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THE BALTIC SEA REGION

**Formation of Threat Image and Identity Building
in Latvia during the pre- and post-Accession
Period to the EU and NATO**

by

Yves Capra

Supervisor: Prof. Olav F. Knudsen

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Abstract

In this thesis, I explore if Latvia has experienced, during the last ten years, a change in *identity* and *threat perception* that could allow for the building of a “cooperative security community” in Northern Europe. Recent *constructivist* researches contend that such change is in progress in neighboring Estonia. This research, performed through a *discourse analysis* of political elite’s speeches, reveals the presence – explained by the concept of *interim inconsequentiality* - of two opposite identity/security discourses. I link the first, *inclusive*, discourse to Latvia’s Western *socialization*, but not to a change in identity, as I contend that both threat images and identity have been *instrumentalized* for the sake of the accession strategy. As for the second, *exclusionary*, discourse that shows a persistent distrust of both Russia and the ethnic Russian minorities, and is the more prevalent in terms of political behavior, I link it to Latvia’s identity as a small ethnic nation vulnerable to external pressures - an identity strengthened during the period by Russia’s behavior. I verify this thesis by exposing the exclusionary discourse’s salience on the EU integration issue. I conclude that the period of reference, far from resolving the *security dilemma*, has, on the contrary, reinforced it.

Keywords: instrumentalization, international socialization, Latvia, identity formation, security dilemma, threat perception.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Foreword

The building of a new security architecture in Europe in the post-Cold war era requires the establishment of “cooperative security”, that is a “cooperation between actors who regard each other as potential enemies” and means “to be politically inclusive so as to bridge divisions between groups” (Knudsen, 2005: chapter 8: 3). Failure on this matter could lead to “exclusionary politics” with the creation of a new dividing line in Europe between NATO countries on one side, and Russia and its allies on the other (Knudsen, 2005: chapter 8: 31). Such an enterprise “requires overcoming the security dilemma.”, i.e. “the tendency, given insecurity, of even defensive measures by one state to be interpreted by its potential adversaries as hostile in intent and thus something to be counteracted” (Knudsen, 1998: 6).

The efforts towards cooperative security come up, indeed, in Northern Europe, against security dilemmas between Russia and its closest neighbors - among them the Baltic states. These dilemmas have their roots in a “lingering distrust” which results of these actors’ past relations (Knudsen, 1998: 9). In his article “Finland and Russia”, Christer Pursiainen, after Collins, summarizes the three possible ways to approach such security dilemmas. Beyond the classical approaches that are the regulation of these dilemmas by the way of balance of power and diplomacy, or their mitigation through international cooperation, he elaborates on the “*contemporary constructivist*” approach. Contending that these dilemmas are not determined by mere material factors but by the way the actors perceive themselves and each others, he therefore argues that “cooperative security communities” could be built, albeit with difficulty, by the way of changes in identities and threat perception (Pursiainen, 2001:143-145).

It seems worth it, now that several of the actors involved at the Baltic Sea region level have joined both the EU and NATO organizations, to see how far they went along this third way. Researches along this line have already been carried out recently on the Estonian case by several authors whose works, presented in a dedicated section, will play the role of touchstone for my research. Some observe an “accommodation” in the Russo-Baltic relations as Pami Aalto, who contends that the link between security and identity begins to loose up among certain groups of the elite (Aalto, 2003: 573). Erik Noreen and Roxanna Sjöstedt contend that

Estonia has operated a change in identity, becoming more “European”. Merje Kuus, however, highlights the persistence of two identity discourses in relation with the European Union integration issue. As for Olav F. Knudsen, in a work that deals with the three Baltic states, he points at the persistent distrust between these countries and Russia as one of the obstacles to cooperative security at the Baltic sea region level (Knudsen, 1998: 9).

As, to my knowledge, this question has not been dealt with specifically as regards the Latvian case in the most recent scholarly works, this thesis aims to fill a gap in this field of research and should allow to see which of the conclusions drawn for Estonia by the above mentioned authors are valid for Latvia, the Baltic state that presents the closest similarities with Estonia, on account of, inter alia, the presence on both territories of an important ethnic Russian population. The aim of this thesis is therefore to explore if Latvia have changed its identity and its perception of threats during the last ten years – i.e. during the pre- and post-accession period - in such a way that can help to resolve the security dilemma with Russia, and thus allow for the building of a “cooperative security community” in Northern Europe.

1.2. Research question

My research question is the following: “Why did certain threat images keep, take on, or lose political salience in Latvia during the period 1996-2006, i.e. during the pre and post-accession period to NATO and the EU?”

1.3. Two opposite discourses

This research, performed through a discourse analysis of political elite’s speeches, reveals the presence of two opposite discourses as regards the threats against Latvia’s national security. *An inclusive discourse* which emphasizes Latvia’s identity as European and espouses the new Western perspective on security: Latvia promotes an inclusive policy towards Russia and its Russian-speaking minorities, and has adopted a broad security agenda, stressing soft security while downplaying the classical military threats. *An exclusionary discourse* which shows a persistent distrust of Russia and its Russian-speaking minorities, both being considered as threats to Latvia’s national security.

1.4. Hypotheses

In order to explain the presence of each of these two opposite discourses on the Latvian security agenda, I test in this thesis two complementary hypotheses:

First, I link the changes in the Latvian security agenda which are revealed in the first inclusive discourse to Latvia's political agenda, as I assume that such variations in the salience of threat images, or threat image *framing*, may be explained by the process of *socialization* of a country that is joining NATO and the EU. However I assume that this socialization process does not go as far as a change in identity and, thereby, that Latvia's Westernized discourse limits itself to an *instrumentalization* of both national identity and security issues.

Second, I link the persistence of an exclusionary discourse to Latvia's national identity. I assume indeed that Latvia's self-perception as a small ethnic nation bordering big Russia has been strengthened during this decade and hence that, since the early years of independence, there has been no substantial change in threat *perception*: Latvia still perceives both Russia and the Russian-speaking populations as threats to its core security and acts accordingly.

Moreover, I intend to verify the "interim inconsequentiality" theory when it comes to explain the presence of two opposite discourses on national security within the speeches of the same elite group, often the same leader, and even in the same speech.

1.5. Plan of the thesis

I first present the previous studies above mentioned, the method of research together with the definition of important concepts, and some background information on the EU and NATO accession. I then present the findings related to Russia and the Russian-speaking populations. In the discussion chapter, I review these findings in order to verify the hypotheses. A chapter dedicated to the perception of an EU threat to Latvia's security provides a confirmation of these hypotheses. In the conclusion, I answer the research question and consider the implications for the building of a security community in Northern Europe.

2. METHOD AND TOOLS

2.1. Previous studies

The question of threat framing, linked with the question of national identity formation, has been already dealt with, in 2004, in the paper by Erik Noreen and Roxanna Sjöstedt: “Estonian Identity Formations and Threat Framing in the Post-Cold War Era”. The first part of their work reveals a variance in the framing of threat, through a textual analysis of Estonian political elite speeches. The second part proposes an explanation of this variance through the analysis of identity formations in the Estonian political discourse. They contend that the “dynamics of collective identity formations” propose an alternative explanation of Estonia’s move toward EU and NATO, complementary to the “realist” and “cognitive” explanations, as this country wishes to recover its lost Western-oriented identity. They then argue that another theory, the process of “socialization”, explains the fact that the Estonian discourse tends to be increasingly similar to the Western discourse.

The second source is an article of 2003 by Pami Aalto: “Revisiting the Security/Identity Puzzle in Russo-Estonian Relations”. In this article, Aalto contends that the dominant Estonian discourse of the early 1990s, labeled as “restorationist geopolitics” in a previous work (Aalto, 2000), which was an exclusionist discourse both vis-à-vis Russia and Estonia’s Russian-speaking populations, has given way to a more varied range of security/identity discourses. He analyzed first diverse kinds of sources turning on security and identity issues - as media, previous researches, pamphlets, etc. - in a search for statements that were used afterwards for a survey directed not only to members of the political elite but also to intellectuals and opinion leaders, and to influential people at the local level as well (Aalto, 2003: 579; 581). He highlights the presence of four security/identity discourses, of which two, as the most salient, are relevant to my own research. The first discourse (Aalto, 2003: 582-3), as an echo of the exclusionist discourse previously mentioned, both condemns strongly the Soviet occupation, considering the Russian-speaking populations that came to Estonia during this occupation as a threat to Estonia’s identity and stresses the imperialist nature of Russia. This discourse promotes a strengthening of the ethnic Estonian identity, notably through language and citizenry policies, and advocates the accession to NATO and the EU as a way to balance the Russian threat. In Aalto’s terms, commenting Suny, such a close linkage between

security and identity tends to limit the possibilities of dialogue between post-Soviet countries and Russia, and between ethnic communities as well, hence limiting peaceful developments in the region, as it presents alternative political behaviors as damaging from an identity perspective (Aalto, 2003: 573-574). The second discourse (Aalto, 2003: 584-5), where the identity/security linkage is loose, tends to “desecuritize” the Russian-speaking populations question, i.e. not to consider them anymore as a subject of threat, and offers them the possibility to integrate a multicultural Estonia, while keeping their language and culture. This discourse is constructionist in nature as it allows for a change in the actors’ identities, and is presented as increasingly dominant in the Latvian society.

The third work is an article of 2002 by Merje Kuus: “European Integration in Identity Narratives in Estonia: A Quest for Security”. This article discusses the Estonian discourse on national identity in the perspective of the enlargement. For her analysis, Kuus extends the sources beyond the speeches of the top political elite, and includes political debates, academic research, the media and public opinion (Kuus, 2002: 92). This allows her to highlight the contradictions of this identity discourse which stresses, on the one hand, the importance of the sovereignty of the state and of the ethnic nation and, on the other, promotes both sovereignty pooling within the institutions that Estonia aims to join and a multicultural society. She shows, in particular, how a “civilizational narrative” (Kuus, 2002: 97), which differentiates between ethnic Latvians and Russian-speaking populations, considers the integration of minorities required by EU and NATO accessions as a threat to Latvia, as these minorities, due to their origins, could prove to be more loyal to Moscow than to Latvia. She shows, too, how a “sovereign narrative” (Kuus, 2002: 100), which differentiates between the Latvian nation-state and its surroundings - including the EU, considers the international integration, too, as a threat, as it will require to abandon some part of sovereignty.

Another work related to this thesis is Olav F. Knudsen’s: “Regions of Power vs. Regions of Identity” whose larger objective is to see the conditions of development of cooperative security at a regional level with an asymmetric distribution of power. He assumes, in particular, that the Baltic states’ lack of will to engage in cooperative security at a Baltic sea region level is due to their distrust of institutions where one country, Russia, would have a prominent role, and that these countries thus favor solutions at a macro-regional level which involve the USA, seen as a means to counterbalance Moscow’s prominence. In chapter 7 of his book, he performs a series of interviews in order to assess the Baltic states’ decision-

makers' state of mind regarding the question of security cooperation. In the following section, which is dedicated to the presentation of my methodological choices, I discuss his method, based on the research and interpretation of "diagnosis statements", together with the choices made by the authors of the works presented above.

2.2. Methodology

In order to answer the research question, I analyzed a number of speeches delivered by the Latvian political elite from 1996 to the present time. I begin this section by a presentation of these speeches, together with a description of the division in periods. I then explain the method of analysis and describe the graphs used to present the quantitative data. I end this chapter with a discussion on alternative methodological choices, and I contend that my approach does, indeed, offer the possibility to answer this thesis's research question.

2.2.1. The corpus of speeches

The 45 speeches selected (see chronological list in the Appendix) have all been delivered by the Latvian leadership, mostly by presidents, M. Ulmanis (10 items) then Mrs. Vike-Freiberga (23 items), some by their respective Foreign ministers (10 items) or Prime ministers (2). I followed Noreen and Sjöstedt in their choice of elite discourse as this discourse is the more relevant to our common purpose, which is to study textual practices of the persons who ultimately make the political decisions (Noreen et al., 2004: 738).

I did not, however, follow Noreen and Sjöstedt who focus only on documents emanating from the Minister of Foreign Affairs and I extended my potential source of data to the President and Prime minister's speeches and addresses. I assume that they all belong to the same "cognitive community", and thus that they all convey the same message, above all on foreign policy issues. For the same reason, I do not see as an inconvenience the high number of speeches by Vike-Freiberga and Ulmanis in my sample. On the contrary, I consider that it provides useful fixed variables as my aim is to reveal diachronic variations in the speeches. My source is the website of the Latvian Ministry of Foreign affairs which supplies some 300 items, dating from 1996 to the present time.

As for the recipients of the speeches, I first settled for speeches delivered on a regular basis, to the diplomatic corps (9 items), and to the UN general assembly (2), and then added speeches delivered in academic setting (25) and, eventually, during international conferences (8). I avoided speeches loaded with securities issues, and tried – but not always successfully - to find speeches presenting the broad foreign policy agenda, i.e. addressing both the EU and NATO integration issues.

2.2.2. Presentation of the periods

I have divided the years 1996-2006 in 3 periods of respectively 3, 4 and 4 years. To be able to quantitatively compare the periods' findings, I selected one additional speech for certain years to reach a total of 15 speeches per period. The three periods are the following:

- Period I: 1996-1998 or “pre-negotiation period”
- Period II: 1999-2002 or “negotiation period”
- Period III: 2003-2006 or “membership period”

To define these three periods, I used two milestones of the dual accession process, i.e. the end of years 1998 and 2002, respectively. I ended period I, or “pre-negotiation period”, at the end of 1998, i.e. just before the Washington Summit of April 1999, where was adopted the Membership Action Plan that provides annual guidelines and reflects the state of preparation of potential candidates. As I intent to establish a link between the leaders' discourse and the accession negotiations, it means that period II corresponds to the years when Latvia had to show its willingness to fulfill the conditions set by NATO. For practical reasons, I call this second period “negotiation period” although, as Grabbe points it out, most of the negotiations happened between the fifteen member states, while the applicant countries had no other choice but to comply with the conditions set during these negotiations (Grabbe, 2003: 76).

The case is less clear cut for the EU calendar, although I contend that this milestone is valid here too as Latvia had to show the EU the same willingness to fulfill the conditions of accession: in November 1998 the Commission adopted the “first regular Report on Latvia's progress” in its preparation for EU accession; the “bilateral screening of the acquis” started in March 1999; and in October 1999, was adopted the “Accession Partnership” which defined

the priorities for Latvia's EU accession preparation and united the then diverse types of EU support.

Concerning the second milestone, I choose the end of 2002 as, for the EU accession calendar, it corresponds to the conclusion of the EU accession negotiations at the Copenhagen European Council of December 2002 and, for the NATO accession calendar, it corresponds to the Prague Summit of November 2002 where Latvia was invited to begin the accession talks. It means, indeed, that from the end of 2002, i.e. the start of Period III, or "membership period", Latvia is practically an EU member, if not formally. I rely on Peter van Ham's opinion that: "... the process and clear prospect of joining the EU is probably as important for the economic and political development and security of the Baltic states, as the final signatures under the accession treaties" (van Ham, 1999: 229). For the NATO accession process, I argue that the same reasoning is valid as Latvia is, from this date, considered as a future member, with no more opposition coming from Moscow.

2.2.3. Data analysis

Noreen and Sjöstedt used a textual analysis, based on a word computerized search through the whole corpus of speeches emanating from the Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in order to reveal the variations in threat images' salience. They repeated the same process, but through a selected corpus (45 items), followed by a discourse analysis, in order to reveal the identity formation. Using the same number of speeches (45), I proceeded on a more inductive manner and defined progressively my categories of threats or identity traits through the reading and analyzing of the selected corpus. The basic units for this analysis are statements, long of at the maximum one sentence, which are related to a particular category. Noting their salience, or their disappearance, or the fact that they are replaced by statements of another nature, I have then been able to propose interpretations that led to answering my research question.

Therefore, the divergent conclusions that these authors and I draw from our researches may come from the different types of analysis that we performed. On the one hand, concerning threat framing, Noreen & Sjöstedt concentrated their research on the occurrences of the word "threat", neglecting other terms as "risk", "danger" or "fear", while I extended my selection of statements to a larger range of words, including "problem", "challenge",

“question”, etc. On the other hand, concerning identity formation, they focused on linguistic features such as personal adjectives and pronouns (we, our people, our nation, etc.) while I worked on whole statements selected according to the topic they were related to and that conveyed a common meaning of the kind: “Latvia wants to cooperate with Russia” or “Latvia is a multicultural society”.

2.2.4. Presentation of the findings

To illustrate the variance of a specific threat, or the changes in collective identity, through the time and to show how, for example, it matches the accession’ calendars, I introduce some quantitative data, namely the *number of occurrences* of a particular category per period. These data are presented in a series of graphs. In order to make this presentation more readable, I supply for each graph some examples of statements between quotation marks, adding thus flesh to my thesis’ bones. Although these graphs, resting on an analysis of 15 items per period may be considered as solid enough evidences to ground my argumentation, I complement these quantitative data with a detailed analysis of each group of statements before drawing my conclusions.

2.2.5. Discussion: discourse analysis

The aim of the studies in this field of research is to get closer to the decision-makers’ state of mind concerning the way they perceive the threats to their countries’ national security, in order to understand, or to foresee, their political behavior. The challenge in this thesis is to reach this hidden truth – i.e. how threats are “really” *perceived* – through a discourse analysis of speeches where threat images are *framed* for the benefit of an audience, here mostly an international one.

Some of the authors working on this question underline the limits of a classical discourse analysis and opt for other tools to reach their common aim. Knudsen’s research in its more recent work rests, for instance, on interviews of Baltic leaders. Moreover, he does not contend himself with simple interviews. The “diagnostic analysis” that he performs rests on “strings of text”, or “diagnostic statements” that are obtained while avoiding direct questions that could lead to descriptions or explanations of policy (Knudsen, 2005: Chapter 7: 4), that is, in my understanding to a repetition of routine statements in use in the elite community of

the moment. In a previous work, Knudsen explained, indeed, how rhetoric has become more important for governmental action with the end of the Cold war – a period where things were easily explained in the frame of the East/West opposition - as “... today conviction must be produced by the uncertain practice of repeating policy statements like mantras, until perhaps their verity is in the end believed ...” (Knudsen, 1998: 18). As for Aalto, when conducting his survey among the Estonian opinion- and decision-makers, he assumes that the subjects are able to speak by themselves, being the inventors of the political discourse and not just its mere echoes (Aalto, 2003: 578). I understand Noreen and Sjöstedt’s choice to conduct their research by looking mechanically for occurrences of terms or other linguistic features as an indirect way to reach the “hidden truth” too, as it amounts to focusing on the way the Estonian leaders speak in some way unconsciously of themselves and of the others.

My methodological choices have been in the first place determined by the scope of this master thesis which did not allow me to perform other more time-consuming – or skill-demanding - types of research of the kind presented above. I choose, indeed, to perform a discourse analysis of secondary material, this corpus of speeches directly available on the Foreign Ministry’ website, thereby following Noreen & Sjöstedt’s steps. I contend, however, that this method constitutes an alternative way to approach the real perception of threats by Latvia’s political elite. I assume that elites are indeed constructing policy through their speeches (see too Knudsen, 2005: Introduction: 6) and that this construction leaves room for some degree of incoherence between what the elites really feel and what is expected of them by the international community – be it the EU, NATO but also the OSCE or the UN. Unlike other political documents as “National Security Laws” or other “Concepts” which are valid for a long period of time and require a high degree of coherence, speeches are reactive to the context in which they are delivered and thus, each speech may not be entirely coherent with the speeches delivered during the anterior or posterior periods with contexts of their own. Therefore, using this lack of coherence over the time, I perform a diachronic discourse analysis which reveals variations in the elite’s discourse on threat images and national identity. I do not only read the statements for what they say but I focus, too, on the evolution of the discourse through the time. The same statement, indeed, may take a different meaning than the one it has in a given speech, depending on the fact that it is isolated, repeated, or that it disappears during a period of time. I therefore argue that this “mantra” quality of the political statements may be used to reach another level of understanding, closer to the true state of mind of the Latvian elite.

2.3. Theoretical tools

I present in this section three theoretical tools that I use and discuss in the following chapters. The first is the *constructivist approach* which Noreen & Sjöstedt favor in their article. The second is the concept of *securitization* which explains the broadening of post-Cold war states' security agendas. The third is the concept of *socialization*, by which Noreen & Sjöstedt explain Estonia's changes in identity and security policy. Other tools, as the "cognitive approach" or the concept of "interim inconsequentiality", will be dealt with in the relevant sections.

2.3.1. Social constructivism

Noreen and Sjöstedt note that Baltic security scholars began to use constructivist approaches, with a focus on the concept of identity, at the end of the 1990s (Noreen et al., 2004: 735). As they themselves favor this kind of approach, I will summarize here what is to be understood by "social constructivist", referring notably to Katzenstein (ed.)'s book: "The Culture of National Security. Norms and Identity in World Politics" published in 1996, which proposes a "middle-of-the-road version of new security studies" (Knudsen, 2001: 365, note n°1).

Basically, constructivists contend that, as collective identities are changing over the time, then state interests are changing too and, with them, threat perception and political behavior. Considering how the environment of states influences the definition of their political interests, Katzenstein contends that one must not only focus on the material capacities of states, as the neorealists do or even on institutions, as the neoliberalists do. For him, the institutions themselves may construct states' identities, affecting the definition of their political interests, and therefore of their security policies (Katzenstein, 1996: 16 & 25). Herman follows the same line, underlining how, for constructivists, the important is not so much the objective conditions but the way states perceive these conditions. As this perception is linked to the way states perceive themselves, he thus argues that, to understand states' behavior, one need to study these collective self-perceptions or identities (Herman, 1996: 285).

The claim that the cultural-institutional environment of states does not only influence

states' behavior but also states' identity (Jepperson et al., 1996: 33), and which is at the core of Noreen & Sjöstedt's argumentation, is of importance for this thesis as I contend, on the contrary, that the EU and NATO accession processes have changed neither Latvia's national identity nor its political behavior on fundamental security issues.

2.3.2. Securitization:

The concept of *securitization* has been developed by what is labeled "The Copenhagen School" with Buzan, Waever and de Wilde as its main proponents (see, i.a., Buzan et al, 2003). Securitization of an issue means that this issue is presented both as crucial to the survival of the object of the threat and requiring emergency measures to be taken. Eriksson & Noreen explain how, after the end of the Cold war, the classical threat images of military conflicts were replaced by new threat images that experts had been asked to identify (Eriksson et al., 2002: 21-22). Knudsen summarizes the implications of this process of securitization in its critical article: "Post-Copenhagen Security Studies: Desecuritizing Securitization": "During the 1990s, non-traditional security studies has been identified with, inter alia, a widened security concept, a non-military and non-state perspective, and an emphasis on identity and cultural factors." Knudsen opposes such a trend and, although not denying the reality of "new challenges" linked, for instance, to transborder phenomena (Knudsen: 1999, p. 4), he wants to keep the research on classical military threats where the state remains the main actor (Knudsen, 2001: 305-306).

Other authors do not have this prevention against broadening the security agenda. Katzenstein enumerates the following threats: ethnic conflicts that lead to civil war, economic competition, the military use of civilian high technology, migrations and the increasing role of national identity and religion in international relations (Katzenstein, 1996: 7). Örjan Berner concurs with him, judging "for the foreseeable future" these "soft" security threats more serious than large-scale military scenarios, and adding to the list such threats as the environmental risks and the Mafia terror (Berner, 2001: 132).

2.3.3. Socialization

The phenomenon of *international socialization* may be differently understood according to the scholars. Archer and Jones present the opportunity given to the Baltic states

to observe and participate, before the accession itself, in the decision-making process of European security institutions, as having “a "socializing" effect upon Baltic decision-makers and, consequently, upon Baltic security policies and concepts” (Archer et al., 1999: 176). The same phenomenon is discussed by Noreen and Sjöstedt after the works of Howard and of Schimmelfennig (Noreen et al., 2004: 743). They present socialization as a “teaching and learning relationship” and contend that the post-communist countries, by learning from the West social norms and practices, are constructing new identities. According to Howard, indeed, socialization may be divided into “four “component processes”: learning a language, using it in practice, institutionalization, and change of state identity.”

Noreen & Sjöstedt acknowledge the rationalist view that socialized states may instrumentalize the socialization process, but contend that this does not exclude a genuine change in identity. Lieven, for his part, expresses a more skeptical view on the question. Indeed, the conclusion of the book: “Ambivalent Neighbors. The EU, NATO and the Price of Membership” both conveys this divergent opinion and explains the book’s very title:

... the ascendancy of liberal ideas in the former communist countries has not been chiefly due to a real understanding of them by the population, or a deep emotional adherence. Rather, they have been associated with the prestige of the west; and public allegiance to these principles has been explicitly demanded by western institutions as part of the price of membership (Lieven, 2003: 305).

In this thesis, I use the term “socialization” in its most restrictive meaning, i.e., according to Howard’s description: learning a language, using it in practice and institutionalization, but short of a change of state identity, as I assume – it is, indeed, the contention of this thesis – that the Latvian leadership did instrumentalize both threat images and national identity in order to fulfill the conditions set by the EU and NATO for applicant countries. This approach corresponds to what Katzenstein defines as a “rationalist” approach: “For rationalists, actors deploy culture and identity strategically, like any other resource, simply to further their own self-interests” (Katzenstein, 1996: 17).

2.4. The conditions of accession

In this chapter, I present the dates and documents where NATO and the EU set the conditions that Latvia, especially or as any other country, had to fulfill in order to be considered as an applicant or as a member. These landmarks will allow me to show how the salience (or the denial) of threat images and identity traits matches (or not) the accession calendars.

2.4.1. EU accession conditions

The basic conditions were set in *The Commission opinion on Latvia's application for EU membership*, a document published in July 1997, i.e. two years after the Latvian application for membership. This document conditioned the opening of accession negotiations between the EU and Latvia to progress in specific areas. The section that interests this thesis is the one which deals with the protection of the minorities in the chapter concerning the Copenhagen political criterion. The document concludes that Latvia presents all the characteristics of a democracy, with only one reservation that is "... that steps need to be taken to enable the Russian-speaking minority to become better integrated into society ...". The document stresses the need for Latvia to accelerate the procedures that enable the non-citizens to acquire the Latvian citizenship, as well as the need to ensure equality of treatment for the non-citizens and the minorities in specific domains (EU, 1997).

The Commission's opinion was followed, from 1998 to 2003, by a series of annual reports on Latvia's progress in its preparation for accession. These reports, while stressing the compliance of Latvia with the Copenhagen criterion, continue all along the period to underline the need for Latvian authorities to increase their efforts in order to better integrate the Russian-speaking minorities. These reservations concern such obstacles to naturalization as the lack of information on the procedures, the level of difficulties of the tests, the capacities of the Naturalization Board to process the requests and some restrictive traits of the Language Law. It stresses repeatedly the need to promote Latvian language learning among non-citizens (EU, 1998, 1999a to 2002). The last report of the series dates from 2003, i.e. just after the conclusion of the accession negotiation (13 December 2002) and the signing of the Treaty of Accession (16 April 2003). In this report, the Commission does not make a full review of

Latvia's progress concerning the political criterion, and, in particular, does not mention anymore the question of the integration of the minorities (EU, 2003).

As regards the EU policy towards Russia, *The Common Strategy of the European Union on Russia* (EU, 1999b) gives the guidelines adopted by the organization that Latvia seeks to join. The document "... welcomes Russia's return to its rightful place in the European family in a spirit of friendship, cooperation, fair accommodation of interests and on the foundations of shared values enshrined in the common heritage of European civilization." This spirit of cooperation encompasses the questions of stability and security in Europe and beyond, with Russia being considered by the EU as an essential partner in the efforts to respond to the common challenges.

2.4.2. NATO accession conditions

For the NATO accession process, the major landmarks are the publication by NATO, in 1995, of *the Study on NATO enlargement* which set the conditions that the countries seeking membership had to fulfill, and the launching, in April 1999, of the *Membership Action Plan* which resumes the conditions set in the previous document and which is followed by an annual national program covering, in addition of the defense aspects, the political and economic aspects.

Concerning the issues relevant to this thesis, i.e. Latvia's relations with Russia and the treatment of its Russian-speaking populations, several conditions are clearly set in these documents. In the Membership Action Plan of 1999, it is stated that the aspirant countries, in addition to the need to conform with the Alliance's basic values of democracy and individual liberty, are expected to "settle their international disputes by peaceful means" and to "settle ethnic disputes or external territorial disputes including irredentist claims or internal jurisdictional disputes by peaceful means in accordance with OSCE principles and to pursue good neighborly relations" (NATO, 1999). As for NATO policy towards Russia, it is defined in a dedicated section of the "Study on NATO enlargement" (NATO, 1995). The relations that the Alliance seeks to develop with Russia are "constructive, cooperative relations of mutual respect, benefit and friendship". They include the security aspects as the Alliance's main goal is to develop a "cooperative security architecture in Europe".

2.4.3. Conclusion

The above summary of the conditions required for Latvia to join the EU and NATO and of these organizations' policies towards Russia shows the path that Latvia had to follow in order to succeed in its international integration. First, Latvia had to show its willingness to integrate its Russian-speaking population through an easier process of naturalization, a promotion of the training in Latvian language and of equal rights to participate in the society's development. Second, Latvia had to develop good neighborly relations with Russia, settling peacefully with this country its territorial disputes and engaging it in cooperative relations that include national security issues.

3. PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS

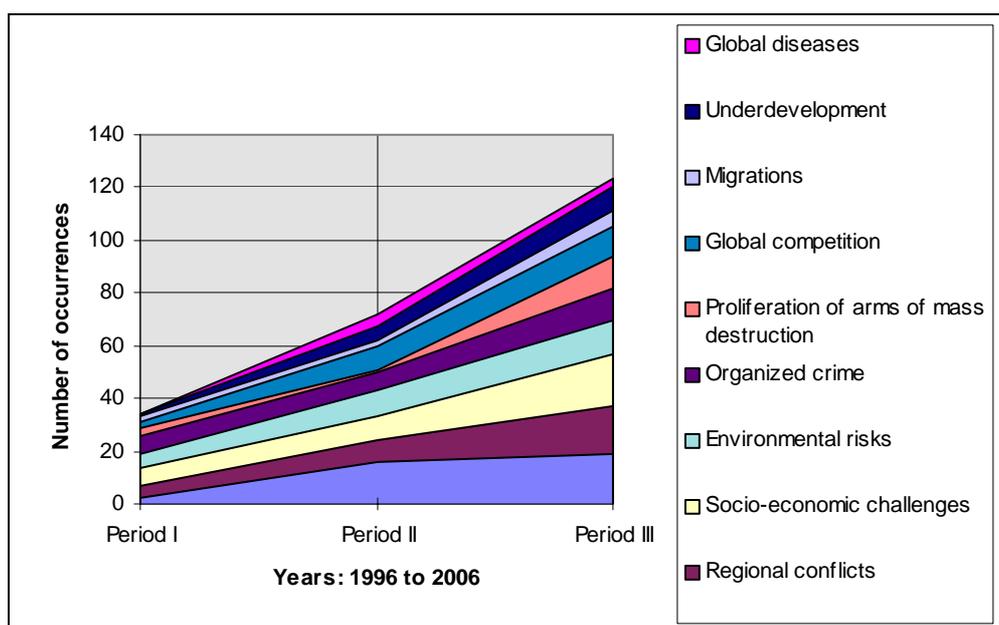
3.1. The new security agenda

I first analyze a series of new threat images that appeared in the speeches during the period of reference. I do not discuss in substance each of these numerous threats, but focus on the statements presenting them and on their very salience in the speeches. I make, however, an exception for the “domestic socio-economic challenges” whose variations in salience present an anomaly which deserves to be explained.

3.1.1 New threat images

A striking finding, presented in figure 1, is the progressive appearance of a whole series of threat images that the academics and the Latvian speakers use to define as “new” or “global” or both. These new images are seldom developed and appear essentially in enumerations as in a speech by Sandra Kalniete (2004), Minister for Foreign Affairs: “In security policy, new threats (international terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, failing states, organized crime, regional conflicts) are coming to the forefront.” This appearance of new threats images in the agenda corresponds to the securitization (see

Figure 1. New threats



section 2.3.2.) of issues belonging to the socio-economic field, or to global phenomena as the environment, the organized crime, the international terrorism, etc. Although they are not always labeled as “threats” but also as “challenges”, “concerns” or “problems”, they are presented in some speeches as “serious” or “pressing”, which clearly points to a process of securitization.

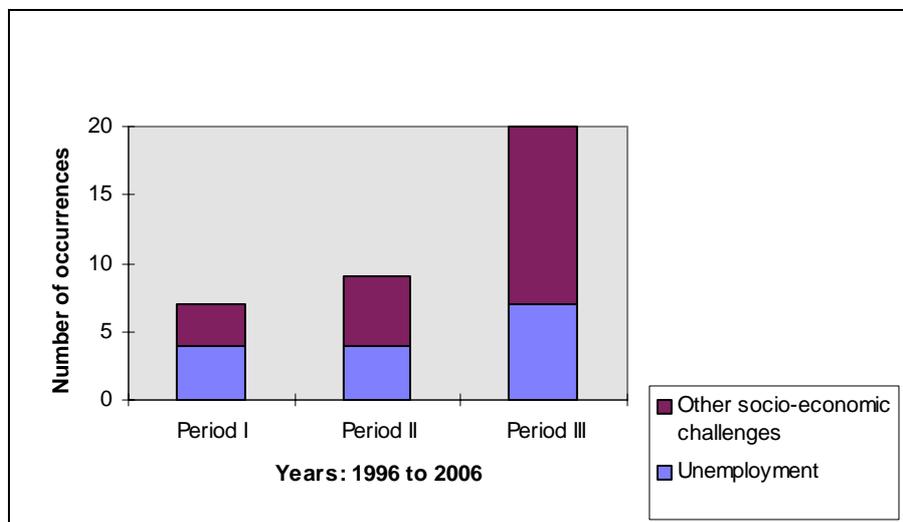
The adoption of the security world’s new trend, i.e. the broadened security agenda, may be explained by a process of socialization (see section 2.3.3.) as Latvia adopts the threats images projected by the community it is joining. This process is clearly conscious as in Ulmanis (1998d): “In a close dialogue with NATO and other countries we acquire the understanding of security in conformity with the trends of the turn of the centuries.” Birkavs (1998) explains what this new understanding is: “Security is increasingly seen as a multidimensional phenomenon involving not only military-political but also economic and societal aspects.” This learning process has both NATO and EU as teachers. Vike-Freiberga (2002d) underlines the role of the new NATO in addressing “the latest security challenges”, i.e. conflict prevention, peacekeeping, and the fight against terrorism. Valdis Birkavs (1998), Minister of Foreign Affairs, presents the integration into the EU as a way to address challenges to “political and economic security” as the EU deals effectively with “threats to social and economic stability, threats posed by organized crime, threats to well-being of people.” In the speech by Kalniete (2004) above mentioned, the threats enumerated – including “failing states”, a threat rarely listed - correspond exactly to the chapters of the EU paper: “A secure Europe in a better world, European Security Strategy, Brussels” of 12 December 2003 (EU, 2003b). Among the “teaching” countries, belonging to NATO or EU or both, are the Nordic countries, which, according to Archer & Jones, have exported to the Baltic states the new security concepts, and in particular the “comprehensive security” concept that I am discussing now (Archer & Jones, 1999: 173). These imported concepts are recognized by Birkavs (1998) as “an indispensable part of [Latvian’s] vocabulary and thinking.”

Moreover these threats are repeatedly presented as “... problems that know no borders, and therefore must be dealt with in close transnational cooperation” (Vike-Freiberga, 2001b) and are, in my opinion, instrumentalized in the context of the accession negotiations as this recurrent argumentation about their global nature pleads for Latvia’s integration into the Euro-Atlantic community.

3.1.2. The domestic socio-economic challenges

Among the new threats, I choose to focus hereafter on a series of concerns that I have regrouped under the denomination: “domestic socio-economic challenges”. I distinguish in figure 2 the numerous statements related to unemployment in order to show the relative importance of the other challenges. These other concerns are, in general: threats to social and economic stability or threats to well-being of people, and in particular: poverty, stifled economic growth, strained social support and health care systems, social problems caused by drug addiction.

Figure 2. Domestic socio-economic challenges



The salience of the domestic socio-economical challenges follows a pattern that deserves to be discussed. Globally, these challenges are increasingly mentioned. They are however omitted in 12 consecutive speeches, during the period 1998-2000 and, until 2004, year of accession, they are mentioned without great emphasize. Then, in the last two years of the period, once Latvia is a full member of both organizations, they reach a significant salience. The main pattern may be explained by the concept of socialization, as argued in the previous section. As regards the anomaly, i.e. this sudden decrease in salience from 1998 to 2004, I explain it by a process of instrumentalization. The Latvian leaders choose to downplay their country’s socio-economic problems as it may have been counterproductive to put forwards such weaknesses during the negotiation period. Then, once the formal accessions were completed, the socio-economic issues regained their salience, this time, in my opinion,

because Latvia, as the poorest member of the EU (Vike-Freiberga, 2005a), has switched to a new strategy in order to be eligible to the EU cohesion funds.

Moreover, according to several authors, the question of Latvia's internal weaknesses – to which, in addition of poverty, Knudsen adds corruption and public mismanagement (Knudsen, 1998: 7) - is linked to its external security. Indeed, one of Knudsen's interviewees, mentioning the socio-economic situation, points out that “that weakness can be exploited from the outside, for instance by Russia” (Knudsen, 2005: Chapter 7: 40). This opinion is shared by Archer who adds to the picture the minorities issue: “... the very weakness of the Baltic states economic infrastructures and societies is a core element in their lack of security and provides a basis for further insecurity when connected to outside pressures and the ethnic question” (Archer, 1998: 269). Therefore, when, for other countries, internal weaknesses are only domestic problems, for Latvia, they constitute a security threat.

One could thus argue first that, and although there is no mention of Archer's argumentation in the speeches, the increasing salience of the domestic socio-economic threats reflects the Latvian leaders' concern about such vulnerability. However, there may be a point beyond which it could be unwise to voice these weaknesses publicly. I therefore contend that the downplaying of this threat from 1998 to 2000 or even 2004, i.e. in the years of tension between Latvia and Russia following the 1998 crisis (see section 3.2.1.3.), can be explained, concurrently to the socialization process already discussed, by the will not to appear too vulnerable, on the domestic ground, to Russia.

3.1.3. Conclusion

To conclude, I contend that Latvia did socialize itself by borrowing to the West its new security concept of “soft” threats, and securitizing a broad range of non-military issues. However, I contend that by presenting these new threats as global and requiring transnational cooperation to deal with them, the Latvian leaders instrumentalized them in the context of the accession negotiations. I highlight another possible case of instrumentalization when I explain the downplaying of the domestic socio-economic challenges by Latvia's accession strategy or, concurrently, by the will not to present Latvia as vulnerable to Russia's pressures in a period of tension between these two countries. In the two following sections, I investigate if Latvia has completed its socialization process and if the Latvian leaders, in accordance with the

Western new security agenda, have indeed desecuritized both the Russian threat and the threat represented by its Russian-speaking populations.

3.2. The Russian question

In this section I present the findings concerning the perception of a Russian threat by Latvia's leadership. I start with the analysis of statements related to this threat itself, and then I focus on the Latvian declarations of inclusiveness towards Russia that I match with a series of statements on Moscow's lack of spirit of cooperation. Finally, I present some findings concerning the leadership's perception of Latvia's past.

3.2.1. The Russian threat

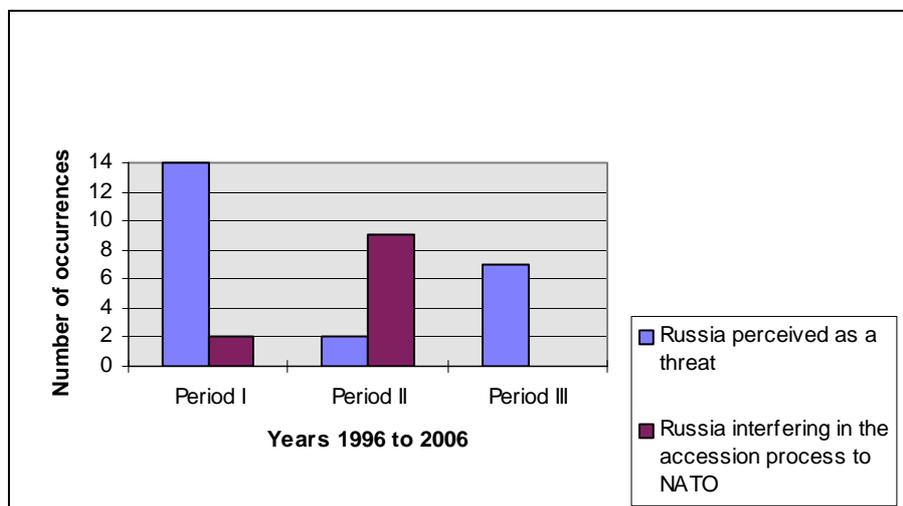
3.2.1.1. Russia as a threat to Latvia's security.

Although the statements that I selected are very eclectic in nature, they all convey the idea that Russia represents a threat to Latvia's security, as Moscow considers the former republic of the USSR as part of its sphere of influence where it can interfere at will. In figure 3, I distinguish the statements referring to Moscow's opposition to Latvia's accession to NATO as they need, in my opinion, a specific treatment.

As regards the first period, the Russian threat is highly salient. Ulmanis (1996c) almost excuses Russia's "threatening signals directed at the Baltic states" by the internal transformations taking place in their neighbor, but he nevertheless states clearly that the Baltic states "shall never accept the view, that [they] are a part of Russia's sphere of influence!". Another speech denounces Moscow's "inappropriate way of conducting foreign policy", in a reference to the Russian accusation of human rights violations against the Russian-speaking population in the Baltic states (Birkavs, 1996). The fear of Russia by its neighbors is presented both as a reason to pursue NATO's enlargement (Birkavs, 1997) and not to deal with security issues at the North-Eastern European level, as stated in Prime Minister Guntars Krasts' speech of 1997. One speech contests Russia's right to "violently cut" a window on Europe of the kind Peter the Great cut two centuries ago (Ulmanis, 1998a) while another

speaks of “economic measures used to achieve political goals”, alluding to Russia’s economic sanctions that followed the 1998 crisis (Birkavs, 1998).

**Figure 3. Russia as a threat
& as interfering in the NATO accession process**



As for the second period, the only references about a Russian threat are that the economic sanctions instituted in March of the precedent year are still in place and the general reminder that “Russia is and will be [their] close neighbour” (Berzins, 1999a). This could mean that the Russian threat is dramatically downplayed for the time of the accession negotiations, as Latvia’s leadership considered being in their country’s interest to be seen as developing good neighborly relations with the Russian Federation. I tend, however, to disagree with this position. Figure 3 shows that, during this period, the main discourse regarding Russia concerns more specifically its opposition to Latvia’s accession to NATO. The statements denounce Russia’s old thinking in terms of sphere of influence and the fact that Russia could have a veto-power on the question of Latvia’s accession to NATO. The leaders ask this organization to send a clear message to Russia about the inevitability of Latvia’s membership, as, I assume, uncertainty about NATO’s intentions could have rendered Latvia vulnerable to a pre-emptive action by its neighbor. I set apart these statements in the graph as they refer indeed more to a reality than to a threat, as Russia did prevent the West to consider Latvia as a future member until 2001 - when Putin eventually gave his agreement, and thus did work against Latvia’s national interests. Indeed, according to Mouritzen, the NATO countries recognized Russia a certain veto-power on the subject and respected “[the] Russian sphere of interest thinking to some extent.” (Mouritzen, 1998c: 293 and 1998b: 86).

However, Russia's behavior constituted a threat at another level, leaving uncertainty as regards its reaction if NATO had enlarged without Moscow's green light. I therefore see these numerous statements concerning Russia's interferences as conveying the Latvian leaders' feeling that their neighbor still thinks in terms of sphere of influence and poses a threat to their interests. I thus conclude that, albeit decreasing, the Russian threat is still significantly salient during the period of negotiation.

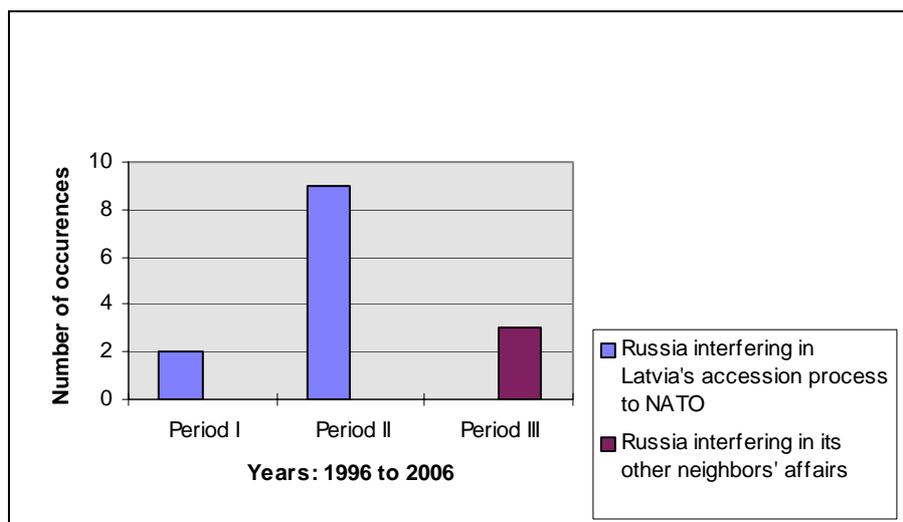
As for the third period, the Russian threat by itself, i.e. if I disregard the NATO accession issue discussed above - regains some salience. Some old threats are restated, but this time with a new assertiveness, and some new threats appear in the speeches. The EU membership, for example, is presented as a means to preserve independence and to strengthen Latvia's national sovereignty (Kalniete, 2003), which points out, in my opinion, to a continuing Russian threat. Pabriks (2005), the Minister of Foreign Affairs, denounces "...that kind of policy we very frequently see today where Russians regard our territory, our population as their historical belongings." In the same speech, he complains about the use made by Moscow of the Latvia Russian-speaking minorities to fulfill its political interests. These statements are, in my opinion, more straightforwardly delivered than in the previous periods, a fact that I ascribe to Latvia's new status of NATO and EU member, which allows the leaders to speak more freely. As for the new concerns, they are of two kinds. The first is "...the unsettling prospect of energy-supplying countries using oil and gas to obtain political and economic concessions from their client nations" (Vike-Freiberga, 2006a), which, undoubtedly - in winter 2006, during the Ukrainian affair, points at Moscow. The second is the demand that both NATO and the EU implement a coherent policy regarding Russia (Vike-Freiberga, 2006d) and that its members do not base only their bilateral agreements with Russia "on economic interest and energy needs" (Vike-Freiberga, 2006c), which refer, undoubtedly again, to the 2005 agreement between Berlin and Moscow to build a pipe-line for natural gas that by-passes Russia's neighbors, among them the Baltic states.

3.2.1.2. Russian interferences in its other neighbors' affairs

Moreover, I found in the speeches of the third period several statements about a new concern among Latvia's leadership, namely the Russian interferences in the internal affairs of its other immediate Western neighbors, namely Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova. Kalniete (2004) defends the right for these countries to develop a direct link with the EU and states that

“[t]he "special interests" of third countries [read: Russia] in this region must be rejected.” Vike-Freiberga (2005a) praises the Ukrainians’ courage in their struggle “to obtain fair elections without falsification and interference [read: “from Russia”].” And the same Vike-Freiberga (2006d) demands that the EU and NATO’s policy towards Russia “... must also be based on Russia's non-interference in the internal affairs of its neighbours, which include Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova.”

Figure 4. Russia as interfering in its other neighbors’ affairs



I present these findings in figure 4 together with a repetition of the findings concerning Russia’s opposition to Latvia’s accession to NATO as these two discourses are exactly the same, except that they now concern Russia’s interference in its other Western neighbors’ affairs. This sudden switch of concerned may be interpreted as evidence that Latvia does not fear Russia anymore, once the dual accession has secured its own position. But, at the same time, it does not mean that Latvia trust Russia. On the contrary, this discourse signals to the audience that Russia is still thinking in terms of sphere of influence. I therefore think that these statements, although not touching Latvia itself, should be added to the statements about a Russian threat during the third period. Consequently, I contend that the Russian threat has not significantly decreased during the whole period of reference.

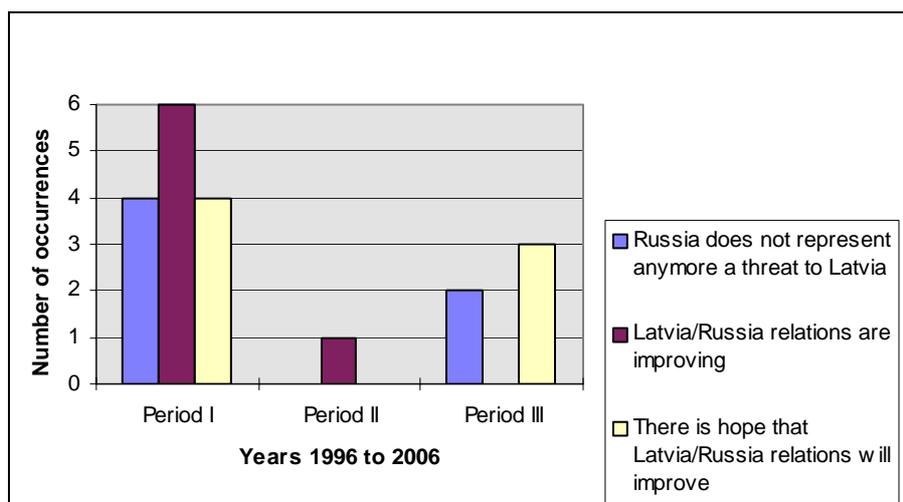
Besides, I found two other discourses during the third period concerning Latvia’s neighbors who struggle to go out of Russia’s sphere of influence. The first discourse shows a will to include these countries in the Western world as in Vike-Freiberga (2006d): “I firmly

believe that NATO and the EU must place high priority on establishing closer relations with their Eastern European neighbours.” The other shows a will to promote the Western values in these countries as in Vike-Freiberga (2006c): “Latvia perceives the EU's Neighborhood Policy as an additional opportunity to foster freedom, democracy and the rule of law in neighboring regions.” These exhortations to follow Latvia’s path may come out of empathy. They may be too interpreted as an encouragement for these countries to “bandwagon” with the West, according to Archer’s definition of the term, i.e. the fact of joining the victor and thus “rewarding the West with ‘extra benefits’” in addition of its victory over the USRR (Archer, 1998: 262). I assume indeed that the aim of Latvia’s foreign policy on this matter comes from the calculation that the more Russia is weakened, the more Latvia is secure. This, in my opinion, provides a supplementary evidence of a continuing distrust of Russia among the Latvian leadership.

3.2.1.3. Improvement in the Latvian-Russian relations

Another way to assess the perception by Latvia’s leadership of this Russian threat is to focus on the statements that express an improvement in the relations between Latvia and Russia. Figure 5 distinguishes three categories of statements expressing such an accommodation in the two countries’ relations. The first category regroups six statements that state that Russia does not represent anymore a threat to Latvia as in Ulmanis (1996a): “If you look at Latvia, you will see that we do not believe that Russia is threatening us.”, and, on one occasion, that Russia’ sphere of influence inherited from Stalin exists no more (Vike-Freiberga, 2005b). The first four statements, during Period I, are linked to satisfactory border negotiations and to the Russian troops’ withdrawal from Latvia. The last two, during Period III, are seen as benefits of the EU and NATO memberships.

A second category of seven statements recognizes the fact that Latvian-Russian relations are indeed improving. They, too, during the first period, appear in the context of satisfactory border negotiations or of troop withdrawal. The dismantling, according to the bilateral treaty’s schedule, of the radar station of Skrunda shows that “Russia can honour its word.” and is also, for the Latvian leaders, a reason for optimism - indeed, the only sign of this kind during Period II (Berzins, 1999b).

Figure 5. Improvement in the Latvian-Russian relations

However, the third category of seven statements expresses more hopes for potential good relations with Russia than actual good relations. Ulmanis (1996a), speaking of the border question, says: “[...] we hope that the matter can be settled soon.” and speaking of the troop withdrawal, he states that “it provides a basis for good relations with the new Russia.” Seven years later, Vike-Freiberga (2004b) is still “looking forwards to a gradual improvement in [Latvia’s] relations with Russia.”

Figure 5 shows a dramatic drop in the salience of these three categories of statements about an accommodation in Russia/Latvia relations, from the first period to the second period. I attribute this fact to the political developments of the years 1997-1998. First, a fact saluted by the Latvian Prime Minister (Krasts, 1997), President Yeltsin offered security guarantees and cooperative projects to the Baltic states in October 1997. The Baltic states, however, rejected these offers, a fact which “left Russo-Baltic relations in limbo” (Knudsen, 1999: 15). Then, in the late winter of 1998, arose a crisis in the relations between the two countries, sparked off by a demonstration of non-citizens in Riga, but which must be linked to Russia’s reaction to the prospect of Latvia joining NATO (Moshes in Knudsen: 1999, p. 14). This led to the adoption by Moscow of economic sanctions against Latvia. I thus contend that the quasi absence of statements about the improvement of the relations between Latvia and Russia during the negotiation period may be explained by this bilateral crisis.

As for the period of membership, the speeches stressing the fact that Russia does not represents anymore a threat or that Latvia is not anymore part of Russia’s sphere of influence

may well be firstly directed to Moscow, which has to draw the consequences of Latvia's new international status. The Latvian leaders remind Russia of the rules of the game, which does not mean, in my opinion, that they really think that Russia is not a threat anymore, on the contrary. As for the three other statements of this period, they just convey the hope of future improvement in the two countries' relations and could well be firstly addressed to the EU and NATO as a sign of Latvia's goodwill in its bilateral relations with Russia.

To summarize the above presented findings, I contend that the high salience of statements expressing an improvement in Latvian-Russian relations in the first period corresponds well to the "fluid relationships in the Baltic sea region" that Knudsen attributes to the withdrawal of the ex-Soviet troops from the Baltic states in 1994 (Knudsen, 1998: 4). The turning point in these relations is the 1998 crisis. Immediately after, during the second period, this kind of statements disappears from the speeches. When they come back, albeit less numerous, during the period of membership, they are, in my opinion, more a way to send messages to Russia and the West than really conveying a positive assessment of the Latvian-Russian relations. Scholars, indeed, have noted, in 1998-99, how Russia's foreign policy towards the Baltic states have become ambiguous, sometimes threatening, sometimes reassuring (Knudsen, 1998: 4; Sergounin, 1998: 38). Moreover, the border negotiations question that explains some of the positive appreciation by Latvia's leaders in period I – a question used by Moscow to slow down Latvia's accession process to the EU (Väyrynen, 1999: 221) - is still present in period III as Vike-Freiberga (2006a) still hopes that a meeting could be arranged in order to settle it. Therefore, I argue that, for good factual reasons, Latvia ceased to consider its relations with Russia as improving from 1998 on, and that this distrust is still present today.

3.2.1.4. Conclusion

To conclude, I contend that the image of Russia as a threat has not been significantly downplayed during the whole period, as one could have expected and that, albeit related to Russia's other neighbors, this image is still present in Period III. Besides, I link the persistence of this threat to Russia's political behavior towards Latvia and its other Western neighbors, and notably to the Latvian-Russian crisis of 1998. I assumed above that the statements about the hope of improvement in the Latvian-Russian relations were addressed to the Western audience, as they show Latvia's goodwill towards Russia, in accordance with the

new Western policy. In order to verify this assumption, I examine in the next section a more specific series of statements that stress Latvia's inclusiveness towards Russia.

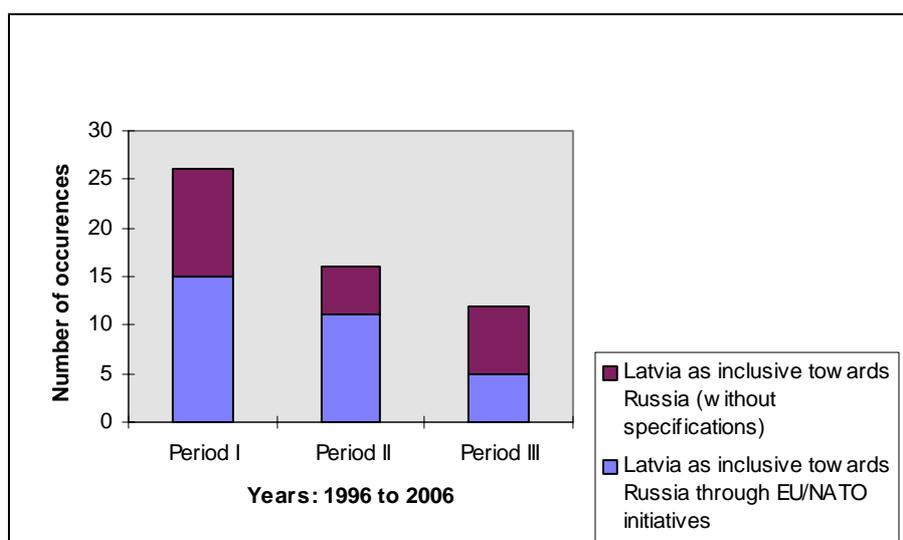
3.2.2. Latvia is cooperative, Russia is not.

I summarized previously (see section 2.4.) what was expected in terms of political behavior from Latvia by the EU and NATO as far as its relations with Russia were concerned. These demands led Latvia's leadership to confront a paradox: Latvia, at the demand of NATO and the EU, had to conduct a policy of inclusiveness towards Russia, while its primary reason to join these organizations was – according to most of the scholars – its fear of Russia. In order to understand how the Latvian leadership dealt with this paradox, I first review statements that stress the importance of good neighborly relations and of cooperation with Russia. I then match these statements with others that stress Russia's lack of cooperativeness.

3.2.2.1. Latvia as inclusive towards Russia

In figure 6, I set apart the statements appraising NATO's initiatives, as the Partnership for Peace and the NATO-Russia Council, or the EU initiatives, as the EU Common Strategy towards Russia and the Northern Dimension initiative, in order to show the existence of a linkage between these statements and the Western policy. Indeed, from the beginning of the

Figure 6. Latvia as inclusive towards Russia



period of reference, the speeches present this “inclusiveness” towards Russia as a Western specificity: “The basis for our relations with Russia is the Western European concept of neighbourly relations. Just as all Western nations, the Baltic states strive to develop with the Russian Federation a stable dialogue in the realms of politics and economics, as only this can be mutually beneficial and meaningful as such, to the security of all of Europe” (Ulmanis, 1996c). Another example are Berzins’ words (1999a): “When we are looking at our relationship with Russia, it is with the eyes of an EU country.”

There are several ways to interpret these findings. The first one is to attribute the salience of such statements to a phenomenon of international socialization as understood by Archer & Jones, i.e. as a learning process. Indeed, in their list of security concepts that the Baltic states imported from the Nordic countries, appears, in third position, “cooperative security”, defined by Haekkerup as the building of security “not by blocks, not by balances of power, not by spheres of interest and grey zones, but through integration, webs of interdependence and networking” (Archer et al., 1999: 173). However, these findings could be interpreted, too, by a constructionist approach – or by a “socialization” process according to Howard - which goes well beyond a learning process as it assumes that Latvia operates a change in identity and, becoming European - “seeing the world with the eyes of an EU country”, adopts a European attitude, namely its inclusiveness towards Russia.

These two interpretations, however, do not fit with what this graph shows clearly. There is a gradual fall in Latvia’s declarations of goodwill regarding cooperation with Russia, while one should, on the contrary, expect an increasing salience of such a discourse, owing to a gradual process of learning and, eventually, a change in identity. I therefore prefer a third explanation, more rationalist in kind, and interpret the salience of this kind of statements to the will to present NATO and the EU the image of an inclusive Latvia, which shares the same goals and nurtures the same goodwill towards Russia.

However, if my interpretation explains the high salience of inclusive statements in the first period, one should expect this salience to be even more pronounced during the period of negotiations. For Estonia, according to Noreen and Sjöstedt, it has been the case: “The closer the crucial decision as to whether the new group of Central and Eastern European countries would join NATO, the more prevalent in Estonian statements were the more inclusive views vis-à-vis Russia.” (Noreen et al., 2004: 740). But as figure 6 shows, it is not the case for

Latvia. To explain this anomaly, I assume that a conjunction of both the Russian opposition to the NATO membership and the aftermath of the 1998 bilateral crisis made difficult for Latvia to put more stress on its good will – sincere or not - towards Russia during Period II. Berzins (1999a), indeed, dismisses this need with these words: “It is important to remember that co-operation with Russia is not just on our shoulders; it is not our special job to make Russia happy; co-operation with Russia is a global question.” I thus argue that if Latvia had undergone a true process of socialization, the inclusive views towards Russia would have been more salient during period II. Moreover, the findings in Period III confirm, in my opinion, that this European inclusiveness professed by Latvia’s leaders has been actually instrumentalized. The last three speeches of the period (i.e. in 2006) do not mention Russia anymore as an object of inclusion and, moreover, during the whole third period, the stress is put increasingly on inclusive policy towards other Eastern neighbors, as Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova and Georgia. This has been discussed previously (see section 3.2.1.2) and amounts to an exclusionist behavior towards Russia, not an inclusive one.

In conclusion, the findings indicate that the stress on Latvia’s good will vis-à-vis Russia is due to the need to present NATO and the EU with a mirrored image of themselves in the perspective of the enlargements. Here, the identity trait “inclusiveness” is instrumentalized. The expression of this will decreases during the Period II, because of the deterioration of the climate between the two protagonists. Then, once a member, Latvia does not feel the same need to stress its “inclusiveness” as during Period I. This interpretation is corroborated in the following section, which deals with a series of statements stressing Moscow’s lack of cooperativeness.

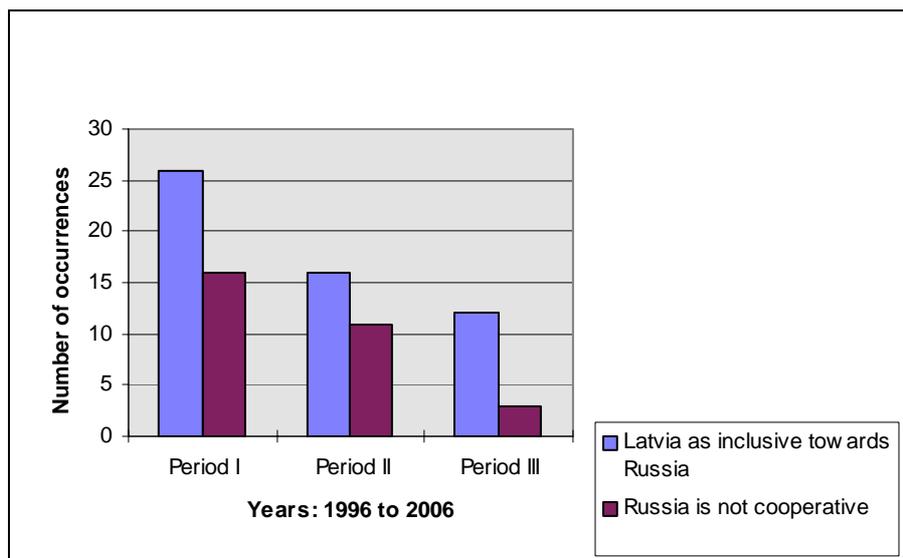
3.2.2.2. Russia is not cooperative

In order to confirm the above presented assumption, I present in figure 7 both the statements related to the Latvian “inclusiveness” towards Russia that I have just discussed and the findings related to Moscow’s lack of will to cooperate.

First, I must take note of a finding that does not show on figure 7: on four occasions, the speakers recognize some signs of good will from the part of Moscow: after the 1997 Russian proposition of guarantees (Ulmanis, 1997c), although Latvia would later reject this proposition; in 2002 after the Russian reaction to 9/11, when it joined the West in the fight

against international terrorism (Vike-Freiberga, 2002a); and after Russia renounced to oppose Latvia's NATO membership (Vike-Freiberga, 2002a & 2002c). These recognitions of Moscow's goodwill appeared during the first and second periods and no statement of the kind can be found since 2003. Moreover, they are relatively few, in comparison with the statements analyzed in this section.

Figure 7. "Latvia is ready to cooperate, but Russia is not."



Indeed, for the rest, most of the Latvian declarations of good will towards Russia that I discussed in the previous section are matched by recurrent reservations about Russia's will, or readiness, to respond to Latvian - or more generally to Western - advances. These reservations may be expressed clearly as in Berzins (1999a): "We are offering dialogue. We are in favour of mutually beneficial cooperation. At the moment, however, the Russian side appears to lack the necessary will to respond positively." They may be more allusive as in Ulmanis (1998b): "Thus I shall continue an open and honest dialogue with everyone who is open for discussion [read: not with Russia, which is not open to discussion]." The reading that I do of figure 7 is summarized in its very title: "Latvia is ready to cooperate, but Russia is not."

3.2.2.3. Conclusion

Latvia has apparently changed its policy towards Russia according to the Western "trend", but this must be attributed to the accession strategy. Latvia reproduces the Western language, but adds repeated reservations of its own on Russia's responsiveness to the Western

policy of inclusion. This amounts to a discourse – never expressly stated, but which answers the paradox stressed in this section’s introduction - of the kind: “For the sake of our accession in your organizations, we may echo your words of inclusiveness towards Russia, but we think that, as long as Russia has not changed, this policy is in vane and we do not believe in it.” I find a confirmation of this interpretation in Latvia’s politico-economic behavior. Sergounin reports the position of Russian experts who, stating that their country is more a threat because of its internal instability than by an aggressive external policy, argue in favor of multilateral cooperation and creation of inter-dependence, as “the best safeguard against any mutual mistrust or fluctuations in the political conjuncture” (Sergounin: 1998, p. 34). This point of view – which echoes Haekkerup’s definition of cooperative security mentioned above - is obviously not shared by the Latvian leadership, as Latvia, together with Estonia, had reduced, by 2003, its trade with Russia to less than 10% of the total, in order to reduce this very inter-dependence (Aalto, 2003: 577).

3.2.3. Latvia as victim of the past

I have highlighted in the two previous sections the persisting salience of Russian threat images in the political elite’s speeches. For most of the scholars this lack of trust comes from Latvia’s past relations with Russia. Knudsen, for instance, in the chapter “Lingering distrust” of his Chaillot Paper no 33 dedicated to the obstacles to cooperative security in the Baltic sea region, states as a general rule that the memory of past subjection leads small states to distrust their bigger neighbors because of the “fear that history will repeat itself” (Knudsen, 1998: 9). In order to assess the importance of its past for Latvia’s perception of Russia in the present time, I analyze below a series of statements that present this country as a victim of the Soviet occupation and of its crimes. I then discuss the explanatory power of cognitive approach to understand this self-presentation as a victim. Finally, I study another series of statements which express a need to re-evaluate this past, notably a demand that Russia recognizes its wrongs.

3.2.3.1. Latvia as victim of the Soviet Union/Russia

To highlight the persistence of the bad memories of the past, I focus in this section on statements related to the occupation of Latvia by the Soviet Union. In collecting these statements or epithets whose occurrences are presented in figure 8, I did not differentiate

between the various way of presenting this period of Latvia's history: "period of occupation", "Soviet occupation", "heavy historical heritage", "subjugation", "communist rule", "yoke of totalitarianism", "tyranny", "forced isolation", "captive nation", etc. I set apart, however, the mentions of Soviet *crimes* - including references to the more recent years of struggle for independence – as it takes some relevance in the following subsection 3.

**Figure 8. Mentions of the Soviet occupation
& of Soviet crimes against the Latvian population**

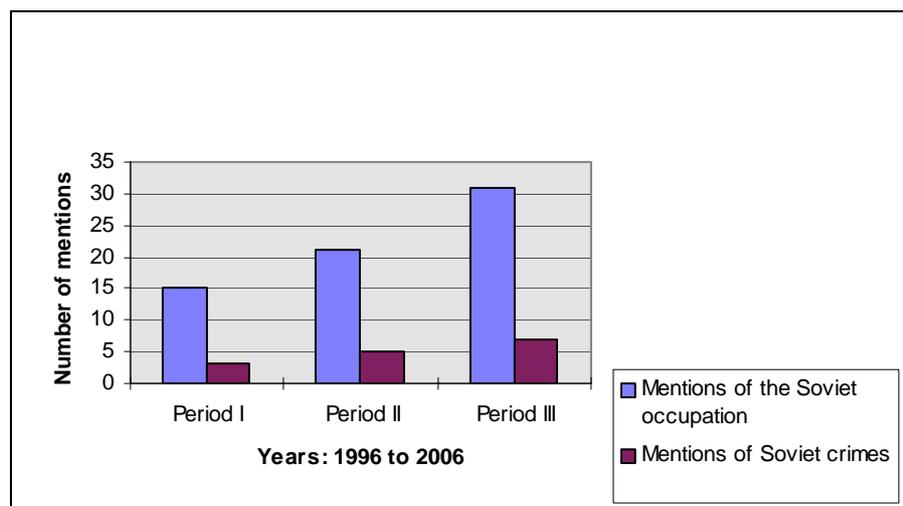


Figure 8 shows a gradual increase in the mentions of the Soviet occupation and of its crimes, which have exactly doubled between the first and the last periods. This is quite puzzling as one may expect that with the time, the memories of the past should fade away. Concerning the period of negotiation, the salience of these references to the Latvian people's suffering could be explained by the will to present the enlargement as the reparation of an historical injustice. In other words, the past could be instrumentalized in a way to reach present political goals. Vike-Freiberga (2001c), for instance, presents NATO's enlargement to the Baltic countries as "a moral, historic and strategic imperative." However, this kind of statement continues to appear during the third period, and even more insistently, at a time when the EU and NATO memberships are assured. One possible explanation for the intensification of these statements – an explanation already used in previous sections - is that once members, or even as soon as being members to be, the Latvians felt more secure to speak freely of the Soviet period of their history. However, I argue that the increasing salience of these references to Soviet occupation may constitute a good case in favor of a constructivist interpretation. Latvia's leaders perceive their country not only as a past victim of Soviet

imperialism, but as a present and potential victim of Russian imperialism too. Such interpretation may indeed explain a puzzling statement where Vike-Freiberga (2001c) labels the period that ended in 1991 as a “Soviet Russian (sic) occupation”. I discuss further the implications of such a perception in the following subsection, in the light of an approach to which several scholars in the field attribute some explanatory power, i.e. the cognitive approach.

3.2.3.2. Latvian cognitive background in relation with Soviet Union/Russia

According to cognitive approach, political leaders, in order to make decisions, not only rely on the contemporary situation, but they rely, too, on past events, and on the theories or schemes that they have designed in order to interpret these events (Noreen & al., 2004: 735; Mouritzen, 1998a: 8). Sergounin sees this psychological process at work in the present relation between the Baltic states and Russia: “For [part of the Baltic political elites and broad public] Russia will be a source of eternal threat posed by Moscow's historical inclination to expansion and imperialism [...] The Baltic States perceive Moscow's current policy as a continuation of Russian (or Soviet) imperial policy” (Sergounin, 1998: 28).

There are indeed in the speeches themselves a lot of clear references to the psychological effects of Latvian history on present political behavior, which may justify such a “cognitive” approach. In the words of Ulmanis: “The heritage of our past is not easily overcome” (1996a) or “[...] may have fostered an attitude of distrust” (1996c) or “[...] has left a lasting mark in the collective consciousness of the people of Latvia.” (1998c). Vike-Freiberga (2004b) herself recognizes it, when she states that “This decision [to join the West] was dictated in large part by my country's past history of oppression and subjugation at the hands of foreign powers.”

However, one important subjacent implication of cognitive approaches is that the decision-makers, seeing the present through the filter of the past, may assess wrongly the present situation, and thus take the wrong decisions. I want, hereafter, to challenge this implication, at least as regards Latvia's case, by resuming a discussion that I began in a recent academic paper (Capra, 2005). The Baltic countries' brutal reaction to the recent signature of an agreement between Russian and Germany on the building of a natural gas pipe-line that will not pass through Balt territories could be, indeed, interpreted by a cognitive approach.

Some Baltic leaders made a parallel with the Molotov-Ribentrop Pact (The Baltic Times, Sept 15-21 2005) and thus may be seen to apply an old scheme of thinking to an altogether different contemporary situation. However, one can also argue that Russia's move is actually a way to put an end to its dependence towards the states that could use the presence of a Russian pipeline as a mean of extortion or blackmail against their big neighbor – or just as a bargaining element in a relation of interdependence. Actually, Russia just does what Latvia did when this country reduced drastically its economical dependence on Russia, as discussed earlier. Moreover, as Russia keeps its role as supplier of energy, this leaves Latvia in a position of dependence without any bargaining power. Consequently, one may interpret the Baltic states' reaction to this German-Russian deal as motivated by a correct assessment of the contemporary situation, and the reference to the historic pact itself as being mostly a rhetoric way, with populist accents, to express a serious concern.

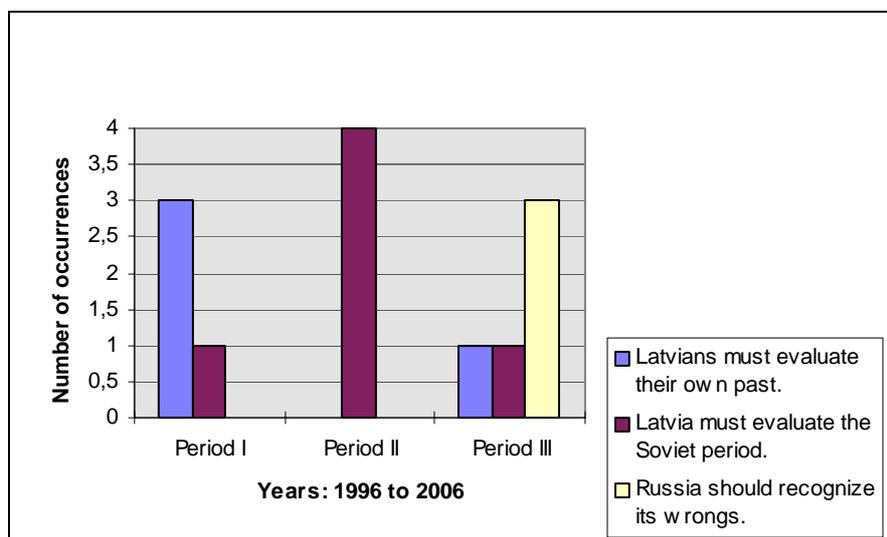
3.2.3.3. Latvia asking for an evaluation of the past

As regards the mentions of a need to reevaluate the past, I found three distinct discourses, each of them corresponding well to the three periods of reference. As shown in Figure 9, the stress, during the first period, is on the need for the different communities present on the Latvian soil to evaluate their common past, as in Ulmanis (1997c): "People in Latvia have very different memories of the past. Understanding of this diversity can also facilitate tolerance in society." This discourse must be understood in the perspective of reconciliation between the Latvian communities and belongs to the integrationist discourse that will be discussed later in this thesis.

The speeches of period II stress the need for Latvia to evaluate the occupation period. A History Commission has even been established to that effect as, "[Latvians] are determined to remember these events and to educate [their] children, so that similar atrocities and repressions never occur again on Latvian soil" (Vike-Freiberga, 2001c). As for period III, the discourse is more assertive and asks the Russians to recognize their wrongs, no differentiation being made between Russia and the Soviet Union. This demand corresponds to the highest salience in statements mentioning the Soviet crimes, as previously shown in figure 8. In 2005, for instance, Vike-Freiberga (2005a) states: "I believe it the duty of all democratic countries to urge Russia to condemn the crimes that were committed during the Soviet era in the name of communism. Russia must face up and come to honest terms with its history [...]." Discussing the question of recognition of past wrongs, Knudsen reminds us that the Russian

leadership limited itself to some tentative moves in this direction, mostly during the Gorbachev era, and stress how this kind of open wound prevents the establishment of trust between neighbors. (Knudsen, 2005, Chapter 8: 18 & endnote n° 44: 37).

Figure 9. Latvia asking for an evaluation of the past



To explain this discourse, I assume first that, during the period of membership, Latvian leaders felt freer to speak their mind. Previously, both the fear of Russian reactions and the will not to compromise their efforts to join NATO and the EU made the speeches less assertive, limiting themselves during Period I with mentions of the need for Latvian communities to evaluate their past and then only daring during Period II to name the Soviet occupation as a problem. I contend however that this discourse would not have been possible if Latvia had not undergone a change in identity. The gradual assertiveness of this discourse indeed parallels the progressive transformation of Latvia’s self-perception as a small country victim of its big neighbor that I revealed earlier. Thus, for Latvia, and because of its change in identity, as long as its big neighbor does not make amend for Soviet Union’s deeds, and proves by doing so that it does not share anymore Soviet Union’s imperialistic views, it cannot be fully trusted.

3.2.3.4. Conclusion

In conclusion, I contend that the continuing salience of statements about the Russian threat that has been revealed in the previous sections is linked to the progressive forging of a

new – or renewed - Latvian identity during the last decade. Latvia, through its political elite's discourse, presents and perceives itself more and more as a small country victim of its big Soviet/Russian neighbor's imperialism. The perception of present Russia as a threat could be explained, according to a cognitive approach, by the fact that today's Latvian leadership assesses its present environment through the filter of its country's past, notably Latvia's period of occupation by the Soviet Union. I however contend that these memories of the past would not have developed in a new identity if it had not been for a crucial factor, namely Russia's contemporary behavior. Indeed, Russia's foreign policy, from 1998 to the present time, amounts to maintaining a de facto influence in the sphere that constitute the late Soviet Union's republics. This factor has reinforced the scheme inherited from the past of a small Latvia threatened by its big neighbor until it became part of today's Latvian collective identity.

3.3. The Russian minority question

Another topic related to the Russian threat analyzed in the previous chapter is the question of the Russian-speaking populations in Latvia. In this section, in order to assess if Latvia's leaders perceived these populations as a threat through the period of reference, I analyze three series of statements related to the national integration issue, to the Latvian nationalism and to the threat itself that these populations may pose to Latvia.

3.3.1. Latvia as an integrated society

During the first two periods, the speakers stress the efforts made by Latvian authorities to integrate their minorities, as in Vike-Freiberga (1999): "Over the past years and with the help of the international community, Latvia has attached particular importance to the process of forming a fully integrated, harmonious society." Some statements, however, limit themselves to the expression of "a high degree of awareness of human and ethnic minority rights" (Ulmanis, 1996c). And most of them limit themselves to the presentation of integration as an ongoing process as in Vike-Freiberga (2001b): "And we are well on the way of integrating the non-citizen population..." I assume, indeed, that it was difficult at the time to say otherwise and contradict the contemporary critical NATO and EU assessments (see section 2.4.). On four occasions, nevertheless, the Latvian integration is presented as a model

for other regions of the world (Ulmanis, 1996c & 1998d; Berzins, 2000; Vike-Freiberga, 2000a). This corresponds to what Kuus noted for neighboring Estonia where “[b]y the late 1990s, ethnic integration had moved to center stage in governmental rhetoric and academic research alike.” (Kuus, 2002: 96).

Figure 10. Latvia as an integrated society

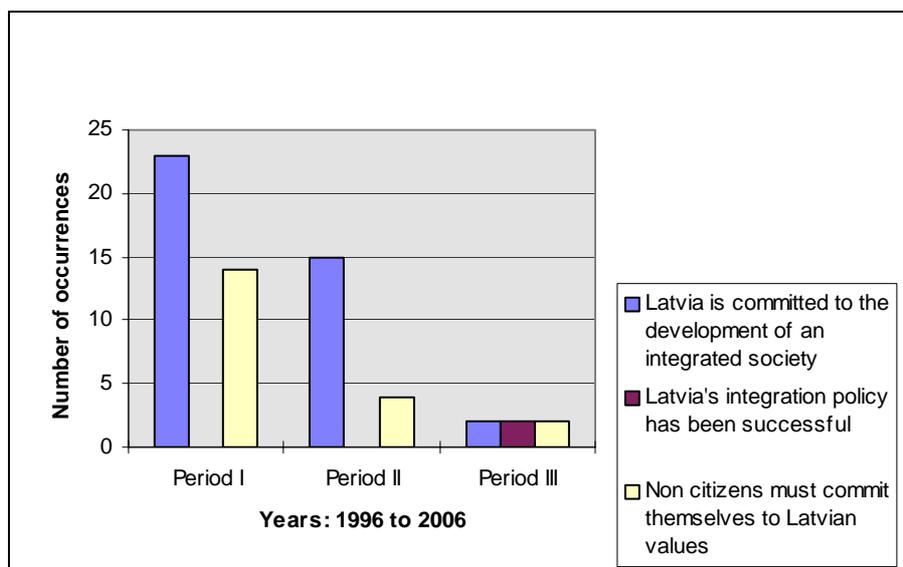


Figure 10 shows that these frequent expressions of Latvia as in the ongoing process to become an integrated and harmonious society are almost absent in the speeches of the third period. As it corresponds exactly to the period following the publication of the annual report of 2003 where the EU ceased to mention the minorities question in its review of Latvia’s progress, I contend that the Latvian leaders instrumentalized the image of Latvia as an inclusive society: once the EU and NATO were satisfied by the Latvian new legislation regarding its minorities, the emphasis on Latvia as an integrated and multicultural society was not anymore needed. Indeed, during the membership period, the integration question is hardly a topic to be mentioned. The integration policy is presented as a success (Vike-Freiberga, 2006a & 2006c). Moreover, Pabriks clearly states in its speech of 2005 that “there is no place for debate anymore.”

Vike-Freiberga (2000a) feels the need to make a crucial precision concerning the type of integration that she has in mind, namely an integration “which should not be confused with forced assimilation.” This question deserves indeed to be addressed, as in parallel to the first discourse of inclusiveness the speakers indeed stress the obligation for the applicants to

citizenship to commit themselves to the Latvians values, as shown in figure 10. The ambiguity of this position is, in my opinion, well present in a speech by Ulmanis (1996b) where he notes: “Latvia is a state where human rights is one of the uppermost values, this is a nation state of the European tradition and understanding, several cultures cohabit within our multicultural society.”, and then point out: “This is a society dominated by Latvian culture as a basic undercurrent and enabling other nationalities to express and identify themselves within a cultural tradition of another nation as well.” This speech, although in some way generous – note the “as well” at the end of the sentence - clearly establishes Latvia as a nation-state where citizens cannot escape to identify themselves with the Latvian psyche.

Other expressions of this need for a deep commitment to Latvia are, for instance, in Ulmanis (1997b): “Everyone who links his life and essence with the name of Latvia shall successfully and certainly take part in a natural consolidation process in Latvian society.” Or, stressing the need to interiorize Latvia’s history: “The history of Latvia must be alive in the mind of each individual in our country” (Ulmanis, 1998b). Elsewhere, he emphasizes the need for “[a]wareness of the shared values” as “the basis of cohesion of any society [and] the most important thing in the process of integration” (Ulmanis, 1997c). Loyalty appears, too, as a requisite for a good integration: “There is a clear political will in Latvia to consolidate inclusive society in which any loyal individual feels he or she belongs to” (Ulmanis, 1998d).

Stressing that instruction in the Latvian language is available to the members of the Russian-speaking minorities, the speeches claim repeatedly that this is “one of the most important mechanisms to integrate non-Latvians into [the Latvian] society” (Ulmanis, 1996a). This goes, however, farther than to meet the EU requirement concerning the teaching of Latvian language to the Russophones, as Ulmanis (1996c) adds on: “... this will strengthen both the emotional and the rational sense of belonging to the Latvian state, and to its destiny.” This requisite must be understood from a Baltic nationalist point of view, as the Baltic languages have been essential to the construction of the Baltic national identities (Lieven, 1994: 51; Priedite, 1999: 239) and therefore are still considered, in the renewal period, as the necessary way to citizenship. In my opinion, this amounts more to assimilation than to integration.

At the end of the third period, there are still mentions of difficulties. Vike-Freiberga (2005b) deplores the fact that a lot of Russophones do not yet master “the state language.” and

stresses the risk to societal cohesion when lacks “respect for the local language, traditions and culture”. Moreover, the same year, Pabriks, noting that, indeed, some of the Russophones were showing interest in the Latvian language, makes this blunt prognostic: “... a third of this group will choose to become Latvian citizens; a third will never join until Russia changes its attitude toward the former Soviet republic; and the remaining third, mostly older people, will fail to make any choice and eventually will pass away.” This statement confirms Sergounin’s judgment of 1998 when he argues that the limited knowledge of Baltic languages by the Russian Balts is used as “an excuse for discrimination” (Sergounin, 1998: 39).

In conclusion, it appears that the discourse of inclusion related to Latvian minorities is clearly linked to the need to convince the EU and NATO that Latvia shares the required “European” value of multiculturalism. I have however highlighted the presence of another discourse, ethnic nationalist in substance, which, actually, requires more a form of assimilation from the other national minorities – by sharing the same language, the same values, the same sense of history, than a mere integration. In addition to that, I found a clear indication that, even during the membership period, national language as a requisite may be a calculated way to limit the integration process. I therefore tend to think that there has been no change in identity as far as the question of integration is concerned and that Latvia considers itself as a nation-state and behaves as such with regards to its alien minorities.

3.3.2. Latvia’s national identity as unique and threatened.

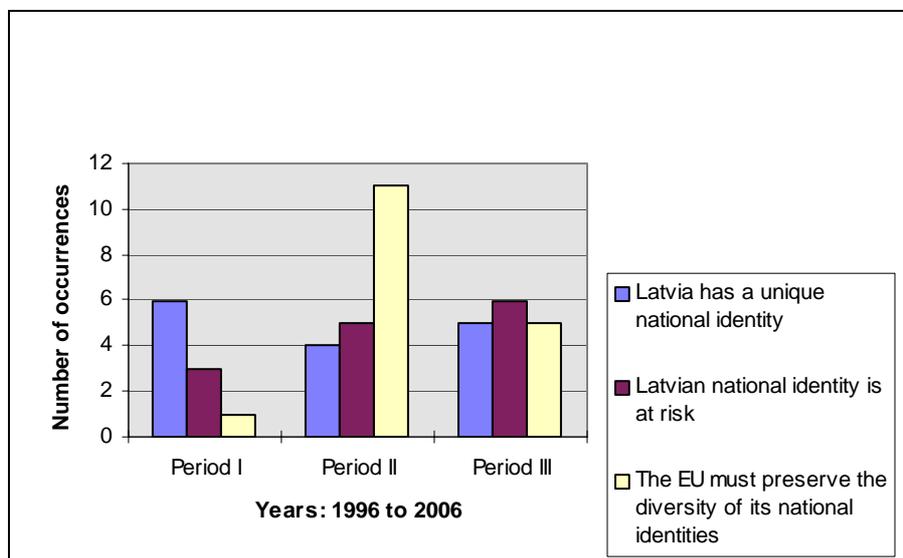
As I assumed in the previous section that Latvia’s treatment of the minorities question is influenced by an ethnic nationalist conception of the state, I look in this section for expressions of this nationalism in order to corroborate this judgment. I comment, firstly, statements related to the uniqueness of Latvia’s national identity; secondly, statements that present this national identity as threatened; and thirdly, statements expressing the specific threat that the EU integration poses to this same national identity.

3.3.2.1. The uniqueness of Latvia’s national identity.

As shown in figure 11, all along the three periods, and with the same intensity, the speeches stress the uniqueness of the Latvian national identity, a notion borrowed from, inter alia, Herder whose concept of national individuality is opposed to any form of

cosmopolitanism (Lieven, 1994: 113). Ulmanis (1998a) reminds us that “Latvians live on the Baltic Sea already for thousands of years.” Birkavs (1997) insists on the uniqueness of the Balts’ identity: “The Baltic States belong to a mixed-culture region where different influences have resulted in a unique blend that has shaped local identity”, as does Vike-Freiberga (2002c): “Culturally, our nations have unique folkloric heritages that they wish to safeguard and nurture, along with their native, spoken languages.” Ulmanis (1996b) reminds us that the nation is at the origin of the state: “However this state is our derivative, it has emerged out of our struggles, our historical memory, our spiritual power, out of the unity of our people in their national conviction.” Eventually, Kalniete (2003) expresses the Latvians’ demand “to see the nation state with its cultural uniqueness at the heart of the European Union.” Latvia has been created as a nation state, is reborn as such some fifteen years ago and remains one today. Aija Priedite, when explaining the role of this claim about the uniqueness of the Latvian culture, quotes Vike-Freiberga: "From the beginning of the National Awakening [i. e. the 1850s] until our own day, the Latvians have faced the problem of "...how to persuade the world that the Latvians really exist as a separate people, thereby explaining and justifying their striving for independence" (Priedite, 1999: 231; Lieven, 1994: 31, for Lithuania).

Figure 11. Latvia’s national identity as unique and threatened



3.3.2.2. Latvia’s national identity perceived as threatened.

In one occasion, it is argued that the integration of non-Latvians “does not imply anything adverse and does not threaten the national identity of Latvians” (Ulmanis, 1996b).

However, the expression of Latvia's national identity as threatened increases clearly in the speeches from 1996 to 2006, as shown in figure 11. The subject of the present - and sometimes past - threat may be the Soviet Union, the Russian-speaking minorities, globalization or is not specified. There are a few references to how the Latvians have been able to preserve their national identity in the adversity as in the president's speech of 2002: "Latvians succeeded in maintaining their national identity, despite a concerted effort by Moscow to russify the population" (Vike-Freiberga, 2002c). Some statements concern the need to consolidate "[their] national self-awareness" (Ulmanis, 1997a) or "[their] identities as nations" (Vike-Freiberga, 2002b); Berzins (2000) mentions the need to "support [...] Latvian culture and the state language". Some statements put the question in the perspective of the accession as in Kalniete (2003): "Let me start by a rather direct but, to my mind, very true statement: for my people, the only way to safeguard the Latvian identity, language, culture and independence is to be in European Union." The following year, he mentions an aspect of globalization as a subject of threat: "The spread of mass culture impoverishes genuine cultural values and threatens traditional identity" (Kalniete, 2004).

3.3.2.3. Latvia's national identity in the EU.

Dramatically during the negotiation period, but still during period III, the speeches insist on the fact that the EU does actually preserve its members' national identity. A good example is this statement by Vike-Freiberga (2004b): "The EU has always viewed the diversity of its constituent nations as a strength, while promoting an overarching sense of unity based on shared values." I interpret these repeated statements as a means first to assure both the Latvian population and its leaders themselves that their national identity is not at risk when integrating the EU and, second, the speech being then addressed to the European leadership, to demand that this European policy does not change in the case of the pending enlargement. Other statements, indeed, imply more directly the existence of such a risk as these argumentative words of Vike-Freiberga (2002c): "While this diversity may present challenges to consensus-building, it is a resource that must be nurtured and cherished."

3.3.2.4. Conclusion

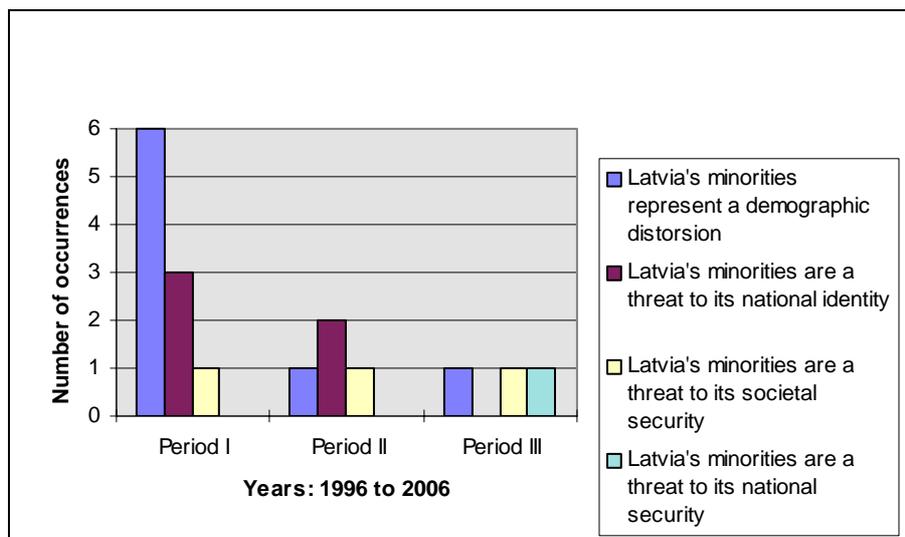
The findings presented above show that Latvia does still perceives itself as a nation state whose national identity is increasingly at risk, which may explain the reservations

discussed previously concerning the integration of populations belonging to other nations, in particular the Russian minority present on Latvian soil. This, indeed, parallels Kuus’ judgment about Estonia as she notes that the identity and sovereignty of this country, in spite of the Russian troop withdrawal and of its dual membership, “are still represented as on the verge of demise.” Besides, she adds that Estonia’s Russophone population is presented as “a principal source of threat to the Estonian identity.” In the following section, I investigate if Kuus’ assessment is valid too for Latvia.

3.3.3. The Russian-speaking minorities as a threat.

In this section, I analyze three series of statements that convey the idea that the Russian-speaking minorities pose a threat, first to Latvia’s *national identity*, second to Latvia’s *national security* and third to Latvia’s *societal security*.

Figure 12. Latvia’s minorities as a threat



3.3.3.1. The Russian-speaking minorities as a threat to Latvia’s national identity.

Although I mentioned above one statement denying that threat (Ulmanis, 1996b), there are repeated occurrences of a Russian-speaking population threat to Latvia’s national identity in the speeches. I distinguish, in figure 12, two kinds of statements, both expressing this threat, namely statements stressing clearly this threat and statements mentioning the “demographic distortion” caused by the presence of these Russian-speaking populations. In

the following quote from a speech by Ulmanis (1998d), both statements appear: “In the Soviet times a distorted demographic situation was developed in our state, since the Soviet ideology supported a mass-scale influx of people into Latvia from other places. This ideology was aimed at erasing our national identity and culture. Latvians almost became a minority in their own land.” The graph shows clearly that the salience of this kind of statement, very high during the first period, decreases dramatically – albeit not completely - during the period of negotiation. Lieven, giving precise data about Latvia’s population in 1994, i.e. Latvians, 57,7% and Russians: 29,7%, suggests that this threat may have been instrumentalized: “The apocalyptic fear of Latvians radicals, too often swallowed by Western observers, concerning the threat of national extinction, are by now wholly unreal” (Lieven, 1994: xxx). I contend here that this threat has been instrumentalized too, during the period of negotiation, albeit in an opposite way, i.e. that it has been downplayed by the Latvian leaders in order not to hamper their country’s international integration.

3.3.3.2. The Russian-speaking minorities as a threat to Latvia’s national security.

There is one clear and rather blunt reference – the first of this kind - to the Russian-speaking populations as a threat to Latvia’s national security in a speech of the third period. Pabriks (2005) states: “Since 1993, Russia has decided it can use this population for its own political interests. The Russian-language media in Moscow and St. Petersburg, which are largely state controlled, negatively influence the mindset of Russians living in Latvia.” According to Ozolina, this threat is the most important of the three threats analyzed here: “[The minority issue] is not so much a matter of social guarantees and preservation of national identity as it is a political issue and means for implementing Russian foreign policy goals in Latvia” (Ozolina, 1998: 135). To find this very threat image in a speech of the end of the third period may come from the fact that this kind of statement can not anymore hamper the accessions negotiations. It may be due, too, to the fact that Latvia feels free, from now on, to speak of threats related to Russia in this assertive way that I mentioned earlier in this thesis. But this constitutes, in my opinion, a strong evidence that suggests the strengthening of Latvia’s collective identity as exclusive towards its alien populations.

3.3.3.3. The Russian-speaking minorities as a threat to Latvia's societal security.

A third kind of threat related to Latvia's minorities that can be found in the speeches is what Birkavs (1998) calls "societal security": "The majority of Soviet era immigrants have not learned the Latvian language and have failed to integrate themselves into the society. This has been a major challenge for Latvia in the sense of societal security". Vike-Freiberga (1999) speaks of a "heavy social [...] legacy" or, later on, in a statement already quoted (2005b), she stresses the difficulty to "build a society" with people that do not share the Latvian values. I contend that this kind of threat image, equally distributed in the three periods, is equivalent to a threat to national security, because of the vulnerability that it implies to external pressures, in particular Russia's, as I already discussed it in the section related to Latvia's domestic socio-economic challenges.

3.3.3.4. Conclusion

The references to the ethnic Russian minorities as a threat to Latvia's national identity decrease indeed dramatically during the period of negotiation and are, albeit not completely, absent in the third period. This may be surprising as Latvia's national identity itself is presented increasingly at risk during the period. I explain this anomaly by the need to present a more inclusive language to the West during the second period, and I thus contend that this specific threat has been downplayed, but not completely erased, for the accession strategy's sake. However, the continuing salience of such a threat in the membership period and, more, the presence of statements expressing that these minorities pose a threat to Latvia's national (or societal) security indicates that the Latvian elite, in contradiction with the inclusive discourse previously presented, have not desecuritized their ethnic Russian population.

3.3.4. Conclusion

The analysis performed in this section shows that the Russian-speaking minorities are still perceived as a threat to Latvia's identity and national security. I interpret both the salient integrationist discourse and the downplaying of the threat presented to Latvia's identity by its alien populations as belonging to a discourse that instrumentalized these two issues to suit Latvia's accession strategy. I link the securitization of these populations and the consequent Latvian policy towards them to the progressive building of a new – or renewed – national

identity: Latvia's leaders perceive their country as an ethnic nation-state whose unique identity is increasingly at risk. Moreover, I show that the ethnic Russians are perceived as a threat not only to Latvia's identity but to its societal and national security for the very same reason, i.e. because they belong to an alien nation. This parallels Kuus' findings concerning Estonia, and corresponds well to what she identifies as a "civilizational narrative" according to which "[e]thnic integration [...] becomes a potential threat to Estonia as it would increase the role of Russia-friendly individuals in Estonian society" (Kuus, 2002: 97).

I have presented above some findings concerning the fears that are linked to the EU integration process. I will come back later to this issue, as I think that a more thorough analysis of the threat which the EU represents to Latvia may corroborate my interpretation of the findings concerning Russia and the Russian-speaking population. Before that, I dedicate the following chapter to a review of these findings in order to verify this thesis' hypotheses.

4. REVIEW OF THE FINDINGS

In this chapter, I first review the findings presented in the previous chapter, contending that they imply the presence of two opposite discourses in the corpus of speeches analyzed. I then discuss these findings in order to verify the two hypotheses stated in the first pages of this thesis.

4.1. Review of the findings: two opposite discourses

4.1.1. The inclusive discourse

The first discourse espouses the new Western perspective on security as Latvia has adopted the broad security agenda, securitizing a number of new issues. There are repeated signs that Latvia appreciates its relations with Russia in more positive terms, stressing, at the end of the period that it no longer belongs to the Russian sphere of influence. Moreover, Latvia uses the same language of inclusiveness towards Russia as both NATO and the EU. As regards the question of integration of its Russian-speaking minorities, Latvia promotes an inclusive perspective with the declared objective to build a multicultural society where these minorities could keep their language and culture. Moreover, the threat that these populations may pose to Latvia's *identity* decreases progressively during the period of reference.

While this discourse corresponds well to Aalto's "desecuritizing" discourse (see section 2.1.), the findings, however, reveal the presence in the speeches of a second discourse that shows a lingering distrust of Russia and its Russian-speaking populations, and that corresponds also well to one of the other discourses revealed by Alto's study, namely the exclusionist discourse.

4.1.2 The exclusionist discourse

The old signs of a Russian threat reappear during the period of membership even more clearly than before together with new statements warning the EU and its members not to play a game with Russia from which Latvia would be excluded. The concern about the Russian sphere of influence, vivid during the period of negotiation, is now voiced in relation with the

other Russian neighbors, which implies indeed that Latvia has succeeded with its alliance policy but, at the same time, that Russia has not abandoned its imperialistic worldview. As for Latvia's policy of inclusiveness towards Russia, in addition to its decreasing salience with the time, I noted that these inclusive statements were matched by statements about Moscow's lack of will to really cooperate. Moreover, I interpreted the clearly voiced will to help Russia's other neighbors to integrate the West as an evidence of a lingering distrust of Moscow, as the finality of such an integration policy would be to weaken Russia even more. I interpreted as a sign of distrust too the findings related to the memory of the past, i.e. both the increasing salience of references to the Soviet occupation and to its crimes and the assertive Latvian demand that Russia recognizes its responsibility in these deeds. As for the downplaying, in the years following the 1998 Latvian-Russian crisis, of the challenges presented by the domestic socio-economic situation, I explained it by the concern among the Latvian leaders not to present their country as vulnerable to potential Russian pressures.

Concerning the question of the minorities, I found that, in parallel to an inclusive discourse of Western tone, there is in the speeches another discourse, based on an ethnic-nationalist conception of the state, that asks more for assimilation than integration from the part of the Russian-speaking populations and that justifies the instrumentalization of the language laws to limit these minorities' access to citizenship. Moreover, I noted that during the third period these populations were still presented as posing a threat to Latvia's security.

4.2. Verification of the hypotheses

4.2.1. Verification of hypothesis 1: socialization and instrumentalization

I explain the adoption of a broad security agenda by the phenomenon of socialization. Latvia does not content itself to speak the Western language but indeed participates in the international efforts towards soft security, be it through NATO, the EU or, at least formally, through the regional institutions of cooperation. The same may be told of its policy towards its minorities, where Latvia, under external pressure and guidance, has passed naturalization laws that, eventually, satisfied the Western observers. However, the Latvian leadership has instrumentalized a number of issues, presenting an image of Latvia that suited its accession strategy:

- I interpreted the quasi absence of references, from 1998 to 2004, to domestic socio-economic challenges to the will both not to present Latvia as a country too difficult to invite in the European club and not to be seen as vulnerable to Russian pressures in a time of crisis. Moreover, this issue regained its salience during the period of membership, as Latvia was now in a position to be eligible to the EU funding programs.
- I showed that the Russian threat itself had been apparently downplayed for the duration of the negotiation period – in an apparent imitation of the Western new security approach. As this period of negotiation correspond broadly to the aftermath of the Latvia-Russia crisis of 1998, I assumed that the accession strategy forbade the Latvian leaders to express their fear of Russia as they would have in other circumstances. During this period, indeed, this threat was actually replaced by or limited to salient references to Russia's opposition to Latvia's accession to NATO – which, for my part, I however interpreted as evidence of a continuing distrust of Russia - and the leaders contented themselves with ceasing to highlight the good quality of the Latvian-Russian relations. However, once assured of their future accession, these leaders voiced the Russian threat with a new assertiveness in contradiction with what should be expected from a socialized state.
- As for the Latvian willingness to cooperate with Russia, which is a fundamental aspect of NATO and EU policies towards Russia, and, as such, should have been increasingly voiced by a socialized Latvia, I demonstrated its decreasing salience through the whole period of reference, even noting that, during the last speeches of period III, Russia is not mentioned anymore as an object of inclusiveness, having been completely replaced by its other neighbors on this respect.
- Concerning the minorities' issue, I demonstrated how the image of Latvia as an ongoing integrated and harmonious society disappeared suddenly from the speeches at the end of the negotiation period, once the Western observer were satisfied with Latvia's progress in the matter. Moreover, the salience of the threat linked to the Russian-speaking populations decreased dramatically during the second period, as, I contend, it would have been counterproductive to the Latvian accession project to do

otherwise, but, contrarily to what should be expected from a socialized Latvia, these populations are still presented as a threat during the membership period, with a new assertiveness and the first clear mention in the whole period of reference that they pose a threat to Latvia's national security.

I thus argue that the Latvian discourse of inclusiveness, both in domestic and international affairs, is better explained by a process of socialization but limited to Howard's first three steps – learning a language, using it in practice, institutionalization - than by a change in identity. This, in my opinion, leaves room for numerous issues to be instrumentalized, as shown above. I argue indeed that Latvia's leaders presented to EU/NATO members a mirrored image of themselves in order to convince them that Latvia was fulfilling the conditions set for membership. This necessity for the leadership to convince the West is presented as a “pedagogical mission” by the Latvian State Secretary interviewed by Knudsen (Knudsen, 2005: Chapter 7: 35). Herman, writing about changes in Soviet foreign policy, speaks of “tactical adjustment” that are motivated by internal or external constraints and not the result of a change in the perception of their interests, itself caused by a change in identity (Herman, 1996: 273). I argue here that the inclusive statements by the Latvian leadership revealed by this thesis qualify indeed as discursive “tactical adjustment” of the kind described by Herman. In other words, a process of instrumentalization is here at work.

4.2.2. Verification of hypothesis 2: Latvia's true identity

I therefore contend that Latvia has not experienced the change in identity that would have made this country “more European” – this last step in Howard's presentation of the socialization process, as it has been the case for Estonia, according to constructionist previous studies. I do not however challenge here the link that constructivists presuppose between identity formation and changes in threat perception. On the contrary, I argue that the threat images related to Russia and to the Russian-speaking minorities revealed in the exclusionist discourse can be explained by the progressive strengthening of Latvia's self-perception as a small country vulnerable to its big neighbor's expansionist views and as an ethnic nation-state. I thus agree with Kuus when she notes that the identity discourse was one among others at the beginning of the 90s and that it took progressive salience through discursive practices during the last decade (Kuus, 2002: 102). Indeed, I contend that while this identity formation was not given during the first half of the 90s – a period characterized by a lessening of the

tensions in the region, Russia's political behavior, from the 1988 crisis until today, has been crucial in setting the bad memories inherited from the past at the core of the new Latvian identity.

4.2.3. Prevalence of the exclusionary discourse on Latvia's political behavior

In its article on EU integration: "The politic of inclusion: The Case of the Baltic States", Wennersten discusses cases where language may not be followed by action because of a competition between several linguistic practices, and thus advise us to weigh language against action (Wennersten, 1999: 275). I follow this advice and, in addition to threat images, identity, and political agenda, I introduce another variable, *political behavior*, in order to confirm the assumptions presented above. I argue, indeed, that all the important decisions related to the country's security have been dictated by the worldview present in the second discourse and not by the inclusive character of the first "Western" one.

When faced by choices in foreign relations, Latvia follows a balance of power policy. Its very choice to join NATO and not to be neutral, its refusal of bilateral Russian guarantees in 1997, its distrust of security solutions at the regional level together with the clearly expressed need of USA's presence in the Baltic Sea region, and, finally, its support to its neighbors against Russia interferences, all these political decisions or positions, which the scope of this work does not allow me to develop, indicate the prevalence of the second discourse when it comes to behavior. Even the decision to reduce trade relations with Russia to less than 8% of Latvia's total trade in response to the 1998 Russian economic sanctions (Berzins, 1999a) – a decision that amounts to refuse inter-dependence with Russia - pleads in favor of the predominance of the exclusionist discourse over the inclusive one. As for the minorities issue, I contend that Latvia follows an exclusionist policy too, having adopted a minimalist integration policy and this, only under the international community's pressures.

Besides, this second exclusionist discourse is less salient than the first inclusive one. Indeed, to reveal its salience, I had to perform a diachronic discourse analysis that bears on the variance of statements all along the period of reference, while the first discourse presents itself as more obvious. The above discussion leads thus to a paradox: Latvia's political behavior seems to be determined by the less salient of the two opposite discourses, i.e. by the exclusionist one. To explain this paradox, I argue that political behavior is dictated by the

perception of threats linked to an “authentic” identity (Latvia as a vulnerable ethnic nation-state) and not by the “framing” of threats linked to an “instrumentalized” identity (Latvia as a European inclusive state).

4.2.4. Two opposite discourses and interim consequentiality

I argued, in the above discussion, that there are two co-existing opposite discourses within the Latvian elite’s speeches of the period. This demands some more clarification. I have already noted that these two discourses correspond exactly to the first two discourses that Aalto’s research reveals in the Estonian case. Aalto, stressing the advantage of his methodology, claims that the variety of discourses which his study reveals “may remain hidden by simply looking at publicly available sources from a given theoretical angle, as is often done, for example, in discourse-analytic research.” (Aalto, 2003: 588). I think that I have just proven in this thesis that by looking at elite’s speeches only and by conducting a simple discourse analysis - i.e. without resorting to questionnaires targeting a larger public - I have been able to reveal the presence of two of the four discourses revealed in Aalto’s work.

Moreover, one important difference has to be explained: while Aalto’s discourses emanate from different groups within the Estonian elite, the two discourses that have been revealed by my analysis emanate from the same community, i.e. the top Latvian leadership. In his introduction to “Regions of Power vs. Regions of Identity: Cooperative Security in the European North”, Knudsen, in order to understand the policies at the Baltic Sea region’s level where cooperative discourses often are not matched by action, makes use of the concept of “interim inconsequentiality”. According to this concept, during periods (hence “interim”) where threats or aggressive attitudes are absent, governments may issue statements that are not followed by the action that they imply (hence “inconsequentiality”). It comes from the fact that, as governments’ actions are determined both by their own intentions and goals and by their reactions to other government’s actions, “it allows the conduct of several political games at the same time in which it is not clear what the stakes are” (Knudsen, 2005: Introduction: 10). Applying this concept to the Latvian case, I contend that my period of reference corresponds largely to such an “interim” period where “inconsequential” statements may be made – those constituting the “first” inclusive discourse - in response to the EU and NATO’s demands, but without real effect on the political behavior. Moreover, as a counter-example that confirms such contention, I showed that in the period of crisis that followed the

1998 events the statements became more “consequential” as the first inclusive discourse towards Russia was less salient, even at a time - the negotiation period - when it should have been dominant.

4.3 Conclusion

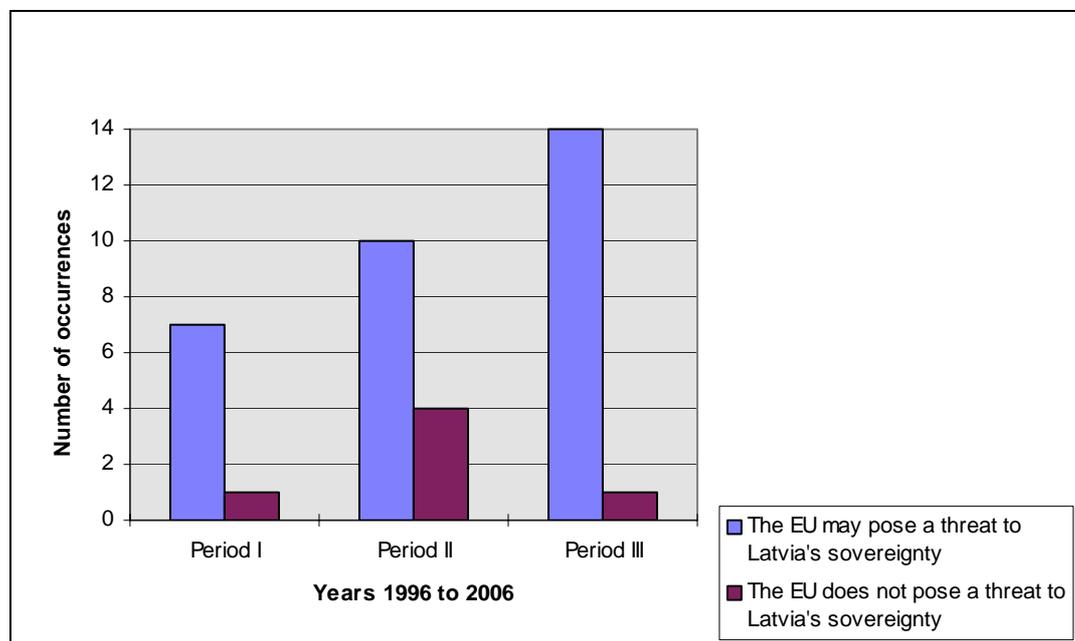
I therefore contend that this thesis’ hypotheses are verified. I first explained most of the findings related to the inclusive discourse by the concept of socialization but short of a change in identity, the Latvian leadership having instrumentalized the security issues and their country’s national identity in order to fit the accession strategy. Second, I showed that Latvia had undergone under the whole period a strengthening of its identity as a small country vulnerable to Russia’s pressures, and based on an ethnic conception of the nation. I supported this argument by showing how only the exclusionist discourse, based on Latvia’s true identity, may explain its political behavior on issues related to its security. Finally, I showed that the concept of “interim inconsequentiality” can be applied to the Latvian case in order to explain the simultaneous presence of two opposite discourses in the speeches analyzed.

5. THE EU THREATS TO LATVIA

I seek in this chapter a confirmation of my thesis through an analysis of a series of statements related to the threats linked to Latvia's integration into the European Union. Kuus argues that such an enterprise, at least in the Estonian case, is in vane. Criticizing previous studies on Estonian identity that are based on the analysis of the leadership's speeches, or, to quote her words, "utterances by a few high-ranking state officials", Kuus claims that these studies "glide over the negative images of the EU and thus fail to explain the ambivalence about the EU that is apparent in policy debates and opinion polls." She therefore advocates an analysis of a broader spectrum of discourses, including the academia and the media (Kuus, 2002: 92). I contend that these remarks by Kuus do not apply to the Latvian case, as I show that the exclusionary discourse is indeed present when it comes to the relations between Latvia and the EU.

5.1. EU threat to Latvia's sovereignty

Figure 13. The EU as a threat to Latvia's sovereignty



As shown in figure 13, the message concerning the threat that the European Union poses to Latvia's sovereignty seems to be mixed. There are indeed, but mostly during the negotiation period, statements that the EU does not represent a threat to Latvia's sovereignty as in Kalniete (2003): "This is [...] a place where the small nations play on equal grounds

with the bigger ones.” To explain this series of statements, I follow the same line of argumentation used in the section related to the EU threat to Latvia’s national identity. The repetitive negation of this threat until 2004 could, indeed, be due to the fact that, although the speeches selected are primarily addressed to a foreign audience, they have an echo in Latvia itself and may target the broad public, partly distrustful of the EU integration, in the years prior to the accession referendum. There is even a few statements which present some degree of federalism as acceptable, and this for a greater good, as in Vike-Freiberga (2002d): “As a relatively small country, Latvia is prepared to relinquish certain aspects of its sovereignty to common European structures within the framework of the EU, in exchange for the opportunity to take part in decisions that it would otherwise have little means of influencing.”

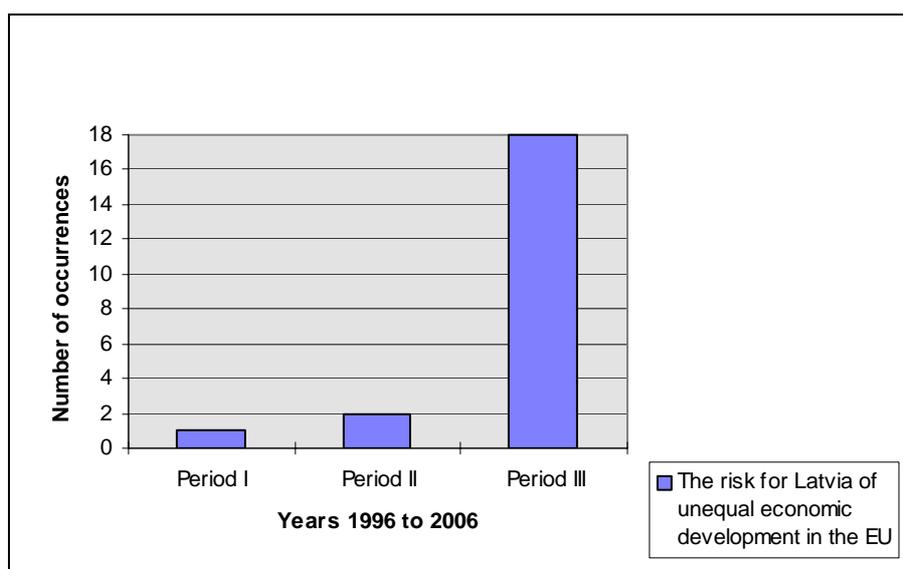
However, most of the statements intimate increasingly over the whole period that the integration in the EU does pose a threat to Latvia’s sovereignty. Most of the speeches identify Latvia as a small nation versus the large Western European nations. In a statement about the concept of a nucleus of Europe, Ulmanis (1996c) expresses his concern that “smaller nations seem to be allocated a peripheral, marginal, or satellite role.” The speakers demand that small Latvia be treated on an equal footing as in Vike-Freiberga (2003b): “The European Union that Latvia wishes to join is a Union of sovereign nations that enjoy equal rights, including the right to express their opinion. This right should apply equally to all of the Union’s member states: large and small, old and new.” This need for equality of treatment is, according to Grabbe, even stronger than “the hope for money from Brussels” (Grabbe, 2003: 69). In the perspective of the Convention on the Future of Europe, it leads the speakers to demand that “the long established practice of arriving at decisions by consensus” be not abandoned (Vike-Freiberga, 2003b) or that each member state be attributed a commissioner (Kalniete, 2003). In the same speech, Kalniete expresses the concern that the institution of a presidency of the European Union could “undermine the principle of equality between the Member States”. Several statements condemn the possible move towards “a federal super-state” (Birkavs, 1997) or “the creation of a monolithic, European super-state” (Vike-Freiberga, 2002b).

The peak of salience (not discernible in figure 13) correspond to the period when the Nice Summit (7-10 December 2000) and then the Convention (28 February 2002 to 10 July 2003) and the following Intergovernmental Conference (04 October 2003 to 18 June 2004) were working to the necessary reform of the EU institutions and of its functioning due to the enlargement to 25 member states. The concern voiced by the above presented statements is

that more federal traits than acceptable by Latvia could be added to the overall functioning of the EU. However, this concern is still present after the end of the IGC. I link this “sovereignty narrative” – to borrow Kuus’ terms – to the exclusionary discourse revealed previously in this thesis and to the strengthening of Latvia’s identity as a small country victim of large neighbors through its entire history. It seems here that, in the frame time of one decade, Latvia has added to a Russian threat to its sovereignty the same kind of threat, this time emanating from the very community this country is entering. In the following section, I intend to show that the same pattern of victimization is valid where economic development is at stake.

5.2. The risk of uneven economic development in the EU

Figure 14. The risk for Latvia of unequal economic development in the EU



There are in the speeches, mostly during the membership period as shown in figure 14, numerous expressions of concern related to “an uneven economic development” (Vike-Freiberga, 2003b) in the EU that could be unfavorable to Latvia as a new, small, peripheral and “the least prosperous of the EU member states” (Vike-Freiberga, 2005a). The speeches mention the threat of a “two-tiered Europe” (Vike-Freiberga: 2000b) or of “a ‘two-speed’ Europe [that] means the abandonment of the weak countries so that the strong countries can go ahead” (Kalniete, 2004). There are mentions of “unfairness”, as in Vike-Freiberga (2005c) when, speaking of the tax harmonization question, she states: “... I don’t believe that it would

be fair to deprive the new member states of an important stimulus for promoting their economic growth” or, when, in the context of the allocation of cohesion funds, she states (2005a): “At a time when we are earnestly striving to attain the same standard of living as the more developed EU member countries, such ceilings place my country at an unfair disadvantage.” The concern about economic “disparities” is often stressed, together with the notion of “growing regional polarisation in the European Union along with the concentration of low value-added activities in the peripheral areas of the European Union” (Kalniete, 2003).

The threatening image of a “two-speed” Europe, directed to foreign decision-makers in the audience, aims clearly to insure that Latvia receives cohesion funds of the kind that Spain or Greece obtained after entering the EU or be not deprived of its competitive level of taxation within this organization. However, I contend that the presentation of Latvia as a potential victim of EU, this time on the economic ground, is linked to the exclusionary discourse too. This concern amounts indeed to a fear to be somehow excluded from the core of the community that this country is joining and, in my opinion, to the risk that Latvia be, at the end, rendered vulnerable again to the very Russian pressures that it aimed to lessen by integrating the EU.

5.3. Discussion

The above presented statements related to the fear that the EU may become a federalist super-state allowing for a two-speed economic development are addressed firstly to the European decision-makers. They are not part of an anti-EU discourse, which is to be expected, as they come from a leadership leading the EU integration process, but rather aim to influence the development of the organization that Latvia is joining in a direction suitable to its interests. This explains, undoubtedly, the absence in these speeches of the reasoning revealed by Kuus about a specific threat that the EU integration poses to Latvia (see section 2.1.). According to Kuus, indeed, the EU’s demand that Latvia fully integrates its alien minorities as a condition for accession is perceived as a threat both to Latvian ethnic identity and to its sovereignty, as these population are perceived as Russian-friendly. This amounts to a paradox, as the main objective of such an integration is based on the idea that Latvia belongs to the Western civilization and that it seeks to ward off the Russian threat through this very accession (Kuus, 2002: 103). I have, indeed, revealed in a previous section a series of

statements expressing the threat that the EU may present to Latvia's identity but I did not find any statement echoing the paradox above mentioned, which is understandable as, I assume, this paradox belongs to an anti-EU rhetoric. This comforts, indeed, Kuus' contention that an analysis of the governmental discourse alone does not reveal the whole spectrum of threat perceptions as far as the EU is concerned. However, I contend that my research reveals more than Kuus would expect from an elite discourse analysis on the perception of such EU threats. Indeed, I have shown in the above sections the presence of statements that stress the threat to Latvia's sovereignty that could present the EU integration. This corresponds quite well to Kuus' sovereignty narrative that "distinguishes [Estonia's identity] from the West and fuses it with the Estonian state" and makes the EU integration problematic "because it undermines the undivided sovereignty of the nation-state" (Kuus, 2002: 100). As for the statements related to the leaders' fear that Latvia could be excluded from the Western economic development, I contend that they echo Kuus' "civilizational narrative", which "merges the Estonian identity into the West": excluded from the core of the EU, Latvia would not be considered the fully European country that it claims to be, with all the risks that it entails.

5.4. Conclusion

In conclusion, I contend that the Latvian leadership's perception of EU as a threat to the identity, the sovereignty and the economic well-being of their country is determined by the same exclusionist discourse that has been revealed when analyzing the statements related to Russia and to Latvia's Russian-speaking populations. These findings suggest that Latvia's self-perception as a small nation-state victim of its big neighbor – this very perception that voices the exclusionist discourse - is now at work today among Latvian elites, this time with the EU as the subject of the threat.

6. CONCLUSION

The reason why certain threat images kept, took on, or lost political salience in Latvia during the pre- and post-accession period is three-fold. First, socializing Latvia adopted the broad security agenda of the communities that it was joining. Second, due to the strengthening of its national identity as a small ethnic nation victim of its big neighbor, linked itself to Russia's behavior during the period of reference, Latvia kept relatively high in its agenda the Russian threat and the threat related to its ethnic Russian minority. Third, and for the same identity reason, Latvia added more recently some new threats related to the EU integration. In relative terms, indeed, the "old threats" did lose their salience, but they are still here and, more important, they prevail in the decision-making process related to Latvia's national security issues.

Concerning the resolution of the security dilemma and the prospect of the establishment of a cooperative security community in Northern Europe, I show in this thesis that the mutual distrust still lingers and explains, for instance, the repeated decisions made by both parties to reject economic related interdependence. From a Latvian point of view, Russia's behavior is the key. However, by challenging Russia to recognize Soviet occupation crimes, Latvia sets its standards very high, if one considers the chances that Russia complies one day with this demand. Moreover, Russia's new role as an assertive energy power – as testifies the recent crisis with Ukraine, its increasingly authoritarian rule in domestic affairs since president Putin began, in 2001, to enforce his policy of restoration of the state power and its continuing policy of interference in its Western neighbor's affairs – as in Georgia, at the time of writing – should strengthen even more Latvia's self-perception as a small country vulnerable to its big neighbor's pressures and thus give more ground to the exclusionary discourse.

This research on Latvia parallels Kuus findings as regards the prevalence of an identity discourse in neighboring Estonia while it contradicts Aalto's thesis, as the Latvian exclusionary discourse is not seen here as losing ground to a more inclusive one, but rather as a renewed identity discourse fueled by Russia's contemporary behavior. I reach, too, different conclusions than Noreen and Sjöstedt did, as I contend that Latvia's socializing process does not entail the change in identity that they suggest for Estonia. These later divergences may

come, from the fact, as suggested in section 2.1., that we performed different types of discourse analysis. I cannot exclude, however, that Latvia and Estonia may have experienced a divergent evolution during the last fifteen years as regards the link between identity and security. Their respective bi-lateral relations with Russia could explain these divergences and, indeed, I showed how the Latvian-Russian crisis of 1998 has been crucial in the strengthening of the Latvian exclusionary discourse. Moreover, Estonia has voiced more strongly than the two other Baltic states its European - and more specifically its Nordic - identity. Its geographical and cultural proximity with Finland may indeed have led Estonia to experience a more genuine process of socialization than, according to this thesis, did Latvia. To assess which of these reasons explains the best our divergent conclusions as regards the linkage security/identity in Estonia and Latvia, further study could thus entail performing the same kind of analysis used in this work, but on the Estonian corpus of speeches that Noreen and Sjöstedt used for their research.

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APPENDIX: list of the speeches analysed presented by period

All the speeches analysed are available at: <http://www.am.gov.lv/en/news/speeches/>

Period I:

- 26/03/1996: An Address by the President of the Republic of Latvia Guntis Ulmanis to the European Political Research Centre, 26 March 1996.
- 03/05/1996: "Latvia - Part of the European Strategic Area" - Address by Guntis Ulmanis, State President of Latvia, at the reception for Ambassadors, 3 May 1996.
- 24/09/1996: Address by Prime Minister Andris Skele at the 51st Session of the UN General Assembly, New York, 24 September 1996.
- 12/11/1996: "A Time for Latvia - A Time for Europe?" - Address by H.E. Guntis Ulmanis, the President of Latvia at the Royal Institute for International Affairs, Chatham House, 12 November 1996.
- 07/12/1996: "NATO and the Baltic States: Quo Vadis?" - Address by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Valdis Birkavs, at the Konrad Adenauer Foundation and Latvian Institute of International Affairs III International Conference, Riga, December 7, 1996.
- 10/03/1997: "The Priorities of Latvia's Foreign Policy" - Lecture by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Valdis Birkavs, at the University of London, School of Slavonic and East European Studies (SSEES), March 10, 1997.
- 03/05/1997: Address by H.E. Guntis Ulmanis, President of Latvia, "The Optimism of the European Policy" at the Reception for Ambassadors accredited to Latvia, Riga Castle 3rd May 1997.
- 06/09/1997: Address by H.E. Guntis Ulmanis, President of Latvia, "United in Differences - United for Europe", Vilnius, 5-6 September 1997.
- 05/11/1997: "Latvia and Regional Security" - H.E. Mr. Guntars Krasts, Prime Minister of the Republic of Latvia, at FAFO Institute of Applied Social Science, Oslo, 5 November 1997.
- 25/11/1997: "Modern Latvia in the New Europe" - Address by the President of the Republic of Latvia, Mr.Guntis Ulmanis, to the Swedish Foreign Policy Institute, Stockholm, 25 November 1997.
- 14/01/1998: "Baltic Security - The President's Perspective" - Address by the President of the Republic of Latvia, Mr.Guntis Ulmanis, to the Carnegie Endowment, Washington, 14 January 1998.
- 27/01/1998: Address by the President of the Republic of Latvia, Mr.Guntis Ulmanis, at the Reception [for Ambassadors accredited to Latvia], Riga Castle, 27 January 1998.
- 29/04/1998: "Integration of Latvia into Europe" - Address by the President of the Republic of Latvia, Mr. Guntis Ulmanis, to the Foreign Policy Institute of Italy, Rome, 29 April 1998.
- 21/09/1998: Address by the President of the Republic of Latvia, Mr. Guntis Ulmanis, to the Fifty-third session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, 21 September 1998.
- 05/12/1998: Address by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr.Valdis Birkavs, to the

International Conference "How Secure are the Baltic States" organized by the Konrad Adenauer Foundation and Latvian Institute of International Affairs, Riga, December 5, 1998.

Period II:

- 22/09/1999: Speech by the President of the Republic of Latvia, Dr. Vaira Vike-Freiberga, at the 54th General Assembly of the United Nations, New York, September 22, 1999.

- 29/09/1999: Address of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Indulis Berzins, to Ambassadors in Stockholm accredited to Riga, September 29, 1999.

- 06/12/1999: "Latvian Foreign Policy and the Development of Northern Europe" – Speech by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Indulis Berzins, at the International Conference organized by the Konrad Adenauer Foundation and the Latvian Institute of International Affairs, Riga, Latvia, December 06, 1999.

- 24/01/2000: "Latvia and Europe: Common Values, Common Goals" - Speech by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Indulis Berzins, at the Royal Institute of International Affairs, London, January 24, 2000.

- 20/09/2000: Address of Dr. Vaira Vike-Freiberga, President of Latvia, at the Norwegian Nobel Institute, 20 September 2000.

27/10/2000: An address by Dr. Vaira Vike-Freiberga, President of the Republic of Latvia, at the London School of Economic and Political Science, October 27, 2000.

- 27/11/2000: Address by Mr. Maris Riekstins, Secretary of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia at the Conference "Subregional cooperation and integration in Europe", Athens, November 27, 2000.

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- 31/10/2002: Address by H. E. Dr. Vaira Vike-Freiberga, President of Latvia, at the University of Zurich, October 31, 2002.

Period III:

- 10/01/2003: Address by H. E. Vaira Vike-Freiberga, President of the Republic of Latvia, to the foreign diplomatic corps in Riga, January 10, 2003.

- 26/02/2003: Lecture by H.E. Dr. Vaira Vike-Freiberga, President of Latvia, at Warsaw University, 26 February 2003.

- 27/02/2003: Speech by the Minister of Foreign Affairs Mrs. Sandra Kalniete to the European Policy Centre seminar "Meet the New Member States", 27 February 2003.

15/05/2003: Address by H.E. Dr. Vaira Vike-Freiberga, President of Latvia, at the Women In International Security (WIIS) Conference on Baltic Regional Security Challenges, Riga, 15 May 2003.

- 10/01/2004: Address by H.E. Vaira Vike-Freiberga, President of Latvia, at the conference Europe - Moving towards a New Era, The New Global Order, Berlin, 10 January 2004.

- 27/01/2004: Speech by Latvia's Minister of Foreign Affairs Sandra Kalniete, Latvia's Foreign Policy at the Crossroads of Changes, at the 62nd Scientific Conference, University of Latvia, 27 January 2004.

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- 14/01/2005: Address by H.E. Vaira Vike-Freiberga, President of the Republic of Latvia, to the foreign diplomatic corps in Riga, 14 January 2005.

- 18/01/2005: "Larger Europe - A Stronger Europe?" - Address by H.E. Dr. Vaira Vike-Freiberga, President of Latvia, at Leiden University, 18 January 2005.

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- 04/05/2006: Address by H.E. Vaira Vike-Freiberga, President of Latvia, at the Vilnius Conference 2006, A Common Vision for A Common Neighbourhood, The Riga Summit 2006: A Benchmark or Turning Point?, 04 May 2006.