contrast with the evidence based on Anthony Smith's framework and call for a reappraisal of his ideas on national identity and nations. Even though his framework provides an elaborate means of analysis for determining what factors constitute a national identity, allowing for such divergent aspects as economy, culture, rights and history to be taken into account, it leaves little room for human agency. The development of Estonian national identity and nationalism turn out to be a case that cannot be explained within the strict structural approach presented by Anthony Smith. The actual desire of the Estonian inhabitants to share a common life outweigh the significant differences they hold. This insight reifies the long-standing notion that the will of the people to form a nation is an extremely important element, as it was expressed by Ernest Renan and Hans Kohn. As it turns out, for individuals pragmatic considerations on what is in their best interest trump the more structural, abstract elements of a lacking national identity. At first sight, these findings seem to be a confirmation of the idea of Mancur Olson that members in groups act in order to maximize their personal gains.[230] However, taking such an approach might be too reductionist, just as the more culturally-orientated theories of nationalism and national identity are too reductionist in the sense that they underestimate the influence of the individual and rational choice. The case of Estonia shows that both play a role in questions regarding nationalism and national identity. The irrationality of the riots surrounding the 'Bronze Soldier' indicate that abstract, structural elements such as culture and memory can drive people to disunity. The fact that Estonia has remained as a single entity, despite its lack of a common culture has shown that individual gains are at least as important.

Pragmatism plays an equally decisive role in the dealings of the Estonian government. Taking into account that an, if not the most important interest of the state is to guarantee the survival of the Estonian nation, the lion's share of policy decisions can be explained as a form of nationalism, making use of Miroslav Hroch's and Anthony Smith's conceptions of nationalism. Measures taken to either assimilate or dissimilate the ethnic Russian minority fit perfectly well within this framework. Even decisions taken that at first sight seem at odds

[230] Mancur Olson, *The logic of collective action: public goods and the theory of groups*, (Harvard 2009), 2.

with the interest of guarding the nation, can be seen in this light. Membership of the OSCE, CE, EU and NATO were seen as excellent instruments in securing survival of the nation, balancing the possible influence of large neighbor Russia by joining larger blocs. Even if meeting the conditions of these international organizations required some decisions that went against the Estonian interests, the eventual gains outweighed these. Just how far the Estonian government went in such matters is illustrated by the case of the 1998 amendment to the Citizenship Act, which was pushed through despite strong popular opposition. This is a clear example of what Anderson has called official nationalism. In general, the entire period of 1991 to 2014 is characterized by a stronger presence of official nationalism than popular nationalism. Whereas the path to independence during the late 1980s and early 1990s showed signs of both popular bottom-up as well as intellectual and political elitist top-down nationalism, in post-Soviet Estonia it was mainly the second type that could be seen.

This brings us to some of the questions that have been posed at the start of this thesis on nationalism in general. Does the Estonian case provide some new insights on whether or not nationalism is inherently bad? Is it a disease that has to be cured? And if so, does the apparent 'return' of nationalism newspapers inform about pose a real danger to European peace? In short, the case of Estonia seems to reify the idea of Horch that the notion that nationalism is a disease that needs to and can be cured is false. As he put it "the emergence of nationally relevant conflicts of interests in reality is usually an answer to some social, economical or political crisis and, for this reason, cannot be prevented by learned arguments or humanists speeches."[231] The recent outbreak of such a nationally relevant conflict of interests in Ukraine, and the fact that in Estonia such a thing is unlikely to happen for the reasons mentioned, affirm this notion. Speaking of a tamed nationalism in Estonia therefore also seems inappropriate, since it comes awfully close to speaking of cured nationalism. A situation like the 2007 'Bronze Soldier' crisis shows that a conflict along ethnic lines easily escalates and the possibility of it happening can never be excluded. That being said, the way in which Estonia manifested itself throughout the 2008 global financial crisis and how it has dealt with the recent political crisis in Ukraine shows that the emergence of a national conflict along ethnic lines is not likely to happen on its soil. Furthermore, the case of Estonia shows that despite the strong symbolic value of factors that compose a national identity, such factors do not always have to be used in mobilizing support for an exclusive type of nationalism. Nations, nationalism and national identities are not some sort of external forces driving

[231] Hroch, nationalism and nationalist movements, 41.

human beings to unavoidable hatred and despair. It are mechanisms that can be used in such a way by clever warmongers and demagogues in politics and media. The recent history of Estonia however, shows that it is not inevitable that this will happen though. Of course humans are emotional beings and emotions can easily be tapped, but it has become clear that luckily they use their minds as well.

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