

# At the Crossroads of Identities

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*European Identity and Competing Collective Identities in Latvia*

A thesis submitted for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
in  
SOCIOLOGY

by  
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Submitted: 19.02.2014.  
Defended: 20.10.2014.

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I would like to thank my supervisors – Prof. Dr. Ansgar Weymann, Prof. Dr. Klaus Boehnke, and Prof. Dr. Brigita Zepa – for supporting me throughout all the stages of the doctoral study, for taking the time to answer the countless questions, and giving advice for overcoming the big and small hurdles on the way.

The fieldwork of this study would not have been possible without the help of several people. A thank you to Prof. Dr. Baiba Bela, Dr. Ieva Garda - Rozenberga, Mārite Milzere, Dr. Baiba Felce, Anastasija Oļeščuka, and Sarma Freiberga for their valuable advice and help in organizing the fieldwork and making the necessary contacts. Inga Antoņēvica and Uljana Ladigina were irreplaceable assistants for doing the interviews, and Ieva Smilga and Olga Sazanova provided excellent help with their thorough work on the interview transcriptions. Most of all, a big thank you to the expert respondents and, especially, the ten families for inviting me in their homes and taking the time to answer the long list of interview questions.

A special thank you to the BIGSSS administrative and technical staff for their help with the numerous practical issues over the past few years, as well as to my BIGSSS colleagues for their continuous encouragement. A thank you also to the Department of Central & East European Studies at the University of Glasgow for the opportunity to spend a research stay at the university and especially to Prof. David Smith, Prof. Geoffrey Swain, and Ms. Maggie Sinclair for the warm welcome at the department.

And, last but not least, I would like to thank my wonderful husband: Daniel, I would not have been able to get this far without your support!

## INTRODUCTION

*“A small child, playing in the crossroads  
Underneath the wheels of carriages,  
Underneath the running horses,  
Underneath the iron footsteps.  
A small child in the crossroads,  
Sand running through its fingers  
Just like the passing time.  
It is our freedom,  
It is our life.”<sup>1</sup>*

The lines above come from a song in the first Latvian rock opera “*Lāčplēsis*” (Bear-slayer). The plot is based on folk legend and tells of the Latvian lands losing their freedom to foreign powers – the German crusaders – in the early 13<sup>th</sup> century. It was first written down in the form of a national epic poem in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the period of the first Latvian intelligentsia attempts to construct a unique Latvian national identity, by Andrejs Pumpurs. Over the years this story has been brought to life in different forms, including its modern interpretation as a rock opera in the late 1980s, the time when Latvia attempted to free itself from another foreign power – the Soviet Union. Premiered in 1988, the rock opera “*Lāčplēsis*” became a symbol of the Latvian national reawakening.

The lines of the song invoke the image of crossroads: a symbol that has been used in different contexts throughout the Latvian history. Latvia is geographically situated on the crossroads between Western Europe and Russia and over the centuries this position has brought about many different cultural, political, and religious influences. The song portrays crossroads as a precarious position and Latvia, the small child playing in them, as subject to many dangers. This interpretation is rooted in the many conquests of the present-day territory of Latvia whose advantageous geographic position was desirable to other regional powers. But there is an alternative interpretation: one that sees the crossroads as a position that can bring about opportunities, reminiscent of the prosperity that the trade in the Hanseatic League brought to the region.

A position in the crossroads also raises a question of belonging: are we a part of the Eastern or a part of the Western space? Since the gaining of independence from the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) in 1991, Latvia has followed a course of integration into the West, becoming a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Union (EU). At the same time, it can be argued that Latvia, together with the other Baltic countries, still lies in the “transit region escaping from easternness to westernness” (Lehti, 2003, p. 12) as is underlined by the “return to Europe” rhetoric (see section 1.3) that came into being in the late 1980s and implies not only an integration into the Western space but also a catching-up with its life standards – a goal that may be much more difficult to reach. Furthermore, framing this process as a “return” implies that there is a period of time when Latvia has not been a part of Europe, which raises the issue of reconciling the recent non-European past with the wished-for European future.

Such reconciliation means a reframing of history as well as a reconstruction of certain identities, chief among which is the Latvian national identity. During the break-off from the Soviet space and the Soviet identity, the Latvian identity was constructed as inherently European and thus different from

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<sup>1</sup> Translation based on the Latvian language libretto of the rock opera “*Lāčplēsis*” by Māra Zālīte (1988)

the Russian-dominated East. Furthermore, integration into the Western European political and economic structures has been the defined goal of Latvia for over two decades. At the same time, especially since Latvia has become an EU member state, it is becoming more and more clear that this integration can come with a price, e.g., giving up of some freedoms or national values such as the national currency: a symbol important for the Latvian national identity.

The European space in which Latvia seeks to integrate is contested itself: public, political, as well as academic debates about such matters as the extent of integration in different spheres, the core and meaning of Europe, or the openness of EU borders continue to surface at times when the ideas of European unity are most vulnerable. Such discussions were raised, e.g., by the EU enlargement and the (failed) attempt to pass a European constitution in 2004. The global economic crisis that began in 2007 continues to fuel current debates about the solidarity between EU states and the extent of continued integration. The rise of national interests, perceived loss of overreaching European goals, as well as the growing distance between the peoples of Europe and the EU governance in Brussels have caused such prominent academics as Ulrich Beck (Goethe-Institut, 2006), Jürgen Habermas (Diez, 2011), and Francis Fukuyama (2012) to call for saving the EU by moving past nationalism-based preconceptions of the meaning, role, and goals of the Union.

A core question in many of these debates is that of European identity. The development of a European identity has a political significance because it could provide feelings of mutuality and solidarity between the peoples of Europe, as well as “delineate the boundaries of support for policies allocating resources based on group membership” (Citrin & Sears, 2009, p. 148). The European project was initially founded on an anti-national identity basis as it sought to move past the national antagonisms that prevailed in the 20<sup>th</sup> century European politics (Fukuyama, 2012). In the words of Ulrich Beck, European identity should mean a “cultural polygamy” as opposed to the “cultural monogamy” characteristic to national identity (Goethe-Institut, 2006). However, despite decades of European integration economically and politically, the national identities have not given way to a unified European identity, and the lack of a unifying identity is often singled out as a fundamental deficiency in the common European project.

Up until recently rising economic prosperity was among the chief driving forces of European integration. According to Fukuyama, the problems currently faced by the EU in the aftermath of the global economic crisis illuminate a much more serious issue: a failure of European identity: “The EU – in many respects – was created as a technocratic exercise for the purposes of economic efficiency. What we can see now is that economic and post-national values are not enough to really buy into this community together, [...] there is no solidarity in that broader European sense” (Fukuyama, 2012). In his opinion, no long-term solution to the troubles of the European project can be found without answering the question of what it means to be European – in terms of positive as opposed to negative values and on grass-roots as opposed to elite level (ibid.).

The identification – or, rather, discovery – of history, culture, and values that could unite Europe as a whole is not an easy task (Guibernau, 2007). Furthermore, when it comes to the subjective feelings of European identity, notable differences from country to country can be observed (European Commission, 2010). And, aside from having a rather strained relationship with the European national identities, the European identity also intersects with regional identities, forming unique identity constellations in regions that have an uneasy relationship with their central governments (Jamieson,

et al., 2005), and ethnic and religious identities, especially ones that are, respectively, non-European and non-Christian (Fligstein, et al., 2012). The existing evidence clearly points to significant differences with regards to the meaning and importance of European identity not only between states but also – perhaps, more importantly – within them.

Consequently, there are solid grounds to believe that in each country, and for each group of people, the role and place of the European identity is impacted by its relationships to the social and collective identities that are already present and perceived as significant. As stressed by Arthur Bogner and Gabriele Rosenthal, subjects of collective belonging need to be approached by carefully constructed empirical case studies that take into account the perspective of individual actors and communities, as well as acknowledge their distinctive geographical and historical characteristics (Bogner & Rosenthal, 2009, p. 9). Unfortunately studies such as these remain rare in the European identity scholarship.

The present study addresses this gap through an in-depth study of European identity in Latvia. As can already be inferred from the first paragraphs of the introduction, Latvia with its rapidly changing historical circumstances and its recent experience of the construction and reconstruction of several collective identities presents a fascinating case for exploring European identity and its relationships with other identities. Furthermore, studying identities on their borders is an approach used often (e.g. see Donnan & Wilson, 1999; Meinhof & Galasinski, 2000), and the choice of a country where being European is not as self-explanatory as it may be in the Western Europe can allow for a better exploration of the construction and negotiation of collective identities.

This study addresses several deficiencies in the current scholarship on European identity. The study:

- 1) Analyses the relationships between European identity and other social and collective identities by expanding the scope of the identities considered beyond the current focus on territorial identifications;
- 2) Focuses on identity relationships by taking into account not only the historical context and the development of collective identities, but also by considering the role of individual histories, i.e., the life experiences of people;
- 3) Captures a potentially wide range of sources of intra-national variety in European attachments by focusing on different regions, generations, ethnic, and linguistic groups;
- 4) Explores the significance of having the experience of another supranational identity-building project – that of the Soviet identity – on the construction of European identity;
- 5) Provides a comprehensive study of a Baltic country thus focusing on a region that has been seldom studied in the research on European identity; the majority of existing studies focus either on the Western Europe or the Central Europe: regions where the development of collective identities has been substantially different from the Baltics.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The existing evidence highlights a current crisis of European identity caused by the lack of a common culture and core values, and made more apparent by the growing divergence between the EU elites and the citizens, as well as the loss of momentum for further integration that was previously provided by increasing economic prosperity. This situation calls for grass-roots explorations of the

meaning of European identity that are sensitive to the local context that the European identity enters and interacts with.

Accordingly, the **purpose** of this study is to carry out an empirical in-depth investigation of European identity in Latvia and to map out its place among other identities in the context of national and personal historical experiences.

The main **research question** that the study seeks to answer is: what are the relationships between European identity and other social and collective identities?

Based on the assumption that the development of collective identities in general and the European identity in particular is closely tied with the local context and the historical experiences of the country and its people, the main research question is tied to several **sub-questions**:

- 1) Which social and collective identities are perceived to be the most important in Latvia?
- 2) How have these identities developed over time?
- 3) Are there any relevant group differences with regards to identification patterns?
- 4) What is the subjective meaning of “European identity” for people in Latvia?
- 5) What is the role of life experiences in the formation of the identity relationships?

To fulfil the purpose of the study and to answer the research questions, the study uses a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods (see below).

## **RESEARCH DESIGN**

This study employs a mixed methods approach to study the relationships between European identity and other identities both in breadth and in depth. In total three methods are applied in a sequential design that begins with a survey analysis and is followed by two qualitative data sources: expert interviews and, most importantly, family interviews. This design allows for each step to inform the next and the different sources of data are complementary to one another – their combination is giving a deeper insight into the research questions.

The first step of the study is a quantitative analysis of three surveys – two waves of the New Baltic Barometer and a national identity study by the Baltic Institute of Social Sciences – that together cover the time period from 1993 to 2010. The survey analysis determines the most important collective identities in Latvia and their development over a period of 17 years, identifies relevant group differences in social identifications, and establishes the place of European identity among other identities. Furthermore, it serves as a tool for improving the qualitative part of the study by informing (1) the development of interview guides for the expert and the family interviews, and (2) the sampling of experts and families.

The quantitative step is followed by two expert interviews the goals of which are the clarification of the initial results of the survey analysis and the identification of any additional information relevant for the study. Importantly, these expert interviews are aimed at touching on aspects of identity relationships that are difficult to capture quantitatively, thus allowing the gaining of more in-depth information ahead of the main part of the fieldwork. The two semi-structured interviews with Latvian social scientists who have worked on issues of ethnic and national identity are also used as a source of information for improving the family interview guides and the interviewee selection.

The survey and expert interviews are followed by interviews of 10 families, specifically, by individual interviews with representatives of three generations within six Latvian and four Russian-speaking families. The interviews took place in three different locations of Latvia: the capital Rīga, the second largest town Daugavpils, and a smaller town Kuldīga. These 30 semi-structured interviews constitute the backbone of the study and their main goal is the exploration of collective identities on the individual level. The interviews provide a deeper understanding of the meaning and importance of various collective identities, most importantly – the national, ethnic and European identities, as well as the relationships between these and other identities that are perceived as significant by the respondents. The generational approach allows gaining a deeper insight into the life experiences that have an influence on the perception of the collective identities and that shape their relationships with one another.

Finally, the last step is two additional expert interviews with two Latvian social scientists that are not ethnically Latvian. These interviews have two goals, the first of which is an attempt to reduce possible interviewer bias in the analysis that might arise from me being a member of the majority ethnic group. Closely tied to this is the second goal: a reflection upon the family interview results, a search for possible alternative interpretations, and a collection of more evidence for the initial results of the analysis.

Throughout the analysis comparisons are made between different groups in order to best explore the intra-state differences in European identity formation and the different patterns of identity relationships. The three most important comparisons are:

- 1) between three generations to explore the role of structural contexts and life experiences in the formation of the relationship between European identity and other collective identities;
- 2) between different parts of Latvia to discover any differences arising due to regional context as well as the size and diversity of the environment closest to the participants of the study;
- 3) between ethnic and linguistic groups to explore a societal divide that has emerged as very important in the Latvian context (see section 1.2) yet remains marginal in studies of European identity.

Although the results of each of these steps influence the data gathering of the steps following them, the results of all of the sources are not explicitly brought together before the inferential stage, i.e. the synopsis presented in the ninth chapter.

## **THE RESEARCHER**

My interest in European identity first arose while doing research on international student mobility. The topic of student mobility, especially within Europe, is often considered in the light of its potential for developing supranational identities but it appeared that no definite conclusions about its impact on promoting European identity could be drawn. My wish was to take a wider look at the development of European identity and to see if and how such a supranational identification relates to other types of belonging that people hold.

For carrying out such a study on European identity I chose my native country: Latvia. On the one hand, this is a case that I am very familiar with and knowledge of the context, the people, and the languages, as well as having contacts in the field for setting up the research project are significant for

carrying out a successful study. On the other hand, there is no doubt that Latvia presents a unique and thus far little studied case that may shed new light on long-debated aspects of European identity and its relationships to other social and collective identities.

The respondents were informed that I am currently residing in Germany and this information led a few of the interviewees to two assumptions that stem from the close association that some of them have between European identity and having lived abroad. First, the knowledge of my international study experience prompted the belief that I must definitely identify with Europe and this assumption was hinted to in the way the respondents would build their own narratives about belonging to Europe. Second, the fact that I am studying in another country caused several of the oldest and middle generation respondents to inquire about my plans to return to Latvia, indirectly implying that intentions to return would be looked upon favourably. Here it should be noted that the relatively large-scale emigration from Latvia to other EU countries is a topic that has been problematized in the Latvian media as well as in the halls of government.

Finally, a particular aspect of this study is the interactions between European identity and ethnic identities. In this context, my belonging to the majority ethnic group of the country – Latvians – is a circumstance that might lead to unintentional bias or difficulties in fully representing the minority ethnic groups. This potential bias is reflected upon and attempted to avoid by means introduced in the research design and the practical organisation of the study.

## DEFINITION OF MAIN CONCEPTS

As this introduction has already made clear, the central topic of this study is identity. As a concept, “identity” is simultaneously one of the most widely used and the most contested terms in the social sciences today. The following pages will outline a typology and conceptualisation of identities that will be taken as the basis for approaching different identities in this dissertation.

At its most basic, **identity** means the human capacity to know “who’s who”; it is a multi-dimensional mapping of the human world and our own place in it (Jenkins, 2008, p. 5). Identities fulfil a basic human cognitive need: they serve as shortcuts to bounding probable ideas, reactions, and practices towards others, thus ensuring a predictable and secure social environment (Hopf, 2009, p. 280). As the creation of categories is an ongoing, relational process, identity can be looked at as something that one does, a process of “being” or “becoming”. This achieved through the process of **identification**: “the systematic establishment and signification, between individuals, between collectivities, and between individuals and collectivities, of relationships of similarity and difference” (Jenkins, 2008, p. 18).

Identity studies used to be divided between two approaches: the essentialist and the constructivist. While the former perceived identity as independent of context, something one is born into, the latter saw it as situational and shaped in interactions between individuals (Calhoun, 1994). However, in the last decades the main approaches in identity studies recognize that most identities consist both of elements that are “given” and elements that are constructed. For example, both identity theory and social identity theory recognize that, while individuals are free to identify with multiple groups or categories and construct their own identities, they are born into a structured society: the social categories precede individuals (Stets & Burke, 2000, p. 225). In the words of Linda M. Alcoff:

“Individuals make their own identity, but not under conditions of their own choosing” (Alcoff, 2003, p. 3).

Overall, modern psychological, sociological and social psychological approaches to identity form a fragmented field that often lacks a unifying taxonomy and even a consensus about underlying assumptions (Côté & Levine, 2002, p. xii). The uses of the term are so ambiguous that Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper have even argued that the term should be replaced with other concepts because identity “tends to mean too much (when understood in a strong sense), too little (when understood in a weak sense), or nothing at all (because of its sheer ambiguity)” (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000, p. 1). Despite a wide recognition of the validity of such claims, social scientists have not abandoned the use of the term. Identity has established its place in sociology’s conceptual toolbox and no single alternative term can fully replace that of identity. Instead, a middle way between rejection and uncritical acceptance of the concept can be achieved through making limitations and applications of the term explicit, avoiding casual reification, and “unpacking” processes of identification (Jenkins, 2008, pp. 14-15).

On the most general level, three “orders” (Jenkins, 2008, p. 39) or sources of identity characterizations (Owens, et al., 2010, p. 479) can be distinguished<sup>2</sup>:

- 1) personal or individual identities that are embodied;
- 2) role-based or interactional identities that are shaped in relationships between individuals;
- 3) category or group membership-based identities; the basis of collective identities.

The first of these types is commonly referred to as **personal identity**, whereas the other two encompass **social identities**, albeit it can be argued that social interaction plays an important role also for personal identification and these two types of identities are closely related to one another. In general, social identities are shaped in the process of social interaction, through individuals identifying others and being identified by others in return (Kohli, 2000, p. 115). The base of each social identity is formed by the identification of similarity and difference: two elements of each identity which are socially constructed and mark a border between those who belong to the group (the in-group) and those who do not (the out-groups) (Jenkins, 2008).

In turn, **collective identities** are a subtype of social identities, ones that “are based on large and potentially important group differences” (Kohli, 2000, p. 117). As opposed to other social identities, collective identities are believed to be less subject to rapid changes, to be more intense and durable (Smith, 1992, p. 59), e.g., collective identities are typically identities based on gender, social class, ethnicity, nationality or religion.

Collective identities come in many shapes and sizes that can be further divided into three types depending on the size of the community that they are tied with<sup>3</sup>:

- 1) local or communal identities – these are commonly based on either kinship or close territorial ties, also ethnicity is usually included among communal identities;
- 2) national identities – identities based on relations with a state and/or nation as well as citizenship;

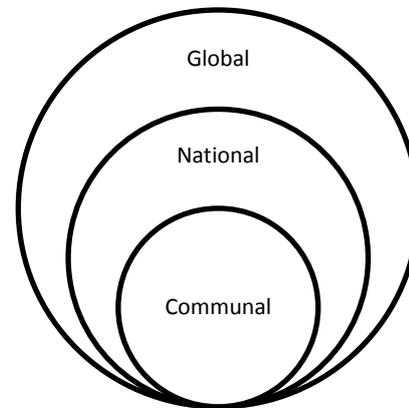
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<sup>2</sup> Although analytically separated, these distinctions are heuristic; the orders are simultaneous and “occupy the same space, intersubjectively and physically” (Jenkins, 2008, p. 40)

<sup>3</sup> Roughly based on the classification of community types by Cohen & Kennedy (2000)

- 3) global identities – also called post-, supra- or trans-national identities; depending on the term, these are identities that are either transcending or stretching across national boundaries; the most typical example are cosmopolitan identities, but also European or pan-African identities can be counted among this type.

*Figure 1. Levels of Collective Identities*



These three types of collective identities roughly represent the progression from traditional, feudal societies into modernity and subsequently second or late modernity. On the one hand, this typology hints to a widening of collective identities from close attachments to broader horizons. On the other hand, many examples show that this process is not unilateral; it is characterized by backlashes and changes in the relative importance of the different types of identities (see more in section 2.1).

Another way of classifying the collective identities that will be used in this study is based on the type of the community/group they are tied with. First, there are **territorial identities** encompassing identities that are tied to geographic entities with clearly defined territorial boundaries. These are, e.g., regional and national identities, as well as European identity if conceptualized as belonging to the EU. Second, there are **group identities** that encompass social and collective identities that are tied to a belonging of social groups such as ethnicity or profession and are independent from territorial boundaries.

Before continuing with the final part of the introduction, the understanding of two collective identities important for this study – ethnic identity and national identity – needs to be discussed in a little more detail<sup>4</sup>.

First, based on the classification of identities proposed above, **ethnic identity** is a collective identity that belongs among communal identities by size and group identities by type. Ethnicity is characterized by metaphoric or fictive kinship (Yelvington, 1991, p. 168; quoted by Eriksen, 2010, p. 17) that has its myths of common origin, however this does not mean that ethnicity is a primordial phenomenon. Quite the opposite: the rise of ethnic identification often comes as a reaction to the process of modernization (Eriksen, 2010, p. 13).

Ethnic identity can be conceptualised both as relational and situational. Instead of being a given property of a group, ethnicity is an aspect of a relationship between groups: there is no ethnicity in mono-ethnic settings (Eriksen, 2010, p. 42). In turn, the prominence of ethnicity in a society is heavily

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<sup>4</sup> The supranational European and Soviet identities are not included here because they are the subject of more in-depth descriptions in the following chapters

context-dependent and the ethnic intergroup relations can be influenced by political, ideological, or institutional factors on regional, national, as well as international level (Horowitz, 2008 [1985]). Furthermore, depending on the specific context, the criteria for delineating each ethnic identity may vary: they can be linguistic, racial, genetic, or biological (Bogner & Rosenthal, 2009, p. 77). And, in addition to being malleable depending on relationships between groups, the shared experiences and norms that form the basis of each ethnic identity are also formed in negotiations within the group: between newly created conceptions and constructions handed down by previous generations (Bogner & Rosenthal, 2009).

Second, **national identity** is a collective identity that belongs to the territorial identity type. One of the most common ways of conceptualizing national identity is the five dimensions distinguished by Anthony D. Smith – one of the most prominent theoreticians of nationalism<sup>5</sup> (Smith, 1991, p. 14):

- 1) historic territory, homeland;
- 2) common myths of origin and historical memories;
- 3) a common, mass standardized culture;
- 4) a common economy with territorial mobility for members;
- 5) common legal rights and duties for all members.

The main difference between national and ethnic identities is that the former has a close relationship to the state (Eriksen, 2010, p. 10), however the two concepts are closely tied together. The social anthropologist Ernest Gellner described nationalisms as ethnic ideologies that hold the belief that their group should dominate the state. In line with this conception, a nation-state means a state dominated by an ethnic group whose markers of identity are embedded in the official symbolism and legislation (Gellner, 2007 [1983]). Both Gellner and the political scientist Benedict Anderson, who coined the conception of nation as an imagined political community (Anderson, 2006 [1991]), see nations (and accordingly: national identity) as a relatively modern phenomenon. For them, nations are ideological constructions that create abstract communities where they did not exist before.

Smith distinguishes between two conceptions in nation construction: the state-nation or the civic model and the ethno-cultural or the ethnic model. While the former takes citizenship and other political criteria as the basis of belonging (*ius solis*) and is more characteristic to Western Europe, the latter is based on common descent, customs and culture (*ius sanguinis*) and developed in Eastern Europe and Asia. Each of the models mirrors a different route of formation of the nation and, despite the distinction between the two, every nationalism contains a mixture of both civic and ethnic elements that can differ between societies as well as across time (Smith, 1995, pp. 9-15).

In a nutshell, national identity can be seen as identification with an imagined community that can be based on a common ethnic core and that is characterised by a common territory and descent, and shares a common culture, economy and legal rights. Through the construction of historical roots and future projects on the one hand, and a consciousness of a distinct community with a shared culture, past, symbols and traditions, and territory on the other, national identity ensures both continuity and differentiation: two crucial elements of any collective identity (Guibernau, 2007, p. 10).

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<sup>5</sup> These five dimensions are similar to the five dimensions of nationalism identified by Montserrat Guibernau (2007): psychological, cultural, historical, territorial, and political. The main difference between the two approaches is that Guibernau stresses the subjective aspect of a human group conscious of forming a community and the importance of a future project in addition to a shared past.

## CHAPTER OVERVIEW

The first chapter gives an introduction to the main collective identities in Latvia to provide background context for this study. Five identities – Latvian ethnic identity, Russian ethnic identity, Latvian national identity, Soviet identity and European identity – are looked at from a historical perspective that illuminates the intertwining of Western and Eastern influences and the formation of Latvian identity between them. The overview in this chapter indicates that not only national but also ethnic identity can be important vis-à-vis European identity and shows that there exist certain similarities between the two supranational identity building projects that Latvia has experienced.

The second chapter establishes the theoretical background of this study. It begins with an overview of that how the theories of second and late modernity approach the changing balance between communal, national, and global identifications, paying particular attention to globalization and identity as two opposing trends that fuel one another. It continues with an in-depth look at the European identity focusing on its contents and borders, as well as its prevalence among various societal groups and relationships to other identities. Based on the theoretical and empirical evidence review in this chapter, European identity emerges as a clearly supranational identity that has been largely appropriated by the EU and that, despite having become increasingly widespread, has not caused a break away from national and communal identifications.

The third chapter establishes the research design and methodology used for approaching the research interest. It introduces the concept of mixed methods and gives a detailed outline of how the three methods – survey analysis, family interviews, and expert interviews – are used for exploring the research questions. The chapter continues with an elaboration of the symbolic interactionism approach, particularly focusing on its practical application for studying identity, and an outline of the concept of generation and its use in the research design.

The fourth chapter gives a deeper insight into the material gathered by the three research methods – surveys, expert interviews, and family interviews – elaborating on each method's role in the research design, the particularities of working with each of type of data, as well as the challenges involved in the process of data analysis.

The fifth chapter presents the survey analysis. It shows that identification with Europe, albeit increasing, is not among the most important collective identities in Latvia: around 60 percent of the respondents hold no supranational attachments at all. An analysis of correlates for group and territorial identifications highlights language/ethnicity and citizenship as the closest associates to differences in group and territorial identifications, with age and the size of a locality having a significant but smaller effect. Finally, a structural analysis of identities hints to possible elite elements of European identification.

The sixth chapter is an in-depth introduction to the family interview data. It begins with descriptions of the three locations of fieldwork and the ten families, followed by characterizations of the three generations, their life stories, and their unique characteristics. This chapter also distinguishes the social and collective identifications that emerged as the most important in the interviews: home and family, profession, territorial attachments to town, region or country, as well as belonging to a language and ethnic group. This overview highlights the first significant differences between respondents of interview locations, generations, and ethnicities.

The seventh chapter is the second qualitative analysis chapter and it is split into three parts. The first part looks at the meaning of Europe in respondents' everyday lives showing that, albeit at times controversial, matters related to "Europe" are entering the daily lives of the interviewees. The second part explores the connection between the respondents' self identifications and their beliefs of what it means to be European and discovers that, although over a half of the informants would call themselves European, this belonging is often formal and abstract. The third part identifies four groups of push and pull factors of European belonging; these are tied to social and political involvement, life satisfaction, foreign experience, and age.

The eighth chapter is the third and final part of the qualitative analysis and looks at the relationships between European identity and other social and collective identities. It begins with contrasting European identity with other territorial identities such as local, regional, and national identity, follows with group identities such as profession, ethnic and linguistic group, and briefly considers also the relationship between European and Soviet identities. Overall, little contradiction is found between the territorial and group identities important to the respondents and the supranational European identity. While on the one hand this can be taken as a positive sign for increasing European identity, the evidence also suggests that the European identity is weaker and more abstract than the more personal local identities therefore such perceived compatibility may be largely presumed and unrelated to daily life matters.

Finally, the ninth chapter offers a synopsis of the study by bringing together information from the background and theory chapters, the quantitative analysis, the family, and the expert interviews in an attempt to clearly answer the research questions. The chapter suggests withdrawing from the theoretical distinction of European identity as either a cultural or a political identity and proposes an alternative conceptualization: identifying with Europe as a space or identifying with Europe as an actor. It highlights the problematic aspects of building a European identity and concludes that, although it is unlikely that the supranational European identity can become highly salient over and above communitarian and national identities, it can gain importance through blending and enmeshing with other identities that are already close and significant to the peoples of Europe.

# 1. LATVIA: AT THE CROSSROADS OF IDENTITIES

The goal of this chapter is giving an introduction to the main collective identities in Latvia and, by doing that, providing the necessary background knowledge for this study of European identity and its relationships to other collective identities in Latvia. Specifically, five identities are looked at: Latvian ethnic identity, Russian ethnic identity, Latvian national identity, Soviet identity, and European identity. From these, the two ethnic identities correspond to the level of communal identities<sup>6</sup>, the Latvian national identity functions on the national level, whereas the Soviet and European identities are supranational in their character. These five collective identities are not the only ones present in Latvia, however can be distinguished as the most important ones. Russians are singled out among the ethnic minorities of Latvia because they constitute the largest group – in 2012 26,5 percent of the population of Latvia was ethnically Russian (Centrālā statistikas pārvalde, 2013) – furthermore, during the Soviet period they constituted the dominant ethnic group.

Identities in general and collective identities in particular are the results of long-term processes and the current relationships of collective identities in Latvia cannot be properly understood without some knowledge of their formation and the ways recent historical events have shaped the identity relationships. As the Baltic political historian Andres Kasekamp reminds, “history is not confined to textbooks: in the form of collective memory, it affirms identities, inflames passions and directly or indirectly influences policy-making” (Kasekamp, 2010, p. 197). Accordingly, this chapter explores the five identities in a chronological order with the first subchapter covering the time period up to the year 1990 and the second subchapter focusing on the period since the dissolution of the Soviet Union. The focus of this chapter is Latvia but, where applicable, it is looked at in the context of the other two Baltic countries or the other post-Soviet countries.

## 1.1. THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF COLLECTIVE IDENTITIES

This subchapter splits the historical period until the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 into three large parts: Latvia in the Russian Empire (section 1.1.1), the period of inter-war independence (section 1.1.2), and the Soviet Era (section 1.1.3). Before delving into the birth of Latvian ethnic identity in late 18<sup>th</sup> century, a few words need to be said about the centuries before.

At the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century the Baltic tribes were the last remaining pagans of Europe and in 1198 the first crusades to the region began with the support of the pope and the Holy Roman Emperor (Kasekamp, 2010, p. 12). By the late 13<sup>th</sup> century German crusader Orders<sup>7</sup> had fully subjugated the lands of modern-day Latvia and Estonia and from there on the history of these lands has been closely tied to the military power struggles and cultural influences of the rest of Europe. German crusaders became the new ruling class and established Feudal relations in the conquered lands that were divided between the Livonian Order and the Bishoprics. Rīga, the largest city of Livonia, was founded in 1202. It joined the Hanseatic League in 1282 and adopted the Hamburg city charter in 1290, which was later copied by other towns of Livonia (Kasekamp, 2010, p. 36). Thus from the late 13<sup>th</sup> century onwards the Baltic towns shared a common legal and cultural space with the northern German cities.

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<sup>6</sup> Please refer to the introduction for an overview of the three levels of identities.

<sup>7</sup> Initially the fighting was done by the Swordbrother Knight Order which, after a defeat in 1236, merged with the Teutonic Order becoming its Livonian branch (Kasekamp, 2010, p. 16)

The Protestant Reformation in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century helped to bring about the dissolution of the Livonian Confederation and between the late 16<sup>th</sup> and the early 18<sup>th</sup> century the territories of modern-day Latvia and Estonia were divided between Muscovy, Sweden, and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth: three regional powers that fared consecutive wars against one another. The local German nobility retained its status and maintained its privileges both under the Swedish rule of Livland (north of the river Daugava) and in the partially autonomous Duchy of Courland (south of Daugava), vassal of the Commonwealth. The Baltic Germans continued to be the ruling class also following the incorporation of these territories into the Russian Empire in the 18<sup>th</sup> century (Kasekamp, 2010, pp. 54-55); they ensured the local administration as well as retained a social and economic dominance. Also the Lutheran Church and the German language upheld their dominant position in the former Livonia, with the exception of the Eastern region of Latgale (Inflanty).

### **1.1.1. LATVIA IN THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE**

The second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century was the period of Enlightenment in Western Europe and enlightenment rationalist ideas were brought to the Baltics by German pastors. Their beliefs that every nation is unique and has its own inherent value, as well as their work on the local languages and folklore, became catalysts for Latvian and Estonian national awakenings in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. (Kasekamp, 2010, p. 60). These ideas were first taken up by Latvian intellectuals who studied at the University of Tartu (Dorpat) and formed a group of “Young Latvians”. They promoted more rights for Latvians within the Russian Empire and worked to develop and modernize the Latvian language also focusing on tradition and folklore: the distinguishing traits of “Latvians” (Pabriks & Purs, 2002, p. 3).

There was a fertile ground for their ideas of ethnic uniqueness due to two main reasons: education and upward mobility of ethnic Latvians. First, a written Latvian language had begun to develop thanks to the translation of catechisms in the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century during the Protestant Reformation (Kasekamp, 2010, p. 40), and a founding of local language schools had taken place already in the 17<sup>th</sup> century under the Swedish rule (ibid, p. 51). As a result, the literacy rates in the population were very high: according to the 1897 census 92 percent of Latvians were literate (Kasekamp, 2010, p. 85). Second, the emancipation of serfs had taken place at the beginning of the century, freeing the local peasants and allowing them to move to the cities, as well as giving them rights to own property. Consequently, the ethnic composition of the big cities was beginning to change and indigenous upward mobility was increasing. Latvians gradually acquired more education and wealth, as well as developed a national self-understanding; acculturation in the Baltic German strata was no longer seen as a viable solution for achieving upward mobility (Pabriks & Purs, 2002, p. 4).

The initial significant other for the shaping Latvian identity was the German nobility: a direct response to the subordinated positions Latvians had historically held towards this ruling strata (Chinn & Kaiser, 1996, p. 54). Between 1880 and 1900 another source of reactive nationalism was provided by a Russification campaign of the Tsarist authorities which targeted education, as well as the legal and administrative systems (Encyclopædia Britannica, 2010). Overall, Russification policies were not successful but they created a new generation of Latvians who resented the rather mild stance towards Tsarism of the Young Latvians. The “New Current”, as this new, more radical generation of intellectuals called themselves, claimed to speak for the workers and the landless. They followed social democratic ideals and did not support political nationalism but saw a common cause for all

workers across the Empire, thus creating an alternative concept of “Latvianness” (Plakans 1995, quoted in Pabriks & Purs, 2002, p. 5).

Table 1. Historical Timeline of Latvia

Year	Events	Year	Events
18th century	The lands of the modern-day Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia are being incorporated into the Russian Empire	1940	Latvia is incorporated into the Soviet Union, mass deportations
1817-1891	Abolishment of serfdom in the provinces of the Russian Empire	1941-1945	Nazi invasion of Latvia
19th century, end of	Industrialization in the Baltic provinces	1945	Beginning of socialist reconstruction of Latvia (industrialization, collectivization, mass immigration)
1905	Russian revolution, rise of Marxist and nationalist views, first demands of national autonomy	1957	Khrushchev’s thaw, a brief period of national communism in Latvia
1914-1918	World War I	1987	Perestroika and the emergence of a national mass movement (national ‘awakening’)
1918	Declaration of independence, a democratic republic is established	1991	Re-establishment of independence, admission to the UN
1934	Authoritarian coup in Latvia	1994	Last Russian troops leave the country
1939-1945	World War II	1995	Latvia admitted to the Council of Europe
1939	Repatriation of the Baltic-German population	2004	Latvia joins NATO and the European Union

Sources: Pabriks & Purs (2002), Baltic States (2010), Kasekamp (2010)

The first possibilities of upward mobility for skilled Latvians were opened after the Revolution of 1905 when an elected, consultative body (the *duma*) was created. Nevertheless, the actual rule was still in the hands of Russian Tsarist bureaucrats and the Baltic German nobility, which dissatisfied the more radical part of the Latvian population who increasingly turned to the ideas of socialism (Pabriks & Purs, 2002, p. 11).

The onset of World War I brought about significant changes for the indigenous populations of the Baltic provinces. Due to a rapid defeat of the Russian armies two Latvian organizations were allowed to be formed, both of which later became the basis for nationalist hopes. One was the Latvian Refugee Association which came to be the nucleus of a future Latvian state, the other was Latvian regiments within the Tsarist army which formed the nucleus of a Latvian army (Pabriks & Purs, 2002, p. 12). In 1918 these organizations used the power vacuum created by a weakened Germany and by Bolsheviks abandoning the Baltic Provinces to preserve the October Revolution at home, and declared Latvian independence (ibid, p. 13), therewith reaching the highest goal of national aspirations. The new state was internationally recognized only in 1920 as fighting against the German and Soviet forces continued for almost 2 years after the declaration of independence.

## 1.1.2. THE INDEPENDENCE PERIOD: 1918-1940

The newly founded Latvia was a multi-ethnic country, although not to the extent that it is today. Approximately 77 percent of the population were ethnic Latvian, 8,8 percent ethnic Russian. The other biggest minorities were the Jewish (4,9 percent), the Germans (3,3 percent) and the Poles (2,5 percent) (Centrālā statistikas pārvalde, 2013). The Constitution for the Republic of Latvia that was drafted in 1922 gave power to the “people of Latvia, not the Latvian people”, taking the nation as a geographic unit not an ethnic one (Pabriks & Purs, 2002, p. 18), thus giving citizenship to all the inhabitants of the territory of Latvia independent on their ethnicity or the length or residence.

In the 1920s Latvia and Estonia were seen as being forefront with regards to minority rights in Europe (Smith, 2005, p. 211). While Estonia had a formal law on minority cultural autonomy, in Latvia the minorities were granted cultural autonomy through other laws and regulations. Overall, the beginning period of independence was orientated towards integration: the legal documents ensured a stable legal position and the model of cultural autonomy allowed to strengthen the local minority cultures (Apine, 2007, p. 72). For instance, a law passed in 1919 guaranteed minorities their own school administrations within the Latvian ministry of education (Smith, 2005, p. 212). Both Russian and German languages were freely used in Parliamentary (*Saeima*) sessions<sup>8</sup>.

The ethnic Latvians were not always content with the existing multi-ethnic reality. Although the status of the Baltic Germans had declined, they remained the wealthiest part of the population and were highly organised politically (Kasekamp, 2010, p. 117). As a consequence, many nationalists objected to the constitution as “too democratic”, and the parliaments with substantial numbers of minority deputies were not seen as protecting ethnic Latvian interests (Pabriks & Purs, 2002, p. 18). This rising nationalist sentiments are excellently illustrated by the poet and writer Karlis Skalbe in his essay “A New Nationalism is Growing among the People” (1927; quoted by Vanags, 2004, p. 123):

“Here in Rīga we still feel like foreigners. Here we are still the ‘immigrants from the countryside’ (..) Only foreigners quickly feel at home here. (..) Where, in which other country, could such a notorious citizenship law be enacted, conferring citizenship upon tens of thousands of foreigners with almost no conditions attached and requiring not the slightest link with the language, traditions, and culture of the land? This can happen only in Rīga, that international market-place where everyone speaks his own language and only a Latvian is required to understand them all. (..) But there is change in the air. It seems to me that this change is already audible. What is now fermenting among the people is a new nationalism (..) [it] comes with its own special, embellished world view, and will not fail to bring about consequences in our political life.”

Changes in political life were indeed not far off: a break in the Latvian policies towards ethnic minorities took place in the 1930, following the worldwide economic crisis which resulted in the rise of nationalistic and authoritarian policies in multiple European countries (Kasekamp, 2010, p. 109). In 1932 Latvian was defined as the national language for the first time, making it obligatory in government institutions, as well as the army and the navy (Regulations concerning the national language, referred to by Vanags 2004). Further attempts of consolidating the position of the Latvian

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<sup>8</sup> The suggestions in 1931 and 1932 to ban the use of foreign languages in the Parliament did not receive sufficient support to be implemented (Apine, 2007, p. 72)

language followed after the year 1934 when the Prime Minister Kārlis Ulmanis carried out an authoritarian coup.

Similarly to the authoritarianism regimes in neighbouring Estonia and Lithuania, the Ulmanis regime based its reason of existence on the need to “preserve national unity and to strengthen the position of indigenous nationalities in their homelands” (Encyclopædia Britannica, 2010). The use of minority languages was restricted in order to strengthen the role of the Latvian language (Vanags 2004: 122), and attempts were made to Latvianise the education system (Apine, 2007, p. 73). One of the first laws accepted by Ulmanis, the new “State Language Law” (1935) clearly singled out Latvian as the national language and as the main language to be used in state institutions and formal documents<sup>9</sup> (Valsts Valodas Komisija, 2010). Yet, as marked by the historian Ilga Apine, this “negative turn to nationalism” was clearly marked in state politics and ideology of, e.g. Latvian writers, but it did not resonate to the relations between local Latvians and ethnic minorities (Apine, 2007, p. 73).

Overall, the independence period of Latvian history later became a source for nationalist idealization and a goal for national aspirations as the ideas of rule of Latvians’ in their own country (a “Latvian Latvia”) described above was also a time of perceived economic prosperity and cultural and educational development.

### **1.1.3. THE SOVIET ERA: 1945-1991**

The independence of Latvia ended with World War II<sup>10</sup> when the country came in the Soviet sphere of control: in 1940 Latvia formally became a republic of the Soviet Union. Before focusing on the characteristics of the Soviet period of Latvian history, a short outline of the nationality policies of the USSR in the 1920s and the 1930s needs to be given in order to provide the context of the development of the relations between indigenous and Russian/Soviet identities in Latvia.

In the early years of the USSR, the Union was accommodating and inclusive to the various ethnicities (in the Soviet terminology referred to as “nationalities”) to the extreme. According to Lenin’s ideological framework, rights and certain autonomy had to be given to the nationalities for developing their trust towards the centre, as well as for modernizing the “backward” indigenous groups at the borderlands. In the 1920s attempts were made to identify all ethnic groups in the Union and to provide each of them with proportional political representation and education in their language (Slezkine, 1994). The flagship policy of this period was *korenizatsiya* (indigenization): all ethnic groups at all government levels were to be governed by representatives of those groups; preferential recruitment was given to nationalities for political and administrative positions in their regions (ibid, p. 433).

In the following decades the nationality policies changed and more rights to ethnic Russians were given, yet an antipathy towards assimilation remained (Laitin, 1998, p. 68). Instead of providing rights and representation to all nationalities depending of their proportion, only the titular nationality of each republic was provided with institutional and cultural supports in their republic. This included an

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<sup>9</sup> However, within local districts where minorities were more than 50% of the population Russian or German could be used in communication with and within the state institutions (Valsts Valodas Komisija, 2010).

<sup>10</sup> The events during the five years of war and the Russian and German occupations are left out here as they are too complex to cover in a few paragraphs and, although giving some material for ethnic and nationalist discourse, they do not provide any fundamental changes to the collective identities. For a good overview of this period refer to Kasekamp 2010.

education system in the native language and equal representation in the party and administrative structure. Hence, a reproduction of national cultures and languages was ensured alongside with an association with a particular administrative “homeland” (Smith, 1999, p. 35). However, only the titular nationalities were treated this way, meaning that a territorial hierarchy of national cultures existed (Laitin, 1998, p. 69).

Russians themselves were virtually outside (or, rather, above) this hierarchy. If during the *korenizatsiya* period their “great power chauvinism” had to be lessened in order to create the same status for all nationalities (Slezkine, 1994), subsequently the authorities worked to ensure Russian cultural presence in all republics. The official administrative homeland of Russians was the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR), but it never represented the Russian nation, only the Soviet Union could speak in the name of Russian national interests (Laitin, 1998, p. 69). The Russians, more than any other nationality, were encouraged to identify with the Soviet Union as their homeland: “In contrast with the borderland Union republics, the Russian republic did not provide a titular nation with its own Communist Party, KGB or Academy of Sciences. Instead, Russians were encouraged to look upon all-Union institutions as the social basis and identific framework of support for their nation” (Smith, 1999, p. 47).

Russians took a special position among other ethnic groups: they were provided with schools and mass media in Russian no matter where in the Union they lived, their language was the *lingua franca* everywhere, and they faced the least obstacles to social mobility. Such institutional supports, coupled with mass migration to the borderland republics, helped to develop an identity for Russians that was inseparable from the Soviet homeland (Smith, 1999, p. 48). Eventually a two-tiered system of ethnic stratification was functioning throughout the Soviet Union: Russians were the hegemonic nation in the Union as a whole, while “titular nations” were dominant in their own republics (Chinn & Kaiser, 1996, p. 74).

Although formally Russians held the same privileges everywhere and all titular nationalities had the same status, the relationships between these groups differed from republic to republic. Most notably, Latvia, together with Estonia and Lithuania, always differed from the other republics (Chinn & Kaiser, 1996). The chief reasons for such particularity were (1) the interwar experience of independence and democracy, and (2) a higher level of economic and social development compared to the rest of the Union.

To begin with, the experience of independence meant that the Baltic elites were fully capable of running their own republics. However, this also meant that they were never fully trusted by the Soviet elites to do so and could not aspire to high political and administrative appointments (Laitin, 1998, p. 67). For instance, the leading administrative positions were usually entrusted to Russian-born Balts who had participated in the revolution. As a result, each of the Baltic republics achieved an “institutional completeness” – a parallel set of institutions was developed for indigenous and Russian speakers and “it was fully possible for Balts to experience a complete cultural, professional and social life without entering into the Russian (or Soviet) world” (ibid.).

Secondly, the education and literacy levels were higher in the Baltics than in Russia itself; the Baltic republics had the best developed economies and the highest living standards in the Union. Thus the Baltic titular elites had little need for Russia, and few titulars could be motivated to move elsewhere

in the Union (Laitin, 1998, p. 66). Furthermore, as noted by Emil Payin (1994), on average, Russian migrants to the Baltics tended to be below the local population in their education and general cultural level, and tended to do heavy and non-prestigious jobs (Payin, 1994, p. 16). This observation is confirmed by Laitin who marks that the control over the intellectual life remained in the hands of the titulars, whereas Russians took positions in the administrative and production sectors, and never became the accepted intelligentsia (Laitin, 1998, p. 72). The Balts, on the other hand, were dominant in technical positions and in the scientific establishments, being nearly autonomous in the non-political technical fields (ibid, p. 74).

Although the local population could preserve their own spheres of influence and retain their language (which had become the “last bastion” of national identity), immigration promoted by the Soviet policies of industrial development significantly changed ethnical proportions in the Baltics (Budryte, 2005, p. 40); see Table 2. The most extreme case of Sovietisation through immigration took place in Latvia: by 1989 Latvians had become ethnic minorities in the seven largest cities of the country (Melvin, 1995, p. 31). The new migrants came from those sections of the Soviet population that were closely tied to the success of the regime: industrial workers, members of the military, and the security apparatus. Neil Melvin characterises them as rootless in an ethno-cultural sense, a “de-ethnicized immigrant population” whose main identity was the Soviet one (ibid.)

*Table 2. Ethnic composition in the Baltic States 1926-2009 (percent)<sup>11</sup>*

<b>Country</b>	<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>1926</b>	<b>1989</b>	<b>2008/9</b>
Estonia	titular	92	62	69
	Russian	4	30	26
	other	4	8	5
Latvia	titular	75	52	59
	Russian	11	34	28
	other	14	14	13
Lithuania	titular	81	80	84
	Russian	2	9	5
	other	17	11	11

*Sources:* Chinn & Kaiser, 1996, p.81; CIA 2010

The first large-scale attempts to halt the immigration took place during the Khrushchev thaw when rapprochement was made with the many nationalities of the Soviet Union. The late 1950s were the time of national communism: with the appointment of ethnic Latvians in leading administrative and political posts in the republic, a campaign of Latvianisation began that included attempts to slow labour migration and to strengthen the rights of the Latvian language. However, these attempts were shorted lived and Latvian national communists were purged just a year later, and the brief nationalist awakening was countered with a new wave of Russification (Pabriks & Purs, 2002, p. 35).

Among the goals of the planned migration was the creation of a Soviet identity. It was believed that the interaction of nations would produce a new multi-national construct in which all Soviet nations would share their “best traits”. No nation was supposed to lose its specific traits, e.g. their language,

<sup>11</sup> Only permanent residents are included, the numbers of present temporary work immigrants were larger. Between 1961 and 1989 approx. 1 466 700 labourers moved to Latvia, only 330 000 of them stayed (Pabriks & Purs, 2002, p. 38)

during this process, yet Russian was to be the language of communication in multi-ethnic areas (Budryte, 2005, p. 49). The large influx of immigrants did have a significant impact on identity construction, yet it was often exactly the opposite of the effect that was hoped for. The immigration was perceived as attempts of a “demographic russification” and functioned as a catalyst for rising titular nationalism, especially in Latvia and Estonia where nationalism was both anti-Soviet and anti-Russian (Chinn & Kaiser, 1996, p. 6). The propaganda on the merging of nations strengthened the preoccupation with ethnic identities, and contributed to rising ethnic fears among Latvians and Estonians<sup>12</sup> (Budryte, 2005).

The escalation of ethnicity-related fears and tensions, in other words “the ethnicity question” is also often cited as one of the reasons for the dissolution of the Soviet Union. When Mikhail Gorbachev came to power, policies of decentralisation, *glasnost*, and democratisation were put in place to invite the Union republics to contribute to the *perestroika*. As Smith, as well as Chinn and Kaiser outline, one of Gorbachev’s mistakes was the lack of understanding that the USSR was a multi-ethnic society, and that the borderlands had amassed grievances against the centre. Instead, he agreed with Brezhnev<sup>13</sup> that “a new historic community of the Soviet people now existed, transcending identities based on ethnic or Union republic differences” (Smith, 1999, p. 37). Yet, when the policies of *glasnost* created space for locally organised citizens’ movements to facilitate the reform process, they had an ethno-regional character instead of a Soviet one. The nationalist movements called for greater autonomy for the republics and eventually for independent statehood. And it was the Baltic republics that were setting the pace for the emergence and development of the popular fronts, with Lithuania being the first nationalist elected government to declare political independence from Moscow, Estonia and Latvia soon following suit (ibid, p. 37).

But why was it assumed that a Soviet identity had taken root if in reality the Soviet Union completely dissolved in just a few years? The answer is partially based on ideology, partially on an erroneous interpretation of societal trends. For one, according to the beliefs of Marx and Lenin, rapid socio-economic development was to lead to national assimilation. Development was indeed taking place: the levels of education, urbanization, and industrialization in the USSR had been rising for decades. Moreover, also inter-republic socio-economic equalization was taking place and the level of inter-homeland migration was high. Even the ethno-cultural statistics were in favour of the Soviet identity thesis: linguistic assimilation towards Russian, rising interethnic marriage rates, and “natural assimilation” of the children from such marriages were all taking place according to the statistical and demographic information, and were interpreted as a sign that nations are drawing together into one Soviet people (Chinn & Kaiser, 1996, p. 76).

Beneath the surface, however, the situation was not as straightforward as it may have appeared in the official statistics. The high levels of inter-homeland migration heightened a sense of national consciousness, especially among the upwardly mobile titulars who experienced competitive disadvantages to the skilled immigrants. Thus, counter-attempts meant mobilizing and using indigenous status to get a competitive edge over such outsiders (Chinn & Kaiser, 1996, p. 82). In

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<sup>12</sup> Lithuania had positioned itself as an agrarian republic, therefore the influx of labour immigrants was smaller

<sup>13</sup> In 1972 Brezhnev stated that international equalization between the USSR nationalities has been achieved and the “national problem” solved. Also, a “new Soviet identity” was assumed to be becoming the primary identity for most people in the USSR, even if national identities were retained (Chinn & Kaiser, 1996, p. 73).

Latvia the knowledge and use of the Russian language, as well as the number of inter-ethnic marriages, was comparatively high (Laitin, 1998). But the learning of Russian was mandatory and often necessary for career advancement, thus it was largely a forced accommodation that the local population had to make, and Russian bilingualism had the effect of raising anti-Russian sentiments (Chinn & Kaiser, 1996, p. 83). In turn, linguistic russification was very rare as was the “natural assimilation” of children in inter-ethnic marriages: in the Baltics the household language usually was the titular one (Laitin, 1998, p. 75) and the children of these marriages usually adopted a titular national identity.

Overall, three trends can be distinguished as characteristic for Latvia throughout the Soviet period: (1) the ethnic identity of Latvians was allowed, preserved and, to a certain extent, even reified. Meanwhile, (2) the immigrants to Latvia were likely to hold a Soviet identity, whereas (3) the other minorities and the Russians who had lived in Latvia already in the pre-Soviet period had no place in this dual stratification and were lumped together either with the Latvian or the Russian groups.

## **1.2. COLLECTIVE IDENTITIES SINCE 1991**

The previous subsection covered the development of main collective identities until the collapse of the Soviet Union. This subsection looks more closely at the developments of collective identities in the last twenty years, focusing on the emerging post-Soviet Russian identities (1.2.1), the Latvian national identity (1.2.2), and the more cosmopolitan European identity (1.2.3).

### **1.2.1. POST-SOVIET RUSSIAN IDENTITIES**

With the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 approximately 25 million Russians living in the Soviet borderland republics became minorities in newly forming countries virtually overnight. 1,6 million of them were located in the Baltics (Smith, 1999, p. 47) and constituted a part of a heterogeneous ethnic minority group. Some of the ethnic minorities were descendants of the Russians who had immigrated to Latvia before its incorporation in the USSR, mainly during the industrialization of the country in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century or during the interwar period. However, the largest part of Latvia’s ethnic minorities was constituted by two groups: (1) economic migrants of the Soviet period and their descendants and (2) party and military personnel (Chinn & Kaiser, 1996, p. 8).

Before the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Russians viewed themselves as the dominant group not as a minority living in a foreign land. They had never needed to acculturate to the indigenous ways of life (Chinn & Kaiser, 1996, p. 10). This attitude had caused resentment on the part of the local population who were especially sensitive due to their small populations and perceived cultural vulnerability (ibid, p. 96). While the struggle for independence had done much to affirm the national identity of Latvians, the settler community was facing an “identity crisis” (Melvin, 1995, p. 37). David D. Laitin even describes their situation as a “double cataclysm” (Laitin, 1998) constituted by the loss of the status of the Russian language and the collapse of the Soviet Union. As Latvians set forth to replace the symbols and political institutions as well the representatives of power of the Soviet Union, they also re-codified the social boundaries distinguishing “us” and “them” (Smith, 1999, p. 76). In other words, the position of Russians as the “other” in Latvian identity building became even stronger with the collapse of the USSR. This was reinforced by the tendencies to essentialise and

historicise the Latvian identity, and to totalise the difference between the groups<sup>14</sup> (Steen, 2005, pp. 12-13).

The situation of this newly formed minority has been extensively studied in the 1990s and most researchers concluded that the minorities were ill prepared for the identity crisis caused by the political and social change (e.g. see Melvin 1995; Chinn & Kaiser 1996, Laitin 1998, Smith 1999). The authors rather uniformly highlight the “imperial character” of the Russian identity as the root cause of the problem. As the formation of the Russian nation took place in step with the colonial expansion, the image most Russians had of their homeland was based on the conception of Russia as a multi-ethnic empire (Smith, 1999, p. 47). The only pre-imperial institutional carrier of Russian identity was the Orthodox Church (Dinello, 1994) which had lost its position with the founding of the Soviet Union. Consequently, Russian identity was closely tied to the Russian Imperial and Soviet orders, making it particularly open in form, and more socio-economic and politic than ethnic in its content (Melvin, 1995, p. 126).

Moreover, the RSFSR was the only of the Soviet Union’s republics which did not reinforce and give political significance to the ethnic identity of the titular group, therefore Russians remained ethnically unconsolidated. According to surveys carried out in the 1980s, on average 80 percent of ethnic Russians consistently considered Soviet Union their motherland, while other nationalities felt closer to their republics. Still in August 1991 almost 62 percent of Russians in the Baltics designated Soviet Union as “our country”. That said, more respondents in the Baltics expressed their preference for republican citizenship over Soviet or Russian citizenship (Dinello, 1994, p. 202).

In the beginning of the 1990s the settler community proved to be weak and disorganised, the main reasons for which were the lack of a clear notion of homeland, lack of a developed sense of “Russianness”, and an absence of institutions to promote non-Soviet identities (Melvin, 1995, p. 126). Also the prolonged debate about a law on naturalization (see more in section 1.2.2.) froze inter-ethnic tension and prevented an internal development of the settler community, leaving it disorganised and uncertain about their loyalty to the new state until at least the mid-1990s. The Latvian authorities, as opposed to the Estonian ones, did not help to structure and organise its minority population, leaving them struggling to define their own identity (Melvin, 1995, p. 27).

In this context an important question was how the Russian minority would define themselves as well as their place in the new political system. The return migration levels remained low as most Soviet-era immigrants chose to stay, causing the ethnic Latvian population to worry about their loyalty to the Latvian state. Graham Smith divided between three minority identity strategies that were observable at the turn of the century (Smith, 1999, pp. 83-88):

- 1) Those whose identity was still bound up with the Soviet homeland. This group was mainly made up of an older generation of urban-industrial workers – more recent, less rooted migrants with little or no command of the state language who remained nostalgic for socialist values and remained politically detached and suspicious of the new regime;

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<sup>14</sup> *Essentialising*: separating and purifying certain traits than demarcate the indigenous group, e.g. language; *historicising*: re-inventing the past by focusing on both tragic events (e.g. deportations), and the glorious periods of the nation’s political and cultural history; *totalising*: using ethnic markers as objective characteristics that divide the population into “in-groups” and “out-groups”.

- 2) Those who recognised that self-empowerment is possible only by attaining citizenship, including learning the state language. This group was mainly the more pragmatic migrants and the younger generation. As the choice is rational, the potential of longer term economic and social benefits were important motivators for crossing the citizenship boundary;
- 3) Those who accepted that their future lies within the new homeland and identified with their country of residence, yet at the same time wanted to preserve and advance minority interests. This group was composed of a small but active cultural intelligentsia, mainly ones who took an active role in supporting Baltic statehood between 1988 and 1991.

In addition, according to the observations of Laitin, a new category of “Russian-speaking population” had began to shape in the mid-1990s and was especially likely to emerge in the Baltics (Laitin, 1998, p. 264). The group this identity category encompasses is larger than just the Russian minority, as the part of the population with similar position and interests extends beyond one ethnical group. In a more recent study on ethnic minority groups in the Baltics, Timofey Agarin uses the term “Russian-speaker” remarking that, despite certain deficiencies, it continues to be the most suitable denominator for the highly differentiated group of Soviet era immigrants that includes people of different ethnicities, education levels, and professional backgrounds (Agarin, 2010, p. 9). Also the researcher Ammon Cheskin finds that over time the identity of belonging to a community of Russian speakers has become one of the most important identity markers in the Baltics (Cheskin, 2010).

An important part of retaining the Russian linguistic identity has been education in the Russian language. Language-separated education existed already in the interwar republic, whereas in the Soviet period the language of instruction was narrowed down to two: Latvian and Russian. In the USSR the linguistic separation of schools functioned in line with the principles of national self-determination and national autonomy, meanwhile serving as a way of delineating the population and thus reducing the risk of Russian population’s too strong identification with the national republic in which they lived in (Björklund, 2004). The tradition of offering primary and secondary education in more than one language was retained also after the restoration of independence, thus the Latvian school system remains linguistically divided and state schools instruct both in Latvian and the largest minority languages. Although the educational content is virtually the same and independent of the language of instruction, studies have shown that the teaching itself can create differentiation, especially in contested issues such as interpretations of history. Furthermore, there is evidence that minority pupils tend to perceive the educational content as encompassing ethnic prejudice (Curika, 2009) and, although it could be argued that the linguistically divided school system preserves cultural distinctiveness, it also constructs ethnic polarization (Björklund, 2004, p. 119).

Finally, according to discourse studies, a particular issue for constructing a Russian minority identity has been the lack of a positive external perception. While on the one hand the minority ethnic identity has been most strongly rooted in the emotional links of an individual with his or her land and biography (family, friends, years spent in Latvia), the majority population – the ethnic Latvians – have consolidated their ethnic identity by putting in place “identity boundaries” between Latvians and Russians, citizens and non-citizens. These make it insufficient to build an identity based on a mere sense of belonging to Latvia as the country one has grown up and lives in (Zepa, 2004). The Russian minority seeks an identity that is different from both the Russians in Russia and the Latvian majority, however this search is still in progress.

The existence of separate identity strategies for different groups of ethnic Russians, the formation of a new identity category of “Russian speakers”, as well as the problematic identity boundaries between the minority and the majority groups all capture a part of a complex situation that still continues to develop. However, over time the preoccupation with ethnic Russian identities has been giving way to questions of inclusion: are the identities of the local ethnic minorities compatible with a sense of belonging to the state? Can they be “Latvian”?

### **1.2.2. A COMMON NATIONAL IDENTITY?**

During the process of gaining independence both Latvians and a significant number of resident non-Latvians supported the break-off from the Soviet Union: in the late 1980s around 85 percent of Latvians and 26 percent of non-Latvians were pro-independence (Zepa, 1992) and these numbers were growing up to 1991. The period between 1990 and 1991 is often characterised as a “honeymoon” in relations between various ethnicities in Latvia (Pabriks & Purs, 2002, p. 61), characterised by an inclusive approach to Latvian identity that helped to broaden the support for Latvian independence across all ethnic groups (Ginkel, 2002). It was the non-Latvian votes that helped the nationalist forces to win the Supreme Council elections in 1990 and to declare independence: despite the fact that the plebiscites of independence in 1991 were “exhaustively inclusive”, 74 percent of Latvia’s inhabitants voted for independence (Budryte, 2005, p. 55). According to ballot counts, more than 60 percent of Russian-language ballots<sup>15</sup> supported Latvian independence (Ginkel, 2002, p. 426).

Yet difficulties began early on as the elected nationalist and reform communist forces sought to restore the ethno-demographic proportions that existed before the Soviet occupation (Payin, 1994, p. 25), and the conception of Latvian identity took on a more ethnically centred form. The independence was framed as the restoration (not founding) of the Latvian state, consequently, automatic citizenship was given only to the citizens of the interwar republic and their descendants. The Citizenship Restoration Resolution split the population in two: citizens, of whom 78 percent were ethnic Latvians, and non-citizens who were Soviet-era immigrants and their descendants, mostly Russians, Belarusians, and Ukrainians (Pabriks & Purs, 2002, pp. 72-73). This decision destroyed the illusions of many among non-Latvian supporters of the independence, and left a large part of the population (approx. 600 000 people) in a vaguely defined status until 1995 when naturalization procedures were enacted. In the words of Anton Steen (2005), the case of Latvia illustrates the role of demography for democracy: the ethnic sensitivity of Latvians that had resulted from the large scale immigration and the fear of having a minority status in their own country resulted in more restrictive laws against the minorities.

As illustrated by the table below, the first laws accepted after independence sought to establish the status of Latvian citizenship and language. The legislative outcomes were typically the result of confrontations between radical and moderate nationals on the state level, and the confrontation of their decisions with the advice and opinions of international organizations and Russia on the international level. For instance, the success of international organizations to make the citizenship legislation more moderate was compensated by more exclusionary measures in the language sector (Steen, 2005, p. 29). A turn in the leading political discourse and ethnic policies of exclusion took

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<sup>15</sup> The ballots were available in two languages: Latvian and Russian

place between 1997 and 1998 when more comprehensive programs for integrating the Russian-speakers were worked out.

*Table 3. The development of minority-related legislation in Latvia*

<b>Date</b>	<b>Law / Amendment</b>	<b>Contents</b>
October 1991	Citizenship Restoration Resolution	Restored Latvian citizenship to those who held Latvian citizenship before June 1940 and their descendants
July 1994	Citizenship Law	Introduced the conditions for naturalization. A “window policy” which categorised applicants by age and place of birth, depending on which start time of naturalization was determined
April 1995	Law on the Status of Former Soviet Citizens Who are Not Citizens of Latvia or any Other State	Permanent residents were granted, among others, the freedom to leave and return to Latvia, the preservation of native language and culture, and the right to choose the language of communication with state and administrative institutions
January – May 1998	Several laws to improve the status of non-citizens adopted	Abolished the remaining professional restrictions for non-citizens, allowed them to register with the State Employment service without a proof of fluency in Latvian
October 1998	Amendments to the Citizenship Law (following a referendum)	Abolished the “window policy”, simplified of the language test, entitled stateless children born in Latvia after August 1991 to citizenship
September 1998	“Framework Document for the Integration of Society” drafted	Aimed to create a cohesive civil society based on common values
1998	Education Law	Reformed bilingual education. As of 2004 all state-supported high schools were to switch to Latvian as the main language of instruction (60 percent in Latvian), leaving education from 1st to 9th grade solely in minority language
December 1999	Language Law	Aimed to strengthen the position of the Latvian language by prohibiting the use of minority languages in the public sphere and private business, and communication with the government
February 2001	National Programme for the Integration of Society	Simplified the naturalization procedures, among others
April 2002	Amendments to the Constitution to strengthen the Latvian language	Introduced an oath of loyalty for the members of Parliament, the use of Latvian for procedures in parliament and municipalities
May 2002	Amendments to the Election Law	Abolished provisions requiring candidates in national and local elections to be fluent in Latvian
October 2011	Guidelines for National Identity, Civic Society and Integration Policy for 2012-2018	Defined concepts such as nation, integration, and minority. Set the goals of consolidating social memory and strengthening Latvian cultural space

Sources: Budryte, 2005; Steen 2005; Ministru Kabinets 2011

The majority of the laws and regulations regarding citizenship, language, and minority rights were passed before Latvia joined the EU in 2004 (see more about the impact of the EU on this process in the next subsection). In the subsequent years most of the proposals for legislation change have not evolved beyond proposals and discussions. In the last years ethno-political issues have predominantly been raised in the context of discussions about national identity. In 2011 the Ministry of Culture passed the long-overdue "Guidelines for National Identity, Civic Society and Integration Policy for 2012-2018" (Ministru Kabinets, 2011). These guidelines caused much debate and disagreement both from ethnic Latvian and ethnic Russian social scientists, intelligentsia and civic society groups, especially with regards to their definition of such terms as "integration" or "minority".

The year 2011 was also marked by attempts to invoke referenda by radical ethnic and political organisations. First, Latvian nationalist political forces attempted to invoke a referendum on ceasing the funding of non-Latvian language schools. As a reply, Russian civil society activists attempted, and succeeded, to call a referendum on changing the Constitution to make the Russian language an official language in the state of Latvia. The referendum took place in February 2012 and 75 percent of the voters were against Constitutional change (Centrālā vēlēšanu komisija, 2012).

How have these political and legislative developments impacted the formation of a common national identity for the inhabitants of Latvia? Defining Latvia as the state "of and for" Latvians in the 1990s meant, from the outset, the national identity was very exclusive towards those who had moved to Latvia after 1940. The positioning of the titular nation as the only legitimate homeland nation, and aspiring to specially protect and promote the language, culture, and political hegemony of this one "core nation" (Brubaker, 1996, p. 103) was the ideal which, however, was not realistic for the significantly changed ethnic composition of the society.

Initially both the legislation and the prevalent discourse towards minorities was exclusionist: the Soviet era settlers were labelled as illegal immigrants and, although the citizenship debate was positioned as employing "homeland descent" not "ethnic descent", distrust (even bordering on ethnic fear of cultural self-preservation) in the minority population created cleavages in the society (Smith, 1999, pp. 80-82). Despite the existing ethnic divisions in the Latvian society the social relations between Latvians and Russians, as well as other minority groups, have remained peaceful and, aside from political differences, the various groups are socially and economically similar.

According to several studies carried out in the first half of the 2000s<sup>16</sup>, there was little regional segregation of the ethnic groups, no significant socioeconomic stratification, and the style of life and income were relatively similar (Zepa, et al., 2005, p. 14). Furthermore in the business environment ethnic segregation was minimal and mainly existed only in small companies (Selecka, et al., 2004, p. 2004). That said, some evidence was found of different employment patterns with non-citizens being overrepresented in the industry sector and the citizens dominating the primary sectors of the economy, as well as constituting a higher share of the public administration employees (Aasland, 2002, p. 61). Despite this, no statistically significant differences between citizens and non-citizens have been discovered with regards to labour force integration, civil society participation, social inclusion, and poverty levels (ibid, p. 75). Also, according to another study, neither ethnicity nor

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<sup>16</sup> Ethnic differences were a particularly explored topic in the years before EU accession as non-citizen and minority matters were among the core issues in the pre-accession talks. This interest has reduced since and there are not many recent studies aside from the ones quoted here.

language are a basis for unfair treatment when dealing with state institutions: no statistically significant differences between ethnic groups and citizens and non-citizens were found with regards to bureaucratic encounters (Galbreath & Rose, 2008, p. 64).

Nevertheless, issues related to language and citizenship are directly influencing societal integration and have shown potential for dividing the society and alienating the minority ethnic groups. The divisive ethnopolitical viewpoints are taken advantage of by the political parties and the mass media that use these existing differences for their own benefit (Zepa, et al., 2005, p. 6). For instance, changes in the Education Law, which came into force in 2004 and introduced bilingual education on the secondary school level in minority schools, led to a mass protest movement and resulted in a polarization of opinions, and increased the alienation between a part of the Russian-speaking population and the state (Hogan-Brun, 2006). Also the referendum of 2012 has had at least a temporary polarising effect on the Latvian society.

The regime of Latvia, and also that of Estonia who chose a similar approach of dealing with its minorities, has been labelled “ethnic democracy” (Pettai, 1998; Järve, 2000): a system where the majority ethnicity has secured an institutionally superior position and status for itself, in part by depriving ethnic minorities of particular political rights, but meanwhile still adhering to certain universal principles of human rights (Smith, 1999, p. 80). Yet, according to the elite researcher Anton Steen, such an evaluation is not entirely accurate. Steen argues that Latvia and Estonia represent a “system for cultural domination of the state by the titular majority” instead of a systematic institutional exclusion of minorities (Steen, 2005, p. 8). He believes that approximately since the mid-1990s both Baltic countries are “ethno-liberal democracies”<sup>17</sup>, meaning that the national elites have made the citizenship thresholds as restrictive as possible, but those who have passed the test of naturalization are accepted as full members of the political community (ibid, p. 9).

Steen’s thesis is rooted in his survey of national elites: in 2003 in Latvia 68 percent of the respondents disagreed that Russians who live in the country are fully loyal to the state, and 73 percent disagreed that all permanent residents should be granted full citizenship rights (lowest trust levels among the Baltic elites), meanwhile 92 percent were in favour of allowing naturalized Russians to obtain leading positions in the central administration (the highest level in the Baltics) (Steen, 2005, pp. 18-22). Based on these results, the minorities who have passed the citizenship threshold are accepted as equals. Steen concludes that the citizenship institution functions as a “political screening mechanism” that guarantees the trustworthiness of the new citizens to the elites (ibid, p. 23).

If we look at the actual practices of people as indicators of their identification with the state they live in, naturalization tendencies, voting patterns and language use are three significant indicators that should be considered (Kymlicka, 2001). To begin with, despite a simplification of the procedures, a reduction of fees, as well as an increased availability of programs for Latvian language learning, the speed of naturalization has been slow. In the 14 years since the beginning of naturalization in 1995, barely 133 000 non-citizens had chosen to pass the naturalization exam (see Table 4 below).

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<sup>17</sup> Steen divides different types of democracies in multi-ethnic states depending on the mechanisms of inclusion employed and the extent to which the political culture of the majority group trusts the newcomers. These types are: (1) ethnocracy: minorities are distrusted and systematically excluded from positions in the state (formally and informally); (2) ethnic democracy: less rigorous citizenship requirements, but distrust remains (mostly informal exclusion); (3) ethno-liberal democracy: strict threshold of citizenship, full inclusion once passed; (4) liberal democracy: both inclusion and trust towards minorities (Steen, 2005, p. 9).

Simplification of the legislation in 1998 did raise the numbers of naturalized persons in the following years, as did the motivation of gaining European citizenship after Latvia joined the EU in 2004. Nevertheless, the numbers of naturalized persons have reduced in the last years and are likely to stay at the present level. In 2011 there were 325 845 non-citizens, constituting almost 15 percent of the Latvian population.

*Table 4. The speed of naturalization*

Year	Naturalized	Non-citizens	Year	Naturalized	Non-citizens
1995	984	n/a	2004	16 064	481 635
1996	3 016	670 478	2005	19 169	452 302
1997	2 992	663 795	2006	16 439	418 686
1998	4 439	642 962	2007	6 826	392 282
1999	12 427	616 258	2008	3 004	371 659
2000	14 900	582 175	2009	2 080	356 977
2001	10 637	552 244	2010	2 336	343 279
2002	9 844	525 454	2011	2 467	325 845
2003	10 049	504 572	<i>Total</i>	132 870	---

*Source:* Pilsonības un migrācijas lietu pārvalde 2013; Centrālā statistikas pārvalde 2013

With regards to voting patterns, in the two decades since the independence there have only been a few parties that have drawn support from more than 25 percent of each ethnic group (Zepa, et al., 2006, p. 168). The ethnic minority parties have had a much smaller share of voters due to the relatively small number of minority citizens, but increasing naturalization in combination with minority party alliances have resulted in them gaining more parliament seats. The mobilization of ethnic vote has been a successful means of gaining political power, especially at times of controversial legislation debates, e.g., that of the implementation of minority education reform in 2004 (Zepa, et al., 2005). However, over time minority support has shifted from hardliner to more moderate political parties while Latvians give their votes to more broadly based parties where ethnopolitical issues are not the determinant ones.

Finally, throughout the independence period language has continued to be a contested issue. Many Russian organisations and political parties have requested to give Russian the status of state language alongside Latvian language. Overall, the knowledge and use of the Latvian language has slowly been increasing over the years. If in 1989 only 20 percent of Russian speakers claimed to know Latvian (Budryte, 2005, p. 125), then in 2008 57 percent reported good Latvian language skills and the proportion of those who do not know Latvian at all had reduced to 7 percent. The level of knowledge is the highest among the youngest generation (age 15-34): 73 percent evaluated their Latvian skills as good (Zepa, et al., 2008, p. 5). The previously existing linguistic asymmetry has reduced mainly due to reducing Russian language skills among Latvians, especially the Latvian youth. In 2008 57 percent of non-Latvians had a good command of Latvian language, and 69 percent of Latvians had good Russian language skills (among the young people this proportion was 73 percent to 54 percent) (ibid, p. 6).

To sum up, the formation of a common, Latvian, national identity is still an ongoing process and ethnopolitical issues such as citizenship and language continue to polarize the population. There is some evidence that while the Russian-speakers of Latvia are more open to civic criteria of defining a nation, Latvians are rather essentialist in their views and show strong support for the mother tongue criterion of national affiliation (Björklund, 2006, p. 112). Nevertheless, if the conclusions of Steen about Latvia being an ethno-liberal democracy are correct, the borders between Latvians and other groups will increasingly be drawn not by ethnicity but by citizenship. Direct communication between the various societal groups seems to be the key, e.g., a study by Daniel A. Kronenfeld of interethnic conflict and identity convergence in Latvia shows that “Russians who live among Latvians are more likely to identify as inhabitants of the Latvian state, to speak Latvian and to marry Latvians” (Kronenfeld, 2005, p. 271). These minorities become Latvian in a citizenship, if not an ethnicity sense.

### **1.2.3. EUROPEAN IDENTITY IN LATVIA**

European identity in Latvia, as in the other Baltic countries, is old and new at the same time. As noted in the beginning of this chapter, the territories of the modern-day Latvia shared common legal and cultural space with other North European countries, especially Germany and Sweden, already since the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Also during the interwar independence the cultural policy of the Baltics was orientated towards Europe (Encyclopædia Britannica, 2010). Even though direct links to the Western Europe were cut after the World War II, throughout the Soviet period the Baltic states were looked upon as being more “Western” than the other republics. The regaining of independence was seen as a restoration of the links these countries had been cut off from and a “return to Europe” (e.g. see Raun 2009), accordingly much more stress was put on the European rather than the Soviet heritage.

Membership in the European Council, NATO and the EU were the expressed goals of the Baltic States from the outset of their independence. The motivations for accession were a combination of economic considerations, a wish to retake a position in Europe, as well as attempts of distancing from and insuring against the neighbouring Russia, thus securing national independence (Pabriks & Purs, 2002) and acquiring a bandwagon vis-à-vis Russia (Lamoreaux & Galbreath, 2010).

During the accession process Latvians, together with Estonians, were the most sceptical among the Central and East European countries about the benefits of EU membership. Around two thirds of the Latvian population voted for joining the EU. According to Kasekamp, “the most popular argument of the opponents of EU membership was that, having recently escaped from an involuntary union, the Balts did not need to enter another union, where they would again have to surrender part of their sovereignty” (Kasekamp, 2010, p. 190).

Another point of contestation was the fact that membership of these international organisations was tied to certain criteria that needed to be fulfilled. Importantly, in Latvia issues regarding ethnic minority and non-citizenship legislation took a prominent role in the talks of accession to the EU. Among others, fulfilling the recommendations of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)<sup>18</sup> was positioned as necessary for getting on the “fast track” to joining the EU (Galbreath, 2006). The Latvian government was required to make the citizenship legislation more moderate, the naturalization procedures easier and more accessible. In turn, Russia attempted to use

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<sup>18</sup> Latvia and Estonia invited the OSCE to establish missions in the countries for the purposes of observation of the ethnic and minority situation. The missions ran from 1993 to 2001.

the negotiations for accession to the EU to influence the status of the Russian speakers in Latvia (Galbreath & McEvoy, 2010, p. 369). As a result, throughout the process of European accession talks ethnicity and citizenship became important factors that influenced people’s opinions and feelings towards the EU.

As Merje Kuss has elaborated on the basis of the Estonian case, there has been a duality in the relationship between national identity and international integration: on the one side, international integration was seen as a security measure against the Russian threat and thus conducive to preserving Estonian identity. On the other side, the supranational institutions pressured to naturalize Russian-speaking residents – a part of the population often seen as representatives of the Russian threat – and thus were seen as dangerous to the Estonian identity (Kuus, 2002). These observations of Kuus are highly applicable also to the Latvian case.

Accordingly, the local ethnic minorities were perceived as opposed to the national state and the international organizations were seen as the protectors of their interests – a situation unfavourable for increasing their attachment to Latvia but favourable for forming more supranational attachments. The same circumstances had quite a different impact on the ethnic Latvians, namely, they created a feeling of incomprehension and a fear of losing the ethnic identity (Budryte, 2005). At the same time, as made clear by the “return to Europe” rhetoric, Latvians were more likely to see themselves as a European nation, whereas the identity of ethnic Russians had historically been tied to the Russian Imperial and Soviet orders (Melvin, 1995, p. 126).

In a nutshell, the existing evidence about the formation of a European identity is contradictory. It can be assumed that, due to the fact that the Latvian ethnic identity is closely tied with the national identity, belonging to Europe can be strong insofar it is perceived as integral for Latvian interests, or Latvia is seen as an organic part of Europe. Meanwhile, as outlined in the previous subchapters, ethnic Russian identity has been more open and cosmopolitan in its form, and a certain alienation from the government of Latvia may have led to a weaker attachment to the national state and a stronger attachment to Europe; at least as far as it does not contradict their belonging to Russia.

*Table 5. European and national belonging, 2004 (percent)*

	just Latvian	Latvian and European	just European	don't know / NA
<b>Latvians</b>	52	44	2	3
<b>Non-Latvians</b>	31	36	17	16
<b>Citizens</b>	48	44	5	3
<b>Non-citizens</b>	27	28	22	23

*Source: European Commission 2004*

There is not much empirical evidence about ethnic differences in European attachments. Eurostat surveys have inquired about the belonging to Europe on an annual basis, however the last year for which the breaking down of Latvia’s respondents by ethnicity and citizenship is possible is 2004 (see Table 5). At the time of joining the EU, ethnic Latvians felt more closely tied to Latvia (52 percent) or to Latvia and Europe (44 percent), only 2 percent said that they are “just European”. Meanwhile, non-Latvian and, especially, non-citizen respondents were much more likely to say that they are “just

European” (17 percent and 22 percent) or could not fit themselves into any of the given categories (16 percent and 23 percent) (European Commission, 2004).

A more recent study about the attitude of Latvia’s inhabitants towards EU citizenship (Makarovs & Strode, 2011) posed the question differently: how much do you feel like an EU citizen in your daily life? 30 percent of Latvian citizens and 19 percent of non-citizens answered that they feel it strongly or somewhat (Makarovs & Strode, 2011, p. 4). Overall the study showed that the attitudes towards EU citizenship were not influenced by ethnicity or native tongue; however, citizenship status proved to be important: non-citizens were comparatively more sceptical towards the EU.

The fact that the two surveys show different trends raises the question: is it the different wording of questions (belonging to Europe vs. role of EU citizenship in daily life) or have people’s attitudes changed in the seven years between the two studies? An international research project “Interplay of European, National and Regional identities” (ENRI-East) that focused on 12 ethnic minority groups in Eastern Europe highlights the Russians of Latvia as the group with the most negative image of the European Union: 45 percent had a very negative or a fairly negative image, 37 percent a neutral one, and only 18 percent a very positive or a fairly positive image (ENRI-East, 2011, p. 12). That said, the youngest respondents (up to 29 years old) were significantly more positive towards the EU. Also a recent focus group study found that the young and well-educated Russian speakers used the notion of “Europe” as a positive means of distinguishing between Latvia and Russia, placing themselves (and Latvia) on the side of Europe (Cheskin, 2013). Thus, it can be assumed that there are significant generational differences within the ethnic minority group with regards to opinions about and attachments to the EU.

Generally speaking, the people of Latvia have been keen to employ the new possibilities brought about by EU membership. In the special Eurobarometer report “New Europeans” (European Commission, 2011) the Baltic States stood out among all EU countries with their large numbers of respondents who have close friends and relatives living abroad: in Latvia 61 percent of the respondents had close friends and 35 percent – relatives who live in another country (ibid, p. 25). Compared to respondents of all other EU countries, Latvians were the most inclined to emigrate: 34 percent said that they likely will move abroad in the next 10 years (ibid, p. 48). However, this high international mobility (or the wish for mobility) seems to have little to do with European attachments: Latvia is also among the countries where the respondents feel the least attachment to other countries than their homeland (32 percent) (ibid, p. 53), thus the wish to emigrate is likely more related to economic than cultural reasons.

This chapter has looked at five identities and, before moving on to the next chapter, it is time to summarise the main points about each of them. First, *Latvian ethnic identity* consolidated in the 19<sup>th</sup> century thanks to the ideas and efforts of the first Latvian intelligentsia. Ever since the end of World War I when Latvia was established as an independent country, the Latvian ethnic identity has been closely tied to the Latvian national identity. The initial significant other for the Latvian ethnic identity were the Baltic Germans, however during the Soviet period it was the need to submit to a foreign power and the large-scale immigration that consolidated the borders of this identity. The national awakening of the late 1980s that resulted in the reestablishment of independence affirmed both the Latvian ethnic and national identity. However, the close connection of the two has meant that the

*Latvian national identity* has largely been tied to descent and the Latvian language which has caused difficulties to expand the national identity to include other groups, most notably, the Soviet-era immigrants and their descendants. That said, there is some evidence that citizenship is becoming more important than ethnicity for defining the borders of Latvian national identity.

The *Russian ethnic identity* has historically been tied to the Russian Imperial and Soviet orders, therefore many social scientists see it as a rather open identity, historically more socio-economic and political than ethnic in its character. In many ways the ethnic Russians were a privileged group during the Soviet period and many of them held the Soviet identity. The dissolution of the USSR left them in an identity crisis and there is evidence that the ethnic Russians more frequently see themselves as part of a language group – the Russian-speakers – a more inclusive identity that includes also other ethnic minority groups. Despite a lack of differences in socio-economic characteristics between the ethnic groups, ethno-political issues (citizenship, language, and interpretations of history) continue to polarize the Latvian society.

The *Soviet identity* was the first intentional supranational identity building project that Latvia encountered. This identity was the strongest among the economic migrants and the Soviet administrative and military personnel, in other words, people whose lives and success were the most closely tied to the Soviet regime. Although it was assumed that by the 1980s the Soviet identity was widespread and that it had transcended ethnic and national differences, the Soviet Union completely dissolved in just a few years and the Soviet identity was swept away by rising national consciousness.

Finally, *European identity* in Latvia has quite long historical roots, on the one hand, but has become more actualised with the accession to the EU, on the other hand. Like the Soviet identity also European identity is a supranational identity building project, yet with the difference that this time the participation has been democratically chosen by the people of Latvia. The majority of existing evidence shows that, compared to local ethnic and national identities, European identity is less directly experienced in everyday life. Furthermore, studies point to differences in European attachments between the different ethnic and citizenship groups possibly caused by the different relationships these groups have to the Latvian national belonging.

To conclude, in addition to giving the background information about Latvia and the development of the main collective identities, this chapter has shown that not only national but also ethnic identity can be important vis-à-vis European identity. Nevertheless, it is unclear in how far the relationship between ethnic and European identities is mediated by national identity. This chapter has illuminated not only differences but also similarities between the Soviet and European supranational identities. It remains to be seen how the people of Latvia interpret the two and whether they draw comparisons between the two supranational identity building projects that they have encountered in their lifetimes.

## 2. THE REALM OF IDENTITY

The first chapter gave an introduction to the case being studied – Latvia; the goal of this chapter is to provide an in-depth inquiry into European identity: a supranational identity that is the main subject of this study. First, European identity needs to be positioned into the broader (historical) context of the three levels of social identities distinguished in the introduction chapter. Second, an outline of the meaning, emergence and evidence of European identity are necessary for developing an empirical study about this collective identity.

This chapter is split into three parts. The first subchapter explores the development of collective identities, highlighting the changes brought about by modernity and globalisation, and elaborating on the dual trends of cosmopolitanism and communitarianism. The second subchapter focuses on the European identity: literature on the character and contents of European identity is overviewed, followed by an inquiry about the societal groups that feel belonging to Europe, and the relations of European identity with other social identities. The third and last subchapter summarizes the main points of this chapter and recalls the research questions of the present study.

### 2.1. IDENTITIES IN THE MODERN WORLD

The impact of technological progress and its impact on changing the society has been a particular interest of sociologists ever since the birth of the discipline. In fact, the notion and problematisation of “identity” is a distinctly modern phenomenon that can be traced back to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, a period of seeming disintegration of social structures and societal consensus about values as a result of the Enlightenment, the Industrial and Democratic Revolutions, as well as the decline of feudalism, and the erosion of religious authority. These processes of rapid change created the need for a stable identity, “a sense of a continuous self-sameness over time while allowing for adaptation to rapid social change and differentiation” (Bendle, 2002, pp. 15-16).

Early social scientists were focusing on the change from feudal to modern society during industrialization. Traditional and modern forms of society were commonly taken as two polar types, albeit characterised in different ways by different scientists. One of the most influential typologies was developed at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century by the German social scientist Ferdinand Tönnies who introduced a distinction between two ideal types of social organisation: *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*, commonly translated to English as “community” and “society”. For Tönnies, *Gemeinschaft* signifies such social groups as family, friendship or neighbourhood, formed by mutual bonds and characteristic of pre-modern, rural societies. In turn, *Gesellschaft* refers to groups based on rationality and utility, it arises with the modern society and is characterized by individualism and instrumental, superficial social ties (Tönnies, 2002 [1957]).

There are similarities between the ideas of Tönnies and those of the French social scientist Émile Durkheim who differentiated between mechanical and organic solidarity: two different ways of establishing unity in a society. Durkheim describes mechanical solidarity as characteristic to traditional societies that are small and homogenous; where religion and family ties serve as the basis of social cohesion, social attachments are based on bonds of obligation and dependency, individual autonomy is discouraged, and the links between the individual and the society are strong and unified (Morrison, 2006, pp. 162-165). In contrast, organic solidarity occurs in large, industrialized societies;

here economy replaces religion as the dominant social institution and individuals are grouped according to their role in the occupational structure instead of kinship. Meanwhile, individual autonomy is increasing and social bonds are based on interdependencies created by the division of labour (Morrison, 2006, pp. 167-168).

More recent examples of dichotomous society types are, e.g. Howard Becker's division of sacred and secular societies and Robert Redfield's typology of folk and urban societies. All of these polar types depict traditional societies that are small in size and dominated by kinship ties and religious norms; opposed to them are modern societies that are large, more complex and characterised by secularization, and domination of economic ties. It is a move from close communities with rigid rules and strong solidarity to a larger world, more susceptible to change and characterised by individualism and weak social ties, yet meanwhile also the development of a much wider type of identification: national identity.

Continuing economic, technological and societal changes since the World War II have similarly preoccupied modern social scientists who already in the 1970s proclaimed a new, postmodern age, assuming that modernity came to its end at the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. In identity studies the postmodern and post-structuralist ideas mark an extreme version of constructivism, and portray identity as "entirely a product of discourse and as inherently fragmented, multiple and transient" (Bendle, 2002, p. 5). By the 1990s, however, the dominant view in sociology had shifted to the belief that the ongoing transformations are not marking a fundamentally new age but rather the beginning of a second or late modernity. These ideas about societal change and its impact on identities will be briefly explored in the next subchapter.

### **2.1.1. IDENTITY BEYOND MODERNITY**

The present stage of modernity has been labelled in various ways: second, late or high modernity, liquid modernity, post-traditional society, network society, and reflexive modernization, to name just the most prominent ones. Sociological treatises that employ these terms recognize the role and influence of such processes as globalization and the rise of information technologies. The next paragraphs will focus on the three most prominent approaches among them: reflexive modernization, network society, and liquid modernity. All of these approaches have been developed by European scholars and are distinctly Western-centric, if not Eurocentric, in their character. The main question of the following overview is: how has the society changed and, most importantly, how have the changes impacted the individual and collective identities of individuals experiencing them?

First, one of the leading concepts for approaching the present social order is that of *reflexive modernization*. This term was introduced in a book co-written by Ulrich Beck, Anthony Giddens and Scott Lash in 1994. Although the three authors use the same term for the state of society today, each of them approaches the subject from a different standpoint, largely depending on their previous work and interests<sup>19</sup>. For Beck reflexive modernization means the dissolution of industrial modernization as an unintended side-effect of the modernization process that brings about a new

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<sup>19</sup> Before turning to reflexive modernization, Beck was writing about risk society, stressing the inability of the industrial society's institutions to deal with the new social, political, economic and individual risks (Beck, 1994, p. 5). Giddens was writing about high modernity and post-traditional society, distinguished by a move from clearly defined individual roles to a reflexive project of the self (Giddens, 1991).

stage of modernity. For him reflexive modernization means “self-confrontation with the effects of risk society that cannot be dealt with and assimilated in the system of industrial society” (Beck, 1994, p. 6). Giddens, on the other hand, sees no clear direction to social change. He outlines reflexively-acting institutions (e.g. the modern state) as the key agents of change; they are forced to abandon tradition and to consider the numerous disembedded forms of abstract knowledge (Giddens, 1994). In contrast, Lash focuses on cultural or aesthetic reflexivity, showing that institutions have become more “cultural” in terms of their embedded meanings and symbolic practices (Lash, 1994).

Despite the numerous differences in their viewpoints, all three authors stress the importance of individualization on the everyday lives of the individuals, the increasing uncertainty about the world, and the need to engage in an active process of self-construction. They also agree that, in a world characterized by a mix of risks and opportunities, tradition has lost the constraining power it once had (Allen, 1997, p. 264). This approach to individualization as a strain rather than opportunity for individuals is also shared by Castells and Bauman (see below).

In the recent years Ulrich Beck has remained to be the only of the three theoreticians who is systematically developing the ideas of reflexive modernization, trying to shape them into a research agenda. He has continued to look at reflexive modernization as a “modernization of modern society” (Beck, et al., 2003, p. 1) that undermines the basic premises of the modern society, most notably the nation state and the social institutions of family and work. Beck stresses the unintended side effects of modernisation as the source of this process. He sees the increasing individualization as a dual process, marking that “the agents of individualization are also its victims” (ibid, p.25); self-definition has become individualized as a result of increased possibilities of choosing bases for definition; multiplicity of possible subject boundaries, and subjects are both producers and results of the networks and their boundaries.

The second framework for looking at the modern society is offered by the Spanish sociologist Manuel Castells. His trilogy “The Information Age” proposes the thesis of information society or *network society*: a society shaped by the technological revolution, the transformation of capitalism and the demise of statism (Castells, 1997, p. 1). It is a society that, on the one hand, is shaped by “pervasive globality”, creating a rational world of markets, networks, individuals and strategic organizations (ibid, p.355). The dominant global elites inhabit the “space of flows” and consist of identity-less individuals, in other words, citizens of the world. But they are a minority against a dominant trend: the rise of communal identity among those resisting economic, political and cultural disfranchisement (ibid, p. 356).

Castells distinguishes between three types of identity constructions (Castells, 1997, p. 8): (1) legitimating identities supporting the dominant institutions of society, (2) resistance identities generated by those marginalized by the logic of dominion and leading to the formation of communes or communities, (3) project identities that involve redefining positions and inducing changes in the societal structure. For him, resistance identities are the most important type of identity building in the network society while legitimating identities, the former basis of civil society, experience a crisis and are in the process of disintegration.

Resistance identities result in the construction of “cultural communes” that are most commonly organised around religious, national, or territorial foundations, at times reinforced by ethnicity.

These communes function as a refuge and offer solidarity that protects against the cold outside world ruled by global networks of power and wealth (Castells, 1997, p. 65). Castells sees the construction of communes as defensive reaction against three fundamental threats (ibid, p. 66): (1) globalisation's dissolution of the autonomy of institutions, organisations and communication systems where people live, (2) increasing networking and flexibility that blurs the boundaries of membership, individualizes social relationships, and induces structural instability of work, space, and time, and (3) the crisis of the patriarchic family that affects the roots of security-building, socialization and sexuality. In a nutshell, "when the world becomes too large to be controlled, social actors aim at shrinking it back to their size and reach" (ibid). The defensive reactions become sources of meaning and identity by constructing new cultural codes out of historical materials.

Third, the sociologist Zygmunt Bauman has put forward the thesis of *liquid modernity*, using "fluidity" and "liquidity" as metaphors for describing the nature of what he sees as a novel phase in the history of modernity (Bauman, 2000, p. 2). The transition to the modern society replaced the "solids" of family and tradition by "new and improved solids" shaped by the economy and instrumental rationality. But if modernity enacted its liquidizing power on the macro level, the system and politics, liquid modernity brings liquefaction to the micro level, to society and life-policies. Freedom in modernity meant a choice between pre-allocated reference groups, each with its codes and rules which served as orientation points. With liquid modernity people are moving to a time of "universal comparison", characterized by "an individualized, privatized version of modernity, with the burden of pattern-weaving and the responsibility of failure falling primarily on the individual's shoulders" (ibid., p. 8). The destinations are not given in advance, the patterns are no longer self-evident, they clash and contradict one another (ibid, p. 7).

Nomads are the new elite of this new age, and the game of domination is won by the ones who are quicker. In Bauman's words: "We are witnessing the revenge of nomadism over the principle of territoriality and settlement. In the fluid stage of modernity, the settled majority is ruled by the nomadic and exterritorial elite." (Bauman, 2000, p. 13). "The might of the global elite rests on its ability to escape local commitments, and globalization is meant precisely to avoid such necessities, to divide tasks and functions in such a way as to burden local authorities, and them only, with the role of guardians of law and (local) order" (ibid, p. 188).

Bauman focuses on the rise of communitarian movements as a reaction to the "liquefaction" of modern life, it is the other side of the coin to the increasing individualization. Bauman sees communitarianism as a reaction to one aspect of change in particular, namely, the deepening imbalance between individual freedom and security. While the former has grown at an unprecedented scale, the latter is rapidly shrinking (Bauman, 2000, p. 170). The community that people seek is "home writ large", something that one has been born into and the ideal community sought is "a total world, supplying everything one may need to lead a meaningful and rewarding life" (ibid, p. 172). But, in comparison with the liquefied aspects of modern life, Bauman spends less time focusing on the communitarian aspect of societal transformations.

Each of the three approaches – reflexive modernization, network society, and liquid modernity – focuses on different aspects of the transformations that are taking place in the economic, politic and social realms, however, there are themes that are voiced in all of them and which are relevant for a study of collective identities today. Specifically, all approaches (1) stress the changing relationships of

space and time, (2) observe a dusk of the nation state, and (3) see a dual relationship between globalisation and identity.

To begin with, according to Baumann, in the pre-modern time space and time were inseparable, while modernity separated time and space from “living practice” and time from space (Bauman, 2000). Castells describes this phenomenon as the “space of flows” already mentioned earlier; it denotes a high level cultural abstraction of space and time and their dynamic interaction with the digital age society (Castells, 1997). If individual’s identities are limited by the communities around them and the identity possibilities of their time, as described in the introduction chapter, the possibilities of identity construction in this time and age should be wider than ever before.

This freedom is reinforced by the second observation of the theories: the nation state, which was among the most important sources of collective identity in the modern age, is believed to be losing its importance<sup>20</sup>. According to Castells, the modern state is losing sovereignty as it is “bypassed by global networks of wealth, power and information” (Castells, 1997, p. 354). As the state power is eroded by the new global powers, it can no longer provide the certainty and security it once did. Baumann observes that “the nation, which used to offer substitute for the absent community at the era of *Gesellschaft*, now drifts back to the left-behind *Gemeinschaft* in search of a pattern to emulate and to model itself after” (Bauman, 2000, p. 185). Also the components of the nation state are called into question: the welfare state, the legal system, the national economy and the parliamentary democracy (Beck, et al., 2003, p. 3). While on the one hand these trends may weaken citizens’ loyalty and lead to post-national citizenship, on the other hand they may cause nationalist resurgence that is separated from the state (Castells, 1997, p. 27; Guibernau, 2007, pp. 28-29).

Finally, the approaches distinguish two trends as the most important characteristics of the new stage of modernity: globalisation and identity. As Castells states in the opening lines of his second book of “The Information Age” trilogy: “Our world, and our lives, are being shaped by the conflicting trends of globalization and identity” (Castells, 1997, p. 1). Also Giddens has voiced a similar observation: “transformations in self-identity and globalization (..) are two poles of the dialectic of the local and the global in conditions of high modernity” (Giddens, 1991, p. 32). Although globalisation and identity are seen to function in opposition to one another, these two trends are interdependent: while globalisation increasingly “liquefies” modern life and the increased individual freedom leads to a loss of security (Bauman, 2000), individuals’ attempts to cope with this new world lead to such outcomes as rising religious fundamentalism, cultural nationalism, or the forming of territorial communes (Castells, 1997). In other words, “men and women look for groups to which they can belong, certainly and forever, in a world in which all else is moving and shifting, in which nothing else is certain” (Hobsbawm, 1998, quoted in Bauman, 2000, p.171).

These theories of late modernity have been criticised on many accounts. Some have noted that they are too optimistic about the construction and plasticity of the self (Bendle, 2002, p. 12), others stress that while the authors focus on increasing flexibility or “liquidity” of modern life, this may be a

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<sup>20</sup> Beck even calls to discard “methodological nationalism” (i.e., assumptions that the nation state is the container of social processes, and that the national provides the core order for the analysis of social, economic, and political processes) as it is becoming questionable in the course of pluralisation of borders in the process of globalisation (Beck, 2005, p. 146). Instead, he promotes a move to “methodological cosmopolitanism”, founding a “science of transnational reality” (ibid, p. 148).

phenomenon that truly applies only to the elites, while the masses remain tied to their localities (Gane, 2001, p. 273). Perhaps most importantly, many believe that the death of the nation state is proclaimed prematurely. As noted by Jeffrey C. Alexander, “with the significant exception of the European Union, which itself remains a regionally restricted power, no larger, more impartial, more universalistic, and more democratic entity has yet taken over from the nation-state” (Alexander, 2005, p. 84). Furthermore, as will be shown in section 2.2, despite more than half a century of effort at building a post-national Europe, national identities have retained their significance.

Despite their deficiencies, the theories of late modernity highlight important trends of change and give a valuable framework for looking at identities in the late modern world. Yet, instead of being taken at face-value, their insights need to be used as road signs for spheres where changes are happening. The most important of these are the changing balance between local, national and global identities. Thus, before looking at that how modernity and identity interplay in Europe today, the next subchapter briefly elaborates on the trend that the theories reviewed in this subchapter highlighted as the chief duality of our age: globalization and identity.

### **2.1.2. IDENTITY AND GLOBALISATION**

When “globalisation” is talked about, the foremost understanding is economical, describing increasing internationalisation of markets and the means of production, as well as increased capital mobility and interdependency of national markets (e.g. OECD, 2003). However, such approach highlights only one aspect of the globalisation process. Globalisation not only merges economic connections and patterns of consumption, it also contributes to the shrinking of distances, and increases the volume of cultural interactions (Eriksen, 1999; Cohen & Kennedy, 2000, p. 24).

Therefore, globalisation can more generally be defined as “the increasing global integration of economies, information technology, the spread of global popular culture, and other forms of human interaction” (Lieber & Weisberg, 2002, p. 274). In addition, a distinction is often made between two terms: “globalisation” refers to the objective changes in the world that are partially outside us, while “globalism” or “globality” refer to the subjective realm, the internationalization of these changes, e.g. identifying with all humanity or the broadening of identities (Cohen & Kennedy, 2000, p. 34)

The effects of globalisation can be roughly divided into three realms: (1) the economic, (2) the political, and (3) the cultural. While economic globalisation has progressed the most freely, globalisation in the cultural realm has been the most contested and is characterised by high levels of divergence (Holton, 2000, p. 151). Identity in its various forms is related to the third – cultural – realm, yet it should be kept in mind that the economic, political and cultural processes interact, influence and reinforce one another.

Cultural issues have been particularly fraught in the globalisation process because, while culture serves as a primary carrier of globalisation and modern values, cultural issues also impact national and individual identity (Lieber & Weisberg, 2002, pp. 291-292). Globalisation on the cultural level has brought about the fragmentation and multiplication of identities (Cohen & Kennedy, 2000, p. 342), as characterised by tensions and convergences both on the elite and popular levels (Berger, 2002). In this the globalisation process shares a “built-in affinity” with the modernisation process: both bring about increased individuation as “all sectors of the emerging global culture enhance the independence of the individual over against tradition and collectivity” (ibid, p. 9), thus making the

individual more self-reliant. This may be experienced by individuals both as liberation and as a burden.

As already hinted at in the overview of the late modernisation theories, the increasing individuation causes polarised reactions. On the one hand, there are people who embrace the freedom to shape their own identities. In their study of the cultural dimension of globalisation Peter Berger and Samuel Huntington distinguish two such groups of people that together form the rising international elites: the business elite and the Western intelligentsia, specifically, the academic and the international NGO worker circles (Berger, 2002, p. 4). On the other hand, there are groups of people who seek a return to the old and the familiar and this creates a resurgence of nationalism and ethnicity.

Thus, as already noted by the theories of late modernity, the relationship between globalisation and identity is characterised by polarized outcomes, often split along the class lines. However, as opposed to the late modernity theories described before, the globalisation literature introduces a more nuanced analysis than a mere duality between cosmopolitanism and identity. Three positions can be distinguished in the debate about the impact of globalisation on culture (Holton, 2000):

- 1) the homogenization thesis: closest to the cosmopolitan trend; indicates a rising cultural convergence and assumes that global culture follows global economy and is primarily Western-orientated. It presupposes that the emergence of a global culture is driven by mass marketing strategies on the one hand and by the emergence of a cross-national global elite on the other;
- 2) the polarization thesis: focuses its attention on the “cultural wars” between globalisation and its opponents as is closest to the trend that late modernity theories describe as “identity”. It supposes that the rapidity of globalisation, in particular the Western or American primacy embedded in it, evokes a cultural backlash and a search for familiar identities (Cohen & Kennedy, 2000; Lieber & Weisberg, 2002). The attempts to restore tradition, religion, or ethnic and national identities typically take the form of identity politics and are signified by a growth of political movements that target the perceived threat of globalisation to local distinctiveness and self-determination (Eriksen, 1999);
- 3) the hybridization/syncretism thesis: dismisses the former two approaches as too simplistic and focuses on the blending and mutual influence of cultural repertoires that are made available by increased interactions on a global scale. The mixing of global and local cultural elements has been labelled as “localization”, “glocalization” or “transnationalism”, and signify the adaptation of global, popular culture to local contexts by deterritorializing them (Watson, 2006). There are also “alternative globalisations” and “subglobalisations” – cultural movements stemming from other, often regional, sources that have a global outreach, e.g. Europeanization (Berger, 2002, p. 12).

The literature on hybridization of the global and the local provides a more detailed view on the globalisation – identity duality and stresses the importance of the local context, highlighting that the globalisation (and modernisation) processes take different forms from country to country and region to region. In this context the balance between local, national and global identities is particularly important because, as historical examples show, reactions to the unfamiliar, cosmopolitan world may lead to its collapse. In the words of the historian Harold James, “there have already been highly developed and highly integrated international communities that dissolved under the pressure of

unexpected events. But in every case the momentum was lost; the pendulum swung back” (James, 2001, p. 1)<sup>21</sup>.

## **2.2. EUROPEAN IDENTITY**

European identity belongs to the widest order of social identities: it is a supranational identity. The overview of modernity and globalisation literature in the previous subsection lets us draw several assumptions about European identity. The accuracy of these will be shown through a discussion of the multiple facets of European identity in this subchapter.

- 1) European identity is an offspring of a globally interconnected, increasingly individualised society where the nation states are losing their power and importance: a transnational identity for a globalising world;
- 2) This identity may be more embraced by the elites – likely, the business elites, the academics, as well as other internationally mobile groups of the population who are the “winners” in the current order;
- 3) This identity may be rejected by other groups of the population who see European identity as a threat and wish to reinforce the “closer” attachments, e.g. to their nation or ethnicity;
- 4) Each region or country of Europe is likely to have developed its own unique cultural mix of European and national elements, in other words, we are likely to find different social identity patterns in different European countries.

The focus of this subchapter is sociological contributions to the European identity scholarship, drawing insights from other social sciences where necessary. The overview of European identity in this section is organized as follows: the first subsection briefly introduces the relationship between European identity and the EU. The second subsection focuses on the debate of the conceptualization, contents and borders of European identity. The third subsection takes a closer look at the Europeans – the potential carriers of this identity – to establish the societal groups that are more likely to identify with Europe. Finally, the fourth subsection focuses on the ways European identity interrelates with other social identities.

### **2.2.1. EUROPEAN IDENTITY IN THE EUROPEAN UNION**

In the early 1990s sociologists argued that European integration represents a step toward a wholly new kind of cosmopolitan, tolerant and multicultural political community (Giddens, 1991; Beck & Grande, 2004). As the international relations scholar Jeffrey T. Checkel noted after the largest enlargement round of the EU: “if there is any place in the world where the nation-state would seem to be in retreat, it is in Europe” (Checkel, 2005, p. 801). The European Union certainly is unique as a supranational organization that requires extensive inter-state co-operation (Fligstein et al. 2012: 106) and the voluntary surrender of certain sovereign rights of the national states (Robyn 2005: 5). But is the nation-state in Europe really in retreat?

European identity has long roots, at least for the highest strata of Europe’s societies it predates national belonging by several centuries. The European historical ties, culture and religion, the

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<sup>21</sup> According to James, the inability of humans to handle the psychological and institutional consequences of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century’s highly interconnected world lead to a rise of nationalism and the nation state and, subsequently, to a fail of globalism.

intermarriages of the royal families, the clergy structures, and trade links across the continent existed well before the national histories began to be written in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century. That said, the current academic debate about European identity mainly focuses on the time period following World War II when the foundations of the European Union were laid.

The modern-day European integration formally began in 1958 with the signing of the Treaty of Rome which created the European Economic Community (EEC) consisting of six members: Italy, France, Germany and the Benelux countries. Against the backdrop of the Cold War and the proximity of the Eastern Block, as well as the need to ensure a stable European Peace after World War II, the initial integration was first and foremost economic (Kraus, 2008, pp. 3-4). The initial development was slow and institutional changes truly began only with further rounds of enlargement in the 1970s and the 1980s (see Table 6).

*Table 6. Enlargement rounds of the EU*

<b>Year</b>	<b>Countries</b>
1973	Denmark, United Kingdom, Ireland
1981	Greece
1986	Portugal, Spain
1995	Austria, Finland, Sweden
2004	Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia
2007	Bulgaria, Romania
2013	Croatia

Only in the 1990s, when the geopolitical situation of Europe significantly changed due to the German reunification and the fall of the Soviet Union, did the integration process become more politicized. Most notably, the Maastricht Treaty of 1992 laid the foundations of the European Union and for the first time went beyond the original economic objectives. The Maastricht Treaty foresaw the creation of a common foreign and security policy, the coordination of economic policies with the goal of creating a single currency, as well the creation of a European citizenship “over and above national citizenship” (Europa, 2010).

If until the early 1990s the integration process had been largely technocratic (Kraus, 2008), now it shifted from a project of economic integration to a project including also political and cultural integration (Fligstein, et al., 2012, p. 113). With the transition from market building to polity and (implicitly) society building (Trenz, 2008, p. 2), the relation between the European institutions and the European citizenry became an important issue (Kraus, 2008, p. 6) and the question of European identity came to the forefront.

The common argument among both policy-makers and academics is that, with ever increasing role and functions of the EU, the need for its legitimation is growing. The earlier permissive consensus that was based on the population’s gains from the common market no longer suffice and, as the EU subscribes to democratic principles, “the ultimate source of legitimacy can only be grounded within the society” (Trenz, 2008, p. 2). Furthermore, the promotion of a European identity is seen as a potential source for popular support for the European project (Jacobs & Maier, 1998) as well as consensus and solidarity (Kantner, 2006, p. 2), especially in cases when the actions of the EU institutions do not provide immediate payoffs or when certain decisions for the common European good may require sacrifice on behalf of the national communities (Herrmann & Brewer, 2004, p. 3).

In short, European identity is seen as necessary for the Union and has to fulfil functional roles from legitimizing the EU to providing support for its goals and decisions, to achieving social integration and solidarity among its citizens. Consequently, the matters of European identity have become enmeshed with economic and political processes and the lack of this identity is believed to be the culprit when community projects fail. Most importantly, the failure to pass the European Constitutional Treaty in the year 2005 was overwhelmingly interpreted as a symptom of a crisis of legitimation (Kraus, 2008, p. 7) and as a sign that a European identity is still missing (Haller & Ressler, 2006).

Promotion of a European consciousness and the creation of a European identity has been a policy goal of the Union already since the 1970s. Both the founding fathers of the EU and the first scholars of European integration expected that economic integration would be followed by political integration and eventually also by a convergence of beliefs, values and aspirations that would unite the people of the (then) EEC and generate a “new nationalism” (Haas 1968 quoted in Fligstein, et al, 2012, p. 107). This prediction, however, has not come true in the way expected.

The current academic debate of European identity, especially in the fields of political science and international relations, has been predominantly conceptual. In fact, empirical, bottom-up studies have been so few that the sociologist Klaus Eder had marked that “theorizing European identity has lost its empirical founding” (Eder, 2009, p. 443). The scholarship of European identity has been too focused on institutional analysis and excessively relied on survey instruments, most notably, the Eurobarometer polls. A recent turn to more empirical studies has come largely as a result of targeted EU funding: in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Framework Programmes<sup>22</sup>, the European Commission has funded a total of 21 projects that are either directly or indirectly relevant to European identity (Miller, 2012). These projects cover a wide range of areas from cultural heritage to language dynamics, from the European public sphere to interplay between European and national identities.

In this subchapter, unless specifically indicated, the terms “Europe” and “EU” will be used interchangeably. Although there undoubtedly are significant differences between European identity and EU identity “the EU has appropriated the term Europe” (Laffan, 2004, p. 84). Consequently, the majority of conceptual contributions to the European identity debate do not distinguish between the two and even in quantitative analysis they are often treated as equal. The qualitative, empirical studies where a distinction between Europe and the EU is made will be noted accordingly.

### **2.2.2. WHAT IS EUROPEAN IDENTITY?**

Despite the many disagreements over the definition and contents of European identity, there is a consensus that European identity is a social identity (Herrmann & Brewer, 2004, p. 6), which implies that individuals identify with it and/or are identified by others as belonging to this group<sup>23</sup>. As a collective phenomenon European identity should imply a perceived sameness which is “expected to manifest itself in solidarity, in shared dispositions or consciousness, or in collective action” (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000, p. 7). This subchapter therefore asks: what is the sameness for European identity? The debate about the contents of European identity has been largely conceptual and top-down in its

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<sup>22</sup> The 6<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme was running from 2002 to 2006, the 7<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme from 2007 to 2013.

<sup>23</sup> For a definition of social identity please refer to the Introduction chapter.

character but, where possible, empirical data will be added to the following overview to introduce the bottom-up perspective on the contents of European identity.

An important point of discussion, especially for political scientists, has been whether European identity is simply national identity writ large or whether it is something fundamentally new, a supranational identity construction. On the surface, there are some clear indications that on behalf of the EU institutions European identity has been modelled after national identity. For one, it has taken inspiration from the political science concept of identity as a sense of belonging to a large political unit (Kohli, 2000, p. 117). And as a consequence, just like national identity, European identity is generally approached in terms of an attachment that has a territorial reference. Furthermore, the EU has even developed its own symbols of national identity, e.g. the European flag, the anthem, the motto, and the Day of Europe (Haller & Ressler, 2006, p. 820).

Let us take a closer look at the comparison of European identity with national identities. As a reminder, according to Anthony Smith, one of the most prominent nationalism theoreticians, national identity has five dimensions (Smith, 1991, p. 14):

- 1) historic territory, homeland;
- 2) common myths of origin and historical memories;
- 3) a common, mass standardized culture;
- 4) a common economy with territorial mobility for members;
- 5) common legal rights and duties for all members.

The last two points – a common economy with territorial mobility and common legal rights – have been increasingly solidified with each new EU treaty. If European identity is taken as EU identity, its borders are set, at least for the moment. Yet, the possibility of continued enlargement makes it difficult to fix the borders and such (geographically) European countries as Norway and Switzerland are excluded from this common EU homeland.

The defining of common historical memories and of a common mass culture provide more difficulty. As the historian Hartmut Kaelble evaluates, Europe lacks all the “typical ingredients” of a national history: a common war of independence, a common period of defeat and suffering, a common period of subsequent reaffirmation of the politic body, a history of common frontiers, and a common historical memory (Kaelble, 2009, p. 207). In short, a common history of Europe is a problematic issue, as history belongs to the realm of the national state and is mainly used for national identity building purposes. The same, at least to a certain extent, is true also with regards to mass culture.

Overall, the European symbols have remained less potent than the national ones. While the European flag and the EU currency have succeeded, the European anthem and Europe Day are largely unobserved, also references to specifically European historical figures are infrequent (Kaelble, 2009, p. 206). Overall, culture remains a sensitive matter on the European level as it continues to be a competence of the member states that are eager to take care of their own identity affairs (Kraus, 2008, p. 44).

As a consequence, the comparisons of European identity with national identity tend to lead to the same conclusion: the former just cannot compete. Particularly nationalism scholars are very critical about the potential of European identity. For instance, Benedict Anderson has noted that market—zones do not create attachments, rhetorically asking: “Who will willingly die for Comecon or the

EEC?” (Anderson, 2006 [1991], p. 53). Also Anthony D. Smith has put it in similar terms “who will feel European in the depths of their being, and who will willingly sacrifice themselves for so abstract an ideal? In short, who will die for Europe? (Smith, 1995, p. 139).

In other words, European identity would not be able to pass the ultimate test of national identity – the readiness to die for one’s country. But does it have to? As Michael Bruter has discovered in focus group studies, some citizens associate European symbols with such values as peace, harmony and cooperation, and see it as a positive contrast to the national symbols which are perceived as narrow and more aggressive (Bruter, 2005, pp. 154-155). If we assume that the national identity should not be taken as the norm against which to measure the European identity and that these two identities do not have to share the same basic characteristics (Robyn, 2005, p. 8), perhaps Checkel and Katzenstein have a point when they state that “in contrast to the nation, dying for Europe is not a political litmus test; not killing Europeans is” (Checkel & Katzenstein, 2009, p. 12).

Moreover, what the “die for Europe” arguments neglect are the unconscious day-to-day, low-level reinforcements of a shared consciousness which reinforce EU membership through the use of coins, passports and driving licenses, background flags and symbols, as well as policy interventions and legal frameworks. Through these daily practices the EU membership has become a part of the everyday life of the member states, shaping what can be labelled as “banal Europeanism” (Cram, 2012, p. 78).

Based on these insights, European identity can be seen as a fundamentally other type of construction which, although shares certain elements with national identity and has been modelled after it in certain aspects, “cannot take its clues from national identity, neither in form nor in substance” (Kohli, 2000, p. 114). As opposed to national identities, European identity does not aim to be a primordial identification; it has meant avoiding conflict and violence against ethnic or religious groups in Europe as opposed to glorifying a war of independence. Furthermore, it establishes equal terms between large and small member states, and trust in the EU as an international political body is stronger than identification with it (Kaelble, 2009, pp. 208-209). Consequently, if European identity is taken to be a supranational identity, the history of nation-states and state-nations does not provide a useful material for analyzing the emergence of a collective European identity (Katzenstein & Checkel, 2009, p. 215).

But what principles and values does European identity include? The basis for the EU approach towards European identity was set in 1973 with the Declaration on European Identity. The declaration named the principles of representative democracy, the rule of law, social justice and respect for human rights as the “fundamental elements” of European identity. Also the common market, European institutions as well as common policies and machinery for co-operation and a common foreign policy were outlined as essential parts of European identity. Finally, the Declaration stated that “the diversity of cultures within the framework of a common European civilization, the attachment to common values and principles, the increasing convergence of attitudes to life, the awareness of having specific interests in common and the determination to take part in the construction of a United Europe, all give the European Identity its originality and its own dynamism” (European Union, 1973).

The basic “ingredients” of the official European identity discourse have remained constant since the Declaration of 1973 (Kraus, 2008, p. 44). On the one hand, a common set of political values delineates the framework of unity; civic principles and values are put as the basis of European identity. On the other hand, in the process of integration a central normative status is accorded to the cultural dimension; culture is mentioned in relation to diversity that is united in a “common European civilization”, the slogan “united in diversity” is derived from this idea. Since 1973 the cultural dimension has been receiving an increasingly prominent role in the efforts to define Europe’s identity (Kraus, 2008). An additional strain on the situation is the contradictory situation that the EU is caught in: it has to define a “European commonness” that is universal but at the same time distinct from the global. Meanwhile, the EU is committed to protect and even to enhance its internal diversity of cultural and social milieus through continued enlargement. The simultaneous processes of coping with differences and striving for unity can be seen as contradictory (Trenz, 2008, p. 7).

The distinction between the political and the cultural dimensions is also at the heart of the academic debate on European identity. In the political science and sociology European identity is typically conceptualized either as a cultural identity (Meinhof, 2004) or political identity (Jacobs & Maier, 1998; Bruter, 2005; Haller & Ressler, 2006). These two types roughly correspond to Smith’s (1995) distinction between state-nation and ethno-cultural nation that was described in the Introduction chapter.

The EU discourse on European identity described above is closest to the state-nation model. Conceptually, given the ethno-cultural diversity of Europe, the development of a European identity should be compatible only with a rational-political conception of the nation (Haller & Ressler, 2006, p. 822). However, empirical evidence shows that the people of Europe are often including elements of both civic and cultural components in their understandings of European identity (e.g. Bruter, 2005; Fligstein, et al., 2012). Nevertheless, when West Europeans answer non-specific questions about European identity they are more likely to talk about the civic identity (Bruter, 2005, p. 201). It appears that the conception of civic identity is comparatively more developed than the ideas about cultural commonalities, the predominant view being that, regardless of ethnicity, language or culture, anyone who accepts the rules and values of the EU can be an EU citizen (Fligstein, et al., 2012, p. 117).

A question remains whether the predominant civic values are sufficient for ensuring a common European identity and whether common cultural elements should not be added as well. Overall, the conception of cultural identity has been more contested than its political counterpart as finding common, basic elements of a European culture that are shared by all Europeans is not an easy task (Kraus, 2008, p. 39). Currently the EU encompasses 28 member states and is considering further enlargement. What can be the common elements of such diverse national states, except occupying the same continent? As Smith has noted, no matter if one looks at the linguistic roots, religion, or historical heritage, each delineation has its problematic aspects. As he observed in a time when the EU had only 12 member states, there is no satisfying answer to the question of “what is common to all Europeans” as there can be as many differences between Europeans as between Europeans and non-Europeans (Smith, 1992, p. 70).

One possible solution to the problem of establishing a common cultural background would be taking common political values such as freedom and democracy as the basis for a common culture (Mokre,

2002, p. 3). This is exactly what the European Commission has attempted and what is mirrored in already the 1973 Declaration on European Identity. While on the one hand, taking political values as the ground for a common culture opens up the concept and avoids essentialism, but this approach has its drawbacks. On the one hand, the political values are essentialised and made into a mechanism of inclusion and exclusion instead of being dynamic concepts, redefined and developed in political struggles. On the other hand, it can be argued that EU institutional structures themselves do not fully meet the values of democracy that they have set: the rulers of the EU are only indirectly held responsible by the citizens for their policies and actions (Mokre, 2002).

Another solution to the common culture problem is offered by Smith who, despite seeing a considerable amount of differences between the European countries, notes that there are shared legal and political traditions, as well as religious and cultural heritages, although not all European share in all of them<sup>24</sup> (Smith, 1992, p. 70). Smith suggests the concept of “family of cultures”, made up by partially shared historical traditions and cultural heritages, as the best way to look at the shared culture dilemma that may have the potential to forge a loose, over-arching political identity and community (Smith, 1992, p. 74). The term also underlines that “cultural cross-fertilization” has been a trademark of the European continent already for many centuries. Yet Smith himself notes that there are problems with the conception as it is hard to institutionalize and would require a genuinely European political mythology (Smith, 1992, p. 74).

With the character and possible contents of European identity looked at, it remains to consider the final important element of a social identity: the social construction of its borders. After all, categorizing someone as a group member, in this case – a European, entails drawing boundaries and having shared beliefs about the criteria of inclusion and exclusion (Citrin & Sides, 2004, p. 165). Furthermore, identification is often most consequential not as a self-identification (i.e. similarity) but as a categorisation of others (i.e. difference) (Jenkins, 2008, p. 15).

There have been attempts to reposition the distinction between in and out groups and reconsider whether European identity needs to be an identity “against” something, delineating members and non-members. Alternatively, a European identity could be founded on a positive ideal, e.g., democratization or constitutional patriotism, or an identity could be constructed via drawing a line between the negative European past of wars and conflicts and a positive future which leaves it all behind (Kohli, 2000, p. 127). That said, there is little evidence that either of the two options is currently taking shape outside of academic discussions. A possible reason for needing clear out-groups could lie in the fact that Europe lacks coherent internal characteristics for generating a strong collective identity, therefore a source of identity is looked for elsewhere (Katzenstein & Checkel, 2009, p. 224). Indeed, some studies have found that for Europeans it is easier to say what Europe is not than what it is (e.g. see Jamieson, et al., 2005, p. lx).

From a geopolitical perspective Europe’s significant others historically have been located in the geographical East and taken either religious or civilizational forms: Turkey and Russia versus the Latin Christendom (Katzenstein & Checkel, 2009, p. 224). Today there are indications that Europe defines itself against the United States and Asian countries, e.g. Japan, this division mainly being rooted in a

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<sup>24</sup> The common heritage that Smith outlines includes: Roman law, political democracy, parliamentary institutions, and Judeo-Christian ethics, as well as cultural heritages like Renaissance humanism, rationalism and empiricism, romanticism and classicism.

social Europe vs. others discourse. This is view most often found among the European elites, European institution employees (Wodak, 2004, p. 123) and likely remains infrequent outside the elite circles.

The problem of finding a significant other to define Europe against has been particularly troublesome since the fall of the Iron Curtain: before that the “other” was easily identified as the Eastern Block (Mach & Pozarlik, 2008, p. 1). But the Soviet Union no longer exists and in the last decade countries that used to be a part of the significant other have joined the EU. As a consequence, the lines between Eastern and Western Europe have become blurred and the former can no longer serve as a threat against which Western Europe can define itself (Fligstein, et al., 2012, p. 113).

With the lack of clear significant others outside the boundaries of Europe, many social scientists have observed another trend that many find worrying, namely, a perception of a threat from inside as a new “other” of the European identity. This “European nationalism” (Kohli, 2000) is turning towards the non-national immigrant groups in one’s own state, particularly those of non-European origin. There are two possible reasons for this trend. First, as already mentioned, the vague notion of what “Europe” and “European” means that it is easiest to define belonging not through inclusion but through exclusion against the less privileged outsiders (Armbruster, et al., 2003, p. 898). The “classic scapegoats” seem to be non-white immigrants, particularly the Muslims, or the indigenous Roma population (Fligstein, et al., 2012, p. 114).

Second, the establishing of the European citizenship, aimed at including the EU nationals in the economic, political, and cultural project of Europe, has been accompanied by internal exclusion of the foreign residents of non-European origin living in the member states. As Jacobs and Maier note, through this the “exclusionary vocabulary of national citizenship has simply been replaced by a similar vocabulary of European nationness” (Jacobs & Maier, 1998); the authors call this the “dark side” of Europe as the promotion of ethno-racial European identity may legitimize and strengthen the local nationalistic and xenophobic movements.

Kohli’s observations are remarkably similar. He notes that the fall of national boundaries has not resulted in the rise of a “Europeanized self-definition” as a direct opposition between Europe and the other world. The latter is constructed indirectly, through the rejection of those who are perceived as “intruders” from this outside world and “inter-state nationalism is replaced by intra-state orientalism” (Kohli, 2000, p. 128). The established ideas about common European values (the rule of law, democracy by representation, social welfare system etc.) often serve to exclude non-Europeans and those Europeans who have an ethnic minority background from citizenship rights in Europe (Armbruster, et al., 2003, p. 887).

Checkel and Katzenstein see this trend as a part of a larger issue, namely, two conflicting projects of what the EU should be. One of the projects is outward-looking and cosmopolitan, the other is inward-looking and national-populist; the former is characterized by political content, the latter is filled with cultural and ethnic content (Checkel & Katzenstein, 2009, p. 11). Those with populist conceptions of European identities see a threat in the political and social integration of ethnic and cultural minorities, and they are the ones actively drawing the boundaries between Europe and “the other”, as illustrated by the slogan “Europe for Europeans” (ibid, p. 13). The salience of these two projects has varied: if in the 1980s and in the 1990s the cosmopolitan project was “winning”, in the

last decade the debates of EU enlargement and the constitution highlight a rise of populist sentiments (Checkel & Katzenstein, 2009, p. 13). A possible explanation for this change is that the increasing Europeanization and, in particular, increasing migration has created a backlash: a rise of nationalist sentiments and right-wing politics especially in the Western European countries<sup>25</sup> (Robyn, 2005; Mach & Pozarlik, 2008). Overall, “Europe for Europeans” and the growth of multiracial and multicultural Europe can be seen as two processes that feed on each other (Checkel & Katzenstein, 2009, p. 14).

Despite looking at different conceptual arguments and empirical findings, no clear image of what European identity means has emerged. It is very likely that “instead of one strong European identity, we encounter a multiplicity of European identities” (Katzenstein & Checkel, 2009, p. 216). Beside indications that European identity is rather weak there are also signs that the EU is changing the lives of its citizens and even if shared beliefs and understandings are slow to emerge, everyday practices arising from dealing with otherness and diversity lead to a collective frame of reference, a “European mental space” (Spano, et al., 2011). After all, even if often seen as the “dark side” of European identity, the rising sentiments of “Europe for Europeans” alongside purely nationalist right-wing ideas indicate that changes are happening.

### **2.2.3. WHO ARE THE EUROPEANS?**

Now when we have established what European identity can mean, let us turn to the second question: who are the people in Europe that actually feel European? As the previous subchapter highlighted the EU as an important agent that attempts to shape and promote the European identity, this subchapter begins with a brief theoretical insight into the means of constructing this supranational identity. It is followed by an overview of recent empirical studies about the reach, strength, and expressions of European identity across the EU. With the exception of looking at data from the Eurobarometer surveys, this subchapter mainly relies on evidence from qualitative bottom-up studies.

#### ***2.2.3.1. Institutions and Identities***

The evidence (and opinions) on that whether the EU has succeeded in making a European identity vary. Jeffrey T. Checkel, based on several studies on the socialising effects of European institutions on states and state agents, concludes that the effects are “uneven and often surprisingly weak, and in no way can be construed as shaping a new, post-national identity” (Checkel, 2005, p. 815). He finds this result surprising as contemporary Europe should be the most likely case for such dynamics to emerge. Also the sociologist Adrian Favell is rather sceptical and cynically remarks that “the EU institutions may as yet have failed to convincingly construct a European population in its own image. But with its multiple arms of university funding in Europe, the US, and further afield, they have been spectacularly successful in constructing a European community of EU scholars, hooked on this kind of pre-packaged Euro-data and Euro-agenda”(Favell, 2005, p. 1110).

Others do find evidence that changes are happening, at least on the individual if not on the institutional level. For one, European institutions have influenced identity formation through the

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<sup>25</sup> The new member countries take an unclear position in this trend. Although they are formally included in the European project, the time period after accession was characterized by fears of immigration to the older member states, bringing unfair competition, different mentality and traditions (Mach & Pozarlik, 2008, p. 9).

creation of new political and functional roles that are “European” in nature or, in other words, with Europe-wide responsibilities (Laffan, 2004, p. 76). These, of course, are the elites: bankers, judges, commissioners, and European civil servants. In turn, Michael Bruter finds that the EU has contributed to the progression of a European political identity through the creation of symbols and mass media work (Bruter, 2005, p. 166). Overall, it can be assumed that the identity construction efforts of the EU have had some results, albeit perhaps not the ones originally intended, and the general outcomes are uneven.

But how can a European identity come about? After all, it is possible that people, despite sharing identifiable characteristics, fail to see themselves as group members, or despite not having European geographic, ethnic, religious, or historic features do consider themselves as part of the community (Kantner, 2006, p. 11). Following the example of Hermann & Brewer (2004) and Risse (2004), the existing theories about the construction of European identity can be divided into three approaches:

- 1) Neo-functional models that assume that European integration would lead to identity changes and transfer of loyalty to supranational organizations especially for individuals and groups who benefit from this integration (Risse, 2004, p. 266). These models approach identity change as a consequence of institutional cooperation and perceive individuals as rational actors who decide whether to identify with the EU based on a cost-benefit analysis (Agirdag, et al., 2012, p. 201);
- 2) Persuasion models that see identity as a resource for achieving legitimization and engaging group loyalties. In line with these models deliberate efforts are undertaken to build identification through the creation of symbols of collective identity, propaganda about common interests and values, shared history or destiny, as well as persuasive campaigns to enhance the perceived legitimacy and importance of the institution. The recipients are seen as rational information processors (Herrmann & Brewer, 2004, pp. 15-16);
- 3) Socialization models that stress the role of individual experiences with the institution and its consequences and correspond to a social constructivist view of identity (Agirdag, et al., 2012, p. 201). These models assume that individuals come to identify with an institution/group to the extent that it is salient in their personal lives. Accordingly, group identity can be furthered by creating shared rules and regulations as well as by providing opportunities for gaining shared experiences. These models presuppose different degrees of identification: identity is most intense for those who are directly involved with the institution, and/or experience its practices in their own lives (Herrmann & Brewer, 2004, pp. 14-15).

There is little evidence for the neo-functional model as European identity has not come about “automatically” with increased integration, there is only modest correlation between attachment to and identification with Europe and perceptions of benefiting from the EU, and the causal link between the two is unclear (Citrin & Sides, 2004). According to Risse, the socialization model is the best candidate for explaining the existing empirical evidence about the prevalence of European identity (Risse, 2004, p. 265). For instance, this model would explain the potential sources of identification differences between the elites and the mass public.

### ***2.2.3.2. Evidence of European Identity***

Now when we have looked at the possible ways of emergence of European identity, let us focus on the empirical evidence to answer the question: which groups of people from all Europeans, the potential carriers of European identity, identify with and feel belonging to Europe or the EU? The following overview begins with data from the Eurobarometer surveys and continues with a look at the most important empirical studies of the last decade that have focused on European identity. An overview table of all the studies that are looked at in the following pages can be found in the Appendix A.

Up to date the Eurobarometer is the most important representative source of information about the opinions of Europeans; it is carried out bi-annually and provides comparable information about all of the current and prospective member states since 1974. The Eurobarometer uses a definition of European identity that is based on self-identity and pride, as well as attachment to Europe (Sigalas, 2009, p. 4). But even social scientists who make use of the Eurobarometer data admit that its questions provide insufficient information for exploring European identity (e.g. Kohli, 2000; Kraus, 2008). The chief difficulty for exploring European identity with the Eurobarometer data is its changing question formats and the irregularity of including certain questions. The formulation that has been used most frequently is “In the near future, do you see yourself as...?”, giving different categories of national and European identity and their combinations<sup>26</sup> as the possible answers. However, the number and wording of the answers have changed four times in the last ten years alone.

Looking at the Eurobarometer data over the last 20 years, Fligstein et al. conclude that the sense of being European has been rather stable over time and even the recent decrease that is related to the world financial crisis is within the historical range (Fligstein, et al., 2012, p. 111). Looking at all the EU member states together, in the year 2010 46 percent of the Eurobarometer respondents said that in the future they see themselves as only their nationality, 41 percent as first nationality and then European, 7 percent as first European and then nationality, and only 3 percent as European only (European Commission, 2010, p. 186).

The small number of people who feel only European or primarily European against those who feel primarily attached to their nationality and only secondly to Europe indicates that for the majority of people European belonging is not among the primary identities. Instead, it is an identity that becomes salient only in certain situations: a phenomenon that Fligstein (2012) calls “situational Europeans” and Risse (2010) labels as “Europeans lite”, concluding that even if the sense of European identity may not run very deep, it is fairly widespread (Risse, 2010, pp. 61-62). Which situations make the peoples of Europe see themselves as European is, however, unclear.

Which groups, according to the Eurobarometer data, are the ones that feel most European? The results of Fligstein’s logit analysis finds that those with more education, higher income, white collar, owner, professional or manager profession, young people, men, and those politically left-wing think of themselves as European more often (Fligstein, 2009, pp. 140-141). Fligstein finds a similar class and age bias with regards to foreign language knowledge and travel to other European countries:

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<sup>26</sup> The most often used answer categories have been: (1) (NATIONALITY) only, (2) (NATIONALITY) and European, (3) European and (NATIONALITY), (4) European only

two measures that he uses as indicators of social interaction with other Europeans. The outcomes of this analysis are in line with the assumptions of the socialization model of European identity construction as Fligstein concludes that the main source of identification with Europe are positive interactions with people from other European countries, especially if one has a basis for solidarity with the people encountered as, e.g. between people of the same profession (Fligstein, 2009). Those who have this opportunity are most often the privileged strata of the society: managers, professionals, white collar workers, and the educated, as well as the young. These are people who travel for business or pleasure, have the opportunities to live in other countries for short periods of time, hold long-term relationships with people abroad, as well as speak a second language (Fligstein, 2009, p. 133). The author sees this class inequality of European identification as an unintended consequence of the European integration that began with the creation of a single market and thus gave some groups more opportunities for interaction with people from other countries than others (ibid, p. 138).

The quantitative data makes it clear that “European” has become a fairly common self-categorization but is it an important self-identification? Due to the poor definition and the lack of an agreed on concept of what European identity is, there can be considerable diversity in the ways it is characterized by different people in different countries: “While we may see that people claim to have an EU identity element, it may have as many visages as there are individuals claiming it” (Breakwell, 2004, p. 38). Overall, “Europe” can evoke positive responses despite potentially different associations for the survey respondents. Interestingly, having a plural identity that encompasses Europe as well as the nation has an impact on beliefs about sharing power (support for the EU and EU decision making is higher among those who identify with Europe) and on the treatment of minorities (those who identify only with nation are more unfavourable to minorities) (Citrin & Sides, 2004).

As opposed to the Eurobarometer data that covers all EU countries, the vast majority of other studies have focused on specific groups that may be the carriers of European identity to explore the various meanings and interpretations of this identity. In line with the socialization models of European identity, the most studied groups can be divided into three: (1) people who have opportunities for creating associations across national boundaries, e.g., employees of the European institutions, Brussels-based journalists, or long-term migrants; (2) people with “fuzzy territorial attachments” (Kohli, 2000, p. 131), e.g., border populations, people in diaspora situations, people with multiple citizenship, or those in multinational marriages, (3) people whose lives are strongly affected by the EU or who are given the most opportunities, e.g. the youth or the farmers in the EU member states.

Let us begin with the people who take political and functional roles on a European level, e.g. as politicians or officials of EU institutions, in other words, the elites. This is a group with direct individual experience of European institutions and for whom the EU is truly salient in their everyday lives. As this group is small in size and located in a handful of cities, elite studies have been qualitative in character. Ruth Wodak in her interviews with European Parliament delegates, civil servants of the European Commission, as well as officials from the Committee of Permanent Representatives, and the Secretariat of the Council of Ministers discovered not only clear beliefs about what “European” means but also these ideas are shared within and, to a certain extent, between the organizations. In essence, the elites recognize the historical and cultural ties between

the EU countries, see a value in being a part of the EU, and believe in its future. For them, Europe is distinguished from other geographic identities in the world by its emphasis on the welfare state (Wodak, 2004, p. 122).

The study of Wodak, as well as the qualitative study of the Brussels press corps carried out by Eugenia Siapera (2004), highlight that on the elite level European identity is closely tied with the professional identities of the individuals, e.g. as employees of the Commission or journalists. However, it may be difficult for them to balance the European and the national interests in their everyday work, for instance, journalists have to negotiate the national and the European viewpoints and interests and, in addition, also their own political beliefs and professional ethics (Siapera, 2004).

The second group –long-term migrants – have been studied both qualitatively and quantitatively. According to the Eurobarometer data, despite the multiple incentives and the removal of physical and formal barriers within the EU, the number of those on the move is rather small. On average 13 percent of the Eurobarometer respondents have worked abroad for longer than three months, 8 percent have studied abroad, while 10 percent have lived in another country for other reasons. Only 11 percent of Europeans state that they are likely to move to another country and only a half of them would move to another EU member state (European Commission, 2011).

One of the best studies on intra-Europe long-term migrants has been done by Adrian Favell (2008) who interviewed European migrants who live and work in London, Brussels and Amsterdam. Favell refers to this potentially important European identity carrier group as the “Eurostars” and characterises them as members of a generation of West European citizens who are pioneers of a new kind of highly skilled and well educated intra-Europe migration. According Favell, the enabling of free movement has been the most important of the EU legislative activities in terms of impacting the everyday lives of Europeans (Favell, 2008, p. 16). Based on the results of the study, the move to another country gives a certain freedom from the nation state and thus becoming more European means “*becoming* post-national, psychologically at least – while continuing to retain your national passport and primary national identity as source” (ibid, p. 20). However, while the Eurostars symbolize a cosmopolitan and post-national Europe, they are an exception in a Europe dominated by “national tales and national norms” (ibid, p. 229) and they continuously encounter limitations to their movement which suggests the resilience of national ethnicities.

A large-scale quantitative project on intra-EU migration “Pioneers of Europe's Integration "from Below": Mobility and the Emergence of European Identity among National and Foreign Citizens in the EU” (2003-2005) was carried out in France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy and Spain, and included 5000 European citizens resident as foreign nationals (PIONEUR, 2006). The researchers note that, in comparison with the earlier low-skilled “guest-worker” migration from South to North Europe, the migrants in the mid-2000s were better educated, highly skilled labour migrants. In addition, migration for studies and retirement (particularly from North to South) was becoming increasingly common (PIONEUR, 2006, p. 3). The subjective motivations for moving abroad were divided as follows: 25 percent moved for work opportunities, 30 percent for family/love, 24 percent for improving their quality of life, 7 percent for studies, and 13 percent for other reasons. Overall, men moved more often for work (33 to 18 percent women) while women moved for family or love (37 to 22 percent men) (ibid, p. 5).

The study concludes that, compared to people who have no migration experience, the intra-EU migrants have more positive views of the EU, they feel more attached to it, and perceive themselves as more knowledgeable about European institutions and policies. The researchers assume that this might be a result of the greater use “movers” make of European provisions as opposed to “stayers” (PIONEUR, 2006, p. 6). Significantly, their identification with Europe grows with the number of years spent abroad (ibid, p. 11). However, despite the positivity, knowledge and above average interest in politics, the movers do not show a much higher electoral participation in European elections than the general population (ibid, p. 7). From the people surveyed, around a half held “tripatriate” territorial identities that included two national attachments (the country of origin and the country of residence) as well as an attachment to the EU. The other half of the movers could be divided into three groups (ibid.):

- 1) People who identify with both country of origin (COO) and country of residence (COR) but not Europe (18 percent);
- 2) People who have experienced a conflict between the COO and COR identities and feel attached to one of the two and the EU (COR and EU 10 percent, COO and EU 7 percent);
- 3) People who hold only one identity or no territorial identity at all (16 percent altogether).

The third group that is commonly studied as a potential carrier of the European identity are border communities. The largest research project on this population is “Border Discourse: Changing Identities, Changing Nations, Changing Stories in European Border Communities” (2000-2003) that studied several border communities: between Germany and Poland; Germany and the Czech Republic; Austria and Hungary; Austria and Slovenia; Italy and Slovenia; and the former border between the East and West Germany. This study explicitly outlines cultural identities and identification processes as “context-dependent, flexible, multiple, only partially conscious, potentially contradictory and discursively constructed” (Armbruster, et al., 2003, p. 886). The researchers found a lack of consistency of identity markers and their ways of interrelating in the same informant’s discourse and showed that people’s identity narratives hold both mutually interdependent and discrepant constructions (Meinhof, 2004).

The researchers used photographs from the present and past of interviewees’ towns as triggers for narratives and this method proved to be very successful with the exception of photos with EU symbols. These were interpreted as internal to the town or region, not European (Meinhof, 2004, p. 242). The researchers concluded that European identity is not experientially salient in people’s own narratives as it rarely was a spontaneous, self-chosen category of identification: “Europe was an abstract category, conceptually vague and experientially intangible” (Armbruster, et al., 2003, p. 889). Answers about Europe and European identity were produced only when people were directly asked about them; the narratives about Europe were complex and often ambivalent between cultural and geographic meanings, positive and negative evaluations (ibid).

Only one large research project has paid specific attention to ethnic minorities: “Interplay of European, National and Regional Identities: Nations between States along the New Eastern Borders of the European Union” (ENRI-East, 2008-2011). This project focused on national and ethnic minorities that are “stranded” on the wrong side of national borders. It aimed to understand the mechanisms behind European, national and regional identities, the way they are constituted and negotiated through individual and group narratives and practices. The researchers used a mix of

quantitative and qualitative methods to explore a total of 12 minority groups in Poland, Hungary, Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Lithuania, Latvia, Slovakia and Germany.(Miller, 2012). Alongside the border identity project described previously, this is another study that contrasted the views and opinions of people from different generations.

According to the ENRI-East data, the young generation (those under 30 years of age) had more favourable attitudes toward Europe and was more perceptive to European liberal values than those above the age of 30 (ENRI-East, 2011, p. 17). The study shows a remarkable variety in attitudes towards Europe. Comparing the eight minority groups in the five EU countries in this study, the image of the EU varied from 70 percent very positive and fairly positive by the Ukrainians in Poland to only 18 percent positive by the Russians in Latvia (ibid, p. 12). In turn, Belarusians and Ukrainians in Poland were the most proud of being European (87 percent and 84 percent very proud or rather proud), whereas Slovaks in Hungary and Russians in Latvia were the least proud (respectively, 63 percent and 59 percent rather not proud or not proud at all) (ibid, p. 15). Overall, the researchers concluded that for most ethnic minority group members Europe and the EU provide no emotional hub and that the majority of them have mixed feelings about the Union (ibid, p. 19).

Let us move on to the groups that have particular potential for using the opportunity structures established by the EU. The group paid attention to the most often is youth. A large scale study “Orientations of Young Men and Women to Citizenship and European Identity” (2005) focused on people aged 18-24 from paired localities within Austria, Spain, Germany, United Kingdom and Czech Republic/Slovakia. The study contrasted a representative sample and a target sample composed of people with education or employment background that potentially orientates them to careers in Europe or related to Europe.

The researchers found that identification with Europe is enhanced by seeing the EU as an effective agent, speaking several European languages, having travelled, and holding friendship connections across Europe. Based on these conclusions, the authors developed the term “doing Europe”: it includes the number of European languages spoken, experiences of travel across Europe, as well as the willingness to live beyond national borders in the future (Jamieson, et al., 2005, p. 43). From the countries studied, the youth from the UK and Spain were the least equipped to “do Europe”; these were the localities where the lowest levels of attachment to Europe, being European and feeling the EU citizenship as important to oneself were observed. This study also points to considerable intra-national differences of European identity, potentially at least partially attributable to regional identifications (see more in section 2.2.4).

Overall, the main predictors for having a sense of European identity were the national context, education, and career path. These predicted how well equipped the young adults were to “do Europe” by speaking other European languages and having travel experience. The target samples, thanks to their differing experiences of education and employment opportunities, had a stronger European identity and for them the national differences were much more muted (Jamieson, et al., 2005, p. 48). The results of the study made it apparent that the “raw materials” for constructing a European identity, i.e., travel experience, language knowledge, and knowledge about European music, art and literature, are not equally distributed and in some locations make up social and cultural capital that is available only to the privileged (ibid, p. 2).

A part of the research project “Reconstituting Democracy in Europe” (RECON, 2007-2011) also focused on young people, specifically university students, in Germany, Hungary and Poland. The researchers attempted to capture the identity patterns of the respondents by using Q methodology. The study found strong commonalities among the factors of identity patterns, thus concluding that differences between the “old” and the “new” Europe are minor, at least when young and well-educated people are the ones looked at (Skully, et al., 2012, p. 142). For instance, among the Polish university students a narrative of an exclusive national identity could not be found at all (ibid, p. 147). The only polarized identity patterns that the authors found were not between European and national identities but rather about different constructions of national identities (see more in section 2.2.4).

A particular youth group that has been extensively studied are the students who have taken part in the ERASMUS student exchange programme. While, theoretically, moving across borders, studying, working and living in other European countries should be favourable for developing a European identity, the typical labour or tourist mobility does not always lead to meaningful communication with the local population of the other country. The ERASMUS programme, on the other hand, offers the most favourable background conditions for such communication: the students share the same status, they have similar goals and interests, and they enjoy the necessary institutional support (Sigalas, 2009, p. 5). Nevertheless, the pre-test, post-test survey study of Emmanuel Sigalas found no evidence that ERASMUS experience leads to adopt a European self-identity. Although the ERASMUS students are more likely to see themselves as primarily European than the non-mobile students, it is a result of self-selection: those choosing to participate in international study exchange have already been more European-orientated than their peers (ibid, p. 14). This study also hints to a possible effect of the chosen host country on developing European identity. Namely, British students who studied in continental Europe became more attached to Europe, yet studies in the UK did not have a similar effect on the foreign students from other regions.

A possible explanation for the results outlined above is provided by the biographical interviews with people with educational mobility experience carried out within the EuroIdentities project (Davis, et al., n.d.). The EuroIdentities interview data showed that, compared to other types of studies abroad, ERASMUS mobility is too brief to achieve more than a limited impact on national attachments and identity: it “provides a frame for comparison and critique of national features but does not introduce any immediate shift towards a general sense of belonging” (Davis, et al., n.d., p. 16). Others note that the international experience of Erasmus students is markedly different from the experiences of other types of foreign students, e.g. those doing their whole degree abroad. There is a developing tendency for Erasmus students to find themselves in an Anglophone “Erasmus bubble” where they interact with students from other parts of Europe but not with the host country (Miller, 2012, p. 32).

Studies about European identity have considered not only youth but also children. A study done in primary schools in Flanders, Belgium showed that, just like adults, children from higher socio-economic status families identified with Europe more strongly than their working-class peers. Also a gender effect, with boys identifying with Europe more than girls, could be observed already at the age of ten to 14 (Agirdag, et al., 2012, p. 208). Interestingly, also the socio-economic composition of the school had an effect on the levels of European identity: children had a weaker sense of European identity if they attended a school with higher proportion of working-class pupils, even when

children's ethnicity and family socio-economic background were controlled for (Agirdag, et al., 2012, p. 209).

Another study that has focused on children was carried out in a European school in the UK (Savvides, 2006). The European schools are similar to the special case of the ERASMUS programme in that their objective is to develop a sense of European identity in the pupils. The pupils of these schools already have a multilingual, multicultural, European background thus they should already be more prone to developing a European identity than their peers in other schools. That said, this study highlights an important difficulty: although the schools are meant to promote a European identity, the teachers have no working definition of what European identity is. Perhaps as a result, the syllabus and classes have only marginal importance for pupils' European identity. The development of a European identity is an indirect outcome that arises as children from different backgrounds spend time together in mixed classes, on the playground and in extracurricular activities, meanwhile learning about one another's cultures (Savvides, 2006, p. 126).

Finally, another EU-funded project, "Evolution of European Identity: Using Biographical Methods to Study the Development of European Identity" (EuroIdentities, 2008-2011), focused on a total of five groups as potential carriers of European identity: (1) adults with experience in cross-border educational exchange schemes, (2) transnational workers, (3) farmers, (4) individuals involved in cultural contacts, both on high and popular levels, (5) participants in civil society organizations that either span countries or have a European or cross-border context (Miller, 2012, p. 31).

Based on the results of this study, the researchers conceptualise Europe as a mental space of orientation that is created "bottom up" in cross-border and cross-cultural communication and cooperation. This happens through structures of opportunity given by the EU, new frames of reference, as well as occasions for comparison and new collective identification (Spano, et al., 2011, p. 6). According to the authors, the sharing of material and cultural space facilitates practices of comparison and mirroring which lead to a considerably enlarged repertory of references around which identity is structured. People's opportunities increase, people can develop their lives in a broader context, and combine the old and the new. Although the interviews showed profound identity changes in all the groups studied, a clear identification with a European we-group was rare. Nevertheless, albeit no single informant declared themselves as only European, European identity was present and increased with the time spent abroad or the length of relationships with people from another country (Spano, et al., 2011, p. 21).

Overall, the way the authors see the emergence of a European space is similar to the concept of "doing Europe" that was described earlier: it is something that emerges in a bottom-up manner, through contacts and comparisons, and developing understanding of different perspectives and even new collective identities in the process. That said, the identifications with Europe developed rather differently for the various groups studied, e.g., while East European farmers were ambivalent about the EU, wanting subsidies on the one hand but confused by bureaucracy on the other, the people involved in cross-national intimate relationships consistently showed the strongest causes of developing a true "European" sense of self (Miller, 2012, pp. 31-32). As in several of the studies outlined previously, the authors found a class bias with regards to European identifications, the upper middle and middle class families having higher cultural and social capital and possessing most

resources for undertaking the activities that can lead to developing a European identity (Spano, et al., 2011, p. 26).

The results were so diverse both between and within the groups studied that the researchers concluded that the only way of talking about European identity as a collective identity is by taking a non-essentialist perspective, i.e., not taking for granted an essence based on religion or common roots. A sense of belonging to Europe is emerging and “[...] a European identity can be seen as one of the diverse possibilities of identification that people can utilize on the basis of the contingency of time, the developing of life trajectories, specific life-circumstances, and so on. It can be conceived as something that constitutes one of the numerous pieces of an individual’s identity” (Spano, et al., 2011, p. 24). In a nutshell, the European space offers new choices, makes supranational identifications available, and gives the opportunities to expand biographical trajectories outside national and cultural boundaries (Miller, 2012, p. 32).

#### **2.2.4. EUROPEAN IDENTITY AMONG OTHER IDENTITIES**

The previous subchapters outlined the possible contents of European identity and overviewed evidence about the societal groups that are potential carriers of this identity. Now it is time to turn to the aspect of European identity that is especially important for the present study: the relationships between European identity and other collective identities. Are there other collective identifications that are competing against, compatible with, or perhaps even conducive to a European identity?

Questions concerning collective identities and their competition or compatibility with European identity have been debated for some time, but they have gained prominence in explorative, empirical studies of European identity only in the last decade. The fact that social as well as collective identities are plural and compatible with one other is virtually universally accepted in studies of European identity (e.g. see Kohli, 2000; Hermann & Brewer, 2004; Harrie, 2006) and European identity is assumed to have a “positive-sum” relationship with other collective identifications (Checkel & Katzenstein, 2009; Risse, 2010). The main issue, therefore, is not the fact of multiple identities itself but rather the way these identities are ordered. As people generally belong to several groups at the same time, reconciliation of the multiple identities is crucial (Citrin & Sides, 2004, p. 165). Since the European identity is a supranational attachment, it presents a special case of identity relationships and may offer a focus for contradictory attachments. As noted by Kohli, European identity may be part of an identity mix linking it with national (and possibly other territorial) identities; or it may be part of a specifically hybrid pattern where contradictions remain virulent and situational switches occur (Kohli, 2000, p. 131).

When the relationship between European identity and other collective identities is considered, European identity is usually compared with identities of geographic reference: the regional, the national, and the global levels of belonging. This approach follows the logic of survey questions that compare the strength of belonging to different levels of geographical entities. The first subsection of this part therefore focuses on the relationships between European identity and territorial identities, while the second subsection looks into the relationships with non-territorial identities which are just as important, yet have been studied comparatively less frequently. Finally the third subsection outlines the ways European identity can interrelate with other identities.

### 2.2.4.1. European Identity among Territorial Identities

To date, studies about the correlations of European identity and other territorial identities have excessively relied on Eurobarometer data. However, if the assumptions of situational salience of European identity are true (see section 2.2.3), identity relationships lend themselves poorly to be analysed via surveys and the changing question formats of the Eurobarometer Standard surveys complicates this task even more. Taking into account these difficulties, the survey data can provide an illustration that can be analysed in more depth by other methods. Table seven presents an overview of reports on the levels of attachment to different geographical locations between the years 2005 and 2009. Unfortunately this type of question about attachment to different entities has not been included in the Eurobarometer surveys in the last years.

Table 7. Territorial identification, 2005-2009 (percent)

Year / attachment	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Wave	EB63	EB65	EB67	EB69	EB71
Country	91	90	91	93	94
Region	87	87		91	91
City/town	87	84	86		
Europe	66	63		71	74
EU		50	53		
World				59	64

Source: European Commission, 2012

*The wording of the question has changed between the waves. In EB63, EB65, EB67 “how attached you feel to...”, EB69, EB71 “to what extent you personally feel you are...”*

On the whole, attachment to the given localities has been rather stable during the five year period. The slight increase in the 2008 and 2009 waves can be attributed to the different question format. After all, there is a difference between asking whether a person feels attached to Germany and asking whether they feel German. Attachment to and identification with the country and region are the strongest types of territorial belonging with city or town coming close to the two.

With regards to attachment to Europe, the changing question formats highlight that the results are particularly susceptible to the way the question is asked. As illustrated by the 2006 data, there is a 13 percent difference between feeling attached to the EU and to Europe, the latter being much higher. Asking whether a person feels European results in an even higher proportion of positive answers. Of course, attachment to Europe may have risen over time, but a change of eight to eleven percent points in mere two to three years is beyond the average variation in Eurobarometer data on European belonging (see more in Fligstein, et al., 2012).

The following paragraphs provide a more detailed exploration of the relationships between European identity and national, regional, and global territorial identifications. The relationship between national and European identity is the one the most academic attention has been paid to, both conceptually and empirically. On the one hand, the construction of a new Europe sought to at least “partially overcome” national identities to give space for a European identity. On the other hand, although European identity may transcend national identities, as a political identity it is dependent

upon national identities as, formally, to be a European citizen one first needs to be a citizen of a member state (Jacobs & Maier, 1998).

On the whole, all empirical evidence shows that national identity is stronger than European identity. As Anthony Smith stressed two decades ago, national identifications have several advantages over a European identity: “they are vivid, accessible, well established, long popularized, and still widely believed (..)” (Smith, 1992, p. 62). Indeed, as shown by the empirical evidence in the previous section, European identity is strongest among those individuals for whom it has a meaning in their everyday life: a sphere where national identity continues to be prominent for the majority of Europeans.

Let us now take a closer look at the interplay of national and European identity in Europe as a whole with the help of Eurobarometer data. As mentioned before, this data does not provide in-depth insights, yet, is the best available information that is comparable on the European level. The respondents were asked: “in the near future, do you see yourself as...?”

*Table 8. European and national belonging: comparing 2004 and 2010 (percent)*

<b>Year</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2010</b>
<i>Wave</i>	<i>EB62</i>	<i>EB73</i>
<b>Nationality only</b>	41	46
<b>Nationality and European</b>	47	41
<b>European and nationality</b>	7	7
<b>European only</b>	3	3

*Source:* European Commission, 2012

The most “European” of the EU countries is Luxembourg (26 percent more European than national<sup>27</sup> in 2004, 28 percent in 2010). Others are Belgium (17 and 16 percent, respectively) and Romania where identification with Europe before nation rose from 6 percent in 2004 to 19 percent in 2010. In the majority countries “pure” Europeans are very rare, the most notable exception is Luxembourg with rather weak “only national” identification (22 to 16 percent in 2010). Please refer to the Appendix B for a breakdown of the country data.

Taking all countries together, between 2004 and 2010 there was no change in the proportion of people who feel more European than national: 10 percent each year. However, there were significant changes between the two years if individual country data is looked at. Romania rose to the second most European: from 6 percent in 2004 to 19 percent in 2010. The second biggest growth of European attachments took place in Latvia: from 6 percent in 2004 to 11 percent in 2010. Italy, Malta and the United Kingdom experienced the biggest fall (by 3 percent points each; in 2010 Italy had 10 percent, Malta 6 percent, and UK 4 percent), giving the UK one of the lowest proportions of people who feel more European than national in 2010. Finland and Hungary were among the least European in 2004 but had approached the European average by 2010 (respectively, from 3 to 7 percent, and from 3 to 6 percent).

To sum up, two trends can be observed in the data: while in many countries the frequency of “European only” answers remained relatively stable (within a three percent point range), the number of people who feel belonging to nationality only increased on the account of a decrease of those who

<sup>27</sup> Answers: “European only” and “European and nationality”

feel firstly national and then European. Example cases are Ireland, the UK, Romania, France, Bulgaria, Slovenia, Cyprus, and Italy. The opposite is true only for Hungary and Luxembourg.

The reasons for the decrease of European belonging can be multiple and there is no telling whether the observed trend is just a temporarily fluctuation due to the financial crisis that sweeps across Europe or whether it is a more lasting tendency. There is evidence, however, that the level of compatibility of European and national identity may vary depending on the local context. The border identity project found that people's sense of Europe is strongly related to their national identity as well as the perceived relationship of their nation to other nation-states (Armbruster, et al., 2003, p. 891). Another study found that the national historical heritage may have an influence on European sentiments, e.g., the British and Greek national identity is based on strong feelings of pride that is rooted in their role as world powers in the past and, accordingly, they may experience a sense of humiliation in the need to cooperate with others and see it as a constant remainder of their loss of a world power status. On the other hand, in Spain and Italy contemporary national identity has been projected towards future (and thus towards the EU) instead of the past because of the history of dictatorship or corruption. For them integration into the EU is seen as a reason for national pride (Ruiz Jimenez, et al., 2004, p. 18).

Generally, the majority of studies have found a significant, positive relationship between European and national as well as regional identities (Bruter, 2005, p. 169; Jamieson, et al., 2005, p. 19). In a factor analysis of ISSP 2004 data on 21 countries local, national and European attachments most commonly positively loaded on the same factor, although European identity has weaker loadings than the more local identities (Haller & Ressler, 2006, p. 838)<sup>28</sup>. In fact, based on the PIONEUR project results, the best condition for intra-EU migrants to develop a European identity is to hold two non-conflicting national identities (PIONEUR, 2006).

One assumption about the reason of compatibility of national and European identities is that these two identities function on different levels and have different meanings, therefore they do not directly compete: while European identity is primarily "instrumental", national identities are mainly "cultural" (Ruiz Jimenez, et al., 2004). Yet, despite this potential for compatibility as well as evidence that national identities are becoming more inclusive and that there are signs of an emerging inclusive conception of European identity (Fossum, 2001), there may be cases when a zero-sum principle does apply. However, these are rare and found almost exclusively among the elites, especially those working in European institutions, e.g., employees of the Committee of Permanent Representatives at the European Council (Laffan, 2004) or journalists reporting from Brussels (Siapera, 2004). These are groups for whom both national and European identities are highly salient and who may encounter situations when a choice has to be made between their attachments to Europe and to their nation.

The feelings of national identity may not be uniform within a country, different groups and regions may have particular relations with the state and, subsequently, to Europe. Possibly due to the close relationship of regional and national identities, when regional identities have been considered in relation to European identity, the inquiries have focused on regions that have a strained relationship with their state, e.g., the Scots, the Flemish, or the Basques. As marked by Kohli, "restive

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<sup>28</sup> Only in four countries European identity did not positively load on the same factor as the other territorial identities. These countries were Great Britain, France, Denmark and Finland.

regionalisms” in the form of territorially-based identities may play out the European identity against the traditionally national identifications (Kohli, 2000, p. 132). The research project of youth orientations to European identity showed that strong regional attachments do not increase the attachment to Europe. However, there was evidence that regions with strong local identities show different identity configurations with regards to European identity than their pair localities in the same country (Jamieson, et al., 2005, pp. 18-19). Furthermore, there is some evidence that while in the Western Europeans see Europe through the prism of their nation and their region, Eastern Europeans reflect on Europe predominantly through the prism of nation only (Armbruster, et al., 2003, pp. 890-891).

A third territorial concurrent of European identity that is covered in the literature is a cosmopolitan/global identity. Based on data from the European Values Survey, in the three waves of surveys done between 1981 and 1999 there have been slightly more people who see themselves as world citizens than those who see themselves as citizens of the EU (calculations based on data from World Values Survey Association, 2009). According to Eurobarometer data (see Table 8) currently the situation is reversed: in the year 2009 64 percent of the respondents felt belonging to the world and 74 percent to Europe.

It is possible that Europe’s positive ideals such as democracy and human rights are so universalistic in substance that identifying with them lends no basis for constructing boundaries between in and out groups (Kohli, 2000, p. 129), and thus they lend themselves well to a feeling of belonging to the world. However, although the majority of the evidence looked at in the previous subchapters shows that little polarization between national and European identity exists, this is not the case with global and national identity: in a Q methodology study people who agreed with national factors opposed the cosmopolitan factors (Skully, et al., 2012, p. 145). This suggests that Europe may in fact be a mid-way between bounded nationalism and a belonging to the world.

#### ***2.2.4.2. European Identity and Other Collective Identities***

Overall, the focus on identities of geographical reference as competing with or conducive to European identity can be evaluated as rather narrow. It disregards multiple other collective identities that may contribute to intra-national variety in European identification, for example, identities based on gender, class, or religion. Although some evidence exists about the relevance of professional identity for developing European identity (see the previous subsection), the information about the relationships between this and other social identities and European identity is insufficient and thus will not be considered here in more depth.

Ethnic identity that has been established as one of the most important collective identities in plural societies (Sanders, 2002) remains largely unconsidered in the context of European identity. There is evidence that, in the process of constructing a European identity, a common “we” of all the European nations, the non-European minorities residing in the EU are becoming the out-group (Smith, 2000, p. 333). For instance, the right of free movement, the ability to live and work anywhere in the EU without restriction, is among the most important aspects that shape European identity (Jamieson, et al., 2005) and it excludes all non-EU nationals. Furthermore, rising “Euro-nationalist” sentiments may lead to exclusion of non-European immigrant and guest worker groups (Smith, 1992). There is a lack of information about how this impacts the views and identifications of the

minorities that are excluded from the community of Europeans. Ethnic differences in feelings of European identity are occasionally relayed only in separate national reports of the Eurobarometer, but no general conclusions are being made.

The largest study of European identity among ethnic minorities (ENRI-East, 2011) did not make comparisons with the ethnic majorities of the EU countries studied. And, although it did highlight a considerable amount of differences within the minority group attitudes towards Europe and the EU, it did not analyze in depth the reasons underlying the existence of any such differences between the opinions of the various ethnic groups. Finally, a study of European identity in Belgian schools (Agirdag, et al., 2012) shows that significant differences between pupils of European and non-European descent can be observed already at a fairly young age. According to their results, pupils of Turkish, Moroccan and other non-European descent identify with Europe less than native Belgian children despite the fact that most of them are born into Belgian nationality and are thus also EU citizens.

Overall, this overview of the relationships between European identity and other collective identities highlights the limits of the present focus on European identity as a territorial identity. A study of relationships between this and other identities should therefore be constructed in a more open manner to allow an exploration of the relationships between European identity and other, non-territorial social identities.

#### ***2.2.4.3. Types of Identity Relationships***

Although the multiplicity of collective identities in relation to European identity has been long recognized, only in the past decade researchers are beginning to pay more attention to the actual identity configurations, overlaps and cross-cuts. In general, it can be assumed that European identity becomes salient in certain contexts or with certain issues that an individual faces (Harrie, 2006, p. 83), i.e., the importance of this identity is context-related. However, there is a lack of systematic evidence about which contexts exactly are those that bring European identity to the forefront.

A good example of possible identity configurations is given in the study “Orientations of Young Men and Women to Citizenship and European Identity” that was already described earlier. The authors distinguish a total of five identity configurations involving European, national-state and regional-national identities<sup>29</sup> (Jamieson, et al., 2005, p. 19):

- 1) Neo-European identity: post-national identification with the EU over national identity (most common in both Austrian and German locations);
- 2) State-national/European: strong national identity that regional and European identities follow from “automatically” (Bratislava, Prague, Madrid);
- 3) Traditional nation-state: strong national identity, weak European identification, often not seeing the latter as a meaningful category (Manchester);
- 4) Neo-region-national/European: dominant sub-state nationalism, focused on region, that is compatible with European identity (Bilbao, less frequent in Edinburgh);

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<sup>29</sup> A sixth configuration involves no identification with any ethno-political category, claiming to be either a citizen of the world or “lacking any membership category beyond that of unique individual” (Jamieson, et al., 2005, p. 19)

- 5) Traditional region-national: dominant sub-state nationalism that is compatible with state-related nationality and European identity (Edinburgh).

Although this typology is valuable, it includes only territorial identities and may not be applicable to other countries and contexts. The edited volume “Transnational identities: Becoming European in the EU” (2004) is the only collection up to date that specifically looks at the kinds of interactions European identity can have with other social identities. In the beginning of the book the editors distinguish between three types of social identity configurations (Herrmann & Brewer, 2004, p. 8):

- 1) Nested: each identity is nested within the next like the Russian *Matruska* dolls where each little doll fits within a bigger one. In this type everyone who belongs to a smaller community is also a member of a larger community (e.g., region – nation – Europe);
- 2) Cross-cutting: some, but not all, members of one identity group are also members of another identity group. Whereas the other group is composed of members who share identities within that group but also have identities with other groups that are not shared with the same people (e.g., profession – religion, race – national identity);
- 3) Separate: the different groups a person belongs to are distinct from one another; non-overlapping memberships.

Summarising all the studies included in the edited volume, Thomas Risse concludes that the identities examined are rarely completely separate from one another, there are more examples of nested and cross-cutting identities. The concept of nestedness fits particularly well when territorial identities are looked at and suggests a hierarchy of the identities in the sense of belonging and loyalty. If for the mass public Europe is the outer boundary and region or nation state is the core of the identity *Matruska* doll, for the elites in Brussels European identity forms the core (Risse, 2004, p. 250). The five identity configurations described at the beginning of this subchapter are also examples of nested identities. In comparison, cross-cutting identities are harder to capture by survey instruments, however there is evidence from interview studies that this type can be found among the elites where their European belonging cross-cuts with their political or professional belonging. (ibid, p. 251).

Based on the results of the different studies, Risse distinguishes a fourth way of conceptualizing the identity relationships: “marble cake”. This model recognises that the various components of one’s identity cannot be neatly separated in different levels as implied by the concepts of nested or cross-cutting identities. Identity components influence each other, mesh and blend into one another and boundaries between the levels cannot be clearly distinguished (Risse, 2004, pp. 251-252). Although the contributions of the volume do not explore this concept, most of the evidence is consistent with it. EU membership leads to an identity change that impacts the previous national identity and, as a result, national belonging can inherently hold an aspect of Europeanness. Since EU membership identity interacts with rather different national identity constructions, the overall effect is not homogenous, leading to a generalized EU identity. Rather, Europe and the EU become enmeshed with given national identities in each country, leading to rather diverging identity outcomes (ibid, p. 252). This is a concept that would need to be explored further to understand such identity relationships in more depth and detail.

## 2.3. SUMMARY AND INDICATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

This chapter has shown that, although modelled after national identity, European identity is a supranational identity and as such belongs to the widest order of collective identifications, and it can mean both a cultural and political identification. Furthermore, the meaning of the notion is often used interchangeably with “EU identity”, therefore it is empirically important to carefully distinguish between identification as European, identification with Europe and support for the EU (Cram, 2012, p. 72). As marked by Thomas Risse, this interchangeability in the use of terms may in itself be a sign of success of European identity building: “To the extent that people identify Europe with the EU, this would be a remarkable achievement of forty years of European integration. If Europe and the EU are used interchangeably, it means that the latter has successfully occupied the social space of what it means to be European” (Risse, 2004, p. 255).

In many ways the two decades old remark of Anthony D. Smith (1992) that the European project is located “between national revival and global cultural aspirations” still holds true. The evidence that was overviewed in this chapter shows that, despite almost four decades of supranational identity building, national identities are very much alive in today’s Europe and acquiring a European identity has not meant leaving the national roots behind. In fact, studies have shown that there is a positive relationship between European identity and national and regional identities (e.g. Bruter, 2005; Jamieson, et al., 2005). The holding of two non-conflicting national identities may even be the best condition for developing a European identity (PIONEUR, 2006).

Despite such widespread belief in a positive-sum nature of the relationship between European and national identities, the evidence hints to at least two types of situations where it may become problematic. The first takes place on a state level with the national states being reluctant to give over responsibilities and symbols to the EU level; e.g., reduced control over foreign policies or the reinterpretation of national histories may be perceived as weakening national autonomy and national identity (Guibernau, 2011). The second takes place on an individual level when people whose profession and/or everyday lives are closely tied to the EU encounter situations when they have to make choices by weighing their national identity against their European identity and choose between loyalty to their home country and to the EU.

Such dilemmas are more likely to be encountered by the members of the elites: the group that, together with the young and the well-educated, is also the most likely to feel European according to several studies reviewed in this chapter (see section 2.2.3.2). At the same time, there is also evidence that, despite not being among the primary identities of the peoples of Europe, European identity is at least rather widespread, if not deep (Risse, 2010). It is most likely to come about through international contacts, experience of travel and life abroad, as well as foreign language fluency (e.g. Jamieson, et al., 2005; Fligstein, 2009). Meanwhile, for the non-elite members of the European societies European identity may still be an abstract category, tied with few life experiences and emotionally distant (e.g. Armbruster, et al., 2003; Meinhof, 2004).

European identity building can be seen as both a top-down and a bottom-up process. On the one hand, it is a political construction project by the national and supranational elites. On the other hand, European identities are a result of open-ended processes that give individual actors space to pursue their own goals and projects (Checkel & Katzenstein, 2009, p. 3). Many of the empirical studies

overviewed in this chapter clearly illustrate that European identity is emerging in a bottom-up manner, with individuals developing an understanding of different perspectives and collective identities in the process of international comparisons and intercultural contacts.

As could already be presumed from the identity theories overviewed at the beginning of this chapter, the meaning of European identity is open to multiple interpretations (Katzenstein & Checkel, 2009, p. 226), furthermore, each country and even each person can exhibit a unique mix of European identity and other identities. This leads to considerable difficulties to measure European identity empirically. The strength of European identity can be measured quantitatively and compared across countries only if its meaning is not clearly predefined and it is left as a category to be filled. Meanwhile, when European identity is approached qualitatively, respondents often have only vague ideas of what European identity means to them and their answers often change depending on the wording of the questions.

Finally, when speaking of communal, national and transnational identities, it has to be kept in mind that the emergence of these identities is not a linear process as the sometimes evolutionary character of the theories (see section 2.1) may lead to believe. Robert Miller outlines two reasons for dismissing such assumptions of linearity, based on recent data: “Firstly, [...] identification is [...] a process which can entail considerable costs, and at any point reverse itself, change direction or be blocked as a result of both negative experiences and the lack of resources. Secondly, persisting inequalities, both at micro and macro level, can play a contrasting role, generating differences and divisions which can weaken emerging transnational/multinational/supranational belonging. We could even say that top-down processes could counter the bottom-up Europeanization process visible in people's daily lives” (Miller, 2012, p. 32). In other words, the relationships between communal, national and transnational identities are dynamic and prone to change in the influence of daily life realities.

The present study builds upon these insights to explore European identity and its relationships with other social and collective identities in Latvia. As illustrated by the research overview in this chapter, thus far the majority of studies on European identity have focused on the Western European countries. Eastern Europe became an interest of researchers in the pre EU-accession process, yet more attention has been paid to the Central European countries from which the Baltic region has important differences. For instance, the three Baltic countries were incorporated in the Soviet Union and thus were subjected to the Soviet identity building project to a greater extent. Furthermore, according to the ENRI-East data, the identifications of ethnic minority groups – a particular interest of this study – differ in the Baltics, and especially Latvia, from the other Eastern European countries.

### 3. RESEARCH DESIGN & METHODOLOGY

The previous two chapters have introduced the case of Latvia and the theoretical background of the study. The purpose of this chapter is establishing the research design and methodology for approaching the research questions of this study. As a reminder, we are interested in the perception and meaning of European identity in Latvia, its relationships to other collective identities, as well as the life experiences that have helped to shape these identity relationships. The first part of this chapter introduces to the concept of mixed methods and outlines which methods are used to study the research questions and how. The second part of the chapter focuses on the approaches chosen to study identity: (1) symbolic interactionism, and (2) the use of the concept of generation in the research design.

#### 3.1. THE RESEARCH DESIGN

Both quantitative and qualitative approaches have been successfully used in identity studies. Abdelal et al. (2009) outline surveys, content analysis, discourse analysis and ethnography as the most often used methods in identity studies. Among these, survey research is an especially widespread method for measuring social identities, especially in the field of political science (Abdelal, et al., 2009, p. 5). The quantitative approach has dominated also the research on European identity, therefore utilizing survey data in the present study would allow for better comparisons to other studies on the subject. Surveys directly inquire into self-described attitudes and practices, and allow establishing the main identifications in the country as a whole, covering all ages, ethnic groups, classes, and other potentially differing segments of the society. The survey data available for use in the present study dates back to 1993 and a secondary analysis of this data allows looking at the development of the identification patterns over time.

Aside from the outlined advantages, a quantitative approach to studying identity has several important drawbacks. Most significantly, it does not allow for a truly in-depth exploration of the subjective meanings that the respondents associate with each identity. For instance, when answering the question about feeling “European”, do people reply about their political, economic or cultural self-identification? Do they have associations or experiences regarding this belonging or is it a result of a simple rationalization based on the fact that they come from a country that is an EU member state?

In comparison, a qualitative exploration of identities allows to capture the full complexity of the subject from different angles (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). It gives voice to the experiences, meanings, associations, motives and opinions that the respondents have regarding their belonging to a place or a group, and makes it possible to come across aspects of the research topic that may not have been anticipated beforehand. Yet, despite achieving a vivid picture, one cannot know how widespread the findings may be, or to which groups of society they are most characteristic of. All in all, combining quantitative and qualitative insights can help to utilize the gains of each method, meanwhile attempting to counter their drawbacks (Brady & Kaplan 2009; Sylvan & Metskas 2009). These considerations lead me to choose *mixed methods* as the most appropriate research design for the study.

### 3.1.1. MIXED METHODS

“Mixed methods” implies a research design that uses both qualitative and quantitative approaches in either collecting or analyzing of research data (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007, p. 9). In mixed methods research methods are chosen so that they help to provide better understanding of the research questions. As Jane C. Greene puts it, “it is critical to think about identifying and selecting the reasons for mixing methods (or mixed methods purposes) *in service to* the broader substantive purpose and questions being pursued in the study<sup>30</sup>” (Greene, 2007, p. 97). In mixing the qualitative and quantitative research paradigms, mixed methods can simultaneously address confirmatory and exploratory questions, as well as use both deductive and inductive logic in the analysis (Tedlie & Tashakkori, 2008, p. 26).

The use of both qualitative and quantitative approaches in this study has several benefits. As already outlined in the beginning of the section, it allows to offset the weaknesses that each of the approaches has if used by itself. Moreover, mixed methods can provide more comprehensive evidence and allow addressing questions that cannot be answered by qualitative or quantitative research alone. Finally, the use of mixed methods is practical as it allows focusing on the research problem (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007, p. 9). All in all, using several methods can help to increase the validity and credibility of the findings, generate broader and deeper understandings, unsettle the settled, probe the contested and challenge the given perspectives on a subject (Greene, 2007, p. 98).

According to Greene (2007), mixed methods designs can have several purposes: triangulation, complementarity, development, initiation and expansion (see table below).

*Table 9. The purposes of mixed methods research, compared*

<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Application</b>	<b>Goal</b>
<b>Triangulation</b>	same phenomenon, different methods	increased validity of construct and inquiry inferences
<b>Complementarity</b>	same phenomenon, different methods for different dimensions of it	deeper, broader, and more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon studied
<b>Initiation</b>	same phenomenon, different methods for different dimensions of it	important insights through the evoking of contradiction and divergence of results
<b>Development</b>	results of one method are employed to inform the development of the other method	better understanding via capitalizing on method strengths
<b>Expansion</b>	different methods for different phenomena	expanding the scope of the study; making the best use of different methodological traditions

Source: based on Greene 2007

In this study three of these purposes are the most important:

- 1) Development: results of the quantitative analysis serve, first, to construct the interview guides for both family and expert interviews, and, second, as cues for purposeful sampling of

<sup>30</sup> Italics in original

interview respondents (based on results about differences regarding identifications between societal groups);

- 2) Complementarity: while quantitative analysis allows determining the most important collective identities in Latvia, the qualitative interviews serve to explore the meanings of the identities on the individual level, as well as to look into the relationships between these identities in more depth. Furthermore, the quantitative findings allow to relate the results of the qualitative analysis back to the “broader picture”;
- 3) Triangulation: this purpose is mainly filled by the expert interviews, two of which are done before the family interviewing, the other two – after. The expert interviews before family interviews serve to clarify the results of the quantitative analysis and attempt to shed light on any related issues that have remained unnoticed. The purpose of the expert interviews after family interviews is the triangulation of the interpretations of interview results.

### **3.1.2. DESIGN OF THE STUDY**

There are numerous ways of mixing methods and, for each individual study, the best combination of methods and the approach towards mixing them should be determined by the research question. Charles Tedlie and Abbas Tashakkori distinguish a total of seven criteria that can be used to distinguish typologies of mixed methods studies: number of methodological approaches, number of phases, type of implementation process, stage of integration of approaches, priority of methodological approach, functions of the research study, and theoretical or ideological perspective (Tedlie & Tashakkori, 2008, p. 141). From these criteria five are important for this study and should determine the particularities of the mixed methods design:

- 1) Number of methodological approaches – to be able to capture as many aspects of European identity as possible, both a qualitative and quantitative approach is necessary to utilize the benefits and to counter the drawbacks of each approach;
- 2) Sequence of methods – to achieve maximum results from the limited number of qualitative interviews, results of the quantitative analysis need to be available before the qualitative fieldwork to facilitate the designing of interview questions and the selection of respondents (i.e., a sequential as opposed to a concurrent design);
- 3) Priority of methods – in order to best explore the characteristics of identity relations, the qualitative part of the study is more important than the quantitative part;
- 4) Stage of integration of approaches – as the quantitative part informs the qualitative part, a mixing of methods will take place both in the experiential stage and in the inferential stage of the study;
- 5) Function of the research design – as described in the previous assignment, the main functions of the design are development, complementarity and triangulation.

Among the mixed methods designs outlined in the literature, there are two designs that might be suitable for fulfilling these criteria: the explanatory design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007) and the sequential mixed design (Tedlie & Tashakkori, 2008).

First, in *the explanatory design*, as described by Creswell and Plano Clark (2007), the quantitative method is carried out first and is followed by gathering of qualitative data. Thus, it fulfils the first two criteria: two (main) methodological approaches are employed, and one method follows the other.

However, a typical explanatory design mixed methods study puts greater emphasis on the first, quantitative, stage (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007, p. 72). That said, there are variants of this design: (1) in the follow-up explanations model qualitative data is used for explaining or expanding on the quantitative data analysis, (2) in the participant selection model the quantitative data are used for identifying and purposefully selecting participants for a follow-up qualitative study.

The qualitative part of this study needs to be broader than just an explanation of or expansion on the quantitative results. Nevertheless, the results of the quantitative analysis are used as cues for topics that need be explored in depth, as well as for respondent selection. Therefore, the criteria that the design of this study needs to fulfil are not entirely satisfied by either sub-variant of the explanatory design. Furthermore, as the intended study is more of an exploratory nature, the “explanatory design” label does not capture its essence.

Second, *the sequential mixed design*, as formulated by Tedlie and Tashakkori (2008), would also allow meeting the criteria of two methodological approaches that follow one another. This design is comparatively more flexible with regards to the purposes and priority of the methods and could lend itself better for being adapted for the present study. Furthermore, the authors explicitly state that this design is well-suited for exploratory questions (Tedlie & Tashakkori, 2008, p. 153) and the logic of the design – to use the conclusions of stage one for formulating design of stage two, then basing the final inferences on results from both stages – fits to the criterion of mixing methods both in the experiential and the inferential stage of the study.

The difficulty with both the explanatory and the sequential mixed designs is that, although either would be well-suited for achieving the goals of development and complementarity, the goal of triangulation is harder to incorporate. Namely, in their basic form, both designs foresee only two stages of fieldwork. Although this fits to the logic of survey analysis followed by family interviews, the expert interviews – the main source of data for triangulation – are more difficult to incorporate in either design. Therefore, the explanatory and sequential mixed designs are taken only as building blocks and cues for developing a mixed methods design that is adapted for the specific criteria that this study needs to meet and includes a total of three methods. The sequential logic of the final design has the advantage that it makes it easy for a single researcher to carry out all the stages (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; Tedlie & Tashakkori, 2008).

The study includes several steps (see also Table 10):

- 1) Carrying out survey analysis to determine the main collective identities in Latvia, their development since the early 1990s, as well as the main groups among which identification differences exist;
- 2) These results are used to develop expert interview guidelines that focus on the questions raised by the survey analysis and touch upon aspects of identity relations that cannot be captured quantitatively;
- 3) Together, the results of the survey and the expert interviews are used for developing family interview guidelines and give cues for choosing respondents (e.g., location, age, ethnicity);
- 4) Carrying out the 30 family interviews;
- 5) A second round of expert interviews, used for reflecting upon the family interview results, confirming the first analytic ideas, finding possible alternative interpretations, as well as

reflecting on any inconsistencies between the results of the survey and the interview analysis;

- 6) Finally, the results of all the three data sources are brought together in the inferential stage. The main part of the analysis is done for of each data source separately and their results are integrated in the last section. In mixed methods research this approach is known as parallel-tracks analysis (Tedlie & Tashakkori, 2008).

*Table 10. The research design*

<b>Phase</b>	<b>Procedure</b>
Survey data compilation	Variable selection Recoding Merger of data sets
Survey data analysis	Frequencies Correlations Multiple regression Factor analysis Multidimensional scaling
Expert interview data collection	Purposeful selection of experts (n=2) Individual in-depth interviews Interview transcriptions & protocols
Connecting survey and expert interview phases	Establishing sampling criteria for selecting respondents for family interviews Developing interview questions and guidelines
Family interview data collection	Selection of 10 families, 3 respondents in each (n=30) Individual in-depth interviews Interview transcriptions & fieldwork notes
Family interview data analysis	Development of coding scheme Coding Thematic analysis
Expert interview data collection	Purposeful selection of experts (n=2) Individual in-depth interviews Interview transcriptions & protocols
Integration of survey, family and expert interview results	Interpretation and explanation of the results of the three methods used in the study Answering the research questions Implications for future research

To sum up, this design employs three sources of data: quantitative surveys, qualitative family, and expert interviews. The quantitative analysis is based on three surveys: two waves of the New Baltic Barometer combined with a national identity survey from the Baltic Institute of Social Sciences that together cover the time span from 1993 to 2010. The family interviews are semi-structured, individual interviews with representatives of three generations within a family; there are a total of 30 respondents from 10 families. The expert interviews comprise four semi-structured interviews with researchers of identity issues in Latvia, two carried out before the family interviews, two after the family interviews.

The data analysis will contrast three generations to explore the role of life experiences in the formation of the relationship between European identity and other collective identities. In addition, two ethnicities/linguistic groups will be contrasted in order to capture intra-state differences in European identity formation in relation to one of the most important collective identities in Latvia.

## 3.2. THE CONCEPTUAL APPROACH

Now when the research design has been outlined, two conceptual aspects of doing the study on European identity and its relationships to other collective identities need to be described. First is the approach taken to studying identity from a theoretical and a methodological standpoint. Second is the meaning and application of the concept of “generation”.

### 3.2.1. STUDYING IDENTITY

The basic conceptualization and typology of identities has already been outlined in the introduction chapter. The purpose of this section is to establish a framework for exploring the different identities, and their relationships, that are the subject of this study. The evidence of European identity overviewed thus far (see section 2.2) is consistent with a social constructivist view of identities and points to the importance of socialization: a sense of European identity is strongest among those for whom it is tied with direct personal experiences and for whom it is salient in their personal lives.

In line with these findings, a suitable approach for studying European identity and its relationships to other identities can be based in the symbolic interactionist tradition: one of the two leading perspectives in social psychological studies of identity (Howard, 2000). Symbolic interactionism is based on the ideas of George Herbert Mead and was formulated into a consistent approach by his student Herbert Blumer (Blumer, 1969). As opposed to other theories that focus either on an individual and their personal characteristics or on the influence of certain social structures or social situations on individual behaviour, symbolic interactionism is interested in the nature of interaction: the dynamic social activities that take place between individuals. Despite their name, symbolic interactionist studies of identity have focused more on the dynamics of self rather than on symbols or interaction (Turner, 2013, p. 331). They portray identities as situational and interactional (*ibid.*) and the individual as a dynamic and active agent as opposed to a passive actor who merely responds to outside stimuli (Charon, 1979, p. 23). These characteristics of symbolic interactionism make it very suitable for studying identity construction, management and expression on the individual level (Côté & Levine, 2002, p. 33).

One can speak of several approaches towards identity theory<sup>31</sup> within the symbolic interactionist perspective. The main researchers who have worked within this perspective are Sheldon Stryker, George G. McCall, J. L. Simmons, Peter J. Burke, and Jan E. Stets. Although each of these scientists approaches the topic of identity from a slightly different viewpoint, they share a set of underlying beliefs that can be characterised with the following five statements (based on Stets & Burke, 2000; Burke & Stets, 2009; Turner, 2013):

- 1) **Identity** functions as a link between the individual and the social structure: each identity stands for designations or roles that individuals take; the roles themselves are relatively

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<sup>31</sup> Not to be confused with the social identity theory: another social psychology approach to studying identity that is mostly applied for studying intergroup behaviour and was developed by Henri Tajfel and John Turner.

stable elements of the social structure and they link the individual taking a particular role to a location in the social structure;

- 2) As each person takes on several roles, everyone also has multiple identities. The individual set of identities form the base of a person's **self**;
- 3) Individuals encounter different situations, each of which can invoke one or multiple of their identities. The likelihood that a particular identity will be activated in a situation is described by the concept of **identity salience**; in other words, the more salient an identity, the more likely that it will be activated in a situation;
- 4) Complimentary to salience is the concept of **commitment to an identity**: the degree to which an individual's relationships to others depend on them taking on a particular identity. The greater this dependence, the more an individual is committed to an identity and, consequently, the more committed they are, the more likely that this identity will be activated in a situation;
- 5) Finally, there exists a **hierarchy of prominence**: in situations that evoke several appropriate identities it is either the identity with the higher level of salience or the identity with the higher level of commitment that will have a stronger impact on guiding the individual's behaviour. Such a hierarchy is not absolute and shifts based on circumstances, depending on that which role performances, i.e., identities, an individual seeks to legitimate in the particular interaction. A person can attempt to satisfy several identities simultaneously by altering the situation; however, in order for such attempts to be successful, the identities must be either unrelated to or aligned with one another. If the identities are in opposition to one another the individual has to choose between them to remove the conflict.

In sum, symbolic interactionist identity theories portray the individual as a carrier of multiple identities, albeit there is some disagreement about the degree to which these identities constitute a linear hierarchy of prominence or salience. According to Turner, individuals are more consciously aware of their role and group identities and can therefore articulate these identities more easily, but their situational relevance is limited. In turn, core and social identities are more general and are thus carried to virtually all social situations, but are harder to articulate because they contain comparatively more unconscious elements (Turner, 2013, p. 349). Symbolic interactionist studies of identity also acknowledge that, when talking about their identities, individuals may construct and cross borders of various categories in defining themselves, actively constructing and negotiating their identities through their talk (Howard, 2000, p. 372).

On a more general scale, symbolic interactionism recognises that the ever increasing complexity of the self is a reflection of the complexity in the society. Namely, as the society has become increasingly differentiated in terms of groups, organizations, and available roles (see section 2.1), individuals who take on more of these as identities become more complex themselves (Burke & Stets, 2009, p. 132), thus matters of identity management, salience, and hierarchy come to the forefront.

This symbolic interactionist understanding of identity and its insights about identity relationships are practically applied in the present study and combined with other methodological insights from qualitative and quantitative identity research. To begin with, it has to be acknowledged that the symbolic interactionist understanding of identity is more suitable for application in qualitative

studies, especially ethnography. Although there are many innovative advances in identity studies through surveys (Chandra, 2009), the current study relies on surveys carried out by others, meaning no control over the inclusion of certain questions or their wording and limited possibilities of adjustment. Importantly, the surveys approach social identities from a largely essentialist standpoint and do not always accommodate for a multiplicity of identities. That said, these surveys offer data that I would not have been able to obtain myself, they allow exploring the development of identities over time, and the use of different questionnaires with different question wording may allow me to capture nuances unavailable by using just one measure (Sylvan & Metskas, 2009, p. 82).

There are several guidelines that should be applied in the qualitative interviews and are discussed in more detail below: (1) mixing of indirect and direct questioning techniques to best capture the multiple aspects of identities, (2) borrowing elements from biographical research to better explore the meaning of life experiences, (3) focusing on the borders of identities to discover the in- and out-groups in relation to the contents of particular identities, (4) paying attention to both self-identification and the strength of an identity, as well as (5) attempting to discover the everyday life experiences tied to the more general social identities.

First, there is substantial evidence that identities – and identification processes in general – are context-dependent, flexible, multiple, only partially-conscious, and potentially contradictory (Armbruster, et al., 2003, p. 886). This makes it difficult to fully capture identities with direct questions as these tap only the consciously held, abstract attitudes. Therefore, the application of indirect methods of interviewing may be helpful (*ibid.*) and should be combined with more direct question techniques.

In addition to this, identity is not a static concept of belonging to a collectivity, rather it can be perceived as a component of an interaction structure that changes over the course of an individual's life and is linked to the interpersonal processes of self-definition and the definition of others (Bogner & Rosenthal, 2009, p. 14). Identities are constantly transforming and are constituted in the interplay between the individual's own experiences, their familial history, and the histories of different social collectivities in which the former two are embedded (*ibid.*). As a consequence, a person's sense of belonging can change over the course of their life, and their past experiences and attachments may be reinterpreted. For this reason it is meaningful to borrow elements from biographical research in the interview process to better explore the intersection between life experiences and identity formation.

As identities are products of social interaction, they are relevant only in relationship to other individuals and groups and are re/produced only in interaction with them (Hopf, 2009, p. 281). In other words, identities are relational: one defines themselves in relation to their own group (the in-group) as much as in comparison to other groups (the out-groups). According to the anthropologist Fredrik Barth, the fact that groups are defined by their relationships to others makes group boundaries an especially important characteristic; boundaries are products of social interactions whose significance and attributes may change over time (Eriksen, 2010, p. 45). Based on this, attention should be paid not only to the identifications of the respondents but also to the ways they draw boundaries between groups and identities, and what characteristics they mention as important for group membership. In line with the two previous points, particular consideration should be given to cases when the drawing of boundaries is context-dependent or even contradictory.

In addition, the relational content of social identities can be conceptualised along two dimensions: (1) self-categorization and (2) strength of identification, i.e., the emotional significance of an identity: “identifying *as* is not the same as identifying *with*” (Citrin & Sears, 2009, p. 147). While self-categorization can be captured rather straightforwardly, particular attention should be paid also to the strength and emotional importance of each identity.

Finally, the focus on European identity may invoke debates that have been taking place on national and EU levels, among the elites and the mass public, and concern economic or political matters, the values of Europe, or the borders of the EU (see section 2.2). Therefore it is important to explore how much (if at all) these and other contested issues enter people’s everyday life experiences and associations (Armbruster, et al., 2003, p. 888). Although this guideline is especially relevant for the rather distant European identity, it is applicable also for national level identifications.

### **3.2.2. A GENERATIONAL APPROACH**

Aside from focusing on the relationships that the European identity has with other social and collective identities, this study is also interested in the life experiences that may have shaped particular identity configurations. As shown in the first chapter, in the last half century Latvia has undergone significant political, economic and social transformations. Such macro level changes impact the life courses of individuals, resulting in increasingly different life experiences for people born at different times (Weymann, 1996). There are two suitable approaches for studying how these transformations have shaped the biographies (and identities) of the individuals experiencing them: a generational approach and a cohort approach.

The generational approach is based on the contributions of Karl Mannheim whose writing remains the cornerstone of the sociology of generations. In his discussion of generations, Mannheim distinguishes between three concepts: generation location, generation as actuality, and generation unit (Mannheim, 1997 [1927]). To begin with, having the same generation location, i.e. sharing a year of birth as well as the historical and cultural region, endows individuals with a common position in the social and historical process and predisposes them to certain modes of thought and experience. At the same time, each generation location also excludes specific potential modes of thought, experience, feeling, or action (Mannheim, 1997 [1927], p. 36). A generation location signifies only a potentiality and does not encompass the whole phenomenon of generation. The second level – generation as actuality – arises when a concrete bond is created between members of a generation as they “participate in the characteristic social and intellectual currents of their society and period, and insofar they have an active or passive experience of the interaction of forces which made up the new situation” (ibid, p. 47). This inherent potential of a generation location is more likely to manifest itself and create new collective impulses and formative principles in times of rapid social and cultural change (ibid, p. 52). Finally, a generation unit represents a more concrete bond and is made up by people from the actual generation who “work up the material of their common experience in different specific ways” (Mannheim, 1997 [1927], p. 47). According to Mannheim, within each generation there can be several differentiated, even antagonistic generation units.

The cohort approach implies focusing on birth cohorts: objectively defined groups of people born in a specified time period. Norman Ryder, who first introduced the concept, believed that Mannheim’s generation as actuality rarely develops and, even if it does, it does not encompass the majority of

generational members. Therefore, he proposed to focus on equality of person-years of exposure instead (Hardy & Waite, 1997, p. 5). According to Ryder, structural transformations of society can be linked to population processes through the mechanisms of cohort succession and cohort replacement. Although every birth cohort is heterogeneous, each acquires a distinctive character that reflects the circumstances of its unique origination and history (Ryder, 1997 [1965], p. 69). In addition to birth cohorts, cohorts can also be identified by the time of occurrence of significant life events such as completion of education, year of marriage, or year of migration (ibid, p. 72).

Both approaches share the belief that the defining events for each age group are the ones that take place in their “formative” period (Mannheim, 1997 [1927]), namely, adolescence and early adulthood. Societal changes experienced during the formative years leave a lifelong influence on the youngest age groups and lead them to differ from their parents and their communities. In a nutshell, both generation and cohort approaches promote the idea that socialization in the formative years of individuals endure throughout their life course and in that serve to distinguish particular generations or cohorts from the ones that precede and the ones that succeed them.

Both of these concepts can be successfully used in the exploration of linkages between history and biography. However, there are important differences between the two approaches:

- 1) While the concept of “cohort” refers only to the birth year, “generation” implies a subjective layer in addition to the external, objective definition. In other words, generation encompasses the cultural mentality and the self-image of an age group, whereas cohort relates to its living conditions and life events (Heinz, 1996, p. 52);
- 2) The more objective character of birth cohorts means that they are easier to define and measure than generations that include elements of self-definition in addition to the external criteria;
- 3) From the two, cohorts are better suited for macro-analysis and investigation of aggregate phenomena (Hardy & Waite, 1997, p. 6), in fact, this is exactly the use that Ryder developed the cohort concept for.

How useful are the concepts of generation and cohort for analysing the present day identities in Latvia? As shown by studies of transformations in the post-reunification East Germany (e.g. Weymann, 1999), both approaches can be fruitfully used in analysing periods following rapid social change. After all, according to Mannheim, it is exactly such circumstances that should lead to the manifestation of the potential inherent in generation location. The dissolution of the USSR created substantial differences between the past and the future and should have had consequences for the relations between generations. Specifically, the experiences that the older cohorts had gathered over their lifetimes in the Soviet Union lost value in the new circumstances, and the more current knowledge of the youngest cohorts should have meant a reversal of the competence relationships between the generations (Weymann, et al., 1999, p. 111). It was the youth of the late 1980s who brought about the change but, as outlined by Ryder, “if change occurs, those who are brought up in the new world will differ from those who initiated the change” (Ryder, 1997 [1965], p. 76). Following this point, it could be argued further that another, albeit smaller, break may have been caused by the accession to the EU as the full utilization of the opportunities brought by this membership requires another set of skills and knowledge, making it the domain of generations growing up in the post-Soviet circumstances.

To sum up, there are grounds to believe that we might observe three different generations<sup>32</sup>: (1) those whose formative years took place in the Soviet times, (2) those who were in their formative period at the time when independence was re-established, (3) those who have grown up in the independent Latvia and whose formative period is taking place in the current circumstances. Based on the insights described above, each of them is likely to have different perceptions of the same events or circumstances due to the fact that they have developed different values, perspectives and understandings in their adolescence and early adulthood.

Based on the information overviewed thus far, a large-scale exploration of cohorts with the goal of identifying life experiences that have shaped particular identity configurations would ideally require longitudinal panel data. Unfortunately suitable data sets are unavailable for Latvia, therefore this particular research question needs to be answered with the help of the qualitative interviews that form the backbone of this study.

A qualitative approach is better suited for grasping the subjective relations and mutual influences between individuals of different ages. And, e.g., the study of EU border identities (Meinhof, 2004) shows that a generational focus can be an effective approach for studying European identity in the context of other identities. However, if the concept of generation is used in the Mannheim understanding, it cannot be applied as a sampling strategy: only the contents of the finished interviews would allow establishing whether the respondents indeed belong to the same generation. A solution to this difficulty is taking “natural” generations, i.e., generations within one family, instead and begin sampling from the youngest generation ensuring that it conforms to the same birth cohort.

A focus on kinship generations has several advantages. Most importantly, people do not acquire collective identities solely as individuals or by their own decisions; instead, these identities are first acquired as a result of their position as members of families (Bogner & Rosenthal, 2009, p. 13). This familial belonging needs to be considered in the context of other agents of socialization, but focusing on families captures the continuity and allows a better comparing of the different generations. Furthermore, previous studies of European identity have found both generationally specific narratives of “Europe” (Meinhof, 2002) and family discourses with narrative tropes on European being shared among family members (Armbruster, et al., 2003).

By taking three generation families in Latvia a large variety of life experiences can be captured. The youngest generation, born after 1990, have spent their lives in an independent, democratic country on its way of integrating in the EU. The middle generation were born in the Soviet Union and were in the transition from education to labour market as the regime changed. The oldest generation has lived most of their lives in the Soviet Union and were at the end of their work lives as the USSR collapsed; for them this major change came at a late point of their lives and meant a significant break from their past experience. In short, the lives of the three generations have been shaped both by major historical events and notable socio-economic changes, hence, a comparison of the generations will allow analysing the role of life experiences and structural contexts in the shaping of collective identity relations.

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<sup>32</sup> “Generation” is used here to signify groups of birth cohorts which differ by their experiences and social locations due to processes of societal change (Sackmann & Weymann, 1994, p. 19).

On a final note, in addition to cohort and generation effects that we might observe in the interview data, there could also be age effects: characteristics that are independent of the period of the respondent's birth or upbringing but stem from their age. Adaptability to change, mobility, or the size of one's social circles are characteristics that may be more subject to age than generation or cohort effects. For instance, there is evidence that political identities are in a constant state of change until around the age of 35, a higher degree of stability in political orientations takes shape through midlife as individuals become more conservative with age (Alwin, 1997).

## 4. THE MATERIAL & DATA ANALYSIS

The previous chapter described the methodological approach and the research design of the study. The purpose of this chapter is to give more detailed information about the three sources of data – the surveys, the expert interviews, and the family interviews. A subchapter is devoted to each of the data sources, describing their purpose in the research design and elaborating on the collection and the characteristics of the gathered information. The first subchapter focuses on the surveys, the second on the expert interviews, whereas the third subchapter is dedicated to the family interviews, also giving descriptions of the three locations where interviews were carried out and descriptions of the ten families that were interviewed.

### 4.1. SURVEY DATA

The survey data fulfils several purposes in the research design: (1) it determines the most important social identities in Latvia and their change since the early 1990s, (2) highlights important group differences in social identifications, (3) establishes the place of European identity among other identities, as well as (4) gives cues to potential issues that need to be explored in more depth. Overall, the survey data not only provides answers to one of the research questions but also helps to inform the interviewee selection for the family interviews, and helps to shape the interview questions for family interviews and the first round of expert interviews.

A secondary analysis was carried out on three data files that together cover the time period from 1993 to 2010. Two of the surveys are part of New Baltic Barometer (NBB) public opinion surveys, coordinated by the University of Strathclyde, UK<sup>33</sup>. From the six waves of NBB the first and the last survey were taken, respectively, the years 1993 and 2004. To add newer data, the National Identity survey by the Baltic Institute of Social Sciences (BISS) was included as well.

*Table 11. The sources of quantitative data*

Year	Survey	Institution	Sample size
1993	New Baltic Barometer	University of Strathclyde, Centre for the Study of Public Policy	2 000
2004	New Baltic Barometer	University of Strathclyde, Centre for the Study of Public Policy	956
2010	National Identity survey	The Baltic Institute of Social Sciences	1 004

The comparability of data was an issue: as the three surveys have been carried out in different time periods and with different purposes, they have notable differences from one another. Therefore a degree of compatibility of the surveys had to be achieved. The number of usable items and the depth of information were restricted by the availability of questions that were similar across all three surveys and whose answer categories could be meaningfully recoded and made comparable.

The selection of questions and recoding resulted in a total of 15 variables (for more details on recoding see Appendix C). Of these eleven are independent variables: age, gender, education, economic status, income quartile, citizenship, ethnicity, language of interview and native language, religion, and territorial location. The rest of the chosen variables serve as a basis for constructing dependent variables measuring identity both as a territorial and group identification.

<sup>33</sup> The NBB fieldwork in Latvia was carried out by the Baltic Institute of Social Sciences

The chief difficulty for recording the items was posed by the different approach taken to inquiring about self-identification between the NBB and the BISS surveys. In the NBB survey the respondents were asked to name two identity categories that are the most important for them from among several choices (ten options in the 1993 survey, seven options in 2004). The BISS survey, on the other hand, asked about the strength of attachment to seven different entities that each had to be evaluated on a four-point scale. The difference between having to make a choice of two belongings versus being able to answer about seven categories means that a typology had to be created that could meaningfully accommodate both question formats (see more in section 5.1). Thus, particular care needed be taken when analyzing this variable and interpreting the changes over time to ensure that they are not merely effects of a different question format (Sylvan & Metskas, 2009, p. 82).

The quantitative data was analyzed using a mixture of descriptive and inferential statistics methods. The core part of the analysis uses the merged data with information from all three surveys. However, the surveys also included other items that are thematically relevant for this study but were not available in more than one survey and could not be included in the merged data file. These survey questions were still used and referred to where applicable. For an overview of all questions that were merged as well as their recoding and the resulting variables please refer to Appendix C.

## **4.2. EXPERT INTERVIEWS**

As outlined in the previous chapter, the expert interviews were carried out in two steps. The first two expert interviews took place in March 2011 and directly followed the quantitative analysis stage. The main purpose of these two interviews was to gain more in-depth information about the identity relations in Latvia ahead of the main part of the fieldwork. These interviews attempted to clarify some of the quantitative analysis' results and to identify any additional aspects that might be relevant for the study but had not been captured quantitatively. The expert interviews also served to improve the family interview guides and the respondent selection (see more in 4.3).

The first pair of experts were:

- 1) Dr. Nils Muižnieks – political scientist; at the time of the interview: Director of the Advanced Social and Political Research Institute at the University of Latvia; currently the Commissioner of Human Rights at the Council of Europe. The topics he has worked on include social integration, minority rights, human rights, and civil society development.
- 2) Dr. Vladislavs Volkovs – sociologist; Leading Researcher at Institute of Social Researches at the University of Daugavpils and Researcher at the Philosophy and Sociology Institute at the University of Latvia. His main area of expertise is the Russian minority in Latvia, in particular with regards to their identities.

The second part of expert interviews took place in November 2011 when the main part of the family interview fieldwork had been completed. These two expert social scientists were purposefully chosen to be native Russian speakers and the interviews had two goals: (1) reflecting on the initial family interview results, finding possible alternative interpretations and, if possible, gaining more evidence for the results of the analysis and (2) attempting to reduce any interviewer bias that may have resulted from me being a member of the ethnic and linguistic majority group.

The second pair of experts was:

- 1) Viktors Makarovs – political scientist; at the time of interview director of the NGO policy centre “EuroCivitas”, currently Parliamentary Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He has done research on citizenship and multiculturalism in Latvia, ethno-linguistic relations, as well as national and European identity.
- 2) Dr. Marija Golubeva – Associated Researcher at the Centre for Public Policy “Providus”. Her research expertise lies in the spheres of cultural diversity and integration policies, in particular, with regards to education, specifically minority and intercultural education.

Each of the four interviews had a different set of questions that were adapted according to (1) the expertise of the respondent – their field of specialization and research projects they have been working on – and (2) the stage of the study. The expert interviews before family interviews included mainly clarifying questions, whereas the questions of the second pair of expert interviews sought explanations and alternative viewpoints for the first outcomes of the family interviews. For an example of expert interview guidelines see the Appendix D.

As opposed to the surveys and family interviews that function as stand-alone data sources in the research design, the expert interviews have a more supportive role: their task is to inform data gathering and analysis of the other data sources. Due to this, the analysis of expert interviews is not presented separately. Instead, their most important results are included in the synopsis chapter (see chapter nine) where they are analysed in the context of the other data sources.

### **4.3. FAMILY INTERVIEWS**

The qualitative, semi-structured family interviews provide the main source of information for answering the research questions about the relationships between European identity and other social and collective identities, as well as about the importance of life experiences that influence these identity relationships. The following description of this method is split into two parts: data collection and data analysis.

#### **4.3.1. DATA COLLECTION**

In line with the considerations outlined the previous subsections, three places of exploration were chosen to maximize the variance within the country in terms of their geographic location, size of settlement, and ethnic composition (see Table 12). Rīga, the capital and the largest city of Latvia, is located at the centre of the country and has a balanced proportion of ethnic Latvians and Russians. Daugavpils, the second largest city, is located near the borders with Russia and Belorussia and it is the city in Latvia with the highest proportion of ethnic non-Latvians. In contrast to the two urbanised, multi-ethnic cities, the third place of inquiry was Kuldīga, a smaller town in the West of Latvia where the proportion of Russians is among the lowest in Latvia.

In total, ten families were interviewed, resulting in 30 interviews. Based on previous research as well as information from the expert interview with Dr. Volkovs, linguistic group instead of ethnicity was chosen as one of the sampling criteria. On the one hand, this choice is based on the evidence that the different ethnic minority groups in Latvia have considerable similarities as they are all predominantly Russian-speaking. On the other hand, this choice facilitated the selection of families because primary language, as opposed to ethnicity, is an externally observable criterion.

Table 12. The three locations of fieldwork

<i>Place</i>	<i>Inhabitants</i>	<i>Ethnic Latvians</i>	<i>Ethnic Russians</i>	<i>Other ethnicity</i>	<i>Latvian/Russian families for study</i>
<b>Rīga</b>	643 615	45%	39%	16%	2 / 2
<b>Daugavpils</b>	89 184	19%	51%	30%	1 / 2
<b>Kuldīga (region)</b>	24 539	93%	3%	4%	3 / 0

Source: Centrālā Statistikas pārvalde, 2013

In line with the statistical data on ethnic composition, in Rīga two Latvian and two Russian speaking families were interviewed, whereas in Daugavpils one Latvian and two Russian speaking families were selected. The original sampling frame foresaw interviewing two Latvian and one Russian speaking family in Kuldīga, however no Russian speaking families could be found. Detailed descriptions of the three locations and the ten families can be found in section 6.1.

The choice of specific interview locations implies a condition that all three generations of the family have to be living in the same locality. As the youth often move to other localities for the purpose of studies, pupils in the last years of secondary school were chosen as the youngest generation. This allowed ascertaining that the youngest and middle generations reside in the same locality, whereas the presence of grandparents in the same city/town (but not necessary in the same household) was used as an additional criterion for selecting families for the study.

Whenever possible, one line of family was chosen: a child, their parent, and a parent of the parent. This design has both benefits and disadvantages. The main benefit is the continuity within the family which increases the comparability of data across generations. The main disadvantage is an unequal division of the sample by age and gender in the middle and oldest generations. The youngest generation, who were the starting point of sampling, is almost equally divided by gender and are of a similar age. The interviewees of the middle and oldest generations have a more diverse age distribution and only women are represented. The gender imbalance has several reasons:

- 1) women are living closer to their parents than men and are thus favoured by the conditions of the same locality and one line of family;
- 2) women in Latvia live on average 10 years longer than men, limiting the availability of men in the oldest generation;
- 3) even when fathers and grandfathers were present, men were less likely to volunteer to be interviewed, at times being more comfortable in remaining nearby and commenting, but not being the main interviewees.

The original design foresaw a selection of families on the basis of the youngest generation, using schools as the access point. However, the attempts to approach schools without having a previous contact person were unsuccessful. Instead, I had to find school teachers who could help me with finding suitable families in other ways: through my own networks and through the networks of local social scientists. Due to many refusals by the oldest generation Russian speakers in Daugavpils, one family was found via snowballing.

As the main interest of the study is the relationships of social and collective identities and the specific working of these relationships, in-depth interviews are the most suitable approach as they allow for an exploration of the cases without the requirement of quantifying the information and the

meanings can be assigned (and elaborated on) by the respondents themselves. At the same time, the number of interviews is rather high and comparability should be facilitated, therefore an interview-guide approach was chosen. This approach allows both for comparability across interviews and flexibility to follow emerging issues, meanwhile ensuring that all the relevant topics are covered (Quinn 2002: 343). The interview guide was shaped according to the information gained in the quantitative analysis and the first two expert interviews, and was tested in three pilot interviews that took place in the fall of 2010.

The full interview guide can be found in the Appendix E. It consists of four main sections that cover both direct and indirect questions aimed at capturing the main identifications and their strength, the social interactions and life experiences that may have shaped these identities, and the way the respondents draw borders between in-groups and out-groups. These sections are:

- I. Identity: general questions
- II. European identity
- III. European identity among other identities
- IV. Relevant life experiences

Figure 2. A map view of the interview locations<sup>34</sup>



The fieldwork took place in three stages. In May 2011 the three families in Kuldīga and three out of four families in Rīga were interviewed. The three families in Daugavpils were interviewed in October/November 2011 and the final family in Rīga in March 2012. All of the interviews with the Latvian speaking families were carried out by me. For interviews with the Russian speaking families, with the exception of the final family, an assistant was hired in each of the cities and trained for facilitating the interviewing process. The final Russian family interviews in March 2012 were carried out without a hired assistant, when necessary, the youngest family member helped with translation. The interview assistants had a dual role: in addition to improving the flow of interviews and allowing the respondents to express themselves in their native language, the use of a Russian speaking

<sup>34</sup> Map source: Nations Online Project, n.d.

assistant was also meant to reduce the differences between the Latvian and the Russian interviews by allowing all respondents to converse with a member of their own language group.

In the majority of cases the interviews took place in the respondents' homes and the respondents were interviewed one by one. Exceptions were the family "T" with all three interviewees, the family "A" with the oldest and middle generation interviewees, and the family "M" with the oldest and youngest generation interviewees remaining in the same room during the interviews of their other family members. They would listen to each other's accounts and at times supplement them with their own views and insights.

*Table 13. The interview respondents, main characteristics*

Date	Location	Generation	Pseudonym	Language	Gender	Age
20.05.2011.	Kuldīga	Oldest	Anna	Latvian	F	62
20.05.2011.	Kuldīga	Middle	Anita	Latvian	F	42
20.05.2011.	Kuldīga	Youngest	Alise	Latvian	F	18
21.05.2011.	Kuldīga	Oldest	Daiga	Latvian	F	80
21.05.2011.	Kuldīga	Middle	Dace	Latvian	F	46
02.06.2011.	Jelgava	Youngest	Dainis	Latvian	M	19
22.05.2011.	Kuldīga	Oldest	Inga	Latvian	F	72
22.05.2011.	Kuldīga	Middle	Inese	Latvian	F	41
22.05.2011.	Kuldīga	Youngest	Ivars	Latvian	M	18
01.06.2011.	Rīga	Oldest	Marta	Latvian	F	72
02.06.2011.	Rīga	Middle	Maija	Latvian	F	51
01.06.2011.	Rīga	Youngest	Mareks	Latvian	M	18
01.06.2011.	Rīga	Oldest	Sarma	Latvian	F	64
01.06.2011.	Rīga	Middle	Sandra	Latvian	F	45
01.06.2011.	Rīga	Youngest	Signe	Latvian	F	18
03.06.2011	Rīga	Oldest	Olga	Russian	F	71
03.06.2011	Rīga	Middle	Oksana	Russian	F	45
03.06.2011	Rīga	Youngest	Olesja	Russian	F	17
27.10.2011.	Daugavpils	Oldest	Ella	Latvian	F	65
27.10.2011.	Daugavpils	Middle	Eva	Latvian	F	38
27.10.2011.	Daugavpils	Youngest	Edgars	Latvian	M	19
20.11.2011	Daugavpils	Oldest	Larisa	Russian	F	73
25.11.2011	Daugavpils	Middle	Ludmila	Russian	F	41
20.11.2011	Daugavpils	Youngest	Laura	Russian	F	19
27.03.2012	Rīga	Oldest	Tamara	Russian	F	70
27.03.2012	Rīga	Middle	Tatjana	Russian	F	41
27.03.2012	Rīga	Youngest	Tanja	Russian	F	17
31.03.2012	Daugavpils	Oldest	Nellija	Russian	F	67
31.03.2012	Daugavpils	Middle	Natalja	Russian	F	40
31.03.2012	Daugavpils	Youngest	Nils	Russian	M	16

Each of the interviewees was assigned a pseudonym and, for the ease of analysis, the pseudonyms of members of one family begin with the same letter. In order to preserve confidentiality, personal information revealed during the interviews, e.g., on past and present occupations, will not be

revealed in detail. Particular care was taken with the respondents from Kuldīga and Daugavpils: as these two locations are smaller more care needs to be taken to ensure confidentiality.

The members of the youngest generation were born between 1991 and 1995 and, accordingly, were between 16 and 19 years of age at the time of interview. The age gap of the other two generations is larger. The middle generation interviewees were born between 1960 and 1973, and were in the ages between 38 and 51 at the time of interview. In turn, representatives of the oldest generation were born between 1931 and 1949 and were between 62 and 80 years of age. The length of the interviews varied from approx. 20 minutes as a minimum to approx. 90 minutes as a maximum, with the oldest and the middle generations typically having more to say than the youth. The average length of an interview was between 45 and 50 minutes.

The interviews were transcribed by me and two hired assistants: one for the Latvian and one for the Russian language interviews. The transcriptions were done word-by-word, including errors, slips of tongue and specifics of dialect. Nonverbal information such as longer pauses, hesitations, words emphasized, and expressions of emotion were all marked in the interview transcript. For the ease of analysis, the Russian language interview transcripts were translated to English, whereas the Latvian language interview transcripts remained in the original language. Each of the transcripts was subsequently proofed for accuracy and summarized.

#### **4.3.2. DATA ANALYSIS**

The analytic process of the 30 interviews was done through an interweaving of inductive and deductive approaches. Summary notes were made for each interview after listening to it and rereading the transcript. These summaries served to identify the first ideas and themes of the interviews. The next step was the dissecting and classifying of the data to place sections of material into categories (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008, p. 101).

The list of categories for organizing the interview data came from two sources. First, as the interview guides had been built on the basis of theory, previous research, as well as inputs from the survey analysis and the expert interviews, there was already a substantial amount of information that could be used for systematizing the information in the family interviews. Based on this previous knowledge, a list of seven deductive categories could be developed for indexing the interview data. These categories were:

- 1) Primary belonging;
- 2) National/local belonging;
- 3) Ethnic belonging;
- 4) European belonging;
- 5) Identity relationships;
- 6) Generations;
- 7) Life experiences.

Second, attention was paid to any important information that could not be subsumed under the deductive categories. This way space was left for any additional categories that could emerge from the data. This way one inductive category was added to the list and labelled “changing times”. It included interview fragments where the informants discussed the differences in time periods of

Latvia's recent history without implicitly tying them to their identifications or life experiences. As the interview themes are interrelated, it was presupposed that several indexes can be applied to the same segments of data.

Once the indexing of data was completed, open coding was carried out on the indexed interview segments to fully cover the richness of the information, allow new analytical concepts to arise from the data, and to systematize it further (Charmaz, 2003). Following open coding, axial coding was carried out, relating the open code categories to their subcategories (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 123) and thus reducing the number of codes and achieving more abstraction.

MAXQDA qualitative data analysis software was used to ease the coding, handling and retrieval of the large amount of textual data that included interview transcripts, memos and field notes. During the development of the coding scheme each interview was reread multiple times and, where necessary, coding of the segments was adjusted. The final coding scheme can be found in the Appendix F.

## 5. SOCIAL AND COLLECTIVE IDENTITIES IN LATVIA

The first chapter outlined European identity in Latvia as a subject on which information is scarce and the existing evidence contradictory. Because of this, the first step of the study is quantitative, namely, a secondary analysis of three surveys: the 1993 and 2004 waves of New Baltic Barometer (NBB), and the National Identity survey carried out in 2010 by the Baltic Institute of Social Sciences carried (refer to section 4.1 for more detailed information about the surveys). The goal of the analysis is to find out more about the social identities in Latvia and the place of European identity among them. Specifically, this chapter seeks answers to four questions:

- 1) What are the main social and collective identities in Latvia?
- 2) Have the identifications changed since the early 1990s and if yes, then how?
- 3) Are there group differences with regard to identification patterns?
- 4) What is the place of European identity among other social identities?

The first subchapter focuses on the main identities and their change, the second subchapter takes a look at the existing differences between age and ethnic groups, among others, and the third subchapter attempts to establish the relation of European identity to other social identities. Finally, the last subchapter summarizes and discusses the results and outlines questions that need to be explored in more depth through expert and family interviews.

The secondary analysis of the three surveys in this chapter shows that European identity is not among the most significant collective identifications in Latvia. Only a minority of Latvians hold cosmopolitan or primarily European identifications while national belonging, if only in a territorial sense, is comparatively stronger. The largest group differences were found between Latvian and Russian speakers and citizens and non-citizens. In general, Latvian speakers and citizens were comparatively more orientated towards Europe.

### 5.1. CHANGING IDENTITIES

Which social and collective identities are the most important in Latvia? To answer this question, let us begin by briefly looking at group identities in Latvia, comparing only the 1993 and 2010 data as this question was omitted in the 2004 NBB survey. Although both surveys asked about a range of group identities, only four of these overlap in both questionnaires. The first two relate to ethnic belonging, seeing oneself as Latvian or Russian from Latvia, whereas the other two concern socio-economic status and inquire whether the respondents identify themselves with workers and with people who do not have much money or who experience financial difficulties.

*Table 14. Belonging to different societal groups (percent)*

Feel belonging to...	1993	2010
<b>Latvians</b>	73,5	56,8
<b>Russians of Latvia</b>	51,2	35,0
<b>Workers</b>	64,3	28,4
<b>People in financial difficulty</b>	62,1	12,9

1993 N=2137; 2010 N=1004

All four group identities have lost significance in the 17 years between the surveys. It appears that ethnic identities have become slightly less important than they were in the national ideal-laden early 1990s. Also the worker identity – a particularly important identification of the Soviet period – has lost its prominence. Interestingly, it appears that the financial crisis that Latvia experienced at the time of the 2010 survey had less of an impact on people’s subjective financial wellbeing than the first years of transition from socialist to capitalist economy in the early 1990s. Overall, despite some loss of importance, ethnic identities still appear to be more important than the two socio-economic status identities.

Next we have to consider the main territorial identifications in Latvia during the first years after independence. The NBB surveys of 1993 and 2004 asked the respondents to choose a first and a second most important identification from a list of options (see Table 15 below).

*Table 15. Primary and secondary identification, NBB 1993 and 2004 (percent)<sup>35</sup>*

Identification	1993		2004	
	First	Second	First	Second
<b>Town/village</b>	32,1	39,9	33,4	39,8
<b>Region</b>	8,2	14,2	6,5	17,2
<b>Latvia</b>	34,6	17,8	38,7	17,8
<b>Europe</b>	1,8	4,5	1,3	6,4
<b>Russia</b>	15,2	15,6	15,0	9,9
<b>Belarus</b>	1,6	1,5	1,2	0,7
<b>Ukraine</b>	1,1	1,2	0,6	0,5
<b>Soviet</b>	1,2	1,7	--	--
<b>NA/Other</b>	4,3	3,4	3,3	7,7
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

1993 first: N=1958, second: N=1877, 2004 N=1000

Identification with Latvia was the most important primary identification in both years chosen by, respectively, 34,6 percent and 38,7 percent respondents. It was followed by identification with the respondent’s immediate vicinity, i.e. their town or village, which was also the most important secondary identification (39,9 percent in 1993, 39,8 percent in 2004). The third most important primary identification was with Russia and it had remained stable at around 15 percent in both years. In turn, regional identification appears not to have been as important as identifying with the country or the town/village of the respondents.

Unsurprisingly, the 11 years between the two NBB waves brought about some changes in the most important identifications. Identification with Latvia increased as a primary identification by 4,1 percent points, whereas identification with region decreased as a primary identification (by 1,7 percent points) and slightly increased as a secondary identification (by 3,0 percent points). Among international territorial identifications, identification with Europe slightly decreased as a primary identity, but increased as a secondary by almost two percent points (from 4,5 to 6,4 percent). Although rising, identification with Europe was not among the most important identities of the respondents either in 1993 or 2004. Meanwhile, all of the East-orientated territorial identifications

<sup>35</sup> Survey question 1993: “Which of these terms best describes how you usually think of yourself?” Survey question 2004: “With which of the following do you most closely identify yourself?”

decreased in importance. The only exception was identification with Russia as a primary identity, yet it decreased by almost six percent points as a secondary identity.

How do these results compare with the 2010 survey of the BISS? As opposed to the NBB survey where two most important identifications had to be chosen, the BISS survey asked about respondents' feelings of closeness to a total of seven categories (see Table 16). Consequently, the proportion of respondents feeling very close or close to their city (81,9 percent), Latvia (78,3 percent), their region (66,8 percent), or Europe (20,6 percent) is higher than in the NBB surveys. The only exception is closeness to Russia: despite not being forced to choose, only 14,8 percent of the respondents said that they feel "close" or "very close" to Russia. This means either that the identification with Russia has reduced or that there is a core group in the population (at the approximate size of 15 percent) for whom this identification is important to the extent that it would also be one of the primary identities.

*Table 16. Closeness to different territorial entities, 2010 (percent)<sup>36</sup>*

	<b>Closest vicinity</b>	<b>City</b>	<b>Region</b>	<b>Latvia</b>	<b>Russia</b>	<b>Baltics</b>	<b>Europe</b>
<b>Very close</b>	33,7	34,6	21,1	29,6	3,4	3,6	4,8
<b>Close</b>	40,3	47,3	45,7	48,7	11,4	16,6	15,8
<b>Not too close</b>	19,0	11,4	24,5	14,9	28,6	46,3	37,8
<b>Not close at all</b>	3,6	2,0	3,8	2,9	51,6	27,8	34,8
<b>NA</b>	3,3	4,6	4,9	3,8	5,0	5,6	6,7
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

N=1004, except city N=688 and region N=684<sup>37</sup>

Comparing the results of the three surveys, it becomes clear that the European supranational belonging is weaker than all of the local attachments. However, as opposed to the NBB surveys of 1993 and 2004, the number of respondents feeling close to Europe in 2010 was higher than of those feeling close to Russia. The different question formats make it difficult to make a more detailed comparison, therefore for further analysis a recoded version of the questions will be used (for details of the recoding see Appendix C).

Where possible, the results in the following overview are split by year. The reason for this presentation of data is the significantly larger sample group of 1993 which accounts for almost half of the cases in the combined data file. Thus, looking at the three years together would lead to a disproportionate influence of the 1993 data. In addition, one has to keep in mind that, although made comparable, some differences in the results between the years can potentially be attributed to the different question formats.

Answers to the survey questions about territorial identities can be divided into three broad categories: (1) cosmopolitan – having only non-national attachments or these attachments being stronger than those to the nation; (2) mixed – having equally strong attachment to the nation state

<sup>36</sup> Question: "How closely tied do you feel to...?"

<sup>37</sup> Only city-dwellers had to answer about the "city" category, the inhabitants of Riga did not have answer about the "region" category.

and an external entity; (3) national – feeling strongly attached to the nation and/or city and region and missing any non-national attachments.

*Table 17. Broad identity categories, by year (percent)*

Year	Cosmo-politan	Mixed	National / local	Other	N
1993	16,1	14,7	60,6	8,5	2137
2004	16,0	14,3	64,7	4,9	956
2010	6,4	23,8	62,0	7,9	1004

On the whole, national – local belonging, i.e. attachment to Latvia or locations within the country, has not considerably changed from year to year. A significant switch has taken place between the pure cosmopolitan and mixed belonging. Cosmopolitan identification has dropped from around 16 percent in 1993 and 2004 to 6,4 percent in 2010, whereas a mixed identification has risen from around 14 percent in 1993 and 2004 to 23,8 percent in 2010. A careful interpretation is needed here as the question format of NBB and BISS surveys likely accounts for at least part of the observed difference, e.g., there is a slight (but potentially important) difference between primarily identifying oneself with Latvia and feeling close to Latvia

In the next step we can distinguish between cosmopolitan as looking towards the East, i.e. Russia, and cosmopolitan as looking towards the West, i.e., Europe. Belonging to Russia and belonging to Europe are taken as the two end points of this comparison – this mirrors both the geopolitical situation of Latvia as well as a reorientation of the foreign policy and future projections from the USSR to the EU that has taken place in the last 20 years (see more in section 1.3).

*Table 18. Polarized identity categories, by year (percent)<sup>38</sup>*

Year	Primary Europe	Europe - Latvia	National / local	Russia – Latvia	Primary Russia	Cosmo-politan	Other	N
1993	1,4	3,2	60,6	11,6	13,9	0,8	8,5	2137
2004	0,8	5,5	64,7	8,8	14,4	0,7	4,9	956
2010	0,6	15,2	62,0	8,6	1,6	4,2	7,9	1004

This alternative categorization of identities allows for a more detailed exploration of the 40 percent of the population that holds other identifications than purely national and/or local. In the 17 years covered by the surveys, both the identification with primarily Russia and Russia-Latvia have experienced the steepest fall, respectively, from 13,9 percent in 1993 to 1,6 percent in 2010 and from 11,6 percent in 1993 to 8,6 percent in 2010. The identification with primarily Europe has changed by a mere half a percent point, while the Europe – Latvia category shows a considerable rise: from 3,2 percent in 1993 to 15,2 percent in 2010. Notably, this change has taken place after 2004 – the year when Latvia became an EU member country. Another important observation is that the proportion of respondents who hold no national – local identifications has risen from 0,8 percent in 1993 to 4,2 percent in 2010.

<sup>38</sup> The “cosmopolitan” category in the previous table has a higher proportion of the total because it includes the “primary Europe” and “primary Russia” categories that are distinguished separately here. The categories “Europe-Latvia” and “Russia-Latvia” include identifications with either (1) Latvia and Europe/Russia or (2) town, city or region and Europe/Russia

Finally, it has to be noted that the proportion of respondents who chose either other identifications or could not define themselves in the given categories was between 4,9 percent and 8,5 percent. In fact, there were more respondents who held other identifications than respondents identifying with several of the other identity categories.

This first glance at group and territorial identifications in Latvia shows that around half of the respondents identify with their ethnic group. Around 60 percent hold territorially national-local identifications while other territorial identity combinations account for slightly less than 40 percent of the total and can be divided into an orientation towards the East and an orientation towards the West. The data indicates two trends in supranational belonging: one is a reducing identification with Russia, the other an increasing identification with Europe. But, while Russia is more frequently the source of a primary identity, European identity is more likely to be combined with a belonging to Latvia.

Overall, these observations need to be interpreted with caution because of the different question formats between the NBB and the BISS surveys. In addition to requiring a choice of the two most important identities, the NBB survey also allows the identity question to be interpreted as asking about a group identity instead of a territorial identity. As already shown in the theory overview (see section 2.2), a change of wording from, e.g., being European to identifying with Europe, can result in a different outcome. The in-depth analysis in the following subchapters will attempt to shed some more light on these first observations.

## **5.2. GROUP DIFFERENCES**

The previous subchapter described the main collective identities and their changes; now it is time to move to the next question: are there group differences with regard to these identifications? This section will attempt to establish whether age, gender, education, income, citizenship, ethnicity, religiousness, and a person's place of residence have an impact on their identifications with societal groups or territorial attachments.

The combined dataset allowed checking for correlations of the dependent variable with eight independent variables. The selection of independent variables is based on previous research findings (see section 2.2) and adjusted for variables that were available in all three surveys. For the purposes of this analysis the nominal variables with more than two answers were made dichotomous. Here and further the language of interview<sup>39</sup> is used as a proxy for respondents' ethnicity because in the NBB survey of 2004 no information about ethnicity was gathered. It has to be noted that this division is not entirely precise and "Russian" includes also other ethnicities, but unfortunately the available survey data does not offer a better alternative for distinguishing the groups.

Let us again begin with the ethnic and socio-economic group identities. The four dependent variables (Latvians, Russians of Latvia, workers, and people in financial difficulties) are all significantly correlated with one another<sup>40</sup>. From the independent variables, citizenship is the only one that significantly correlates with all four group identities. Ethnicity is important for all except identifying

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<sup>39</sup> Common for Latvia, the surveys took place in two languages (Latvian and Russian) and the respondents could choose in which one to give their answers

<sup>40</sup> The lowest coefficient is 0,16 for Latvians with Russians of Latvia, highest is 0,47 for workers with people in financial difficulties

with people in financial difficulty; size of locality is significant for all except identifying as Latvian. Although statistically significant, all of the correlation coefficients are weak.

Table 19. The correlates of group identities<sup>41</sup>

Variable	Description	Latvians	Russians of Latvia	Workers	In financial diff.
<b>Age</b>	Scale				
<b>Gender</b>	Dichotomous: Male (1), female (0)			-,052	
<b>Education</b>	Scale of four (lowest to highest)	-,061		,066	
<b>Income quartile</b>	Scale of four (lowest to highest)	-,055			
<b>Citizenship</b>	Dichotomous: citizen (1), non-citizen (0)	-,142	,359	,097	,067
<b>Ethnicity</b>	Dichotomous: Latvian (1), other ethnicity (0)	-,266	,474	,073	
<b>Religiousness</b>	Dichotomous: Believer (1), non-believer (0)	-,052			
<b>Size of locality</b>	Scale of four (smallest to biggest)		-,269	-,054	-,061

Perhaps the most unexpected outcome is that the income level does not correlate with either worker self-identification or with seeing oneself as a person in financial difficulties. Looking at the latter in more detail (see Table 20), it becomes clear that in 1993 the 62 percent of respondents who saw themselves among people who do not have much money were rather equally divided among the income quartiles: the difference between the lowest and the highest income group was only 7 percent. Also in 2010 there are people in all income groups who identify with those in financial difficulties. However, these 13 percent of the population are divided more unequally than in 1993: the difference between the lowest and highest group is 18 percent. But, as this group is much smaller than the one of 1993, it has less impact on the overall correlation coefficient.

Table 20. Identification with people in financial difficulties

Year	Income quartile				N
	1 lowest	2 middle low	3 middle high	4 highest	
<b>1993</b>	27,3%	28,1%	24,5%	20,2%	1328
<b>2010</b>	31,3%	31,3%	24,2%	13,1%	99

Next, we look at the territorial identities. For the analysis the identity categories that were described in the previous section are narrowed down to five: primary Europe, Europe- Latvia, national/local, Russia- Latvia, and primary Russia. The category “cosmopolitan” is excluded because it encompasses attachments to both ends of the ordinal scale (belonging to Europe and Russia at the same time) and thus cannot be included together with the other five categories without skewing the scale. This choice excludes 67 cases (1,6 percent of the total). In addition, the category “other” is excluded

<sup>41</sup> The values of the dependent variables are: 1-Yes, 2-No. Only significant correlations are shown. The reported correlation is Spearman’s rho, it was double-checked with gamma for the ordinal variables

because it does not provide an additional analytical value, thus leaving out another 308 cases (7,5 percent of the total). Please refer to Table 21 for descriptives of the resulting dependent variable.

*Table 21. Identification between Europe and Russia, by year (percent)*

Year	1 Primary Europe	2 Europe - Latvia	3 National / local	4 Russia - Latvia	5 Primary Russia	N
1993	1,5	3,5	66,9	12,8	15,3	1937
2004	0,9	5,9	68,6	9,3	15,3	902
2010	0,7	17,3	70,4	9,7	1,8	883

Just like with group identities, all the correlations between the dependent and the independent variables are weak. Among these, the strongest correlates for the dependent variable are citizenship and language of interview. This correlation is negative meaning that non-Latvian speakers and non-citizens held stronger identification with Russia – Latvia or primarily Russia. The inhabitants of cities and the elderly were also more likely to identify with Russia.

*Table 22. The correlates of identity categories*

Variable	Description	Significance	Correlation <sup>42</sup>
Age	Scale	Significant at the 0,01 level (2-tailed)	,046
Gender	Dichotomous: Male (1), female (0)	Not significant	
Level of education	Scale of four (lowest to highest)	Not significant	
Income quartile	Scale of four (lowest to highest)	Not significant	
Latvian citizenship	Dichotomous: citizen (1), non-citizen (0)	Significant at the 0,01 level (2-tailed)	-,420
Language of interview	Dichotomous: Latvian (1), Russian (0)	Significant at the 0,01 level (2-tailed)	-,447
Religiousness	Dichotomous: Believer (1), non-believer (0)	Not significant	
Size of locality	Scale of four (smallest to biggest)	Significant at the 0,01 level (2-tailed)	,160

In order to check the robustness of this outcome and to explore whether a bias is created towards ethnicity and citizenship by putting the ethnic homeland – Russia – of the majority of the Latvian ethnic minorities on one of the poles of the dependent variable, an alternative dependent variable was created. It focused on supranational identification with primarily European identification on one pole and purely local identification on the other. This variable had five categories: (1) primarily Europe<sup>43</sup>, (2) primarily Russia, (3) Europe-Latvia and Europe-Russia, (4) Latvia-Russia, (5) national/local identification.

Also in this analysis all of the correlations were below a coefficient of 0,5. Citizenship, language of interview and location remained the strongest correlates but the direction of correlation changed,

<sup>42</sup> The reported correlation is Spearman's rho, it was double-checked with gamma for the ordinal variables.

<sup>43</sup> "Primarily Europe" is chosen as the most supranational category because primarily identifying with Russia can function as an alternative national reference

namely, citizenship and language correlated positively, whereas size of locality correlated negatively with the dependent variable. Age remained a significant correlation and retained a positive direction. Gender, education and income also showed significant (negative) correlations, however these were very weak (-0,06 and lower), meaning that people with higher incomes, higher education and men were slightly more likely to hold supranational identifications.

The following paragraphs take a closer look at the independent variables that emerged as the most important in both analyses of correlation: language, citizenship, size of locality and age. The possible explanations for the insignificant effect of education, income and gender – all of which traditionally are among the most important effects on supranational identity – are considered as well.

First, language of interview emerges as the strongest correlate of the identification variable. As a reminder, language of interview has been used as a proxy for ethnicity because there is no data about the respondents' ethnicity from NBB 2004. Comparing the language of interview to data about ethnicity in the surveys of 1993 and 2010, it emerges that it is a near-perfect proxy for the Latvian ethnicity (98 percent overlap), whereas only 66 percent of those who did the survey in the Russian language indicated they were ethnic Russians<sup>44</sup>.

*Table 23. Identity categories by language of interview (percent)*

	1993		2004		2010	
	Latvian	Russian	Latvian	Russian	Latvian	Russian
<b>Primary Europe</b>	1,3	1,9	0,9	0,9	1,2	0,2
<b>Europe - Latvia</b>	3,3	3,8	7,1	3,7	19,7	15,1
<b>National - local</b>	91,8	32,9	88,9	33,2	75,9	65,4
<b>Russia - Latvia</b>	2,6	26,6	1,2	23,5	2,8	16,2
<b>Primary Russia</b>	1,0	34,8	1,9	38,7	0,5	3,1
<b>N</b>	1116	821	574	328	427	456

The comparison shows that in the first decade after independence Latvian speakers were almost exclusively identifying with national and local entities, this was especially the case in 1993. This observation can be explained by the fact that the early 1990s were a time of national revival: distancing from the USSR and building a national state after over 40 years of Soviet rule. The identifications of the Russian speakers largely correspond to what is known about the Soviet identity (see sections 1.1.3 and 1.2.1). Only a third of Russian speakers identified with Latvia or another local entity, the other two thirds expressed some form of supranational identification. The increased identification with primarily Russia in 2004 could at least partially be explained by the protests against the school language reform which, according to studies (Kļave, et al., 2004) served to alienate a part of the Russian speaking population from the Latvian state.

Although a part of the differences between the NBB and the BISS survey data can be explained by the different question format, six years after joining the EU the main identifications had changed. If Latvian speakers had been almost exclusively national-orientated in the 1990s, the identification with Europe has been growing and meanwhile the identification only with Latvia has decreased. However, this trend has not resulted in an increased identification with Europe primarily. Rather, the national identification has opened up to a European element. At the same time, the Russian speakers who

<sup>44</sup> 10% of the respondents indicated themselves as ethnic Latvian, 6% as ethnic Ukrainian, 8% as ethnic Belorussian, 5% ethnic Polish, and 6% were another ethnicity

held predominantly supranational identifications in the early 1990s have become more attached to Latvia and their identification with Russia has decreased.

The second most important correlation of the dependent variable is citizenship. As described in section 1.2.3, there are studies in which citizenship has emerged to be more important than ethnicity with regard to European identity (Makarovs & Strode, 2011). In general, the two independent variables are highly correlated with one another<sup>45</sup> with 98 percent of the Latvian speaking and only 46 percent of Russian speaking respondents being citizens of Latvia. Therefore it is not surprising that there are considerable similarities between the identification trends by language and citizenship.

*Table 24. Identity categories by citizenship (percent)*

Identity category	1993		2004		2010	
	Citizen	Non-citizen	Citizen	Non-citizen	Citizen	Non-citizen
<b>Primary Europe</b>	1,4	2,0	1,0	0,5	0,8	0,0
<b>Europe - Latvia</b>	3,7	2,9	6,6	3,5	19,2	7,6
<b>Latvia /locality</b>	80,6	31,5	79,0	32,7	72,6	59,3
<b>Russia - Latvia</b>	7,7	25,8	7,0	17,3	6,1	28,3
<b>Primary Russia</b>	6,6	37,8	6,4	46,0	1,2	4,8
<b>N</b>	1394	543	700	202	738	145

The citizens have been less nationally-orientated than the Latvian speakers and an approximately similar proportion of citizens have remained orientated towards the East. Meanwhile, the orientation towards the West, i.e., Europe, has been increasing. At the same time, the national attachments have increased for non-citizens but here the outcomes for the Russian speakers and the non-citizens slightly differ. The events of 2004 seem to have alienated the non-citizens even more as the proportion of those who primarily identify themselves with Russia increased by almost 10 percent points. And if in 2010 the identification with Europe-Latvia was at a similar level to that of Europe-Russia for Russian speakers, the non-citizens were clearly retaining a higher identification with Russia.

*Table 25. Identity categories by the type of residence location (percent)*

Location	Primary Europe	Europe - Latvia	Latvia /locality	Russia – Latvia	Primary Russia	N
<b>Village</b>	0,8	4,2	84,1	5,5	5,5	1198
<b>Small town</b>	0,9	6,7	73,6	9,8	9,0	857
<b>Big town</b>	1,2	11,4	57,8	13,7	16,0	431
<b>Capital</b>	1,8	9,5	52,5	16,8	19,3	1236

The size of the residence location of the respondents was the third most important correlate. There is a clear trend that the bigger the location, the more likely its respondents are to hold supranational identifications. While the villages and small towns are predominantly nationally and locally orientated (respectively, 84 percent and 74 percent), residents of the bigger towns and the capital hold more supranational identifications. Looking at European identifications specifically, the big towns are more “European” than Rīga which, in turn, has more respondents who identify with Russia

<sup>45</sup> Person correlation coefficient of 0,588

either primarily or in combination with a national attachment. This difference may at least partially be explained by the fact that, with the exception of Daugavpils, Rīga has the largest proportion of non-Latvians who, as shown before, identify with Europe comparatively less than ethnic Latvians.

Finally, the age of respondents was a weak but significant correlation of the identification variable. In Table 26 the respondents are split into three age groups: those younger than the age of 30, people in the ages between 31 and 55, and those older than 56. National identifications are predominant for all ages with the oldest age group being slightly more nationally-orientated. Comparing belonging to Latvia across the years, the gap between the oldest and the youngest generation has grown from 4 percent in 1993 to 7 percent in 2010. In all surveys the youngest generation has been the one with most Europe-orientated identifications: around twice higher than those of the oldest generation. Russia-orientated identifications have been rather similar across all age groups in 1993 and 2004, while in 2010 the oldest generation has remained as the one with the highest identifications with Russia, although the number of those identifying with Russia primarily is low.

*Table 26. Identity categories by the age of respondent (percent)*

Identity category	1993			2004			2010		
	Until 30	31 to 55	Above 56	Until 30	31 to 55	Above 56	Until 30	31 to 55	Above 56
<b>Primary Europe</b>	2,8	1,4	0,6	2,9	0,2	0,4	1,5	0,8	0,0
<b>Europe - Latvia</b>	4,9	3,7	2,1	7,3	6,3	4,0	26,7	14,9	13,9
<b>Latvia /locality</b>	65,0	66,9	69,0	66,0	66,2	75,1	63,1	74,1	70,7
<b>Russia - Latvia</b>	12,3	13,4	12,4	9,7	10,7	6,4	6,3	8,5	13,9
<b>Primary Russia</b>	15,0	14,6	16,0	14,1	16,6	14,1	2,4	1,8	1,4
<b>N</b>	472	888	525	206	447	249	206	390	287

Now when we have looked at the differences between language, citizenship, location and age groups, the question remains: how much of the differences in identifications do these independent variables explain? This question can be answered with the help of multiple regression (see Table 27). For the multiple regression model, the dichotomous language and citizenship variables as well as age and location of interview were included as predictors for the territorial identification variable. Although the model is significant, it only explains 23 percent of the variance<sup>46</sup> and only language and citizenship remain as variables that have a significant effect on territorial identification.

*Table 27. Multiple regression coefficients*

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error			
<b>(Constant)</b>	3,802	0,051		73,990	0,000
<b>Language</b>	-0,472	0,030	-0,290	-15,985	0,000
<b>Citizenship</b>	-0,451	0,034	-0,239	-13,107	0,000
<b>Location of interview</b>	0,019	0,010	0,029	1,900	0,057
<b>Age</b>	0,000	0,001	0,009	0,592	0,554

<sup>46</sup> To check robustness, multiple regression was also carried out for the alternative identity variable, described before. This model could predict 24% of the variance.

Overall, the analysis of correlates for group and territorial identifications underlines language/ethnicity and citizenship as the closest associates to differences in group and territorial identifications. The effect of the size of locality can be partially explained by the different ethnic composition of towns and cities. Age, on the other hand, has a weaker effect due to the fact that, despite differences with regards to other types of belonging, nation-orientated identifications are by far the most important in all age groups.

Perhaps the most surprising outcome is the lack of significant correlations between supranational belonging and the level of education and income. As described in section 2.2, these are among the most important predictors for European identification. A possible explanation for the lack of significance of education level is the different approach of measuring education between the surveys used in this study and the Eurobarometer. While Eurobarometer records years spent in education, the NBB and BISS surveys use the highest attained level of education. This does not distinguish between the levels of higher education (Bachelor – Master – Doctorate) and, as a consequence, potentially loses its predicting power for holding a supranational identity. This may especially be the case because Latvia is among the countries with the highest number of students per 10 000 inhabitants in the world (Cunška, 2010, p. 5).

As for the lacking effect of income, two explanations are possible. On the one hand it may have to do with the fact that the income distribution in Latvia is among the most unequal in Europe (Eurostat, 2011) and there is little evidence of an established middle and upper-middle class. On the other hand, in previous studies the impact of income on European identity has been related to more frequent travel and work experience of those who are well-off (Fligstein, 2009). While this has been typical for the Western intra-Europe labour movement, immigrants from the new accession countries are coming from all social strata and often occupy blue-collar positions. It is possible that this difference leads to a divergent relationship between income and supranational identifications, as well as education and supranational identifications.

### **5.3. IDENTITY STRUCTURE**

So far the analysis has shown that belonging to Europe is not among the most important identifications in Latvia, it is secondary to more national-local scale attachments. This subsection takes a closer look at the relationship of European identity to other identities. The exploration of identity relationships is done using data from the BISS survey of 2010 because neither of the two NBB surveys have suitable and comparable variables for analysing identity relationships. Specifically, the question B7 is used: “About which of the mentioned groups can you say that you feel a certain belonging to the extent that you could refer to you and them as “us”?”

The 22 categories are very different and range from kin to world-scale cultural ties, from groups based on ethno-linguistics to economic status (for the full list of answer categories please refer to Table 28). The first step towards understanding the underlying structure of this variety of categories is a factor analysis. Principal axis factoring was chosen as the method of extraction because it is the preferred factor analysis technique when the goal is to detect structure (StatSoft, 2012). A total of five factors fulfilled the Kaiser criterion of having an *eigenvalue* above 1.0 and extraction of five factors was also supported by the scree test.

Table 28. Groups the respondents would refer to as "us" (percent)

Group	%	Group	%
Latvians	56	Ordinary working people	28
Russians in Latvia	35	People who are well-off	5
Russians in Russia	12	People living in economic diff.	12
Ukrainians, Belarussians, Poles etc. ethnicities living in Latvia	16	People of my generation	39
All citizens of Latvia	34	People of my faith	19
Non-citizens of Latvia	17	People who know how to protect their interests	19
Europeans	13	People who are responsible towards the state	18
Colleagues, people of my profession	35	Latvian-speakers across the world	19
Classmates, course mates	38	Russian-speakers across the world	11
Friends	72	People of culture across the world	10
Relatives/family	81	People of my culture and traditions	25

N=1004

In an unrotated solution the majority variables loaded on the first factor, therefore orthogonal rotation (varimax) was applied to minimise the number of variables that have high loadings on each factor (Pallant, 2007, p. 176). In Table 29 loadings below 0,3 and the lowest values of variables that loaded on two factors if the difference was bigger than 0,1 are excluded.

Table 29. Results of the factor analysis<sup>47</sup>

	1	2	3	4	5
LV Russians	0,69	State respons. 0,51	Friends 0,74	Economic diff. 0,54	Latvians 0,58
RU Russians	0,67	Interest prot. 0,50	Family 0,66	Well-off 0,42	All citizens 0,48
Non-citizens	0,59	Colleagues 0,47	<i>Classmates</i> 0,45	Workers 0,41	<i>Latvian-sp.</i> 0,37
Minorities	0,57	<i>Classmates</i> 0,47		<i>My generation</i> 0,33	
Russian-sp.	0,47	Europeans 0,45		<i>My faith</i> 0,33	
		<i>My generation</i> 0,39			
		<i>My faith</i> 0,38			
		<i>Latvian-sp.</i> 0,38			
		My culture 0,37			
		World culture 0,36			

Factor one, as well as factor five, are clearly ethno-linguistic in character. Factor one encompasses such identities as Russians living in Latvia and Russia, non-citizens and minorities of Latvia as well as Russian speakers across the world. Factor five, on the other hand, holds Latvians, citizens of Latvia and Latvian speakers across the world. Factor three encompasses the closest ties: friends, family and also classmates. Factor four is socio-economic, holding the categories of people in economic difficulties, those who are well-off and workers. Also people of one's generation and one's faith load on this factor but their loadings are slightly stronger on factor two.

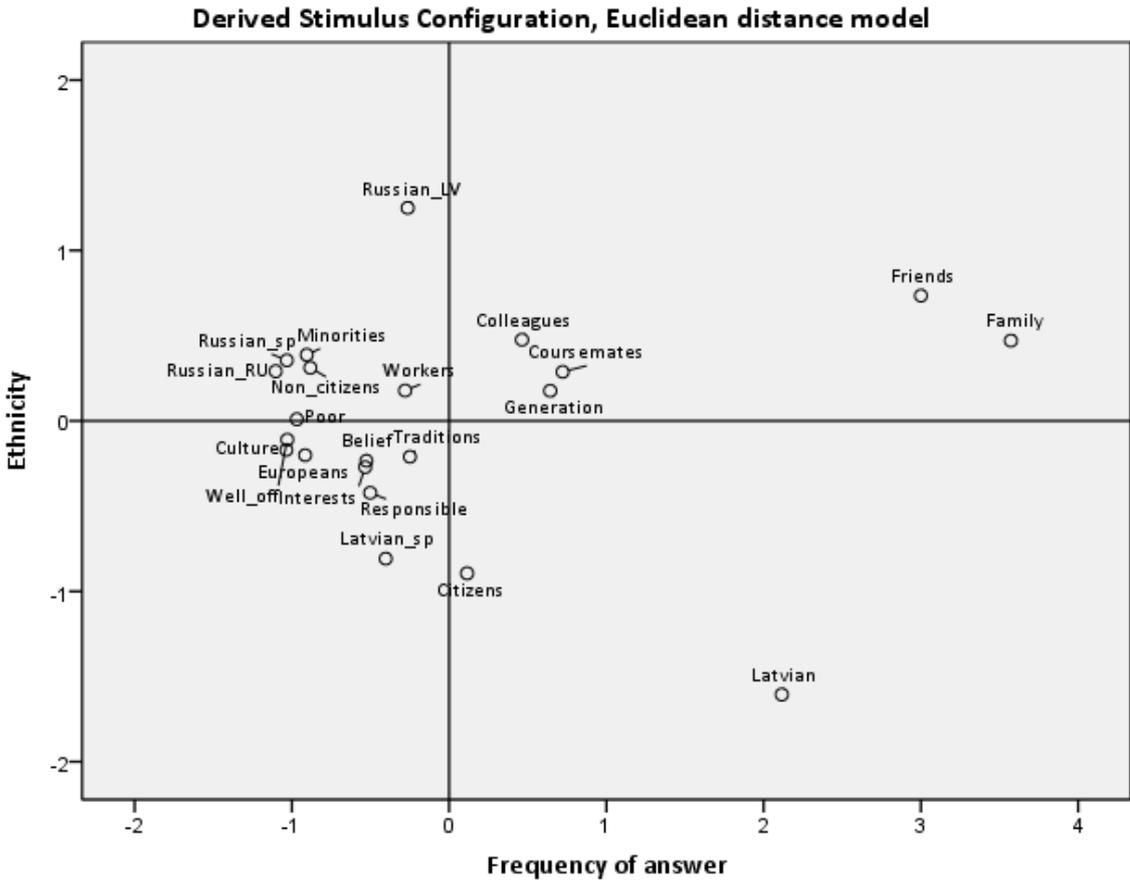
Factor two encompasses all other group identities: from people of culture to work colleagues, from people who know how to protect their interests to Europeans. Furthermore, all categories that load

<sup>47</sup> For the exact wording of answer categories please refer to Table 28. Variables that load on more than one factor are marked in Italics.

on more than one factor (Latvian speakers, my generation, my faith, and classmates) also find their place here. As opposed to the other four factors that can be easily characterised by the commonalities of identities they hold, factor two is a “leftover” factor. It encompasses many different identities, among them also European identity. The results of this analysis hint that European identity does not have much in common with identities of ethno-linguistic, socio-economic character or family ties, but are not very useful for establishing the place of European identity among other identities.

The next step of analysis was the technique called multidimensional scaling (MDS). As an exploratory statistical procedure MDS is an alternative to factor analysis. In contrast to the tables of factor analysis, it gives a visual representation of similarities (and dissimilarities) in the input data. In doing this, MDS allows for the detection of the underlying dimensions and structure of the data. Among the main advantages of MDS is the richness of the interpretation of the results as these can be done both via interpreting the dimensions (“dimensional interpretation”) and the configuration of the points in the matrix (“regional interpretation”) (Dickes, et al., 2010, p. 151). To use a common example, if the input data was a matrix of distances between different cities, the MDS output would show a spatial map of relative locations of these cities. In this case, the emergent dimensions would be of geographical direction: one corresponding to North-South, the other to East-West (Jaworska & Chupetlovska-Anastasova, 2009). The results of the MDS analysis of the identity categories can be seen in the Figure 3.

Figure 3. The structure of identity categories; results of multidimensional scaling<sup>48</sup>



<sup>48</sup> For the exact wording of answer categories please refer to Table 28

The two dimensions that the MDS model highlights as the structure of the identity categories are fairly straightforward to interpret. Dimension one depicts the frequency that each particular self-reference was chosen by the respondents, i.e. the importance of each identity category to the majority of the respondents. Dimension two is ethnicity: seeing oneself as Latvian or Russian in Latvia are the two end points of this dimension. Neither Latvian nor Russian self-references cluster together with any of the other identity categories. Latvian appears to be the stronger of the two on dimension one, likely because the majority of the survey respondents (65 percent) were ethnically Latvian and therefore the number of respondents who chose this particular self-reference was higher.

In the MDS model five distinct clusters of identities can be distinguished:

- 1) Family and friends;
- 2) Colleagues, classmates, and generation;
- 3) Russians in Russia, Russian speakers across the world, non-citizens, and other ethnicities in Latvia;
- 4) People who know how to protect their interests, people of one's religion, and people of one's culture and traditions;
- 5) Europeans, people of culture across the world, and people who are well-off.

There are several similarities between the MDS and the factor analysis results. The closest ties – family and friends – are the strongest and closest group attachments. It is followed by colleagues and classmates (in the MDS model also generation) which are among the strongest attachments. Both methods also clearly group ethno-linguistic categories. That said, in comparison with factor analysis, MDS gives more structure to some of various categories that were clustered in factor two.

The fourth group of attachments listed above includes culture, traditions and religion of the person together with standing up for one's interests. This is a group of a particular culture, one that is close to the person, it is their religion, their traditions; ones that perhaps are to be protected. The fifth group, on the other hand, can be interpreted as a more general culture: feeling related to Europe and the world. The two group together with identification to people who are financially well-off, hinting to a possible elite element in these supranational identifications which was not found in the previous analysis.

## **5.4. QUANTIFYING IDENTITY**

Now when the available evidence has been analysed, it is time to give answers to the four questions asked at the beginning of this chapter. The first and second questions inquired about the main social identities in Latvia and their changes since the early 1990s. The two types of group identities looked at – ethnicity and low socio-economic status – have decreased in their importance, yet particularly Latvian ethnic identity remains important for more than a half of the population. Regarding territorial identities, around 60 percent of the Latvian population hold exclusively national-local identities. Yet, if in the early 1990s the majority of other identifications were Russia-orientated, in 2010 there were more people with Europe-oriented identities. Europe is rarely the primary identification and it appears that, as opposed to identification with Russia, it lends itself better for combining with the national – local identifications. This observation can be explained by the fact that European identity is dependent upon national identity because national citizenship is a precondition

for a European citizenship (see section 2.2.2). In contrast, Russia offers an alternative territorial identification, distinct from and perhaps even contradictory to belonging to Latvia.

The third question inquired about group differences with regard to identification patterns. The analysis of correlates for group and territorial identifications outlined differences in identification between groups speaking Latvian or Russian and groups with or without national citizenship. Overall, with the exception NBB 1993 data, Latvian-speakers and citizens expressed more Europe-orientated identifications. Differences were found also between people from different size of residence locations and people of different ages. Age had a comparatively weaker effect because, despite differences in supranational identifications, national identifications are dominant in all age groups. The lack of significance of education and income can potentially be explained by a different pattern these variables have on impacting identification with Europe than described in studies focusing solely on Western Europe. If the West-to-West travel and migration experiences have disproportionately been available to the managerial and academic strata, the East-to-West experiences are often of blue-collar labour migration and not restricted to the elites.

Finally, the fourth question inquired about the place of European identity among other social identities. In the MDS model seeing oneself as European clusters together with attachment to “people of culture across the world” and “people who are well-off”: the two groups out of 22 that the least respondents could identify with (respectively, 10 percent and 5 percent). Thus, as opposed to the analysis of correlates, these two identifications position feeling European as a potentially elite phenomenon. This result, as well as the previously described conclusion that the most important identification differences exist between groups of ethnicity and citizenship, illustrate how the narrow focus of inquiring about European identity solely alongside identities of geographic reference is missing other potentially important aspects of European identity.

Ethnicity and citizenship emerged as the most important correlates for the identity variables, they had the most explanation power in the multiple regression model, they formed clear factors in the factor analysis and made up one of the dimensions of the MDS model. These outcomes raise additional questions: why are ethnicity and citizenship so divisive for identities in Latvia? Do they impact the supranational orientations? The particularities of the ethnic and citizenship issues in Latvia have already been discussed in chapter one, but data from the three surveys can give some additional information.

The NBB of 1993 characterises the early 1990s as a time of considerable uncertainty about the development of the situation. Although 62 percent of the respondents characterised the ethnic relations as very good or good and these feelings were almost equal among all ethnicities, 40 percent saw ethnic conflicts as a potential threat to peace in the future. The ethnic minorities were unsure about their future and possibilities: 41 percent was unsure whether living in Russia would be better or worse than in Latvia, 39 percent did not know whether Latvia offers them a better future. By 2004 the perception of threat from the ethnic minorities had slightly reduced, yet conflict with ethnic minorities was still seen as a distinct possibility by a third of the population, comparatively more often by the ethnic Latvians. When asked in 2010 whether their language and culture in Latvia is in danger, 56 percent of ethnic Latvian respondents replied affirmatively, while 34 percent of the ethnic Russians feared the same about their language and culture. At the same time, neither of the two

groups believed that the other is threatened: only 17 percent of ethnic Russians and 11 percent of ethnic Latvians believed that the culture of the other group is endangered.

These results point to deep rooted perceptions of threat from the other ethnic group and a sense of endangerment of one's own group in almost half of the population. This may explain the dominance of national – local identifications for the ethnic Latvians and the search for alternative identifications by the non-Latvians. Especially during the national revival period in the 1990s the ethnic minorities were often excluded from the nation-building process (Pabriks & Purs, 2002). It could be assumed that the resulting differences in national attachments may have lead to different patterns of supranational identifications. For ethnic minorities the increase in attachment to Europe has gone hand in hand with increased rates of naturalization, and since the accession to the EU a Latvian citizenship automatically means a European citizenship. Meanwhile, as described in section 5.2, non-citizens remain more strongly attached to Russia. It is possible that for the ethnic minority groups a lack of strong national identification leads to a search for non-national alternatives that can be found either in an orientation towards Russia or towards Europe. Meanwhile there is evidence that the ethnic Latvians have become more open to European belonging, likely as an extension of their national identification which since 2004 is formally "European". These indications need to be further examined in the qualitative interviews.

The search for answers to the questions about the main identities in Latvia and the place of European identity among them has illustrated the vulnerability of outcomes that is caused by different question formats. For instance, the 2010 survey data clearly shows that respondents are more likely to say that they feel close to Europe geographically (21 percent) than to call themselves European (13 percent). As a result, the results of this analysis that was based on three data sets have to be interpreted cautiously as the wording of the questions has differed from year to year. No single survey question can conclusively describe social identities in a country, instead the different questions analysed in this chapter have focused on the attachments, belonging or self-identification with different pre-defined identity categories.

Several of the results show that there are aspects of social identities that the surveys cannot shed much light on, e.g., the proportion of the respondents who chose either other identifications or could not define themselves within the given categories for the territorial identities was between 5 percent and 9 percent: higher than answers to several of the other given categories. Furthermore, all the significantly correlating independent variables in the multiple regression model taken together could explain less than a quarter of the variance of territorial identification.

Nevertheless, this analysis has given valuable information about social and collective identities in Latvia that can be employed for further inquiry. First, it highlights that there are differences between groups of different ethnicity, citizenship, location and age that can be important for the study and should be included in the sampling of the qualitative family interviews. Secondly, it outlines a list of topics that need to be included either in the expert or the family interviews. Most importantly, attention should be paid to the relationship between European and national, ethnic and national, as well as ethnic and linguistic identities. Furthermore, the interviews should explore the meanings of "Latvia", "Europe" and "Russia" for the respondents and establish whether generational differences exist only in the priority of identifications or also in the understandings of these identities.

## 6. TALKING ABOUT IDENTITY

The previous chapter provided some insights about identities in Latvia, highlighting the most important collective identities and marking issues that need to be looked at in more depth. This chapter begins the interview analysis part of this dissertation that provides an in-depth exploration of the main research questions through a thorough analysis of 30 interviews with 10 families across Latvia.

The interview analysis is organised in three chapters. This chapter describes the towns and the families, characterises the three generations and their most important life experiences, and outlines the primary identifications of the respondents. Chapter seven focuses on the meanings that Europe and European identity have for the respondents' and explores the identifications and stereotypes associated with belonging to Europe. Lastly, chapter eight tackles identity relationships, attempting to give an in-depth insight into that how European identity intertwines with other collective identities. These three chapters focus solely on describing and analysing the interview data, leaving attempts to interpret the findings in relation to the quantitative data, theories and previous research for the last chapter.

Throughout the interview analysis three kinds of comparisons are made: (1) between generations, (2) between towns, and (3) between ethnicities or language groups. Where applicable, also particularities of specific families are highlighted. In this and the following two chapters the term "generation" is used to indicate the respondents' place in their family, i.e. their "natural" generation. A discussion about which of the observed characteristics can be attributed to the respondents' age, cohort or generation<sup>49</sup> follows in the last chapter (see section 9.1.3)

### 6.1. INTRODUCTION

Just as the diversity of identities in Latvia cannot be properly understood without knowing their historical context, the stories of the interviewees cannot be told without some explanation of their context. The purpose of this introductory subchapter is to give some of the necessary background information, focusing first on the towns and second on the individual families.

#### 6.1.1. THE TOWNS

The three towns differ not only in their size and ethnic composition as described in chapter four (see section 4.3). Each of them also illustrates a different part of the history and the present of Latvia. While Rīga has always been a cosmopolitan trade city and the centre of the country, Kuldīga has long been ruled by the Baltic German nobility and today is at the heart of the proudest region of Latvia – Kurzeme. Meanwhile, the history of Daugavpils – and the region of Latgale in general – has been tied to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the region has retained a distinct character among the other regions of Latvia.

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<sup>49</sup> For an overview of the meaning of the terms please refer to section 3.2.2.



## KULDĪGA

Population<sup>50</sup>: 11 456

Ethnic division: 92,5% Latvian, 2,8% Russian, 1,3% Lithuanian, 1,1% Roma, 2,4% other ethnicity

Fieldwork: May 2011

Figure 4. Pedestrian street in Kuldīga

Kuldīga is located in the heart of the region of Kurzeme in the Western part of Latvia. Today it is a rather small town but it has a long history that it is proud of. The town was founded in the 13<sup>th</sup> century when the Livonian Order of Knights built a castle here, naming the town *Goldingen*. Although not located by the sea, the river Venta was suitable for shipping and Kuldīga became a member of the Hanseatic League in 1368.

After the fall of the Livonian Confederation in the 16<sup>th</sup> century Kuldīga became one of the capitals of the Duchy of Courland, ruled by the Kettler family<sup>51</sup>. At its peak of power in the second part of the 17<sup>th</sup> century the Duchy briefly established colonies in West Africa and the Caribbean (Kasekamp, 2010, p. 48). The Duchy came to its end in 1795 and its territory became a part of Russian Empire's Baltic provinces but the Courland nobility kept their privileges also under the new rule (ibid, p. 66). In the period of railway development in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Kuldīga was not included in the railway network and the former economic centre of the region became a small and quiet town (Kuldīgas Tūrisma Attīstības Centrs, n.d.).

Today Kuldīga is a popular tourist attraction because of its medieval architecture, especially its 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century wood buildings, and the widest waterfall in Europe. Its historical centre is included both in the UNESCO World Heritage and European Heritage lists. In the last years the town's leadership has been very active and efficient in attracting European funding for the development of the town: alone in the last three years over 100 projects have been carried out with partial funding from the European Union Structural Funds (Kuldīga Municipality, 2012).



## RĪGA

Population<sup>52</sup>: 650 478

Ethnic division: 44,6% Latvian, 39,1% Russian, 4,1% Belorussian, 3,7% Ukrainian, 1,9% Polish, 0,9% Lithuanian

Fieldwork: May 2011, March 2012

Figure 5. Livu square, Old Town of Rīga

<sup>50</sup> Data from the Kuldīga Municipality (n.d.)

<sup>51</sup> The first duke of Courland, Gotthard Kettler, was the last master of the Order of Livonia. His Livonian knights transformed themselves into the land-owning nobility (Kasekamp 2010: 48).

<sup>52</sup> Data from the Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia (2013)

Rīga is the capital of Latvia and the biggest city of the Baltic States. The location of Rīga at mouth of the river Daugava made it an important trade point already in the early Medieval Ages as it was on the Viking river route to Byzantium. The city itself was founded in 1201 as the seat of the Archbishop who led the Crusades to the Baltics. Rīga gained city rights in the 13<sup>th</sup> century (Kasekamp, 2010, p. 36) and thanks to its geographic location the city prospered through trade between the Hanseatic League and the Russian lands to the East, accessed by the river Daugava.

Over the centuries the city of Rīga has been ruled by the Livonian Order of Knights, the Archbishopric, it has briefly been a free city (1561-1581), subsequently taken by the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (1581-1621) and the Swedish king (1621-1710). During the Great Northern War in 1710 Rīga was conquered by the Russian Tsar and in the next centuries served as the regional centre for the Tsar administration. Becoming a part of the Russian Empire was marked by attempts to reduce the influence of German tradesmen who had hitherto played a considerable role in the city's history (Latvijas vēstures enciklopēdija, 2012). In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the population of Rīga rapidly increased as a result of the emancipation of serfs and industrialization. By population, at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Rīga was the third biggest city of the Russian Empire (Latvijas vēstures enciklopēdija, 2012) and the trade and industrial centre of the region.

At the end of World War I Rīga became the capital of the independent Latvia and in the 1920s and 1930s for the first time in its history the cosmopolitan Rīga became more Latvian as the number of ethnic Latvian inhabitants rose to a little over 60 percent (Latvijas vēstures enciklopēdija, 2012). After the World War II Rīga was the capital of the Latvian SSR and the number of inhabitants began to rise once again, due to immigration by 1989 the proportion of Latvians in Rīga had sunk to a mere 36,5 percent (Centrālā statistikas pārvalde, 2013).

Today Rīga continues to be the economic and social heart of Latvia. The historical city centre is included in the UNESCO World Heritage list and in 2014 Rīga takes on the role of the European Capital of Culture. Like Kuldīga, also Rīga is active in the use of available funding from various EU sources, chiefly the structural and the cohesion funds (Riga City Council, 2012).



#### **DAUGAVPILS**

Population<sup>53</sup>: 91 478

Ethnic division: 51,0% Russian, 18,3% Latvian, 14,1% Polish, 7,9% Belorussian, 2,1% Ukrainian, 0,9% Lithuanian

Fieldwork: October/November 2011, March 2012

Figure 6. Unity House, Daugavpils

Daugavpils is the second biggest town in Latvia and the centre of the East region of Latgale. Like Rīga, it is located by the river Daugava. Daugavpils is close to the borders with Lithuania (25 km) and Belarus (35 km), also the border to Russia is just a little more than 100 km away. Like Kuldīga, Daugavpils (also called *Dinaburg* or *Dvinsk*) was founded by the Livonian Order in 1275; it gained Magdeburg city rights in 1582 (Daugavpils novada tūrisma informācijas centrs, n.d.).

<sup>53</sup> Data from the Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia (2013)

The region of Latgale (also known as *Inflanty*) was part of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth from the 16th to mid-18th century and, as a consequence, it developed an identity distinct from the other ethnic Latvian lands that were ruled by Lutheran Germans. *Inflanty*, in turn, was mainly Catholic and was in the hands of a mixture of Polish, Lithuanian, German and Ruthenian land-owners (Kasekamp, 2010, p. 48). The main occupations of the region were farming and stock raising, only Daugavpils was more developed with regards to crafts, trade and later also industry (Latvijas vēstures enciklopēdija, 2012).

As a result of the first partition of Poland, Latgale was incorporated into the Russian Empire in 1772 and included into the Vitebsk province. The region's biggest city Daugavpils bloomed economically with the construction of railway lines to Petersburg, Warsaw and Rīga in the late 19th century. The economic and also cultural development continued into the time of the inter-war independence. Due to its history, in this period Daugavpils was highly ethnically mixed: the town's population was 34 percent Latvian, 25 percent Jewish, 18 percent Polish, and 18 percent Russian (Daugavpils City Portal, 2011). After considerable destruction during the World War II, Daugavpils was rebuilt during the Soviet time, growing considerably and becoming more industrially developed (Daugavpils novada tūrisma informācijas centrs, n.d.)

Today Daugavpils is a multi-ethnic town and, although the town itself fares well economically, it is located in the poorest region of Latvia. Like Kuldīga and Rīga, also Daugavpils is attempting to use EU funds for development; however, it has not yet reached the scope of projects alike those of the much smaller Kuldīga: in 2011 there were 30 projects carried out with co-funding of the EU (Daugavpils pilsētas dome, 2012). Also tourism is comparatively less developed here than in the other interview locations.

### **6.1.2. THE FAMILIES**

The focus of the interviews was families, specifically, representatives of three generations within one family. Each of the families is different and, before turning to the interview analysis, some words need to be said about the different life stories of the 30 interviewees. The descriptions below are ordered by city and language. Despite of the distinction between two language groups, many of the family stories show that the borders between the groups, as well as the relations between ethnicity and language, can be ambiguous.

For ease of recognition, the pseudonyms for members of one family begin with the same letter. In addition, the names chosen are to an extent linguistically-specific: with few exceptions, typical Latvian names were taken for the Latvian speakers and Russian names for the Russian-speakers. A summary table of the respondents' replies about territorial belonging can be found in Appendix G.

#### **Family A, Kuldīga**

- Grandmother Anna
- Mother Anita
- Daughter Alise

The three generations live together in a house that belonged already to Anna's parents and that has been expanded over the years. Anna at 62 years of age is the youngest among the oldest generation interviewees. She has lived and worked in Kuldīga her whole life. Now retired, she continues to be an

active lady who enjoys travelling. Her daughter Anita is 42 years old and, following a rather diverse work life, is currently unemployed. Anita is the mother of two children; her oldest son is currently studying in Denmark and his sister Alise, who is 18 years old and in her last year of school, is planning to follow suit.

#### **Family D, Kuldīga**

- Grandmother Daiga
- Mother Dace
- Son Dainis

Family D lives in two adjacent flats in the same building. The grandmother Daiga is 80 years old and has been living in the town since the 1960s. In the last years she rarely leaves home and most of Daiga's opinions are shaped by what she reads and sees in the mass media or from the stories of her family. Her daughter Dace is 46 years old and, after a few years of living elsewhere in the late 1980s and early 1990s, she has returned to her hometown to be closer to her aging parents and to raise her children. Dace works at the local school and characterises herself as a person who tries to keep an open mind and to adjust to life's changes. Her youngest son Dainis is 19 years old, he has just begun his studies and moved away from home. He has been folk dancing since the age of seven and travels abroad regularly with his dance collective.

#### **Family I, Kuldīga**

- Grandmother Inga
- Mother Inese
- Son Ivars

Grandmother Inga is 62 years old and lives only a few minutes' walk away from her daughter's family. Following a long work life, Inga has been in retirement since the early 1990s. She currently leads a rather quiet life but always sets aside some money for going to Rīga to a see play or an opera. Her daughter Inese is 42 years old and the mother of two children of whom Ivars is the oldest one. Inese is currently working in the local administration and is quite disillusioned by the current situation in Latvia and Europe. Her son, Ivars, on the other hand is an optimistic and patriotic young man. At 18 he is in the last year of school and is very active in organising events both in his school and in the town.

#### **Family M, Rīga**

- Grandmother Marta
- Mother Maija
- Son Mareks

Grandmother Marta is a 72 year old retiree and a mother of three; she lives with one of her sons while the other son and his family live in England. She feels closely attached to Latvia and has never enjoyed travelling. Her daughter Maija is 51 years old and the opposite of her mother – a musicologist by education, her daily work is closely tied to culture and involves frequent travel across Europe and international contacts. Her only son Mareks, aged 18, sees himself as an artist and a citizen of the world. He has one more year of school before him and is currently seeking his future path.

### **Family S, Rīga**

- Grandmother    Sarma
- Mother            Sandra
- Daughter        Signe

Sarma, although aged 64, is still not retired and lives separately from her two children. After a long career in industry, the last ten years she works as an interviewer for household surveys. Her daughter Sandra is 45 years old and works at a publishing house. She was active in the independence movement in the early 1990s and for her being a Latvian continues to be highly important. Sandra's daughter Signe is 18 years old and has just finished the 11<sup>th</sup> grade of school. Like the other young people, also she is actively searching for future possibilities and does not exclude the option of studies abroad.

### **Family O, Rīga**

- Grandmother    Olga
- Mother            Oksana
- Daughter        Olesja

Grandmother Olga is 71 years old and born in Belorussia in a family of a Latvian father and a Belorussian mother. She has been living in Latvia since the school age and sees herself as a Latvian while the rest of her family – her late husband, her children and grandchildren – are Russian. Her daughter in law, Oksana, is 45 years old and works as a cashier. She is a non-citizen and feels detached from the political events in the country. Her daughter Olesja is 17 and already knows that she wants to spend her life doing (or teaching) dancing. She is an ambitious and goal-orientated young woman who does not limit her opportunities to one country.

### **Family T, Rīga**

- Grandmother    Tamara
- Mother            Tatjana
- Daughter        Tanja

The three generations of this family live together in the same flat. The grandmother Tamara is 70 years old; she was born in Belorussia to a Polish family and moved to Rīga, the city her grandparents had lived in, in 1960 to work in a factory. She speaks Polish and Russian but has never learned Latvian and has therefore remained a non-citizen. Her youngest daughter Tatjana is 41 years old and works as an accountant in a catering company. Although Russian is her main language of communication, Tatjana feels no connection to Russia as a country. Her only child, daughter Tanja, is 17 years old and studies in the 11<sup>th</sup> grade. A physical disability has lead her to studying in a Latvian language school because the accessibility by wheelchair, not language determined the choice of school. Tanja fills the role of family translator, especially for her grandmother, and is trying to decide on a direction of university studies.

### **Family E, Daugavpils**

- Grandmother    Ella
- Mother            Eva
- Son                Edgars

Ella is 65 years old and lives on her parent's countryside lands not too far from the city. She has been in retirement for a few years now and, together with her husband who is a Moldavian, spends her days taking care of the house and the farm. Her daughter Eva is 38 years old, she lives in Daugavpils and works in a trading company. Although half-Moldavian, she has little connections to Moldova and feels a strong belonging to Latvia, her motherland. Eva's son Edgars is 19 years old and is in his last year of studies in a secondary school of art. He feels equal belonging to the Latvian and Russian speaking environments as both languages are used in the family as well as in his circle of friends.

#### **Family L, Daugavpils**

- Grandmother Larisa
- Mother Ludmila
- Daughter Laura

Grandmother Larisa is 73 years old. A statistician by profession, she has been in retirement since 1993. Larisa's family is of Polish origin and they have been living in Daugavpils for generations, yet neither she nor her children speak the Polish language, Russian is their mother tongue. Larisa has two children, her son lives in Lithuania while her daughter has remained nearby. Ludmila does social work and is 41 years old, she is a dynamic person and takes an active part in various local events. Her daughter Laura, a creative young woman interested in art and dance, is 19 and in her last year of school. Although she currently learns in a Latvian school, Laura feels closer to and more comfortable among Russian speakers.

#### **Family N, Daugavpils**

- Grandmother Nellija
- Mother Natalja
- Son Nils

Nellija is 67 years old, she was born in Belorussia and moved to Daugavpils at the age of 22. She retired in 2000 after a work life as a school nurse. A Belorussian by ethnicity, she is a non-citizen whose ties with Russia are reinforced by the fact that her son and his family live in Russia. Her daughter Natalja is 40 years old, a mother of three children, and works in a local newspaper. Natalja has undergone the naturalization procedure, yet feels very closely tied to the Russian language and culture. Her son Nils is one of the youngest interviewees, at 16 he is still in school and considering his future plans which are tied either with studies in Europe or Russia.

The stories of each of these ten families are diverse and the experiences of each of the thirty respondents – unique. The following subchapters will try to discover similarities in these stories and find out how the different life experiences have impacted respondents' identities.

## **6.2. BRIDGING TIME: THE THREE GENERATIONS**

Almost every single one of the interviewees could identify themselves as members of a generation. When talking about their generation and comparing it to other generations, the respondents drew upon their life experiences. In their stories a particular role was taken by life in the Soviet time, the establishment of independence and, to slightly lesser extent, the new challenges and opportunities given by the EU membership. Especially the transition period of the late 1980s and the early 1990s

has left important marks on the life courses of the oldest and middle generation respondents, whereas the youngest generation is distinguished through its lack of this experience.

In general, generational belonging in Latvia appears to be independent of people's language or ethnicity. At least, according to all of the respondents who were willing to make such a comparison: many Latvians, particularly in Kuldīga, and some Russian speakers in Daugavpils said that they cannot compare the groups because they do not know enough people from other ethnicities. The respondents who answered about possible differences between the groups underlined that all people who live in Latvia, independent of their language or ethnicity, have undergone similar life experiences. A good explanation is given by Natalja who does not see differences between ethnicities but outlines generational differences:

"I think that the people being 40, whether they are Russians or Latvians or of another nationality, for example, Polish, they treat life in the same way as well. (...) And I think that as for the current moment, me as a Russian and somebody as a Latvian have the same conditions, we may achieve the same results. (...) At least among the people with whom I communicate, whom I know, I think, we are treating life in the same way. And it is changing with age, that's true. I have a feeling, that I don't fully understand my children and don't understand my parents, the people of that generation. I haven't seen the difference that an old man who is Latvian and an old man who is Russian give a different assessment of the reality."  
*(Natalja, middle, Daugavpils, Russian)*<sup>54</sup>

In the following overview each of the generations is given a name. The elderly are called the post-war generation, the middle-aged are referred to as the children of the perestroika, and the youngest are labelled as the generation of risky opportunities. Each of these labels stems from the interviews and alludes to a unifying characteristic of the generation that has shaped the life paths of its members. While the opportunities of the elderly were moulded by the post-war rebuilding of the Soviet Union, the perestroika made a sharp cut in the lives of their children, figuratively speaking, changing the rules in the middle of the game. Meanwhile, compared to the generations before, the youngest generation is growing up in very different circumstances, characterised by bigger freedoms and cross-border opportunities but also by bigger risks.

### **6.2.1. THE POST-WAR GENERATION**

The age gap between the oldest and the youngest among the respondents of the first generation is 18 years. The oldest of the interviewees is Daiga who was born in 1931 and was already 80 years old at the time of interview, while the youngest, Anna, was born in 1949 and was 62 years of age. There is an even larger gap with regards to the retirement ages of this generation (see Table 30) largely because retirement used to depend on the number of years in employment. Despite these differences, the people of the oldest generation share similar life experiences as their youth as well the biggest part of their adulthood has been spent in the Soviet times.

Only Daiga has some childhood memories about the times before the Second World War - she tells about cattle ranching at her parents' farm - but for all the interviewees, including Daiga, the war and the period before it are something they remember little, if at all. As expressed by Sarma (elderly, Rīga, Latvian): "I was born in 1947, right after the war, now it counts as the post-war years. When we were growing up in that time, when we started going to school, for us it felt that the war had been

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<sup>54</sup> Here and further the quotes will be identified by the name, generation, location, and language of interview.

sometime very long ago." Nevertheless, the school years and the careers of this generation were shaped by the post-war rebuilding of the Soviet Union. As remembered by Larisa from Daugavpils:

"Well, we suffered through many things [literal translation: went through cold and hunger], as it was very difficult, everybody was living badly after the war, our town was completely destroyed, for 70 percent. (...) There were no places for living as everything had been destroyed. I got a flat just in 1963. And before that there had, in fact, been no place to live in." (*Larisa, oldest, Daugavpils, Russian*)

Table 30. The oldest generation, sorted by age

Pseudonym	Age	Birth year	Retirement	Town
Daiga	80	1931	1986	Kuldīga
Larisa	73	1938	1993	Daugavpils
Marta	72	1939	1988	Rīga
Inga	72	1939	1994	Kuldīga
Olga	71	1939	n/a	Rīga
Tamara	70	1941	1992	Rīga
Nelliija	67	1944	2000	Daugavpils
Ella	65	1946	2008	Daugavpils
Sarma	64	1947	working	Rīga
Anna	62	1949	2009	Kuldīga

Several of the interviewees remember the 1960s and the 1970s as a time of intensive building and restructuring - from construction of houses and hospitals to changes in study programmes. The navigation of this changing system to get an education or to acquire a place of living was not always easy and is elaborated on by several of the respondents in considerable detail. During the Soviet time an important means for both career advancement and social inclusion was Party membership. As illustrated by the following quotes from interviews, the chances of getting a job or a promotion in the bustling times were often dependent on the local Party Committees, and the right choice of a workplace, in turn, could lead to better living conditions:

"[The department chief] once comes to my home and says that I should go work for him as the senior accountant. (...) He cast a fishing rod: yes, we are going to build a house, you will have a flat in a newly built house, so I was hired. (...) I was working there for three years... Then [another department] was being organised and they again gathered employees from the whole town. And again the Party Committee was acting, they called me to the Party Committee, well, all the companies have to give a person for the new organisation so that it can start working. Now they have imagined that I could be the chief accountant. Again a flat, the foundations will be laid already in half a year and whatever rooms you want - one, two, three room flats."<sup>55</sup> (*Daiga, oldest, Kuldīga, Latvian*)

"We have built this house [referring to the apartment building the informant lives in]. Well, our factory<sup>56</sup>, I think, that everybody knew that it was very... that it had everything on its own, such as health resorts for children, and summer camps, and concert-halls. So, here, our concert-hall VEF, and the factory was very influential on its own. The houses were built here, and everything was provided in general." (*Tamara, oldest, Rīga, Russian*)

<sup>55</sup> The department names are left out to preserve the confidentiality of the informant

<sup>56</sup> The respondent worked in the VEF (State Electrotechnical Factory), the leading communication technology producer in the Soviet Union and the largest factory in Latvian SSR

The new ways of life in the Soviet Union were not always easy to accept for the parents of this generation. Some of the respondents allude to the difficulties their parents experienced and their stories highlight that this generation differs from its parents who had grown up in very different circumstances and had experienced two world wars as well as 20 years of independent statehood. For instance, Inga tells a story of a generational conflict between her and her mother regarding membership in political organisations. While for her the participation in the Pioneers or the Komsomol<sup>57</sup> was important for social inclusion, her mother found it irreconcilable with her religious beliefs.

"An important moment in my life is that my mother was firmly religious, catholic. I was not allowed to join either the Pioneers or the Komsomol which I wanted to tears - all the other children go but I do not have the red necktie. Even teachers and leaders of the Pioneers came to our home but mother refused. I was consecrated when I was little, I am baptised, and we were taunted in the newspapers, well one could not and should not do that in the Soviet time. So when I got free, when I moved here [to *Kuldīga*]... already while I was studying I had friends, I even shared dorms with boys from the party school and we became friends, well then they wanted to admit me in the Komsomol without any queues, I refrained from that. But here, when I moved here then... Well, that is how it is. (*Inga, oldest, Kuldīga, Latvian*)

Overall, the life-courses of the post-war generation are characterized by a remarkable stability: all of them have spent their working lives in the same town and worked in the same occupational branch. With the exception of Sarma (*Rīga, Latvian*) who, after retiring from a managerial position at a factory, began working as an interviewer for household surveys, the only career changes for the other informants were brought about by promotions or switching departments. The stability and social security during the Soviet times is something that the older generation interviewees still appreciate, and particularly the Russian speaking respondents contrast it with the present situation that is characterised by less stability and increasing costs:

"We had our goals, we were working, we knew that we would always have a job, a pension. (..) I knew that if I went to work, I would get money, would work and then would get my pension. And now people don't know how to live and what tomorrow will bring." (*Nellija, oldest, Daugavpils, Russian*)

"I had a permanent job, a permanent salary; I remember paying 13 Rubles for the public services. I had enough money. I was working and getting a salary of 250 Rubles and that was a big money at that time. I could buy something if not at once, then taking a loan. I could educate my daughter, she finished an institute. We didn't have it like we have it now, that you have to save and save all the time. Medicine was free of charge, education. My granddaughter will finish school and I don't know whether we will be able to get her into higher education. One will need to pay the tuition fees. If she goes to *Rīga*, we will have to pay for accommodation and food. I doubt we will be able to do that. And everything was free of charge during the Soviet time, only accommodation was not." (*Larisa, oldest, Daugavpils, Russian*)

For the oldest generation the independence movement and the break from the Soviet Union came at a time when their work lives were completed or were close to being completed. Six out of ten interviewees retired either a few years before or directly after the restoration of independence in 1991. Inga who retired in 1994 remembers:

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<sup>57</sup> Youth organization for those aged 10 to 15 and the youth division of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

"It was a nightmare. My salary was 17 lats or 17 Latvian rubles<sup>58</sup>, something like that. Everyone was being fired (..) it was something horrible, I was kept because I had been working there from the first to the last day. Others were fired and people left in tears..." (*Inga, oldest Kuldīga, Latvian*)

For Inga, as for many others, her previous membership in the Communist party endangered her work position after the independence, despite the participation of her and her husband in the Barricades<sup>59</sup>. Furthermore, Inga notes that she cannot deny the time of her youth, the best years of her life just because they happened under a regime that in the present times is defined as a grim interlude between two periods of independence:

"I have to say, also we, looking at it that way... also I was a patriot in the Soviet times (..) I, for example, cannot deny all those Soviet years at all - it was my youth, it was my school, my friends at the time, it was all my society, where I was... well it was that way and disregarding everything, perhaps it was hard and there were no products, but I was happy. We sang and danced, laughed and went, and drove and ran all the same. No, well, it was our time no matter how it was and I do not deny or inveigh it at all. Let's say when Stalin died we cried... I was learning in primary school then, it was terrible (laughing) such crocodile tears. One has to laugh afterwards." (*Inga, oldest, Kuldīga, Latvian*).

The repositioning of the Soviet time and everything that is associated with it has been especially harsh for some of the ethnic minority informants. For instance, Tamara is upset by the ethnic division following the regaining of independence and she is particularly hurt by being called an "occupant". Tamara outlines her experiences and compares them to the labour mobility of people nowadays:

"I think, it comes just when they don't understand, when they want to abase one with saying words like "the occupants"! You see, during perestroika we were working at the factory together and when the perestroika came, we began to divide. I am just interested: who was occupying whom? Was it me who occupied you? Secondly, you have invited me, you were coming there and inviting. I tell, think of the history, if you don't want to go into details, and I have personally lived through it. As I personally, my grandpa, my granny, everybody, we came here freely, there were no people to work here. They were coming and asking. The factories were opened that time. Yes, it was such a time. As our people are moving now. Why are you moving? And that time it was also like that. Well, in what way have I occupied you?!" (*Tamara, oldest, Rīga, Russian*)

Today respondents of the post-war generation are not as active as they used to be, and the restrictions imposed by their age and their health mean that many of them truly feel as people of the "oldest generation". Respondents talk about the narrowing circles of friends and acquaintances, the inability to travel or even to leave home very often. Their opportunities are also limited financially, e.g., Ella (Daugavpils, Latvian) explicitly compares the present financial possibilities of her and other people her age with the earlier life: "Our pensions are very small, of course it is hard. We have worked a lot and our salaries were not bad for the time but now we are not doing that well".

Although the youngest among the interviewees of this generation (e.g. Sarma and Anna) still lead rather active lives, overall the elderly have been less impacted by the opportunities that accession to the EU in 2004 has brought about. Similarly, also the financial crisis that began in 2009 has had less

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<sup>58</sup> A currency issued by the Central Bank between 1992 and 1993 in transition from the Russian rubles to the national currency, the Latvian lats.

<sup>59</sup> "The Barricades" refers to the building and manning of barricades for protecting possible Soviet targets in January 1991 organised by the Popular Front after a Soviet military attack on Lithuania. Between 15 000 and 16 000 people from all over Latvia took part.

impact on this generation, particularly if compared to their children who are active in the labour market. Nevertheless, the crisis has left the elderly worried about the insufficiency of their pensions, the unemployment levels, and the large emigration. The latter was mentioned by almost all of the respondents: many of them have a child or a grandchild who has left the country to work or study abroad.

When comparing themselves to the other generations, the informants of this generation stress several qualities that distinguish them from the younger generations. Most notably, some respondents believe that they have different moral values, stemming from good literature and upbringing (Sarma, Rīga, Latvian), that they are less materialistic and more focused on the non-material values (Ella, Daugavpils, Latvian), as well as more frugal (Daiga, Kuldīga, Latvian; Ella, Daugavpils, Latvian). Also, some characterise their generation as educated, hard working people who were not as spoiled as the generation of their grandchildren (Olga, Rīga, Russian). At the same time, their children remark that the Soviet experience has made the older generation more scared or at least more reflective about what they say and how they say it<sup>60</sup>. They try to be tolerant, yet do not always understand the modern life and the opportunities open for their children and, especially, their grandchildren (Sandra, middle, Rīga, Latvian).

## 6.2.2. CHILDREN OF THE PERESTROIKA

The respondents of the second generation were born between 1960 and 1973 and in the early 1990s when Latvia became independent the majority of them had recently finished or were about to finish their education. Based on their life experiences, some of the interviewees (Maija, Rīga, Latvian; Inese, Kuldīga, Latvian) delineated the borders of their generation in a 10- to 20-year amplitude. Several of the interviewees referred to themselves as the generation "in the middle" (Anita, Kuldīga, Latvian), the "generation of transition" (Ludmila, Daugavpils, Russian), the ones "thrown out from life" (Eva, Daugavpils, Latvian), or – as referred to in this subchapter's title – "the children of the perestroika" (Tatjana, Rīga, Russian).

*Table 31. The middle generation, sorted by age*

Pseudonym	Age	Birth year	Graduation	Town
<b>Maija</b>	51	1960	mid-1980s	Rīga
<b>Dace</b>	46	1965	1988	Kuldīga
<b>Oksana</b>	45	1965	ca. 1988	Rīga
<b>Sandra</b>	45	1966	1991	Rīga
<b>Anita</b>	42	1968	n/a	Kuldīga
<b>Inese</b>	41	1970	ca. 1992	Kuldīga
<b>Tatjana</b>	41	1970	n/a	Rīga
<b>Ludmila</b>	41	1970	1992	Daugavpils
<b>Natalja</b>	40	1971	1995	Daugavpils
<b>Eva</b>	38	1973	n/a	Daugavpils

The middle generation were brought up and educated in the Soviet times, yet by the time their work careers were about to begin, the rules of the game had radically changed due to democratisation and

<sup>60</sup> This observation is supported by the fact that people of the older generation were the ones most difficult to convince to take part in the interview and in several cases were the family members who refused, making it necessary to look for another family

transition to a market economy. As Inese (Kuldīga, Latvian) notes, compared to her son, she is still the "Soviet product who knows what it means to queue and who knows what it means when you have nothing". Also Natalja (Daugavpils, Russian) characterises her generation as those who still had the Soviet experience in their childhood but, as opposed to Inese who compares the financial circumstances, Natalja focuses on the experiences and values: "My whole childhood were spent in the Soviet period of this country, we were brought up as the Soviet children, we were the pioneers, the member of the Komsomol, and now we have a different kind of moral principles".

The interviews brought to light some differences in the perception of the transition among the people of this generation. While for those born in the mid-1960s, especially the Russian-speakers, the sudden changes were severe and had a big impact on their lives, for those just five years younger the immediate impact on their lives was not as significant. These differences of perception are illustrated by the quotes below. Oksana (Rīga, Russian) and Eva (Daugavpils, Latvian) stress the severity of the change for people of their generation and explicitly remark that the Soviet upbringing had not prepared for the challenges of the new times.

"Parents are giving the directions, they implant their customs, how one has to live. And it is natural that the school has an educational function. The parents, the school. Accordingly, what time we were growing up - we were growing up in the Soviet time. And, of course, I think, that my generation, well, well, well, those being 43 till 48, we got into a quite serious perturbation. It is possible to say that you are still a young person, but you are not young enough to catch everything from the very beginning." *(Oksana, middle, Rīga, Russian)*

"We were raised in the Soviet time and we had somehow gotten used to this life. Well, then we could not understand what we should do - to stay back with the sight, with all the stereotypes or whether to accept these. (..) Somehow it came out that way, yes, the year 1990 was too hard for us. Many people could not get over all those problems and stayed below the level. Bet overall, I do not know, a happy generation, after all happy, I remember childhood - it was as it was, I have what to remember, everything is alright with that." *(Eva, middle, Daugavpils, Latvian)*

As the last quote shows, despite difficulties, Eva still sees her generation as a happy one. This opinion is shared with Natalja (Daugavpils, Russian), born in the early 1970s, who believes that the collapse of the Soviet Union was not hard for her generation:

"I think that this post-Soviet generation treated the collapse of the Soviet Union rather easily, not very painful, and not being afraid of it. Now I am thinking of this period as of my childhood. It was a very good period for me. I don't remember something bad about it. In my personal surrounding nobody was repressed, nobody was killed, nobody was sent into exile so, for me it was the period of the good happy childhood." *(Natalja, middle, Daugavpils, Russian)*

The informants who were born in the 1960s had to make their education choices still in the Soviet times, and several of the respondents who elaborated on their choices of study fields explicitly tied their decisions to the potential income. They could not foresee a complete labour market restructuring soon after their graduation. Consequently, as opposed to the life-courses of their parents, the paths of the perestroika generation show more frequent breaks in the education and work paths. Many of the informants have studied one sphere and worked in a completely different sphere or switched between very different occupations.

While some like Maija (Rīga, Latvian), Dace (Kuldīga, Latvian) or Natalja (Daugavpils, Russian) have largely stayed on the same work trajectory, others have taken very different paths, e.g., Tatjana (Rīga, Russian) who has studied and worked as a sports trainer, later went into the money exchange business and currently works in the restaurant business. Sandra (Rīga, Latvian) who was an ice skater decided to study zoo engineering and later chose a career in a newspaper. Or Anita (Kuldīga, Latvian) who studied and briefly worked in gardening but then became a crane operator and later a salesperson. These career paths have been shaped by significant changes in the income of certain professions, the restructuring of the economy, as well as changing professional qualifications. For example, Oksana (Rīga, Russian) did not accredit the nurse diploma she acquired during the Soviet time and thus had to switch from being a nurse to working at a supermarket.

Several of the interviewees elaborated on their experience and navigation of the changing times. For this generation the beginning of their higher education trajectories took place in the Soviet times and had to follow a certain set of rules, such as being a Party member. Sandra remembers her experience of applying for a university where her lacking Komsomol membership was a particular challenge for enrolling in the study programme of her choice:

"Of course, the first thing that they [*university administration*] saw, and what was underlined with red in my profile, was that I was not in the Komsomol; because of my conviction already from the childhood, I have been nationally inclined already from a young age, also in the Russian times. That, of course, was difficult because I was warned in school that I will not get anywhere... I will get nowhere, no university and so on... Despite the fact that my grandmother was the First Secretary of the trade union in Latvia, despite that I kept my stance and did not join the Komsomol. And this sentence was underlined and I was summoned to the dean. He asked: why are you not a member of the Komsomol? Well, please, take a look at the sheet with my grades, they are not as good as one would need to be in the Komsomol. To which he knew that I am not entirely truthful but could not object. He said: but you must join in the first year of studies then. I answered: yes, I will do what I can." (*Sandra, middle, Rīga, Latvian*)

However, changes in this system were not far away and the story of Dace provides a good illustration for the events of the time. Dace remembers her parents' resistance to her study choice of history because of the subject's close ties to ideology. And indeed with the perestroika and the subsequent establishment of independence she had to swiftly "re-learn" the entire history of Latvia and the Soviet Union:

"[...] my parents had not been members of the Communist party and when I went to study history they were not particularly thrilled. They said exactly that: the ideology will change and what will you do then? But it was not so important to me then. (...) Right before finishing the university studies in 1988, then... in the last 2 months we were re-taught the entire history of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, all of it. That was the first big shock and the second came when I started working in a school, I was straight away sent to courses of Latvian history and re-taught again. In the first year the entire Latvian history was re-taught." (*Dace, middle, Kuldīga, Latvian*)

Some of the changes brought about by the transition times had a different impact on the respondents of different ethnicities. For some Latvians, like the nationalistically-inclined Sandra who remember the Soviet time as a suppression of their language and the lack of freedom, it was a welcome transformation; Sandra was taking an active part in the Popular Front independence movement, as well as other events and for her the memories of the time are still very emotionally-laden and bring her to tears:

"In my country, in my Latvia, I was not allowed to speak Latvian and write Latvian, it was horrible. It really was HORRIBLE and because of that... it truly was horrible and it cannot be wished upon anyone. (..) It is very hard for me to speak about this, because we went... I went to the Barricades. Frankly, it did not matter to us what will happen with us... it was an intense cold, and disregarding everything we were completely unarmed... we did not even know whether it will happen as in Lithuania that the tanks will come and whether they will or will not shoot, but we went, including me." (*Sandra, middle, Rīga, Latvian*)

For the Russian-speaking Natalja, on the other hand, the same events were something that took place without her involvement and she sees herself as a mere observer, adjusting to the new rules of life but having little choice or impact aside from adaptation. Tatjana, on the other hand, remembers the same time period as a swift turn from having nothing to being able to have everything, a time that brought new opportunities which she could utilize to improve her and her family's wellbeing.

"Those 20 years of the independence of Latvia I treat as some particular structure of the life, which comes from the old times, and it was not created by me, I didn't collapse anything. I was just brought to this life how it is, and, thus, I am living. So, it is the country now where one needs to know the language and so on. So, I got to such a country, where there will always be hard times with the work, where you have this unemployment." (*Natalja, middle, Daugavpils, Russian*)

"Well, it was interesting. I was 20, it was the years of 1990's, we call it the time of the "windfall money". Money was coming in huge amounts after a time when there had been NOTHING. And, of course, in our family, as mum was working at the factory, we had everything in limited amounts only, as there were two of us [*children*] in the family, and mum was bringing us up alone, in some way. (..) And when the perestroika started and all those kind of commercial businesses started to appear, I got to this sphere right at that moment, in 1991 or 1992. I got to this currency company, as they were just starting to appear that time. When I got my first salary, I wanted to buy EVERYTHING, just EVERYTHING! But it came to an end very quickly." (*Tatjana, middle, Rīga, Latvian*)

Another aspect of the rapid changes is brought to the forefront by Dace (Kuldīga, Latvian) who talked about "turncoats": people of her generation who were even too successful at adapting from one time to the other, hiding their past to remain in leading positions. Dace questions the integrity of the conscience of such persons, marking that she has learned not to divide people by ethnicity because their personality and a clear conscience is the most important.

Overall, several of the respondents remarked on the lack of safety and stability as a characteristic of their time. As Natalja (Daugavpils, Russian) put it, her time is different from that of her parents who lived in a certainty: "[during the Soviet time] once you are done with your studies, you will get a job. You will always get a job in your particular specialization. So, if you are a railway-man, you will go to work to the railroad. If you had the specialization as the helper to a locomotive driver, you will be working as the helper to the locomotive driver. And if you want to work as a conductor, you need to learn and study for it." Some of the respondents highlighted the present uncertainty of future prospects as a cause for a lack of self-confidence. When Natalja's mother Nellija (oldest, Daugavpils, Russian) compares the middle generation to her generation, she marks that "children have nothing to put as their goals nowadays, they are afraid to be fired if not today, then tomorrow. They are not as self-confident. We were more confident." Also Anita (Kuldīga, Latvian) voices a similar opinion:

"You do not know how the circumstances change, everything is relative, nothing is giving you some certainty, some particular feeling of stability, that you would know that everything will be in a certain

way. Let us say, how my mother said, before you had everything planned, you knew ahead what awaits you, what will be. Now everything changes so fast that you simply cannot follow. I have happened to be living in a time when there are changes all the time: currencies, governments, all those layers." (*Anita, middle, Kuldīga, Latvian*)

A particular role in the instability that the respondents are talking about has been played by economic hardships - first caused by the break with the Soviet economy, followed by a bank crisis in 1995, and the current world financial crisis that began in 2009. The topic of "the crisis" was touched upon in different contexts in the majority of interviews, but it was particularly important for the middle generation. The interviewees spoke of downsizing in their workplaces and unemployment, of the lack of financial means for fulfilling their or their children's needs, and friends and relatives who move abroad to find a job for paying off their loans. Maija (Rīga, Latvian) also mentioned a reduced interest in the issues of culture, while Anita (Kuldīga, Latvian) talked about the shame in the eyes of the neighbouring countries caused by the "falling back in a pit".

Several of the informants stressed that through the many transformations and the economic crises throughout their youth and adulthood the distinguishing feature of their generation has become the ability to change, to "keep up with the times". As expressed by Dace (Kuldīga, Latvian), "through the changes I have been taught that one has to go with the time, learn continuously, one cannot fixate on things. As soon as you do that you are not valuable anymore." At the same time, Natalja (Daugavpils, Russian) talks about the post-Soviet period as a time characterised by the freedom to shape one's own life path, also marking that she has been quite successful at using this freedom.

"I was 20 years old when I was told: you have a total freedom, do what you want! You may achieve something or may achieve nothing, you may become unemployed, or may become the president of the country. Here is the freedom! And if my parents didn't need that in that moment, I see that it was good for me. If to think of it now, I would say that my life has taken a good path in general. So I was struggling, struggling, was putting a lot of effort to achieve something, and I see, if to compare it to the others, that my life and the life of my family turned out very well." (*Natalja, middle, Daugavpils, Russian*)

At the same time, both Dace and Natalja hint to the "other side of the coin": not all of their peers have been able to adjust to the changes and challenges of the new times. The two women give different explanations for their observations about their generation. While Dace stresses the role of the economic hardships and the inability to think and act for oneself, stemming from the "Soviet mindset", Natalja contrasts the present freedom to the more equal opportunities of the Soviet times.

"When I look at my classmates, (...) sometimes in reunions when we come together (...) what can we talk about? Because we are not going to talk about bottles. There are enough of those in our age who have become drunkards or those who have had broken lives. It is perhaps because of all the economic crises (...) and also that it was not allowed to think for yourself, that one had to do what they were told to. We hear that often: I will do what is asked to do." (*Dace, 46, Kuldīga, Latvian*)

"I see a lot of my ex-classmates and the people of my time, who are 40-42 years old already, and who have achieved nothing in the life. They are nobody and they have no prospects. People are living just with the unemployment benefits, they are becoming drunkards, they are not getting well with their private lives and so on. So, there are two opposite sides here: you can become somebody or nobody at all. And when you are thinking of the previous time, it was the time when everybody was becoming everything. People had just the very equal opportunities." (*Natalja, 40, Daugavpils, Russian*)

Although the members of this generation characterise themselves as willing and able to keep up with the times, they also mention limitations stemming from their age - they sometimes have a different outlook on life, they are not as good with the modern technologies (Inese, Kuldīga, Latvian), or lack the foreign language skills for making the most of the opportunities offered by Latvia's membership in the European Union. Maija (Rīga, Latvian) and Dace (Kuldīga, Latvian) also remark on a "psychological impact on the subconsciousness" that the Soviet regime has left on their generation: people have become too meticulous, too tense and stressed, unable to sit back and enjoy life. Yet, just as the generation that precedes them, also the children of the perestroika see themselves as tough, hard working people (Tatjana, Rīga, Russian).

### 6.2.3. THE GENERATION OF RISKY OPPORTUNITIES

As the sampling of families for interviewing was based on the youngest generation, its age division is the most uniform. Among the youth, at the time of interview the three oldest respondents were 19 years old and the youngest was in the age of 16. The young people have been born between 1991 and 1995, in the first years of the Latvian independence and, compared to the other two generations, have a limited personal historical experience. Only Dainis (Kuldīga, Latvian) remarks that people like him, born around the turn of the decade, still have some idea about what the USSR used to be, given by their parents. At the same time, Maija (middle, Rīga, Latvian) would even expand this generation to include those born in the late 1980s as their conscious age has been spent in an environment different to that of the Soviet Union.

Table 32. The youngest generation, sorted by age

Pseudonym	Age	Birth year	Town
Dainis	19	1991	Kuldīga
Edgars	19	1992	Daugavpils
Laura	19	1992	Daugavpils
Mareks	18	1993	Rīga
Signe	18	1993	Rīga
Alise	18	1993	Kuldīga
Ivars	18	1993	Kuldīga
Olesja	17	1993	Rīga
Tanja	17	1995	Rīga
Nils	16	1995	Daugavpils

Their parents and grandparents mark that this is the first generation that cannot compare the different times, their life experience is limited. The peculiarities of life in the Soviet Union is foreign to the youngest generation - aside from history lessons in school, their understanding of such terms as "kolhoz", "the pioneers" or "Komsomol" is limited (Anna and Anita, Kuldīga, Latvian). Furthermore, the realities of their parents' lives are hard to imagine for them:

"What I feel on every step is that the generation of my son, specifically he, cannot imagine certain things at all (...) He was still little, he was 12 or 13 years old and he asks me: listen, what it "blat"<sup>61</sup>? He had read it somewhere. And I explain it to him and he listens and says: hey, but it is really good that when you have friends, you give your friends the best! So, not knowing the full picture, the system and maybe the

<sup>61</sup> The term "blat" was used in the Soviet Union to refer to the acquirement of goods, services, or positions via informal agreements and social networks.

complete results or reasons but only by explaining this system, he cannot understand it. Or understands it in his own way. (*Maija, middle, Rīga, Latvian*)

Also the youth themselves admit that the different circumstances of their upbringing differentiates them from their parents and grandparents. They remark on not having to live through as many things (*Signe, Rīga, Latvian*) "getting to know the world as it is now" and learning about the past through history lessons and stories of their parents (*Tanja, Rīga, Russian*). The youngest generation call themselves the maximalists of youth, with little experience but many hopes (*Nils, Daugavpils, Russian*). They disdain the lack of individual thought in the Soviet times (*Edgars, Daugavpils, Latvian*), and not only the youth themselves but also their parents highlight their liberal views (*Sarma, oldest, Rīga, Latvian*) and their freedom and vast opportunities. The youth are the also the ones who adapt to changes and novelties much more easily than their parents and, especially, grandparents (*Laura, Daugavpils, Russian*). That said, the latter is likely an age, not a generation characteristic.

These characteristics distinguish the youngest generation from its forebears – they are the first who experience complete freedom. The quote from *Eva (middle, Daugavpils, Latvian)* excellently characterises the generational differences, stressing the independence and freedom of her son and his peers:

"[...] they are raised in a different way than our generation. To go forth, by own initiative, to do something, not to sit still, nobody will think of you. They have a completely different way of thinking, they want, want... even my son, we were talking that he might continue his studies in Denmark. And grandma was saying: so far! Well yes, sort of, Denmark is a different country, it is right next to us, right here... well so it is for us. Well, also at home, there are no restrictions or something like that, you are free. Firstly, you are free. You do what you want, but you know that you are responsible for yourself, of course, for your actions. It was not like that for us, we were not free, we could not do what we wanted. I think it is that way already from the childhood: you are free!" (*Eva, middle, Daugavpils, Latvian*)

Aside from the many positive traits of the generation of risky opportunities, both they themselves and some of their parents also highlight negative characteristics. In particular, *Ivars and Dainis (Kuldīga, Latvian)* are very critical of their peers and say that they do not have much in common with their classmates, e.g., *Ivars* is active in organising events and participating in various projects in his school and his town. In his work he often experiences lack of initiative and motivation from his peers who show little willingness to help, however do not hesitate to criticise the work of others:

"If I organise an event instead of receiving from the youth some 'it was good, well moderated, well spoken' I will hear: oh, you could have done something differently, you could have done this or that, oh, why do you have to speak again, why do you have to do this or that. It is the same about volunteer work (...) they do not know what it is. They also do not want to know." (*Ivars, youngest, Kuldīga, Latvian*)

*Ivars*, as well as *Dainis*, observe also a lack of ambition among the other young people: many do not want to get further education and are more interested in, e.g., temporary work abroad and earning money for immediate gains such as buying a car. Education is not among their priorities, they are more interested in material values, also as signs of status (*Dainis, Kuldīga, Latvian*).

*Dace (middle, Kuldīga, Latvian)* who is a teacher at the local school has similar observations about the youth that she teaches. According to her, while the youngest generation is more open to new ideas, compared to other generations they are often not enterprising, lack teamwork and communication

skills and frequently have little motivation to undertake new things. Dace ties this lack of motivation to the current financial crisis:

"... the youth could be more active, more enterprising, exactly enterprising. Lately, what I come across, is that in many places the motivation has been lost, but I think it is also because they do not see their opportunities anymore - something has been missed in that brief period - either the parents cannot support anymore, or something else." (Dace, middle, Kuldīga, Latvian)

Furthermore, Tatjana (middle, Rīga, Russian) observes that, compared to her and her parents' generation, the youth are not as hardworking and lack endurance: "This generation is weaker just in the physical terms, just in the terms of stamina. As we are dealing with it at our work as well. That those being 17-19 years coming to work to us, they are weak. We were stronger".

Perhaps the best, if somewhat radical, description of this generation and its conflicts with the generations before them is given by Maija's son Mareks who highlights freedom and permissiveness as the main characteristics of his peers:

"We are the post-Soviet children, I think... we were allowed to be born free, born with our own identity, so to say. That is - we curse with Russian swearwords, we smoke, everyone drinks, every other uses drugs... permissiveness of sorts that certainly was not in the Soviet Union, which is why we come into very big conflicts with our parents who have been raised and lived in the Soviet Union. I could say that I feel a belonging to a generation that is harder to understand than perhaps in another country. Generation that does many things that would have been taboo for older generations. We are always made to settle down... independent from whether it is our beliefs, or opinions, or elementary actions, we are always made to settle down and I think that in the end... now there are a lot of bad examples, I think, in this age, but in the end - at the age of 30 we will be people who have walked through crossfire where they have experienced everything that is allowed, because everything is allowed, and afterwards we will have been taught how to do things right." (Mareks, youngest, Rīga, Latvian)

Finally, a particular characteristic of the youngest generation is related to the scope of their future plans. The dreams of the 10 young people to receive higher education and/or shape successful careers are perhaps not unique. However, as opposed to their parents and grandparents who have spent the majority of their lives in a single town, the youth do not tie their futures to one town or even to one country. The detail of such future aims varied from prepared applications to education institutions abroad to hypothetical plans, but even in their most vague form the ideas of the youth starkly contrasted with the views of their parents. Namely, when talking about leaving Latvia even for a few years, the middle generation typically focused on constraints such as language knowledge or networks abroad, while the youth focused on the opportunities.

This overview of the life paths and characteristics of the three generations serves as background information to the analysis of generational differences and the impact of life experiences in this chapter as well as the following two chapters. Before we continue with the main identities of the respondents, let us summarize the main characteristics of each of the generations:

- 1) The post-war generation, born in the late 1930s and the 1940s, have spent the most active part of their life in the Soviet Union. Coming of age in the post-war development of the USSR taught them how to navigate their way in the Soviet system; their work lives have been characterised by a remarkable stability and predictability. The establishment of

independence came towards the end of their work lives and, for many, caused difficult re-evaluation of their lives in a regime that was now condemned;

- 2) The middle generation – “children of the perestroika” – were born in the 1960s and the early 1970s. Brought up in the Soviet Union, the majority of them were in their twenties when they had to learn to adapt to a completely new system. The lives of this generation are characterised by many changes and periods of economic hardships to which some have successfully adapted, while others have been unable to cope;
- 3) The generation of risky opportunities, born in the early 1990s, is the first to grow up in a democratic country and cannot compare life in different regimes. Compared to their forebears, the youth experience complete freedom, enjoy (risky) opportunities unavailable before, and do not tie their futures to a single country.

### 6.3. MAPPING IDENTITIES

Now when the towns and the families have been introduced and the generations described, it is time to tackle the third objective of this chapter: to outline the main collective identities of the respondents. This subsection gives an overview of the identities that the respondents found to be the most important for them: family, profession, territorial identities tied with belonging to one's town, region and Latvia, and, lastly, ethnic and linguistic identities.

In the beginning of the interviews each of the respondents was asked to characterise themselves and to say to what/where they belong. The spontaneous answers to these two open questions are grouped in the table below, divided by location, generation and language of interview.

*Table 34. Primary belonging, classification of spontaneous answers<sup>62</sup>*

Type of belonging	Total	Location			Generation			Language	
		Riga	Kuldīga	Daugavpils	Elderly	Middle	Youth	Latvian	Russian
Family/home	11	4	4	3	7	3	1	7	4
Town/city	9	3	6		2	2	5	9	
Occupation	8	3	2	3	1	3	4	3	5
Country/nationality	5	3	2		2	3		5	
Language/ethnicity	4	1	1	2	2		2	2	2
Region	2		1	1	1		1	2	
"Leaving"	2		1	1		2		2	
Education	1			1	1				1
Generation	1	1					1	1	
Gender	1			1		1			1

The most important of spontaneous identifications, independent of location or interview language, is home and family. It is followed by belonging to the respondents' town or city which is the strongest in Kuldīga. The third most often mentioned spontaneous belonging is to one's occupation, including a past occupation for those retired or a future occupation for the youth. Four people mentioned identification with Latvia or Latvians, and further two spoke of their belonging in the context of “leaving”, formulating their answer in the light of the present trend of emigration. Two people talked

<sup>62</sup> The total number of respondents was: ten per generation, 12 in Riga, nine in each Kuldiga and Daugavpils, 18 Latvian and 12 Russian; several respondents mentioned multiple identifications

about regional belonging, whereas education level, generation and gender were mentioned by one person each.

In the following overview these identifications are divided into four groups: (1) family and home; (2) occupation, (3) territorial belonging (combining town, region, and country), and (4) language and ethnicity. "Leaving" is discussed together with territorial identities, whereas generation, gender and education are not looked at in more detail because they are mentioned as primary identifications only once. The interview fragments on primary identifications are analysed together with other parts of the interviews where the respondents have talked about these identities. Especially territorial and ethnic belonging were discussed in interviews also in other contexts.

### **6.3.1. HOME AND FAMILY**

A person's home and the people close to them are, unsurprisingly, important in all towns and independent of respondents' language and ethnicity. However, there are generational differences: belonging to one's home and primarily identifying with one's role in the family - mainly as a grandparent, parent or a spouse - becomes more important with age and it is especially important for the oldest generation. On the one hand, this is because family becomes more important once a person has children, as put by Sarma (oldest, Rīga, Latvian): "Well yes, mother, but that is so for almost every woman who is a mother." Natalja (middle, Daugavpils, Russian) elaborates: "I am a mum. That is definitely so. (...) Of course, that means taking care of the children, of their health, of their education. (...) To care of what they are thinking about, what disturbs them, what they are worried about. To live through their worries and joys."

On the other hand, the scope of belonging for the oldest generation has become smaller. As they age and lead less active lives, they focus on that what is closest to them and what makes them happy - their children and their grandchildren. The only young person that mentions family among their primary identifications is Edgars (Daugavpils, Latvian) who stresses that for him the belonging to family and friends is more important than any territorial attachments because he feels at home wherever his family and friends are.

### **6.3.2. OCCUPATIONAL BELONGING**

Primary identification with one's profession, be it past, present or future occupation, is particularly important for the middle and youngest generations, and more common among the Russian speakers. For the youngest respondents their occupation was, firstly, something that they are doing right now, as for Ivars (Kuldīga, Latvian) who identifies himself as the leader of a local youth organisation and as a person who organises various events: these are the roles his peers recognise him by primarily. Secondly, it is identification with an activity that could become the future occupation as for Olesja (Rīga, Russian) and Laura (Daugavpils, Russian) who see themselves doing, respectively, dancing and art in the future. Olesja is already teaching dancing to younger children while Laura studies in an art school.

Those of the middle generation who mentioned profession among their primary identities talked about their careers or the fields where they have been working for the past decades. So for Maija (Rīga, Latvian) it is her specialisation in musicology that has been tied to all the various work positions that she has occupied in her career, for Natalja (Daugavpils, Russian) it is her editor's job,

the "only thing I have been doing for the whole life", while Inese (Kuldīga, Latvian) relates to her work experience in three spheres, her last three occupations.

The only of the oldest generation representatives who mentions professional identification is Olga (Rīga, Russian) for whom her career path during the Soviet times is so important that she recites it several times during the interview, every time using almost the same words: "I was a seamstress, then a forewoman, then a machine-shop manager, then a chairwoman of the labour-union committee. So I went through all possible steps."

### **6.3.3. TERRITORIAL BELONGING**

Three types of territorial belonging were mentioned among the primary identities: belonging to one's hometown, to a region within Latvia, or to Latvia as a whole. Since these identities are closely tied with one another, the three are combined in one subchapter. As opposed to belonging to the home and family and to one's profession, the territorial identities were mentioned more often throughout the interviews, therefore in the following subsections the quotes about primary belonging are supplemented by relevant fragments from the interviews where the respondents were discussing their territorial attachments.

#### ***6.3.3.1. Belonging to the Hometown***

Belonging to one's hometown is the territorial identity that was most often mentioned among the primary identifications. It is particularly important in Kuldīga - out of the nine respondents from this town six mentioned being from Kuldīga among their most important identifications; it is important for all generations. Meanwhile none of the nine respondents from Daugavpils mentioned the belonging to this city among their primary identities, and a primary belonging to Rīga was more common among the Latvian language respondents.

For the majority of interviewees their town or city signifies home, the place where a person has been born or spent the most of their life in. Yet there are also differences with regards to the meaning each of the towns has for their inhabitants. In particular, several of the people from Kuldīga expressed pride of their hometown, for example Ivars:

"I can be proud [that I am from Kuldīga] - we have the oldest red brick bridge, from those that have been preserved, we have the longest waterfall in Europe. There is what to be proud of, the town is very beautiful, especially the old town, there is everything here. I have lived both in the town and in the suburbs, it is good everywhere. I like it here but future, somehow, I do not know whether I tie it to this place especially." (*Ivars, youngest, Kuldīga, Latvian*)

Despite their close attachment to the town, none of the Kuldīga youth tie their future with it, as also illustrated by the last sentence of the quote above. As Dace explains, the youth have to leave Kuldīga for university studies and they remain in the towns where they have studied, the ones that return "can be counted on the fingers of one hand" (Dace, 46, Kuldīga, Latvian).

Also the majority of interviewees from Rīga expressed their belonging to this city as important, although it was not listed among the primary identifications as often as the belonging to Kuldīga. Especially the youngest generation highlighted Rīga as their home which, although not entirely known (Tanja, Russian) and at times not loved from all its sides (Mareks, Latvian), is a place where they belong and feel safe, miss when they are away, and Rīga may even give them strength and self-

confidence (Olesja, Russian). In the words of Mareks "a small child will always run back to its mother and I, as a person in the world, will probably run back to where I have been born and raised".

At the same time, several of the middle generation informants describe their belonging to Rīga by contrasting it to the smaller towns of Latvia or the countryside. However, while for Maija (Latvian) the countryside is an alternative and sometimes even an escape from the city life, for Sandra (Latvian) the experience of living in the countryside for a few years has left her certain that she never wants to leave the city again. For her Rīga offers a variety of cultural pastimes, the bustle of life, as well as safety and security:

"Rīga, that is something fantastic. (..) I may not go to the theatre every day but I know that it all is right here. I think that the culture environment here is... well there are much more opportunities to enjoy the arts, whether I enjoy them or not, of course, is again my choice. I am often surprised when I go to one of our towns and see that everything is closed at five. I cannot understand how it is when life seems to have stopped. For us here in Rīga life begins... in principle it never ends, it continues 24 hours a day (..) When I want to be alone I mingle in the crowd, I feel myself very good between people. (..) And also in relation to health, at any moment, any time of day, I can be at a doctor in five minutes, (..) I feel safe here, such a feeling of safety." (*Sandra, middle, Rīga, Latvian*)

Only a few of the interviewees from Daugavpils elaborate on their belonging to this town. Natalja (middle, Russian) and Larisa (oldest, Russian) both stress that their belonging to Daugavpils is primarily tied to this being the place where they have been born and spent their lives. In Larisa's words: "I have gotten used to that. To this life, to my town. I think that I would not be able to live in any other town. I have spent the whole childhood, the youth, and the maturity here". In turn, Edgars (youngest, Latvian) ties his belonging to Daugavpils to the changes in his personality and growing up that has happened in the four years since he and his mother moved to the city from the nearby village where they lived before.

### **6.3.3.2. Regional Belonging**

Among the three territorial identities, regional belonging was mentioned as a primary identity only twice: by Ella (oldest, Daugavpils, Latvian) about Latgale, the Eastern region of Latvia, and by Ivars (youngest, Kuldīga, Latvian) about Kurzeme, the Western region of Latvia. Looking at the interviews in more detail, belonging to Kurzeme is mentioned by the majority of people from Kuldīga for whom this regional belonging is very close to the identification with their hometown. Meanwhile only one person in Rīga and one person in Daugavpils speak of regional attachments; in both cases attachment to, accordingly, Vidzeme – the Northern region – and Latgale was important for oldest generation Latvian speakers.

The respondents from Kurzeme stress their roots in this region, often stemming for several generations, and some (e.g. Anna, oldest, Latvian; Anita, middle, Latvian; Ivars, youngest, Latvian) were eager to draw comparisons with people from other regions that may become apparent upon meeting people from other parts of Latvia. Particularly, the interviewees stressed differences in vocabulary and pronunciation between their dialects and other Latvian language dialects. Also Sarma (oldest, Latvian) from Rīga who expressed belonging to Vidzeme talks about the differences in dialects, and mentions that people from different regions of Latvia also tend to have different personal characteristics.

The belonging to Latgale was especially important for Ella (oldest, Daugavpils, Latvian) who mentioned it among her primary identifications. For her Latgale and the Latgalian dialect - which she refers to as the Latgalian language - is an important part of her roots and is tied with strong emotions. For her belonging to Latgale is a closer and dearer component of a general identification with Latvia:

"[I belong] to Latvia as well, I cannot say anything bad, absolutely, but Latgale is language, that is my mother's tongue. (..) I am proud that I am Latgalian, that I am in Latvia, yes (..) It is somewhere in my heart... my father's home, my father's land, all those old Latgalian songs. Well there is a radio show, I cannot always listen to it, they speak in Latgalian there. They speak Latgalian so... [starting to speak in Latgalian] they would say a song, play a polka, well... let us say, nothing special but it is something for the heart, for the soul." (*Ella, oldest, Daugavpils, Latvian*)

### **6.3.3.3. Belonging to Latvia**

Five of the 30 respondents named belonging to Latvia among their primary identities. These were middle and older generation Latvian speakers from Rīga and Kuldīga. When probed at a later point of the interviews, all of the respondents admitted some belonging to Latvia yet its importance and meaning were very different from person to person.

The most common association with Latvia is native land or fatherland. Especially the elderly stress that this is the place where they were born (and where they will die), therefore it is important to them. As expressed by Marta (oldest, Rīga, Latvian): "Well if I was born as one [Latvian] where else should I be? Then one should ask my parents why they gave birth to me here, in Latvia". On the one hand, as illustrated by Marta's quote, belonging to Latvia can be expressed as a matter of no personal choice: it is the place where one happened to be born and thus must belong. On the other hand, also a life spent in this country has created strong the ties to it, e.g., Olga (oldest, Rīga, Russian) was born in Belarus but has spent the greatest part of her life in Latvia and considers it her fatherland, and Nellija (oldest, Daugavpils, Russian), explains that "I am rooted in Latvia nowadays, as my children they took their roots here, the grandchildren as well".

Also many of the interviewees from the middle generation express their belonging to Latvia in similar terms, even their wording is often similar when characterising Latvia as the place where they were born, have been living, finished their education and where they have given birth to their children. This belonging can be both tied to and independent from local or regional belonging, e.g., Eva (Daugavpils, Latvian) stresses: "I can live in Liepāja, Rīga, well does not matter where, but in Latvia".

Other respondents mark that, despite difficulties and struggles, Latvia is and stays the fatherland (Oksana, middle, Rīga, Russian), independent whether you like it or not, even if you (try to) leave it, it remains the native land (Tatjana, Rīga, Russian). As Maija puts it, belonging to Latvia is like belonging to a family, one that has to be taken care of:

"I think it is just like in a family – you will always have friends but your relatives you will know better and love them more, and you somehow will care exactly for them. So then it is my family, then I know this little place and take care of it. (..) Latvians have this saying: master of your land. Well you cannot feel as a master anywhere else even if you wanted to." (*Maija, middle, Rīga, Latvian*)

Also the informants from the youngest generation stress that Latvia is their fatherland, the place where they have been born and raised. If Maija compared belonging to Latvia as a family, Alise uses

the metaphor of a house – Latvia is one's home where they recognize everything and everyone, and feel safe and comfortable in. The only person who expressed a certain lack of attachment to Latvia was Nils (Daugavpils, Russian) from whom, in his words, "it depends. When you need to do something in the name of Latvia, like being an anonymous participant, then yes. In other cases, no."

A total of five associations regarding belonging to Latvia can be distinguished in the interviews:

- 1) Belonging to a geographic location;
- 2) Belonging to a culture;
- 3) Belonging by ancestry and history;
- 4) Belonging through citizenship;
- 5) Belonging through working for the country.

To begin with, Latvia as a place where one belongs is primarily connected to it being the fatherland, it evokes family ties and a lifetime of experiences. Yet, as illustrated by the quote of Eva given above, it is also a more general attachment to the country as such. As Maija (middle, Rīga, Latvian) notes, "it has been said by a few foreigners that what characterizes a Latvian is that he feels unbelievable belonging to this geographic place, somehow. I have heard that from the French, for example, they do not understand that you... feel such belonging to this place". A subtype of this kind of belonging is stressing explicitly the Latvian countryside and the nature, and was mentioned by Oksana (middle, Rīga, Russian) and Mareks (youngest, Rīga, Latvian).

The second and third associations can be illustrated by a quote of Ivars who stresses the historical heritage as well as Latvian traditions and the language as grounds of his belonging to Latvia. This interview excerpt also shows the confounding between national and ethnic identity characteristic to the Latvian speakers.

"My ancestors have lived here, they have fought for this land, and there have been those who have fallen, well you know, the history of Latvia is not too bright (...) Yes, I feel my belonging to Latvia. I speak Latvian and write Latvian, I don't know, that's how I feel. We have our national costumes, we have all... I have my national identity and it is Latvian, that's all." (*Ivars, 18, Kuldīga, Latvian*)

And alternative way of conceptualising belonging to Latvia is looking at it as tied to a citizenship and its rights and regulations. As expressed by Ludmila (middle, Daugavpils, Russian): "First of all, it means that I am taking part in all those kind of activities as the voting during the elections, it is my minor level, but I do feel that I am the citizen of Latvia, not of any other state, but Latvia in particular." At the same time, a lack citizenship can be associated with a feeling of alienation from Latvia or an incomplete belonging to the country.

Finally, a particular way of speaking about belonging to Latvia was by stressing contributions to the country. The older generation of Russian speakers mentioned giving to the country (Olga, Rīga, Russian) or dedicating one's life to Latvia (Nellija, Daugavpils, Russian). For them doing something for Latvia means looking backwards, whereas for the youngest generation it is a forward-looking sentiment: "I was born in Latvia, I am feeling myself as a citizen of Latvia and my belonging to this country. And if to develop, there is a need to develop in your country, to go ahead and to help your state" (*Olesja, youngest, Rīga, Russian*).

Overall, the Latvian speakers were more likely to talk about their belonging to Latvia in one of the first three associations: geographic location, culture, and ancestry. Meanwhile, the Russian speakers

were more likely to express their attachment to a geographic location, belonging through citizenship or through working for the country. A unique answer was given by Mareks (youngest, Rīga, Latvian) who explained that for him Latvia is a place to grow, and to grow together with the country as both he and Latvia are still young:

“I am happy about my country, she is very beautiful and I have never had an idea that there is something that I would dislike much. (...) Latvia is still green behind the ears, I think, compared to other countries. If Latvia was a person it would be, well how old could Latvia be in people years? 10 years, I think? A little boy or a little girl. But yes, that is why I feel good here because I have the feeling that I am allowed to be silly and I am allowed to be small in such a country.” (*Mareks, youngest, Rīga, Latvian*)

#### **6.3.3.4. The Debate of “Leaving”**

Particular answers to the question “where do you belong?” were given by the middle generation informants Dace (Kuldīga, Latvian) and Eva (Daugavpils, Latvian). When asked about their attachments, Eva stressed that her roots are “here” and that she could not move away despite having had opportunities to do so, while Dace spoke about the lack of foreign language skills and the necessity to be close to her parents that keep her in Kuldīga. Their answers illustrate a particular way of thinking about national belonging. Namely, belonging to Latvia is thought about and defined through the choice and options of leaving, that is, emigrating. Also Oksana (middle, Rīga, Russian), when asked about her belonging to Latvia, replied: “Of course, I do [belong]. Well, if I am told to go somewhere now, I wouldn’t go, I think.”

These answers are the result of two circumstances: the increased opportunities of international labour mobility given by EU membership on the one hand, and the world financial crisis that hit Latvia particularly hard on the other. As a result, every one of the 30 interviewees has at least one friend or relative who is currently living abroad. In turn, the impact of “the crisis” has been twofold: it has left a dent in the feelings of national belonging and patriotism and has made people to realistically consider moving away from Latvia. The middle generation has been hit particularly hard, as illustrated by the quote of Inese:

“Belong? Well I would really want to belong but somehow lately it feels that this feeling of belonging is just that when I need this Latvia but does Latvia as such needs me? Well in this sense, because at the moment it is very hard to tie myself to Latvia. Well, that I have the Latvian language and that I am a Latvian citizen but... somehow the feeling that I am needed as a Latvian right here has been destroyed (...) Latvia as a land, as a place but not Latvia as... how to say it... Everything is ok with the land, everything is very beautiful and very cool, and probably nowhere it is as good, after all. Well yes, I belong to Latvia but then this economics... Oh, God, we are there where we are. Ah [sighs], I belong to Latvia.” (*Inese, middle, Kuldīga, Latvian*)

Inese as many others of her generation have been particularly affected by the salary cuts and the rising unemployment. They are disillusioned by the economy and by the government and see their friends leaving the country. Dace and Inese (both: middle, Kuldīga, Latvian) see particularly negative effects on the youth who begin to lack motivation to strive for achievements, and are not patriotic. This is expressed by a few of the young people themselves, e.g., Signe (Kuldīga, Latvian) ties her lack of patriotism to the current situation which “has affected the whole way of thinking”, and marks that it is unpleasant that Latvia is behind other countries, that so much needs to be done to “get to the

top”. Another illustration of the situation in Latvia and the debate of immigration and patriotism can be given by an excerpt from the interview with Tanja who recalls a recent event in her school:

“Today we had an actress in the school and she asked the young people who wants to study abroad. And many raised their hands and then she asked whether anyone has acquaintances abroad and even more people raised their hands. Everyone has this will to leave. And she was saying that you should study well and follow your dreams but it would be preferable to return to Latvia. I liked how she said it: the patriotism is shown not when you go to Krastmala<sup>63</sup> and put down a candle or carry a flag but that you return even if you have been away; that you think how to improve that what is happening here.”  
*(Tanja, youngest, Rīga, Russian)*

Also some of the oldest generation respondents talk about “leaving” in the context of national belonging and their opinions vary. For Anna (Kuldīga, Latvian) and Ella (Daugavpils, Latvian) the choice to remain in Latvia despite the hardships and opportunities elsewhere is a proof of deep roots in the country. Only Daiga (Kuldīga, Latvian) expresses some condescension towards those who emigrate, and Tamara (Rīga, Russian) is worried about this trend. Other elderly informants who talk about this topic express understanding (e.g. Inga, Kuldīga, Latvian) or even feel sorry for those who have left because they do not feel wanted in Latvia (Anna, Kuldīga, Latvian) and they “cannot find their place” neither abroad nor upon return (Sarma, Rīga, Latvian).

Informants from the middle generation told stories of their own choices when faced with the decision to leave or to stay. Many have close friends or siblings who have chosen to move abroad, therefore the question of emigration has been an important one. They tell stories of friends who have made the leap and moved, stories that are both about longing to come home and about people who feel happy abroad. The middle generation respondents themselves stress family ties and often also the lack of foreign language skills as reasons for choosing to remain in Latvia:

“Currently I am here and I have language problems, what else can I do? Well, I have to say so, three years ago it was so... my master’s was finished, everything was ordered in life until the economic crisis came – redundancies and more, the ride down was grim. Simply dreadful, I have to say. Then there was the choice whether to hand in a resignation and leave yourself while you feel that are you are going to be let go anyway (...). From my workplace there were people who took out their papers, registered unemployed, and later went abroad, and that’s it. I have this belonging – my parents are here and I don’t have this English (...). I belong here, I simply do not have other options.” *(Dace, middle, Kuldīga, Latvian)*

The prevalence of topics related to the financial crisis and emigration in the interviews is telling as no interview questions dealt with these topics specifically, rather they seeped in when people were speaking about their life experiences and their attachments. It also needs to be mentioned that particularly the respondents of the oldest generation inquired about my future plans, asking whether and when I plan to return to Latvia, leaving the impression that a planned return would be looked upon favourably.

#### **6.3.4. LANGUAGE AND ETHNICITY**

There was one respondent - Larisa (oldest, Daugavpils, Russian) - for whom the mother tongue was among the most important self-characterisations and four respondents – Larisa, as well as Marta

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<sup>63</sup> The riverside promenade in Riga where events take place on national holidays

(oldest, Rīga, Latvian), Alise (youngest, Kuldīga, Latvian), and Laura (youngest, Daugavpils, Russian) - for whom ethnicity was significant. Thus, on a first glance, linguistic and ethnic identities appear to be more important for ethnic minority respondents.

Overall, for the ethnic Latvians national and ethnic, as well as linguistic and ethnic identities are closely intertwined and often cannot be distinguished separately because the Latvian language appears to be among the most important components of the Latvian ethnic identity. When speaking about their ethnic identity, the Latvian informants largely refer to the same notions as when speaking about national identity. Ethnic belonging is often perceived as something that one is born into, as stated by Marta (oldest, Rīga) when asked to describe who she is: "Who I am? Latvian! (short laugh) What else could I be?" Yet Marta is proud of being Latvian, a feeling also expressed by Anita (middle, Kuldīga), Eva (middle, Daugavpils), and Mareks (youngest, Rīga). In the interviewees' stories being Latvian is tied to (1) one's ancestry, e.g., Daiga and Anna (both: oldest, Kuldīga) note that their ancestors have been Latvian for several generations, as well as (2) the Latvian history (Mareks, youngest, Rīga), (3) the Latvian culture with its arts and crafts (Inga, oldest, Kuldīga) and simply (4) living in Latvia and speaking the Latvian language (Dainis, youngest, Kuldīga).

Overall, being Latvian as an ethnic identity invokes more positive emotions for the informants than being Latvian as a national identity. However, a few respondents also expressed some self-criticism and mentioned that the feeling and importance of being Latvian has lost its significance, especially if compared to 1991 (e.g. Sarma, oldest, Rīga). This opinion is highlighted in the quote by Inese who appears to miss the unity of the early 1990s:

"Well naturally, I am a Latvian with all the traditions and all the consequences resulting from it - a real Latvian, an introverted creature [laughs] (...) Well we gained that with the independence that yes, we are Latvians. In that moment, well we really carrying ourselves pretty great and everything was all right but then something went terribly wrong. Maybe really a point has to be reached again when we have to become aware that we are, after all, one nation." (*Inese, middle, Kuldīga, Latvian*)

Also for the ethnic Russians there exists a close association between their ethnic and linguistic identities. Meanwhile for the non-Russian ethnic minorities the pattern of identification is more complex as their linguistic and ethnic identities are often divergent. A rather typical combination of minority self-characterisation is expressed by Ludmila (middle, Daugavpils, Russian): "As I live in Latvia, I consider myself as a citizen of the Latvian republic, but I am Polish and my mother-tongue is Russian."

The family "N" from Daugavpils expresses a mix of Belorussian and Russian ethnic identities and appear to have a Russian linguistic identity. The grandmother Nellija clearly states: "I do not think of myself as Latvian, definitely not. My nationality is Belorussian, so, that is who I am Belorussian. (...) I have all of my roots there, all of my relatives". Meanwhile, her daughter Natalja recognises herself as Belorussian by descent but for her the Russian culture is more important. As Natalja explains, she feels Russian because she has never spoken Belorussian so Russian is her mother tongue; this feeling is reinforced by her studies of Russian philology. She also stresses that she consciously chooses Russian language concerts, performances or even TV programmes (see quote below). Perhaps as a result her son Nils perceives himself as only Russian.

"I am speaking just Russian from my very childhood and that is why I am feeling Russian here, in Latvia. Russian, or a Russian-speaking person, as they are also called. As I was studying philology, we were

learning Russian literature mostly, and I am brought up on the Russian classics. So, I feel myself as a Russian person, although it is written in my passport that I am Belorussian. (..) It is kind of a national self-consciousness. (..) I am bringing my children up in such a way so that they know that they are Russians, that they know the Russian language, they would be able to write properly in Russian, to speak properly in Russian." (*Natalja, middle, Daugavpils, Russian*)

Two of the families - family "L" in Daugavpils and family "T" in Rīga - identified themselves as ethnically Polish, yet only the oldest generation still speak the Polish language; for the middle and the younger generations the mother tongue is Russian. Even Larisa (oldest, Daugavpils) marks that her native language is Russian – she spoke Polish only in her childhood. Both families originally come from the lands near Daugavpils that belonged to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and in 1918 became a part of the Latvian Republic. Thus, they belong to the historic minorities of Latvia and through time have adapted to the majority languages. As told by Larisa:

"All of us, going four generations back, we have all been Polish. Both of my parents, grandfather and grandma from the side of the father as well as from the mother's side, have been Polish as well. But they had been speaking Latvian during the time of Ulmanis, as my mum told. My parents were speaking fluently three languages: Russian, Polish, and Latvian. And we, the children, did that as well." (*Larisa, oldest, Daugavpils, Russian*)

Overall, the meaning of the Polish identity is based on a person's descent, yet has little significance aside from that. As put by Larisa's daughter Ludmila: "I have no feelings as for the fact that I am Polish. (..) The nationality means nothing to me." Living in Russian-speaking communities has led the families to identify themselves with the Russian speakers, as opposed to the Latvian-speaking majority, even if some of them are fluent in the Latvian language. As expressed by the granddaughter Laura:

"I don't speak Polish, I don't know the language. I am Polish just because of my roots. So, I am more Russian than Latvian. (..) I feel myself comfortable among the people who speak Russian. I am able to talk to them, as it is more difficult to do with the Latvians, as I think we differ a lot, those who speak Russian and those speaking Latvian. They have the different way of talking to people and the different topics even. That is why I don't feel very comfortable among Latvians." (*Laura, youngest, Daugavpils, Russian*)

Similar sentiments are expressed by the family "T". Tatjana (middle, Rīga) says that she feels Polish "inside of me" as she does not speak the language. For her the Russian language is the major means of communication and she calls herself a "defender of the Russian-speaking people". Her mother Tamara marks that she has no other choice than belonging to the Russian-speakers because she does not speak Latvian and communication and translations are very difficult for her. While the grandmother is struggling with Latvian and the mother is trying to become more fluent in this language, Tanja learns in a Latvian school and feels closer to the Latvian speaking environment. She explains: "Simply the society where I am, is basically Latvian. Say, family is something different. If I came to that, I think in Latvian and translate when I speak Russian, so one can say that I am almost Latvian".

Particularly interesting cases are the family "O" from Rīga and the family "E" from Daugavpils. The parents of grandmother Olga are Latvian and Belorussian and she considers herself Latvian because she has finished her education in Latvian and has lived most of her life in the country. However, as

she married a Russian-speaker, the language of her family is Russian and not everyone has the Latvian citizenship. As Olga says: "That's the way it is, that my children, they are Russians! Russians, Russians. They have finished the Russian school, so that they speak Russian all the time." Olga's daughter-in-law Oksana is half Georgian and half Russian and unsure about her ethnic belonging, while her daughter Olesja considers herself Russian.

In the family "E" the grandmother Ella has ethnic Latvian roots for several generations and is married to a Moldavian. Her daughter Eva considers herself Latvian, saying: "I am Latvian. It is not important that my father is Moldavian". Yet as also Eva married a non-Latvian her son Edgars speaks Latvian and Russian equally well and has a mixed belonging:

"I have a lot of friends of the Russian ethnicity, a lot of friends of the Latvian ethnicity, honestly, I do not know. It is good for me both there and there (..) Since I live in Latvia, after all... I am more loyal to the Latvian language, the Latvian ethnicity, because I live in this country, well logically, that it is more important in some sense. (..) [the Russian side] is tied not to Latvia but, so to say, with my relatives who are outside of Latvia because I have learned Russian from them.. I do not even know how to formulate that. I am sort of balancing between two ethnicities". (*Edgars, youngest, Daugavpils, Latvian*)

The stories of the families highlight several factors that are important in the formation of their ethnic and linguistic identities: the choice of a school in Latvian and Russian, the ethnicity written in a person's passport, and the citizenship status.

First of all, judging from the accounts of ethnic minority respondents, the choice of school can have important consequences with regards to identity, especially for non-Russian ethnic groups, as it has imposed a partially artificial dualism between Latvian and Russian. For example, the oldest generation ethnic Polish informants Larisa (Daugavpils) and Tamara (Rīga) grew up speaking Polish and remember how the Polish language was forbidden in schools<sup>64</sup> in the Soviet period and, partially because the children were educated in Russian, Russian has been the dominant language in their workplaces and among their friends, Polish lost its place even as a family language. The story of Larisa illustrates the importance of school and the closest linguistic environment:

"We had been living in Liepaja, then in Aizpute after the war and we didn't hear Russian there, we were all speaking Latvian. And I went to the first grade in a Latvian school as well. And when we returned to Daugavpils in 1947, after the war already, everywhere was Russian and we started to speak Russian. And we went to the Russian school, as the Polish one had been shut down. If our parents had brought us to the Latvian school, so, we would have learned in Latvian. And that is how it all began with Russian. Everybody was speaking Russian here and we started speaking Russian as well." (*Larisa, oldest, Daugavpils, Russian*)

The consequences of the dual language school system for one's belonging can be clearly observed in the stories of the youngest generation. Despite the mixed ethnic background that is most clearly expressed by the oldest generation respondents, the youth see themselves as either Latvian or Russian. So Olesja (Rīga) and Nils (Daugavpils) identify with the Russian language and ethnicity, whereas Tanja (Rīga) and Edgars (Daugavpils) feel closer to the Latvian language environment.

Secondly, also the "passport ethnicity" appears to play a role in the self-definition of the respondents. This objectified information is mentioned by the informants when they name the

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<sup>64</sup> In the mid-war period there was a variety of schools in minority languages but after World War II only Latvian and Russian language schools were allowed (see more in Chapter 1).

groups they belong to, even if their ethnic label has little significance for them. Tanja (youngest, Rīga, Russian) explains her choice of including her ethnicity in her passport: "In the beginning, when I myself had to choose the ethnicity I did not know what to take [laughs]. But, if we have a connection to the Polish nationality then I as well... I do not speak the Polish language and it is hard to judge to what I belong". In contrast, Eva's (middle, Daugavpils, Latvian) choice of including her ethnicity in the passport is tied with a certain pride: "It is written in my passport that I am Latvian, well, I asked them to write it in. Well there is some pride after all, after all, that I am exactly Latvian".

Thirdly, ethnic and linguistic identification is also tied with matters of citizenship and the feelings of inclusion<sup>65</sup>. In particular, the ethnic minority respondents at times express a lack of inclusion in Latvia on the one hand, and a lack of acceptance by the countries where their ethnic group is the majority because of differences accent or "mentality". Natalja describes these circumstances as feeling like a foreigner everywhere:

"So, it is feeling like this Russian diaspora living abroad. And I know that, as my brother lives in Russia and when you go there, people are treating you as a person from Latvia. So, you feel yourself as a foreigner anyway, although you are Russian and you speak Russian, but they have a different mentality... (..) In Latvia it is so that you are treated as a foreigner there [in Russia] and here as well."  
*(Natalja, middle, Daugavpils, Russian)*

Two other ethnicity-related topics that the respondents took up in the interviews were contacts between the ethnicities and the differing "mentalities" of the ethnic groups. The Latvian speaking informants from Kuldīga touched upon these issues less frequently because of their infrequent contact with other ethnic groups. Even in Rīga some of the respondents mentioned that they lack contact with the ethnic minority population, whereas in Daugavpils especially the older generation respondents spoke of a lack of contact with ethnic Latvians. Divisions clearly exist also from the Latvian side, e.g., Mareks (youngest, Rīga) speaks of incomprehension of minority youth who believe that they do not need to learn the Latvian language, or Sarma (oldest, Rīga) stresses that she prefers to keep a certain distance between the groups: "I have nothing against a neighbour, I am a very good work colleague, but I do not want [a Russian] in the family, just that - I do not want in the family, that is the most important".

Despite the divisions, several of the older and middle generation respondents mark on the mutual impact of the ethnicities on one another. Daiga (oldest, Kuldīga, Latvian) remarks that the people who immigrated to Latvia while still young or those have grown up there are closer to the Latvians than the generations before them: "The younger ones are closer, well... so to say, they also live here, they adapt to the milieu. If we lived in Russia then also we would adapt to their customs, traditions, behaviour and everything." Sarma (oldest, Rīga, Latvian) mentions that working together with people of the Russian ethnicity has also changed her and her generation, making them more sociable and change some habits of social behaviour:

"We have gotten so used to it. Me myself... how to say it? I have accepted in me the Russian mentality, learned a lot, being together with those Russians for so long I have become different. My grandmother was never so chummy with strangers, when people came to her to get their clothes sown<sup>66</sup> she only

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<sup>65</sup> See more on this in chapter 8 (?), relationship between ethnic and national identity

<sup>66</sup> Her mother was a seamstress

talked to everyone, no drinking tea, no coffee, no pastries. But a Russian cannot let you leave their house without treating you." (*Sarma, oldest, Rīga, Latvian*)

In the quote above Sarma mentions having accepted the "Russian mentality". The terms of "mentality" and "temperament" in comparing the ethnicities and attributing them certain ingrained characteristics are used particularly by interviewees of the oldest generation and the Latvian speakers. For example, Sarma marks that the Latvians are suspicious while the Russians are more responsive; her opinion is close to that of Olga (Rīga, Russian) who observes that while Latvians are reserved and know-it-all (*хитрожопые*), the Russians are outspoken, good-natured and more willing to meet other people. Also Anna and Anita (middle and oldest, Kuldīga, Latvia) agree that the Russians are more open-minded than the Latvians.

In the interviews Latvians are characterised as people who learned to live through hard times and intelligent (Inga, oldest, Kuldīga, Latvian), quiet and steady (Signe, youngest, Rīga, Latvian), circumspect to a fault (Dace, middle, Kuldīga, Latvian), conservative (Sarma, oldest, Rīga, Latvian) and also as a "servant nation" that cannot stand on its own and does not stand up for itself (Inese, middle, Kuldīga, Latvian). On the other hand, Russians – usually generalized as the Russian speaking minorities – are perceived as generally different from the Latvians (Daiga, oldest, Kuldīga, Latvian; Ella, oldest, Daugavpils, Latvian), more dominant and more extroverted than Latvians (Sarma, oldest, Rīga, Latvian).

Despite the stereotyping, many of the respondents simultaneously recognise that there are differences also within the ethnicities and that any dissimilarities do not stand in the way of amicable relations between people. Several respondents of the oldest and middle generations also stress that their life experience has taught them to judge people not by their ethnicity but by their character. As Olga (oldest, Rīga, Russian) repeats multiple times throughout her interview: "All people are the same: Russians as well as Latvians. There is no such a big difference. The main is whether a person is good."

This subchapter has looked at three types of identities that the respondents mentioned among their most important characterisations: home and family, profession, territorial attachments to town, region or country, and language and ethnic groups. Belonging to home and family were the most important for informants of the middle and oldest generations, whereas occupational belonging was comparatively more significant for the middle and youngest generations, and more common among the Russian speakers. Belonging to one's hometown and one's region was the most distinct in Kuldīga, and both attachments were more often expressed by Latvian speakers.

All respondents expressed a belonging to Latvia, however the importance and association of this belonging varied. Latvian speakers more often associated belonging to Latvia with geographic location, culture and ancestry, while Russian speakers associated it with geographic location, citizenship and contributions to the country. An alternative way of conceptualising belonging to Latvia, especially for the middle aged respondents, was through their choice between staying and leaving in the context of financial hardships and loss of patriotism.

Finally, for the ethnic Latvians the national, ethnic and linguistic identities were closely tied to one another, and for the ethnic Russians the same was true for ethnic and linguistic identities.

Respondents from other ethnic minorities distinguished between their ethnic identities and their linguistic – Russian – identity. However, largely due to the dual linguistic environment and the former dual language schooling in Latvia, the younger generation ethnic minority informants are more likely to see themselves either as Latvian or Russian, losing the more finely grained self-identifications characteristic to their grandparents.

The next chapter focuses on European identity. It was not spontaneously mentioned among the most important identifications and only one interviewee – Maija (middle, Rīga, Latvian) – stated that she feels European without being prompted. Despite this, the respondents expressed a wide range of feelings and opinions about what “Europe” means for them and their everyday lives. The last chapter of interview analysis explores how the life experiences and identities described in this chapter relate to European identity described in the next.

## 7. THE MULTIPLE FACES OF BELONGING TO EUROPE

European identity was not among the primary identities for any of the 30 interviewees. Yet, when prompted, the respondents expressed a wide range of opinions and feelings about Europe and the EU. The goal of this chapter is to provide an analysis of that what belonging to Europe means and what it is associated with. The chapter begins with a short overview of the first associations the respondents have when they hear and speak of “Europe”. It continues with the meanings of Europe, looking both at its importance in everyday life and the perceived place of Latvia in Europe. Finally, the personal identification with Europe and the Europeans are tackled, focusing on self-references, stereotypes, and push and pull factors of belonging.

To begin with, what do the respondents think about when they hear the word “Europe”? It appears that for the majority of the 30 respondents “Europe” means the EU and freedoms and rights associated with the membership in the Union. The most frequently mentioned association – linking Europe to travel and a lack of borders – belongs to this group.

*Table 35. First associations with the word “Europe”*

Association	Freq.
The EU as...	
...travel & lack of borders	7
...a union with common goals/economy/politics	5
...work & study opportunities abroad	4
...funding & improvements locally	4
...the euro currency	3
Cultural heritage & places to see	4
The continent	2
Other	6
None	3

There are only two groupings of answers that focus on Europe without linking it to the EU: associations with the continent and cultural heritage. For two people Europe means the continent and this association is largely neutral. Meanwhile associating Europe with cultural heritage takes two forms, both related to drawing a line between “us” and “them”. On the one hand, Latvia can be included as an integral part of the common, yet diverse, cultural heritage of Europe, as done by Maija (middle, Rīga, Latvian) and Sarma (oldest, Rīga, Latvian). On the other hand, “Europe” can be an external place where one can go to, e.g., on a vacation to explore different cultures. This view is illustrated by a quote from Olesja:

“It is more the art and some geographical places also, I think, which come to my mind when I think of Europe. You want to go abroad and you imagine Europe at once and those different countries, the culture in particular. The culture of the other people. To go, to see, to learn how the people live there, what interests they have.” (*Olesja, youngest, Rīga, Russian*)

The youngest generation of respondents most frequently associate Europe with the EU and are the only generation who mention the euro currency among their first associations. For the youth Europe signifies a political and economic union (Ivars, Kuldīga, Latvian) that is trying to achieve common goals (Signe, Rīga, Latvian and Tanja, Rīga, Russian). Although they mark that the borders have

disappeared, forming a common space, Tanja and Mareks (Rīga, Latvian) also note that the countries within Europe remain different and unique. In the words of Mareks:

“European Union, I believe, is a power that pulls down the borders between countries but in no way does it change the identity of the countries (..) I am allowed to enter that county, I am allowed to see the culture of its people, I am allowed to speak to those people... well it is a huge continent and we sort of can feel like citizens of the whole continent not only our own country, and that is good because there is so much to see, we would not see many things if we lived with the assumption that we are citizens of only one country” (*Mareks, youngest, Rīga, Latvian*)

This quote also connects the meaning of Europe to the most frequently mentioned association: Europe as the removal of borders. Unsurprisingly, it is particularly noted by people who have had the chance to travel across the continent before and after joining the Union. As Anna (oldest, Kuldīga, Latvian) explains: “It is pleasant in the sense that one does not have to stand on the border for two, three hours. It is not like it was earlier, when you would drive to the Czech Republic and ‘with away’ in one border crossing point, then a second, then a third”.

The middle generation respondents refer to these new opportunities as a “green light” (Tatjana, Rīga, Russian), and a “feeling of freedom” (Anita, Kuldīga, Latvian). Sandra (Rīga, Latvian) also recalls a feeling of safety that she experiences whenever travelling in Europe. Overall, many of the respondents see the open borders as a vehicle for seeing other countries and meeting people from elsewhere, as well as for comparing experiences. And, even if this space is not uniform, it is united by the freedom of movement. As expressed by Natalja (middle, Daugavpils, Russian), “you understand that it is a separated space, which still has a lot of small countries inside (..) I just have been to Europe [laughing]. Germany differs from France, France differs from England, so that each country is different. But that is such kind of space where you can go, where you can feel free, without any restrictions.”

Freedom of movement through travel is not the only opportunity that the respondents value and associate with the word “Europe”. The opportunities to work and study in the other EU member countries – the other components of the right to freedom of movement– are important as well. These are especially significant for the respondents of the youngest and middle generations, but for the middle generation it is often the increased opportunities for their children, not themselves, that matter. Ludmila describes the increased opportunities as “open doors”:

“We became a member of the EU and doors were opened to us, and now you can apply to the university, you can study, you can find yourself not just in one state, but you can find yourself where you would like to, or depending on the resources you have. (..) Europe is associated with the open doors to me, (..) the development, the opportunities to fulfil yourself.” (*Ludmila, middle Daugavpils, Russian*)

In addition to the freedom of movement, some of the respondents also associate Europe with positive changes in their closest environment brought about by EU funding. Several of the respondents talk about improved roads or renovated buildings, but it is exactly funding that has a direct personal impact that creates the strongest associations. So, e.g., the family “T” particularly acknowledges improvements in infrastructure easing wheelchair access, as it is very important for the granddaughter Tanja. Meanwhile Edgars (youngest, Daugavpils, Latvian) experienced personal positive changes when he received an EU-funded scholarship. He remarks that before receiving the

scholarship for the first time: “I knew that we are in the EU but I had not seen something in particular or felt it on my own skin”.

As opposed to the initial positive associations with Europe that predominate in the youngest and middle generations, the elderly more often expressed either negative associations or had no associations at all. For example, Marta (Rīga, Latvian) and Tamara (Rīga, Russian) both explicitly state that they neither have much connection to “Europe” nor pay much thought to it. Meanwhile, Nellija (Daugavpils, Russian) and Daiga (Kuldīga, Latvian) express resentment about the restrictions and regulations stemming from Europe that they hear and read about in the mass media. Finally, the clearest division between Europe as “them” and people of Latvia as “us” is drawn by Olga:

“They live better than we do here (..) And why is there a better living there? I can't even tell you... It is possible to live good here as well, if you are working and your other half is working as well, it is possible to live normally. (..) They think they are cleverer, than we are. But I wouldn't say that. Our people understand everything very well as well and they know how to do things. So, let them not think too much of themselves, I would say. Well...our people are not worse.” (*Olga, oldest, Rīga, Russian*)

These first associations highlight some of the issues that will be tackled in the following subchapters, most importantly, the strong association of Europe with the EU and the different ways of drawing the lines between “us” and “them”. The following analysis is divided into three parts. The first subsection tackles the questions of the role of Europe in the everyday life and the place of Latvia in it. The second subsection explores whether the respondents feel European and how they make distinctions between the in-group and the out-groups when speaking of Europe. The third subsection uses these insights to seek the push and pull factors of identifying with Europe and Europeans.

## **7.1. THE MEANINGS OF EUROPE**

As already the first associations with the word “Europe” show, for the respondents Europe is the same or very close to the EU. Indeed, when asked directly whether Europe and the EU is the same thing, twelve of the respondents stated that yes, Europe is the EU, while six made clear distinctions between the terms. A close association of the two notions is mainly based on the fact that the majority of European countries are EU members, and it is prevalent among the interviewees of the youngest and oldest generations. Meanwhile, the reasons for disagreeing with an equation of the two terms are more often expressed by respondents from the middle generation who distinguish between the EU as a political and economic union and Europe as a continent. Looked at it this way, the EU is a narrow term which, as expressed by Natalja (middle, Daugavpils, Russian) “associates only with Brussels, (..) the EU is such a huge gray building”. Europe, on the other hand, is a wider term that signifies the continent and the diversity of countries, cultures and peoples.

But what do people belong to, the EU or Europe? This question was discussed in a handful of interviews and the answers were not uniform. So, e.g., in the family “E” (Daugavpils, Latvian), Eva (middle) says she belongs to Europe because she is “with the people. Today there is one government, tomorrow there are other lords of the government, but the people are the people and they, nevertheless, have the main role”. Her son Edgars, on the other hand, feels closer to the EU because he has felt the belonging to the EU “on his skin” while he has not “had the chance to travel across all Europe to get some impressions from there, therefore I cannot say that I belong to Europe as a

continent, I do not know”. Mareks approaches this question from a similar angle; for him, the EU is what makes Europe in a common space:

“Europe without the EU would be... a continent, a part of the world where, looking from a satellite, it is unclear whether I can travel there and whether I will have what to do there. The EU is more a creation, a creation of people, that says: yes, please go. My country is your country and your country is my country”. (*Mareks, youngest, Rīga, Latvian*)

Looked at it this way, the EU is giving a layer of meaning and personal experience to the rather abstract notion of Europe as a continent. And, although several of the respondents distinguish between the EU and Europe, when talking about “belonging to Europe” they predominantly relay their opinions and tangible experiences of the time since Latvia became an EU member state. That what this membership has changed in peoples’ lives is the topic of the next subchapter.

### **7.1.1. EVERYDAY EUROPE**

An important question in the interviews was the role and meaning of Europe in people’s everyday lives. Among all respondents, only Maija clearly tied belonging to Europe as an inherent part of life in Latvia, marking that the lifestyle of people of Latvia is, in essence, European and in that distinct from other parts of the world:

“I think that, firstly, our lifestyle is European, decidedly. I haven’t been to America but I think that the American way of life is different. Well, undoubtedly, the way of life of people in Asia is different. (..) I think that it [European belonging] dictates the rhythms of everyday life” (*Maija, middle, Rīga, Latvian*)

In contrast to Maija’s response, for the majority of respondents “Europe” has become an element of everyday life only with the EU membership and is thus closely associated with changes brought about by this membership. When asked about their observations and opinion of EU membership, the interviewees’ answers were diverse:

- Seven people noted that they see positive changes, most importantly, increased opportunities for them or their children to travel and gain experiences abroad, the availability of products and services, improved infrastructure, and international cooperation;
- Seven people were neutral, noting some changes that have impacted their life but either not unequivocally evaluating them or seeing a balance between the positive and the negative;
- Three people associated it with negative changes: predominantly corruption and, through it, a lack of benefits for the common people, as well as rising prices;
- Finally, five people saw no changes, noting that the EU relates only to “the politics” and has little or no connection to their daily lives.

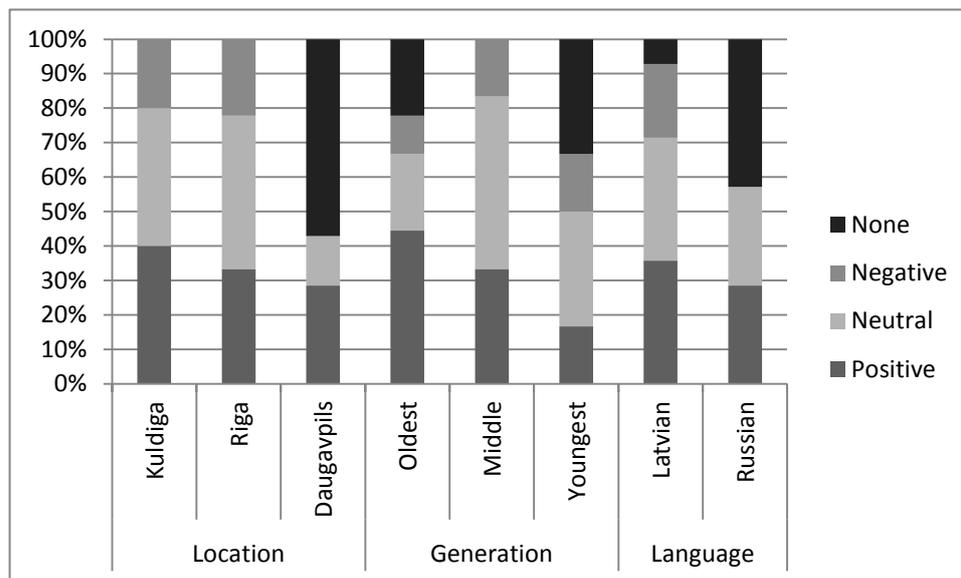
As illustrated by Figure 7, interviewees from Kuldīga are the most positive about the changes brought about by the EU membership, Latvian speakers are slightly more positive than the Russian speakers, and rather surprisingly, the oldest generation respondents are more positive than the other generations<sup>67</sup>. In all groups, with the exception of youth, there are more positive than negative attitudes. An important observation is that the interviewees from Daugavpils and Russian speakers

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<sup>67</sup> The ambivalent responses of the oldest generation respondents to this and other questions are tackled in more depth in section 9.2.

never gave negative evaluations; instead in each group a notable number of respondents saw no impact of the EU at all.

Figure 7. Attitudes towards EU membership by location, generation, and language (percent)



Kuldīga N=5, Rīga N=9, Daugavpils N=7, oldest N=9, middle N=6, youngest N=6, Latvian N=14, Russian N=7<sup>68</sup>

Among this diversity of evaluations, two of the respondents from the oldest generation – Marta (Rīga, Latvian) and Inga (Kuldīga, Latvian) – marked that the accession to the EU has simply meant a redrawing of borders. For them, the source of international opportunities has simply shifted: if in the Soviet times one needed to learn the Russian language and could travel all across the USSR, today one needs to learn English and is free to travel across the EU. Unsurprisingly, the freedom of movement emerged as the most positively evaluated attribute of the EU membership. Also travel and life abroad that were underlined as important in the associations with the word “Europe”, appear to be a significant positive influence also when evaluating the meaning of the EU in everyday life.

For one third of the respondents the EU does not invoke any personal connection and they see it as an abstract notion, unrelated to everyday experiences. As expressed by Ludmila (middle, Daugavpils, Russian): “It is very distant to me, it is not connected to my everyday life. (...) What is it there for a woman in the everyday life? Cleaning, washing, ironing, shopping and that is it. Europe doesn't play any role here”. This sentiment was most often vocalized by respondents from the oldest and youngest generations. While the elderly like Inga (Kuldīga, Latvian), Ella (Daugavpils, Latvian) and Larisa (Daugavpils, Russian) noted that they are not as active and involved in life outside their home and therefore have little connection to the current events or travels, the youngest like Dainis (Kuldīga, Latvian), Alise (Kuldīga, Latvian), Edgars (Daugavpils, Latvian) and Nils (Daugavpils, Russian) relate Europe with the realm of politics or confess that they do not pay much thought to it, characterizing Europe as something abstract and distant.

Similarly, when the respondents were asked whether they can recall a particular situation or experience that has made them realize their attachment or detachment from Europe, two thirds

<sup>68</sup> The number of answers per category do not fit the total number of respondents in each category because not all respondents talked about this topic in their interview

could not recall such a situation. Inese's (middle, Kuldīga, Latvian) answer is particularly firm and she dismisses thinking of Europe, framing it as the opposite of the everyday: "the everyday takes precedence over everything. That is no longer any philosophising, it is a practical thing".

When talking about possible European experiences the respondents, both those who recalled specific situations and those who did not, predominantly talk about travel and meeting people from other countries. On the one hand, respondents like Anita (middle, Kuldīga, Latvian) and Ludmila (middle, Daugavpils, Russian) mark that the lack of borders when travelling makes them feel European. On the other hand, informants like Anita (middle, Kuldīga, Latvian), Ivars (youngest, Kuldīga, Latvian) and Dainis (youngest, Kuldīga, Latvian) mention that in their travel experience within Europe they have been identified not as European but as Latvian. This situation has led Ivars to assume that he would be seen as European only in different parts of the world. As stated by Dainis: "Practically, when you go somewhere they do not care whether you are European or not. They only care what country you come from, not whether you are in Europe or whatever continent, or the European Union or something."

Meanwhile, for Oksana (middle, Rīga, Russian) feeling European is associated with watching the European Championships in football, and Maija (middle, Rīga, Latvian) tells that she realized the difference of her European concept of distance when travelling in Siberia and experiencing a much larger scale of what is "far". Overall, it was the youngest interviewees who had the most specific experiences of feeling European. As mentioned before, for Edgars (Daugavpils, Latvian) it was his European scholarship, and for Nils (Daugavpils, Russian) it was his first good grade in English that made him feel European. At the same time, Olesja (Rīga, Russian), Tanja (Rīga, Russian), and Laura (Daugavpils, Russian) remember that they felt European in social events and activities that have involved either people from other countries or EU-related topics and opportunities:

"I have such situations happening, for some reason, during [dance] competitions when people from different countries are gathered together. So there are people from other countries and talking to them, (..) you have the feeling that there is a person coming from every single country around you and you are around the whole Europe, and in this very moment you are having this wonderful feeling that you can share with the people, with the different people, not like you." (*Olesja, youngest, Rīga, Russian*)

"I am a participant of the Euroclub at school. So, the EU is paying for our journeys to some other places, but mostly we meet and we discuss Europe, the EU, and some problems, express our opinions. And so the EU opens an opportunity for us to go somewhere, to see the world, to have a look at the other countries. I think that is the only situation where I am feeling that the EU gives such an opportunity." (*Laura, youngest, Daugavpils, Russian*)

These answers show that the role of Europe in everyday life is an ambiguous subject and that after almost 10 years of EU membership there are respondents, particularly those residing in Daugavpils and the Russian speakers, who see no impact of the EU in their everyday lives or cannot evaluate whether any such impacts have been positive or negative. For many respondents Europe and the EU are the opposite of the everyday, and they see little connection between the distant, politicized Union and their daily lives.

It is mainly travel experience and international contacts that bring "Europe" into the lives of the people, but it can be disputed whether such experiences are a usual part of the everyday life for the majority of the informants. Nevertheless, the stories of some of the respondents about their

everyday practices like using foreign mass media or shopping in foreign internet stores shows that, in Dace's (middle, Kuldīga, Latvian) words, "Europe has sufficiently come into the home and into the everyday life". Natalja (middle, Daugavpils, Russian) even expresses a kind of European patriotism when it comes to choosing products, preferring those made in a European country not elsewhere in the world. But how deep do these changes run?

### **7.1.2. LATVIA IN EUROPE**

Another dimension of the respondent's perception of the EU's role in their daily life is its impact on Latvia. In the narratives of the informants the place of Latvia in Europe is tied to (1) financial considerations, (2) EU rules and regulations, (3) a fear of losing the national, and (4) the perceptions of Latvia's place among other European countries.

First of all, the role of "Europe" is closely tied with matters of money and finance: this association can be either positive or negative, and is tied to concerns about the use of the European funding and worries about a lack of transparency in this process. Positive perceptions primarily surface when talking about European funding for infrastructure development and renovations. In particular, the informants from Daugavpils and Kuldīga were remarking upon EU funded projects that have improved their closest surroundings: the construction of roads, the renovations of buildings; e.g., schools have been supplied with new technologies for learning. In Eva's (middle, Daugavpils, Latvian) words, "Europe really helps", and others, like her mother Ella and Natalja (middle, Russian) from Daugavpils, as well as Dace (middle, Latvian), and her son Dainis, as well as Ivars (youngest, Latvian) from Kuldīga, talk about experiencing pleasant feelings seeing such improvements in their towns.

Negative perceptions surface when the respondents are considering the rising prices and the perception of corruption: both are topics that in the understanding of several informants go hand in hand with funding from the EU. For example, Natalja (middle, Daugavpils, Russian) remarks on the inefficiency of the acquiring of EU funding and the local government's reliance on it. Although she appreciates the investments and their outcomes and believes that the town would not have been able to achieve the same results alone, in her opinion the process is at times too slow and bureaucratic, and requires a lot of "personal effort":

"There are a lot of positive things, as something has been renovated, something has been done, and you know that it was done with money from the EU. But there is such a feeling, at the same time, that one has been asking for this money a lot until it comes. (..) There is a project to renovate this whole street (..), this project costs 6 million and it is the money from the EU as well. And this road, as people are going through every day, and there are those pits and pits everywhere, people are complaining. (..) And when you are asking the authorities why it is not done, they answer that they have the project, but they are just waiting for the money. And when we get the money, we will have a four-lane road with all possible crosswalks and everything. And you are living in this uncomfortable position of waiting and it is slowing down. (..) Maybe, one expected that it would be going (..) more rapidly, would be great, like in 2-3 years our town would turn from being a province into the European town. And it appeared to be that one needs to put a lot of personal effort into it, to have a lot of projects, some of which would be accepted and some not. On the other hand, a lot of things have been done here with the money from the EU." (*Natalja, middle, Daugavpils, Russian*)

Some of the respondents also express some cynicism with regards to acquiring European funding, e.g., Sarma (oldest, Rīga, Latvian) says "well what can I say about that Europe, just let them give us

money [laughs], we will know what to do afterwards.” Ivars (youngest, Kuldīga, Latvian) has also observed that people around him are criticizing the ways EU money is spent and resents this kind of opinion: “the most interesting is that people again say: oh, Europe is spending money. There are some who say that Europe splashes money left and right, puts it in projects, should have better done this or that”. The personal experiences of such EU expenditures as, e.g., with regards to further qualification courses differ. While Inese is especially critical of the quality of some of the EU-funded courses that she has attended, Dace values the opportunity to learn new skills and gain new qualifications for free:

“When there is an EU project people say: oh, we will eat well there [laughs], it is ridiculous and has become a joke. One will eat well there, get some materials there for free. These courses (..) have lost quality, absolutely. If I go to courses I no longer go there with the thought that I will learn something new. I know that I just sit there for those hours because I need that certificate.” (*Inese, middle, Kuldīga, Latvian*)

“The projects started to appear shortly after we joined the EU, at least in the system of education. And then all that knowledge, I have also been able to help other people afterward and to change their thinking; Europe should be thanked for that. Honestly, had we been in the Soviet system, it would not have been achieved.” (*Dace, middle, Kuldīga, Latvian*)

In addition, a number of respondents are concerned about a lack of transparency in the division and use of EU money. Especially informants of the older generation are worried about corruption and a fair managing of the large EU funds. The doubts are expressed, e.g., by Inga (Kuldīga, Latvian): “The money, does it go exactly there where it is supposed to? I read that millions are lost, where do they disappear? A project is done, someone gets a part of it, some huge amount of money, but what good comes out of it?” Similar concerns are voiced by Marta (Rīga, Latvian) who says that she does not see “where the money goes”: funding for education and medicine are lacking therefore foul play must be involved. Tatjana (middle, Rīga, Russian) believes that cheating is taking place both on the side of the project submitters who make the costs artificially higher and on the side of the project evaluators who do not make sufficiently thorough checks. All of the outlined sentiments are closely tied with feelings of uncertainty on who is to blame – “Europe” or the local politicians and public service employees. In particular, Inga (oldest, Kuldīga, Latvian), Sandra (middle, Rīga, Latvian) and Dace (middle, Kuldīga, Latvian) voice feelings of uncertainty and believe that they do not understand the real situation and that they likely will never know the real story “behind the curtain”.

Finally, some of the informants also associate the EU with increasing prices, “the expensiveness of life”. The oldest generation informants Marta (Rīga, Latvian) and Larisa (Daugavpils, Russian) compare the current situation with the USSR times, stressing that the circumstances have been turned upside down: if previously products were cheap, they were scarce, whereas now everything is plenty but often unaffordable:

“.. (t)he prices are increasing, the food. During the Soviet time we had money, but we could buy nothing and now it is vice versa. One can buy everything, but you don't have enough money. We can't buy it, but the choice is really big now, that is true. There is no shortage in the shops, but you cannot always afford to buy what you want. Maybe that has changed, that we have such a big choice of the goods and products, but you can't always afford it.” (*Larisa, oldest, Daugavpils, Russian*)

Many of the points outlined in these last paragraphs can be summarised in a quote from Inese who talks about her belonging to Europe:

“There is belonging – costliness we have, ideal! [short laugh] (...) What is positive? Positive is that we can now travel without visas, yes, well beautiful, great, everything is alright. Sit in a plane – fly, sit in a car or a bus and drive – that is great, that is all very good, everything is alright. Just with that Europe it is so that our life is expensive, it is very expensive to live nowadays. It is expensive to afford to live at all, that is the thing (...) We are getting nothing good out of it. Well I don’t feel it, I don’t. Then I should be a bit higher, probably in Rīga into those 100 heads<sup>69</sup>.” (*Inese, middle, Kuldīga, Latvian*)

In this interview excerpt Inese makes a division between “Europe” as something positive with regards to individual international opportunities, but negative with regards to the daily-life issues on a national level. Her feelings are mirrored in the statements from other informants of her generation and, to a lesser extent, also of the oldest generation.

The second dimension of the respondent’s accounts of Latvia in the EU is related to EU rules and regulations that the country has to abide by. Only Oksana (middle, Rīga, Russian) mentions these in a positive light: for her, “Europe took muzzles off of dogs”. For the other interviewees EU regulations are a source of negative associations. The middle generation respondents Sandra (Rīga, Latvian), Natalja (Daugavpils, Russian) and Inese (Kuldīga, Latvian) describe the demands of “Europe” as negative and often incomprehensible, illustrating their opinions with the examples about forbidden light bulbs, standards for children’s’ toys, or the wellbeing of chicken. These and other stories of “Europe’s requests” are mentioned by the informants as unnecessary and price-increasing, and are ridiculed by the people. As Daiga (oldest, Kuldīga, Latvian) complains, they also mean a loss of local autonomy: “And all those European rules that come in, nothing can be done anymore without Europe. We have been made tiny, ones who have nothing to say.”

One specific example of the harm caused by EU regulations that is mentioned particularly by the Latvian-speaking respondents is the closing of the Latvian sugar refineries<sup>70</sup>. It is referred to by interviewees of all generations as the primary example of why EU regulations are not in Latvia’s best interests, yet this example seems to function more as an emotional symbol because none of those who mention it would go into the details of this case or provide a clear, fact-based argumentation to support their statements.

The concern of losing local autonomy is closely related to the third dimension of Latvia’s place in Europe: the perception of losing the national. In particular, the respondents of the oldest generation are concerned about a “buyout of Latvia”, namely, the buying of land by foreign investors for production or recreation. Tamara (oldest, Rīga, Russian) is upset that the best properties are not acquired by the locals: “They [the foreigners] are buying such beautiful houses, in such beautiful places. All of them are Swedish, German. They buy this good land, their mansions. And why couldn't our Latvian people do that themselves?” Such concerns are tied with other aspects of losing the national mentioned particularly by Latvian speakers from Kuldīga: being subjected to refugee quotas

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<sup>69</sup> Reference to the Parliament which consists of 100 deputies

<sup>70</sup> The respondents refer to the closing of the two Latvian sugar refineries in 2007 which meant the end of Latvia’s sugar refining industry. The closing, defined as restructuring of the sugar industry, was done in line with the EU common sugar market reform. The owners and the employees of the refineries were well-compensated, but it resulted in an increase of sugar prices in the country (Fridrihsone, 2010).

(Inga, oldest), the restrictions and norms imposed on local production (Anita, middle; Dainis, youngest), as well as the need to give up the national currency in favour of the Euro (Inese, middle; Dace, middle).

Finally, the place of Latvia in Europe is tied to the connections with other European countries: from being recognised abroad to the perception of commonalities and differences with other European countries and the perception of Latvia's place among them. The recognition of Latvia and Latvians abroad is tied to the perceived international status of the country. In Anita's (middle, Kuldīga, Latvian) and Tatjana's (middle, Rīga, Russian) stories having been recognized as Latvian when participating in an international event abroad or when travelling is tied with feelings of pride. At the same time, the stories of several Latvian speaking informants from Kuldīga (Inese and Dace of middle, Ivars and Dainis of youngest generation) show that a lack of such recognition may lead to feeling that one's country is insignificant.

When talking about Latvia's relationship to Europe, several respondents from the middle and oldest generations mark that Latvia has always been Europe. For example, Larisa (oldest, Daugavpils, Russian) stresses that she could not even imagine being anything but a European because: "I have been living in Europe for my whole life. Latvia has been part of Europe all the time anyway." Sarma and Oksana tie Europeanness to the historical heritage, stressing that even during the USSR times Latvia was always "European" compared to the rest of the Soviet Union:

"Latvia has never been outside Europe. (..) All the connections that we have had, the Swedish times... the Polish times we didn't have here in Rīga, I think... and the German times and the Russian times, and always it has been Europe here after all." (*Sarma, oldest, Rīga, Latvian*)

"Latvia has always been, has always been.. even while being the part of the USSR our Baltic states have always been different with a different culture, an absolutely different culture. The cities have always been different. This cleanliness, this order. That has always been and it is so nowadays as well. It is going in line with the West more, of course, it is clear..." (*Oksana, middle, Rīga, Russian*)

In turn, Maija underlines that, despite being behind the Iron Curtain, the cultural events in Latvia did not differ much from that what was happening in the rest of Europe at the time:

"In the Soviet context and scale we were the refined abroad, so to say, and that is how we felt to a certain extent. But, at the same time, there was never complete isolation, not for a moment. All the historical trends have entered, like the student revolution of '68, all trends have been reflected in our rock music... We have had it all." (*Maija, middle, Rīga, Latvian*)

While looking towards the East Latvia emerges as more Western and more prosperous than many of the other former Soviet republics, a look towards West leaves much to be desired. Throughout several of the interviews "Europe" appeared as the goal Latvia should strive towards, to be at the "level of Europe" (Tanja, youngest, Rīga, Russian). In this context "Europe" means orderliness (Dace, middle, Kuldīga, Latvian), better financial conditions (Larisa, oldest, Daugavpils, Russian), better social protection (Ludmila, middle, Daugavpils, Russian), and more frequent travel (Signe, youngest, Rīga, Latvian). People "there" are thought to be more smiling and more sympathetic (Signe), more friendly and at ease, as well as much more ready to share ideas and success (Mareks, youngest, Rīga, Latvian). The interview excerpt of Natalja describes her comparisons after travelling across Western Europe and Russia:

“Especially, when you are going there [to Western Europe] for the first time and you are comparing it to your life, you have the feeling that your life is worse than the life there. Well, it is fine here, but what I mean is that they have it in a different way. That is why when I personally went there I didn't feel myself as belonging to Europe, I didn't feel as if I came from an equal country. (...) On the other hand, when I am coming to Russia, I have the same kind of feeling that we have it better in Latvia, that we have a more European country, we have different kind of relations, different mentality, everything is better organized. When you are going in the Eastern direction, you do feel as being the part of Europe, of Latvia, you are then proud of Latvia, that it is better here. And if to compare it to the West, that is why I didn't have this feeling of being European.” (Natalja, middle, Daugavpils, Russian)

Alongside the unfavourable comparisons of the life standard, a few of the interviewees<sup>71</sup> also remarked on the imbalance that exists between EU member states. Namely, that the old, big and rich countries dictate the rules for the new and weak member states like Latvia. As expressed by Daiga (oldest, Kudīga, Latvian): “I don't know the size of the payments but I only hear that we only get a tiny share but the old countries, the powerful ones, those get the lion's share. Well is it justice in Europe, in that case?” Anita (middle, Kuldīga, Latvian) also sees opportunities for changing the balance of the situation: “We need to get the largest opportunities, as much as possible, so that we have... then they will have some good from us, not only us from them, so that it goes both ways, then everyone will gain”.

While comparisons as these are not in the favour of Latvia, some of the respondents sought things that are better in Latvia than abroad. One of the spheres mentioned is education: Inese (middle, Kuldīga, Latvian) tells about a former pupil who learned in a Swedish school and found it unchallenging and boring, while Dainis (youngest, Kuldīga, Latvian) stresses that in Latvia one learns a much broader field of subjects than in other countries where “you simply learn only your topic and do not know anything else”.

All in all, some of the respondents believe that Latvia still has a long way to go towards improvement. As Sandra (middle, Rīga, Latvian) remarks: “no matter in what situation we are currently, we are free only 20 years, after all. It is not like in America or somewhere else where the democracy is for hundreds of years. We still have a long way to go”. And, despite the critique of the EU, several of the interviewees<sup>72</sup> believe that it is better than the alternatives: still being a part of the Soviet Union or being independent and caught between Russia and the EU. In the words of Edgars (youngest, Daugavpils, Latvian): “I think that it is better [to be] in the EU but what I am certain of is that without the EU it would be worse”.

All of these aspects of belong to Europe, either perceived as positive or negative, are intertwined with a feeling of lacking information about the causes and consequences of current events that is expressed by some of the interviewees. Particularly respondents of the oldest and middle generations at times admit that that they do not understand many of the issues, while the younger respondents confess a lack of interest in trying to entangle them. In particular, e.g., Kuldīga informants Inga (oldest), Inese (middle) and Dace (middle) stress that they are unsure “who is to blame” for the fact their circumstances of life have become worse – the EU decisions or their

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<sup>71</sup> Daiga, oldest, Kuldīga, Latvian; Anna, oldest, Kuldīga, Latvian; Dace, middle, Kuldīga, Latvian; Oksana, middle, Rīga, Russian

<sup>72</sup> Olesja, youngest, Rīga, Russian; Edgars, youngest, Daugavpils, Latvian; Olga, oldest, Rīga, Russian; Natalja, middle, Daugavpils, Russian; Dace, middle, Kuldīga, Latvian

interpretation by the local politicians and government officials. As Inga says: “it is hard to tell, I feel either it is because of the EU or because of our own fellows, those 100 that sit there or someone else, but it is worse, well, it is worse and that makes me very sad”.

As this section has shown, the interpretations of the place of Latvia and in the EU and its expression in the everyday life are multiple, both positive and negative. Maija remarks on the polarity of opinions and her quote makes a good summary of some of the main issues looked at in this subsection:

“Yes, [I see] very big changes, every day these or other, positive or negative. After all, that is the reason why we joined [the EU], to have changes, whether we can always shape those changes to our liking, probably not. But, of course, it is from everyday things, for example, we see signs in well-renovated trains that it has been done with EU money, or that country roads have been repaired with EU money; although we huff that we have to close our sugar refineries because of European directives and we lose workforce due to that, or that we have to reform our education system, primarily due to European directives and only secondarily because we think ourselves that it maybe should be done. And we don’t always think that it is right. So yes, every day” (Maija, middle, Rīga, Latvian)

**7.2. ARE WE EUROPEAN?**

Now when the role of Europe in the EU for the everyday life on an individual and a national level has been looked into, it is time to tackle the second question of this section: do the respondents feel European and why. This overview is split into three parts: it begins with a look at the identification and self-references of the informants, continues with the stereotypes of what is “European” and evaluates whether the respondents fit into their own picture of European characteristics, and finally identifies the push and pull factors of European belonging.

**7.2.1. IDENTIFICATION AND SELF-REFERENCE**

Do the respondents see themselves as European? The table below gives a classification of the most common answers, shown by proportion of the total to facilitate the comparison of groups. Four types of answers are distinguished: those who feel clearly positive (48 percent) or negative (21 percent) of their belonging to Europe, those who are neutral towards it (9 percent), and those who believe that identification with Europe is not a matter of their personal choice (21 percent).

*Table 36. Identifying with Europe by location, generation and language (percent)<sup>73</sup>*

Answer	Total	Location			Generation			Language	
		Rīga	Kuldīga	Daugav -pils	Elderly	Middle	Youth	Latvian	Russian
Positive	48	47	67	33	40	55	50	63	29
Negative	21	13	11	44	30	36	0	5	43
Neutral	9	13	0	11	10	0	17	11	7
No choice	21	27	22	11	20	9	33	21	21
N	33	15	9	9	10	11	12	19	14

<sup>73</sup> The number of answers does not correspond to the number of respondents in each group because three respondents gave answers that fit two of the categories.

Overall, with the exception of the interviewees from Daugavpils and Russian speakers, there are more respondents who identify with Europe than those who do not. These results also show that evaluating the EU positively and identifying with Europe are only loosely connected. So, e.g., the elderly are the most positive about the benefits of the EU membership, yet are the least likely of the three generations to indicate a belonging to Europe. A third of all informants cannot give an unambiguous positive or negative answer and are either neutral towards a European belonging or believe that this identification has nothing to do with their individual choice.

This grouping of “no choice” answers is particularly interesting; it encompasses people who tie belonging to Europe with EU membership and believe that the accession to the EU has made them belong to Europe independent of their personal preferences. These are either the elderly like Inga (Kuldīga, Latvian), Daiga (Kuldīga, Latvian) and Marta (Rīga Latvian) who have voted for EU membership and now mark that, in Marta’s words: “I am here, I cannot change anything anymore, if I have agreed, then I have to live [with it]”, or those who had no choice in the matter either because they were too young like Mareks and Alise (youngest, Rīga, Latvian) or because they are not citizens and could not express their opinion by voting like Nellija (oldest, Daugavpils, Russian) or Oksana (middle, Rīga, Russian).

Just as national belonging, also identifying or not identifying with Europe means quite different things to the respondents and the strength of the positive or negative identification varies. To begin with, the positive answers can be grouped into six types of identifying with Europe based on the perception of what Europe is:

- 1) Europe as a continent;
- 2) Europe through cultural connections and feelings of closeness;
- 3) Europe through mobility allowed by the EU;
- 4) Europe as the opposite to Russia/the Soviet Union;
- 5) Europe as the closest entity in a globalized world;
- 6) Europe because of belonging to Latvia, “through Latvia”.

The first four associations of Europe were more often expressed by Latvian speakers of middle and oldest generations, cultural connections and closeness were mentioned particularly in Rīga. The connections between Europe and the globalized world and Europe and Latvia were mentioned by the youngest generation of interviewees, and Europe as the closest entity in a globalized world was mentioned only by youth from Rīga.

There is comparatively less variety in the answers of the respondents who do not identify with Europe. These interviewees either stress a much stronger belonging to Latvia, remark that “Europe” for them is something distant and has little personal significance, or believe that it brings little benefit to their lives. Overall, the Russian speaking respondents from Daugavpils feel the least connected to Europe, and express the most distinct “no’s”. A particularly vibrant answer was given by Olga (oldest, Rīga, Russian): “No, why do I need that [Europe]?! I am at home here. Russians and Latvians. What is the point for me to get into this Europe? [short laugh] I don't need to be European! I am a normal person, why do I need to be European?!”

To add another dimension to the question of belonging to Europe, the interviewees were asked whether they could say about themselves: “I am European”. The European self-reference of the

respondents did not entirely correspond to their answers about identification with Europe (see Table 37). This question format resulted in more clear-cut positive and negative answers; there were fewer respondents who felt neutral and less of those who believed that being European is something that comes about automatically.

*Table 37. Identifying with Europe and referring to oneself as European (percent)*

Answer	Identification	Self-reference
<b>Positive</b>	48	56
<b>Negative</b>	21	32
<b>Neutral/automatic</b>	30	12
<b>N</b>	33	25

The “automatically European” answers to this question are the closest to the belief outlined earlier that one is European because they are Latvian. This sentiment was expressed by several respondents from all generations and both language groups. A typical reply is that of Inga (oldest, Kuldīga, Latvian): “European... no, I am Latvian [short laugh]. Well, how to say, European I am automatically, that is how it is.”

Those who would call themselves European do that largely because they come from the European continent or are citizens of an EU country. In contrast, the people who do not want to call themselves European stress their attachment to Latvia and characterise Europe as a space that is currently foreign, something they might objectively be a part of but it is not felt on a personal level. As expressed by Laura (youngest, Daugavpils, Russian): “I consider myself as being a part of Europe just because I was born in Europe. I feel more as Latvian, as I was born in Latvia. For me Europe is just the place where I was born and that is it. Nothing else”. Natalja believes that, perhaps, more distance is needed to feel European as it is not a part of everyday life:

“In the everyday life?.. Well, no, I wouldn't say that it is playing any role. I don't feel. Well, if I go to Asia or to China, I would probably feel that I am European, the representative of some European territory, and in contrast to Asian, I am a person from Europe. But living here, I cannot tell that. I would rather say that I am a resident of Latvia than of Europe.” (Natalja, middle, Daugavpils, Russian)

In addition to the questions about personal identification with Europe the interviewees were also asked whether they believe that the people closest to them – their relatives and their friends – feel belonging to Europe. Overall, people who express belonging to Europe themselves are more likely to believe that also their closest people feel the same, and vice versa. 10 out of the 30 informants were positive on all accounts – they identified with Europe, called themselves European and believed that those closest to them feel the same. These 10 were the representatives of the middle and youngest generations from the families “M” (Rīga, Latvian), “E” (Daugavpils, Latvian) and “T” (Rīga, Russian), the oldest and middle generation of the family “S” (Rīga, Latvian), as well as Dace (middle, Kuldīga, Latvian) and Nils (youngest, Daugavpils, Russian). Only three respondents gave negative answers on all three accounts, these were the Russian speaking Olga (oldest, Rīga), Nellija (oldest, Daugavpils) and Natalja (middle, Daugavpils). Overall, these answers show the importance of the family context and certain shared experiences among family members which, however, are not always shared by all generations within the family.

The majority of respondents (17 people) gave mixed answers to these three questions and show a variety of combinations. On the one hand, there are interviewees who clearly identify themselves as belonging or not belonging to Europe and believe that those closest to them are mixed in their attachments. On the other hand, there are respondents whose own identifications are mixed, e.g., the oldest generation respondents Inga (Kuldīga, Latvian) and Tamara (Rīga, Russian) who identify with Europe and call themselves automatically European, or the youngest generation respondents Signe (Rīga, Latvian) and Olesja (Rīga, Russian) who are neutral in their identification with Europe but would not call themselves European, or Alise (Kuldīga, Latvian) who is neutral but would say she is European.

The attachments to Europe and their interpretations differ between generations, towns and ethnicities and there is no clear-cut uniformity within families. Commonly, the oldest generation respondents would not identify with Europe themselves, or state that they are European “automatically” but recognize that the younger generations feel different. Exceptions are the families “O” and “N” where the older and middle generations have more similar views, while the youngest differ. An interesting example comes from the family “M”: while Maija and her son Mareks are among the respondents who identify with Europe the most, the grandmother Marta, when first asked, could not imagine knowing any people who might feel European. Only after a prompt from her grandson she remembers: “Your mom is travelling around everywhere, she is European, that I believe. And my youngest son lives in England already three years with his family and doesn’t plan to come here”.

### **7.2.2. STEREOTYPES**

A particular theme that was explored in the interviews were people’s stereotypes about that what makes a person “European” and, contrary, what does not. These questions allow further analysing of the meanings and associations that the respondents have of being European and of that what is important for their subjective feeling of attachment to Europe. Furthermore, they also allow exploring whether the informants fit to their own stereotypes and, if not, what experiences or characteristics they are missing to be truly “European”.

Table 38 presents the stereotypes of what is “European”, grouped into the categories of age, personality, and socio-economic characteristics, and Table 39 presents the stereotypes of “Non-European”, grouped by age and other characteristics. Although these interview answers are presented in a table form, it has to be stressed that this is done only for better illustration of the results. The cell frequency is too low to carry out any further analysis.

Overall, the most often mentioned stereotypes of a person in Latvia who feels European are:

- 1) experience of travel as well as other experiences abroad gained through work, studies or foreign contacts;
- 2) education and intelligence: a person who is smart or intelligent, knowledgeable and well-informed, as well as well-educated;
- 3) youth, a person below or around the age of 30;
- 4) work ethnics: a person who is enterprising, ambitious, and industrious, as well as orderly and disciplined.

Table 38. The stereotypes of “European” by location, generation and language

	Stereotype	Total	Location			Generation			Language	
			Rīga	Kuldīga	Daugav-pils	Elderly	Middle	Youth	Latvian	Russian
Age	Youth	12	4	4	4	2	6	4	7	5
	Around 30	4	1	1	2	1	2	1	2	2
	Middle aged	4			4	2	2		1	3
Personality	Intelligence & education	12	3	6	3	5	4	3	9	3
	Work values	10	3	5	2	3	4	3	6	4
	People skills	4		1	3		3	1	3	1
	Life satisfaction	4	2	1	1	1	1	2	2	2
Socio-econ	Travel & foreign contacts	15	7	3	5	1	7	7	9	6
	Work & financial stability	5	1		4	1	1	3	1	4
	Language skills	5	2	2	1	2	1	2	4	1
	Social elite	3	3			1		2	2	1
	Other	6	2	1	3	1	3	2	4	2

Experiences abroad are the most often mentioned factor and several of the respondents tie it with certain consequences: feeling comfortable in different countries, being open to different cultures, and not limiting oneself to opportunities only in Latvia. With regards to age, none of the informants mentioned someone older than middle-aged as a person who could stereotypically be European. If a middle-aged person was mentioned as one of those who feel European, their age was explicitly tied with having a certain level of wellbeing or affluence and an established place in life: characteristics seen as conducive to feeling European.

Aside from intelligence and work ethics, several of the respondents also believe that someone who feels European has good people skills – they are communicative, sociable and active, as well as satisfied with life and positive. The enjoyment of life in the answers is often tied with financial stability as respondents note that a person who feels European should be employed, preferably in a stable job and free from financial problems. Several of the interviewees take this assumption of affluence even further, associating European with a person in the elite: a politician, a government official or a businessperson. Finally, aside from the travel and foreign contacts already described, some of the interviewees also mention foreign language skills, in particular, speaking English.

Some more unique answers associate feeling European to national belonging or global thinking. For example, Eva (middle, Daugavpils, Latvian) tied feeling European with being a citizen of Latvia and someone who cares for Latvia, while Laura (youngest, Daugavpils, Russian) believed that such a person cannot be a Latvian patriot. An interview excerpt from Olesja brings together several of these elements – travel, affluence, positivity – with idealism and striving for a common good:

“I think it is a person who is belonging more to the politics, economics, who is travelling to different countries... Who wants to unite the countries or to bring.. some deputy or so, who wants to bring something from the other countries to his own. Such a person, standing for the interest not only of the own country, but the interests of the other states in a positive sense. (..) I think, it is a person... Maybe

even a cheerful person, positive one, who only wants... I have only associations with such positive emotions, - who wants something for himself and for everybody. To develop... Who is overfilled with grandiose plans, ideas." (*Olesja, youngest, Rīga, Russian*)

In all groups being young is stressed among the most important characteristics, only people from Daugavpils and the elderly assume equally often that the middle-aged can also be among the most European part of the population. Personality characteristics are the most important for respondents from Kuldīga and also the elderly; both groups stress work values, intelligence and education more often than other characteristics. Informants from Rīga and Daugavpils, as well as the middle and youngest generations, most often mention travel and foreign contacts as the most important elements for feeling European. Also for the Russian speakers travel and foreign contacts are the most important, whereas the Latvian speakers mention intelligence and education equally often.

Contrary to the positive stereotypes about a person who feels European, the stereotypes about those who do not are predominantly negative. The two most distinct stereotypes groupings are (1) an elderly person, particularly someone who is retired, and (2) someone who feels detached and indifferent with regards to the current political, economic and social events of Latvia in general, and matters related to Europe and the EU in particular.

*Table 39. The stereotypes of "non-European" by location, generation and language*

	Stereotype	Total	Location			Generation			Language	
			Rīga	Kuldīga	Daugavpils	Elderly	Middle	Youth	Latvian	Russian
Age	Elderly	11	5	3	3	3	5	3	8	3
	Age 20-30	1			1			1		1
	Age 45-50	1		1			1		1	
Other characteristics	Detachment & indifference	11	6	3	2	1	4	6	8	3
	Dislike of the EU	5		4	1	1	2	2	5	
	Lack of financial & social security	4	1		3	1	2	1	1	3
	Lack of life satisfaction	4	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	3
	No foreign experience	4	2		2		3	1	3	1
Other	6	1	2	3	2	1	3	4	2	

Several of these characteristics are direct opposites of the stereotypes of what is European described before. The main contrasts are between the young and the old, and the involved/well-informed and the detached/the indifferent. Also here several informants make a link between Europeanness and financial stability: lack of financial and social security is associated with not feeling European. Furthermore, the respondents link material difficulties with a lack of life satisfaction – being pessimistic, unhappy, reserved or stagnated – all of which are associated with a lack of European identification. No foreign experience, including a lack of European language skills, foreign contacts and no interest in European culture are among the other associations. Several informants also mention a general dislike of the EU that may arise due to no experience of change, no visible personal gains from EU membership, or being critical of the EU in general.

The middle and the oldest generation respondents are among those who most often mention that it should be the elderly who feel least European. The respondents from Rīga, as well as the youth and the Latvian speakers, believe that it is detachment and indifference that makes people less likely to identify with Europe. Meanwhile, the respondents from Kuldīga think that a lack of European attachment is caused by a dislike of the EU, and the interviewees from Daugavpils associate such feelings with a lack of financial and social security. The middle aged mention an older age and detachment/indifference equally often, and the Russian speakers mention four characteristics equally often: being elderly, detachment, lack of security and lack of life satisfaction.

Among these predominantly negative stereotypes about what a person who does not feel attached to Europe is like, a few positive interpretations were given by some of the Russian speaking respondents. For example, Olga sees a belonging to Europe as something almost artificial and believes that not identifying with Europe is a sign of an independent, genuine person. Some of the youngest generation interviewees associate a lack of European identification as characteristic to a patriotic person who is closely attached to Latvia:

“Well, he has an independent personality. If he doesn't want to be a European, and doesn't want to... he wants to be himself, how he is. If Latvian, so being Latvian, if Russian - then Russian, if Belorussian - then Belorussian. But he can learn the languages, of course, and know the languages. But to stay a person as he is, as he was born.” (*Olga, oldest, Rīga, Russian*)

“A very big patriot, who loves his country and doesn't want to compare it to anything, doesn't want to move somewhere, who is trying to make his state better, maybe, who is participating even in some political groups, if to think of politics. Who is satisfied with his life in Latvia, for whom it is his Motherland, where all the relatives and friends live, who haven't moved to the other countries.” (*Laura, youngest, Daugavpils, Russian*)

The latter association is the strongest among the youngest generation Russian speakers, e.g., Olesja (Rīga) believes that this kind of attachment to the motherland is specific to the oldest generation from whom the native land is of particular importance: “they like having their territory, their Motherland, as it used to be that everybody was standing for his land and nobody would ever go abroad, as they had their Motherland and they would fight for it.” Nils (Daugavpils) calls a person who feels European in Latvia “a hybrid person” because such a person lives in Latvia but feels European and Laura (Daugavpils) believes that such a person “is not a patriot for 100 percent, so to say, just for a half, as he lives in Latvia”.

How do these positive and negative stereotypes fit to the people who express them? Overall, the majority of respondents characterise “European” as an ideal, a person in Latvia who is clearly above the average in such characteristics as education, material wellbeing or amount of foreign experience. Furthermore, this stereotypical person also has “European” personal characteristics and in this differs from the stereotypically Latvian. For example, Maija compares the skills of enjoying life, being cultured and openness of a typical Latvian and a European:

“I think perhaps that those who live in Latvia, compared to an average European, they have had less possibilities and also abilities to enjoy... especially the French know how, this skill for life. He would be enjoying life more. An average Latvian, I think, is not yet as great enjoyer of life as a European. Belongs to Europe... He is certainly very, very knowledgeable, interested, let us say, in the qualitative aspects of life, including culture, at least that is what I think could characterise such a person who thinks and feels

European. He would be very open also to contacts with people from foreign cultures, he would be warm-hearted." (*Maija, middle, Rīga, Latvian*)

Dace (middle, Kuldīga, Latvian) mentions that over the last years, working in various projects that are related to and funded by the EU, she has changed and become more "European": she explains that she used to be more reserved but has become more communicative, learned to ask more questions and look at herself more positively, be less critical and less focused on minutiae. Yet she adds: "I have not learned to smile like they do and I doubt whether I will learn that, it is completely not matching my character."

Natalja, on the other hand, believes that the carefree European ideal does not fit to her life and she associates herself with the people who do not feel European:

"I think that this feeling that a person doesn't live, but is just surviving, is running round like a squirrel in a wheel, that is probably the difference. As a European lives for his own pleasures, he satisfies all his needs and wishes. So, as soon as he gets some wish, he can easily get it done. Of course, he is working at the same time, he is making an effort, but he is working just a particular amount of time, so that he still has time to rest, for his family. And our person has to get out of scrape, as my husband has three jobs to be able to get something in this life." (*Natalja, middle, Daugavpils, Russian*)

Overall the respondents are more likely to explicitly state their incompatibility with the European stereotype than to clearly state that they are among the people they would describe as the ones who feel belonging to Europe. So, e.g., Marta (oldest, Rīga, Latvian) replies without hesitation when asked what kind of people do not feel European: "People like me [laughing] Paying no mind to it and letting everything go in one ear and out the other". Inese believes that she does not belong in the European stereotype because of her different life experiences and believes that it is easier for the youth to fit in. She describes the Soviet heritage as an obstacle to being European:

"I think those a people younger than me, much younger, who already think differently, for whom English is already a usual language of communication, which for me is Russian. I come from the other end. That he can communicate with anyone in this common language, because I think that everyone speaks English there. (..) Again it is what my son says, well, that this breadth, it stretches towards Europe. If I put myself so then I am in the middle in Latvia. I sit here, for me there was this Russia, now is this Europe." (*Inese, middle, Kuldīga, Latvian*)

On the other side, especially for some of the young respondents it is hard to imagine a person who is not feeling European. For example, Edgars (Daugavpils, Latvian) and Tanja (Rīga, Russian) presume that such a person has not experienced any changes in their daily life due to the EU membership or pays no attention to the current events, but both of them mark that such people must be very hard to find. As Tanja says: "I don't think that there are people like that, except perhaps for the homeless, every person who has a TV at home belongs to the European Union [short laugh] because he follows the current events here in Latvia". Also Sarma expresses a similar opinion but ties feeling European to a birthplace and hints to possible ethnic differences:

"No, no everyone [of the closest people] feels belonging to Europe. Well, belonging... I even think that it might be a question for the Russian ethnicity who do not feel but no, I think that every Latvian family feels belonging, well no... how can it be understood otherwise if he is born in Europe? Well it cannot be understood in another way, because they are all the same in principle" (*Sarma, oldest, Rīga, Latvian*)

To sum up, this subchapter has shown that the majority of respondents identify with Europe, at least to a certain extent. There is only a loose connection between evaluating the EU positively and identifying with Europe. As shown by the perceptions of what Europe is, a likely reason for this discrepancy is the much wider and more personal base of reference the respondents have when reflecting on their belonging to Europe. Namely, instead of thinking about Brussels or things heard in the evening news, the respondents draw on their personal experiences and their feelings of closeness to a certain corner of the world. Nevertheless, around a third of all interviewees could not unambiguously formulate their attachments and many do not perceive being European as a matter of personal choice. The interviewees have widespread positive associations of what a person in Latvia who feels European should be like, whereas the lack of such attachment is attributed to predominantly negative characteristics. However, the respondents are cautious of including themselves among the people they describe as European; “Europe” is more frequently expressed as a standard to compare one’s life against or a goal of better life that one can strive toward. The correspondence of these assumptions to the reality of life in the Western European countries is, of course, an entirely different question.

### **7.3. PUSH AND PULL FACTORS**

Based on the interview analysis in this chapter, four broad dichotomies or push and pull factors for feeling European can be distinguished. These are closely intertwined with one another and subsume also other factors that will be discussed below:

- 1) The involved vs. the detached;
- 2) The content vs. the dissatisfied;
- 3) The travellers vs. the homebodies;
- 4) The young vs. the elderly.

The first dichotomy can be made between those who are involved and those who are detached with regards to current events in politics, society and economy, both locally and in relation to Europe. Those involved are more likely to have personal experiences related to the “European”, e.g., through having received funding to projects important to them, or are simply more informed and thus able to make evaluations about the importance of Europe and the EU. Those detached are not keeping up with the current events or do so without a critical evaluation of the information. They are the ones unable to give evaluations of the role of the EU and are unsure even about their own belonging to Europe.

According to the respondents, the reasons for divergence of these two groups lie in differences of age and the level of education, with youth and a better education being tied with higher involvement and knowledgeability. The perception of the relationship of these factors can be illustrated by a quote from Alise:

“I think that there is a difference in terms of age, how educated you are, the more educated and experiences a person is the more he knows and orientates himself in those things, maybe he is more interested in the EU and wants to find out all the news, the first and the last. And then he knows and can say, if he likes that and is he is here, he says straight away: yes, I am a European, and is satisfied with it, with it all, and is proud of it, and everything is all right for that person.” *(Alise, youngest, Kuldīga, Latvian)*

Furthermore, Eva (middle, Daugavpils, Latvian) mentions that a possible reason for such detachment could be a lack of Latvian citizenship. She explicitly stresses that citizenship is more important than ethnicity because it opens the doors to more opportunities in the EU: “It is not about ethnicity but about citizenship. They maybe would like to travel in Europe and there would be more opportunities as well but the citizenship interferes. They feel, yes, as if offended”. This observation is supported by the fact that the non-citizen informants were more likely to stress that being European is not their choice because they had no say in the decision of joining the EU.

Being involved does not automatically mean that a person feels European, it merely means that the individual can make informed judgements about Europe/the EU and their own place in it. In the interviews some of the respondents mentioned possible ways of increasing involvement in a pro-Europe way. These can be projects or campaigns on a national level that, as Ivars (youngest, Kuldīga, Latvian) marks, are easily distinguished by an EU flag on their posters or other materials. Also international efforts for achieving common goals can work positively, e.g., projects for nature protection of children’s rights can be “such activities [in which] it is possible to feel as the European, that you can give something as well” (Olesja, youngest, Rīga, Russian). Finally, a particular attachment and connection can be made through culture, be it high culture in the sense of art and music mentioned by Maija (middle, Rīga, Latvian) or more everyday culture such as exploring European cuisines mentioned by Tatjana (middle, Rīga, Russian). These experiences may help to get acquainted with the European space, find commonalities and learn, all of which further involvement.

The second dichotomy is between being content and being dissatisfied, and is closely tied to presence or absence of social and financial security that was discussed in the previous subchapter. Material wellbeing was among the stereotypes of a person who feels European and, even more prominently, among the factors that deters people from making European attachments, especially for the elderly and middle aged respondents. As Sarma (oldest, Rīga, Latvian) explains, in her interviewer’s work she has observed a clear connection between the two: “Everything depends on the financial situation. If people are doing badly they do not like anything anymore, they do not need Europe, nothing, they need bread.” Also the answers of several other respondents (e.g. Inese, middle, Kuldīga, Latvian; Larisa, oldest, Daugavpils, Russian) point to material hardships as firstly, making people more withdrawn and preoccupied with their own problems and secondly, not seeing practical benefits of EU membership or any European ideas. A very illustrative example of the meaning of financial and social security for feeling European is given by Natalja who explicitly links “Europeanness” to material goods and social security, and describes it as a kind of ideal life model. However, this model does not match her reality:

“Well, this person has a job by all means! It is the job with the long-term perspective, so, he has clear positions in his head, that he has a good, well-paid job and he will have it till the time of the retirement. So, it is a respectable man, who has his income. He has a good salary, so that he can afford to live good, not at the level of Latvia, but at the level of Europe, of the countries with the highest income. This person has all of the social benefits, so that he is totally sure that if something happens to him the government will pay, if something happens to his health, he will get the help, if he is already retired, then he has particular guarantees and so on. (..) This person has a house, his private house, this person has a car or some means of conveyance he would like to have. He has a family by all means, he travels at least twice in a year, well, at least once, well, no, if he is European, then twice [laughing]. He is travelling, (..) he has the possibility to go to any country where he wants and how he wants. This person

has a right to decide where his children will get their education, in what sanatorium he would like to receive a treatment. So, he can choose from a variety of options.” (*Natalja, middle, Russian, Daugavpils*)

The third dichotomy is between having foreign experience such as travel or foreign contacts and a lack of such experience. Many of the interviewees believe that it is exactly experiences like travelling or living abroad that broaden one’s horizons and make people feel stronger attachments to Europe. Such direct experiences of different cultures and peoples would allow reflecting on the similarities and the differences and get acquainted with the common European space. Ultimately, it would also be the expansion of one’s future plans or business actions beyond the borders of one country.

“I think that when you are travelling and you are visiting the different countries, you start to feel as being very comprehensive. And you are taking a little piece from the every country you visit, the part of the national cuisine, culture, education, work. And when you, if you have had the chance to travel in the different countries, you return with the full complete set of being the European, when you have a little bit of everything from the different countries. It is exactly those moments, when you can feel such a person, I think.” (*Olesja, youngest, Rīga, Russian*)

The grandmothers Daiga (*Kuldīga, Latvian*) and Ella (*Daugavpils, Latvian*) believe that those who move abroad may even become too European and lose their patriotism and attachment to their native land. However, Ivars (*youngest, Kudliga, Latvian*) makes a different conclusion and highlights that, in his opinion, not all foreign experiences make a person more European. He distinguishes between people who travel and participate in EU projects and those who go abroad to earn some quick money, saying that the former experiences further European belonging while the latter do not.

“The result is not alike, not at all, because if they go with the goal to simply earn a penny – they will not acquaint themselves with the culture, nothing, everything will go by them, they will get their money, they will have had a good time, come back and pour the money down the drain. But those who go, for example, on volunteer work and all the other projects, Erasmus and others, in all they go with the wish to learn about the other culture, they go to get to know people, I think that is somewhat different.” (*Ivars, youngest, Kuldīga, Latvian*)

A particular aspect of the foreign experiences is language knowledge. When speaking about foreign language skills, the interviewees most frequently meant English and, more rarely, German. Language knowledge was often mentioned by the elderly and the middle generations as a factor restricting their possibilities. For example, Anita (*middle, Latvian*) and Dace (*middle, Latvian*) from *Kuldīga* named a lacking knowledge of the English language among the reasons they have chosen not to go abroad to work. Interestingly, the respondents often did not include Russians language skills or travel within the Soviet Union as foreign experiences. Overall, several of the oldest and middle generation interviewees included (English) language skills as the realm of the young, something that will offer them wider opportunities that are already passed for the middle aged.

Finally, the respondents made a very clear distinction between the youth as the most likely to feel European and the elderly as the ones most likely to be distant from such identification. In the argumentation of the respondents this distinction is based on two grounds. The first is the belief that the youth are the ones who profit the most of the opportunities given by the EU, in particular, travel and studies or work abroad, as well as different EU projects that take place on a national level. Olesja takes this argumentation one step further and marks that these opportunities can also create a rift in national attachments:

“I think that the young people want to go abroad, to see, how it is there, maybe if a person will like it abroad, he will stay there, will build a family. That is exactly the point, as the youth is very energetic nowadays and... probably can abandon the Motherland very easily. So, if there is a better place, they will go and stay in the place where it is better. And the older generation is more patriotic.” (Olesja, youngest, Rīga, Russian)

The second explanation for the generational differences given by the interviewees is linking the identification with Europe to changing times and different life experiences. Namely, especially the respondents of the middle generation characterise the elderly as people who have grown up in a time when the opportunities were tied to the USSR and the Russian language, and life was more secure. Thus, it is assumed, for them the EU is something new, incomprehensible, and also distant.

A particular thread in the interviews with the middle aged was belonging to Europe though one's children, especially pronounced among the Latvian language respondents. As Eva (Daugavpils, Latvian) says: “I believe that the youth already feels that they are 100 percent European”. The parents wish their children to learn languages, go abroad, study or work in another European country, they see a lot of opportunities and, as Sandra (Rīga, Latvian) puts it, “it is your priority, it is your time”. Anita (Kuldīga, Latvian) whose son currently studies in another EU country remarks: “I think that my son will have that, he will feel more belonging to Europe. Exactly those who have lived abroad, learned, worked, also found friends... I think that they will be, they will certainly feel more belonging”.

This chapter has shown that in the interviewees' associations Europe is closely linked with the EU, and the evaluation of the significance of the EU and Latvia's place in is controversial. However, both the positive and the negative accounts illustrate that matters related to “Europe” are entering the everyday life of the respondents, be it travelling without having to stop at borders or dissatisfaction with the way the EU funds are spent. Almost a half of all respondents identify with Europe to some extent and over a half would call themselves European. At the same time, for around a third of the informants belonging to Europe is a distant matter or something that comes about automatically, not a matter of their personal choice. Finally, the stereotypes of what is European and which part of the Latvian population feels Europe are predominantly positive, tied with the affluence, high education, mobility and youth. Nevertheless, only a few respondents would explicitly include themselves in this stereotypically European group.

Throughout this chapter the European identity was also touched upon in the context of Latvian identity. Some respondents pointed to a strong belonging to Latvia as an obstacle to feeling European, others marked that being Latvian makes them European automatically, while others worried that becoming European might make a person less nationally patriotic. The relationship of European and national identity, as well as other social and collective identities will be topic of the next analysis chapter.

## 8. IDENTITY RELATIONSHIPS

Chapter six outlined the generational differences as well as the main identities of the respondents, and chapter seven focused on the meanings and emotions associated with Europe and the EU, and its role in interviewees' lives. The goal of this chapter is to bring together the identities that were described in the two previous chapters and to examine the relationship they have with one another. In the following analysis identities are divided into three types: first European identity is examined in the context of territorial identities such as local, regional and national identity. Second, the relationship of European identity and group identities such as profession, ethnicity and citizenship is explored. Third, the connection between European identity and a belonging to the world and the European and Soviet identities is looked at.

### 8.1. EUROPEAN IDENTITY AMONG TERRITORIAL IDENTITIES

According to the majority of previous studies (see section 2.2.4), territorial identities on a local level are generally combinable and akin to the "matryoshka" doll image of identity relationships: one fits neatly into another. Belonging to one's town, region or state signifies attachment to a known space characterised by familiar places and people, places that have been the backdrop of most events in the respondents' lives. As a result, the interviewees take the compatibility of these identities as a given and only seldom express the order of importance these identities have for them. Furthermore, following the hierarchical order of town – region – country identities, the respondents would compare the strength of their town and regional or regional and national identities but would seldom make comparisons between belonging to their town and belonging to Latvia.

A connection between town and regional identifications are mentioned by the respondents only rarely and in the majority of cases they are seen as two complementary identities. This is particularly the case in Kuldīga, the heart of the region Kurzeme. One exception is given by Ivars who clearly states that belonging to Kuldīga is more important for him than belonging to Kurzeme, and stresses the dissimilarities within the region:

"Whenever I am in such an event [youth project] I say that I am from Kuldīga. I put Kuldīga a little before Kurzeme after all because many say: oh, you are from Kurzeme, you speak like someone from Kurzeme. But there is a difference: in Kuldīga we speak differently than in Ventspils and in Ventspils they speak differently than in Liepāja or Kuldīga, there are peculiarities." (*Ivars, youngest, Kuldīga, Latvian*)

The connection between region and Latvia was touched upon more often by the oldest generation Latvian speaking respondents who, as was already described in section 6.3, are also the generation for whom regional belonging is the most important. So for Sarma (oldest, Rīga) belonging to Latvia is more important than belonging to Vidzeme, Ella (oldest, Daugavpils) and Edgars (youngest, Daugavpils) feel more Latgalian than Latvian, whereas for Anna (oldest, Kuldīga) both are of a similar importance.

The following subchapters look at the relationship of these identities and European identity to determine whether Europe provides the outer layer for the nested doll of territorial identification or whether it is deemed to be conflicting. The territorial identities are split into two groups: (1) town and region, and (2) Latvia.

### 8.1.1. EUROPE AND SUB-NATIONAL IDENTITIES

The main differences in relationship between European identity and identifying with one's town and region, unsurprisingly, can be observed between the three towns as opposed to other, more individual characteristics of the respondents. Overall, the people from Kuldīga appear to feel European the most integrally, there is some closeness also in Rīga, whereas Daugavpils is the most distant.

As has already been described, Kuldīga is historically tied to the European space and currently enjoys a considerable amount of EU funding for locally important projects. The respondents from Kuldīga would generally see no contradictions between being from the town, Kurzeme, Latvia and Europe; as put by Alise (youngest, Latvian), these identities "fit into one another". The respondents speak about the restoration of cultural heritage sites made possible by EU funding and the town becoming more beautiful. They have also observed an increase of foreign tourists, especially from Germany. On the one hand, according to Ivars (youngest, Latvian), this situation increases local pride. On the other hand, it creates a feeling of inclusion within the wider processes of Europe. A particular touching point, mentioned by several respondents, comes through having a sister city – Geesthacht – in Germany and maintaining successful cooperation with it.

If Kuldīga feels European through its historical heritage and sister city cooperation, Rīga's place is determined by its heritage and the status of a capital. Respondents from the middle and youngest generations believe that Rīga is Latvia's main tourist destination and it is well recognized abroad. Sandra believes that Rīga's Hanseatic history means that the historical centre has a distinctly European look, while Maija stresses that also the modern day life rhythm of a the city is European:

"For example, going to the centre of Rīga here and wandering around the Old Town is like being in Lisbon and wandering around the old Lisbon. The belonging is very similar, yes, definitely. Of course, the architecture is a little different, that is another thing, but no. I think that on a big scale there are some similarities." (*Sandra, middle, Rīga, Latvian*)

"The rhythm of life of cities is largely similar, of course, there are differences in the spectrum of what different cities offer, elsewhere it is wider, bigger, but I think that the life rhythm is similar. Rīga is a small city, of course, compared to the big cities and that is a big advantage, in my opinion, that I can walk to work every morning. It is fantastic, that is a luxury offered by the little Rīga, but not everyone has that also in Rīga." (*Maija, middle, Rīga, Latvian*)

Finally, the interviewees from Daugavpils do not feel as integrated in the European image of cities as the interviewees from Kuldīga and Rīga are. They feel some belonging through EU funding, e.g., Eva (middle, Latvian) mentions that it is hard to see commonalities despite the money, "investments that come from Europe exactly for Daugavpils", but she believes that this might change. None of the Daugavpils interviewees strictly expressed that the belonging to Daugavpils and Europe cannot be combined, however, for many this was more a theoretical assumption because the European space has little actuality in their everyday lives. In the words of Edgars (youngest, Latvian): "It is a logical order [of identities], but that depends on the person (..) If a person has wide views then I think yes, certainly, everything is possible [to combine]".

The views about the relationship between regional and European identities are similar to those about their respective towns: while interviewees from Kuldīga believe that Kurzeme is quite

European and culturally involved, the interviewees from Daugavpils believe that their region of Latgale has been forgotten both by Latvia and Europe.

“Kurzeme and Europe? I think we cooperate well. We have something too – the green forests that Europe likes [laughs]. German tourists often come to Kurzeme for vacation. They are also interested in their ancestors, they like to take a look (...). It would not have been possible earlier, let us say, if there was no European Union I doubt whether they would come and show interest. (...) The choir of the music school “Cantus” is popular, they participate in various contests and gain prizes. And then our county organizes cello contests where people from Europe apply, we have had even people from Asia, Japan. (...) It takes place in Kuldīga for several years now. And then we have *suiti*<sup>74</sup> in Alsunga and Jurkalne with their distinct style of singing. And they participate in many things and are known in the world for their singing. (...) I think that we are not backward culturally. It is not that we only take and take, I think that we also give something [to Europe]” (*Anna, oldest, Kuldīga, Latvian*)

“Latgale has been forgotten – Europe and Latvia have forgotten Latgale. Take a look at what is happening here. All the money, all that has been given from Europe to Latvia, does it come to Latgale? [it goes] To Kurzeme, Zemgale (...) Maybe the city, let us say, Daugavpils, but I hear on the radio, people are always unsatisfied – it is not here where roads are fixed, not here really... (...) No Latgale is being wronged, in my understanding.” (*Ella, oldest, Daugavpils, Latvian*)

Overall, connections between the local and the European are made through assumptions of recognisability and mobility, cultural connections, and the receiving of EU funding for locally important projects. While the majority of respondents believe that these identities are theoretically combinable, Europe is more distant than the local, well-known spaces, thus little personal connections are made between the two. As expressed by Tanja (youngest, Rīga, Russian): “Rīga and Europe are two completely different things. Because you see Rīga every day, you do not see Europe every day, you only know about it. In Rīga it is like walking around in your own house, well you are here, you do not go out the door to a different space, you sort of simply are at home”.

### **8.1.2. EUROPE AND LATVIA**

The relationship between European and Latvian identities was already slightly touched upon in the previous chapter and is by far the identity pair whose compatibility is reflected about the most often. In general, three types of relationship between European and national identities can be distinguished:

- 1) Competitive identities: strong national belonging can be an obstacle to feeling European or, contrary, becoming “European” might make a person less nationally patriotic;
- 2) Connected identities: being Latvian means being European by default because Latvia is an EU member state; this introduces an automatic hierarchy of identities with Latvia coming first and thus being more important;
- 3) Compatible identities: a person can hold both identities without them overshadowing one another, however one can be more personally important than the other; this type is linked to a cultural and historical understanding of European identity.

In all three types national identity tends to take precedence over European identity. In fact, only one respondent (Nils, youngest, Daugavpils, Russian) explicitly expressed feeling more European than

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<sup>74</sup> A small Catholic community with their distinct culture and customs living in the Western part of the traditionally Protestant Kurzeme

Latvian, however his sentiment is caused not by a particularly strong European attachment but rather by a weak bond to Latvia. All other interviewees felt either no connection to Europe, believed their Latvianness makes them European by default, or saw both identities as important, yet expressed closer attachment to Latvia.

The first type of identity connections, labelled as *competitive identities*, implies a conflicting relationship between belonging to Latvia and belonging to Europe. In other words, it is based on the assumption that strength of one identity weakens the other. This view was seldom consciously formulated when asked about the compatibility of various identities, rather it emerged in discussions about other topics, e.g., when the respondents were talking about their stereotypes about a people who feel European.

One of the most direct opinions is given by Inese who stresses her belief that Latvia may become lost within Europe and give up its special traits through integration and emigration:

“Compatible? I think that no because we are all in one common pot, well, we have a large probability to vanish as Latvians, Latvia as such. Everything is going towards that, one has to really fight to be able to show that your ethnical is worth something because everything gets lost in that common pot. Well, what are we, a small nation, how many of us are there, well, we are small, after all. (..) Integrating into Europe we simply vanish in it, we are not there.” (*Inese, middle, Kuldīga, Latvian*)

Nils (youngest, Daugavpils, Russian) particularly emphasises that being European means emigrating, leaving the national state to which he does not feel attached to. The destination of emigration is not essential: the act of “leaving” is important by itself, it means turning back to Latvia and doing it exactly in spite of the politicians’ efforts to stall migration.

“[I feel] European because: I think, to the first one. (..) Well, my friends, as nowadays nobody wants to stay in Latvia, everybody wants to go abroad to get education, job there. They are not staying in Latvia, the authorities ask all the time the workers to stay, but they are saying 'no, we will leave' [laughing]” (*Nils, youngest, Daugavpils, Russian*)

The quotes of Inese and Nils illustrate two sides of the identity conflict: one is rooted in an underlying, strong attachment to the national state and a fear of it losing its distinctiveness through integration and unrestricted mobility of people. The other is caused by a fundamental rejection of the national and choosing the European as an alternative space of opportunities for building one’s future.

A weaker type of identity conflict can also be found in the stories of the Russian speaking families, with the exception of the family “T” (for more on this see section 8.2.2.). The majority of these interviewees feel little connection to Europe, do not see many ties between Latvia and Europe, and stress their strong identification with Latvia. Below are quotes from three generations of respondents that illustrate different aspects of the importance of the national and distance to the European: the ties of the daily life with the national state, the distinctiveness of its culture, and the locally-rooted family ties.

“To be the part of Latvia. I: Why? Nellija: Well, Latvia is closer for me, Latvia is paying me money, my pension. Latvia is giving me food, provide everything for living. Here I can go to the supermarket, to the market. Well, I won't go to Europe, but I will go to Latvia.” (*Nellija, oldest, Daugavpils, Russian*)

“No! No! Latvia is Latvia. Latvians are Latvians. They can be the Europeans, but in fact it is the nation. It is separate nation with its own traditions, with its language, with its own emotions and national traditions. With the cuisine, with its national dress, with everything! That is the point.” (*Oksana, middle, Rīga, Russian*)

“Latvia is my Motherland and I think it is more important than the EU. (..) You have the belonging to Latvia, as it is your Motherland. And when you go somewhere, all of your friends and all of your relatives are still staying here. So, you feel your belonging to Latvia more, even while going abroad.” (*Laura, youngest, Daugavpils, Russian*)

The second type of identity connections can be labelled as *connected identities* and presupposes a close connection between the European and the national. Here European identity stems from national attachments and, vice versa, national belonging is a prerequisite of feeling European. As expressed by Anna (oldest, Kuldīga, Latvian) when asked whether there are no contradictions between being Latvian and European: “I think you cannot be [European] without a nationality. That would be some cosmopolitan [short laugh]”.

The connected type of identity relationship is tied to the understanding of “Europe” as the European Union. The formal EU membership and the economic and political ties stemming from it are taken as the base of Latvia’s Europeanness and it makes the two identities connected by default. Out of the three types of identity relationships this was encountered the most often. Most commonly, interviewees would stress that they feel European only because they are Latvian, and Latvia will always be the most important attachment of the two.

This type of identity relationship is the closest to the “matryoshka doll” allegory and is expressed by several respondents. For example, Ivars (youngest, Kuldīga, Latvians) straightforwardly explains: “If I feel belonging to Latvia then I feel belonging also to Europe because Latvia is in Europe, logically concluding from all that.” And he adds: “I am a Latvian, living in Latvia, in the EU. Latvia comes first, Europe comes afterwards. Unequivocally.” Such a clear logical chain was most often expressed exactly by the youngest generation: not only Ivars, but also Dainis and Alise from Kuldīga, Tanja from Rīga and Edgars from Daugavpils outlined the same idea, linking Latvia with the EU and stressing the dominance of the attachment to Latvia.

Although this type of identity relationship is more inclusive than the type of contradictory identities, also here “Europe” often appears as a distant actor and, despite political and economic ties, respondents have little emotional attachments to it. Dainis (youngest, Kuldīga, Latvian) even explicitly stresses that any links between the two identities are only formal, not tied to any deeper attachments or cultural connections. As described by Ludmila, although there are connections, Latvia is also more important due to its more direct relevance to the daily life:

“More important is what is happening in our country. I think, the belonging to Latvia. That is what is more important for me, as I live in this state, and the most things which are happening in our state influence us somehow. (..) Well, the things which are happening in Europe influence Latvia, of course. I think, that everything is interconnected. As if we are the part of the EU, everything is interconnected.” (*Ludmila, middle, Daugavpils, Russian*)

The third type of identity relationship can be labelled as *compatible identities* and describes a connection between Latvian and European identity based on historical and cultural links. This relationship functions on a deeper level than the rather formal connection of Latvia and the EU. On

the most basic level such links are geographic, as expressed by Larisa (oldest, Daugavpils, Russian): “Well, Latvia is situated in Europe, it cannot belong to any other place. (...) And if Latvia is in Europe, so it is Europe as well. Latvia is in Europe. It cannot move to some other place, to America or Asia or somewhere?”

Only a few respondents, most notably oldest and middle generation Latvian speakers from Rīga, explicitly spoke of cultural ties between Latvia and Europe. Especially Sarma and Maija stress long historical links and common cultural heritage as important aspects of the compatibility between Latvian and European identities:

“..all Latvian literature has been tied to it. Well, they [writers] went to St. Petersburg to study, but they also went to Tartu and many went to Germany (...) all the painters who learned in Paris and in Germany. All of it has always been tied (...) neither Latvia nor our people can be withdrawn from Europe.” (*Sarma, oldest, Rīga, Latvian*)

“For thousands of years European cultural history is common with ours... we can begin counting from the early medieval times when the breezes carried by Christianity came in, but we were here also before. (...) Culturally, if we look, all at the same breezes that were in Europe... after all, the first book was printed in Rīga, if I’m not mistaken. Herder worked here, who was a star at the time of Enlightenment, everything was closely connected. Ludvig van Beethoven whose friend lived here wrote letters to here, and so on and so forth. We are in Europe much more than maybe Europe thinks that we have been.” (*Maija, middle, Rīga, Latvian*)

Perhaps because of their erudition, both women also stress that the knowledge of culture and history are important elements for understanding the ties between the Latvian and the European. Maija emphasizes that it is not the geographic location or the economic ties that creates a true closeness, it is the knowledge of the culture and an amassed experience that makes one understand the connection between the two identities. As she explains: “I think that all the Latvian artists, writers, poets and composers who have worked with European material – either by translating books or by playing music or listening to music and being inspired – well, they are on the same wavelength and they are rich with this since old times.”

This kind of identity connection also stems from a deeper level of familiarity with other European countries and peoples. And in its knowledge of historical and cultural connections such belonging is more profound than an average tourist experience of the other European countries that, first and foremost, focuses on the different instead of the similar. As explained by Edgars:

“Cultural similarities between European countries? From what I have learned in history many things are similar but, at the same time, in every country... even if we look at our neighbours – from the first glance everything is different but there are some deeper things that, after all, are similar... Maybe there is some similar European mentality, I think.” (*Edgars, youngest, Daugavpils, Russian*)

Overall, in all three types of identity relationships Latvian identity is more important than European identity. Among the respondents who feel European, all but one interviewee (Nils, youngest, Daugavpils, Russian) states that their European belonging stems from their attachment to Latvia. In many ways the two identities appear as opposites: while Latvia is intimately familiar, Europe is largely unknown; while Latvia is relevant to the daily life, Europe’s role in everyday life is not understood; while Latvia is emotionally dear, Europe is neutral. Especially respondents from the oldest generation express their distance from “Europe” as it is an unknown space that cannot be

explored due to their age and lack of language knowledge while, in contrast, Latvia means their home where all of their lives have been spent.

Mareks even completely dismisses a belonging to the EU as it is a too abstract entity; for him European belonging is impossible without single or multiple national attachments among which Latvia is by far the most important one:

“Theoretically there is no such belonging to Europe. The European Union is not a territory that one could belong to or an environment. Those are 50 different environments so I have to say that [I belong] certainly to Latvia because Latvia is something tangible and perceptible. European Union... in principle, I perceive European Union only as theoretical power that is not tangible, which simply connects the countries but the countries do not change. Then I can belong to one of the countries or all of the countries but I cannot belong to the European Union. (...) But to Latvia, Latvia – here I have lived too long not to feel belonging to.” (*Mareks, youngest, Rīga, Latvian*)

Several of the interview quotes leave the impression that Latvian and European identity are deemed compatible not in spite of but because of European identity’s distance from everyday life and the lack of ties to strong emotions. It is largely an assumed, formal compatibility of identities that emerges from undisputable facts such as Latvia’s EU membership or its geographic location. As the quotes below illustrate, potential political level conflicts have little relevance to the interviewees’ personal experiences and do not stand in the way of the presupposed compatibility of identities. Meanwhile, in times of hardships or important decisions the respondents would always give precedence to Latvia and Latvia’s interests; these stand above European ideals.

“Latvia belongs to Europe anyway, so that it is kind of the chain here [short laugh]. (...) Well, no, there is no conflict, they are giving the money [laughing]. So, I don't see a conflict. Maybe, if to look at that from the political perspective, one would be able to find some conflict. It is difficult for me to say. ... I don't want to go deep into that. I am just one small person if to compare to them.” (*Tatjana, middle, Rīga, Russian*)

“Latvia is the primary, after all. Although I understand that maybe I should think differently but I guess I cannot do it, yes. Of course, undeniably, I understand that we are all in it together, sort of... but we are going through such hard times that we should think about Latvia (...) Well but belonging to Latvia is belonging to Europe. Well, of course, they are related because we are in the European Union.” (*Sandra, middle, Rīga, Latvian*)

A good summary of the prevalent sentiment of the relationship between Latvian and European identities is given by Inga (oldest, Kuldīga, Latvian): “If I have to decide any question I will firstly be for Latvia and then I will be for Europe. (...) well, that is how it is. I am Latvian, after all! [short laugh]”.

## **8.2. EUROPEAN IDENTITY AMONG SOCIAL GROUP IDENTITIES**

The previous subsection showed that the respondents find little connection between local and regional identities and European identity and that the connection between national and European identity is multifaceted and ranges from competition to compatibility. The task of this subchapter is to extend the scope of identity relationships beyond territorial identities and to look at the European identity as a social group identity. The focus on this section is the relationships between European identity and group identities that are important to the respondents (see section 6.3): profession, ethnicity and citizenship. Linguistic identity is not included as it has comparatively less importance

with regards to European identity aside from that what is already subsumed under the issues of ethnicity and citizenship.

### 8.2.1. EUROPE AND PROFESSION

As described in chapter six, in the interviews a person's past, present or future profession emerged as one of the most important social identities. Its relationship with European identity is twofold: while the youngest generation respondents (Ivars, Kuldīga, Latvian; Olesja, Rīga, Russian; Laura, Daugavpils, Russian; Nils, Daugavpils, Russian) who primarily identified with their profession also feel European, the middle (Inese, Kuldīga, Latvian; Natalja, Daugavpils, Russian) and oldest (Olga, Rīga, Russian) generation respondents do not identify with Europe. An exception here is Maija (middle, Rīga, Latvian) who strongly identifies with her profession and also feels distinctly European.

In turn, a positive relationship between identification with a profession and with Europe has two grounds. The first is tied with the experience of having dealt professionally with Europe or EU-related issues. So for Ivars (youngest, Kuldīga, Latvian) it is his experience with attracting EU funding for projects and participation in various EU-funded events that creates a strong link between the two identifications. Meanwhile for Maija (middle, Rīga, Latvian) it is the specifics of her work – music and its promotion – that allows her to see European cultural connections. For both Ivars and Maija it is the particularities of their work that connects the European to their daily lives and gives them personal international connections.

The second ground for a positive relationship between professional and European identification is specific to the youth and ties the European with future professional opportunities. For example, for Laura Europe mainly means a space where she can build her future career, albeit the direction of it is still unclear. Meanwhile, Olesja is the only one of the respondents for whom both of the grounds of this identity relationship are important:

“Being part of Europe can give you the new opportunities in your life, something new. (..) I don't see my future life connected to art, as everything can change. I understand that it will not always bring in a good income to me, to my family. So, I think, if Europe gives me the opportunity to do something different and to get permanent income, so, I do understand that it is impossible to live just with the art.”  
(*Laura, youngest, Daugavpils, Russian*)

“...the style I am dancing was founded in Europe. And, of course, all the competitions, all those styles they came from abroad as we hadn't had that in Latvia. And even how the hip-hop is developing in our country nowadays is thanks to some European standards of this dance. And if to talk of the studies for becoming a choreographer, of course, there are more opportunities in Europe, as we do not have such development in this sphere here. (..) I think that a person does not have to stop at any point in time. If it is possible to reach something in Rīga, it is still not the top of the mountain yet. If you have reached it in Rīga, you need to conquer higher peaks, such as Europe.” (*Olesja, youngest, Rīga, Russian*)

The views of Laura and Olesja imply a kind of a “credit” of European belonging: although they are uncertain about their present attachment to Europe and the meaning it has for them, their future dreams and plans are tied to the European space and leads them to express a European belonging. As illustrated by a quote from Olesja (youngest, Rīga, Russian): “...it is even hard to say if I feel belonging to this Europe. But I think that in the future I am not planning to stay just in Latvia. I want to progress in the different countries. And I think that this will exactly be this mutual work with Europe and with the different countries.”

Especially the Russian speaking youth portray Europe as a space of opportunities for their future profession. Yet, as opposed to the Latvian speaking youth who rarely imagine living outside Europe, the Russian speaking young people do not restrict their dreams to Europe. In their accounts European countries compete with the attraction of Russia or the USA, e.g., as expressed by Nils:

“Europe is good, and Russia is good. You can get a lot in Russia as well, education as well as job, one can find everything there. It will be easier for me in Russia, as the language is Russian, will be easier to understand everything. It would be not that difficult as with the foreign languages.” (*Nils, youngest, Daugavpils, Russian*)

### **8.2.2. EUROPE, ETHNICITY, AND CITIZENSHIP**

As outlined in chapter six, the alignment of national, ethnic and linguistic identities is notably different between the Latvians and the ethnic minorities of Latvia. While for the Latvians these identities are all parts of a common whole, the minorities express different combinations and contradictions between national, ethnic and linguistic group identities. In line with this, the Latvian speakers see little conflict between belonging to their ethnic group and belonging to Europe, and their citizenship makes them EU citizens automatically. Their differences in attachment to Europe are based on factors other than ethnicity and citizenship. In turn, identity relationships among the Russian speaking respondents and non-citizens are much more diverse and thus will be the ones this chapter will mainly focus on.

On the most general level, the ethnically Russian and Belorussian respondents were comparatively more Eastern-orientated, while the two Polish families – especially the family T from Rīga – were more Western-orientated. Looking towards the East for these families is mostly tied with ancestry, family ties in other former USSR countries, as well as Russian linguistic connections. For example, as illustrated by Nellija (oldest, Daugavpils, Russian): “I have no idea about the Europe at all, and as for Belarus, I had spent my whole youth there. So, of course, Belarus is closer and dearer to me.”

In this context the story of the family T is particularly interesting as their language leads them to be defined as Russian which does not overlap with their self-identification. As Tamara (oldest, Rīga, Russian) remarks: “we have always turned more to European in our family. Well, we are kind of Russian-speakers, but, at the same time...” and states that “my nationality and I personally, I am closer to the European one. All those traditions, as I am not so close to Russia. (..) Well, as I am Polish, of course, I am European [laughing].” Tamara’s life story begins in what is today the border of Latvia and Lithuania near Daugavpils. She tells that her father grew up among “the superior people”, the well-educated and cultured Polish landowners, and he paid particular attention to teaching his children the Polish language and culture. As Tamara came to Rīga in her 20s she was immediately identified by her work colleagues as someone who is not Russian. Yet, as she never learned the Latvian language and Russian became her family language, today she is identified as a Russian speaker and relies on her granddaughter for translation. Also Tamara’s daughter Tatjana clearly states: “I belong to Europe, yes. And I feel so myself as well. Because the other side is not mine”.

In comparison, the Polish family L from Daugavpils feel European to a lesser extent, largely because they perceive it as a more abstract entity. For example, grandmother Ludmila states that, compared to her ethnic identity, being European is too distant: “To belong to Europe sounds somehow like big-words, and people are not generally thinking in those global terms, but are thinking of what is here,

closer to you.” Also her granddaughter Laura explains that her ethnic identity, albeit largely insignificant in her daily life, is still more important than identifying with Europe.

The second aspect of the differences with regards to European belonging within the ethnic minority group is related to the presence or absence of Latvian citizenship. In a sense the relationship between citizenship and European identity is mediated by national identity, i.e., the belonging to Latvia. Only four of the respondents did not have a Latvian citizenship – Oksana (middle, Rīga), Tamara and Tatjana (oldest and middle, Rīga), and Nellija (oldest, Daugavpils). All of the youngest generation respondents have citizenship; Natalja (middle, Daugavpils) has undergone the naturalization process, whereas the family “L” belongs to the historical Polish minority and had gained citizenship automatically. However, a citizen status does not mean a harmonious relationship with the Latvian state and the citizen and non-citizen minority groups often actualize similar issues.

The major subject discussed by the ethnic minority respondents tackles their place in the divided society of Latvia with its lack of ethnic integration and reproaches they encounter of a supposed lack of loyalty or being called “occupants”. The question of loyalty is particularly upsetting for Tamara (oldest, Rīga, Russian), who exclaims: “We will always be loyal. If we decided to stay in order to live here, if our children are growing up here, and our ancestors are buried here. What more of loyalty one may want from me?” Meanwhile Nellija (oldest, Daugavpils, Russian) explains that, despite not being born in Latvia, it is the motherland of her family: “I am not a citizen of Latvia. I moved out of Belarus by my own will, nobody made me. [short laugh] I have been living here and I took my roots here, my children were born here, and were grown up here, and are working here. My children don't have another Motherland.”

Even for those who are more integrated into the society, either through citizenship or social connections, the situation can remain controversial. So Natalja, despite being naturalized, believes that she will never feel Latvian because of the strained relationship between the ethnic groups, whereas Tatjana expresses that she does not feel a part of the society in Russia, while in Latvia she is “torn between” the groups when it comes to heatedly debated issues.

“I went through the process of naturalization in this country, but I do understand that I am not Latvian and I would never be Latvian. Maybe, in another country, like when we were living in the USSR, I would not feel that I have this national self-consciousness. But as for the current moment in Latvia, when there is such a struggle between Latvians and Russians, I feel it very clearly that I am Russian. I am thinking in a different way, I have different perceptions of events.” (*Natalja, middle, Daugavpils, Russian*)

“Well, what kind of Russian citizenship do I have? I went to Russia and it was ridiculous even for me. They were looking at me as 'what the hell is this foreigner doing here?!' (..) I am living here and I have been accepting the Latvian culture, the Latvian language. As for the communication it is still harder to me, as I didn't have that much of opportunity for the communication. Although, I am communicating with Latvians all the time. And my husband is Latvian as well [laughing]. At the same time, I support Russians when this question of the occupation comes. Well, Latvians start to talk of the occupation and Russians start to insist on Russian being the second official language. And you are torn in between. You are kind of supporting the one side as well as another. Well, why do we need the second official Russian language? What would we do with it? If to speak of the culture, yes, let's support the Russian culture.” (*Tatjana, middle, Rīga, Russian*)

On the most general level, the complicated relationship between ethnicity and citizenship on the one side and the national belonging on the other side determines that the relationship between citizenship and European identity can take two clear-cut directions: (1) an acceptance of the Latvian<sup>75</sup> but a rejection of the European as something foreign, (2) an acceptance of the European through a rejection of the Latvian. It has to be noted that only the views of a few respondents fit these two polar types.

The first type is more common among the oldest generation respondents who have spent most of their lives in Latvia and feel attached to the country. But, as they speak Russian and have spent most of their lives in the Soviet Union, Europe for them remains a linguistically and experientially foreign space. Furthermore, they could not participate in the decision to join this space. The second type is most clearly illustrated by Nils (youngest, Daugavpils, Russian) whose choice of the European as a negation of the Latvian has already been described in the previous subchapter. The roots of this denial lay in his dissatisfaction with the Latvian state, in particular, the lack of inclusion of the Russian linguistic environment that is among Nils' primary identities. A milder form of this sentiment is expressed by Olseja:

“On the one hand, it hurts that people are trying in Latvia...are trying either not to respect or not to pay attention to the Russian people. They do not take our interests into account. So that I wanted to move to Russia some time ago, as I understood that there are people who are the same Russians as I am and as my family is and that, maybe, there would be more understanding from the side of the government there. As I think that some situations that happen in our country offend Russian people, as, for example, visiting the doctors or when you go to some restaurant or a shop everybody wants you to speak Latvian. But, I think, that there is such a division of people in our country that there are a lot of Russians and ... it hurts that [they] are trying to close the Russian schools and to turn more to the Latvian language.”  
*(Olseja, youngest, Rīga, Russian)*

Particularly for the respondents of the oldest and the middle generations the changing situations with regards to ethnic relationships and citizenship was something they feel little control over. Rather, they see themselves not as those who act but as those who react; passive observers who can only adjust to the world that is changing around them. This feeling is illustrated by a quote from Natalja; it also links to the topic of the next subchapter: the European and the Soviet (see 8.3.2).

“Well, I don't have any kind of inside conflict, as I have always had this feeling, I have never changed the place of living. If I had lived in one state, as my mum had done, and then had moved to another part, then, maybe, I would have had it. I was born here, I am living in this house, I have always been living here, and the part of the world I was living in was called the USSR or the Republic of Latvia, then it turned to be called Latvia. It has belonged to that Union before, now it belongs to this one, but I am still staying in this point of the world, as I have been staying here before. And it is quite natural, I think, that I am Russian, but I have always been living here, well, now it is a part of Europe, well, let it be so. And if I had moved there, like, for example, the guest workers do, maybe I would have had this feeling that I have brought part of my culture there and I would have felt like a stranger, as like being Russian in the English environment. And I don't feel it here, we have always been living here.” *(Natalja, middle, Daugavpils, Russian)*

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<sup>75</sup> In the meaning of the Latvian land, not the state/government

### 8.3. EUROPEAN IDENTITY AMONG SUPRANATIONAL IDENTITIES

After looking at European identity in the context of territorial and social identities, this last subchapter explores the relationships between European identity and two other supranational identities: belonging to the world and the Soviet identity. Compared to the other social and collective identities, the two supranational identifications were mentioned in the interviews more seldom, likely because they share the fundamental difficulties of the European identity: a lack of personal experiences and a distance from everyday life issues.

#### 8.3.1. EUROPE AND THE WORLD

Only a few of the respondents expressed their perceptions about the relationship between being European and being a citizen of the world. This sentiment appeared most often in the interviews with the youngest generation respondents who would see the world as a globally connected place where feeling European is a step towards being a global citizen. These views are illustrated by the quotes from Mareks and Edgars:

“I fully feel as a citizen of the world. I feel sorry that there are such problems with immigration and emigration in the world, that so many doors are closed, but we are all citizens of the world. We should have equally free rights to travel everywhere, to be anywhere, to see anything. Europe, the EU, is a good way how to enjoy this here, within this continent.” (*Mareks, youngest, Rīga, Latvian*)

“I cannot exactly claim that I am a patriot, I think either more locally or more globally because I believe I am a citizen of the world. I think that I would feel good everywhere where I would have friends, where I would have people who can support me, how to say... not some material things but that what shapes me... (..) Place or something material is not the most important for me, people are more important after all, so I believe that it would be good anywhere where I would have friends and everything else.” (*Edgars, youngest, Daugavpils, Latvian*)

Alternatively, both European and world belonging can be seen as supranational attachments to a large, fundamentally unknown space. Thus, as soon as one leaves the national borders, i.e., the known space, there is not much difference between belonging to Europe or the world as a whole. Such supranational attachments are, among others, enabled by the global flow of information and mass media, dominated by products from North America.

“I don't have such a strong distinction as if there is Europe and the rest of the world. For me, when you are going out of your country, that is not usual to you, something is different. And it doesn't matter anymore whether you are still in Europe or in some other continent, in the US, or somewhere else.” (*Laura, youngest, Daugavpils, Russian*)

“The flow of information that comes into the life of a young person is global nowadays. Many things from his [Mareks'] spheres of interest is pop culture coming from America, also cinema... Europe, after all, is such a geographic entity that you first have to enjoy, to feel, go to France, meet French people and swallow those oysters. Or, I do not know, go to Norway, admire fjords, and see those wonderful places and really understand how unique each place is and how unique the people are. But that what comes into his daily life is global, of course (*Maija, middle, Rīga, Latvian*)

In general, in the 30 interviews global worldview is expressed seldom and is relevant to only a few of the youngest generation informants.

### 8.3.2. EUROPE AND THE USSR

Although not explicitly asked about, some of the respondents from the oldest and, especially, the middle generations<sup>76</sup> drew comparisons between European and Soviet belonging. Such comparisons are not surprising as the EU is the second multi-national union and European identity the second attempt of a supranational identity building that the respondents have experienced in their lifetimes. Overall, the few respondents who expressed a deep former attachment to the Soviet Union were among those who do not identify with Europe or the EU. The best example for this incompatibility of the Soviet and the European is Olga (oldest, Rīga, Russian) who asserted herself as a model Soviet citizen, dedicated to hard work and indifferent towards ethnicity or nationality; she clearly distinguished between Europe and Europeans as “them” and Latvians, Russians and Belorussians as “our people”. This incompatibility of the two supranational identities restricts the possible combinations of European and Soviet identities to (1) neutrality with regards to both, (2) a Soviet attachment and (3) a European attachment.

A few respondents notice similarities and, as outlined in section 7.1, may see it as a simple redrawing of borders. Inga (oldest, Kuldīga, Latvian) gives an example: if previously their town had a friendship with a town in Russia and organized events together, now they still have such a cooperation, just with a town in Germany. Although respondents more often outline such similarities in a neutral way, a quote from Inese shows that they can also be related to bitter feelings about ideologies and their promises:

“We will simply integrate and we will be some united, I don’t know, some multi-lingual union again. Well, in principle, well, probably... how was the Soviet Union different? Well basically in nothing, in essence, in nothing. Well, democracy? Maybe but also that has gone into extremes. There we were repressed, so it seemed at that time, that feeling that you need to speak only in Russian, that you have to know everything in Russian. (..) Back in that time one needed to know everything about Russia... and now Europe, yes, I had to tell little children about it as I worked in a school. There were all these brochures about Europe, the European Union, oh my, what one needed to tell everywhere. But somehow, yes, it is like they promised us the ideal communism, now they are promising Europe, but well...” (*Inese, middle, Kuldīga, Latvian*)

This quote from Inese echoes the feelings on Natalja of being subjected to different times and different regimes, and being made to adapt to their requirements, that were quoted in the previous subsection. Also Inese’s mother Inga expresses similar emotions; however she avoids describing the changes as good or bad, merely calls them “different”:

“It is very hard for me to say, maybe it is good, maybe it is bad, maybe today one need to know how to live in another way than we lived, because there is a very big difference. You were all the time lead from there [the top] and you all the time did... when you had written a paper, if it did not begin with the right and good words then you were always reprimanded that those sentences are not enough. (..) ... but today one needs to know themselves, do themselves.” (*Inga, oldest, Kuldīga, Latvian*)

Another type of parallels between the Soviet Union and the European Union are drawn on the grounds that both are international unions that, voluntarily or not, limit national autonomy. This argument comes from two very different sides: if for Sandra the dissolving of the USSR was a blessing

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<sup>76</sup> Inga, oldest, Kuldīga, Latvian; Inese, middle, Kuldīga, Latvian; Sandra, middle, Kuldīga, Latvian; Maija, middle, Rīga, Latvian; Tatjana, middle, Rīga, Russian; Natalja, middle, Daugavpils, Russian

and she did not want to give up the newly regained autonomy, Natalja felt that if Latvia wants to be in a union it should have been the Soviet one.

“I am a rather big Euro-sceptic and, if you are interested, I can tell you why. (...) It was completely clear to me that we had just gotten rid of one union and I would have wanted that we stay an independent country just like Switzerland is, yes. Small but independent from everyone but sadly, sadly...” (*Sandra, middle, Rīga, Latvian*)

“If I had been a citizen as at that moment [voting for EU membership], I would have voted against, I think, as I had such a feeling that we either need the Soviet Union or we don't need any union at all. So, there was no sense in the collapse of the Soviet Union if we want to enter a new one again. It is the same as when people get a divorce to then get married again.” (*Natalja, middle, Daugavpils, Russian*)

Natalja is also among the interviewees who believe that the Soviet Union had its advantages in comparison with the European Union and her reasons go beyond the nostalgia for economic stability and social security that sometimes appears in the stories of the oldest generation. Natalja illustrates the Soviet time as a period when large scale projects would take place “on their own”, whereas in the EU they are tied with a long and at times inefficient bureaucratic process.

“...in the Soviet Union everything was built on its own. There was such a feeling, that there was a need and it was built. So, if there was a need to have kindergartens, the money appeared from somewhere and they were built. If there was a need to have houses, new districts were built. And nobody had any projects done, and nobody demanded it and was waiting for it. (...) I had such a feeling. And now I have the feeling, that, yes, we need to renovate this street, we have such and such project done. We have asked for the money. We asked and we are waiting and waiting... (...) People are saying that, well, this street is in the need of renovation and the authorities are saying that 'well, we have asked for the money, and we are waiting now. As we need to wait for this Euro-project and only when we get money, we will do that'. And everybody is waiting. And then, when the money are here, well, let's do it in 2 months and forget! And they are saying that it is impossible as they have this project which has to last 1 year. This is the first stage, this is the second, and this is the third. And so, the money is here for the each stage. When the stage 1 is done, the next amount of money comes. (...) I had a feeling that there was more care about the people in the Soviet Union. If something was in the need to be done, it was done!” (*Natalja, middle, Daugavpils, Russian*)

At the same time, there are respondents who distinctly express their preference of the European as opposed to the Soviet. One of the main reasons for such inclination is the freedom to travel and the accessibility of various goods. Maija also hints to more profound grounds of self-determination and the underlying principles of the two unions.

“Parallels... Well that everything is being put into one pot, to a certain extent, and that something is being told from above. But, in my opinion, it is hard to say, but at least I hope that the rational reason for that is a different one. (...) I have seen a few times some information brochures about the EU and in one I really liked this idea that one of the basic principles for why and how to make this development, or the concept of development, is that this region that encompasses the EU countries should not have points or places that are weaker or worse... not equipped but maintained, than others. Well, let us say, there were mentioned the poor regions of Spain that were there already 10, 20 years ago. In short, to lift all the little ones, to ensure a good quality of life in the whole region. I really want to hope that what was written on the paper is also how it is. I do not think that the main goal of the Soviet Union was to ensure equally good... there everything happened for other goals, I think.” (*Maija, middle, Rīga, Latvian*)

In general, for the majority of respondents neither the Soviet nor the European identity are sources of strong emotions or very important attachments. All in all, both Soviet and European may simply serve as convenient, inclusive labels for multi-nationality, each seen as favourable in their own time: comfortable descriptions, e.g., for children of ethnically or nationally mixed marriages or people with considerable international experience.

This chapter shows that, at least on the most superficial level, there are little contradictions between the territorial and group identities important to the respondents and the supranational European identity. While this may appear as good news to increasing European identity, the fact that the local identities are close and personal while the European identity is mostly distant means that any such perceived compatibility is largely theoretical and does not stem from personal connections or associations. This is especially true for the relationship between local and regional identities and the European identity, albeit with existing differences between the towns and regions. In contrast, the relationship between Latvian national identity and European identity emerges as more nuanced as characterised by the three types of relationships: competitive, connected and compatible. Nevertheless, independent of the compatibility or incompatibility of the two identities, the national identity is generally stronger than the European identity. Importantly, the deepest level of connection between the national and the European is expressed by well-educated middle and oldest generation respondents who are erudite in matters of culture and history.

If any relationship between professional and European identities was discussed, it was largely positive with Europe (more often in the meaning of the EU) either being tied to current professional activities or being perceived as a framework for future career opportunities. Looking at the relationship between ethnicity and European identity, the ethnic Latvian and Polish respondents felt closer to Europe than the Russian and Belorussian respondents who have ancestry and current family ties with countries outside the EU. In turn, the relationship between Latvian citizenship and European identity is to an extent mediated by national identity with those who are citizens feeling more involved in the political processes or at least having a greater feeling of control over decision-making. Even if it does not always result in increased European attachments, the fact that Latvian citizenship also means EU citizenship gives a certain symbolic attachment to the otherwise distant Europe.

Finally, the other two supranational identities that this chapter looked at – belonging to the world and the USSR – can largely be seen as incompatible with European identity. The first because as soon as one leaves the national borders – the known space – there is not much difference between belonging to Europe and the world as a whole. The second because of a historical opposition between the two sources of identification; despite some perceived similarities between the two, a deep belonging to both Europe and the USSR is difficult to combine in one person's life story.

The next chapter brings together the analysis of this chapter and the two preceding qualitative analysis chapters, the quantitative analysis, as well as the insights from theories and previous research to thoroughly answer the research questions about the meaning of European identity, its relationships to other identities, and the life experiences that shape them.

## **9. IDENTITIES IN LATVIA AND EUROPEAN IDENTITY AMONG THEM: A SYNOPSIS**

The purpose of this study was to carry out an empirical in-depth investigation of European identity in Latvia and to map out its place among other identities in the context of national and personal historical experiences. The central research question asked in the beginning was: what are the relationships between European identity and other social and collective identities? This chapter brings together the information from the background and theory chapters, the quantitative analysis, as well as family interviews and expert interviews to answer this main research question as well as the sub-questions about the main social and collective identities in Latvia and their development, the group differences in identification patterns, the meaning of European identity, as well as the role of life experiences in the formation of the identity relationships.

For ease of overview, this discussion is split into four subsections. The first subsection looks at the most significant social and collective identities and evaluates the importance of various life experiences in the shaping of these identities. The second subsection considers the meaning of Europe and European identity in Latvia. The third subsection builds on the information of the first two subsections to explore the relationships between identities, paying particular attention to the place of European identity among other identities important in Latvia. Finally, the fourth subsection contemplates the broader subject of the balance and significance of different types of identities in today's transnational world.

### **9.1. IDENTITIES AND EXPERIENCES**

The quantitative data analysis in chapter five highlighted identifications with Latvia and one's town or village as the most important territorial identities, and belonging to one's family, group of friends, ethnic group, generation, and profession as the most important social group identities. Information gained in the qualitative family interviews is largely congruent with these results: the spontaneous self-characterizations of the respondents underlined the importance of one's family, town and region, profession, as well as nationality and language or ethnic group.

The combined results show that identities related to one's gender, religion, or socio-economic class that are often discussed in the identity scholarship are comparatively less significant in Latvia. This dissonance was stressed also by two of the interviewed experts: Dr. Nils Muižnieks and Viktors Makarovs (please refer to section 4.2 for information about the experts quoted in this chapter). To quote Makarovs: "There are some divisions that are actualized, for example, the abstract ethnicity that many do not perceive as the most important in the real life, but it is actualized. In reality gender, for example, has much more significance but it is not actualized. It is a situative matter." According to the two experts, the unsolved issues related to language, citizenship, and historical memory (see section 1.2), as well as the constant reification of the ethnic divisions in political processes and mass media have caused an over-emphasis of this particular identity and an under-emphasis of other social identities that may have more actual impact on the daily lives of the people in Latvia.

The identities that emerged as the most important in the quantitative and qualitative data – family, profession, town and region, nationality, as well as ethnicity and linguistic group – are briefly discussed below. This overview is followed by a look at the impact of two particular life experiences:

the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the recent global financial crisis. Finally, the distinction between age, period, and generation effects are discussed with regards to the life experiences covered in this section.

### **9.1.1. THE MOST IMPORTANT IDENTITIES AND THEIR MEANING**

The paragraphs below focus on the meaning of family, profession, ethnicity and linguistic group, town and region, as well as nationality, specifically concentrating on the life experiences that are important for shaping these identifications. Due to this focus the majority of evidence in this subsection comes from the family interviews, but it is supplemented by information from the survey analysis and expert interviews. European identity is not included here as it was seldom mentioned among the most important identifications. The experiences that further a belonging to Europe are discussed in the next subchapter together with the meaning and importance of Europe and European identity.

#### **9.1.1.1. Family**

A person's home and family emerged as the most important belonging both in the 2010 survey data and the family interviews. The closest kinship group forms the immediate environment of one's life and usually also signifies the closest social connections, therefore it is unsurprising that the importance of this identification is independent of language, ethnicity, or the part of Latvia where a person lives. The interviews did show a slight difference with regards to age: family becomes more important with age and is most significant for interviewees from the oldest generation. This increased importance can be tied with the experience of having children and grandchildren on the one hand, and with taking care of the elderly parents, often expressed by the respondent's conscious choice to live close to their aging parents, on the other hand.

Although the territorial and social group identifications covered in the interviews were not always felt – or not felt equally strong – by all the members of one family, the identification patterns show distinct similarities. The close-knit family ties illustrate that a person's identifications can be influenced not only by their own experiences but also by the experiences or opportunities of other family members. This was expressed, e.g., in some of the interviews with the middle and oldest generation representatives who indicated a closer attachment to the EU due to the opportunities it gives to their children or grandchildren.

#### **9.1.1.2. Profession**

Professional identities, just like identifications related to social strata or classes, are seldom considered in the Latvian context. As noted, e.g., by Dr. Muižnieks, in the past decades the Latvian labour market has been too unsettled for a development of durable professional identities. This opinion, at least to a certain extent, is supported by the quantitative data: if in 1993, just a few years after the collapse of the USSR, 64 percent of the population identified with working people, by 2010 this number had fallen to 28 percent, indicating a significant shift in the labour market and a changing prestige of various occupational categories. Also the comparison of the working life stories of the oldest and middle generation family interview respondents underlines a significant instability in many career paths since the 1990s.

That said, a little over a third of the 2010 survey respondents (35 percent) felt belonging to the group of their colleagues and people of their profession. In the family interviews identification with one's profession was comparatively more significant for the middle and youngest generations, and slightly more common among the Russian speakers. This identity was the strongest among those middle generation interviewees who had experienced a relatively stable career path, e.g., by working in the same general field despite changing positions, and those youngest generation respondents who already have a clear goal for their future occupation and are already working towards this goal.

### ***9.1.1.3. Ethnicity & Linguistic Group***

Ethnic and linguistic group identities are particularly important in the Latvian context and can have a divisive role, as already shown by the literature overview in the first chapter and the quantitative data analysis in the fifth chapter. The importance of ethnicity has reduced since the regaining of independence – from 74 percent identifying with Latvians and 51 percent with Russians of Latvia in 1993 to, respectively, 57 percent and 35 percent in 2010 – yet ethnic identifications remain among the most important group identities in Latvia.

Although it is often presumed to be the same or similar with ethnic identity, linguistic identity needs to be distinguished separately. For ethnic Latvians it may be impossible to separate between the ethnic, linguistic, and national identities, as these build upon one another and share many common elements, e.g., associations with ancestry, history, and culture. The situation is different for the various ethnic minority groups many of which use Russian as their main language of communication both within the family and in their societal life but hold a different ethnic identification. While for ethnic Russians there is a close association between their ethnic and linguistic self-definition, Latvia's inhabitants of Polish, Belorussian, or Ukrainian descent hold more complex patterns of identification.

Among the group of experts Dr. Muižnieks and, in particular, Dr. Volkovs stress that the linguistic group identity is more important on a day-to-day basis than ethnic identity. According to Dr. Volkovs the spoken language is not only the main structuring element of the minority ethnic identity but also an important part of the citizenship identity, thus “there is a fight for the recognition of this identity in the public space, [...] in multicultural societies ethnic groups wish to accent the linguistic identity because it is the main path for combining their private life with their public life”. Although the Russian linguistic identity is shared by several minority groups, Dr. Volkovs stresses that it is comparatively more important for the ethnic Russians: a conclusion largely supported by the evidence from family interviews. Thus, from the possible criteria that may delineate ethnic identity – linguistic, racial, genetic, or biologic (Bogner & Rosenthal, 2009, p. 77) – language is by far the most important in the Latvian context.

The role of political parties and mass media in the reification of the ethnic and linguistic identities (and their divisions) has been already elaborated on in the first chapter, therefore the main question here is: what are the specific life experiences that shape these identities on the individual level? The interviews allow distinguishing between three particular aspects: the negotiation of the external and self-identifications, the choice of school in the multiple language school system, and the “passport ethnicity”.

First, several of the Russian speaking respondents were concerned about a lack of acceptance or inclusion in the society at large, e.g., of doubts about their “loyalty” to the country. As stressed by

the expert Makarovs, such a lack of acceptance (or perception thereof) makes it difficult for the minority groups to identify with the majority, therefore they attempt to construct a different identification. The expert gives the example of the celebration of the 9<sup>th</sup> of May – the Soviet date for celebrating the defeat of Nazism – which in the past years has become a day of resistance for the minorities, particularly for the youth, who chose this celebration that is not recognized by the Latvian state to protest against their perceived discrimination.

Second, the dual language school system introduced in the USSR furthered the importance of Russian not only in the public sphere but also in the private life of the minority interviewees, several of whom lost their ethnic minority language. Although since the restoration of independence education in other minority languages has been reintroduced, the dualism between the Latvian and the Russian language groups can be best observed in the identifications of the youngest generation respondents who tend to see themselves either as Latvian or Russian despite having mixed ethnical background. However, it is not only the school linguistic environment that has an influence. According to the expert Marija Golubeva, each school is an institution with its own culture that reproduces a certain perspective on identity and history; with the help of such mechanisms as celebration days and traditions schools “enact different identities in a ritualized manner”. As a consequence, the linguistically divided school system may also further the development of different understandings of collective identities.

Finally, a particular aspect of ethnic identity in Latvia is the inscription of one’s ethnic group in their passport. While in the Soviet times this inscription functioned as a part of the wider belief system on the role of “nationality” (see section 1.1.3), today it appears to serve as an objectified identification based on one’s descent, incompatible with other ethnicities<sup>77</sup>, and largely unchangeable. A study carried out in the 1990s in Estonia and Russia found an almost complete overlap between the respondents’ responses to the questions of what nationality they consider themselves and what nationality is recorded in their passport (Brady & Kaplan, 2009, p. 54). The results of the family interview analysis leads to a similar conclusion; several of the interviewees explicitly mentioned their passport ethnicity as one of the elements of their ethnic belonging, the choice of including their ethnicity in their passport serving as an objectification of their ethnic identity. That said, this is also a forced choice that may be difficult for individuals with mixed ethnic and cultural background. As expressed by the expert Makarovs: “I do not want to identify in this manner, [...] I have different blood, so to say, roots from different cultures and I stay with it. What minority would I be? I can choose between four depending on the level of absurdity I would be ready for.”

Overall, two of the life experiences looked at – negotiation of the external and self-identifications and the choice of school in the multiple language school system – reinforce the importance of the linguistic group identity and solidify its importance in people’s daily lives. On the other hand, the choice of including one’s ethnicity in the passport retains an ethnic identification even if it can be a forced one and have comparatively little meaning in everyday life interactions. Perhaps as a result several of the younger generation ethnic minority interviewees expressed closer identification either with the Latvian or the Russian linguistic group, losing the more finely grained self-identifications particularly characteristic to their grandparents.

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<sup>77</sup> Only one ethnic identity can be listed in the passport, however a person has the right not to include their ethnicity at all.

#### **9.1.1.4. Town and Region**

According to the survey data, local and regional territorial belonging has been continually important in Latvia over the last two decades and attachment to one's village or town is somewhat more important than regional belonging: it was among the most often chosen primary and secondary identifications in the NBB surveys of 1993 and 2004, chosen between 30 and 40 percent of the survey respondents, and in the 2010 BISS survey 82 percent of the respondents indicated a very close or close attachment to their town and 67 percent a very close or close attachment to their region. Belonging to one's hometown has also been continuously stronger than national attachments (see section 5.1).

The family interviews highlighted significant regional differences in these local territorial attachments with the Western region of Kurzeme and the town of Kuldīga being a stronger source of identification than the Eastern region of Latgale and its largest city Daugavpils. With the exception of two oldest generation respondents, the inhabitants of the large cities of Rīga and Daugavpils had little or no connection to any of Latvia's regions, and regional identification was not mentioned by any of the Russian speaking respondents. An exception here is the attachment to Kuldīga as it was closely tied to attachment to the region at the heart of which the town is located. This close connection between the two as well as the strong local pride has long historical roots, as outlined in section 6.1.1.

Overall, local and regional belonging signify home and roots, and are attachments to locations that people are the most familiar with. These territorial identities are reinforced through making comparisons with people from other parts of the country based on such characteristics as the local dialect or typical characteristics on the one hand, and the economic development or availability of certain amenities on the other.

#### **9.1.1.5. National Identity**

Identification with Latvia was the primary identity for 35 percent of the NBB respondents in 1993 and for 39 percent respondents in 2004, little fewer than 80 percent respondents of the 2010 survey indicated a very close or close attachment to Latvia. Taking together national, local, and regional identification, exclusively national-local attachments are held by a little over 60 percent of the Latvian population (see section 5.1). These numbers show that national identity has been and remains significant in Latvia but what how deep is this attachment and what does this identity signify?

All of the family interview respondents admitted a belonging to Latvia; however the importance of this identity varied from person to person, it being the most significant for middle and oldest generation of interviewees from Kuldīga and Rīga. The interviews also showed that national belonging can either be tied to a local or regional belonging, i.e., national identity being secondary to (but reinforced by) a stronger local attachment, or independent from it, i.e., national identity being the most important among the national-local territorial attachments.

The interviews allow distinguishing between a total of five possible meanings of Latvian identity (in the order of frequency mentioned):

- 1) geographical location, fatherland;
- 2) culture, including language;

- 3) ancestry and history;
- 4) citizenship;
- 5) contributing to the country.

As could be expected already based on the evidence overviewed in section 1.2.2, the meaning and importance of Latvian identity differs between inhabitants of different ethnic groups and different citizenship statuses. While the ethnic Latvians tie their belonging to the country with it being their fatherland, associate it with the Latvian language and culture, as well as their ancestry and the history of the state, the minority ethnic groups – in particular, the Russian speaking ones – while also associating Latvia with their fatherland, put a larger emphasis on citizenship and their contribution to the country.

According to the observations of Dr. Muižnieks, the core of national identity for Latvians – the cultural space, the language, the land and its nature – is relatively stable, whereas the national attachments of ethnic minorities are comparatively more influenced by matters of prosperity and economic opportunities: if these are lacking, the identification becomes weaker. While being somewhat congruent with this presumption, the results of the interview analysis hint to an additional important aspect. Namely, based on how the interviewees talk about their national identity a separation can be made between belonging to Latvia as a place, their fatherland, and belonging to Latvia as a state. While the first is relatively stable, the second is more subject to change due to current events (as illustrated by the discourse of “leaving”, see section 6.3.3.4) and is independent of one’s citizenship, ethnicity, or linguistic group.

Looking more in depth at national identity as belonging to a political entity, the expert Makarovs notes that the state has defined itself as a Latvian country and it is “perceived as a Latvian project by both sides”. This is also stressed by Golubeva who notes that the expectation of societal integration on the basis of the Latvian language and culture remains a polarized issue, and there still exists a lack of unity of historical memory – in particular, with regards to the period of the Second World War. Makarovs agrees with this opinion: “Our problem is that nobody has created a truly open and civic definition of Latvianness, one that also ethnic and linguistic non-Latvians would like to join, all the ideals are related to cultural Latvianness.” He also remarks that many non-citizens do not feel a belonging because of a lack of involvement, e.g., through elections. And even the ethnic minority inhabitants who have gained the Latvian citizenship may experience a similar perception of disassociation because in the course of over 20 years the parties that they vote for have never been included in government coalitions. As a consequence, the potential for ethnic minorities to identify with the state as a political system are limited. That said, a problematic identification with Latvia as a political entity is not exclusive to the ethnic and linguistic minorities, the family interviews show that also ethnic Latvians, particularly those from the middle generation, can feel distant from or unneeded by the state: emotions most recently evoked by the hardships related to the global financial crisis (see more in the next section).

### **9.1.2. THE MOST IMPORTANT LIFE EXPERIENCES**

In the family interviews two events emerged as particularly important in terms of their impact on the life experiences and life courses of the interviewees independent of their age, place of residence, or

ethnicity. These events are the breakup of the Soviet Union and the currently ongoing global financial crisis, the impact of each is briefly discussed in the following paragraphs.

First, the dissolution of the USSR – including the events leading up to it and the period directly thereafter – is highlighted by many of the interviewees as a changing point in their lives. And, although it is mentioned by representatives of all generations, it has had a distinctly different impact on each generation. The oldest generation experienced most difficulties with reconciling their life experiences in the Soviet Union with the new reality and this reinterpretation of one's life story was (and continues to be) particularly difficult for some of the ethnic minority interviewees. The middle generation had to undergo, figuratively speaking, a change of rules in the middle of the game. They have had to adjust the trajectories of their education and work paths and adapt to a rapidly changing environment that often lacks stability: something that increased the opportunities of some but was too challenging for others. In turn, the youngest generation distinguishes itself by the lack of the Soviet experience that marks the ones that precede them; they can take on the current opportunities without a potentially problematic heritage. The collapse of the Soviet Union had a widespread impact on many identities, in particular, on the ethnic and national identifications that have already been discussed in depth in the previous section. In addition, it is likely that the increased territorial and labour mobility that directly followed the collapse has resulted in the reduction of meaning of regional and professional identifications. Furthermore, the quantitative data (see chapter five) show a distinct shift in transnational identifications from a predominantly Eastern to a more Western orientation.

Second, the global financial crisis that hit Latvia in 2008/2009 and has not yet been fully overcome was a topic that seeped into virtually all interviews despite not being a subject of inquiry. The financial hardships have impacted the employment and income if not of the respondents themselves then of their extended families or close friends. Furthermore, every single interviewee has family members or friends who have left Latvia to search for employment elsewhere. Unsurprisingly, the current situation has had the most impact on the middle generation who are active in the labour market, but it has also caused concern and uncertainty about the future of their families among the oldest generation, and lead the youngest generation to realistically considered building their futures abroad. With regards to its effect on identities, the financial crisis has had the most negative impact on national identity if taken as a belonging to Latvia as a political entity. This is most clearly illustrated by the way some of the interviewees would speak of their national identity: by defining their attachment to the country through the choice for emigration or against it, juxtaposing “staying” and “leaving”. The interviewees would also speak of losing patriotism, a lack of national pride and the feeling of not being needed by the state. However, as opposed to the breakup of the Soviet Union, the financial crisis is a very recent event and it remains to be seen whether the present-day observations will leave a lasting mark on the people experiencing it.

### **9.1.3. BETWEEN AGE, COHORT, AND GENERATION**

Up until now the term “generation” has been used to indicate the respondents' natural generation, i.e., their place in the interviewed family. The purpose of this section is to attempt to untangle the age, cohort, and generation effects to ascertain which of the observed characteristics and differences can be attributed to each.

First, interviewees' age undoubtedly has an effect on their experiences, opinions, and identities, and these are the most visible among the oldest and the youngest groups of respondents. First, aside from the much larger stock of life experiences to draw upon, the oldest respondents are also limited in their everyday life options and future possibilities by their health and reduced financial capabilities, as a result their social circles are objectively smaller, their attachments are more focused on the closest social groups and locations, and they are comparatively more withdrawn from the current events. Of course, this does not apply to everyone in the oldest group of interviewees as their age range is close to 20 years. Second, at least a part of the "world beneath my feet" attitude of the youngest respondents can be explained by their young years: as opposed to their parents and grandparents, their lives are just beginning, they may not have much life experience yet but they have their plans, hopes, and ambitions that still need to stand the test of reality.

Second, based on the observed characteristics and particularities of the interviewees we can clearly speak of certain cohort effects. As clearly shown by the generation descriptions in section 6.2, youth and young adulthood spent in, respectively, post-war Soviet Union, the period of national revival and regime change, or the years following the reestablishment of independence have had an impact on the life courses of the interviewees, impacted their values and identifications. So, e.g., the oldest age group hold strong local-national identifications, some also felt attached to the USSR, they see their contemporaries as hard-working, frugal, valuing education and non-material values. The middle age group was raised with the Soviet values, yet had to learn to adapt to rapidly changing circumstances and adjust to a lack of stability, accordingly they perceive their contemporaries as easily readjusting and hard working, but also more tense and stressed. The youngest age group is the most open and transnational in their identifications, they see their peers as more individualistic as their parents or grandparents, but also more materialistic and orientated towards short-term rewards.

That said, the three natural generations do not correspond to three cohorts. Rather, the differing accounts of the interviewees indicate that there are at least two separate cohorts among the oldest generation respondents who can be divided into those who had already retired before 1991 and those whose work careers ended during the first decade of independence as these two groups experienced different kinds of adjustments. Also the middle generation can be divided into two groups based on their age at the time of regime change; as the accounts of the interviewees show, a mere few years of age difference result in divergent views about the severity that this change caused in their lives. Despite the much smaller age gap of the youngest generation respondents, the oldest (born 1991) and the youngest (born 1995) interviewees expressed contrasting opinions from their peers, however, it is difficult to ascertain insofar these are individual or cohort differences. Overall, the general dynamics of the life paths and characteristics of the cohorts that emerge in this study are similar to the conclusions of studies carried out in the former East Germany following the German reunification (e.g., see Weymann, et al., 1999).

Finally, do these cohorts form generations in a Mannheim understanding, in particular, a generation as actuality? Is there a subjective self-identification with generation in addition to the externally definable cohort? For one, in the 2010 survey 39 percent of the respondents expressed a belonging to people of their generation. This was one of the highest group identifications and clustered together with attachment to the groups of colleagues and classmates. In the family interviews the majority of interviewees expressed an attachment to people of their generation and there were

general similarities in the way the interviewees of each natural generation characterized their contemporaries. However, just as with cohorts, each of the natural generations could be split into two generations as the age – and experience – gaps between the interviewees are fairly large, especially in the oldest and middle natural generations. Importantly, despite the considerable ethnic and linguistic group differences described in the previous sections, the family interviewees and the experts agree that these do not matter with regards to generational belonging as the most important life experiences are shared by all the inhabitants of Latvia independent of their language or ethnicity.

## **9.2. THE MEANING OF EUROPE AND EUROPEAN IDENTITY**

Now when the baseline of the main group and territorial identities and the life experiences that shape them has been established, it is time to turn to the main subject of interest: the European identity. When looking at the understanding of Europe and European identity, two particular sets of questions need to be examined. First, what does European identity include? What are the common elements, the shared beliefs and understandings, and do these correspond to everyday practices? Second, what does this identity exclude? Which are the out-groups and how are they different from the in-group? How are the borders between the in-group and the out-groups drawn? And, most importantly, on which side of this border do people include themselves?

### **9.2.1. THE CORE(S) OF EUROPEAN IDENTITY**

European identity can mean either belonging to a part of the world – a particular territory, or belonging to a particular group of people that share some commonalities. The majority of conceptual contributions to the topic of European identity distinguish between two possible sources of such commonalities for all Europeans. The first is based on political values such as democracy and human rights; the second is based on a cultural dimension and includes the values of diversity and tolerance. Accordingly, this division leads to the conceptualization of European identity either as a political identity based on civic principles and common political values or a cultural identity based on the understanding of the peoples of Europe as belonging to one “family of cultures” (Smith 1992, see also Kraus 2008).

Evidence that would support either of these presuppositions is difficult to find in the survey data that is used in this study as the pre-given answer categories generally take a different approach and look at Europe either as a territorial identity or explore belonging to Europeans as a group of people without inquiring into the specific meanings and values that the respondents had in mind when deciding about their identification or lack thereof. In contrast, a more nuanced picture of what Europe and European identity is or may be is provided by the family interviews. The accounts of the interviewees allow distinguishing between a total of six understandings of Europe:

- 1) Europe as a continent;
- 2) Europe through cultural connections and feelings of closeness;
- 3) Europe through mobility allowed by the EU;
- 4) Europe because of belonging to Latvia, “through Latvia”;
- 5) Europe as the opposite to Russia/the Soviet Union;
- 6) Europe as the closest entity in a globalized world.

The first of these is clearly a territorial identification, associating Europe with a certain part of the world. The second is close to the conception of European cultural identity outlined in the literature, but is more based on a subjective feeling of closeness instead of a consideration of a rational, clearly predefined set of common characteristics. An understanding of a European identity as a political identity based on civic principles was not found in the interviews at all; what mattered instead were specific life experiences made possible by the EU, such as wider opportunities for physical mobility, or the simple fact that Latvia is a member state of the Union. Finally, the last two understandings point to a definition of Europe based on what it is not, i.e., its outer borders: Russia, the Soviet heritage, and the world as a whole, which are the subject of the following section.

In the interviews, the understanding of, and identification with, Europe as a cultural space was expressed by only a few respondents. These were people who would make a clear distinction between the EU and Europe, perceiving the former as denoting a “cold” political and economic union, and the latter as standing for the continent with its people and cultures. Those interviewees who saw themselves – and Latvia – as part of the European cultural space were ones with both travel experience and a wide knowledge and understanding of the European cultural heritage and historical ties. Respectively, only for a minority of the interviewees European identity was an organic part of their perception of themselves and the place of Latvia in the European context. For the majority of the respondents Europe became an element of daily life only with the accession to the EU. The expert Golubeva believes that these perceptions are the result of a lack of reflection about European identity as a cultural and emotional belonging over and above the economic level: “It is strange that people do not see a connection, if you think about it, we live in the European space to a greater extent than we lived in the Soviet cultural space; these spaces overlap but, living in Latvia, the European one is more visible. But people do not reflect about this because nobody gives them a ready package with how to reflect about it. It is a matter of education policy, culture policy that has not been sufficiently consistent.”

Most interviewees associated Europe with the EU, either by focusing on Latvia’s membership in it, the characteristics of the Union itself, or on the opportunities made possible by it. This association was particularly strong among the youngest generation of respondents. It appears that the EU can be successful in giving a layer of meaning and personal experience to the otherwise abstract notion of Europe that, lacking travel experience and erudition about cultural ties, often remains a largely unknown entity. That whether this meaning is positive or negative is, however, another question. The positive experiences are mostly related to the freedom of travel made possible by the lack of borders, greater opportunities to study or work abroad, as well as local improvements made possible by EU funding and increased international cooperation. In turn, the negative experiences are associated with various regulations and restrictions stemming from the EU, the perception of Latvia’s small significance on the EU scale that may lead to the neglect of Latvian interests, as well as beliefs about a corrupt or unfair use of EU funds. It is important to note that not only the positive but also the negative experiences can serve as a basis for building identification with Europe because the presence of either of them signifies that a person is a part of the European space, subject to influences stemming from the EU. So, e.g., in the family interview analysis only a loose connection between a positive evaluation of the EU and identification with Europe was found.

In addition to these meanings and experiences, Europe can also be an empty or a confusing space. There were interviewees who saw no relation between their daily lives and Europe/EU, noting that the EU relates only to the political sphere, and for around a third of the respondents Europe or the EU invoked no personal connection at all. Even among the respondents who could clearly formulate their attachment or detachment towards Europe, there were those for whom it was not associated with any particular life situations or experiences. Here Europe stands for the opposite of everyday and is perceived as an abstract and distant space unrelated to the daily life. In addition, some interviewees remarked that they lack information (or interest) about the issues related to the EU, for them the subjects of the meaning and impact of the EU in everyday life are a cause for uncertainty and confusion. These conclusions are in line with the statement of the expert Dr. Muižnieks that “many people, due to a lack of information, have very unsubstantiated opinions about Europe. As a consequence, when something good happens they suddenly like Europe, when something bad happens they do not like it anymore”. Thus, for a part of the population Europe and European identity are likely unrelated to any underlying values, beliefs, or attachments, instead they are subject to short-term developments or certain events that can easily sway the opinions one way or another. Overall, the outcome of the interview analysis is largely congruent with the conclusions of the study about European identity in border communities (Meinhof, 2002; Armbruster, et al., 2003): narratives about Europe are complex and frequently also ambivalent, shifting between cultural and geographic meanings, positive and negative evaluations.

The final question that needs to be asked about the understandings of Europe and European identity is: for those who do identify with Europe, is it an active, informed or a passive belonging? Looking at the first four meanings of Europe distinguished above – the continent, the cultural connections, the mobility enabled by the EU, and belonging through Latvia – two are clearly passive: interviewees see themselves as European because they live on the European continent or in a country that is an EU member state. This type of belonging is based on objective factors and independent of personal choice. A more active identification with Europe can be achieved through a combination of utilizing the mobility opportunities given by the EU and a cultural belonging, expressed by the awareness of a common history and intertwined cultural influences, which together can transform Europe into a familiar space. Such an active type of identification was expressed by only a few interviewees and was more common among culturally-erudite Latvian speakers of the middle and oldest generations.

These results can potentially explain why in the MDS analysis of the 2010 BISS survey data belonging to the group of Europeans clustered together with people well-off financially and people of culture across the world: three groups that only a small proportion of survey respondents could identify with. Furthermore, they provide a possible explanation for the lack of correlations between transnational identification and education and income. It appears that education is important only insofar it relates to having acquired cultural, and to an extent also historic, knowledge regarding European heritage and in that is independent from the formal level of education attained by individual. As to income, its main importance towards furthering European identification likely stems from it enabling the acquirement of European experiences, e.g., through travel and, as supposed before, it is not limited to the highest income groups in the society.

To conclude, in the accounts of the interviewees “Europe” generally signifies either a space or an actor. This is conceptualization is (1) more suitable for analysing the empirical data of this study than

the division of European identity into a cultural and political belonging that is commonly used in the conceptual literature and (2) conforms to the conclusions from other studies about the existence of a bottom-up “banal Europeanism” emerging through the use of common symbols, cross-border communication, and comparisons within the European mental space (e.g. see Spano, et. al., 2011; Cram 2012).

Perceived as a space, Europe is a place where a person can go (or, more rarely, somewhere where they already are); it is a space that can be compared to the Latvian space and, in turn, the inclusion of Latvia in this space can make the Latvian space different or separate from the Russian space or the global space. In addition to this, Europe can also be an empty or a confusing space. Europe becomes an actor when it is seen or defined as the EU. As the EU has “appropriated” the term Europe (Laffan 2004), it is unsurprising that it can transform the passive European space into an actor that, in the words of the interviewees, “makes” Latvia do certain things, “gives” money, or “requests” certain actions. Accordingly, for the majority of the interviewees it is the life experiences, both positive and negative, caused or enabled by the EU that shape their identification with Europe or further their perception of themselves as European.

Before we continue with the second set of questions about the borders of European identity, one more matter needs to be considered, namely, why the understanding of European identity as a political identity with its underlying values and ideas of democracy, civil rights, and cooperation, among others, was virtually missing from the accounts of the interviewees? One possible explanation lies in the opinion by the expert Golubeva outlined above that in the Latvian public sphere there is no pre-given “package” for reflecting on these issues. In addition, the expert Dr. Muižnieks stresses that, despite the EU spending considerable sums of money for promoting itself in member countries, “their communication and PR is simply catastrophic” and the EU lacks powerful symbols that the people could easily identify with. Based on this, a possible explanation for the lack of a discourse of European political identity is that neither the EU nor any local actors have sufficiently invested in the creation of discourses that could be taken up by the people as something they can identify with, or, if such attempts have been made, they have not been successful.

### **9.2.2. DRAWING THE BORDERLINES**

The overview of the literature on European identity in chapter two clearly showed that, although it is theoretically possible to build a strong identity without having any out-groups (Kohli, 2000), this seldom works in practice. Furthermore, considering the problematic of finding a common content for European identity, it can be easier to solidify this identity if a clear “other” is present (Katzenstein & Checkel, 2009). The evidence in section 2.2.2 clearly points that, at least in the Western Europe, it is the non-European migrant groups and those without a European citizenship that serve as an out-group for European identity, resulting in a “European nationalism” (Kohli, 2000; Armbruster, et al., 2003; Fligstein, et al., 2012). Does this apply also to the situation of Latvia with its comparatively large population of different ethnic minorities?

In this section the question of borders of Europe and European identity is considered in two parts: first, by looking at the place of Latvia in Europe; second, by looking at the place of Latvians among Europeans. Again, most of the in-depth information about this subject can be gained from the family interviews.

Two of the understandings of Europe examined in the previous section define Europe based on what it is not: its outer borders. These are drawn between Europe and Russia on the one hand, and Europe and the world as a whole on the other. The first of these means contrasting the large powers on the East and the West and is illustrated by the “return to Europe” rhetoric that was a part of Latvia’s break from its Soviet past and its attempts to become a part of the European space. In the words of the expert Dr. Muižnieks: “I saw a good quote somewhere: we do not know what Europe is, but we do know what it is not: Russia is not Europe. And we want to get away from Russia”. The second understanding recognizes the increasing globalization and takes Europe, either as the continent or the EU, as the closest entity for Latvia in the interconnected, globalized world. It may still be an unknown space but, in comparison with the world, it is closer and more familiar.

At the same time, the inclusion of Latvia within the European space is by no means unequivocal. Latvia is a part of the space – the Eastern Block – that was the former out-group for European identity but that now has become a part of the EU (Mach & Pozarlik, 2008). And while Latvia’s membership in the EU makes it formally European, several of the respondents did not see it as an equal member among the other EU countries, particularly in relation to the “old” and the large member states that are more influential and more prosperous than Latvia. Thus, despite having acquired EU membership, true European belonging is still often perceived as a goal Latvia can strive toward, not a position it is already legitimately occupying.

Looking at the self-perceptions of the people themselves, based on the 2010 survey data around a fifth of the population (21 percent) feel close to Europe as a territory, while only 13 percent feel they belong to the group of Europeans. The quantitative data do not correspond to the information gained in the family interviews where, with the exception of the respondents from Daugavpils and the Russian speakers, there more interviewees who could identify with Europe than those who could not. Furthermore, as opposed to the survey data where more people expressed a European territorial than a European group belonging, the interview questions elicited much more clear-cut positive and negative answers when directly inquiring: can you say that yes, I am a European? It is likely that this discrepancy is caused by the different character of inquiry between the survey and the interviews, as in the latter the respondents need to consider their beliefs and attachments in more depth and from multiple angles, also bringing in their own understanding of the subject questioned about.

In the inquiry about the stereotypes about a person in Latvia who feels or does not feel European the majority of stereotypes about the former were positive and about the latter – negative. Someone who feels European was characterised as young, well-educated and intelligent, well-informed about the current affairs, with many foreign experiences and foreign contacts, as well as being a person with good people skills and strong work ethnics, someone who is satisfied with life and financially secure. In contrast, a person who does not feel European was stereotyped as someone elderly, detached from current events and without much foreign experiences, lacking social and financial security, and having a low life satisfaction. Only three of the respondents associated it with positive characteristics such as independence, patriotism and strong attachment to Latvia.

This juxtaposition of stereotypes clearly illustrates that feeling European is a certain ideal: having good education, vast travel experiences, social and financial security, and a positive outlook on life. Some of these characteristics are ones that many of the respondents perceive as lacking in their

current life situation; they outline European identity as something that can be strong only in a situation unencumbered by everyday life troubles. Overall, the interviewees were more likely to admit their own incompatibility with such ideals than explicitly include themselves among those feeling distinctly European. For example, particularly some of the oldest generation respondents explicitly contrasted such characteristics learned in the Soviet period as introversion and suspicion with such stereotypically European characteristics as being communicative and optimistic. Thereby becoming European was seen as something that requires the shedding of some traits that are incompatible with the European: something that is not easy to achieve.

Accordingly, just like with the place of Latvia in Europe, the interviewees outline the perception of oneself as European more as a goal to strive towards. Nevertheless, not fulfilling their stereotypes and seeing considerable differences between Latvia and Western European countries did not prevent several of the interviewees to express their identification with Europe. In addition, as the perception of belonging to the European space is closely tied with the perception of its commonalities and differences with the Latvian space, a few of the respondents expressed the belief that European identity could be solidified by travelling to other – more different – parts of the world. Such experiences would help the individuals to become aware of the outer borders of Europe and better realize the underlying similarities between their own country and Europe at large.

As could be seen in the stereotypes of the interviewees, no distinctions were made between people of different ethnicities. A couple of interviewees did note that a lack of citizenship may be a reason for detachment from Europe – an assumption largely supported by both the survey and interview data – but no interviewee draw explicit borders outlining any of Latvia's ethnic minorities as the out-group for their European identity. As noted by the expert Makarovs, the everyday life reality means that people's lives are more closely tied with the EU and "they live one life independent of ethnicity, discuss the same things, both groups have both those positive and negative." Also the experts Dr. Volkovs and Golubeva expressed similar opinions, stressing the similarities between the ethnic and linguistic groups with regards to European identifications. Thus, although the ethnic minority groups are often defined as the "other" for Latvian national identity, they are not excluded with regards to European identity. Nevertheless, despite the lack of an external definition as the out-group, the Russian speaking interviewees were more likely to see no impact of the EU in their daily lives and more seldom expressed a European identification. This was true especially among the oldest and middle generation Russian speakers who were comparatively more tied to the Russian space. Significantly, there are differences within the ethnic minority group with regards to European belonging: the ethnic Polish Russian speakers felt considerably more attached to Europe than the other, non-European minority groups. The main reason was their perception of cultural connections with the European space that the other minority groups lacked.

The other group that has a somewhat complicated relationship with European identity are the elderly who, as opposed to the ethnic minorities, are also clearly excluded from the group of Latvians that is likely to identify with Europe. While on the one hand the elderly are positive about the benefits of the EU membership, on the other hand their belonging to Europe is low and they are also among those most likely to perceive this belonging as something independent of their individual choices. There are two possible causes for this ambiguity among the oldest generation. First, their previous life experiences can be difficult to reconcile with the new circumstances: they have lived

most of their lives in the USSR, learned to lead their lives in accordance to the rules of the regime, their main foreign language is Russian, and they are more familiar with the former Soviet than the European space. These traits and experiences make it hard to adjust to a radically new situation at such a late point in their lives when they are also hindered by restrictions due to their age. Second, despite a certain detachment from the current life and an often perception of the European space as confusing or empty, they give positive evaluations because of the opportunities they see for their children and, especially, their grandchildren, not for themselves.

### **9.3. INTERTWINED IDENTITIES**

Now when the first subsection has explored the most important territorial and group identities and the second subsection has overviewed the meaning of Europe and European identity, it is time to focus on the interactions between the local and the transnational to answer the main research question of this study: what are the relationships between European identity and other social and collective identities?

For an evaluation of identity relationships we need to recall the framework for categorising the possible identity configurations offered by Hermann, Brewer, and Risse (Herrmann & Brewer, 2004; Risse, 2004):

- 1) Nested – each identity fits within the next, wider identity akin the Russian *Matruska* dolls;
- 2) Cross-cutting – some, but not all, members of one identity group are also members of another identity group;
- 3) Separate – a person's group memberships do not overlap with one another;
- 4) "Marble cake" – identity components cannot be neatly separated in different levels as implied by the configurations above, they mesh and blend into one another.

As the goal of this study was to find social and collective identities that are in some extent related to European identity, no identities with separated relationships are included in the analysis below. Such configuration characterises, e.g., the relationship between European identity and family, and European identity and generational belonging. According to previous evidence, territorial identities would typically fall into the nested identity configuration, whereas the relationship between professional identities and European identity is usually cross-cutting (Risse, 2004, pp. 250-251). There is little evidence in the literature and previous empirical studies about the potential relationship between European identity and ethnic or linguistic identities.

#### **9.3.1. PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY AND EUROPEAN IDENTITY**

Thus far the relationship between European identity and professional identities has mainly been explored in elite studies that focus on staff of EU institutions or politicians and journalists working in Brussels: people whose sphere of work is directly related to the European level (e.g., Siapera, 2004; Wodak, 2004). Unsurprisingly, these studies find a close relationship between the two types of identities.

The family interviews carried out in the present study found either a non-existing or a positive relationship between one's professional and European identifications. The respondents for whom these two identities were tied positively had experienced dealing with issues related to Europe or the EU professionally, but such experiences were seldom mentioned overall. In general, the connection

between professional and European belonging hint to possible class differences in identifications with Europe. Such a relationship has been observed in multiple quantitative studies (see section 2.2.3), but, as already discussed in section 9.2, it is likely that any existing class differences are based on the level and type of education.

A rather interesting approach to connecting Europe with occupation was expressed by several of the youngest generation respondents who perceived Europe as a space enabling their future professional opportunities. Their answers can be characterised as a “credit of European belonging”: although the youth were at times uncertain about their present belonging to Europe and Europeans, the linking of their future plans with the European space lead them to express stronger European attachments.

Accordingly, while the identity configuration of the oldest and middle generation interviewees more closely corresponds to the cross-cutting identity type found also in the previous elite studies, for the youth the relationship between professional and European identities is more alike the “marble cake” type defined by Risse because an aspect of European belonging is enmeshed with the (future) professional identification.

### **9.3.2. ETHNIC IDENTITY AND EUROPEAN IDENTITY**

Also empirical evidence about the relationship between ethnic and European identities is rather scarce and has not been explored in much detail previously. As shown in the previous section, despite evidence that could lead to assumptions about Latvia’s non-European ethnic minorities becoming the out-group in the process of European identity construction (e.g. see Kohli, 2000; Smith, 2000; Agirdag, et al., 2012; Fligstein, et al., 2012), this has not been the case. Nevertheless, the evidence from quantitative and qualitative data used in this study clearly points to significant differences in European belonging based on ethnicity and linguistic group.

To begin with, the survey analysis that covered the time period from 1993 to 2010 outlined the Latvian speakers as almost exclusively nationally-orientated in the early 1990s, but over the last two decades the national-local attachments have been opening up to a European element, yet the number of those identifying with Europe primarily has remained low. In turn, in the early 1990s the Russian speakers held predominantly transnational identifications but over time they have become more attached to Latvia, and their orientation towards the East has been partially replaced by an orientation to the West.

As noted the previous section, the experts Dr. Volkovs, Makarovs, and Golubeva stressed the underlying similarities between the ethnic and linguistic groups when it comes to European attachments based on the belief that all the inhabitants of Latvia share similar conditions of life, opportunities, and problems independent of their ethnicity and language. While this assumption is largely correct, there are clear differences between these groups’ understanding of, and attachment to, Europe. This leads to the question: if the life experiences that are directly related to Europe are the same or very similar, what else can account for the different patterns of identification?

Based on the information gained in the survey analysis and family interviews, a likely explanation for the observed discrepancy lies in the relationship the ethnic and linguistic group identities have with the national identity. As was already assumed from previous evidence about European identity in

Latvia (see section 1.2.3), the differentiated national identity functions as a mediator in the relationship between the ethnic/linguistic and European identities. For the ethnic Latvians there is a close, at times almost indistinguishable, connection between their ethnic, linguistic, and national identities and these are generally not in conflict with belonging to Europe, even if in a weak or “automatic” sense. In turn, as illustrated in the previous sections, the ethnic and linguistic minority groups define national identity in different terms than the ethnic Latvians and they can have a problematic relationship with the state (see section 9.1.1.5). The combined insights from all three data sources allow distinguishing several ways in which the relationship to the national identity, in particular taken as belonging to Latvia as a state, can function as a mediating factor.

First, the various ethnic and linguistic groups have different understandings of the meaning of national identity: culture and language, as well as ancestry and history are more important for the ethnic Latvians, whereas citizenship and contribution to the country for the non-Latvians. Thus, while all Latvian citizens are also EU citizens independent of their ethnicity, the ethnic Latvians are more likely to feel an additional – and, potentially, more emotional – connection to the European space that is based on elements of culture and history. This assumption is supported by the fact that the ethnic Polish families held closer identifications with Europe in comparison with interviewees from other ethnic minority groups.

Second, it is possible that a lack of national identity and, especially, a rejection of it stemming from the perception that one is discriminated against or not accepted in the Latvian society (see section 9.1.1.3), can lead to a conscious choice in favour for European identity. In the words of the expert Dr. Muižnieks, it is “integration in Europe via bypassing Latvia”. It is difficult to ascertain how widespread this pattern of identification may be as it was explicitly expressed by only one of the interviewees, but it is likely that it is more common among the young Russian-speaking minority.

Third, in the late 1990s and the first years of the new millennium there were indications that the ethnic minorities are more supportive of the EU than the ethnic Latvians (see section 1.2.3). As explained by the expert Dr. Muižnieks, the EU was seen as an actor that could support the rights of the minorities and influence the legislation in the contested spheres of citizenship, language, education, or the rights to vote in local elections. Such sentiments are similar to the attitudes towards Europe in such regions as Scotland and Catalonia that have a problematic relationship with their states and thus may perceive the EU in a more favourable light (see more in section 2.2.4). In this case, however, the EU did not fulfil the role the minorities had expected from it and did not sufficiently protect the rights perceived as restricted by the Latvian state, resulting in significantly reduced levels of support.

Overall, the relationship between ethnic and linguistic identities and European identity does not fit a single type of identity configuration. For the ethnic Latvians this relationship is closest to a nested identity, whereas for ethnic minorities it can follow different patterns. For the ethnic Polish interviewees the relationship between ethnic and European identity is the closest to the nested identity type as well, although not as “smooth” as for the ethnic Latvians because they also belong to the Russian linguistic group. For the other Russian-speaking ethnic minorities the relationship between the two identities, depending on the orientation of each interviewee, can be characterised either as cross-cutting or entirely separated.

### **9.3.3. SUB-NATIONAL IDENTITIES AND EUROPEAN IDENTITY**

According to previous studies, there generally exists a positive-sum relationship between regional and European identities (e.g. Bruter, et al., 2005; Jamieson, et al., 2005; Haller & Ressler, 2006). An exception is cases when a region has a strained relationship to the state and it may attempt to play out the European identity against national identifications (Kohli, 2000). In addition, there is some evidence that regional identity may have less impact on European identity in Eastern Europe than in it has in Western Europe (Armbruster, et al., 2003).

The survey data allows establishing the connection between sub-national and European identifications only based on the size of the residence location of the respondents and shows that those living in larger towns are more likely to feel closer to Europe. The family interviews allow exploring these identity relationships in more detail. Although the interviewees generally perceived Europe as distant and had little personal connections to it, some clear differences between the locations can be distinguished. So the interviewees from Kuldīga felt the most integrally European due to such various factors as their town's European historical heritage, international cooperation, and successful use of European funding. In contrast, Daugavpils is the most distant from the European space, it situated in a region that is perceived as forgotten by both Latvia and Europe. Furthermore, as opposed to Kuldīga and Rīga, none of the interviewees from Daugavpils mentioned historical or cultural ties to Europe.

Overall, as could be assumed from previous studies, the relationship between sub-national identities and European identity fit the nested type of identity configurations. However, the European identity clearly forms the outer layer of the clustered identities and the compatibility of these identities, at least in the accounts of the interviewees, is often theoretically assumed but not based in experiences or everyday life connections.

### **9.3.4. NATIONAL IDENTITY AND EUROPEAN IDENTITY**

The empirical evidence overviewed in section 2.2.4 clearly shows that, despite national differences, national identity remains stronger than European identity all across Europe. The compatibility of these two identities varies based on the local context and is influenced by such diverse factors as the country's historical heritage and current economic and political events. Overall, the majority of studies point to a positive relationship between national and European identity (e.g. Bruter, et al., 2005; Jamieson, et al., 2005; Haller & Ressler, 2006) and the best condition for developing a European identity may even be the holding of two non-conflicting national identities (PIONEUR, 2006). The only studies that have shown explicit examples of a zero-sum relationship between national and European identities focused on the elites (e.g. Laffan, 2004; Siapera 2004): the group of people for whom these two identities are tied to important, real life decisions.

Also the survey data from Latvia highlight that national identity is stronger than European identity for all locations, ethnicities, and age groups. The interview data allows to distinguish three types of relationships between national and European identity:

- 1) Connected: national identity is perceived as a prerequisite for European identity and being Latvian means being European by default; Europe taken to signify the EU;

- 2) Compatible: perception that a person can hold both identities without them overshadowing one another, but not being of equal strength; Europe taken to signify a territory or a cultural space;
- 3) Competitive: a conflicting relationship where the strengthening of one of the identities is perceived as possible only through a lessening of the other.

In each of the three types of identity relationship found in the interviews, national identity takes a clear precedence over European identity. The most common perception of the relationship between the two identities fits the connected type and is rather formal, characterized by little emotional or experiential attachment. A comparatively deeper connection between these identities is seen by the few interviewees whose opinions are characterized by the compatible type of identity relationship. It denotes a deeper level of familiarity with the European space and was expressed by a few culturally and historically erudite, urban Latvian-speakers.

Overall, the connected type of relationship is the closest to nested identities, whereas the compatible type, depending on the perceptions of each individual interviewee can be either nested or cross-cutting. None of the identity configurations distinguished by Hermann, Brewer, and Risse fit the third – competitive – type found in the interviews. This category characterizes the opinions expressed by some of the ethnically non-European minority interviewees who, although rooted nationally, saw little connection between their national belonging and the distant Europe that was perceived to have little significance in their daily lives. It is possible that this type of identity relationship is rooted in their different understanding of national identity (see section 9.3.2).

In addition to the interviewees whose views allowed distinguishing the three types of relationships between national and European identity, there were those for whom these identities were clearly separated. In addition, even when connections were seen, in the accounts of the respondents the two identities were often characterized as opposites: Latvia was emotionally dear, intimately familiar, and undisputedly relevant to the daily life, whereas Europe was often emotionally distant, largely unknown, and its impacts were unclear. That said, it could be assumed that the compatibility of these two identities is partially possible exactly because one of them is close while the other is distant. As the examples from the elite studies show (see section 2.2.3), strong identification with both can lead to a conflict and incompatibility of the national and the European when real life decisions have to be made. In contrast, none of the interviewees had experienced situations when their national and European belonging would be in conflict with one another.

*Table 40. Identity relationships, a summary*

	<b>Separate</b>	<b>Nested</b>	<b>Cross-cutting</b>	<b>Marble cake</b>
Family	X			
Generation	X			
Profession	X		X	X
Ethnicity	X	X	X	
Locality/region	X	X		
National state	X	X	X	

## 9.4. IDENTITY IN A TRANSNATIONAL WORLD

European identity is a supranational identity or rather, a supranational identity in the process of construction. Although it is to an extent modelled after national identities (Kohli, 2000; Haller & Ressler, 2006), European identity lacks a common history, clear-cut geographical and cultural boundaries, and it cannot promote cultural and linguistic homogenization within its territory. Instead, it relies on the “shared consciousness of belonging to an economic and political space defined by capitalism, social welfare, liberal democracy, respect for human rights, freedom and the rule of law, prosperity and progress” (Guibernau, 2011, p. 40). But are a shared political culture and the desire to benefit from common economic advantages enough to build a strong supranational identity?

Although it is the biggest supranational project of the current time, the EU is by no means the first transnational formation of the modern period. What sets it apart from earlier transnational empires such as the British Empire, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, or even the Soviet Union, is that the EU has been created on the basis of free will. Namely, the member states have sought to be a part of this Union and have willingly given up parts of their national sovereignty to a higher level of governance. In addition, as opposed to empires of the past, the EU does not have one core or dominant group whose members could be the main carriers of the European identity as, e.g., the ethnic Russians were in the Soviet Union.

These two particular characteristics of the EU pose a challenge for building a European identity and mean an inherent strife between the European and national levels also in terms of loyalty and identification of the peoples of Europe. Of course, the fact that European citizenship is based on national citizenships makes the citizens of the member states “European” automatically, at least in a citizenship sense. At the same time, the nation states have little interest in promoting a European identity because it could potentially weaken national identity and refocus the loyalties of their citizens, and they can successfully employ the EU as a scapegoat for domestic problems and thus reinforce national identity (Guibernau, 2011, p. 36). Overall, the example of the EU clearly illustrates that the demise of the nation state presupposed by the theoreticians of second modernity is indeed premature (see section 2.1).

The case of Latvia differs from the Western European context described in the theories of Beck, Giddens, and Baumann in one important aspect: while the Western European states were moving towards closer integration, seeking to set aside national antagonisms and achieve a supranational identity (Fukuyama, 2012), Latvia together with other Eastern countries was experiencing a revival of nationalism that led to the dissolution of another supranational entity. As a result, in Latvia the processes of globalization, individualization, and the rise of transnational identifications potentially resulting from these, began with a considerable time-lag. According to the survey data used in this study, at no point in the last two decades has the number of people that could at least partially identify with entities outside the national borders been higher than 40 percent. The majority of the Latvian population – around 60 percent – has continued to hold solely national-local identifications.

The unique position of Latvia on the crossroads between the East and the West has meant an ongoing negotiation about its place of belonging and thus allows to draw some valuable insights about (1) the challenges posed by other supranational identifications for developing a European

identity, and (2) the differences and similarities between the Soviet and the European supranational identity building projects.

First, despite the proportion of those holding identifications with entities outside the national borders, either as primary identities or in combination with national-local attachments, remaining around 40 percent over the course of 17 years, the survey data show that the focus the supranational identity configurations has switched from attachment to the former Soviet space to closer belonging to the European space. This shift is illustrative of Latvia's course: entangling from the Soviet past and building a European future. However, this reorientation from the Soviet supranational attachments of the past to the present-day European supranational attachments has not been an easy task for all Latvia's inhabitants. While for some this change has not meant more than a simple redrawing of borders resulting in different advantages and sources of opportunities, others have retained close ties to the former Soviet space through ancestry, family ties, and even linguistic connections. This is particularly the case for some of the ethnic minorities for whom, as indicated by the expert Dr. Muižnieks, the European integration has meant a reinforced border with Russia and has caused difficulties to remain loyal to both the European and the Russian space.

Second, as already mentioned in the previous paragraph, for some of the interviewees the reorientation from the East to the West has not meant more than a redrawing of borders and they see similarities between belonging to the USSR and the EU in that both of these formations give certain opportunities for social and spatial mobility on the one hand, and restrict national autonomy on the other. One of the causes of such comparisons lies in the fact that neither of the two entities have been sources of strong emotions or particularly salient identities for the majority of the population. Another cause is the low awareness concerning the underlying ideas and principles of the EU described in the section 9.2. However, at least according to the survey data, European identity lends itself better for combining with the Latvian national identity than the Soviet and Russian identities. While European belonging is based on national belonging, even if only in the citizenship sense described above, Russia is more likely to offer an alternative to belonging to Latvia as a state<sup>78</sup>.

In contrast to the identifications tied with the Soviet and Russian space, global identifications are much less significant in Latvia and were mentioned only by a few of the youngest generation respondents. Thus it can be concluded that while in the Western European countries European identity is seen as a mid-way between national attachments and belonging to the world (Skully, et al., 2012) and global identifications are the main competitor of the European identity on the supranational level, in Latvia – and possibly other Eastern European countries – the strongest rival to European attachments is an identification with the former Soviet space.

The identity theories outlined in section 2.1 portray the balance between supranational, national, and communitarian identities as constantly shifting in response to various events and movements that may either promote a turn to post-national identifications or cause a nationalist or communitarian resurgence. As was the case of the Soviet Union, a combination of economic struggles and rising ethnic and national sentiments succeeded in bringing down this transnational project that had been constructed for almost half a century. Authors like Guibernau (2011) and

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<sup>78</sup> There appears to be less contradiction between attachments to Russia and Latvia if both are perceived in a territorial/fatherland sense.

Fukuyama (2012) are concerned that the current global economic crisis may cause a backlash for European integration and fuel the wish to protect national interests, thus reverting the development towards more supranational attachments. In particular, Fukuyama believes that such transient developments could not lead to questioning the prospects of the European project if there existed a strong European identity and solidarity between the peoples of Europe.

As this has not been the case and the majority of evidence points to the fact that the European identity remains weaker and less “emotional” (Guibernau, 2011, p. 41) than the well-established national identities, the question remains: is a strong and emotionally significant European identity possible? Overall, the results of the present study have outlined the European identity as less salient than the national and communitarian identities, individuals are less committed to it, and its place in the hierarchy of prominence among other types of identities is rather low. At the same time, the youngest generation are more likely to express a European belonging, if compared to the older generations, and the youth often tie their future prospects with the opportunities provided by being a part of the EU.

Based on the results of this study, it is unlikely that the European identity can become highly salient over and above other identifications on the communitarian and the national levels. Rather, it can gain importance through becoming closer enmeshed with the identities already close and significant for the peoples of Europe. In the terms of the typology of identity relationships used in section 9.3, European identity does not need to be nested or cross-cutting with other social and collective identifications. Its relationships should develop towards the “marble cake” configuration, meshing and blending into these other identities, e.g., a European element becoming an integral part of the national self-understanding.

## CONCLUSION

This study set out to explore the relationships between the supranational European identity and collective identities on the communal and national levels that are close for the Europeans and salient in their daily lives. Modern-day Europe is often considered to be the most likely candidate worldwide for the emergence of an identity that transcends national borders (e.g. Checkel, 2005), and thus also a potential example of the demise of the nation state foreseen in the theories of second or late modernity (see section 2.1.1). However, there is ample evidence that national and sub-national identities have not lost their importance across Europe and may, in fact, be stronger than ever in the aftermath of the world financial crisis that halted economic growth – the longstanding engine of European integration (e.g. see Fukuyama, 2012).

Over the last decades the concept of European identity has become intimately tied with the EU and the construction of a European identity is seen as necessary for legitimizing the Union, as well as for achieving social integration and solidarity within it. But solidifying a supranational identity is not an easy task. The conceptual literature on European identity highlights several areas of difficulty, most notably, fluid borders, a lack of common culture and core values, as well as an ever growing divergence between the elites and the citizens of the EU countries. Meanwhile, the existing empirical evidence of European identity points to notable differences of European sentiments both across and within countries and portrays this identity as at least fairly widespread if not highly salient for the peoples of Europe (see section 2.2.3).

Although European identity has been studied from many aspects there still exists a lack of grass-roots explorations of this identity, particularly of ones that are sensitive to the local context. The goal of this study was to carry out an empirical in-depth exploration of European identity in one country: Latvia. It sought to map the place of European identity among other locally significant identities and looked at this identity in the context of national historical and, importantly, also personal lifetime experiences.

This research project expands the scope of identities that the European identity is typically looked at in connection with and – by taking Latvia as the case study – focuses on a region that is comparatively little studied in research on European identity. Latvia and neighbouring Estonia are unique with regards to their ethnic minority situation (see section 1.2) and previous evidence pointed to particular relationships between ethnicity and European identity: an identity combination seldom considered in the European identity scholarship. In addition, as the majority of existing studies focus either on Western or Central Europe, little attention has been paid to the Baltic region and its particular circumstances, e.g., the Baltic states were Soviet Republics and thus subject to the Soviet identity building project to a much larger extent compared to the Central European satellite states, thus they already have a previous experience of a supranational identity construction project. The rapid socio-economic changes that Latvia has experienced in the last decades allowed for an exploration of generation differences and the meaning of specific life experiences in shaping European identifications.

The main research question of the study was: what are the relationships between European identity and other social and collective identities? This overarching question was tied to several sub-questions: (1) what are the main social and collective identities in Latvia? (2) How have these

identities developed over time? (3) Are there any relevant group differences with regards to identification patterns? (4) What is the subjective meaning of “European identity” for people in Latvia? (5) What is the role of life experiences in the formation of the identity relationships?

Based on the information gathered through survey analysis and family interviews, the most important territorial identifications in Latvia are attachments to one’s hometown and the country as a whole, while regional identities are comparatively less important. In turn, the most important social group identifications are attachments to one’s family and group of friends, their ethnic or linguistic group, generation, and profession. Identifications with one’s gender, religion, or socio-economic class are comparatively less important, likely because they are less actualized and do not form significant division lines in the Latvian society. Overall, the majority of Latvia’s population (approx. 60 percent according to the survey data) holds exclusively national-local attachments. Although this proportion has remained largely unchanged during the last two decades, the main orientation of supranational attachments has shifted from East to West.

Results of the survey analysis and the family interviews show that the most important differences with regards to identification patterns exist between people of different generations and people of different ethnic and linguistic backgrounds. In addition, there are differences between regions within Latvia, however, these strongly intersect with age and ethnicity. Generations are distinguished from one another by their amount of Soviet experience as well as their age at the time of the dissolution of the USSR: an event that had a distinctive impact on people in different stages of their life courses. In turn, ethnicity and linguistic group emerged as particularly actualized identifications that are built upon unresolved societal issues concerning language, citizenship, and interpretations of history and that are reified in daily life experiences.

Although a total of six understandings of Europe could be distinguished in the interview data, the dominating association is that “Europe” signifies the EU. Therefore, Latvia’s membership in the EU, as well as the opportunities and restrictions stemming from this membership, forms important elements of people’s European identifications. On the one hand, this strong association shows that the knowledge about European cultural and historical connections is either low or not considered important, and that people seldom have vast travel experience and close personal contacts with other Europeans. On the other hand, this association highlights the ability of the EU to give a layer of meaning and localised personal experience (both positive and negative) to the otherwise abstract notion of Europe.

The findings of this study are largely in line with the socialization model of identity construction (Herrmann & Brewer, 2004) and consistent with a social constructivist view of identities: a sense of European identity is strongest among those for whom it is tied with direct personal experiences and for whom it is salient in their personal lives. European identity is more embraced by socially engaged, culturally erudite individuals who have international experiences, while for others this identity often remains abstract and emotionally distant. In other words, the European identity gains salience if it becomes an element of or is tied to daily life practices, either in a positive or a negative sense. That said, the accounts of the youngest generation interviewees show that the formation of such attachments does not always need experiences that have already taken place, instead future plans and expectations can build a ground for a “credit” of European belonging.

One of the most interesting outcomes of this study is the unsuitability of the conceptualization of European identity as a cultural or a political identification for the Latvian context. The division between cultural and political understandings of European identity is used in the majority of conceptual approaches to European identity both in political science and sociology and it has been found also in some empirical studies carried out in Western European countries (e.g., Bruter 2005; Fligstein et al. 2012). Instead, a division between attachment to Europe as a space and Europe as an actor was more suitable for the empirical data of this study. This alternative conceptualization would also suit the results of other recent large-scale comparative studies of European identity, e.g., the EuroIdentities project (Spano, et al., 2011; Miller, 2012).

Distinguishing between the perceptions and identifications of Europe as a space and as an actor hints to two distinct (but connected) ways of approaching the construction of European identity. A close identification with Europe as a space implies the ability to see connections between countries and peoples encompassed in this territory. It is closely tied with education and income that are distinguished to be among the most important correlates or predictors in quantitative studies of European identity (see section 2.2.3). Yet, as the qualitative part of this study shows, at least in the Latvian context education and income are important only insofar as they allow the individuals to reflect on cultural and historical commonalities and enable travel experiences within (and, sometimes more importantly, outside) the European space.

An identification with Europe as an actor can be independent from cultural education and familiarity with other parts of the European space; it stems from the influence, either positive or negative, that the EU has on the daily lives of individuals and their regions/countries. In other words, a person becomes European through being subject to the actions and decisions of the EU or related to the EU. As opposed to the first type of identification that can be both a belonging to the Europe as a continent and the EU space as a whole, this identification is solely tied with the EU. The two understandings do not exclude one another and, as illustrated by the interview data, a person can express both types of belonging as they function on different levels.

The review of the European identity scholarship in section 2.2 outlined the non-Europeans who reside in EU countries as a group that functions as the “other” in the process of constructing a European identity (e.g., Kohli 2000; Armbruster, et al., 2003). The assumption that this might apply also to the Slavic ethnic minority groups in Latvia proved to be incorrect. Although they have taken the role of the out-group in the construction of the Latvian national identity (see section 1.2.2), the minorities are generally not perceived as an out-group in the process of building a European identity. Nevertheless, the Russian speakers in the three surveys and in the family interviews were considerably less likely to identify with Europe or to call themselves European (more on this below).

In contrast, a group that was often excluded in the perceptions about European belonging were the oldest generation inhabitants of Latvia. The previous studies overviewed in section 2.2.3 already indicated the youth as the group that feels comparatively more European, but it is likely that contrasts between the age groups are particularly stark in Latvia because of its Soviet heritage. The elderly experience difficulties to reconcile their life experiences with the new circumstances and their age does not permit them to use the opportunities provided by Latvia’s EU membership. Overall, their relationship with Europe is ambiguous: although their belonging to Europe is conflicted and it is often a confusing space, they see the potential benefits it brings for their children and their

grandchildren. Here the generational design of the study allows demonstrating that family ties and experiences and opportunities of other family members can be just an important in the shaping of one's beliefs and identifications as a person's own life experiences.

Previous empirical evidence (see section 2.2.4) pointed to a general compatibility of European identity with national and local level territorial identities. This study extends the scope of identity relationships that the European identity is connected to by looking at it in the context of social group identities. Altogether the relationships between European identity and four social and collective identities on the communal and national levels were found and analysed. These identities were:

- 1) Professional identity;
- 2) Ethnic & linguistic group identity;
- 3) Local & regional identity;
- 4) National identity.

The interview analysis demonstrates that professional identity can have a positive relationship with European identity beyond the elite level where it has been demonstrated in previous studies (Siapera, 2004; Wodak, 2004). That said, this pair of identities demonstrates a higher socio-economic class bias. In turn, as was assumed based on previous studies, European identity has a nested relationship with the local territorial identities. Although the relationship between this pair of identities is rather weak, clear differences between locations in Latvia were demonstrated based on their historical and cultural heritage, as well as current international cooperation, and success in the use of EU funding.

Relationships between the European and ethno-linguistic group identity, and European and national identity pairs were comparatively more complex. The relationships between these two pairs of identities can be both nested and cross-cutting depending on the ethnic or linguistic group background of the informants. While for the ethnic Latvians these identity relationships are largely nested and European identity forms the outer layer of their attachments, for the ethnic and linguistic minority groups these identity relationships vary. An important conclusion is that the differences between ethnic groups with regards to European identity are not primarily based on their personal experiences with the European space or the EU as these are largely similar across the ethnic and linguistic groups of Latvia<sup>79</sup>. Instead, the existing differences in the relationship between ethnic and European identities are based in the divergent relationship of ethnic and national identities between the groups. National identity functions as a mediating factor in the relationship between ethnic and European identities and its influence is based on the different understandings of national identity, perceptions of acceptance in the Latvian society, and the perception of the role of the EU in the protection or endangerment of one's ethnic group interests. Neither of these is uniform among Latvia's ethnic minority groups who demonstrated different patterns of ethnic and European identity relationships despite sharing a linguistic group identity.

Although many respondents perceived no contradictions between European identity and the other territorial and social group identities, this compatibility of identities is often largely assumed and untied to everyday life experiences. As shown by elite studies, a high salience of European identity

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<sup>79</sup> Citizen and non-citizen groups could be more differentiated, however, the small number of non-citizen interviewees does not allow making conclusions about this relationship.

may lead to conflicts in situations when it is invoked together with a highly salient communal or national identity (see section 2.3). The fact that specific conflicts were not mentioned indicates the comparatively lower salience of the European identity. Furthermore, for a part of respondents European belonging was unconnected with any other identities, mainly because they were unable to tie the European identity with their daily lives and attachments that are close and important to them.

A particular interest of this study was the exploration of the significance of Latvia's experience with another supranational identity-building project, namely, that of Soviet identity. The orientation towards Europe and integration in the EU was simultaneously an orientation away from the Soviet heritage and attempts to limit the Russian influence. Thus, the Soviet and the European supranational identities are constructed as contradictory and, according to the evidence from family interviews, high commitment to both supranational identities is unlikely. That said, on the surface the construction process of the Soviet and the European identities appears to be alike. Most notably, both identities are the most salient among groups whose personal and work lives are tied with the supranational entity. Assuming that the identity-building dynamics of both supranational identities are largely similar, one should be careful with the proclamation of the importance and strength of the European identity: as demonstrated by the Soviet example, socio-economic equalization and increasing migration do not suffice as foundations for a strong supranational identification.

The conclusion above leads to a question: what can be the foundations of a strong European identity? The analysis in this study has demonstrated that the European identity is often a passive identification and that this identity is considerably less salient than the closer communal and national level identities. Can European identity be transformed into an active identification and gain salience and commitment from the Europeans? The empirical evidence analyzed in this study provides several indications that would need to be explored in more detail in future studies. In general, the means for furthering European identity can be divided between the two conceptualizations of this identity outlined above.

First, identification with Europe as an actor means a belonging that is based on perceptions and experiences that stem from living in the sphere of influence of the EU. This type of European identity appears to be comparatively more widespread, yet is also tied with feelings of confusion as the exact impact of the EU is often perceived as too complex and incomprehensible. Therefore potential means for increasing European identity would be (1) less nationally-orientated and more explanatory communication of EU-related issues, as well as (2) promotion of involvement in international projects or local projects tied to themes that are important on the EU level. As illustrated by the interviews, although being more knowledgeable and involved does not automatically make a person feel more European, it allows them to make more informed judgments about the EU and their own place in it. Although these factors can give a basis for constructing a European identity, this type of identification may not be sufficiently deep by itself: it is technocratic in character and occupied with the top-down relationship between the EU as a supranational actor and the national state, and makes little connections with other parts of Europe.

Second, identification with Europe as a space is tied to knowledge about cultural and historical connections between the European countries, as well as a familiarity of this space gained through travel and contacts with other Europeans. This type of identification appears to be more seldom but it presents a stronger basis for building an enduring supranational identity. On the most general

level, the promotion of this type of identity requires the provision of education focused on (non-national) history, arts and music, as well as foreign languages. In addition, it requires the development of an education and culture policy “package” for reflecting on European identity that would give information that allows connecting Europe with cultural and emotional belonging over and above the economic linkages. An additional element for furthering this type of identification is achieving an increasing familiarity with the European space through travel and making close inter-European connections: something that is likely to be furthered by improved economical conditions.

Even if such means of increasing European identity were implemented, they might not be sufficient in the Latvian context. This study has illustrated that the people of Latvia do not see themselves as an undisputed part of Europe. Furthermore, “Europe” and “being European” in the past decades have been constructed as ideals to strive toward: they signify good education, vast travel experiences, social and financial security, and a positive outlook on life. These are ideals that are not only hard to achieve but also ones that do not confirm to the reality of life of all West Europeans. Thus, perceiving oneself as European and as a legitimate part of the European space requires a re-evaluation of comparisons with other European countries and a giving up of these constructed ideals.

In this study the relationships between European identity and other social and collective identities were explored on the basis of one specific case – the small Baltic country of Latvia. On the one hand, this limits the transferability of the results to the other Baltic States and, to an extent, to also other post-Soviet countries that are integrating in the EU. On the other hand, the identity dynamics illustrated in the previous chapters can be applied also in a wider context as conflicts between communal, national, and European identity are not unique to Latvia or its region. In each country the particular identity relationships will be dependent on the local context, making the cases undeniably unique, yet comparable to one another.

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## **APPENDICES**

## APPENDIX A: OVERVIEW OF EMPIRICAL STUDIES ON EUROPEAN IDENTITY

Author/project	Group focus	Year	Country/location	Main findings
<b>Agirdag et al.</b>	Youth & children	2012	School children in Belgium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High socio-economic status conducive to stronger identification with Europe already at the age 10-14</li> <li>• Boys identify more than girls</li> <li>• School socio-economic composition has effect independent from family status</li> </ul>
<b>ENRI-East</b>	Ethnic minorities	2008-2011	Poland, Hungary, Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Lithuania, Latvia, Slovakia, Germany	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large variance of attitudes towards the EU between the minority groups;</li> <li>• For most minorities EU and Europe provide no emotional hub; minorities have mixed feelings towards Europe;</li> <li>• Minority youth more favorable towards Europe</li> </ul>
<b>EU Border Identities</b>	Border communities	2000-2003	Germany, Poland, Czech Republic, Austria, Hungary, Slovenia, Italy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No spontaneous discourse of European identity; Europe as an abstract category that is not experientially salient</li> <li>• Narratives of Europe often inconsistent and ambivalent within one individual's discourse</li> </ul>
<b>EuroIdentities</b>	Mixed groups	2008-2011	Bulgaria, Estonia, Germany, Italy, Poland, the UK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on five groups: people with foreign education experience, transnational workers, farmers, people with cultural contacts, civil society activists; considerable group overlap found</li> <li>• Considerable differences between ERASMUS students and other international education experiences</li> <li>• Cross-national intimate relationship was the most consistent cause for developing a strong European self-definition</li> <li>• Not European identity but a "European mental space"</li> </ul>
<b>Eurostat data</b>	Representative to country populations	Since 1974	All EU members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 46% (2010) feel belonging to nation only</li> <li>• More European: higher income; more education; white collar/owner/professional/manager profession; young people; men; politically left-wing</li> <li>• Travel, life abroad and language knowledge important factors</li> </ul>

<b>Favell</b>	Long-term migrants	2008	Brussels, Amsterdam, London	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Free movement as the most important legislation that impacts everyday lives</li> <li>• Becoming European as freedom from nation state, while retaining connections to it</li> </ul>
<b>Orientations to Citizenship and European Identity</b>	Youth & children	2005	Austria, Spain, Germany, the UK, Czech Republic & Slovakia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unequal distribution of “raw materials” for European identity (travel experience, language &amp; culture knowledge)</li> <li>• National differences among representative but to a lesser extent target samples</li> <li>• Main predictors for European identity: national context, education and career path</li> </ul>
<b>PIONEUR</b>	Long-term (West-European) migrants	2003-2005	France, Germany, the UK; Italy, Spain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Migrants are more attached to Europe, more positive views of the EU, more knowledge about it</li> <li>• Identification with Europe grows with years spent abroad</li> <li>• “Tripartiate” territorial identities are the most common</li> </ul>
<b>RECON</b>	Youth & children	2007-2011	Germany, Hungary, Poland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Differences between West and East EU countries small among the young and well-educated</li> <li>• Polarized identity patterns not between European and national identities but between different constructions of the national</li> </ul>
<b>Savvides</b>	Youth & children	2006	European school in the UK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Syllabus and classes have a marginal effect on promoting European identity</li> <li>• Important: interaction between pupils in classes and free time activities</li> </ul>
<b>Sigalas</b>	Youth & children	2009	ERASMUS students in the UK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No evidence that ERASMUS leads to adopt European identity</li> <li>• Self-selection of programme participants</li> <li>• Host country has effect on the outcome</li> </ul>
<b>Wodak; Siapera</b>	The elites	2004	Brussels-based civil servants, officials & journalists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear ideas of “Europeanness”, slightly differ between EU organizations and tied with professional identities</li> <li>• Active negotiation and possible conflicts between European and national identities</li> </ul>

## APPENDIX B: NATIONAL AND EUROPEAN IDENTITY, 2004 & 2010

	EB62				EB73			
	<i>NAT only</i>	<i>NAT and EUR</i>	<i>EUR and NAT</i>	<i>EUR only</i>	<i>NAT only</i>	<i>NAT and EUR</i>	<i>EUR and NAT</i>	<i>EUR only</i>
<b>EU27/EU25</b>	41	47	7	3	46	41	7	3
<b>Austria</b>	42	48	4	3	49	42	6	1
<b>Belgium</b>	30	49	9	8	33	46	10	6
<b>Bulgaria</b>	40	49	3	2	51	36	5	2
<b>Cyprus</b>	29	59	6	4	39	44	7	6
<b>Czech Republic</b>	57	37	4	1	59	36	3	1
<b>Denmark</b>	40	53	5	2	43	52	4	1
<b>Estonia</b>	45	50	3	1	49	43	4	2
<b>Finland</b>	56	41	2	1	48	44	6	1
<b>France</b>	30	55	9	4	42	44	9	3
<b>Germany</b>	36	48	9	5	39	47	8	4
<b>Greece</b>	57	37	4	1	50	41	5	2
<b>Hungary</b>	64	32	2	1	47	47	5	1
<b>Ireland</b>	40	53	4	1	58	34	4	2
<b>Italy</b>	35	50	11	2	45	41	8	2
<b>Latvia</b>	47	45	5	1	52	33	8	3
<b>Lithuania</b>	53	37	5	1	60	32	3	2
<b>Luxembourg</b>	34	37	9	17	22	46	12	16
<b>Malta</b>	34	57	7	2	39	54	4	2
<b>Netherlands</b>	33	54	9	3	36	52	8	2
<b>Poland</b>	46	50	3	1	44	48	6	1
<b>Portugal</b>	49	46	2	2	43	46	6	2
<b>Romania</b>	37	47	3	3	50	18	13	6
<b>Slovakia</b>	37	48	9	4	41	45	10	3
<b>Slovenia</b>	44	51	3	1	55	37	4	3
<b>Spain</b>	39	48	5	5	35	50	6	5
<b>Sweden</b>	48	45	4	2	48	44	5	1
<b>United Kingdom</b>	55	35	5	2	70	24	2	2

## APPENDIX C: RECODING OF THE DATA SETS

Label	Variable	1993		2004		2010		NOTES
		Old	New	Old	New	Old	New	
<b>Weight</b>	<b>weight</b>							No change
<b>Year</b>	<b>year</b>							Added as a sorting variable
<b>Age</b>	<b>q01</b>	185		G1		D01		No change
<b>Gender</b>	<b>q02</b>	249		G2		D02		
	1 female	1 female	1	1 female	1	1 male	2	
	2 male	2 male	2	2 male	2	2 female	1	
<b>Education</b>	<b>q03</b>	<i>qualcol/227</i>		<i>G5LAT</i>		<i>D05</i>		Reduced to the categories that are shared in the three surveys
	1 unfinished secondary	1 doctorate	4	1 elementary or lower	1	1 basic or unfinished secondary	1	
	2 secondary	2 university degree	4	2 incomplete secondary	1	2 secondary	2	
	3 secondary vocational	3 vocational school	3	3 incomplete secondary, vocational	1	3 secondary with specialisation	3	
	4 university	4 secondary school	2	4 complete secondary	2	4 higher	4	
		5 technical school	3	5 complete secondary, vocational	3			
		6 incomplete secondary	1	6 higher incomplete	2			
		7 none	1	7 university degree	4			
<b>Economic status</b>	<b>q04</b>	26		G4a		D08		Working pensioner and working student categories dropped as those do not appear in the 2010 survey
	1 employed	1 employed	1	1 employed full or part time	1	1 unemployed	2	
	2 unemployed	2 pensioner	4	2 unemployed, seeking work	2	2 housewife	3	
	3 housewife	3 working pensioner	4	3 pensioner	4	3 retired or disabled	4	
	4 retired	4 working student	5	4 pensioner and employed	4	4 student or pupil	5	
	5 student	5 student	5	5 student	5	5-9 employed	1	
		6 unemployed	2	6 housewife	3			
		7 housewife	3					

<b>Income quartile</b>	<b>q05</b> 1 lowest 2 lower 3 high 4 highest	<i>base: 242</i> What was the average income for each family member during the last month?	<i>base: G7</i> What would you say was the total income of your family during the last month from all sources?	<i>base: D06</i> In the last month, what was your family's income after taxes per one person in the family, taking into account all income?	Different question each year (family vs. per person; before vs. after taxes), therefore division in income quartiles was chosen as the best option for achieving comparability
<b>Citizen of Latvia</b>	<b>q06</b> 1 Yes 2 No	<i>229</i> 1 Lithuanian 2 2 Latvian 1 3 Estonian 2 4 Soviet 2 5 Russian 2 6 Other Soviet 2 7 Other 2 8 Uncertain 2	<i>C2</i> 1 This country 1 2 Russian federation 2 3 Ukraine 2 4 Belarus 2 5 other ex-Soviet republic 2 6 Other 2 7 Uncertain 2 8 Non-citizen resident 2	<i>D09</i> 1 Yes 1 2 No 2	Categories reduced to Yes/No because the 2010 survey does not provide more detailed data
<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>q07</b> 1 Latvian 2 Russian 3 Ukrainian 4 Belorussian 5 Polish 6 Lithuanian 7 Other	<i>228</i> 1 Lithuanian 6 2 Latvian 1 3 Estonian 7 4 Polish 5 5 Russian 2 6 Belorussian 4 7 Ukrainian 3 8 Other 7	<i>none</i>	<i>D03</i> 1 Latvian 1 2 Russian 2 3 Ukrainian 3 4 Belorussian 4 5 Polish 5 6 Lithuanian 6 7 Jewish 7 8 Other 7	Reduced to the categories present in both surveys
<b>Ethnicity dual</b>	<b>q08</b> 1 Latvian 2 Other	<i>228</i> 1 Lithuanian 2 2 Latvian 1 3 Estonian 2 4 Polish 2 5 Russian 2 6 Belorussian 2	<i>none</i>	<i>D03</i> 1 Latvian 1 2 Russian 2 3 Ukrainian 2 4 Belorussian 2 5 Polish 2 6 Lithuanian 2	Dummy variable

		7 Ukrainian 8 Other	2 2			7 Jewish 8 Other	2 2	
<b>Language of interview</b>	<b>q09</b>	<i>lang</i>		<i>G12</i>		<i>D10</i>		Language was used as a proxy for ethnicity in the 2004 survey
	1 Latvian 2 Russian	Latlat Latrus	1 2	1 Latvian 2 Russian	1 2	1 Latvian 2 Russian	1 2	
<b>Native language</b>	<b>q10</b>	<i>181</i>		<i>G1c</i>		<i>B22</i>		For 1993 and 2004 question about language at home during childhood, for 2010 question about native language Reduced to categories present in all three surveys
	1 Latvian 2 Russian 3 Other	1 Lithuanian 2 Latvian 3 Estonian 4 Russian 5 Polish 6 Belorussian 7 Ukrainian 8 Other	3 1 3 2 3 3 3 3	1 Latvian 2 Russian 3 Polish 4 Finnish 5 Belorussian 6 Ukrainian 7 Other	1 2 3 3 3 3	1 Latvian 2 Russian 3 Other	1 2 3	
<b>Religion</b>	<b>q11</b>	<i>230</i>		<i>G8a</i>		<i>B16</i>		In 2010 survey specific religion asked only to those who define themselves as believers, therefore categories were reduced for comparability
	1 Believer 2 Non-believer	1 Atheist 2 Catholic 3 Orthodox 4 Lutheran 5 Other 6 Believe without church 7 No definite answer	2 1 1 1 1 1 2	1 Roman catholic 2 Protestant 3 Orthodox 4 Jewish 5 Muslim 6 Other 7 Not a believer	1 1 1 1 1 1 2	1 a religious person 2 non-religious person 3 convinced atheist 4 hard to say	1 2 2 2	
<b>Location</b>	<b>q12</b>	<i>252</i>		<i>G11</i>		<i>D11</i>		To avoid uncertainties, the number of inhabitants has been used as a reference for the categories
	1 village/ countryside 2 small town 3 big town 4 capital	1 capital city 2 100,000 - 500,000 3 50 - 100,000 4 20,000 - 50,000 5 5,000 - 20,000 6 rural, village	4 3 3 2 2 1	1 village 2 small town (<50K) 3 big town (>50K) 4 capital	1 2 3 4	1 Rīga 2 Regional capitals 3 Other city 4 Small village, countryside	4 3 2 1	

<b>Group identity</b>	<b>q13_1 to q13_4</b>	<i>197-204</i>		<i>none</i>		<i>B7</i>		Selected only categories that repeat; 1993 transformed into yes-no answers (great deal & some = yes; not much, nothing & don't know = no)
	Four categorical variables	Could you look at this list and tell me how much you have in common with each of these groups...				About which of the groups mentioned can you say that you feel a certain belonging to them to the extent that you could refer to you and them as 'us'?		
	1 Latvians	198 Workers	3			1 Latvians	1	
	2 Russians of Latvia	199 Russians	2			2 Russians of Latvia	2	
	3 Workers	203 State nationality	1			12 Simple working people	3	
4 People with	204 People who don't have much money	4			14 People in financial difficulties	4		
<b>Identity combined</b>	<b>q14</b>	<i>179-180</i>		<i>C1</i>		<i>B2</i>		Variable not for analysis but for making the three data sets comparable. Leaves out the identity categories that do not repeat. For 1993 merged Russian and Soviet (took the strongest), used Latvian = Latvia, European = Europe (not ideal but no alternative). For 2010 merged locality and city (took the strongest)
	1 Locality/city	1 city/locality	1	1 city/locality	1	1 Locality	1	
	2 Region	2 region	2	2 region	2	2 City	1	
	3 Latvia	3 Latvian	3	3 Latvia	3	3 Region	2	
	4 Europe	4 Polish	no	4 Europe	4	4 Latvia	3	
	5 Russia	5 Russian	5	5 Russia	5	5 Russia	5	
		6 Belorussian	no	6 other CIS	no	6 Baltics	no	
		7 Ukrainian	no	7 other	no	7 Europe	4	
		8 European	4					
		9 Soviet	5					
	10 other	no						

Identity type	q15			
	1 Primary European	European as the first choice	European 'very close' and 'close' and stronger than national	Recoded to preserve the largest possible detail, later used as basis for further recoding of variables. Recoding done following the example of NBB 2004 of creating a "combined identity" variable. It is adapted here and made suitable for the different data. Middle categories (4; 5) used only if none of the other categories applied.
	2 European - national	first national, second European	same answer for European and national (only for 'very close' and 'close')	
	3 European - local	first city/locality or region, second European	very close' and 'close' for city/locality, region and Europe but not for Latvia	
	4 Integrated national	choices of national and city/locality or region,	answer 'very close' and 'close' for all: city, region, Latvia	
	5 Local	choice of locality/city and region (any order)	very close' and 'close' for locality/city and region but not Latvia	
	6 Russian - national	first national, second Russian	same answer for Russian and national (only 'very close' and 'close)	
	7 Russian - local	first city/locality or region, second Russian	very close' and 'close' for city/locality, region and Russia but not for Latvia	
	8 Primary Russian	Russia as the first choice	Russia 'very close' and 'close' and stronger than national	
	9 European - Russian	Russia and Europe as the two choices (any order)	both Russia and Europe as 'very close' and 'close'	

## **APPENDIX D: EXAMPLE EXPERT INTERVIEW GUIDELINES**

1. In your opinion, which are the most important collective identities in Latvia?
2. What is the relationship between ethnic and national identity in Latvia?
  - Are there differences between ethnicities with regards to this?
3. Does European identity exist in Latvia?
  - In which societal groups can it be found?
  - Relationship with national identity?
  - Relationship with ethnic identity?
4. In your opinion, are there generational differences with regards to the identities that we have been discussing?
  - National, ethnic, European identity
5. Are there regional differences with regards to these identities?
6. Has the financial crisis had an impact on the feelings of belonging of people in Latvia?
  - National belonging?
  - European belonging?

## APPENDIX E: FAMILY INTERVIEW GUIDELINES

*A translation from Latvian*

Good day! Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview!

I am a PhD student and am currently carrying out interviews for my PhD dissertation. I am interested in your life experiences in relation to feelings of belonging to various groups and places, including but not limited to belonging to Europe.

The information that you give me will be anonymous, if the interview will be read by anyone else than me, a pseudonym will be used instead of your real name. I will analyse the interviews and some quotations from them will be used in publications. If any quotations from your interview will be taken, your name will be replaced by a pseudonym. The final result – my dissertation – will be published in English.

<i>Nr</i>	<i>Interview question (approximate wording)</i>	<i>Notes for further inquiry</i>
<b>IDENTITY: GENERAL QUESTIONS</b>		
1	Please tell me a little bit about yourself, your life	<i>(depending on the age of the respondent)</i> Where have you grown up and lived Education Work life Family: while growing up, currently  Youth: future plans?
2	If you had to tell me about yourself in little more detail, how would you say, who are you? Where do you think you belong?	Ask about each identity mentioned: why is it important to you? What does it mean/include? <i>(based on cues from the answer, ask about other groups)</i>
3	Do you currently participate in any political organisation, NGO or interest group? (have you ever participated in one?)	If yes: what groups? Do you think that it has had an impact on that what you feel belonging to?
4	<i>(if not mentioned before)</i> Does being a Latvian/Russian mean anything to you?	Please specify!
5	<i>(if not mentioned before)</i> Do you feel a belonging to Latvia?	Please specify!
6	Do you feel a belonging to a certain generation of people?	If <u>yes</u> : Which generation is it, what characterizes it, elaborate? If <u>not</u> : Are there generations in Latvia? (personality, history) Are there ethnic particularities in generations?

<b>EUROPEAN IDENTITY</b>		
7	When do you think of Europe, what comes to your mind?	Culture, economy, politics, geography?
8	Is for you Europe and European Union the same?	
9	Do you feel that you belong to Europe?	Do you support Latvia's membership in the EU? (has your opinion about it changed)
10	Can you say that yes, I am a European?	
11	Does belonging to Europe have a meaning in your daily life? (can it have a meaning...)	Why, why not
12	Can you imagine a person in Latvia who <u>feels</u> a belonging to Europe? What would be the characteristics of this person?	What is a typical 'European' in Latvia Stereotypes
13	Can you imagine a person in Latvia who <u>does not feel</u> a belonging to Europe? What would be the characteristics of this person?	
14	Now when you have given the descriptions, which group would the most of your relatives and friends belong to?	Examples of each, elaborate
<b>EUROPEAN IDENTITY AMONG OTHER IDENTITIES</b>		
13	Have there been situations/times when you have felt (especially) European? (specific example)	If negative reply to the previous question: Situation when it has been clear that one is not European
14	If you compare belonging to Latvia and Europe, which of them is more important for you, if at all?	Under what conditions is each important, in what contexts (examples); which when or both  Are these two belongings related to one another?
15	Should be asked also about other relevant identities mentioned in question two.	
<b>RELEVANT LIFE EXPERIENCES</b>		
16	How often do you travel outside of Latvia?  How often do you encounter people from other countries?	Which countries?  Which of the countries seen and people met did you feel to be the closest to you?

17	Have you ever lived (worked, studied) in another country?	<p>If yes: where, why and how long?</p> <p>Did you feel belonging to the country?</p> <p>Why, why not? (sometimes yes, sometimes not?)</p> <p>No: can you imagine doing it? Why?</p> <p>Which countries would do you prefer and why?</p> <p>Do you have any friends/relatives who have lived abroad? (attitude towards them)</p>
18	<p><i>(to respondents born outside Latvia)</i></p> <p>Can you imagine returning to the country of your birth?</p>	Why, why not?
19	Can you think of any other life experiences that have furthered (or hindered) you feeling closer or more distant from Europe or Europeans?	

## APPENDIX F: CODING SYSTEM OF FAMILY INTERVIEWS

Line-by-line codes are not included in this table for reasons of clarity and better overview. Instead, the smallest level of codes present here come from focused coding: the use of most significant or frequent earlier codes that could be applied for larger amounts of data.

1	2	3	4	
<b>Life experience</b>	Childhood & youth			
	Education	<i>Secondary</i> <i>Secondary specialised</i> <i>University</i>		
	Professional life			
	Family life			
	Social activities	<i>Social</i> <i>Professional</i> <i>Sports</i> <i>Dance/music</i> <i>Other hobby</i> <i>Political</i>		
	Foreign experiences	<i>Travel</i>	Western Europe Eastern Europe Other post-Soviet Other	
		<i>Foreign contacts</i>		
		<i>Closest nations</i>	None Germany Lithuania Estonia Sweden Poland Finland Russia Belarussia The North	
		<i>Languages</i>		
		<i>Opportunities</i>	Own Children	
		<i>Family/friends abroad</i>	Western Europe Eastern Europe Other post-Soviet Other	

1	2	3	4
	Future plans/possibilities	<i>Studies in Latvia</i> <hr/> <i>Studies abroad</i> <hr/> <i>Life &amp; work abroad?</i>	Not wished for Limitations Western Europe Eastern Europe Other post-Soviet Other
<b>Changing times</b>	The lives before WW2 <hr/> Soviet times <hr/> Transition period <hr/> The crisis	<hr/> <i>Social security</i> <i>Work specifics</i> <i>Living arrangements</i> <i>Party etc. membership</i>	
<b>Generation</b>	Young	<hr/> <i>Self description</i> <hr/> <i>Other description</i>	Lack experience Freedom No motivation No ambition Materialistic Individualist Maximalist Easy adapting <hr/> Cannot compare Don't understand USSR Open to the new Freedom No initiative More opportunities Weak

1	2	3	4
	<p>Middle</p>	<p><i>Self description</i></p>	<p>Stressed Soviet experience Go with the times Lack of stability Endurance Constant changes Soviet upbringing Other morals</p> <hr/> <p><i>Other description</i></p> <p>Hard working Lack of confidence Lack of security</p>
	<p>Elder</p>	<p><i>Self description</i></p>	<p>Well educated Shrinking belonging Less materialistic Frugal Hard working Had security Soviet experience</p> <hr/> <p><i>Other description</i></p> <p>Think before speak Don't understand youth</p>
	<p>Different times</p>		
	<p>Ethnic differences</p> <p><i>No</i> <i>Cannot compare</i></p>		
<p><b>Primary belonging</b></p>	<p>Self-characterisation Family/home Profession Interest group Generation Language group Ethnicity Locality Country/nationality Region Gender</p>		

1	2	3	4	
<b>Local belonging</b>	Town/city	<i>Home</i> <i>Safety</i> <i>Pride</i>		
	Region	<i>Kurzeme</i> <i>Latgale</i> <i>Vidzeme</i> <i>Regional differences</i>		
	Latvia	<i>Native land</i> <i>Nature</i> <i>Giving to country</i> <i>Loyalty</i>		
		<i>Impact of crisis</i>	Leaving Patriotism, lack of	
<b>Ethnic belonging</b>	Ethnic group	<i>Latvian</i> <i>Russian</i> <i>Polish</i> <i>Belorussian</i> <i>Mixed</i> <i>Unimportant</i> <i>Not a choice</i>		
		Influences	<i>Culture &amp; history</i> <i>Language, daily</i> <i>Citizenship</i> <i>Contacts to people</i> <i>Ethnic relations</i>	Mutual impact Divisions
	"Mentality"	<i>Direct comparison</i>		
		<i>Latvian mentality</i>		Self description Other description
		<i>Russian mentality</i>		Self description Other description
	<i>Other groups</i>			

1	2	3	4
<b>European belonging</b>	First association	<i>Opportunities</i> <i>Travel &amp; free movement</i> <i>Cultural heritage</i> <i>Liberties</i> <i>Restrictions</i> <i>Funding</i> <i>The euro</i> <i>Unity of countries</i> <i>The continent</i> <i>"They"</i> <i>None</i>	
	Identification	<i>Positive</i> <i>Negative</i> <i>Not a choice</i>	
	"I am European"	<i>Yes</i> <i>No</i> <i>Automatic</i>	
	Meaning of Europe	<i>Geographic</i> <i>Cultural</i> <i>Political</i>	
		<i>Europe = EU?</i>	Yes No
	Everyday meaning	<i>Infrastructure development</i> <i>Unclear causes</i> <i>Rules and regulations</i> <i>Availability of products</i> <i>Lack of personal experience</i> <i>Specific situation?</i>	Yes No
	Everyday changes	<i>Positive</i> <i>Negative</i> <i>Neutral</i> <i>None</i>	Redrawing borders

1	2	3	4
	Latvia in Europe	<p><i>Historical ties</i></p> <hr/> <p><i>Money matters</i></p> <hr/> <p><i>Loss of the national</i> <i>Lack of information</i></p> <hr/> <p><i>Views from the outside</i></p> <hr/> <p><i>Wider information space</i> <i>Political participation</i> <i>"Europe requests"</i></p>	<p>Geography Culture</p> <hr/> <p>European funding Corruption/use of money Expensive life Buyout of Latvia</p> <hr/> <p>Lack of recognition abroad How others see us</p>
	Comparisons	<p><i>Business methods</i> <i>Worse products</i> <i>Imbalance between states</i> <i>Differences to the USSR</i></p>	
	Stereotypes	<p><i>European</i></p> <hr/> <p><i>Non-European</i></p> <hr/> <p><i>The closest people</i></p>	<p>Positive Negative</p> <hr/> <p>Positive Negative</p> <hr/> <p>Neutral Belong Do not belong</p>
	Promoting factors	<p><i>Travel</i> <i>Languages</i> <i>Life abroad</i> <i>Cultural knowledge</i> <i>Business relations</i> <i>Future: the children</i></p>	

1	2	3	4
	Stalling factors	<i>Age</i> <i>Language knowledge</i> <i>Lack of citizenship</i>	
<b>Identity relationships</b>	With Europe	<i>Latvia and Europe</i> <i>Region and Europe</i> <i>City and Europe</i> <i>Ethnicity and Europe</i> <i>Profession and Europe</i> <i>USSR and EU</i> <i>World and Europe</i>	
	Others	<i>Region and Latvia</i> <i>City and Latvia</i> <i>Region and city</i>	

## APPENDIX G: SUMMARY OF RESPONDENTS' TERRITORIAL IDENTITIES

Pseudonym	Characteristics			Identities			
	Generation	Town/city	Language	City	Region	Latvia	Europe
Marta	elderly	Rīga	Latvian				
Maija	middle	Rīga	Latvian				
Mareks	youth	Rīga	Latvian				
Sarma	elderly	Rīga	Latvian				
Sandra	middle	Rīga	Latvian				
Signe	youth	Rīga	Latvian				
Anna	elderly	Kuldīga	Latvian				
Anita	middle	Kuldīga	Latvian				
Alise	youth	Kuldīga	Latvian				
Daiga	elderly	Kuldīga	Latvian				
Dace	middle	Kuldīga	Latvian				
Dainis	youth	Kuldīga	Latvian				
Inga	elderly	Kuldīga	Latvian				
Inese	middle	Kuldīga	Latvian				
Ivars	youth	Kuldīga	Latvian				
Ella	elderly	Daugavpils	Latvian				
Eva	middle	Daugavpils	Latvian				
Edgars	youth	Daugavpils	Latvian				
Olga	elderly	Rīga	Russian				
Oksana	middle	Rīga	Russian				
Olesja	youth	Rīga	Russian				
Tamara	elderly	Rīga	Russian				
Tatjana	middle	Rīga	Russian				
Tanja	youth	Rīga	Russian				
Larisa	elderly	Daugavpils	Russian				
Ludmila	middle	Daugavpils	Russian				
Laura	youth	Daugavpils	Russian				
Nelliņa	elderly	Daugavpils	Russian				
Natalja	middle	Daugavpils	Russian				
Nils	youth	Daugavpils	Russian				

	Strong
	Medium
	None/not mentioned

Bremen, 19<sup>th</sup> February 2014

I hereby declare that:

- 1) the dissertation was completed without any unauthorized aid/s,
- 2) only those sources and aids where used as are referenced,
- 3) all exerts, citations, and ideas are indicated.

/Ilze Ievina/